

Part 2 James Ducker of Haxey

James Ducker, second son of George and Mary Ducker, was born 3rd January 1841 and christened eight days later at St Nicholas Parish Church, Haxey.
(Isle of Axholme FHS: Parish Transcripts, Haxey Baptisms Vol 5 Pg 21)

A glimpse into the Ducker household, shortly after James was born, is given by the census of 1841.

1841

City or Borough of		22		41				
Parish or Township of		Haxey		Enumeration Schedule.				
PLACE	HOUSES		NAMES		AGE and SEX	PROFESSION, TRADE, EMPLOYMENT, or of INDEPENDENT MEANS.	Where Born	
	Uninhabited or Building	Inhabited	of each Person who abode therein the preceding Night.				Male	Female
Haxey			1	George Ducker	45	Farmer	Y	
do				Mary do	30		Y	
				Mary do	15		Y	
				Ann do	4		Y	
				Sarah do	2		Y	
				James do	3		Y	
				Elizabeth do	15		Y	
				Mary do	55		Y	
do			1	John Bowditch		Farmer	No	✓
				Mary do	65		No	✓
				Walter do	30		Y	
				John do	25		Y	
				Thomas do	3		Y	
				John do	40		Y	
do			1	Robt Hatfield	25	Whitwright	Y	
				Ann do	25		Y	
				William do	9		Y	
do			1	John Gilding	30	Saddler	Y	
				Richard Coffins	15	Apprentice	Y	
do			1	George Fillingham	55	Farmer	Y	
				George do	20		Y	
				John do	7		Y	
				James do	20		Y	
				Ann do	15		Y	
TOTAL in ?				15	10			
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The address of the Ducker residence is given here only as “Haxey”. However the description of this enumeration district states that the census recorder was to begin his door-to-door survey in the village of Haxey, and finish in the vicinity of “Mr. George Duckers in the Field.” From this we know that the census recorder has worked his way from Haxey Village in an easterly direction, almost as far as today’s Eastlound, finishing up in the vicinity of the Duckers and their neighbours.

The neighbours on one side are the farming family of old John Bowskill and his wife, with their son George and daughter Ann. It is a reasonable assumption that the others are an older son, John, and a grandson, Thomas, who are visiting the family that day. Beyond the Bowskills is the Pitchfork family. John Pitchfork is a labourer with a family of seven. Eldest son John is 13, and the youngest is little Cook who appears on the 1841 census fragment on the previous page, just 6 months old. Nearest neighbour on the other side is young Robert Hatfield, 25, a wheelwright, with his wife Hannah and 9-month-old son William. Next is another tradesman, John Gilding, saddler, and his apprentice Richard Colpin, 15 years. The final page for this enumeration district shows three more households. They are the Brock family (farmers), old John Kelsey’s family (labourer) and another family of labourers living in a house called “Currygarth.”

Walking the narrow lanes which connect this scatter of rural homes, the census recorder has knocked on the door of George Ducker, “farmer.” George Ducker is recorded as 45 years old on this day, and his wife Mary as 30.

Their children are recorded as follows:
Mary (15) is George’s daughter from a previous marriage, usually called Mary Ann, and actually just 13.

(Mary Ann’s mother was Mary Starkey who had married George Ducker in 1825, and died in 1832.)

A son, George also had been born in 1832. On this census day, George Jnr. is staying with his grandparents Abraham and Mary Starkey, in the hamlet of Graizelound, just a few miles south of here.)

The census recorder has rounded the ages of the adults to the nearest five years.

However, with the remaining children he has to be more precise: Emanuel (4 years), Sarah (2 years), and our ancestor James Ducker, just 5 months.

It seems there are also some visitors in the house this day: Elizabeth Ducker (15), and a 55-year-old lady called Mary Pilsworth.
(According to red1st.com George’s wife Mary had a sister called Elizabeth Ducker, who was born in 1822. This could be the Elizabeth who was present that day. Census clerks in 1841 often changed adult birth dates up or down to the nearest 5. And red1st.com records the Pilsworth family living in nearby Epworth.)

1851

“Fast forward” now to the census of 1851. This time the enumeration district has changed, and the recorder starts his door-knocking in Eastlound, before calling on George Ducker and his neighbours, then moving on towards Haxey and finally north to Low Burnham. What has changed in the last 10 years? James is now 10, of course.

George Ducker	Head	56	Farmer	10 Acres
Mary de	Wife	59	de	Wife
Sarah Ann de	daugh	12	de	daugh
James de	Son	10	de	Son
Elizabeth de	daugh	8	de	daugh
Suzannah de	daugh	6	de	de
John de	Son	3	de	Son
Harriott de	daugh	1	de	daugh

George Ducker is now recorded as 56, “farmer, 10 acres.”

The “10 acres” is only an approximation. In fact George is the proud owner of ten strips within nearby “East Moor Furlong”, which, together with his own homestead and croft in the “Field”, amount to 8 acres, 1 rood and 26 perches.

(This is 3.4 hectares.) In addition to what he owns, he is currently renting 17 more strips scattered around various parts of Haxey, which add a further 17 acres to his total. So, in all, George Ducker manages about 10.5 hectares.

