

VIII. THE OHIO GYMANVA

THE first Welshman to enter the territory now known as the State of Ohio was Rev. David Jones, who labored as a missionary among the Shawnee and Delaware Indians in 1772 and 1773. The second Welshman to tread Ohio soil was General Anthony Wayne, who came to Ohio in 1793, having been commissioned by the Government "to make an end of Indian troubles on the frontier."

The first permanent Welsh settlers in Ohio were Ezekiel Hughes and Edward Bebb. Hughes and Bebb persuaded a company of fifty Welsh people in the neighborhood of Llanbrynmair, North Wales, to accompany them to America. A part of this company joined a group who settled in Cambria County, Pennsylvania. Some members of this settlement later migrated and formed the Welsh Hills settlement in Licking County, Ohio. Ezekiel Hughes and Edward Bebb did not accompany their friends to the new Pennsylvania settlement, but remained for several months with other friends in the Great Valley near Philadelphia. In April, 1796, they started for the West, walking over the mountains to Redstone, now Brownsville, Pennsylvania, where they secured a flatboat and floated down the Ohio River to Fort Washington, now Cincinnati. In 1801, when the Government surveyed the land on the west side of the Miami River, Hughes and Bebb purchased land in the newly opened territory. This was the beginning of Welsh settlement in Ohio.

Theophilus Rees and Thomas Phillips, members of the colony which settled in Cambria County, Pennsylvania, in 1796, soon began to investigate the land beyond the Ohio River. In 1801 Rees sent his son, John, and Simon Jones, to survey a tract of land in Licking County, Ohio. The result of this investigation was the establishing of the well-known Welsh Hills settlement in Licking County.

The Radnor settlement, in Delaware County, also entered its initial stage in 1801, when David Pugh, from Radnorshire, South

Wales, purchased land, buying land warrants for four thousand acres from Samuel Jones, of Philadelphia. In 1804 Pugh divided his tract into lots of one hundred acres each, and sold the farms to other Welsh settlers who came to the community; many Welsh families came into the Radnor settlement between 1804 and 1807.

The Jackson and Gallia settlement in southern Ohio received its name from the fact that it includes a large portion of the Counties of Jackson and Gallia. In the spring of 1818 six families from Kilkenny, Cardiganshire, South Wales, migrated to America. Their destination was Paddy's Run, Butler County, Ohio, where they hoped to join friends who had settled there. These six families landed in Baltimore, Maryland, and hired a wagon to transport them and their baggage to Pittsburgh. There they purchased a flatboat, intending to float down the Ohio River as far as Cincinnati. On the voyage they arrived at a small village and, being short of provisions, paddled to shore. A delegation was sent to the village in search of food. Upon entering, they discovered that the inhabitants were French—the village was Gallipolis. When the provender committee returned and reported what they had learned of the inhabitants, and that the French had urged the entire company of Welsh voyagers to remain for the night, the six families disembarked and accepted their hospitality. The French seized the opportunity and did all in their power to persuade the Welsh to remain in Gallia County. During the night a violent storm arose, with heavy rain and a strong wind. The next morning when the Welsh went to the river bank their boat was nowhere to be seen. Two theories are advanced to account for its disappearance. One is that the boat broke loose from its mooring during the fierce storm and drifted down the river. The other theory is that some resident of the village, imbued more or less with the modern idea of booming his town, cast the boat adrift in the hope of compelling the Welsh immigrants to swell the population of Gallipolis. After several days of search the boat was found and returned to its mooring. By that time the Welsh women rebelled, avowing that they had sufficiently risked their lives, and positively declined to commit themselves again to the mercy of the treacherous Ohio in a

flatboat. The rebellion of the women and the hospitality of the French inhabitants of Gallipolis prevailed.

The famous Welsh settlement of Jackson and Gallia owes its existence to this incident which occurred to a group of immigrants destined for Paddy's Run who never reached their destination. These Welsh families pushed their way north and west from Gallipolis some eighteen or twenty miles and came into the vicinity of what is now known as the village of Centerville, in Gallia County. It was not until 1829 that another Welshman came into the community. In that year David Thomas, from Cardiganshire, paid a visit to his old friends and former neighbors. In 1831 Rev. Edward Jones arrived from the same place, and, after remaining a short time, returned to Cardiganshire and published a pamphlet in which he described the land of Jackson and Gallia Counties as the very place to which the Welsh should migrate. Following the distribution of this pamphlet, the Welsh from Cardiganshire poured into the Jackson and Gallia settlement for many years. This far-famed settlement was frequently called the Cardiganshire of America. Immigration began with vigor in 1834 and continued increasingly for twenty-five years.

The influence of the Paddy's Run settlement in Butler County may also be seen in the settlements in Allen and Van Wert Counties, in Ohio. While the Cardiganshire Welsh were flocking into Jackson and Gallia Counties, the Welsh from Montgomeryshire were entering Allen County. It was in 1833 that James Nicholas, Esq., David Roberts, and Thomas Watkins, with their respective families, drove in wagons from Paddy's Run to what is now known as Gomer, Ohio. This was the beginning of the flourishing Welsh settlement of Gomer. As a result of correspondence and visits to Wales on the part of some who had already settled in Gomer, scores of friends from Montgomeryshire settled in Allen County.

