

This is A Few Forgotten Women Story



This story was written, in April 2024, as one of a series resulting from the 'A Few Forgotten Women Friday' collaborative research project, investigating the lives of women staff and female patients associated with the Fleming Memorial Children's Hospital, Jesmond, Northumberland.

Annie Clay

When we research people from the nineteenth century we don't always expect them to move very far from their roots and many jobs did mean that families remained, all their lives, close to where they were born. There were several occupations however which necessitated movement, mining, agricultural labouring, engineers are examples. Workers often moved either for better conditions, pay, advancement, where their particular skills were needed or the work just dried up in a particular area. Maybe surprisingly nursing was an occupation which saw, particularly women, moving round the country.

Developments in medicine, the raising of the status of nurses and their increasing training meant that opportunities were arising in different areas.

The higher and specialization in their qualifications, the wider the areas where they may find work.

One such lady was Anne Clay (aka Annie). She appeared in our data base for the project on the Fleming Memorial Hospital, Jesmond. In the 1891 census (RG12/4219/74/18) Annie was recorded as a 25 year old nurse at the Fleming Hospital in Jesmond, quite some distance from home, as she was born in Midsomer Norton in Somerset. Looking into her background she came from what appeared to be quite a close family and community of professional people. Her father, Thomas Clay (1825-1895) was an accountant (his marriage certificate), bank clerk and manager of Stuckey's Bank (obit in Weston Super Mare Gazette and General Advertiser, 16th Dec 1895) and he was also from a family who worked in the financial sector, his father, Blakeman John Clay (1787-1841) working for the Revenue department as a manager and inspector.

Her mother's family were also in the same sector of employment. Her maternal grandfather, Joseph Bishop (parent's marriage certificate) was also a Revenue Inspector.

Annie's parents, Thomas Clay aged 32 and Ann Bishop aged 20 had married on November 18th, 1858 (Somerset Marriages). There was quite a difference in their ages but it must have been a small and close community all engaged in the financial sector as in the previous census of 1851 Thomas and Ann (not yet married) were living in the same house in Old Bond Street, Bath, with Ann's maternal uncle, Thomas Bishop, who was also an accountant. This census gives tantalizing information which needs careful unravelling.

Thomas Bishop, head, 47, single, accountant from Ironbridge, Shropshire
Catherine Bishop, sister, 40, single, fund holder from Stafford

Thomas Clay, nephew, 26, single, accountant, from Marlborough, Wiltshire

Ann Bishop, sister -in -law, 45, widow, interest of money (sic), from Box, Wiltshire

Catherine Bishop, niece, 14, at school, from Tipperary, Ireland

Ann Bishop, niece, 10, at school, from Holy Cross, Ireland

Thomas Bishop, nephew, 8, from Castle Take Ireland

Elizabeth Bishop, niece, 7, from Castle Take Ireland.

Plus 2 servants.

Through all records Thomas and Catherine (Ann's uncle and Aunt) are single. In all records, Annie Clay's mother, Ann, is recorded as being born in Ireland (around 1839) Thomas Clay, 26 and Ann Bishop, 10 who appear in this record are Annie's parents.

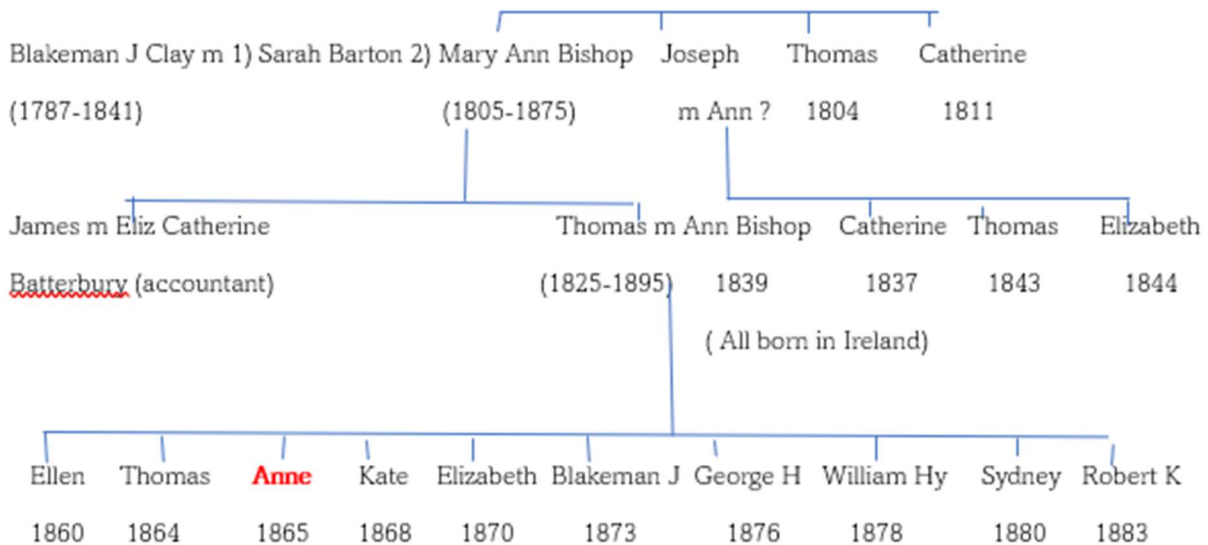
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
1855.	Novr 18 th	Thomas Clay	22	Bachelor	Accountant	3 Prospect Lodge Wells Road Lycombe	Blakeman John Clay.	Revenue Officer.
		Ann Bishop	20	Spouse		3 Prospect Lodge Wells Road Lycombe	Joseph Bishop	Revenue Officer.

