

This is A Few Forgotten Women Story



This story was written, in July 2025, as one of a series resulting from the 'A Few Forgotten Women Friday' collaborative research project, investigating the lives of women who were born in the same year as Queen Victoria, 1819.

Hyaena Clapham's Story

Strictly speaking, Hyaena Clapham is not a Forgotten Woman, but she was born in the same year as Queen Victoria. Hyaena was my husband's great great-grandmother. She was baptised in St Peter and St Paul in Burton Pidsea, a small village in the East Riding of Yorkshire, on 2 January 1820¹. No date of birth was recorded in the parish register. Her parents were Robert and Rachel Clapham.

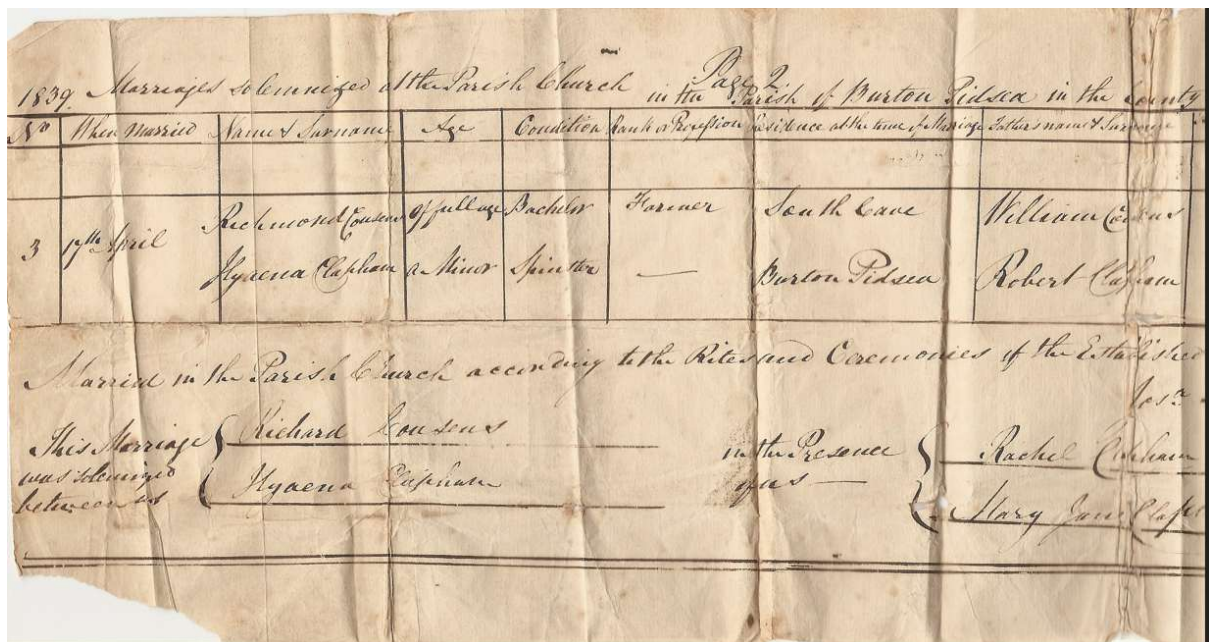
Robert Clapham had been born in Burton Pidsea in 1774¹. He was the youngest son of George Clapham and wife Rachel nee Pattinson of Chatt House in Burton Pidsea. This Grade II listed house still exists, though it was sold by the Clapham family in 1871¹. The Clapham family were one of 'the' families in the village owning over 170 acres of farmland, cottages and tenements.

As the youngest son, Robert inherited £100 on the death of his father in 1792, with the amount to be paid when he turned 21². By 1798, Robert was being assessed as the proprietor and occupier of land³ so it is likely his father had also established him with a farm of his own. In his own will dated 25 January 1827², Robert refers to his land in Burton Pidsea and from probate² and census records⁴ it can be deduced that Robert farmed 'Prospect Hill', a farm of around 160 acres. In 1836 he was listed in the poll books as the occupier of land with a rental value of £50⁵.

