

The Experiences of Basque and Spanish Iron Workers and their Descendants in Wales from 1900

Hola Cymru

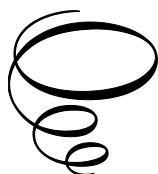
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By

Stephen James Murray

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To my wonderful wife Svetlana, my sorely missed parents Evelyn and John, my warm endearing children Lauren, Joseph and Thomas, to my stalwart and very capable son-in-law Dominic and to my beautiful granddaughter Siân Evelyn. I thank you all for putting up with me. Also, to the memory of Mr Ken Adeva-Vaya con Dios Ken.

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MIGRATION DEFINITIONS/TERMS

Migrants The accepted definition of an international migrant is one who leaves a country for twelve months or more with the intention of settling or seeking employment elsewhere.

Invisible Immigrants A term coined by Charlotte Erickson to describe migrants who blend in completely to their receiving community.

Impelled Migration (also called “reluctant” or “imposed” migration) Where individuals are not forced out of their country, but leave because of unfavourable situations such as warfare, political problems, or religious persecution.

Lateral migration When a migrant takes up an occupation that they had been performing in the sending location.

Onward migration A process whereby people leave their country of origin, settle in a second country for a period of time, and then migrate on to a third country. It has also been used to describe a move within the host country.

Re-migration The act or process of returning or migrating back to the place of origin.

Sojourning Temporary residence. Seasonal workers for instance.

Transilient A class of migrant whose outstanding characteristic is their readiness to move from one country to another and back again.

Return Migration Migrants who emigrated with the intention of returning and who did in fact return.

Diaspora The dispersion or spread of any people from their original homeland.

ABSTRACT

Spanish/Basque Ironworkers migrated to South Wales around the turn of the twentieth century. They were employed principally in iron foundries and some, subsequently, in the coal industry. Initially they lived in and around Merthyr Tydfil with a few, after a relatively short interval, moving to Abercrave and some, a little later, to East Moors in Cardiff, colloquially known as “Dowlais by the Sea”. They arrived in the main from Biscay with the very first, seventeen in total, arriving in May 1900.

The focus of the book is migration but is not concerned purely with the movement of one ethnic group to another ethnically different receiving society, rather, it attempts to move the reader away from thinking of just emigrants or immigrants and considers the process of migration as a complete sequence of experiences whereby the individual moves from one social identity to another.¹ These experiences, which are addressed in the work, include many inter-related issues such as, the birthplace of emigrants, internal migration from rural to urban areas, the resulting urban growth, chain migration and the family, sojourning, return migration (including recruitment of migrants for the Spanish Civil War) and finally, the extent and nature of the assimilation of the immigrants.² This last issue, that of assimilation and its twin area acculturation, is a major focus of the book. In an attempt to address these dual issues, as they affected the Hispanic migrants to Dowlais and Abercrave, an oral history project was undertaken to investigate the extent to which the current descendants retain elements of their heritage.

From the oral investigations, chain or family migration, does seem evident in many cases. This involves, for instance, wives and children reuniting with husbands and fathers, adult emigrants arriving with parents, couples going to join the wife’s family, as well as young people going out to uncles and family friends. Furthermore, it is known that many (but not all) of the

¹ Frank Thistlethwaite, ‘Migration from Europe Overseas in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,’ *Rapport* 6 (1960) reprinted in *A Century of European Migration, 1830-1930*, ed. Rudolph J. Vecoli and Suzanne M. Sinke, 17-49 (Urbana, Illinois, 1991), p.22.

² Dudley Baines, *Emigration from Europe 1815-1930* (Cambridge, 1995), p.28.

original arrivals did migrate internally within the Iberian Peninsula before spending time in the industrial north of the country, specifically around the area of Baracaldo. In order to underpin the evidence already gathered, archives and academic literature in Spain have been accessed yielding further demographic data relating to the emigrants, the process undertaken with the support of the University of the Basque Country. Finally, for comparison purposes, a selection of Basque receiving countries have been discussed namely, Uruguay, Argentina, and the USA to reflect on the extent and nature of the assimilation that has occurred in those locations, highlighting the extent of lateral vs non-lateral migrations.

