

Hannah Denison formerly Marsden née Sinclair and her family part 1

Lightcliffe baptised Hannah Denison was not buried in St. Matthew's churchyard, but she did own plot NN*3 as it says at the bottom of the ledger stone on the left of the two below.



When she died, she was remembered on the same ledger stone which is positioned next to her parents' plot OO*3. This is her story which takes you from Lightcliffe to the USA.



Hannah was the eldest of the ten children of William and Ann Sinclair. She was baptised at St. Matthew's old church on 2nd November 1800. Working back from her parents' death ages William Sinclair was born about 1774 and Ann about 1784. William may have been born in Whitby on 21st May 1774. He had a non-conformist baptism at Flowergate Presbyterian Church in Whitby, Yorkshire on 19th June 1774. His wife, Ann, who gave her birthplace as Leeds in later censuses may also have been baptised at a Presbyterian Church in Leeds on 2nd May 1784. If so, she was the daughter of Thomas and Jane Hardcastle whose names crop up in subsequent generations.

Did both these two then move separately to Hipperholme? There is a Halifax marriage between a William Sinclair and a Ann Hardcastle on 15th June 1800. The transcribed record says that William Sinclair was a 'Clothier' and both the bride and groom were from Hipperholme.

William and Ann Sinclair were recorded as living at German House, Lightcliffe once both parents and their abode were recorded in the parish baptism records. After Hannah they baptised Thomas Hardcastle Sinclair on 19th December 1802, Jane on 24th November 1805, Mary on 7th July 1808, Joseph on 6th January 1811, William on 26th September 1813, Ann on 25th December 1816, Martha on 14th February 1819, John on 11th August 1822 and finally Charles on 12th August 1827. Father William was a 'Clothier' in 1813, a 'Woolcomber' in 1816 and after that a 'Farmer'. It looks as if eldest son Thomas Hardcastle Sinclair was named after his maternal grandfather.

In between these Sinclair baptisms, on 29th June 1823, there is one recorded for a little girl, Mercy, the daughter of spinster Hannah Sinclair.

June 29	Mercy Daughter of	Hannah Sinclair	Upper Lightcliffe	Spinster	Thomas Hardcastle Officiating Clerk
No. 700.					

A year later Hannah married a widower John Marsden who had previously been married, on 25th February 1821 to Sarah Crossley. Sarah was also from Hipperholme, the daughter of Abraham Crossley. She had been baptised at St. Matthew's Church on 1st November 1801. John and Sarah Marsden's son Abraham was also baptised at Lightcliffe on 16th December 1821 and then buried in the churchyard on 19th January 1823. This was eleven days after his mother had been buried there on 8th January 1823, both in unknown plots.

NO. 140.

John Marsden of Hipperholme of this Parish
Flagfacer, Widower
 and Hannah Sinclair of Hipperholme of this Parish
Spinster
 were married in this Church by Banns with Consent of
 this twenty fifth Day of
October in the Year One thousand eight hundred and twenty four
 By me Wm. T. Vicar
 This Marriage was solemnized between us John Marsden & Martha
Hannah Sinclair
 In the Presence of John Marsden
 No. 147.

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John Marsden married Hannah Sinclair on 25th October 1824 at St. John's Church, Halifax.. Their first-born son, George, was just 2 weeks old when he died on 19th November 1826. He was buried in plot NN*3 of Lightcliffe churchyard on 22nd November 1826. George was not baptised, but his siblings were. The Lightcliffe parish records have 'John & Suzy' of 'German House' as William Marsden's parents when he was baptised on 8th June 1828, but a later memorial inscription suggests that his mother was Hannah. His father John was again a 'Flag facer', a flag facer was a dresser of stone flags for roofs etc..

The family then moved to Northowram and John Marsden's occupation after a daughter Jane's baptism on 3rd April 1831, changed from 'Flag facer' to 'Delver', a delver worked in a stone quarry. The baptisms – for Ann on 16th February 1834, Thomas on 1st January 1837 and Mary Ellen on 12th January on 1840 – continued to take place at St. Matthew's Church, Lightcliffe.

Meanwhile Hannah's father William Sinclair of German House had died on 29th April 1836. He was buried with his one-year-old son, also called William, in plot OO*3 on 6th May 1836.

