

THE HISTORICAL TIMES

NEWSLETTER OF THE GRANVILLE, OHIO, HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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A crumbling little white church and a small graveyard with weathered, leaning gravestones on the Sharon Valley Road mark the site of the first Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church built in Ohio.

In 1832 William T. Williams came from Wales, along with James Evans and Robert Walter, Welshmen from Oneida County, New York, settled in "Sharon Valley" a few miles from Newark, near the Welsh Hills Settlement. In the spring of 1833 these settlers with other families direct from Wales, united with Walter and Nicodemus Griffiths, in establishing a Welsh Sabbath School at the old Stone School House, two miles north-east of Granville, on the Utica-Granville road. This was the pioneer Welsh Sabbath School in Licking County, and probably in Ohio. These settlers also sustained a regular weekly Welsh prayer meeting.

In October 1834 and again in October 1835 the Reverend Edward Jones travelled on foot from his home in Cincinnati to preach to his countrymen in Sharon Valley and Granville. During his second visit in 1835 he organized the Pioneer Welsh Church of Licking County. The original members were William T. Williams, Mrs. Williams, James Evans, Mrs. Evans, Alban Albans, Mrs. Albans, John J. Evans, Mrs. Evans, Robert Walter, William Parry, William Lewis, Mrs. Lewis, Jenkin Hughes, John Jones, Mrs. Kinor Hughes, Nathaniel Davis, Mrs. Davis, Mrs. Albans, Miss Albans, and Miss Jane Davis.

The Reverend William Morgan was employed as the pastor of the church. Reverend William Parry occasionally supplied the pulpit until after his ordination in 1838, when he became the settled minister and remained until 1853, a period of fifteen years.

On October 26, 1835, James and Mary Evans conveyed the use of a parcel of land to Robert Walker, John Evans, William Williams, Jenkins Hughes, Nathaniel Davis, Alban Albans, William Parry, William Lewis and Rowland Hughes. This property was to be used for the purpose of establishing a meeting house for public worship for the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist community residing in the Welsh Hills of Licking County. The congregation erected a frame building, (the first in the neighborhood) twenty-one by thirty feet, which was finished in 1837 at a cost of \$321.89.

The newly built church was dedicated on June 25, 1837 by the Reverend Dr. Rowlands of New York City. In addition to being an important figure in the church, Dr. Rowlands was a well-known and respected authority of the literature of Wales. Services were held according to the rules of the faith drawn up by the association of ministers of Aberystwith and Bala in Wales and adopted by the Welsh churches in New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio. Church services were always conducted in the Welsh language.

Sometime after the 1835 contract for use of the property, James and Mary Evans conveyed the property in fee simple to Manuel Jones. Then in 1844 Manuel Jones and his wife, Elviria, sold the site to John Evans, Robert Walker, William T. Williams, El Ellis, Robert Owens, Thomas Hughes and John R. Owens. The property was transferred to these persons who served as trustees for the Welsh Hills Church and to their successors, to be used only for the benefit and on behalf of the members of the community of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church.

A DWINDLING CONGREGATION

Over the years, a dwindling congregation, the disuse and neglect of the church building and the adjoining cemetery. There have been several attempts toward restoration. For example, in the 1950's, the Granville Cambrian Society became active in repairing the building and cleaning up

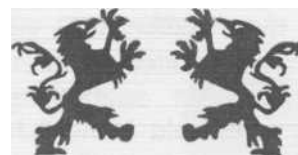
the cemetery. About this time, historian Minnie Hite Moody wrote in her column, "I Remember, I Remember" of the occasion of a refurbishing and clean up of the church property in preparation for a Sunday service to be delivered by the Reverend John Owen, a Welshman from Mt. Gilead.

As the membership of the church community continued to decline, in 1952 the last surviving member, Mrs. Hannah Evans Jones, turned the property over, by quit-claim deed, to the Cambrian Society of Granville. Nonetheless, Welsh culture continued to exhibit an influence in Granville Township. Streets, houses, and developments in the Granville area continue to bear Welsh names.

