

Catherine Ryan
(born 1815, died 1891)

8 September 2020

Jane Collins

Catherine Ryan was recorded as an inmate of Leeds Union Workhouse on the 1881 Census (1). We do not know the circumstances of her admittance to the Workhouse. All we know from the Census entry is that in 1881 she was a Widow; her occupation was Domestic Servant/Cook and she was born in Ireland.

We do not know exactly when Catherine arrived in Leeds. It is possible that she was one of the many who left Ireland because of the "Great Hunger" (1845-1852) caused by the failure of the potato crop. As a result of death and mass emigration, Ireland's population fell by 2 million in this period. The effects were also felt in Leeds as the Irish-born population of the town more than doubled between 1841 and 1861 (2). Born in 1815, Catherine would have been about 30 years old at the start of the "Great Hunger" (1).

It appears that Catherine never left the Workhouse. She died in January 1891 aged 75 years and was buried on 7th January 1891 in Beckett Street Cemetery in the Nonconformist section (3) and (4). Her address on the burial record is recorded as the Union Infirmary, Leeds.

References

- (1) 'Catherine Ryan'(1881) Census return for Leeds Union Workhouse, Becket Street, Leeds, North Leeds Subdistrict, Yorkshire. Public Record Office: PRO RG11/4524, folio 104, p.14 (1881). Available at: <https://www.ancestry.co.uk> (Accessed: 8 Sept 2020)
- (2) 'Untold Stories: The Irish Community in Leeds'.
<https://www.untoldstories.co.uk/articles#> (Accessed 8 September 2020)
- (3) 'Catherine Ryan' (1891). Certified entry recording death on the Civil Registration Index, March 1891. Available:
<https://www.freebmd.org.uk/cgi/information.pl?cite=CcstShTydYM4OhvGXDHELw&scan=1>(Accessed 8 September 2020)
- (4) 'Catherine Ryan (1891). Burial of Catherine Ryan, 7 January 1891. Beckett Street Cemetery, Leeds; Burials – Nonconformists. Leeds Beckett Street Cemetery, 1845-1987. Ref LC/CEM (B)/1/9, Numbers 38801-58640, 1889-1909. Available at:
<http://www.ancestry.co.uk> (Accessed 8 September 2020)