

HIDDEN GEMS AND FORGOTTEN PEOPLE



W.F. MARSHALL (1888-1959): WRITER

William Forbes Marshall was born at Drumragh, Omagh on 8 May 1888. He received his early education in the primary school at Sixmilecross, where his father was principal. He went on to Royal School, Dungannon, Queen's College, Galway, and the Presbyterian College, Belfast. In 1916 he was ordained minister in Aughnacloy but moved to Castlerock, Co Londonderry, twelve years later.

Marshall's publications include a novel, *Planted By A River*, and *Ulster Sails West* (a history of 18th century Ulster emigration to the United States), as well as four books of poems, all of which have the name of his native county in the title; not surprisingly he was dubbed "the Bard of Tyrone." The poems include one that became the school song of the Royal School; many are in Ulster dialect and include the famous *Me An' Me Da*: "I'm livin' in Drumlister/In clabber to the knee."

Marshall's interest in Ulster dialect was life-long; he wrote a dialect version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* which was broadcast by the BBC, and spent many years compiling a dictionary of Ulster dialect which was unfortunately torn to pieces by his dog. It was long believed that the loss was total, but there are sections which have survived, and a future publication is not impossible.

Marshall died on 27 January 1959. He is buried at Tullyneil, Co. Tyrone

Victor Price