**FRANCIS ALLEYNE (1740-1815) DRAFT 1**

The portrait painter Francis Alleyne R.A. was baptized under the name “Francis Alleyn” at the Church of St Mary Magdalene, Richmond, Surrey, on the 25th January 1740. He was one of the eight children of Henden (or Hendon) Alleyn and his wife Mary.

Henden Alleyn (1703-1788) was a barber and a “peruke maker” (wig maker) in Richmond. A baptism record shows that he was the son of Thomas Alleyn, a farmer, and his wife Margaret, of Battle, Kent (north-west of Hastings). Henden married Mary King at the Church of St Mary Magdalene on the 16th February 1726.

The Alleyn siblings were baptized in Richmond in the following order: Henden (1728-1748), Elizabeth (1731), John (1733-1791?), Thomas (1735-1801), Mary (1737), Francis (1740), Ann (1743), and Margaret (1751). Thomas’s will was probated by both Francis and his namesake nephew – Thomas’s son Francis Alleyn, a linen draper in Richmond.

The artist Francis Alleyn married Elizabeth Harris on the 14th December 1767 at St Paul’s, Covent Garden. She likely passed away in Richmond in March 1773.

His name was recorded as “Francis Alleyne” when, as a widower, he married twenty-five year-old Elizabeth Roth at the Parish Church of St Giles in the Fields, Camden, on the 18th May 1774.

Jacob Simon, long associated with the National Portrait Gallery, has surmised that Elizabeth Roth was the daughter of the drapery painter George Roth (who worked with Van Loo, Hudson and Ramsay) and the sister of the artists George (junior) and William Roth. Certainly, Francis and his second wife Elizabeth were witnesses on the occasion of the marriage of George Roth [junior] and Ann Baas at St Giles in the Fields, Camden, on the 18th April 1775.

According to the Benezit Dictionary of Artists (online, 2011), Francis Alleyne exhibited at: the Royal Academy in 1774 (“a Portrait of a person running, small whole length”), the Free Society of Artists in 1774 and at the Society of Artists in 1790. Francis Alleyne reportedly favoured three-quarter length portraits in oval formats. Ellis Waterhouse in his dictionary of British Artists surmised that Francis Alleyne “probably moved around Kent in 1786, going from family to family to paint portraits”.

The address associated with his work at the Royal Academy in 1774 was “Mr. Handy’s, Porter Street, Newport Market”. British History Online has reported the following: “Porter Street has now completely disappeared, its site being occupied by Sandringham Buildings, to the east of Charing Cross Road.”

<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vols33-4/pp360-379#h3-s13>

A City of London insurance record at the National Archives (MS 11936/389/603097) shows that the address of the “portrait painter” Francis Alleyne on the 28th July 1792 was 44 Old Compton Street.

Ten portraits by or attributed to Francis Alleyne are in public collections in the United Kingdom and appear on the Art UK website.

<https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/search/actor:alleyne-francis-17501815>

Those works include portraits dated 1786 of William Wheatley (1743-1807) and his wife Margaret [not Margot] Wheatley (née Randall)(c. 1751-1824). The couple had married in London in 1768 and lived at Lesney House, Erith, Kent. A portrait of their eldest son Major General William Wheatley of the 1st Foot Guards (1771-1812), who died of illness in military service in Spain, is in the collection of Lord’s (since he is depicted holding a cricket bat). That portrait, too, was painted by Francis Alleyne in 1786.

[https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/william-wheatley-245944/](https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/william-wheatley-245944/search/actor:alleyne-francis-17501815/page/1/view_as/grid)

[https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/margot-wheatley-245933/](https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/margot-wheatley-245933/search/actor:alleyne-francis-17501815/page/1/view_as/grid)

<https://apps.lords.org/lords/tours-and-museum/museum/searchthecollections/artefactdetails/Museum/8704?page=1>

The artist had a link to the Austen family. Deirdre Le Faye’s book ‘A Chronology of Jane Austen and her Family: 1700-2000’ (2006) notes for 1774: “It may be this year that Mr. JLP [Jane Austen’s uncle James Leigh Perrot] has his portrait painted in oils by Francis Alleyne – small oval, three-quarter length, seated, wearing blue coat and buff breeches”.

<https://www.google.ca/books/edition/A_Chronology_of_Jane_Austen_and_Her_Fami/hQlx8cMfWGQC?hl=en&gbpv=0>

Francis Alleyn passed away at “Vine Row” in Richmond and was buried in the churchyard of the Church of St Mary Magdalene on the 24th December 1815.

*From the Art UK discussion ‘*Is this portrait of Rowland Holt by Francis Alleyne or Henry Walton?*’*

Marcie Doran May 2024