

SIMMONS or SIMONS, JOSEPH (1694? - 1774), Independent minister, and schoolmaster

Name: Joseph Simmons

Date of birth: 1694?

Date of death: 1774

Child: Noah Simmons

Gender: Male

Occupation: Independent minister, and schoolmaster

Area of activity: Education; Religion

Author: Robert Thomas Jenkins

Born c. 1694 at Foxhall, Llansamlet, Glamorganshire, and educated at Carmarthen Academy under **Perrott**. In 1724 he was appointed assistant-pastor to Roger Howell at Cwmllynfell and Gellionnen. He is found keeping school at Neath in 1730, and **Lewis Rees** was a pupil of his there. In August 1738 we find **Howel Harris** staying a night with 'Jos. Symons, near the Abbey at Neath.' Simmons is said to have taken over **Rees Price**'s academy at Tyn-ton when **Price** died in 1739 - but in 1741 at the latest he had a school at Swansea. Simmons was a Calvinist; he is named by **Edmund Jones** in 1741 (Trevecka letter 362) as one of the Independent ministers who supported the Methodist revival; and **Edmund Jones** urged **Thomas Morgan** (1720 - 1799) to go to the school kept by 'Mr. Seimons at Swanzey ' rather than to **Samuel Jones** (*fl.* 1715-64) at Pentwyn, whose orthodoxy was dubious. Simmons sent his own son to Abergavenny Calvinistic Academy, and **Edmund Jones** was present at the young man's ordination; but the 'Old Prophet ' was deeply vexed (diary of 1789) when Joseph Simmons took part in the ordination of the 'heretical' **Edward Evans** at Aberdare. In 1750, Simmons removed his dwelling from Hendreforgan to Llansamlet, the better to oversee the Independent cause at Neath (meeting at that time in Chwarelau-bach chapel) - he had charge also of the cause at Skewen. In 1772, Maes-yr-haf chapel at Neath was built, and at its opening, Simmons's son Noah (who had been at Abergavenny Academy, 1768-72) was ordained as his assistant. Joseph Simmons died suddenly, at Swansea, 12 May 1774. Noah Simmons succeeded him, and remained at Maes-yr-haf till 1794, when disagreement with some of his congregation drove him to emigrate to U.S.A.; the date of his death is not known.

Author

Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins, (1881 - 1969)

Sources

J. Dyfnallt Owen in *Hanes Eglwys Cwmllynfell* (1935), 14-16

Hanes Eglwysi Annibynnol Cymru, ii, 97-8, 104

and the references in the article

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