

A brief history of the Murrell's in our family

William Murrell, grandfather of Isabella Murrell

William Murrell married Sarah Horlock at St. Catherine Cree Church, Leadenhall Street, London in the 4th quarter of 1789. The Archbishop of Canterbury granted them a marriage license on 27 October 1789, which was rather a high level authorisation. While he lived inside the City of London, she was from Rettendon in Essex and in order to avoid a three week delay while banns were called in both parishes, the couple obtained the license from the archbishop. We do not know why William and Sarah chose this speedy means rather than waiting for banns to be called.

We don't know where William Murrell was born or anything about his family.

Sarah Horlock, grandmother of Isabella Murrell

Sarah Horlock was the daughter of a merchant family involved in barge traffic on the rivers of Essex and the Thames. The family dates back to Richard Horlock, born in the London parish of Hammersmith about 1650/70. He was a barge owner, wharfinger, and boat builder. He married and had seven children. His son Samuel (1694-1742) married and had five children. His son Samuel (1729-1799), who was Sarah Horlock's father, continued in the shipping business, married and had the following legitimate children - Robert (b. 1770), Elizabeth, Mary, Elleanor, Sarah, Richard and Hannah, as well as several illegitimate children. We believe Sarah was born in Hockley.

This second Samuel branched out to Rettendon, near Battlesbridge, on the River Crouch about 1750. The Maldon Ship registers show that he owned several sailing barges between 1786 and 1840. He probably came across this village while trading on the East Anglia coast and decided it would be a good place to set up business.

Another source says: About 30 barges were owned in Maldon about 1790. The first to be built in Essex seems to be the "Experiment" built for Samuel Horlock at Rettendon in 1791. The Maldon ship registers show that Samuel owned several square-sterned sailing barges between 1786 and 1798 - The "Henry & Robert" 52 tons, "Sally" 44 tons, "Industry" 64 tons, "Charlotte" 45 tons, and the "Experiment" 63 tons.

A descendant, R J Horlock, believes that the Experiment was built in Hockley by Samuel Horlock since he had obtained a working knowledge of boat building from the Hammersmith yard and also owned a wharf in Hockley.

When Samuel died in 1798/9 he had established a very good business. He owned quite a lot of farming land in the area; coal yards in Rawreth, lime kilns in Rettendon, wharves at Hockley, a wharf at Hammersmith and the above mentioned barges. The combination of farming and barging has always been fairly common in Essex because of the extensive network of tidal creeks and rivers and in this case provided the colours for the family 'bob'. This was a triangle with blue at the top and yellow beneath; blue for the sea and yellow for the corn.

The main trade for Samuel's barges seems to have been in coal, manure, and chalk

being converted into lime for the heavy Essex soil. The return trip to London was probably with corn and hay and straw for the thousands of horses in the city. William Murrell inherited half of his father-in-law's business when Samuel Horlock died in 1798/9.

William Murrell and Sarah Horlock had 11 children, of whom four lived to a full age.

William Charles Murrell - Isabella's father

William Charles Murrell (circa 1792 - 1853), seems to have followed in his father's footsteps. He was the eldest son of William Sr. & Sarah and was born and likely raised in Hockley. He married Harriet who was born 3 July 1800 in Orsett. We know that Harriet was born in Orsett from the 1851 census. We also know that Harriot (sic) Robinson baptised in Orsett on 3 July 1800 was the daughter of Ralph & Ann Robinson. William Charles's brother Robert, born 1803 married an Isabella Campbell Robinson and she too stated in the 1851 census that she was born in Orsett. We are sure that Harriott and Isabella Robinson were sisters.

The marriage of William Charles & Harriot took place on 12th Feb. 1828 at St Botolph's Without, Aldgate, city of London, William Charles Murrell (Bachelor of this parish) and Harriot Campbell (widow of Hockley, Essex)

Harriot had previously been married to John Fearnhead Campbell from St Giles Cripplegate, City of London. He and Harriet were married by licence and with the consent of the mother of Harriot at Orsett on 8 July 1819. Witnesses were William Robinson, Ann Robinson, Richard Watts and Mary Butterfield. John Fearnhead Campbell died in 1821 and was buried 30th September 1821 at St Giles Cripplegate. He was aged 39 years.

