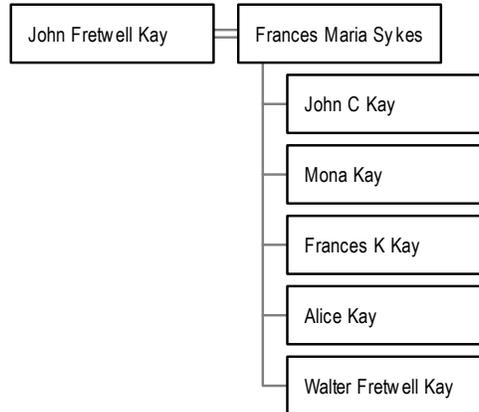


John Fretwell Kay



A birth, registered in the Jul-Sep quarter of 1843 heralds the arrival of John Fretwell Kay, the youngest child and fourth son of Edward and Mary Kay.ⁱ He would have been a young boy when his father died, and is found at home, now aged 7 at 5 Alfred Street, Leeds with his mother in 1851, and also in 1861 in Chapel Allerton when, as a young man of 17, he was contributing to the family income as a bookkeeper at a plumber's works.ⁱⁱ

By the time of the 1871 census, John was still living in Leeds, now at 3 Green Mount Street. In the intervening period he had married and he and his wife had a young family of 2 children. Also with the family is a young girl, employed as domestic help.ⁱⁱⁱ

John F Kay	27	Mechanical Draughtsman	Leeds
Frances M Kay	23		Harrogate
John C Kay	2		Leeds
Mona Kay	11 mths		Hunslet
Sarah Watson	12	Domestic Servant	Thorner, Yorkshire

Between 1861 and 1871 John had acquired the qualifications for his new occupation as a draughtsman.

A search of the marriage registrations shows that John's wife's maiden name had been Sykes. The registration records that the marriage between John Fretwell Kay and Frances Maria Sykes was registered in the 1868 Jan-Mar quarter in Islington.^{iv} Some 5 years his junior, she had been born around 1848 to James and Betsey Sykes, and is listed with them in the 1851 census, at Brightside, Sheffield.^v

James Sykes	25	Contractor Civil Engineer and Miller	Wentworth, Yorkshire
Betsey Sykes	28		Rukby, Yorkshire
Louisa Sykes	4		Harrogate
Frances M Sykes	3		Harrogate
Mary Lardner	29	General Servant	Ireland
Emelia Fox	14	Servant Nurse	Manchester

It would seem that the Sykes spent some time in Harrogate where their two daughters were born, before they moved to Sheffield.

James was still a young man when he died, as we find Betsey as a widow for the 1861 census. Two more children were born to the couple after the 1851 census, and from the age of the younger one, James would have died sometime between 1856 and 1861. Betsey is now the breadwinner and is running a lodging house as 68 Wellington Street Leeds.^{vi}

Betsey Sykes	35	Lodging House Keeper	Thorne, Yorkshire
Louisa Sykes	14		Harrogate
Kate C Sykes	9	Scholar	Sheffield
Walter A Sykes	6	Scholar	Sheffield

Frances Sykes is not at home and I have not been able to locate her in the 1861 census.

In 1881 the Kay family was living at 10 Shaftesbury Street, Barton upon Irwell, Lancashire, on the outer edge of Manchester, where their youngest child Walter was born in 1880. Frances was born while the family was still at Leeds. At some stage between 1873 and 1877 they probably spent some time in Durham, where Alice Kay had been born.^{vii}

John F Kay	37	Mechanical Draughtsman	Leeds
Frances M Kay	33	Wife	Harrogate
John C Kay	12	Scholar	Leeds
Mona Kay	10	Scholar	Leeds
Frances K Kay	8		Leeds
Alice Kay	4		Dunstan on Tyne, Durham
Walter F Kay	1		Eccles, Lancashire
Alice E De Lescluze (visitor)(M)	36		Harrogate
Adolph L De Lescluze (visitor)	4		Middlesex, London

