

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-43772-1 - D. H. Lawrence: The Early Years 1885–1912

John Worthen

Frontmatter

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‘it is hard to imagine that this biography will soon be superseded’.

Sir Frank Kermode, *The Guardian*

‘. . . a remarkable and outstanding achievement . . . informed by the kind of insight into personal relations that is the mark not of an academic but of a considerable novelist’.

H. M. Daleski, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

‘[This is] a work of impeccable scholarship, and comes provided with an impressive apparatus of notes, appendices, chronological tables, family trees, an exemplary index, and complete lists of Lawrence’s prose and verse writings in the relevant period, making it an invaluable resource for serious students of Lawrence; but it is also written in a lucid, unpretentious style which lay readers will find accessible and enjoyable.’

David Lodge, *The New York Review of Books*

‘This is a superb biography. Apart from the compelling narrative there are judicious excursions into the mix of rurality and the mining industry that formed the background to Lawrence’s life. There are portraits of the family members and . . . insights into Lawrence’s admiring bluestockings and into the less well-known early works that led up to *Sons and Lovers* . . . Cambridge have already given us . . . a decent edition of Lawrence’s fiction; now they are embarked on what should be the definitive life.’

Anthony Curtis, *The Financial Times*

‘[Worthen] has researched deeply, reading everything even remotely relevant, and is able to be authoritative where others have conjectured. [This] is a warm as well as a serious book, for he clearly loves his subject, and makes us share his feeling. The theme of the development of the miner’s son and sickly scholarship boy with warring parents is a wonderful one, and he grasps all its possibilities in the 500 pages of his narrative.’

Claire Tomalin, *The Independent on Sunday*

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John Worthen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

‘One of this biography’s great merits is that Worthen understands the dangers of creating a life from a work of fiction. He uses Lawrence’s fiction intelligently. He never forgets that even the most apparently autobiographical novels rearrange real events in order to make an artistic point. They cannot be trusted, as too many biographers trust them, to do the biographer’s work for him. The other great merit, apart from the wonderfully detailed and engrossing reconstruction of a period and a society, is its attitude to Lawrence himself. Worthen is unfailingly sympathetic, as a biographer should be, yet he never falls into the trap of supposing his hero to be perfect . . . This definitive book will be a hard act . . . to follow.’

Allan Massie, *Weekend Telegraph*

‘Worthen’s depiction of Eastwood is on something of a scholarly par with Lawrence’s evocation of it in *Sons and Lovers*.’

Janet Byrne, *The New York Times Book Review*

‘Literary scholars who thought they knew Lawrence and his circle well will be suprised by the subtlety, aptness, and psychological nuance of Worthen’s presentation and interpretation. It is as if for the first time we see Lawrence whole . . . this persuasive biography is compulsive reading from cover to cover. A major event in modern literary studies.’

Keith Cushman, *Library Journal*

‘Worthen sets the record straight in a thousand little ways, and there emerges a complex genius, ruthless, sensitive and fully alive.’

Publishers’ Weekly

‘. . . extremely thorough and careful . . .’

Jeffrey Meyers

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John Worthen

Frontmatter

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The Cambridge Biography

D. H. LAWRENCE

1885–1930



DAVID ELLIS

MARK KINKEAD-WEEKES

JOHN WORTHEN

The author of *The early years, 1885–1912*, John Worthen, was born in London during the Second World War and educated at Downing College, Cambridge and the University of Kent. He is the author of several books on D. H. Lawrence, most recently *D. H. Lawrence: A Literary Life*, and has edited a number of Lawrence's works for Cambridge University Press. Having taught in America, Scotland and England, he now lives in South Wales, where he is Professor of English at the University College of Swansea.

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978-0-521-43772-1 - D. H. Lawrence: The Early Years 1885–1912

John Worthen

Frontmatter

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D. H. LAWRENCE

THE EARLY YEARS

1885–1912



JOHN WORTHEN



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Frontmatter

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Tokyo, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521437721

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is made to William Heinemann Ltd in the UK and the
Viking Press in the USA for the authorisation granted
to Cambridge University Press through the Frieda
Lawrence Estate for quotation from the works of
D. H. Lawrence.

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First published 1991
First paperback edition 1992
Re-issued 2011

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data

Worthen, John

D. H. Lawrence: the early years, 1885-1912/John Worthen.

p. cm. - (The Cambridge biography)

Includes index.

ISBN 0-521-25419-1 (hardback). 0-521-43772-5 (paperback)

I. Lawrence, D. H. (David Herbert).

1885-1930 - Biography - Youth.

2. Authors, English - 20th century - Biography - Youth. I. Title.

II. Series.

PR6023.A93Z957 1991

823'.912-dc20 90-23423

[B] CIP

ISBN 978-0-521-25419-9 Hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-43772-1 Paperback

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John Worthen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

To M and F

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John Worthen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

It is perhaps absurd for any man to write his own autobiography. The one person I find it impossible to 'know', is myself. I have dozens of little pictures of what purports to be myself, and which is me? None of them. The little animal is now a bigger animal. But what sort of animal it is, I do not know, and do not vastly care.

