THE WALTON'S OF TOOTHILL BANK RASTRICK

A BRIEF LOOK AT THE HISTORY OF A RASTRICK FAMILY INCLUDING SOME FAMILY REMINISCENCES

RESEARCHED AND COLLATED BY

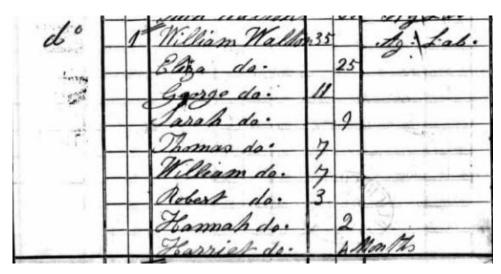
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THE WALTON'S OF RASTRICK

Let us go back to the year 1805, a year in which Horatio Nelson defeated the combined French and Spanish fleets in the Battle of Trafalgar, London Docks opened, the first Trooping the Colour took place at Horse Guards Parade, Eton and Harrow colleges played the first cricket match against each other and William Walton was born in the village of Norton, located on what we now know as the A19 between Selby and Doncaster in the Parish of Kellington.

On the 27th November 1827, William Walton married Hannah Amby at All Saints Church, Whitley in Kellington Parish. The couple produced five children between 1828 and 1834 but in October 1835, Hannah passed away at just 32 years of age. She was buried on the 2nd November 1835 at the above All Saints Church. William was a quick worker and within six months of the death of his first wife, he was marrying his second bride, twenty-one year old Eliza Butterfield, at the nearby St. Martin's Church, Womersley. She must have been brave to take on four surviving children (the eldest, John died aged eleven weeks) but by the time of the 1841 census (shown below) she had given birth to four children of her own, the eldest having died soon after his birth. The census record shows William (35) and Eliza (25) along with George (11), Sarah (9), Thomas (7) and William (7), who were children from William's first marriage, along with Robert (3), Hannah (2) and Harriet (4 months) from his marriage to Eliza.



Working as an agricultural labourer certainly gave William an appetite for more than just his dinner when he got home from a hard day in the fields as the couple went on to have a total of

11 children, 6 boys and 5 girls. William lived until the age of 87 years and was laid to rest at All Saints, Whitley, where he had lived for most of his life.

The sixth born child from his marriage to Eliza and therefore William's eleventh child was named Joseph Walton. He was born on the 2nd June 1844 and baptised at All Saints, Whitley and later married Ann Schorey Clarkson in the same church on the 3rd October 1865. Joseph, like his father, was an agricultural farm labourer. Looking at job titles on the census records of that time we find that the majority of people who lived around the Whitley area were agricultural labourers. Initially, Joseph and Ann had three children, William (1867), Tom (1868) and Sarah Eliza (1870) who were all baptised at Whitley but the family then decided to move away from the area and settle in Brighouse. Most people who moved from agricultural areas into growing townships such as Brighouse, did so because the farm labourer was susceptible to being laid off due to harsh weather conditions in the winter months which often resulted in family hardship. They sought work in the various industries that had moved into the large new mills where work was guaranteed. Brighouse was an attractive area due to its diverse industrial environment as there was not only the usual cotton and woollen textile associated jobs but there was a thriving silk industry, heavy and light engineering, stone quarries, coal mining and wire drawing to mention but a few. So why Joseph decided to move in late 1870 early 1871 is unclear. Maybe it was a bad winter and they decided enough was enough but it seems strange that in the 1871 census, we find him residing at Pollard Buildings, Birds Royd, Rastrick where his new employment is not in any of the above mentioned trades but he is shown as continuing to be a farm labourer.

Joseph and Ann went on to have a total of seven sons and one daughter and by 1881, the family were living at Firth House Farm which is located near to Bradley Wood to the east of Woodhouse Lane, from where the farm is best accessed. Firth House was part of the Toothill estate and was farmed by tenant farmers Joseph and George Dyson who were unmarried brothers for whom Joseph worked for over 20 years. By 1891, the Dyson brothers were 78 and

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76 years old respectively and were coming towards the end of their farming lives. Joseph Walton was still shown as the labourer but in truth he was probably doing most of the work on the farm, overseen by the Dyson brothers. When the Dyson brothers either moved or passed on, Joseph was the ideal candidate to run the farm and in 1901 he was shown as a farmer in his own right, employing other workers. His son Albert is living with him and he is shown on the census as simply a 'farmer's son' whilst his eldest son, George, was also living in one of the other houses on the farm along with his wife. George was employed as a 'cow keeper and farm worker'. George Walton was still working at Firth House at the time of the 1911 census but eventually went to work at Longroyd Farm as the farm foreman. He died on the 9th August 1934 at the age of 59 years, where his residence was shown as Longroyd Lodge. His effects were valued at £199 - 6s according to the probate record.