Several people in the area of Welsh descent have been active in helping maintain the church and cemetery. Among them were Jeannette Evans, George Morgan, Wendell Jones, William Richards, and others of Welsh ancestry who had an interest in preserving the property.

THE CAMBRIAN SOCIETY

The Cambrian Society is comprised of a group of people in the Granville area who are largely of Welsh descent interested in preserving aspects of the Welsh heritage and culture that flourished here. The Society has taken a special interest in the church fixtures of the Welsh Hills Church. According to Tom Matthews, Cambrian Society President, the contents of the church are stored safely in Granville. Included are the handmade pews, the deacons' bench, the pulpit, and the pump organ. The tin reflector oil lamp fixtures from the walls and the roughly carved coat pegs from the back walls have been saved, stored, and preserved. The communion set and the Welsh bible from the church are in the Sherwood-Davidson House of the Licking County Historical Society in Newark.



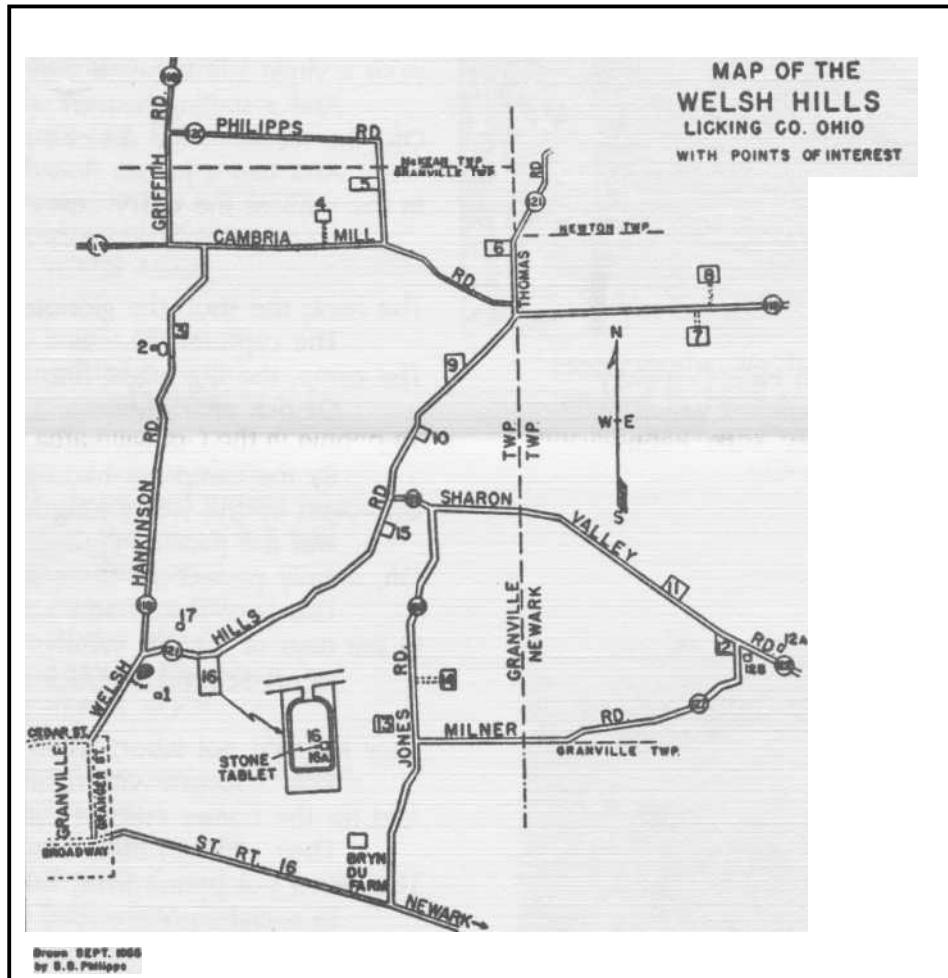
PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER RENOVATION AND PRESERVATION

There is significant interest and hope among people in Granville that the building may be restored, or a replica built. The old fixtures and furnishings could then be put in place to serve a religious community once again.

