

**Roderick Williams alias Powell,
Elinor Jeffreys
and
Elizabeth Evans**

Roderick Williams alias Powell was my fourth great grandfather. He married Elinor Jeffreys in 1753 and Elizabeth Evans in 1778. Because he was sometimes called Roderick Powell and sometimes Roderick Williams, genealogists have never before, to my knowledge, pulled all the records together and recognized that they were the same person. I made the exciting discovery at 8:30 p.m. on March 31, 2009. The key to the discovery was Cefn-gwyn farm, mentioned in two wills of Llandeilo'r-fân. Here, for the first time, is the record of Roderick Williams alias Powell and his two wives:

Elinor Jeffreys

Jeffrey Bevan was a yeoman of Cefn-gwyn farm, Llandeilo'r-fân parish, Breconshire.¹ He was a Church Warden of St. Teilo's Church in 1719.² He had a wife, Ann Jeffreys,³ and at least five children:⁴

- Evan Jeffreys was christened 26 Jun 1720 Llandeilo'r-fân. He died young and was buried 18 Feb 1731/2 Llandeilo'r-fân.⁵
- Joan Jeffreys was christened 8 Apr 1722 Llandeilo'r-fân. She was buried 11 Oct 1756 Llandeilo'r-fân.
- David Jeffreys was christened 30 Aug 1724 Llandeilo'r-fân. He was married 1 Mar 1754 Llandeilo'r-fân to Ann William.
- Margaret Jeffreys was christened 22 Jul 1726 Llandeilo'r-fân. She was buried 18 Mar 1741/2 Llandeilo'r-fân.
- Elinor Jeffreys Does not appear to have been christened in Llandeilo'r-fân parish, but her father's will proves that she belonged to this family.

¹ Will of Jeffrey Bevan, National Library of Wales, call number BR/1747/53.

² Bishop's Transcripts of Llandeilo'r-fân, Breconshire. The originals are available at the National Library of Wales. A microfilm copy (FHL 104,471) is available through the LDS Family History Library system (see www.familysearch.org).

³ According to Welsh custom, women often retained their maiden names after marriage. See John & Sheila Rowlands, *The Surnames of Wales: for family historians and others* (1996, Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc.), pages 12-13. However, I suspect that Ann took her husband's given name as her surname. I have noticed several examples of that practice in the records of Llandeilo'r-fân.

⁴ Bishop's Transcripts of Llandeilo'r-fân.

⁵ 18 Feb 1731/2 is an example of double dating. The Research Outline for Wales, published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, pages 40 and 41, says that in 1752 "The new Gregorian calendar was adopted. The first day of the year changed from March 25 (Lady's Day) to January 1.... Pre-1752 dates may be confusing. Dates between 1 January and 24 March are often recorded using a technique called double dating. For example, the day after 31 December 1696 would be 1 January 1696/7 and the day after 24 March 1565/6 was 25 March 1566."

In his will, dated 10 Sep 1745, Jeffrey Bevan gave “all this tenement and lands where now I live upon ... commonly called and known by the [name] of tir **Ceven Gwynn** to my beloved Wife Ann Jeffreys during her naturall life, and after her disease I doe give and bequeath the aforesaid tenement and lands between my two daughters **Elinor Jeffreys** and Joan Jeffreys....” Jeffrey Bevan died before 1 May 1747, the date of his inventory. His widow proved his will on 9 May 1747.⁶

Joan Jeffreys was buried 11 Oct 1756 Llandeilo’r-fân.⁷ Therefore, when Ann Jeffreys died, and was buried on 30 Jun 1759 Llandeilo’r-fân,⁸ Elinor Jeffreys became the sole heir of Cefn-gwyn farm. At the time of her mother’s death, Elinor Jeffreys had been for five and a half years the wife of Roderick Williams alias Powell.

Roderick Williams alias Powell

A quick lesson in Welsh names may explain how Roderick Williams can be the same person as Roderick Powell. In a style common to periods earlier than the 18th Century, a patronymic name like *Rhydderch ap Gwilym ap Hywel* would indicate that Rhydderch was a son of Gwilym, and that Gwilym was a son of Hywel.⁹ Over time, especially during the 18th century, the *ap* was gradually dropped¹⁰ and the names were gradually anglicized, so *Rhydderch ap Gwilym ap Hywel* became *Roderick William Howell*. Still, the name was patronymic: Roderick was the son of William, and William was the son of Howell.

However, the *ap* was not always eliminated. Sometimes the *p* in *ap* became part of the name. For example, *ap Howell* contracted to Powell, and *ap Rees* contracted to Prees, which became Price.¹¹ Sometimes a final *s* was added to a name so that *William’s* (meaning William’s son, for example, or William’s wife) became Williams.¹²

Gradually, and especially during the 18th century, the patronymic system gave way to fixed surnames. A person patronymically named Roderick William Howell might acquire the fixed surname William, Williams, Howell or Powell. He might have some children with the surname William or Williams, some with the surname Howell or Powell, and even some reverting to patronymics with the surname Roderick or Prytherch. During the transition period, “fixed” surnames were not always settled. They were sometimes used inconsistently, and the same Roderick William Howell might be alternately referred to as Roderick Williams or Roderick Powell.¹³

The husband of Elinor Jeffreys was sometimes called Roderick Williams and sometimes Roderick Powell. Therefore, it seems very likely that his father’s name was either William Powell or Howell Williams. An appropriate Howell Williams does not

⁶ Will of Jeffrey Bevan, National Library of Wales, call number BR/1747/53. The emphasis is mine.

