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## MORGAN JOHN RHEES AND HIS BEULA

IT was in the autumn of 1796, or the fall as they called it now, that the first party came across the Allegheny Mountains.<sup>1</sup> They came up from Philadelphia and the Great Valley of the Appalachians by boat and on foot, since only Esquire Jones, the surveyor, had a horse as yet. They found their way to the place by compass, cutting through a rolling sea of endless, blazing forest, down on to Blacklick creek and the Connemaugh, under the Laurel hills, whence they could see the lower ground sweeping on west, past the Ohio towards that far Missouri where, even now, John Evans might have found their lost compatriots, the Madoc Indians. 'And if such a nationality exists, and there seems now to be no great room to doubt the fact', wrote a breathless William Richards, the unorthodox Baptist minister of Lynn, to his brother-in-the-cloth, Samuel Jones of Pennepek, Philadelphia, who succoured the emigrants, 'it will then appear that a branch of the Welsh nation has preserved its independence even to this day'.<sup>2</sup>

Captain of the branch then at grips with the forest was Thomas Watkin Jones, the surveyor, a man of property from Glasbury in Brecknock, an able and passionate young freethinker, barely twenty-four years of age, who was to give himself with a cold and total fury to this knucklehard edge of wilderness and to leave his still-young bones there.<sup>3</sup> There were other men of spirit—Rees Lloyd, who had been minister to the Congregationalists at Ebenezer in Pontypool and who was now painfully teaching himself the English language; his deacon, George Roberts, from a celebrated Llanbrynmair family; Theophilus Rees, a boyhood friend of William

<sup>1</sup> This general account of the first settlement is based on a wide variety of sources, which are specified below. Basic was the material available in the courthouses of Cambria and Somerset counties, Pennsylvania and the Cambria County Historical Society in Ebensburg. I am particularly grateful to the Curator of the Historical Society, Miss Edna Lehman, who runs a remarkable little museum, for her invaluable assistance and her labour well beyond the call of duty; I also owe a heavy debt to the staffs of the courthouses in Ebensburg and Somerset who were almost incredibly tolerant of a peculiarly nosy foreigner; among them I must single out Mr. Mark Brown of the Cambria Deeds Office and, especially, Fred McCann, the Chief Assessor, who initiated me into the complexities of life in Cambria county.

A great deal of material on Beula and Ebensburg has been collected and will be made available.

<sup>2</sup> W. Richards - S. Jones, 6 June 1791, in Mrs. Irving H. McKesson Collection (Jones section), Historical Society of Pennsylvania (henceforth Pennepek papers). Samuel Jones was the Welsh-born minister of Lower Dublin (Pennepek or Pennypack) Baptist Church, Philadelphia.

<sup>3</sup> I call him a free-thinker because he affirmed and did not swear an oath, because he was a Freemason and because he called his son Voltaire; see below. His will, dated 30 May 1807, is in Will Book 1, p. 3, Register of Wills, Cambria county.

Richards, a man of small property who had led over the Baptists from Salem, at St. Clears in Carmarthenshire. Twelve families and four bachelors, they ringed trees, planted their axe-crop and huddled before the winter.

'My first habitation here', wrote Rees Lloyd years later to his brother, 'was a little cabin covered with spruce limbs or rather spruce brush and Providence covered that with snow two feet deep, where now the town of Ebensburg is. In this place my child Rachel was born'.<sup>4</sup> In that place he lost her to the wilderness which was to break the spirit of half of them.

But though they had to go 26 miles for seed-corn and iron, their spirits were high, for, in the spring, the second party came—John J. Evans and William Rees, John Roberts (Penbryn) and William Williams (South)—twelve more families and six bachelors, with Simon James, the Baptist elder from Blaenywaun near St. Dogmael's in Cardiganshire, who had ministered to them back in the Great Valley and among the old Welsh churches of eastern Pennsylvania.<sup>5</sup> With them, also, came their leader, who held (under mortgage) the ground they laboured at.

Morgan John Rhys, or Rhees as he called himself now, came to lay out a town and to give names to the land.<sup>6</sup> He brought with him *The Heroic Elegies of Llywarch Hen, prince of the Cambro-Britons*, which was to be the first book in the town library,<sup>7</sup> but he had also been reading his Isaiah . . . 'Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies; and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine . . . but they that have gathered it shall eat it and praise the Lord. Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate, but thou shalt be called Hephzibah (that is, my delight is in thee) and thy land Beulah

<sup>4</sup> Rees Lloyd – Jonah Lloyd, 4 September 1837; copies in Cambria County Historical Society and (printed) in C. T. Roberts' centennial history of the First Congregational Church, Ebensburg (1898).

<sup>5</sup> Particularly important for these first two groups are original deeds and letters in Cambria County Historical Society; correspondence and articles in the local press, particularly the *Cambria Freeman* and *Mountaineer-Herald*; census, taxation and testamentary materials in the courthouses; an account by Rees Lloyd in the centennial history cited above; another by George Roberts quoted in *Biographical Cyclopaedia of Cambria County* (Philadelphia, 1896); membership lists, with comments, in the anonymous *Home Coming Celebration of First Congregational Church, Ebensburg* (1934), and two letters from William Richards to Samuel Jones, 16 and 22 March 1796, in Pennepek papers.

<sup>6</sup> Morgan John Rhys became an American citizen on 7 March 1797 (Prothonotary's Records, Philadelphia County, in City Hall, Philadelphia); in the U.S.A., he spelt his name Rhees. Since, in this form, it became the family name, I have retained his orthography (as also in Beula for Beulah).

<sup>7</sup> This heads the list of Rhees's own contributions to the Library, recorded in his Library notebook, which passed to George Roberts and is now in the Cambria County Historical Society.

(that is, married) for the Lord delighteth in thee and thy land shall be married.<sup>8</sup> So Morgan John Rees planted his town and gave it the name of Beula; the creek and the country he called Cambria.

Morgan John Rhees burns in the mind like a sudden flame, all warmth and brilliance and brevity.<sup>9</sup> Sunday schools and popular journalism, negro emancipation, civil liberty, religious tolerance—what unpopular cause did he not embrace? In a generation of concentrated individuality and creative eccentricity, he marked himself out as boldly as he marked out the bounds of Beula, which was to rival William Penn's 'green country town'. Who else would carry a crusade for Protestant liberty into revolutionary Paris? Who else would translate the French atheist Volney into Welsh and print him on the Methodist presses? Who else would greet Anthony Wayne's victorious American army in the west with a lecture on Indian property rights?

'An insignificant Welsh Baptist' as he called himself in Boston, in one of the major inaccuracies of the time, he *did* stand on the ruins of the Bastille and on the unbroken grass west of the Ohio. His *Cylchgrawn* of 1793–94 was the first political periodical in the Welsh language; his *Western Sky* of 1798, one of the first newspapers of the American frontier. It was he who organised a negro school and a negro church in the teeth of nobs and mobs in Savannah. A freed mulatto, Robert Stewart, *Pompey*, made the bricks for Beula.<sup>10</sup>

True, nothing was carried to completion—but was this his fault? He always meant to return—to Paris, to Savannah, to Beula, to Wales, but he never did. Without a doubt, the man was a visionary and there was probably a lot of the dreamer in him, but this was not the impression he made on such hardheads as the Quaker speculator, Henry Drinker, or the tough and conventional Richard Rush. Morgan John Rhees let himself be trapped by his

<sup>8</sup> *Isaiah*, 62, iv, viii, ix; it is often asserted in Pennsylvania that Beula is a Welsh word meaning freedom.

<sup>9</sup> There is no full biography in the proper sense of the word. J. J. Evans, *Morgan John Rhys a'i Amserau* (Cardiff, 1935) is the most recent study, but the prime source is J. T. Griffith, *Morgan John Rhys*, in two editions, one in the U.S.A. of 1899 and a second, fuller edition, in Wales in 1910. It relied mainly on material supplied by Morgan John's grandson, who managed the Smithsonian Institution, William Jones Rhees, whose papers at the Huntington Library, California, no longer include any material on his grandfather. The account in the *Dictionary of National Biography* is by Ramsay MacDonald and, as might be expected, is very bad; that in the *Dictionary of American Biography* (supplement 1) is by W. H. Allison and is even worse; see *Dictionary of Welsh Biography* and *Bywgraffiadur*; I have a note on his translation from Volney in *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* XX (1962). On the diary, see below.

<sup>10</sup> See anonymous former Beula resident, in *Cambria Freeman*, 20 January 1872, and Census Return, Cambria Township, Somerset county, 1800.

times, his friends, his loyalties and his commitments. He could not come to a sharp enough focus in time, for he was dead before he was forty-five. Probably the nearest to him in spirit was the man who became his close friend, that justly celebrated and truly remarkable American, Dr. Benjamin Rush. 'Prudence', once proclaimed Dr. Rush, in a statement which could stand as Morgan John's epitaph, 'Prudence is a rascally virtue'.<sup>11</sup>

But if Rhees was idiosyncratic, he was also representative. For in the 1790s, after a lapse of many years, the westward movement was renewed and the Welsh came in boatloads into American ports to join the English, Irish, Scots, Scotch-Irish, Germans, French in this first major immigration of the new republic.<sup>12</sup> And while economic motives were, without doubt, decisive for the migrants, it is quite unreal to try to separate these from the overtly or vaguely political, religious and social. To ship for America was to vote with the feet; it was an ideological act. Even the massive land speculations which characterized the period often had a missionary tone. These were the days of the liberty settlements, of British-Republican Sparta in New York, of the French Asylum and Gallipolis. Benjamin Rush, who diagnosed speculation, quite literally, as a nervous disease, nevertheless laid out his money in huge tracts in northern and western Pennsylvania. To his lands on the Susquehanna came Joseph Priestley to found *Liberty*, where Coleridge hoped to establish *Pantisocracy*;<sup>13</sup> to his lands in the west came the Scottish philosopher, John Millar's son, whose early death smothered a new free Scotland in the Alleghenies.<sup>14</sup> William Cooper, Fenimore Cooper's father, who was Rush's agent for the Susquehanna, made political homily an integral element of his advertising. Land agents abroad were propagandists for a way of life. Joel Barlow was one; Dr. Enoch Edwards, the Baptist courier of Robert Morris, preached a new Cambria in Wales in 1793;<sup>15</sup> one of these men, William Jackson, ended on a British gallows, and for sufficient reason. 'Well, here we are in the Land of Libberty', wrote one Welsh emigrant in 1799, 'Now where do we ground it?'<sup>16</sup>

<sup>11</sup> To savour this marvellous man, try L. H. Butterfield (ed.), *The Letters of Benjamin Rush*, two vols. (American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 1951).