(Information is from lists attached to the “Act of Tithe Redemption 1847”.

See appendix: “Location of George Ducker’s Homestead.”)

The family has grown. The children are: “Sarah Ann (12), James (10), Elizabeth (8), Suzannah (6), John (3) and Harriott (1).

The James’s eldest brother Emanuel has left home, and appears now as a farm labourer, 15, with the Brownley family a few miles north in the village of Burnham. The children of George’s first marriage are staying with their grandfather Abraham Starkey, in Graizelound. (George Jnr., 19, is an agricultural labourer. Mary Ann, 22, has no occupation recorded here.)

The neighbours John and Joanna Pitchfork are still there, but getting on in years, and the children have all left home except for the youngest, Cook, now 10.

James grew up in a rural area just to the east of Haxey Village called “The Field” or “Haxey Field.” Today the general area is called Eastmoor. This is where George Ducker had his croft and homestead where he and his wife lived and raised their family. For a discussion on the location of the croft and homestead, see Appendix.

Significantly, Robert Hatfield, the wheelwright who we met in the 1841 census is now well established. He and his wife now have 4 children, including son William, the same age as James Ducker, and they are next-door-neighbours to the Duckers.

It is easy to imagine young James spending time at the Hatfield’s after school, with classmate William Hatfield and maybe young Cook Pitchfork too - perhaps finding an early interest in the craftsman’s special tools, his woodworking skills, the spectacle of this man working with his hands, applying his useful trade.



<http://www.tarland.org.uk>



<https://aipetcher.wordpress.com/tag/wheelwright/>

“If the wright had been in business for a while, he likely had lots of tools (possibly several hundred) hanging on a wall or lying on a table. He was a carpenter who cut wood apart, a joiner who put pieces of wood together, and a blacksmith who covered the outside rim of a wheel with an iron band. He had specialty tools for all three crafts. (An apprentice spent seven years learning how to use them.) He had adzes, augers, and axes for cutting wood, calipers, chisels, and clamps for working on it, files and rasps to smooth it, and drawknives and spokeshaves to taper it. He had different templates for wooden felloes (called ‘fellies; these were the curved pieces that when fitted together formed the exterior rim). This allowed him to make wheels of different sizes. There were hub cradles and a hand-cranked wooden wheel next to a wall. (A belt assembly connected to it provided power for a lathe or a band saw.) There were water tubs for cooling down wheels that had just been ‘shod’ with hot iron shoes (strakes).” (<http://www.davidwebbfowler.com>)

The wheelwright’s apprentice.

Within the next few years, within five years perhaps, James Ducker commenced an apprenticeship to a wheelwright. It is quite natural to think that James would have bound himself to the neighbour, wheelwright Robert Hatfield. This is indeed possible, though the census of 1861 records Robert Hatfield as employing his own two sons as “assistants”, with no mention of his employing an apprentice.

There are other wheelwrights in the district.

Master wheelwright Robert Read (38) was stationed not far away in Haxey East End, though the 1861 census makes no record of Read employing an apprentice at that time either. There is also Samuel Burrell in Eastlound, previously a wheelwright and whose son is now a journeyman in that trade.

Again, however, no record in 1861 of him employing an apprentice.

We do not know where James commenced serving his time.

We know that in 1861 James was employed as an apprentice wheelwright, and that he was at home with his parents, at least on the day the census was taken, which suggests he may have been living at home while serving his trade, and therefore his place of employment was probably close to home.

1861

Described in 1841 as “in the Field”, this year the census simply records the address of George Ducker’s homestead and croft, as “Field”.

There are two households in 1861 whose address is “Field”, and as in previous decades, we can locate this place as being on the western side of Eastlound, between Eastlound and the east end of Haxey village.

This other household at “Field”, visited immediately before the Duckers, is occupied by Thomas Clark, 46, Master Miller, and his family.

The location of the next home visited after the Duckers, is given the address “Haxey East End Main St.”⁵ It belongs to the family of Robert Hatfield the wheelwright.

George Ducker is now reckoned as a farmer of 46 acres. At home that day we find George and his wife, and James (20) who is now nearing the end of his wheelwright apprenticeship. James’s brother John, 13, like his sister Elizabeth (14), is evidently no longer at school, but has no recorded occupation. There are two other sisters at home: Sarah Ann and Harriot. Sarah Ann (22) is working as a dressmaker. Harriot (10) is still at school. The family has recorded a “servant” – a young man called John Waterhouse – his occupation is given as “carter.”

James himself is now recorded as a wheelwright’s apprentice.

29	Field	1	Thomas Clark	Head	Mar	46	Miller (Master)
			Martha	Wife	Mar	38	
			Mary	Da	Un	18	
			Thomas	So	Un	15	
			Jane	Da	Un	9	Scholar
			Fanny	Da	Un	5	Do
30	Field	1	George Ducker	Head	Mar	66	Farmer of 46 acres
			Mary	Wife	Mar	49	
			Sarah A	Da	Un	22	Dressmaker
			James	So	Un	20	Wheelwright (appren)
			Elizabeth	Da	Un	14	
			John	So	Un	13	
			Harriett	Da	Un	11	Scholar
		11	John Waterhouse	Serv	Un	19	Carter
	Haxey East End						
31	Main St	1	Robert Hatfield	Head	Mar	45	Wheelwright
			Hannah	Wife	Mar	46	
			William	So	Un	20	Do (resident)
		11	George	So	Un	16	Do (do)
32	do	1	William Morris	Head	Mar	75	Retired Farmer

In 1861 James’s sister Susannah is now living away from Haxey.