I am not sure where the visitors fit into the scheme of things. Alice was the wife of a Belgian, and they were lodging with the Hurl family in Lymington, Hampshire in 1871.^{vii}

Finding this Kay family in the 1891 and 1901 census proved fruitless. We do know that at least one of the children did not survive to adulthood. Walter Fretwell Kay, whose birth was registered at Barton Upon Irwell in the last quarter of 1879, appears again in the records with his death being registered at Manchester in the Apr-Jun quarter of 1885. He was only 5 years old.^x The death certificate confirms that Walter, son of John Fretwell Kay, foreman mechanic, died on 26th May 1885 at the Royal Hospital, St John Street, Deansgate, from Exhaustion from general debility due to Natural Causes. An inquest was held on 29th May and the death registered on 3rd June.^x

However, I have been able to trace John F Kay and his wife, and two of their children – John C and Alice – who had emigrated to America, where they are recorded in the 6 June 1900 Federal Census, the information for which was far more comprehensive than the English records.^{xi}

According to the 1900 census, these family members were living at 12 Offord Street, Passaic City, Passaic County, New Jersey. Their birth months and years are given, together with their ages at the time of the census :

John F Kay	July 1843	56
Frances M Kay	March 1848	52
John C Kay	November 1868	31
Alic(s)e Kay	August 1876	22

John and Frances had been married 31 years and the two children are Single. They all arrived in America in 1888, and had been in the country for 12 years during which time John F Kay had become an American citizen. Both father and son were mechanical engineers. Furthermore, all the family could read, write and speak English!

Now, how had they got there and were the other daughters also in America? I have found the following listing for the SS Italy which left Liverpool and sailed via Queenstown Ireland, arriving at Pittsburg on 21st June 1888. The persons listed were all from Manchester and between them had 8 pieces of luggage. They were accommodated After Saloon.^{xii}

Mm. Fanny Kay	39	Wife
Mona Kay	18	Spinster
Kate Kay	15	Spinster
Alice Kay	4	Child

How do these details fit with the information we already have on this family?

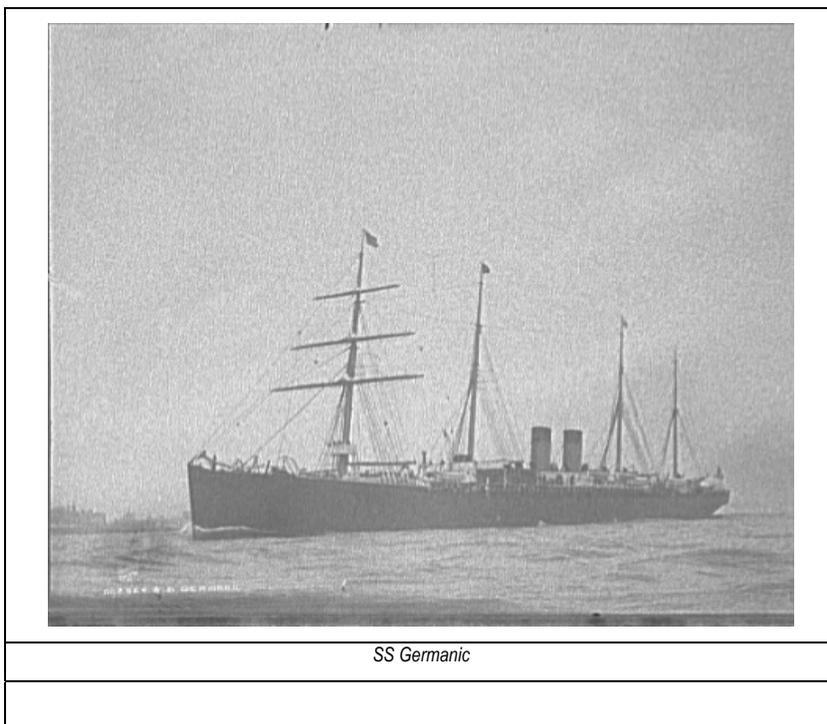
Fanny (an alternative name for Frances) Kay's birth year fits with that of France M. Kay. The birth of Mona Kay was registered in the Apr-Jun quarter of 1870, so this fits with the Mona on board the ship. The same applies to the Kate Kay if she is the girl whose birth was registered as Frances Kate Kay in the Oct-Dec quarter of 1872 in Hunslet. It is with Alice that a problem arises. We know from the 1900 census that she was in America. I think that the person who wrote up the passenger list made a mistake and the age of this passenger should have been 14, which would tie in with the birth registration of Alice Kay in the Jul-Sep quarter of 1876 at Gateshead, Durham^{xiii} and with the month of birth given for the 1900 census (August).