Similarly the Venedocia settlement in Van Wert County bears a close relation to Paddy's Run. Governor William Bebb, the son of Edward Bebb, of Paddy's Run, purchased two or three sections of land in what is now Venedocia, Van Wert County. Through the influence of Governor Bebb his cousin also, William

Bebb by name, came to America from Montgomeryshire. In 1848 William Bebb, Thomas Morris, and Richard Jervis, with their respective families, left Paddy's Run for Van Wert County, and this was the beginning of the prosperous Welsh community of Venedocia, Ohio.

Among the early Welsh settlements in Ohio was Palmyra, in Portage County. The Welsh came to the Palmyra vicinity in the early 1830's, and in the winter of 1835 the Calvinistic Methodists began to hold religious services. This settlement, like others, was an agricultural community.

With this general survey of the background, we can now study the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church in Ohio.

The first Calvinistic Methodist church established west of the Alleghenies was organized in the city of Cincinnati in 1832. Welshmen had settled in Cincinnati some fifteen years before this. W. Davies, whose son, S. W. Davies, was the mayor of the city in 1838, settled in Cincinnati previous to 1817. He came from Cardiganshire, South Wales, and was accompanied by John H. Phillips and his family from the Great Valley in Pennsylvania. In 1818 twenty other Welsh families established homes in Cincinnati.

About 1818 Rev. William Morgan, a Baptist minister from Indiana, formerly from Merionethshire, Wales, came to preach to the Welsh in Cincinnati, remaining about a year. He was followed by Rev. Thomas Stephens, also a Baptist, who remained less than two years, preaching in the homes of Thomas Jones, William Davies, and others. When Mr. Stephens left, many Welsh people identified themselves with American churches; others resolved to meet regularly for prayer. The prayer service grew and increased in numbers and influence. There were about nine persons who regularly assembled when Rev. Ebenezer Davies, a Wesleyan divine from Flintshire, Wales, arrived in the city. He preached to the little group for a short period. In February, 1831, Rev. Edward Jones came from Cardiganshire to Cincinnati. Edward Jones was a Calvinistic Methodist, and with his arrival the story of Calvinistic Methodism in Ohio begins.

Edward Jones began to preach to the Welsh immediately upon his arrival. Services were held in the homes of William Bebb and William Roberts, and sometimes in a log house rented by Rev.

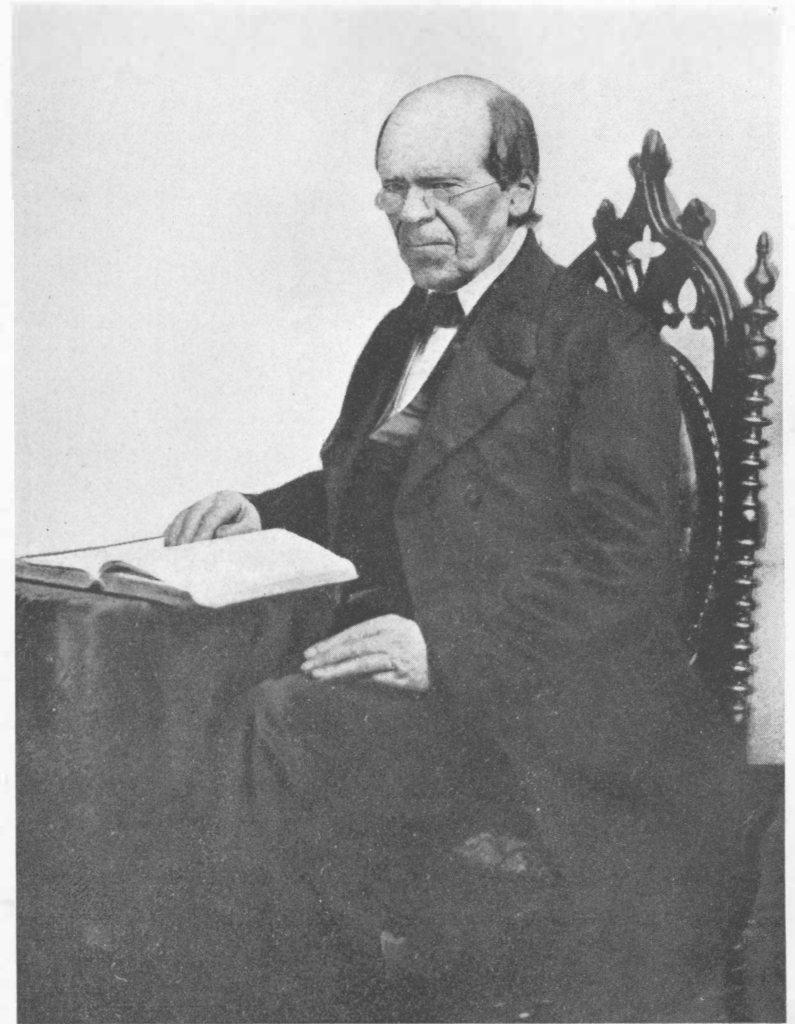
Edward Jones for a private school. On June 4, 1832, the first fellowship meeting was held. Twelve persons were present at this first official church meeting when the first Calvinistic Methodist church in Ohio was organized. On January 22, 1833, the society resolved to provide a house of worship. A lot was purchased on Harrison Street and a church was built. The society agreed, for the safeguarding of the property, that the church should belong to the denomination represented by the majority. The church was assigned to the Calvinistic Methodist denomination. Dedication services, beginning with a prayer meeting at six A.M. and preaching sessions throughout the day, were held on July 14, 1833.

