

*FROM ANDREW CARNEGIE'S
DUNFERMLINE TO CARNEGIE
STEEL, USA
BY SHEILA CULROSS*

Andrew Carnegie, the famous steel magnate and international philanthropist, is undoubtedly Dunfermline's most famous son. He was born in rather poor circumstances in a weaver's cottage, in Dunfermline in November 1835. The Carnegie family emigrated to America in 1848, seeking a better life, as did many others. Andrew started work there as a bobbin boy (aged twelve) and ended up as the wealthiest American of his day.

David Melville – the pensioner I researched as part of this RSLP with USA-- was also born in 1835, but in Dysart, not Dunfermline. By the time of the 1861 census, however, he and his first wife Helen Lawrie had moved to Reid Street, Dunfermline. Their son David and daughter Margaret were born in Dunfermline (in 1863 and 1865 respectively) and David senior spent the rest of his life living in Dunfermline, becoming a Dunfermline postal worker in 1867 before retiring in 1901 and dying in Dunfermline in 1920 at the ripe old age of eighty-five from senile decay.

I was puzzled when I was unable to find David junior in the 1881 census for Dunfermline; but, after further research, I discovered him, to my surprise, on a passenger list, arriving in New York on 7th April 1881, on the *Furnessia*. What made David take the momentous decision to emigrate to America, on his own, at the age of eighteen? Well, it would be a great adventure, of course. More likely, however, he had read in the local newspapers about Andrew Carnegie, the “local boy made good”. During 1880 and 1881 discussions were afoot between the Dunfermline local authority and Carnegie regarding his offer to donate £5,000 to Dunfermline for the establishment of a public library in the town. He had donated £5,000 to Dunfermline previously for the provision of a public swimming bath and had then been granted the freedom of the city. David junior therefore, would have known all about Andrew Carnegie before his own voyage to America to start a new life.

David junior's pursuit of the American dream worked out reasonably well. Because the 1890 American census was destroyed by fire, we don't have evidence of David's life from the time of his arrival in New York until his appearance in the 1900 census. By then, he was living in Pennsylvania, had married Emma Bentley, a native of Illinois, in 1885. He had a family of three (a daughter and two sons). He had also become a naturalized American. In the 1920 census the family is living in Steubenville, Jefferson, Ohio, and David's occupation is given as chief clerk at Carnegie Steel. Is this simply a coincidence- or were Dunfermline-born immigrants given a helping hand for employment at Carnegie factories? Perhaps that's too fanciful a conjecture! David junior, who was now calling himself David F. Melville (the F, presumably, standing for Forman, his grandmother Agnes' maiden name), died there in 1929, a mere nine years after his father's death in 1920 in Dunfermline. I have found no proof that he ever returned to Scotland to visit his father or sister, Margaret.

From weaver to seaman to postal worker

David Melville, our postal pensioner, started his working life as a linen hand loom weaver, according to the 1851 census. By the time of his marriage to Helen Lawrie in 1859, however, he is a seaman (merchant service). In the nineteenth century, life at sea was notoriously precarious. One wonders

what part his wife might have played in his decision to leave the merchant service to become a postal worker, in 1867. At the time of the 1861 census he is at sea and his wife is at home alone. After the birth of their son David and daughter Margaret (in 1863 and 1865 respectively), Helen may well have encouraged David to seek a more secure form of employment at a time when there was no social security or pension. If anything untoward had happened to David at sea, she would have had to rely on charity to survive and bring up her children. Examples of marine accidents abound in the newspapers of the day. One such was the wreck of the *Dalhousie* in 1864, with the loss of twenty passengers and fourteen crew. Eighteen women were widowed and fifty-two children were orphaned. A public appeal for relief raised £3,000. I found a possible entry for David Melville in Ancestry's "*UK Apprentices indentured in Merchant Navy 1824-1910*", although the estimated year of birth is two years out. The place of indenture is Kirkcaldy, just along the coast from Dysart where 'our' David was born. If this does indeed refer to our postal pensioner, he also appears in Find My Past's *Britain Merchant Seamen 1835-1857*, serving on board the *Saint Clair* of Shields.

