

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

WILLIAMS, William

Bristol 1727–27.iv.1791

Self-taught portraitist; father of William Joseph Williams (*q.v.*). Williams arrived in America in 1747 as a mariner but was employed in Philadelphia 1759 and 1776 as a theatre-scene painter. His manuscript *Lives of the painters* influenced Benjamin West. According to his advertisement in the *Pennsylvania gazette* of 21.iv.1757, he also taught the flute. In the *New York gazette and weekly Mercury*, 8, 15.v.1769, he undertook “painting in general, viz. History, portraiture, landskip, sign painting, lettering, gilding and strewing smalt.” He also restored pictures and taught drawing. He returned to England in 1776. He is not to be confused with a homonym (*fl.* 1758–97), an itinerant painter and engraver from Norwich.

Bibliography

Howard 2010; Washington 1987

Pastels

- [J.7974.101](#) Man, pstl, 55x37.5 (Colonial Williamsburg 1974)
- [J.7974.102](#) Child holding dog, pstl, 54x37 (Colonial Williamsburg 1974)