<sup>12</sup> The literature on this subject is enormous; for this section, I have relied a great deal on the Benjamin Rush papers, formerly in the Library Society and now in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, which are voluminous; for a general view, see Maldwyn A. Jones, *American Immigration* (Chicago, 1960).

<sup>13</sup> Benjamin Rush Papers, Vols. 21, 26, 32; see also Mary C. Park, *Joseph Priestley and the Problem of Pantisocracy* (Philadelphia, 1947).

<sup>14</sup> Benjamin Rush Papers, Vols. 4, 5, 24.

<sup>15</sup> Several of Enoch Edwards's letters on Wales are in the Pennepek papers; see also, on him, Norman B. Wilkinson, 'Land policy and speculation in Pennsylvania, 1779-1800' (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1958).

<sup>16</sup> David Williams - Rees Lloyd, November 1799, Cambria County Historical Society.

Letters from Wales to America in the 1790s are full of the prices, the rents, the labour, the poverty, the landlords and the Church, but an ingrained doctrinal hostility to government and regime, a permanent irritation at the constant anti-American propaganda in press and pulpit were integral elements of the plaint.<sup>17</sup> This was a movement of Dissent, in the fullest sense, and as conditions worsened during the war against France, as persecution followed the treason trials of 1794 and the Fishguard landing of 1797, Independents, Baptists and even Methodists became fiercely and insistently republican. Timothy Thomas, son of the Baptist historian, Joshua Thomas of Leominster, could call his brother—and in September 1794, too—‘a downright Sans-Culotte Republican’ and this kind of assertion was literally commonplace.<sup>18</sup>

In these circumstances, one could imagine, on reading the Welsh correspondence of Samuel Jones, Pennepek, that half the nation was ready to move. George Lewis, from Caernarvon, seriously discusses the wholesale transfer of the Independents of north Wales to the U.S.A. Men as old as Morgan Jones, Hammersmith, yearn for Kentucky; letters of dismissal, appeals for help or information, warnings of the arrival of ‘another seven score’ from Pontypool or Newcastle Emlyn or Llanbryn-mair, flow into Pennsylvania. Much can be discounted, but there remains a hard core of reality. It was in 1795 that the First Baptist Church of Philadelphia addressed an urgent letter to the local Association, demanding concerted action to deal with the unprecedented immigration, particularly from Wales;<sup>19</sup> in 1798, Morgan Rhee himself wrote the new constitution of the revived Welsh society of the same city, brought to life to deal with the newcomers.<sup>20</sup>

It was, further, peculiarly a *Welsh* movement: ‘There is a very great complaint in Wales against the English’, wrote Morgan Jones of Hammersmith to Pennsylvania. ‘They go into the Principality and raise the rents of farms to so great a degree that the farmers there cant live upon them.’<sup>21</sup> The feeling was more

<sup>17</sup> This is based on the Pennepek papers.

<sup>18</sup> Timothy Thomas – Samuel Jones, September 1794, Pennepek papers.

<sup>19</sup> Minutes of First Baptist Church, 5 October 1795. I am grateful to the pastor and officers of the church for allowing me to inspect their records; only through their records was I able to trace Morgan John Rhys's grave; see also A. D. Gillette (ed.), *Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association, 1707–1807* (Philadelphia, 1851).

<sup>20</sup> Three volumes of the minutes of this society are in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania; its list of ‘honorary Welshmen’ included most of the aristocracy of Philadelphia. On the society, see A. H. Dodd, *The Character of early Welsh emigration to the United States* (Cardiff, 1953), and George Vail, ‘Backgrounds of Welsh music in colonial Pennsylvania’, *Church Music and Musical Life in Colonial Pennsylvania*, III, 365 (Colonial Dames of America, Philadelphia 1947).

<sup>21</sup> M. Jones – S. Jones, September 1796, Pennepek papers.

positive; there was some diffused sense of a need to create a new Wales, to make a new start for an old people, which seems to have affected every group which moved. In part, this was simply a desire to stick together in familiar company with familiar language. 'I wish they may settle nearly together', wrote William Richards of the group which moved out to Beula, 'as they may then have preaching in their mother tongue and be very comfortable'.<sup>22</sup> But the emigrants of the 1790s do seem to have been peculiarly Welsh in spirit. A feature of British emigration generally in these revolutionary years was its quality. To judge from Pennsylvania records, hardly an immigrant was illiterate; most were skilled artisans and small tradesmen.<sup>23</sup> It is quite clear that the Welsh were a similar sort of people, but their English was frequently non-existent. Theophilus Rees from St. Clears, for example, a pioneer at Beula and in Ohio, was an able man with 'a competent share of property' but 'he has the disadvantage of knowing but little English'; the comment was frequent.<sup>24</sup>

The most striking case was Rees Lloyd himself, the founder of Ebensburg. Born in Llanboidy and a member of Glandŵr church in Pembrokeshire, he moved to assist Edmund Jones at Ebenezer in Pontypool, and he served in Monmouthshire for many years before he emigrated. He arrived in Philadelphia in 1795 and moved at once to the Great Valley, where he attended the Presbyterian Church.<sup>25</sup> In March 1796, the minister of that church, John Gemmill, wrote to him—'I am much pleased that you have determined to learn the English language and I will with pleasure afford you every assistance in my power'. He sent him Morrison's grammar and the first volume of Newton's works, and promised to correct his letters.<sup>26</sup> The English of Rees Lloyd's letters around 1800 is at best quaint, at worst bizarre; his wife Rachel signed by mark.<sup>27</sup> Only at the end of his life, when he was a minister in Paddy's Run, Ohio, was Rees Lloyd writing good, if somewhat bookish, English. His English 'family Bible', which passed to the Roberts family which

<sup>22</sup> W. Richards - S. Jones, 22 March 1796, Pennepek papers.

<sup>23</sup> Based on the voluminous records of naturalization proceedings in the federal district courts and county courts of Pennsylvania, Federal Record Centre, Philadelphia; City Hall, Philadelphia; and fifteen county courts.

<sup>24</sup> W. Richards's letter of 22 March 1796 cited above.

<sup>25</sup> The basic source for Rees Lloyd is a memoir by George Roberts, published in *Cyfaill*, I (1838), and translated in *Biographical Cyclopaedia of Cambria County* (1896).

<sup>26</sup> J. Gemmill - R. Lloyd, 18 March 1796, Cambria County Historical Society.

<sup>27</sup> For Rachel, see the deeds in Deed Book 1, Cambria County.

venerated it, he seems in fact to have picked up from a family called Hanson in the Great Valley.<sup>28</sup>

What is even more interesting and what should give check to glib nonsense about the 'anglicised south-east' is that those of Lloyd's people from Pontypool and thereabouts who followed him were just as ill-at-ease in English.<sup>29</sup> And one should perhaps observe that, in the naturalization records of Pennsylvania, whose content was dictated to the clerk by the immigrant, the Welsh invariably distinguish themselves quite sharply. Many of them, indeed, describe their native place as 'The Kingdom of Wales'.<sup>30</sup>

Welsh settlement, however scattered, tended to preserve some thin sense of unity. In the back of their minds, there seems always to have been some notion, however tenuous, of a new Wales in the west. The same phrases endlessly recur. 'I hope of the Almighty', said Rees Lloyd, 'by some means or other to direct us all to ficks upon some good spot of land where the poor Welsh people may have a comfortable Settlement'.<sup>31</sup>

There were other facets to this notion of a new beginning. Ministers and elders were obsessed with the back country, the Monongahela, Kentucky, the Ohio. Among such men, the missionary impulse was remarkably powerful. Rees Lloyd had a son born to him four days after landing in America; he called the boy Ebenezer and dedicated him to missionary work among the Indians.<sup>32</sup> William Tibbott, who moved from the Monongahela to Beula, left half his fortune to that Missionary Society for which Morgan Rhees preached and which, after his Ohio experience, he helped to revivify.<sup>33</sup> Many of these Welshmen talked like sixteenth-century Spanish friars.

And it was here, in these realms of the imagination and the spirit that the myth of the Welsh Indians worked its magic. Many were

<sup>28</sup> The Bible is now in the possession of the Cambria County Historical Society; it has Hanson entries earlier in date than the Lloyd entries. A reference to them placed them in the Great Valley Presbyterian church, where I found several Hanson gravestones; they may be connected to the Mrs. Hanson who married William Stoughton, a celebrated minister of First Baptist, Philadelphia, who emigrated in order to be free to marry the lady.

<sup>29</sup> Numerous letters, letters of dismission, etc., in the Pennepek papers; see also some of the letters to Rees Lloyd cited in this article.

<sup>30</sup> Based on the federal district court admission records; of several hundred Welshmen securely identified during the period 1790-1815, only two used the stock form for natives of Great Britain.

<sup>31</sup> Rees Lloyd - Samuel Jones, n.d. (probably 1800), Pennepek papers.

<sup>32</sup> Rees Lloyd - Jonah Lloyd, 4 September 1837, Cambria County Historical Society.

<sup>33</sup> Will of William Tibbott, 16 February 1822, Will Book 1, Cambria County; see preface to Morgan John Rhees's oration at Greenville, *The Altar of Peace* (1795), as published by the Missionary Society in 1798.



sceptical, many more indifferent. But in the 1790s it was not possible to escape the Madoc Indians and the search for them.<sup>34</sup> John Evans had crossed in 1792, and in 1795 set off up the Missouri with the fur trader James McKay; within a year, Griffith Williams was off after him. Rhees gave McKay a Welsh vocabulary, and even after Evans's sad return (Morgan John wrote the report home) conjecture was not stilled. Authors like George Burder were bombarding Welsh and Welsh-Americans for information; Cherokee chiefs were still reporting the Madogwys just around the next bend or over the next mountain. Jefferson warned Lewis and Clark to watch out for them (and, of course, they 'found' them). The myth runs as a curious but insistent descant to the Welsh migration of the nineties. It reinforced a sense of identity, added something to the flavour of an Israel to be created in the wilderness. Floating around the minds of all these men, however pressed by reality, was some notion of fixing upon a 'good spot' for the poor Welsh to ground their land of liberty. Morgan John Rhees was the first to try.