FOREWORD

One of the most neglected areas in history is the experience of migrant and immigrant workers who moved to new areas or countries in response to a demand for their skills. Furthermore, history books have usually ignored the impact these migratory movements have had on local environments, preferring to focus on national environments and/or indigenous workers and their families. How the migrants came to settle, how they sought to integrate into communities with different cultures and languages, how much they retained of their own cultures, and how they contributed towards evolving social and cultural processes, are often overlooked in both national, and local histories.

Of the countries in Western Europe which exported labour to other parts of Europe and the World, Spain was amongst the most prolific, particularly to the latter. And Spain's migratory movement abroad contained not just unskilled workers from the countryside but workers with industrial skills, such as the iron workers from one of the most developed regions in Spain at the turn of the twentieth century, the Basque Country.

I therefore welcome the publication of this book, which offers the most comprehensive and in-depth story of the Basque workers who emigrated to Wales and of their impact on the local community and environment across several generations. The result of meticulous research in local archives in Wales and elsewhere, this study makes a fascinating contribution to the interaction between two communities over time.

Sebastian Balfour

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Department of Government,
London School of Economics and Political Science.

PREFACE

The catalyst for this study came about as a result of a thesis submitted to Warwick University for the degree of Ph.D. With a seemingly unrelated geographic focus, that work considered the funded emigration of Lancastrian cotton workers to Massachusetts in the second half of the nineteenth century and had nothing to do with Spain or Wales, or indeed for that matter, the twentieth century. However, they both have everything to do with migrants, ethnic groups, family, inter-marriage, language attainment, labour migration and even more factors that make up the laundry list loosely termed “the migrant experience”.

With regard to the specific terms of reference of this work, I will admit to knowing nothing of the Spanish that appeared in Dowlais, Merthyr Tydfil and Abercrave in the early part of the twentieth century until, out of interest, I came across Robert Stradling’s book, *Wales and the Spanish Civil War*.³ Referring to that terrible conflict, Professor Stradling comments:

What could be more voluble on this subject than the fact that when coalminers, metalworkers and merchant seamen signed up for the International Brigades, the sons of Spanish immigrants who had settled in Dowlais and Abercrave went to fight alongside them?

Who is to know what the principal motive was for those *Brigaders* wanting to involve themselves in that conflict? Did they have an overriding desire to help restrict the expansion of fascism in Europe or was it more to do with the fact that they still regarded Spain as “home” and the fact that the Spanish community, of which they were a part and which had been present in South Wales for nearly forty years, had little influence on that perception?

This idea of home reflects a central theme of the book, that of migrant assimilation, and even though Chapters 4 and 5 are devoted entirely to the dual concepts of assimilation and its twin area acculturation, the two provide a major focus throughout. Furthermore, in an attempt to address these dual issues as they affected the Hispanic migrants, an oral history project was

³ Robert Stradling, *Wales and the Spanish Civil War: The Dragon’s Dearest Cause?* (Cardiff, 2004), p.8.

undertaken to investigate the extent to which the descendants retain elements of their heritage. The methodology adopted, for this element of the work, encompassed a twofold approach as it is both intergenerational and longitudinal. Specifically, interviews were conducted with migrant descendants in 2012 and it was through those interviews that I was provided with copies of tape recordings undertaken in the late 1950s by a then living member of the Spanish diaspora- Sr. Joe Arriaga.

Historian Frank Thistlethwaite's all-inclusive model, which sees migration as a "complete sequence of experiences", provides a framework for the structure of this work, and the migrant origins and their internal movement in Spain form an integral part of those experiences. On this basis, the narrative can probably be interpreted as one of width rather than depth.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the first instance, I would like to thank three authors whose publications put me on the road. Firstly, Carl Llewellyn and Hugh Watkins. Their supplementary edition to the *Merthyr Historian, Los Desconocidos a L'Extranjero: Strangers in a Foreign Land* contained more than enough information about the Dowlais immigrants to whet any potential author's appetite. Similarly, but with perhaps a more academic approach, was Professor Robert Stradling. His contribution came through both personal contact and his well-received monograph, *Wales and the Spanish Civil War: The Dragon's Dearest Cause?* His comment about coalminers, metalworkers and merchant seamen signing up for the International Brigades, who were the sons of Spanish immigrants who had settled in Dowlais and Abercrave, inspired me. It was also via Professor Stradling that I was introduced to Professor Xosé Manuel Núñez Seixas, Professor of Contemporary History, University of Santiago de Compostela who both talked me through the nuances of Spanish migration of the nineteenth century and who introduced me to Professor Oscar Alvarez Gila, Professor of History at the University of the Basque Country who has helped me throughout and proved a real stalwart.

