2024

"Many Fabulous Stories and Idle Tales": The Intersection of Elizabethan Political Gambits and Indigenous Erasure in the Early American Republic

Daniel Ryan Lewis
University of Kentucky, lemminglou@gmail.com
Author ORCID Identifier:
https://orcid.org/0009-0003-8109-2006
Digital Object Identifier: https://doi.org/10.13023/etd.2024.161

STUDENT AGREEMENT:

I represent that my thesis or dissertation and abstract are my original work. Proper attribution has been given to all outside sources. I understand that I am solely responsible for obtaining any needed copyright permissions. I have obtained needed written permission statement(s) from the owner(s) of each third-party copyrighted matter to be included in my work, allowing electronic distribution (if such use is not permitted by the fair use doctrine) which will be submitted to UKnowledge as Additional File.

I hereby grant to The University of Kentucky and its agents the irrevocable, non-exclusive, and royalty-free license to archive and make accessible my work in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter known. I agree that the document mentioned above may be made available immediately for worldwide access unless an embargo applies.

I retain all other ownership rights to the copyright of my work. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of my work. I understand that I am free to register the copyright to my work.

REVIEW, APPROVAL AND ACCEPTANCE

The document mentioned above has been reviewed and accepted by the student's advisor, on behalf of the advisory committee, and by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), on behalf of the program; we verify that this is the final, approved version of the student's thesis including all changes required by the advisory committee. The undersigned agree to abide by the statements above.

Daniel Ryan Lewis, Student

Dr. Vanessa Holden, Major Professor

Dr. Hillary Jones, Director of Graduate Studies

“MANY FABULOUS STORIES AND IDLE TALES”: THE INTERSECTION OF ELIZABETHAN POLITICAL GAMBITS AND INDIGENOUS ERASURE IN THE EARLY AMERICAN REPUBLIC

THESIS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the awarding of a degree of Master of Arts in the
College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Kentucky

By

Daniel Ryan Lewis

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Vanessa Holden, Professor of History

Lexington, Kentucky

[2024]

https://orcid.org/0009-0003-8109-2006

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

"MANY FABULOUS STORIES AND IDLE TALES": THE INTERSECTION OF ELIZABETHAN POLITICAL GAMBITS AND INDIGENOUS ERASURE IN THE EARLY AMERICAN REPUBLIC

Welsh Indian Theory, originating in Elizabethan England, stated that a group of Welsh explorers settled in the Americas in the late 12th century and intermarried with the Indigenous tribes, thereby explaining "advanced cultures" ranging from the Mississippians to the Aztec Empire. This act of erasure became rooted in Kentucky and the surrounding area in the 18th and 19th centuries; a series of prominent individuals from Kentucky in turn contributed to a growing body of false historical narratives that denied Indigenous Americans their cultural identities and connection their ancestral lands in the United States. With a 460-year trail of scholarly debate and conjecture, the Welsh Indian Theory provides a case study of inherent cultural bias in historical research and US-Indigenous relations.

KEYWORDS: Kentucky History, Welsh Indian Theory, Erasure, Indian Removal, Elizabethan Era, Dark and Bloody Ground.

Daniel Ryan Lewis

[04/25/2024]
Date

“MANY FABULOUS STORIES AND IDLE TALES”: THE INTERSECTION OF ELIZABETHAN POLITICAL GAMBITS AND INDIGENOUS ERASURE IN THE EARLY AMERICAN REPUBLIC

By
Daniel Ryan Lewis

Dr. Vanessa Holden
Director of Thesis

Dr. Hilary Jones
Director of Graduate Studies

[04/25/2024]
Date

DEDICATION

To Quinn: I can never thank you enough for the support you have given me and continue to give. Your patience, encouragement, and your willingness to listen to me ramble about random historical events has given me more than I can ever repay. I love you.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis project has been one of numerous difficulties, with a lot of time spent spinning in circles trying to translate thoughts into written words. I could not have crossed this line without the support of numerous people who made direct and indirect contributions to my work. Dr. Vanessa Holden, my advisor, has been a source of advice and encouragement since my time as an undergraduate, and I thank her for her patience as I am very aware of the fact that I can be frustrating to work with at times – I have a million ideas at any given time but have a hard time focusing on just one. Dr. Joseph Clark has often been an informal advisor during my time as a Graduate Student; though we do not share the same field of study, he has been a great source of advice and perspective. Dr. Mark Summers, a member of my thesis committee, has never failed to impress me with his breadth of knowledge, his affable nature, and his willingness to facilitate the studies of all who are fortunate enough to work with him.

Finally, I would like to thank my family for their support and encouragement through the years. To my Mom and Dad, I can't adequately express what you mean to me – you always encouraged my siblings and I to dream big, to work hard, and to not be afraid of failing on the way to success. To my grandparents, I thank the four of you for getting me interested in history and genealogy as a kid, encouraging me to read thick books well above my age level, and for the simple fact that you are who you are. Last but not least, to Quinn, you have been my rock these last few years. Your love and companionship made this possible, and you are the best thing that has happened to me in a long, long time

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER 2. THE WELSH INDIAN THEORY 13

2.1 Origins of the Welsh Indian Theory 15

2.2 In the Court of St. James 21

2.3 Elizabethan Hermeneutics 26

2.4 On Euhemerism 30

CHAPTER 3. THE AMERICAN ADOPTION 33

3.1 A New National Mythology 36

3.2 Second-Hand Sourcing 38

3.3 Kentucky Connections 43

CHAPTER 4. CONCLUSIONS 52

BIBLIOGRAPHY 56

VITA 65

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

"We came here and created a blank slate. We birthed a nation from nothing. I mean, there was nothing here…I mean, yes we have Native Americans but candidly there isn't much Native American culture in American culture." [1]

On April 23rd, 2021, former US Senator (R-Pa.) and presidential candidate Rick Santorum uttered the above quote in front of a crowd of students at a Young America's Foundation conference. Ostensibly, Santorum was there to give a speech on the origins of the United States of America, but in the process of doing so he joined a long list of public figures and private individuals who have contributed to the erasure and delegitimization of Indigenous cultures in North America. This concept is ubiquitous in discussions of America's origins dating to the time of Columbus, with many descriptions of his voyages to the West Indies in the 15th century making heavy usage of terms like "discovery" and "new world" and even the moniker "West Indies" itself.[2]

The erasure and delegitimization of Indigenous societies has taken many forms in the annals of American history, with a Eurocentric conception of land ownership usually at the heart of the matter. Among early generations of Europeans arrivals, it was asserted that they had the right to claim lands in the Americas under *vacuum domicilium*, or "empty domicile" doctrine; one *Mayflower* passenger, Robert Cushman, wrote in 1622 "Our land is full…their land is empty. This then is a sufficient reason to prove our going

---

1 Simon Moya-Smith, "Rick Santorum's 'Native American culture' crack was racist. But here's why he thought it was OK.," *NBC News*, April 27, 2021, https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/rick-santorum-s-native-american-culture-crack-was-racist-here-ncna1265548.

2 Heike Paul, *The Myths That Made America: An Introduction to American Studies* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag: 2014): 43.

thither to live lawful…"[3] These new arrivals seemingly had a preconceived notion of the Americas as having both abundantly available land and a small population that was devoid of rights to said land.

Over a century later as Colonial Americans from the Carolinas such as Daniel Boone and John Finley began to push beyond the Appalachian Mountains into what is today Kentucky, this ideology of an "empty continent" would remerge in the mythology of the "Dark and Bloody Ground." According to this trope, few if any Indigenous Americans made a permanent home Kentucky, instead using it as a hunting ground and a space to conduct war against one another.[4] In John Filson's *The Discovery, Settlement, and present state of Kentucke*, the Bluegrass region was allegedly referred to as "the Middle Ground" by Indians, the implication being that it was an empty no-man's land between two established civilizations.[5]

These conceptions of an empty, uninhabited region of a continent ripe for the taking are usually attributed to one of three factors, namely the difference in Eurocentric and Indigenous concepts of land ownership and management, arbitrary delineations between "prehistoric" and "historic" Indigenous civilizations that severed Indigenous connections to the land, and the financial motives of early land speculators.[6] In the course of

---

[3] Benjamin Madley, "Reexamining the American Genocide Debate: Meaning, Historiography, and New Methods," *The American Historical Review* 120, no. 1 (February 2015): 99.

[4] A. Gwynn Henderson, "Dispelling the Myth: Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Indian Life in Kentucky," *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 90, no. 1 (Bicentennial Issue): 1.

[5] John Filson, *The Discovery, Settlement, And Present State of Kentucke: And An Essay towards the Topography, and Natural History of that important Country* (Wilmington: James Adams Printing, 1784), 8.

[6] Such as Filson himself.

researching this ideology of ownerless-land, I believe that I can make the case for a fourth potential factor: Welsh Indian Theory.

In the course of this thesis, I will examine the effects of a particular political movement that has survived for roughly 460 years beyond its original intended purpose, and in the process was drastically altered and acted upon by generations of adherents. Originating in Elizabethan England, less than a century removed from Gutenberg's printing press, the Welsh Indian Theory states a group of Welsh explorers, led by the pseudo-historical Prince Madoc, settled in the Americas in the late 12th century and intermarried with the Indigenous tribes, thereby explaining the remnants of "advanced precursor cultures" ranging from the Mississippian Mound Builders to the Aztec Empire. Although modern research indicates Sir Humphrey Lhoyd originally created Welsh Indian Theory as a political ploy to give England a claim to the New World superseding the Spanish, that crucial bit of information was lost over centuries of repetition and translation.

With a 460-year trail of debates, 2nd hand accounts, and quixotic expeditions, previous scholars of the "Welsh Indian" Theory have argued back and forth on the archaeological and anthropological evidence in an attempt to prove or disprove it. A common failing of Welsh Indian theorists of the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries is that they produced their works without including the original context. Without a clear understanding of why Elizabethan politicians created Welsh Indian Theory, these writers in the early modern period inadvertently transformed it into a metaphorical weapon of erasure against the Indigenous populations of North America. In the course of this thesis, I will be charting the evolution of the "Welsh Indians" from fringe theory to topic of

scholarly debate and commonly-held ideology in an attempt to show how it provides us with an additional insight as to why generations of Americans held the bias they did against the very real achievements of Indigenous American society and why Americans were so quick to dismiss Indigenous claims to their ancestral lands.

In essence, Welsh Indian Theory as interpreted in the United States suggested a proto-civilization of Indigenous people with European roots were the original, rightful owners of the land; they cultivated it, built fortifications and villages, and worked to improve the land by European standards before disappearing and being replaced by modern Indigenous tribes. In turn, since the 18th and 19th century Indigenous inhabitants of the United States' interior could be portrayed as an invasive force with no historical connection to the land, said lands could be rightfully seized by the European colonists and later US citizens for their own usage

In the course of writing this thesis, my work has come to incorporate the work of historians, archaeologists, anthropologists, philosophers, clerics, politicians, and a small army of writers and poets. In particular, this thesis owes a great deal of inspiration to the works of two professors, the late Dr. Gwyn A. Williams of Cardiff University and the late Dr. Richard M. Dorson of Indiana University.

The most recent scholarly work surrounding Welsh Indian Theory was written in 1979 by the Welsh historian Gwyn A. Williams. In his monograph *Madoc: The Making of A Myth*, Williams explained that he had two distinct aims: to trace the history of the Welsh Indian Theory and to demonstrate the influence of myth on reality. Williams was fascinated by the evolution of a story into action; he argued that myths over a long enough period can become a new version of truth. In his prologue, Williams stated that

"…ideas, no matter how fanciful or Utopian or even lunatic, can become material force."[7] Williams proved this statement in relation to the Welsh Indian Theory by showing how it inspired generations of men from Wales and England to travel to North America in search of proof of Madoc's voyage, usually in the form of the legendary tribe of "Welsh Indians."

Although various native groups have been associated (usually by white explorers) with the legend, the Mandan Tribe was usually the go-to candidate for true believers. As part of his study, Williams used myth to examine not only the impact on the world writ-large, but especially the impact of the story on the minority groups tied to it such as the Mandans, the Colonial Spanish in North America, and of course the Welsh. Despite having relatively small populations within North America, these minority groups figured prominently in the various retellings of the legend, though usually to the detriment of actual Mandans, Spaniards, and Welshmen. Williams contributed a great deal of thought into how these particular groups became entangled in the Welsh Indian Theory, even though it was usually done by rejecting their cultural identities and self-agency in favor of a mythological origin story.

Another substantial contribution that Williams made was in identifying the recurrences of the myth in popular culture throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. According to this monograph, the story of Madoc experienced an almost cyclical existence in both Britain and some parts of the United States; for various reasons the story would repeatedly bloom in popularity, creating a generation of believers or

---

[7] Gwyn A. Williams, *Madoc: The Making of A Myth* (Yorkshire: Eyre Methuen, 1979), 11.

"Madocians" as Williams called them. These in turn would inspire a new generation of academics to pick up the story, intending to either once again disprove it or be immortalized as the one who found the smoking gun proving its merits. Williams pointed to a very particular set of scholars in the 1830s who spent years systematically compiling every aspect of the story and disproving it item by item, only to be met with ridicule by a small cadre of true-believers within the Methodist Church.[8]

In trying to explain why the story was able to persist in the face of overwhelming evidence against it, Williams suggested that myth is an essential facet of American identity.[9] In places like Europe and Asia, nations can trace their origins back hundreds and thousands of years – their mythological founders and heroes are rooted in the lives of real men whose stories have been warped by eons of repetition. America does not have those kinds of national tales – not yet anyway – because in the grand scheme of things we are a young nation. In a quest for ancient and distinctly American roots, we have a tendency to latch onto tales, no matter how farcical they are, that we can call our own. Few rational people believe Sasquatch live in the swamps of Arkansas, or that John Henry actually outperformed a steam driller, or that Madoc sailed across the ocean in a 12th century clinker-built ship, and yet these stories have become common tropes in modern American fiction. They are told so often that sometimes they become accepted as truth, and it is precisely this apotheosis of myth that Williams is an invaluable source for.