It may well have been the political situation in 1794 which prompted him to drop the *Cylchgrawn* and take ship for America, but he was, in fact, fulfilling an old dream. He had booked passage to Charleston in 1785 and was within three days of sailing when his brother Tom brought him the news that his mother was dying; it was the news from France, apparently, which distracted him from a second attempt.<sup>35</sup> On 1 August 1794, he finally sailed from Liverpool, in company with a group of Baptists headed by Jenkyn David, the minister from the Wrexham area, and, probably, one of his own brothers.<sup>36</sup> On arrival at New York on 12 October, he was at once taken over by the Baptist connexion.

It may be merely a documentary accident which makes the Baptist seem the most active of all the trans-Atlantic internationals at this date, but one suspects that this vivacity was an objective reality.<sup>37</sup> Ever since Morgan Edwards, the historian of the American

<sup>34</sup> The classic in this field, of course, is Professor David Williams's splendid article, 'John Evans' Strange Journey' in *Amer. Hist. Rev.*, LIV (1949), 277-95 and 507-29, and *Trans. Hon. Soc. Cymm.*, 1948, pp. 105-46; among the Pennepek papers are further references to John Evans's mission, some letters from his brothers and, most striking of all, John Evans's original report after his return from the Mandans; these papers will be published shortly.

<sup>35</sup> These details are from the original of his diary, which is fuller than the version published in part by John T. Griffith.

<sup>36</sup> One of his brothers, probably Thomas, was at Beula by 1798 and had been there for at least a year; see M. J. Rhees - B. Rush, 26 July 1798, Benjamin Rush Papers, Vol. 14.

<sup>37</sup> The Pennepek papers yield much evidence; so does every history of the American Baptists one can cite; the subject cries for an historian.

Baptists, had returned to Wales to solicit funds for Rhode Island College (later Brown University) which was, in large part, a Welsh-American initiative, the connexion had been close. The War of Independence, the activities of men like Thomas Hollis and his kin, and, latterly, the resumption of emigration brought it to new life. There was a constant two-way flow of letters, books, pamphlets, information across the Atlantic, usually by certain favoured vessels like the *Pigou* of Captain Benjamin Loxley, junior, of a celebrated Revolutionary family which was a pillar of the Philadelphia First Baptist. William Richards was to leave a library to Rhode Island College; Dr. William Rogers, its first student, became a close friend of Morgan Rhees. This alert, living, constantly renewed connexion made the Baptist network a prime channel of entry when emigration resumed. It came to focus on the cluster of churches of old Welsh foundation in and near Philadelphia, from the Great Valley in the former Welsh Barony down to the Welsh Tract in Delaware. To the ministers and elders of these churches, Rhees and David were old familiars. Jenkyn David was directed to the Great Valley, where he took over the pastorate from the famous David Jones, on whose head the British had put a price in 1777, who was off as chaplain to Anthony Wayne's army in the west.<sup>38</sup> Morgan John was taken up smoothly by William Rogers, now provost at the College of Philadelphia and gently passed along the Baptist network throughout the entire union.

His epic tour of the republic (the full journal of which is one of the major travel documents of the period) took Rhees over a year.<sup>39</sup> Two contradictory purposes seem to have jostled in his brain. According to David, his mind was fixed on the south and, indeed, having based himself in Philadelphia, he moved across the Mason-Dixon line and spent a relatively long period in Savannah. On the other hand, David also asserts that Rhees meant to spy out the land for settlement, collect funds and return to Wales to

<sup>38</sup> Jenkyn David – Samuel Jones, 8 November 1794, Pennepek papers; Monthly Meeting Register, Baptist Church in the Great Valley, 1790–1823. I am much indebted to the minister of Great Valley Baptist Church, Rev. Chester T. Winters, for his help with his church's records and for his papers and lectures on David Jones, whose lively and effective biographer he is.

<sup>39</sup> The original of Morgan Rhees's diary, which is a primary source of major significance, is now in the possession of Mrs. Mary Murray Brown of Mount Kisco, New York, a niece of Nicholas Murray Butler, the president of Columbia, who was himself a descendant of Rhees. She has very kindly lent me a photocopy. There are two elements, a rough, on-the-spot journal which covers the period January–February and February–early July 1795, and a more formal record, which covers most of the year October 1794–October 1795. J. T. Griffith, in his book, used only the formal material, omitted a great deal of that and censored the remainder. A properly-edited publication of the diary would be a contribution of value to American history.

fetch the people. This he certainly tried to do with his preaching tours, but it is also clear that mission work from time to time distracted him.

He moved into the south like some vengeful crusader.<sup>40</sup> 'O my God!', he shouts on one occasion, 'Send down Thy flame and BURN these murderous oppressors' and later, having freed one negro from a flogging tree . . . 'I secretly vowed VENGEANCE on slave holders, but God says, vengeance is mine, I will repay, but HOW LONG, *O thou beneficent being*, wilt thou permit those miserable Africans to live in worse than Egyptian bondage?' In Savannah, indeed, he worked in a kind of fury for the negro cause, writing angry letters to the press, preaching sermons to the deaf, 'administering as many abolition pills as I thought could be well digested', organising a negro school and helping to fashion a negro church. The constitution of the latter was pure Rhees :

1. Jesus Christ is the only head of the church.
2. Believers in him are the only members.
3. They are to choose their own officers.
4. The Bible is their only rule of faith and practice'.

*Beth-Shalom* negro church was, in fact, the model for that *Christian Church* he tried to establish in Beula on the ruins of all the denominations. It may have been here that he freed Robert Stewart, Beula's brick-maker.

Rhees was evidently half-hypnotised by the south, by that uneasy co-existence of a slave society with the radical democratic movement he found so congenial—for he missed no opportunity to sing *Ça Ira* with the crews of French privateers in the ports, to give toasts to the irresistible *sans-culottes* and the martyrs of Botany Bay. But though he always kept an eye open for Cambro-Britons, indeed developed a nose for them in the most unlikely places, and though he knew of the Welsh settlements in the Carolinas, there is no evidence that he ever seriously considered siting Cambria in the south. Finally, in March 1795, after much wrestling with his conscience, he tore himself away from the battlefield in Savannah (where mobs had jeered his services) and turned his mare *Primrose* towards the mountains and the west.

<sup>40</sup> The material which follows is taken from the *original* diary, under the appropriate date; Griffith's 1910 edition is a guide to the more formal journal, which was composed partly in the form of letters to a correspondent.

No omission by his nineteenth-century editor, John T. Griffith, is more inexplicable than this<sup>41</sup>—Rhees's incredible journey, with an emigrant train of some 150, over the mountains, through the Cumberland Gap into the wilderness, where they were sniped at by stray Indians and threatened by murderous renegades, to the settled regions of Kentucky, where he took flatboat down the Ohio to the frontier town of Cincinatti, there to meet the Governor St. Clair (he had already addressed two state legislatures), James McKay, Judge Turner and that engaging scoundrel, Brigadier-General Wilkinson of the Spanish Conspiracy, who offered to go and hang the judges who condemned Muir and Palmer, whom Rhees had toasted as usual. Cincinatti presented Morgan Rhees with a testimonial when he left and his account of the Ohio is idyllic (he sailed about a hundred miles beyond Cincinatti). On into the northwest then, to Wayne's headquarters at Greenville, where he witnessed the peace negotiations, delivered orations, sparred with David Jones and was once more transfixed, this time by the Indians. He planned to go further west still, to Detroit and on into the Illinois, but the British stopped him. So he turned *Primrose* and pointed her nose at 'the sacred island of Roger Williams.' By the autumn, he had reached Boston and was on his way home to Philadelphia.

His diary is an honest record of this remarkable experience and his editor's nervous excisions are perhaps understandable; one never knows what's coming next. 'This poor widower', he writes of a Baptist brother in Wilmington, 'keeps a very smart young lass for his housekeeper and has nobody else to live with him. I would certainly pray if I did not mean to marry her. Let me not be led into temptation!'—a prayer he felt compelled to repeat at increasingly frequent intervals. Several times, he conducts an earnest but lively discussion of the virtues of American cider and beer as antidotes to the 'stinking God', whisky. Always an open-minded man, however, he seems to have achieved a more balanced view at the end, since his executor noted among his property in 1804 one barrel which held 250 gallons of the stuff and another of the same size which was empty.<sup>42</sup>

His views were perhaps not unusual for a man of that *enlightenment* he so cherished, but they sometimes sound a little odd in a Baptist

<sup>41</sup> What follows is taken from his original diary between April and July 1795.

<sup>42</sup> Will of Morgan John Rhees, dated 3 December 1804; Register of Wills, Somerset county. Estate papers include accounts of his executor.

pulpit. He found the Indians to have a keener sense of religion than the whites, looked with favour on the Freemasons and cried aloud for all denominations, including the Baptist, to be 'ground to powder'; one recollects that he translated Volney with obvious enjoyment. Generally speaking, his favour was reserved for the unpretentious, the simple, the natural; pomposity irked him. 'As for telling a parcel of trash after the clergyman', he once snorted at a marriage service, 'I take thee Mary—and I take thee John, for better or for worse, etc., it must be ridiculous in the sight of sensible men . . . Have a written contract and let the man and woman sign the same in the presence of witnesses, then the magistrate or minister pronounce them married without further ceremony'.

This latter assertion was soon to be put to its severest test. For, on his return to Philadelphia, doubtless at the First Baptist, he met Ann Loxley and, at her father's house in Spruce Street, by the Rev. Thomas Ustick, A.M., he was married to her in 1796, on the evening of 22 February—'being the anniversary of the Nativity of the Illustrious George Washington'.<sup>43</sup>

In marrying Ann Loxley, Morgan Rhees not only married a woman of character, charity and courage; he married into a tradition. For if anyone could be said to embody an American revolutionary tradition, it was her father, Colonel Benjamin Loxley.<sup>44</sup> Ben Loxley came from Wakefield in Yorkshire. In 1733, when he was thirteen, his uncle came over from the Brandywine and offered his American estate to any of his nephews who would go back with him. Ben alone would go. Lodged on his uncle's farm at Darby, near Philadelphia, and trained by Jenkin Jones, the Baptist minister, he apprenticed himself as carpenter and joiner to Joseph Watkins from Abergavenny ('in Wales', as Col. Loxley observes with commendable precision). Free on 31 July 1742, Ben Loxley started on his own, with a kit of tools, a Bible, a psalm book and two books of architecture.

