

## NICHOLAS, THOMAS (1816 - 1879), Congregational minister, theological college tutor, and historian

**Name:** Thomas Nicholas

**Date of birth:** 1816

**Date of death:** 1879

**Gender:** Male

**Occupation:** Congregational minister, theological college tutor, and historian

**Area of activity:** Education; History and Culture; Literature and Writing; Religion

**Author:** William Llewelyn Davies

Born 17 February 1816 at Troed-y-rhiw, near Trefgarn Chapel, Solva, Pembrokeshire, and educated at the Lancashire College, Manchester, and in Germany (M.A., Ph.D., Gottingen). He was Congregational minister at Stroud, Gloucestershire (1847), and, later, at Eignbrook, Hereford before he was appointed (1856) tutor in Biblical literature and mental and moral sciences at the Presbyterian College, Carmarthen.

In 1863 he settled in London, and thereafter, with the aid of [Sir Hugh Owen](#), the [first lord Aberdare](#), the [Rev. David Thomas](#), Stockwell, and others, he promoted a scheme for the furtherance of higher education in Wales, Nicholas becoming secretary of the movement which led eventually to the founding of the first University College in Wales at Aberystwyth in 1872; before that came about, however, Nicholas had disagreed with some of the promoters and had resigned (for details see [Iwan Morgan in \*The College by the Sea\*, Aberystwyth, 1928, particularly 257-66](#)).

In the meantime he had been busy writing and publishing (a) *Middle and High Class Schools, and University Education for Wales*, 1863, a work which exerted considerable influence in Wales at the time; (b) *Pedigree of the English People*, 1868, and other editions - for particulars of the lawsuit which followed on the publication of this work see [Iwan Morgan](#), *op. cit.*, and [NLW MS 3097E](#); (c) *Annals and Antiquities of the Counties and County Families of Wales*, two vols. - the 1872 edition is still a useful source book; (d) *History and Antiquities of the County of Glamorgan and its Families*, 1874 - this is the Glamorgan portion of (c), separately published. He also produced, in 1860, an edition of [Mathias Maurice](#), *Social Religion Exemplify'd*, whilst, in the autumn of 1878, he was editing for the press the English edition of *Baedeker's London*. Further details of his career can be learnt from the Nicholas MSS. (now [NLW MSS 3091-3106](#)); note, e.g. a journal ([NLW MS 3091B](#)) kept by him in 1838 which includes notes on a preaching tour from Trefgarn to Liverpool and back undertaken by Nicholas and [James Evan\(s\)](#) (Caereinion, 1814 - 1842), and legal letters and papers, 1876-77 ([NLW MS 3106E](#)) relating to Lonsdale House School, Bridgwater, in which Nicholas was co-partner.

He died, unmarried, at 156 Cromwell Road, London, 14 May, 1879, and was buried in Hammersmith cemetery ([Edwin Poole](#), *The illustrated history and biography of Brecknockshire*, 308).

### Author

**Sir William Llewelyn Davies**, (1887 - 1952)

### Sources

*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

T. R. Roberts, *Eminent Welshmen: a short biographical dictionary of Welshmen... from the earliest times to the present* (1908)

*Y Geninen*, 1901, 129

*Handlist of Manuscripts in the National Library of Wales*, i, 266-7

*The Congregational Year Book*, 1881

*The Homilist*, 1877, 456 ff.

and the sources mentioned in the article

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