

Albert and Hannah Woolgar, escaping to a good life up north

Albert Henry Woolgar, born in 1851, was the youngest of many children of **William Woolgar**, an agricultural labourer, and **Ann Lickfield** in Sussex. William died when Albert was eight and his mother remarried a year later. Albert, being the youngest, seemed to be the only child to live with his mother and new step-father **John Pritchard** but didn't stay too long. By 1873 Albert had arrived in Settle, probably for work on the railways. He met and married **Hannah Leeder** who had come to Settle from Norfolk to find work in the mills.

Hannah, born in 1853, had an even more disconcerting childhood. Her mother was **Mary Ann Bexfield** who had married **George Leeder**, a labourer and fishmonger. At the time of the 1861 census, Hannah, aged six, and three elder siblings were living with their maternal grandparents, **Richard and Ann Bexfield**. Where were their parents?

Mother Mary Ann Bexfield was living with **Rudd Howling**, a chimney sweep, who was her recently widowed brother-in-law. Rudd had married Mary Ann's sister **Hannah Maria Bexfield** who had died after the birth of their son **Jonathan** just a month before. By the time of the next census Mary Ann was living with Rudd and several more children of their own. In census returns they described themselves as head of house and housekeeper until Rudd died in 1885. Rudd had numerous court appearances, fines and prison visits for 'petty crime'; being drunk and riotous, theft, assault and cruelty to horses. A lovely man. And Mary Ann was still married to George Leeder wasn't she?



What had happened to George Leeder, Hannah's father? Records for him stop completely, however there may be a clue linked to a criminal conviction in 1841 which, if it's the right George Leeder, would have been before he married Mary Ann in 1844. 18 year old George had been imprisoned for a year for attempting an 'unnatural crime'. In this case, the unnatural misdemeanour was bestiality, although 'sodomy with another man' was also included in the definition [1]. Victorian society was so shocked by offences such as this that they were only reported with the minimum of detail in the papers, even though many murders were reported in graphic detail. The 'Offences Against the Person Act of 1861' gave far harsher sentences than George received, including life sentences and transportation, so George was lucky that he was caught before his attempt was successful. With all of this, perhaps Hannah and her siblings were safest with their grandparents. George had probably changed his name and moved away, or died.

BEASTIALITY.—George Leeder (18), convicted of attempting an unnatural crime, at Great Eversden.—One year's imprisonment and hard labour. The Court broke up at a quarter before eleven at night.



Mary Ann had several siblings, most of whom had seemingly 'normal' working class jobs with families. However, sister **Annie Elizabeth** struck lucky after she went to London to work in domestic service. She caught the eye of **Edward Strickland Mannock Power**, the son of a barrister and a fleet paymaster in the Royal Navy. Fleet paymasters were essentially the top logistics officer and ranked on a par with commanders. Unsurprisingly Edward and Mary Ann have a very impressive grave in



Morden (Battersea) cemetery. They had two spinster daughters. How family fortunes can differ!

It's no wonder Hannah took the opportunity to move to Settle to work in the mills. Albert and Hannah had six daughters and four sons. Little **Elizabeth Ann** and **Richard** died in infancy and are buried in the Ancient graveyard. Son **William** died, aged 14, in 1890.

Albert and Hannah brought up their family whilst living in High Croft Street and South View, just round the corner, in Upper Settle. In 1886 the family, with the first four children, were one of many that had their photo taken beside the snow castle, It took two days to build between March 3rd and 5th and was 14 feet high and 16 feet long with two side chambers each 8 feet long. On Saturday 6th, 700 children were taken inside, 60 at a time, and provided with coffee and buns and on the Monday 140 adults had tea, paying sixpence per head [ph2,5,6]. Unsurprisingly, *“Snow Castle” has been the chief topic of conversation in the neighbourhood and has been visited by hundreds of sightseers, many coming for miles for that intent’* [ph5].

the result. On Monday, thanks to the presence of Jack Frost, the castle was again inhabited, and this time a public tea was provided for adults at a charge of sixpence per head. Upwards of one hundred and forty availed themselves of the opportunity of feasting beneath snow, an occurrence somewhat rare, especially at so late a period of the winter. “Snow Castle” has been the chief topic of conversation in the neighbourhood for some days, and has been visited by hundreds of sightseers, many coming miles for that intent. Having now fulfilled so admirably the purpose for which it was intended, it stands awaiting the more genial breezes to convert it again into cooling streams.



