

More Than Oliver Twist: Biography

Name: Ann Marr (Maher)

B. 1811-1814, d. 1885

According to the 1851 Census, Ann Marr (Maher) was born in Roscrea, Tipperary, Ireland in about 1811 (1). In 1851, she lived with Michael Maher, a labourer, who was also born in Roscrea, in 1804. Whether they were formally married is not known. The couple lived on Giles Street in North Leeds, with four children. James was 19, Edward, 9, Margaret, 11 and Catherine, 6. The boys were labourers and the girls, scholars. According to the 1851 census, all the children were born in Leeds (2).

I could not confirm the birth of Ann's son, James in Leeds. It is possible he was born in Roscrea, Ireland, before the couple moved. A baptism record for a James Maher, dated 1832, identifies a Michael Maher as James' father (3). The baptism took place in 'Roscrea, Offaly, Tipperary and Laois'. Roscrea is where Ann and William were born (4). It is likely that Ann and William moved from Ireland to England in the early to mid, 1830s. Ann's first daughter, Mary Maher, died at the age of 2, and was buried from Giles Street on 24 March 1837 in St Mary's Church, Leeds (5). The parents are listed on the burial record as William and Ann Maher. It is not known whether Mary was born in Ireland or England, but Edward's birth was registered in Leeds in 1842 (6) and Catherine's in 1845 (7). I could not find a birth record for Margaret.

Strangely, in the earlier 1841 Census, Michael lived with a 'Jane' Maher (born 1811, Ireland), on Giles Street, with son James and daughter Margaret (8). 'Jane' may have been another name of Ann. Ann is not listed in the record, but the birth year and place of birth are the same. Alternatively, Jane could have been another adult relative of Michael.

Ann and Michael lived together on Giles Street, North Leeds, in 1861 (9). Michael was a labourer at the Gas Works. All the children appeared to be working in a Flax mill. Ann's birth year is still listed as 1811 but the family name is recorded as Marr in this and subsequent records. By 1871, the family had moved to Grantham Street, South East Leeds. James, Edward, and Catherine were still with them and still worked with Flax (10). However, in this return, the word 'wife' is crossed out in relation to Ann. This may mean the partnership between Ann and William was common-law. Ann's birth year is listed as 1814 in this and subsequent records. It maybe she chose to conceal her age as she grew older.

Michael Marr died in 1878 and was buried from the 'Little Convent', Park Lane, in Becketts Street Cemetery, North Leeds (11). Presumably, Michael received care at the Convent before he died. Ann had to move into Leeds Workhouse because of his illness and subsequent death (12). Her workhouse census return, for 1881, describes Ann Marr as a widow, born 1814 in Ireland, and a Stuff Weaver by occupation. Ann Marr's death was registered in Leeds in 1885 (13). She was buried from the Union Infirmary, in Beckett Street Cemetery, Leeds, on 4 March 1885 (14).

References

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13. 'Ann Marr' (1885). *Certified entry recording death on the Civil Registration Index, Leeds, Jan-Feb-Marc 1885*. Available at: <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> (Accessed: 7 May 2021).
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