

HERBERT, Sir WILLIAM (died 1593), Irish planter and Welsh educational pioneer

Name: William Herbert
Date of death: 1593
Spouse: Florentia Herbert (née Morgan)
Child: Mary Herbert (née Herbert)
Parent: Jane Herbert (née Griffith)
Parent: William Herbert
Gender: Male
Occupation: Irish planter and Welsh educational pioneer
Area of activity: Education; Land Ownership; Nature and Agriculture
Author: Arthur Herbert Dodd

was the son of William Herbert of S. Julians, Monmouth, and great-grandson in the male line of [Sir William Herbert](#) (died 1469) 1st earl of Pembroke. His mother was Jane, daughter of [Edward Griffith](#) of Penrhyn, Caernarfonshire, from whom he inherited lands in Anglesey and Caernarvonshire to add to his Monmouthshire estates. Although apparently not a university man, he was a great student, especially of divinity, and of alchemy and astrology (on which he corresponded with [John Dee](#)), and was well versed in the classics. He married Florentia, daughter of [William Morgan](#) of Llantarnam (died 1582), his father's colleague in the representation of the shire and father of his own colleague. He leased Newport castle (26 October 1578) and Elizabeth made him deputy constable of Conway castle (8 July 1579) and in 1583 steward of Rhymney and other South Wales manors forfeit to the Crown since Buckingham's attainder (1521). Knighted on 21 December 1578, he took an active and sometimes turbulent part in local politics, serving as sheriff of Glamorgan in 1578 and of Monmouthshire in 1580. He was equally active as M.P. for Monmouthshire in the Parliament of 1584, where he interested himself in legislation of a puritanical character, and that of 1586, where his speech against Mary, Queen of Scots - the first speech on record by a Welsh member - resulted in his membership of a deputation to Elizabeth about her. Next year he took up as 'undertaker' over 13,000 acres of forfeited Fitzgerald lands in Munster, paying a Crown rental of c. £200 a year and living (1586-7) at Castle Island, co. Kerry. He is conspicuous among the Munster planters for educational and evangelistic zeal and for sympathy with the Irish tenants, whose rents he tried to keep down, for whom he had parts of the Anglican service translated into Irish, and for whom also he projected a college, till the lands earmarked for it were successfully claimed by another planter. He denounced the tyranny of the English garrison (which he wished to replace by Monmouthshire men) and the rapacity of his fellow-planters, who flouted his authority as acting vice-president of Munster and impugned his 'Welsh humour,' 'fat conceit,' and pro-Irish tendencies; but the responsible officials of the plantation, clerical and lay, defended him. He went home in 1589, was admitted to the Middle Temple (20 June 1589), and was again busy with the affairs of his county, both locally and in the 1593 Parliament, while keeping in touch with Irish affairs through his kinsman Charles Herbert (probably of Aston, see under [Herbert](#) of Montgomery), who had a 6,000 acre allotment in Kerry and also lived at Castle Island. His nomination for the Council of Ludlow (1591) by the [2nd earl of Pembroke](#) does not seem to have taken effect.

Of the three ambitions he confided to Walsingham in 1588 - a book, a colony, and a college - the first took shape ephemerally in controversial works of Protestant theology (one of them directed against the Jesuit Campion) and more solidly in his unpublished reports on Munster; the second in the plantation itself, disappointed as he was in his hope of making it an example of 'piety, justice, inhabitation, and civility'; the third embraced a Welsh as well as the abortive Irish project, for to remedy the local 'backwardness in religion' which he had long deplored he planned to inaugurate in 1593 and to complete by 1600 a college housed in his mansion at Tintern and endowed with lands at Bassaleg, Monmouth, and Llanidan, Anglesey, estimated to bring in about £400 a year. The scheme is set out in *Cal. S.P. Ireland*, 1586-8, 473; but Herbert died (4 March 1593) before a start had been made, and during the six years that passed before the estates devolved on the future [1st lord Herbert of Cherbury](#), through his marriage with Sir William's daughter Mary, the project passed into oblivion. Sir William was also a patron of the poetaster Thomas Churchyard, who eulogizes him in his *Worthines of Wales*, 1587.

Author

Emeritus Professor Arthur Herbert Dodd, (1891 - 1975)

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Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [William Herbert](#)

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