

This is A Few Forgotten Women Story



This story was written, in September 2024, as one of a series resulting from the 'A Few Forgotten Women Friday' collaborative research project, investigating the lives of pupils at the Royal Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb Poor (later The Royal School for the Deaf), Margate, Kent and The West of England Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Exeter, Devon

.

Sarah Henley's Story

Sarah Henley was aged 12 and attending the West of England School for the Deaf at the 1841 English Census. According to school records, Sarah attended the school from 1836 to 1844. The Admission Register 1827-1836 stated that Sarah was from Newton Bushel and she was baptised at age three on 15th January 1832. The record also named her parents as Mary and Samuel.

It proved possible to locate Sarah's parents on Ancestry. Samuel Henley was born 14th September 1799 and baptised in Salem Chapel, Newton Abbott. It has not proved possible to discover when he died but it was before 1861 as

Mary is described as a Widow in the Census of that year. Samuel married Mary Davis on 15th March 1828 at Highweek, Devon. Mary was born in 1804 and passed away in 1873.

The School's Annual Report for 1845 stated that Sarah was living with her mother in 1845. This was still the case in the 1861 Census, when Mary and Sarah were living at 81 Wolborough St., Newton Abbott, Devon. Mary is described as Lodging Housekeeper and there were 14 lodgers living in the property in addition to Mary and Sarah.

In the 1871 Census, Sarah was still living with her mother at 191 Wolborough St., Newton Abbott, Devon along with two family members and a lodger. Sarah's mother passed away in 1873 and her will dated 17th February 1874, listed Charles and William, two Davis relatives as executors along with Alfred Oliver Crocker (Schoolmaster). The Probate Calendar listed and Estate of under £600.

In the 1891 Census, Sarah was living at 93 Glenart, Newton Abbott, Devon along with a cousin, Joanna Davies. Both are described as 'living on her own means' which might suggest Sarah benefitted from her mother's will. Also living at this address was a boarder who was also described as 'independent' and a servant.

In the 1901 Census, Sarah was living as a 'boarder' at 155 West St., Newton Abbott, Devon. Again, Sarah was described as 'living on own means'. Also living at this address was Charles Davis, a County Court Bailiff and likely to have been a maternal relative of Sarah's.

Sarah passed away, aged 75, on 31st March 1904 and Probate was granted on 16th April to Alfred Oliver Crocker and Charles Davis (County Court Bailiff). Sarah left an estate of £1259 6s 9d. It would appear that Sarah had a fairly comfortable lifestyle and was well supported by family members who lived with her and helped to care for her.

Sources

Admissions Register 1827-1836 Transcription/Extracts D123 by Joint project Devon Family History Society with Devon Record Office (Ref7645) www.devonfhs.org.uk/product/weat-of-england-school-for-the-deaf-admission-register-127-1836

1841, 1861, 1871, 1891 & 1901 England Census, www.ancestry.co.uk

Annual reports DHC 7645C West of England School for the Deaf and Dumb Annual Reports, 1826-1860. Extracts provided by Forgotten Women Team

England & Wales, Civil Registration of Death Index, 1837-1915, www.ancestry.co.uk

England & Wales, Non-Conformist and Non-Parochial registers 1567-1936, www.ancestry.co.uk

England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538-1975, www.ancestry.co.uk

England, Select Marriages, 1538-1973, www.ancestry.co.uk

England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Willa and Administrations) 1858-1995, www.ancestry.co.uk