

Dorothy Cottrell Archive

Ida Dorothy Ottley Cottrell (1902-1957), writer, was born on 16 July 1902 at Picton in New South Wales, daughter of Australian-born parents Walter Barwon Wilkinson, mine manager, and his wife Ida Constance, née Fletcher. When Dorothy was five, she contracted infantile paralysis and was thereafter confined to a wheelchair. Her parents later separated and Dorothy was raised by her grandmother at Picton, and later, in Toowoomba, then on her Fletcher uncles' stations, Elmina and Ularunda, near Charleville. While on the stations, she trained sheep and cattle dogs to draw her wheelchair. She was taught at home by governesses until about 1915, when she went to live with her aunt Lavinia Fletcher in Sydney, then in 1920 she went to live at Ularunda.

On 23 May 1922, at the Ann Street Presbyterian Church, Brisbane, she married Walter Mackenzie Cottrell, a bookkeeper at Ularunda. In February 1923 they went to Dunk Island where they lived with beachcomber, Edmund Banfield. In 1924 they travelled round New South Wales in a truck, selling odds and ends, returning to Ularunda in the winter where she started to write fiction.

To avoid "iniquitous taxation" on her American earnings, the Cottrells sailed for California on 19 October 1928. She published *Earth Battle* (*Tharlane*, in America) in 1930, depicting the difficulty in making a living from the outback. Dorothy and Walter Cottrell became American citizens in 1939 and from 1942 they lived in Florida. In the USA Cottrell proved to be a successful journalist and writer, especially of short fiction on Australian themes. She also published two children's books, *Winks: His Book* (1934) and *Wilderness Orphan* (1936) which was filmed. In 1953 Cottrell published *The Silent Reefs*, a mystery adventure set in the Caribbean. It was serialized in the *Saturday Evening Post* and in 1959 was made into a film. In 1954 the Cottrells returned to Queensland to manage Ularunda until 1956 when they returned to Homestead in Florida. It was here that Dorothy died of heart disease on 29 June 1957. She was survived by her husband and adopted son.

Reference:

Barbara Ross and Martha Rutledge, "Cottrell, Ida Dorothy Ottley (1902-1957)," Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/cottrell-ida-dorothy-ottley-5788/text9817> .

Archive Location: 178

Detailed Listing:

DC/1/1 Writings or compilations by Barbara Ross concerning Dorothy Cottrell:

DC/1/1/A Dorothy Cottrell: a bibliography

DC/1/1/B Novels

DC/1/1/C Short stories, articles and extracts

DC/1/1/D Bibliographical material and general articles

DC/1/1/E Short stories with Australian settings

DC/1/2 Introduction to a proposed edition of "*The Singing Gold*" by New Endeavour Press (c.1978), not published

DC/1/3/A "Drawn by Dossie," *Voices* (National Library of Australia Quarterly Journal), Summer 1991-92, pp.21-30.

DC/1/3/B "The Art Class, 1917," *Voices*, Summer 1991-92, pp.31-36.

DC/1/4/A Talk given to the Toowoomba Ladies' Literary Society, 1995, entitled "The Regional Connections with Toowoomba and South-West Queensland in Dorothy Cottrell's fiction."

DC/1/4/B "Dorothy Cottrell: Links with Toowoomba and SW Queensland," Notes for publicity

DC/1/5 "Dorothy Cottrell's Grey Country: Extracts from 'Wheelrhyme,' an unpublished novel by Dorothy Cottrell," *Coppertales*, No.2, 1995

DC/1/6 "Encounters with Dorothy Cottrell," Talk given at a seminar, James Cook University

DC/1/7 "Different Leaves from Dunk Island," as submitted for publication to *LiNQ*

DC/1/8 Talk for Bowen Historical Society, "Dorothy Cottrell and North Queensland"

DC/1/9 "Dorothy Cottrell: Links with Toowoomba and SW Queensland"

DC/1/10 "*Prepared for the Journey: A Life of the Australian Writer Dorothy Cottrell*," 185 pages (no date - bound, unpublished, last version)