Considered the father of Folklore Studies in the United States, Dr. Richard Dorson of Indiana University proposed in this monograph *American Folklore* that early

---

8 Williams, *Madoc*, 94.
9 Williams, *Madoc*, 68.

American oral traditions could be divided into two distinct categories: folklore and "fakelore." Fakelore, according to Dorson, is not a uniquely American invention, but it was widely adopted in said country. "Fakelore" is a story intentionally devised by individuals seeking power and influence for a specific purpose, usually as an agent of social change or personal profit.[10] Dorson also set out to reclaim the idea of folklore from the realm of children's stories and reposition it for what it truly is: an oral tradition of thoughts, value systems, and identity that until very recently would be considered "too coarse or obscene for printed word."[11]

Although he is to this day highly regarded in scholarly circles, his work generated some controversies during his career, especially in his classification system for what was and was not "genuine" folklore. Dorson considered many popular folk icons, such as Paul Bunyan and Davy Crockett, to be illegitimate fakelore because they were created for economic reasons rather than long-standing tradition.[12] He was also known to be critical at times of the works of contemporary folklorists such as Benjamin Botkin, saying that their unscholarly approaches and broad criteria for inclusion delayed the acceptance of folklore as a serious topic of study.[13] That said, Dorson actively encouraged his students to debate the criteria he created to judge folklore from fakelore, sarcastically referring to them as the "Young Turks" who would undo his work by questioning his methods.[14]

---

10 Richard Dorson, *American Folklore* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 4.

11 Dorson, *American Folklore*, 4.

12 Dorson, *American Folklore*, 199-200. He acknowledged that Davy Crockett was a real person of course, but argued many of the stories associated with him were the creations of Disney in the 1950s.

13 Dorson, *American Folklore, 285.*

14 Dan Ben-Amos, "The Historical Folklore of Richard M. Dorson," *Journal of Folklore Research* 26, no. 1 (Jan-Apr 1989): 52.

While these two scholars represent important foundational works for this thesis project, it would be somewhat ironic to have composed a work around contextualization without mentioning two key figures that formed the genesis of my research. My interest in the "Welsh Indian" Theory was first sparked by the works of John Filson, of Filson Society fame, and an obscure reference I found to the writings of an Elizabethan cartographer named Sir Humphrey Lhoyd.

To the extent that my research can show, a 16th century book entitled *The Historie of Cambria, Now Called Wales: A Part of the most famous Yland of Brytain, written in the Brytish Language Aboue Two Hundreth Yeares Past* is the earliest historical document containing the Welsh Indian legend. Sir Humphrey Lhoyd (there's about a half dozen variations of the last name) was a Welsh cartographer and politician in Elizabethan England. Famed for his map of Wales that was included in the first modern Atlas, *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, several of his books and manuscripts were actually published posthumously after his unexpected death in 1568. This particular work was edited and published by Dr. David Powel, though he gives credit for the bulk of the work to Lhoyd.

In this book, Lhoyd/Powel lay the groundwork for generations of future writers and is often quoted word for word by those attempting to establish the Welsh Indian Theory as true fact; some future authors would even plagiarize his entire book without any additional proofs or edits while claiming it as original work. Other than the fact that it is the oldest account found, it stands apart from other Madoc writers for what it doesn't say: at no point in his writing does Lhoyd suggest that the Welsh Indian Theory gives England claim to the new world – he simply includes the tale as part of an exhaustive history of the Welsh nation. That said, at least Lhoyd and Powel had at least claimed their work's

origins had historiographic origins; the other foundational author for my research relied mostly on personal observations and vague notions for his work.[15]

In the introduction to his 1784 travelogue *The Discovery, Settlement and present state of Kentucke and an Essay towards the Topography, and Natural History of that important Country*, John Filson repeatedly assured the reader that he intended for this to be a genuine asset and guide to any who would travel to the frontier regions, avowing that other works on Kentucky were done by men who "had no knowledge of Kentucke, or to have neglected it…the rest have proceeded so erroneously, that they have left the world as much in darkness as before."[16] Given that the book was the 18th century equivalent of a travel guide and Filson had strong financial motives to get people to move to the new territory (as a surveyor, he owned several thousand acres of land that he intended to sell for profit), the account is a heavily romanticized portrayal of Kentucky that emphasizes the abundant game and quality soil while downplaying the danger and volatile terrain.[17]

It is in the pages of this work, specifically the section on the Indigenous people of Kentucky, that Filson lays the groundwork for a Kentucky connection to the Welsh Indian myth. Filson recorded some of, if not the first, observations of Adena mound sites

---

15 Sir Humphrey Lhoyd, *The Historie of Cambria, Now Called Wales: A Part of the most famous Yland of Brytain, written in the Brytish Language Aboue Two Hundreth Yeares Past* (London: John Harding Publishing, 1568), V. Despite some attempts at talking with archivists and historians in Cardiff and London, I was unable to locate any private papers or journals of Lhoyd or Powel that could shed light on where they got their information from; Powel notes that many of the stories written were taken from a collection of 13th century manuscripts kept at the Abbeys of Conwey and Stratflur, but they were lost in the 1530's during Henry VIII's dissolution of monasteries, making further research into the origins likely impossible

16 Filson, *Present State of Kentucke*, 5.

17 Reuben T. Durrett, *John Filson, the First Historian of Kentucky: An Account of His Life and Writings* (Louisville: John P. Morton & Co., 1884), 14.

near Lexington on the banks of Elkhorn Creek, including the area now known as Mt. Horeb. Filson gave descriptions of the mound structures, but erroneously described them as ruined fortresses, declaring that they contained several acres of land apiece, surrounded by "ditches and bastions".[18] By his reckoning, they must have been European in origin because they were too complex in design for the local natives.[19] Although one does not get the sense that Filson misjudged the nature of the site through intentional malice, it does speak to the pervading bias against the capability of Indigenous societies of the time; the notion that an advanced precursor race had to have been responsible for the ancient ruins dotting the landscape deprived Indigenous tribes with their ancestral identity and connection to the lands.

Although Filson did not ever ascribe the mounds along the Elkhorn directly to "Welsh Indians" his statements were later combined by future generations with other sections of his book that include the Welsh as possible precursors of the local tribes (along with the Norse, Chinese, and Phoenicians) to support claims of Welsh presence in the Ohio Valley Region.[20] Despite the prestige associated with the name Filson in modern Kentucky through the Filson Society, I often found myself at odds with his writings. Although they do contain first-hand accounts on a wide array of information, he repeatedly proves to be an unreliable source in terms of the historical sections of the book, relying on hearsay, biblical passages, and generally little if any sources beyond observation.

---

[18] Filson, *Present State of Kentucke*, 97.
[19] Filson, *Present State of Kentucke*, 97.
[20] Filson, *Present State of Kentucke*, 95.

These, and numerous other writings, have traced the Welsh Indian Theory and more generally the story of stories down the centuries to the present day. In particular, the musings of Filson, combined with the absurd tall tales of the 19th century British writer Joseph Roberts, have led to generations of scholars and historians towards associating the Americas, and in particular the Bluegrass, with the Welsh Indian Theory. Recognizable names from Kentucky's past like Harry Toulmin (KY Secretary of State 1796-1804), Humphrey Marshall (US Senator from Kentucky 1795-1801), Dr. George W. Ranck (Bacon College History Professor c. 1865), and Dr. William D. Funkhouser (UK Zoology Professor 1918-1948) all produced serious academic works that either outright supported the theory or considered it plausible, and all referenced the writings of Filson and his contemporaries in doing so.

* * *

Despite the best efforts of these historians, archaeologists, and sociologists that have taken up the cause of Madoc's expedition, there has never been nor likely ever will be evidence that can trump ingrained biases and tendency to "other" groups of perceived inferiority. Furthermore, I would argue that with the exception of Dr. Gwyn Williams, their efforts have lost sight of the original context of the myth's origins. In that spirit, in the following pages I will attempt to reconstruct the chronology of the Welsh Indian Theory in order to show how it can be used as a roadmap for understanding how the tangible achievements of Indigenous American were dismissed in favor of fictitious "precursor" origins and why their ancestral claims to their land were overlooked.

Before delving further into the historiography of the Welsh Indian Theory, I would ask of the reader's patience the chance to quickly address a critical component of this

work. Despite an exploration of what amounts to conspiracy theories and fringe speech, at no point in this paper will I be trying to prove the myth itself. This is not a quixotic search for Welsh Indians, or Madogwys as they were known, in the American frontier. To be as blunt as possible and prevent any ideas to the contrary: I do not think Welsh Indians exist. My interest is in the origins of the story itself – who created it, why they did so, and how it was received. It is my hope through the lens of the Welsh Indian Theory, this research can lead to a bigger discussion about the historical and ongoing fallacy of an America devoid of functional societies of Indigenous people. With this disclaimer firmly in place, our story can begin in earnest.

CHAPTER 2. THE WELSH INDIAN THEORY

In 1784, the geographer John Filson published a large manuscript entitled *The Discovery, Settlement, and Present State of Kentucke*. This expansive tome was purportedly an accurate, first-hand account of the recently formed counties of Fayette, Jefferson, and Lincoln in the Virginia backwoods. In the introduction to his work, Filson repeatedly assured the reader that he intended for this to be a genuine asset and guide to any who would travel to the frontier regions, swearing that "there is nothing mentioned or described but what they will find true. Conscious that it would be of general utility, I have omitted nothing, and been exceeding particular in every part."[21] Under the auspices of that promise, Filson's readers were then treated to a somewhat thorough lesson in the history, geography, and resources that "Kentucke" had to offer.[22] Filson even went as far as including detailed descriptions of the native peoples that inhabited the area, some twenty-eight different tribes in total.[23]

It is among these biographic descriptions that the reader can find a very strange tale – one that is far removed from the history of the Americas as we commonly know it – yet as previously stated, one that the author stakes his name on being true. In recounting the origins of the natives of "Kentucke", Filson mentioned a figure named Prince Madoc ab Owain, a person not of Cherokee or Shawnee origins, but Welsh. According to Filson, this Madoc, a nobleman from one of the royal houses of Wales, arrived in North America with a fleet of ten ships.[24] He and his followers established settlements with the ability to

---

21 Filson, *Present State of Kentucke,* 5.
22 Thorough by the definition of the time.
23 Filson, *Present State of Kentucke*, 87.
24 Filson, *Present State of Kentucke*, 95.

smith metals and produce pottery, and were surrounded by complex fortifications that were still visible in the area surrounding Lexington at the time of his explorations.[25] In time, isolated from their European brethren, these Welsh colonists would intermarry with the local Indigenous tribes, forming a new hybrid civilization hallmarked by advanced technology and construction; by the 18th century these Welsh Indians would become commonly identified as the Mandan Tribe of the American Midwest.[26] Most remarkable of all though, is the fact that these Welsh Colonizers allegedly arrived in the year 1170 AD, some 300 years prior to Christopher Columbus' first voyage to the Americas.[27]

For the most part, there is nothing particularly jaw-dropping about Filson's book; it is essentially what it promises to be: a traveler's guide to Kentucky. That having been said, this story of Welsh Indians, inserted in such a casual manner amongst discussions of Shawnee, Cherokee, and Wabash, seemed out of place, and led me to reread the passage multiple times to ensure I had read it correctly. Although alien to many in the 21st century, Filson discussed as a matter of common knowledge the idea that Welshmen settled the Americas in the Pre-Columbian era.[28] Under the basic assumption that the idea of a 12th century Welsh nobleman building a civilization in North America did not originate with Filson himself, I began an investigation that ultimately pointed to 16th century England as the story's source.

---

25 Filson, *Present State of Kentucke*, 97.

26 Filson, *Present State of Kentucke,* 97. This claim is incredibly convenient to make since the Mandan are functionally extinct and there is no way to thoroughly research the claim.

27 Filson, *Present State of Kentucke*, 95.

28 Filson, *Present State of Kentucke*, 96.

This answer, instead of satisfying my curiosity, led to yet another question: why would the English say Welshmen had found the Americas? The evidence I found made it clear that English writers created this story, so why would they credit another nation, especially one that they had subjugated, with being the first permanent colonizers of the Americas? Surely, that is something they would want credit for, so why give it away? As I began my research, I made an initial assumption that crediting the Welsh with the colonization of the New World was a political act intended to curry favor with Queen Elizabeth I, who in addition to being the Queen of England, was of Welsh descent.[29] In turn, because the creators were so highly connected to the upper echelons of Elizabethan society, the story was euhemerised over ensuing generations on the basis of the creators reputations, ultimately losing its original context with each successive generation. In time, a political gambit became mistaken for a plausible version of reality.

2.1 Origins of the Welsh Indian Theory

The earliest verifiable written account of a Welsh presence in the Americas was produced in the year 1568, just over two hundred years before John Filson's travelogue. *The History of Cambria, Now Called Wales: A Part of the most famous Yland of Brytain, written in the Brytish Language Aboue Two Hundreth Yeares Past* was credited to Sir Humphrey Lhoyd, a cartographer and member of Parliament.[30] Himself a Welshman, Lhoyd was often regarded as one of the leading scholars in his day, even receiving credit

[29] The irony of a story credited to a nation that was subjected to attempted erasure being used as a tool of erasure is not lost on me in the slightest.