At the end of his life, he was still calling himself a 'house carpenter', but he had in fact become a highly successful builder and engineer with much property. He had taken up a military career

<sup>43</sup> Marriage Register of First Baptist Church, p. 179. The records of this church have much material on the Loxleys.

<sup>44</sup> The material on the Loxleys which follows is drawn largely from an autobiography composed by Colonel Loxley himself, supplemented by sundry notes added by his kinsfolk, in particular his daughter Elizabeth, who married Lloyd Jones, merchant brother of William Jones who was to serve as Secretary of the Treasury. There also exists some correspondence and a draft of Colonel Loxley's will, the whole forming the Loxley papers within the Uselma Clark Smith Collection at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

early, taught himself the artillerist's skills; in the Revolution, he became a colonel, ran a famous manufactory and managed the Continental arms laboratory, performing heroic deeds with his son (the Captain Loxley so affectionately remembered by a generation of Welsh Baptists)<sup>45</sup> against British troops and ships. This personification of Poor Richard was, needless to say, a close friend of Benjamin Franklin. He was in truth, Franklin's technician. He made all Franklin's apparatus, often being roused in the small hours to do it. Franklin's famous kite, with which he conducted his experiments in electricity, was a Loxley kite. It passed to his daughter Ann and was for years a feature of Morgan John Rhees's household.<sup>46</sup>

Morgan John joined a remarkably numerous family, a whole circle reared in one tradition, which was adjusting itself easily to another, sending merchants into the Atlantic trade and stalwarts into the Jeffersonian Democrats. He followed Ann to the First Baptist, which was a Loxley church, too, in the sense that Colonel Loxley had built it. And though the Welshman died in far-off Somerset county, his body was brought back to the Loxley family vault, which Colonel Loxley had also built.

One sometimes feels that Morgan John must occasionally have felt that the universe was peopled with Loxleys, but they were clearly congenial, even if Colonel Loxley had 'a negro man Cuff' whom he bequeathed to his wife!<sup>47</sup> Morgan's first son was called John Loxley, taking precedence over the later Benjamin Rush and Thomas Jefferson Rhees.<sup>48</sup> Ann Loxley he obviously cherished. It is difficult to penetrate to her through the formidable piety which encases her letters. She was to be a mighty figure in Philadelphia religion and, in widowhood, raised a large family to a rich and respected adult achievement. She wrote a poem on Morgan John's death, but rarely does the human being break through to visibility: 'I feel now,' she wrote to her sister in 1806, 'that my heart was too much devoted to its darling idol and acknowledge the justice of God in removing him far from me'.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>45</sup> See, in particular, the correspondence of Morgan Jones and William Richards with Samuel Jones, in Pennepek papers; also William Richards - Ann (Loxley) Rhees, 22 April 1808, Gratz Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>46</sup> For this intriguing detail, see note attached to Colonel Loxley's memoir in Loxley papers. Apparently Ann Loxley Rhees lent the kite to the editor of a New York paper and it disappeared.

<sup>47</sup> Draft of B. Loxley's will, Loxley papers.

<sup>48</sup> Thomas Jefferson Rhees is not mentioned by any of the biographers of Morgan John, but the boy is mentioned in a letter to Rush of 11 December 1802; he must have died in infancy.

<sup>49</sup> Ann Rhees - Elizabeth (Loxley) Jones, 1 September 1806, Loxley papers.

In the spring of 1796, however, there was work for a Welshman, even a newly-married one. The problem of the Welsh migration had become serious. Already, in 1795, Morgan John, ministering in the October to a group of newcomers near New York, ran into another bunch just in from south Wales; as many as seventy people left Caernarvonshire that year for New York. 'O God, let the cloud move before us and lead us where the bounds of our habitation are fixed', prayed Rhees on the way back to Philadelphia.<sup>50</sup>

Even as he reached Samuel Jones's house in Pennepek, another and rather remarkable shipload of Cambro-Britons was coming up the Bay. This was the *Maria* of Salem, no less than thirteen weeks out from Bristol, having run through a violent storm which dismasted her and before an Algerian corsair which pursued her; now, as he sighted the Delaware, the captain turned in relief to his leading passenger and said, 'Well, Mr. Lloyd, there is no need to pray and preach any more, as we come from the sea to the river'—whereupon, as Mr. Lloyd pointed out with some satisfaction, the *Maria* ran aground.<sup>51</sup> The mariner seems to have been under some strain; his ship was packed with nonconformists from every corner of Wales. Rees Lloyd had brought his people from Pontypool; there was George Roberts, S.R.'s uncle, with a group from Llanbryn-mair; probably this was the ship on which William Tibbott, Ezekiel Hughes and Edward Bebb sailed. The Gwilym brothers from Cefn Amman were there, a number of 'iron-men' from Glamorgan and Monmouth, a few of Thomas W. Jones's friends from Brecknock. They dispersed around Philadelphia. Some went further west to join a handful of Welsh or co-religionists on the Monongahela south of Pittsburgh or at Redstone on the edge of the North-West Territory. At Redstone, the Gwilyms and their men seem to have been the first to make iron west of the Alleghenies. Rees Lloyd moved at once to the Great Valley, where his son Ebenezer was born the day after his arrival, only to be buried in the Presbyterian churchyard within eight months.

In the following year, the pressure built up. It was in March 1796 that William Richards wrote his letters on behalf of Simon James of St. Dogmael's and Theophilus Rees of St. Clears. He announced the imminent departure of 'six or seven score' from neighbouring

<sup>50</sup> See his diary.

<sup>51</sup> Rees Lloyd — Jonah Lloyd, 4 September 1837 (Cambria County Historical Society), and B. W. Chidlaw, *An Historical Sketch of Paddy's Run, Butler County, Ohio* (1876) which, taken with the evidence of the census and various deeds and bonds, supply the warrant for this paragraph.

Baptist churches, 'together with a number of Presbyterians and other serious people'. This party seems to have sailed in April and to have reached New York around the end of May. Most of them moved south. Rees was delivering his letter to Samuel Jones on 3 June, James on 24 July. Most of them moved out about 20 miles to the Great Valley to settle temporarily among their co-religionists (sometimes their kinsfolk) there.<sup>52</sup>

Apart from the arrival of Jenkyn David as pastor of Great Valley Baptist, the records of the 'Welsh' churches of the area do not register this influx.<sup>53</sup> In fact, the newcomers seem to have organized themselves into *ad hoc* churches, often of mixed denomination. Simon James served those in the Great Valley. George Roberts, years later, said that Morgan Rhee organized Independents, Baptists and Methodists into a church in and around Philadelphia city. In 1808, his widow, Ann, handed over to the First Baptist a list of marriages which Morgan Rhee had celebrated between November 1795 and November 1796. They were all Welsh, all married at Pennepek or in the city. It was by Morgan Rhee that William Griffith, the bookseller, was married to Ann Evans, and David Francis, the Ohio pioneer, to Mary Rowland.<sup>54</sup> According to George Roberts, Morgan Rhee administered the first communion to this group in July 1796, 'when we enjoyed a precious and reviving season'.<sup>55</sup>

But if the people were gathering, where was Canaan? Morgan Rhee had his answer. Back in May 1795, on his tour, he had revelled in the lands beyond Cincinnati on the Ohio. On 7 May he had visited Captain Brown who lived 7 miles beyond the town (and was almost certainly the man who organized the first Independent church in 1803). He floated down the river, landing on the west bank at several points . . . 'I was almost lost in amazement and love in contemplating the work of creation', he wrote in his journal. 'The land in some places below the mouth of the Big Miami is uncommon rich. Fine prospect and plenty of level land all round. First rate quality. Well watered with creeks running into the Ohio. The

<sup>52</sup> William Richards - Samuel Jones, 16 and 22 March 1796, Pennepek papers; William Harvey Jones, Granville centennial oration, reprinted from *Utica Cambrian* in *Weekly Tribune* (Johnstown, Cambria county), 5 January 1906.

<sup>53</sup> I am indebted to the ministers and officers of eight churches of the area for allowing me to inspect their records. It is possible that material may yet be found in local and denominational historical societies.

<sup>54</sup> The list may be found, under the year 1808, in the marriage register of the First Baptist Church of Philadelphia.

<sup>55</sup> Roberts is quoted in Griffith's 1910 edition, p. 248; see also C. T. Roberts's centennial history of Ebensburg Congregational Church.



turkeys are plentiful so that a man may kill as many as he pleases of them. Deer and bears likewise in abundance with some elk and buffalo, with plenty of wild geese, and ducks, etc. almost as tame as barn owls'. He added—'Marked out a spot on the side of a hill to build a town'.<sup>56</sup>

Now, this was the precise spot to which Ezekiel Hughes and Edward Bebb came in 1796. Here they were to squat until the federal land law of 1800 opened the area; here they bought those properties along the Whitewater which marked the beginning of what was to be the celebrated Welsh settlement of Paddy's Run.<sup>57</sup> Significant here is the fact that Ezekiel Hughes was named in this same year as official searcher for Morgan Rhees's Cambrian Company.<sup>58</sup> Hughes made a beeline for the spot Morgan Rhees had marked the previous year. He was shortly joined by the Gwilym people from Redstone. This Cambrian company was to sell its purchase in lots of 640 acres, which was the legal minimum for the sale of federal land; George Roberts reports that, during 1796, Rhees made several appeals and presented several petitions to Congress. All this makes sense only in terms of federal land—the lands thrown open by Wayne's treaty of Greenville.<sup>59</sup> Quite clearly, Morgan Rhees's Beula was to rise on the Ohio.

Once again, Morgan John Rhees had begun what others were to complete. His company was a shadowy affair but in structure typical of the times. Subscribers of \$100 were to elect commissioners on 1 November 1796; a block purchase was to be made and a town plan prepared as focus before settlement began; there was some provision against engrossment and speculation. Morgan Rhees was signing deeds as *President* during 1797, and William Griffiths, named as secretary, was certainly active in the early stages, based on Rhees's house in Second Street (a Loxley house, of course). Both of them signed advertisements throughout 1797 and 1798. Of the Treasurer, Thomas Cumpston, we know nothing, though a Kimpston was a resident in Beula in 1800. The company as an organized corporation seems to have faded out fairly quickly, but this was quite normal once the actual process of settlement was under way. More significant is the thinking behind it. It was an attempt to collect the scattered Welsh settlement and focus it on one site.

<sup>56</sup> Original diary, under date.