IN MEMORY OF
WILLIAM THE SON OF WM SINCLAIR
OF GERMAN HOUSE WHO DEPARTED
THIS LIFE DEC 4TH 1814 AGED 1 YEAR AND 3 MONTHS

ALSO OF THE ABOVE NAMED WM SINCLAIR
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE
APRIL 29TH 1836 AGED 62 YEARS

CALM ON THE BOSOM OF THY GOD
FAIR SPIRITS REST THEE NOW
E'EN WHILE WITH US THY FOOTSTEPS TROD
HIS SEAL WAS ON THY BROW
DUST TO ITS NARROW HOME BENEATH
SOUL TO HIS PEACE ON HIGH
HE THAT HATH SEEN THY LOOK IN DEATH
NO MORE MAY FEAR TO DIE.

1841 census

Ann Sinclair	50	Farmer
Martha Sinclair	20	
Charles Sinclair	12	
Joseph Sinclair	11	
Fanny Dixon	3	
Richard Brook	55	Ind
Address		
German House, Hipperholme cum Brighthouse		

1841 census

John Marsden	50	Stone delver
Hannah Marsden	40	
William Marsden	13	
Ann Marsden	7	
Thomas Marsden	4	
Mary [Ellen] Marsden	1	
Address Lidget, Northowram		

Hannah's eldest two daughters were in service as Female Servants (F.S.).

15-year-old Mercy Sinclair was with her uncle Thomas H(ardcastle) Sinclair in Lancashire.

1841 census

Thomas H Sinclair	35	Joiner
Mary Sinclair	35	
John Sinclair	15	Joiner's App
Marcey [sic] Sinclair	15	F.S.
Address Cheetham, Manchester, Lan		

10-year-old Jane Marsden was in the household of a Charles Bradshaw Pool, a Manufacturer of braces, hand drills for drilling holes in wood. Also in this Halifax house was the Rev Wm Bagaley aged 30, a Methodist minister

Joiner Thomas Hardcastle Sinclair and his second wife Mary née Spencer who the widower had married on 1st October 1840 had his younger brother John and his niece Mercy living with him. His first marriage was to Hannah Roddis on 8th May 1834 in Manchester. Two of their children were buried back in Lightcliffe, two-year-old William on 4th October 1838 – you can see the memorial inscription to him at the foot of his grandparents' plot - and twenty-week-old Ellen on 5th November 1839. This was after their 38-year-old mother Hannah Sinclair née Roddis had been buried in Cheetham on 28th July 1839.

The Joseph Sinclair living at German House was the son of a plumber William Sinclair and his wife Mary who happened to be living next to Thomas Hardcastle Sinclair and his second wife in 1841 so a possible relative, perhaps providing the family connection to Lancashire.

The next decade was an eventful one for the Sinclair family in the Lightcliffe area.

On 16th February 1842, John and Hannah had one more son appropriately named Sinclair Marsden. He was baptised as all his siblings had been at Lightcliffe on 27th March 1842.

Then Hannah's daughter, Mercy Sinclair, married George Ripley on 10th November 1844 in the parish church at Elland, as the below record shows

1844. Marriage solemnized at <u>Elland</u> in the <u>Parish of Halifax</u> in the County of <u>York</u>								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
23	Nov. 10	George Ripley	22	Bachelor	Coalminer	Brighouse	Gabriel Walker	Silver
		Mercy Sinclair	21	Spinster		Brighouse	John Marsden	Silver
Married in the <u>Church at Elland</u> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by <u>James</u> by me, <u>Wm. Atkinson M.A.</u>								
This Marriage was solemnized between us, <u>George Ripley</u> <u>in X marks</u> in the Presence of us, <u>Joseph Firth</u> <u>Mercy Sinclair</u> <u>in X marks</u> <u>William Cawthron</u>								

George Ripley was probably the George Ripley baptised at St. Matthew's Church, Lightcliffe, on 3rd November 1822, the son of Elizabeth Ripley of Slead Syke.

No. 3 No. 644.	George	Elizabeth Ripley	Slead Syke	Spinster	W. Wilkin
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On 25th April 1835, aged thirteen, George Ripley was apprenticed to a Brighouse coal miner, Joseph Firth. This was who George and other apprentices were living with on 6th June 1841.

