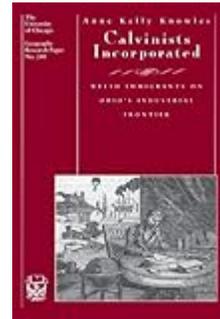


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Anne Kelly Knowles. *Calvinists Incorporated: Welsh Immigrants on Ohio's Industrial Frontier.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997. xxiii + 330 pp. \$24.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-226-44853-4.



Reviewed by Metin Cosgel (Department of Economics, University of Connecticut)

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Nowhere is the relationship between religious culture and economic performance more complex than in the experiences of immigrants who strive to improve their economic position while trying to preserve deeply held religious values. In *Calvinists Incorporated* Anne Kelly Knowles tells the fascinating story of a community of Welsh immigrants who settled in Jackson and Gallia counties of Ohio during the first half of the nineteenth century. Although recent studies of European migration have revised the earlier belief that immigrants quickly lost their native culture, they have not fully explored the two-way interaction between the immigrants' culture and their common desire for economic success. Knowles fills this gap by focusing on the key turning points in the history of this community and exploring the moral dilemmas faced by these strict Calvinists in their decisions to emigrate and to choose settlements and economic activities.

Focusing narrowly on a community of Welsh immigrants, Knowles addresses issues that have broader significance. One of the heavily debated issues in economic history has been about whether and to what extent has been a transition from moral to market economy. Against arguments that view the two types of economy as being distinct and incompatible, and consistent with the recent consensus that acknowledges their co-

existence in any society, Knowles shows the plurality of economic behavior and motivations among the Welsh immigrants that she studies. She finds that they were both family-oriented yeomen farmers and competitive industrial entrepreneurs and that their religious values served both to constrain behavior and to facilitate economic success. Based on careful and detailed analysis of the decisions made by this community in various contexts, she provides an illuminating example of the complex interaction between economic change and cultural values and institutions.

The book consists of an introduction that discusses general themes and five chapters that focus on key decisions of this community by reconstructing their culture and economy in different contexts and scales. Chapter One studies the historical geography of Welsh emigration to the United States in the national context of the early nineteenth century in order to determine the representativeness of those who left for Jackson and Gallia. It also establishes spatial features of Welsh emigration, the relationship between emigration and internal migration, and the social characteristics of Welsh emigrants at the time. The next two chapters examine the range of migration possibilities for the rural people in the county of Cardiganshire in Wales in their search for greater economic opportunities. Chapter Two focuses on internal

migration. It examines the long-standing migration traditions within Britain and the moral concerns that explain why so few people from one part of Cardiganshire participated in these migrations. The localized cultural and economic reasons for why they instead chose to emigrate to Jackson and Gallia are explored in Chapter Three. Remaining on the scale of locality, Chapter Four examines the relationship of Welsh settlers with the rapidly growing charcoal iron industry, their novel involvement in the industry through community corporations, and the way this involvement created new tensions within the community along with economic success. Moving between the national and local scales, the final chapter discusses the Welsh Calvinist immigrant experience in its moral context. Focusing on the major points of transition for the community, it shows the way confrontation between religious values and new opportunities created new social formations and the way culture and economy reinforced each other.

In reconstructing the history of Welsh migration, Knowles draws on an impressive range of sources and displays an admirably high level of scholarship. For example, because official records provide little specific information about Welsh migration flows before the end of the nineteenth century, she turns to obituaries printed in Welsh American religious magazines and other supplementary sources to painstakingly construct a database of individual immigrants that contains geographical and biographical information about 1,772 individuals (available in an appendix). Similarly, she uses interviews, British and U.S. census records, records of furnace companies, maps and atlases, and a variety of other primary and sec-

ondary sources (all listed in a 23 pages long bibliography) to incorporate the rich detail into the history in its different scales and contexts. Maintaining a close attention to the details of individual histories and geographies, she skillfully weaves together the details to reconstruct the history of the community and to analyze larger issues surrounding the relationship between economy and culture.

Calvinists Incorporated is an excellent work of historical geography that should also be of interest to economic historians, cultural anthropologists, and social science historians in general. Through a close study of a community's history, it enriches our understanding of the relationship between religious culture and economic performance and introduces new methods for studying histories of immigrant groups. Knowles's methods for constructing a database of individual biographies and biographical approach to community reconstruction will set new precedents.

(Knowles is lecturer in geography at the Institute of Earth Studies, University of Wales, Aberystwyth.)

Metin Cosgel's paper, "Productivity of a Commune: The Shakers, 1850-1880," with John E. Murray, is forthcoming in the June 1998 issue of *The Journal of Economic History*.

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