

## *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.*

### **Elizabeth and Ellen Murphy**

D.o.B: Place: Leeds for Elizabeth

Only other details from the admission' register

Elizabeth aged 12, admitted on 5 Apr 1867, no. 111, born Leeds.

Ellen aged 12 admitted on 3 Jul 1867 no. 123, (born: Not known)

Elizabeth and Ellen Murphy were both recorded as 12 years old when admitted three months apart to the Leeds Industrial School in 1867,<sup>1</sup> indicating they were born about 1855. Neither was recorded at the Girls' Ragged School at Windsor Street in Leeds on the 1871 census when they would have been 16 and likely released from schooling. Given the common surname and the lack of information on the school records for these two Murphys it is difficult to determine who they were; however a number of Elizabeth and Ellen Murphys were found in historical records who could be the girls admitted to the school:

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<sup>1</sup> 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](http://www.ancestry.co.uk)

## Possibilities for Elizabeth Murphy born 1854 in Leeds

- There were two Elizabeth Murphy babies registered in the Leeds district in 1854, but one of them died aged six in 1860 before the Murphy girls were admitted to the industrial school; this is likely to be the Elizabeth whose mother's maiden name was Hadden.<sup>2</sup> The General Registry Office (GRO) index shows she had two Murphy siblings born in Leeds also with mother's maiden name Hadden: Agnes and Francis Michael Murphy born in 1849 and 1857.<sup>3,4</sup> In 1861 Agnes and Francis lived in Grey Street Leeds with their parents Joseph (a blacksmith) and Catherine Murphy and siblings Ann, Lewis and Joseph who had all be born in Ireland.<sup>5</sup> Elizabeth was not listed on the 1861 census with her siblings; therefore perhaps this is the Elizabeth Murphy who died in Leeds in 1860 aged six.<sup>6</sup>

- An Elizabeth Murphey was registered in quarter 1 of 1854 after her birth on 27<sup>th</sup> December 1853 at 49 Off Street Leeds to Sarah Murphy, formerly Conrey, and John Murphy.<sup>7</sup> Her father was described as a furrier: this is a person who prepares or deals in furs. By 1851 there were a large number of Irish in and around Off Street, living in Watkinson's Yard, Dunn's Yard, Phillips Yard, Brick Street, Graham Court, Goulden Yard and Rising Sun Yard in the North of Leeds near Dukes Street; however her parents John and Sarah Murphy do not appear to be living there in 1851. They also cannot be found living there together in 1861, or together with

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<sup>2</sup> MURPHY, ELIZABETH, Mother's Maiden Name (MMN) HADDEN, GRO Reference: 1854 S Quarter in LEEDS Volume 09B Page 340

<sup>3</sup> MURPHY, AGNES, MMN HADDEN, GRO Reference: 1849 D Quarter in LEEDS Volume 23 Page 408

<sup>4</sup> MURPHY, FRANCIS MICHAEL, MMN HADDEN, GRO Reference: 1857 S Quarter LEEDS Volume 09B Page 316

<sup>5</sup> 1861 England Census: RG 9; Piece: 3386; Folio: 34; Page: 19

<sup>6</sup> MURPHY, ELIZABETH, died aged 6, GRO Reference: 1860 S Quarter in LEEDS Volume 09B Page 229

<sup>7</sup> MURPHY, ELIZABETH, MMN CONREY, GRO Reference: 1854 M Quarter in LEEDS Volume 09B Page 326; certificate obtained

Elizabeth elsewhere in Leeds. However it is possible that one or both of her parents may have died, separated, remarried or even been imprisoned.

### Possibilities for Ellen Murphy born about 1855, but not in Leeds

- In 1871 an Ellen Murphy aged 16 (born about 1855) was a pauper inmate at Leeds workhouse, recorded as a flax doffer who was born in Hull. Only one Ellen Murphy was birth registered in Hull around 1855. She was born on 17<sup>th</sup> September 1853 at 8 Middle Street Myton near Hull to Ann Murphy, formerly Conroy, and Michael Murphy a labourer.<sup>8</sup> However the three of them cannot be easily found together near Hull or Leeds. It is possible this Ellen might be a cousin of Elizabeth Murphy born at Off Street Leeds: Ellen's mother Ann Conroy may have been the sister of Sarah 'Conrey' who had also married a Murphy, perhaps a brother of Ann's husband?
- There was an Ellen Murphy born in Ireland in about 1854 who in 1861 lodged at Nelson Street Leeds with the Calligan family from Ireland, together with her mother Ellen Murphy (aged 50, a widow and a rag sorter) and sisters Kate (21, reeler in a fax mill) and Mary (17, a frame minder at the fax mill).<sup>9</sup> Young Ellen was a cloth sorter, working when seven years old. It is likely the Murphys knew John Calligan and his wife Ellen (likely nee Shields) in Ireland, and they may have been related. Unfortunately John's wife is widowed by 1871, and is found living with her three children at St Paul's Street Leeds, but the Murphys are not lodging with her, and cannot be found easily elsewhere.