<sup>57</sup> B. W. Chidlaw, *op. cit.*

<sup>58</sup> The company's prospectus is printed in Griffith, *op. cit.*, pp. 244–47.

<sup>59</sup> The best treatment of the land problem at this time is Ray A. Billington's superb *Westward Expansion; a history of the American frontier* (New York, 2nd edition., 1960).

Morgan had seen Canaan in May 1795; Ezekiel went to claim it while the people were marshalled.<sup>60</sup>

The choice was obviously sound, but there was never a hope in 1796. Although settlers were already streaming into the northwest and moving out from the Ohio bottom, the tide could not freely flow before the land law of 1800. The riverine areas had been parcelled out among speculative companies and were the theatre for some of the more spectacular frauds and disasters, notably the miserable Scioto fiasco. The territory was riven by factional strife, with the land law as a central issue. It was only in 1800, amid partisan tumult, that Congress passed its first workable land law, which lowered the minimum purchase to 320 acres and extended credit to 75 *per cent* of the price. From 1801, the tide really swept across Ohio (and carried much of the Pennsylvania Beula with it).<sup>61</sup>

Hughes and Bebb chose to sweat it out on Blue Rock creek, but the company could hardly lead the people into a Canaan whose title was insecure. In the long run, no doubt, it would have been better had they waited. But how could they wait? The Welsh were milling about around Philadelphia and New York, many of them in the heavily-settled areas; more were coming in every year. Their letters were urgent. 'Through the mercy of the Lord', wrote David Williams, *Coomddwynannt*, spokesman for one group newly arrived at the coast, addressing himself to Rees Lloyd, 'we have the privilege to take the pen in hand to acquaint you from the Land you called Land of Fridom. But we are now like ship must founder. Do not know where to go. Some say hear others thear. Now I desire of you return me true intelligence of your Settlement by return of post'.<sup>62</sup> None of them could wait. So Rhees turned to Pennsylvania and to the secondary frontier, the hill country which was filling up behind the endless tide flowing west into Kentucky and Tennessee and damming up along the Ohio. His friend, Benjamin Rush, was to hand. Already he had enabled Priestley to plant *Liberty* on the Susquehanna. South of the western branch of that river was the land Rush had patented in 1794 in the last of the

<sup>60</sup> Original deeds survive in the possession of the Cambria County Historical Society; one, in favour of Dr. Joseph Priestley, is on display at the Priestley house in Northumberland town, Pennsylvania; copies fill Deed Books 1-4 of Somerset county and Book 1 of Cambria county.

<sup>61</sup> Billington, *op. cit.*, especially chapter 12; Rhees's diary has a little material on the problem as seen in Cincinnati.

<sup>62</sup> David Williams - Rees Lloyd, November 1799, Cambria County Historical Society.

intra-montane folds of the Appalachians, a great tract of heavily-forested hill country already scratched by John Millar and some of the Philadelphia speculators. On 1 October 1796, Morgan John Rhees and his wife Ann bought the whole country, forty-three named tracts, totalling 17,400 acres, on the waters of the Blacklick and the Connemaugh, nearly 250 miles west of Philadelphia and about 80 miles from Pittsburgh.<sup>63</sup> That autumn, the first party moved on to the land.

We know that this settlement, Cambria, ultimately succeeded, but that the town, Beula, failed and disappeared, to be replaced by Ebensburg, a bare 3 miles away, which flourishes today as the capital of Cambria county. But we are far too quick to assume that Beula was bound to fail. The problem of such a settlement as this could best be expressed by an equation which took as its elements time, labour and morale. Timing was in fact the essence. This was the secondary frontier; its rolling hills, clothed in dense forest, were, and still are, beautiful. But there was little chance here for that plateau farming and maple production which was to enrich Somerset county to the south. To the north of the settlement, timber was to be the mainstay; to the south, coal and iron. Ironically enough, just a couple of miles west of the Beula site, a populous coal town was later to take its name from Nant-y-Glo.<sup>64</sup> With the main drive thrusting west for Ohio and Kentucky, the 'natural' process of settlement here was slow.

The aim of the founders of such settlements was to create a centre of mixed production;<sup>65</sup> in this hill country, agriculture could be adequate but not much more; hence Morgan Rhees's stress, in his talks to the Beula Seminary, on sylvan products, on potash, on maple sugar; hence the special encouragement to mechanics and artisans. The ideal was a viable, sufficient service centre which would, in turn, virtually create its own hinterland. As in all such communities, the emphasis was on craftsmen, roads and public services; the remarkable Cambrian Library planned for Beula was to be a vital growth factor. There was nothing inherently mistaken in this thinking; on the contrary, this is precisely how Ebensburg and many another hill-county seat did grow.

<sup>63</sup> The original conveyances are recorded in Deed Book 2, Somerset county.

<sup>64</sup> Launched fairly late in the century; the streets have Welsh names, the inhabitants Slav, though there are still many Welsh families in the area. One Pennsylvania-Dutch (German) farmer told me he steered clear of Ebensburg-Nant-y-Glo because it was a Welsh town; this comment, which appears to me lunatic, should perhaps be recorded.

<sup>65</sup> This section is based on my reading of William Cooper's correspondence with Benjamin Rush about difficulties of a similar nature in upper New York, on Billington's regional analyses and on my own observation of the area. The frontier was a frontier of *commercial* farming.

But everything depended on the first few years and, in the last resort, on morale. Results had to be achieved in short order. Judge Cooper was an old hand at this game. As he told Rush, the main problems were the moral ones presented by 'frightful appearance' and 'the length of the rout'; the only way to solve problems was 'by spiritedly rushing upon them with a number of people . . . we must raise a party by way of breaking the ice.'<sup>66</sup> The proximity of the major routes to the west was an added and serious complication at Beula, but it was this method that Rush and Rhees tried to apply.

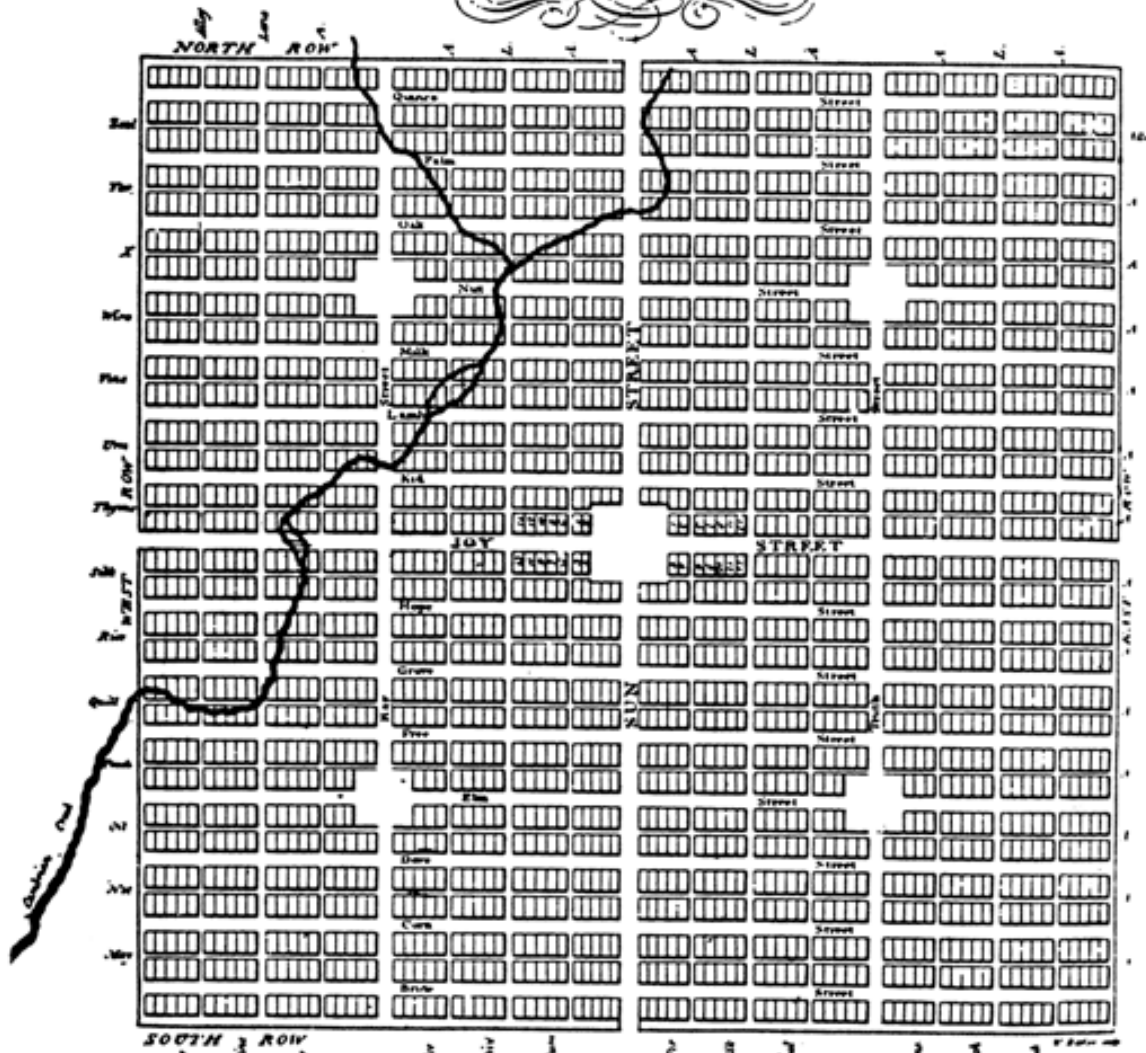
Obviously, they seriously underestimated the difficulty of the land. No native American would tackle it. The weight of timber was very heavy and much of the land turned out to be stony. The settlers were precariously strung out at the end of a 30-mile supply line; concentrated effort was needed for mills and other necessities. In these circumstances, a comparatively minor setback could cause a delay which might prove morally disastrous. Moreover, all other landholders in these areas were similarly placed. There was sharp competition for population, particularly since Pennsylvania law required (in theory at least) that patented land be settled within two years. Little help and much hindrance could be expected from neighbours; settlements like these became enmeshed in fierce local struggles over roads and courthouses and waggon trains. It was easy to succumb to the irrational.

