

Margaret Schoefield
(born 1819, died 1883)

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Jane Collins

Margaret Schoefield was an inmate of Leeds Union Workhouse in April 1881 aged 61 years (1). We do not know the circumstances or the date of her admittance to the Workhouse. All we know from the Census entry is that in 1881 she was a Widow, a Charwoman, and she had been born in Ireland (1).

Margaret was born in Dublin in about 1819-1820 (2). Her father was Thomas Connor, a tailor (5). This is all we know about Thomas; we do not know if he remained in Ireland or travelled with Margaret to Liverpool.

In the 1850-1870s, Margaret lived in Liverpool with her husband John, a tailor, and then with her two sons, Albert William and Richard James following John's death (2)(3). Liverpool is known for having the strongest Irish heritage of any UK city. The Port of Liverpool being close to the Irish coast made Liverpool relatively easy to reach for all those escaping the "Great Hunger" of 1845 -1849. By 1851, more than 20 percent of Liverpool's population was Irish (4). Margaret would have been about 25 years old at the start of the "Great Hunger" in 1845 and was one of the 20 percent of Irish immigrants living in Liverpool in 1852 (5).

In 1852, Margaret married John Schofield, a tailor, in St Nicholas Parish Church, Liverpool. This was not the first marriage for either Margaret or John; on the marriage certificate they are described as Widow and Widower. At the time of this marriage, Margaret is identified as Margaret Baker (5) (6). One year later in June 1853, Margaret and John's son Albert William was born; he was baptised at St Nicholas's Church in Liverpool in April 1854 (7). Their second son, Richard James, was born 3 years later at the beginning of 1857.

In 1861, Margaret and John were living together in the Mount Pleasant sub-district of Liverpool with their four sons. It is likely that the oldest boys, George (15 years old) and Henry (14 years old), were from John's previous marriage. The two younger boys, Albert William (7 years old) and Richard James (4 years old), were no doubt Margaret and John's children. John continued to work as a tailor (2). We do not have a record of John Schofield's death but by 1871 Margaret was a widow and working as a Charwoman. She was still living in the Liverpool sub-district of Mount Pleasant but at a different address with her two youngest sons. Albert William (16 years old) working as a Butcher and Richard James (11 years old), attending school (3).

The next record of Margaret is in 1881 in the Leeds Union Workhouse (1). We do not know why she left Liverpool; perhaps one of her sons had been working in Leeds.

Margaret died in October 1883, aged 64, and was buried on 17 November 1883 in the Anglican section of Beckett Street Cemetery (8)(9). Her last abode on the burial record is recorded as the Medical School, Leeds. It is therefore likely that Margaret died in the

Workhouse without any known family members to claim her body. It was a common and legal practice for a 'pauper' body from the Workhouse to be sent to the Medical School to be used for medical research and training purposes.

References

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- (2) 'Margaret Schofield' (1871) Census return for 6 Court, Trowbridge Street, Liverpool, Mount Pleasant Subdistrict, Lancashire. Public Record Office: PRO RG9/2681, folio 126, p.22 (1861). Available at: <https://www.ancestry.co.uk> (Accessed: 19 Nov 2020)
- (3) 'Margaret Scholfield' (1861) Census return for 4 Court, Duckinfield Street, Liverpool, Mount Pleasant Subdistrict, Lancashire. Public Record Office: PRO RG9/2681, folio 126, p.22 (1861). Available at: <https://www.ancestry.co.uk> (Accessed: 19 Nov 2020)
- (4) 'Irish Migration to Great Britain: Liverpool'.
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- (5) 'Margaret Baker' (1852). Marriage of Margaret Baker and John Scholfield, 29 August 1852. St Nicholas Church in the Parish of Liverpool in the County of Lancaster. Liverpool England, Church of England Marriages & Banns, 1754-1935. Available at: <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> (Accessed 20 Nov 2020)
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<https://www.freebmd.org.uk/cgi/information.pl?cite=1dnpZhD7rf8rFGh8K7dmrA&scan=1> (Accessed 20 Nov 2020).
- (7) 'Albert Schofield' (1854). Baptism of Albert Schofield on 25 April 1854 at St Nicholas's, Copperas Hill, Liverpool. Liverpool Catholic Baptisms, 1741-1919 (St Nicholas 1848-1856). Available at: <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> (Accessed 20 Nov 2020)
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- (9) 'Margaret Schoefield' (1883). Burial of Margaret Schoefield, 17 November 1883. Beckett Street Cemetery, Leeds; Burials – Anglican. Leeds Beckett Street Cemetery, 1845-1987. Ref LC/CEM (B)/1/3, Numbers 38169-58080, 1874-1887. Available at: <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> (Accessed 22 November 2020)