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Transcript of a sound recording in MS 608, WLBZ Radio Station Records, Bangor, Maine, 1931-1973

Title: Broadcast from Bangor, North Wales to Bangor, Maine

Date: Not dated. Circa 1955

Please note: This transcript represents our best effort to understand what is being said. It is provided in an effort to make the audio recording more accessible, but may contain inaccuracies.

Recording number: Tape 18, part 1

Length of recording: 13:52

[Transcript begins]

ANNOUNCER: This is London Calling North America. The British Broadcasting Corporation presents a special program of greetings from the townfolk of Bangor in North Wales to folks in and around Bangor in the state of Maine. Here to introduce the program is Anthony McDonald.

McDONALD: Hello listeners in and around Bangor in the state of Maine. This is Anthony McDonald of the British Broadcasting Corporation calling you from your namesake town, Bangor in North Wales in Britain. The age old friendship between our two countries becomes stronger and warmer each time we get a chance to know each other a little better. And today, I have with me some of the citizens of our Bangor to bring you something of the flavor of their life here. Which must be, I suppose, a little different to yours in your rugged state of Maine, with your majestic coastline only a few miles away and your wonderful fishing and hunting in the forests of Maine whose colors in fall we cannot help but envy. Here in North Wales, life is one must admit, a little more tamed. It's a beautiful part of the world with a softer beauty that comes with long, level beaches of golden sand, gentle hills, sunny green valleys with streams wandering through them. And very little industrial activity, much less, I think even, than your own. So the people who live here are happy and smiling. I came here yesterday, I suppose, sharing the traditional Englishman's view of the Welshman as of a member of a deeply musical, deeply cultural, deeply religious community. I don't think we can do better than to ask the newly enthroned Bishop of Bangor who's with me here at the microphone whether he agrees with that estimate. Do your sir?

BISHOP: I am inclined to agree with you, sir, that it is an estimate which has a great deal to be said for it. You will find that in Wales, culture, religion, love of music and of poetry, is scattered all over the country in a way which may not be true of England where culture is apt to be localized in the large cities. In Wales, for example, you will find in tiny little hamlets, in little farm houses in the mountain [inaudible] people with an intense love of poetry and of music. I myself, in my childhood, knew of an old bachelor farmer who had an elementary school education who used to spend his evenings alone reading Plato, and I can remember my own brother confiding to me his great ambition to write a poem which would win a prize at the eisteddfod.

McDONALD: Well, sir, I think most of us know that this deep love of poetry and music is one of the fundamental things about you Welsh. I wonder, my lord bishop, if you would care to send a greeting to our listeners in Bangor and the state of Maine, with perhaps a short blessing in Welsh.

BISHOP: My pleasure. As Bishop of Bangor in North Wales, I send to listeners in Bangor in the state of Maine affectionate greeting in the name of the Church in Wales and especially of the church in this diocese of Bangor, and with the love of the nonconformist churches so freely given to me, I am bold to send greeting in their name also. [Greeting in Welsh language]

McDONALD: Thank you, my lord. Now listeners, another of the notable things about Bangor is that here the Welsh are not content with spare time reading, as it were. Bangor is famous for its schools and colleges where they channelize and formalized this learning. Here with me is a student from one of Bangor's colleges, the University College of North Wales. Her name is Patricia Prince and she is 22 years old. Now, Miss Prince, you're not a Welsh woman are you?

PRINCE: No, I don't come from here, really, I come from near Liverpool.

McDONALD: Well, tell me why have you come here for your course of study to the University of North Wales instead of going to say, Liverpool University?

PRINCE: Well, I wanted to find somewhere where the life of the college wasn't submerged in the multifarious activities a very large city.

McDONALD: And you found it here?

PRINCE: I found it here, indeed.

McDONALD: I suppose you might, because there are only what, ten thousand people altogether in this area?

PRINCE: Something like that...

McDONALD: Against the many hundreds of thousands of Liverpool. Well now, a Welsh friend of mine this morning said that he thought that Bangor was the Athens of Wales. Would you agree with that?

PRINCE: Well, a trifle sweeping, but I think it's true. Yes, culture's so general here that you don't lose anything by coming to a university here, even though it is small.

McDONALD: Uh-huh. What do you do apart from study here?

PRINCE: Oh, so many things. We've got the scenery to start off with, which gives us room for mountaineering, fair walking, and lazy lounging on the beach and [inaudible] in the summer. And of course, singing. Ainging always plays a big part in the life the Welsh people.

McDONALD: Any Welsh people, anywhere, anytime.

PRINCE: And particularly, I think that at our college, we sing whenever we can.

McDONALD: How true that is, and this capacity for song shows itself, as the world knows, in the eisteddfods, or festivals of song and poetry of the Welsh, perhaps more than in any other nation. And here's another aspect of the same thing. Three students from Patricia Prince's college to a sing a song of their own composition. And incidentally, it's another interesting comment on the Welsh. They can make fun of their own most sacred institutions. This is a song about the animals in the farmyard who decide to hold their own eisteddfod.

[Music]

McDONALD: Thank you, students of the University College of North Wales in Bangor. And as we've indicated to you, Wales has been, to some extent, invaded by industrial activity in recent years, but North Wales rather less than South Wales, I think. So that the main industrial activity here in North Wales is still what it has been for many, many years, the quarrying of slate. There are many big quarries near here and I've asked Mr. Richard Jones, who's a quarry man in one of them, to come here and talk to you. Mr. Jones, you are at the Penrhyn slate quarry, aren't you?

JONES: Yes.

McDONALD: Is that a big one?

