

British Buckeyes. The English, Scots, & Welsh in Ohio, 1700-1900. By Warren E Van Vugt. (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2006. xiii, 295 pp. Cloth, \$55.00, ISBN 0-87338-843-7.)

British Buckeyes. The English, Scots, & Welsh in Ohio, 1700-1900 by Warren E. Van Vugt of Calvin College is a survey of the influence British immigrants had on the development of Ohio over the course of two centuries. The arrival, settlement, and impact of British immigrants in the United States after 1775 is virtually ignored in academic literature, so this examination of them in one state is to be welcomed. The first premise of the work is that the history of Ohio cannot be told or understood without the British immigrants. The second premise, asserted in an often repeated phrase, is that British immigrants had a significant impact because of their cultural affinity with the Americans as well as a common language and religion. This fact is perhaps why British immigrants are so often overlooked: before 1775 they helped create American culture, but afterwards they simply blended in, not having as many obstacles to overcome or barriers to break through as other immigrant groups. Van Vugt, following heavily on the heels of *Albion's Seed* by David Hackett Fischer, believes that British immigrants coming to Ohio were simply reinforcing the folkways of earlier arrivals from Scotland, England, and Wales. Provocatively, in his conclusion he wonders when Ohio stopped being British and started being American. Although he admits many changes occurred between "early" and "late" British migrants, he does not seem to regard the differences as significant.

For *British Buckeyes*, Van Vugt identifies a selection of 602 British immigrants from biographies included in county histories for 60 of Ohio's 88 counties, most of which date from the 1880s and 1890s. The vast majority of the collected biographies are from English immigrants, reflecting perhaps the larger numbers of English who came to this country. While the book may seem "English-heavy," biographies and data on the other national groups are included. Throughout his work he relies heavily on these biographies and relating their contents to form a significant portion of the narrative. The county history research is supplemented by collections of letters, found in the United States and in England, ships' passenger lists and US and UK censuses. Unfortunately, Van Vugt does not say how he chose his sample of 602 immigrants, out of how many total biographies he found, or how he selected histories for those counties with more than one published. For example, there are four county histories for Columbiana County: Mack 1879, Cramner 1891, McCord 1905, and Barth 1926. While Mack is earlier, there are more biographies in Cramner. Frequently, entries for the native-born contain information for their pioneer ancestors, many of whom were also immigrants. Thus, using different county histories or different individuals could have produced different results. Neither does he comment that his selection of biographies is pulled from a decidedly non-random sample of Ohio residents. County histories were subscription volumes, so the biographies were generally not included in the volumes for free, which means only those individuals willing to pay for inclusion were memorialized. Consequently, only more successful (and wealthy) individuals were likely to be included and have the result of making the British immigrants appear more successful than they were. Van Vugt cannot be blamed for using a sample, as accounting for every biography of a British immigrant in Ohio from all published county histories would be an overwhelming task, but some indication of how his sample was selected and defined is warranted.

With the exception of the first chapter, the results of this research are divided thematically, not chronologically. Due the nature of the settlement of Ohio, the bulk of which

post-dates 1810 and the late date of the county histories (1878-1923), the volume centers on the nineteenth century. Chapter One, "The First British Buckeyes," examines the experience of the British, most of whom were English, from 1700 until 1815. For much of the long eighteenth century the Ohio Territory was a contested frontier where the French, Native Americans, and British lived and fought with each other, creating a new frontier culture. Van Vugt relates stories of various personages who helped define this new culture like Nicholas Cresswell and Ann Bailey. The British presence remained strong after the end of the Revolution with further settlement and the appointment of the Arthur St. Clair, a native of Caithness, as territorial governor.

