

PROMINENT WELSH SETTLERS

"Rowland Ellis was a man of note among the Welsh settlers, from a place called Bryn-Mawr, near Dolgelly, in the county of Marioneth. In 1683 he sent Thomas Owen and his family over to make a settlement. This was the custom of the Welsh at first -- to send persons over to take up the land for them, and to prepare it against their coming. Rowland Ellis first came over in 1686, bringing with him his eldest son, Rowland, then a boy. About 100 Welsh passengers came at the same time. They had a long passage -- suffered much for want of provisions -- touched at Barbadoes, etc.

"Rowland Ellis, after remaining about nine months here, returned to Wales, leaving his son with his uncle John Humphrey. He returned to Pennsylvania in 1697, with his family, and about 100 other passengers, all from North Wales. He was then in his 45th year. He was a preacher among the Quakers, and an acceptable man in every station. He lived long to do good, and died in his 80th year, at his son-in-law's, John Evans' house, North Wales, now Gwynedd.

"Hugh Roberts was an eminent Quaker preacher; he removed from Wales to Pennsylvania about the year 1683, where he lived near eighteen years, to an advanced age. He had suffered much for his religion in his native country prior to his removal. On his return from a religious visit to Wales, in the service of preaching the gospel, in the year 1698, a number of the inhabitants of North Wales removed to Pennsylvania in company with him, where he arrived on the 7th of the 5th month

"Ellis Pugh, one of the early Welsh settlers who arrived in the Province in the year 1687, lived much of his time and died here, 1718. He was convinced of the Quakers' principles in Wales in the year 1674. He became a minister among them in 1680, in which capacity he continued until his death.

"In the latter end of 1698, William Jones, Thomas Evans, Robert Evans, Owen Evans, Cadwallader Evans, Hugh Griffith, John Hughes, Edward Foulke, John Humphrey, Robert Jones, and others, having purchased of Robert Turner 10,000 acres of land, began in the following year to improve and settle the same. They settled in Gwynedd township -- in English, North Wales. Of these original settlers, John Hughes and John Humphrey were Quakers. The others in general did not at first profess. But as the neighborhood increased, they, with many others joined in religious society with them."

THE FIRST CHURCHES

In the history of Montgomery County, the Centennial History recounts the establishment of the first churches:

"In 1683 a first-day meeting was established to be held at Takoney or Oxford. Another was also established at Poetquessing. And afterwards in the same year a monthly meeting was set up, to consist of these two meetings and that at Abbingdon, to be held by turns among them.

"The 24th of the 7th month, 1716, the meeting at Horsham was settled, at first only in the winter season; but Friends increasing, after some time a meeting house was built, and it was fixed there constantly -- and so continued.

"One of the venerable meeting houses, founded by the early Friends from Wales, is that in Lower Merion township, about two miles west of Manayunk. It was erected, as appears by a date on a tablet, in 1695, and is the oldest place of worship in the state.

"Among the early settlers of Merion were the Roberts family; Edward Jones, a man given to hospitality, and generally beloved by his acquaintances, who died in February 1737 at the advanced age of eighty-two; and Benjamin Humphrey, who came over in 1683, and died in November 1737, aged seventy-six. He was also remarked for his hospitality and was a useful member among the Quakers.

G w y n e d d

"A meeting house was built at North Wales (Gwynedd) in the year 1700, which was but two years after the arrival of the Welsh Friends at that place. Meetings were kept therein by the consent of the Haverford monthly meeting, unto which they had first joined themselves. Finding truth to prevail, and their numbers to increase, they found it necessary to build another meeting house in 1712; and on the 19th of the ninth month that year, the first meeting for worship was held therein.

"Their number still increasing, as well among themselves as by the union of many adjacent settlers, Friends belonging to North Wales or Gwynedd and Plymouth meetings, settled a monthly meeting for business among themselves, by the consent of the Haverford meeting aforesaid and the quarterly meeting of Philadelphia.

"The said monthly meeting was first held on the 2nd day of the twelfth month, 1714 or 1715, at Gwynedd meeting house and called the Gwynedd monthly meeting. Plymouth meeting house was built a considerable time before this, and a meeting for worship held there.... The said meeting was in being the 4th of the first month, 1688-89, but how long before is not certain."

A sketch of the 1695 Merion Meeting House is shown by Egle at page 954, volume II, Centennial History of Pennsylvania. Dr. Egle also explains that the reason why the Village of Gwynedd has disappeared from the map is a question of terminology. The village was platted in 1867. And on August 20, 1869, it was incorporated as a full-fledged borough, under the name of "North Wales".

"Ye Olde Stampynge Groundes"

1. Gwynedd, alias North Wales
2. Swarthmore College and the
===Friends Historical Society
3. Westchester, County Seat
4. Norristown, do
5. Doylestown, do
6. Trenton, New Jersey

(7) Delaware County

