

The Nelsons, running the oldest business in Settle, probably

The success of the Nelsons meant that they became an integral part of Settle's backbone through shoemaking, the nonconformist chapels and scouting. As an overview, the article printed by the Craven Herald in 1997, 'Family business cobbles together 150 years of history' is a good place to start [CH]:

The well known business was founded in 1847 by Titus Nelson, of Cononley, who pushed a handcart of shoemaker's equipment up the turnpike road from South Craven to Settle and took a cottage in Chapel Street and started to work. "This was before the days of the railway, the stage coach ran on alternate days between Leeds and Kendal, changing horses at the Golden Lion at midday. Perhaps Mrs Nelson and the young family travelled by coach. We don't know" says Jim Nelson, the great grandson of Titus, who has now handed over the business to his son Daniel.



Titus specialised in 'livery boots', that is coachman's boots, as all the big houses of the day had their own carriage and pair and the driver was always recognised by the colour of the top-band of his boots. In 1865 the current property in Duke Street came on the market and Titus borrowed money from Long Preston Building Society and moved in. Work was still by candlelight – gas did not come to Settle until 1853.



The massive construction project of the building of the Settle and Carlisle Railway brought great change as there was now a great demand for work boots for the workers. All week five bootmakers sat and produced 'navvy boots', then on pay day Titus' two sons, John William and James, went up the line to the construction camps to sell the hand-made hob nailed boots – the leather was tanned in Settle and the hob nails were made in Silsden.

James eventually left Settle and took a job in a Liverpool hospital making surgical boots. Titus died in 1902 and John William moved to live at the shop with his wife, daughter and son, John, who was Jim's father. By this time, factory-made footwear was available, but shoes were still made by hand, customers' lasts hung in rows around the workshop walls.

Titus Nelson was born on 18 July 1823 in Cononley, south of Skipton, to **Daniel Nelson**, also a shoemaker, and his wife **Martha Bottomley**. Titus' younger brother **Jabez Nelson** stayed in the area, working as a bootmaker but then became the innkeeper of the Old Bear Inn in Crosshills [ph2], operative since 1735 and still running today.



Titus probably moved to Settle to be near his wife's family. In October 1846 in the Skipton Registration District, Titus married **Annie Bullock** whose parents, **John and Mary Bullock** were farmers living in High Street in Settle. A year later, daughter **Mary Nelson** was born in Cononley and then they moved to Settle to have a further four daughters and five sons. Three sons, **Thomas Henry Nelson** and two called **Daniel Nelson**, died in infancy.

Today's shop has a sign above the door proudly stating 'Shoemakers since 1847'. Titus moved to Duke Street shop in November 1865 [SC] taking over from **John Mason**, another bootmaker and his wife **Elizabeth Snell** who moved away to Barrow-in-Furness. In 1875 Titus bought the property next door from the estate of his deceased neighbour, Mrs Redshaw and so was able to extend his business [1, LSA]. Widow **Mary (Whittam) Redshaw's** husband **William Redshaw** had



worked as a tanner/currier with the *Whittam family* in Upper Settle, but had died in 1831, aged just 36. Titus took an active part in town life, leading the Zion Chapel choir [2] and contributing to a ratepayers' meeting about plans for improving the sewerage systems [1] both in 1877. *John Winskill* was appointed an engineer for the project.

FASHIONABLE
BOOT & SHOE
ESTABLISHMENT.

TITUS NELSON

In expressing his gratitude to his friends for past favours, begs to inform them and the general public that his NEW PREMISES being now completed he has stocked his shop with a

FIRST-CLASS SHOW
OF
BOOTS & SHOES,

In all the latest styles.
BESPOKE WORK and REPAIRS
Carefully and promptly executed in the New Workshops.

CORN SOLVENT, the new and perfect remedy for Corns, 6d. per bottle.

DUKE STREET, SETTLE.