I should also like to thank Sñr. Luis Alfonso Gámez for writing an article on my behalf entitled, "Los Vascos Olvidados de Dowlais" (the forgotten Basques of Dowlais) through which we were able to contact Sñr. Ferdinand Aristegui and Sñra. Isabel Ibañez Gotzens two individuals who responded to such a request in the article and who are descendants of individuals who emigrated to Dowlais c.1900.⁴

Big thanks to sisters, Mrs Pat Fearn and Mrs Jeanne Coombs, for allowing me to make use of their father, Sñr. Joe Arriaga's tapes. It was through those recordings that I was made aware of Sñr. Esteban Peña (aka Uncle Steve) who, probably more than anyone else, sums up the idea of a "complete sequence of experiences" which is the principal underpinning of this work.

⁴ Luis Alfonso Gámez, 'Los Vascos Olvidados de Dowlais,' (The Forgotten Basques of Dowlais), *El Correo*, 1 August 2015. See Appendix 4.

The project has been partly financed by both the *Anglo-Spanish Society* (Principal Supporters Scholarship) and by *Eusko Ikaskuntza* (Basque Studies Society Scholarship) without whose help, with this perennial problem for researchers, many of the things I have been able to do would probably not have been done.⁵

I am indebted to Professor Gila for his continual help and support and it is he who has guided me on the origins and internal movement of nineteenth-century Spanish migrants. It was Professor Gila who introduced me to the University of Trier, Germany, where I presented a paper at a conference in November 2011 on the Spanish migration to Wales. As a result of that conference, I joined a network of academics who have since become colleagues in the broad area of European migration history. With that in mind, many thanks also to Dr Jenny Pleinen, formerly of the University of Trier and now the University of Augsburg, for both her efficacy in heading up the conference and, of course, her invitation.

Similarly, thanks are appropriate to Dr Alicia Pozo-Gutierrez of the Transnational Studies Department of Southampton University for allowing me to present the paper to the department of the university in their staff seminar programme. I was subsequently given “Visitor Academic” status by the university and Dr Gutierrez and I worked on both my project and her own, which concerned the forced migration of Basque children in 1937 from Bilbao (*Los Niños*).⁶ An issue which is highlighted within this work.

Gratitude also to Professor Heaven Crawley and the members of the Centre for Migration Policy Research group at the Geography Department of Swansea University for having enough confidence in me to offer me an Honorary Research Fellow position. Although the group’s prime focus is contemporary, it has helped enormously for me to understand that many of the problems that migrants faced a hundred years ago are replicated in the ones faced today by the new migrant groups.

I am also extremely grateful to Professor Daniel Williams from the School of Arts and Humanities at Swansea University for endorsing my application for an Honorary Fellowship in The Richard Burton Centre for the Study of Wales; for inviting me to present my research at a conference entitled *New*

⁵ The Anglo-Spanish Society is now the British Spanish Society.

⁶ A. Pozo-Gutierrez and P. Broomfield, *‘Here, Look After Him’: Voices of Basque Evacuee Children of the Spanish Civil War*, (Southampton, 2012).

Research in Welsh Studies in 2013 and, above all, for his constant support. *Diolch yn fawr iawn Daniel* (Thank you very much Daniel).

No researcher could survive without the help and support of libraries and archives. Even when we live in such a high-tech world, historians still only access a small proportion of what they really need from such a source. Hands-on is still substantially the case. To that end my thanks are therefore very much extended to Siân Anthony, Operations Librarian, Dowlais Library and her second-in-command and HFG member, Clare Allen; the various staff at The Glamorgan Archives, Cardiff; Abercrave Library; Sñr. Julen Erosteigi of the Chamber of Investigators, Biblioteca Foral de Bizkaia in Bilbao; The South Wales Miners' Library of Swansea University and finally, The Modern Records Centre, Warwick University. Carolyn Jacob, former Senior Librarian and Family Historian at Merthyr Tydfil Library, has to have a special mention as the individual that did the donkey work at the outset of the project and her work recently in obtaining copyright permissions for me for most of the images used in this work has proved invaluable.

