

Maria Dixon

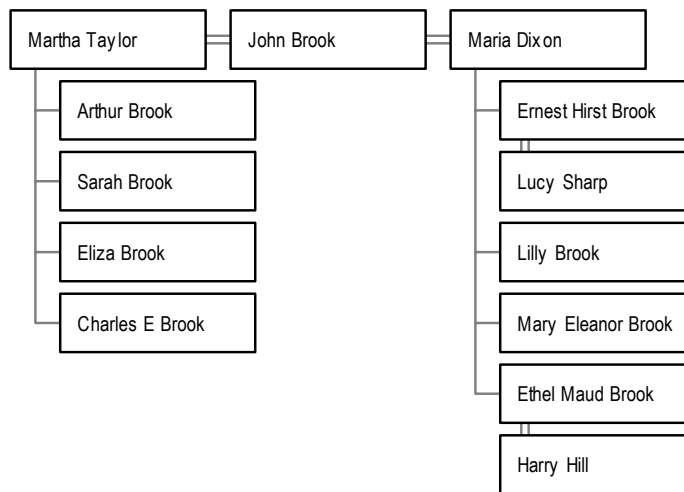
Maria, who was the only recorded daughter of John and Elizabeth, was born about 1838 in Leeds and she was with her parents for all the census returns from 1841 to 1871, after which she 'disappears'. For the 1871 census she was recorded as being a "Numberer of Pieces at Cloth Works". I am not quite sure what a "Numberer" did, but the following definition, from the website www.occupationalinfo.org may assist with clarification.

CODE: 689.587-010

TITLE(s): NUMBERER AND WIRER (textile) alternate titles: card-cutter helper

Numbers punched and laced Jacquard loom pattern cards according to prescribed sequence, using pencil or hand numbering device. Wires together series of cards in prescribed sequence to make pattern chain, using handtools.

By the time of the 1871 census Maria was the only child still at home. She was aged 33 and unmarried. She had been a witness of the marriage of her younger brother John to Eliza Illingworth in 1862 and she herself had married and was Mrs. Brook by September 1884 as it was by this name that she was recorded as the informant for her father's death. As M. Brook she performed the same function when her mother died in 1888. With this clue I checked the FreeBMD records and found a marriage between Maria Dixon and John Brook in the Oct-Dec quarter of 1871 at St. Peter's Church, Leeds. That this was our Maria Dixon was confirmed by the marriage certificate which states that she married John Brook on 18th November. It also confirms my supposition (see below) that John Brook was a widower when he married Maria. His profession was given as Manager, and his address at Hunslet. His father was George Brook, Weaver. Maria's address was Beeston Hill. The two witnesses were James and Emma Sutcliffe.#



It was not until I did a search on the surname Brooks that I found Maria and John Brook in the 1881 census. They were living at 6 Cobden Street, Kidderminster, Worcestershire.# Kidderminster's economic mainstay was, and continued to be until recently, carpet manufacturing and, given John's trade skills, it was probably this fact that encouraged the family to move there from Leeds, via Kendal, around 1880.

John Brook	48	Powerloom Mechanic	Huddersfield
Maria Brook	43	Home	Leeds
Charles E Brook	13	Scholar	Halifax
Ernest H Brook	8	Scholar	Leeds
Lilly Brook	5	Scholar	Leeds
Mary E Brook	3	Scholar	Leeds
Ethel M Brook	1		Kendal, Westmoreland

The list of the children affirms that when John married Maria he was a widower as son Charles E Brook would have been born around 1868, and this is backed up by a Halifax birth registration for a Charles E Brook for the Jul-Sep quarter of 1867.v Working back from the 1881 census, we find John Brook with wife Martha and their family in Halifax, living at 11 Hob Houses in 1871. Surely their son would have been too young to be correctly described as a scholar, and a reminder of the early age for putting children out to work is provided by the occupation of the two young daughters.v