1881: "Annus Horribilis"

1881 was a truly momentous year in the life of David Melville- but not in a good way. As already stated, his only son David arrived in New York on the 7th of April 1881. On April 24th that same year David's only surviving daughter, Margaret, gave birth to an illegitimate son named For(e)man, having just celebrated her sixteenth birthday nine days previously. This puts a different complexion on David junior's decision to leave Scotland for the New World. Had there, perhaps, been an explosive family row about Margaret's pregnancy? Was the Melville family, behind closed doors, a family in crisis? David's two children had lost their mother at the age of eight and six, in 1871 (Helen Lawrie had died from "Hysteria during pregnancy"). David married Eliza Toddie, a widow, only three months later. Did the children accept their step-mother, or was the relationship problematic? We shall never know.

One thing we do know is that David was the informant on his grandson's birth certificate and that Forman grew up in his grandfather's home, together with his mother. So there was an acceptance of Margaret's situation on the part of her father, although the illegitimacy would have been frowned on in the community at that time. I have attempted to find out if Margaret's "antenuptial fornication" (using the language of the Church of Scotland, the moral arbiter at that time) was mentioned in Dunfermline's Kirk Session records. Unfortunately, the records for that period have yet to appear on the ScotlandsPeople website. In any case, because David Melville was probably not a member of the Established Church of Scotland (David's first marriage took place according to the forms of the Baptist Church and his second according to the forms of the United Presbyterian Church), meaning Margaret may not have featured in the Kirk Session records at all. One can only speculate.

What is in no doubt is that Forman, despite his inauspicious start in life, "made good". He served in World War One in the RAMC, gaining the British War Medal and the Victory medal. He didn't follow in his grandfather David's footsteps by entering the postal service. At the time of his marriage to Elizabeth Crombie in 1918 (only one month after the death of his mother) he was a cloth lapper; but he later became a confectioner. He owned a business in Cross Street, Dysart, from which he retired in 1948 and put up for sale, along with his residence. He was buried in Dunfermline Cemetery in 1957.

References

- Websites
 - 'Andrew Carnegie', *Wikipedia*: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrew_Carnegie
 - Taymara. SS Dalhousie: the wreck of the steamer Dalhousie. Taymara, 1 Jul 2020: <https://www.taymara.org>
- Articles
 - 'The gift of a townsman to Dunfermline', *Fife Herald* (15th January 1880).
 - 'The recent severe storms. The Wreck of the Dalhousie. Loss of thirty-three lives', *Fifeshire Journal* (1st December 1864).
 - 'Dalhousie: The Tay Shipwreck you may not have heard about', *Evening Telegraph* (13th January 2016)
- Genealogical references
 - David Melville (3.4.1855 Kirkcaldy) UK apprentices indentured in Merchant Navy 1824-1910:
https://www.ancestry.co.uk/imageviewer/collections/60609/images/42482_613000_0_0013-00096?treeid=&personid=&hintid=&usePUB=true&usePUBJs=true&pId=343248
 - David Melville (3.4.1855 Kirkcaldy): Britain, merchant seamen, 1835-1857 Image | findmypast.co.uk
 - Birth of Margaret Melville (15.4.1865): 1865 MELVILLE, MARGARET (Statutory registers Births 424/1, 140) | ScotlandsPeople
 - Birth of David Melville (5.6.1863): 1863 MELVILLE, DAVID (Statutory registers Births 424/1, 211) | ScotlandsPeople
 - Birth of Forman Melville (24.4.1881): 1881 MELVILLE, FOR(E)MAN (Statutory registers Births 424/355) | ScotlandsPeople
 - Death of Margaret Melville (13.10.1918): 1918 MELVILLE, MARGARET (Statutory registers Deaths 424/452) | ScotlandsPeople