Married in the Church of St. Marks according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by License or after _____ by me,
James W. Spradley Vicar

This Marriage was solemnized between us, Thomas Clay } in the Presence of us, Thomas Bishop
Ann Bishop } Catherine Bishop

Again from the census, all sister -in -law, Ann's children are born in Ireland and she is a widow, it is difficult to establish her maiden name. There are several Joseph Bishop marriages around the approximate time so definite conclusions cannot be drawn. Therefore, a possible scenario is; (see tree below) Joseph Bishop was the brother of Mary (Maria) Ann Bishop, the second wife of Blakeman John Clay, the parents of Thomas Clay who married Ann Bishop (born Holy Cross, Ireland) who were the parents of

Annie Clay our nurse. Possibly Joseph married in the Somerset area and went to Ireland where he and Ann had a family. Joseph passed away and Ann returned to Somerset and lived with her in laws (1851 census). Joseph must have had quite a good job as Ann is living off the interest of money.



The two families of Clay and Bishop possibly met due to working in the financial sector even though the Bishops appear to have come from Shropshire, a connection carried on by Ann and her sister, Ellen, later in their lives.

As the nineteenth century progressed, nursing was advancing from being for the less respectable women to having status including means of training and developing a career. Annie Clay was born on 18th October 1865 (RG1017051C/014/4, 1939 Register and Uk Roll of Nurses) to Thomas Clay a bank clerk and Ann Bishop. She was baptised (Somerset Baptisms) on 10th December 1865 in Midsomer Norton. Her siblings in the 1871 census were Ellen Beatrice, 10, Thomas 7, Kate 3, and Elizabeth 9

months. From the places of birth of the children the family moved around the local area. By 1881(RG11 2420/35/63/326) 4 more siblings had been born, Blakeman John 8, George H 5, William H 3 and Sydney 6 months. Robert King Clay was born in 1883. Although Thomas had retired and was an annuitant, they had a bank clerk as a lodger.

The 1891 census (RG12/4219/74/18) was where we originally found Annie working as a nurse at The Fleming Memorial Hospital. However, this was Annie's second stint at the Fleming, July 1st 1900 to January 1901, as in the UK and Ireland Queen's Nursing Roll of Nurses. Her first stay was when she was recorded as a sister from January 1895 to October 1899. The family were living in Raglan Circus, Weston Super Mare.

The UK and Ireland Queen's Nursing Roll of Nursing listing Annie's career and reveals how nurses did find employment in a wide area. The record gives personal details and states that her religion was Church of England. Her employment in various hospitals is listed as:

General Hospital, Weston Super Mare, Mar 1888- Oct 1889

Staff nurse at Fleming Memorial Hospital, Newcastle upon Tyne, Aug 1890- May 1892