The little animal was a pasty-faced boy born to have bronchitis and a weak chest, but otherwise lively enough. A little animal that

D. H. Lawrence: 'Mushrooms' (University of Cincinnati)

What separates us from the characters about whom we write is not knowledge, either objective or subjective, but their experience of time in the story we are telling. This separation allows us, the storytellers, the power of knowing the whole. Yet, equally, this separation renders us powerless: we cannot control our characters, after the narration has begun. We are obliged to follow them, and this following is through and across the time, which they are living and which we oversee.

The time, and therefore the story, belongs to them. Yet the meaning of the story, what makes it worthy of being told, is what we can see and what inspires us because we are beyond its time.

John Berger: 'Once Through a Lens' (1984)

Oh, I could go on and on for pages about Christie's young life, inventing and observing, remembering and borrowing. But why?

unexplainable.

is as he is, you are as you are.

that: all is chaos.

understand anything.

All is chaos and

These things happened. He

Act on

The end is coming, truly.

It is just so much wasted effort to attempt to

understand anything.

Lots of people never had a chance, are ground down, and other clichés. Far from kicking against the pricks, they love their condition and vote conservative.

B. S. Johnson: *Christie Malry's Own Double-Entry* (1973)

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-43772-1 - D. H. Lawrence: The Early Years 1885–1912

John Worthen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTENTS

	<i>Authors' Preface</i>	xiii
	<i>List of Illustrations and Maps</i>	xvii
	<i>Family Tree</i>	xix
	<i>Chronology</i>	xxiii
PART ONE: <i>Eastwood and Nottingham</i>		
1 · 1815–1883	ANTECEDENTS	
	I The Legacy of Eastwood	5
	II Lawrences	6
	III Beardsalls	12
	IV Lydia and Arthur	15
	V Differences	24
2 · 1883–1892	HOME AT EASTWOOD	
	I Houses and Money	29
	II James, George, Walter	42
	III Sisters and Brothers	51
	IV Father and Mother	57
	V Language	60
	VI Chapel	64
	VII Parents Recreated	69
	VIII Conflict and Choice	72
3 · 1892–1901	LAUNCHING INTO LIFE	
	I Beauvale Board School	75
	II Scholarship Boy	79
	III Nottingham High School	82
	IV 'Shocking Affair at Ilkeston'	86
	V Education Recreated	89
	VI Haywoods: and Death in the Family	94

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-43772-1 - D. H. Lawrence: The Early Years 1885–1912

John Worthen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTENTS

4 · 1901–1905	WIDENING CIRCLES	
I	The Chambers Family	103
II	Pupil-Teacher	112
III	Jessie Chambers	119
IV	Eastwood Friends	124
5 · 1905–1906	WRITING AND PAINTING	
I	‘A collier’s son a poet!’	127
II	Pictures	132
III	D.H.L.	134
IV	Breaking the Ice	136
V	‘... she doesn’t like what I write ...’	141
VI	Writer as Artist	145
6 · 1906	SPIRIT LOVE	
I	Sex and Love	152
II	Easter Monday 1906	158
III	The Intercourse of Talk	163
7 · 1906–1908	COLLEGE	
I	Disillusion	168
II	Loss of Faith	169
III	Religious without Religion	175
IV	Materialism, Monism, Pragmatism	179
V	Study	184
VI	Writing in College	189
VII	The Feminine	194
VIII	From a College Window	195
PART TWO: <i>Croydon and London</i>		
8 · 1908–1909	SUCCESS	
I	Croydon Teacher	201
II	Ford Madox Hueffer	213
III	Devotion	218
IV	‘The makings of a very considerable novelist’	220
V	<i>The White Peacock</i>	224
9 · 1909–1910	STRIFE	
I	The Literary World	230
II	Class and Selfhood	235
III	Plays	242
IV	The Hags as Myth	246

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-43772-1 - D. H. Lawrence: The Early Years 1885–1912

John Worthen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTENTS

V	'The great experiment of sex'	248
VI	Enter Helen	253
VII	'The Saga of Siegmund'	260
VIII	Ending with Jessie	262
10 · 1910	THE BITTER RIVER	
I	The Death of Lydia Lawrence	267
II	Biography, Autobiography	273
III	<i>An Idyll</i>	284
IV	Rain on a Grave	287
11 · 1911	THE SICK YEAR	
I	Louie Burrows	288
II	'Paul Morel'	296
III	Marriage Considered	300
IV	Helen and Louie	301
V	Getting and Spending	306
VI	Flames	311
VII	The 'Jeune Fille'	314
VIII	Keeping Faith	316
IX	Running Away	319
X	Breakdown	320
12 · 1911–1912	BREAKING OFF	
I	The End of School	325
II	Miriam Again	326
III	Edward Garnett	331
IV	The Casting Off of Louie	334
PART THREE: <i>Eastwood Again</i>		
13 · 1912	SPRING	
I	On the Margin	345
II	'Paul Morel' in Eastwood	347
III	Jessie Chambers and Lydia Lawrence	354
IV	Ending with Jessie	357
V	Alice Dax	358
VI	'Morphia'	364
VII	The Limits of Liberation	368
14 · 1912	FRIEDA WEEKLEY	
I	Wedded Wife	371
II	'The most wonderful woman in all England'	380