Titus [ph1] died, aged 77 in 1900, leaving a healthy estate in the safe hands of executors *Dr Charles William Buck* and *Thomas Dixon*. Alice died in 1913, aged 86. They are buried with daughter *Margaret Ann (Nelson) Latimer* and her two young daughters in *Old D11*.



In Remembrance of Titus Nelson Born July 17th 1823, died Aug 31st 1900. Also of Alice wife of the above died Dec 26th 1913 Aged 56 years. Also of Margaret Ann Latimer daughter of the above died April 15th 1938 aged 75 years, at rest. Alice and Nellie (Grandchildren) died July 1895 aged 6 and 5 respectively. They were lovely and pleasant in their lives and in death they were not divided.

Alice's parents are buried in the Ancient graveyard EX13. Alice had many siblings and several are buried in the Old graveyard in plots *Old G36* and the unmarked *Old BX76* and *Old GX29*.

DECEMBER, 1st 1865.

REMOVAL OF BUSINESS.

TITUS NELSON

Has the pleasure to announce that he has entered upon the Shop lately occupied by Mr Mason, Duke Street, where he will keep a select assortment of

BOOTS & SHOES,

Of the best quality, and hopes to be favoured with the custom of those who are desirous of being well and promptly served. Especial attention will be paid to the Bespoke business.

Repairs neatly executed.

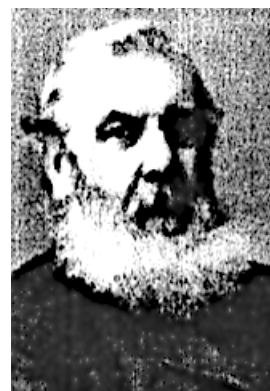
An assortment of French Goods including Ladies' House Boots, French Slippers, &c. &c., just to hand.

Duke Street, Settle, Nov. 12th, 1855.

VALUE OF HOUSE PROPERTY IN SETTLE.—On Monday evening, the property of the late Mrs. Redshaw, situate in Duke-street, was offered for sale by public auction at the Lion Hotel. There was a very large attendance, the sale room being crowded. Mr. J. Cowburn, auctioneer, offered the property in four lots, with the following results: --Lot one, comprising house, garden and premises, occupied by Mr. Richard Hardacre and Mr. E. Handby, was knocked down to Mr. John Preston (Mearbeck) for £560. Lot two, comprising house and garden, in the occupation of Miss Ellison, was purchased by Mr. J. Greenwood, for £420 who also became the purchaser of lot four, being the house and garden occupied by Miss Slater, for £520. For lot three, house and garden lately occupied by Mrs. Redshaw, deceased, Mr. Titus Nelson, was declared the purchaser at £445. There was a keen competition for all the lots, which realised altogether £1,945.

Preston. Mr. Ineson proposed a comprehensive and hearty vote of thanks to the ladies, the speakers, and all concerned in the management of one of the most successful and pleasant anniversaries yet held. Several anthems were given by the choir, under the able leadership of Mr. Titus Nelson.