On the 1841 Census William Charles Murrell and his family appear in Battlesbridge, near Rettendon, as follows:

William Murrell aged 40 (49) a mariner.
Harriet aged 30 (40)
William aged 13
Harriet aged 10
Charles aged 9
Samuel aged 7
Isabella aged 6
Robert aged 3
Henry aged 1

On the 1851 Census William Charles Murrell and his family appear under the name of Morrell and they were living at Church Street, St. Mary, Maldon as follows: William Morrell, Head, married, age 59, Mariner, born Hockley. Harriett Morrell, Wife, married, age 50, born Orsett. Mary Morrell, daughter, unmarried, age 8, born Maldon. Isabella does not appear.

William Charles and Harriet are buried in St. Mary's churchyard in Maldon. The death records shown them as William Charles Murrell, sailor, age 61, who died in

Maldon on May 5th, 1853 (burial May 16th) and Harriet Murrell, age 67, who died on November 26th 1867 (burial December 3rd) in Maldon. On his death certificate William Charles was listed as a “mariner”, and on Harriet’s certificate she was listed as the “widow of William Murrell, bargeman”. On Isabella’s marriage record, her father was listed as William Murrell, sailor. On Isabella’s remarriage certificate, her father is listed as William Charles Murrell, master mariner.

Isabella’s Brother and Sisters

Isabella’s eldest brother, **William Charles Murrell**, married Mary Handley (both were minors at the time), on September 17, 1846 in the Maldon St. Mary’s Registration District. Witnesses were Charles Murrell Handley & Harriet Murrell and the groom’s father was listed as William Charles Murrell, mariner.

The groom was also a mariner, and continued the family shipping business through “Murrell’s Wharf” in Bermondsey. We find a Mary Murrell, age 3, living with Charles Murrell Handley & his family as a visitor in 1851. This is the daughter of William Charles Murrell and Mary Handley, but they are not at this address or on the Maldon census at all.

Mary Handley Murrell died in the first quarter of 1875 at age 48 in the Lambeth registration district. In the 1881 census, in Lambeth, William Charles Murrell appears as a coal merchant & widower, aged 52 who was born in Hullbridge, which is about 10 miles from Southend on Sea. He had a daughter Isabella aged 23, born in Bermondsey and other children Edith (22), Robert (20), Samuel (19), Grace (18), and Clara (16), all born in Bermondsey.

William Charles married again in the third quarter of 1886 to an Elizabeth, who was the executrix of his will. William Charles became financially overextended in 1889 by guaranteeing his son Robert’s debts and declared bankruptcy. He died in St. Saviours registration district in Southwark in the 4th quarter of 1892 aged 63 and was listed as a coal merchant.

Samuel Murrell was a mariner and married Mary Raven in the first quarter of 1860 in Maldon, St. Mary’s. He died in Salcott in the second quarter of 1892, aged 48 and was listed as a hay and straw merchant.

Robert Murrell was a master mariner and married Esther Rawlinson, a widow and sister of Mary Raven in the 3rd quarter of 1866 in Bermondsey. He was the licensee of the “White Hart” in Virley, from 1874 to at least 1882. He died in the 3rd quarter of 1889 in Virley and was listed as an innkeeper. His wife died there in the first quarter of 1893 aged 54.

Henry Murrell was also a mariner and he married Sarah Sutton from Heybridge about 1867. Henry and his wife and six children were aboard the vessel "Denton" at Halling on Medway, Kent at the time of the 1881 census.

We know of Charles Murrell from the 1841 census but have no other information about him.

There is a **Harriet Murrell** on the 1851 census living in Maldon, who was born in

Hockley and aged 21. She was working as a domestic with no other family at this address. This is probably Isabella's sister Harriet. Harriet later appears on the 1881 census as Harriet Allan, aged 51, married to Andrew Allan of Fife, Scotland, a cooper, age 50 living in Bermondsey, Surrey with 3 daughters.

Harriett was still alive in September 1902 as she is mentioned as staying with her sister Isabella in Maldon in a letter (dated Sept 1st) written by Isabella to her son Robert just before he left for America.

Ann Murrell appears in the 1881 census as Ann M. Worth, aged 36, wife of Moses Worth, age 39. They were farmers in Denver, Colorado, owning 160 acres of land, but appear as visitors in the home of Moses' brother Peter in Siddington, Cheshire at the time of the census.

Ann died in England of cancer on 17 June 1881 in her 37th year and is buried in Maldon St Mary's churchyard next to the grave of her parents. Moses returned to America after Ann's death.