- DC/2 Colour copies of book jackets of Dorothy Cottrell's novels
- DC/3 Dorothy Cottrell, *Tharlane*, Houghton and Mifflin, The Riverside Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1930. No dust jacket
- DC/4 Short stories or articles written by Dorothy Cottrell. The items listed here are xerox copies of those held in the National Library of Australia's Cottrell Collection, MS6085.
- DC/4/1 Undated. Typescript of *And the Blind Shall Lead*, published, not known where, 2 copies
- DC/4/2 March 1929. Typescript of "Before Bunny Came Here." Published in *Ladies Home Journal* - Cottrell's first short story
- DC/4/3 28 February 1949. "Blown Away," in *Woman's Day*, from Mitchell Library
- DC/4/4 1933. Typescript of "Cabbage Roses," published in *Winchester Story-Teller* (May 1933).
- DC/4/5 Undated. Cut out book for Aunt Livinia, Xerox of Dorothy's holograph copy. Not published.
- DC/4/6 1933. *In the Dark Moon*, typescript, published, not known anywhere, 3 copies
- DC/4/7 1950. Typescript of details of hand-operated elevator as shown in the article "How to wear a wheel-chair," published in the *The Saturday Evening Post*, 10 June 1950.
- DC/4/8 1948. Hurricane, Xerox of cut-out of story from *Women's Journal* (UK)
- DC/4/9 Undated. "I Loved it, Love," (alternative title was "A matter of comparison"), typescript published in *My Weekly* (early 1970s)
- DC/4/10 September 1932. Magazine cuttings of an "Old Doc story," published in *Liberty*, 3 September 1932
- DC/4/11 1940. Magazine cut-outs of "Little Fellow," published in *Hearst's International Cosmopolitan* in September 1940
- DC/4/12 1930. *The Night Flowers*, Elsinore Leader press, intended as a film script
- DC/4/13 1951. Magazine cut-out of "The Pit in the Jungle," published in *The Saturday Evening Post*, 18 August 1951.
- DC/4/14 1933. "Racing Abe Goes Home," published in the *American*, August 1934, 3 copies

DC/4/15 1948. Magazine cut-out of "The Reef," published in *Argosy*, July 1947, 2 copies

DC/4/16 1950. Typescript of "Shark Bait," published in *Argosy*, 1950, and in *The Australian Journal*, August 1951

DC/4/17 Undated, c.1925, "*The Socialistic Menace*," and letters published in *The Grazier's Review*

DC/4/18 1933. Magazine cuttings of "The Square Peg," published in *Hearst's International-Cosmopolitan*, April 1933

DC/4/19 1937. Magazine cut-out of "Teddy Bear," published in *Nash's Magazine*, August 1937

DC/4/20 1933. A "An Uncommon Stupid Dog" typescript, published, not known where

DC/4/21 1935. Cut-outs of the "Spike" stories

DC/4/22 Dorothy Cottrell's miscellaneous jottings and a letter to Jess Cordes

DC/4/23 1932. Magazine cuttings of the "Dickie" stories

DC/4/24 September 1932. Magazine cuttings of the "Winks" stories

DC/4/25 File of animal short stories as sent to Philippe Tanguy, Endeavour Press

DC/4/26 "The Gauntlet of Flames," [published in *Post?*], 11 October 1952

DC/5 Unpublished novels in typescript

DC/5/1 "*Nika Lurgin*," written by Dorothy Cottrell using the non-de-plume Olga Raff

DC/5/2 "Wheelrhyme" version A1336/2, item 16327, first version

DC/5/3 "Wheelrhyme" version A1336/2, item 16936, second version

DC/6 Miscellaneous

DC/6/1 Materials relating to Ularunda and Dorothy Cottrell in the Noel Butlin Archives Centre, ANU, Canberra; Fletcher Papers

DC/6/2 Copy of National Library of Australia's file with Walter Cottrell

DC/6/3 Barbara Ross papers on Dunk Island and regarding Dorothy Cottrell's painting of Dunk Island

- DC/6/4 Copy of Barbara Ross's address book regarding Cottrell and Fletcher correspondents
- DC/6/5 Copy of "Hurricane Wedding," from Wayne Cottrell's collection
- DC/6/6 Cottrell miscellanea: family homes; letter sent to Barbara Ross from J N Nicholas on his account of Walter and Dorothy Cottrell's life in the United States
- DC/6/7 Photocopy of Dorothy Cottrell's Fletcher family tree
- DC/6/8 Wayne Cottrell's memories of adopted mother and father (NOT to be quoted without his express permission)
- DC/6/9 Marianne Ilbery, "*Pastoral Occupation of Back-Country in South-West Queensland: Formation of Ularunda Station 1884-1917*," Sub-thesis for Bachelor of Letters, ANU (1984)
- DC/6/10 Margaret Dent, "A Gentle Soul and a Generous Colleague," *National Library of Australia News* (2005). Dedication to Barbara Ross, Canberra scholar, researcher and archivist, and donor of this collection.