Rev. Edward Jones was a licensed preacher before leaving Wales for America, but he had not been ordained. His ordination took place on June 12, 1833. His nearest clerical neighbors belonging to the Calvinistic Methodist Church lived in Oneida County, New York. The distance was so great that other expedients had to be resorted to for his ordination. Those who participated on the occasion were Rev. Evan Martin, a Presbyterian; Rev. Evan Williams, a Congregationalist from Anglesey, North Wales, who chanced to be visiting in Cincinnati at the time; and Rev. Ebenezer Davies, a Wesleyan.

REV. EDWARD JONES, CINCINNATI

Rev. Edward Jones laid the foundations of the Calvinistic Methodist Church in Ohio and organized many of the early churches in the gymanva. He was well educated and a schoolmaster and he opened a private school in Cincinnati and taught for many years. He also invented a shorthand writing system and gave instructions in shorthand.

Mr. Jones was a tireless worker and made extended tours in Ohio, between 1832 and 1840, traveling thousands of miles on foot to organize churches and to strengthen and encourage weak churches in the state. On one such tour in 1835 he walked from Cincinnati to Palmyra, Portage County, in the northeast corner of the state, to organize Palmyra Church. On this trip he was overtaken by a severe storm of rain and wind. Houses on the trail were few and far apart. The roads were mere tracks through the



REV. EDWARD JONES

woods. During the storm he had to remove his shoes, for he feared to lose them as he walked in the sticky clay. He trudged along barefoot through the evening hours, almost blinded by the rain and with nothing but frequent flashes of lightning to show the way. Tired and almost exhausted, at last he saw a light from a window. Encouraged by this, he continued to trudge to the humble farmhouse, where he was kindly received and given quarters for the night. Weary and with bleeding feet, he retired for the night, grateful for the kind hospitality. Not until three days later could he wear his shoes and continue his journey in the interest of the churches. After organizing the church in Palmyra he went to Pittsburgh and then down the Ohio River on a flatboat to his home in Cincinnati.

On one of his itineraries in the month of March, 1836, Mr. Jones, in company with Rev. Edward Blunt, took a boat from Cincinnati to Portsmouth, then walked through the woods to the Centerville neighborhood in Gallia County. As the darkness came the two men lost their way and spent the night in the forest. Said Edward Blunt, "Mr. Jones, we'll be devoured before morning." "Oh, no," said Edward Jones, "God can keep us in the forest. Remember Daniel and the three lads in Babylon." "Yes," said Blunt, "but many a Daniel has been swallowed up since then." "If He has work for us to do," Jones answered, "we'll be protected." The morning dawned, and the two ministers continued their walk toward Centerville. At about nine o'clock on Sunday morning they reached the cabin of Thomas Alban, the first Welsh home on their trail. After a brief respite and nourishment they proceeded to the house of Daniel Edwards where, according to announcement on the previous Sunday, a prayer meeting was to be held at ten o'clock. Because of their arrival the prayer meeting was changed to a preaching service. Edward Jones had been in the settlement previously, in November, 1835, when he remained two Sundays, and it was during the week intervening that Moriah Church was organized by him, with fourteen charter members. Again when Sharon Church, in Welsh Hills, Licking County, was organized in 1835, Edward Jones traveled on foot all the way from Cincinnati to Welsh Hills and

return—a distance of about three hundred miles—to do the service of organizing Sharon Church.

Edward Jones remained as pastor of Cincinnati Church for about eighteen years from its organization, in 1832. He was a fluent penman and an accurate recorder. He was clerk of the Ohio Gymanva on the occasion of its organization in 1838. He was also elected clerk of the Organized Assembly at its first meeting in Palmyra, Ohio, in 1842, when William Rowlands, D.D., of New York, was made moderator. Edward Jones labored incessantly among the churches and spent his energy lavishly in laying the foundation of the Ohio Gymanva. His later years were spent in Portsmouth, Ohio, and there he died on October 7, 1878. When the new Calvinistic Methodist church in Cincinnati was built on the corner of May and Crown Streets, in 1912, a pulpit, a pulpit seat, and a Communion table were donated in memory of Edward Jones, its organizer and first pastor.

Edward Jones, no doubt, was the controlling influence in forming the statement of union in the Ohio Gymanva, on the occasion of its organization in 1838.