SNOW CASTLE,
The Green, SETTLE.
TEA-PARTY
Monday, March 8th, 1886.
PRICE SIXPENCE.
→ TEA AT FIVE O'CLOCK. ←



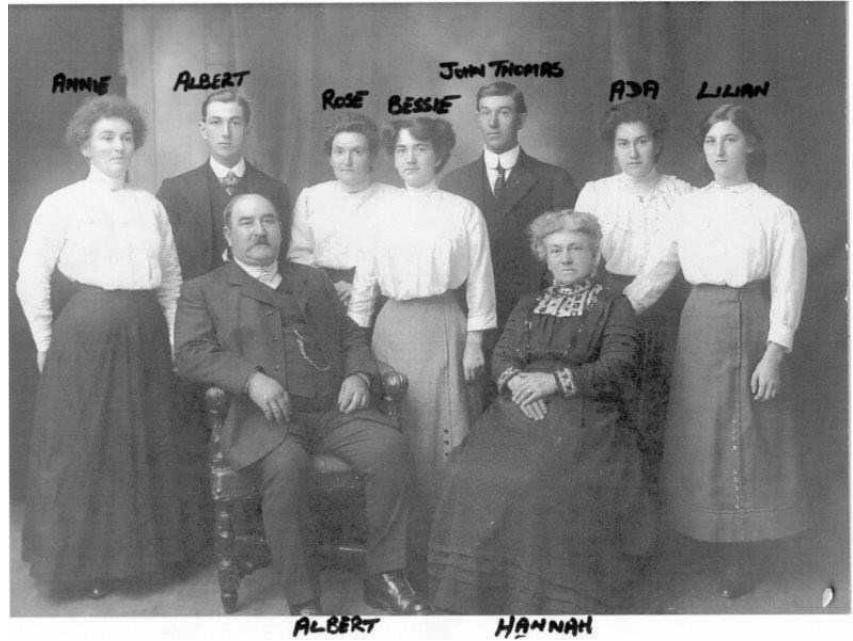
Albert made a living as a grocer and is pictured with his fruit and veg cart [ph1]. His shop was at the bottom of Victoria Street opposite the Folly, now used as a laundry. James Riley remembers, *‘As we left Victoria Street we would pass ‘Punch’ Woolgar, the fruiterer standing on his doorstep, hands clasped over his ample paunch’.* [A]



A wonderful family photo was taken around the time of the war [ph1]. Wednesday 19th April 1922 was an important day for the Woolgars. Parish records tell us that on that day three of the next generation of Woolgars were baptised. **William** was 13, **Dorothy** was 12 and **Enid** was 9. They were all living at the same address and were the illegitimate children of three of the daughters, Bessie, Ada and Lilian.

19	4	1922	William	s	Bessie	WOOLGAR
19	4	1922	Dorothy	d	Ada	WOOLGAR
19	4	1922	Enid	d	Lilian	WOOLGAR

Perhaps this baptism was on Albert's bucket list as he died just a year later in April 1923, aged 71, and Hannah followed in 1936, aged 82. They are buried in the unmarked grave Old BX6 with their son William.



Also in April 1922 single mum Ada married Craven Wilson Ralph, a road builder. They are buried in the unmarked grave New IX34. Ada's daughter Dorothy Woolgar lived for many years with sister Ada in Settle. She remained a spinster but had 19 cats! She is buried alone in the unmarked grave New GX68.

In 1914, mum Bessie [ph2] had married John Richard Jackson who was from Westmorland. He had come to Settle working as a railway porter. They had several children of their own [ph1]. John used a horse and cart to deliver goods from the station, based in Ulverston [ph2]. Descendants describe that Albert and Hannah insisted that Bessie's son William was brought up by them back in Settle. When he married, William took his family to live over the road from Bessie and John Richard in Barrow.



Bessie and John's daughter Doris Ena Jackson married William Gorman, a shipyard plumber. William did not meet his father, Daniel Gorman [ph2], until he was ten. Just after William was conceived in 1911, Daniel had crossed the Atlantic with his brothers Isaac and Francis to find work in the mines of Bisbee, Arizona as the local iron ore industry was declining.



Both Francis Gorman decided to come back home in 1915. Unfortunately, Daniel and his brother Isaac were two of the 1286 men involved in the 'Bisbee Deportation' of 1917 [ph4]. The mines in Arizona attracted thousands of workers, 80% of whom came from abroad. Mining conditions in the region were difficult enough but, to make it worse, working conditions were also extremely poor. After failed negotiations, unions took their members out on strike and 85% of the miners took part in a peaceful strike. The mine owners asked for help from federal troops. After three weeks tensions escalated and the Bisbee deportation was instigated. Some 2200 men in the Sheriff's Posse, each wearing a white armband for identification, arrested 1286 men, including Daniel and Isaac, and forced them, at gunpoint, onto a train for a 200 mile, 16 hour journey without food and water through a desert to New Mexico. They were ordered not to return.