Many such settlements failed or made false starts. There was a certain rhythm to the process. The first serious crisis came almost at once within a year or so, after the first scanty harvest, when back-breaking labour in daunting isolation seemed to have yielded so puny a gain. Those who did not abandon the site at once tended to withdraw from the proposed town and concentrate on the little clearings on their own farms, which made yet more difficult the energising of the settlement. The worst crisis of all often came when the settlement's road was finally opened; this moment, which could mark the take-off for a community, could also mark its collapse.

Beula, indeed, followed this familiar and dismal pattern. Worse, to sustain itself, its men had to take work on the major roads not too

<sup>66</sup> William Cooper - Benjamin Rush, 23 March 1790, Benjamin Rush Papers, Vol. 26. Judge Cooper seems to have been a good deal less literate than his son Fenimore's buckskin heroes.

PLAN of  
Beula  
PENNSYLVANIA.



*Situates at the shortest passage between the Eastern & Western waters on the nearest & most level Ridge  
from Philadelphia to Pittsburg avoiding all the mountains except the Alleghany distance from Philad<sup>a</sup>  
255 from Pittsburg 63 Miles. The two center Streets are each 100 feet wide, the others 80 ft. The lanes & ft  
the Alleghy running N. 65. E. 20 ft. & E. 65 W. 15 feet wide*

PLAN OF BEULA, ABOUT 1798  
Courtesy Eric Book Store

far away, with the Conestoga waggons creaking daily westwards towards easier land. The town did not survive these characteristic crises. But the wonder is that a focus remained at all, for it did. That focus could well have served the Welsh settlements gradually thickening around it. Had Beula been chosen as the county seat, there is every reason to believe it would have developed as Ebensburg did; it is difficult to avoid the conclusion, in the last resort, that Beula died because Morgan John Rhees died—three months before the choice was to be made.

The venture was launched, however, in fine style. One cannot tell when Rhees and Rush became friends; the first surviving correspondence dates from 1797, when their relationship was already close. Morgan John named a son for the doctor.<sup>67</sup> Neither can one penetrate to the reality which lies behind the formal deeds and bonds. The forty-three 400-acre tracts were transferred to Rhees for £9,450 and were promptly mortgaged for that amount. Some 600 acres were reserved to Rush, 400 for the town site and 200 for Rhees's cherished *Christian Church*, which was to be a focal centre served by the lesser denominations. In March 1798, Rush conveyed six more tracts on Blacklick to Rhees for \$3,748, under mortgage, while Rhees restored to Rush three of the original tracts on Connemaugh for \$1,781. On 1 April 1798, Rush quit-claimed to Rhees his 600 reserved acres, for by this time the town plan was complete.<sup>68</sup>

The town, patented by Morgan and Ann Rhees on 2 November 1797, as the first titles to town lots were being issued, was formally registered at the court of Somerset county on 18 September 1798.<sup>69</sup> It was ambitious. Beula was laid out on the side of a hill, straddling one of the creek systems which constituted the Blacklick. It was to be a mile square. Two major roads—Sun and Joy—quartered it; two other major roads ran north-south—Truth and Ray. It was to be a gridiron town, with five major plazas, in the Philadelphia style. Roads and alleys took their names from useful and beautiful objects, creatures and qualities, rather in the manner of the French

<sup>67</sup> The Rhees - Rush correspondence may be found in Benjamin Rush Papers, Vol. 14. The Butterfield project of a union catalogue of Rush MSS. did not materialize; there must be many Rhees letters still to be found.

<sup>68</sup> All these deeds, town plans, etc., may be found in Deed Books 1-3 of Somerset county; the books are well indexed.

<sup>69</sup> The original town plan filed at Somerset is in a ruinous state. Unspoiled copies of the Beula plan exist; one was used to illustrate the collection of George Roberts's letters published by Professor A. H. Dodd, 'Letters from Cambria County, 1800-1823', *Pennsylvania History*, XXII (1955).

calendar. Quince, Palm, Oak, Lamb and Kid co-existed with Zeal, Hope, Free and, perhaps less easily, with Oil, Wire and Quill. All who purchased one of the major tracts were guaranteed four town lots totalling an acre; so were professional men and mechanics who built a house with a stone or brick chimney (*Pompey* had a stock of 40,000 bricks by 1800)<sup>70</sup> and became resident before 1 October 1797. A town lot measured 58 feet by 125 feet, and 500 were offered for straight sale at \$10 (by 1799, improved lots of this type were fetching \$50–70). Apart from the 200 acres reserved for the church, some 395 acres were to be set aside for court buildings, a school, library and a seminary. Moreover, payment for lots could be made in ‘valuable books’.

This characteristic provision mirrored Morgan John’s intense pre-occupation with the need to plant a major library in the wilderness. He enlisted the aid of Baptist and liberal friends.<sup>71</sup> While the settlers were mostly Welsh, the high command of Beula included Thomas W. Ustick, kinsman of the pastor of Philadelphia First Baptist (another kinsman, Stephen Ustick, did most of the printing), Dr. Ebenezer Hickling, an apothecary from London who had adopted the Universalist doctrines of Elkanan Winchester, and Mr. Joseph J. Moore, a gentleman who was to pen a famous *Beula Lament* on the death of Washington. Many other ‘friends of civil and religious liberty’ were canvassed. On 7 May 1798, Rhees got a charter establishing Beula Seminary through the Pennsylvania Assembly, and on 24 September allocated no fewer than 350 town lots to its maintenance. For several years he delivered annual ‘keynote’ orations at the school.

A small notebook, which passed to George Roberts, is all that now remains of the seminary and its library. It records the books bought for or given to the library. The list is incomplete; it does not include the Rush donations. Rhees supplied a substantial number of books himself, bought others from William Griffiths and the celebrated Philadelphia publishers, Mathew Carey and Thomas Bradford; there were gifts from about a score of well-wishers in Philadelphia and New York, including Dr. William Rogers, Rev. Thomas Ustick and the British *Jacobin* refugees, Joseph Gales of Sheffield and William Young Birch of Manchester.

<sup>70</sup> M. J. Rhees – B. Rush, 17 September 1801, Benjamin Rush Papers.

<sup>71</sup> There are numerous references to the Library in the Deed Books of Somerset county and the correspondence of the men involved, but the major source is a little soft-covered Library notebook kept by M. J. Rhees, which passed to George Roberts and is now in the Cambria County Historical Society.

As might be expected, the books were a mixed bag. There was an apparently inexhaustible supply of Biblical commentaries and moral homilies—*Zimmerman on Solitude* and *Dodd on Death* seem to have been popular. But there were substantial shelves of serious scientific works, practical treatises, many encyclopaedias; politics, poetry and the classics (both in translation and in Greek and Latin) were well represented. Most of the major thinkers then popular were available and there were multiple copies of Voltaire, Locke, Mably, Delolme, Brissot, Godwin, Paley, Grotius and Jefferson's *Virginia*. Not many seem to have been directly relevant to Wales and the Welsh. Llywarch Hen was there and Warrington's *Wales*, as well as sundry magazines and testaments, but the only volume in Welsh given a specific title was the tome blazoned, perhaps appropriately, *Halleluia Drachefn*. Altogether, it was surprisingly well-balanced and its size was considerable. There must have been at least 1,500 volumes. Harvard at this date boasted fewer than 14,000 and Beula must have outstripped the back country colleges then in existence.

What one might call the *pays légal* of Cambria developed rapidly.<sup>72</sup> By 1799, Rhees, Thomas W. Jones, the surveyor (who was extremely active laying out the town and running the land office business) and Hickling were all J.P's and associate judges of Somerset county. In the spring of 1798, the settlement was erected into a township, Cambria; a voting station was opened at Miles Phillips's house. John J. Evans, who devoted himself to Beula, opened a tavern, where a Somerset court was once held by adjournment. The county authorised new roads, from Huntingdon to the north and Somerset town to the south, and in 1798, Rhees brought out a short-lived newspaper, the *Western Sky*, edited at Beula and printed at Philadelphia by Conrad, the Missionary Society printer.<sup>73</sup> It was designed to attract settlement and with the benevolent approval of speculators like Henry Drinker and Zaccheus Collins who held land nearby, Rhees and Thomas W. Jones were soon claiming that Beula was about to be ringed by 500 busy and prosperous farmers.<sup>74</sup>

But, beneath this brilliance, the foundations had given way. The first jarring shock came early and was perhaps the worst. The year 1797 was a year of unremitting labour succeeded by a winter of

<sup>72</sup> These appointments, etc., are recorded in the minutes, rolls and docketts of the quarter sessions courts of Somerset county.

<sup>73</sup> No copy of this paper survives.

<sup>74</sup> Beula was widely advertised; for a typical piece, see *Aurora*, 7 July 1797.



unrelieved disaster. Rhees, coming up from Philadelphia in the spring of 1798, was shocked at the sudden collapse of morale. 'The freezing hand of winter', he wrote to Rush, 'like that of death, has chilled and blasted many of our best enterprises. My sawmill and seat are completely gone after spending the best part of last summer in erecting and sinking at least on them \$1,000'. This loss had set back the settlement by a year or more. His brother, overwhelmed by the difficulties of the land, had taken to drink and Dr. Hickling 'has been poorly for some time, his mind is a great deal depressed.' Morgan John was cast down by the apparent failure to make any impression on the landscape. Debts had rocketed, the men's labour had been swallowed up in the useless mill and the road, many were disaffected because of poverty and accidents. Nearby settlements were hostile and the whisky was flowing freely.<sup>75</sup>

Thomas W. Jones worked furiously to restore morale, but the spirit of many never seems to have recovered from this first shock. That the life was tough cannot be doubted. Rees Rees, one of the first men up in 1797, wrote to Rush in 1805: 'I have gone through a great deal of Hardship for some years, but it is something better now. I went the first year to the next settlement past of us called Frankstown and carried 30 bushels of grain that year on my back, which is the distance of 20 miles, sometimes I was obliged to go 4 or 5 miles further. I carried all the grain I used so far the first year, I feel the effects to that in my limbs to this day'. He had also lost much time from his plot, 'working out' to procure money for grain and victuals and iron.<sup>76</sup>

The essential need was to preserve faith that it would be 'something better' in a reasonable time. Even in 1798, Rhees could report a tolerable grain crop and plenty of vegetables. By 1801, George Roberts, who had cleared some eight to ten of his fifty acres a couple of miles east of the town site, in which he held two lots, had a dozen cattle and four pigs and could write to Llanbryn-mair, 'I have hardly a trace of the fear of poverty that dogged me for some years in Wales to a sinful extent'.<sup>77</sup> Others were less lucky. 'I have through great difficulty partly cleared and improved about 12 acres of land', said William Griffith to Rush as late as 1804, 'although the weight of timber is inexpressible yet the stones that is in every part of it disheartens me more'. The land was too poor

<sup>75</sup> M. J. Rhees - B. Rush, 26 July 1798, Benjamin Rush Papers.