Pensioner Details
<i>Pensioner name:</i> David Melville
<i>Person ID:</i> SC1024
<i>Your name:</i> Sheila Culross
<i>U3A group:</i> Scotland
Part One: Birth and Family
1: When and where was your pensioner born?
David Melville was born in Dysart, Fife on 27 th December 1835 and was baptised on 8 th January 1836
2: Who were your pensioner's parents? Record any details you can find out about them here (e.g. occupation, religious affiliation, whether they could read or write)
David's parents were David Melville and Agnes Forman. David Melville (Father) was recorded on David Melville's death certificate in 1920, as being a Carter by trade. On the 1851 census, he is recorded as "Labourer, Ag Lab & Quarryman". His birthplace is given in 1851 census as Kirkcaldy, Fife, but Gallatown on his death certificate. His estimated birth year was 1806. David Melville (Father) died on May 25 th 1855 in Dysart, Fife. On his death certificate (at the age of 48), his parents are given as John Melville, Linen Weaver and Agnes Mitchell. He was buried in Dysart Church Yard. The informant on the certificate was his son John, brother of David Melville (Postal Pensioner). Agnes Forman, wife of David Melville (Father), according to the 1851 census was born in Wemyss, Fife in 1807 (estimated).
3: Did your pensioner have any siblings? What were their names, and how old were they in relation to your pensioner? Use this space to record anything else you have found out about them (e.g. occupation, later life)
David, according to the 1851 census, had 7 siblings: John, born "1829", in Gallatown, a Hand Loom Weaver Linen; Agnes, born "1833", in Dysart, a Hand Loom Weaver Linen; Henry, born "1838", in Dysart, a Hand Loom Weaver; Jememia? [Jemima?], born in "1840" in Fife; Isabella, born "1841", in Dysart; William, born in "1844", in Dysart; James, born in "1849", in Dysart. On David Melville, Senior's death certificate in 1855, other siblings of David who by that time are deceased are listed: Jemina (1831), Henrietta(1835) and Robert (1842). It is unclear whether these dates are of the birth or the death of the deceased siblings. The dates, in any case, are rather suspect. Robert, for example was born in 1845 and died in 1846, according to SP; Henrietta was born in 1834, but her death is not listed in SP; the only Jemima born to David and Agnes listed in SP is in 1839 (which is the Jemima born in 1840 according to the 1851 census). In the 1851 census, Jememia Forman, the mother-in-law of David Melville (Father), was living with them. She is described as a "Pauper", born in Wemyss, Fife, in 1783.
Part Two: Marriage and children/ boarders
1: Did your pensioner marry? What was their spouse's name, and when and where did they marry them? Use this space to record any extra details you can find out about their spouse (e.g. when/where they were born, their occupation).

David Melville married **Helen Lawrie** on 18th July 1859 in Dunfermline Burgh. Helen Lawrie was born in Dysart, Fife (according to the 1861 & 1871 censuses). She was the daughter of James Lawrie, weaver and Margaret – [can't make out the name]. The marriage was carried out according to the Forms of the Baptist Church, which may explain why I can't find her parents' marriage in the OPRs in ScotlandsPeople. The name given for David's mother (Agnes Horn) is incorrect on the certificate. It should be Agnes Forman. David's occupation is given as "mariner" (which tallies with the 1861 census for his wife (where he is absent) where she is described as "sailor wife"). Helen died on 25th October 1871 from "Hysteria during Pregnancy", in Dunfermline, aged 36. David was married for the 2nd time to **Eliza Toddie** on 26th January 1872, also in Dunfermline Burgh. She was born in Dunfermline, Fife (according to the 1881 & 1891 censuses). Her parents were William Toddie and Janet McLaren. William was a weaver by occupation. Eliza Toddie was a widow when she married widower David Melville. (The name of her previous husband is not given). Interestingly the couple was married in the United Presbyterian Church, not the Established Church of Scotland. Eliza Toddie died in 1894 in Dunfermline, aged 68. (Information from search result on SP- certificate not purchased

2: Did your pensioner have any children? What were their names, and when they were born? Use this space to record any extra details you can find out about them (e.g. occupation, where they lived later in life)

To his 1st wife, Helen Lawrie he had: a son, **David**, born in 1863 in Dunfermline and a daughter, **Margaret**, born in 1865, also in Dunfermline. A second daughter, **Agnes**, born in 1868 in Dunfermline died age 1 in 1869, according to the index in SP. (The maiden name of her mother is indexed as Lawris instead of Lawrie).