John Brook	38	Carpet Loom Overlocker	Huddersfield
Martha Brook	35		Halifax

Sarah Brook	11	Worsted Spinner	Halifax
Eliza Brook	8	Worsted Spinner	Halifax
Charles E Brook	3	Scholar	Halifax

In fact John Brook and Martha Taylor, residents of Stainland, married on 6th July 1854 when they were both aged 30 at the parish church of Halifax. At the time John was listed as the son of Benjamin Brook and both father and son were weavers. Martha's father was also named Benjamin and he was a woollen manufacturer. Two of Martha's relatives were the recorded witnesses – Benjamin and Francis Maria Taylor.^{vii}

John and Martha had another son who was not at home for 1861, as shown by the 1851 census, when they were living at 9 Birks Hall Lane (Hob Houses).

John Brook	28	Plush Weaver	Huddersfield
Martha Brook	26	Cotton Weaver	Halifax
Arthur Brook	6	Scholar	
Sarah Brook	1		Halifax

Before proceeding, having established John's parentage from his marriage certificate, I have located him with his parents and a niece and nephew, showing that he was not an only child, for the 1851 census, at 76 Lane Side, Stainland with Old Lindley.

Benjamin Brook	61	Woollen Spinner	Leeds
Betty Brook	61		Stainland
John Brook	22	Cloth Presser	Stainland
William Abraham Brook (G-son)	6	Scholar	Stainland
Eliza Ann Brook (G-Dau)	8	Scholar	Stainland

I have not found any record to prove that Martha Brook died sometime between April and November 1871.^{viii} But on the assumption that she did, John would not have had much time to mourn because, as noted above, he was married again by the end of the year.

It is interesting to follow John's advancement in the textile industry from Plush Weaver in 1851 to Power Loom Mechanic in 1871.

We have seen that by the time John and Maria relocated to Kidderminster they had four children of their own. Maria would have been a relatively 'elderly' first-time mother in 1872 when Ernest was born, and she would have been about 42 when Ethel was born. We find her in 1891 with 3 of her four children back in Leeds, living at 2 Seymour Terrace, Hunslet.^{ix} Mary Eleanor was absent from the household.

Maria Brook (W)	53	Plush Weaver	Leeds
Ernest Hirst Brook	18	Wool Cloth Cutter	Hunslet
Lilly Brook	15	Tailoress	Hunslet
Ethel Maud Brook	11	Scholar	Kendal, Westmoreland

Husband John is not with the family because Maria was now a widow and in fact as suggested by a death registration Jan-Mar quarter of 1882, at Kidderminster, confirmed by the death certificate, Maria had been widowed for nearly ten years. Within a year of the 1881 census John Brook had succumbed to phthisis on 28th January 1882, aged 49. He died at home at 18 Cobden Street, Kidderminster in the presence of his son Charles Brook, who was the informant – a demanding role for a 14 year old boy.^x

Apart from having the sole responsibility for bringing up their four children, her elderly mother Elizabeth Dixon had moved in with the family after the death of John Dixon in 1884 and Maria had looked after her until her death in 1888.

Maria lived to see in the new century, and for the March 1901 census she only had two of her children still living at home at 8 Hullard Street, Hunslet. To assist with the finances it seems that she was a 'self employed' housekeeper.^x

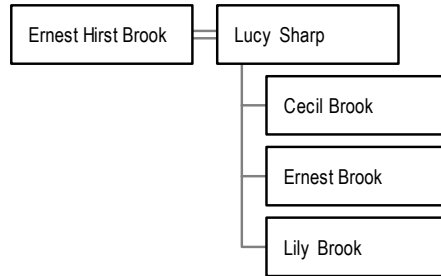
Maria Brook	63	Housekeeper on own account at home	Leeds	Domestic	-
Lilly Brook	25	Machinist Fancy Silk Goods	Leeds		
Ethel Maud Brook	21	Teacher Board School	Kendal, Westmoreland		

I have no further information on what happened to Maria after the 1901 census and where and when she died. However I have done some research on her children, with varying degrees of success. I thought I had identified a marriage for Lilly Brook, but the certificate is for a marriage between a Lilly Brook of Rothwell, daughter of Thomas Brook, farmer, deceased. The groom was Arthur Willie Sidebottom, also of Rothwell,

son of George Sidebottom, Miner. This is a rather tantalising record as there were Sidebottoms in the family of Lilly's cousin Ada Elizabeth Dixon's husband, Walter Ward.