Newspapers were a major secondary source and therefore my thanks are due for the immense contribution made by the *British Newspaper Archive* and, in particular, to Mr Eddie Bundy, Data and Copyright Executive who guided me through the nuances of obtaining permissions.

Amongst the many individuals and departments at Swansea University I must make a special mention of Mr Kevin Sullivan, Senior Press Officer at the university who helped enormously in promoting the film, *Hola Cymru*, so that it could be shown and attended at various South Wales' venues.

The film was successfully completed due to the input of three very talented individuals. Producer and Director, Joseph Murray, Head of *Let's Go Productions*; Cinematographer, David Švorčík and Sound Recordist, Fred Badhan. Gentlemen, you are destined for great things.

A special mention should be made for *Llafur*, The Welsh People's History Society and Dr Steve Thompson in particular, for publishing two of my articles over the last few years and allowing me to use those articles within this monograph.

I am also extremely grateful to Professor Sebastian Balfour, a former colleague at Buckinghamshire College (Brunel University), currently Emeritus Professor of Contemporary Spanish Studies at The London School

of Economics, who kindly responded to my request to write the Foreword to this work.

My thanks go to all the individuals, both those who are part of the Hispanic Focus Group (HFG), all identified in Appendix 1, together with the many individuals who have contacted me over the last few years to provide me with their own testimonies and without whose help the fine detail necessary for this work would not have been made available.

And finally, a special thanks is appropriate to the very many migrants, now long gone, who were brave enough to take a chance and change their lives by migrating to Dowlais and subsequently Abercrave, who made this work possible and whose obvious drive and inner spirit will stay with me always-

GRACIAS A TODOS CON TODO MI CORAZÓN

(Thank you to everybody with all of my heart)

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASE	The Amalgamated Society of Engineers
FRFG	The Fall River Focus Group
FSIF	The Friendly Society of Iron Founders
HFG	The Hispanic Focus Group
ILO	The International Labour Organisation
LATIFUNDIA	(Definition)- Large estates of privately owned land originally associated with ancient Rome but, in the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century, with Spain and typically worked by peasants.
NUM	The National Union of Mineworkers
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PSOE	Partido Socialista Obrero Español (The Spanish Socialist Workers' Party)
SORV	Sociedad de Obreros de la Región Vizcaína (a Workers' Society of the Vizcaya Region)
SCW	The Spanish Civil War
WCML	Working Class Movement Library

INTRODUCTION

“Long before Napoleon had been vanquished, Merthyr Tydfil had emerged as the outstanding centre of iron production in the world [whilst] in the second-half of the nineteenth century, the Bilbao river area (in the Basque region) was transformed into one of Spain’s most industrial areas [and] Altos Hornos...was the largest single concern in Spain.”⁷

In a recent article, one academic argues that “as the town where modern Wales was born, Merthyr Tydfil should be regarded as our [Wales’] most important place”.⁸ Others would surely put forward a similar claim for Cardiff, Swansea and other urban locations but it is true to say that at the turn of the twentieth century Merthyr was the industrial hub of the country. Although the heyday of the ironworks district of Merthyr started to fade from around 1860, one company, the Dowlais Ironworks, went from strength to strength due in no small part to the stewardship of Mr Edward Pritchard Martin.⁹ In 1897 he had been appointed President of the Iron and Steel Institute and oversaw, in 1899, the formation of the Dowlais Iron and Steel and Coal Company which, in turn, gave rise to the Guest Keen Company in 1900 where the first Spanish migrants took up employment in May of that year.

However, whatever the growing success of Dowlais and whatever the merits of Martin as an industrialist, it is difficult at the start of the twenty-first century to understand the pull of either Merthyr or Dowlais as locations for a migrant to plant roots. In 1899, the *Western Mail* reports upon the, “dolorous sanitary condition of the town” and closes by expressing hope

⁷ Chris Evans, *The Labyrinth of Flames’: Work and Social Conflict in Early Industrial Merthyr Tydfil* (Cardiff, 1993), reviewed by Geraint H. Jenkins in *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 25 (1993), p.560; Raymond Carr, *Modern Spain: 1875-1980* (Oxford, 1980), p.55.