Like New York and Pennsylvania, Ohio had its little gymanvas, or preaching festivals. The first of these was held in Cincinnati, June 11-12, 1833, when Edward Jones was ordained by three ministers representing three different denominations, not one of which was Calvinistic Methodist. Another gymanva was held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, March 29-30, 1834. A gymanva was also held in Columbus, Ohio, in October, 1834. Similar small gymanvas were in all probability held, under Calvinistic Methodist auspices, in other locations where the Welsh had settled. But in these nothing had been accomplished by way of organic union of the churches.

It was on April 6, 1838, that the Ohio Gymanva was formally and officially organized when it convened at Moriah Church, Jackson County, for that specified purpose. The gymanva was organized with a solemn declaration signed by the ministers and elders present, which reads as follows:

“Moriah, Jackson County, Ohio.

“We, whose names appear below, to-day, April 6, 1838, in the presence of God, who knows all hearts, and is the punisher of all who break

their covenants, bind ourselves to be one body, in connection with the body [*corph*] of Calvinistic Methodists in Wales; binding ourselves to defend the sacred doctrine contained in their Confession of Faith without adding anything to it, or subtracting from it. Also to defend the sacred rules contained in that book by conforming to them and endeavoring to persuade others to do likewise, especially those who have visible relationship with us ecclesiastically. Also to follow the same order in the work generally, so far as circumstances permit. And may the holy God, through the mediation of his Son, Jesus, and the continuous influence of the Spirit of grace, sustain us in the fulfillment of our vow.”

The declaration was signed by the following ministers and elders present:

Ministers: Edward Jones, Robert Williams, Edward Blunt, William Parry, John Edwards, David Rosser, and David Lewis.

Elders: D. Wynne, W. Evans, John Evans, Stephen Davis, Alban Alban, Richard Davies, Edward T. Morris, Lewis Williams, W. Bowen, W. T. Williams, and John E. Jones.

To subscribe to such an oath and covenant, with all the accompanying implications, was to assume a solemn and serious responsibility. The statement to which these early Ohio ministers and elders affixed their names is both comprehensive and concise, and likewise potent. When analyzed with all its purpose and action, expressed and implied, it is complete and far-reaching. The statement is an evidence of a sincere purpose, expressed by men of fine intellectual acumen and of strong convictions and deep spiritual natures, to establish a church of their own persuasion west of the Alleghenies. Let it be observed that the founders of the Ohio Gymanva were very definite in their determination to identify themselves clearly with the Calvinistic Methodist body in Wales, and to conform generally to the order prescribed by the denomination in the old country.

After the formal organization, sessions of the gymanva went, in turn, from one location to another within its bounds. In September, 1838, it convened at the Sharon Church, Welsh Hills; in April, 1839, it was held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and in July of the same year it went to Cincinnati. The meetings of the gymanva were very much sought after. The gymanva never had to go begging for entertainment. The people in every Welsh locality

in Ohio and elsewhere were anxious to receive it and anticipated its approach with great joy and elaborate preparation.

The Ohio Gymanva was incorporated, according to the laws of the State of Ohio, about five years after its organization. It may be of interest to many readers to observe the statesmanship of the early leaders of the Calvinistic Methodist Church in Ohio. Hence we here insert the articles of incorporation and the accompanying declaration as adopted, taken from the pages of the first minute book of the Ohio Gymanva:

COPY

"AN ACT TO INCORPORATE THE WELSH CALVINISTIC METHODISTS
IN THE STATE OF OHIO

"Section 1. Be it entered by the General Assembly of the State of Ohio that Edward Jones, Robert Williams, William Parry, David Lewis, William Jones, and David Wynne, and their associates, and those who may hereafter be associated with them, be, and they are hereby created, a body corporate and politic by the name and style of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists in the State of Ohio, and as such shall be entitled to all the rights, privileges, and immunities granted. And shall be subject to all the restrictions of an act in relation to incorporate religious societies; passed March 5, 1836.

"Section 2. That Edward Jones, Robert Williams, William Parry, David Lewis, William Jones, and David Wynne, or a majority of them, shall give 30 days' previous notice by publishing advertisement in at least one of the newspapers published in Cincinnati, Hamilton County; one in Chillicothe, Ross County; and one in Newark, Licking County, of their first meeting under this act.

"Seabury Ford, Speaker of the House of Representatives.

"William McLaughlin, Speaker of the Senate.

"March 26, 1841."

ORGANIZATION

"The organization of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists under their act of 'Incorporation' passed by the Legislature of the State of Ohio, March 26, 1841:

"According to the notice given as required in the said act, we the above named met together in Sharon [Saron] Church meetinghouse in Newark Township, Licking County, and the State of Ohio, on July 27th, of 1844, at 3.00 P.M. And after electing the Rev. William Parry chairman, and Edward Jones, of Cincinnati, as secretary pro tem, the said bill of 'Incorporation' was read and understood by them and also the newspaper in which the said notice advertised was called for and read,

to wit: the said Newark newspaper, the Newark Gazette, dated June 13, 1844, as follows:

"Notice is hereby given to all of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist churches within the State of Ohio that the first meeting under their act of 'Incorporation,' passed March 26, 1841, shall be at Sharon, being their meetinghouse in Licking County, State of Ohio, on the 27th day of July, 1844, at 3.00 P.M.