[30] "Lloyd (Lhuyd), Humphrey (1527-1568), of Foxhall, Henllan, Denb. And of Denbigh," Members, Research, The History of Parliament, accessed 8 April 2023, https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/lloyd-(lhuyd)-humphrey-)-1527-68.

for coining the phrase "British Empire" in one of his later works.[31] In the recountings of the Welsh Indian Theory throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, various authors, scholars, and courtiers of Queen Elizabeth I credit Lhoyd as the "discoverer" of the story. Immediately, from a historiographical standpoint, two major concerns are raised by these statements: Lhoyd died 16 years before "his" account was published, and he never mentioned the story in any works published his lifetime. In point of fact, when *The History of Cambria, Now Called Wales* was published by Dr. David Powel, he claimed that most of the account was translated by Lhoyd from a 13th century manuscript long since lost to the ages (a reoccurring theme in this saga, along with second and third-hand accounts written decades after the events they describe taking place).[32]

It Is from this Lhoyd/Powel account we are given three of the key facets of the Welsh Indian Theory. First, we are told that Madoc was one of the sons of Owain Gwynedd, a 12th century King of Wales.[33] Second, we are given a list of places and animals in Central America that had names allegedly derived from the Welsh language.[34] Lastly, and perhaps strangest of all, we are told that the Aztec Emperor Montezuma II claimed direct lineage from Prince Madoc.[35]

Claiming that Madoc was the son of Owain Gwynedd would have been a critical step in giving the story an air of legitimacy. Owain Gwynedd, as a Prince of Wales, was a

---

31 Sir Humfrey Lhoyd and Thomas Twyne, *The Breviary of Britayne: As this most noble and rednowmed lland, was of auncient time deuided into three Kingdomes, England, Scotland and Wales, Contaynyng a learned discourse of the variable state, & alteration therof, vnder diuers, as wel natural: as forren princes, & Conquerours, Together with the Geographicall description of the same, such as neither by elder nor later writers, the like hath been set foorth before.* (London: Richard Johnes Printing, 1573), 92.

32 Lhoyd, *The Historie of Cambria,* 5-6.

33 Lhoyd, *The Historie of Cambria*, 227.

34 Lhoyd, *The Historie of Cambria*, 229.

35 Lhoyd, *The Historie of Cambria*, 229.

well-known figure in Welsh History with a heavily documented life.[36] Madoc, on the other hand, is generally regarded as a semi-historical figure at best. There are documents suggesting that Owain Gwynedd had a son named Madoc, but other than the name there is little trace of him in the historical record. The year of Madoc's alleged voyage, 1170, was the year of Owain Gwynedd's death; After ruling Wales for 33 years, a civil war erupted almost immediately following his death when two of his older sons claimed his crown for themselves.[37] In the ensuing chaos, most of Owain's 20+ children disappear from record as chroniclers focused their attention on his eldest sons, and therefore there is no concrete proof in the contemporary Welsh Chronicles that the son named Madoc performed any of the feats ascribed to him in the Lhoyd/Powel account. For more concrete evidence of Welsh presence in the western world, Lhoyd/Powel next presented an argument involving language.

In *The History of Cambria, Now Called Wales*, language similarities are cited as proof of Welsh presence in the Americas. According to Lhoyd/Powel, numerous locations, plants, and animals around the modern-day Gulf of Mexico bore names that were allegedly either similar to or directly taken from Welsh. Specifically, they claim that "a certeine bird with a white head, which they call Pengwin" was derived from the words "pen" (head) and "gwyn" (white).[38] It was also said that natives were known to have used

---

36 Rev. John Williams ab Ithel, ed., *Brut Y Tywysogion; Or, The Chronicle of the Princes* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1860), 179.
37 ab Ithel, *Brut Y Tywysogion*, 207.
38 Lhoyd, *The Historie of Cambria*, 229.

the word "gwrando" which is Welsh for listen, and numerous other linguistic crossovers.[39]

It is worth noting that despite the numerous similarities claimed, those same two examples are repeated verbatim by successive authors as the sum total of linguistic evidence. Further confusing the matter is the fact that nearly every documented species of penguin has black feathering on their heads, giving doubt to the species of birds referenced. If claims of noble lineage and linguistic similarity gave the intended audience pause, Lhoyd/Powel could allegedly turn to a more concrete source for their remaining claim surrounding the ethnicity of Emperor Montezuma II: the words of Montezuma himself.

During the Conquest of Mexico from 1519-1521, Hernán Cortés wrote a series of letters to Charles V of Spain that detailed his exploits. In his second letter, dated October 1520, Cortés recounted a series of conversations he allegedly had with the Aztec Emperor Montezuma II when his army arrived in Tenochtitlán.[40] In one of these conversations, Montezuma II stated that according to their traditions, the Aztecs believed themselves to be the descendants of "foreigners who came from distant parts" who were led by "a chieftain of whom they were all vassals."[41] Montezuma continued on, stating that since Cortés came from "where the sun rises" the Aztecs believed that his king, Charles V, was

---

39 Lhoyd, *The Historie of Cambria*, 229.

40 Ross Hassig, *Mexico and the Spanish Conquest* (London: Longman Group UK Limited, 1994), 88-89.

41 Hernán Cortés, *Letters from Mexico*, trans. Anthony Pagden (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 85.

their rightful king and that they would "obey you and hold you as our lord in place of that great sovereign of whom you speak."[42]

Once again, it should hopefully go without saying that we have no way of verifying this conversation. It is a very easy assumption to make that Cortés could have embellished or fabricated this entire exchange to ingratiate himself with his patron after ignoring a direct order to not invade Mexico.[43] At any rate, despite this exchange not mentioning Madoc or Wales or the Madogwys, this letter from Cortés is incorporated by Lhoyd/Powel into the body of evidence supporting the myth. In *The Historie of Cambria*, Lhoyd/Powel stated that:

> "The common report of the inhabitants of that countrie, which affirme that their rulers descended from a strange nation, that came thither from a farre countrie: which is confessed by *Mutezuama* king of that countrie, in his oration made for quieting of his people, at his submission to the king of *Castile, Hernando Curteis* being present, which is laid downe in the *Spanish* Chronicles of the conquest of the *West Indies*."[44]

Again, while the author(s) offer no evidence that the "farre countrie" was any specific location, let alone one across an ocean, they surmise it is proof enough that Madoc's Wales is in fact what the Aztecs referred to.[45] We therefore find ourselves in a circumstance where a letter of dubious provenance has been co-opted by another writer to prop up a political treatise of dubious provenance.

---

42 Cortés, *Letters from Mexico*, 86.

43 Thomas J. Brinkerhoff, "Reexamining the Lore of the 'Archetypal Conquistador': Hernán Cortés and the Spanish Conquest of the Aztec Empire, 1519-1521," *The History Teacher* 49, no. 2 (February 2016): 172.

44 Lhoyd, *The Historie of Cambria*, 229.

45 Lhoyd, *The Historie of Cambria*, 229.

The preceding account would put the territory of the Welsh Indians, or Madogwys, in central Mexico; according to John Filson's version cited earlier, they established themselves near Lexington, KY. One of the more confusing aspects of the Welsh-Indian myth is the geographic inconsistencies it presents: the realm of the Madogwys is given (depending on the source) as far south as Mexico or as far north as Maine. In 1674 Reverend Ephraim Pagitt would avow that a tribe worshipping the sign of the cross was known to live in Florida.[46] Over a century later, George Burder would claim that the Mandan tribe of the Dakotas spoke broken Welsh and possessed fragments of a Welsh Bible.[47] In the 1950's, the Daughters of the American Revolution erected a plaque in Mobile, Alabama proclaiming it as the true land of Madoc.[48] All in all, one of the few consistencies in the story of the Madogwys is the inconsistency of their supposed homeland, but this did little to deter generations of writers from taking up the story.

Lhoyd and Powel's citation of Cortes' letter appears to be the historical equivalent of grasping at straws, as it never definitively states that the Aztecs had any awareness of Europe, let alone Wales. If, however, we accept the premise that the Welsh were credited with colonizing the Americas to curry favor with Queen Elizabeth, a plausible scenario

---

46 Ephraim Pagitt, *Christianography: Or, The Description of the Multitude and Sundry Sorts of Christians, In the World, Not Subject to the Pope* (London: Robert Clavell Publishing, 1674): 46-47.

47 George Burder, *The Welch Indians; Or, A Collection of Papers, Respecting a People Whose Ancestors Emigrated From Wales To America, In The Year 1170, With Prince Madoc (Three Hundred Years Before The First Voyage of Columbus), And Who Are Now Said To Inhabit A Beautiful Country On The West Side Of The Mississippi* (London: T. Chapman Printing, 1797): 23. As a recurring theme in this thesis, the more likely story for the Mandans having a Welsh Bible is them being given one by an actual Welshman in the 18th or 19th century. The idea that they held ancient fragments of a Welsh Bible from Madoc's era is impossible, given that the Bible wasn't translated into Welsh until roughly 300 years after he supposedly left Europe; see Rosemary Burton, "William Morgan and the Welsh Bible," *History Today* 38, no. 5 (May 1988), https://www.historytoday.com/archive/william-morgan-and-welsh-bible.

48 John Sledge, "Madoc's Mark: The Persistence of an Alabama Legend," History, Mobile Bay Magazine, written 24 November 2020, https://mobilebaymag.com/madocs-mark-the-persistence-of-an-alabama-legend/. The sign was put in storage following damage sustained in 1979 during Hurricane Frederic but reinstalled in 2008 at the insistence of the Alabama Welsh Society.

emerges. If the intent was to supersede Spanish claims to the western hemisphere, it stands to reason that Lhoyd/Powel would seize upon the account of Montezuma II's speech to not only make the case that the Welsh were present prior to the Spanish, but to make them an injured party. If the Spanish seized land held by the Welsh, the English, as overlords of the Welsh, could argue that they were within their rights to seize the lands from Spain as an act of reclamation. To be fair to Lhoyd and/or Powel, neither of them flat-out make that assertion. One of their contemporaries did it for them.

2.2 In the Court of St. James

In 1583, an English merchant and professional explorer named Sir George Peckham published his report of a series of overseas expeditions he had performed with Sir Humphrey Gilbert and Thomas Gerard, 1st Baron Gerard.[49] Within the pages of this report is the first explicit claim that England was the rightful owner of the New World, as opposed to the Spanish. Lacking any concept of the word "subtlety", the third chapter of the treatise was titled "The third Chapter dooth shewe the lawfull tytle, which the Queenes most excellent Maiestie hath vnto those Countries, which through the ayde of almightie God are mente to be inhabited."[50] The very first sentence in this chapter states that funding colonies in the Americas will not establish Elizabeth's control of the land, but rather "restore to her Highnesse auncient right and interest in those Countries" by

---

49 Sir George Peckham, *A True Reporte, Of the late discoveries, and possession, taken in the right of the Crowne of Englande, of the New-found Landes: By that valiant and worthye Gentleman, Sir Humfrey Gilbert Knight* (London: John Hinde Publishing, 1583), ii.

50 Peckham, *A True Reporte*, 23.

virtue of her blood ties to Prince Madoc.[51] According to Peckham, since no other nation had existent records showing voyages prior to Madoc's, England stood as the earliest claimant to the lands in the Americas.

On the basis of his testimony alone, any claim to the New World would likely have gone nowhere: between his Catholic faith and a series of poor financial investments, Peckham fell from favor in court shortly after publishing *A True Reporte*, ultimately surrendering his estate to pay off debts before dying in poverty.[52] One could argue that Peckham, in worsening social and financial standing, was attempting to curry favor with the court by capitalizing on the work of Lhoyd and Powel but failed in his gambit; By promoting the interests of Protestant Elizabeth over the Catholic Phillip II of Spain, Peckham could have simply been trying to show his loyalty to the English crown over his Catholic faith. Fortuitously, his assessment of Madoc's existence and Elizabeth's claims were echoed by another prominent figure at court: Dr. Richard Hakluyt.

Yet another English official of Welsh descent, Richard Hakluyt served many years as a secretary and chaplain under Sir Francis Walsingham, Queen Elizabeth's Secretary of State.[53] Although he was primarily trained for the priesthood from an early age, Hakluyt was heavily involved in England's early efforts to map and explore the Americas. Before entering the service of Walsingham, Hakluyt edited a series of works

---

51 Peckham, *A True Reporte, 23.* Queen Elizabeth was not a direct descendant of Prince Madoc (it is unknown if he even existed, let alone fathered children) but the Tudor family did have blood connections with the several other Welsh noble families.

52 "Peckham, Sir George," Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, published online 23 September 2004, https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-21743.

53 Edward Lynam, ed., *Richard Hakluyt & His Successors: A Volume Issued To Commemorate The Centenary of the Hakluyt Society* (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1946), 31.

on Jacques Cartier and Sebastian Cabot's sea voyages, and even offered his services to Sir Humphrey Gilbert's ill-fated search for the North-West Passage.[54] It was during his tenure as chaplain to the Ambassador to France that Hakluyt began working on one of his most famous works, *The Principall Navigations, Voiages And Discoveries Of The English Nation* in 1589. In this book, Hakluyt recounted the tales of early English explorers in an attempt to drum up support for state-sponsored colonies in the Americas.