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-43772-1 - D. H. Lawrence: The Early Years 1885–1912

John Worthen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTENTS

III	<i>The Married Man</i>	384
IV	'Sort of freedom'	385
PART FOUR: <i>Germany and Italy</i>		
15 · 1912	ABROAD	
I	Metz	393
II	In Fortified Germany	400
III	Trier	401
IV	Frieda under Pressure	403
V	Beuerberg	408
VI	Icking	413
VII	First Round	417
VIII	Over the Hills	425
16 · 1912	SONS AND LOVERS	
I	Coming Out Myself	433
II	Italy	438
III	Frieda and <i>Sons and Lovers</i>	441
IV	Escaping the Past	446
V	Death of the Mother	451
VI	Shedding Sicknesses	455
VII	<i>The Daughter-in-Law</i>	458
VIII	Together	460
	<i>Cue-titles and Abbreviations</i>	465
<i>Appendices</i>		
I	D. H. Lawrence's Prose Works, 1906–1913	471
II	D. H. Lawrence's Poetry, 1897–1913	478
III	'A Life History In Harmonies and Discords'	495
IV	D. H. Lawrence's Autobiographies	500
<i>Notes and Sources</i>		
	The Use of Sources	507
	Notes	511
<i>Acknowledgements</i>		
	<i>Index</i>	581

THE CAMBRIDGE BIOGRAPHY OF D. H. LAWRENCE



AUTHORS' PREFACE

The need for a new Biography of a writer about whose life – to put it mildly – much has been written, arises from the mass of new information in the Cambridge collected *Letters* and *Works*, which makes all existing biographies out of date. This can be said without insult or injury to previous biographers, whose work we gratefully acknowledge. But it would be strange indeed if over two thousand unpublished letters and postcards, the editing and annotation of the thousands previously known, and the researches of an international team into how and when each of the writings came into existence, did not substantially alter and correct the existing picture of Lawrence's life. We are deeply indebted to all the Cambridge editors who have allowed us access to their work, published and unpublished.

No amount of new material, however, can make any biographical overview the final word, and we express this conviction in the form of one work by three authors: not only a new 'Life' but also, we believe, a new kind of biography. Each author has taken responsibility for a different period of Lawrence's life, the first volume ending with the completion of *Sons and Lovers*, the second with Lawrence's departure from Europe in 1922. From the beginning, we have collaborated very closely, and subjected one another's work to intensive scrutiny and comment. We have acted as research assistants to one another, have challenged the half-conscious tendency of every biographer to turn a blind eye to inconvenient items of evidence and have argued out fundamental positions. Nevertheless, though the whole will be joint work – in that sense – from first to last, each author is finally responsible for the Lawrence who emerges from his particular period. Three Lawrences, striking the reader as both the same and different, will (we believe) answer all the more to ordinary experience of other people.

There might seem, however, to be danger here of dissonant or even contradictory answers to the question of who Lawrence was and what he was really like. Can three people, however closely they work together, be sufficiently in harmony to capture Lawrence's identity? It seems to us that the assumptions which prompt such questions are dubious. Our culture

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-43772-1 - D. H. Lawrence: The Early Years 1885–1912

John Worthen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

AUTHORS' PREFACE

does often appear bound by the idea of a personal core or centre, an 'essential self', out of which character grows in a process of development. Yet in Lawrence's own writings, though there is plenty of support for the notion of an essential self, there is also a characteristic and no less powerful emphasis on fluidity and change. It was Lawrence who denounced 'the old stable ego of the character' in the kinds of novel he no longer wanted to write, and whose preferred way of imagining his progress through life was in terms of rebirth, again and again, into new states of being. To have three people write his life is an explicit (even dramatic) acknowledgement that, however important the continuities, the Lawrence of the last years (for example) is so different from the 19-year-old who visited the Hags Farm, that it sometimes seems only by accident that they share the same name. There is a hardly less striking and significant difference between the writer who sent off *Sons and Lovers* to its publisher in November 1912, and the author of *Women in Love* expelled from Cornwall, by order of the military authorities, less than five years later.

There are of course important continuities in Lawrence's life, because certain elements in his nature remained constant: he himself felt, at the age of 43, that 'I am somewhere still the same Bert who rushed with such joy to the Hags.' We are confident that we agree enough about these not to produce a contradictory effect upon readers of all three volumes. Our biography overall, and our individual volumes themselves, will not however show Lawrence's life evolving with steady emotional logic from initial premises. Of all the dangers biographers have to fear, the so-called 'genetic fallacy' – explanation in terms of origins – should be less in evidence here. We have learned to distrust hindsight, because reading the later man back into the earlier always implies determinism. We believe that our one work by three writers, each allowing his particular material rather than any overview to dictate his form, will produce the necessary tension between a continuous and a continuously changing Lawrence, in a way that no synoptic view could achieve. In biographies which succeed in rising above the conscientious enumeration of one thing after another, a pattern of interpretation is established early, and later events are then selected and arranged with a predictability which plays false to the actualities and unexpectedness of life – especially life as our subject himself saw it.