<sup>76</sup> Rees Rees - B. Rush, 23 January 1805, Benjamin Rush Papers.

<sup>77</sup> See G. Roberts - his parents, 13 October 1801, in A. H. Dodd, *op. cit.*

for wheat or corn; hard put to feed his family, he had let his fences go to ruin; he had given up trying to keep hogs; the work and the vegetable diet had unfitted him for labour and he could not look at the land for thinking of what he still had to pay for it.<sup>78</sup>

Particularly serious was the failure of the mills. For whatever reason, ineptitude, lack of skill or sheer accident, they failed one after the other. By 1800, Rhees was complaining, 'This day we raise the *third* sawmill the expence of which will fall very little short of a thousand dollars, in addition to the \$2,000 spent in vain'.<sup>79</sup> The whole enterprise remained precarious until Thomas Phillips got his gristmill going on nearby Connemaugh and William Tibbott opened mills to the east.<sup>80</sup> Many of the men took work as waggoners and teamsters on the road to get necessities, and the Phillipses indeed started a waggon service to Philadelphia. Though there was some inflow into the settlement during 1799, the opening of the first major Beula road that year proved decisive. In a matter of months, Rhees was writing gloomily to Rush: 'Settlers, chagrined with disappointments, are quitting our settlement in different directions'.<sup>81</sup>

Worst of all, the atmosphere had become poisonous; frustration bred malice and recrimination. 'It has been the study and glory of some mischief makers among us to drive every newcomer away', wrote Rhees in June 1800; 'I have threatened to take legal measures'. By this time, his relations with Hickling and Moore had reached breaking point. 'Mrs. Phillips has followed her husband down the country', he reported the next month, 'and we all hope she never will return to live here.' It is not possible now, of course, to get at the cause or occasion of these quarrels. One suspects that the community had become claustrophobic; but such hatreds could be terrible in their immediacy and resentment could fester permanently. Evidently many of those in despair had turned on Rhees; he speaks in 1801 of 'the torrent of opposition and slanderous reproach which has been poured on my head'. For the first time, too, there are references in his letters to Rush to enemies anxious to prevent the population of that part of the country, who were exploiting the divisions in the settlement. In the summer of 1800 came the first breakaway, when Moore led a group north on

<sup>78</sup> W. Griffith - B. Rush, 2 December 1804, Benjamin Rush Papers.

<sup>79</sup> M. J. Rhees - B. Rush, 21 July 1800, Benjamin Rush Papers.

<sup>80</sup> Will of William Tibbott, 16 February, 1822, Will Book 1, Cambria county; William Harvey Jones, *op. cit.*

<sup>81</sup> M. J. Rhees - B. Rush, 4 June 1800, Benjamin Rush Papers.

a mysterious 'Clearfield expedition'; its failure turned him into an unremitting enemy.<sup>82</sup> Small wonder that Morgan John's address to the Beula Seminary and Beula Society of Rural Arts in September 1800 was distinctly defensive.<sup>83</sup>

In that year, he finally yielded to the urgings of Pennsylvania's Jeffersonian governor and accepted the post of Prothonotary and clerk of courts of Somerset county, 'Debt! debt!', he cried to Rush, 'Cure me once of this malady, doctor, and I promise never to be afflicted with it again. Money! Money! if the love of it is the root of all evil, the want of it to a man of business is the *great devil* . . . were it not for the office, which I refused twice, I should soon run ashore without bread for my family. The ways of God which are equally mysterious in the wilderness as in the ocean are not known till often travelled and even then, like the Hebrew alphabet, must always be read backwards'.<sup>84</sup>

It is not possible to identify the enemies who were trying to wreck Cambria, but the struggle was certainly intense. Rhees took up residence in Somerset town in 1801 and made an efficient clerk, but much of his time was spent at the state capital warding off threats to Beula. County-creation was promised western Pennsylvania on a massive scale and the question was crucial to Beula's future. In 1801, indeed, Rhees and Thomas W. Jones got their friends in the Assembly at Lancaster to stifle a bill which threatened the settlement. From the summer of 1800 on, Morgan Rhees was pressing an Association on the landholders of the area; he seems to have envisaged a cartel, financed by a levy, which would employ Thomas Jones as a kind of field manager and develop the whole area with Beula as focus, rather in the style of the Holland Company in New York state. Nothing came of the plan except angry quarrels, but about this time, both Jones and Simon James began to make careers for themselves as land agents to the great Philadelphia merchants.<sup>85</sup>

The year 1800 was crucial; a new tide of immigrants came flooding into the eastern ports while the new land law passed Congress. Rhees talked Rush into making generous offers of 50-acre donation

<sup>82</sup> M. J. Rhees - B. Rush, 4 June, 21 July 1800, 10 May 1801; Benjamin Rush Papers.

<sup>83</sup> The address, 22 September 1800, is in the Gratz Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, along with one of his charges to the Somerset Grand Jury.

<sup>84</sup> M. J. Rhees - B. Rush, 17 September 1801, Benjamin Rush Papers; his name is very prominent in the records of Somerset county, 1800-4; he had a clerk, James Sullivan, to whom, apparently, he would preach, in default of a Baptist congregation (one was formed in 1812, it is said, by people who recalled Rhees).

<sup>85</sup> See M. J. Rhees - B. Rush, 7 February 1801-14 December 1802, Benjamin Rush Papers; Zaccheus Collins Letter-Book, 1801-4; Zaccheus Collins Papers and Henry Drinker Letter-Books, 1796-1800, 1800-2; Drinker Papers, all in Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

lands to any who would seriously undertake settlement; without doubt, this caught many minds and there was an influx of new strength into Cambria. At the federal census of 1800, there were 88 heads of families and 445 souls in the settlements. Some were German and more Irish, but fifty families were Welsh. It is not possible to say how many of these lived in Beula itself, but George Washington Loxley, Morgan John's brother-in-law, moved in about this time.<sup>86</sup>

On the other hand, the new land law threw open Ohio and drove Beula into another paroxysm. By May 1801, Morgan John was again at his wits' end: 'Something must be done or our settlements are undone. My health is impaired and every feeling of soul harassed by a perverse and crooked generation. Several of our settlers returned towards Philadelphia, others are going to the westward. A Mr. Lloyd one of our ministers is now travelling in quest of a better country . . . since our road has been opened and the travellers become numerous, himself and others have been seised with a kind of mania for migrating to some paradise where they may live without work'.<sup>87</sup>

This is the first appearance of Rees Lloyd as dissident and it was more serious than Rhees indicated, for it marked the first organized Welsh secession from Cambria. Lloyd held four lots within Beula but he had just lost his little girl, Rachel, who died of exposure in the forests, and he was being pressed for help by new arrivals in Philadelphia. He found himself unable to recommend Cambria—'it is too hard for poor people make a living upon this land on the account of its heavy clearing and slow producings. It require a great deal of money and a strong team and to buy their provisions the twice and thrice first years . . . I cannot with a clear conscience to encourage my poor countrymen to depend much on this place'. On 23 March 1801, he informed Samuel Jones that he and many of the Welsh had formed a new society. All were to have equal rights; all denominations were to live in company if they wished; all were to pledge two days' labour a month on behalf of those who went to look for land . . . 'there is some report lately', said Lloyd hopefully, 'that there shall be a vast deal of land this summer for the settling of it'.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>86</sup> See Census Return, Cambria township, Somerset county, 1800; advertisements from 1800-02 included in Benjamin Rush Papers, Vol. 14; Kate Standish, 'The Racial Origins of the Early Settlers of Cambria County, Pennsylvania' (typescript A. M. Thesis, University of Pittsburgh, 1934) is an attempt to analyze the composition of the settlements. Taxation, census, testamentary and other evidence is quite substantial and a thorough analysis of Cambria settlement is in course of preparation.

<sup>87</sup> M. J. Rhees - B. Rush, 10 May 1801, Benjamin Rush Papers.

<sup>88</sup> Rees Lloyd - Samuel Jones, n.d. and 23 March 1801, Pennepek papers.

This signaled the breakdown of the Beula project as Morgan Rhee had conceived it. The basic cause was evidently the brute reality of a difficult settlement, but the stress on the integrity of the denomination leads one to wonder whether there were other points of friction. When Rees Lloyd finally quit the area for Paddy's Run in 1817, he gave its land to the First Congregational Church of Ebensburg. But his terms were interesting. The Independents at Ebensburg were bound to the strictest orthodoxy: the Divinity of Christ, the Atonement and the absolute necessity of the effectual work of the Holy Ghost in the conversion of sinners. If the majority deserted this creed, the church was to pass to the minority; if the whole community deserted it, the church was forfeit and was to pass to the nearest congregation of English Presbyterians.<sup>89</sup>

This remarkable document seems to have been characteristic. It was Rees Lloyd who formed the Independent Church as early as April 1797, from twelve Independents, eleven Methodists and a new member; his decision seems to have killed Rhee's *Christian Church*, for the Baptists at once drew off to a church of their own in the north-east corner of Beula.<sup>90</sup> Lloyd wrote a book in 1811—the *Richmond Alarm*—which described a fire which consumed a playhouse in Richmond, and drew the appropriate moral.<sup>91</sup> George Roberts and William Tibbott, who served as co-pastors, seem to have been men of similar temper. Roberts, made a judge in 1807, took great pains to enforce 'moral' legislation, however obsolete, inflicting fines on those (generally Irish drovers) who worked on a Sunday and who swore on any day, and carefully noting the facts in Morgan Rhee's little Library notebook. Their cause, in truth, was to lose the next generation wholesale (John Lloyd and Festus Tibbott among them) to the Campbellites, whose church, in final irony, stands to this day, in permanent rebuke to Baptists and Independents alike, as the First *Christian Church* of Ebensburg.

There is no need to point out that there was little of this spirit about Morgan John Rhee; his *Christian Church* may have grated on some sensibilities. Moreover, many of the men closely associated with him refused to take an oath in court; they affirmed. Prominent among these was Thomas Watkin Jones. In 1799 he, together with Hickling and Moore, formed a Freemasons' lodge in Beula and

<sup>89</sup> Deed, 21 November 1817, Deed Book 1, Cambria county.