⁸ Professor Chris Evans, ‘Welsh History Month: Merthyr Tydfil,’ *Wales Online*, 8 April 2012.

⁹ Dowlais Iron Works were not the only iron works in Merthyr, but all closed at various intervals during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The main works of Dowlais ceased production in 1936; Cyfarthfa Iron Works was bought by GKN and, of which, Dowlais was a subsidiary in 1902; Plymouth Iron Works closed in 1882 and finally, Penyardren closed a year later, in 1883-Merthyr Tydfil Library.

that “Dowlais may arise and shake itself from the filth and stench in which it has so long wallowed”.¹⁰ This optimism did manifest itself in a, “Purifying Crusade” which may have benefited the new immigrant workers however. It was reported in May of the same year that “Mr Gittlesohn...probably the largest property owner in the whole of the [Merthyr] district [was charged with] not complying with the order of the council to put into condition fit for human habitation nearly a score of houses of which he is the owner”.¹¹

The migrants’ point of departure in 1900 had been Bilbao in northern Spain which had witnessed a similar industrial development to that of Merthyr and district. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, principally brought about through the exploitation of the local mineral deposits of iron ore and coal, the Biscayan economy, the *Margen Izquierda*, witnessed phenomenal growth. Out of that growth arose shipbuilding and other enterprises and, most importantly, the Iron and Steel industry of which the Sociedad de Altos Hornos y Fábricas de Hierro y Acero de Bilbao was the most significant and where the first Spanish migrants, prior to their departure, had previously been employed.¹²

So why did they come? Chapter 1: Adiós a Chroeso, considers this question in some detail and, although the principal focus is on the Hispanic group, the chapter also considers other migrant groups, Irish and Jewish for example, who found themselves in Dowlais and Merthyr at that time.¹³

A major underpinning element of this work is to try and explore and understand the motives for the migrants’ actions. Migration research may have moved on from the simple rationale of “push/pull”, but it remains a difficult model to ignore as it still allows for a useful taxonomy. Research for this investigation clearly identifies “push” factors as a fundamental element and it is true that Biscay, in particular, was suffering from commercial decline when the migrants departed. Harvey and Taylor suggest that foreign capitalists may also have contributed to the economic downturn,

¹⁰ ‘Dismal Dowlais,’ *Western Mail*, 18 April 1899.

¹¹ ‘Purifying Crusade at Dismal Dowlais,’ *Western Mail*, 3 May 1899.

¹² *Margen Izquierda* refers to the left bank of the Bilbao estuary.

¹³ The use of the term ‘Hispanic’ needs some clarification. It is true that the first migrants left from Baracaldo and the easiest term to use to describe them would therefore be ‘Basque’. However, amongst those early migrants there is little evidence of Basque names, which does not necessarily mean, of course, they were not born in Pais Vasco but does suggest a non-Basque background (see “The Hispanic Focus Group”).

particularly in northern Spain which, in turn, may have contributed to the exodus of the Hispanic workers:

It is argued [that] the Spanish economy was “plundered” in true colonial fashion. Foreign firms, with the connivance of a degenerate political élite, took from Spain precious assets of an irreplaceable nature. In so doing they earned fabulous profits, removing from the country the funds which might have promoted a more broadly based and rapid phase of national economic development.¹⁴

It was, in fact a director of the Altos Hornos de Vizcaya, Pablo de Alzola, who suggested that the Spanish mineral industries [under the direction of the foreign direct investors] had “merely created...ephemeral prosperity”.¹⁵ Harrison suggests another, possibly more significant, cause of economic gloom however:

The principle obstacle to Spanish economic development during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the persistence of profound structural problems in the dominant agricultural sector [which] meant that the performance of Spain’s embryonic and uncompetitive industrial sector became...bound up with the fortunes of traditional agriculture.¹⁶

