

## George Cotson/Cockton

(b. 1800, d. 1885)

12 October 2019

Elizabeth Barker

George Cotson was baptised as an Anglican on 21 April 1800 at Ripon Cathedral, his place of birth being given as Littlethorpe (1). In the Ripon Parish records for Littlethorpe, George is listed with his date of baptism, as are his parents, George and Elizabeth, two older sisters Mary and Elizabeth and younger siblings Maria and Anthony, however the family name has been transcribed as Cockton.

On 27 January 1822, the marriage of George Cotson of Ripon and Elizabeth Beek of Dallowgill was celebrated in the church of Kirkby Malzeard (2). Both of them signed the entry in the Church register with a cross. The Parish Register for that year also shows the birth of a son, Anthony, on 6 May 1822 who was buried on 20 June 1822 (3,4). His father's occupation is that of labourer.

At the time of the 1841 census, George Cotson had moved to Ripon and was living with his wife in Low Skellgate, together with John Cotson, aged 5 (5). There is no further mention of John Cotson in George's household after this date and no indication that the couple had any other children.

In 1851, George is living with his wife in Fishergate, Ripon; both are stated to be 56 years of age and his place of birth is recorded as Littlethorpe (6). His occupation is still given as labourer. He and Elizabeth (apparently known as Becky at this date), are to be found in the 1861 census in Low Skellgate once again, under the name Cockton together with George's widowed sister Becky Grainge, aged 45 who has no occupation (7). However both George and Elizabeth are listed as labourers. By 1871 George was a widower (8), and had been admitted to the Ripon Workhouse perhaps after the death of his wife who was buried in Ripon on 3 February 1866, aged 70 (9).

In 1881, George, now aged 78 is an inmate in the Ripon Workhouse where his occupation is given as gardener for the first time (10). Perhaps, once in the workhouse, he helped to tend the workhouse gardens?

His later years were not happy ones: the following report in the *Knaresborough Post* of 1 November 1884 (11) makes sad reading:

**"Attempted suicide** - a determined attempt at suicide was made at the workhouse on Tuesday, an old man named George Cotson having cut his throat with a razor. His injuries were attended to by Mr John Husband, surgeon, and the unfortunate man is in a fair way for recovery. He has been in low spirit for some time and has on former occasions attempted suicide."

A few days later, on 4 November 1884 (12) he was admitted to the West Riding Pauper Mental Hospital at Stanley Royds, and his death was recorded at Wakefield, aged 80, on the 12 February 1845 (13).

## Reference List

- (1) 'George Cotson' (1800) *Baptism 21 April 1800*, Ripon Cathedral, Yorkshire Baptisms, NYCRO N-PR-RI-1-4. Available at: <https://FindMyPast>. (Accessed 12 October 2019)
- (2) 'George Cotson and Elizabeth Beek' (1822) *Marriage of George Cotson and Elizabeth Beek, 22 January 1822 St Andrew's Church, Kirkby Malzeard*, Yorkshire Marriages, 22 January 1822, NYCRO N-PR KMZ 1-8 p.48. Available at: <https://FindMyPast.co.uk> (Accessed 12 October 2019)
- (3) 'Anthony Cotson' (1822) *Baptism 6 May 1822*, Ripon Cathedral, Yorkshire Baptisms, NYCRO N-PR-RI-1-18, p.278. Available at: <https://FindMyPast.co.uk> (Accessed 12 October 2019)
- (4) 'Anthony Cotson' (1822) *Cotson' Burial 20 June 1822*, Yorkshire Burials NYCRO N- PR -RI 1-39, P.176. Available at: <https://FindMyPast.co.uk> (Accessed 12 October 2019)
- (5) 'George Cotson' (1841) *Census return for Low Skellgate, Ripon, Yorkshire West Riding*. Class: *HO107; 1352*; Book: 5; Civil Parish: *Ripon*; County: *Yorkshire*; Enumeration District: 6; Folio: 26; Page: 8. Available at: <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> [Accessed: 20 September 2019]
- (6) 'George Cotson' (1851) *Census return for Fishergate, Ripon, Yorkshire West Riding*, Class: *HO107; 2281*; Folio: 171; Page: 38; GSU roll: 87466-87467. Available at: <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> [Accessed: 20 September 2019]
- (7) 'George Cotson/ Cockton' (1861) *Census return for Low Skellgate, Ripon, Yorkshire West Riding*, Class: *RG 9; 3196*; Folio: 127; Page: 16; GSU roll: 543094. Available at: <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> [Accessed: 20 September 2019]
- (8) 'George Cotson' (1871) *Census return for Allhallowgate, Ripon, Yorkshire West Riding*. Class: *RG10; 4275*; Folio: 84; Page: 41; GSU roll: 846968. Available at: <http://ancestry.co.uk> [Accessed 20 September 2019]
- (9) 'Elizabeth Cotson' (1866) *Certified entry recording death on the Civil Registration Index, England and Wales Deaths 1837-2007*, Civil deaths and burials, Ripon, 9A, p.55. Available at: <https://FindMyPast.co.uk> (Accessed 12 October 2019)
- (10) 'George Cotson' (1881) *Census return for Ripon District, Yorkshire West Riding* Class: *RG11; 4317*; Folio: 83; Page: 35; GSU roll: 1342030. Available at: <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> [Accessed: 20 September 2019]

(11) 'George Cotson'(1884) 'Attempted suicide', *The Knaresborough Post*, 1 November 1884, p. 5 (2019). Available at: <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk> .(Accessed 12 October 2019).

(12) 'George Cotson'-(1884)-'George Cotson' [1885] Lunacy Patients Admission Registers 1846-1912. The National Archives of the UK; Kew, Surrey, England; *Lunacy Patients Admission Registers*; Class: *MH 94*; Piece: 27. Available at: <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> (Accessed 20 September 2019)

(13) 'George Cotson' (1885) *Certified entry recording death on the Civil Registration Index, March quarter 1885*. Available: <https://www.freebmd.org.uk/>. (Accessed 20 September 2019).