

## Marcus Gustavus Rochfort

The 1881 census was the first English record I found for the woman who was both Marie Hoyle (née Rochfort)'s mother and George Hoyle's mother-in law – Mary Rochfort. The second record I found for her was her death registration, at the age of 78, for the 1885 Oct-Dec quarter at Rotherham. The death certificate confirms that Mary Ann Rochfort died on 2<sup>nd</sup> October at 3 Lindum Terrace, Rotherham. She was described as the widow of Marcus Gustavas Rochfort, Principal of Kishnagur College, Bengal. The cause of death was given as cerebral softening and congestion of the lungs. The informant was her son-in-law George Hoyle. The third and last record was from the National Probate calendar. Her daughter Maria was the sole executrix of Mary Ann's estate – I wonder if the amount she left would have covered the administration fees? <sup>1</sup>

ROCHFORD Mary Ann  
Personal Estate £15

19 October. The Will of Mary Ann Rochfort formerly of Bradford but late of 3 Lindum-terrace Rotherham both in the County of York Widow who died 2 October 1885 at Lindum-terrace was proved at Wakefield by Maria Catharine Hoyle (Wife of George William Hoyle) of 3 Lindum-terrace the Daughter the sole Executrix.

The following is her story. There are conflicting records regarding her maiden name and date of marriage as recorded by (a) an India Office Family History listing and (b) an entry in the book 'Poor relations : the making of a Eurasian community in British India 1773-1833'. Mary Ann(e) Hodges (a) or Hodges (b) had been born in India about 1807 at Kidderpore. I have found an announcement from the East India Register for the birth on 21<sup>st</sup> November 1807 of a daughter to a Mrs. Wm. Hodges, but no further evidence that this record is that of Mary Ann Hodges, except that it tallies with her age when she died. According to (a) On 26<sup>th</sup> May 1825 at St John's Calcutta (a) and according to (b) in 1830, she married Marcus Gustavus Rochfort probably born around 1800 if, as suggested, he was a son of Captain Gustavus Rochfort who in 1806 was serving in His Majesty's 67<sup>th</sup> Regiment in Calcutta. Given the birth years of their children, I was inclined to favour an 1825 marriage when Mary Anne would have been about 18 years old and her husband about 25 and this is borne about by the following record.<sup>2</sup>

Marius Gustavus Rochfort of Kidderpour, bachelor and Mary Anne Hodges of the same place spinster were married at St John's Cathedral in Calcutta aforesaid by Licence this 26<sup>th</sup> day of May in the year 1825 by Thomas Thomason, Junior Presidency Chaplain. Witnesses : Wal Hovinden, T R Hodges.

There is yet another marriage reference, and for some reason the bridegroom's name is Thomas.<sup>3</sup>

At Calcutta on the 26<sup>th</sup> May, Thomas Gustavus Rochfort, Esq. Allipore, to Miss Mary Anne Hodges.

One of the witnesses of the marriage was a T R Hodges. It is possible that he was Theodore Robert Hodges, born on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1807 and baptised on 27<sup>th</sup> August 1811 at Pertaubghur, Assam. He was a son of Nathaniel Hodges (1783-1818), a captain in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Cavalry, and a native woman. It has been mooted that Theodore and Mary Ann were brother and sister, which would eliminate the theory of Mary's father being William Hodges, and would mean that their mother would have given birth to two children in the same year – not impossible but quite a feat. At this stage nothing further has been found to verify (or discount) any relationship between Theodore and Mary Ann.<sup>4</sup>

The other witness, Walter Hovinden, had only recently arrived in Bengal. In May 1823 a Bond and Covenant, with a security of £500 had been issued for him to work and reside in Bengal and another for a security of £1500 had been issued at the same time for his wife Everina, daughter Sophia and two others (Charles and Frances Dana) to accompany him. It is, perhaps, of note that Marcus and Mary Anne named their first daughter Eliza Everina.<sup>5</sup>

Marcus Gustavus Rochfort was a teacher by profession and early in his career he taught at the Upper Military Academy, and then was headmaster of the PAI, from 1829-1830. The Military College was probably the Upper Military Orphan Society the establishment of which was an initiative of Major General Kirkpatrick who, in August 1782, circulated proposals for the establishment of an Orphan Society.<sup>6</sup>

Not a single exception was to be found, so cheerfully and cordially did the officers respond to the appeal of the gallant Major General. In the month of March following, the Society was formed. The objects of the Society "are to provide funds, or resources, for the maintenance of the children of officers dying in indigent circumstances; to relieve officers from the burden of contributing to private subscriptions, on behalf of the orphans of individuals; and, in the hour of sickness and danger, to yield them the consolation that, in the event of their dying poor, a certain pension will be secured to their offspring."