⁷ Bishop’s Transcripts of Llandeilo’r-fân.

⁸ Bishop’s Transcripts of Llandeilo’r-fân. On 15 Sep 1749 Ann Jeffreys, widow, witnessed the will of John David Powell, National Library of Wales, call number BR/1751/37.

⁹ Rowlands, *The Surnames of Wales*, page 8. Also, Sheila Rowlands, “The Surnames of Wales” as chapter 7 in *Welsh Family History: A Guide to Research* (1993, Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc.), page 58.

¹⁰ Rowlands, *The Surnames of Wales*, page 26.

¹¹ For simplicity, I’m using only *ap* as an example. However, *ap* was generally used before names beginning with a consonant, and *ab* before names beginning with a vowel. For example, *ab Owen* became Bowen and *ab Evan* became Bevan.

¹² Rowlands, *The Surnames of Wales*, page 26.

¹³ Rowlands, *The Surnames of Wales*, chapter 3 generally. The chapter contains several examples of inconsistency.

occur in the Bishop's Transcripts of Llandeilo'r-fân.¹⁴ However, there is a William Powell who might have been Roderick's father:¹⁵

4 Jun 1733	Howell, son of William Powell, was christened.
9 Nov 1734	Elinor, daughter of William Howell, was christened.
9 Apr 1737	Morgan, son of William Powell, was christened.
22 Aug 1742	William Powell was buried.

This William Powell is a likely candidate for Roderick's father, but further research is required. If he is the father, he probably moved to Llandeilo'r-fân after the birth of Roderick and before 1733 when Howell was christened.¹⁶

The earliest record I have of Roderick Williams alias Powell is his bond for marriage to Elinor Jeffreys, dated 3 Dec 1753 Llandeilo'r-fân. In the bond, both "Roderick Williams," yeoman, and Elinor Jeffreys are said to be of Llandeilo'r-fân.¹⁷ The Bishop's Transcripts of Llandeilo'r-fân show that the marriage of "Roderick Powel" and Elinor Jeffreys was performed on 21 Dec 1753.¹⁸ Twenty-one being the "full age" for marriage,¹⁹ it is likely that both Roderick and Elinor were born sometime before 21 Dec 1732.

Roderick and Elinor had at least two children. Ann, daughter of "Roderick Powel," was christened 29 Sep 1754 Llandeilo'r-fân, and Elizabeth, daughter of "Roderick Powel," was christened 27 Jun 1760 Llandeilo'r-fân.²⁰ Although I will write reports on Ann and Elizabeth in the future, I will take this opportunity to record an interesting note about Elizabeth Powell, also known as Elizabeth Williams.²¹ She married Roger Price on 29 Jul 1785.²² Their son Evan Price was the father of John Evan Price, the Mormon missionary who married Ruth Williams. Ruth Williams was a daughter of Daniel Williams, who was a son of Roderick Williams alias Powell and Elizabeth Evans.²³

Roderick Williams alias Powell attended St. Teilo's Church in Llandeilo'r-fân. The Bishop's Transcripts show that "Roderick Powel and David Powel" were the Church Wardens in 1760. In 1761 the same Church Wardens were recorded as "David Powel & Roderick William." In 1762 the same Church Wardens appear to be recorded as "Roderick

¹⁴ There is only one Howell Williams in the Bishop's Transcripts – Howell, son of William Powell, christened 4 Jun 1733. He might have been a younger brother of Roderick Williams alias Powell.

¹⁵ Bishop's Transcripts of Llandeilo'r-fân.

¹⁶ See my report on "Baptisms for the Dead" (21 Mar 2009).

¹⁷ I have not seen the bond itself. However, the index to the National Library of Wales contains an abstract in which the groom is Roderick Williams, yeoman, of Llandeilo'r-fân and the bride is Elinor Jeffreys of Llandeilo'r-fân. I will get a copy of the bond on my next trip to Wales; the call number is Brecon B 39/109. The catalog entry may be viewed at www.llgc.org.uk. Under "Catalog Search" type *Llandeilo'r-fân* and go to page 38, record number 373.

¹⁸ Bishop's Transcripts of Llandeilo'r-fân.

¹⁹ The "full age" for marriage in the United Kingdom was 21 years, as implied by the Hardwick Act of 1754, and reinforced by subsequent legislation. With parental consent, girls could marry as young as 12 years and boys as young as 14 years. (See http://rmhh.co.uk/files/marriage_age.wri.)

²⁰ Bishop's Transcripts of Llandeilo'r-fân.