Cambrian Society President Matthews feels that by preserving the evidence of worship by the local sturdy Welsh Hills pioneers an important part of this area's history would be renewed and reactivated. The Welsh were settled in this immediate area prior to the coming of the New

Englanders who founded Granville in 1805. The members of the Cambrian Society are spearheading a movement to bring this little church and its adjoining graveyard back to the beauty and usefulness it enjoyed over a hundred years ago. They particularly encourage descendants of these early Welsh settlers, as well as all persons of Welsh ancestry, to become members of the Cambrian Society, to share its interests, and to contribute their efforts to the restoration of this important part of Granville's heritage.

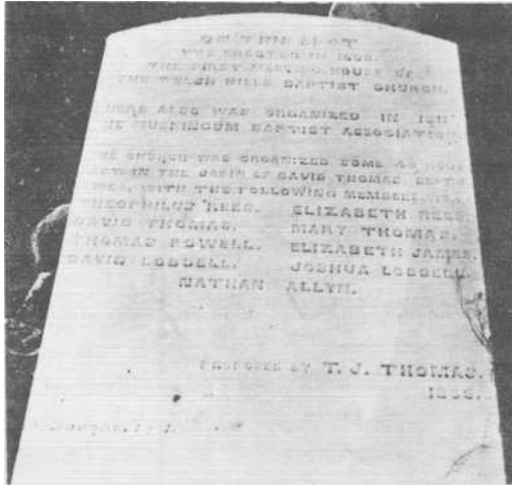
Fanchion R. Lewis and
the Editorial Board



LEGEND

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Site - Theophilus Rees' First Cabin | 8. King Fruit Farm | 12a. Site - Former School |
| 2. Big Spring | 9. W. H. Grange - was W. H. School | 12b. Site - Scalehouse |
| 3. Oldest Frame House | 10. Last Log Cabin | 13. Oldest Stone House |
| 4. Oldest Brick House | 11. Welsh Calvinist Methodist Church | 14. Milner Orchards |
| 5. Philipps Cemetery | 12. Sharon Valley School | 15. Old Stone School - Site |
| 6. W. H. Baptist Church | | 16. W. H. Cemetery |
| 7. Price Fruit Farm | | 16a. Site - First Church |
| | | 17. Site - Rees'Big' Cabin |

The Welsh Pioneer



The tablet in the Welsh Hills Cemetery on the site of the building which served as both church and school.



The ruins of the old stone school, photographed about 1900.

Here's a song all about the Welsh Pioneers,
 And their own green forest homes.
 Whose pleasant memory freshly yet,
 Across the bosom comes;
 We sing of the free and gladsome life,
 In those early days they led.
 With a virgin soil beneath their feet,
 And a smiling heaven o'erhead!
 Oh! the waves of life danced merrily,
 And had a joyous flow
 In the days of the old Welsh Pioneers,
 NEAR SEVENTY YEARS AGO!

The hunt, the shot, the glorious chase,
 The captured bear and deer;
 The camp, the big bright fire, and days
 Of rich and wholesome cheer;
 The sweet, sound sleep, at dead of night,
 By the camp-fire blazing high--
 Unbroken by the wolf's long howl,
 and the panther springing by.
 Oh, merrily passed the time, despite
 The once-feared and savage foe,
 In the days of the old Welsh Pioneers,
 NEAR SEVENTY YEARS AGO!

They shunn'd not labor; when 'twas due
 They wrought with right good will,
 And for the homes erected then,
 Their children bless them still.
 They lived not hermit lives, but oft
 In social converse met,
 And fires of love were kindled then
 That burn on brightly yet.
 Oh, pleasantly the stream of life
 Pursued its constant flow,
 In the days of the old Welsh Pioneers,
 NEAR SEVENTY YEARS AGO!

