

Learning Activity Key Stage 3

This resource provides learning activities for your students using People's Collection Wales. It is one of a series of nine relating to Patagonia for KS3.

Establishment of the Welsh Settlement in Patagonia

The Voyage of the Mimosa, 1865

The Native Patagonians and the Welsh Settlers

Early days in Patagonia

'Crossing the Patagonian plains': from the Camwy Valley to Cwm Hyfryd

Dark times – Floods and Emigration

Early Schools in the Welsh Settlement - Patagonia

History of the Welsh Language in Patagonia

Chapels and Churches in Patagonia



The establishment of the Welsh Settlement in Patagonia



By Culturenet Cymru

Introduction

The aim of the supporters of the Welsh Settlement is not to promote emigration, but to regulate it. The Reverend Michael D. Jones, c.1860

Tasks and learning objectives

- 1 Life in nineteenth century Wales
- 2 Landowners in Wales
- 3 Religious and cultural ideals
- 4 Camwy Valley
- 5 Society Today

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The Establishment of the Welsh Settlement in Patagonia

The establishment of the Welsh Settlement in Patagonia

'The aim of the supporters of the Welsh Settlement is not to promote emigration, but to regulate it.' The Reverend Michael D. Jones, c.1860

The idea of establishing a specifically 'Welsh' community in another part of the world emerged long before the mid-nineteenth century. As early as the 1610s, William Vaughan (1577-1641) sought to establish a Welsh community called 'Cambriol' in Newfoundland and, over the following two centuries, several individuals had similar aspirations. These included John Miles (1621-83), William Jones of Llangadfan (1726-95) and Morgan John Rhys (1760-1804), but none of them succeeded in establishing a sustainable Welsh community outside Wales. Nevertheless, by the 1840s, the notion of establishing a Welsh settlement became more widely discussed as emigration from Wales reached unprecedented levels and long-established Welsh communities in the United States became aware of the gradual disappearance of their national characteristics.



The Rev. Michael D. Jones (1822-98), c. 1890

Among those who voiced their support for the establishment of a Welsh settlement in the late 1840s was the Rev. Michael D. Jones. Originally from Llanuwchllyn, near Bala, he studied at Carmarthen and London, before travelling to North America in 1848. During the eighteen months that he spent in the United States, Jones observed the powerful influence of American society on the language, religion and customs of Welsh emigrants. The solution, he claimed, would be the establishment of a Welsh settlement, a place where the national characteristics of the emigrants could flourish unhindered.

During the 1850s, attempts were made to form Welsh communities in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, and in Tennessee in the United States, but without any long-term success. The beginnings of the Patagonian venture may be traced to 1856, when a society was formed in Camptonville, California, with the aim of promoting the establishment of a Welsh settlement. At the society's inaugural meeting, Patagonia was suggested for the first time as a possible location for a Welsh settlement. A circular letter was sent to Welsh newspapers to appeal for support in Wales, and Michael D. Jones responded by organising a public meeting in Bala. The meeting, held at the Calvinistic Methodist College in August 1856, resulted in the formation of a similar society in Bala. Other societies were formed in Wales over the following months, the most active being the Caernarfon society.

The Establishment of the Welsh Settlement in Patagonia

Between 1856 and 1859, the movement to establish a Welsh settlement gathered momentum in the United States. It was during this period that Edwin Cynrig Roberts, a native of Flintshire whose family had emigrated to Wisconsin in 1847, emerged as one of the chief promoters of the campaign. In 1859, it was arranged for a group of Welsh-Americans to travel to Patagonia, but the plan did not come to fruition. Upon realizing this, Roberts had considered emigrating to Patagonia on his own, but he was persuaded at the last moment to travel to Wales in search of others who shared his views.

Having arrived in Liverpool, Edwin Roberts contacted Michael D. Jones, who suggested that he travelled throughout Wales to promote the Welsh Settlement. Roberts also came into contact with a group of individuals who had been gathering frequently in Liverpool to discuss the proposed settlement. Among its members were Hugh Hughes (Cadfan Gwynedd) and Lewis Jones, both of whom were former-members of the society at Caernarfon. In July 1861, this group organised themselves as a society, and Liverpool soon became the focal point of the movement to establish a Welsh settlement.