It is in the third section of his book that Hakluyt made a novel (If groundless) contribution to the burgeoning body of work surrounding Prince Madoc. In the third section of *The Principall Navigations*, Hakluyt acknowledged the assertion that the Welsh Indian Theory was nothing but a recent invention meant to give Elizabeth jurisdiction over the Americas. With a showman's panache, Hakluyt revealed "proof" that undermined that notion: a poem written in 1477 by "Meredith, daughter of Rheseus" that mentioned Madoc by name. The story (and therefore the land claims) couldn't have been invented by Hakluyt and his contemporaries if poems recounted the same tale a century prior.[55]

On the surface, this does not seem like the worst argument: existent historiography is typically a good basis for a historical argument, assuming the work cited has substance. In examining the poem in question, however, numerous flaws become evident. While the poem does mention Madoc by name and does in fact describe

---

54 Lyman, *Richard Hakluyt & His Successors*, 30-31.

55 Dr. Richard Hakluyt, *The Principall Navigations, Voiages And Discoveries Of The English nation, made by Sea or ouer Land, to the most remote and farthest distant Quarters of the earth at any time within the compasse of these 1500 yeeres: Devided into three several parts, according to the positions of the Regions whereunto they were directed* (London: George Bishop, Ralph Newberie, Christopher Barker Royal Printers, 1589) 506.

him as the son of Owen Gwynedd, it makes no mention of sailing across the ocean and colonizing a far-flung land. According to Hakluyt, when translated from Welsh, Meredith's poem says:

> "Madoc I am, the son of Owen Gwynedd.
>
> With stature large, and comely grace adorned:
>
> No lands at home nor store of wealth me please,
>
> My minde was whole to search the Ocean seas."[56]

General allusions to the seas aside, there is nothing extraordinary about Meredith's version of Madoc to even suggest trans-Atlantic colonization. It is also worth pointing out that the sailing technology of the day would have made the odds of surviving a trans-Atlantic crossing very unlikely. While there is no consensus on the type of ship Madoc would have used, the most common vessel in the North Atlantic of the time was called a "cog" ship. These ships utilized a construction method known as clinker-build or lapstrake, wherein the wood timbers overlap each other and are held in place by rivets.[57] While this does allow ships to flex in response to waves, reducing the strain on the vessel, it severely limits the size of cogs; based on recovered wrecks, the average cog would only be 15-20 meters long and 5-8 meters wide. Another issue with cogs is that they only had a single mast, supporting a single sail, meaning it was extremely limited in speed even with a

---

56 Hakluyt, *The Principall Navigations*, 507.

57 Richard W. Unger, *The Ship in the Medieval Economy, 600-1600* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1980): 140.

prevailing wind.[58] Based off of those dimensions and the speed capabilities, nothing short of divine intervention would have made the crossing possible for Madoc.[59]

A further point of contention is that Hakluyt's translation is not exceedingly accurate; in his and all subsequent accounts citing Hakluyt recollection of this poem, Hakluyt did not even correctly identify the author. "Meredith, daughter of Rheseus" is actually a poor translation of "Sir Meredyth ab Rhys", the name of a 15th century MALE Welsh poet.[60] I cannot say for certain if the translation error lies with Hakluyt alone, but as he is the first to mention this poem as evidence, it seems fair that he bears some measure of fault. This also presents an inherent issue with the Welsh Indian Theory, or any story passed down from this era of history: a lack of standardized spelling that can muddle vital details. English as a language has undergone numerous evolutions, combining elements of Latin, Greek, Gaelic, Norman French, and numerous regional dialects. Standardized spelling is a more common invention than many would think – the generally accepted benchmark being Samuel Johnson's *A Dictionary of the English Language* in 1755.[61] Given that the texts discussed so far predate 1755, it seems a foregone conclusion that they would be rife with misinterpretations.

---

58 Unger, *The Ship*, 140. According to ship trials conducted on a replica in 2009, a cog could travel at 0.63 knots in winward conditions.

59 While we are aware that Scandinavians made it to Canada around the 11th century AD, they had did not cross the entire North Atlantic in one go; if Madoc had attempted the crossing, he would not have had access to friendly ports in Iceland or Greenland like Leif Erikson.

60 "Meredudd ap Rhys," Dictionary of Welsh Biography, accessed 17 April 2023, https://biography.wales/article/s-MERE-APR-1450. In traditional Welsh, the name of the father was attached to your given name by either "ab" meaning "son of" or "firch" meaning "daughter of", making his proper name "Meredyth son of Rhys". In Welsh, "dd" makes a "th" sound, so Meredyth is an Anglicized spelling of Meredudd.

61 Jeff Strabone, "Samuel Johnson: Standardizer of English, Preserver of Gaelic," *ELH* 77, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 238.

Thus far, we have confronted a series of theologians and court officials, several of whom had Welsh origins themselves, that each presented Elizabeth and members of her Inner Circle with a claim to the lands in the Western Hemisphere. By their reckoning, by right of blood and conquest, Elizabeth was the rightful heir to the legacy of Prince Madoc. Though they presented a series of arguments seemingly backed by evidence, it is not an argument that would hold up to modern standards; the authors seem to stake many of their claims on their reputations as scholars, with little in the way of primary source material. It is in this form that the "Welsh Indian" theory was formed with the intent of persuading the Queen to lay claim to the dominions of Spain and Portugal. All that was left was to present their findings and gauge the reaction of Elizabeth herself.

2.3 Elizabethan Hermeneutics

In the spirit of full disclosure, I will note that the following section is taken from documents written after the death of Queen Elizabeth. Honest attempts were made to find some transcript from her own hand, or at least lifetime, in the British National Archives in London, but were ultimately fruitless. The closest things that could be found are excerpts from the writings of George Abbot, 75th Archbishop of Canterbury, and Rev. Peter Heylyn, some 30 years after her death. Abbot's writings are of special importance to this subject, as they not only represent the opinions of an immensely significant personage in English society, but also the earliest found rebuttal of the Welsh Indian Theory writ large. Heylyn's writings are significant to the early origins of the Welsh Indian Theory for two distinct reasons: in addition to recording the Queen's reaction to the story presented by her counselors, they help establish a trend of intellectuals from the era of the myth's origin turning their back on the Madoc story through the application of hermeneutics.

Hermeneutics, according to the philosopher David Hoy, is "a branch of philosophy concerned principally with methodological questions about how to acquire correct understanding and interpretation of texts."[62] In simple terms, hermeneutics looks beyond the literal wording of a work or body of works and tries to find an underlying meaning or root cause. The process is subdivided into multiple genres and is most commonly applied to studies of scriptures but can be used in concert with historical analysis.[63] By separating the outlandish claims from accepted narratives a rational mind could arrive at a rational explanation. In this instance, "Native Americans speak Welsh because they're descended from Madoc" can be easily interpreted as some then-modern Welshmen washed up in North America due to a storm and encountered Indigenous people and/or the natives weren't actually speaking Welsh. George Abbot and Peter Heylyn did not take the Welsh Indian Theory at face value, but rather than outright dismissing it, they utilized hermeneutic reasoning to explore the given evidence and explain their respective misgivings.

The Right Honorable George Abbot was a towering intellectual in Stuart England. A member of a well-connected family, Abbot became the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1611, and assisted in the creation of the King James Bible.[64] Shortly before his tenure, Abbot wrote a book entitled *Geography, or a Briefe Description of the Whole World,* and would continue to release updated versions for the remainder of his life. In the 2nd Edition, Abbot devoted a section to the Americas and the claims of ancient explorations of the lands.

---

62 David Couzens Hoy, "Hermeneutics," *Social Research* 47, no. 4 (Winter 1980): 649.

63 Paul Ricoeur, "History and Hermeneutics," *The Journal of Philosophy* 73, no. 19 (November 1976): 683.

64 Gustavus Paine, *The Men Behind the King James Version* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 1977), 157. Abbot also holds the unfortunate distinction as the only Archbishop of Canterbury to kill a man while in office (hunting accident).

According to Abbot, not only did the stories of Madoc make a terrible legal basis for territorial claims, but it was plain to him that many of the stories were repurposed from the early Arthurian legends.[65]

In a prime display of the prevailing logic of the era, Abbot wrote that while Queen Elizabeth was a descendent of (the fictional) King Arthur, "the wisdom of our State hath been such as to neglect that opinion, imagining it to be grounded upon fabulous foundations, as many things are which are now reported of King Arthur."[66] Abbot went on to posit that even if there was a Prince named Madoc who sailed to the New World, it doesn't amount to a sustained territorial claim because "the entercourse betwixt Wales and those parts, in the space of divers hundred years, was not continued, but quite silenced."[67] In other words, even if a Welsh contingent had landed in the New World, they didn't maintain communication with their homeland, so there is no way to confirm if they claimed it for Wales or for their own.

Picking up where Abbot left off, in the 7th Edition of his book *Mikrokosmos*, Dr. Peter Heylyn recounted in 1636 that many scholars and advisors came to Queen Elizabeth's court to present claims to the Americas, specifically claims that undermined the Spanish claims under the Treaty of Tordesillas.[68] Citing ancient philosophers and poets ranging from Seneca to King Solomon and Hanno, numerous men proclaimed that not only were these new lands in the west known to the ancients, but England had special claim to them

---

65 George Abbot, *A Briefe Description of the whole World*, *6th Ed.* (London: John Marriot Printer, 1624), R-R2.

66 Abbot, *A Briefe Description,* R1.

67 Abbot, *A Briefe Description*, R1.

68 Peter Heylyn, *Mikrokosmos: A Little Description of the Great World, 7th Ed.* (Oxford: William Turner Printing, 1636) 775.

through the Queen's Welsh connections to Madoc.[69] Despite the entreaties of the men in court, Elizabeth's reaction to Lhoyd, Powel, Peckham, Hakluyt was lukewarm at best. According to Heylyn "she wisely did reject these counsels, & not loving to put her scythe into another man's harvest," meaning that she didn't wish to interfere with the business of her former brother-in-law, King Philip II.[70]

Specifically referencing the claims of Lhoyd/Powel, Peckham, and Hakluyt, Heylyn went on to state that the presence of Welsh or Welsh-adjacent terms in the native languages was not suitable proof of Welsh colonizers. On page 775, Heylyn wrote that *"Welch-men, as others, might by force of tempest bee driven to these parts; and having no possibility of returne, might easily implant some part of their language in the memories of the people."* Heylyn argued that even if the language was Welsh as reported, it would be a shaky basis for a claim. Heylyn suggested that anyone of any nationality in the Atlantic could've gotten blown across the ocean by a strong enough storm and gotten marooned there – but even then, that doesn't equate to colonization or establishing a genetically distinct race.[71]

Through the hermeneutic reasonings of these two men, we can derive an informed inference of Queen Elizabeth's reaction to the Welsh Indian Theory. If, as I have posited, the attribution of the discovery of the Americas to the Welsh was an attempt at currying favor, it was one that fell on relatively deaf ears. Aside from the ill-fated Roanoke, the English never made a serious attempt at colonizing the Western Hemisphere in Elizabeth's

---

69 The connection, again, wasn't that she was related by blood, but simply by virtue of having noble Welsh ancestry.

70 Heylyn, *Mikrokosmos*, 775.

71 Heylyn, Mikrokosmos, 775.

lifetime; it would not be until the enthronement of the Stuart dynasty for the English to make any serious ventures into state-sponsored colonization. This then leaves us with the central conundrum of my research: as a political ploy, the Welsh Indian Theory was an abject failure, and yet it did not disappear. John Filson wrote about Prince Madoc as accepted fact almost 150 years after Abbot's and Heylyn's dismissals of the story. Filson's writing demonstrates that the Welsh Indian Theory took on a new life beyond its original intent. The questions that must now be answered are why did this happen, and how? The answer, I believe, lies in the concept of Euhemerism.

2.4 On Euhemerism

Earlier in this thesis, we examined the concept of Hermeneutics, wherein miraculous aspects of stories can have logical explanations. This process allows otherwise fantastic stories to have a degree of factual legitimacy. This alone doesn't satisfy task before us though: how did the 18th century come to embrace what the 17th century dismissed? Enter Euhemerism. Euhemerism is a system of logic that believes all mythology is rooted in historical truth: every pagan god, every miraculous tale, every larger-than-life I can be tied to a real event.[72] Although primarily used in theological circles to call the divine nature of deities into question, Euhemerism can and has been used to uncover tangible evidence of what was presumed to be fiction, such as when Heinrich Schliemann used the Iliad to locate the remnants of the fabled city of Troy.[73]

---

72 Robert A. Segal, "The Blurry Line Between Humans and Gods," *Numen* 60, no. 1 (2013): 40.

73 Heinrich Schliemann, *Ilios: The City and Country of the Trojans* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1881), 189.

One of the key tenets of Euhemerism is that anything can transcend from reality to myth over a long enough period of time, so long as people keep talking about it. With the passage of time, minor details become exaggerated until they reach fantastical proportions, and stories become separated from their historical context. Plato explains the concept in his dialogue *Phaedrus*, where Socrates discusses the legend of a girl carried into the sky by the wind god Boreas; Socrates notes that her shrine is on the edge of a cliff, and that at one point in time a girl probably got blown off by a gust of wind, but over many years it evolved into a story of a god lifting a girl into the heavens by divine power.[74]

Even though men like Abbot and Heylyn were discussing the Welsh Indian Theory in a somewhat dismissive manner, the fact remained that they were talking about it, and therefore granting it longevity. They, along with the earlier generation of Elizabethan supporters, wrote about the Welsh Indian Theory in their publications, which were printed and reprinted in multiple editions and languages. With each updated version of their respective books, the story was disseminated further and further. Since Abbot and Heylyn only questioned the logic of the Welsh Indian Theory instead of outright disavowing it, their versions of events were referenced with varying degrees of accuracy over time. Eventually later authors like the Dutch Joannis de Laet in his *Notae ad*

---

[74] John M. Cooper, ed., *Plato: Complete* Works (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997), 509.

Dissertationem Hugonis Grotii and the Italian Giovanni Paolo Marana in *Letters Written by a Turkish Spy* misquoted them as supporters of Welsh Indian Theory.[75][76]

* * *

150 years later and an ocean away, men in the United States read apocryphal versions of the Welsh Indian Theory that had transcended from dubious to accepted. With the historical context of Elizabethan political intrigue long since vanished, early American scholars were left with a series of anecdotes by learned, scholarly men of unquestioned reputation that they had no reason to not take at face value. If anything, the Americans had just as many, if not more incentives to embrace Welsh Indian Theory as Queen Elizabeth's courtiers felt she did all those centuries prior. On the American continent, Welsh Indian Theory would undergo a transformation from Elizabethan political speech into a metaphorical weapon of erasure that would be used to legitimize the presence of European colonists while eroding the presence of Indigenous Americans.

---

[75] Joannis De Laet, *Notae ad Dissertationem Hugonis Grotii: De Origine Gentium Americanarum: Et Observationes aliquot ad meliorem indaginem difficillimae illius Quaestionis* (Amsterdam: Louis Elzevirius Printer, 1643), 137.