The next two chapters, "The Nineteenth-Century: Migration Patterns and Assimilation," and "Communities and Settlements" summarize the settlement patterns of the various British groups in Ohio, including several useful graphics depicting these patterns. Chapter Two includes nuts and bolts information such as how much it cost to cross the Atlantic and then journey inland to Ohio, as well as population statistics for both Britain and the United States. By 1850, there were 28,557 British-born residents in Ohio. While this seems a sizable number it is less than the number of Irish immigrants, and it pales in comparison to the numbers from the various German states and principalities. Despite the conclusion of the previous chapter, that British immigrants assimilated quickly and later arrivals were not really immigrants so much as "cousins". Chapter Three details the experience of the Welsh, Manx, and Guernsey Islanders, who successfully created separate and long lasting cultural communities. A fourth, the English settlement at Nelsonville, did not prosper as an ethnic enclave. He does not include a Scottish settlement, likely because the available secondary sources on their settlement in Ohio are slim. Although religion played a dominant role in each of these successful communities, this chapter along with other data from the book, suggest that language was the most important factor in slowing assimilation. This conclusion seems to have been overlooked by Van Vugt. Immigrants from England and the Scottish Lowlands were the only groups within the British Isles who could almost be guaranteed to speak English. All other groups, Highland Scots, Manx, Welsh, and Guernsey Islanders, had distinct language traditions which were often maintained in spite of English cultural and linguistic dominance. He also overlooks the longstanding cultural differences and national animosities that existed between the groups which did not disappear when one boarded ship. Moreover, in areas where different British migrants probably lived in proximity to each other, especially in cities like Cleveland, Toledo and Cincinnati, he does not seem interested in finding out whether they maintained a distance or banded together. He does identify two communities that may have been either English or British enclaves, East Liverpool (p.136) and Shawnee (pp. 154, 170), but does not investigate them further.

The remaining four chapters examine the ways in which British immigrants contributed to their adopted homeland and interacted with native Ohioans in several arenas: agriculture (Chapter Four), crafts and industry (Chapter Five), religion and reform movements (Chapter Six), and the professions (Chapter Seven). A common theme of Chapters Four and Five is the technological superiority of the British. Due to the higher value of the land in Britain, they practiced a more labor intensive form of agriculture and were more likely to improve their land with draining and liming. Although, they often had to switch to the more "wasteful" techniques American farmers had developed due to the high cost of labor, their use of drainage did have a wide and important impact. Because of the advanced stage of the industrial revolution in the United Kingdom, immigrants coming from crafts and industries had extremely valuable knowledge and skills that propelled the economy of Ohio forward at a tremendous speed. Two

examples cited by Van Vugt are the pottery industry at East Liverpool and the steel industry in Cleveland. The sixth chapter outlines the similarities between religious denominations and reform movements in both countries. Many British immigrants prized the greater political freedom available in the United States and used this new power to further their own causes, particularly the temperance movement. The final chapter relates the British contributions to the various professions, particularly government work and the publishing of newspapers. A key example of a British immigrant who had a significant impact on the governance of Ohio was "Golden Rule" Jones of Toledo who came from Wales as a child.

While I am sympathetic to Van Vugt's claim that the influence that the impact of British immigrants in the development of Ohio far exceeded their numbers, a lack of comparison to other immigrant groups weakens his case. In the work, the only immigrant experiences and actions detailed are those of the British. Many British immigrants, particularly the English and Lowland Scots, were not handicapped by a language barrier and this meant they could participate as much as they wanted in Ohio culture and politics from the minute they arrived. Perceived cultural similarities made them seem less "different" than non-English speaking groups. But other immigrant groups did participate in Ohio. Van Vugt states that "...the territorial governor, first state governor, many of the early lawyers, politicians, merchants, newspaper publishers, reformers, ministers, and college presidents were either English, Scots, or Welsh – not to mention many of the most important industrialists" (pp. 220). However, it seems to me that even a cursory examination of the secondary literature available on German settlement, as they were the largest immigrant group in Ohio, would show that they also contributed merchants, publishers, reformers, ministers and college founders if not presidents. Additionally, speaking English was not required to farm. The participation of German-Americans was likely greater for the second generation as they acquired English. Though German immigrants have been coming to this country since 1683 and have contributed greatly to our language and folkways, they and other immigrant groups in Ohio receive scant mention.

Despite the amount of research that went into producing this volume, it is not as good as it could have been. More explicit methodology and comparison with other immigrant groups, particularly the Germans, would have added greatly to the value of *British Buckeyes*. Even with these flaws, however, *British Buckeyes* is a significant step in the study of British immigration to the United States after the American Revolution and the settlement of Ohio. Van Vugt's compilation of the biographies and communities together in one place will facilitate future research. Additionally, there is an extensive bibliography of primary and secondary sources. This work, either in its entirety or in sections, should prove useful for courses which focus on Ohio, immigration, agriculture, and industrialization.

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