

Researched by
Jean Murray

Dorothea Conyers (1869-1947)

Author of 54 novels and one autobiographical reminiscences of sporting. The books were published between 1900 and 1948.

Dorothea was born on 18 November 1869 at Fedamore, Co. Limerick to Colonel J. Blood-Smyth and Minnie Spaight, daughter of Francis Spaight. She had at least one sister and a brother, Arthur, who practised as a solicitor in Limerick for many years.

The family hunted and kept horses and had a holiday cottage at Ardsollus in Co. Clare, possibly near Quin.

Dorothea was educated at home and at Doncaster. Her interests are listed at hunting, skating, tennis and fishing. She was also fond of opera.

Dorothea married Charles Conyers at St. Mary's Cathedral, Limerick on Tuesday, 2 February 1892. Charles was the youngest son of the late Charles Conyers of Castletown Conyers and Minnie Dorothea Spaight was the youngest daughter of the late Colonel Blood-Smyth of Fedamore, Co. Limerick and of Mrs. Blood-Smyth of Richmond, Limerick.

Charles Conyers was born on 19 November 1867 at Castletown Conyers, which is situated on the border of the parishes of Corcomohide and Ballingarry. Formerly known as Castletown McEniry (or McHenry). The land was forfeited in Cromwell's wars and the property was granted to the Conyers in 1643. Charles Conyers Senior was a J.P.

According to the 1901 Census, the property was then occupied by David Graham Conyers and his wife Aileen Harriett Mary and their three children. David's occupation was that of landlord and J.P.

Charles had been a member of the Royal Munster Fusiliers and upon marriage he moved to Leinster where the couple lived at the Curragh, Co. Kildare and (possibly) also in Kilkenny. The couple had two children, a boy and a girl, neither of whose birth announcements have been found, as yet.

An entry in the 1911 Census shows that Dorothea was staying at the residence of her mother, Minnie Blood-Smyth at 7 Richmond. At that point Dorothy was 39 years old (in reality she was 42) and had been married for 18 years. She is listed as having two children. Minnie Blood-Smyth was 72 years old and had four children, three of whom were still living.

The death of Major Charles Conyers was announced on Thursday, 20 May 1915. He served with the 2nd Battalion, Royal Irish Fusiliers. He had previously been wounded on 12 May and had just gone back to the trenches after an operation for a bullet wound to his shoulder at Ypres. It was further stated that his only son served since the commencement of the war in the Royal Horse Artillery at the front.

Lieutenant Colonel Charles Conyers is buried in Bradhoek Military Cemetery, Belgium. This is located 6.5 km west of Ieper town centre on the Branderstraat.

On 31 May 1915 it was reported that Dorothea received a telegram from the King and Queen expressing their deep regret at the loss of her husband.

In Ireland's Memorial Records Vol. 2 1914-1918 it is stated that Charles was a Major and temporary Lieutenant-Colonel with the Royal Irish Fusiliers. A plaque in St. Mary's Cathedral includes Charles Conyers' name and is situated on the mural table near the southwest door.

On February 25, 1917, Dorothea Conyers married Captain J.J. White at the University Church, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin. Captain White lived at Nantinan, Co. Limerick.

Captain John Joseph White, the eldest son of John P. White, succeeded at Nantinan in 1892. The estate comprised of a house and 145 acres, 2 roods and 19 perches.

Captain John Joseph White died on 18 April 1940 at his residence. He had been in ill health for some time. Captain White had been a High Sheriff, a Grand Juror and a J.P. but was best known as a breeder of bloodstock and a patron of the Turf. His membership of Limerick County Hunt extended over half a century. He had no children.

Captain White's funeral took place on Sunday 21 April 1940. His remains were removed to the Catholic Church; Cappagh on a farm cart and internment took place in the family burial plot in the yard beside the church. There was a very large attendance, as detailed in the Limerick Chronicle of 25 April 1940. Chief mourners were Mrs. White, Major C.G. Conyers and Mr. Helenus White.

In his will, Captain White left his estate to Colonel Martin Helenus White, who had received many awards and decorations during his twenty-five years of military service in India. In 1932 he received an MBE. Colonel White handed over responsibility of the estate to his nephew Simon in the 1970's. (There is a listing in the telephone directory for an S and H White at Nantinan, Askeaton).

Dorothea Conyers died on 26 May 1949 at Nantinan. She was 80. Internment took place on 28 May 1849 to St. Mary's Cathedral.

Sources for the above include newspapers such as the Limerick Chronicle, the Irish Times, 1901 and 1911 Census, publications such as Ireland in Fiction by Stephen J. Brown S.J. (Dublin, 1919), Ireland in Fiction 2 by Stephen J. Brown and Desmond Clarke (Cork, 1985), British Museum General Catalogue of Printed Books Vol.6 (New York, 1967), The Monuments of St. Mary's Cathedral by Rev.M.J. Talbot, (1976), Dictionary of Irish Literature, Robert Gogan (ed.) (1979), Sporting Reminiscences by Dorothea Conyers (London, 1920), Cappagh, a Sense of History by Frank Whelan (2003), Guy's Directory of Munster (1886), Ireland's Memorial Records Vol.2, 1914-18.