"By order of the Incorporate Body.

"Edward Jones.'

"The notice as it appeared was in the Newark newspapers and in the Cincinnati Chronicle and Chillicothe, Ross County's Scioto Gazette, was called for and read and proved to be correct, therefore, we, the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists in the State of Ohio organized ourselves under the aforesaid act and have unanimously agreed on the following resolutions:

"1. Resolved affectionately to approve our confession of faith and rules of discipline now in use by the said denomination, without any alteration—appealing—adding, or amendment to the same, to be our rules of government in all things, respecting the cause of our beloved God among us, in general, and strictly adhering to all the same.

"2. Resolved that each of our churches, or societies, by their members which elect their trustees annually by ballot, or majority of them, be given ten (10) days' notice previous to their election in three different places, including their usual place of worship within each township or corporation where each church or society is located.

"3. Resolved that each church, or society, elect three, five, or seven trustees annually in a meeting appointed for the said purpose and in case one, or more, of the said trustees be removed by death, or any other way, from any of the said churches, or societies, or refuse to serve in this said office according to the approved rules of our Government; the remainder of the said church, or society's trustees, or majority of them, shall elect the same number as removed, or refused to fill the vacancies in the said office.

"4. Resolved that all of the trustees must serve in their office for those churches, or societies, which elect them according to their rules of government, subordinate to our Assembly in the State of Ohio and in accordance with the views of the General Association of our denomination, as expressed in our aforesaid confession of faith. And if any church, or society's trustees, or both, refuse to serve accordingly, the [other] officers of our said assembly which have power to take possession of the said church's or society's property, shall make use of it as two thirds of our assembly may deem proper in the interest of the cause of our beloved God, on the same place or vicinity within the same county, if the neighbors called, and wished it, according to the said rules and restrictions of the same.

"5. Resolved that there will be a meeting again held under this act

of our 'Incorporation' in Cincinnati, where and when our next assembly will meet, at the time fixed by our Incorporate Body or majority of them before they adjourn from the said place.

"6. Resolved that our present resolutions may be altered or appealed from, added to or amended, as our assembly or majority of them may deem proper.

"7. Resolved to request our present trustees to serve in said office under the said bill of 'Incorporation' and aforesaid rules of government, and they voluntarily accepted the same.

"8. Resolved to advise our present trustees to make deeds for our meetinghouses, safeguarding them to our denomination so far as possible. In testimony thereof they set down their names, attached to the foregoing resolutions, to certify that they are the very and only resolutions drawn in this meeting held at the aforesaid place on the above date.

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| "SHARON TRUSTEES | { | his | Robert Walter |
| | | John (X) Evans | William T. Williams |
| | | mark | John Owens |
| | | Thomas Hughes | |

"NEWARK TRUSTEES Morgan Williams, Enos Owens, Jenkin Evans
 "GRANVILLE TRUSTEES John R. Owens, Robert Owens, William Williams

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| "Saron (Sharon) "July 27, 1844." | { | "William Parry, Chairman "Edward Jones, Secretary |
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The report of the committee on incorporation was made to the gymanva held on October 25, 1844, at Cincinnati, Ohio. A statement of its adoption follows:

"According to the notice given at Saron, July 27, 1844, in Newark Township, Licking County, State of Ohio, we the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Assembly held in the said city on the above date, and after electing the Rev. R. Williams as chairman and E. Jones, secretary pro tem, passed unanimously the resolutions made at Saron, July 27, 1844, without altering any of them. In testimony whereof we set down our names as follows:

- "Rev. William Parry
- "Mr. David Rosser
- "Mr. Owen Jones
- "Mr. John W. Evans
- "Mr. John J. Williams
- "Mr. Moses Williams
- "Mr. Lewis Williams

"Cincinnati
"October 25, 1844."

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| { | "Robert Williams, Chairman "Edward Jones, Secretary |
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The following is the form adopted for the conveyance of local church property:

"We the undersigned and trustees of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist church, at a meeting held at Sharon on the Welsh Hills, certify that the said church members unanimously accepted the bill of 'Incorporation' which was passed by the Legislature on the 26th day of March, 1841, and resolved to transfer our meetinghouse and lot, as stated in our deed, to the care and government of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists' Assembly, held in the State of Ohio, for the use of their members and their associates to worship God herein according to the said denomination's Confession of Faith and Rules of Discipline.

"Signed for and by the order of the above church.

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| "Sharon Church "Newark Township "Licking County "State of Ohio "March 23, 1844." | { | "John Evans "Robert Walter "William J. Williams "William E. Ellis "Robert Owen "Thomas Hughes "John R. Owen |
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The gymanva, when it convened in regular session, was a great gathering in the historic days of Welsh settlements in Ohio. It was the great institution of the Church, and the Church was in control socially as well as religiously in Welsh communities. It was anticipated for weeks beforehand, and the churches held special prayer services for its success, and for the outpouring of spiritual blessings upon the community by reason of its presence. Many details had to be attended to. Ministers and elders from every church were expected to be present and a great docket was arranged when the outstanding preachers of the gymanva proclaimed the gospel message. Local choirs and congregations rehearsed special hymns selected for the gymanva services. These hymns were frequently printed in pamphlet form for distribution at the services. Generally a delegate or invited preacher from Wales was present and the guest was given an honored and prominent place on the preaching schedule.

