

Biography of William Lofthouse

B. 1828, D. 1890

Written by Lesley Collins, 11 Sep 2022

William Lofthouse was an inmate in the Leeds Union Workhouse on the night of the 1881 Census (1). He was 53 years old and had worked as a Warehouseman.

William was born in Holbeck and baptized in St Peters Church, Leeds, on 9 November 1828. He was the son of Leonard Lofthouse, a Clothier, and his wife Elizabeth (nee Naylor) (2). In 1841, a 12 year old William was living with a Susannah Naylor, presumably his Grandmother. She worked as a Cowkeeper, in Little Woodhouse, Leeds, and William acted as her assistant (3). The rest of his family, including 4 siblings, lived nearby (4).

In 1851, William was back with his family, living in Leighton Lane. His father Leonard was earning a living as a Milk Dealer but William was working as a Warehouseman (5).

On 31 March 1851, William married Mary Hodgson in St Peters Church, Leeds (6) and the following year, a daughter, Betsy, was born. The family were still in Leighton Lane in 1861, and William was working as a Milkman (7).

At some point in the late 1850's, William started a life of crime. There are many entries in the UK Calendar of Prisoners and related records (8, 11).

1859, 3 Feb	Leeds	Willful damage to 18 squares of glass	1 month	Leeds Prison
1864, 25 Jan	Leeds	Riotous	7 days	Leeds Prison
1867, 21 Oct	Leeds	Stealing 2 boxes of money	6 months	Leeds Prison
1868, Oct	Leeds	Stealing a pencil case, 1 purse, 1 hymn book	12 months	Leeds Prison

In 1869, William's wife Mary died and was buried in the Beckett St Cemetery, aged 41 (9), and on the 1871 census, a widowed William was living with his parents in Leighton Lane (10). He was noted as working as a Colliery Clerk, but his life of crime continued and in late 1871, he was tried at Leeds Assizes and found guilty of Forging a Bill of Exchange with intent to commit Fraud. In Jan 1872, he was sentenced to spend 8 years in Prison and then to be subject to 5 years Police supervision (8).

By 1881, William had been released from prison and was in the Workhouse, but within 2 years was back in prison on a charge of Larceny, sentenced to spend 9 months in prison (11).

In 1890, he was admitted to the Union Infirmary and died there on 3 July from Phthisis. He was buried in the Beckett St Cemetery 2 days later (12, 13)

Reference list:

1. 'William Lofthouse' (1881) Census return for Leeds Union Workhouse, RG11/4524, f102, p9, on www.ancestry.co.uk
2. 'William Lofthouse (1828) Baptism entry 9 Nov 1828, St Peters PR, W Yorks Index on ancestry.

3. 'William Lofthouse' (1841) Census return for Little Woodhouse, Leeds, HO 107/1349/4, f44, p10, on www.ancestry.co.uk
4. 'Leonard Lofthouse' (1841) Census return for Little Woodhouse, Leeds, HO107/1349/4/p4,f6.
5. 'William Lofthouse' (1851) Census return for Leighton Lane, Leeds, HO 107/2321, f, p7, sch 25, on www.ancestry.co.uk
6. 'William Lofthouse' (1851) Marriage 31 March 1851, St Peters Church, Leeds on W Yorks Index, Ancestry.
7. 'William Lofthouse' (1861) Census return for Leighton Lane, Leeds, RG9/3392, f, p6, sch 30, on www.ancestry.co.uk
8. 'William Lofthouse' (1859 on) UK Calendar of Prisoners, 1878, Leeds,
9. 'Mary Lofthouse' (1869) Burial record, 30 Aug 1869, Beckett St Cemetery, Ancestry.
10. 'William Lofthouse' (1871) Census return for 16 Leighton Lane, Leeds, RG10/4565, f92, p22, sch 101 on Ancestry.
11. 'William Lofthouse' (1883) Conviction record 9 Apr 1893, W Riding Qtr Sessions, Leeds in England & Wales Criminal Registers on Ancestry.
12. 'William Lofthouse' (1890) Admission & Death in Union Infirmary Death register, W Yorks Archives, Morley.
13. 'William Lofthouse' (1890) Burial entry 5 July, Becket St Cemetery, Leeds, on www.ancestry.co.uk