²¹ The variation in her surname supports the accuracy of this report.

²² Bishop's Transcripts of Llandeilo'r-fân.

²³ These relationships will be examined elsewhere. Another interesting note is that Cefn-gwyn remained in the family. Jeffrey Price (1793-1838), son of Roger Price and Elizabeth Powell/Williams, lived and died at Cefn-gwyn.

William & David Bowel.”²⁴

The will of Thomas Evan Bowen of Llandeilo’r-fân parish, signed on 17 December 1763, is the next record of Roderick Williams alias Powell.²⁵

... I Give and bequeath unto Mary Bowen my Beloved wife forty Pounds, thirty Pounds being due to me from **Roderike William of Ceven Gwynne** and ten Pounds being due unto me from David Jones mercer of Builth, and one Cow and be[d]stead and bed cloath....

The fact that “Roderike William” lived at Cefn-gwyn farm in 1763 proves that he is the same Roderick Williams, alias Roderick Powell, who ten years earlier married the heiress of Cefn-gwyn, Elinor Jeffreys.

Elinor “Powel” was buried 17 Aug 1776 Llandeilo’r-fân.²⁶ One and a half years later her widower married Elizabeth Evans.

Elizabeth Evans

Elizabeth Evans, born about 1739, was at least seven years younger than Roderick Williams alias Powell.²⁷ She was previously married, and her children – Rees Davies, William Walter and Rees Walter – were born somewhere in Breconshire.²⁸ She moved to Llandeilo’r-fân sometime before her wedding to Roderick, which is recorded in the 1778 Bishop’s Transcripts of Llandeilo’r-fân:²⁹

Rodk. Willms. & Eliza Evans married Febry. 28th.

William, son of “Rodrik Wms,” was christened on 21 Mar 1779 Llandeilo’r-fân.³⁰ Roderick and Elizabeth also had a daughter named Margaret Williams,³¹ and another son, Daniel Williams, born 23 Aug 1783 Llandeilo’r-fân.³² Daniel Williams was my third great grandfather.

“Rodrick Williams” was buried 11 Jan 1805 Llandeilo’r-fân.³³ Twenty-seven years later his widow, Elizabeth Williams, was living at Drain-duon farm in Llandeilo’r-fân parish. She died, age 93, and was buried 28 Aug 1832 Llandeilo’r-fân.³⁴

²⁴ Bishop’s Transcripts of Llandeilo’r-fân. I don’t know whether David Powell was related to Roderick Williams alias Powell. It may be of interest that Mary, wife of David Powell, inherited property by the will of Thomas Evan Bowen.

²⁵ Will of Thomas Evan Bowen, National Library of Wales, call number BR/1773/30. The emphasis is mine.

²⁶ Bishop’s Transcripts of Llandeilo’r-fân.

²⁷ The Parish Registers of Llandeilo’r-fân, available at the National Library of Wales, show that Elizabeth Williams of Drain-duon was buried 28 Aug 1832, age 93.

²⁸ See my report on “Baptisms for the Dead” (21 Mar 2009).

²⁹ Bishop’s Transcripts of Llandeilo’r-fân.

³⁰ Bishop’s Transcripts of Llandeilo’r-fân.

³¹ See my report on “Baptisms for the Dead” (21 Mar 2009).

³² In 1861 Daniel Williams stated that he was born 23 Aug 1783 in Brecknockshire, Wales, son of Roderick Williams and Elizabeth Evans. Endowment House Records, Book D, Page 36, #658 (FHL 1,262,039). (See also, FHL 298,442; FHL 183,404.)

³³ Bishop’s Transcripts of Llandeilo’r-fân.

³⁴ Parish Registers of Llandeilo’r-fân, available at the National Library of Wales.

Both sons of Roderick Williams alias Powell and Elizabeth Evans had several children. Most descendants of William Williams remain in Wales. Most descendants of Daniel Williams live in the United States of America. Their stories are told elsewhere.

Conclusion

Roderick's name appears eleven times in original documents, seven times as Williams and four times as Powell:

- 1753 Marriage Bond Roderick Williams
- 1753 BT Marriage Roderick Powel
- 1754 BT Christening Roderick Powel
- 1760 BT Christening Roderick Powel
- 1760 BT Church Warden Roderick Powel
- 1761 BT Church Warden Roderick William
- 1762 BT Church Warden Roderick William
- 1763 Will Roderike William
- 1778 BT Marriage Rodk. Willms.
- 1779 BT Christening Rodrik Wms.
- 1805 BT Burial Rodrick Williams

The evidence in this report firmly establishes that Roderick Powell and Roderick Williams were one and the same person. This discovery marks a new frontier for family research. Ideally, the Bishop's Transcripts of a parish near Llandeilo'r-fân will contain the christening of a Roderick, son of William Powell, within a few years of 1730. Even if there is no such christening record, it may be fruitful to examine the records of parishes near Llandeilo'r-fân. It was only while revisiting and carefully combing through records of Llandeilo'r-fân that I noticed two references to Cefn-gwyn, leading to this amazing and exciting discovery.

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