

This is a Story from 'A Few Forgotten Women'



This story was written, in January 2023, as one of a series resulting from the 'A Few Forgotten Women Friday' collaborative research project, investigating the lives of girls from Leeds, Girls' Industrial School, Yorkshire.

Eliza Longster

Eliza Longster or Longstor was admitted¹ to Shadwell Children's centre Jan 24th 1867 sentenced to 4 years by John Ellershaw and John Cooper Esq at Leeds court LC/SS2/1/1. She is described on admittance to have light coloured hair, be moderate in build have a scar on right knee with a full and a rather light complexion with freckles. It states on admission that she was

“a very bad girl she often attained goods from shops in her Mothers name and made away with them to women who got her to do so and gave her small sums of money”.

She was described in court as refractory and unmanageable. She had attended the National School Campfield and St John Parish Church. She could read 1st book and write on a slate but could not cipher (mathematics).

¹ West Yorkshire, England, Reformatory School Records, 1856-1914 Admission Register Commitment. 1862 - 1879. LC/SS2/1/1 Register Numbers 1-461 Institution Shadwell Children's Centre

According to the records she lived with her Uncle Joseph and Sarah Higgins at Bradford Beer House. I have not been able to trace these relatives yet, but on her parent's marriage the witness names were Richard and Drusilla Higgins.² On the admittance records it says her grandparents were Richard and Jane Allis from Hope Street Inn Durham. On Eliza's mother's marriage certificate to Matthew Longster³ it says she resided at Hope Street Leeds. Her surname is recorded as Harris. The admission record also states she has an Uncle and Aunt Joseph and Margaret Lancaster Boat Builder of Holbeck Bridge. The surname has several variations Longstor, Longster, Langster and Lancaster which are all phonetically similar.

The GRO index registers an Eliza Longstor born in Hunslet⁴ early in 1856, giving the mother's maiden name Harris. The Parish Church of St Peter Holbeck baptised many children on 11th May 1856 including an Eliza Longster⁵. Her date of birth was given as 25 Jan 1856 daughter of Hannah Jane and Matthew Longster, Sawyer. (Matthew said he was born either Leeds or Pately Bridge depending which census you look at.)

The Leeds Times of Saturday 24 Feb 1855 on page 8 reports "On Monday Matthew Longster Sawyer married Miss Hannah Jane Harris both of Leeds." Parish records have the marriage by banns, on 19 February 1855, at St Peters

² West Yorkshire, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1813-1935 Leeds St Peter 19 Feb 1865. Ref 68/5/47 accessed via [ancestry.co.uk](https://www.ancestry.co.uk) February 2023

³ West Yorkshire, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1813-1935 Leeds St Peter 19 Feb 1865 Ref 68/5/47 accessed via [ancestry.co.uk](https://www.ancestry.co.uk) February 2023

⁴ England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915 Hunslet 1856 March Qtr 09b p269 accessed via [GRO.gov.uk](https://www.gro.gov.uk) and digital image register entry February 2023

⁵ Parish records on Ancestry in West Yorkshire, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms 1813-1910. West Yorkshire Archive Service; Wakefield, Yorkshire, England; Yorkshire Parish Records; New Reference Number: RDP68/3A/17 Accessed via [ancestry.co.uk](https://www.ancestry.co.uk) February 2023

church. Matthew 20 years old, of Dewsbury Road married Hannah Jane Harris, 25 years old, of Hope Street. Both fathers were Sawyers. Matthew's father was named as Robert and Hannah's father confirmed as Richard.

Although Eliza's mother was recorded as Anna Jane Longster on the admittance records, she used Hannah Jane, Hannah or Jane on census records. Different census records also have her born in Leeds or more frequently Portsmouth. Looking at the births on FREEBMD and matching to the GRO index and the Beckett St Cemetery Leeds records it appears Hannah Jane gave birth to several children who did not survive. Robert was born Sept qtr 1866 Leeds 09b352 but sadly died the same year Leeds Dec qtr 9b 249. Also Jane Longster born 1868 Mar qtr 09b 400, again her death is recorded on the GRO 09b237 the same year. The burial has Jane daughter of Matthew of Garland's Fold (Genuki confirms as an old Leeds street name) buried on 19 March 1868 aged 11 weeks.

