

Generation 2

William Fretwell Hoyle

William Fretwell Hoyle was the second of the of six known children born to, and the heir of, William Hoyle, Attorney and Gentleman of Hooton Levitt and Aughton Hall and his wife Mary (née Johnson of Retford). He was baptised at Maltby, Rotherham, on 6th February 1801. He qualified as a Solicitor in 1822 and was listed in Gells 1825 Directory of Sheffield as Hoyle, W.F. (solicitor) residing at Church Street, Rotherham and, was Steward of the Manor of Laughton-on-le-Morthen.¹

The next official record we have for William Fretwell Hoyle is the registration of his marriage, by licence, on 1st September 1830 to Hannah Clarke Walker in the parish of Rotherham. Hannah was a daughter of George Clarke Walker and Jane Grave, who were married in Doncaster on 29th May 1805. Hannah had been born on 19th February 1810 and it was at Doncaster on 21st March of that year that she had been christened. This marriage between William and Hannah, which produced one child – Fretwell William Hoyle, born on 6th June 1831 – was short lived. Hannah died, at the age of only 21, on 8th October 1831 (possibly from post-natal complications) and was buried at St Bartholomew's Church, Maltby on 12th October. Some years later, her son Fretwell William Hoyle commissioned a fine stained-glass window which was erected in Maltby Church, commemorating his mother, Hannah Clarke. The design was furnished by Fretwell Hoyle himself, and it was executed by Messrs. Wailes of Newcastle; its character is very rich, and the window forms a very striking ornament to the church.²

On 24th April 1834 William married again this time to Jane Grave Walker, who was in fact a sister to his first wife Hannah, and who had been born on 27th July 1811 and christened in Doncaster on 17th March 1813.³

White's 1837 Directory of Sheffield and Rotherham records that Hoyle, W. Fretwell (Attorney and Manor steward and also agent for the Atlas Fire & Life Office) was residing at Westgate, Rotherham. Four years later he is listed in the Henry & Thos. Rodgers Sheffield and Rotherham 1841 Directory as 'Hoyle, Wm, Fretwell (solicitor, agent to Atlas Ins office, commissioner for taking acknowledgements of deeds by married women, clerk to the Tinsley & Doncaster, Rotherham & Swinton, and Hesley Turnpike roads, steward of); residing at Westgate, Rotherham'.⁴

I had not come across a 'commissioner for taking acknowledgements of deeds by married women' before and was intrigued to know what 'acknowledgements' and what 'deeds' were involved. Property, the possession and disposal of which, is the key.

In contrast to the words of the marriage service when the groom was made to say 'with all my worldly goods I thee endow', the reality is that it was the other way round. Because, until the Married Women's Property Acts of the late Victorian period, whatever benefits the woman gained by the marital status, property rights was not one of them. Whereas a single woman (*femme seule*) had full discretion over any property she owned, when a woman married (*femme couverte*) all her legal rights, including any property she may have acquired as a single woman, were automatically subsumed by those of her husband. However, in an attempt to protect a married woman's property from overbearing husbands, the office of Commissioner was established. His role was, before a husband disposed of any of his wife's property, to take the wife aside, and well out of the hearing of her husband, and to establish that (a) she knew of her husband's intentions, and (b) that she freely and voluntarily consented, and for the woman to acknowledge this by signing a deed.

Interestingly, in his Will, William Fretwell Hoyle's father stipulated that his bequest to his daughter Judith, whose husband John Hall seems to have been in considerable debt to his father-in-law, was to be 'to and for her own absolute use and disposal' thus, presumably, preempting any need for a Commissioner's services.

I have not located William in the 1841 census but Jane (listed as wife of William Hoyle, Solicitor), and their growing family, is found at Westgate. At home were, were three boys – George 5, Robert 4, Henry 2 – and two girls – Jane 6, Hannah 1. Also included in the household were one male servant and four female servants. Fretwell Hoyle was not with his step-mother as he was a pupil at a boarding school for young boys at Conisbrough.⁵

William Hoyle Snr died on 8th December 1847 and, in drawing up his last Will and Testament on 2nd March of that year, he had appointed William Fretwell Hoyle and John Clarke of Hellaby Hall as joint executors. As heir, William Fretwell Hoyle was the major beneficiary and inherited a considerable portion of the Hoyle properties, securities and other assets, including the family pews in Maltby Church, as evidenced by the following extract.⁶

The Hoyle Connections

I give and devise my messuages, tenancies, lands and real estate called Hooton Levett, situate in the Parishes of Maltby and Aughton-en-le-Morthen in that said county, and also my pews in Maltby Church with the rights and appurtenances therein to belonging, unto my son William Fretwell Hoyle, his heirs and assignees for ever.