The Liverpool Emigration Society expressed its desire to establish a Welsh Settlement in Patagonia to the Argentine consul in Liverpool, Samuel R. Phibbs. His advice was that a board of trustees should be formed to act as a link between the Society and the Argentine government. Five trustees were appointed to the board, and they included Michael D. Jones and Captain Love Jones-Parry of Madryn. The Society was also restructured as a 'National Committee', which included representatives from several parts of Wales. By the end of 1862, the Committee had published a handbook, entitled 'Llawlyfr y Wladychfa Gymreig', and a fortnightly journal, 'Y Ddraig Goch' (The Red Dragon), to further its aims.



Map of Patagonia from 'Llawlyfr y Wladychfa Gymreig' (1862)

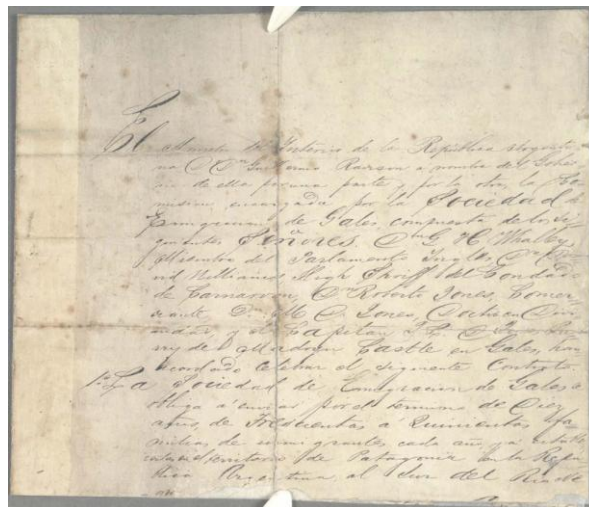
In response to its application for land in Patagonia, the Liverpool Committee received an invitation from the Argentine government to send representatives to Buenos Aires. In November 1862, Lewis Jones travelled to Buenos Aires on behalf of the Society, and he was later joined by Captain Love Jones-Parry of Madryn.

The Establishment of the Welsh Settlement in Patagonia

After several meetings with government officials in Buenos Aires, Jones and Love Jones-Parry sailed to the port of Patagones before embarking on a voyage along the coast of Patagonia to the mouth of the Chupat River. Both kept detailed notes of their expedition, and having surveyed the land for about a week, they returned to Buenos Aires to finalise the agreement with the Argentine government on 25 March 1863.



The representatives of the Emigration Committee had made significant compromises in order to secure this agreement with the Argentine government. The Argentine government had not responded positively to their request for independence, and had insisted that the new Welsh settlement should remain under the authority of Buenos Aires and that it should be officially recognised as an Argentine province once its population reached 20,000. Nevertheless, the Committee remained convinced that Patagonia was the best location for the settlement and therefore accepted the terms of the agreement.



Copy of the agreement offering land in Patagonia to Welsh immigrants, 25 March 1863 [page 1 of 3]

The Establishment of the Welsh Settlement in Patagonia

However, in September 1863, the Committee was informed that the Argentine Congress had refused to ratify their agreement with the Government. With the movement on the verge of collapse, the Committee decided to make a request for land in the Chupat Valley on the same terms as ordinary immigrants, and Samuel Phibbs was sent to Buenos Aires to negotiate a new agreement. In October 1864, the Committee received a letter from the Argentine Minister of the Interior, Guillermo Rawson. Land in the Chupat Valley in Patagonia was offered to Welsh settlers under the same terms as were offered to all immigrants: 25 cuadras (about 100 acres) would be given to each family and they would receive their deeds within two years. Having waited so long for a positive reply, the members of the Liverpool Committee voted unanimously in favour of accepting the Argentine government's terms.