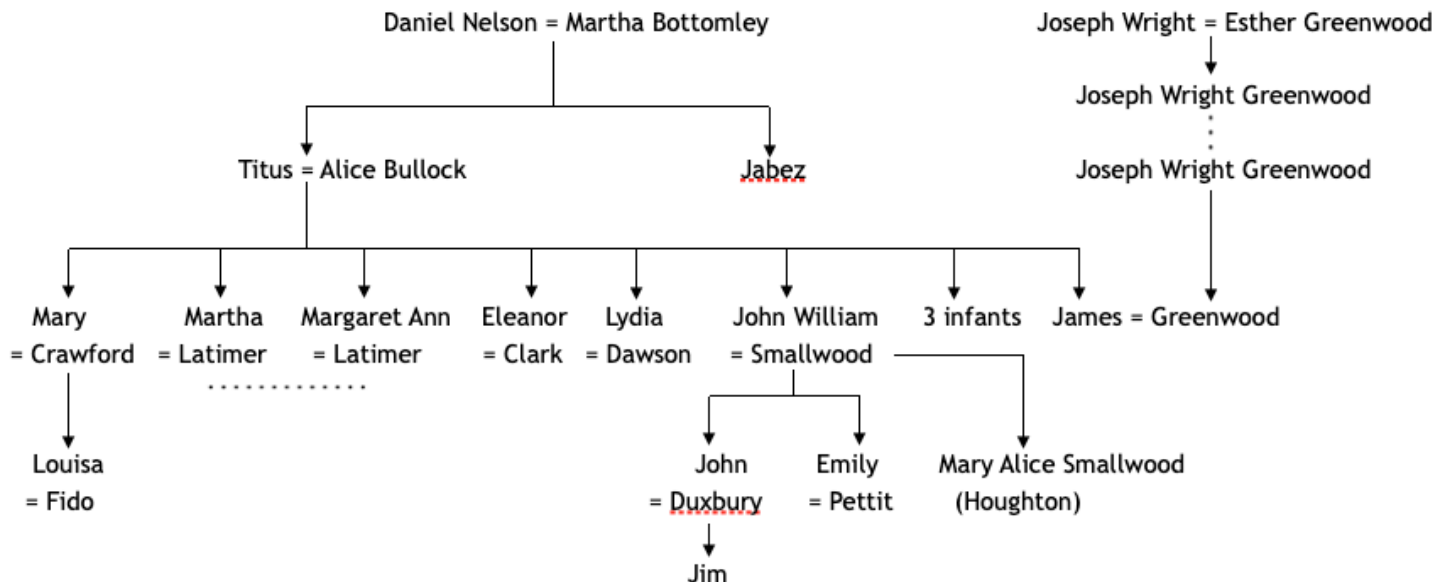
respect to the preparation of plans for sewerage. A meeting of the ratepayers was held in the Mechanics' Hall, on Thursday last to take into consideration the above letter, and to recommend to the Rural Sanitary Authority the name of a competent engineer to consult with and prepare plans for improving the sewerage. The chair was occupied by Mr. Thos. Harvey, and an animated discussion was taken part in by Messrs. Titus Nelson, John Lord, John Winskitt, John Maudsley, Josh Hayes, and others. Mr. Southwood



So, what happened to Titus and Annie's children?

Eldest daughter Mary Nelson had five daughters and two sons with a Scottish tailor, **Charles William Crawford**, living in Rochdale. They may have married in Scotland as there are no records in England. For some reason, one daughter, **Louisa Nelson Crawford** was brought up by Titus and Alice back in Settle. When she was 44 Louisa married **Edwin Bescoby Fido** and gave birth to a daughter a year later – goodness! Edwin was related to Louisa's grandmother, Alice (Bullock) Nelson, by his first marriage and his incredible life story is given with the **Milner family**.

Nelson Family Tree



Second and fourth daughters **Martha** and **Margaret Ann Nelson** married into the Latimer family. In 1885 Martha married **Charles Latimer**, the son of **David Latimer**, a joiner from Carlisle and his second wife **Mary Bell** from Scotland. Charles worked as a secretary to a fancy linen company and they lived in Broughton, Lancashire. Their son, **Nelson Latimer**, continued the business and was a beneficiary in the wills of many of his aunts and uncles.

Daughter Margaret Ann drew the short straw. She married **John Bell Latimer** who was a half-brother of Charles being born to Mary (Bell) Latimer six years after her husband David had died. As a much younger second wife Mary was only 34 when David died aged 57. Son John's existence could have been something to do with Mary's lodger at the time of the next census, a 37 year old Scottish railway platelayer, **John Robinson**. John Bell Latimer, a travelling draper and Margaret Ann Nelson married in 1888 in Salford. At the time of the following census Margaret Ann lived with her parents in Settle and two small daughters, **Nelly** and **Alice Latimer**, while John Bell Latimer was selling his wares in Barrow-in-Furness. Tragically, the daughters died of smallpox just two weeks apart in 1895. Smallpox was rife in Settle during the 1890s. It seems John's travelling took precedence over his family and they were never together again. Margaret Ann stayed in Settle helping to run the shop with her ageing parents and then helped her amazing niece, **Emily (Nelson) Pettit** to run her maternity hospital at 1 Halsteads on Duke Street. Margaret Ann was buried with her daughters and parents. John Bell Latimer found himself a new family in the form of **Ada Louise Eaton** and at least five children, one of whom was named **Robert Burns Latimer**, living in Manchester. Naughty John.