Robert Clapham and Rachel Johnson married in St Peter and St Paul Burton Pidsea on 3 April 1813¹. Robert was a bachelor aged 38 and Rachel a spinster aged 26. They were already the parents of three children – Mark Clapham Johnson b. 1807, George Clapham Johnson b. 1808 and Rachel Clapham Johnson b. 1811 – all of whom were baptised in St Peter and St Paul Burton Pidsea¹. Robert recognised them as his lawful children so we can only assume that there was some impediment to an earlier marriage.

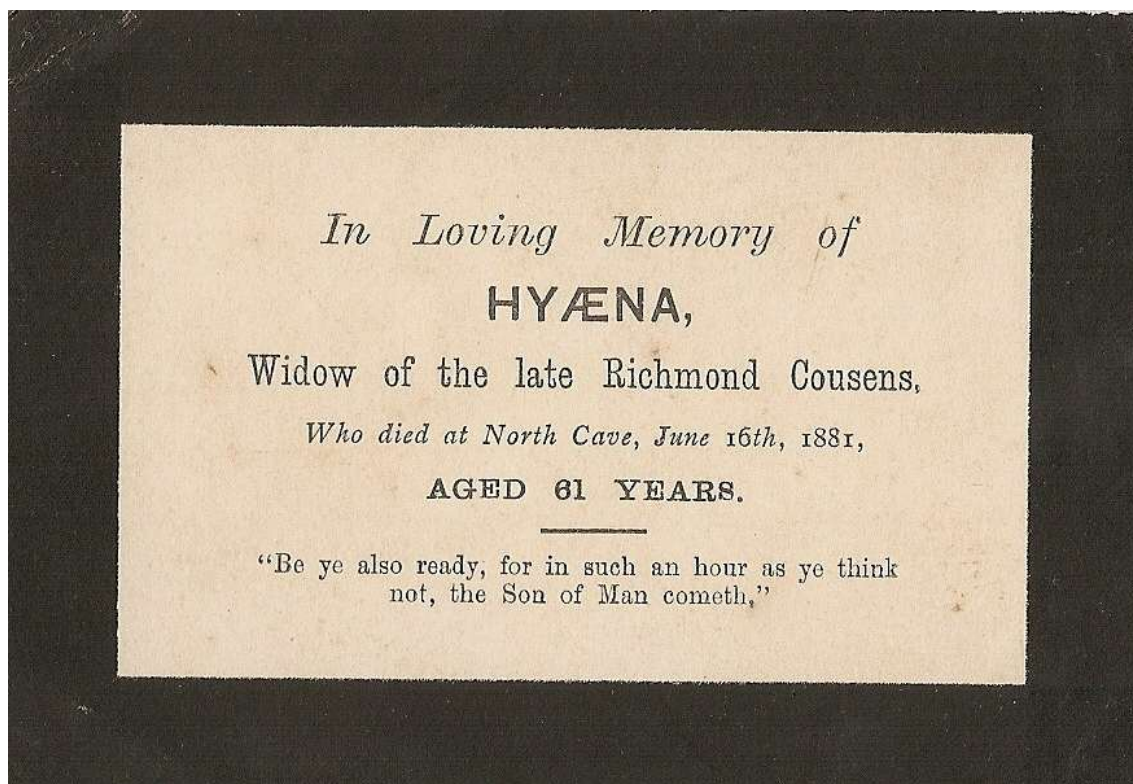
Seven more children followed after their marriage¹ – William Clapham b. 1815, Henry Clapham b. 1816, Isaac Clapham b. 1817, Hyaena Clapham b. 1819, Mary Jane Clapham b. 1822, Robert Clapham b. 1823 and Leonard Johnson Clapham b. 1828. Robert died, aged 62, on 8 February 1837¹ and was buried in the graveyard of St Peter and St Paul with a memorial erected in the nave of the church⁶. He left an estate valued at £300, with each of his daughters receiving a bequest of £50². His widow, Rachel, was listed as a farmer on the 1841 and 1851 census⁴, the later stating it comprised 164 acres.