The Military Orphan Society is divided into two schools—the Upper and Lower. The former contains the children of officers; the latter, of soldiers. These schools are again divided into two departments, for boys and girls respectively; and the education imparted is of a practical nature, designed to qualify the children for the situations they are likely to occupy in this land.

The Parental Academy (PAI) was established on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1823, but from its inception competed with the Calcutta Grammar School which was established in June of the same year. It opened with just sixteen scholars, but gradually prospered.

To this Institution must be cheerfully and unreservedly given the tribute of having raised the tone of Christian Education in this city, and directed attention to the importance of the study of the History of India, and of the Vernaculars. The Roman and Grecian classics, the importance of which we do not mean to underrate, were - very properly for the youth of this country, and the employments which they are likely to fill - reckoned of only secondary consideration, and held subordinate to the study of English Literature in all its branches, and the practical Sciences. Hence the success of the Institution. Many of its alumni fill lucrative and respectable employments, and have distinguished themselves in after-life. By adhering to these principles, it will continue to prove a blessing to the East Indian body.

In 1835 Marcus Rochfort was listed as a teacher at the Madrassa in Calcutta, and later he was, initially, headmaster, and later, Professor of Literature, at the Mahommed Mohsen School, Hooghly. According to the Calcutta Review :

... the Madrassa, or Muhammadan College, owes its origin to Mr. Hastings, who, in the year 1780, founded a building for it at his own expense and, at his recommendation, the Government assigned lands, of the estimated value of Rs. 29,000 per annum, for the benefit of the institution. Of all the Colleges this is the only one which has given little or no satisfaction. Government allotted 1,40,537 rupees for the building, which is handsome and classical: but the Mussulmans have shown no disposition to avail themselves of the advantages of an English education, so eagerly grasped at by their Hindu fellow subjects.

With reference to the funding of educational institutions in Bengal, which were under the control of the General Committee of Public Education, a report on Native Education in the September-December 1832 issue of The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register, noted that :<sup>7</sup>

Some of them have large funds arising from charitable bequests; the richest will be the Madressa or Mahommedan college, about to be established at Hooghly, to which is appropriated a legacy of Hajee Mohammed Mohsen, amounting, with interest since 1807, to 7,47,000 rupees, now in the hands of the government agents.

Marcus Rochfort's last teaching post was as principal of the Kishnaghur College in 1846. The College had been founded in 1845, when part of the grounds was purchased by the government and, for the remainder :<sup>8</sup>

The College is indebted to the munificence of the Maharajah of Nuddea and the Rani Surnomye of Cossimbazar.

The 'Poor Relations' entry for Marcus Rochfort concludes by noting that he was no longer listed as a Calcutta resident by 1847. The next, and final records I have located for him are a Lambeth death registration for the Jul-Sep quarter of 1856, and a note in the obituary column of The Gentleman's Magazine, which advised its readers of the passing

...at his residence in 31 New Park Road, Stockwell, on 19th August 1856, of Marcus Gustavus Rochfort, Esq, late principal of the Kishnaghur College, Bengal.

The death certificate records that he was 65 years of age (which would put his birth year at around 1791, not 1800 as suggested earlier) and the cause of death was given as erysipelas 10 days and gangrene 4 days – a very unpleasant end. The name of the informant was listed as Henry S Elton, but I think this should have read Henry N Elton who was Marcus's son-in-law. I had hoped that the death certificate would have indicated whether Mary Ann Rochfort had accompanied her husband to England, but this question seems to be answered when looking at the arrangements made for the settling of Marcus's affairs. Another set of records, purely speculative as I have not checked them out, are sourced from the departures listed in an 1856 Calcutta directory. Sailing on board the Blenheim, departing from Calcutta to London on 12<sup>th</sup> February 1856 were a Mr and Mrs Rochfort (plus two children) and a Miss Rochfort. Also on board were Dr. Elton and Mrs Elton plus two children. Could it be that Marcus and Mary Ann Rochfort and two of their younger children and an older daughter, and Henry and Eliza Elton (née Rochfort) and two of their children all travelled together to England in 1856? Again speculating, Dr and Mrs Elton may have been the passengers who sailed from Marseilles on the Bentinck and arrived in Calcutta on 6<sup>th</sup>

