



## More family history background for composer/pianist William Rea

The 1900 Belfast Street Directory has grandfather William's eldest son, Joseph Rea, watchmaker and jeweller, at 256 Shankill Road; also J. Rea, watchmaker and jeweller, 83 Crumlin Road. Both addresses in earlier years had also been listed, in turn, as the Rea family home.

Grandfather William Rea's wife died just one year after the 1901 National Census:

*Belfast News-Letter*, Saturday 17 May 1902, page 1

**REA** – May 16, at her husband's residence, 83, Crumlin Road, Annie, the dearly-beloved wife of William Rea. Her remains will be removed from the above address, for interment in City Cemetery, tomorrow (Sunday) afternoon, at three o'clock. ...

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The 1908 Belfast Street Directory has Rea, Joseph, watch maker and jeweller, 200 Crumlin Road.

Joseph's brother, William also ran his own watchmaker/jewellery business from the former family home address at 256 Shankill Road.

Joseph's business developed and soon he had moved to the centre of town: 49 Ann Street and 42a Church Lane.

But then disaster struck:

*Northern Whig*, Saturday 21 December 1918, page 4

### **OBITUARY.**

#### **Mr. Joseph Rea.**

Sincere regret will be caused by the announcement of the death of Mr. Joseph Rea, watchmaker and jeweller, 49, Ann Street, who passed away yesterday morning at his residence, 3, Ashley Villas, Cliftonville. Deceased had not been enjoying good health for some time, but on Thursday he was out of doors, and seemed to have regained much of his accustomed energy. In the evening, however, he became so ill that his condition gave anxiety to his friends, who at once sent for his medical adviser, Dr. Hayden. As the night advanced, the patient sank, and passed away about midnight.

The deceased gentleman, who was unmarried, was the eldest son of Mr. William Rea, formerly missionary of Argyle Place Presbyterian Church. He possessed keen business talents, and was highly esteemed by those with whom he came into close contact, either socially or in business. He is survived by his father, two brothers

(Messrs. William and James Rea), and three sisters (Misses Mary and Annie Rea and [Agnes] Mrs. H. [Henry] McKibbin) and to all these the greatest sympathy will be extended in their bereavement.

Joseph's death was followed some six months later by that of his father, William.

*The Witness*, Friday 4 July 1919:

#### **DEATH OF FORMER BELFAST MISSIONARY.**

Sincere regret will be occasioned by the announcement of the death of Mr. William Rea, 3, Ashley Villas, Cliftonville Road. The deceased was a native of Co. Armagh, having been born midway between Lurgan and Portadown some 78 years ago. At an early age he came to Belfast, where he became identified with the linen trade. Keenly interested in the Gospel work, he was subsequently appointed to the position of missionary of Argyle Place Presbyterian Church, from which post he retired about two years ago after faithful service covering a period of a quarter of a century.

Amongst all classes of the community he was held in the highest esteem, but it is perhaps by the poor of Shankill district – amongst whom he was renowned for his generous financial assistance as well as practical sympathy in other forms – that he will be most sadly missed, for in his passing hence they have lost a friend indeed. He is survived by two sons (Messrs. William and James Rea) and three daughters (Miss Mary Rea, Mrs. H. M'Kibbin, and Miss Annie Rea), to whom sincere sympathy is extended in their sad bereavement.

The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland has:

Administration of the Estate of the late William Rea, Cliftonville Road, Belfast, Gentleman, who died 30 June 1919, granted at Belfast 18 July 1919 to James Rea, Jeweller, the son.

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This next 'news piece' surely counts as 'promoted content' in the *Belfast Telegraph*! It also points to the likelihood that James Rea (father of our composer/pianist William Rea) had been running Joseph's shop and was now being joined in business by his brother William.

*Belfast Telegraph*, Thursday 17 June 1920, page 4

#### **WATCHES, CLOCKS, AND JEWELLERY.**

##### **GREAT DROP IN PRICES.**

It is refreshing to learn in these days when prices are rapidly advancing that Messrs. Rea's, the well-known jewellers of 49 Ann Street, Belfast, have considerably reduced the prices of their entire stock, which includes watches, clocks and jewellery during their sale, which is now proceeding.

The sale is necessary owing to Mr. Wm. Rea, late of 256 Shankill Road, having secured an interest in and transferred his business and stock to [the] Ann Street premises. It affords an opportunity, rarely given, of making purchases at almost pre-war prices, and the public are advised to shop early.

In the midst of life ...

*Belfast News-Letter*, Tuesday 29 November 1921, page 8

### **McKibbin and the Settled Land Acts.**

This was an application on behalf of Anna McKibbin, a minor, by her next friend, asking that James Rea and William Rea, her uncles, might be appointed trustee under the Settled Land Acts of the settlement of three houses, Nos. 26, 28 and 30, Reid Street, Belfast, to which she became entitled under the intestacy of her father, Henry McKibbin, of Belfast, grocer.

The three houses were held under one fee-farm grant at a rent of eight guineas, and in his lifetime Henry McKibbin had contracted to make a lease for 900 years of No. 26, Reid Street, in consideration of a fine of £500 and a rent of £4 4d per year.

Henry McKibbin subsequently died, before the lease had been executed, leaving surviving him his widow Agnes McKibbin and one daughter, Anna McKibbin, his heiress at-law.

This application became necessary owing to the infancy of the heiress, and the court was asked to appoint persons to execute the lease on her behalf.

Mr. J. H. Robb. K.C., M.P. (instructed by Messrs. R. Kelly & Son) appeared for the applicant.

His Lordship granted the application.

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I assume this next newspaper notice is a case of business consolidation:

*Northern Whig*, Friday 23 July 1926, page 1

### **GIVING UP BUSINESS.**

Important Notice to Watchmakers, Jewellers, and the Public at large.

SALE BY PUBLIC AUCTION, commencing on SATURDAY, July 24th, 1926.

Mr. A. FAITH has been instructed by Mr. S. R. HOWARD, Accountant, 53, Donegall Street, to Sell by Auction the whole of the Stock, Fixtures, Fittings, Cases, &c., WITHIN THE PREMISES BELONGING TO MR. WILLIAM REA, Watchmaker and Jeweller, 115, SHANKILL ROAD, Belfast.]

The Stock comprises Ladies' and Gent's Gold Watches, Gold Alberts, Diamond Rings, Diamond Brooches, Pendants, Necklets, Clocks, all kinds of makes, Westminster Chimes. Large selection of Sheffield-made Cutlery; solid Silver and Silver-plated Tea Sets, and a large stock of Fancy Goods too numerous to particularise.

Sales Daily, commencing Saturday, July 24th, 1926, at 11 a.m. Fixtures, Fittings, Cases, Safe, will be Sold on FRIDAY. Look out for advertisement.

**A. FAITH, Auctioneer.**

Notice — The whole Stock to be Sold without reserve.

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This next mention was a further development for the business:

*Belfast Telegraph*, Wednesday 01 September 1943, page 3

### **New Companies**

**Joseph Rea & Co., Ltd.** (private company). — Nominal capital, £3,000, divided into 3,000 shares of £1 each. Registered office, not stated. First directors — James Rea, 7 Parkmount Road, Belfast; William Rea, 32 Hamilton Road, Bangor.

Objects — To carry on, develop and turn to account the business of jewellers heretofore carried on by James Rea and William Rea at 49 Ann Street, Belfast, trading as “Joseph Rea”.

David Byers, 26 January 2021