

U DX85

Letters about the Clayton family of Grimsby

1970

Biographical Background:

Anthony Dymoke Powell was born on 21 December 1905 in Westminster, England. He became a novelist and is most famous for his twelve-volume work *A Dance to the Music of Time*, which was published between 1951 and 1975, and which has been in print ever since. He was named as one of the '50 greatest British writers since 1945' in *The Times* (2008).

He went to Eton in 1919, becoming a founding member of the Eton Society of Arts in 1922, before starting at Balliol College, Oxford in 1923. After graduating, Powell moved to London, first serving a form of apprenticeship at the publishers Gerald Duckworth and Co. and later as a scriptwriter at Warner Brothers Studio in Teddington. He married, in 1934, Lady Violet Pakenham with whom he had two sons, Tristram born in 1940 and John born in 1946. In 1937, he attempted to become a Hollywood screenwriter, but this failed and he later found work reviewing novels and other books for the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Spectator*.

During the Second World War, Powell served with the Intelligence Corps and was later attached to Military Intelligence (Liaison) at the War Office in Whitehall. After his demobilization at the end of the war, writing became his sole career.

Powell had written his first novel, *Afternoon Men*, in 1931 and his fifth, *What's Become of Waring*, was published in March 1939. Realising that to continue writing during wartime would be difficult, Powell began to compile a biography of the seventeenth-century writer John Aubrey. His army career also got in the way of this project and so it was only finished in May 1946. After difficult negotiations with publishers, it was eventually published in 1948.

Following this foray into non-fiction, Powell returned to writing novels and over the next thirty years he produced his major work of twelve novels, *A Dance to the Music of Time*. Alongside his novels, he continued to write for newspapers including reviews for *The Times Literary Supplement*, *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Spectator*. He also served as the Literary Editor of *Punch* from 1953 to 1959.

His last two novels, *O, How the Wheel Becomes It!* and *The Fisher King*, were published in 1983 and 1986 respectively. Powell was awarded a CBE in 1956 but later declined a knighthood in 1973. He was made a Companion of Honour in 1988 and served as a trustee of the National Portrait Gallery from 1962 to 1976. Anthony Powell died at on 28 March 2000.

Edward Gillett published *A History of Grimsby* in 1970. He was appointed honorary archivist to the Grimsby Corporation in 1952.

The **Clayton family** were the dominant family in Grimsby from around 1727 to 1772. Through their position as the wealthiest family in the borough, they essentially controlled the corporation and all local elections. They were related by marriage to the Hildyard's of Kelstern and later to the Tennysons. The first Christopher Clayton owned Chantry farm and also had shares in ships importing timber from Norway. The second Christopher Clayton, his nephew, also had interests in imported timber as well as being a client of the Duke of Newcastle. Moreover, he had a profitable place in Customs and shipped tea from Bengal with his brother David, alongside other London business interests.

Hull History Centre: Letters about the Clayton family of Grimsby

The Claytons' dominance in Grimsby was broken by the arrival of landowner Charles Anderson Pelham who succeeded to the Brocklesby estate in 1763 and was made Record of Grimsby in 1772. Christopher Clayton, who was simply a merchant not a landowner in any real sense, was unable to compete and for the rest of the eighteenth century Pelham candidates won almost every election.

Custodial history:

Donated by E. Gillett, Department of Adult Education, University of Hull, Jun 1973

Description:

This small collection contains three letters from Anthony Powell relating to his descent from the Clayton family of Grimsby and their possible connection with Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

Extent: 3 items

Related material:

Letters from Anthony Powell to Philip Larkin [U DPL3/1/10]

Review Article. Just Larkin Around by Anthony Powell [U DPL2/3/77/35]

Print of Anthony Powell, Philip Larkin and others outside the Ivy Restaurant [U DLV/2/5/7]

Other repositories:

Estate, family and legal papers of the Clayton Family of Grimsby and Gosberton, Lincolnshire Archives [ref. Td'E, 2-4 Td'E]

Access conditions: Access will be granted to any accredited reader

U DX85/1

Three typed letters from Anthony Powell to E. Gillett
Relating to the genealogy of the Clayton family of
Grimsby with an attached family tree illustrating the
possible connexion of the Clayton family with Alfred Lord
Tennyson.
3 items

26 Nov-
5 Dec 1970