David (Son):

He was born 5.6.1863 in Dunfermline. In the 1871 he is living with his parents, in Dunfermline, aged 7, Scholar. He then disappears from the Scottish records. I found his probable arrival in the US on 7th April 1881 on the "Furnessia" (as David Melville, 18, Book Keeper). I then located him in the 1900 US Federal Census in Allegheny, Pennsylvania with wife Emma and 3 children: Helen A. Melville, 14, Bentley Melville, 12 and David J. Melville, 10. The marriage year is given as "1885" in this census. His occupation is Book Keeper. His immigration year is recorded as "1881" and he is Naturalized. He can read and write. He then appears in the 1910 US Census, in Steubenville, Jefferson, Ohio, with his wife Emma and children Helen A. Melville, 23, David J. Melville, 19 and Ruth Melville, 17. His occupation in this census is Clerk in a Steel Company. In the 1920 US Census he is still in Steubenville, Jefferson, Ohio. He is now Chief Clerk to a Steel Company. Living with him are: Emma, his wife, 58, Helen A. Melville, 35, daughter and William B. Melville, Son, 32 (presumably the Bentley Melville listed in the 1900 census aged 12). He died in Steubenville, Ohio on 12th November 1929 and was buried on 14th November in Union cemetery.

I have been unable to find his marriage to Emma Elizabeth Bentley, a native of Illinois, in 1885.

There is a family tree on FamilySearch for this family. **N.B.** David added a middle initial to his name in the United States: F- possibly for Forman, after his grandmother, Agnes Forman. That David Melville became David F. Melville is proved by the date of birth on David F. Melville's death certificate in 1929: June 5th 1863. This is the same date of birth as on his birth certificate as David Melville) in Dunfermline Burgh.

Forman Melville (Grandson) (Son of Margaret Melville (Daughter)):

He had a grandson, Forman Melville, born to his unmarried daughter Margaret, a dressmaker, in 1881, in Dunfermline. (The forename is transcribed in FMP's 1891 census transcription incorrectly as Furman). In the 1901 census, Forman Melville is incorrectly listed as David's son, not grandson. Margaret's occupation in the 1881 census is Scholar; in the 1891 census she is a dressmaker; and in 1901 she is David Melville's Housekeeper. Forman's occupation in 1901 is given as Cloth Lopper Linen Fact[ory]. This should be Cloth LAPPER.

He attended Free Abbey Public School, Dunfermline, from 5.4.87 to 8.11.89 while residing at 33 Brucefield Street. From 11.11.89 until 8.5.96 he attended Dunfermline St Leonard Public School while residing at 73 Brucefield Street. Forman served in WW1 and gained the Victory Medal and British Medal. He was a Private in R.A.M.C. (No. 73872). He married Elizabeth Crombie who died in Edinburgh Royal Infirmary on 8th May 1939. Forman died in Meigle, Perthshire in 1957 at Belmont Castle, a Church of Scotland Care & Retirement Home, but was buried in Dunfermline Cemetery in 1957. According to newspaper articles Forman's occupation was Confectioner. He owned a business in Cross Street, Dysart, from which he retired in 1948 and put up for sale, along with his residence.

Part Three: Work

1: What occupation was your pensioner recorded as doing in census years? Please make sure to state clearly which year you are referring to

1851: Listed as Hand Loom Weaver Linen, aged 15
1861: Wife's schedule indicates he is a sailor
1871: Listed as Letter Carrier, aged 35
1881: Listed as Rural Letter Carrier, aged 45
1891: Listed as Rural Postman, aged 55
1901: Listed as Retired Postman, aged 65
1911: Listed as Retired Postman, aged 75

2: What occupations were people living with your pensioner (e.g. spouse, children, boarders) doing in the census years? Please make sure to state clearly which year you are referring to

In **1841** census David Melville is living with his parents and siblings. His father is described as "Ag Lab" and his sibling John (aged 13) is "Weaver".

1851 census. David is living with his parents & siblings. His father is described as Labourer, Ag Lab & Quarryman. David's brother John is a Hand Loom Weaver Linen. His sister Agnes is a Hand Loom Weaver Linen. His brother Henry is a Hand Loom Weaver Linen. His other siblings are listed as Scholars.

1861 census (where David is absent) his wife is on her own, living at Reid Street, Dunfermline. Her occupation is given as Sailor Wife.