I also give, devise and bequeath unto my said son William Fretwell Hoyle, his heirs, administrators and assignees, one of my shares in the River Dun Navigation and my two shares numbered 167 and 168 in the Dearne and Dove Canal Navigation.

I also give and bequeath all my household furniture, linen, china, cattle, crops and farming utensils in and upon my premises at Hooton Levett unto my said son William Fretwell Hoyle, his executors and administrators.

Some time after John's birth the Hoyles moved to Kimberworth, and it was here at Ferham House that William, now back with his family, was found for the next census held on 30th March 1851. George, Henry, and Hannah were not at home when the census was taken as they were all boarding at various schools. The visitor Amelia Clipperton was a daughter of the principal of the school at which Hannah Hoyle was a pupil.⁷

William F Hoyle	Head	M	50	Solicitor	Maltby
Jane Grave Hoyle	Wife	M	37		Doncaster
Fretwell Wm Hoyle	Son	U	19	Solicitor's Articled Clerk	Rotherham
Jane W Hoyle Hoyle	Dau	U	16		Rotherham
Robert Parker Hoyle	Son	U	13	Scholar (at Home)	Rotherham
Kate Hoyle Hoyle	Dau		8	Scholar (at Home)	Rotherham
John Walker Hoyle	Son		7	Scholar (at Home)	Rotherham
Samuel S Hoyle	Son		5	Scholar (at Home)	Masbrough
Frank Edward Hoyle	Son		3	Scholar (at Home)	Masbrough
Emma Mary Hoyle Hoyle	Dau		1		Masbrough
Amelia S Clipperton	Vis	U	16	Scholar	London
Eliza Bellamy	Serv	U	28	Cook	Masbrough
Eliza Cox	Serv	U	18	Lady's Maid	Masbrough
Fanny Rayner	Serv	U	26	House Maid	Worksop
Mary Ashkam	Serv	U	19	Nurse Maid	Askern
Ann Finney *	Serv	U	15	Kitchen Maid	Maltby
Sarah Finney *	Serv		8	Scholar (Object of Charity)	Maltby
Thomas Lambert +	Serv	U	40	Object of Charity	Hooton Levett

* described as children of House Servant; + described as Deformed and Defective



Ferham House⁸

The Hoyles were still living at Ferham House for the 1861 census. The children making their debut for this census were Ferham (at home) and presumably named after the family home, and Charles, who was away at school.⁹

William Fretwell Hoyle	Head	M	60	Solicitor	Hooton Levett
Jane Grave Hoyle	Wife	M	48		Doncaster
Hannah Clark Hoyle Hoyle	Dau	U	21		Rotherham
Kate Hoyle Hoyle	Dau	U	19		Rotherham
Samuel Saunders Hoyle	Son		15	Scholar	Masbrough

The Hoyle Connections

Frank Edward Hoyle	Son		14	Scholar	Kimberworth
Emma Mary Hoyle	Dau		11	Scholar	Kimberworth
Ferham Arthur Hoyle	Son		8	Scholar	Kimberworth
Sarah Wilkinson	D. Serv	U	54	Cook	Woodall
Hannah Webster	Serv	U	39	Lady's Maid	Woodall
Mary Sellars	Serv	U	36	Lady's Maid	Leeds
Hannah Dimes	Serv	U	19	Housemaid	Ickles
Martha Bradley	Serv	U	24	Housemaid	Newhall
Alice Pelly	D. Serv	U	19	Kitchen Maid	Dalton

Also living on the Ferham estate was Robert Robinson, coachman, his wife Mary and adopted child Jane Osborne. This was a substantial household, but, apart from Charles, some other family members are also absent – Fretwell and Jane (who were now married) and George and John (who were not in England at the this time). Robert Parker Hoyle had died just after the previous census, and his death was registered at Rotherham for the Jul-Sep quarter of 1852. I wonder if he was a sickly youth, as he is the only one of the elder children not to be sent away to boarding school.¹⁰