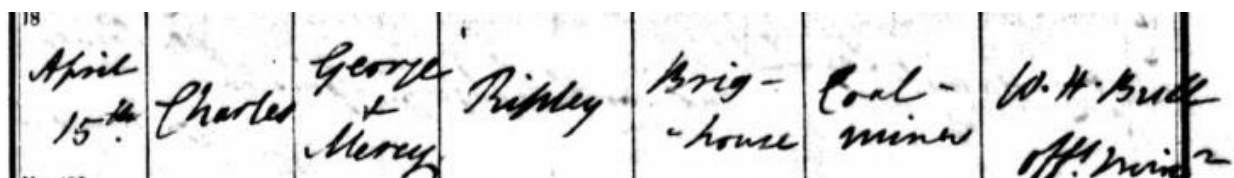
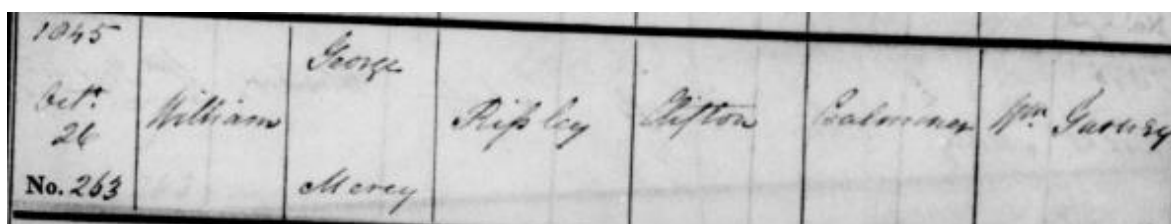
April 25th George Ripley went apprentice to James Firth Brighouse
Coal miner was 13 years old

Presumably this was the same Joseph Firth who signed as a witness on the marriage record above. As you can see John Marsden was recorded as Mercy Sinclair's father and a Gabriel Walker as George Ripley's father. Gabriel Walker was deceased by the time George Ripley married Mercy Sinclair. Is this why his name appeared on his parish marriage record but not on George Ripley's baptism record?

Gabriel Walker and his family have Lightcliffe connections. Their story will be told in

Gabriel Walker and family

Two more Lightcliffe baptism records for William Ripley on 26th October 1845 and then his brother Charles on 15th April 1849 are important clues for later in their grandmother's story.



John and Hannah Marsden lost their 17-year-old son William on 5th November 1845. He was buried with his baby brother, George, in plot NN*3. The memorial inscription suggests that the 1828 baptism record for William Marsden did have the wrong mother's name.

IN MEMORY OF

GEORGE

SON OF JOHN AND HANNAH MARSDEN

WHO DIED NOVEMBER 19TH 1826

AGED 2 WEEKS

ALSO OF WILLIAM SON OF THE ABOVE

NAMED WHO DIED NOVEMBER 5TH 1845

AGED 17 YEARS

The memorial inscription continues

ALSO OF THE ABOVE NAMED

JOHN MARSDEN WHO DIED JUNE 30TH 1847 AGED 55 YEARS.

John Marsden was buried with his sons on 4th July 1847 in plot NN*3 in Lightcliffe churchyard next to his father-in-law, William Sinclair.

Two years later widow Hannah Marsden née Sinclair married a labourer John Denison on 23rd December 1849. He was the son of Thomas Denison and Hannah Shuttleworth who married in 1806. John was born on 31st August 1809 and then baptised at Methley near Leeds on 29th October 1809. No 1841 census record has been found for John Denison. He was not in Methley with his parents and siblings

1849 Marriage solemnized at									
in the Parish of <i>Methley</i> in the County of <i>York</i>									
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.	
387	Dec ^r 23 rd	<i>John Denison</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>Bachelor</i>	<i>Labourer</i>	<i>Near Methley</i>	<i>Thomas Denison</i>	<i>Labourer</i>	
		<i>Hannah Marsden</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>Widow</i>		<i>8</i>	<i>William Sinclair</i>	<i>Farmer</i>	
Married in the <i>Parish Church</i> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by <i>William Smith</i> or after <i>Banns</i> by me,									
This Marriage was solemnized between us, <i>John Denison</i> his <i>Marriage</i> in the <i>Parish</i> of <i>Methley</i> of the <i>County of York</i> by <i>William Smith</i>									

Not long after this marriage Hannah's two daughters, Mercy Ripley and Jane Marsden, left England for the USA aboard SS *Charles Crooker* which left Liverpool on the 17th March 1850 arriving in New York on 14th May 1850. Also, on the same ship as the Ripley family - understandably Jane's surname was recorded as Ripley not Marsden - was apparently an Oldworth family. In fact, this was the family of John Ho(u)ldsworth, a fellow miner and a friend of George Ripley.