October 1857.<sup>9</sup>

I am grateful to Sylvia Murphy for a summarised account of the will of Marcus Gustavus set out as follows.<sup>10</sup>

Intestate's name : ROCHFORD, Marcus Gustavus, Principal (with will)  
 When granted : 1856 23 December  
 In what right : The Constituted Attorney of Mary Ann Rochfort, the widow & residuary legatee of the deceased  
 To whom granted : Robert Townsend Allan  
 Proctors : Lingham  
 Sureties : A F Lingham & Guschunder Bonnerjee  
 Value : Rs 24,000

The first four pages are a submission by Robert Townsend Allan setting out his authority and the facts as he knows them concerning Marcus Gustavus Rochfort and his appointment by the widow. In this statement we learn that Marcus Gustavus was a British Subject and Principal of Kishnaghur College. He died on 19<sup>th</sup> August 1856 in London, England. His will was made on 31<sup>st</sup> January 1853 and he had it with him in England at the time of his death, and it had been returned to India by his widow Mary Ann. No executor or executrix was named in the will. Widow Mary Ann was still residing in England but had not applied for the will to be proved there because Marcus did not own any property in England. By authority, dated 2 September 1856, the widow appointed Robert Townsend Allan as her attorney and agent to act as Executor to the will of her late husband. The estimated estate and effects of the late Marcus Rochfort will not exceed (East India) Company's Rupees 12, 000 (but note that in the preamble the value of the estate was put at Rs 24,000). The last 2 pages complete Robert Allan's statement under oath and then provide a copy of Marcus Rochfort's will, the key features of which were that he held a life insurance policy with the Indian Laudable and Mutual Assurance Society in the sum of Rs 10,000, with profits now worth Rs 11,000 (note this was in 1853). The proceeds of that policy were left to his wife in trust for herself and children -

John Steel Rochfort  
 Marcus Burtle (Burgh) Rochfort  
 Eliza, now Mrs Elton  
 Delia, now Mrs Smith  
 Mary Ann Rochfort  
 Margaret Rochfort  
 Geraldine Rochfort  
 Maria Rochfort

I had found nothing in the England 1861 or 1871 census records to confirm her Mary Ann Rochfort's ongoing presence in England and wondered whether she had returned to India soon after his death to live with relatives still residing there, but I was not able to find a shipping record to substantiate this. I am grateful to Ann O'Grady for pointing me in the direction of the Isle of Man census return for 1861, where Mary Ann Rochfort was residing (presumably in rented accommodation) in Coburg Road, in the parish of Lezayre.<sup>11</sup>

Mary Ann Rochfort	Head	W	51	Fund Holder	???, India
Delia Smith	Daur	W	31	Fundholder	Calcutta
Geraldine Rochfort	Daur	U	16	Fundholder	Chinshura
Maria Cath Rochfort	Daur	U	12	Fundholder	Kishnaghur, India
Janet Thost [sic] Smith	Gd Daur	U	14		Goruckpore, Hooghly,
Mary Ann Smith	Gd Daur		13		Hooghly River
Ann Eliza Smith	Gd Daur		11		Kishnaghur
Ann Kelley	Serv	U	21	Housemaid	Isle of Man
Mary Ann Mylan	Serv	U	25	Cook	Isle of Man

