

Harley Josey

(b.1855, d.1881)

Elizabeth Barker

Harley Josey was born in Reading, Berkshire in October 1855 (1). The earliest information available about his family comes from the census for 1861. The census shows Harley, aged 5, living at 19 Howard Street, Reading, with James Josey aged 67, Mary his wife aged 50, sons James aged 23, Thomas aged 21 and William aged 16, and a daughter Sarah aged 18. Harley is rather bizarrely described as a “son in law” (2).

It is not clear from this census who Harley’s parents might be. As well as the family members in the household, the difference in age between James Josey and his wife Mary gives rise to the possibility that James may have been married before, and had children from that marriage who might be a parent to Harley.

The census of 1871 shows that the family has become much reduced. Only Mary, James (her son) and Harley remain and are now living at 9 Charles Street, Reading. Mary describes herself as a “laundress”, James has no occupation and there is a note alongside his entry stating “nearly blind”, and Harley is an apprentice stonemason. This time he is described by Mary as her grandson. Also in the house are two lodgers, Thomas and Mary Jeffings (3).

It is perhaps fortunate that Harley was able to learn a trade, because when Mary came to die, it seems likely that James would be admitted to the workhouse in Reading, and Harley would be homeless. Possibly when he completed his apprenticeship, he may have joined a group of itinerant stonemasons who went wherever they could find work. On the date of the 1881 census, he is to be found in Ripon (4).

Unfortunately, his situation in Ripon is very sad. He is an inmate in the workhouse, having been admitted on 24 November 1880 (5). It seems that he was suffering from a serious illness or injury, because he died on 14 May 1881 (6). The Cathedral records show that he was buried on 15 May 1881, aged 24 (7).

References:

- (1) ‘Harley Josey’ (1855) *Certified entry recording birth of Harley William Josey on the Civil Registration Birth Index 1837 – 1915, Reading, Berkshire, Vol 2c page 296, December 1855*. Available: <https://www.freebmd.org.uk/cgi/information.pl?cite=WEmzzaPL%2FSXS4pVQIImbaA&scan=1> (Accessed 5 January 2020)
- (2) ‘Harley Josey’ (1861) *Census return for Howard Street, Reading, Berks, subdistrict Reading St Mary*. PRO GR9/746. Piece no. 746, folio29, page 18 (1861) Available: <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> (Accessed 5 January 2020)

- (3) 'Harley Josey' (1871) *Census return for Charles Street, Reading, Berks, subdistrict Reading St Mary*. PRO RG10/1280. Piece no 1280, folio 104, page 8 (1871). Available: <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> (Accessed 5 January 2020)
- (4) 'Harley Josey' (1881) *Census return for the Workhouse, Allhallowgate, Ripon, West Riding of Yorkshire, subdistrict Ripon*. PRO RG11/4317. Piece no.4317, folio 83, page 35. (1881) Available: <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> (Accessed 5 January 2020)
- (5) 'Harley Josey' (1880) Admissions/Discharges record for Ripon Workhouse. Available: www.northyorks.gov.uk/county-record-office ref BG/RI microfilm 2420. (Accessed 13 October 2019)
- (6) 'Harley Josey' (1881) *Certified entry recording death on the Civil Registration Index 1837 – 1915, Ripon, West Riding of Yorkshire, Vol.9a* page 50, June 1881. Available: <https://www.freebmd.org.uk/cgi/information.pl?cite=XLpawMmCNdSO%2F9hscw%2F5GA&scan=1> (Accessed 5 January 2020)
- (7) 'Harley Josey' (1881) Burial record from Ripon Cathedral Church of St Peter and St Wilfred parish registers May 1881. (Accessed 5 January 2020)