1871 census. David's son David & daughter Margaret are both listed as Scholar. A Rebecca Sneddon (Widow, aged 74) has "No Occupation" in the Occupation section of the schedule. (N.B. FMP has incorrectly added her to David Melville's household- she in fact resided elsewhere. I have sent an error report to FMP).

1881 census. His daughter Margaret (aged 15) is "Scholar".

1891 census. Daughter Margaret is "Dressmaker" (aged 25 and unmarried).

1901 census. Daughter Margaret is "Housekeeper" to David, who is now a widower and aged 65. His "son" Forman [i.e. grandson] is "Cloth Lopper [i.e. Lapper] Linen Fact[ory]"

1911 census. Daughter Maggie [i.e. Margaret] is living with David at 75 Brucefield St. No occupation is given- presumably she is still acting as David's Housekeeper. She is unmarried, aged 44.

Part Four: Anything Else/Later Life

Please use this space to record anything else you have found out about your pensioner. For example: what do we know about their life after retirement?

In the "Fifeshire Journal", 22 Jan. 1891, p.6 there is a short article: "Presentation to Mr David Melville". David had been a rural postman for Torryburn and district for 24 years, but now, because of "alterations in the postal service" he was engaged in Dunfermline postal work. The inhabitants of Torryburn and district presented him with a writing desk, purse & sovereign "as a token of the respect in which he was held during these years".

Part Five: Your Sources

Please use this space to record the sources you have used

David Melville (Father) and family in 1841 census, Dysart, Fife:
[Record Transcription: 1841 England, Wales & Scotland Census | findmypast.co.uk](#)

David Melville (Father) and family in 1851 census, Dysart, Fife:
[Record Transcription: 1851 England, Wales & Scotland Census | findmypast.co.uk](#)

David Melville (Father) death in 1855 in Dysart:
[D1855 426 01 0027Z \(scotlandspeople.gov.uk\)](#)

Helen Melville (David Melville, Junior's wife) in 1861 census, Dunfermline, Fife:
[Record Transcription: 1861 England, Wales & Scotland Census | findmypast.co.uk](#)

David Melville and family in 1871 census, Dunfermline, Fife:
[Record Transcription: 1871 England, Wales & Scotland Census | findmypast.co.uk](#)

David Melville with 2nd wife and family in 1881 census, Dunfermline, Fife:
[Record Transcription: 1881 England, Wales & Scotland Census | findmypast.co.uk](#)

David Melville and family in 1891 census, Dunfermline, Fife:
[Record Transcription: 1891 England, Wales & Scotland Census | findmypast.co.uk](#)

David Melville and family in 1901 census, Dunfermline, Fife:
[Record Transcription: 1901 England, Wales & Scotland Census | findmypast.co.uk](#)

David Melville & Daughter Maggie in 1911 census, Dunfermline, Fife:
[ScotlandsPeople: Dunfermline, Fife Census 1911: 424/14/12](#)

David Melville's birth/baptism in 1835/1836 in Dysart, Fife:
[Scotland, Select Births and Baptisms, 1564-1950 - Ancestry.co.uk](#)

David Melville's 1st marriage 1859 to Helen Lawrie in Dunfermline:
[Record Transcription: Scotland Marriages 1561-1910 | findmypast.co.uk](#)

David Melville's 2nd marriage 1872 to Eliza Toddie in Dunfermline:
1872 marriage certificate (ScotlandsPeople): 1872 MELVILLE, DAVID (Statutory registers Marriages 424/1 24)

1891 article about David Melville's presentation, Dec.1890, for 24 years as rural postman:
"Dunfermline", Fifeshire Journal, 22 January 1891, p.6

David Melville's death in Dunfermline in 1920:
1920 death certificate (ScotlandsPeople: 1920 MELVILLE, DAVID (Statutory registers Deaths 424/584)

David Melville (Son), birth 1863, Dunfermline:
Record Transcription: Scotland Births & Baptisms 1564-1950 | findmypast.co.uk
Scotland, Select Births and Baptisms, 1564-1950 - Ancestry.co.uk

David Melville (Son) Arrival in US (Probable):
1881; Arrival: New York, New York, USA; Microfilm Serial: M237, 1820-1897; Line: 49; List Number: 364