Ernest Hirst Brook



His birth registered in the last quarter of 1871, Ernest Hirst Brook was the first child of Maria and John Brook. He had been born in Leeds, but by the time of the 1881 census he and his family had moved to Kidderminster, where they were living at They were living at 6 Cobden Street, Kidderminster, Worcestershire. Included with the household was Ernest's step brother Charles, a son of his father's first marriage to Martha Taylor.^{vi} By the time Ernest was ten his father had died and his mother and the rest of his siblings went back to Leeds where they were living for the 1891 census at 2 Seymour Terrace, Hunslet. By this time Ernest was contributing to the household finances as a Wool Cloth Cutter.^{vii} Nearly six years later Edward married Lucy Sharp. The wedding took place on 24th February 1897 at the Beeston Hill Parish Church, according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, after Banns. Ernest was listed as a 24 year old bachelor, a Warehouseman living at 8 Holland Street, Hunslet. Lucy, a spinster aged 21 was resident at 117 Lady Pit Lane, Hunslet. It is likely that she was expecting her first child at the time. It was noted that Ernest's father John Brook, Manager of Carpet Works, was deceased. Lucy's father was listed as John Sharp, Cooper. The two witnesses were one Noel Paton and Ernest's sister Lilly.^{viii}

For the census immediately preceding her marriage Lucy was with her family at 203 Hunslet Road. It is noticeably how popular the name Lil(l)y had become! Both her parents had been born in Lincolnshire and had moved to Leeds sometime before Lucy was born.^{ix}

John Sharp	56	General Dealership	Grantham, Lincolnshire
Lilly Sharp	42		Boston, Lincolnshire
Lucy Sharp	15		Leeds
John W Sharp	5		Hunslet

By the time of the 1901 census Ernest and Lucy had three children of their own and were living at what looks to be 53 Dunbar Street, Hunslet. The transcript is almost illegible, and the family was difficult to locate as their name was transcribed as Brookes. Ernest was no longer working in the woollen trade.^x

Ernest H Brook	26	Tram Car Conductor	Hunslet
Lucy Brook	25		Leeds
Cecil Brook	3		Hunslet
Ernest Sharp	1		Hunslet
Lily Brook	8 mos		Hunslet

The FreeBMD Birth Index records the registrations of the three Sharp children, all at the Hunslet District, as :

Cecil Brook(e)	Jul-Sep	1897	
Ernest Brook	Jul-Sep	1899	
Lily Brook	Jul-Sep	1900	(given that she was 8 months old in on 31 st March 1901 we can more accurately put her birth as July 1900).



Mary Eleanor Brook

The third of four children born to Maria and John Brook, and the second of three daughters, the birth of Mary Eleanor Brook was registered in Hunslet for the Apr-Jun quarter of 1878. At home in Cobden Street, Kidderminster, as a three year old scholar in 1881, Mary was away from her immediate family for the 1891 census. For this census night she was found in the household of her step-sister Eliza Willis (née Brook) at 24 Ebor Mount, Headingley.^{xii}

Hill Wilson Willis	63	Book Keeper	Everton, Liverpool
Eliza Willis	28		Halifax
Eliza Anderton Willis (Daug)	31		Kirkdale, Liverpool
Hill Brook Willis (Son)	3		Leeds
Mary Eleanor Brook (Wife's Half Sister)	13		Beeston Hill, Leeds

