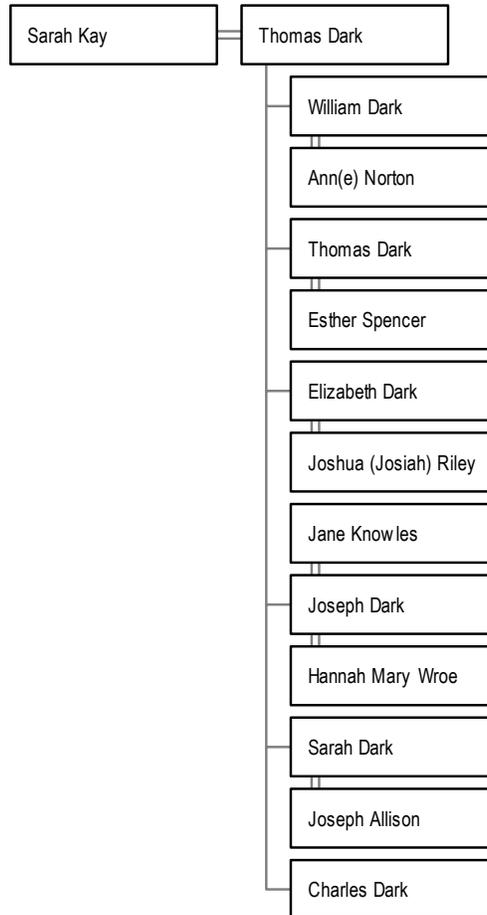


Sarah Kay



As far as is known, Sarah was the third child of John and Mary Kay. She and her brother John and sisters Ann and Elizabeth were grandchildren of Mary and Richard Kay and their grand uncle was Mary's brother John Fretwell. At this stage very little is known about John and Mary Kay. However it was through the will of John Fretwell, drawn up on 2nd December 1848, that a little more was discovered about Sarah and her family, and it was the brief reference to Sarah that gave the impetus to try and find out more.

To my great niece Sarah Dark daughter of my said late nephew John Kay deceased £40 and to each of her children £10.^z

So, by 1848 Sarah Kay had married – but who – and how many children were there in 1848 to benefit from their great-grand uncle's bequests? The 1841 census provides the groundwork for further research. The Dark family is found living at Sherbourne Place, Norwich. How long they had been there is not known, but from the birth dates given for the children who were all born in Norfolk, Sarah and Thomas would have been there from at least 1828.[#]

Thomas Dark	36
Sarah Dark	30
William Dark	13
Thomas Dark	11
Elizabeth Dark	8
Joseph Dark	3
Sarah Dark	1 mo

Thomas was a machine maker. Under the 'Where Born/Whether born in same County' column, the transcript has 'Y' (Norfolk) for the children but not the parents. The census information also puts the parents' years of birth as, respectively, about 1805 and 1811. Ten years later the family has relocated to Hunslet, and during that period Thomas Dark died^v, as on the 1851 census Sarah is now a widow. She is living at the Hicks Buildings, Lady Pit Lane.^v

Sarah Darke* 40

Yorkshire

William Darke	22	Engine Maker	Norwich
Thomas Darke	20	Engine Maker	Norwich
Joseph Darke	13		Norwich
Sarah Darke	9		Norwich
Charles Darke	7		Norwich

* Dark has become Darke!

Apart from finding out that Sarah was a widow by 1851, we also learn that she was born at Woodhouse, Yorkshire. A son has also been added to the family – Charles, born about 1844, which narrows down the estimated year of Thomas the father to between 1844 and 1851. Daughter Elizabeth is not at home, and has been located working as a domestic servant to Elizabeth Hick, a widow living at 1 Balloon Place, Brewery Field, Holbeck.^v In fact Thomas Dark died on 9th October 1845, interestingly at 2 Balloon Street, which suggests that the family moved there when they relocated from Norwich sometime after Charles's birth in 1843. His death at the relatively young age of 42 would have been painful and no doubt a shock to his family. A coroner's inquest, conducted by George Frederick Harrison, Deputy Coroner of 17 Park Place Leeds, made the finding that the cause of death was Poison Verdict. Destroyed himself in a fit of Temporary Insanity. The death was registered on 1st January 1846.^{vi} At the time suicide was considered a crime and therefore "a fit of temporary insanity" was the term generally applied in such deaths. The vagaries of transcription presented a challenge for finding any reference to Sarah Dark in the 1861 census. However, she and those of her children still at home were finally found 'masquerading' under the name Dack! And there is a minor discrepancy in the stated age. But this is quite clearly our Sarah, now living at 1 Darnley Street, Hunslet.^{vii}

Sarah Dack	52		Leeds
Joseph Dack	23	Iron Turner	Norwich
Sarah Dack	19	Dress Maker	Norwich
Charles Dack	17	Stone Carver	Norwich
Samuel Nuns	29	Wire Worker	Adwalton, Yorkshire

Only the three youngest children, all now earning a living, are at home. Elizabeth Dark (Dack) was still working as a domestic servant, but now in the household of one Bower Grosvenor.^x William (now married) and Thomas were living at Portsea.^x The 1871 census presents yet a further variation on the spelling of Sarah's surname – Donk. It is under this name that she is found at 30 Lady Pit Lane, Hunslet and living with her are her daughter Elizabeth, son-in-law Josiah Riley and their 2 children.^{xi} Her other daughter Sarah and son Joseph had by this time both married and were living elsewhere.^{xii}

Sarah Donk		58		Leeds
Josiah Riley		33	Iron Turner	Leeds
Elizabeth Riley		38		Norfolk
Laura Riley	(Gd) Daug	6		Leeds
Charles Riley	(Gd) Son	1 mo		Leeds

The tables have turned for the next census as in 1881 Sarah is now a boarder in the Riley household at 41 Bismark Street, Hunslet. Also boarding is her son Charles.^{xiii}

Sarah Darke	Boarder	69		Leeds
Charles Darke	Boarder	37	Sculptor	Norwich

Sarah must have been a doughty woman, as she is still found in the 1891 census, this time back as the Head of the household at 37 Elcho Street, Hunslet. With her are unmarried son Charles and a granddaughter.^{xiv}

Sarah Dark		79		Leeds
Charles Dark		47	Stone Carver	Norwich
Sarah J Allinson	Gd Daur	23		Grimsby, Lincolnshire

However, Sarah was not around for the next census, having died on 30th December 1891 at the age of 80 at Hunslet.^{xv} The certified copy of the death certificate records that Sarah, the widow of Thomas Dark, Fettle in a Woollen Mill, died at home, at 37 Elcho Street. With her when she died was her granddaughter L. Mallinson. The death from Senectus (senility) was certified by Thomas Smith.^{xvi}



ⁱ We do know from John Fretwell's will, that John Kay had died before 2nd December 1848.

ⁱⁱ Will of John Fretwell held in family papers.

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- iii HO107/788/7/p9.
 - iv Note : John Fretwell's will did not refer to Sarah Dark as a widow, nor did it make any reference to a husband.
 - v HO107/2318/p23.
 - vi HO107/2317/p10.
 - vii Certified copy of death certificate DYB 190522.
 - viii RG9/3367/16.
 - ix RG9/3368/p6.
 - x RG9/637/p15; RG9/637/p7.
 - xi RG10/4515/p22.
 - xii RG10/3414 p 32; RG10/4639/p17.
 - xiii RG11/4492/p35.
 - xiv RG12/3664 p28.
 - xv FreeBMD Death Index.
 - xvi Certified copy of Death Certificate DYB 189542.