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<sup>8</sup> MURPHY, ELLEN, MMN CONROY, GRO Reference: 1853 D Quarter in KINGSTON UPON HULL Volume 09D Page 163; certificate obtained

<sup>9</sup> 1861 England Census: RG 9; Piece: 3378; Folio: 30; Page: 18

## Were Elizabeth and Ellen sisters?

- Assuming Elizabeth and Ellen were sisters and that their ages were slightly out on the admission form, it is possible that they were the daughters of two or three times widowed Ann Murphy (probably nee Hunter). Elizabeth and Ellen Murphy were born after the death of Ann's second husband; however there is no official registration of them under these names (with an appropriate mother's surname) nor of Ann marrying a Murphy.

In 1861 at 62 York Street Leeds an Ellen Murphey (aged 6 born abt 1855) and Elizabeth Murphey (4 born about 1857) were living with their mother Ann Murphey (widow, 47 born about 1814) and sister Jane Murphy (9 born about 1852).<sup>10</sup> Also living with them was George Day (19), a cloth dresser, and his sister Harriet Day (16), a flax spinner, who were recorded as the son and daughter of Ann Murphey. The census stated they all were born in Leeds. There was no father living with them.

In 1851 an Hannah Holden (aged 30 or 36?) a widowed washerwoman, was living at 10 Stainburn square Leeds with her children Sarah Ann Day (aged 11 or 17?), George and Mary (both recorded as 8) and Harriet Day (4).<sup>11</sup> All were born in Leeds. This may have been Ann Hunter, baptised in Leeds in 1814, the daughter of William Hunter, a joiner.<sup>12</sup> Her first husband was Samuel Day; they married in 1838,<sup>13</sup> lived at Marsh lane in

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<sup>10</sup> 1861 England Census: RG 9; Piece: 3381; Folio: 37; Page: 52

<sup>11</sup> 1851 England Census: HO 107; Piece: 2320; Folio: 570; Page: 32

<sup>12</sup> West Yorkshire Archive Service; Wakefield, Yorkshire, England; Yorkshire Parish Records; New Reference Number: RDP68/3A/1

<sup>13</sup> West Yorkshire, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns 1813-1935: 31 Dec 1838, Leeds, certificate; GRO 1838 qt4 Leeds Vol23, P448

1841,<sup>14</sup> and within seven years had Sarah Ann, Mary,<sup>15,16</sup> George<sup>17</sup> and Harriet. Unfortunately her husband Samuel died aged 32 in 1849,<sup>18</sup> and with four children under 10 years old, Ann soon remarried in April 1850 to William Houlden/Holden. Dubiously, on this marriage certificate she was recorded as Hannah Day, aged 9 years younger than expected, but was recorded as the daughter of William Hunter, joiner and living on York Street.<sup>19</sup> (She may have had a younger sister called Hannah, but there is no record of her having married a Day). Within two months of their marriage, her second husband William Holden died, aged 28, having been in the Leeds House of Recovery,<sup>20</sup> which had been used to treat and isolate patients with infectious diseases.

After 1861 it becomes hard to trace Elizabeth and Ellen and their family members. Their half-sister Sarah Ann Day, daughter of Samuel Day, may have married Martin Wailing on 23rd April 1861 in York.<sup>21</sup> And half-brother George Day, son of Samuel Day, may have married Winifred Broderick on 3 Dec 1868 in Leeds,<sup>22</sup> and later lived at 135 York Street Leeds.<sup>23</sup> In about 1862 a Harriet Day was found guilty of larceny and sentenced to imprisonment with hard labour in the House of Correction at Leeds for 6 months.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> 1841 England Census: HO 107; Piece: 1347; Folio: 46; Page: 18

<sup>15</sup> West Yorkshire, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813-1910: 17 Jan 1842, Leeds

<sup>16</sup> DAY, MARY, MMN HUNTER GRO Reference: 1841 S Quarter in LEEDS Volume 23 Page 411

<sup>17</sup> DAY, GEORGE , MMN HUNTER, GRO Reference: 1843 M Quarter in LEEDS Volume 23 Page 385

<sup>18</sup> DAY, SAMUEL, died aged 32, GRO Reference: 1849 S Quarter in LEEDS Volume 23 Page 435 or 135?