The gymanva came to the Jackson Presbytery every two years, in the month of May. Moriah was the mother church in the settlement and for many years the largest in the community, so the gymanva was held there, although the entire community

shared in the entertainment. But the church edifice was far too small to accommodate the assembled multitude, and the gymanva preaching services had to be held in a near-by grove. Here a platform was built and a pulpit made for the occasion. Seats made of planks were provided for the accommodation of several hundred people, while the remainder of the crowd stood and listened during three services in which two preachers delivered sermons in each service. Various estimates have been made of the number of people attending these Welsh gymanvas. The estimates range from three thousand on some occasions to six thousand as a maximum in the largest of them. Enthusiasm ran high. The Welsh *hwyl* pervaded the assembled worshippers. Great Welsh divines swayed the multitude with their true Welsh eloquence. The congregational singing by the vast throng on these festal occasions was nothing short of a foretaste of things to come, an experience never to be forgotten.

In May, 1861, when the gymanva convened in Moriah Church, the weather conditions were perfect for holding it in the open air. It began on Thursday and continued throughout Sunday. Two estimates from reliable sources were made of the number in attendance. Mr. Thomas Lloyd Hughes, of Oak Hill, estimated the crowd at five thousand, while Rev. David Harries, stated clerk of the gymanva, in his recorded minutes gave his estimate as six thousand people. It may well be assumed that there were from five to six thousand people in attendance.

Unfortunately these were trying days. Rumors of battles were abroad. There was a spirit of uneasiness pervading the minds of the worshippers much of the time. Reports of a disturbing nature had come to their ears. Some of the reports were false and some were valid. On Saturday evening it was said that Virginians had crossed the Ohio River at the mouth of Symes Creek. Symes Creek is the stream which, about seventeen miles from the Ohio, skirts the foot of the hill upon which Moriah Church stands. They said the Virginians were marching up along the creek in the direction of Centerville and destroying everything in their path. This rumor, as reported on Sunday morning, was without foundation.

By Sunday morning an immense audience had assembled for

the eight o'clock general fellowship meeting, also held in the grove. The crowds kept coming in ever-increasing numbers, on foot or horseback, in large lumber wagons and an occasional carriage. By ten o'clock, the hour for the first preaching service, the five or six thousand had arrived. So large and compact was the crowd that no recess followed the fellowship meeting. The singing of a hymn started the ten o'clock service. Rev. John Williams, of Ebensburg, Pennsylvania, was the first preacher. He faced a tremendous audience and that under a disadvantage, for the spirit of uneasiness still possessed them. As he proceeded, Mr. Williams gained the attention of his hearers to the extent that the alarm over the approach of Virginians was forgotten. When he had finished, a favorite hymn was announced and sung with great fervor.

Following the singing of the hymn, William Rowlands, D.D., rose to preach. Dr. Rowlands was the guest preacher of the gymanva and a favorite with the audience. He was a great master of assemblies. It is reported that on this occasion he was unusually eloquent and impressive. But before the conclusion of his sermon it was evident, from the change to be seen in the sea of faces before him, that something disquieting had broken the spell. A messenger had appeared on the stage, back of the preacher, with a communication to Rev. Robert Williams, the local pastor, requesting him to announce to the audience that one hundred and fifty teams and wagons were needed to transport soldiers, who were expected to arrive at Portland¹ at any moment from Columbus. The message bore the signature of Quartermaster John A. Lane. The wagons were to be in Portland at seven o'clock Monday morning to transport the Twenty-first Ohio Company to Gallipolis. The reading of this message caused excitement and consternation. Some declared that the gymanva should be adjourned. Others counseled its continuance, for it was a time for prayer. Still others knew not what to do or think. The ministers tried to calm the audience, exhorting them to put their trust in the Almighty.

After the noon recess the excitement had somewhat subsided, although many people had left. There were still some thousands

¹ The old name for Oak Hill.

remaining, and they assembled in the grove for the two o'clock service. After the reading of the Scriptures and prayer by Rev. R. H. Evans, Rev. Howell Powell, of Cincinnati, began to preach. In a few minutes the sound of drums could be heard in the distance. There was a moment's hush, for the sound came from the direction of the expected Virginians' approach. The beating of drums became more distinct; the soldiers were evidently coming nearer. At first there was silence; then came fear and consternation. Some ran, and women wept. Happily it was soon evident that there was no occasion for fear. The soldiers approaching were the home guards from the village of Centerville, marching in an orderly way, coming to the gymanva to hear a sermon. A hearty welcome was extended and seats of honor were provided for them before the rostrum. Dr. Rowlands addressed them in English. After the service, the home guards returned to their quarters in Centerville.