The *Western Mail* at the time offers a more focused interpretation of this “push” factor and suggests that “owing to a dispute over the introduction of unskilled labour from other provinces and the employment of non-Unionists, the men had been idle for several months. The works were afterwards closed, and operations were still suspended”.¹⁷

Of course, highlighting one contributory variable, that of an economic downturn (a “push” factor) only provides a single element of a patchwork of potential reasons for leaving a given location. To fully understand this process of migration one author, Frank Thistlethwaite, suggests that what we need to look at is the complete sequence of experiences that migrants

¹⁴ Charles Harvey and Peter Taylor, ‘Mineral Wealth and Economic Development: Foreign Direct Investment in Spain, 1851-1913,’ *The Economic History Review*, 40 (1987), p.187.

¹⁵ P. de Alzola, ‘The Iron and Steel Industry of Spain,’ *Journal of the Iron and Steel Institute*, 11 (1896), p.8, in Harvey and Tylor, ‘Mineral Wealth’, p.188.

¹⁶ Joseph Harrison, ‘Heavy Industry, the State, and Economic Development in the Basque Region, 1876-1936,’ *The Economic History Review*, 36 (1983), p.535.

¹⁷ ‘A Spanish Colony in Dowlais: Their Life and Labour Methods. A Reinforcement expected shortly,’ *Western Mail*, 2 June 1900.

face and it is this basic model that has guided the development of this book.¹⁸

Chapter 2: Origins and Internal Migration, provides the first element of Thistlethwaite's model and attempts to reflect on how these experiences affected the Hispanic diaspora in South Wales and therefore complement each other. The HFG has proved particularly valuable in the writing of this chapter.¹⁹ However, as assimilation is a major focus of the work, comparative examples have been drawn from other Basque migrations of the period to different geographic locations such as the USA and certain Latin American locations. Early investigations seem to suggest different degrees of assimilation/acculturation.

Chapter 3: Transnational Labour Recruitment, considers those who arrived in Dowlais in May 1900, having been positively recruited by E.J. Martin from Altos Hornos. It is almost certain that they were the first to have done so but the association between Wales, particularly South Wales, and Vizcaya was much more long standing.²⁰ Indeed, even the initial "pioneers" had almost certainly been exposed to a range of British cultural nuances during their time at the iron works in Bilbao. Thomas suggests that music was a particularly cultural activity that bound the Basques and the Welsh in the locale at that time due to both cultures' natural inclination to it.²¹

In order to complement the Thistlethwaite framework of a complete sequence of experiences, Chapter 4: Assimilation and Acculturation, focuses on the dual elements from the migrant descendants' point of view.

¹⁸ Thistlethwaite, 'Migration from Europe.'

¹⁹ HFG refers to The Hispanic Focus Group.

²⁰ A sample of work on this association would include: D. G. Watts, 'Changes in Location of the South Wales Iron and Steel Industry 1860-1930,' *Geography*, 53 (1968); Stefan Houpt, 'Putting Spanish Steel on the Map: The Location of Spanish Integrated Steel, 1880-1936,' *European Review of Economic History*, 6 (2002); Carl Llewellyn and Hugh Watkins, *Los Desconocidos a L'Extranjero: Strangers in a Foreign Land* (Merthyr Tydfil Historical Society in Conjunction with Merthyr Tydfil Central Library, 2001); Mike Thomas, 'Bilbao's Britons: Mining in Biscay,' *History Today*, 62 (2012).

²¹ Mike Thomas, 'Bilbao's British Colony and its Influence on the Region,' *PLANET (192): The Welsh Internationalist*, December/January, 2008/2009, Available at Miners' Library Main (PB2101.P5), Swansea University; Mike Thomas, 'Not Unlike Bilbao,' Swansea University, Main Library: Call Number: D1.H37, also in *History Today*, 62, 8 (2012); Refer also to Chapter 4, Assimilation for a brief discussion on visibility.

The methodology adopted is described in detail within the chapter and involves two principle elements: firstly, an oral history exercise carried out with a group made up of current descendants and secondly, the use of a series of tape recordings made in the late 1950s by a very far-seeing father of two current descendants, Sñr. Jose (Joe) Arriaga, who realised the future value of this exercise. As Minister suggests, “Oral histories provide information that is not provided by newspapers or other sources [providing] a greater emphasis on a sense of the life, society and communities of the locale”.²² It is supplemented by a number of individual biographies (see Appendix 2: Testimonials and Biographies).

