PRICE, WATKIN WILLIAM (1873 - 1967), schoolmaster, researcher

Name: Watkin William Price
Date of birth: 1873
Date of death: 1967
Spouse: Margaret Price (née Williams)
Parent: Sarah Price
Parent: Watkin Price
Gender: Male
Occupation: schoolmaster, researcher
Area of activity: Education; History and Culture; Scholarship and Languages
Author: David Leslie Davies

Born 4 September 1873 at 261 Cardiff Road, Aberaman, Aberdare, Glamorganshire, son of Watkin and Sarah Price, a Welsh -speaking family from Breconshire. The father was a collier; apparently the family had moved to Aberdare by 1866. ' W.W. ' was educated at Blaen-gwawr elementary school until 1886 when he went to work in the office of *Tarian y Gweithiwr* in Aberdare. Then he became a pupil-teacher in two local schools until 1895 when he entered Cardiff University College as a 'normal' student. In 1897 he was employed by Cardiff Schools Board. In 1900 he returned to the Cynon valley as a teacher in Dan Isaac Davies 's old school, Ysgol-y-Comin (Park school), Trecynon, which was founded in 1848 in reaction to the vilification of the district in the Blue Books. Subsequently he was headmaster of Llwydcoed (1912), Cap Coch (1921) and Blaen-gwawr (1924) schools until he retired in 1933.

He spent almost all his life researching his local and county history and biography. He began in response to a competition set in the national eisteddfod in 1920 for an essay on the history and folklore of any Welsh parish. He never completed the work; but he collected and interpreted widely the history of one of the most important areas in Wales in the 19th c. His labours resulted in valuable essays, records and transcripts in fields varying from monastic to mining. One can but marvel at his feat in copying during 1941-43, in his old age, many hundreds of detailed pages from the complicated mining deeds of the district. He rescued an unique 1827-28 volume of drawings by the nieces of Anthony Bacon II which depicted the rural nature of east Glamorgan before it was despoiled by industry. His index of some 40,000 cards on persons, past and present, in Wales continues to be of use to researchers (copies are in the National Library of Wales and Cynon Valley Library). R.T. Jenkins invited him to contribute 30 articles to *The Dictionary of Welsh Biography*, several of them on some of the most important persons of old industrial Wales.

He was also a socialist pioneer; secretary of the Independent Labour Party at Aberdare 1900-08, and consequently one of the chief supporters of Keir Hardie when he was M.P. in 1906. There is a tradition that he was one of the most fervent members pressing for the nomination of Hardie in the meeting at Bethel, Abernant (September 1900) to contest the general election in October of that year. Eventually, however, he turned to Plaid Cymru, supporting Gwynfor Evans in the Aberdare by-election in 1954. Because of the luke-warm support of some of the chapels for Labour, ' W.W. ' left Saron (Congl.) chapel, Aberaman, and joined the Welsh Unitarians meeting in Yr Hendy-cwrdd, Trecynon.

In 1901 he married Margaret Williams, Henbant Hall, Llandysul, Cardiganshire. She died in 1950. In 1952 the University of Wales conferred on him an hon. M.A. degree, and he was sometimes known as ' Bob Owen of the South ' (see Owen, Robert above). He died 31 December 1967 leaving four sons and a daughter.

Author

David Leslie Davies

Sources

Who's who in Wales, (1937)

Old Aberdare, 4 (1985) and the sources referred to there

Y Casglwr pob peth printiedig, March 1983

Aberdare Parish Magazine, March 1950

memoirs in *Aberdare Leader* during January 1968

biographical notes in Aberdare Central Library

his deposits there and at N.L.W. and Glamorgan Record Office

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: Watkin William Price

Additional Links

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