She is living in the township of Crowle, in the household of a General Practitioner Henry Ellis, a graduate of the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh.

Susannah, 16, is the housemaid.

Henry W. Ellis	Head	Mar	44	in R. Col. Reg. Edin. Regt.	St. John's Island
Mary B. Do	Wife	Do	31	General Practitioner	Edin.
William B. Do	Son	Un	6	Scholar	Linos Crowle
Isabella B. Do	Do	Do	5	Do	Do Do
Emily B. Do	Do	Do	3		Do Do
Robert H. P. Do	Son	Un	3		Do Do
James H. Do	Do	Un	2		Do Do
Elizabeth L. Do	Son	Un	20	General Serv	Do & other
Susannah Do	Do	Un	16	House maid	Do Hilly

James’s brother William appears to be unaccounted for in the census of 1861.

⁵ Main Street has been renamed, and today the east end of Main Street is called Brackenhill Rd.

Bradford

Though the tradesmen may not yet have been aware of it, by the time James had “served his time”, some time soon after 1861, the wheelwright trade was already on the verge of a rapid decline. Perhaps this is why, when we next encounter James Ducker in 1864, at Little Horton, in Bradford, he is not working in a wheelwright’s shop. He is in partnership with William Cooper and they are in the joinery and building trade, but evidently the partnership is about to be dissolved.

London Gazette 20 September 1864

NOTICE is hereby given, that the Partnership heretofore subsisting between the undersigned, William Cooper and James Ducker, in the trade or business of Joiners and Builders, carried on by them at Little Horton, in the parish of Bradford, in the county of York, or elsewhere, under the style or firm of Cooper and Ducker, has been this day dissolved—by mutual consent. The business will in future be carried on by the said William Cooper, on his own account, and he will pay and be entitled to receive all debts and sums of money due to or owing by the said late firm.—As witness the hands of the parties this 17th day of September, 1864. William Cooper.
James Ducker.

Evidently James then found a new business partner, and carried on the business of Builders and Joiners under the name Farrar and Ducker, at Marshall Street, Park-road, Bradford.

It was during this time in Bradford that James met his future wife, Eleanor Wright Bradley. We can trace the ancestry of Eleanor, and the origin of her name, back to her grandmother Nellie Wright who married John Waddington on 12th Jan 1806 at Haworth, St Michael and All Angels, Yorkshire.

Nelly Wright and John Waddington

N ^o 589 { <u>John Waddington</u> of this Parish of <u>and</u>	
<u>Nelly Wright of this Parish</u> were	
Married in this <u>Church</u> by <u>licence</u>	
this <u>twelfth</u> Day of <u>January</u> in the Year One Thousand <u>eight</u> Hundred	
and <u>six</u> By me <u>J. C. Barnock Min^{er}</u>	
This Marriage was solemnized between Us { <u>John Waddington</u>	
In the Prefence of { <u>Nelly Wright</u>	
{ <u>Thomas Horsfall</u>	
{ <u>Ann Waddington</u>	

Elizabeth Waddington and John Bradley

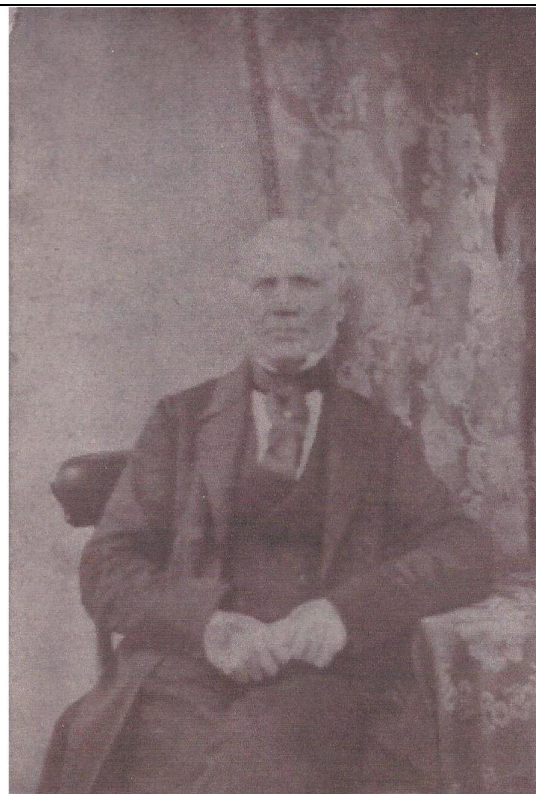
A daughter of John and Nellie (Wright) Waddington, Elizabeth, married a blacksmith called John Bradley, in the parish of Bingley, Yorkshire, on 4th November 1835.

