

LEWIS, FRANCIS (1713 - 1802), one of the signatories of the American Declaration of Independence

Name: Francis Lewis
Date of birth: 1713
Date of death: 1802
Parent: Amy Lewis (née Pettingal)
Parent: Anne Lewis (née Pettingale)
Parent: Francis Lewis
Parent: Morgan Lewis
Gender: Male
Occupation: one of the signatories of the American Declaration of Independence
Area of activity: Politics, Government and Political Movements
Author: David Williams

Julia Delafield (his great-granddaughter), in her *Biographies of Francis Lewis and Morgan Lewis* (New York, 1877) speaks of him as being born at Llandaff, the son of the 'Rector of the Parish,' his mother being 'the daughter of the Rev. Dr. Pettingal, also a clergyman of the Established Church and settled at Carnarvon.' *The Dictionary of American Biography*, on evidence supplied by one of his descendants, gives his date of birth as 21 March, and states that he was 'the only child of the Rev. Francis Lewis, rector of Llandaff, Glamorganshire, Wales, and Amy Pettingal of Caernarvon.' The 'Parish' of Llandaff is an obvious error, and no Dr. Pettingal is known as vicar of Llanbeblig, the parish within which the borough of Caernarvon was then situated. An alderman Francis Pettingale of Newport, Monmouth (died 1726), had children: Francis, vicar of S. Woollos (who also died in 1726); his son, Dr. John Pettingal, was a celebrated antiquary (see *D.N.B.*); Richard, alderman of Newport; Mary, the residuary legatee and sole executrix under his will (who died a spinster in 1740); Anne, married to Morgan Lewis; and others. Mary Pettingal, by her will dated 9 April 1740, bequeathed the bulk of her property to her nephews, Francis Lewis and Hanbury Pettingal. Both cousins were named as executors, but the will was proved by Hanbury Pettingal only (which would be consistent with Francis Lewis's departure for New York some five years earlier). Mary Pettingal also left £200 to Charles Griffiths of Llanaravon in the parish of Llanvrechva, Monmouth, and John Cadogan of Newport, to be placed at interest, such interest to be paid to her sister Anne Lewis, during her life, and then to her two nephews. (It may be that the above authorities have misread Caernarvon for Llanaravon.) There is little doubt that Francis Lewis was the son of Morgan and Anne Lewis of Newport.

Francis Lewis was educated at Westminster. He emigrated to America (in 1734 according to Delafield, in 1738 according to *Dictionary of American Biography*) and established himself as a merchant, undertaking several voyages for commercial reasons. He took an active part in revolutionary agitation and appended his signature, as a delegate from New York, to the Declaration of Independence, his being the only signature of a native of Wales. He died 31 December 1802.

Author

Emeritus Professor David Williams, (1900 - 1978)

Sources

Julia Delafield, *Biographies of Francis Lewis and Morgan Lewis* (New York 1877)

Dictionary of American Biography

copies of wills and entries in parish registers in the possession of the late J. Llewellyn Morgan of Llandaff

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Francis Lewis](#)

Sound and Film

Welsh Political Icons: [Francis Lewis](#)

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