

MATHIAS family, of Llwyngwaren (Llwyn Gwaring, Llangwaren, and other forms) and later also of Lamphey, Pembrokeshire

The original surname of this family was 'Cole,' and later 'Young'; and its original habitat was Clastir (wrongly, 'Glastir') near Newport, Pembrokeshire (Fenton, *Pembrokeshire*, 1903 ed., 293) - Fenton incorrectly explains this as meaning 'green land'; the records show that it was 'church (clas) land.' 'Mathias' was at first merely a recurring Christian name in the family (see *W. Wales Hist. Records*, ii, 41-2); it becomes stabilized as a surname with THOMAS MATHIAS (died at the end of 1617 or the beginning of 1618) - his second wife, Ursula, was a daughter of the antiquary George Owen of Henllys, but the later Mathias families do not descend from her. With his son JOHN MATHIAS comes the shift from Clastir to Llwyngwaren; he was on the county Parliamentary Committee during the Civil War (June 1644 - see Laws, *Little England*, 327), and died in 1681 (*W. Wales Hist. Records*, loc. cit.). His son LEWIS MATHIAS (died in 1733 - *ibid.*), was opposed to the Revolution of 1688, and at the end of June 1693 was involved, at Narberth, in a brawl against the new regime; in the same year, he was accused of 'drinking, at his own house at Llwyngwaren, and also at Slebech and at Narberth,' and shouting 'the King shall have his own again'; so too in 1694; but by 1696 he was quiet, and he made no move in the affair of 1715 (Francis Jones in *The Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, 1946-7, 220-1). His son JOHN MATHIAS (1694? - 1774) added to the estate the property of Trefayog (Trefaeog) in S. Nicholas parish, some miles to the north of Llwyngwaren - indeed, he died at Trefayog, and was buried (21 October 1774) at S. Nicholas. He and several of his children had Methodist leanings; Howel Harris stayed at Trefayog in 1740, and we have a letter of Harris's to him (*Trev. Letters*, 295), and another (294) to one of his daughters - perhaps Ann, for an 'Ann Mathias' is named in William Richards's reports on the North Pembrokeshire Methodist Societies in 1743. But Mathias (together with some of his children) was drawn also to Moravianism; Moravian services were held at his house of Trefayog; the Moravian 'labourer' of Haverfordwest was at his funeral; his daughters Ann, Elizabeth, and Martha, were professed Moravians, as was his son David. By his wife Margaret Thomas of Dyffryn, John Mathias had sixteen children - list, furnished by the late C. Ronald Mathias of Lamphey, from family records, in *Cylchgrawn Cymdeithas Hanes y Methodistiaid Calfinaidd*, xxxiv, 7-8. The second daughter (and fourth child), ELIZABETH, is important in the family history; a Moravian, she married another Moravian, William Smalling, a German, owner of plantations in Jamaica, and it was with money left by her that Lamphey (says Mr. Mathias) was purchased later on - more about her will be found in *Cymm.*, xlv (consult index). Of the six sons, three call for mention: JOHN MATHIAS (1720 - 1800?), a naval officer, sheriff in 1792, who died childless; LEWIS MATHIAS (1740 - 1815), sheriff in 1811, whose issue predeceased him, and the sixth son (and fourteenth child), David.

DAVID MATHIAS (1738 - 1812), Moravian 'labourer';

Born 27 June 1738. It is difficult to understand why Edward Laws (*Little England*, 365) should have said that David was his father's 'heir,' and that his father 'disinherited' him for becoming a Moravian - difficult when we remember the facts mentioned above, and remember, too, that Laws had actually married into the Mathias family. It is very clear that there was no great 'inheritance' in store for a sixth son (actually, his father left him £40), and that it was natural that David should be apprenticed to a shopkeeper at Haverfordwest. He was a member of Haverfordwest Moravian Society in 1759. At the end of 1761 he was shopkeeper to the Moravian settlement at Fulneck, near Leeds, where he remained till the end of 1771; in 1768 he had been recognized as a preacher among the Brethren. By the summer of 1772 he had inaugurated a Moravian mission in the Nantlle Vale, Caernarvonshire (see under William Griffith, 1719 - 1782, John Morgan, 1743 - 1801, and Edward Oliver); he remained there till the middle of 1776. In 1776-80 he 'laboured' (though he was never in the Brethren's orders) at Devonport, in 1780-2 at Kingswood, and in 1782-8 in the settlement at Ockbrook, near Derby (once more keeping the shop). He returned to North Wales in May 1788, this time settling in Caernarvon town, where he remained till the middle of 1793. Falling out with John Morgan, he abruptly abandoned the mission and opened a shop on his own at Fishguard, ceasing to 'labour.' Indeed, he ceased for a while to keep contact with the Brethren, and had to be formally readmitted to the flock in 1804. He died at Fishguard, 15 January 1812, and was buried there. He was a man of great energy, and a zealous missionary (fluent in Welsh and English alike), but rash and intractable; a full account of him will be found in *Cymm.*, xlv. He was twice married; for his wives and children, see *Cylchgrawn Cymdeithas Hanes y Methodistiaid Calfinaidd*, loc. cit.

The deaths without surviving heirs of David Mathias's brothers led to the Llwyngwaren estates falling to David's second son CHARLES DELAMOTTE MATHIAS (1777 - 1851 - his second name was his mother's surname); it was he who, with his aunt Elizabeth's moneys, as has already been said, bought Lamphey in 1821 from the Owen family of Orierton. He was the ancestor of the whole of the existing Mathias clan, who have from time to time been prominent in the public life of their shire, in the armed forces (notably the colonel Mathias, who led the Gordon Highlanders to storm the heights of Dargai in 1897), and at the Bar.

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