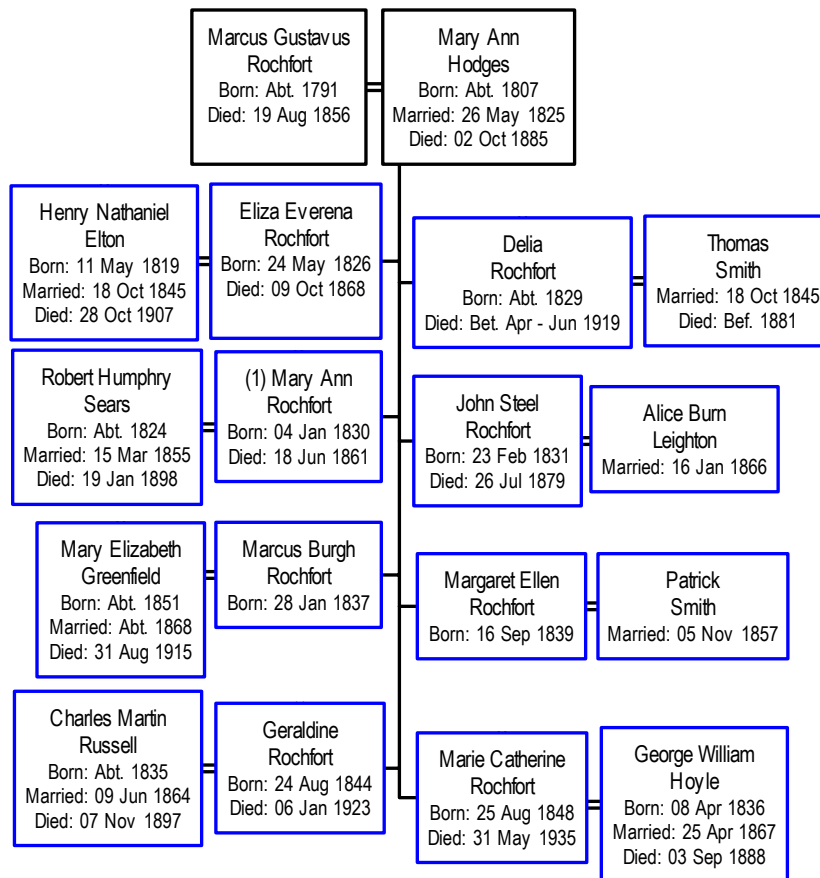
So here we have two widows, both fundholders, and both with family responsibilities. Apart from providing support to her widowed daughter Delia, Mary Ann has her two youngest children with her. The three other girls are the children born to Delia and her husband Thomas Smith. The name of the eldest was actually Janet Stuart Smith.

I still have not found any UK census record for Mary Ann Rochfort for 1871, and perhaps she did return to India for a time, perhaps taking her two young daughters back with her perhaps also attending their weddings – Geraldine in 1864 and Marie Catherine in 1867. But, again, I have nothing to support this theory. We do know, as noted

above, that she was in England for the 1881 census, living at 3 Lindum Terrace, on the Doncaster Road, Rotherham. Again she was looking after grandchildren.<sup>12</sup>

Mary Ann Rochfort	Head	W	73	Annuitant	East Indies
George W Hoyle	Gd Son		10		Goruckpore, Hooghly,
Bentley C Hoyle	Gd Son		7		Hooghly River
Jeannie Hoyle	Gd Daur		6		Kishnaghur
Alice White	Serv	U	23	Domestic	Cuckney, Notts

Referring back to the children listed in Marcus Rochfort's will documentation we see that he and Mary Ann had eight children. All of the Rochfort children married and produced a bevy of Rochfort grandchildren. The story of the youngest daughter, Marie Catherine Rochfort, has already been recounted (refer to the section on George William Hoyle). So what follows is an attempt to follow up on Marie's siblings.



## Notes

<sup>1</sup> FreeBMD Death Index 1837-1915; certified copy of Death Certificate DYC440255; England & Wales National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administration) 1861-1941.

<sup>2</sup> Families in British India Birth Announcements taken from East India Register Source Year 1809; India Office Family History Search Ref N/1/13/f.537; Extract from 'Poor relations : the making of a Eurasian community in British India 1773-1833' by Christopher J Hawes; N/1/13 p.537 – record provided by Sylvia Murphy.

<sup>3</sup> The Quarterly Oriental Magazine, Review and Register, Vol III Nos V and VI January and June, 1825.

<sup>4</sup> India Office Family History Search N/1/8 f.402; FIBIS List of the Officers of the Bengal Army 1754-1834; notes from Anne O'Grady referring to research carried out on her behalf by Sylvia Murphy.

<sup>5</sup> FIBIS Miscellaneous Bonds 1814-1865; these bonds were issued by the Company after an Act of Parliament in 1813, lifting restrictions on travel to India of Missionaries, Tradesmen – and Women! (Fibiwiki).

<sup>6</sup> The information on the educational institutions was sourced from The Calcutta Review Vol XIII January-June 1850.

<sup>7</sup> 'Poor relations : the making of a Eurasian community in British India 1773-1833'; The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British and Foreign India, China and Australasia, Vol IX - New Series, September-December 1832.

<sup>8</sup> Google Books.

<sup>9</sup> FreeBMD Death Index 1837-1915; The Gentleman's Magazine, Volume 58, p522, Google Books; certified copy of Death Certificate DYC910310; FIBIS Departures from The New Calcutta Directory 1856, Arrivals from The New Calcutta Directory 1857.

<sup>10</sup> Email from Sylvia Murphy, 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2010.

<sup>11</sup> RG9/4422/83/p15.

<sup>12</sup> RG11/4671/144/p38.