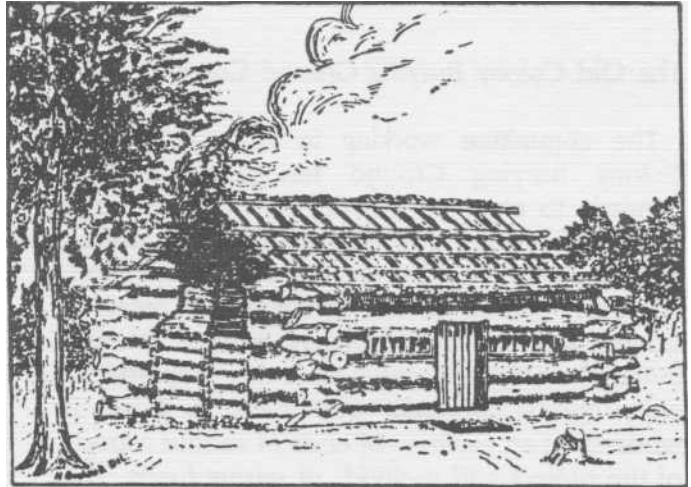
of Licking County

They felt that they were fellow-men:
And that they were a band
Sustained here in the Wilderness,
By Heaven's upholding hand.
And when the holy sabbath came,
In woods or cabin's they praises sung,
And lifted up their hearts in prayer
To God the only Wise.
The groves were God's first Temple's
here, wherein
Where humble worshippers we know
In the days of the old Welsh Pioneers,
NEAR SEVENTY YEARS AGO!

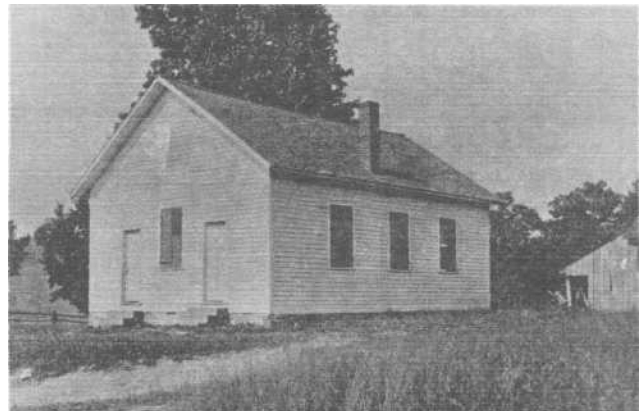
Their forest life was rough and rude,
And dangers closed them round,
But then amid the green old trees,
They freedom sought and found.
Oft through their cabins wintry blasts
Would rush with shriek and moan;
They cared not--though they were but frail
They felt they were their own!
Oh, free and manly lives were led,
In summer, or mid the snow,
By our brave-hearted Welsh Pioneers,
NEAR SEVENTY YEARS AGO!

Few or none remain! Their steps grew short,
And as from day to day,
They moved along with halting feet
And fainting by the way,
Another land more bright than this
To their dim sight appeared,
And on their way they well remembered
How here they pioneered!
Now there midst purer, lovelier scenes, they
Happy backward glances throw,
To the "Hills" where they were pioneers,
NEAR SEVENTY YEARS AGO!

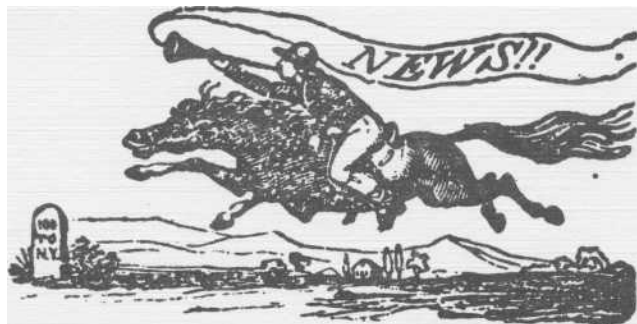
From "History of the Welsh Settlements in Licking County, Ohio"
read at the Licking County Pioneer Meeting, April 7, 1869, by Isaac
Smucker.