Well, this is a very interesting set of names. To start with the head of the family, Hill Wilson Willis. He was born about 1828 to Harrison and Elizabeth Willis, and for the 1841 census the Willis family was living at Everton, where Harrison was a Victualler.^{xvii} Judging by the age of his unmarried daughter Eliza, his marriage to wife Eliza was not his first. So a check on the FreeBMD Marriage Index was undertaken and proved that Hill married twice. His first wife was Eliza Cowell Anderton, and they were married in the Oct-Dec quarter of 1849. For the 1851 census Hill and his wife were staying with his brother-in-law at 173 Seacombe Street, Everton.^{xviii}

Thomas M. Anderton	21	Clerk in the Magistrates Office, Liverpool	Liverpool
Mary Jane Anderton	21	Wife	Liverpool
Thomas Anderton	1	At home	Liverpool
John William Anderton	2 mos		
Hill Wilson Willis (B-in-L)	23	Clerk to an Accountant	Liverpool
Eliza Cowell Willis (Sister)	27	Wife	Liverpool
Mary Collins	20	Servant	Ireland

We have already come across the name Anderton, because it was Mary Eleanor's cousin Alfred Verity Dixon who had married Grace Anderton in June 1889. It is most likely that Grace and Eliza Cowell Willis (née Anderton) were related. It is also interesting to note that, before her marriage, Grace Anderton was a servant in the household of one Henry Rudolph D'Anjin Willis, but the connection between the two Willis families is far more tenuous.

Hill and Eliza Willis were living at 57 Salop Street, Kirkdale, Everton, for the 1861 census with their daughter Eliza aged 1 and Hill's 25 year old brother Harrison. Hill was working as a bookkeeper to a paper hanger, and his brother was a sailor. Sometime between the 1861 and 1871 censuses the Willis family moved to Leeds and it was here on 2nd April 1871 that they were living at 1 Hill Top House, Headingley. Apart from Hill and Eliza and their daughter Eliza Anderton Willis, the household included 4 year old nephew William Carson and an older woman, Elisabeth Clayton aged 65 from Ireland who was described as mother-in-law – but I am not sure at this stage where she fits into the scheme of things. Ten years later the Willis family, together with the nephew, has moved a few streets away to 23 Ebor Mount, Headingley, and was listed as follows.^{xix}

Hill W Willis	53	Clerk (Leather Manufacturer)	Liverpool
Eliza C Willis	57		Liverpool
Eliza A Willis	21		Kirkdale, Lancashire
William Carson	14	Scholar	Bootle, Lancashire

Eliza Cowell Willis only lived for a further three years or so and her death at the age of 60 was recorded in the Leeds district for the Jul-Sep quarter of 1884. Within two years, Hill, who would have been about 55 years old, married Eliza Brook some 35 years his junior during the Apr-Jun quarter of 1886 at St Mathias Church, Burley.^{xx} It was in recognition of her maiden name that the second Eliza Willis named her son Hill Brook Willis.

Having been thoroughly sidetracked by the Willis family I will finish off with the other information I have found for them before returning to Mary Eleanor Brook.

For the 1901 census, Hill Wilson Willis was registered as an inmate at St. Augustine's Home at Toxteth Park, Liverpool.^{xxi} His status was recorded as Widower which indicates that his second wife, Eliza Willis, predeceased him. I have located a probable death registration for Eliza Willis for the Jul-Sep quarter of 1899 at Leeds. The record shows the estimated year of birth as 1864 and age at death as 35.

