

MANSELL, FRANCIS (1579 - 1665), three times principal of Jesus College, Oxford

Name: Francis Mansell
Date of birth: 1579
Date of death: 1665
Child: Jane Stepney (née Mansel)
Parent: Francis Mansel
Gender: Male
Occupation: principal of Jesus College, Oxford
Area of activity: Education
Author: Robert Thomas Jenkins

one of the Mansells of Muddlescombe (Kidwelly), descendants of Francis Mansell, second son of [Sir Edward Mansel](#) - the papers of this branch are at N.L.W. He was born in 1579 (christened 23 March 1578/9), third son of the above Francis. From Hereford school, he went in November 1607 to Jesus College, Oxford, graduated 20 February 1608/9, and proceeded D.D. in 1624. He was elected Fellow of All Souls (though not on his first attempt in 1613). At the end of July 1620 he was made principal of Jesus by the vice-chancellor, despite opposition from some of the Fellows. Mansell ejected four of these; but (possibly deeming his place too hot to hold) resigned in 1621, and was replaced by [Eubule Thelwall](#). But when [Thelwall](#) died (1630) Mansell obtained the principalship without difficulty. He was, says E. G. Hardy, 'by far the most picturesque figure in the College history.' Very authoritarian, he yet proved very sagacious; he greatly enlarged the college buildings, contributed liberally to its funds, and gathered in many donations. When the Civil War broke out, Mansell was in Wales, where he remained for years (while Oxford was under siege), assisting the royalist cause; but when in 1647 the parliamentary visitors descended upon Oxford, he hurried there to stand his ground. In 1648 he and the Fellows were deprived, and he returned to Wales, living for a time at Llantrithyd Court, Glamorganshire. But in 1651 he was back in Oxford - in the same year (so greatly was he respected at Jesus), he was allowed to occupy rooms in the tower above the college gate; there he remained during the principalship of his two successors, until the Restoration restored him in his turn. But he was now an old man, with failing eyesight; he resigned in seven months (1661), being succeeded by [Leoline Jenkins](#); but he continued to reside in college, and died there 1 May 1665; 'a man of sternness indeed, and severity ... but one who had gained in a singular degree the love and veneration of every member of his College' (Hardy). He left all his property to Jesus College.

Author

Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins, (1881 - 1969)

Sources

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (by A. F. Pollard)

Hardy, *Jesus College* (1899) (including selections from Leoline Jenkins's biography of Mansell)

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Francis Mansell](#)

Additional Links

Wikidata: [Q5481847](#)

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