Avoiding this predictability, through three points of view, has seemed to us very important – and we hope our procedure has an additional advantage. Because our biography is based on more documentary evidence than any previous one, and because (unlike some biographers) we have always acknowledged Lawrence to be a writer, each volume has to be detailed, and long – and for the reader to find the same manner in three lengthy books

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-43772-1 - D. H. Lawrence: The Early Years 1885–1912

John Worthen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

AUTHORS' PREFACE

might be more than flesh and blood could bear. Variety of approach will at least mean variety of style: three different voices to tell Lawrence's story – but at the same time give the lie, by their very difference, to the idea that any single view, however detailed and comprehensive, could ever be 'definitive'; any pattern of interpretation *the* pattern.

David Ellis – Mark Kinkead-Weekes – John Worthen
Canterbury – Ramsgate – Swansea
March 1990

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-43772-1 - D. H. Lawrence: The Early Years 1885–1912

John Worthen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

ILLUSTRATIONS

Between pages 194 and 195

1. The Lawrence Family 1897
2. Lydia Lawrence *c.* 1900
3. Arthur Lawrence *c.* 1875
4. D. H. Lawrence *c.* 1886
5. Ernest Lawrence 1901
6. Gipsy Dennis 1901
7. Emily Lawrence *c.* 1905
8. Eastwood 1900
9. Brinsley Colliery
10. 8a, Victoria Street
11. 57, The Breach
12. D. H. Lawrence March 1905
13. D. H. Lawrence September 1906
14. D. H. Lawrence September 1906
15. D. H. Lawrence *c.* summer 1908
16. D. H. Lawrence *c.* December 1908
17. D. H. Lawrence *c.* December 1908
18. Walter Lawrence *c.* 1903
19. Harriet Lawrence *c.* 1900
20. The Chambers Family *c.* 1898
21. The Chambers Family *c.* 1906
22. Jessie Chambers *c.* 1908
23. 'Last Words to Muriel'
24. 'Champions' and 'Last Words to Muriel'
25. Ada Lawrence and Frances Cooper *c.* 1900
26. Ada Lawrence *c.* 1907

Between pages 386 and 387

27. Lydia Lawrence *c.* September 1910
28. Lydia Lawrence *c.* September 1910

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-43772-1 - D. H. Lawrence: The Early Years 1885–1912

John Worthen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS

29. Helen Corke *c.* 1906
30. Louie Burrows *c.* 1910
31. Alice and Harry Dax with Phyllis and Eric 1915
32. Marie and John Jones *c.* 1906
33. Friedrich von Richthofen 1870
34. Friedrich von Richthofen *c.* 1895
35. Anna von Richthofen *c.* 1895
36. Frieda von Richthofen and Ernest Weekley 1898 or 1899
37. Agnes and Charles Weekley, Ernest and Frieda Weekley
c. 1900
38. Frieda Weekley with Montague and Barbara 1905
39. Ida Wilhelmy with Barbara, Montague and Elsa *c.* 1910
40. Edgar and Else Jaffe with Friedel, Peter and Marianne
1907
41. Jessie Chambers and 'Paul Morel' p. 220
42. Frieda Weekley and 'My Love, My Mother'
43. Edward Garnett and 'The Saga of Siegmund'
44. Otto Gross *c.* 1914
45. D. H. Lawrence and Margaret Brinton 26 April 1912
46. Frieda Weekley *c.* 1912
47. Dominicus-Hütte *c.* 1912
48. Villa and Gargnano *c.* 1912
49. Villa de Paoli and Villa Igea, Villa *c.* 1930
50. *Sons and Lovers* final manuscript p. 540

MAPS

Eastwood and its Surroundings	<i>page</i> 28
Eastwood <i>c.</i> 1907	32
Metz, Trier, Waldbröl	392
Icking to the Lago di Garda	424