MARRIAGES solemnized in the Parish of <u>Bingley</u>	
in the County of <u>York</u>	in the Year 18 <u>35</u>
<u>John Bradley of Harden</u>	of this Parish
<u>Blacksmith</u>	
and <u>Elizabeth Waddington of Bingley</u>	of this Parish
<u>Spinner</u>	
were married in this <u>Church</u>	by <u>Samuel Licence</u> with Consent of
	this <u>fourth</u> Day of
<u>November</u>	in the Year One thousand eight hundred and <u>thirty five</u>
By me <u>Wm Hartman Curate</u>	
This Marriage was solemnized between us { <u>John Bradley</u>	
{ <u>Elizabeth Waddington</u>	
In the Presence of {	<u>John Waddington</u>
	<u>Sarah Waddington</u>
No. 445.	

They had a daughter they named Eleanor Wright Bradley.



Eleanor Wright Bradley (born 25th July 1836)
(Very early photographs taken in Bradford. Ron Henderson collection.)



Eleanor's father John Bradley

Eleanor Wright Bradley born 25th July 1836

Baptism record St. Peter Cathedral, Bradford.

Baptism date 5th March 1837

Date of birth 25th July 1836

“Ellenor Wright daughter of John & Elizabeth Bradley, Bradford, Blacksmith.”

1837	5 th March	Ellenor Wright	John & Elizabeth Bradley	Bradford	Blacksmith	John Bradford Blacksmith
1836	No. 904					John Bradford Blacksmith

In 1841 the blacksmith John Bradley with his wife Elizabeth and young family (“Ellenor”, 4, Susannah, 3 and John 8 months) are recorded in the UK census living in Horton, Bradford.

1	John Bradley	29	Blacksmith	4
	Elizabeth do	32		4
	Ellenor do	4		4
	Susannah do	3		4
	John do	8/12		4
	Joseph Brammwell	29	Master Blacksmith	4

1851 census. John Bradley now a master blacksmith employing 1 man and three boys, is living with his family at 42 Milbrook Terrace in Bradford, Yorkshire. 14-year-old “Ellenor” is a dressmaker.⁶

42	Milbrook Terrace	John Bradley	Head	39	
		Elizabeth do	Wife	30	
		Ellenor do	Serv	14	
		John J. Bradley	Son	11	
		Susannah do	Serv		
		Ann B. do	Serv		
John Bradley	Blacksmith Master employ 1 Man and 3 boys				
Ellenor Bradley	Dress maker				

⁶ The story was passed down through my grandmother Edie, to Margaret Cardiff, that Eleanor’s mother paid £40, a lot of money in those days, to have Eleanor apprenticed as a seamstress. She worked for a well-to-do family called Illingworth.

In 1861 the family is living at Number 6 Nelson Square, Bradford, Yorkshire. Interestingly, John Bradley, as recorded here, is no longer occupied as a blacksmith. He has now become a “*Home Missionary for Wesleyans*” “Ellenor”, now 24, is a dressmaker.

1861	6	do	1	John Bradley	Head	Man	49
				Elizabeth do	Wife	Woman	57
				Ellenor do	Daughter	Girl	24
				Susannah do	Daughter	Girl	18
				John Thos do	Son	Boy	13

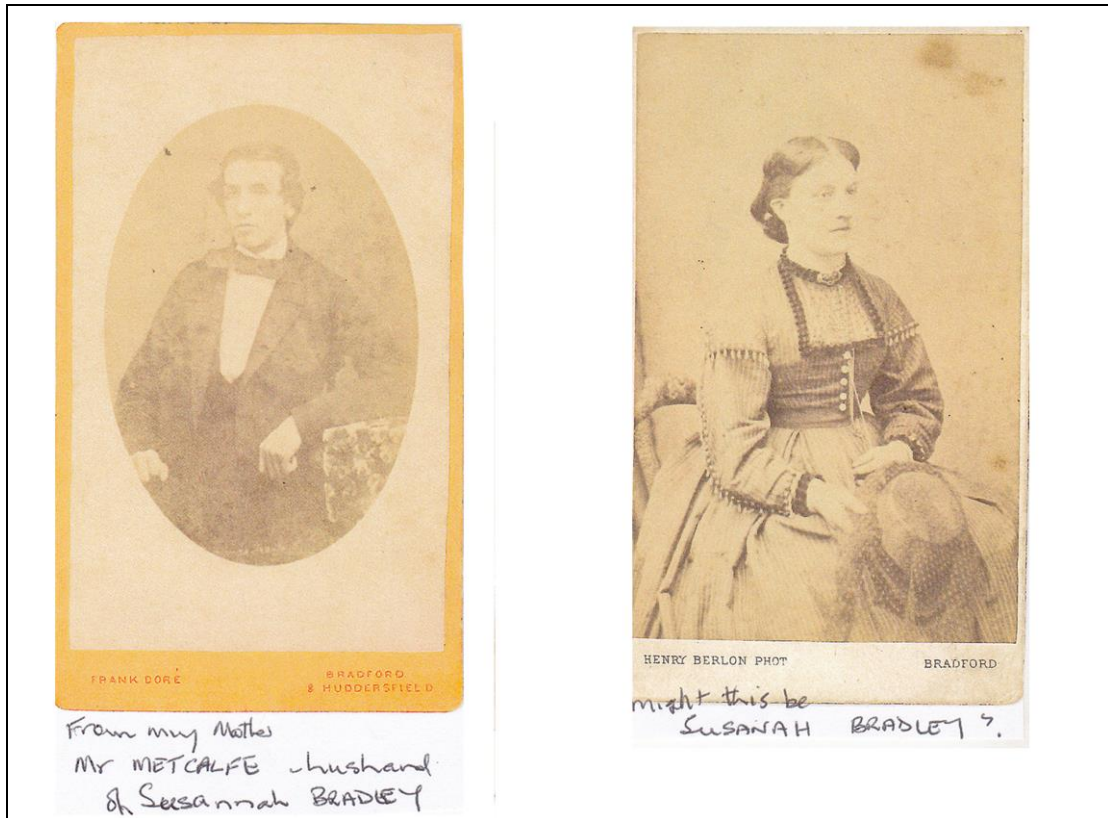
John Bradley	<i>Home Missionary for Wesleyans</i>
Ellenor	<i>Dress Maker</i>
Susannah	<i>Home Domestic</i>
John Thos	<i>Scholar</i>