In 1910, Joseph was himself getting on in years and at the age of 68 he was given the opportunity by the Toothill estate owner, Clement Blackburn, to rent the smaller Throstle Nest on Shepherds Thorn Lane where another of his sons, William, had been working as a nurseryman. Joseph worked at Throstle Nest into his late seventies and upon his retirement, he was permitted to reside in one of the cottages belonging to the Toothill estate located on Toothill Lane. He died at 7, Toothill Cottages on the 10th June 1928 leaving effects to the value of £83-7s-10d. The house is still there, set back slightly from the other buildings, almost opposite the junction with Lyndhurst Avenue.

Next, we will look at Joseph and Ann's eldest son, William Walton. He was born at Whitley in 1866 and moved to the Brighouse/Rastrick with his parents in 1871. In 1881, at the age of 15, he was living at Firth House Farm with his parents and was working as a domestic gardener. On the 17th December 1887, he married Eliza Nicholl at St. Mary's Church, Elland. In ensuing documents, the name Nicholl is spelled Nichol, Nichols and Nicholes, which can be confusing at times but it is a name that we will explore further in this document. At the time of the

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wedding, William was still working as a gardener but two years later, on the baptism record of his first child, he is shown as a green grocer. By the time of the 1891 census, he is recorded as working as a farm labourer whilst residing with his wife and son at New Hey Road, Rastrick and in 1901, William was living at Throstle Nest Farm, Shepherds Thorn Lane, Rastrick, the farm where his father went to work a few years later. He was working as a nursery gardener so it appears that he had gone back to working with fresh produce again. When you look at an early photograph of the farm, there is certainly evidence of a glasshouse where William would have reared the young vegetable and salad seedlings.



By 1911, he had moved into a rented home at 8, Victoria Place off Gooder Lane, where he continued working as a landscape gardener until his death in 1936. The couple had four children, a daughter Ethel (1892) and three sons, Joseph Henry (1893), Arthur (1896) and Tom (1899).

We now move on to the next generation and will briefly look at Ethel, Arthur and Tom before concentrating on the eldest son, Joseph Henry Walton.

Ethel Walton was the second child of William and Eliza Walton. She was born on the 12th June 1891 and baptised at St. Matthew's, Rastrick on the 19th July that same year.

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Ethel never married and in 1911, she was still living at home with her parents and working in one of the local mills as a cotton gasser. This involved the use of methyl bromide to kill any insects that may be living in the raw cotton which was imported mainly from the West Indies into Liverpool Docks, where co-incidentally, my great grandfather was a dock labourer working on the off-loading of cotton around this same period. Using methyl bromide caused certain side effects upon the workers such as dizziness, headache, vomiting, weakness, hallucinations and loss of speech so I would imagine that Ethel did other jobs in the mill during her life. She died in Rastrick in December 1959 aged 68.

Arthur Walton was the third born child who made his entrance into the world on the 5th

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December 1895 and baptised at St. Matthew's Church, Rastrick on the 19th January 1896. After leaving school, he was employed as an iron moulder, probably at Blakeborough's, near to where he lived with his parents on Birds Royd Lane, Rastrick.

In 1913, after attaining the age of 18, Arthur decided to join the army and chose the Royal Garrison Artillery at Huddersfield where he enlisted on the 19th December. His army record shows him as being 5' 11 ½", 143 lbs with a 38" chest, pale complexion with brown hair and brown eyes. Whilst outwardly appearing to be a sturdy fit young man, army medical checks showed that he suffered with a term then known

as VDH which referred to a disease of the heart valve(s). Just one month after joining, his army record states 'discharged not being likely to become an efficient soldier'. This disease took its toll on the young man and in March 1928 he died at the age of 32 years.