On Private staff, River's Street, Bath, Jan 1893-Jan 1895

Nurse at Fleming Memorial Hospital, Jan 1895-Oct 1899

Bath, Jan 1st 1900-Feb 3rd 1905

Shrewsbury Feb 3rd 1905 – Sept 28th 1907

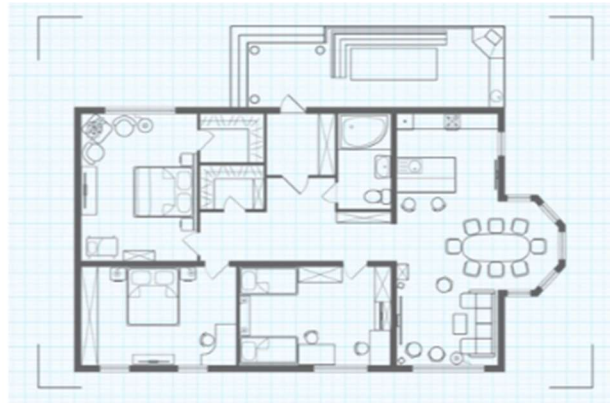
It then goes on to state that she "rejoined" at Shrewsbury on Jan 28th 1918 until Aug 22nd 1918. Could this possibly be to help returning wounded soldiers from the 1st World War?

According to the Weston Super Mare Gazette and General advertiser of 16th December 1895 Annie's father, "the late manager of Stuckey's Bank Radstock" passed away, age 70 after a long illness. Despite searching it did not appear that Thomas left a will, which seems strange for a bank manager. Stuckey's Bank was a joint stock bank founded in 1826 and over the course of the nineteenth century took over several smaller banks to become one of the largest in the county. Later to be taken into the Nat West group. Ann carried on at the 19 room, 12 Raglan Circus, Weston Super Mare and was recorded as a lodging house keeper in 1901 and 1911. She passed away on 10th December 1917 aged 79. According to the Probate Register, probate was granted to Ellen Beatrice, Robert King Clay who was an assistant overseer and Benjamin Richard Rowley, grocer who was the husband of daughter, Elizabeth. Ann left £243.14.7.

Annie spent several years in Shrewsbury, where, after her time in the hospital there, she appears to have joined her sister, Ellen Beatrice, in owning a private nursing home. Ellen had not started out as a nurse but as a teacher. In the 1881 census (RG 11/2421/65/67) she is recorded as a teacher in Weston Super Mare aged 20. The 1891 census sees her living with what appears to be, a wealthy family, all living off private means, in Weston Super Mare. Ellen is recorded as "certified nurse – sick". It is not clear if Ellen was a nurse to the family. The relationship to head is left blank and the person above is recorded as boarder, (no ditto marks) or if she is just lodging there. In 1894 Ellen qualified as a midwife according to the Midwife's Roll. Like Annie she spent time at 44, River's Street, Bath, in the nurses' home,

In 1911 Annie and Ellen had joined forces and were running a private nursing home at 3, Claremont Bank Shrewsbury, Ellen the 47 year old

head, a sick nurse and employer; Annie was 45, again sick nurse and employer, both Annie and Ellen are recorded as “at Home”. They had an 18 year old nurse, Ivy Trudgett from Bickerstaff in Staffordshire and a servant. Today the property is Grade II Listed and the most expensive property in the area



The war years saw the sisters in different situations and by 1921 Annie is a visitor in her sister, Elizabeth and brother in law, Benjamin Richard Rowley’s house at 54, Newfoundland Street, Bristol. She is 55 and a retired sick nurse. Ellen is living on her own, also retired, in High Street, Batcombe, Bath.

By 1939 the two sisters are living together again, this time at “Dunelm”, Baytree, Weston Super Mare. Sadly Ellen died the next year on May 14th. She left £1624.19.5 and probate was granted to Annie. Annie lived to the ripe old age of 90 passing away in Weston Super Mare on 30th August 1956, leaving £3287.18. 5. The probate was granted to a solicitor. Annie left her younger brother, William Henry’s adopted daughter, Ella Bettee Clay £600 and the residue of her estate, after costs, went to the said brother. In a codicil the solicitor received £100.

Ann Simcock 2024

Sources:

Ancestry

Find My Past

Free BMD

<https://www.yeovilhistory.info/stuckeybank.htm>

<https://www.ancestry.co.uk/discoveryui->

[content/view/1731:61098?tid=&pid=&queryId=9c9696d9-e9f9-4b9f-](https://www.ancestry.co.uk/discoveryui-content/view/1731:61098?tid=&pid=&queryId=9c9696d9-e9f9-4b9f-9a8d-fd894b59f3d8&_phsrc=NhA589&_phstart=successSource)

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Nursing and Midwife's Registers, Ancestry

Find a Will:

<https://probatesearch.service.gov.uk/>