

Thomas Carnduff: 1886-1956

Biographical Chronology

- 1810 Carnduff's grandfather, Thomas Carnduff, born Ballyauglis, Drumbo. Co. Antrim.
- 1844 Carnduff's father, James Graham Carnduff born.
- 1860 The Carnduff family move to Sandy Row.
- 1871 James Graham Carnduff married Jane Bollard on September 30 at the Parish Church, Great Connell, Kildare.
- 1872 Arthur Carnduff born.
- 1874 Martha Carnduff born.
- 1880 Rose Carnduff born.
- 1882 Carnduff's grandfather, Thomas Carnduff, dies.
- 1886 Thomas Carnduff born at 13 Kensington Street, Belfast.
- 1896 April 30: Carnduff became a pupil at the Royal Hibernian Military School.
- 1900 January 23: Leaves Royal Hibernian Military School and begins work in a local printing firm and on to various jobs as butcher's delivery boy, light porter, factory hand, and catch-boy in the shipyard
- 1901 James Graham Carnduff dies.
- 1906 Starts as an assistant in the stereotyping department of the Belfast Steam-Print Company, Belfast (incorporating *The Ulster Echo* and *The Witness*).
- 1909 August 20: marries Susan McCleery McMeekin on August 20 at Great Victoria Street Presbyterian Church.
- 1911 September 29: James Graham Carnduff born.
- 1912 September 28: signs 'Ulster's Solemn League and Covenant' at the City Hall, Belfast.
October 12: attends the 'first Official Drill' of the Cliftonville Company of the Young Citizen Volunteers at Cliftonville Presbyterian Church, Belfast.
- 1914 February 5: leaves the Belfast Steam-Print Company to work as a plater's helper at Engine Works, Workman, Clark & Co. Ltd.,
July 1: Joseph Carnduff born.
- 1916 Joins the Royal Engineers. Served at Ypres and Dunkirk.
- 1918 Demobbed. Went first on 'the dole', then back to the shipyard.
- 1921 October 1: Thomas Noel Carnduff born.

- 1922 February 21 to December 31, 1925: Special Constable, Ulster Special Constabulary, North West Brigade, 1st West Battalion.
- 1924 October 20: Samuel McMeekin Carnduff born.
Songs from the shipyard and other poems published by E. H. Thornton.
- 1929 *Politics* performed by the Stanhope Players.
- 1930 *The First Warrant*, a play in two acts.
The Haunted House and *Revolt in Ballyduff* performed by York Street Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church Dramatic Society.
- 1932 *Workers* opens at the Abbey Theatre.
Song of an Out-of-Work published by Quota Press.
Possibly, *Shipyardsmen*, a play for radio set in 1932.
- 1933 *Machinery* opens at the Abbey Theatre.
- 1934 *Traitors* opens at the Empire Theatre, Belfast. Noel Carnduff's role as 'a Belfast newsboy', was created specially for him by his father.
- 1935 *Castlereagh* opens at the Empire Theatre.
Laid off from the shipyard. Unemployed for a several years before securing a job as a bin man at the Belfast Corporation.
- 1936 Possibly, *Death Keeps No Calendar*, set in 1936, and *Curfew (or Derry)*.
July: *A Dustman's Life* broadcast by BBC.
November: With Jack Hayward and Denis Ireland formed the Young Ulster Society at a meeting held in the YMCA.
- 1937 December: *Birth of a giant* broadcast by BBC.
Murder at the New Road broadcast by Radio Éireann.
- 1938 *The Stars Foretell* read at a Young Ulster Society meeting.
Edited the first issue of *Young Ulster*.
Pantomime, *Bluebeard*, performed by the Harold Norway Theatre Company in the Ulster Hall.
June: *Catchboy* broadcast on BBC Radio.
- 1939 March 17: Susan Carnduff dies.
September: transferred from the Belfast Corporation to the A.R.P. Rescue Service as a telephonist. Continued as a Civil Defence Volunteer until December 1943, then transferred to the Administrative Staff as a Caretaker. (Awarded a Defence Medal in 1946)
Recorded 'Northern Ireland contribution to Christmas Day Empire exchange, 1939' for the BBC.
Industry broadcast by the BBC.
Possibly, *War Brides*.
- 1940 Begins his "Journal to Mary".
- 1942 Working on his Autobiography; by October Richard Rowley was editing a typescript for the printed version which never materialised.
May 15: secretly married Photographer's Assistant Mary McElroy at All Souls' Presbyterian Church, Belfast.
December: as a founder member of the Belfast P.E.N. Carnduff (with Mary) attends a formal Dinner of the International P.E.N. in Dublin. Other committee members were Richard Hayward, John Hewitt, Roy McFadden, Ruddick Millar and May Morton.

