

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

ALVES, James

Inverness bpt 27.IV.1737–27.XI.1808

Alves was awarded a gold medal in 1756 by the Society of Artists in Edinburgh, enabling him to travel. Between .X.1758 and .III.1765 he was a pupil at the Académie royale in Paris, under the protection of Vien. He was in Rome by 31.V.1765 when Boswell commissioned him to make a miniature copy of his portrait by Willison; Boswell gave Alves three sittings, and he was paid £6 (Willison got £15); the miniature was sent to Scotland via Lumisden and Strange (*v.* Katherine Read). In 1768 Alves appeared in Toulouse, exhibiting a portrait in the Salon from the address of Jean Francès, associé ordinaire de l'Académie de Toulouse, at the Pénitents noirs. Two years later he showed four miniatures.

He seems to have been back in Scotland in 1773, when Boswell, accompanied by Dr Johnson, visited Inverness castle. A few years later, he was in London, exhibiting pastels at the Royal Academy (from Mr King's, New Bond Street, 1777; King Street, Covent Garden, 1778; 26 Maddox Street, 1779). In .IV.1778 he made portraits of the children of "Mr Nicholay" (that of William was already on exhibition in Pall Mall, while Edward required another sitting; their father was Frederick de Nicolay (1728–1809), a German musician, principal page to Queen Charlotte from 1762, and her music librarian; he married Albinia Lattman in 1759); in Bath, on 25.X.1778, he played whist (badly) with the lawyer John Baker, who described him as "écossais, fort petit, was 8 years at Rome...turned Roman Catholique à Rome and great bigot, pas trop sensé." Later he settled in Scotland where some of his works, signed JA, survived. "His life was singularly good, reclusive, and inoffensive, and his death much regretted. He went abroad when young to improve himself in the fine arts, and studied eight years in Paris, and other eight years in Rome" according to the *Inverness journal*, 16.XII.1808.

Bibliography

The diary of John Baker, barrister of the Middle Temple, solicitor-general of the Leeward Islands, 1931; Foskett 1987; Gaetgens & Lugand 1988, p. 333; Ingamells 1997; Lemoine-Bouchard 2008; Frederick Albert Pottle & Frank Brady, *James Boswell*, 1984, p. 221; Sanchez 2004; Saur; Sée 1911; Waterhouse 1981

Pastels

- J.1046.101 Two ladies, crayons, Royal Academy 1779, no. 5
J.1046.102 Lady in a yellowish-green bodice, white skirt, pstl/ppr, 30x25.4 ov. (Braithwaite Wilson. Ernest Renton; Émile Gross; Xavier Haas, New York, Anderson, 13–14.I.1927, Lot 2 repr., \$40) φ



- J.1046.104 Four small portraits, crayons, Royal Academy 1777, no. 6
J.1046.105 Four small portraits, crayons, Royal Academy 1778, no. 5=?:
J.1046.106 ~Edward NICOLAY (c.1773–)
J.1046.107 ~Frederick NICOLAY (1767–1818), chief clerk to the Treasury
J.1046.108 ~Rev. George Frederick Lovisa NICOLAY (1764–1833), chaplain to Frederick, Duke of York
J.1046.109 ~Lieutenant-General Sir William NICOLAY (1771–1842), Royal Engineers