Cambridge University Press

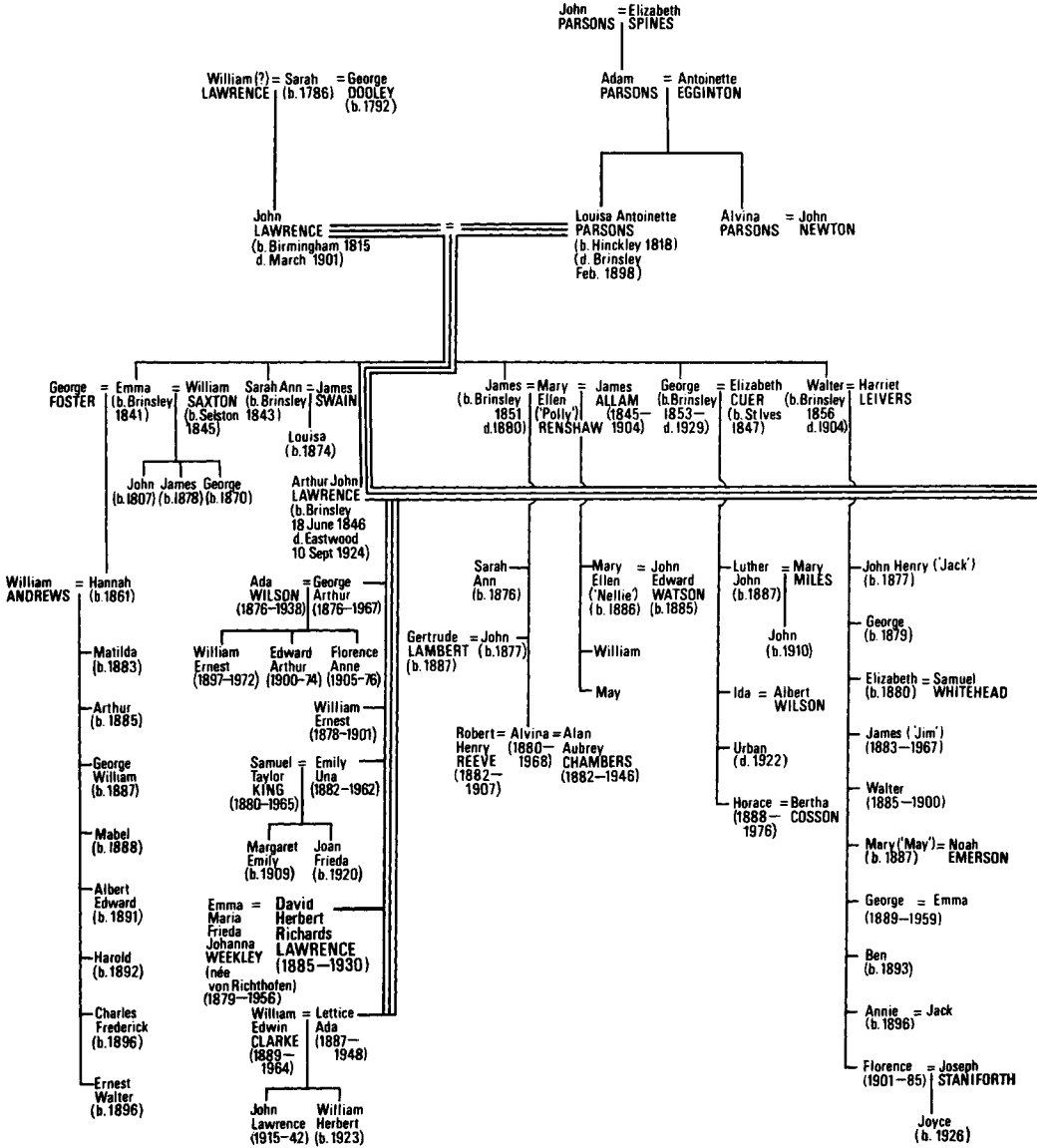
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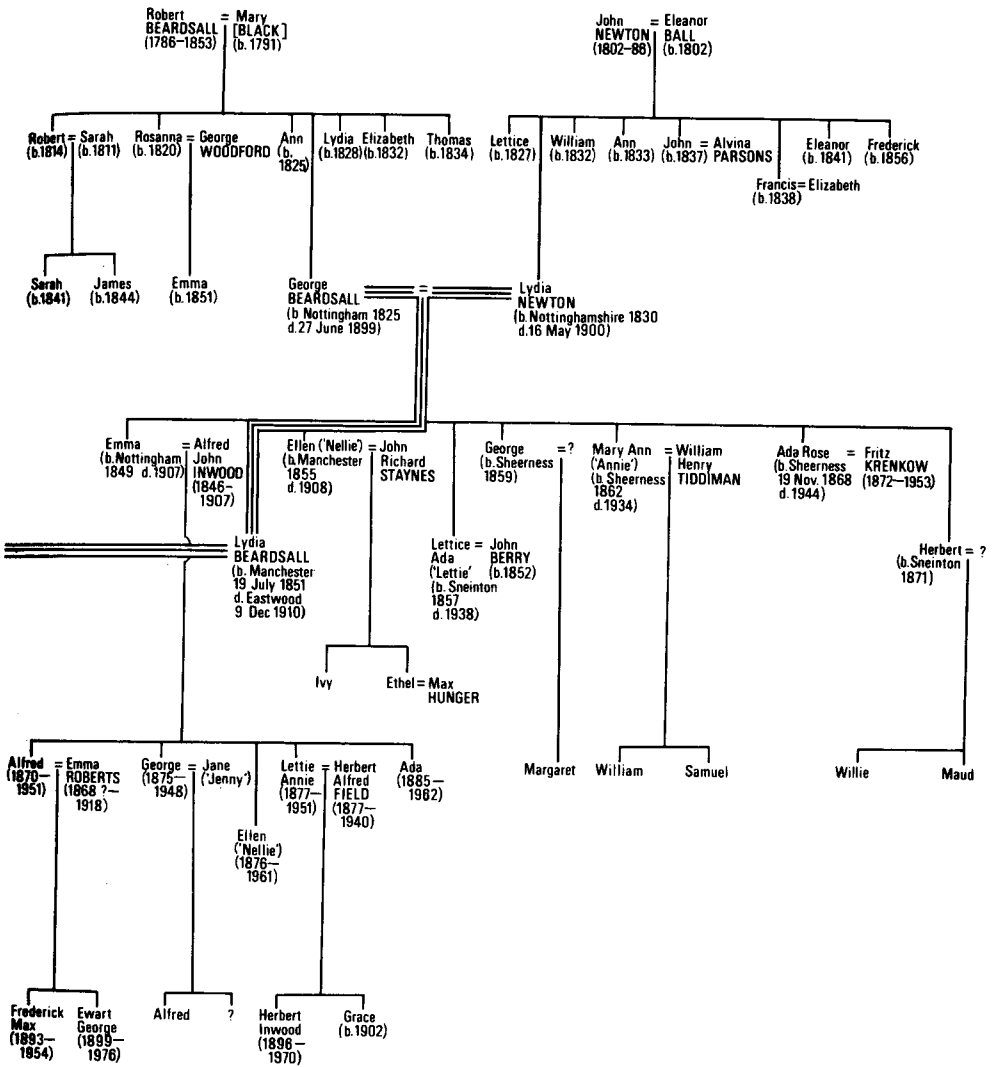
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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Family Tree





