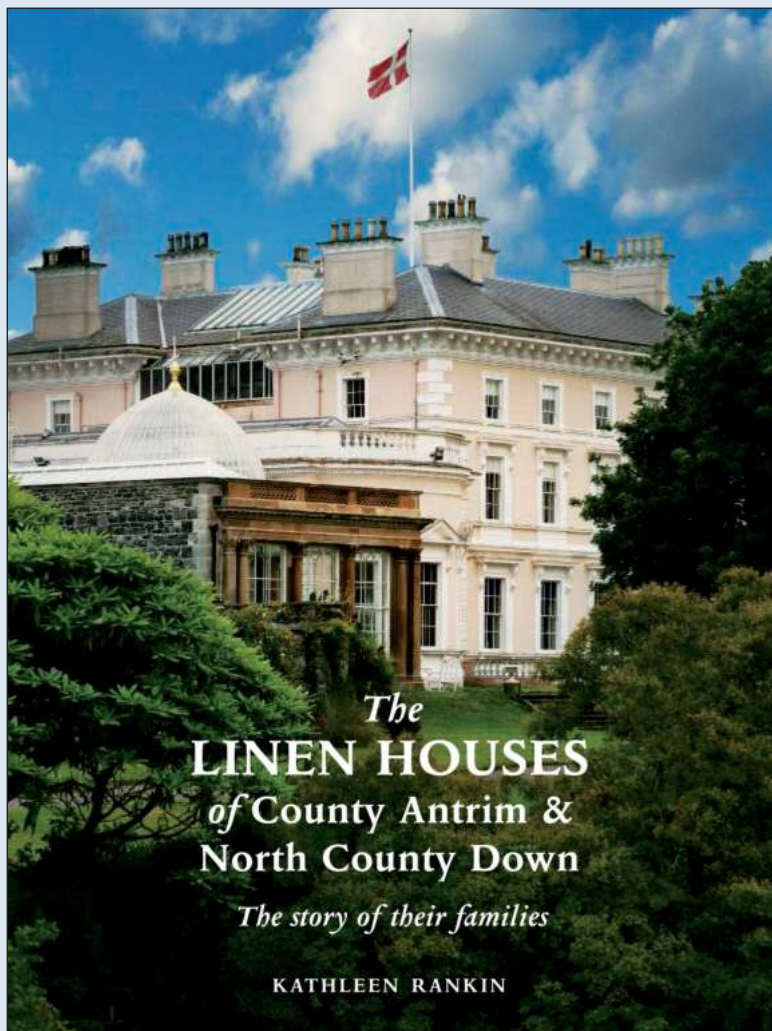


*New from Ulster Historical Foundation*

# The Linen Houses of County Antrim and North County Down: The story of their families

Kathleen Rankin



By the late nineteenth century Belfast had developed into one of the great industrial cities in the British Isles. Much of this new found wealth was based on the manufacture of linen. The opulent lifestyle that came to be so characteristic of the great linen barons is reflected perhaps best of all in the houses they built. Many travelled from their imposing mansions in south east County Antrim, and in north County Down on the new railways which converged on Belfast. Others, particularly bleachers, lived in equally resplendent houses near the linen works they had already established, particularly on the Six Mile Water, and on the River Maine in County Antrim. Significant linen spinning mills existed in Comber, County Down, and Mossley, County Antrim, where their owners lived adjacent to their works. This book provides an illustrated and informed commentary on the major linen families and their magnificent houses in County Antrim and north County Down. The images – exterior views of the actual houses, interior scenes of the stately rooms and portraits of their owners, many selected from private collections of the families themselves – present tantalising and poignant glimpses of a bygone age, when Belfast was justifiably known as ‘Linenopolis’.

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## About the author

Dr Kathleen Rankin is a graduate of Queen's University, Belfast where she completed her Ph.D. on the In-service Education of Teachers with particular reference to science. For many years she was involved with the organisation of both Chemistry and Biology courses for teachers at the Queen's University Teachers' Centre.

In addition she is a graduate of Trinity College, University of Dublin where she obtained an M.Litt. in Education. Dr Rankin is the daughter of the late Herbert R. Lilley, a well known linen designer, and since retirement as a lecturer in Lisburn Institute, she has been involved with Living Linen, an organisation associated with the gathering of information on the Irish Linen Industry in the twentieth century.

Kathleen Rankin has written several books on a range of subjects, mostly concerning Irish linen. They include *Linen Houses of the Lagan Valley: The story of their families*, and on the same theme, *Linen Houses of the Bann Valley: The story of their families*.

Kathleen Rankin was appointed MBE in the 2010 New Year's Honours List.



