

**Elwyn T. Ashton. *The Welsh in the United States*. (Hove, Sussex, England: Caldera House Limited, 1984) 182 pp., \$12.00 paper.**

Ashton's mid-sized volume about the Welsh in America joins the first, and very short account by David Williams, *Wales and America* (published in Wales in 1946 as part of a bilingual pamphlet series), and Edward George Hartmann's *Americans from Wales* (nearly three hundred pages, published in 1967 and reprinted in America in 1978).

The three volumes are not difficult to compare. Williams provides a brief overview of the Welsh immigrant experience in America, primarily for British readers. Ashton's book is much more complete, and perhaps its most valuable part deals with Welsh-American developments since the publication of Hartmann's still definitive work, one to which Ashton is greatly indebted, as he acknowledges by his dedication. *Americans from Wales*, then, with its extensive bibliography, list of Welsh-American churches, and of famous Americans of Welsh descent is still the fullest and most detailed account of the subject.

To say that is in no way to denigrate Ashton's new book. It provides a full, although not exhaustive, view of the subject and does so in a lively and readable manner. It will be of value to ethnic students, Welsh or otherwise, who wish to know more than Williams provides, but do not desire the detail included in Hartmann's much more scholarly volume.

Although his section on recent developments (primarily a vogue for learning Welsh and the start of a second Welsh-American newspaper) is useful, there are two rather weak parts. These include a tentative and undetailed section on "Welsh Place-names in the United States," primarily a mere list of Welsh-sounding geographical names. Also of dubious value is a thirty page section of short biographies of Americans of Welsh descent. Although it includes such worthies as Charles Evans Hughes and John L. Lewis (in neither chronological nor alphabetical order), many of the people represented are scarcely famous nor are their lives of great interest. One, for example, was a pirate.

Ashton has lectured widely in British universities and has visited America periodically. His lack of extensive first-hand experience here leads him to some minor errors of fact and omissions. However, what he says will be found almost invariably to be both accurate and interesting to American readers, although it is evident that he, like Williams before him, is writing primarily for a British audience.

The book is softbound with a colorful cover, a good number of interesting photographs and maps, and a brief bibliography. Although it really breaks little new ground and gives few fresh insights, it still should be welcomed in both Welsh-American and ethnic history circles.

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