[76] Giovanni Paolo Marana, *The Eighth and last volume of letters writ by a Turkish spy, who lived five and forty years undiscover'd at Paris: Giving an Impartial Account to the Divan at Constantinople, of the most Remarkable Transactions of Europe: And discovering several Intrigues and Secrets of the Christian Courts (especially of that of France,) continued from the Year 1673, to the year 1684, Written originally in Arabick, translated into Italian, from thence into English, by the Translator of the First Volume* (London: J. Rhodes publishing, 1684), 160.

CHAPTER 3. THE AMERICAN ADOPTION

According to the Welsh government, roughly 4% (or 11.3 million) of people in the United States today are of Welsh heritage.[77] Beginning with the Colony of Pennsylvania in 1618, the Welsh steadily made their way to North America, spreading from coast to coast. Many prominent figures in early days of the United States could claim Welsh heritage, including President Thomas Jefferson, Governor John Sevier of Tennessee, Daniel Boone, and even John Filson himself.[78][79] While these men, and many tens of thousands of their contemporaries, knew of and could claim their Welsh heritage, few if any of them had a fully-formed idea of what it meant to call themselves "American" in those early days of the 19th century.

The United States of America at that point in time was well defined in a geographic sense, but it was far from achieving any semblance of a homogenous society that could fit under a single label. Historians have described the America of the day as a "complex ethnic mosaic" comprised of numerous languages, faiths, cultures, and backgrounds that were often wary of one another.[80] The founding generation that had created an American government overwhelmingly identified with English culture, but the nation also faced the complex task of creating an American society. According to Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, both were critical to the longevity of the American

---

77 "The Welsh Diaspora: Analysis of the Geography of Welsh Names," Statistics and Research, Welsh Assembly, accessed 26 April 2023, https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2018-12/061102-welsh-diaspora-analysis-geography-welsh-names-en.pdf.

78 Edward George Hartmann, *Americans From Wales* (Boston: Christopher Publishing House, 1967), 217.

79 Hartmann, *Americans*, 208.

80 Rudolph J. Vecoli, "The Significance of Immigration in the Formation of an American Identity," *The History Teacher* 30, no. 1 (November 1996): 10.

experiment – government establishes laws and keeps corruption in check, while society promotes a set of shared values and goals for the people to coalesce around.[81]

As Professor Rudolph J. Vecoli of the University of Minnesota noted in an article for *The History Teacher*, these early Americans were "Lacking deep roots in the soil, ancient ties of blood, and recourse to 'mystic chords of memory,'" that had given meaning to concepts of being French or German or Welsh.[82] While the task of combining many ethnicities, creeds, and faiths under one resolute banner and simultaneously creating a system of government seems a daunting task, but to Thomas Paine it was the perfect opportunity to craft a society. In *Common Sense* he stated that "Youth is the seed-time of good habits as well in nations as in individuals. It might be difficult, if not impossible, to form the Continent into one government half a century hence…the intimacy which is contracted in infancy, and the friendship which is formed in misfortune, are of all others the most lasting and unalterable."[83]

Essentially speaking, if the creation of an American government and the American cultural identity did not coincide with one another or at least closely follow each other, they might never materialize. If they were attempted as solo endeavors, it would give time for division to grow among the many groupings found in the new nation. Creating a government was a comparatively simple manner – representatives gathered in one place, debated laws and institutions, and compiled them before voting. Creating a

---

81 Thomas Paine, *Common Sense: Addressed to the Inhabitants of America* (Philadelphia: R. Bell Printing, 1776), 1.
82 Vecoli, "Significance," 10.
83 Paine, *Common Sense*, 40.

culture isn't as simple as writing something down and holding a vote – a sense of one's *Dasein* cannot be set in stone with the stroke of a pen.[84]

Although a perfect, concrete answer to the aforesaid question may never achieve consensus, the following chapter will contribute to the discussion by looking at how, when faced with the dilemma of how to unite peoples of so many backgrounds, the first generations of Americans co-opted a series of myths and legendary figures, among them Prince Madoc and the Welsh Indian Theory, to justify their presence on the land and in doing so, contributed to the forging of a new identity for their people at the expense of the Indigenous people already living in North America.

The American experiment was conceived in such a way that co-existence alongside Indigenous tribal nations was an unlikely outcome. As early as the Washington administration, Indigenous tribes were given promises of peace with the United States that were followed closely with violent eviction from their land; in 1790 President Washington received a delegation from the Seneca tribe and assured them of their safety, only to dispatch a militia to push them across the Ohio River a few months later.[85]

This chapter will also look at the role played by Kentucky in integrating Welsh Indian Theory with this new national mythology. In the course of my research, a surprising number of writers from the Bluegrass state emerged as key and supporting players in the Welsh Indian Theory of the 19th and 20th centuries, including several politicians and

---

84 Carole Ann Ramsey, "A Brief Phenomenology of *Dasein*," *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 30, no. 4 (2016): 499-500. *Dasein* is a term in existentialism that refers to a state of being and self-awareness assumed to be unique to human beings.

85 Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "Surrogate Americans: Masculinity, Masquerade, and the Formation of a National Identity," *PMLA* 119, no. 5 (October 2004): 1325.

former academics of the University of Kentucky and Transylvania University. Although there is arguably a potential bias in my research, given my dual status as a native Kentuckian and a University of Kentucky student, I feel reasonably justified in stating that Kentucky has played an outsized role in perpetuating the Welsh Indian Theory in the United States.

3.1 A New National Mythology

According to Dr. George Lenczowski, "The primary function of myth is to ground present events in the primordial divine acts and, by ritual re-enactment, to establish them ever anew."[86] America as a nation had not existed anywhere near long enough for real foundational truths to slip into the realm of myth and legend; even the earliest colonists of Jamestown and Plymouth were still known as mortal men – destined and admired perhaps, but mortal.[87]

The people of England could derive national notions of honor and chivalry from the tales of Arthur and Camelot; the Greeks embraced the bravery of Leonidas and his ancestor demigod Hercules; the Italians embodied the sense of destiny from their founder-turned-god Romulus. What, if any, heroic tales and civic pride could the Americans draw upon when their founding was still in living memory?

A seemingly reasonable answer would be the stories and cultures of the Indigenous Americans who had lived on the continent since before recorded time, but that would be a step too far for these new Americans; their society had from the onset

---

86 Joseph Baumgartner et al., "Myth and Mythology," *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* 2, no. 4 (December 1974), 196.

87 This would not prevent future generations from trying; the interior of the US Capitol rotunda is covered in a fresco literally titled "The Apotheosis of Washington" that was commissioned in the 1860s.

been one of opposition to Indigenous Americans.[88] The Americans Revolution had been fought to establish themselves free of ties to Great Britain but embracing the traditions of the so-called "noble savages" would be a step too far. A perfect scenario would be the ability to claim to the longevity and rootedness of the Indigenous Americans without having to in any way treating them with deference. In other words, they needed find a group of Indigenous Americans who were really of European blood.

It is in this spirit that the story of Madoc and the Welsh Indian Theory was given a new lease on life in the fledgling American Republic, as soldiers, explorers, and statesmen alike began to circulate tales of a band of European-adjacent tribes in the interior lands. Beginning with Filson's *The Present State of Kentucke,* reports were made of ancient settlements and artifacts that were claimed to be far beyond the technical sophistication of other Indigenous societies.[89]

These elusive "Madogwys" built fortifications in the European manner, produced iron artifacts while their contemporaries dabbled in stone, and made pottery far beyond the capacity of other 18th century Indigenous societies.[90] Rather than being viewed as the ancestors of the tribes present in the United States, Welsh Indians were seen as a distinct and separate group that straddled the line between Indigenous and European. In asserting the European nature of the Madogwys, authors like John Filson created a graspable myth that their American audiences could claim for themselves. In Madoc's colonists, they

---

88 Jason O. Jeffries, *The Religion of White Rage: Religious Fervor, White Workers and the Myth of Black Racial Progress* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022), 110.

89 Filson, *Kentucke*, 97. Again, Filson's definition of "sophistication" was limited to ditches and earthen berms.

90 Ibid, 97.

could see themselves as part of a longstanding tradition of explorers and settlers dating back to medieval era. In Welsh Indian Theory, Americans could have history and legitimacy in their new nation through a founding mythology anyone with European ancestry could identify with. All that was left was to see if they could prove it.

3.2 Second-Hand Sourcing

One of the greatest early champions of Welsh Indian Theory in the United States was an English theologian named George Burder. In 1797, Rev. Burder authored a book for the London Missionary Society entitled *The Welch Indians; Or, A Collection of Papers, Respecting a People Whose Ancestors Emigrated from Wales to America, In The Year 1170, With Prince Madoc*. This book was a collection of sworn statements and journal articles compiled by Rev. Burder to convince the society to fund expeditions to the United States to locate the "long-neglected race of men, originally Britons".[91] Burder did not ever set foot in the United States, much less encounter Welsh Indians, but firmly believed that they existed, nonetheless. Burder cited a number of early writers of Welsh Indian Theory like Hakluyt, Abbot, and Lhoyd, but his facts were consistently jumbled throughout his account. In one instance, he claimed that Lhoyd translated Powell's work when it was the opposite that took place.[92] In another, he cited Giovanni Paolo Marana's *Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy* as one of his primary sources of information, despite the fact that it was a fictional novel.[93]

---

91 Burder, *The Welch Indians*, 3.
92 Burder, *The Welch Indians*, 6.
93 Burder, *The Welch Indians*, 7.

In 1810, John Sevier, a Revolutionary War general and former governor of Tennessee, wrote a letter to his friend Captain Amos Stoddard, the former Commandant of Louisiana, which discussed an encounter he had with a group of Cherokee roughly 30 years prior. According to Sevier, during a prisoner exchange in 1782 he began conversing with one of the elder chiefs known by the name Oconostota. Sevier asked him if he knew anything about a series of ancient "fortifications" found along the Hiwassee River he had seen during his expedition.[94] Oconostota informed Sevier that the cluster of ruins he found had been built by "white people who had formerly inhabited the country" and that "they were a people called Welsh".[95] Oconostota went on to say that one of the women in his tribe possessed pages of an ancient Welsh Bible given to her by some of these Welsh Indians, but before Sevier could read it, the woman's hut and the pages were destroyed by fire.[96]

One of the more dramatic accounts of Welsh Indian Theory belongs to a Mormon Missionary named Captain Dan Jones. Jones, a steamboat captain, was among the first group of Welsh converts to Mormonism in 1843.[97] After arriving in Salt Lake City in 1849, Jones began a series of expeditions throughout the western United States,

---

94 "John Sevier letter to Amos Stoddard, 1810," Edward E. Ayer Digital Collection, Newberry Library, accessed 12 April 2023, https://collections.carli.illinois.edu/digital/collection/nby_eeayer/id/48638. It is worth reminding that the "expedition Sevier is recollecting was in fact part of a protracted campaign of bloodshed against the Cherokee Nation throughout what is now Tennessee, Georgia, North Carolina, and Alabama. Prior to his negotiations with Oconostota when this anecdote allegedly took place, Sevier and his militia had burned numerous Cherokee villages to the ground, adding a touch of dark irony to the statement involving the woman's hut burning. See Jace Weaver, "The Red Atlantic: Transoceanic Cultural Exchanges," *American Indian Quarterly* 35, no. 3 (Summer 2011): 418-463. Also, as previously stated, the Bible wasn't translated into Welsh until long after Madoc supposedly left Wales.

95 Newberry Library, "John Sevier."

96 Newberry Library, "John Sevier."

97 Ronald D. Dennis, "Captain Dan Jones and the Welch Indians," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 18, no. 4 (Winter 1985): 112.

ostensibly to establish new Mormon settlements and convert new members. While these were his official duties, he confided to his colleagues that he had a secondary aim – finding the Welsh Indians. According to a letter he wrote in late 1849, Jones stated that his personal mission was "to search out that branch of the race of Gomer which are called the Madocians; their story is well-known, and I go with the intent of bringing them into the fold of the Good Sheperd."[98]

During his childhood in Wales, Jones had heard the Welsh Indian Theory presented as an accepted truth and was a lifelong believer in the same. In 1851, in the middle of his missionary period, Jones stated in a letter to friends that his greatest desire in life was to "get the Madocians out into the light and to give them a knowledge of their forefathers."[99] Jones received support for his expeditions from Brigham Young himself after he convinced the Mormon prophet that Welsh Indians would help convert Indigenous American tribes and the country of Wales, but he never succeeded. Jones made numerous treks through the wilderness between 1849 and 1860 based on a series of rumors of Madogwys contact, but the harsh western winters severely impacted his health, which ultimately led to his death in 1862 at age 51.[100]

Much like the Peckhams and Powels of centuries prior, this new generation of Welsh Indian Theorists nearly always based their accounts around second-hand evidence, relayed by "trusted sources" years or decades after the events they described. Few ever claimed to witness the Madogwys first-hand but insisted that they spoke the unvarnished

98 Dennis, "Captain Dan Jones," 113.
99 Dennis, "Captain Dan Jones," 114.
100 Dennis, "Captain Dan Jones," 116.

truth. As a point of fact, one of the only individuals to claim direct contact with a Madogwy, a Lt. Joseph Roberts, only published his claim over a decade after it allegedly occurred.

On May 15, 1819, an article simply titled "Welsh Indians" was printed in *The Louisville Public Advertiser* in Louisville, Kentucky. The article was written by Lt. Joseph Roberts, a junior officer in the British Army, recalling his visit to Washington D.C. around 1807.[101] During his stay in D.C., Roberts was sitting in the lobby of the hotel he was staying in, when two Indigenous tribesmen entered the room, conversing amongst themselves. Roberts, being himself of Welsh background, had been quietly singing a song in his native language when one of the two natives overheard him. Allegedly, the pair asked Roberts in fluent Welsh if they could understand him, and he replied that he of course could. The men went on to tell Roberts that it was their first time in Washington, and they had never encountered a white man who spoke their "sacred tongue" before.[102] When he pressed for further information, the two natives would only tell Roberts that the language was spoken in their village, which lay west of the Mississippi.