Daniel was called back to Arizona to give evidence to the court hearings into the deportation in 1920. During the enquiry Sheriff Wheeler, who had acted on instructions from the mine owner, said, *"I have no statute that I had in mind. Perhaps everything that I did wasn't legal....It became a question of 'Are you American, or are you not?' I would repeat the operation any time I find my own people endangered by a mob composed of eighty percent aliens and enemies of my Government."* Sadly events of the 21st century suggest these attitudes have not changed today. The inquiry's verdict was that the action was *"wholly illegal and without authority in law, either State or Federal."* Nevertheless, no individual, company, or agency was ever convicted in connection with the deportations. Former President Theodore Roosevelt said that *"no human being in his senses doubts that the men deported from Bisbee were bent on destruction and murder."*

Despite this, Daniel decided to stay in California and applied for American citizenship/naturalisation. In 1922 he returned to Dalton-in-Furness with documentation saying his intended future residence was America, presumably to persuade his family to join him. This was the first time Daniel saw young William which may have changed his mind as he stayed in Dalton-in-Furness with the family. Daniel's brother Isaac decided to stay in Bisbee. His wife booked onto a ship to join him with the children in April 1912 but her son became ill, so she postponed her trip. The original ship was the Titanic. A lucky escape! She sailed in October 1912 on the ship Carmania.



In 1925 Albert and Hannah's youngest daughter and unmarried mum Victoria Lilian [ph3] married Matthew Airey, a farmer's son from Hawes, who became a postman. When he retired Matthew was presented with a cuckoo clock and tea service and related his time delivering letters on horseback and then by pushbike between Settle and

Horton-in-Ribblesdale [ph2]. Matthew, Victoria and young Enid moved to Shipley and had five more children. Their daughter Jean (Airey) Walsh lived at Greenfoot Cottage in Upper Settle.

Albert and Hannah's daughter Annie married a chauffeur Arthur Woodruff and they lived in Silverdale near Morecambe – very nice. Albert and Hannah's daughter Rose Ellen married Anthony Herbert Lamb, from a family who had farmed at Armitstead Hall and Stackhouse. Sons John Thomas and Albert [ph2] emigrated to Missouri in America. Albert worked

**THE MOUNTED
POSTMAN**

**Matt Airey Retires After
33 Years' Service**

After delivering mail for 33 years, during which time he went on his round on horseback, then on a cycle, and finally on foot, Mr. Matthew ("Matt" to his many friends) Airey, retired last month.

At a concert in Westcliffe Road Chapel schoolroom on Saturday evening Mr. and Mrs. Airey were presented respectively with a cuckoo clock and a tea service by the staff of Shipley Post Office.

The story of Matt Airey is an interesting one, and it started in 1920 when he was working on a farm. He was then appointed local postman on an Auxiliary duty for five years. His round at that time consisted of only nine houses, but they were so widespread that it took him almost four hours on horseback to deliver the mail.

At the end of this five year duty he went to Settle and Horton-in-Ribblesdale where he did a cycle duty.

as a clerk and had a family with his wife whose parents had emigrated from Germany.



John Thomas worked as a farmer and married **Maud Huggins** [ph2] who was born in Missouri but her family came from Grasmere in the Lake District. John Thomas and Maud had a couple of children. Maud died in 1922 and John Thomas married a widow **Hattie Mae (Lawrence) Close** and they had a daughter. Hattie already had a couple of children with her first husband who was **William Joseph Close**, the nephew of Settle's **Anthony Close**. There is much more about these English families in Missouri in the extraordinary account of the Close family.



Albert and Hannah deserved to be very proud of their family.



This account has been compiled as part of the Settle Graveyard Project which has recorded gravestone inscriptions, updated church records and researched the lives of those buried. It has been written in good faith with no offence intended. If I have inadvertently included errors or breached any copyright I apologise and would welcome corrections.

Life stories can be found on dalescommunityarchives.org.uk/settle graveyard project. The 'Old Settle' family tree on ancestry.co.uk includes the families buried in the graveyard. The project is ongoing and welcomes queries and information on settlerearch@gmail.com. Latest news and events are on the Facebook page 'Settle Graveyard Project'.

With thanks to descendant Marjorie Lane for her help with this account. Illustrations kindly provided by Teresa Gordon. The life stories of people with italicised names have been researched as part of the graveyard project.

Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 – Cambridge Independent Press

A – Listening and Remembering, Memoirs of a Settle Boy by James F Riley

ph1 – credited to the descendants of the family on ancestry.co.uk wendyHUDSON158, ph2 – credited to Marjorie Lane, descendant of the family, ph3 – credited to the descendants of the family on ancestry.co.uk, username denise ashe, ph4 – credited to Wikipedia, public domain, ph5 – with the kind permission of the North Craven Buildings Preservation Trust, ph6 – kindly provided by John Reid