This part of the monograph again focuses on the dual aspects described in Chapter 4. The topics discussed in this chapter, Chapter 5: Assimilation and Acculturation-Part 2, were chosen as they complemented each other and include: Food and Cuisine, Occupational mobility, Religious Affiliation, Inter-Marriage and Language Attainment, all fundamental elements of such an analysis.

The next section, Chapter 6: Nativism, Racism and Job Protection, considers the kind of hardships that many migrants face, and have had to face, not just in South Wales but in many countries globally that are receiving communities. To that end, the chapter reflects on the Dowlais/Abercrave arrivals and compares the migrant workers who arrived in Fall River, Massachusetts from the United Kingdom c.1870 up to the First World War. Many of the trials and tribulations faced by both migrant groups during their periods of assimilation and acculturation, over one century ago, bear direct comparison both to each other and to migrant groups moving inter- and intra- continental today. Furthermore, the chapter doesn't just refer solely to Spanish but to Irish, Jewish and other nationalities that made up the industrial, cosmopolitan patchwork that was Merthyr, Dowlais and Abercrave during the period in question.

Chapter 7: Kinship Networks and Chain Migration explores the issue that Charlotte Erickson described as the “friends and relatives” variable which she said was found to be just as significant as push or pull factors as a motive for emigration in nineteenth-century transatlantic migration.²³

²² Darren Minister, ‘Trade Union Activity in the Tinsplate, Nickel and Coal industries in the Swansea Valley, c.1870-1926’, Unpublished M.Phil. Dissertation, *Swansea University*, 2009, Introduction.

²³ Charlotte Erickson, *Leaving England: Essays on British Emigration in the Nineteenth Century* (Cornell, 1994), pp.87-89.

Whilst carrying out the oral history interviews with the current descendants, via the HFG, it became very apparent from the outset that the interviewees knew each other and were long standing acquaintances. It is known, for instance, that the initial seventeen who arrived in the middle of 1900 were quickly followed by many others including the relatives and friends of the first arrivals.²⁴ It cannot be ascertained exactly how many came directly as a result of the presence of an already existing group of fellow countrymen and women, but it is certain that those present acted as conduits providing information and assistance. The chapter (and others) provide many examples of these kinship networks including the help and support given by the Welsh-Hispanic diaspora to the Basque children forced out of Biscay by Franco's armies in 1937 during the Spanish Civil War and the support given, by some early descendants, to the Republican cause during that conflict, from the Dowlais and Abercrave diasporas.²⁵

The complete sequence of experiences that Thistlethwaite emphasizes in order to fully understand those which migrants go through, can include not only internal migration in the sending country (Chapter 2) but also in the country in which they have decided to start their new life i.e.: the receiving one. Chapter 8: Internal Migration, reflects on the decision by some members of the Hispanic diaspora to move away from their first location in Dowlais and Merthyr and onto others within the UK, notably Abercrave in South Wales, where the group were confronted with a whole new set of assimilatory experiences.

The final chapter, Chapter 9: Return, Transilient and Onward Migration, considers the decision by some of the Hispanic migrants to return to their homeland, to move on to another location outside the initial receiving country Wales, or even transilient movement where migrants exhibit a high

²⁴ Davies infers that the twelve who came over at that time were the first. This is not the case however as they were almost certainly the second group, the first arrived on 13 May 1900 made up of seventeen in number. However, more seems to have been written about the "twelve". Hywel Davies, *Fleeing Franco: How Wales Gave Shelter to Refugee Children from the Basque Country During the Spanish Civil War* (Cardiff, 2011); 'Scarcity of Labour in the District: Spaniards Introduced into Dowlais Works,' *The Merthyr Express*, 19 May 1900, p.5. See Chapter 1- Adiós a Chroeso.

²⁵ See, *The Spanish Civil War*, Los Niños and Mrs Fernandez, p.169; *La Guerra Civil/The Spanish Civil War*, p.187; Roman Rodriguez- the correspondence, p.189 and Laurie Lee and the International Brigades controversy, p.180.