These early photographs, taken in Bradford, were left to Ron Henderson by his mother (a descendant of Eleanor.)

It seems most likely they are Eleanor’s parents:
Elizabeth Bradley (nee Waddington) and John Bradley (“*Home Missionary for Wesleyans*”.)

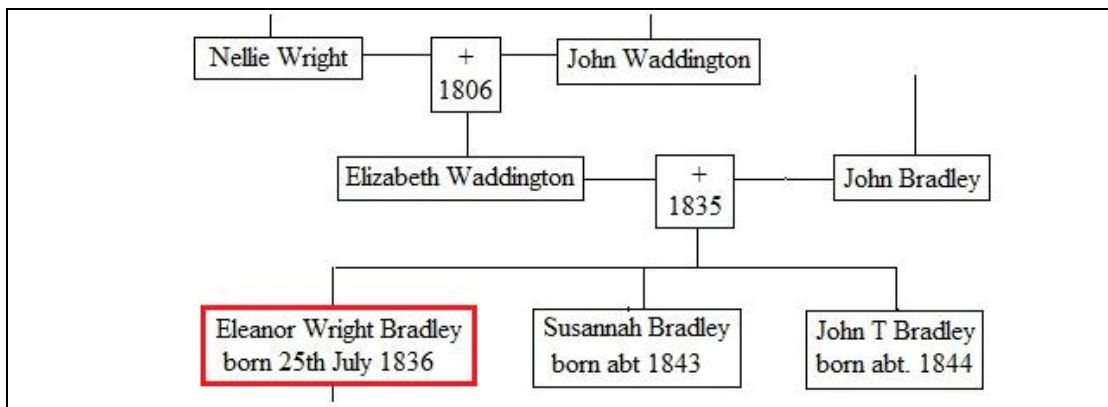
Janet Fleming has noted that the Bradford Observer recorded the death of John Bradley in 1861, so if these are of Eleanor’s parents, they must be very early photographs.



More from the collection of Ron Henderson. The subjects are probably Eleanor's sister Susannah and her Husband, book keeper James Metcalf. (Susannah and James Metcalf were married in Bradford in December 1875.)

Elizabeth Bradleys family were.
 John Bradley.
 Eleanor Wright. (m. James Ducko). died at New Plymouth 1930
 Susannah m. James Metcalf.
 Metcalf { Eliza never married lived at Idle
 Frank Metcalf. married (?) no family Yorkshire.
 The writer is Allie Bradley of Whangarei

This fragment of information above, referring to Eleanor's parents and siblings, is part of Ron Henderson's collection. It may be of interest to genealogists following the Bradley family.



James Ducker and Eleanor Wright Bradley

On 29th March 1866, James married Eleanor Bradley, the daughter of John Bradley.

Despite John Bradley having referred to himself as a “Home Missionary for Wesleyans” five years before, the wedding of his daughter took place in a conformist cathedral, (St Peters, see over page) and on the marriage certificate, John Bradley (father of the bride) has reverted to his occupation of Blacksmith.

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10 26 Marriage solemnized at the Parish Church, in the Parish of Bradford, in the County of York.								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
466	29 March	James Ducker	25	Bachelor	Joiner	Horton	George Ducker	Joiner
		Eleanor Wright Bradley	29	Spinster	Dressmaker	Horton	John Bradley	Blacksmith
Married in the Parish Church, according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by						or after <u>Canon</u> by me,		
						<u>A. King Smith</u>		
This Marriage was solemnized between us,			James Ducker			in the presence of us,		
			Eleanor Wright Bradley			John Thomas Bradley		
						Susannah Bradley		
I, <u>A. King Smith</u> of Bradford, in the County of York, do hereby certify that the foregoing Entry, numbered <u>466</u> is a true copy of the Entry in numbered, made in the Marriage Register Books of the said Parish. Witness my hand this <u>29th</u> day of <u>March</u> 18 <u>66</u>								

From the collection of Janet Fleming.