The fourth child was Tom Walton who was born on the 10th May 1898 and he was also baptised at St. Matthew's, Rastrick on the 17th November that same year. At the time of the 1911 census he was 12 years of age and was working part-time to coincide with his school education.

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The census record informs us that he was working in the printing trade as a news boy therefore he would very likely be working for the Brighouse News, the forerunner to the Echo. He became an apprentice engineer and married Clarice Helena Sanderson from Ripponden on the 20th December 1924 at Halifax Parish Church.

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Finally, we look at the eldest born child, Joseph Henry Walton. He was born on the 4th February

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1889 and baptised at St. Matthew's, Rastrick on the 25th of that same month. In 1901, whilst residing with his parents and siblings at Throstle Nest, Shepherds Thorn Lane, Rastrick, he was

employed in the textile industry as a set doffer whilst in 1911 he was a woollen twister and resided at 8, Victoria Place off Gooder Lane, Rastrick.

His brother Arthur's army record shows Joseph as his next of kin and residing at 3, Aire Street, Rastrick around the time of the start of the 1st WW, an address he lived at certainly until 1915 when the electoral roll ceased for the duration of the war. There is no record of Joseph having joined the armed forces himself therefore he must have been working in a reserved occupation that exempted him from military service. Many farming related jobs were classed as reserved occupations as the government deemed it to be of vital importance to ensure that the residents of the country were fed as adequately as possible whilst also taking into account the needs of the military. We know that Joseph worked in farming around that time and was probably exempt upon those grounds. When the electoral roll recommenced in 1919, Joseph and Emily were residing at 3, Southage Place, one of just three houses in a block and a house where they lived for the next 17 years. In 1937, the house next door at number 5 became available and whether they moved to upsize as their children got older, I am not sure, but they certainly moved next door where they lived until Joseph died in 1967. It was shortly after that time that Southage Place was earmarked for demolition by the local authority and Emily was forced to move from the little row of houses that had been her home for just over 50 years.

The Rastrick Local History Group, who meet on a monthly basis at Rastrick Library, put out a request some time ago for local people to reminisce about the past. A document was received from a Mary Walton and her son, David. They had chosen to write about the Walton's, in particular, Emily Walton (neé Rodgers), the wife of Joseph Henry Walton. This is their story, written in their own words:-

EMILY WALTON

Born at 17, Nelson Street, Normanton, she was the daughter of Sarah Anne Rodgers (housewife) and John Rodgers who was a miner. Emily was a tomboy as a child and the eldest of eight children; her brothers and sisters were Fanny, Ernest, Arthur, Edith, Sarah, Bertha and Evelyn.

At a relatively young age she applied for a job as an assistant cook at Toothill Grove in Rastrick. The lady of the house, a Mrs Eastwood, would probably initially have been sceptical of such a young girl applying for the job but must have seen something in her that led to employing her. So started a long association with the Eastwood family spanning more than 60 years. Emily duly became the assistant cook and during that time, the Eastwood's, who were mill owners, hosted grand parties. Attendees were such as Sir George Armytage of Kirklees Hall and Brigadier General Richard Sugden who owned Sugden's flour mills in Brighouse. Also the Lister's.

The house itself was stone built with a clock tower, stabling, orchard and had extensive lawns which Emily's sons mowed at various times: first Frank and John, then John and Harry. Harry guesses that these lawns were in excess of a quarter of an acre and took about three hours for which the boys were paid 1s 6d. Mrs. Eastwood always sent a card by post to request that the boys come and cut the lawns – she never simply passed the message on via their mum, Emily!

Emily eventually met Joseph Henry Walton who at that time was a gardener working at Wood's with his father, who was a landscape gardener. They used to pass Toothill Grove and we assume that's how Joseph first set eyes on Emily. Romance blossomed and they married in July 1911 at Halifax Registry Office. The marriage certificate said Emily was a cook domestic and Joseph was a woollen spinner, though he was later a teamer (driving horses) on a farm. They first lived in a house in Aire Terrace close to where all the boys went to the Victoria Central School. They didn't live there all that long before they moved to Toothill Bank, which would of course have been nearer to their places of work. The children were:

Frank, born 22nd December 1912

Mary, born 27th December 1914

Marion, born 14th November 1916

John William, born 22nd June 1919 (the heaviest, over 12 lbs at birth)

Alice, born 15th January 1922

Harry, born 11th September 1924

Stanley, born 1927?