Titus and Annie's daughter **Eleanor Nelson** married **Walter Clark**, the son of **Richard Clark** and they had four children. Walter worked as a butcher until he inherited his father's farm, Pyethorns in Wigglesworth. Their life story is provided with the **Clarks**.

Daughter **Lydia Nelson** married **Thomas Dawson** [ph3], the only child of Settle grocer **William Dawson**. Thomas continued the family business and expanded it to become an aerated water

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manufacturer. Thomas and Lydia had two sons, living on Belle Hill in Giggleswick until their final years in Leeds. They were brought back to Settle for burial with Thomas' parents. This grave is immediately in front of that of Titus and Annie's in *Old C11*.



In loving memory of William Dawson who died May 7th 1892 aged 66 years. Also Margaret his wife died June 21st 1901 aged 69 years. Also Thomas their son died Jan 23rd 1921 aged 53 years. Also Lydia his wife died Feb 13th 1920 aged 54 years, Old C11



Only two of Titus and Annie's five sons survived infancy. As we know, James left Settle, equipped with shoemaking skills and took a job in a Liverpool hospital making surgical boots. In 1898 he married **Elizabeth Greenwood** whose family had recently moved to Settle and they had three sons, all born in Liverpool, including another **Titus Nelson**. Elizabeth died, aged 40, after the birth of the youngest son, **Edward Nelson**, but was buried back in Settle in *Old F29* where her parents would later join her. James stayed in Liverpool to bring up the children with the help of niece **Alice Ellen Clark**, the daughter of his sister Eleanor.

Elizabeth was one of at least eight children of **Joseph Wright Greenwood** and his second wife **Elizabeth Guy**. Joseph's first wife was his first cousin, **Hannah Wright Greenwood**, who died at the birth of a daughter, another **Hannah Wright Greenwood**, who also died. Joseph was the fourth in a line of Joseph Wright Greenwoods. The earliest Joseph Wright Greenwood, born in 1757 in Howarth, was the illegitimate son of **Joseph Wright** and **Esther Greenwood**. According to family records, Joseph and Esther were '*caught fornicating*' and, as a result, Esther was brought to the church wrapped in a white sheet on three consecutive Sundays and chastised in front of the congregation. However, Esther was already pregnant with the first Joseph Wright Greenwood. Joseph's 'punishment' was to be sent into the army and he probably took part in the North American seven year war with the French. When he returned in 1764 Joseph and Esther married and had other children [A].

Elizabeth's father was born in Haworth and, after marrying, farmed 100 acres of land near Kirkby Lonsdale. During the 1880s the family moved to the exceptionally grand Swinden Hall [ph4], near Gisburn built in 1857 with 462 acres of land. During his tenancy the property changed hands and an advert explained that it was '*enclosed within an excellent limestone wall and was well stocked with partridges and hares.*' There was a '*capital lime kiln*' on the farm [3]. During the 1880s, Joseph, now approaching his 60s moved to a smaller farm in Arncliffe before retiring to Settle, living near the Post Office on Duke Street. Along with Titus Nelson, Joseph bought his property from the late Mrs Redshaw in 1875.



Joseph and Elizabeth were buried with their spinster daughter **Ada Greenwood** and Elizabeth Nelson. Most of their other children worked in farming in other parts of Yorkshire and Lancashire.