<sup>90</sup> See the centennial history of First Congregational cited earlier and David Benedict, *A general history of the Baptist denomination in America* (Boston, 1813), I, 600 ff.

<sup>91</sup> See George Roberts's account, cited above.

on 21 October, out of 'the good opinion and respect' which he held for the Masons and 'for the furtherance of their views', Morgan John Rhees gave the lodge two lots in Lamb Street.<sup>92</sup> It comes as no surprise to learn that when a son was born to Thomas Watkin Jones, the young man called him Voltaire—Voltaire Goldsmith Jones, no less.<sup>93</sup>

Too much should not be made of this—George Roberts was pleasantly surprised by the good relations between Independents and Baptists in Cambria—but there does seem to have been some difference in temperament. Oddly enough, however, Rees Lloyd took no part in the major exodus of 1801. In the summer of that year, Simon James and John Rees joined David Jones, the Great Valley pastor who had bickered with Morgan Rhees in 1795, and went deep into Ohio. There, on behalf of Theophilus Rees, Thomas Phillips and many others, they bought the whole north-east corner of what became Granville township. The following year, led by the Indian scout, Jimmie Johnson, and moving through Wheeling and the newly-opened Zane's Trace, a party moved to Granville to begin a settlement. About the same time, James Nicholas took a group to the Miami area on the Ohio. Within a few years, Beula had peopled the Ohio settlements and was to serve, henceforth, largely as a staging post on the route there.<sup>94</sup>

At this point, Morgan John decided to cut his losses. In 1802, in a complicated series of transfers and exchanges, he restored to Benjamin Rush all the lands of the original grant which lay outside Beula proper; Watkin Jones and John J. Evans acquired substantial properties and all mortgages were declared cleared. Rush granted several of the tracts to the Philadelphia Anti-Slavery Society, and in 1805 handed over the remainder to his son Richard. Beula still existed, but by 1803, there seem to have been only nine families actually in residence.<sup>95</sup>

In March 1804, however, Pennsylvania created Cambria county, with the Welsh settlement the central inhabited area; within a year, a county seat was to be chosen, no more than 7 miles from the

<sup>92</sup> Deed recorded 18 December 1799, in Deed Book 1, Somerset county.

<sup>93</sup> See testament of T. W. Jones, 30 May 1807, Will Book 1, Cambria county; this only son seems to have suppressed his name and taken his father's—at least, on a sentimental pilgrimage to the Beula ruins in 1871, he was called Thomas W. Jones, junior (*Cambrian Freeman*, 10 June 1871).

<sup>94</sup> See B. W. Chidlaw and William Harvey Jones, *op. cit.*

<sup>95</sup> Deed Book 3, Somerset county; Deed Book 1, Cambria county; *Cambrian Freeman*, 20 January 1872.

geographical centre of the new jurisdiction.<sup>96</sup> Rhees roused himself for a final effort. He travelled to Washington and got the mail extended through Beula. The faithful John J. Evans became postmaster and made his first report in January 1805.<sup>97</sup> But Morgan John, spent out, could do little else. He seemed to hope that the seminary, with its library, would carry the day and tried to rally Philadelphians to pledge books, if Beula were chosen. In fact, it was the provision of public buildings which concerned the state legislators. Rhees was unable to do anything further in this direction. One would have thought, however, that he had good reason for hope. What one has to say is that the events which followed in the summer of 1804 were quite remarkable and remain, at present, almost inexplicable.<sup>98</sup>

For in August 1804, Rees Lloyd bought, from Benjamin Rush, one of the original tracts—*Mere*—which had been part of Rhees's purchase in 1796 and which he had restored in 1802. On this tract, Lloyd announced the plotting of a new town, which he called Ebensburg, some say in memory of his son who died in the Great Valley, others, in memory of Ebenezer in Pontypool. The first town plan seems to have been an unfinished draft which ended at a dotted line. For, late in 1805, Lloyd, in a complicated transaction with the executors of William Jenkins, bought 100 acres of another tract (again one of Morgan John's originals) and added a chunk of it to the town plot. The plan itself was not patented and filed in court until July 1807. Yet Ebensburg had been chosen as county seat in March 1805. Since the new town stood a bare 3 miles east of Beula, on a rise above it, and since Beula, however shrunken, was in existence, with a post office and a road and a library, one can only add that it was as well for Morgan John Rhees that he died suddenly on 7 December 1804.

Lloyd won, it seems, by pledging a whole slate of town lots to the support of public buildings, the courthouse and the jail. He also pledged town lots, totalling a third of the town's area, to Nathaniel W. Sample, a minister from Lancaster county who was an assemblyman and apparently an influential one. According to the

<sup>96</sup> See H. Wilson Storey, *History of Cambria County*, 3 vols. (New York, 1907); W. H. Koontz (ed.), *History of Bedford and Somerset Counties* (New York, 1906), and W. H. Egle, *History of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1883) for the story.

<sup>97</sup> M. J. Rhees - B. Rush, 21 March 1804, Benjamin Rush Papers; an official statement from the Postmaster-General of 1936 about the Beula post office (which was shut down in 1807) is available at Cambria County Historical Society.

<sup>98</sup> All the conveyances, deeds, bonds, etc., which follow are recorded in Deed Book 3, Somerset county, and Deed Book 1, Cambria county.

historian Walkinshaw, the choice of Ebensburg was ultimately carried by only two votes.<sup>99</sup> Sample entered into his inheritance and, by skilfully driven alleys, doubled it ('A fine performance by a Christian minister', wrote one former Beula resident, still irate in 1873).<sup>100</sup> Lloyd also conveyed properties to Alexander Ogle, one of the new county commissioners. His town was a much smaller and simpler affair than Beula; his street names differed, too. He named one street after himself; others after Sample, Ogle and Horner, who was a second commissioner (but not after John J. Evans of Beula, the third commissioner). One street he named after his daughter, Fanny, whose name, fortunately for the future dignity of the county seat, he spelt Phany (it has gently mutated into Phaney). To achieve his end, Rees Lloyd mortgaged himself and he did not pay off the mortgage until 1818; much has been made of his generosity, with justice. It should also be noted that the county sold or leased back to him a large proportion of the property he had given it.<sup>101</sup> When all is said, one cannot help feeling that Beula died, not with a bang but with a whimper.<sup>102</sup>

For die it now did. The siting of the seat of justice at Ebensburg proved decisive. Some houses were literally moved up the hill from Beula into the new town. Beula church itself ultimately moved into town, though there were burials in the old churchyard as late as the 1870s. The little site was soon noted for its ruins; as the very stones crumbled, it became the 'ghost village'. Perhaps it can be said finally to have expired when Thomas Watkin Jones died in 1808, at the age of 36; at the very latest when John J. Evans went in 1829. No house was built after 1804. Much of the land ultimately passed to one man, Griffith Lloyd, who in the 1840s was the first to report the Beula ghost.<sup>103</sup>

Morgan John Rhees saw nothing of this. As late as 22 November 1804, he was buying property from his friend, Otho Shrader, a prominent member of the Somerset Pennsylvania-Dutch community, but, early in December, he was taken seriously ill. On

<sup>99</sup> L. C. Walkinshaw, *Annals of South-Western Pennsylvania* (New York, 1939), II, 315-30.

<sup>100</sup> *Cambria Freeman*, 5 September 1873.

<sup>101</sup> Commissioners' Minute Book I and Deed Book I, Cambria county.

<sup>102</sup> Striking confirmation of the sudden, *ad hoc* character of Ebensburg's creation is provided by the *Small and Elegant Atlas*, published in 1804 by the celebrated Aaron Arrowsmith and Samuel Lewis. This map is unique in that it shows Beula without Ebensburg. Beula was still then part of Somerset county, as is shown, but there is no trace of Ebensburg. The map, published in 1804, was probably prepared in 1803.

<sup>103</sup> The literature on the 'ghost village' is substantial; there are even novels based upon it. On the first ghost, see N. B. Wolfe, *Startling facts in modern Spiritualism* (Chicago, 1875), pp. 5-16. The modern ghost is a weeping female in white who tends to linger on Nant-y-Glo railway bridge; she was reported again by three different persons the night after I visited the Beula graveyard; as a Welshman, I found this both proper and reassuring.



3 December he made his will. His property in Somerset was valued at \$729, in Beula at \$169. His books went for \$334 and though his executor, Thomas Watkin Jones, sold the Somerset lands for \$700, he was left in the red. Morgan John Rhees finally gave up on 7 December 1804 and was taken back to Philadelphia to lie among all the Loxleys.<sup>104</sup>

His name was made illustrious by children and descendants,<sup>105</sup> but his own life, to the end, was incomplete, an essay in frustration. The tragi-comic ending of Beula was poor recompense for all the labour and the hope that he and so many others invested in that sad square mile. In Ebensburg, a Tibbott and a Griffiths and an Edwards still stand sentinel over the hilltop crossroads,<sup>106</sup> but down in Beula, above the lonely marker, there is just a handful of gravestones, Watkin Jones's staring stonily at the minister's recumbent among leaning heads, facing down to the creek and the west where so many of the others went. So much backbreak and heartbreak, so much malice and anger and despair, to make a comfortable settlement for the poor Welsh people, and most of them carried far away in the end, as if by some giant shrug of a westering ocean.

GWYN A. WILLIAMS.

York.

<sup>104</sup> The testament of Morgan John Rhees, with an inventory of his goods and an account by his executor, is in the office of the Register of Wills, Somerset county. His grave proved difficult to find. In 1860 the First Baptist dead were transferred to a new cemetery, Mount Moriah, in what is today west Philadelphia; its records are in a parlous state and officers of the burial ground did not even know that the First Baptist dead were with them. The plot and Morgan John's grave were ultimately found by quartering the cemetery and searching it; it lies in plot 112 across Cobb's Creek.

<sup>105</sup> Among them the physician, Benjamin Rush Rhees, William Jones Rhees, first clerk of the Smithsonian and the college presidents, Rush Rhees and Nicholas Murray Butler. Also Rush Rhees, former Senior Lecturer in Philosophy, University College of Swansea.

<sup>106</sup> Mr. Harvey Tibbott, who was kind enough to give me an interview, was a Congressman for the district and, a noted singer, led the hymn *Beula* at the dedication of the Historical Society memorial stone in May 1936. This stone, like so much else, is now threatened by an encroaching automobile dump.