Hyaena Clapham was 17 years old when her father died. She was still a minor when she married Richmond Cousens in St Peter and St Paul Burton Pidsea on 17 April 1839¹. Her sisters Rachel and Mary Jane were the witnesses. Both signed with surname of Clapham. Richmond was a bachelor farmer from South Cave, which is approximately 25 miles west of Burton Pidsea. How they met, we don't know for certain, but we can speculate that it was in Hull. According to Pigot's Directory for 1834, Richmond Cousens was operating a carrier service between South Cave and Hull every Tuesday and Friday⁷. What we do know is that a handwritten copy of their marriage certificate made its way to Australia and is in the possession of her great great-grandson.



Richmond and Hyaena were living in North Cave in 1840¹ and Richmond was the publican of The White Horse in Westgate. Their eldest son Robert was born that year¹. The family continued to live at The White Horse until 1872 when they moved next door to The White Hart¹. From the 1851 census⁴, Richmond was also farming 20 acres and employing a labourer. The family grew over the years with the birth of twelve more children¹.

When Richmond died on 11 February 1874¹, aged 62, his widow, Hyaena, was granted probate over his estate⁸ and became the publican of The White Hart. With the help of some of her children, Hyaena continued as publican until her death on 16 June 1881 at the age of 61¹. Hyaena and Richmond were buried in All Saints North Cave¹. While Hyaena hasn't left the same legacy as Queen Victoria, there is tangible evidence of her existence. The White Hart Inn still trades in North Cave and the farm she grew up on in Burton Pidsea still exists. Her children benefited from the various improvements and advancements which came with the Victorian age, including a decent education. Four took the opportunity to travel further afield, making new lives for themselves and their families in the expanding British Empire. And thanks to Ancestry, she is certainly not forgotten. It has enabled great great-grandchildren to connect and meet up. Sadly, we do not have a photo of Hyaena. She may be gone, but she is not forgotten.



Children of Hyaena Clapham and Richmond Cousens –

1. Robert b. 20 January 1840 North Cave¹. He had moved to Burton Pidsea by 1861⁴ and was working at Prospect Hill farm for his uncle Isaac Clapham. On 15 October 1861 he married his cousin Hyaena Clapham Johnson (daughter of Rachel Clapham Johnson b. 1811)¹. They lived in Flora Cottage, Burton Pidsea. Six children were born¹ before Hyaena's early death in 1884¹ aged just 41 – Samuel Wilson b. 1861, Isaac Clapham b. 1863, Richmond Robert b. 1865, Arthur Edwin b. 1872, Joseph Alfred b. 1879 and Beatrice b. 1883. Robert died, aged 82, on 13 April 1922 in Burton Pidsea¹.

2. George b. 27 August 1841 North Cave¹. He was employed as a groom on the 1871 census and was living at The White Hart⁴. George was a bachelor and a farmer when he died on 5 May 1878 in North Cave¹.

3. Rachel Ann b. 15 February 1843 North Cave¹. She too was living with her Uncle Isaac Clapham in Burton Pidsea in 1861⁴. In 1868, Rachel gave birth to a daughter Annie⁹. Rachel emigrated to Christchurch, New Zealand in 1877¹⁰ leaving her daughter with her mother Hyaena in North Cave. Annie died in 1882 without seeing her mother again. Rachel's passage was paid by the government, as an assisted immigrant, and she gave her occupation as a cook. On 12 March 1880¹¹, Rachel married her employer, a herbalist known by the name of Thomas Bryne Rodger Gusscott. A son, Thomas Byrne Guscott, was born on 18 May 1880¹². The family of three moved to Auckland where Thomas senior died in 1882. Rachel died in Auckland on 5 November 1907¹².

4. William Richmond b. 2 September 1844 North Cave¹. In 1861⁴ he was an apprentice/assistant to a woollen and linen draper in Selby. William was buried in All Saints North Cave on 18 February 1863¹.