Henry Bushnell's drawing of the log cabin erected in 1809 as the house of worship for the "First Regular Baptist Church" of Granville.



The Welsh Hills Baptist Church as it appeared in the early twentieth century.



The Old Colony Burying Ground Committee

The committee working to restore the Old Colony Burying Ground has been meeting regularly to organize this project of the Society. All available historic records have been collected and research is underway on stone restoration, the best method of straightening and resetting stones, and lists of prominent citizens interred there. The existing records are being prepared for entry into a computer data base. A group is working on an estimate of costs of various aspects of the project and methods of raising funds. The Village has removed a dangerous dead tree and trimmed branches in several others.

Anyone who has family records or photographs of the cemetery is urged to share these with the committee. The originals will be promptly returned. If you have information or would like to help in any way, please call the Society at 587-3951, and leave a message.

Granville Historical Society Board of Management

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Civil War Roundtable

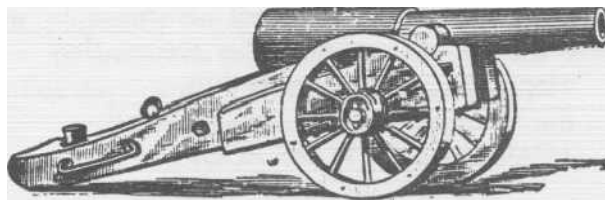
The Civil War Roundtable continues to meet monthly on the third Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in Lamson Lodge on the Denison University campus. All member of the Society are invited to participate in the Roundtable discussions.

On February 8th, seventeen members of the Roundtable visited Lancaster for the 170th birthday of William T. Sherman. Following a dinner at Shaw's restaurant, we visited the Sherman home and had exclusive tours of the many exhibits. Our thanks to Kevin Bennett -- also a member of our Roundtable -- for including us in this Columbus Roundtable festivity. Many people were present in Civil War regalia.

The March Roundtable meeting featured Professor Emeritus George Hunter discussing Civil War music. George made several recordings from his collection of Civil War music and illustrated his comments with musical accounts. Our thanks to George for a wonderfully informative evening.

The Roundtable will meet Tuesday evening, April 17th, in Lamson Lodge. The topic will be "The Battle of Buffington's Island: Ohio's Only Civil War Battle". Kevin Bennett will make the presentation and lead the discussion. This will be a joint meeting with the Columbus Roundtable.

During the last week of April, several members of our Roundtable will journey to Gettysburg for an exclusive tour of the battlefield site together with members of the Columbus Roundtable.



1869 Statistics of The Welsh Churches of Licking County, Ohio

	Church Members	Sunday School Scholars
Welsh Hills Baptist Church Organized in 1808	73	70
Sharon Valley Welsh Hills Calvinistic Church Organized in 1835	31	40
Granville Welsh Congregational Church Organized in 1839	60	80
Granville Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church Organized in 1839	20	30
Newark Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church Organized in 1841	97	100
Newark Welsh Congregational Church Organized in 1841	140	115
	421	435

From "History of the Welsh Settlements in Licking County, Ohio" by Isaac Smucker. Read at the Licking County Pioneer Meeting, April 7, 1869.



