

WELSH IMPRINTS OF CENTRAL NEW YORK

A Preliminary Inventory

by

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Preface and Acknowledgements

The large Welsh settlement in Central New York in the early Nineteenth Century quickly became the cultural center of the Welsh immigration to America, or at the very least the publishing center for Welsh books, pamphlets, periodicals and newspapers. It has been one of the many functions of the Library of Utica College and the College's Ethnic Heritage Studies Center to collect and preserve the hundreds of volumes of this Welsh heritage in the area where it was first created. The Libraries at Harvard and Yale and the Library of Congress may have comparable collections of CNY Welsh Imprint books, but it is likely that the Utica College CNY Welsh Periodical Collection is unmatched anywhere in the United States (the holdings, for instance, of the Y Drych, the Welsh American national newspaper, at Utica College are contained in seventeen reels of microfilm, Harvard's in four). The National Library of Wales at Aberystwyth, Wales, desires as complete a collection of Welsh American imprints as possible, and it is the intention of Utica College to serve as a clearing house for Welsh Imprints of CNY, so as to spread duplicates, xeroxes, and microfilms to interested institutions in the area, in America, and in Wales.

The work of anyone attempting to do Welsh American bibliography is made immeasurably easier by Henry Blackwell's A Bibliography of Welsh Americana (National Library of Wales,

Aberystwyth, 1942, second edition, 1977), and by two articles in the National Library of Wales Journal, Idwal Lewis's "Welsh Newspapers and Journals in the United States" (Summer, 1942, pp. 124-30), and Bob Owen's "Welsh American Newspapers and Periodicals" (Winter, 1950, pp. 373-84). In this preliminary inventory of the CNY Welsh holdings of local institutions, and with the kind permission of the National Library of Wales, I have excerpted freely from the three mentioned monographs, in sections one, two, and five from Blackwell '77 for book citations where no library cards existed in the CNY libraries, and in section three from the Lewis and Owen to give full profiles of the CNY periodicals. There are few Welsh speakers left in CNY, so that this sort of inventory can only lean on the extant scholarship. There are, however, many books and pamphlets here listed that do not appear in Blackwell, which will aid the National Library in its proposed 3rd edition of the Blackwell Bibliography.

Of the 240 titles listed in Blackwell '77 as imprints of CNY (that is, printed in Utica, Rome, and Remsen, NY), Utica College (UC) and the other local institutions with Welsh holdings, the Utica Public Library (UPL), The Oneida Historical Society (OHS), Hamilton College (Ham. Coll.), the Remsen Stone Church Library (Remsen), and the Remsen Didymus Thomas Public Library (D.T. Lib.), have currently some 180 of these titles along with duplicates and some titles not in Blackwell. Blackwell does not list periodicals, but they are here inventoried as well.

Blackwell himself, in a short-lived journal of his own, Cambrian Gleanings, said in 1914 of Welsh American periodicals:

Possibly, in the future, some may want information where they can find particulars of the Welsh in America...Many Welsh magazines have been published in America. the following will be of help: Y Cyfaill, Y Wawr, Y Cenhadwr Americanaidd, and the Cambrian.

It must be noted that all four of these periodicals were published in CNY! In an article on "Printers of Books in Welsh in the United States," also in 1914, Henry Blackwell has this to say about T. J. Griffiths in particular:

But the dean of Welsh printers in America... is Thomas J. Griffiths, Utica. He started in 1860, and to this day he holds his own. Mr. Griffiths has done much to foster Welsh printing in America; he keeps himself out of the limelight; he surrounds himself with good, capable men. Mr. Griffiths has published Y Drych, a weekly Welsh newspaper, for over forty years, and during all this time his name is rarely seen in his paper. Just think-a man who does not read, speak, or write Welsh, is the printer of hundreds of Welsh books, and the publisher of the cleanest and best paper published in the Welsh language in any part of the world.