278	Mr Oldworth	28	Miner
279	Harriet	7	10
280	George	28	7
281	Abraham	"	3
282	Richard	"	2 1/2
283	George Ripley	"	25
284	Isaac	"	24
285	Isaac	"	3
286	Isaac	"	2 1/2
287	Isaac	"	19 Miner

During the voyage, which took much longer than it should have done, John Holdsworth made a note of what had happened on some of the days. He included these 'diary' entries in a letter home to his family in Mirfield, Yorkshire. A copy of this quite extraordinary letter from 1850 has been sent to us by a descendant of the Yorkshire family. It came into his possession via his maternal grandparents after an America couple visited them in the 1970s researching their family history. Read more in

From Liverpool to New York in 1850

The Ripley family, recorded as living in Wayne, Ohio on the 1850 USA census, were Hannah Denison's family given the ages of the children, George Ripley's occupation and the presence of his sister-in-law, Jane now nearly a Marsden! Also on the same page of the census, appearing just two households before the household of George Ripley, is listed the family of John Holdsworth (this time recorded incorrectly as "Jn^o Oldsworth") another collier. The census was taken just three months after the two families arrived in the USA, so it seems only natural that they would have chosen to stick together at this early stage. From then on Mercy Ripley née Sinclair seems to have been known as Martha.

1850 USA census

George Ripley	27 Collier
Martha Ripley	27
Jane Mardine[Marsden]	18
Wm Ripley	5
Chas Ripley	1
Address Chippewa, Wayne, Ohio, USA	

Back in the West Riding of Yorkshire the family were in these households in 1851.

1851 census

John Denison	Head	40	Excavator
Hannah Denison	Wife	50	
Thos Marsden [Stepson]	14	Apprentice cordwainer	
Mary Ellen [Marsden Step dau]	11	Scholar	
John Russell	Lodger	33	Joiner
Address Lidget, Northowram			

1851 census

Sinclair Marsden	9	Scholar
Address		
Causway Almshouses, Blue Coat School Halifax		

1851 census

Ann Sinclair	Head	67	Widow Farmer
Martha Sinclair	Dau	32	Dressmaker
Ann Marsden	Grnddau	17	Servant
William Gurney	Lodger	54	
Clergyman of the Church of England			
Harriet Gurney	Lodger	43	
Wm Woodward	Lodger	26	School Assistant
Address			
German House, Hipperholme cum Brighthouse			

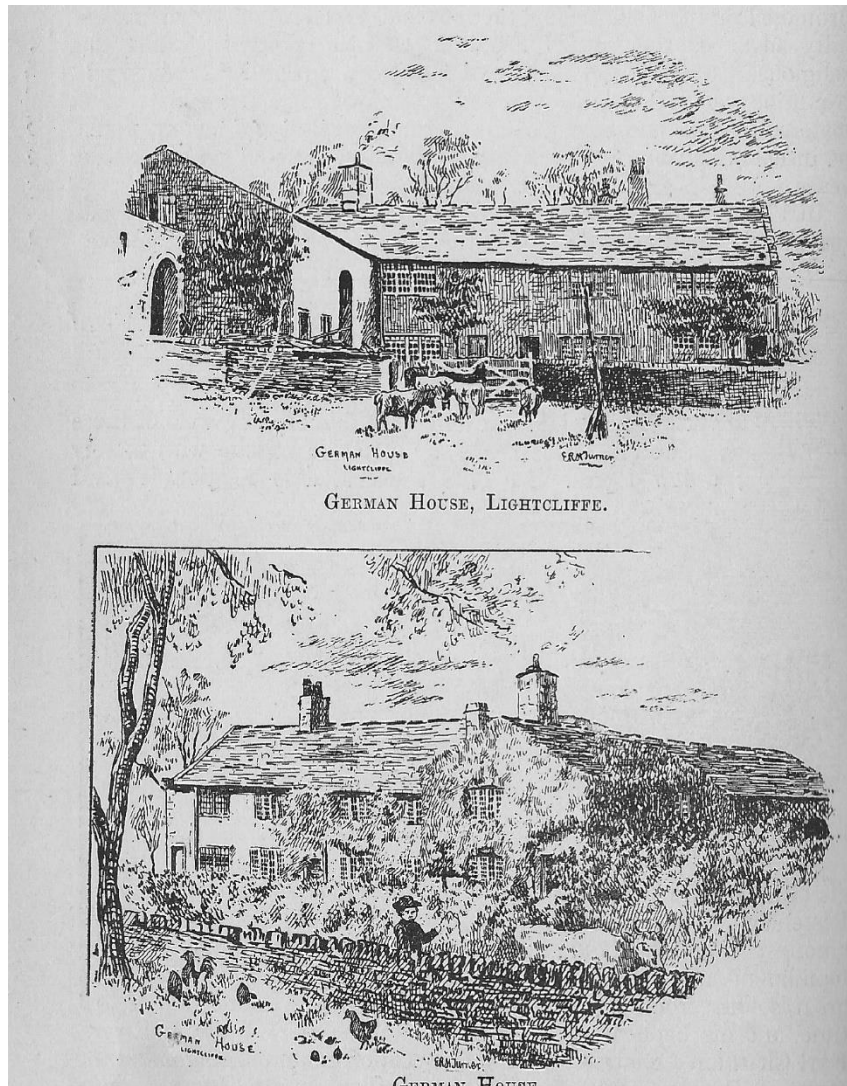
Fatherless Sinclair Marsden attended the charity Blue Coat School – so called because the children wore blue coats – and lived in the adjacent almshouses. Both charitable establishments were set up by Nathaniel Waterhouse (1585-1645). The buildings were situated near the current Halifax Minster.



