



The Welsh Way

ORAL HISTORY OF
THE LONG CREEK WELSH COMMUNITY
IN IOWA

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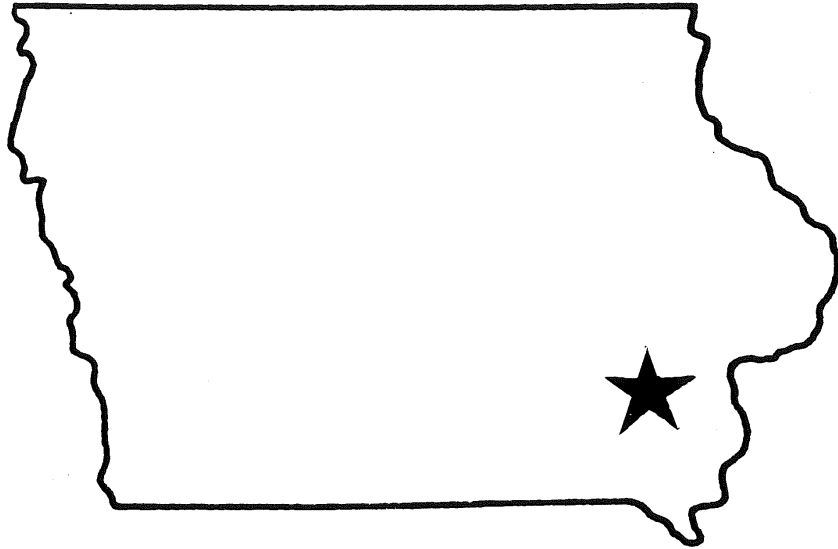
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A Project of the Iowa Welsh Society

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and the
National Endowment for the Humanities*



A Cultural Resource for Iowans Since 1971

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PREFACE

In 1993 members of the Iowa Welsh Society realized that the current generations of Welsh in Iowa were the last to remember the immigrant Welsh families who were their parents and grandparents. With the purpose of preserving these remembrances, our committee was formed. It proposed collecting oral histories and was awarded some financial support from the Iowa Humanities Board and the Iowa Welsh Society. Members of the project committee have worked on a volunteer basis since the summer of 1994 to conduct the interviews and bring the interview material together for this book.

The Long Creek community of Welsh in western Louisa County was chosen as our subject because it is the oldest Welsh community in Iowa and the least changed. A 1912 history of Louisa County describes the "Welsh settlement" as occupying the west and southwest part of Columbus City township and the north part of Elm Grove township. The current settlement extends from Columbus Junction on the east to the town of Washington in Washington County on the west. From slightly north of the city of Cotter it extends south into Henry County. The defining geographical marker is still Long Creek, which crosses the area from west to east between the two remaining churches, Cotter Presbyterian Church and Salem Welsh Presbyterian Church.

The project committee owes many thanks to Harriet Jones of Columbus City, our local coordinator, who introduced us to those members of the Long Creek community whom we did not already know and helped us immensely with background information. Twenty-four people were interviewed during the summer and fall of 1994. The tapes and entire transcripts of the interviews will be given to the State Historical Society of Iowa. Excerpts from the interviews appear in this book to emphasize the different facets of American Welsh life in the community and in the home, primarily in the first half of this century.

We also wish to thank Dr. Ron Roberts of the University of Northern Iowa who guided us in our planning, Laurie Robinson, director of the Johnson County Historical Society who assessed the project, Robert Campbell of Iowa State University Press who generously designed this book, Linda Emmerson for the graphics, Margaret Hootman of Iowa City who located important information for us, and Mrs. Marcus Bach who provided us with an audiocassette

of her husband's recordings at the Salem Presbyterian Church in 1943.

Most important of all the recipients of our thanks are the people who were interviewed. Without their time and patience we would not have had the opportunity to preserve this information. Those of us who did the interviewing have special memories of mornings and afternoons spent with the people of the community who graciously allowed us into their homes and refreshed us with Welsh hospitality and friendliness.

There is much material still to be collected. Time and budget limitations mandated a stopping point for our committee but we hope that what we have collected will form the basis for further work.

The Welsh Way Oral History Project Committee members were Martha Davies, Phillips Davies, Ruth Hall, Ada Mae Lewis, Donelle Meyer, and Jane Thomas Zaring.

RUTH HALL
Project Director