

MAURICE, WILLIAM (died 1680), antiquary and collector of manuscripts

Name: William Maurice
Date of death: 1680
Spouse: Elisabeth Maurice (née Ludlow)
Spouse: Lettice Maurice (née Kynaston)
Child: Lettice Gethin (née Maurice)
Child: Ann Williams (née Maurice)
Parent: Jane Maurice (née Holand)
Parent: Lewis Maurice
Gender: Male
Occupation: antiquary and collector of manuscripts
Area of activity: History and Culture; Literature and Writing
Author: Evan David Jones

The son of Lewis Maurice, who descended from the Moeliwrch family in Llansilin, by Jane, daughter of John Holand, vicar of Guilsfield (1586-1639), he spent his life at Cefn-y-braich or Ty Newydd in Cynllaith, Llansilin. It is said that he erected a building of three stories, locally known as 'the Study,' to house his library.

He had sufficient means to collect books and manuscripts, to employ copyists, and to spend his time copying and studying manuscripts. In these studies he regarded [Robert Vaughan](#) of Hengwrt as his Gamaliel. He worked much at Hengwrt and compiled a catalogue of the manuscripts in the collection. He himself acquired some important Welsh manuscripts, e.g. the 'White Book of Hergest,' which was lost in a fire at a bindery in Covent Garden in 1810, and the manuscript of the Welsh laws which his cousin [Meredith Lloyd](#) of Bryn Elen gave him (Wynnstay MS. 36). He transcribed a considerable body of Welsh poetry, and made a pioneer study of the texts of the Welsh laws in his 'Deddfgrawn' or 'Corpus Hoelianum' (Wynnstay MSS. 37-8) in 1660-3. He was interested in the early history of Wales and the Celts. He wrote a letter on Brennus to [Robert Vaughan](#) in 1662 (Wynnstay MS. 12). Contemporary problems also engaged his attention, and, in 1653, he wrote a treatise against altar-worship in which he criticised the work of [Dr. George Griffith](#), afterwards bishop of St Asaph, and Richard Jervis, vicar of his own parish. He is also said to have compiled a chronicle of the events of the Civil War in North Wales. [Evan Evans](#) (see Panton MS. 72) listed over 100 manuscripts which were in his possession or had been written by or for him.

He was twice married (1), to Lettice, daughter of Roger Kynaston, Ruabon, by the daughter and heiress of Roger Eyton of Cefn y Carneddau; by her he had three sons who died young, and two daughters - Ann, wife of David Williams of Glan Alaw, brother of [\(Sir\) William Williams](#) (1634 - 1700), Speaker of the House of Commons, and Lettice, wife of Roger, son of Thomas Gethin of Maesbrook; (2) to Elizabeth, daughter of George Ludlow of Morehouse, and widow of Thomas Gethin, and by her he had one daughter, Elizabeth, who married George Jukes of Pool. In 1678 he had a share in [\(Sir\) William Williams](#)'s attempt to purchase the Hengwrt library.

He was buried at a great age at Llansilin, 23 March 1680. His library he left to his daughter, Lettice. It was valued, in 1682, from a list, at £60 by Edward Millington, and sold to [\(Sir\) William Williams](#). Until about 1771 it was kept at Llanvorda, and then removed to Wynnstay, where it was practically all lost by fire, 5-6 March 1858. In addition to the manuscripts cited, the chief surviving manuscripts in the hand of William Maurice are [Llanstephan MS 15](#), [Llanstephan MS 31](#), [Llanstephan MS 54](#) and [Llanstephan MS 197](#). In some of his manuscripts he used a Welsh orthography peculiar to himself, and no manuscript was too precious for him to disfigure with his scrawl.

Author

Evan David Jones, (1903 - 1987)

Sources

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

History of the Princes, the Lords Marcher, and the Ancient Nobility of Powys Fadog, iv, 252

The Cambro-Briton, i, 379-80

Wynnstay Manuscript at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth 143, 234

NLW MSS 732, 1505 (418)

The National Library of Wales Journal, ii, 26-36

Handlist of Manuscripts in the National Library of Wales, I, xvi-xx; *Reports on Manuscripts in the Welsh Language* (Historical Manuscripts Commission 1898–1910)

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [William Maurice](#)

Additional Links

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