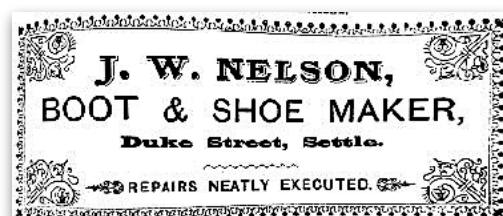
In loving memory of Joseph Wright Greenwood Born Sept 20th 1829 Died Jan 10th 1908 Also of Elizabeth, wife of the above who died Aug 7th 1914 Aged 84 years. Also Elizabeth Nelson daughter of the above, who died Aug 5th 1905 Aged 40 years. Also Ada their daughter died March 8th 1955 aged 80 years, Old F29.



Titus and Annie's son **John William Nelson** would continue the family

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business in Settle [LSA] and is credited with brining technology to Settle after investing in a finishing machine. He had the help of his wife **Eliza Smallwood** who had come to Settle from Barrow-in-Furness where her father, **Edward Smallwood**, worked as a blast furnace keeper in the rapidly expanding iron ore industry. Eliza came to Giggleswick to work in service for **William**



Hartley, solicitor, at Catterall Hall. John William and Eliza's son **John Nelson** was next in line [ph5] and he married **Aline Duxbury**, the daughter of the Settle oatcake maker **William Duxbury**, a family with another interesting tale to tell. John handed over to son **Jim Nelson** and then on to son **Daniel**. During the 20th century petrol powered machinery helped the Nelsons' work until electricity became available. The business has adapted over the years and is still thriving, producing hand-made shoes to order for those who appreciate real quality. Jim was a talented and creative man, known to have made a grandmother clock for his wife, chandeliers and lamp stands. Whilst serving in the Egyptian desert he made a decorative plate from German silver. Jim played the violin in Settle Orchestra, taking after **Titus** who was a talented cello player in the congregational church. Jim was at the heart of Settle Scouts for over 40 years and was a district commissioner.

For many years John William and Eliza helped to make ends meet by having a boarder. For decades their boarder was **William Howarth**, a joiner and cabinet maker who moved in after his parents died. William is buried with his parents in *Old BX69*. In those days bachelors rarely lived alone, choosing instead to live at inns or with families such as the



Nelsons who would feed and look after them. William Howarth's sister **Isabella Howarth** married **Thomas Waller** and they worked as the landlords of the Black Horse Inn in Giggleswick for decades.

John William Nelson and Eliza Smallwood's first child was daughter **Emily Nelson**. Emily initially worked in her grandmother's shop in Duke Street but decided to become a midwife. At the beginning of the 20th century the Central Midwives Board was set up with the aim of training skilled midwives to bring down infant mortality figures. Emily undertook the standard three months' training in Ipswich in 1913. When war was declared Emily signed up as an army nurse at King's College Cambridge, where she met her husband, **William Thomas Pettit** who she married in October 1915, in Woodbridge in Suffolk. Even before the war, William Thomas Pettit was a corporal in the Royal North Lancs Regiment, 1st Battalion. He was born in Hemel Hempstead, the son of an engineer so would have been an ideal candidate

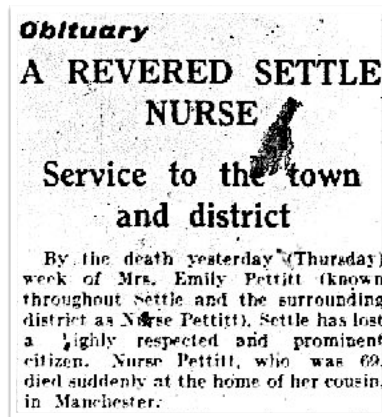


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for an officer. Tragically William was killed on 19th April 1918 in France, aged 30. However, before he died, Emily had given birth to a son **Nelson Noel Pettit**, born on Christmas Day 1916 in Settle, so she was left to bring him up single handed.