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978-0-521-43772-1 - D. H. Lawrence: The Early Years 1885–1912

John Worthen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CHRONOLOGY

(The chronology of Lawrence's writing will be found in
 Appendices I and II.)

DHL=D. H. Lawrence	Frieda=Frieda Weekley, née von Richthofen
? December 1815	John Lawrence born, Deritend, Birmingham
1825	George Beardsall born, Nottingham
27 February 1838	John Lawrence marries Louisa Antoinette Parsons, Old Radford, Nottingham
18 June 1846	Arthur John Lawrence born, Brinsley
26 December 1847	George Beardsall marries Lydia Newton, Sneinton, Nottingham
19 July 1851	Lydia Beardsall born, Ancoats, Manchester
27 December 1875	Arthur John Lawrence marries Lydia Beardsall, Sneinton, Nottingham
26 September 1876	George Arthur Lawrence born, Brinsley
22 July 1878	William Ernest Lawrence born, New Cross
11 August 1879	Frieda born, Metz
24 February 1880	James Lawrence killed, Brinsley pit
21 March 1882	Emily Una Lawrence born, New Cross
1883	Lawrence family moves to 8a, Victoria Street, Eastwood
11 September 1885	DHL born, Eastwood
29 January 1887	Jessie Chambers born, Carlton
16 June 1887	Lettice Ada Lawrence born, Eastwood
late 1887	Lawrence family moves to 57, The Breach, Eastwood
20 May–20 October 1889	DHL attends Infant section, Beauvale Board School

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-43772-1 - D. H. Lawrence: The Early Years 1885–1912

John Worthen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CHRONOLOGY

1891	Lawrence family moves to 3, Walker Street, Eastwood
1892–8	DHL attends Boys' section, Beauvale Board School
1898	Chambers family moves to Hags Farm, Underwood, Notts.
14 September 1898–July 1901	DHL attends Nottingham High School
20 March 1900	Arrest of DHL's uncle Walter Lawrence for manslaughter
13 July 1900	Trial and release of Walter Lawrence
July 1901	DHL leaves Nottingham High School
? late September–December 1901	Clerk with J. H. Haywood Ltd, Nottingham
11 October 1901	Death of DHL's brother Ernest Lawrence
late December 1901	DHL ill with pneumonia
c. April 1902	Month at Skegness convalescing
October 1902–July 1905	Pupil-teacher at British School, Eastwood
31 October 1903	Peterborough, Skegness
21 November 1903	Arthur Lawrence fractures leg, Brinsley pit
March 1904	DHL begins part-time attendance at Pupil-teacher Centre, Ilkeston
4 April 1904	Death of Walter Lawrence
5 November 1904	Emily Lawrence marries Sam King, Eastwood
December 1904	DHL sits King's Scholarship Examination
19 December 1904	Arthur Lawrence injured, Brinsley pit
early 1905	Lawrence family moves to 97, Lynn Croft, Eastwood
June 1905	DHL at Great Yarmouth, Hunstanton, etc.
late June 1905	Sits University of London Matriculation Examination
August 1905–September 1906	Uncertificated assistant teacher at British School, Eastwood
Easter 1906	Break with Jessie Chambers
August 1906	Lawrence family holiday at Mablethorpe, Lincolnshire

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-43772-1 - D. H. Lawrence: The Early Years 1885–1912

