

WILLIAMS, JOHN (RUFUS) (Rufus; 1833 - 1877); Baptist minister and author

Name: John (Rufus) Williams
Pseudonym: Rufus
Date of birth: 1833
Date of death: 1877
Spouse: N. Williams (née Jenkins)
Spouse: Mary Williams (née Davies)
Parent: Hannah Williams
Parent: William Williams
Gender: Male
Occupation: Baptist minister and author
Area of activity: History and Culture; Literature and Writing; Religion
Author: Benjamin George Owens

Born at Merthyr Tydfil, 5 May 1833, son of William and Hannah Williams, members at Abercannaid, where he himself was baptized in 1848. He was employed as a youth at the Pentre-bach ironworks, but started to preach 24 April 1850, and in January 1855, after a two years' course of training at a school kept at Merthyr Tydfil by [Thomas Davies](#) (1812 - 1895), he was admitted to Pontypool College. In 1859 he was ordained minister of the English church at Dowlais, where he also kept a school for ministerial candidates, and on 6 January 1861 he moved to the Welsh church at Nebo, Ystradyfodwg, where he remained till his death 12 February 1877. He married (1) 1866, Mary Davies, daughter of Thomas Davies, Ynys y Maerdy, near Llantrisant, who died within a little over two years; (2) N. Jenkins, a member of his church. Although he died young, Rufus became a very prominent figure in the Welsh Baptist world, as preacher, organiser, and historian. He was co-secretary (probably principal secretary) of the Welsh Baptist Union from its foundation in 1866 till 1874, published a number of the early *Handbooks* at his own expense, and did more than anyone else to remove the opposition to the Union which arose among some of the Associations. As a denominational historian, he published two series of articles in *Seren Cymru*, the one on Baptist Academies (published in volume form in 1863) and the other on the Baptists of Ystradyfodwg (also published in volume form, under the title of *Ystradiana*, in 1886); he compiled the Glamorgan Association letter for 1873; and delivered a lecture to the Welsh Baptist Union in 1875 on the history of ministerial education among the Baptists of Wales and Monmouthshire. He was co-editor of *Yr Athraw* from 1864 till his death, and published a volume of sermons and essays under the title of *Gweithiau Rufus*, i, 1873 (no subsequent volumes appeared). In addition, he actively organised the Baptist cause in the Rhondda valley during a period of intense industrial development, and was instrumental during the late '60s in founding the English church at Ystrad, and the churches at Hebron (Ton), Noddfa (Treorchy), and Moriah (Pentre).

Author

Benjamin George Owens

Sources

Y Geninen, 1907, 20 (D)

Baptist Handbook, 1878

Trafodion Cymdeithas Hanes Bedyddwyr Cymru, 1938, 44

Yr Athraw, 1877, 67, 99, 121, 152, 185, 259, 281

Y Greal sef Cylchgrawn Misol at wasanaeth y Bedyddwyr, 1877, 68; 1886, 258

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