On 15th June 1856 the partnership between William Fretwell Hoyle and Robert Marin the younger of Rotherham, Attornies, Solicitors and Conveyancers was dissolved and by 1857 William Fretwell Hoyle was part of the firm of W. G. Taylor, Solicitors at Rotherham, Kimberworth and Rawmarsh. His career continued to be charted in the trade directories, and Drakes 1862 Rotherham and District Directory lists him as 'solicitor, registrar of County Court, agent to Atlas Fire and Life Offices, steward to the Manor, clerk to Tinsley and Doncaster, Sheffield' – a very busy man! By 1864 he had put up his shingle as Hoyle and Son, Solicitors at Rotherham, Doncaster and Sheffield, the son being his oldest, and only child by his first wife, Fretwell William Hoyle who had qualified as a solicitor in 1856.¹¹

When the 1871 census was conducted the only Hoyle child at home is Charles who has obviously decided not to pursue the traditional family profession of the law. The family had suffered the loss of another son and brother, Samuel Saunders Hoyle, at the age of 22, on 28th February 1868, and his death had been registered at Rotherham for the Jan-Mar quarter. When the census collector called at Ferham House on 2nd April 1871 the Hoyle household consisted of more retainers than family members. Robert Reynolds, his wife Susan and two children were living on the estate. Robert was employed as Man Servant and Susan did the Hoyle's laundry. The gardens were looked after by Thomas Foy who, with his wife, was accommodated in the Ferham Lodge.¹²

William Fretwell Hoyle	Head	M	70	Solicitor	Hooton Levett
Jane Grave Hoyle	Wife	M	59		Doncaster
Charles F Hoyle	Son	U	19	Brewer's Pupil	Kimberworth
Sarah Wilkinson		U	64	Domestic Servant	Kimberworth
Jessie Gibbs		U	10?	Domestic Servant	Rotherham
Harriett Depledge		U	36	Domestic Servant	Masbrough
Sarah Hawten		W	46	Domestic Servant	Eydon, Northampton
George Miller		U	31	Groom	Calverton, Notts.

For the same year, Whites Sheffield and District Directory has an entry for Hoyle, William Fretwell, (esq, solicitor and joint registrar of County Court) residing at 30 Westgate; house: Ferham House Masbro', and Hooton Levitt Hall, Maltby.¹³

The final census appearance of William and Jane was that of 3rd April 1881. Their address is now given as Hooton Levitt, and with them on census night is one of their married sons, his wife and child.¹⁴

