

BLACKWELL, HENRY (1851 - 1928), bookbinder and bookseller, bibliographer and biographer

Name: Henry Blackwell

Date of birth: 1851

Date of death: 1928

Spouse: Jennie H. Blackwell (née Davies)

Parent: Arabella Blackwell (née Jones)

Parent: Richard Blackwell

Gender: Male

Occupation: bookbinder and bookseller, bibliographer and biographer

Area of activity: Business and Industry; History and Culture; Literature and Writing; Printing and Publishing; Scholarship and Languages

Author: William Llewelyn Davies

Born 2 August 1851, the son of Richard Blackwell, of Northop, Flintshire, and Arabella (née Jones), of Rhosesmor, Flintshire. His father is probably the Richard Blackwell of Liverpool who is described in a Liverpool directory of that year (1851) as a bookbinder with an address at 10 Chester Street, Toxteth Park. In 1873 the name of Henry Blackwell, who can safely be identified as Richard's son, appears in the Liverpool directory as a bookbinder, his address being 8 Haliburton Street, Toxteth Park, with a shop at Chatham Buildings, 25 South John Street. Of Henry's education little is known except that he attended S. Paul's School, Liverpool.

Blackwell went to New York in September 1877; in Y Wasg (Pittsburg) for 21 May 1886, he is described as having the supervision of a large bindery.

Blackwell played a prominent part in the Welsh-American life of his adopted country. He was a life-member of the S. Davids Society of the State of New York, a life-member of the Virginia Historical Society, one of the founders of the Ex-Libris Society, Washington, a vice-president and governor of the American Society, 1912, a member of the Welsh Society of Philadelphia, and a member of a committee formed in 1890 to found a chair of Celtic at Marietta College. He was secretary of the eisteddfod held in New York in February 1886; at this eisteddfod he won the prize for a bibliography of Welsh books and Welsh authors in America. He was also secretary of the New York eisteddfod of 1888. In Britain he was a member of the Hon. Society of Cymmrodorion and of the Welsh Bibliographical Society. He visited Wales in 1911 for the national eisteddfod held at Carmarthen.

Blackwell's printed literary and bibliographical work appears mainly in journals. In January 1914 he began to publish *Cambrian Gleanings*: a monthly Magazine, edited by himself at University Place and Tenth Street, New York. This survived only until the September number. The May issue has a list of 'Printers of books in Welsh in the United States.' He had previously contributed to such British and American newspapers and journals as *Oswestry Advertiser*, January 1890 ('Catalogues of Welsh MSS.'), and August 1891 ('A Collection of Welsh Travels') (both were afterwards reprinted in *Bye-Gones*), *Red Dragon*, *Old Welsh Chips*, 1888 ('Bibliography of local and county Histories relating to Wales and Monmouth', and 'List of Bibles and Testaments in the Welsh Language published in the United States'), *Y Drych*, *The Druid*, *The Cambrian*, 1882, and 1884 (a catalogue of his library of books in the English language relating to Wales and the Welsh), and *Old Brecknock Chips*, 1886 ('Brecknockshire authors and books printed in Brecknockshire'). He had proposed to issue in 1886 an American edition of [Jane Williams](#): *A History of Wales* ... (London, 1869); another appeal for subscribers appeared in 1889.

Blackwell's bibliography, when it was awarded the prize at the 1886 New York eisteddfod, contained 469 titles. Writing twenty-three years later the compiler said: 'I have in manuscript a list of over one thousand titles on the same topic.' This manuscript (N.L.W. MS. 9278) (including items added from time to time) was published by the National Library of Wales in 1942 under the title *A Bibliography of Welsh Americana*.

The greater part of Blackwell's bibliographical and biographical work is, however, unpublished. The following manuscripts are in the National Library of Wales: (a) 'A Dictionary of Welsh Biography,' (N.L.W. MSS. 9251-77 [↗](#)) forming twenty-seven volumes; (b) 'Cambrian National Bibliography,' in five volumes, commenced in 1882 but discontinued in 1896; (c) 'A Bibliography of Welsh Bibliography,' in two volumes; (d) 'Rhestr o Ffugenwau Cymry'; this contains over 4,000 bardic and other pseudonymous names arranged alphabetically. At one time Blackwell possessed what was probably the most extensive library in America relating to Wales; he also issued catalogues of books for sale, e.g. in 1886, 1887, 1888, 1889, 1891, 1904, and 1908.

Blackwell had married Jennie H. Davies. He died in New York 28 January 1928.

Author

Sir William Llewelyn Davies, (1887 - 1952)

Sources

Who's who in Wales, 1921 ed.;

Cambrian Gleanings, 1914;

A Bibliography of Welsh Americana (NLW MS 9278) (Aberystwyth 1942);

Gore's directory for Liverpool and its environs for 1851, 1873, and 1878;

NLW MSS 4565-70, 4861, 4925-31, 5595, 5932, 5940, 9251-77;

newspapers and journals cited above;

portrait in *Troy Daily Times*, 21 March 1891.

Additional Links

VIAF: [19304952](#) 

Wikidata: [Q20733138](#) 

Published date: 1959

Article Copyright: <http://rightsstatements.org/page/InC-RUU/1.0/> 