John Worthen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CHRONOLOGY

October 1906–June 1908	DHL student at University College, Nottingham
10–24 August 1907	Lawrence family holiday at Robin Hood's Bay, Yorkshire
30 September 1907	Emily King's first child born dead
7 December 1907	'A Prelude' in <i>Nottinghamshire Guardian</i>
19 March 1908	'Art and the Individual' read to Eastwood Debating Society
June–July 1908	Sits Nottingham University College examinations
8–22 August 1908	Lawrence family holiday at Flamborough, Yorkshire
16–24 September 1908	DHL at 50, Dulverton Rd, Leicester, with Ada and Fritz Krenkow
25 September 1908	Unsuccessful interview for teaching post in Stockport
26 September–3 October 1908	London: interviewed in Croydon
11 October–23 December 1908	Croydon: certificated assistant teacher at Davidson Road School
24 October 1908	Hampton Court
7 November 1908	Epsom, Dorking, Reigate
14 November 1908	Barnet
5 December 1908	London
23 December 1908–10 January 1909	Eastwood for Christmas holidays
10 January–8 April 1909	Croydon
9 February 1909	Emily King's daughter Margaret born
8–18 April 1909	DHL at Eastwood for Easter holidays
18 April–28 May 1909	Croydon
8–9 May 1909	Brighton, Rottingdean
22 May 1909	Caterham
28 May–6 June 1909	Eastwood for Whitsuntide holiday (attends Mabel Cooper's wedding on 2 June)
6 June–29 July 1909	Croydon
29–31 July 1909	Harrow-on-the-Hill
31 July–14 August 1909	Lawrence family holiday at Shanklin, Isle of Wight
14–29 August 1909	DHL at Eastwood for Summer holidays
29 August–23 December 1909	Croydon
c. 11 September 1909	London to meet Ford Madox Hueffer

CHRONOLOGY

November 1909	Sequence of poems, 'A Still Afternoon', in <i>English Review</i>
14 November 1909	London and Hampstead (further visits on 16 and 20 November)
27–8 November 1909	Jessie Chambers visits DHL in London
11–12 December 1909	DHL in London
23 December 1909–9 January 1910	Eastwood for Christmas holidays
9 January–24 March 1910	Croydon
21 January 1910	London
February 1910	'Goose Fair' in <i>English Review</i>
8–11 February 1910	Ill and absent from school
9 March 1910	Hampstead
?19 March 1910	London with Alice Dax
25 March–3 April 1910	Eastwood for Easter holidays
3 April–13 May 1910	Croydon
13–22 May 1910	Eastwood for Whitsuntide holidays
22 May–28 July 1910	Croydon
23 July 1910	London
28 July–6 August 1910	Eastwood and Nottingham for Summer holidays
1 August 1910	Breaks 'betrothal of six years standing' to Jessie Chambers
6–12 August 1910	Holiday with George Neville in Blackpool, Fleetwood and Barrow-in-Furness
c. 10 August 1910	Lydia Lawrence falls ill in Leicester
12–22 August 1910	DHL in Eastwood, with visits to Leicester
22–8 August 1910	Leicester
28 August–4 September 1910	Croydon
4 September 1910	Leicester
4 September–6 October 1910	Croydon
?late September 1910	Lydia Lawrence brought back to Eastwood
October 1910	'Three Poems' in <i>English Review</i>
6–9 October 1910	DHL in Eastwood: visits Nottingham's Goose Fair: sees Louie Burrows
9–21 October 1910	Croydon
21–3 October 1910	Eastwood
23 October–4 November 1910	Croydon

CHRONOLOGY

4–7 November 1910	Eastwood
7–23 November 1910	Croydon
23 November–13 December 1910	Eastwood
2 December 1910	Copy of <i>The White Peacock</i> for Lydia Lawrence arrives
3 December 1910	Leicester: becomes engaged to Louie Burrows
9 December 1910	Lydia Lawrence dies
11 December 1910	DHL meets Jessie Chambers, gives her poems
12 December 1910	Lydia Lawrence buried
13–24 December 1910	DHL in Croydon
24–31 December 1910	Christmas holidays in Brighton with Ada Lawrence and Frances Cooper
31 December 1910–8 January 1911	Quorn (home of Louie Burrows)
8 January–14 April 1911	Croydon
19 January 1911	<i>The White Peacock</i> published in New York (20 January in London)
9 March 1911	Lawrence family moves to Queen's Square, Eastwood
14–23 April 1911	DHL in Eastwood and probably Quorn for Easter holidays
17 April 1911	Matlock with Louie Burrows
23 April–4 June 1911	Croydon
13 May 1911	With Louie Burrows in London (includ- ing Buckingham Palace and West- minster Abbey)
June 1911	'Odour of Chrysanthemums' in <i>English Review</i>
4–11 June 1911	Quorn, Eastwood and Leicester for Whitsuntide holidays
11–17 June 1911	Croydon
17–25 June 1911	Quorn and Eastwood (holiday for George V's Coronation)
25 June–27 July 1911	Croydon
12 July 1911	Dover
19 July 1911	London
27 July 1911	Quorn
28 July 1911	Eastwood