<sup>19</sup> West Yorkshire, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1813-1935: 19 Apr 1850, Leeds, certificate; GRO 1850 qt2 Leeds Vol23, P440

<sup>20</sup> Leeds, England, Beckett Street Cemetery, 1845-1987

<sup>21</sup> Parish Registers for the Archdeaconry of Yorkshire/i. York, Yorkshire, England: Borthwick Institute for Archives. GRO 1861 qt2 York Vol9d, P66

<sup>22</sup> West Yorkshire Archive Service; Leeds, Yorkshire, England; Yorkshire Parish Records; RDP68/5/75: 3 Dec 1868, certificate; GRO 1868 qt4 Leeds Vol9d, P595

<sup>23</sup> 1871 England Census: RG 10; Piece: 4554; Folio: 85; Page: 9

<sup>24</sup> Yorkshire, England, Quarter Session Records, 1637-1914

Ann Murphy, a widow, died aged 66 in the Convent of Little sisters and had a non-conformist burial on 6 Nov 1880 at Leeds Beckett Street cemetery.<sup>25</sup> To this day, the Little Sisters of the Poor still care for the elderly in Leeds. This may Ann, nee Hunter, who married Samuel Day, then William Holden, and was the mother of Elizabeth and Ellen Murphy.

Elizabeth Jane Murphy born 1853 whose sister Ellen died before 1867

- In 1861 an Elizabeth (aged 7) and Ellen Murphy (aged 3) were living with parents James (38) and Harriet (35) Murphy at 14 East Water Lane Leeds with their siblings John (18?), Mary (10), Robert A (aged 1). Their father James was an iron plainer born in Ireland and Harriet their mother was born in Manchester.<sup>26</sup> Their brother John was a milk hand, also born in Manchester. Robert was born in Leeds, Mary in Huddersfield and their mother's maiden name was registered as Jackson, as also found on GRO for Elizabeth Jane and Ellen Murphy born in Leeds in 1853 and 1857.<sup>27,28</sup> James Murphy and Harriet Jackson had been married on 13<sup>th</sup> February 1848 at the Cathedral and Parish church in Manchester, Lancashire.<sup>29</sup> Both were full age and not previously married. James was a carder, living at Pitt Street and his father was Owen Murphy, a seaman. Harriet lived at Lever Street and her father Thomas Jackson was a milk seller.

Ellen died aged 5 and was buried on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1863 at Beckett Street Cemetery, Leeds.<sup>30</sup> Her abode was recorded as East Water Lane, which was

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<sup>25</sup> Leeds, England, Beckett Street Cemetery, 1845-1987; MURPHY, ANN died aged 66, GRO Reference: 1880 D Quarter in LEEDS Volume 09B Page 317

<sup>26</sup> 1861 England Census: RG 9; Piece: 3372; Folio: 107; Page: 12

<sup>27</sup> MURPHY, ELIZABETH JANE, MMN JACKSON, GRO Reference: 1853 S Quarter in LEEDS Vol 09B Page 319

<sup>28</sup> MURPHY, ELLEN, MMN JACKSON, GRO Reference: 1857 D Quarter in LEEDS Volume 09B Page 301

<sup>29</sup> Manchester, England, Marriages and Banns, 1754-1930 (Cathedral): 12 Feb 1848, Manchester, certificate; GRO 1848 qt1, Manchester, Vol 20 p433

<sup>30</sup> Leeds, England, Beckett Street Cemetery, 1845-1987: buried 24 May 1863, non-conformist

where the family lived in 1861, and her father was recorded as James, a labourer.

Elizabeth Jane Murphy died aged 15 or 16, and was buried on 8 Jun 1869 at Beckett Street Cemetery, Leeds. She had been living at Mill Street, and her father was recorded as James, a labourer.<sup>31</sup>

As expected, they were not on the 1871 census at Vine Street Leeds with parents James and Harriet Murphy who went on to have Harriet (1862), James (1866) and Agnes (1870). Here their older brother John and sister Mary were recorded as working in a Woollen Mill.

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Delving deeper into the records, for instance ordering potential death certificates and marriage certificates, may eliminate some of the above possibilities; however given the common surname and the lack of information on the school records for Elizabeth and Ellen Murphy who were admitted in 1867, we may never be able to find enough evidence to determine who the girls were.