At St. Peter (Bradford Cathedral):

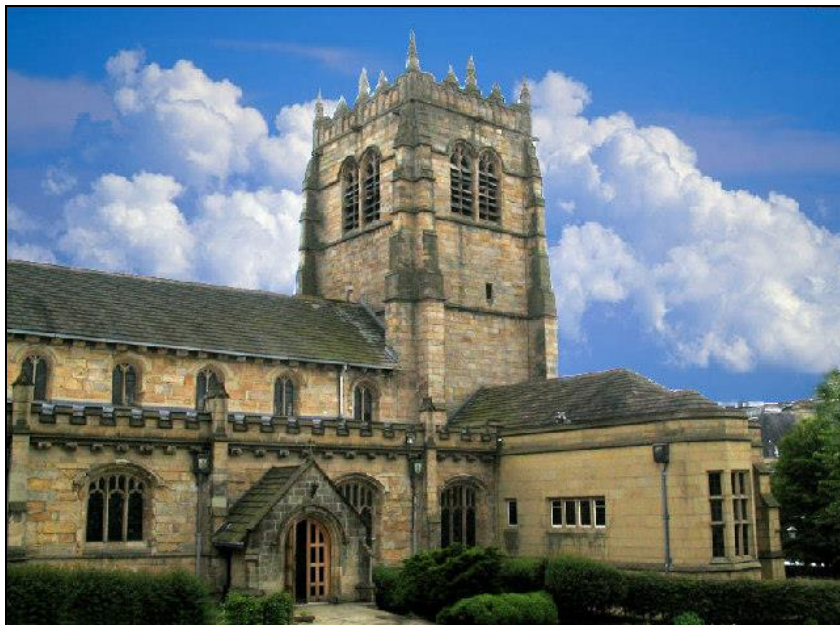
James Ducker, 25, Joiner + Eleanor Wright Bradley, 29, Dressmaker
(Witnesses were John Thomas Bradley and Susannah Bradley, both brother and sister of Eleanor.)

Both Eleanor and James signed, with accomplished handwriting, as did Eleanor's brother John (21) and (perhaps not quite so accomplished) sister "Susanah" (23).

This Marriage was solemnized between us, { James Ducker
Eleanor Wright Bradley }

in the Presence of us, { John Thomas Bradley
Susannah Bradley }

From the certificate held by Yorkshire Parish Records. (via Ancestry.com)
(West Yorkshire Archive Service; Wakefield, Yorkshire, England; Yorkshire Parish Records; Old Reference Number: 40D90/1/3/72; New Reference Number: BDP14)



St Peter Cathedral, Bradford (Mick Melvin - From geograph.org.uk)

Marian Ducker born 1866

On Nov 15th 1866 a daughter was born to James and Eleanor, who was baptised in the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Richmond Terrace, Bradford, and named Marian.

(The baptism record below gives date of birth as Feb 7 1867 but there are reasons to suspect it may be mistaken. See later.)

When Baptized.	Child's Name, Son or Daughter.	Parent's Name.		Abode.	Child's Age when Baptized.	The Minister by whom the ceremony was performed.
		Christian.	Surname.			
1867 No. 121.	Marian daughter	James and Eleanor	Ducker	Osborn Rd	Feb 7 1867	Richard Smetten

The next child born to James and Eleanor was a son they named Herbert. The child died in 1869 about two years later.

In December 1868 James's father George Ducker died.

In the same month, James Ducker and George Farrar dissolved their partnership.

THE LONDON GAZETTE, DECEMBER 8, 1868.

NOTICE is hereby given, that the Partnership heretofore subsisting between us the undersigned, George Farrar and James Ducker, carrying on business at Marshall street, in Park-road, in Bradford, in the county of York, and elsewhere, as Joiners and Builders, under the style or firm of Farrar and Ducker, has been this day dissolved by mutual consent. All debts due to or owing by the said partnership will be received and paid by the said George Farrar, who will in future carry on the said business on his own account.—Dated this 4th day of December, 1868.

George Farrar

James Ducker.

The following year George Farrar was declared bankrupt.

The next child born to James and Eleanor was Ada, born in Bradford on 2nd July 1869

When Baptized.	Child's Christian Name.	Parent's Name.		Abode.	Quality, Trade, or Profession.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
		Christian.	Surname.			
1870 Dec 13 th Born July 2 nd 1869	Ada	James Eleanor	Ducker Ducker	Bradford Park Rd	Joiner	George Stinson

(Taken from the baptism certificate, part of Janet Fleming's collection)

The 1870's Westwoodside, Haxey

James now returned to Westwoodside in his home town of Haxey, where he settled with his wife Eleanor, 3-year-old daughter Marian and baby Ada, and started a business of his own.

1871 UK Census provides us with the following record of James and his family, in Westwoodside, Haxey. Their house address is "Commonside"

James Ducker	Head	34	Builder & Wheelwright
Eleanor H. Ducker	Wife	34	Employing 2 men + 1 Boy
Ada	Daughter	1	
Ernest Ducker	Son	4 mo	
Daniel Dunn	Apprentice	16	Builder & Apprentice
Sarah Jackson	Servant	11	Domestic Serv

There are a number of interesting points to note here. James is recorded as "Builder and Wheelwright employing 2 men + 1 boy".

The apprentice boy, Daniel Dunn, 16 years of age, is staying with the family.