- 1946 Transferred from Civil Defence to Belfast Corporation Surveyor's Department as yardman.
- 1951 Retired from Belfast Corporation; became resident caretaker at the Linen Hall Library.
- 1954 Cahill & Company of Dublin advance Carnduff £25 for his autobiography; again it never appeared.
- 1956 April 17: Carnduff dies. He is buried at Carnmoney Old Cemetery, Co. Antrim.
May: Rev. A.L. Agnew, "Obituary, Mr. Thomas Carnduff", *Calender*, All Souls' Second Presbyterian Church. Belfast.
- 1970 Five extracts from Carnduff's autobiography surfaced in the Linen Hall Library.
- 1978 John Gray, Librarian of the Linen Hall, introduced three chapters, "Adolescence", "Industry" and "Drama" in "Thomas Carnduff, 1886-1956 : chapters from an unpublished autobiography", *Irish Booklore*, Vol. 4, No.1, pp. 24-46.
- 1986 Noel Carnduff returns to Belfast and begins searching for his father's missing works.
In "Thomas Carnduff" in the *Linen Hall Review*, Vol. 3, No. 3, (Autumn 1986), p.18, John Gray acknowledged Noel's role in recovering three more chapters of the autobiography, "On the dole", "Culture in Belfast", and "The last chapter".
Press interest prompted Rosario Player, Jack O'Malley, to donate the play *Death keeps no calender* to the Linen Hall Library.
- 1988 Noel Carnduff presents Carnduff's portrait to the Linen Hall Library.
- 1990 January 23: Mary Carnduff dies; Carnduff papers held by her pass to Noel.
- 1991 March 25 to April 26: The Linen Hall Library stage an exhibition of the "Life and Work of Thomas Carnduff".
Noel receives *Give losers leave to talk* and an extract of a pantomime, *Bluebeard*.
March 24: The Tinderbox Theatre Company produce "The Writings of Thomas Carnduff" at the Old Museum Arts Centre.
April: Noel Carnduff presents Carnduff's typewriter to the Ulster Museum.
Denis Smyth edits *Poet of the people : Thomas Carnduff 1886-1956*. North Belfast History Workshop. Belfast.
Anon., "Thomas Carnduff 1886-1956 : Poet of the People: his life, times and his writings", appeared in a dockside literary magazine *Waterfront* published by North Belfast History Workshop.
Anon., "Thomas Carnduff: Poet of the People", *Lurigethan*, Journal of North Belfast History Workshop, No. 2, (Spring/Summer c1991), ed. Denis Smyth.
- 1993 *Poverty Street and other poems* published by Lapwing Press. Belfast,
- 1994 John Gray edits *Carnduff: Life & Writings*, Lagan Press. Belfast.
- 1996 Sarah Ferris begins cataloguing Carnduff's papers.
- 1999 January 20. Carnduff's papers are catalogued in © Sarah Ferris, *The Thomas Carnduff Archive*. At Noel Carnduff's request, the papers are lodged in Queen's University Library. [Sarah Ferris](http://www.sarahferris.co.uk) is appointed Literary Executor to the Carnduff Papers.
Website: <http://www.sarahferris.co.uk>