With his mother dead, and his father in a home, young Hill Willis was boarding with the Thompson family at 25 Hildyard Street in Clee, Lincolnshire, as a 14 year old earning his living as a fish porter. I am not sure what, if any, connection there might have been between the Willis and Thompson families. I do not know either if Hill ever saw his father again as Hill the elder died in 1908 aged 80 and his death was registered at Toxteth Park for the Jul-Sep quarter.^{xxii}

Eliza Anderton Willis, daughter of Hill by his first marriage, remained unmarried and in 1901 was a patient at the Home for Incurables, 11 Montpelier Parade, Harrogate. The census records her as a single woman of 40 who was suffering from hemiplegia (stroke). I have not found any record to indicate how long she survived.^{xxiii}

The last person who featured in census returns with the Willis family was the nephew, William Carson. He is located in the 1901 census as a married man, with his wife Elizabeth and a 9 month old daughter, working as a labourer and living at 5 Elm Tree Avenue, Sculcoates, Kingston upon Hull.^{xxiv}

Getting back to Mary, I think I have located her for the 1901 census boarding with a family at what looks like 58 Orley Road, Skipton.^{xxv}

John Tomkinson	57	School Attendant Officer and Journalist	Ilkley
Mary Tomkinson	40		Lepton, Yorkshire
Mary E Brook (Boarder)	23	Assistant in Boot Shop	Leeds
Amelia J Hill (Boarder)	22	Assistant School Worker	Canterbury, Kent

I checked for a possible marriage for Mary and came up with one that looked promising for the Apr-Jun quarter of 1913 at St Mathias Church, Burley. However the marriage certificate is for a Mary Ellen Brook, daughter of Samuel Dawson Brook, Oil Manufacturer to Joseph Winnie Gaunt 28, Moulder, who had the same name as his father. At the time of the marriage this Mary was 28, whereas Mary Eleanor Brook would have been in her mid-thirties.^{xxvi} While the middle name Dawson is no doubt coincidental, it is worth noting that Mary Eleanor's cousin Clara Dixon married a Frank Dawson. Another apparent coincidence is that the other names on the printout of the FreeBMD Marriage Index for Eliza Brook and Hill Wilson Willis in 1886 were Sam Gaunt and Hannah Robinson.



Ethel Maud Brook

Ethel Maud Brook was the fourth and last child of John and Maria Brook (née Dixon). Her birth was registered in the Apr-Jun quarter of 1880 at Kendal where at least her mother must have spend some time between the birth of Ethel's sister Mary at Leeds, and the family's move to Kidderminster where they were for the 1881 census, when Ethel is recorded at a one year old.^{xxvii} Before Ethel reached here second birthday her father had died and she, with her mother and siblings, moved back to Leeds where they were living, minus Mary Eleanor, at 2 Seymour Terrace, Hunslet by April 1891.^{xxviii}

Maria Brook (W)	53	Plush Weaver	Leeds
Ernest Hirst Brook	18	Wool Cloth Cutter	Hunslet
Lilly Brook	15	Tailoress	Hunslet
Ethel Maud Brook	11	Scholar	Kendal, Westmoreland

During the next ten years Ethel had completed her education and qualified as a teacher and, although she was working, she was still at home in 1901 at 8 Hullard Street, Hunslet.^{xxix}

Maria Brook	63	Housekeeper	Domestic
		on own account at home	Leeds
Lilly Brook	25	Machinist Fancy Silk Goods	Leeds
Ethel Maud Brook	21	Teacher Board School	Kendal, Westmoreland



Eighteen months later Ethel was a married woman. On 1st November 1902 she and Harry Hill were married by certificate at the Methodist New Connection Chapel on Dewsbury Road, Hunslet. On the day the bride and groom were respectively aged 23 and 25 and their addresses were 9 Bismark Place, Hunslet, and 32 Cambrian Road, Holbeck. As we know, Ethel's father was deceased, but Harry's father was listed as Walter Hill, Joiner Journeyman. Harry's occupation was Pawnbroker and Ethel's Pupil Teacher. Witnesses were Arthur Conquest and Norman Hill, Harry's brother.^{xxx}

I have not been able to locate Walter in the 1881 census, but he is at home with his family at 24 Anchor Street, Hunslet. Young Harry is already earning his keep.^{xxxi}