JONES: Well it's supposed to be the largest in the world.

McDONALD: The largest slate quarry in the whole world?

JONES: Yes, we think there are lots of [inadudible]. We think that it's the eighth wonder of the world.

McDONALD: The eighth wonder of the world, well, well. Mr. Jones, let me ask you a straight question. Apart from your work in the quarry, which after all brings you your living, which is an important reason for staying in a place, if you had your chance, would you live anywhere else, or would you live here?

JONES: I think not. [Inaudible] I can't think of anywhere in the whole world that I should rather be more than the [top ?]

McDONALD: Why do you like to be here?

JONES: I'm in love with the feeling, in love with the people, I think we've got the nicest spot for scenery.

McDONALD: Ah but now have you seen any other scenery anywhere else?

JONES: Well I, during the first World War, we traveled quite a lot of it. I go to France, to Italy, out to the Far East. Even there, I always thought of home, enjoyed it in retrospect, and looked forward to coming back to it, you know.

McDONALD: Tell me, do you ever show visitors around the slate quarry?

JONES: Yes, quite a few during the summer months. Hundreds...

McDONALD: We are broadcasting to America, as you know. It might be interesting for me to ask you, did you ever during the war show any Americans around, or do you show Americans around?

JONES: [Inaudible] we showed ... in uniform and ladies in uniform from America during this last war. They were very interested, and we had some very nice, enjoyable afternoons with them. And then if you would allow me, I'd like to send my greetings to any of them that maybe listening to your broadcast today and we sincerely hope that we can see them again in the Penrhyn Quarry in the near future.

McDONALD: Well, I hope you will. Mr. Jones, you strike me as being probably a real Welsh speaking Welshman. Are you?

JONES: Yes.

McDONALD: Well, I wonder if you would let our listeners in America hear then a piece of this, this strange language that uses all its consonants together, or all its vowels together, but never seem to mix the two of them.

JONES: Yes, I can give you just a small, four line verse, which is an appreciation of the mountain tops, [Welsh word]. What you get there is a nice breeze, and from [inaudible]

[Recites poem in Welsh]

McDONALD: Thank you very much, Mr. Jones. Well, now I have with me in front of the microphone Mr. [P ?] Williams who was a local farmer, who true to the tradition of Welshman, generally, and Welsh farmers in particular, besides farming in the daytime, is a great student of Welsh literature in the evenings. And has also a bit of a reputation as a singer to the harp, but more about that in a minute. But Mr. Williams, what kind of farming do you do?

WILLIAMS: Cattle farming.

McDONALD: And whereabouts? Near Bangor?

WILLIAMS: In the borough of Bangor is my farm, yeah.

McDONALD: I heard something about you having another farm.

WILLIAMS: I have also another farm in Anglesey.

McDONALD: Over in Anglesey, that's over on the other side of the Menai Strait?

WILLIAMS: Yes, that's right, and we're very proud two things over in Anglesey. On this old farm of ours there's an old castle built in the 10th century and most of it is still standing. Another thing that we're very proud of is one of our Welsh poets, a very famous Welsh poet, who eventually went over to America and settled on the east coast and did become a principal in one of your colleges.

McDONALD: What was his name?

WILLIAMS: [?] and he was he was born, was he, within half a mile of my home. The name [?] is the name of the district.

McDONALD: Mr. Williams, well, despite your reputation as a student of Welsh literature and the farmer in this neighborhood I can't conceal from you that the reason I've asked you to the studio isn't for your own beautiful eyes, but for those of your daughter sitting over there.

WILLIAMS: Quite all right, sir.

McDONALD: Tell me, she had some skill as a harpist, I believe.

WILLIAMS: Yes, the youngster.

McDONALD: How old is she now?

WILLIAMS: She, she will be twelve next week.

McDONALD: And this costume she's wearing there, this red cloak with the black hat, this is the Welsh national costume?

WILLIAMS: Yes, that is the traditional Welsh national costume.

McDONALD: And do you know here in Wales that we regard that hat, that tall, thin hat with a broad black brim, we regard that as a witch's hat in England.

WILLIAMS: I dare say.

McDONALD: Will she play for us?

WILLIAMS: Yes, she will play something

McDONALD: Now, [inaudible] what will you play for us?

DAUGHTER: I'll play [Title inaudible]

[Music]

Thank you very much, [inaudible], that was beautiful. Now just one other little thing before we go. Mr. Williams, I am glad to acknowledge that the world owes a great deal to Wales in one way or another, but one of the things that we were not quite certain about is the fact but you have a village, haven't you, very near you, I imagine, in Anglesey, which has the longest name of any town in the world, is that so?

WILLIAMS: That is true, sir.

McDONALD: Well remarkable, it appears. Would you like to give it to our listeners? We'll listen very carefully.

WILLIAMS: Here it is. Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogoch.

McDONALD: Really? And so there you are, listeners in Bangor, Maine. There's just a brief glimpse of the happy, smiling countryside and the happy, smiling people of Bangor, North Wales, who are lucky enough or clever enough to find time in the hurly-burly of the modern world to read and write poetry, to play music, and to sing. And now to the sound of Mr. [Produk?] Williams and his daughter playing and singing to the Welsh harp, this is Anthony McDonald of the British Broadcasting Corporation saying goodbye from Bangor North Wales in Britain to listeners in Bangor, state of Maine.

[Transcript ends]

For more information about this transcript, audio recording, or other materials in Special Collections at the University of Maine, contact:

Fogler Library Special Collections
5729 Raymond H. Fogler Library
Orono, ME 04469-5729
207.581.1686
um.library.spc @ maine.edu