

WILLIAMS (alias PENROSE), LLEWELLIN (1725 - ?), sailor and painter

Name: Llewelin Williams
Date of birth: 1725
Date of death: ?
Gender: Male
Occupation: sailor and painter
Area of activity: Art and Architecture; Business and Industry
Author: Hywel David Emanuel

Williams was his family name, but he took the name ' Penrose ' from a shipbuilder or sea-captain of his acquaintance. Born in May 1725, near Caerphilly, Glamorganshire, he was the elder of the two children of a sailor, who later lost his life in a storm off the Dutch coast. Williams attended a grammar school in Bristol, where he first developed his love of painting. On the remarriage of his mother, the family lived for some time in Worcestershire and Monmouthshire before returning to an unspecified town in South Wales. Unhappy because of his step-father's insistence that he should enter the legal profession, Williams ran away from home in September 1744, and made for Bristol, passing through Pyle, Glamorganshire, on his way. Thereafter for many years he led an adventurous life at sea and in America, where he spent some years amongst the Indians. During this period of his life, he met the artist Benjamin West, who later attributed the development of his artistic ability in some measure to his contact with Williams in Philadelphia. Returning in indigent circumstances to London and then to Bristol, Williams was befriended by Thomas Eagles, who placed him in the Merchants' Alms House in Bristol. On Williams's death, Eagles inherited all his books and also the manuscript of a 'Journal' containing adventures based partly on Williams's own experiences amongst the Indians. This was published in 1815, under the title *The Journal of Llewelin Penrose, a Seaman*. The date of his death is unknown.

Author

Hywel David Emanuel, (1921 - 1970)

Sources

John Eagles, *The Journal of Llewelin Penrose, a Seaman* (London 1815) (four volumes), 1815

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W. T. Whitley, *Artists and their Friends in England, 1700-99* (London 1928), 193-4

H. Blackwell, [NLW MS 9276A: A Dictionary of Welsh Biography](#) (under West, Benjamin)

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