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John Worthen

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CHRONOLOGY

29 July–12 August 1911	Summer holidays in North Wales with Louie Burrows and Ada Lawrence: later joined by George Neville
12–19 August 1911	Eastwood, Eakring
19–?21 August 1911	Shirebrook, with Harry and Alice Dax
22–7 August 1911	Eastwood, Lincoln, Quorn
27 August–27 October 1911	Croydon
September 1911	‘A Fragment of Stained Glass’ in <i>English Review</i>
13–15 October 1911	Visits Edward Garnett at ‘The Cearne’, near Edenbridge, Kent
27–9 October 1911	Quorn and Eastwood
29 October 1911–4 January 1912	Croydon
November 1911	Review of <i>Contemporary German Poetry</i> in <i>English Review</i>
4 November 1911	Two poems in <i>Nation</i>
18–19 November 1911	‘The Cearne’: falls ill
19 November–22 December 1911	Ill with pneumonia and absent from school
24 December 1911–4 January 1912	Louie Burrows in Croydon
January 1912	Reviews of <i>The Minnesingers</i> and <i>The Oxford Book of German Verse</i> in <i>English Review</i>
4–6 January 1912	DHL with Louie Burrows at Redhill
6 January–3 February 1912	DHL at Bournemouth for convalescence
3–9 February 1912	‘The Cearne’
4 February 1912	Breaks engagement with Louie Burrows
9 February–3 March 1912	Eastwood, with visits to Nottingham
13 February 1912	Meets Louie Burrows in Nottingham; sequel ‘which startled me’
14 February 1912	Meets Alice Dax in Nottingham
?3 March 1912	Visits Professor Ernest Weekley, meets Frieda: sees Chambers family at Arno Vale in afternoon: to Shirebrook
3–8 March 1912	Shirebrook, with Alice and Harry Dax
8–25 March 1912	Eastwood, with visits to Nottingham
17 March 1912	Nottingham: ?sees Frieda
between 18 and 23 March 1912	Sees <i>Man and Superman</i> with Frieda in Nottingham

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CHRONOLOGY

25–31 March 1912	Bradnop, Staffs., with George Neville
31 March–23 April 1912	Eastwood, with visits to Nottingham
9 April 1912	Nottingham, meets Agnes Mason: ?sees Frieda
23–5 April 1912	Leicester, with Ada and Fritz Krenkow
25–8 April 1912	London, Kew Gardens with Irene and Margaret Brinton and ‘The Cearne’ with Frieda
28–9 April 1912	Leicester
29 April–3 May 1912	Eastwood
3 May 1912	London; meets Frieda, travels (via Dover and Ostend) to Metz
4–7 May 1912	With Frieda in Metz
7 May 1912	Trouble with military policeman in Metz
8 May 1912	DHL goes to Trier
8–11 May 1912	Trier
11 May 1912	To Waldbröl (via Koblenz, Niederlahnstein, Troisdorf, Hennef)
11 May 1912	First three of eight ‘Schoolmaster’ poems in <i>Saturday Westminster Gazette</i> , 11 May–1 June
11–24 May 1912	Waldbröl
15 May 1912	To Nümbrecht with Hannah Krenkow: hail-storm
19 May 1912	To Bonn and Drachenfels
23 May 1912	<i>The Trespasser</i>
24 May 1912	To Munich, meets Frieda
25 May 1912	DHL and Frieda to Beuerberg: stay till 1 June
June 1912	‘Snapdragon’ in <i>English Review</i>
1 June–5 August 1912	DHL and Frieda in Icking
3 August 1912	‘French Sons of Germany’ in <i>Saturday Westminster Gazette</i>
5 August 1912	DHL and Frieda leave Icking: to Wolfratshausen on foot, Bichl by train, Bad Tölz on foot
6 August 1912	To Röhrlmoos hay-hut on foot
7 August 1912	To Café Hubertus on foot and (later) Achensee farmhouse by omnibus
8 August 1912	To Jenbach on foot, then to Kufstein by train

CHRONOLOGY

9 August 1912	To Jenbach by train, then to Mayrhofen
9–26 August 1912	DHL and Frieda in Mayrhofen; joined by David Garnett c. 18 August, later by Harold Hobson
10 August 1912	‘Hail in the Rhine-Land’ in <i>Saturday Westminster Gazette</i>
26 August 1912	To hay-hut beyond Ginzling on foot
27 August 1912	To Dominicus-Hütte on foot
28 August 1912	Over the Pfitscherjoch pass on foot to Gasthof Elefant
29 August 1912	To Sterzing on foot: Garnett and Hobson to Munich
29 August–1 September 1912	DHL and Frieda in Sterzing
1 September 1912	To Jaufen Haus on foot
2 September 1912	Back to Sterzing on foot: then to Bozen by train
3 September 1912	To Trento by train
4 September 1912	To Riva, Lago di Garda, by train
4–18 September 1912	Riva
18 September 1912–2 April 1913	Villa Igea in Villa
2 November 1912	All Souls’ Day
December 1912	‘Snap-Dragon’ in <i>Georgian Poetry 1911–1912</i>
February 1913	<i>Love Poems and Others</i>
22 March 1913	‘Christ in the Tirol’ in <i>Saturday Westminster Gazette</i>
March 1913	‘The Soiled Rose’ in <i>Forum</i> ; review of <i>Georgian Poetry: 1911–1912</i> in <i>Rhythm</i>
2–10 April 1913	San Gaudenzio, Lago di Garda
29 May 1913	<i>Sons and Lovers</i>