The quartermaster's request for one hundred and fifty teams at Portland by seven o'clock on Monday morning met with a generous and prompt response, for by six o'clock that morning the teams and wagons at Portland, awaiting his further orders, numbered two hundred and twelve.

With the passing of time conditions changed. It became more convenient to hold the gymanvas in Oak Hill. The village was more central and otherwise more convenient for such a gathering. Oak Hill Church was by far the largest in the settlement. But here also the gymanva preaching services had to be conducted in a near-by grove. For several years in the 1890's the Jackson Presbytery seriously contemplated the erection of a pavilion for the holding of the great gymanvas. This was discussed at the gymanva held in Oak Hill in 1894. The Calvinistic Methodist church in Portsmouth had been dissolved and the building sold for three hundred and seventy-eight dollars. The Jackson Presbytery appealed to the gymanva to have this money applied toward erecting a gymanva pavilion. The gymanva resolved:

"That the Jackson Presbytery be allowed the sum received for the Portsmouth Church to build such a pavilion, and if the pavilion is not built, the money is to be returned to the gymanva treasury."

A committee of the gymanva was appointed to oversee the matter, and later a subcommittee of the Jackson Presbytery was also appointed. In the presbytery meeting held at Zoar Church in August, 1895, the pavilion question was tabled indefinitely. The real reason for dropping the matter, in all probability, was that the gymanva in the Jackson and Gallia settlement had attained and passed its highest point so far as large attendance was concerned. Great gymanvas, and gymanvas with large attendances, were held for many years thereafter, but from that time forward the number of those attending gradually diminished.

Not only was there preaching during the regular gymanva services of four days, but during the week following ministerial delegates and guest preachers were scheduled to speak in the different churches of the settlement and in other churches in near-by towns. The largest number of sermons preached on one gymanva occasion, so far as the records show, was at the Ohio Gymanva, convened at Moriah Church in May, 1856. Rev. David Harries, stated clerk, in his official report of that gymanva writes, "There were delivered from the beginning of the gymanva unto its conclusion one hundred and one (101) sermons."²

Let it not be assumed from the foregoing that all the great gymanvas in Ohio were held in the Jackson and Gallia settlement. Other centers such as Cincinnati, Columbus, Pittsburgh, and Venedocia in Van Wert County also entertained great gymanvas. This particular settlement has been selected as an illustration because it was a rural community and one of the most extensive Welsh settlements, not only in Ohio but in America. These great preaching festivals were occasions never to be forgotten by those who attended, in other states as well as in Ohio.³ Great was the preparation in anticipation of them. The Welsh hospitality was phenomenal. Every home was open, and every heart as well, to welcome and to entertain all who came. Women spent hours and days in preparation. The baking of tasty morsels was the order of the season. But the anticipation and the planning for entertainment was not the chief value. After the gymanva

² See *The Friend*, 1856, page 280.

³ The Ohio Gymanva here serves as an illustration of gymanvas in general. Other states had great gymanvas with similar attendances and equal fervor.

was over, in the fellowship meetings in each little church the gymanva sermons were rehearsed. Delegates from other communities also reported on the sermons to their respective churches. In that day everything possible was done to conserve the value of a good sermon. It was the custom to make notes on the sermon while the preacher spoke. Scores of men in a gymanva audience could be seen with pencils and notebooks, writing down the texts and the "heads" of the sermons, and other points of special interest. Reporting a sermon is an art which many a Welsh layman had cultivated to a high degree. He not only reported what he had heard and written down, but made practical application of the same when he reported it in the fellowship meeting.

Congregational singing was an important feature in these Welsh assemblies. Local choruses rehearsed the hymns beforehand and led the vast audience in the congregational singing. The four parts—soprano, alto, tenor, and bass—could always be heard well balanced throughout the vast congregation as well as in the selected choir. When particularly favorite hymns were sung, the refrain was repeated over and over, and each repetition was given with renewed zeal and intensified fervor. To hear a great gymanva audience sing a favorite hymn at the close of a service when a great preacher had carried them to a high plane of religious emotion—all but ecstatic—is an experience which forever lingers in one's memory.

THE PRESBYTERIES AND THEIR CHURCHES

For about fifteen years after the organization of the gymanva all the churches of the Calvinistic Methodist denomination in Ohio were under the direct and immediate supervision of the gymanva itself. But as churches multiplied and became distributed over a larger area, the gymanva felt that more detailed oversight was necessary. At the gymanva session held at Coalport, Ohio, in 1852, three presbyteries were created, within which all the churches were included and to which they were severally allocated as follows:

The First Presbytery: Jackson, Coalport, and Cincinnati Churches.

The Second Presbytery: Columbus, Radnor, and Newark Churches.

The Third Presbytery: Pittsburgh, Ebensburg, and Sugar Creek Churches, in Pennsylvania.