*Jayne Hutchinson January and February 2023*

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<sup>31</sup> MURPHY, ELIZABETH JANE died aged 15, GRO Reference: 1869 J Quarter in LEEDS Volume 09B Page 254

Research notes, exploring other possibilities that seem unlikely:

- There was an illegitimate Elizabeth Murphy born in Leeds in 1858,<sup>32</sup> who died in the same quarter.<sup>33</sup> This was likely to be the daughter of Christiana Murphy who was mentioned in the Leeds Beckett Cemetery register of burial: Elizabeth Murphy buried 30th May 1858 aged 5 Weeks, daughter of Christiana Murphy [no father given], abode was Accommodation Road.<sup>34</sup>
- Given Ellen and Elizabeth were recorded as 12 years old when admitted in 1867, I investigated whether they were twins; however there are no Murphy girl twins (same or subsequent registered page number) listed on freebmd for vol 9b (Leeds area) born in the years around 1855. There were births recorded for Elizabeth and Ellen Murphy in Greenwich both under reference Vol 1d P559 for Qt1 1856 on freebmd. However this reference is not found on GRO for Elizabeth Murphy, furthermore Elizabeth had been recorded as born in Leeds on admittance to the school.
- When our Elizabeth was about 7 years old, an Elizabeth Murphy was sentenced for steeling, and this was reported in the Leeds Times on 25 October 1862: Sentences. Six Months' Imprisonment Catherine M'Dermot and Elizabeth Murphy, alias Jackson, s. a gold watch and dressing case, the p. of Charles Tilney. In the Leeds quarter sessions she and Catherine were described as single woman so this may not be the Elizabeth we are looking for.

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<sup>32</sup> MURPHY, ELIZABETH - , GRO Reference: 1858 J Quarter in LEEDS Volume 09B Page 344

<sup>33</sup> MURPHY, ELIZABETH died aged 0, GRO Reference: 1858 J Quarter in LEEDS Volume 09B Page 228

<sup>34</sup>Beckett Street Cemetery Records. Digitized registers. West Yorkshire Archive Service, Leeds, England.

- In the West Riding calendar of prisoners of 1886 an Elizabeth Murphy was recorded as a 28 year old unmarried servant, not guilty of larceny from the person; she had been accused of stealing a purse and £2 17s from Edward Narey at Otley on 11th September 1886.<sup>35</sup> This Elizabeth may be the Elizabeth Murphy who was a general servant and bar worker for John and Sarah Woodcock at the Great Northern Hotel, Laister Dyke, Bradford in 1881.<sup>36</sup> If this is the same person who was recorded as born in South Lincolnshire, then she is unlike to be the Elizabeth we are looking for who was born in Leeds.

Explored Findmypast newspapers further but these Ellen and Elizabeth Murphys mentioned below were probably not the ones we are looking for:

- Otley News and West Riding Advertiser 26 October 1888: At Horsham on Saturday, John and Elizabeth Murphy were charged with the theft of a bottle of Hollands and a bundle of cigars, at the Fox and Hounds Inn, and, further, with stealing from St Mary's church Horsham, two surplices, the property of the chorister and Mr Buttifant, the organist, and three alter candles. ...They afterwards went to the public houses and committed robbery there. They were committed for trial. Some communication plate found upon them has been identified as having been stolen from Northfleet church.
- York Herald 24 November 1876: If Ellen Murphy, formerly servant to Mrs Hargitt of York will apply at 48 Bedford Street, Liverpool, she will hear of something to her Advantage

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<sup>35</sup> West Yorkshire Archive Service; Wakefield, West Yorkshire, England; Calendar of Prisoners; Year Range: 1882 - 1887; Reference Number: C118/261/2

<sup>36</sup> 1881 England Census: RG 11; Piece: 4444; Folio: 119; Page: 16

- Wakefield Press 6 Dec 1884. Wakefield Police Intelligence, A special Tipplers court Ellen Murphy of Horbury road, Westgate Common , drunk on Monk Street, 2s 6d and 7s costs , or five days.
- Brighthouse and Rastrick Gazette 23 July 1892: At the Liverpool City Police court, on Saturday a women named Ellen Murphy was charged with attempting to commit suicide by drowning in the Leeds and Liverpool Canal on the previous evening. Mr Stewart, the stipendiary, remanded the woman for seven days.
- Huddersfield Chronicle 18 July 1892: Two brave Boys. At the Liverpool Police court, on Saturday, Ellen Murphy (32) was charged with attempting to commit suicide on the previous evening. The prisoner jumped into the Leeds and Liverpool Canal. A boy named Frank Clinker, aged 13, leaped in after her and attempted to rescue her. Another boy named David Heard, aged 14, also threw himself into the water, and the two boys were placed in a perilous position owing to the frantic struggles of the woman. She also attempted to push Clinker beneath the surface, and grasped Heard around the neck. The two lads kept gallantly to their task, and eventually the would-be suicide was brought to the bank and rescued. The magistrate, in remanding, the prisoner, commended the action of the boys, and presented each of them with 5s.