Betty (Sarah Elizabeth), born 3 May 1929?

Joyce, born 28th December 1931

Emily would return to work as soon as she could after giving birth and she would take the pram together with a toddler or toddlers in tow. Eventually when Mr. and Mrs. Eastwood died Emily still worked for their daughter, Doris Beaumont Eastwood and virtually became a companion to her, working by this time for only three days a week. She kept working for the Eastwood's right up until a few weeks before she died.

Miss Eastwood could be quite generous. Harry remembers being asked to move a wardrobe for her, which they did by taking a window out and taking it down a ladder as the spiral staircase made that route impossible. He recalls being paid 10s each which equated to about half a week's wage for an apprentice.

At Southage Place there was one large bedroom upstairs plus a smaller bedroom in which the three eldest girls slept. In the large bedroom there were three beds – two doubles plus what might have been a three quarter bed. The eleven of them lived like this until about 1937 when the eldest girls started to get married.

At one time, Stanley had scarlet fever and as part of the then treatment the upper floor of the house was sealed off and sulphur candles were burnt. With this going on, everyone except Stanley, who was in hospital, had to sleep downstairs: all ten. Some slept on the table, others on the floor or the couch and two were even in each end of the old fashioned tin bath!

Emily was social secretary of Brighouse Labour Club. Harry was married and living next door but one to his mum when she was in her sixties. One night she knocked on his door, agitated that she had to get the trolley bus down to a big meeting at the Labour Club and had just missed it. All Harry could offer was a lift on his motorbike! She duly hopped on the back and apparently enjoyed the experience.

Emily always used to leave a low gas light on in case in case one of the children needed her. One time, Harry, Frank and John were in one of the beds and somehow one of them must have thrown the bedcover off or something and the bedcover and curtains caught light. Luckily Joe managed to rip the curtains down and beat out the flames on both of them and the bedcover. Joe burnt his hands in the process, fortunately, not badly.

On a Friday, a very old man often used to come round selling lavender sprigs for a penny. Friday lunch time was fish and chips and if he ever called in the winter-time, Emily would invariably sit him up to the fire and give him her fish and chips. Another time Joe brought a young man home and said Em. should feed him. She duly did, but when the young man left she rounded on Joe saying, "don't you ever do that again". She felt that a young man should be working and standing on his own two feet.

Emily often sat for neighbours if ever someone was ill in bed so that the parents or spouse etc. could get a break. Every Wednesday during the war she held a whist drive and all the proceeds went on food parcels to those in the forces round about.

When the air raid sirens went, EVERYONE from round about converged on number 5 – people everywhere, even babies in drawers!

Further research led me to be in contact with David MacCallum, a grandson of Joseph Henry and Emily Walton through their daughter, Alice Walton (1922 - 2000) and her husband Ronald MacCallum. David informed me that his maternal grandparents used to have a smallholding at Southage Place and has vague memories of a gentleman turning up to help his grandfather to slaughter a pig or assist when the garden needed turning over. "I still recall the Old Man putting his chickens in to an old galvanised (I think) bucket in the big shed, before he plucked them, and Grandma using the part formed eggs in her baking! I remember too, the Yorkshire Puds that Gran used to make on a Sunday. Enough to sink one of those new American Flat Tops". David goes on to say, "there were nine kids in that family but by the time I got to know who fitted where in the family, half the buggers had moved out. Mind, we didn't do too bad that way either. Out of Alice's family there is only me left now".

David speaks about both his own and his father's time with the army, particularly service with the Malay Corps. in Malaysia. It appears that his father served in the army for many years until he was eventually forced to retire.

Another of his recollections about his grandparent's home was around the time when Brighouse Council made the decision to pull down the houses at Southage Place. "I do recall that at some stage the old Brighouse Council marked Southage Place down for the big 'heave ho' and when they had flattened the place they found a waterwheel below Grandma's kitchen that Grandad had

repeatedly told them was there and they had poo-poo'ed him. I did hear somewhere that the idiots that make up the planning department at Calderdale gave a certain builder permission to build in amongst the old mine shafts. I do recall a few years ago talking to a surveyor who was on the grounds, and he had no idea where the shafts were. I didn't bother enlightening the silly bugger. I do note that apart from a car parking area nothing has started there yet – I wonder why?"