5. Hyaena b. 20 March 1846 North Cave¹. She married local farmer William Laverack in All saints North Cave on 6 August 1873¹. They had 4 children¹ – Margaret Jane Laverack b. 1880, Annie Richmond Cousens Laverack b. 1882, Frances Hyaena Laverack 1884-1885 and William Richmond Laverack b. 1886. Hyaena died aged 64 and was buried in All Saints North Cave on 24 April 1910¹.

6. Mary Jane b. 6 January 1848 in North Cave¹. She married William Little, a veterinary surgeon, in All Saints North Cave on 1 August 1867¹. William established a practice in Lincolnshire. Mary Jane died in December quarter 1906¹³. She and William had 11 children¹⁴ – Annie Little b. 1867, twins Margaret and Suzanna Little b. 1868 who died the same year, William Richmond Little b. 1870, Spencer Ewbank Little b. 1871, John Clapham Little b. 1872, Margaret Hyaena Little b. 1873, Thomas Batty Little b. 1875, Miriam Elizabeth Little b. 1876, Dennis Little b. 1879 and Alfred Cousens Little b. 1880.

7. Margaret b. 3 September 1849 was buried in All Saints North Cave on 28 February 1865 aged 15¹.

8. Henry Isaac b. 12 June 1851¹. He was a gardener and had moved to Somerset by 1871⁴. On 15 May 1877 he married Louisa Miles in Wincanton¹⁵. By 1891 they had moved to Staffordshire⁴. Louisa died on 12 August 1910 and Henry Isaac on 8 February 1923 in Tettenhall¹⁶. Both were buried in St Michael and All Angels churchyard¹⁶. They had 7 children^{13, 15}, 3 of whom died as

infants – Richmond Henry b. 1878, Grace Hyaena b. 1879, Mabel 1882-1885, Chandos 1884-1885, Harold b. 1886, Annie Louisa b. 1888 and Harry Isaac 1890-1891.

9. Clapham b. 16 January 1853 North Cave¹. He was an apprentice carpenter/joiner, living in Spaldington in 1871⁴. On 14 September 1876 he married Sarah Frudd in Silkstone¹. She was born in 1844, the daughter of a master barber/hairdresser¹⁵. They had 2 children before Sarah died in Barnsley in 1880¹⁸—

Harry Richmond b. 14 June 1877¹⁷ Barnsley who died 25 August 1963 in Ingham, Queensland¹⁹. He fought for 'Queen and Country' during the Boer War with the Queensland Imperial Bushmen¹⁹. Harry married Sophy Amelia Meyers on 11 December 1910 in Winton, Queensland¹⁹. They moved to the Ingham area where he was a sugar cane farmer. Five sons and a daughter were born¹⁹.

Lucy Annie b. 30 September 1878 Barnsley¹⁷ who died 24 August 1957 in Brisbane¹⁹. Lucy married Frederick Bertram Buchanan in Rockhampton, Queensland on 8 January 1900¹⁹. They initially lived near Dalby, then moved back to Toowoomba in 1931 where Lucy was a café proprietor for the next 20 years¹⁹. They had 5 sons and 5 daughters¹⁹.

On 14 January 1885, Clapham remarried in Cottingham¹. His wife, Esther Ann Leake b. May 1856¹, was the daughter of a well to do farmer in North Cliffe and had been educated at a private school in Selby⁴. A son Sydney Leake Cousens was born in South Cave on 14 June 1885¹⁷. He never married. Sydney was employed as a grocers' assistant in Toowoomba when he enlisted a Private in

the 26th Battalion Australian Imperial Force on 14 February 1916²⁰. He was KIA on 8 August 1918 during the advance on Marcelcave near Villers-Bretonneux²⁰.

Clapham, Esther and the 3 children (Harry, Lucy and Sydney) emigrated to Australia, arriving in Brisbane on 19 May 1886¹⁹. They moved inland, settling in Toowoomba where Clapham established himself in business as a carpenter/builder¹⁹. Clapham built the family home in Toowoomba circa 1891. Made of timber with a corrugated iron roof, it was nothing like the substantial White Hart Inn, or Esther's childhood home. The house was sold in 1929 after Clapham's death, along with his Ford Motor car^{19,21}. He was very community minded, building a hall on land adjacent to his home which was used for dances, meetings and as a polling station²¹. Clapham was a member of the local progress association and served as a local councillor for a number of years²¹.