Most of the books are religious in nature, as is the majority of the contents of the periodicals. There is a good deal of poetry (most of it presumably part of Eisteddfod competitions in Utica and elsewhere), as well as prose essays and fiction, and material of local social and economic interest. For the non-Welsh reader, there is a wealth of information in the English language

periodical, the Cambrian. There is some fine manuscript material and secondary material on the Welsh of CNY. A collection, in short, waiting for the serious student. The interested reader is referred to the excellent bibliographies in Edward Hartmann's Americans from Wales, in Jay Williams's Memory Stones, and in David Ellis's "The Welsh in North America."

The origin of the collection goes back to the mid-nineteen-sixties, when a deal was struck between the historians David Ellis at Hamilton College and Harry Jackson at Utica College and the librarians at both institutions, Walter Pilkington at Hamilton and Mary Dudley at Utica, to consolidate Welsh holdings at Utica, where they would be more accessible to the large Welsh community in Utica and vicinity. It was early determined that the Utica College Welsh Collection could not accommodate a national or international collection of Welsh material, and the decision was made to restrict the collection to New York State Welsh material. The New York City Welsh settlement is a story in itself and the few books in the Utica College Collection printed in NYC or elsewhere in America are listed in section five of this inventory to inform other collections of trade possibilities for CNY Welsh imprints we do not have. It should be noted that we have sent off hundreds of Welsh language books printed in Wales to large university collections, and that the Remsen Stone Church Collection is the only one locally that is actively engaged in collecting Welsh language books outside of the CNY focus.

Special thanks are due to subsequent Utica College librarians Harry Tarlin (who focused the collection) and Painan

Wu (who garnered a grant to microfilm the entire collection, circa 1983), the present librarian, David Harralson, and the library staff, Virginia Loin, Reference Librarians Elizabeth Pattengill, Patty Burchard, and Eileen Kramer, and especially, Catalogers Morris Wills and Cathy Woodruff, and assistant Chun-yik Chiu. The staff of the Utica Public Library, Bridget O'Brien, Director, Robert Quist, Robert Lalli, and Barbara Brooks, searched every corner of their admirable institution for Welsh material, cataloged and uncataloged, as did Doug Preston, Director of the Oneida Historical Society, along with his volunteer staff. Ralph Stenstrom, Director of the Hamilton College Library, has been very kind in lending his support and aid to this project. We have had substantial book contributions from Cornell University and from the American Antiquarian Society, and book and monetary contributions from the local St David Society and from the local Welsh community generally. I would like also to thank the staff of the Didymus Thomas Library in Remsen, James Corsaro of the New York State Library in Albany, Carolyn Spicer, Sarah How, Katherine Reagan, and Julie Pactovis of the Cornell University Library, Cheryl Mitchell of the Library of Congress, and Wayne Wright, Assoc. Director of the NYS Historical Association Research Library. One cannot thank enough Leonard and Dorothy Wynne, administrators of the Remsen Stone Church, for their unfailing enthusiasm for all things Welsh, and their incredible hard work in creating the Stone Church Welsh Collection as just one of their many activities on behalf of the preservation of the area's Welsh history and culture. Mair Lloyd

and Vaughn Jones, pillars of the local Welsh community, have been always available to lend their expertise to Utica College's Welsh efforts, as have Bob Jones, Pam Kneller, and Regent Emlyn Griffith. Prof. Phillips Davies, a nationally-known Welsh scholar and translator, has advised the College library on many aspects of the collection and has donated many books to the collection (in a letter to this editor he speaks of "Utica's former position as intellectual capital of Welsh America"). Two Professors from Aberystwyth have visited the collection, Geraint Gruffydd and Deian Hopkins, and the latter has written, "the journals alone would make your collection unbeatable in this part of the US... Utica must now be regarded as a major centre for these imprints." Prof. Gruffydd kindly put me in contact with Brian Lile, Librarian at the National Library at Aberystwyth, with whom I have been pleasantly exchanging information ever since.

Finally, I would stress what is perhaps obvious in the cut, paste and xerox nature of this inventory: its temporary status. Once we have exchanged information, hard copy of books, and periodicals, or copies of these, xeroxed or microfilmed, to the point where we feel we have a settled collection, we will then put the collection on disc and send print-outs to all interested parties. Till then, may this serve.

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