Another former Rastrick resident was Roger Thompson who now lives in the London area. Roger recalls the Walton family, referring to Joseph Walton as 'Joey'. He also remembers the names of some of their children, mentioning Tommy, John, Stanley and David along with daughters Alice and Joyce but says that there could have been more. He also recalls two cousins that used to stay at the house off Toothill Bank from St. Albans in Hertfordshire. "Both girls, one fair haired the other dark haired". Like David, Roger also mentioned Joseph Walton plucking his chickens in his big shed next to the house.

David states that, "like most big families this one split up and went their separate ways. In the late 1940's we ended up in Austria and I remember when we came back here, the Old Man was sat in the downstairs room. I asked my mum a question and she asked Grandma Walton if she had some milk for me. As I had asked my mother (Alice) in Austro-German, Grandad's reaction was.....robust, I think is the best description. He told my mother to take the 'foreigner' out of his house until it could speak English. Needless to say we did not get on too well after that – I just hope he did not use the same terms when he met up with St. Peter".

Roger Thompson remembers David's family returning from Austria and living with Joseph and Emily at Southage Place. He also recalls David's brother, Ian, as the two of them went to Carr Green school together and he further recalls, "your Grandad and Grandma took Ian and I to Huddersfield Palace to see the Pantomime, Babes in the Wood".

To conclude these reminiscences, I will finish with further words from David MacCallum who states, "Emily and Joe (especially Emily) were the best of the best. They were what Rastrick and Brighouse needed in the years after the last war. I have never had problems with the Walton's. My comments on everyone going their own way were the comment of someone who became a professional expatriate - me, on the breakup of a whole family unit. The Walton's of that generation were a good close family. Their children, my mother and her brothers and sisters, started the breakup and it was carried on by my own generation. Hell - I talk to my

grandchildren and they talk about engineeringin space, so I assume my great grandchildren will be performing those operations up in space. As someone who has always believed in greener grass I cannot blame them and I would wish the children of that generation all the luck there is! Wish I could be here but I shall be long gone - maybe exploring somewhere or something else".

Earlier in this story, I touched upon William Nicholl, the brother of Eliza Nicholl who married William Walton on the 17th December 1887 at St. Mary's Church, Elland. The reason I mention



this again is that Eliza's brother had a 'claim to fame'. Family history researchers love to find nuggets like this. Her brother was called William Nicholl, born 30th October 1868, died 10th April 1922. He was born in Rastrick and played at club level for Brighouse Rangers who were one of the top Rugby Union teams in Yorkshire in the late 1800's, prior to the formation of what we now know as the Rugby League in August 1895. William played at various positions including the forwards, front row, back row and lock. When Brighouse Rangers split from the Rugby Union along

with many other northern clubs, William was still playing for them and would therefore have played both codes of the game.

Prior to the split, William had represented Yorkshire on several occasions and in 1892 he had sufficiently impressed the national selectors to be chosen to represent England, making his debut on the 2nd January 1892 against Wales at Blackheath. England won the game 17-0 and William scored a try. He was again chosen for a second game against Scotland on the 5th March 1892 at Raeburn Place, Edinburgh, the home of Edinburgh Academical Football Club which England again won by the score of 5-0.

In his early life, William Nicholl lived with his family at Spout, Rastrick where the 1881 census shows him being employed as a bobbin setter, no doubt at Spout Mills, owned by William Helm. He married Eliza Sheard on the 18th January 1890 at Halifax and they went to live on Bradford Road, Brighouse, not far from the Brighouse Rangers ground on Waterloo Road. In 1891, the year before making his international appearances, he was employed as a dyer's labourer. On the 25th August 1897, he was granted a beer-house licence at the Stag & Pheasant pub on Bethel Street, Brighouse (now the home of Eddie Taylor's hairdressers). In 1911, he

had moved on to run the Round House Inn, Clifton Road, Brighouse (now Brearley's solicitors) and in 1915 he was shown resident at 82, Marion Street, Thornhill Briggs, where he died in 1922.

And so we conclude this brief history of an average working family, who came to this area from a rural West Yorkshire background and who produced many children who in turn were responsible for those family members that exist today. Countless descendants will not be aware of their Walton family background and now live in various parts of the country, maybe even abroad but if they bother to investigate, they will find that they descend from honest decent people who helped to shape the Rastrick area into what it has become today.