The Roberts article is the only purported first-hand account of an interaction with "Welsh Indians" that could be found in the course of researching this paper. Further complicating the matter is the inability to find any biographical information on Lt. Joseph Roberts beyond this single article, rendering it apocryphal at best. While this article does not offer much in the way concrete evidence, it does highlight the fact that the Welsh

101 Joseph Roberts, "Welsh Indians," *The Louisville Public Advertiser*, May 15, 1819, pg. 2.
102 Roberts, "Welsh Indians," 2.

Indian Theory in the United States, despite a constant measure of interest, has little if anything in the way of 1st-hand, eyewitness accounts to support it.

These early writings from Burder, Thomas, Jones, and Sevier demonstrate a common pattern in early American writings related to the Welsh Indian Theory in the United States, namely that they rarely claim direct interaction with these mysterious Madogwys or any physical relics. These books, letters, and articles helped to create a series of plausible anecdotes that rest more on the reputations of the writers than tangible evidence; In the absence of direct interaction, their accounts from the onset could not be categorically proven or disproven by the public at large. This process helped to lump Welsh Indian Theory into a growing lexicon of plausible American myths, along such larger-than-life stories as the Headless Horseman, Rip Van Winkle, and Johnny Appleseed.

Of secondary importance to this chapter, Roberts' article also serves as one of many examples of Kentucky's involvement in the perpetuation of the Welsh Indian Theory in the United States. Despite the Welsh Indian Theory having no fixed geographic point beyond North America writ large, Kentucky has played an outsized role in its American life. Numerous authors have claimed either encounters with Madogwys or discovery of their "ancient ruins" in the Bluegrass state. These men often led otherwise reputable careers in politics and higher education, and yet advocated for a fringe theory based on little evidence. What follows are a collection of exceedingly unorthodox accounts by some of Kentucky's political and professional luminaries of the 19th and 20th centuries.

.

3.3 Kentucky Connections

After Filson's *Kentucke*, one of the earliest accounts of Welsh Indians in the United States was written by a former President of Transylvania University and Secretary of State of Kentucky. Harry Toulmin, an Englishman and close friend of Thomas Jefferson, was a respected legal scholar that would come to be known as "The Frontier Justinian" by his peers and students.[103] After his term as Secretary of State of Kentucky ended, Toulmin published an article in *The Palladium*, a weekly newspaper in Frankfort, Kentucky in December 1804. This article recounted the tale of a frontiersman named Maurice Griffiths who was allegedly kidnapped by Shawnees while hunting in Kentucky in 1764.

According to Toulmin, Griffiths was taken to the Missouri River where he encountered "a nation of Indians who were of a very light complexion and spoke the Welsh language."[104] Toulmin offered no proof of this account beyond the word of Griffiths, but he was willing to stake his considerable reputation on it being factual. Like many of the accounts that surfaced in the following decades, it centers on the notion that one or more of the Indigenous tribes in the vicinity of Kentucky was anything but Indigenous; Toulmin's oft-cited article would go on to perpetuate the erasure of Indigenous history and identity, with little proof of its claim. This reoccurring theme of a lack of evidence is a common frustration in researching personal anecdotes, but it is far

---

[103] Paul Pruitt Jr, "Harry Toulmin," Encyclopedia of Alabama, last updated July 7, 2023, https://encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/harry-toulmin/.

[104] Harry Toulmin, "Welsh Indians," *The Palladium*, December 12, 1804, 2.

preferable to blatantly fabricated evidence heavily featured in the accounts of one of Toulmin's lesser-regarded contemporaries, Thomas Ashe.

A former British infantry lieutenant, Thomas Ashe could have been charitably described as a Georgian explorer. After a series of professional setbacks in the army and a stint in prison for dueling, Ashe decided to try his hand at surveying and writing travelogues.[105] In 1808, Ashe published a three-volume set of memoirs about his time spent exploring the American frontier entitled *Travels in America*. In volume two, Ashe described his experiences in the state of Kentucky, and specifically Lexington and the surrounding area.[106] To say that Ashe disproved of the Lexington of 1806 would be a gross understatement; he found the men to be little better than drunken brutes, the "so-called" churches to be dens of prostitutes, and that anyone with any sense had been or should be in the process of fleeing, writing that "it is evident that the town and the state are no longer susceptible of rising into eminence, and that their decline and degeneracy in wealth are reasonably to be apprehended."[107]

After a lengthy discussion of the town's perceived shortcomings, Ashe described at length the ruins of a great civilization in the Lexington area with little semblance of reality; while he does reference a "wide range of circumvallatory works" that bear resemblance to the Adena mounds located along Elkhorn Creek, Ashe also described a series of great catacombs running beneath the city containing thousands of perfectly

---

105 T.F. Henderson, "Ashe, Thomas (1770-1835)," in *The Dictionary of National Biography Vol. 2*, ed. Sir Leslie Stephen (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1885), 169.

106 Thomas Ashe, *Travels in America, Performed in 1806, For the Purpose of exploring the Rivers Alleghany, Monongahela, Ohio, and Mississippi, and Ascertaining the Produce and Condition of Their Banks and Vicinity* (London: John Abraham, printer, 1808), 146.

107 Ashe, *Travels in America*, 152-153.

preserved mummies.[108] According to Ashe, the early pioneers who settled Lexington found the catacombs, but filled with "terror and a spirit of revenge" from recent conflicts with the Indigenous people in the area, the early settlers ransacked the catacombs, burned the mummies, and smashed the burial chambers.[109]

Ashe would later claim that he found the entrance and attempted to recover some artifacts, but neglected to record where the entrance to catacombs was or the fate of the artifacts he found. It should hopefully go without saying that to this day, no evidence of catacombs beneath Lexington has ever been found – various caves and sinkholes within the limestone bedrock to be sure, but no grand burial chambers by any stretch.

Reminiscent of the events of Chapter Two where Lhoyd used the Cortes account to prop up his own assertions, this account by Ashe would be used by future writers to support Welsh Indian Theory despite the fact that he never claimed the ruins he "found" were Welsh in origin. Ashe readily described scenarios where the remnants could be Egyptian or Phoenician but was steadfast in saying that the grand structures could not have possibly been made by Indigenous tribes.[110]

For a more direct claim to Welsh presence in Kentucky, we can look to the writings of a Methodist minister, Rev. Thomas S. Hinde. A veteran of the War of 1812 and staunch abolitionist, Hinde lived most of his adult life in the town of Mount Carmel,

---

108 Ashe, *Travels in America*, 158-159.
109 Ashe, *Travels in America*, 160.
110 Ashe, *Travels in America*, 160-162.

Illinois that he helped establish.[111] In addition to his ministerial duties, Hinde was an avid writer who published a newspaper, *The Fredonian*, and various books and journal articles on the topics of religion, abolition, Hollow Earth Theory, and Welsh Indian Theory.

In the November 1842 edition of *The American Pioneer*, a journal published by the Logan Historical Society of Logan County, Ohio, Hinde asserted that the Welsh Indian Theory was a factual matter with archaeological evidence to back it up.[112] Hinde described the excavation of a gravesite near Louisville that took place in 1799, where the remains of six men in plate armor were allegedly found.[113] The breastplates on the bodies were decorated with Welsh crests and were inscribed with Latin phrases, which according to Hinde, meant these six were remnants of the followers of "Owen ap Zuinch," Welsh explorers of the 12th century who passed the Falls of the Ohio.[114]

These artifacts were taken from the burial site and subsequently lost to history; assuming this actually happened, it would have been a tenuous assumption to consider them Madogwys given the fact that breastplates weren't found in Europe until the early 14th century, nearly 200 years after Madoc's fleet allegedly landed in the Americas.[115] Despite his factual blunders, Hinde's article would become part of the growing Kentucky-centric "evidence" for Welsh Indian Theory that would be quoted by future

---

111 Arthur Clinton Boggess, *The Settlement of Illinois, 1778-1830* (Chicago: The Chicago Society, 1908), 196.

112 T.S. Hinde, "Mount Carmel, Illinois, May 30, 1842," *The American Pioneer* 1, no 11 (November 1842): 373.

113 Hinde, "Mount Carmel," 373.

114 Hinde, "Mount Carmel," 373. It's possible the name *Owen ap Zuinch* is Hinde mistakenly attempting to use the name of Madoc's alleged father, Owen ap Gruffydd, but the context suggests he his discussing Madoc.

115 Alan Williams, *The Knight and the Blast Furnace: A History of the Metallurgy of Armour in the Middle Ages & the Early Modern Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 55.

scholars, including some former members of Transylvania University and the University of Kentucky's faculty.

Though forced into retirement early in his career due to poor health, George W. Ranck was known throughout his life for his reputation as a gifted historian.[116] A professor in the History Department at Transylvania University, his area of focus was on local and state history, and he published several books and articles in the field. In his 1872 work *History of Lexington, Kentucky* he devoted an entire chapter to the ancient civilizations that flourished in the region prior to the arrival of white settlers. From the very first page, he begins to quote Thomas Ashe as a factual source, stating that the scholarly work of Prof. C.S. Rafinesque corroborated Ashe's findings, proving "the former existence in and about the present Lexington of a powerful and somewhat enlightened ante-Indian nation."[117]

Ranck went on to describe various archaeological evidences of some lost civilization in the forms of "stone sepulchers, at Lexington, built in pyramid shape" and a sacrificial altar in a mound that was since leveled but once "occupied a part of what is now called Spring Street, between Hill and Maxwell."[118] Ranck went on to paraphrase heavily from Ashe for several pages, and in some instances outright repeated verbatim what Ashe recorded nearly 60 years prior; he even went as far as to caution naysayers who believed a catacomb beneath the city was impossible, stating that even if the location

116 Obituaries, "Struck By Train – George W. Ranck Is Killed Near Lexington," *The Courier-Journal*, August 3, 1901, 3.
117 George W. Ranck, *History of Lexington, Kentucky: Its Early Annals and Recent Progress* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co, 1872), 1.
118 Ranck, *History of Lexington*, 2.

of the entrance was lost to time, so to were many ruins of Greece and Rome until someone got lucky.[119]

Ranck spent several pages of this chapter quoting early archaeological surveys conducted by Constantine Rafinesque in the 1820s before turning to speculation on the identity of those who built these sepulchers and mounds. Ranck firmly asserted that these ruins could not be the works of Indians, as they were far too complex for their capabilities, and instead offered suggestions of ancient Picts, Egyptians, or Welshmen.[120] The inherent eurocentrism of Ranck's words was compounded by the opening of his second chapter, where he stated that regardless of where Indigenous Americans came from, "that they came *after* the 'Mound Builders' is evident.[121]

This consistent and racially-motivated thread of believing a foreign power preceded Indigenous Americans in Kentucky persisted into the 20th century, even surfacing in the writings of Drs. Webb and Funkhouser of the University of Kentucky. William S. Webb was a career academic; by age 33 he was the Head of the Department of Physics, and after serving in WWI he became the inaugural Head of the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology.[122] William D. Funkhouser was a globally recognized entomologist who was named Head of the Department of Zoology at age 37, a position he would retain until his death in 1948.[123] In addition to their respective fields, both men had

119 Ranck, *History of Lexington*, 3.
120 Ranck, *History of Lexington*, 11-12.
121 Ranck, *History of Lexington*, 14.
122 William G. Haag, "William Snyder Webb, 1882-1964," *American Antiquity* 30, no. 4 (April 1965): 470.
123 Alfred Brauer, "William Delbert Funkhouser, 1881-1948," *Science* 108, no. 2817 (December 1948): 726.

a passion for archaeological fieldwork; it was this hobby that led to their 1928 monograph *Ancient Life in Kentucky*. Despite unparalleled access to some of the most artifact-rich sites of early man in Kentucky, both of these highly educated men gave Welsh Indian Theory a strong endorsement.

In Chapter 9, Webb and Funkhouser discussed a series of burial sites across the Bluegrass that they attributed to an ancient society known as "Stone-Grave People" due to their construction of cairns for their burials.[124] The first several pages of this chapter are devoted to photographs and descriptions of these burial sites, but a full third of this chapter was devoted to the plausibility of Welsh Indian Theory and its role in the history of Kentucky. The authors began this section by making direct reference to the earlier accounts of Thomas Roberts, Harry Toulmin, and Thomas Hinde. In a seemingly misguided display of deference to the reputations of their predecessors, Funkhouser and Webb avowed that "These accounts of Indians who could speak Welsh are so numerous and in many cases are from such reliable sources, that we must be very skeptical indeed to doubt their authenticity."[125] Another argument given by the pair of University of Kentucky department heads is that the stone burials they found on their digs were of similar enough construction to cairns found in Wales that the matter deserved a deal of consideration.[126] On the one hand, it is true that the Welsh landscape, especially in Madoc's alleged birthplace of Gwynedd, is dotted with burial cairns and mound tombs;

---

124 W.D. Funkhouser and W.S. Webb, *Ancient Life in Kentucky: A Brief Presentation of the Paleontological Succession in Kentucky Coupled with a Systematic Outline of the Archaeology of the Commonwealth* (Frankfort: The Kentucky Geological Survey, 1928), 163.