[Nathaniel Waterhouse was a benefactor of Eastfield Chapel the predecessor of St. Matthew's Church, his name appears on the benefactors' board now housed in Lightcliffe Tower.]

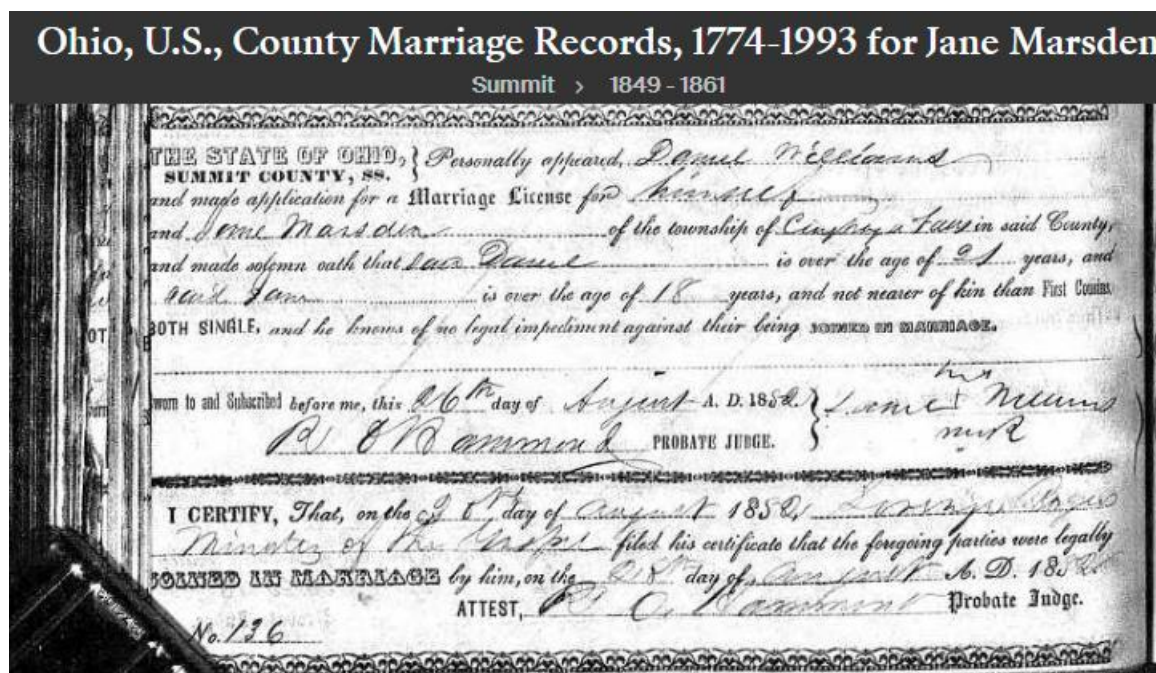
Another of Hannah's daughters, Ann Marsden, was with her Sinclair grandmother, still at German House. Two of their lodgers were the Reverend William Gurney and his wife Harriet. As curate of Lightcliffe he had baptised Ann Sinclair's great grandson William Ripley in 1845. The article [Reverend William Gurney updated.pdf](#) tells his story.