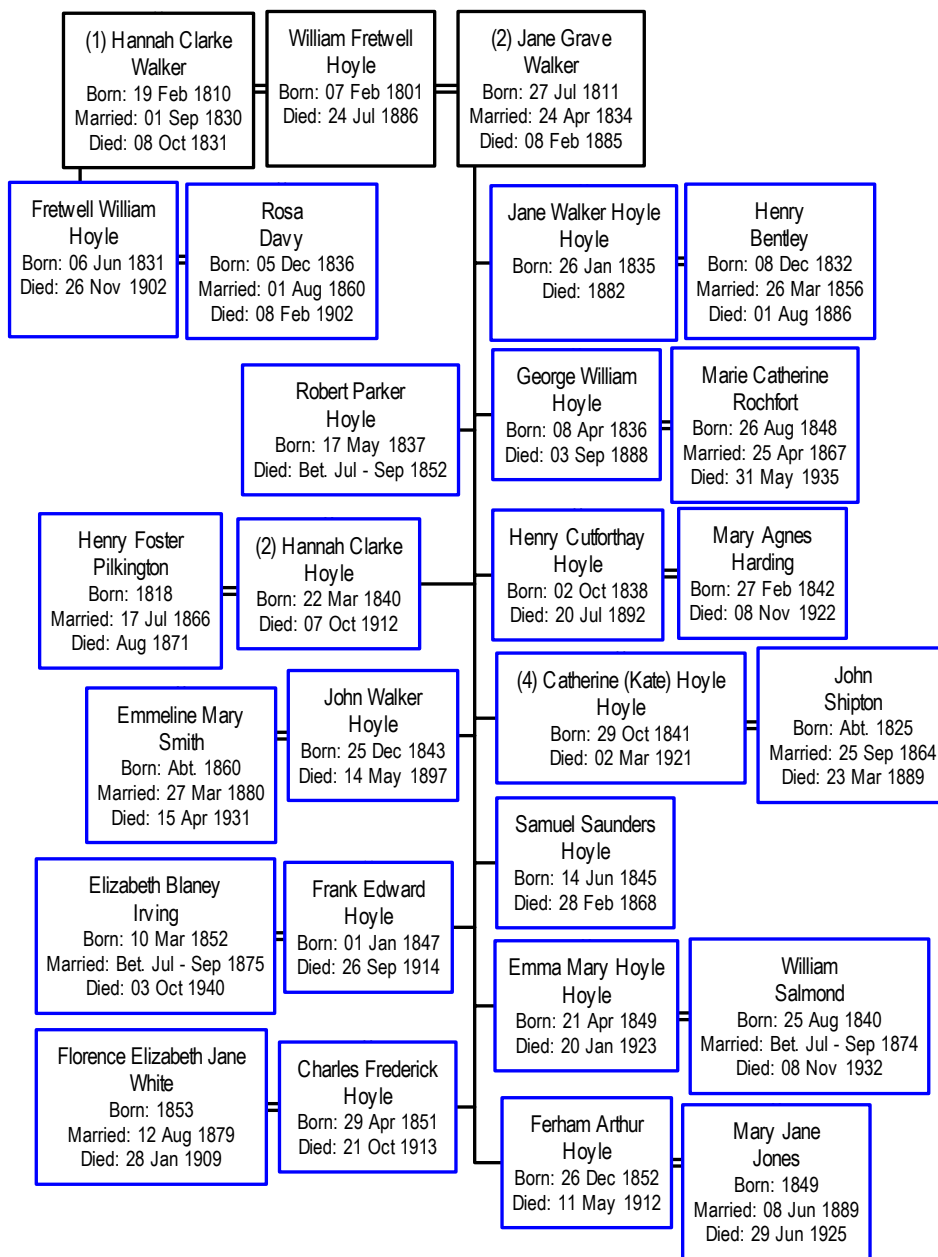
William Fretwell Hoyle	Head	M	80	Solicitor	Hooton
Jane Grave Hoyle	Wife	M	68		Doncaster
George William Hoyle	Son	M	45	Solicitor	Rotherham
Maria Catherine Hoyle	D-i-L	M	32		East India, Bengal
Maria Hoyle Hoyle	G Dau		4		Horsforth, Yorks
William Cook	Serv	U	46	Butler, Dom Servant	Whittington, Derbyshire
Rosamand Ward	Serv	U	31	Cook Dom Servant	Letwell, Yorks
Mary Poskett	Serv	U	16	Housemaid Dom Servant	Woodhouse
Fanny Greenwood	Serv	U	13	Kitchenmaid Dom Servant	Doncaster

Jane's death was registered at Rotherham in the Jan-Mar quarter of 1885. She had died on 8th February at Hooton Levitt Hall, with the informant being her son Henry Cutforthay Hoyle, who was at the time in England on furlough from India. William survived her by less than two years, and his death was registered, also at Rotherham, in the Jul-Sep quarter of 1886. He had died on 24th July and the informant in this case was his granddaughter, Hilda Pilkington. Jane and Henry were respectively 72 and 85 when they died.¹⁵

While I do not have a copy of Henry Fretwell Hoyle's will, I do have the National Probate Calendar extract. He left a relatively modest estate when compared to a number of the earlier and later Hoyle family and connections.¹⁶

HOYLE William Fretwell
Personal Estate £3,537 6s 11d

23 November. The Will of William Fretwell Hoyle late of Hooton Level Hall Maltby in the County of York Gentleman who died 24 July 1886 at Hooton Level Hall was proved at Wakefield by Charles Frederick Hoyle of the Grove Oulton in the said Country Brewer the Son Hannah Clark Hoyle Pilkington of Hooton Levett Hall Widow the Daughter and William Salmon of 45 Redcliffe gardens in the Country of Middlesex Esquire the Executors.