The household also includes a domestic servant: Sarah Jackson, 11 years of age.

At the time of this 1871 census, their eldest daughter, Marian – our ancestor – was recorded as staying with her grandmother Elizabeth Bradley, now a widow and keeper of a lodging house, back in Little Horton, Bradford.

(Marian is incorrectly recorded here as "niece, visitor." In fact she is Elizabeth's granddaughter.)

Elizabeth Bradley	Head	Widow	61	Lodging House Keeper
Susannah Bradley	Daughter	Unm	20	Lodging house keeper's Ass't
John T. do	Son	do	25	Workmen's Clerk
Marian Ducker	niece, visitor	do	4	
Margaret Spence	Boarder	do	36	Teacher of Drawing & Painting
Thomas R. Crabtree	do	do	17	Staff Manufacturer (cyr)

Another point of interest, possibly to be significant in the near future:

James Ducker is not the only wheelwright in Commonsides.

The 1871 census shows, just 22 houses away from James, the household of John Johnson, 26, wheelwright and joiner.

Here is an extract from the Haxey trade directory, found in County Gazetteer 1872:

Ducker Emanuel, farmer	Ducker John, farmer
2 Ducker George, farmer	4 Ducker John Haywood, florist (D. and Son)
Ducker Miss Harriet, draper	1 Ducker Joseph, farmer
4 Ducker James, florist (D. & Son), and farmer	Ducker and Son, nurserymen, seedsmen and florists
4 Ducker James, joiner and wheelwright, Common	Ducker Miss Susannah, day school
Ducker James, farmer	

Our James is the one listed here as a joiner and wheelwright, Commonsides.

George Ducker (in the directory above) is James's father, still living at Eastlound, and Emanuel is James's eldest brother. School mistress Susannah is James's sister.



Commonside (<https://axholmecameraman.shutterfly.com>)

James and Eleanor had four children during this time living at Commonside, in Westwodside, Haxey.

Their birthdates and baptisms are recorded in the “Haxey Transcripts”, from which the following records have been extracted:⁷

DUCKER	Ada	James	Eleanor	02 Jun 1869	13 Dec 1870	Joiner	CP Westwoodside
DUCKER	Ernest	James	Eleanor	21 Nov 1870	13 Dec 1870	Joiner	CP Westwoodside
DUCKER	Frank	James	Eleanor Wright	21 Aug 1872	11 Sep 1872		CW Westwoodside
DUCKER	Alfred	James	Eleanor Wright	26 Dec 1873	28 Jan 1874		CW Haxey
DUCKER	James	James	Eleanor Wright	18 Oct 1875	29 Dec 1875		CW Westwoodside

Isle of Axholm Family History Society.

(CP=Primitive Methodist CW=Wesleyan)

The Haxey Transcripts tell us that in 1869:

Ada and Ernest were baptised together at the **Primitive Methodist Chapel, Westwoodside.**

Frank was baptised in 1872 in the **Wesleyan Chapel, Westwoodside.**

Alfred was baptised in 1874 at the **Wesleyan Chapel in Haxey**

James was baptised in December 1875 back at the **Wesleyan Chapel in Westwoodside.**

James and Eleanor appear now to be firmly associated with the non-conformist Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist chapels.

⁷ (Ada, baptised at Westwoodside along with Ernest, was born in Bradford.

There appears to be a transcription error regarding her date of birth.

The Waddington family bible has her birth date as 2nd July 1869, not 2nd June 1869 as stated above in the Haxey transcripts.)



Westwoodside

<https://axholmecameraman.shutterfly.com>

The decade of the 1870s was not a good time to be in business in rural England. The farming economy was depressed, wages were low, and farmers were not inclined to invest in repairs and maintenance, which was the mainstay of the local wheelwrights and blacksmiths. As we have already noted, the wheelwright trade was facing decline – and James Ducker was not the only wheelwright in Commonsidge.

By mid-1875, James Ducker was facing bankruptcy.

THE LONDON GAZETTE, SEPTEMBER 21, 1875.

The Bankruptcy Act, 1869.

In the County Court of Lincolnshire, holden at Lincoln.

In the Matter of Proceedings for Liquidation by Arrangement or Composition with Creditors, instituted by James Ducker, of Westwoodside, in the parish of Haxey, in the county of Lincoln, Joiner and Wheelwright.

NOTICE is hereby given, that a First General Meeting of the creditors of the above-named person has been summoned to be held at the Great Northern Hotel, Haxey Station, in the parish of Haxey aforesaid, on the 4th day of October, 1875, at twelve o'clock at noon precisely.

—Dated this 14th day of September, 1875.

GEORGE NEWBORN, Epworth, near Rotherham
Attorney for the said James Ducker.

This must have been a difficult time for Eleanor, who was soon to give birth to their sixth child, James.

About the time the Duckers began to grapple with their deteriorating prospects, a meeting was held at the neighbouring village of Epworth.

It is very likely this meeting would have been attended by James Ducker.

Epworth Bells and Isle of Axholme Messenger, Saturday September 11th 1875.
(Thanks to Beryl Ward for finding this...)

EMIGRATION TO NEW ZEALAND.