There were in each of the presbyteries defined above more churches than are here named. Thus, for example, the name "Jackson" in the First Presbytery included all the churches of the denomination in the Jackson and Gallia settlement and some others not in the immediate settlement. Some churches were quite remote from any center, and to these special assignment was made. The Palmyra Church, in Portage County, was assigned to the Third Presbytery. In like manner, the Van Wert and Putnam County churches were to be under the care of the First and Second Presbyteries. After a few years, the natural boundaries of the presbyteries became more apparent, and a realignment was made. The Cincinnati Church was transferred from the First to the Second Presbytery, and the churches in Van Wert and Putnam Counties, heretofore "under the care of the First and Second Presbyteries," were then transferred to the Second Presbytery.

The names of the presbyteries were also changed. The First Presbytery received the name "Jackson Presbytery," sometimes called the Jackson and Gallia Presbytery. The Second Presbytery became the "Western Presbytery" and the Third Presbytery was known as the "Pittsburgh Presbytery." Many churches of the Pittsburgh Presbytery were in the State of Pennsylvania, west of the Alleghenies. Rightly to include these in the gymanva proper, the name of the gymanva was changed to "The Gymanva of Ohio and Western Pennsylvania."

The gymanva of 1852, in session at Coalport, Ohio, decided to reduce the number of its meetings to one each year. This was done, no doubt, on the assumption that the presbyteries then created would exercise such supervision locally as to make one gymanva in the year sufficient. It was scheduled to rotate, going in turn to each of the three presbyteries. But the longing for the gymanvas on the part of the people was such as to change the ruling. In 1856 it was resolved to hold the gymanva semi-annually, and it was so held from that time until its dissolution.

The presbyteries began to function immediately after their formation by the gymanva of 1852. The Second, or Western, Presbytery convened for the first time on December 25-26, 1852, at Radnor, Ohio. The Third, or Pittsburgh, Presbytery met at Pittsburgh, October 29, 1853. The first meeting reported for the First, or Jackson, Presbytery, though in all probability meetings had previously been held, was on February 20, 1856. These presbyteries convened every three months for many decades. Their meetings were later reduced to three each year, and later, in the Pittsburgh and Western Presbyteries, were held semiannually.

CHURCHES OF THE JACKSON PRESBYTERY

Moriah, the mother church of Jackson Presbytery. Neighbors in the vicinity of Moriah gathered together for worship—Sunday School and prayer meeting—in October, 1835. In November of the same year Rev. Edward Jones, of Cincinnati, visited the neighborhood and remained for two Sundays. He preached on Sunday, November 29, and the sacrament of baptism was administered. On the second Sunday Mr. Jones preached again, and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was celebrated. Plans for organizing the church were begun on Sunday, November 29, and the organization was completed on Monday, November 30. The services were held in the home of Mr. Daniel Edwards. There were fourteen charter members.

In the summer of 1836 the first church was built. A Mr. Parry offered to donate the land and to build a log church on it for one hundred dollars. His offer was accepted. The church was twenty-two feet long and twenty feet in width. Soon afterward, because a large number of Welsh had come to the settlement, an addition was built. In less than four years after its organization Moriah Church numbered one hundred and fifty communicant members. This large membership, however, was not of long duration. The membership of Moriah fluctuated considerably from time to time, as new churches sprang up in near-by neighborhoods and members withdrew from the mother church to constitute new societies in other neighborhood centers. The first elders in Moriah were William Evans and John E. Jones. In 1837 Alban Alban and Daniel Edwards were added to the session.

Horeb Church. When the large influx of Welsh arrived in 1836, families began to establish homes some miles away from Moriah Church. Some of the members of Moriah had to travel eight miles or more to the services. That was too far, for the people had no conveyances and there were no roads—only tracks through the woods and over the hills. Many of those who lived at this distance were in the vicinity of Hewitt's Fork, where, in September 1837, the Welsh settlers began to assemble for Sunday School in private homes on Sunday afternoons, after making the journey to Moriah Church on Sunday morning to hear Rev. Robert Williams preach. In 1838 other families came into what was later known as the Horeb neighborhood, and that year Rev. Robert Williams went there, occasionally, to preach. Fellowship meetings were also held in the Horeb neighborhood that year, and a missionary prayer service on the first Monday in each month.

Among the first settlers in the Horeb neighborhood were David Edwards, James Jenkins, David Evans and his son Joshua Evans, William Jones (Gofadail), Thomas Edwards, and Thomas Williams, all from Cardiganshire.

Horeb Church was built in 1839, and from the number of the first settlers William Jones (Gofadail) and David Evans (o'r Wern) were elected elders. These men were well qualified for leadership, as both had been elders in Cardiganshire before leaving Wales: David Evans in Llangeitho, and William Jones in Horeb Church (Wales). They were not only strong pillars in Horeb Church, but able and influential leaders in the whole settlement. Moses Morgan arrived in 1840 and was soon made an elder. Among other early elders were Thomas Davies (Gareg Lwyd) and John Harris. Joshua Evans was elected elder after the death of his father. Horeb was at one time the most flourishing church in the community. Its Sunday School, in pioneer days, numbered about two hundred and fifty.

Centerville Church. Divine worship was begun in Centerville in 1838, and the church was organized in 1840. Neighbors assembled for worship at first in the home of Edward Thomas. In 1841 a church of hewed logs was built and in 1854 the present frame church was erected. The first elder was David Wynne, in many