On the 1861 census Eliza was living at 6 Back Row Leeds⁶ with Parents Matthew and Hannah. In 1871⁷ she was still in the school, despite her time being served by 24th January that year. Her family now with brother Richard were at 4 Wade Yard Leeds⁸. Her mother is now using the name Jane.

The 1881 census⁹ finds the family at 6 Duke William Yard Leeds, mother now called Hannah. This has a daughter 'Clarissa' on this census, she has the same age as Eliza and I suspect this is the name she is using. There is a baby Emily also;

⁶ 1861 England Census TNA Class: Rg 9; Piece: 3371; Folio: 73; Page: 12; GSU roll: 543121
Accessed via [ancestry.co.uk](https://www.ancestry.co.uk) February 2023

⁷ 1871 England Census TNA Class: RG10; Piece: 4555; Folio: 114; Page: 4; GSU roll: 847137. Accessed via [ancestry.co.uk](https://www.ancestry.co.uk) February 2023

⁸ 1871 England Census TNA Class RG10 4567 page 27 Accessed via [ancestry.co.uk](https://www.ancestry.co.uk) February 2023

⁹ 1881 England Census TNA RG11 Piece 4510 Folio 132 Page 31.
Accessed via [ancestry.co.uk](https://www.ancestry.co.uk) February 2023

born on 26th November 1874, the GRO records no mothers maiden name. The register entry¹⁰ confirms Eliza is her mother. Eliza goes on to marry, but Emily is brought up by her grandparents¹¹.

Eliza marries William Booth¹² and can be found in the 1891 census¹³ working as a flax spinner. It is difficult to confirm what happens to Eliza after that.

Hannah Jane Longster dies a widow in Union Infirmary, Leeds, and was buried on 6 July 1897 at Beckett Street Cemetery¹⁴. Her surviving children were Eliza and Richard . Richard who was born Jun qtr 1861 9b 374. A tree on Ancestry has his date of birth as 28 June 1861. Richard is an interesting character and appears in court records several times. In the record set MEPO Metropolitan Police Habitual Criminal register 1902 Piece no 13 page 0229 we find Richard was committed on 6 Jan 1902 Leeds for larceny and it reports he had 12 previous convictions. Richard appears to have been married firstly to Lizzie Bedford on May 11th 1880 June at St John the Baptist Leeds after Banns (Leeds 9b 542). He next married Harriet Hardwick at Alban The Martyr on 26 Nov 1887. In the Beckett St Cemetery Leeds it has the wife of Richard Longster buried Sept 20th 1893 grave 11258. In the same grave is William Dixon from the Union Infirmary . This is recorded on the Find a Grave site. It is not believed they were related.

¹⁰ England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915 Leeds, Yorkshire, 1874 Vol 09B page 560. Accessed February 2023

¹¹ Census Returns of England and Wales, 1891; Class: RG12; Piece: 3683; Folio: 74; Page: 7; GSU roll: 6098793 Accessed via [ancestry.co.uk](https://www.ancestry.co.uk) February 2023. Emily Lancaster

¹² West Yorkshire, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1813-1935 West Yorkshire Archive Service; Leeds, Yorkshire, England; Yorkshire Parish Records; Reference Number: RDP56/14. Accessed via [ancestry.co.uk](https://www.ancestry.co.uk) February 2023 Note Wife's name is given as Ann Eliza but father's name and occupation are correct

¹³ Census Returns of England and Wales, 1891; Class: RG12; Piece: 3683; Folio: 74; Page: 8; GSU roll: 6098793. Accessed via [ancestry.co.uk](https://www.ancestry.co.uk) February 2023 Eliza Booth

¹⁴ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/227093879/hannah-jane-longster> accessed February 2023

Richard and Harriet had a son William Henry who died Dec qtr 1892 aged 3. Beckett St cemetery has him buried in grave 11403 on October 29th with the address of Lands Court along with other people mainly young children. They also had Frances a daughter born in Leeds J Qtr 1892 09b 426.

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