Walter Hill	33	Carpenter and Joiner	Leeds
Sarah A Hill	32		Leeds
Harry Hill	13	Office Boy	Leeds
Norman Hill	8		Leeds
Rowland Hill	6		Leeds
Mabel Hill	3		Leeds
Clifford Hill	2		Leeds

While Harry gave his address as Cambrian Road on the marriage certificate, for the 1901 census he was

living at home at 32 Yarm Place, Holbeck. The family had suffered the loss of youngest son Clifford, whose death was registered at Hunslet for the Apr-June quarter of 1889 when he was only four.^{xxxxi}

Walter Hill	43	Carpenter and Joiner	Leeds
Sarah Hill	42		Leeds
Harry Hill	23	Pawn Broker's Assistant	Leeds
Norman Hill	18	Pawnbroker's Assistant	Leeds
Rowland Hill	16	Pawnbroker's Assistant	Leeds
Mabel Hill	13	Dressmaker's Apprentice	Leeds

I have checked to see if Harry features in the 1908 Kelly's Directory, but there is no listing of a Harry Hill under Pawnbrokers, although the alphabetical listing has three entries for Harry Hill in other occupations.^{xxxxii} Perhaps the 1911 census will shed more light on this.



ⁱ RG10/4522/p16.

ⁱⁱ Leeds:CE46/79/400; FreeBMD Marriage Index; certified copy of Marriage Certificate MXD315740.

ⁱⁱⁱ RG11/2902/p33. Incidentally, living at 5 Cobden Street was the family of George Brooks, carpet weaver (if his name was also misspelt, there may be some relationship between the two Brook families).

^{iv} FreeBMD Birth Index.

^v RG10/4398/p31.

^{vi} Certified copy of Marriage Certificate MXD311145.

^{vii} I do have a record on file of the Halifax death registration of a Martha Brook for the Oct-Dec quarter of 1880, with estimated job as 1825, but I have not followed up on it as it is unlikely to be John Brook's first wife.

^{viii} RG12/3666/p14.

^{ix} FreeBMD Death Index; certified copy of Death Certificate DYB587603.

^x RG13/4190/p9.

^{xi} RG11/2902/p33.

^{xii} RG12/3666/p14.

^{xiii} Certified copy of Marriage Certificate MXD311207.

^{xiv} RG12/3659/p3.

^{xv} RG13/4194/p31.

^{xvi} FreeBMD Birth Index; RG11/2902/p33; RG12/3709/p31.

^{xvii} HO107/519/2/p10.

^{xviii} HO107/2189/p40.

^{xix} RG9/2717/p37; RG10/4572/pp25-26; RG114540/p15.

^{xx} FreeBMD Death Index; FreeBMD Marriage Index; Leeds:CE10/D/50.

^{xxi} RG13/3442/p4; FreeBMD Death Index.

^{xxii} RG13/3094/p44; FreeBMD Death Index.

^{xxiii} RG13/4053/p17.

^{xxiv} RG13/4490/p13.

^{xxv} RG13/4032/p18.

^{xxvi} Certified copy of Marriage Certificate MXD372571.

^{xxvii} RG11/2902/p33.

^{xxviii} RG12/3666/p14.

^{xxix} RG13/4190/p9.

^{xxx} Certified copy of Marriage Certificate MXD311200. The Methodist New Connection was founded at Leeds in 1797 by Alexander Kilham (1762-98); hence its members are also known as "Kilhamites". It was the first organised secession from the main body of English Methodism, and started its separate existence with 5000 members. Its foundation was occasioned by the conference's refusal to grant laymen the extensive rights in church government claimed for them by Kilham. The sect never acquired any considerable importance. The fact that they were married in a non-conformist chapel may have been the reason that the marriage was by certificate as opposed to by banns.

^{xxxi} RG12/3663/p6.

^{xxxii} RG13/4203/p31; FreeBMD Death Index.

^{xxxiii} Kelly's 1908 Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire, Vol 2, p594.