Ann Sinclair rented German House and land on the Crow Nest Estate from the Walker family. She would have had dealings with Ann Walker's land agent Samuel Washington.



These images of German House are from p250 of *The History of Brighouse Rastrick and Hipperholme* by J. Horsfall-Turner. German House stood and still stands on the corner of Victoria Road and Wakefield Road. The lower image reflects the current view of the house.

Back in the USA, Jane Marsden married Daniel Williams on 28th August 1852 in Summit County, Ohio, USA. He too was from England, possibly from West Monckton in Somerset where another Daniel and Jane Williams baptised a son Daniel on 10th October 1825 which fits with his birth date on his memorial. There are too many Daniel Williams travelling to the USA to work out when he emigrated.



It is similarly difficult to be sure when Hannah's son Thomas Marsden emigrated to the USA. He might have been the 18-year-old recorded as travelling from Liverpool to Boston, Massachusetts arriving on 31st May 1854. He was not with his mother, stepfather and younger brother in Northowram for the 1861 census, but he has also not been identified on the 1860 USA census. But two of his sisters and their families were in Summit, Ohio.

1860 USA census

George Ripley	38 Coal Miner
Martha Ripley	37
William Ripley	14
Charles Ripley	11
John Ripley	9
Thomas Ripley	7
Eli Ripley	7
Joseph Ripley	4
Address Springfield, Summit, Ohio	

The name Martha Ripley rather than Mercy Ripley continues to be used.

1860 USA census

Daniel Williams	38 Farmer
Jane Williams	29
Mary Williams	7
George Williams	4
Sarah Williams	1
Address Tallmadge, Summit, Ohio	

1861 census

John Denison	Head	51 Stone Quarryman
Hannah Denison	Wife	60
Sinclair Marsden	Son	19 ?Fier?at Mill ??????
William Helmes	Lodger	20 Stone Mason
Address Legget [sic], Northowram		

1861 census

Ann Sinclair	Head	77 Widow
Farmer of 10 acres employing 1 man		
Address		
German House, Hipperholme with Brighthouse		

Daughter Ann Marsden had married John Wood of Southowram on 31st May 1857 in Halifax but by the time of the 1861 census she was a widow, a housekeeper for a Elijah Robinson and family in Hipperholme cum Brighouse. She has not been found in any records after this. Her younger sister Mary Ellen Marsden was a servant in Manchester on 7th April 1861.

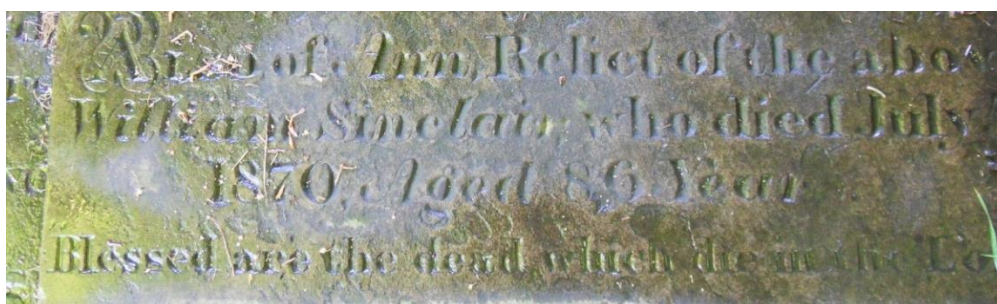


Hannah's second husband, John Denison, died on 22nd May 1863. He was buried four days later with Hannah's first husband and their sons in plot NN*3; he was 53 years old.

1869. Marriage solemnized at _____ in the Parish of <i>Halifax</i> in the County of <i>York</i>								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
290	July 7 1869	<i>William Sinclair Hodkinson Mary Ellen Marsden</i>	24 29	<i>Bachelor Spinster</i>	<i>Saddler -</i>	<i>Manchester Southowram</i>	<i>William Hodkinson John Marsden</i>	<i>Saddler Householder</i>
Married in the <i>Parish Church</i> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by _____ or else <i>Banns</i> by us.								
This Marriage was solemnized between us, { <i>William Sinclair Hodkinson</i> } in the Presence of { <i>William J. Johnson</i> }		{ <i>Mary Ellen Marsden</i> }		{ <i>Alfred Hodgkinson</i> }		{ <i>John Farrington</i> }		

Youngest daughter Mary Ellen Marsden married her first cousin William Sinclair Hodkinson on 7th July 1869. He was the son of William Hodkinson and his wife Mary Sinclair, Hannah's sister who had married Q4 1839 in Halifax. Their eldest son was born on 23rd April 1842 and baptised in Didsbury on 3rd June 1842. After William Hodkinson senior died his widow lived for years with Mary Ellen and William Sinclair Hodkinson. The death of 88-year-old Mary Hodkinson née Sinclair was registered in the Chorlton district of Lancashire in Q4 1896. Mary Ellen and William Sinclair Hodkinson then moved to Rainow, Cheshire where they both died; she in Q1 1912 and he in Q2 1923.

The death of Hannah's and Mary's 86-year-old mother, Ann Sinclair who had lived at German House for years occurred on 5th July 1870. She was buried at Lightcliffe with her husband and son – possibly also with some young grandchildren - on 7th July 1870 in plot OO*3.



Did the death of her second husband and then her mother prompt Hannah Denison to go to the USA to see / be with her eldest daughters and their families? Her son Thomas was also probably there. Her youngest daughter had married and moved across the Pennines That just leaves Sinclair Marsden unaccounted for. Neither mother nor son have been found in the 1871 census and they would have missed the 1870 US census if they were in Lightcliffe for Ann Sinclair's funeral.

1870 census

George Ripley 48 Farmer
 Martha Ripley 47
 Charles Ripley 21
 John Ripley 19
 Thomas Ripley 17
 Eli Ripley 17
 Sarah Williams 16
 Address Tallmadge, Summit, Ohio

1870 census

Daniel Williams 46 Teamster
 Jane Williams 38 Keeping House
 George Williams 14
 Sarah J Williams 17
 Albert Williams 9
 Samuel Williams 7
 Frank Williams 2
 Address Tallmadge, Summit, Ohio

Similarly, neither Hannah Denison nor her son Sinclair Marsden have been found on any USA bound Passenger Lists. But there is in the *British and Irish Roots Collection* on the Findmypast website dated 1872 for Sinclair Marsden. It says that his 'destination' was Akron, Summit, Ohio, USA and the 'source dataset' is *Ohio County Naturalizations 1800-1977*. Did he and his mother travel together? Was she naturalized? Who knows! What is known is that they were together in 1880 although the enumerator had trouble with Sinclair's first name – Stclair?!

36	Burnett C S	31	M	18	England	do	do	do
37	Marsden Sinclair	38	M	18	England	do	do	do
38	Denison Hannah	39	F	18	England	do	do	do
39	Williams Emma	9	F	18	England	do	do	do
40	Williams Thomas	17	M	18	England	do	do	do
41	Williams Eli	17	M	18	England	do	do	do
42	Williams Sarah	16	F	18	England	do	do	do
43	Williams Daniel	46	M	18	England	do	do	do

1880 USA census

Sinclair Marsden 38
 Hannah Denison 78 mother Keep house
 Emma Williams 9 granddaughter
 Address Akron, Summit, Ohio, USA

1880 census

George Ripley 58 Self (Head) Farmer
 Martha Ripley 57 Wife
 John Ripley 27 Son
 Celey Ripley 20 Daughter-in-law
 Address Tallmadge, Summit, Ohio, USA

1880 census

Daniel Williams 56 Self (Head)
 Jane Williams 48 Wife
 George Williams 23 Son
 Sarah A. Williams 21 Daughter
 Albert Williams 18 Son
 Emma J. Williams 9 Daughter
 Walter Williams 5 Son
 Address Akron, Summit, Ohio, USA

It looks as if Emma Williams, staying with her grandmother, was listed twice.

In 1880 a labourer, Thomas Marsden, was boarding with a Scottish / English family in Water Street, Akron, Summit County, Ohio. This was probably Hannah's son. What he did and where he was before then has not been established. But there is a later clue.

Continued in part 2

D.M.Barker
 July 2022
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