Four more children were born in Toowoomba –
John b. 22 June 1887 who died 24 March 1889¹⁹.

Ivy Mary b. 17 September 1889¹⁷ who married Frederick Adolph Jentz in Toowoomba on 17 February 1920¹⁹. Fred was a farmer and they lived about 35 miles south west of Toowoomba. They had one daughter. Ivy died in Toowoomba on 6 August 1955²².

Stanley Clifford b. 15 May 1891¹⁷ who never married. He was one of the first five men from Millmerran to enlist for service in WWI²¹. He was a Private in the 15th Battalion Australian Imperial Force²⁰. Sergeant Stanley Cousens was KIA on 9 August 1916 during the advance on Mouquet Farm near Pozieres²⁰.

Frank Clapham b. 18 July 1893¹⁷, my husband's grandfather. He commenced employment with Queensland Railway on 22 November 1909 aged 16. Initially

a cleaner in the locomotive branch, he worked his way through the ranks to become a fireman in 1913 and by 1926 he was a driver¹⁹. Frank married Ethel May Coombs on 14 April 1921 in Roma¹⁹. They lived in Roma for the next 10 years and two sons were born. Circa 1931 the family moved to Ipswich where Frank continued his employment as a driver until his retirement circa 1959. Frank and Ethel were living in a retirement home near Brisbane when he died on 5 November 1985 aged 92.

Esther died in Toowoomba on 18 February 1926 and Clapham on 28 July 1929¹⁹. Both are buried in the Drayton and Toowoomba Cemetery²².

10. Mark b. 14 December 1854 North Cave¹. He moved to London prior to 1881⁴ where he was a solicitors' clerk. On 30 September 1885 he married Edith Fanny Braithwaite in St Barnabas, Islington²³. Mark died in 1894¹³. Fanny never remarried and she died in 1940¹³. They had no children.

11. Annie Eliza b. December 1856 North Cave¹. She married William Brown in All Saints Sculcoates on 21 April 1883¹⁵. They had 4 children¹⁵ – William Richmond 1885-1885, Olive Millicent b. 1890, Dorothy May b. 1893 and Barbara Helen b. 1894. All three daughters married and had children. Annie had moved to Bridlington by 1907²⁴ where she operated a boarding house until at least 1911⁴. She died in Bridlington on 15 January 1923²⁵.

12. Samuel b. 12 September 1858 North Cave¹. He was an agent for the NE Railway living in Thorngrafton, Northumberland in 1881⁴. Samuel married Catherine Ann Reed from Thorngrafton in 1882¹³. They emigrated to Melbourne, Australia circa 1883 where 4 children were born²⁶. Samuel was

employed as a conductor and then as a clerk for the Melbourne Tramway and Omnibus Company²⁷. Samuel died on 29 October 1897 aged just 39 and was buried in St Kilda Cemetery²¹. Catherine and her three children (the 4th Mary Hyaena had died as an infant) remained in Melbourne for almost 20 years²⁸. They moved to Sydney prior to 1916²⁹. Catherine died in Sydney on 27 May 1937 and was buried in Rookwood Cemetery²¹. Neither son, Reed Richmond b. 1886 or Henry Isaac b. 1890, had children. Daughter Lucy Ethel b. 1888 married and had 3 sons.

13. Alfred b. 13 October 1860 North Cave¹. He emigrated to Australia circa 1888 and married Mary Taylor in Randwick, Sydney in 1891³⁰. They were living in Broken Hill in 1901 and Alfred was employed by BHP²¹. Alfred died in Broken Hill on 25 July 1911 aged 50³¹. He was a silver miner. According to his death certificate, he had lived in Victoria for 5 years, Queensland for 6 years and New South Wales for 12 years. Mary died in Broken Hill in 1936 aged 74²¹. They had no children.

Karen Cousens

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