Despite looking after Noel, Emily was successful in becoming district nurse for Settle, a tricky job during the influenza outbreak of 1919. She was presented with a Rose Bowl for her work during the flu epidemic. By 1925 Emily had bought 1 Halsteads in Settle, including the land opposite specifically so she would have a good view, to run as a maternity home with the help of her aunt Margaret Ann Latimer. This coincided the government's new regulations for formal registration of maternity homes. Nurse Pettit was the only midwifery service for miles around and she spent a considerable time getting on her bike to help expectant mums who could afford to pay her, including trips to Malham! The nearest hospital was in Leeds, and in those days there was just one ambulance in Settle, a Rolls Royce, and one driver. As a result, many children were born at home, or wherever was convenient, and if things went wrong, it was tough luck.

Emily [ph1] wasn't just about nursing – she was a founder member of the Women's Legion of the Settle branch of the British Legion, formed in 1928 and was awarded a gold medal for her work there [CH]. Emily was a member of the Zion Chapel and a member of the Women's Guild. Her obituary said she was a lady of 'sterling character', cheerful, generous and kind. What an incredible woman!



Son Noel was employed by the Post Office as a wireless watcher and then joined the navy. Some family memories suggest he was injured in Alexandria in Egypt with family being told to visit him before he died, however other records show he continued his naval career becoming a Lieutenant Commander until he retired and died in Spain in 1973. He had four children by his first wife, two of whom were born in Chatham, Kent and another in Singapore. Emily was buried with her parents in the Old graveyard H22. The kerbstones also commemorate the life of her husband.

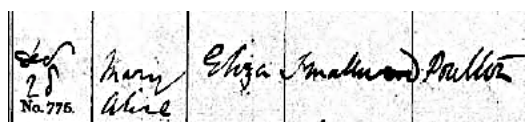


In Loving Memory of John Nelson Who died November 2nd 1920 Aged 66 years. Also Eliza Beloved wife of the above who died February 23rd 1926 Aged 67 years Peace Perfect Peace. Also of William Pettit Lieut Loyal North Lancs Killed in action April 19th 1918. Also of Emily beloved wife of William Pettit Died 21st April 1955 aged 69 years, Old H22

Emily's brother John Nelson and his wife Aline (Duxbury) were buried in the New graveyard L38.

In memory of Mary Alice Houghton died Sep 13th 1938 aged 64 years, also of John Nelson died June 25th 1962 aged 71 years, also of Aline Nelson died July 17th 1963 aged 73 years, New L38

They are buried with **Mary Alice Houghton** who was born in Morecambe and adopted by widow **Sarah (Wadson) Houghton**, probably from birth. She was born **Mary Alice Smallwood** and was the daughter of Eliza Smallwood, John's mum, who gave birth to her



when she was just 15. Therefore Mary Alice Houghton was a half-sister to John and Emily Nelson. Once Mary Alice's adopted mum Sarah Houghton had died, Mary Alice worked in domestic service for **Frank Marlor**, a wealthy wool merchant, at Close House in Giggleswick. Frank's son, **Eric Marlor** married **Monica Buck**, the daughter of **Dr Buck**, but was killed during the war three years

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later. When Mary Alice died she left her estate of £495 to half-brother John who used some of it to remember her with a most respectable gravestone.

For further information, the Nelson family is well documented by North Craven Heritage Trust and others.



This account has been compiled by Sarah Lister 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.

The life stories of people with italicised names have been researched as part of the graveyard project and can be found on [dalescommunityarchives.org.uk/settle graveyard project](http://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 settleresearch@gmail.com. Latest news and events are on the Facebook page 'Settle Graveyard Project'.

With thanks to Dan and Jane Nelson for their help with this account.

Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 – Lancaster Gazette, 2 – Lancaster Guardian, 3 – Burnley Gazette

ph1 – with the kind permission of the North Craven Buildings Preservation Trust, ph2 – oldwhitebear.co.uk, ph3 – with the kind permission of Paul Cochrane. ph4 – credited to Wikipedia, ph5 – kindly provided by John Reid

A – History of the Greenwoods of Howarth, Vol IV, CH – with the kind permission of the Craven Herald and Pioneer, SC – Settle Chronicle, LSA - Lambert's Settle Almanac, with the kind permission of the North Craven Buildings Preservation Trust