

ALLGOOD family, of Pontypool and Usk.

A family of this name was for more than 150 years identified with the japanning industry at Pontypool and at Usk. The series begins with THOMAS ALLGOOD I (c. 1640 - 1716), a Northants Quaker who was invited by his friend [Richard Hanbury](#) to establish copperas works at Pontypool. He turned his attention to the possibility of producing lacquer from the by-products of coal. He died 8 May 1716, and was buried in the Quakers' graveyard at Pontymoile.

His son, EDWARD ALLGOOD I (1681 - 1763), was [John Hanbury](#)'s principal agent in his ironworks; but he also made important improvements in japanning; he died 9 January 1763 and was buried in Llanfrechfa churchyard. Before his death, his japanning works were being carried on by two of his sons. The elder, THOMAS ALLGOOD II (born c. 1707), made (about 1734) still further advances in the art. He, with his son THOMAS (junior) III, and his younger brother, EDWARD ALLGOOD II (1712 - 1801), established a japannery at Usk in 1761; the move had already been contemplated in 1755, and the affair led to a family feud and a separation.

The Pontypool works were then carried on by THOMAS ALLGOOD IV (baptized 15 May 1727), son of JOHN ALLGOOD I, and grandson of Thomas I. He entered into a financial partnership with John Davies and William Edwards. Their chief limner and decorator was [Benjamin Barker](#), father of [Thomas Barker](#) of Bath; during this period the quality of the Pontypool lacquer was at its zenith; and the Pontypool firm issued a challenge (which was not taken up) to its rival at Usk. Thomas IV died 22 November 1779 and was buried in Pen-y-garn Baptist graveyard. He was followed at Pontypool by JOHN ALLGOOD II (fl. 1779-1790), who experimented in japanning on glass; towards the end of his time his partner Davies left the firm.

From about 1790 to 1811 the business was in the hands of WILLIAM ALLGOOD I ('Billy Allgood,' 'Billy the Bagman'), of whom there is a small portrait in the National Museum of Wales. He maintained a high standard of workmanship, employing his daughter Mary and two Midland artists, Anne and Hannah Walker, as painters. William I disappeared mysteriously in London in 1811, and the management of the works, on a smaller scale, devolved upon his widow MARY ALLGOOD I (1760 - 1822), with the assistance of their daughter MARY II (1785 - 1848, already mentioned) and of John Hughes (nephew of Thomas Hughes) (1740 - 1828), who came over from Usk. The establishment in Lower Crane Street (formerly Japan Street) combined the sale of japan-work with ironmongery and chandlery. Mary I died 21 August 1822; with her the story of Pontypool japanning practically ends, for her son WILLIAM ALLGOOD II became a grocer and emigrated to America. Mary II married Thomas Jones, a medical man.

To turn to the Usk japannery, established by Edward Allgood II in 1761, with Thomas Allgood II and his son Thomas Allgood III (junior) : they produced very fine work, using black and tinned plates from the Caerleon Forge. Coxe (*Monmouthshire*, chap. 25) records a meeting with Edward II. Nothing further is known of Thomas II and III. Edward II died in 1801; he was buried in the graveyard of Twyn Congregational Church, Usk. He had disposed of his business to his nephew Thomas Hughes (1740 - 1828).

See further, [Pyrke, John](#), and [Evan Jones](#) (1790 - 1860).

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Sources

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personal research.

Additional Links

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