Annual Meeting

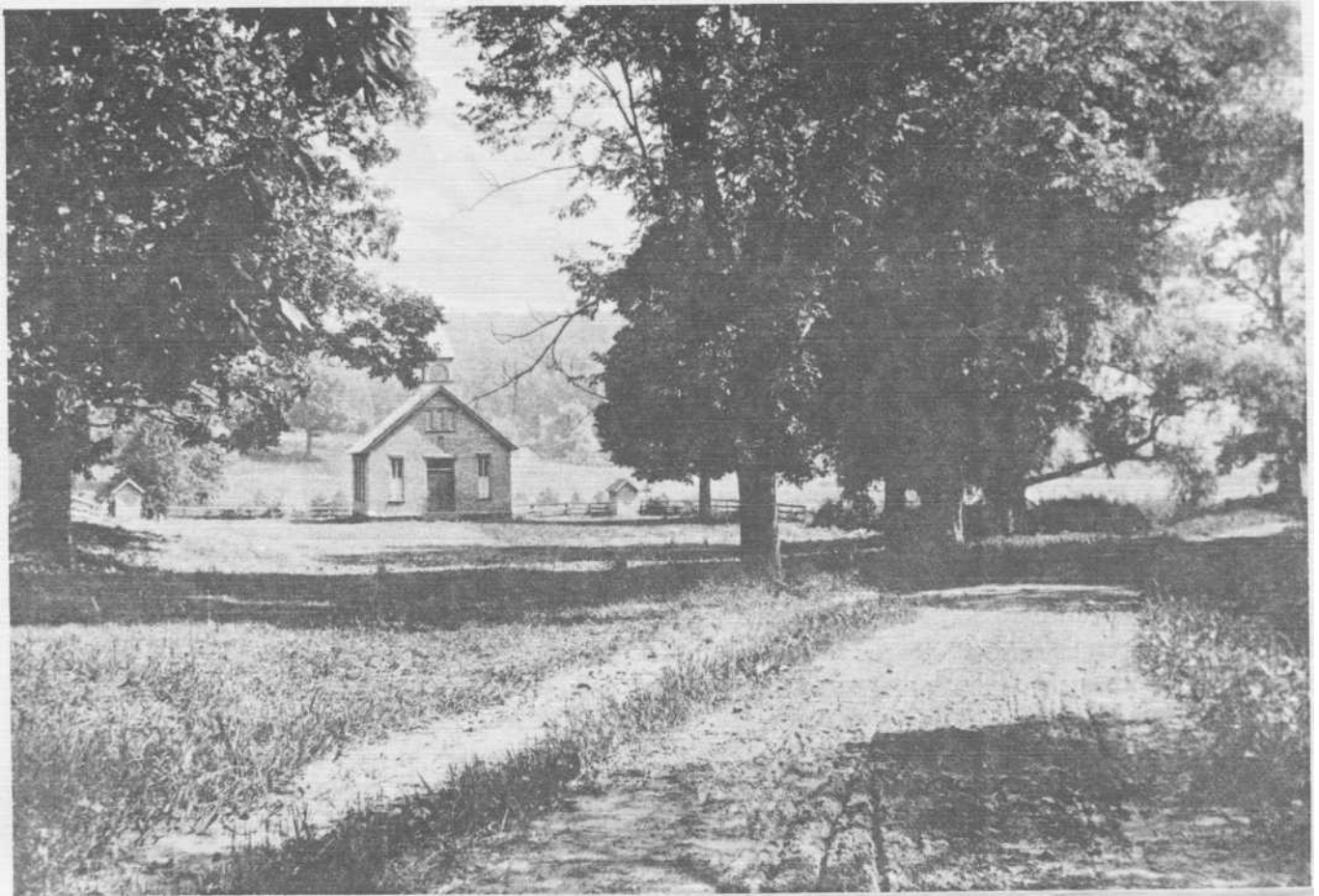
The annual meeting of the Society will be held April 24th at the Old Academy Building. Officers for the coming year will be elected. Dr. Bradley Lepper, archaeologist at the Newark Earth Works, will speak on the Burning Tree Mastodon.

The editors wish to thank Samuel Schaff and Cookie Shields for their assistance with this issue.

The Historical Times is included with membership and is sent to all members of the Society. Questions or comments may be sent to:

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Editorial Board: Florence Hoffman, Anthony Lisska, Mary Ann Malcuit



The Brick School House on Welsh Hills Road,
later used by the Welsh Hills Grange.



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