David F. Melville (Son) in 1900 US Federal Census:
1900; Census Place: Braddock Ward 2, Allegheny, Pennsylvania; Page: 5; Enumeration District: 0348; FHL microfilm: 1241365

David F. Melville (Son) in 1910 US Federal Census:
1910; Census Place: Steubenville Ward 3, Jefferson, Ohio; Roll: T624_1201; Page: 6A; Enumeration District: 0130; FHL microfilm: 1375214

David F. Melville (Son) in 1920 US Federal Census:
1920; Census Place: Steubenville Ward 4, Jefferson, Ohio; Roll: T625_1402; Page: 13B; Enumeration District: 229

David F. Melville (Son), death, 1929, Ohio, USA:
"Ohio Deaths, 1908-1953," database with images, FamilySearch
(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33SQ-GPKP-9HKD?cc=1307272&wc=MD9F5PD%3A287601301%2C294687401> : 21 May 2014), 1929 > 69701-72900 > image 1864 of 3530.

Agnes Melville (Daughter), birth 1868, Dunfermline Burgh:
1868 birth certificate (ScotlandsPeople): 1868 MELVILLE, AGNES (Statutory registers Births 424/1 210)

Agnes Melville (Daughter), death 1869, Dunfermline Burgh:
1869 death certificate (ScotlandsPeople): 1869 MELVILLE, AGNES (Statutory registers Deaths 424/1 200)

Margaret Melville (Daughter), birth 1865, Dunfermline:
Record Transcription: Scotland Births & Baptisms 1564-1950 | findmypast.co.uk

Forman Melville (Grandson), birth 1881 in Dunfermline:
Scotland, Select Births and Baptisms, 1564-1950 – [Ancestry.co.uk](https://www.ancestry.co.uk)

Forman Melville (of 33 Brucefield St.), School Record, Free Abbey Public School, 5.4.1887-8.11.1889

[Ancestry.co.uk](https://www.ancestry.co.uk) - Fife, Scotland, School Admissions and Discharges, 1867-1916

Forman Melville (of 73 Brucefield St.), School Record, Dunfermline St Leonard P. School, 11.11.1889-8.5.1896

[Ancestry.co.uk](https://www.ancestry.co.uk) - Fife, Scotland, School Admissions and Discharges, 1867-1916

Forman Melville (Grandson), marriage to Elizabeth Crombie in Dunfermline in 1918:
1918 MELVILLE, FORMAN (Statutory registers Marriages 424/ 283) | [ScotlandsPeople](https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk)

Forman Melville (Grandson), Medal Index Card for WWI:

[Record Transcription: Britain, Campaign, Gallantry & Long Service Medals & Awards | findmypast.co.uk](https://www.findmypast.co.uk)

Death of Forman Melville's wife Elizabeth Crombie 8.5.1939:

"Deaths", Fife Free Press, & Kirkcaldy Guardian, 13 May 1939, p.7

[The British Newspaper Archive | findmypast.co.uk](https://www.findmypast.co.uk)

Retirement of Forman Melville (Grandson) & Sale of House and Business 1948, Dysart, Fife:
Dundee Courier 6.7.1948, p.1 "Dysart"

<https://search.findmypast.co.uk/bna/ViewArticle?id=BL%2F0000564%2F19480706%2F096%2F0001&browse=true>

Death of Forman Melville (Grandson) 1.3.1957, Meigle, Perthshire:

1957 MELVILLE, FORMAN (Statutory registers Deaths 379/ 4) | [ScotlandsPeople](https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk)

Forman Melville (Grandson), burial 1957 in Dunfermline Cemetery, Dunfermline:

[Record Transcription: Scotland Monumental Inscriptions | findmypast.co.uk](https://www.findmypast.co.uk)

Death of Helen Lawrie, 1st wife of David Melville:

1871 MELVILLE, HELEN (Statutory registers Deaths 424/1 236) | [ScotlandsPeople](https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk)

Death of Eliza Toddie, 2nd wife of David Melville:

Statutory registers - Deaths - Search results | [ScotlandsPeople](https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk)

1894 TODDIE, ELIZA (Statutory registers Deaths 424/94) [ScotlandsPeople](https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk)