

**Hannah Denison formerly Marsden née Sinclair  
and her family**

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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> May 1774. He had a non-conformist baptism at Flowergate Presbyterian Church in Whitby, Yorkshire on 19<sup>th</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> December 1802, Jane on 24<sup>th</sup> November 1805, Mary on 7<sup>th</sup> July 1808, Joseph on 6<sup>th</sup> January 1811, William on 26<sup>th</sup> September 1813, Ann on 25<sup>th</sup> December 1816, Martha on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1819, John on 11<sup>th</sup> August 1822 and finally Charles on 12<sup>th</sup> 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 25<sup>th</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> November 1801. John and Sarah Marsden's son Abraham was also baptised at Lightcliffe on 16<sup>th</sup> December 1821 and then buried in the churchyard on 19<sup>th</sup> January 1823. This was eleven days after his mother had been buried there on 8<sup>th</sup> 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. J. J. J. J.*  
 This Marriage was solemnized between us *John Marsden & Martha*  
*Hannah Sinclair*  
 In the Presence of *Joseph Marsden*  
 No. 147.

N

John Marsden married Hannah Sinclair on 25<sup>th</sup> October 1824. Their first-born son, George, was just 2 weeks old when he died on 19<sup>th</sup> November 1826. He was buried in plot NN\*3 of Lightcliffe churchyard on 22<sup>nd</sup> 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 8<sup>th</sup> June 1828, but a later memorial inscription suggests that his mother was Hannah. His father John was again a 'Flagfacer'.

The family then moved to Northowram and John Marsden's occupation after a daughter Jane's baptism on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1831, changed from 'Flag facer' to 'Delver'. The baptisms – for Ann on 16<sup>th</sup> February 1834, Thomas on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1837 and Mary Ellen on 12<sup>th</sup> 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 29<sup>th</sup> April 1836. He was buried with his one-year-old son, also called William, in plot OO\*3 on 6<sup>th</sup> 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		

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		

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		

10-year-old Jane Marsden was in the household of a Charles Bradshaw Pool, a Braces Manufacturer. 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 1<sup>st</sup> October 1840 had his younger brother John and his niece Mercy living with him. His first marriage was to Hannah Roddis on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1834 in Manchester. Two of their children were buried back in Lightcliffe, two-year-old William on 4<sup>th</sup> October 1838 – you can see the memorial inscription to him at the foot of his grandparents' plot - and twenty-week-old Ellen on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1839. This was after their 38-year-old mother Hannah Sinclair née Roddis had been buried in Cheetham on 28<sup>th</sup> 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 16<sup>th</sup> 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 27<sup>th</sup> March 1842.

1844. Marriage solemnized at <u>Elland</u> in the <u>Parish</u> of <u>Fulifax</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</u>								
This Marriage was solemnized between us, <u>George Ripley</u> in <u>Law</u> in the Presence of <u>Joseph Firth</u> <u>Mercy Sinclair</u> in <u>Marriage</u> <u>William Coathen</u>								

Then Hannah's daughter, Mercy Sinclair, married George Ripley on 10<sup>th</sup> November 1844 as the above record shows. George Ripley was probably also baptised at St. Matthew's Church on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1823, the son of Elizabeth Ripley of Slead Syke.

No. 644	3	George	Elizabeth Ripley	Slead Syke	Spinster	W. Wilkin
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On 25<sup>th</sup> April 1835, aged thirteen, George Ripley was apprenticed to a Brighouse coal miner, Joseph Firth with whom he and other apprentices were living on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1841. Presumably this was the same Joseph Firth who witnessed the marriage. As you can see John Marsden was recorded as Mercy's father and a Gabriel Walker as George Ripley's father.

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

1845	Oct. 26	William	George Ripley	Brighouse	Coalminer	Mr. George
No. 263		Mercy				

1849	April 15 <sup>th</sup>	Charles	George + Mercy Ripley	Brig-house	Coal-miner	W. H. Budd Off. Min.
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John and Hannah Marsden lost their 17-year-old son William on 5<sup>th</sup> 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 30<sup>TH</sup> 1847 AGED 55 YEARS.**

John Marsden was buried with his sons on 4<sup>th</sup> 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 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1849. He was the son of Thomas Denison and Hannah Shuttleworth who married in 1806. John was born on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1809 and then baptised at Methley near Leeds on 29<sup>th</sup> 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 <sup>r</sup> 23 <sup>d</sup>	<i>John Denison</i>	<i>free</i>	<i>Back<sup>d</sup></i>	<i>Labour</i>	<i>N<sup>o</sup> 11 Moorau</i>	<i>Thomas Denison</i>	<i>Labour</i>
		<i>Hannah Marsden</i>	<i>free</i>	<i>Wid<sup>d</sup></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 _____ or after <i>Banns</i> by me, <i>William Smith</i>								
This Marriage was solemnized between us, <i>John Denison his Mark</i> in the presence of <i>Wm Thomas</i> and <i>Hannah Marsden her Mark</i> <i>Isaac Ingham</i>								

Before then Hannah's son in law George Ripley had travelled to the USA America arriving in New York on 25<sup>th</sup> August 1848. At the time his wife Mercy née Sinclair was probably pregnant with their son Charles which no doubt explains why she and their toddler son William did not travel with him. Although no record of his return journey has been found he did return to the UK.

Then all the Ripley family as well as his wife's half-sister, Jane, left England for good as can be seen on the passenger list below for the Maine built immigration ship *Charles Crooker* which arrived in New York from Liverpool on 14<sup>th</sup> May 1850. Understandably Jane's surname was recorded as Ripley not Marsden.

283	George Ripley	"	1	25
284	Wm	"	#	24
285	Wm	"	M	3
286	Chas	"	"	Inf
287	Jane	"	F	19
				Nurse

The Ripley family, recorded as living in Wayne, Ohio on the 1850 USA census, would appear to be 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! The only doubt is because his wife appears to be known as Martha and not Mercy from 1850 onwards.

1850 USA census

George Ripley	27	Coal Mining
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

Hannah's daughter Ann Marsden was with her Sinclair grandmother, still at German House. Look who some of the lodgers were; the Rev Wm Gurney, the Lightcliffe curate, who had baptised Ann Sinclair's great grandson William Ripley, and his wife Harriet. Both were later buried in the churchyard.

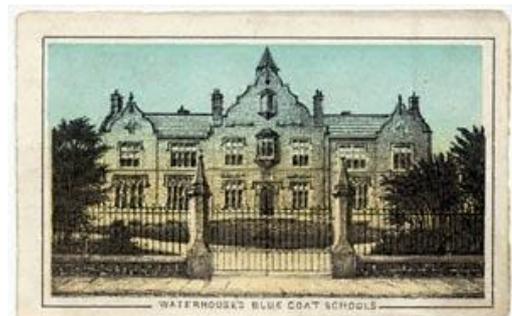
1851 census

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

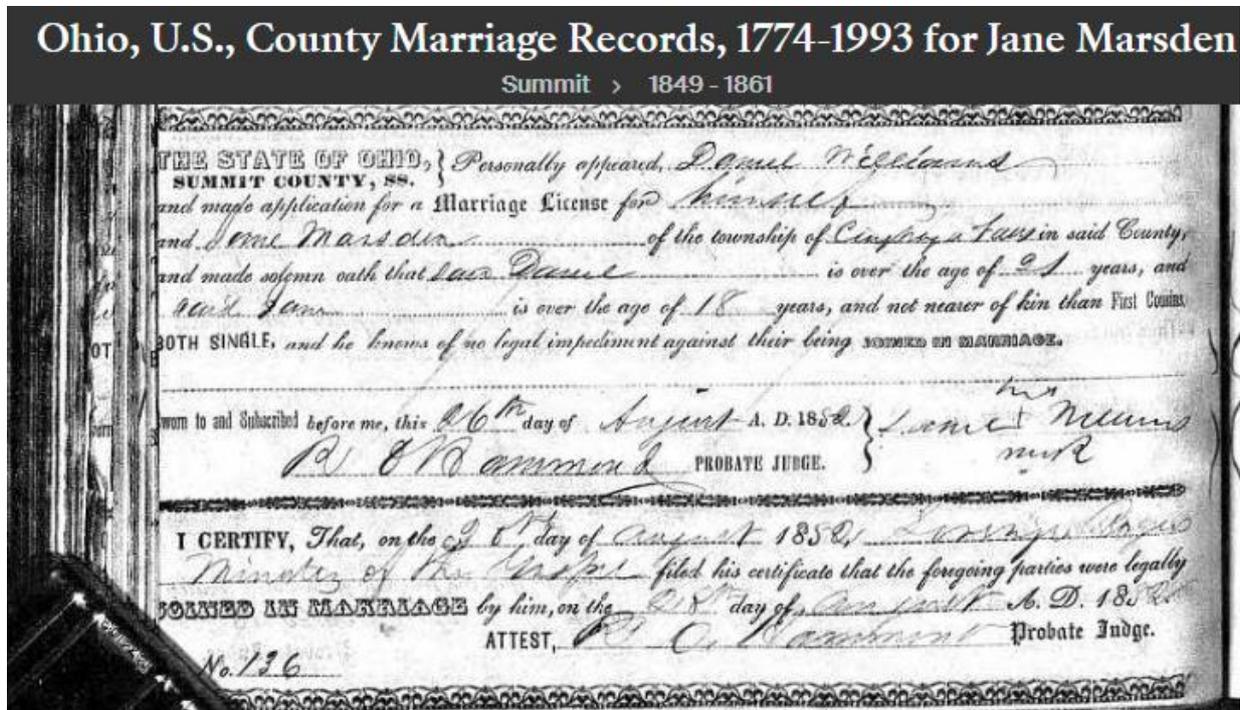
Fatherless Sinclair Marsden attended the charity Blue Coat School – so called because the children wore blue coats – and lived in the adjacent almshouses. Both charitable establishments were set up by Nathaniel Waterhouse (1585 – 1645). The buildings were situated near the current Halifax Minster.

1851 census

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



A year later Jane Marsden married Daniel Williams on 28<sup>th</sup> 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 10<sup>th</sup> 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup> April 1861.



Hannah's second husband, John Denison, died on 22<sup>nd</sup> 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>	<i>24 29</i>	<i>Bachelor Spinster</i>	<i>Saddler -</i>	<i>Manchester Southowram</i>	<i>William Hodkinson John Marsden</i>	<i>Saddler Stonecutter</i>
Married in the <i>Parish Church</i> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by _____ or other <i>Banns</i> by _____								
This Marriage was solemnized between us,		<i>William Sinclair Hodkinson</i>		in the Presence of		<i>William J. Johnson</i> <i>Alfred Hodgkinson</i>		
		<i>Mary Ellen Marsden</i>				<i>John Farrister</i>		

Youngest daughter Mary Ellen Marsden married her first cousin William Sinclair Hodkinson on 7<sup>th</sup> 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 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1842 and baptised in Didsbury on 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 5<sup>th</sup> July 1870. She was buried at Lightcliffe with her husband and son – possibly also with some young grandchildren - on 7<sup>th</sup> 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.

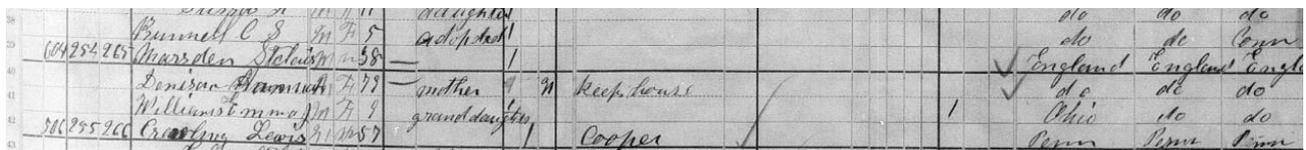
1870 census

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 *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!



1880 USA census

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

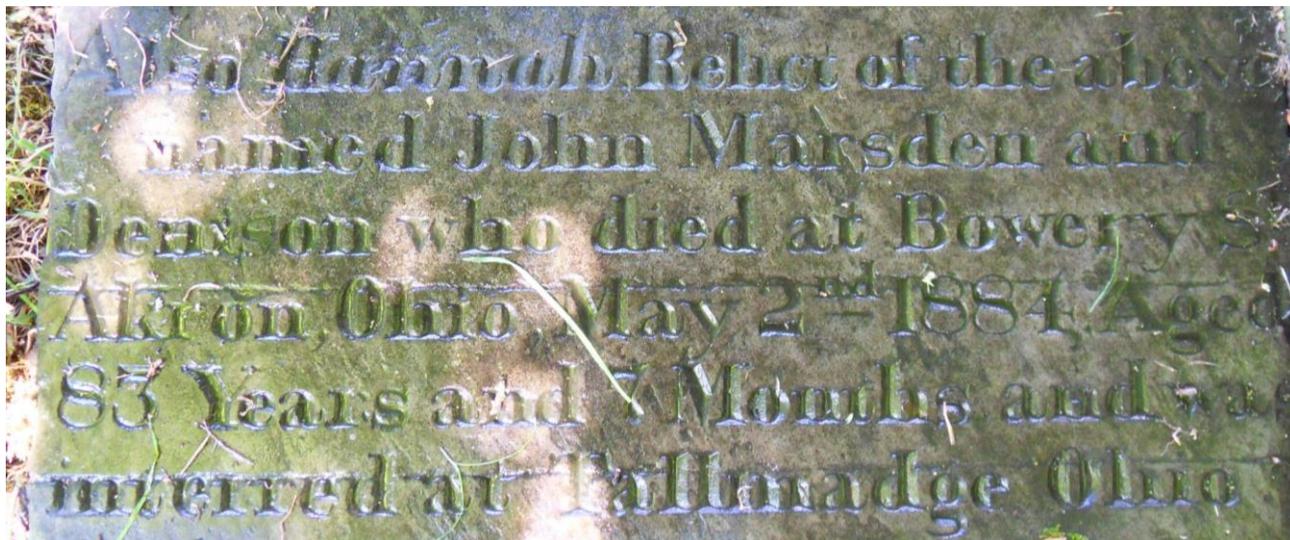
1880 census

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

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.

Hannah Denison died on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1884 aged 83 years and 7 months as the record on the *Summit County, Ohio, U.S., Death Records, 1866-1908* states. It also says that she died of malaria. The memorial inscription back on the grave plot she had owned in St. Matthew's churchyard has the same and then some more information.



**ALSO OF HANNAH RELICT OF THE ABOVE  
NAMED JOHN MARSDEN AND JOHN DENISON  
WHO DIED AT BOWERY ST. AKRON OHIO  
MAY 2<sup>ND</sup> 1884 AGED 83 YEARS AND 7 MONTHS  
AND WAS INTERRED AT TALLMADGE OHIO**

The first question is :-

Who organised this inscription to be added to this NN\*3 Lightcliffe plot?

Perhaps her sister Mary Hodkinson and her daughter Mary Ellen Hodkinson from across the Pennines, maybe her other daughter Ann Wood. There was one family member still living in Lightcliffe, Hannah's youngest brother Charles Sinclair. Being in the area did he oversee getting the Marsden / Denison ledger stone engraved with his eldest sister's details?

From the 1841 census to the 1891 census Charles Sinclair lived at German House. In 1841 he was there with his mother. He married Jane Elizabeth Mallinson on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1850 in Halifax. They baptised four children at St. Matthew's Church: Emily on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1851, Arthur on 11<sup>th</sup> December 1853, Ann on 21<sup>st</sup> January 1855 and Martha Ann on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1859. The last baptism was private, probably because little Martha Sinclair was buried at Lightcliffe just a few days later, on 11<sup>th</sup> September 1859. Her parents had already buried Arthur on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1854 and then 4-year-old Ann on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1859 i.e. just before Martha Ann was born. These infants were buried in unknown plots. Two more daughters Mary Eleanor and Clara Sinclair were born in 1863 and 1865 but not baptised at Lightcliffe. By 1901 Charles Sinclair, a widower and retired farmer, had moved to Blackpool with his two unmarried youngest daughters. He died there shortly after the census was taken in Q2 1901.

The second question is :-

Is there a memorial inscription for Hannah Denison in Tallmadge Ohio?

To help answer that question some USA family memorials have been found.

Hannah's daughter Mercy / Martha Ripley née Sinclair may have died on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1887 if she is the lady remembered on this - not easy to read even close-up - memorial in Tallmadge Cemetery, Ohio. The close-up image appears to come from the monument on the right which has the name RIPLEY on a lower plinth.



On another side of this memorial is an inscription to four Ripley children including two sons Joseph and Thomas Ripley who were born in Springfield, Summit, Ohio, USA – where the family were in 1860 - and died as indicated on this record.

RIPLEY, JOSEPH  
d 14 May 1870 Tallmadge; ae  
14y 4m; b Springfield; r  
Tallmadge; cd scarlet fever;  
bk 1, pg 20

RIPLEY, THOMAS  
d 23 July 1871 Tallmadge; s;  
ae 17y 8m; b Springfield; r  
Tallmadge; cd swallowing a  
bean; bk 1, pg 38

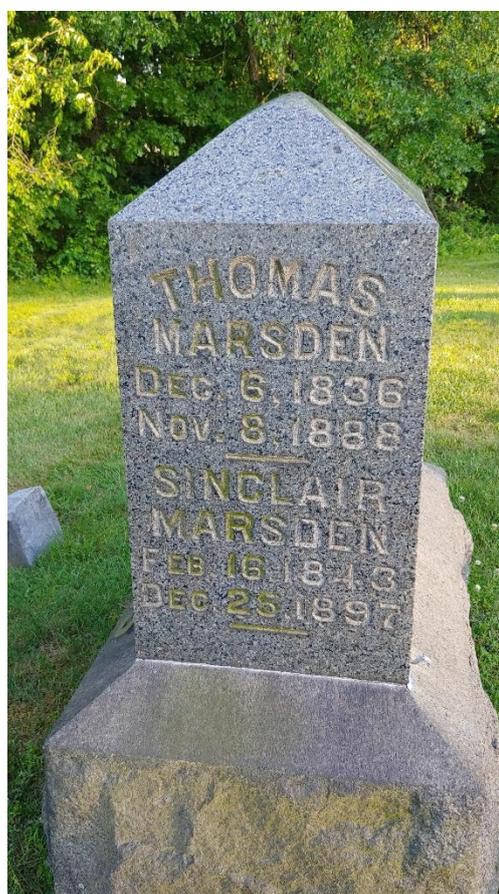
Interesting causes of death!

Hannah's daughter Jane Williams née Marsden and family were also buried at Tallmadge Cemetery, Ohio as recorded on these memorials. Her maiden name was helpfully included.



On the reverse side is a memorial inscription to four Williams sons. But is there a memorial inscription on either of the ends?!

There would appear to be, look below.



In addition to the two images above, the *Billion Graves* website has another image of what looks like an end to this same headstone.

The memorial inscription is for Jane's brothers, Hannah's sons, Thomas Marsden and Sinclair Marsden complete with their dates.

The birth date for Thomas fits with his baptism date but that for Sinclair seems to be a year out. Mistakes did and do happen!

But what had these two Marsden brothers been doing since arriving in the USA, whenever that was?

There is a transcription of a *Ohio, U.S., Soldier Grave Registrations, 1804-1958* record which has this interesting information on it :-

Name: Thomas Marsden  
 Birth Date: 6 Dec 1836  
 Birth Place: England  
 Enlistment Date: 1861  
 Discharge Date: 1865  
 Death Date: 8 Nov 1888  
 Death Place: Tallmadge, Ohio  
 Burial Place: Tallmadge, Ohio, USA  
 Cemetery: Tallmadge Old  
 Branch of Service: Army

The dates agree with those on the memorial. But confusingly there is another record for a Thomas Marsden of Tallmadge, Summit, Ohio with a death date of 27<sup>th</sup> November 1888. This is from an alphabetical list so was there just a transcription error, another little mistake?

NAME		DATE OF DEATH			AGE			In case of death without Given Name enter here name of		PLACE OF DEATH	PLACE OF BIRTH	SEX	MSW	ORIGINAL RECORD		
SURNAME	GIVEN NAME	Year	Month	Day	Yrs.	Mo.	Day	FATHER	MOTHER			COLOR		Vol.	Page	No.
Marsden	Thomas	1888	Nov	27	52					Tallmadge, Ohio	England	male	white	1	316	165

Going with the first record, it seems likely that Hannah Denison’s son Thomas Marsden became a USA soldier sometime after he emigrated. Tempting though it is to wonder if he served in the Civil War 1861 – 1865, it is difficult to be sure as there appear to be several Thomas Marsdens born in England about 1836 who were drafted into the US Army. However, it might explain why he has not been found in any of the censuses before 1880.

In 1880 his younger brother Sinclair Marsden was living in Akron, Summit, Ohio. What did he do after his mother died in 1884? Most of the 1890 USA census records were destroyed in a fire in 1921 and so they are no help. But an American lady – a big thank you, Frances – managed to find his name in an article in *The New York Herald* for 27<sup>th</sup> June 1897.



.... The next morning his wife and Sinclair Marsden came on from Akron, Ohio and they settled in the mud shack – the first house in the coming nation.

It was a picture of gloom. It was time to plant but there was no ground to plant in that was not taken up by trees two feet in diameter or shrubbery. There was no water nearer than half a mile, absolutely nothing for man or beast to eat or drink. Lonsbury wanted a well, but he needed a man to dig it. He watched the opening at the head of the ravine for the appearance of another pioneer, and in a few days White the

shoemaker and his wife fought their way through the swarms of ferocious jiggers and rapacious wood ticks and entered the mud cabin. Marsden, the mechanic, told White the shoemaker that his first duty in Utopia would be to go to the bottom and dig while he stayed at the top and pulled up the dirt from a hole which he hoped might prove to be a well. It was not much of a prospect for a seeker of happiness and contentment, but the men dug. They found water sixty feet lower than the bottom of the valley of the side hill. They then had water but had little food. They worked and lived on bread.

**Wikipedia** has this information about the Ruskin Colony.

The Ruskin Colony (or Ruskin Commonwealth Association) was a utopian socialist colony which existed near Tennessee City in Dickson County, Tennessee from 1894 to 1896. The colony moved to a slightly more permanent second settlement on an old farm five miles north from 1896 to 1899, and saw another brief incarnation near Waycross, in southern Georgia, from 1899 until it finally dissolved in 1901. At its high point, the population was around 250. The colony was named after John Ruskin, the English socialist writer

How long Sinclair Marsden stayed with the Ruskin Colony can only be guessed at. As his memorial inscription says he died on 25<sup>th</sup> December 1897. The *Tennessee, U.S., City Death Records, 1872-1923* state that he died in Ward 13, City Hospital, Nashville, Davidson, Tennessee, USA and gave his cause of death as ‘Stricture of Urethra’. It also confirms that the 55-year-old, who was born in England, was buried in Tallmadge, Akron.

But where exactly was his mother, Hannah Denison formerly Marsden née Sinclair, buried after she died on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1884? In the Williams plot or the Ripley plot or somewhere else?

A helpful list on the *Ohio Genealogy Express* website probably has the answer. Although a misreading of her birth year has not helped in trying to track down her final resting place. She was born in German House, Lightcliffe, Yorkshire on 19<sup>th</sup> September 1800 not 1880 as some records state ( making her just 3 years old!) and not 1900 as recorded below!

Ripley, George		1892	ae 69	
Ripley, Martha - wife		1887	ae 64	
Ripley, Hannah Dennison	1900	1884		b. Yorkshire, Eng. Sept. 19
4 children of George and Martha				

Hannah Denison was thus almost certainly buried with the Ripleys and may have a memorial inscription on that impressive Tallmadge Cemetery monument in the USA as well as on that flat ledger stone in St. Matthew’s churchyard, Lightcliffe, Yorkshire, England.

Unusually for someone born at the start of the nineteenth century Hannah had travelled far from where she was born, experiencing much in her long life.

D.M.Barker

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