In the space of seventeen years Jane Hoyle produced twelve children who, together with the child from William's

first marriage, brought the total of the Hoyle brood to thirteen as shown on the chart above.

We know that the second son of William and Jane, Robert Parker Hoyle, died at the age of 15, and another son Samuel Saunders Hoyle had also died after having just reached his majority. Nevertheless, there would have been slim pickings from the estate if all the surviving children were to benefit. And the pickings may have been less than might have been expected. Indeed, as we will see in the section dealing with John Walker Hoyle, it seems that, as executor to his father's estate, Charles Frederick Hoyle intended to sell the Hooton Estate.

In fact it seems to me that the sons, and particularly those from William's second marriage, were regarded as financial liabilities and were treated rather shabbily (perhaps deservedly so?). On the other hand, the daughters were possibly regarded more as marriageable assets, and they more or less fulfilled their destiny.

All the surviving children from both of William Fretwell Hoyle's two marriages reached adulthood and married. The following accounts of these third generation Hoyles, and their progeny, are based principally on the census returns which, due to the idiosyncrasies of the recorders (and the narrators!) can be a 'hit and miss' exercise, the FreeBMD Indices and, much more reliably, information from other Hoyle researchers.



Notes

¹ Sheffield Indexers.

² IGI Family Group Record and Yorkshire, England Parish and Probate Records; additional information provided by Elizabeth Cargill, Suzanne Paget and Anthony G L Coghlan; www.rotherhamweb.co.uk/genealogy/hoyle.htm; Nora McLean, living in Canada provides some additional information about the Walkers, from whom she is a direct descendent – ‘Jane Grave Walker who married William Fretwell Hoyle was a daughter of George Clark Walker 1776-1852 and Jane Grave 1784-1831, and was descended from the only child of George Clark Walker’s younger brother Thomas Walker 1787-1818 and his wife Elizabeth Hawxby 1789-1821 – note how young they both were when they died, their son Edward Hawxby Walker was not yet 4 years old when his father died and not yet 7 years old when his mother died, so someone else must have raised him; how I wish I knew what happened, etc. George Clark Walker and Thomas Clark Walker were two of six children that I know of George Walker 1745-1798 and his wife Hannah Clark 1748-1793; this 1745 George Walker was a son of Richard Walker 1698-1765 and his wife Mary Freeman 1702-1763, who had ten children that I know of. It is Richard Walker’s genealogy that I have on old parchment pages that were given to me by my maternal grandmother in the 1980s. The pages start off saying “Shewing the Descendents of Richard Walker of Bessacre, parish of Cantley, near Doncaster”- email from Suzanne Paget 12 December 2010.

³ IGI Family Group Record and Yorkshire, England Parish and Probate Records; additional information provided by Elizabeth Cargill, Suzanne Paget and Anthony G L Coghlan.

⁴ Sheffield Indexers.

⁵ HO107/1332/12/27/p11.

⁶ Transcript of the Will of Fretwell Hoyle obtained from the National Archives.

⁷ HO107/2344/171/p14 but note that the Durham, Northumberland and Yorkshire Royal National Commercial Directory of 1855 (p423) has a Rotherham listing under Attorneys for Hoyle William Fretwell, Westgate, so he presumably maintained an office there; interestingly the entry above this is for Hoyle & Marsh, Westgate.

⁸ Illustration of Ferham House provided by Suzanne Paget, via Anne Baker; from the undeveloped state of the grounds it is likely that this picture was commissioned shortly after the house was built.

⁹ RG9/3507/54/pp14-15.

¹⁰ FreeBMD Death Index 1837-1915.

¹¹ www.rotherhamweb.co.uk/genealogy/hoyle.htm; Sheffield Indexers; Anthony G L Coghlan; another son, George William Hoyle, who had qualified in 1859 and then moved to India, on his return to England joined his father’s practice.

¹² Free BMD Death Index 1837-1915; RG10/4706/60/p25.

¹³ Sheffield Indexers.

¹⁴ RG11/4684/21/p36.

¹⁵ FreeBMD Death Index 1837-1983.

¹⁶ England & Wales National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations) 1861-1941.