

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.

Harriet's Story

When Harriet Malthouse was admitted to the Leeds Girls' Industrial School on 16th January 1868, she is recorded as being 11 years old. Apart from her place of birth, Leeds, Harriet's entry¹ contains no other details at all; no reason for admission, no other family, no schooling, no offences. It's a pathetic little entry and doesn't offer too many clues on which to base a search for Harriet's story.

Fortunately, Malthouse is not a particularly common name, so Harriet's birth is traceable – she was born to Hannah (nee Wheelhouse) and Miles Malthouse on 14th February 1856 at 8 Apple St, Leeds². In the 1861 Census, Harriet is living with Hannah at 18, Plato St, Leeds, together with her sister Anne aged

¹ West Yorkshire Reformatory School Records 1856-1922, originals at West Yorkshire Archives Service WRT/1/72-77, 81-84 accessible on www.ancestry.co.uk

² Accessed via GRO.gov.uk 24th January 2023

10, brother James aged 8 and brother John aged 4 months. Hannah is recorded as married, although Miles is not with the family, and as a washerwoman.³

To take a step back, Miles Malthouse and Hannah Wheelhouse were both born around 1829. They married in Leeds on 22nd December 1849; both made their mark rather than signing the register.⁴ Miles was convicted of larceny on 8th April 1850 and sentenced to three months in jail⁵ but they were together for the 1851 census at 8 Apple Street, Leeds⁶ and Ann Elizabeth, James and Harriet were born over the next five years.

Just a few weeks after Harriet's birth, Miles enlisted in the 95th Regiment of Foot⁷; there is nothing to say why he went, but if he was deserting his growing family he may be said to have had his comeuppance – the 95th Regiment was sent to India to help quell the Indian Mutiny and marched 3,000 miles across the subcontinent.⁸ Miles served until 1875, re-enlisting at Kurrachee (now Karachi) in 1865 and transferring to the 58th Regiment of Foot. I was unable to find any evidence that he played any further role in his family's lives.

Hannah's son John was born in November 1860; he was registered without a father's name⁹ and is the only one of Hannah's children for whom I could trace a baptism.¹⁰ He died and was buried on 9th November 1861 at Leeds Beckett

³ [1861 England Census - Ancestry.co.uk](https://www.ancestry.co.uk)

⁴ [West Yorkshire, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1813-1935 - Ancestry.co.uk](https://www.ancestry.co.uk)

⁵ [Record Transcription: England & Wales, Crime, Prisons & Punishment, 1770-1935 | findmypast.co.uk](https://www.findmypast.co.uk)

⁶ [Ancestry.co.uk - 1851 England Census](https://www.ancestry.co.uk)

⁷ [British Army Service Records 1760-1915 Image | findmypast.co.uk](https://www.findmypast.co.uk)

⁸ [95th \(Derbyshire\) Regiment of Foot | National Army Museum \(nam.ac.uk\)](https://www.nam.ac.uk)

⁹ Accessed via GRO.gov.uk 5th February 2023

¹⁰ [West Yorkshire, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813-1910 - Ancestry.co.uk](https://www.ancestry.co.uk)

Street Cemetery.¹¹ The next appearance in the official record is Hannah's death; she died on 8th October 1866 at Duke William Street of post-confinement complications aged 38 years.¹² She was buried on 10th October at Leeds Beckett Street Cemetery,¹³ still described as the wife of Miles Malthouse.

Harriet was admitted to the Shadwell Children's Centre on 16th January 1868 – there is nothing to tell us where she had been in the intervening 15 months but many of her contemporaries had been picked up for destitution and begging. It is not hard to see that Harriet may have been in the same situation. By the time of the 1871 Census, Harriet had been transferred to the Ragged School, Windsor Street and was then 14 years old.¹⁴ Harriet's older sister Anne was living with Hannah's older sister, Sarah¹⁵, who had married Robert Spencer in June 1847,¹⁶ and their family – Anne was working as a factory hand. Their brother James was living with an uncle, William Ridley, and working as a carter.¹⁷

Sadly, there is just one more verifiable mention of Harriet in the official record. I've been unable to trace a convincing marriage or a death registration and the last reference is another tragedy – Ann Elizabeth Malthouse, aged 5 months and 'the daughter of Harriet Malthouse' is buried at Leeds Beckett Street Cemetery on 26th April 1874.¹⁸ Her death certificate says that her mother is

¹¹ [Leeds, England, Beckett Street Cemetery, 1845-1987 - Ancestry.co.uk](#)

¹² Accessed via GRO.gov.uk 24th January 2023

¹³ [Leeds, England, Beckett Street Cemetery, 1845-1987 - Ancestry.co.uk](#)

¹⁴ [1871 England Census - Ancestry.co.uk](#)

¹⁵ [Record Transcription: 1871 England, Wales & Scotland Census | findmypast.co.uk](#)

¹⁶ [West Yorkshire, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1813-1935 - Ancestry.co.uk](#)

¹⁷ [West Yorkshire, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1813-1935 - Ancestry.co.uk](#)

¹⁸ [Leeds, England, Beckett Street Cemetery, 1845-1987 - Ancestry.co.uk](#)

Harriet Malthouse, a servant of 13 Coleridge Street, Leeds;¹⁹ Ann Elizabeth doesn't seem to have been registered at birth. Maybe her mother's fate will come to light in the future but for now, that's the best we can do.

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¹⁹ Accessed via GRO.gov.uk 6th February 2023