Having secured an agreement for land, the Liverpool Society stepped up its efforts to find people to pioneer the Welsh Settlement. In the press and at public meetings throughout Wales, potential emigrants were given favourable reports and promises of new opportunities in Patagonia. Although the organizers of the venture had difficulties in finding settlers to make the voyage to Patagonia, plans were made to set sail from Liverpool on 25 April 1865 on a 700 tonne ship called 'Halton Castle'. In March, Edwin Roberts and Lewis Jones (accompanied by Jones's wife, Ellen) set off for Patagonia in order to make preparations for the arrival of the first group of settlers.

As the emigrants gathered in Liverpool in April 1865, the Committee was informed that the 'Halton Castle' had not returned from its previous voyage and that it would not be ready in time. Frantic efforts were made to find another ship to make the voyage to Patagonia.

Finally, on 28 May 1865, the pioneers of the Welsh settlement departed from Liverpool aboard a teaclipper called 'Mimosa'. The group consisted of about 150 passengers, almost a third of whom were children. After a long and difficult voyage, the settlers set foot on Patagonian soil on 28 July 1865. They remained in New Bay for a few weeks before travelling another thirty miles to the Chupat Valley, the place that was to become their new home.

Sources:

R. Bryn Williams, *Y Wladfa* (Caerdydd, 1962)

E. MacDonald, *Yr Hirdaith* (Llandysul, 1999)

The Establishment of the Welsh Settlement in Patagonia

Task 1. Life in nineteenth century Wales

Research into the social situation in Wales at the end of the nineteenth century, looking at the experiences of men, women and children.

Task 2. Landowners in Wales

Why was Michael D. Jones opposed to the landowners in Wales?

Task 3. Religious and Cultural Ideas

What cultural and religious ideas would have been important to Michael D. Jones?

Complete the worksheet 'Michael D Jones's Religious and Cultural Ideas'

Task 4. Camwy Valley

What have been promised to the emigrants on their arrival in Patagonia?

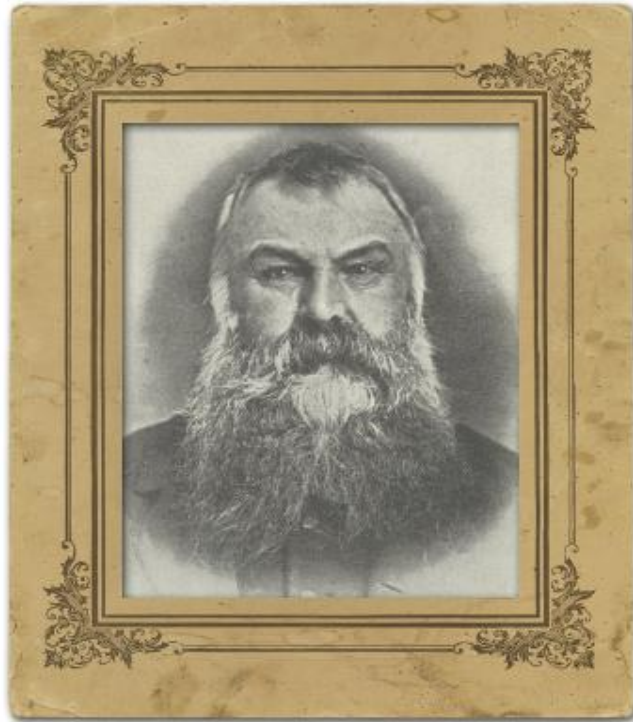
Complete the worksheet 'Camwy Valley'

Task 5. Society Today

In your opinion, what ideals are important to our society?

Complete the worksheet 'Society'