A public meeting, presided over by Mr. H. Gravel, was held in the Temperance Hall last Thursday evening, when, after some remarks on the Labour Question by Mr. Bradley, delegate from the Amalgamated Labour League, Mr. J. H. White, of Laceby, Lincolnshire, and Mr. W. M. Burton, of New Zealand, spoke at some length on the above subject.

The addresses were interesting, and included a graphic description of New Zealand, and the advantages of emigrating there. It was, however, shewn that those who go to New Zealand with a hope of success as emigrants, need to be good workers, distinguished by perseverance, sobriety, and general good character. The attendance, chiefly consisting of the working classes, was large: and the interest in the subject was manifested by their remaining till the close of the meeting at half-past ten o'clock; after which a portion of the audience remained to inspect some views of New Zealand exhibited by Mrs. Burton.

Burton, a settler from New Plymouth, New Zealand, had been appointed by the people of New Plymouth to recruit specially for the Province of Taranaki.

These meetings, organised by agents Burton and White, were held throughout Lincolnshire during the mid 1870s (See Appendix.)

While it was not a convenient moment for James, hampered as he was by his unfolding financial difficulties, it would have put some ideas in his mind, and it is likely that emigration was a hot topic of discussion among the villagers at that time. When the family decided to emigrate, as they later did, why did they choose New Plymouth as a destination? This meeting may provide the answer.

Its purpose was to promote New Plymouth and the Province of Taranaki.

If James was not attracted to Taranaki as a direct result of this meeting, it is more than likely that at least one of his neighbours or associates was.

London Gazette Notices in October 12th 1875 and February 2nd 1876 further documented the bankruptcy procedure.

THE LONDON GAZETTE, FEBRUARY 22, 1876.

The Bankruptcy Act, 1869.

In the County Court of Lincolnshire, holden at Lincoln.

In the Matter of a Special Resolution for Liquidation by Arrangement of the affairs of James Ducker, of Westwoodside, in the parish of Haxey, in the county of Lincoln, Joiner and Wheelwright.

THE creditors of the above-named James Ducker who have not already proved their debts, are required, on or before the 4th day of March, 1876, to send their names and addresses, and the particulars of their debts or claims, to Frederick Brewster, of 50, Norfolk street, Sheffield, in the county of York, one of the members of the Committee of Inspection under the liquidation, or in default thereof they will be excluded from the benefit of the Dividend proposed to be declared

—Dated this 11th day of February, 1876.

Eventually the Duckers were able to move away from Haxey, and they shifted to the coastal town of Grimsby in North East Lincolnshire.

Evidently they lived at Bargate, in Grimsby, and Beryl Ward has added the following: “.....without a house number it would be impossible to guess where they were in that road, but it is quite upmarket and would have been a smart place to live back then. At the city centre end of Bargate there are some houses that look as if they have been there from around that time and would have been rather splendid in their day....”

We know that in July 1878 Elizabeth, the youngest child of James and Eleanor was born at Grimsby, and that Grimsby was the Duckers’ last place of residence when they embarked on their long journey to New Zealand in February 1880. From this, it follows that the Duckers probably lived at Grimsby for at least a year and a half, maybe more

Some time in the mid to late 1870s James and Eleanor made the decision to emigrate to New Zealand. They may have made the decision as early as 1875, while James was extricating himself from his financial difficulties at Westwoodside – or it may have been as late as October 1879, before the assisted immigrant scheme was suspended.

Why did they decide to emigrate, why did they choose New Zealand – and why in New Zealand did they choose New Plymouth in the (then) somewhat depressed province of Taranaki?

James Ducker was not the first of the family to make the decision to emigrate. His first cousin (also called James) who had grown up just a few miles away in Burnham, had emigrated to America in 1851, followed out there by two brothers. (See Appendix: The American Duckers.)

Eleanor’s brother John T Bradley had already emigrated too.

John T. Bradley had departed as an assisted immigrant arriving in New South Wales in Australia, in 1878.

LIST of IMMIGRANTS per Ship		<i>"Peterborough"</i>									
Arrived on the		<i>15th</i>		day of		<i>January</i>				187 <i>8</i> .	
<i>Bradley</i>	<i>John</i>										
<i>Warehouseman Yorkshire</i>											

(Somehow he was in Wellington when the Duckers arrived in 1880, but how and why he was there, and how he came to be recorded as the Duckers' "nominator" for assisted immigration, remains a mystery.)

It is obvious from what had already happened that James was probably seeking a way to better himself, and provide a future for his family. Beryl Ward has suggested another possible motive (referring to the recent death of Elizabeth Bradley, Eleanor's mother):

"...Elizabeth died 1 Dec 1879, the Will was proved 20 Dec 1879, and she left under £300 to be shared between her three children. So early in 1880 Eleanor inherited just under £100. Could this be significant in their decision to emigrate?

Decisions weren't always made by the male of the family..."

My own view is that this (not insignificant) inheritance might have arrived a little too late to influence the decision, as the cut-off for assisted immigration was 1879 and the Duckers had sailed for New Zealand as assisted immigrants by February 1880.

(It might also be pointed out here that James's father had died (in December 1868). The estate was at that time held in trust to support his mother, and she was still living at the time when James's family left England.)

