

Richard Tate (1736-1787)

Brief biography

Richard Tate was baptized at Cawthorne All Saints Church in January 1736 where his mother Ann came from. She was from the Longley family. His father, Paul Tate, was a glassmaker at Gawber Hall (two miles North West of Barnsley town centre); Paul worked there from its beginning in about 1735. Richard must have grown up there.

We know no more details of Richard's early life and schooling. When he was 26 he married Hannah Moss (1734-1793) in Liverpool. He had moved there to become book keeper to a new glass works. He became a successful merchant.

In late 1768, the artist Joseph Wright of Derby came to Liverpool to develop further his portraiture career. Joseph lodged with Richard Tate and his family for most of the next three years. For an artistic family to have such a skilled and already well regarded artist lodging with them for such a considerable time must have been thought to be a great privilege. Wright developed a lifelong intimate friendship with the Tates.

Richard Tate became an active amateur artist in Liverpool. He was a member of the group that set up the first ever Society of Artists there (1769-70). He was then part of the Society which in 1774 organized the first public art exhibition outside London. Richard exhibited 11 works-the second highest number of all artists both amateur and professional.

All his four children exhibited works either then or at the second exhibition of 1784. These included Thomas Moss Tate (1763-1825) and Elizabeth Tate (1766-1822). Elizabeth later married Joseph Williamson who had been born at Gawber - his father had also been a glassmaker at Gawber Hall.

A painting of Elizabeth by her uncle William Tate is shown in the portraiture section. We know little about Richard's later life and he died relatively early at the age of 50. None of his pictures are publicly known. Some paintings are said to have been painted by 'school of Joseph Wright of Derby' or 'after Joseph Wright'. These may contain works by Richard as he is known to have made copies of Wright's work. His life is now remembered on a plaque where St Thomas' churchyard in Liverpool used to be. His family were buried there but the church was demolished.



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