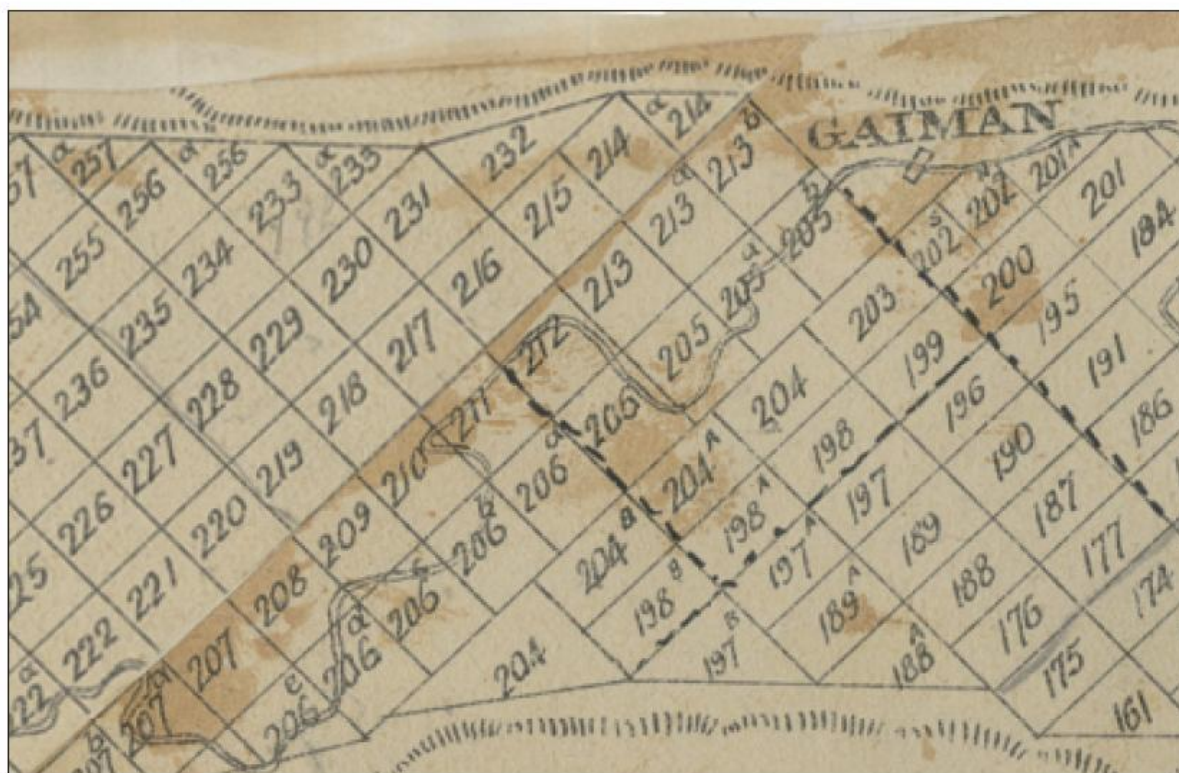
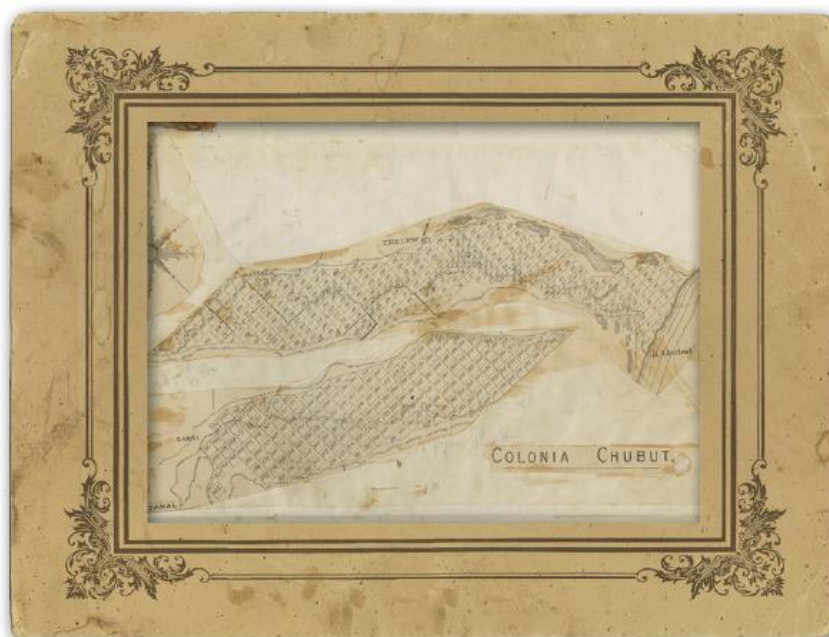
Michael D. Jones's Religious and Cultural Ideals



religious

cultural

Camwy Valley



Society