John C Kay is recorded in the passenger list of the SS Italy which left Liverpool in 1888 and arrived in Pittsburg, via Queenstown Ireland, on 26th October 1888.^{xiv}

The one member of the family for whom I can find no record in the passenger lists is John Fretwell Kay. This of course may be because the record of his journey has not been recorded. The only record I have been able to find for a John Kay, with a birth year of about 1844 was for a John Kay who arrived in America aboard the SS Gallia on 6th February 1884. Now if the arrival date of 1888 on the 1900 census for John F. Kay has been given incorrectly, it may be that John arrived in America in advance of his family. One fact that would disprove this is if he was present at the death of his son Walter Kay in 1885 – but the death certificate does not indicate if John was present, only that Walter

died in hospital.

Regardless of when John Kay first arrived in America, it seems that he and Frances took a trip back to England around 1893, as they are listed in the passenger list of the SS Germanic, which departed from Liverpool and arrived in New York on 6 May 1893. Their place of origin is given as American. John is listed as an Engineer, and also as American citizen.^{xv}



Ten years later the 1910 Federal Census records Frances as a widow, living with her still unmarried son John C. Kay. There is no mention of Alic(s)e who, of course by this time, may have married. Equally, her older sisters Mona and Kate, who were not with the family for the 1900 census, have not been found at this stage. Frances and John are still living in Passaic City, but now at 316 Bloomfield Avenue. John is still working as a draughtsman for what looks like the Automatic Scale Company.^{xvi}

This is the last verified reference to Frances and John C Kay. I do have on file an extract from the 1920 Federal Census for a John C Kay, but this is unlikely to be our John C. This John C Kay, whose approximate year of birth is given as 1867, also immigrated in 1888, but his occupation is given as Mason. He is a married man (wife Louisa) and is listed with 4 children. At a stretch, if this is our John C, his wife, who arrived in America in 1894, would have been a widow, whom he would have married after 1910 and it would be her children who are listed as sons and daughters.^{xvii}



ⁱ FreeBMD Birth Index 1837; hLeeds : HUNS/8/319.

ⁱⁱ HO107/2321/p3; RG9/3357/p15.

ⁱⁱⁱ RG10/4545/p19.

^{iv} FreeBMD Marriage Index.

^v HO107/2342/p30.

^{vi} RG9/3391/p37.

^{vii} RG11/3880/p.15.

^{viii} RG10/1173/p16.

^{ix} Free BMD Birth and Death Index.

^x Certified copy of Death Certificate DYB492569.

^{xi} Twelfth Census of the United States, Schedule No. 1 Population – extract on file.

^{xii} New York Passenger Lists, 1820-1957.

^{xiii} FreeBMD Birth Indexes.

^{xiv} New York Passenger Lists 1820-1957.

^{xv} Extract of Passenger List, SS Germanic – on file.

^{xvi} Thirteenth Census of the United States : 1910 - Population – extract on file.

^{xvii} Fourteenth Census of the United States : 1920 - Population – extract on file.