

DAVIES, JOHN (1652 - post 1716), of Rhiwlas, Llansilin, Denbighshire, genealogist

Name: John Davies
Date of birth: 1652
Date of death: post 1716
Spouse: Margaret Davies (née Lloyd)
Child: Jane Davies
Child: Margaret Davies
Child: Edward Davies
Parent: Margaret ferch William Llwyd ap Rowland
Parent: Edward Davies
Gender: Male
Occupation: genealogist
Home: Rhiwlas
Area of activity: History and Culture; Scholarship and Languages
Author: Evan John Jones

Son of Edward Davies of Rhiwlas (20 February 1618 - 14 March 1680) and Margaret, only daughter of William Llwyd ap Rowland of Coed-y-Rhygyn, Trawsfynydd (see *Peniarth MS 145* (71); *Powys Fadog*, iv, 353; *Display of Heraldry*, 47). His grandfather was Dafydd ab Edward ap Dafydd ap Ieuan of Rhiwlas, and his grandmother was Gwen Gruffydd (died 1640), daughter of Gruffydd ap Lewis of Golfa, Llansilin. According to *Archæologia Cambrensis*, 1888, 51, Davies was born 10 October 1652. His marriage has now been ascertained, by Mr. David Watkins in his unpublished dissertation 'Welsh Historiography in the 17th Cent.' (1955). The bishop's transcripts of Llansilin parish record, 27 May 1685, the christening of 'Margaret daughter of John Davies and Margaret his wife, of Rhiwlas ' (the child was born 24 May 1685 and died in 1695; a son, Edward, born 9 November 1683, had died 14 February 1684, and another daughter, Jane, was born 11 January 1688 - *Peniarth MS 144*, 269); Margaret, the wife, was buried 21 April 1719 - Mr. Watkins (from St Asaph MS. 41) gives her father as Thomas Lloyd of Llanwddyn. His son's death in infancy explains why Davies's manuscripts passed to the nephew, for whom see *Archæologia Cambrensis*, loc. cit.

Very little is known about John Davies. He traced his genealogy back to Rhiwallon, a grandson of *Bleddyn ap Cynfyn*. He was connected with the well-to-do families of the district and counted among his friends many who were interested in history, genealogy, and the science of heraldry. They included *William Maurice* (died 1680) of Cefn-y-brach, Llansilin, antiquarian, Lewis Jones of Ty-yn-yr-Wtra and Hirddol, antiquarian, Evan Llwyd Jeffrey of Golfa Isa (Sycharth), poet and gentleman, and *Walcyn Clywedog*, bard and household companion to his grandfather. His father also was an antiquary and was the owner of *Peniarth MS 144* and *Peniarth MS 145*. In these manuscripts there are additional notes by John Davies himself. His own manuscripts are contained in four volumes now in the British Museum (B.M. Add. MSS. 9864-7). These show clearly the debt which John Davies owed to the labours of *Lewis Dwnn*.

In 1716 his book, *A Display of Heraldry*, was published by *John Roderick*. It is full of interesting and valuable details, especially about the families of North Wales (see Moule, *Bibliotheca Heraldica*, 296-7). At the request of *Thomas Mostyn* of Gloddaeth, John Davies copied the manuscript prepared by *Lewis Dwnn* giving the pedigrees and the coats of arms of the gentle families of Anglesey, Caernarfonshire, and Merionethshire. At that time, the manuscript was in the possession of *Lewis Owen* of Peniarth; the work was finished in 1685 and is to be found in *Sir S. R. Meyrick's* collection, *Heraldic Visitations*, ii. John Davies and one William Hughes testified to the accuracy of *Lewis Dwnn's* work.

After his death his manuscripts came into the possession of his nephew John Reynolds of Oswestry, who was the son of Jacob Reynolds of Chirk and Gwen, sister of John Davies. John Reynolds, too, was an antiquary and made extensive use of his uncle's work when preparing for the press his own book, *The Scripture Genealogy*, 1739.

Author

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Published date: 1959

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