125 Funkhouser and Webb, *Ancient Life*, 172-173.

126 Funkhouser and Webb, *Ancient Life*, 175.

on the other hand, modern archaeology has shown that these Welsh mounds were products of the neolithic period, well before the time period of Prince Madoc.[127]

While this proposed evidence by Webb and Funkhouser was at least rooted in documented physical evidence and observation, which is more than could be said for most facets of Welsh Indian Theory, if we recall the section earlier in the previous chapter on hermeneutic reasoning, another conclusion could be just as easily reached: more than one civilization on planet Earth figured out a stable way of stacking rocks. Ultimately, what we can say with certainty is that our modern archaeological record shows that Indigenous civilizations have existed in Kentucky dating back to the Paleoindian period, some 12,000 years ago.[128] We can also state as absolute certainty that the "Myth of the Mound Builders" that claims the earthen mounds dotting the Eastern Woodlands and Miami Valley regions were built by a mysterious precursor race is absolutely wrong; despite the hobbyist work of Funkhouser and Webb, American archaeologists have known that the prehistoric "Mound Builders" were the ancestors of modern Indigenous Americans since 1894.[129]

* * *

From the days of the earliest frontiersmen, Welsh Indian Theory has been a reoccurring presence in Kentucky's history. From soldiers to statesmen, men of scripture

---

127 Steve Burrow, "The Formative Henge: Speculations Drawn from the Circular Traditions of Wales and Adjacent Counties," in *Round Mounds and Monumentality in the British Neolithic and Beyond*, ed. Jim Leary, Timothy Darvill, and David Field (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2010), 182.

128 Kenneth B. Tankersley, "Ice Age Hunters and Gatherers," in *Kentucky Archaeology*, ed. R. Barry Lewis (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 1.

129 Gordon Randolph Willey and J.A. Sabloff, *A History of American Archaeology* (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman, 1980), 41-43.

to men of scholarship, a wide variety of individuals have recorded dubious accounts and conjectured opinions that the legendary Madogwys once roamed the Bluegrass State. While it is easy to scoff and raise an eyebrow at the idea of Welsh-speaking Indigenous tribes and hidden ruins beneath our modern cities, these stories did not simply materialize out of thin air; they are the product of centuries of repetitions of a false political narrative. The Welsh Indian Theory far outlived its intended purpose and transformed into a matter of accepted fact hundreds of years and an ocean away from its original context. Due to the euhemerized nature of Welsh Indian Theory, generations of otherwise reputable scholars had their thinking inherently biased against more plausible scenarios for their findings and observations, ultimately derailing what might have been important foundational work in the history of the American continent and contributed to the delegitimization and erasure of Indigenous history and culture. Instead of using the physical evidence to prove the connections of Indigenous people to the lands they had lived on for untold generations, effort was instead wasted on entertaining theories of a hybrid civilization that never was.

CHAPTER 4. CONCLUSIONS

In the course of this thesis, through the use of historiography, philosophy, and political science among other things, I have attempted to show how an English political gambit was transformed into an early component of American's conceptualization of their lived environment and a metaphorical weapon of violence against Indigenous Americans. A false story that was ostensibly created for a singular purpose, the usurpation of Spanish land claims, took on a new life in a new land, bolstered by the search for legitimacy in America's origin story. While I am resolute in my belief that there is not a shred of credible evidence to support the veracity of Welsh Indian Theory, that is not the issue at hand – what is of importance here is not IF Madoc existed, by rather WHY the tales surrounding him and the existence of Welsh Indians persevered as they did.

More important than the apocryphal nature of the accounts written by the Elizabethans and early Americans was the reputations of the men who wrote them. Authors, church officials, scholars, and statesmen – these were people who represented the highest echelons of their respective societies and eras. If the accounts they gave could not be corroborated, then the reputations and occupations they possessed could give credence to their words by themselves. By the sheer nature of who they were, their stories of Madoc and the Madogwys endured across time and space.

As stated at the beginning of this piece, it is the opinion of this author that crediting the Welsh with the colonization of the New World was a political act intended to curry favor with Queen Elizabeth I, who in addition to being the Queen of England, was of Welsh descent. In turn, because the original generation of statesmen and clergy

were so highly connected to the upper echelons of Elizabethan society, the story was euhemerised over ensuing generations on the basis of the creator's own reputations. When the story crossed the Atlantic, Welsh Indian Theory came to be accepted as a matter of common knowledge and took on a new life as a way of rooting European colonists in North America by usurping the connections Indigenous cultures had with their prehistoric ancestry across the United States, especially in what is now Kentucky.

Madoc and the narratives surrounding him outlived his intended purpose and transcended from the realm of court intrigue to become a legend in his own right. The man may or may not have lived, but his reputation has euhemerised into one of the great legends of the modern age. By studying the path of evolution undergone by the Welsh Indian Theory, we are provided with an additional insight as to why generations of Americans held the bias they did against the very real achievements of Indigenous American society, and why Americans were so quick to dismiss Indigenous claims to their ancestral lands.

In the course of my research, this thesis has undergone numerous evolutions to arrive at its current iteration. What started as a Kentucky history project has at various times been a social history, a political history, and a constitutional history. In light of these many false-starts, I wish to acknowledge the simple, and hopefully obvious fact, that this is not meant to be an exhaustive or definitive work on the history of US-Indigenous relations – that is an entire field in and of itself.[130] This thesis is also not intended to be a condemnation of several centuries worth of historiography and the

[130] I will be pursuing this topic further in the future. Due to the time constraints involved, there are several avenues yet to be explored.

individuals involved in it – while there were undoubtedly bad-faith actors in the mix, many of the contributors to the body of Welsh Indian Theory were operating with an inherent biased due to the cultural acceptance of the Madoc legend.

With the benefit of 21st century technology and scientific methodology, we know that the "ancient ruins" located near the Elkhorn River on the outskirts of Lexington are mounds built by the Adena tribe; we also know that there are no secret catacombs, or a necropolis buried beneath the city. We know that the legendary artifacts that 19th-century explorers spent years searching for, like ancient Welsh Bibles or breastplates, simply did not exist prior to Madoc's alleged departure from Europe in 1170 AD. We know that the ship technology of the time would not have allowed for a survivable transatlantic crossing. We also know, based on every conceivable metric, that Kentucky was not the vast, empty "Middle Ground" that is was purported to be in the mid-18th century; throughout the state of Kentucky we have archaeological evidence of continuous habitation dating back to the Ice Age.

When trying to explain the process of blatantly erasing the connection to the land that Indigenous Americans have through their ancestors, the traditional factors that are brought up are the differences in Eurocentric and Indigenous approaches of land ownership and management, a series of arbitrary delineations between "prehistoric" and "historic" Indigenous civilizations that severed Indigenous connections to the land, and the financial motives of early land speculators. Throughout this thesis, it has been my goal to propose Welsh Indian Theory as a justifiable fourth factor. In essence, Welsh Indian Theory as interpreted in the United States suggested a proto-civilization of Indigenous people with European roots were the original, rightful owners of the land;

they cultivated it, built fortifications and villages, and worked to improve the land by European standards before disappearing and being replaced by modern Indigenous tribes. In turn, since the 18th and 19th century Indigenous inhabitants of the United States' interior could be portrayed as an invasive force with no historical connection to the land, said lands could be rightfully seized by the European colonists and later US citizens for their own usage.

The tale of Madoc and the Welsh Indian Theory is one that will live on far after the bones of those who write of him turn dust, for it is a myth that can be molded to reflect numerous societies and be used as a tool or weapon to achieve a staggering array of outcomes. While the content of the theory has little basis in fact, the theory itself is a testament to the longevity of our words and thoughts; while a lack of physical proof may make similar rumors and tall-tales appear easily dismissible, I can whole-heartedly say that a lack of physical proof can actually make certain stories harder to dismiss. To an extent, I think this may have been something the original creators of Welsh Indian Theory were not only aware of but counting on. In the words of Prince Madoc ap Owain's (ostensible) creator Sir Humphrey Llwyd:

"But concerning Madawc's Voyage to this Country, and afterwards his return from thence; there be many fabulous Stories and idle Tales invented by the Vulgar, who are sure never to diminish from what they hear, but will add to and increase any Fable as far as their invention will prompt them."[131]

[131] Dr. David Powell, *The History Of Wales, Comprehending the Lives and Succession of the Princes of Wales, From Cadwalader the last King, to Llewelyn the last Prince, of British B0lood, with a Short Account of the Affairs of Wales, under the Kings of England* (London: M. Clark Publishing, 1697): 195.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

- Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury George. *A Briefe Description of the Whole World, Wherein is particularly described, all the Monarchies, Empires, and Kingdomes of the same, with their Academies, Newly augmented and enlarged, with their several Titles and Scituations thereunto adioyning, The Sixth Edition.* London: John Marriot Printer, 1624.

- ab Rhys, Sir Meredyth. *Cywydd i Ddiolch am Rwyd Bysgota; i Ifan ab Tudor*. Gwynedd: Royal Court at Cardiff, 1477.

- Ashe, Thomas. *Travels in America, Performed in 1806, For the Purpose of exploring the Rivers Alleghany, Monongahela, Ohio, and Mississippi, and Ascertaining the Produce and Condition of Their Banks and Vicinity.* London: John Abraham, printer, 1808.

- Burder, George. *The Welch Indians; Or, A Collection of Papers, Respecting a People Whose Ancestors Emigrated From Wales To America, In The Year 1170, With Prince Madoc (Three Hundred Years Before The First Voyage of Columbus), And Who Are Now Said To Inhabit A Beautiful Country On The West Side Of The Mississippi*. London: T. Chapman Printing, 1797.

- Casaubon, Meric. *A True & Faithful Relation Of What Passed For Many Yeers Between Dr. John Dee (A Mathematician Of Great Fame In Q. Eliz. And King James Their Reignes) And Some Spirits: Tending (Had It Succeeded) To A General Alteration Of Most States And Kingdomes In The World.* London: D. Maxwell Printer, 1659.

- Catlin, George. *North American Indians: Being Letters and Notes on their Manners, Customs, and Conditions, Written during Eight Years' Travel amongst the wildest tribes of Indians in North America, 1832-1839, in Two Volumess.* Philadelphia: Leary, Stuart and Co, 1913.

- Cortes, Hernan. *Letters from Mexico*. Translated by Anthony Pagden. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.

- De Laet, Joannis. *Notae ad Dissertationem Hugonis Grotii: De Origine Gentium Americanarum: Et Observationes aliquot ad meliorem indaginem difficillimae illius Quaestionis*. Amsterdam: Louis Elzevirius Printer, 1643.

- De Solis, Antonio. *The History of the Conquest of Mexico, by the celebrated Hernan Cortes. Containing a Faithful and Entertaining Detail of all his Amazing Victories, in that vast Empire, its Laws, Customs, Religion, etc*. London: William Anderson, 1759.

- Filson, John. *The Discovery, Settlement, And Present State of Kentucke: And An Essay towards the Topography, and Natural History of that important Country*. Wilmington: James Adams Printing, 1784.

- Gwilym. "II. Welsh Indians: To the Editor of the Cambro-Briton." *The Cambro-Briton* 3, no. 29 (May 1822): 435-437.

- Hakluyt, Richard. *The Principall Navigations, Voiages And Discoveries Of The English nation, made by Sea or ouer Land, to the most remote and farthest distant Quarters of the earth at any time within the compasse of these 1500 yeeres: Devided into three several parts, according to the positions of the Regions whereunto they were directed.* London: George Bishop, Ralph Newberie, Christopher Barker Royal Printers, 1589.

- Heylyn, Peter. *Mikrokosmos: A Little Description of the Great World, 7th Edition.* Oxford: William Turner Printing, 1636.

- Hinde, Thomas S. "Mount Carmel, Illinois, May 30, 1842." *The American Pioneer* 1, no. 11 (November 1842): 373-375.

- Lhoyd, Sir Humphrey. *The Historie of Cambria, Now Called Wales: A Part of the most famous Yland of Brytain, written in the Brytish Language Aboue Two Hundreth Yeares Past*. London: John Harding Publishing, 1568.

- Lhoyd, Sir Humphrey and Thomas Twyne. *The Breuiary of Britayne: As this most noble and renowmed lland was of auncient time deuided into three Kingdomes, England, Scotland, and Wales, Contaynyng a learned discourse of the variable state, & alteration therof, vnder diuers, as wel natural: as forren princes, & Conquerours. Together with the Geographicall description of the same, such as neither by elder, nor later writers, the like hat set foorth before.* London: Richard Johnes Printing, 1573.

- Marana, Giovanni Paolo, *The Eighth and last volume of letters writ by a Turkish spy, who lived five and forty years undiscover'd at Paris: Giving an Impartial Account to the Divan at Constantinople, of the most Remarkable Transactions of Europe: And discovering several Intrigues and Secrets of the Christian Courts (especially of that of France,) continued from the Year 1673, to the year 1684, Written originally in Arabick, translated into Italian, from thence into English, by the Translator of the First Volume.* London: J. Rhodes publishing, 1684.

- Obituaries. "Struck By Train – George W. Ranck is Killed Near Lexington." *The Courier-Journal*, August 3, 1901.

- Pagitt, Dr. Ephraim. *Christianography: Or, The Description of the Multitude and Sundry Sorts of Christians, In the World, Not Subject to the Pope*. London: Robert Clavell Publishing, 1674.

- Peckham, Sir George. *A True Reporte, Of the late discoveries, and possession, taken in the right of the Crowne of Englande, of the New-found Landes: By that valiant*

and worthye Gentleman, Sir Humfrey Gilbert Knight. London: John Hinde Publishing, 1583.

- Powell, Dr. David. *The History Of Wales, Comprehending the Lives and Succession of the Princes of Wales, From Cadwalader the last King, to Llewelyn the last Prince, of British Blood, with a Short Account of the Affairs of Wales, under the Kings of England*. London: M. Clark Publishing, 1697.

- Roberts, Joseph. "Welsh Indians." *The Louisville Public Advertiser*, May 15, 1819.

- Sevier, John. John Sevier to Amos Stoddard, October 9, 1810. In *Edward E. Ayer Digital Collection at Newberry Library*. https://www.collections.carli.illinois.edu/digital/collection/nby_eeayer/id/48637.

- Southey, Robert. *Madoc, A Poem In Two Parts*. Boston: Monroe and Francis, 1806.

- The History of Parliament. "Lloyd (Lhuyd), Humphrey (1527-1568), of Foxhall, Henllan, Denb. And of Denbigh." Accessed 8 April 2023. https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/lloyd-(lhuyd)-humphrey-)-1527-68.

- Toulmin, Harry. "Welsh Indians." *The Palladium*, December 12, 1804.

- Welsh Society of Pennsylvania. *Constitution And Rules of the Welsh Society of Pennsylvania*. Mount Holly: Stephen Ustick Publisher, 1799.

- Williams, John. *An Enquiry Into The Truth Of The Tradition, Concerning The Discovery Of America, By Prince Madog ab Owen Gwynedd, About The Year 1170.* London: J. Brown Publishing, 1791.

- Williams, John. *Farther Observations, On The Discovery Of America, By Prince Madog ab Owen Gwynedd, About The Year, 1170.* London: J. Brown Publishing, 1792.

Secondary Sources

- ab Ithel, John Williams, ed. *Brut Y Tywysogion; Or, The Chronicle of the Princes*. London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1860.

- Armstrong, Zella. *Who Discovered America? The Amazing Story of Madoc.* Chattanooga: The Lookout Publishing Company, 1950.

- Arnow, Harriette Simpson. *Seedtime on the Cumberland*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1983.

- Ashton, Elwyn T. *The Welsh In The United States*. Sussex: Caldra House Limited, 1984.

- Barbier II, Paul. *The Age Of Owain Gwynedd: An Attempt At A Connected Account Of The History Of Wales From December 1135 To November 1170.* London: David Nutt Publishing, 1908.

- Barksdale, Kevin T. "Introduction: Kentucky and the Struggle for the Early American West." *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 114, no. ¾ (Summer/Autumn 2016): 291-302.

- Bartrum, Peter C. *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1966.

- Baumgartner, Joseph, George Lanczowski, J.B. Fries, and H. Fries. "Myth and Mythology." *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* 2, no. 4 (December 1974): 195-200.

- Becker, Audrey L. and Noone, Kristin, ed. *Welsh Mythology and Folklore in Popular Culture*. London: McFarland & Company Inc., 2011.

- Ben-Amos, Dan. "The Historical Folklore of Richard M. Dorson." *Journal of Folklore Research* 26, no. 1 (Jan-Apr 1989): 51-60.

- Boggess, Arthur Clinton. *The Settlement of Illinois, 1778-1830*. Chicago: The Chicago Society, 1908.

- Bowen, Benjamin F. *America Discovered by the Welsh in 1170 A.D.* Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co, 1876.

- Bown, Stephen R. *1494: How a Family Feud in Medieval Spain Divided the World in Half*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2011.

- Brauer, Alfred. "William Delbert Funkhouser, 1881-1948." *Science* 108, no. 2817 (December 1948): 726.

- Brinkerhoff, Thomas J. "Reexamining the Lore of the 'Archetypal Conquistador': Hernán Cortés and the Spanish Conquest of the Aztec Empire, 1519-1521." *The History Teacher* 49, no. 2 (February 2016): 169-187.

- Bronner, Simon J., ed. *The Oxford Handbook of American Folklore and Folklife Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.

- Conway, Alan. "Welsh Emigration To The United States." *Bulletin: British Association for American Studies* no. 8 (February 1959): 11-18.

- Cooper, John. *The Queen's Agent: Francis Walsingham at the Court of Elizabeth I*. London: Faber & Faber, 2011.

- Danisi, Thomas C. and Wood, Raymond W. “Lewis and Clark’s Route Map: James MacKay’s Map of the Missouri River.” *Western Historical Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 53-72.

- Deacon, Richard. *Madoc & The Discovery of America: Some New Light On An Old Controversy*. London: Frederick Muller Ltd, 1967.

- DeCosta, Benjamin F. *Myvyrian Archaeology: The Pre-Columbian Voyages of the Welsh to America*. Albany: J. Munsell’s Sons, 1891.

- Dennis, Ronald D. “Captain Dan Jones and the Welch Indians.” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 18, no. 4 (Winter 1985): 112-117.

- Durrett, Reuben T. *John Filson, the First Historian of Kentucky: An Account of His Life and Writings*. Louisville: John P. Morton & Co., 1884.

- Faulkner, Harold and Tyler Kepner. *America: It’s History and People*. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1934.

- Franklin, Caroline. “The Welsh American Dream: Iolo Morganwg, Robert Southey and the Madoc Legend.” In English Romanticism and the Celtic World, edited by Gerard Carruthers and Alan Rawes, 69-84. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

- Frost, John. *Pictorial History of the United States: Vol. 1.* Philadelphia: Benjamin Walker Publishing, 1844.

- Funkhouser, W.D., and W.S. Webb. *Ancient Life in Kentucky: A Brief Presentation of the Paleontological Succession in Kentucky Coupled with a Systematic Outline of the Archaeology of the Commonwealth.* Frankfort: The Kentucky Geological Survey, 1928.

- Gomme, George Laurence. *Folklore As An Historical Science*. London: Methuen & Co., 1908.

- Guy, Ben. *Medieval Welsh Genealogy: An Introduction And Textual Study*. Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2020.

- Haag, William G. “William Snyder Webb, 1882-1964.” *American Antiquity* 30, no. 4 (April 1965): 470-473.

- Halliwell-Phillipps, James Orchard. *The Private Diary of Dr. John Dee, and The Catalogue of his Library of Manuscripts: From the Original Manuscripts in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, and Trinity College Library, Cambridge.* London: John Bowyer Nichols and Son, 1842.

- Hartmann, Edward George. *Americans From Wales*. Boston: The Christopher Publishing House, 1967.

- Hassig, Ross. *Mexico and the Spanish Conquest*. London: Longman Group UK Limited, 1994.

- Henderson, A. Gwynn. "Dispelling the Myth: Seventeenth – and Eighteenth – Century Indian Life in Kentucky." *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 90, no. 1 (Bicentennial Issue): 1-25.

- Henderson, T.F. "Ashe, Thomas (1770-1835)." In *The Dictionary of National Biography Vol. 2*, edited by Sir Leslie Stephen, 169. London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1885.

- Henshaw, Henry W. *Who Are The American Indians?* Washington D.C.: Judd & Detweiler Printers, 1889.

- Hort, G.M. *Dr. John Dee: Elizabethan Mystic and Astrologer*. London: W. Rider & Son, Ltd., 1922.

- Hoy, David Couzens. "Hermeneutics." *Social Research* 47, no. 4 (Winter 1980): 649-671.

- Hunter, Jerry. "Myth and Historiography: One Hundred and Sixty Years of Madog and the Madogwys." *The Yearbook of English Studies* 46 (2016): 37-55.

- Jarvenpa, Robert. *Declared Defective: Native Americans, Eugenics, and the Myth of Nam Hollow.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018.

- Jones, Thomas. *Brut Y Tywysogyon, or The Chronicle of the Princes*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1955.

- Kubal, Timothy. *Cultural Movements and Collective Memory: Christopher Columbus and the Rewriting of the National Origin Myth*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

- Klotter, James and Craig Friend. *A New History of Kentucky, 2nd Ed.*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2018.

- Klotter, James and Freda Klotter. *A Concise History of Kentucky*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008.

- Leary, Jim, Timothy Darvill, and David Field, eds. *Round Mounds and Monumentality in the British Neolithic and Beyond*. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2010.

- Lewis, Henry, ed. *Collins-Spurrell Welsh Dictionary*. London: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd., 1960.

- Lewis, R. Barry, ed. *Kentucky Archaeology*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996.

- Lloyd-Morgan, Ceridwen. "Narratives and Non-Narratives: Aspects of Welsh Arthurian Tradition." In *Arthurian Literature XXI: Celtic Arthurian Material*, edited by

Keith Busby, Roger Dalrymple, and Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan, 115-136. Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2004.

- Lynam, Edward, ed. *Richard Hakluyt & His Successors: A Volume Issued To Commemorate The Centenary Of The Hakluyt Society*. London: The Hakluyt Society, 1946.

- Madley, Benjamin. "Reexamining the American Genocide Debate: Meaning, Historiography, and New Methods." *The American Historical Review* 120, no. 1 (February 2015): 98-139.

- Mann, Rob. "Intruding on the Past: The Reuse of Ancient Earthen Mounds by Native Americans." *Southeastern Archaeology* 24, no. 1 (Summer 2005): 1-10.

- Mattes, Mark Alan. "Colonial Prehistories of Indigenous North America." *Ohio Valley History* 22, no. 1 (Spring 2022): 80-85.

- McGrail, Sean. *Boats of the World: From the Stone Age to Medieval Times*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

- Milner, George R. "Warfare in Prehistoric and Early Historic Eastern North America." *Journal of Archaeological Research* 7, no. 2 (June 1999): 105-151.

- Moya-Smith, Simon. "Rick Santorum's 'Native American culture' crack was racist. But here's why he thought it was OK." *NBC News*, April 27, 2021, https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/rick-santorum-s-native-american-culture-crack-was-racist-here-ncna1265548.

- Newman, Marshall T. "The Blond Mandan: A Critical Review of an Old Problem." *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 6, no. 3 (Autumn 1950): 255-272.

- Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. "Peckham, Sir George." Published 23 September 2004. https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-21743.

- Paine, Gustavus. *The Men Behind the King James Version*. Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 1977.

- Paul, Heike. The Myths That Made America: An Introduction to American Studies. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2014.

- Propp, Vladimir. *Morphology of the Folktale*. Translated by Laurence Scott. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968.

- Pruitt Jr., Paul. "Harry Toulmin." Encyclopedia of Alabama. Last updated July 7, 2023. https://encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/harry-toulmin/.

- Pryce, Huw. *The Acts of Welsh Rulers, 1120-1283.* Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2010.

- Ranck, George W. *History of Lexington, Kentucky: Its Early Annals and Recent Progress*. Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co., 1872.

- Ricoeur, Paul. "History and Hermeneutics." *The Journal of Philosophy* 73, no. 19 (November 1976): 683-695.

- Saunt, Claudio. *Unworthy Republic: The Dispossession of Native Americans and the Road to Indian Territory*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2020.

- Schliemann, Heinrich. *Ilios: The City and Country of the Trojans*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1881.

- Seal, Graham. *The Encyclopedia of Folk Heroes*. Santa Barbara: ABC Clio, 2001.

- Segal, Robert A. "The Blurry Line Between Humans and Gods." *Numen* 60, no. 1 (2013): 39-53.

- Shackel, Paul A., ed. *Myth, Memory, and the Making of the American Landscape*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001.

- Sledge, John. "Madoc's Mark: The Persistence of an Alabama Legend." History. Mobile Bay Magazine. Last modified 24 November 2020. https://mobilebaymag.com/madocs-mark-the-persistence-of-an-alabama-legend/.

- Smith-Rosenberg, Carroll. "Surrogate Americans: Masculinity, Masquerade, and the Formation of a National Identity." *PMLA* 119, no. 5 (October 2004): 1325-1335.

- Spradlin, Derrick. "'GOD ne'er brings to pafs fuch Things for nought.': Empire and Prince Madoc of Wales in Eighteenth-Century America." *Early American Literature* 44, no.1 (2009): 39-70.

- Staples, Charles R. *The History of Pioneer Lexington: 1779 – 1806*. Lexington: Transylvania Press, 1939.

- Stephens, Thomas. *Madoc: An Essay On The Discovery Of America By Madoc Ap Owen Gwynedd In The Twelfth Century*. London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1893.

- Strabone, Jeff. "Samuel Johnson: Standardizer of English, Preserver of Gaelic." *ELH* 77, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 237-265.

- Switzer, Richard. "Chateaubriand and the Welsh Indians." *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 3, no. ½ (Fall-Winter 1974-1975): 6-17.

- Thomas, R.D. *Hanes Cymry America*. Translated by Philips G. Davies. Lanham: University Press of America, 1983.

- Turvey, Roger. *The Welsh Princes: The Native Rulers of Wales 1063-1283.* London: Routledge Publishing, 2002.

- Unger, Richard W. *The Ship in the Medieval Economy, 600-1600*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1980.

- Vecoli, Rudolph J. "The Significance of Immigration in the Formation of an American Identity." *The History Teacher* 30, no. 1 (November 1996): 9-27.

- Watts, Edward. *Colonizing the Past*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2020.

- Welsh Assembly. "The Welsh Diaspora: Analysis of the Geography of Welsh Names." Statistics and Research. Accessed 26 April 2023. https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2018-12/061102-welsh-diaspora-analysis-geography-welsh-names-en.pdf.

- Willey, Gordon Randolph and J.A. Sabloff. *A History of American Archaeology, 2nd ed.* San Francisco: W.H. Freeman, 1980.

- Williams, Alan. *The Knight and the Blast Furnace: A History of Metallurgy of Armour in the Middle Ages & the Early Modern Period*. Leiden: Brill, 2003.

- Williams, David. "John Evans' Strange Journey: Part I. The Welsh Indians." *The American Historical Review* 54, no. 2 (January 1949): 277-295.

- Williams, Gwyn A. "Welsh Indians: The Madoc Legend and the First Welsh Radicalism." *History Workshop* no. 1 (Spring 1976): 136-154.

- Williams, Gwyn A. *Madoc: The Making of a Myth*. Yorkshire: Eyre Methuen, 1979.

- Witgen, Michael. "A Nation of Settlers: The Early American Republic and the Colonization of the Northwest Territory." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 76, no. 3 (July 2019): 391-398.

- Witgen, Michael. *Seeing Red: Indigenous Land, American Expansion, and the Political*

Economy of Plunder in North America. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2022.

VITA

A native of Lexington, Kentucky, Dan Lewis attended the University of Kentucky as an undergraduate, graduating *cum laude* with a Bachelor of the Arts in History while minoring in Philosophy and obtaining an Undergraduate Certificate in Historic Preservation. As an Undergraduate, he received the Charles Scott Brent Prize for his undergraduate capstone paper. During his time as a Graduate Student at the University of Kentucky he has worked as a teaching assistant in the History Department and was awarded Best Graduate Student Research Paper from the Society for the History of Discovery in 2023 for his paper "Many Fabulous Stories and Idle Tales: Myth, Memory, and Madogwys in the Age of Exploration."