



## The family of 'radical traitor' Henry Redhead Yorke

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**Abstract:** Although the political views of Henry Redhead Yorke have received attention since he first emerged as a radical in the early 1790s, his origins have always been regarded as somewhat obscure. Nor has attention been paid to his family and descendants. Using genealogical techniques, this article explores not Henry Redhead Yorke the radical, but his family origins, his upbringing and education, his marriage and the 'what happened afterwards' to his descendants. It also discusses his change of name and proposes a new explanation.

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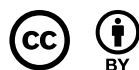
### Introduction

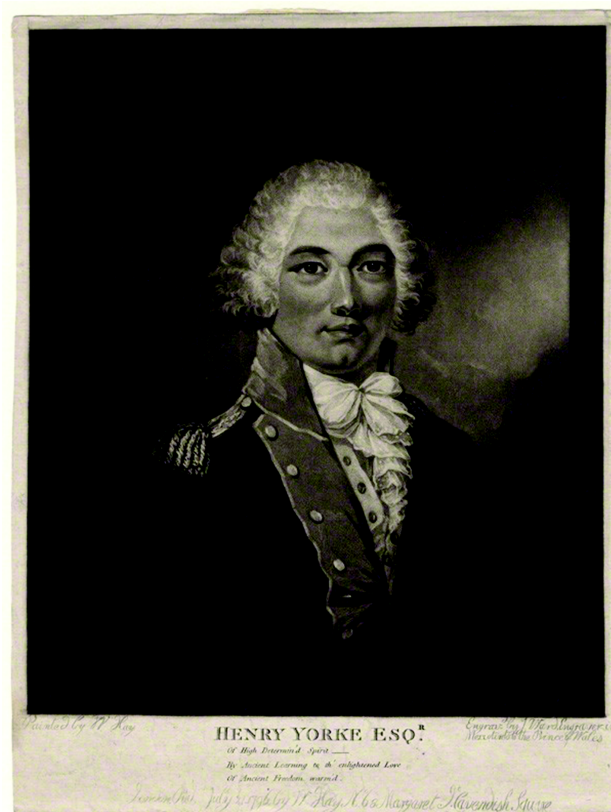
Henry Redhead Yorke, born Henry Redhead, hit the headlines in the 1790s when he was tried on charges of conspiracy in one of the much-publicised political trials that followed civil unrest in Britain in the wake of the outbreak of the French Revolution. Although he is less well-known than others tried at the same period – the five Scottish 'martyrs' (Thomas Muir, Thomas Fyshe Palmer, William Skirving, Maurice Margarot and Joseph Gerrald) who were sentenced to transportation, or Thomas Hardy, John Horne Tooke and John Thelwall who were acquitted in England in 1794 – there has recently been a revival of interest in Yorke. This has mainly centred on his political views, and his recantation of them after a period of imprisonment, rather than on his origins which have generally been regarded as enigmatic.

Yorke was sent to Paris in 1792 as a delegate to the Revolutionary Convention from the Derby Society for Political Information, along with Dr William Brooks Johnson of Coxbench near Little Eaton. He was present at the trial of the king, but escaped back to England in early 1793 when he was alerted to his own imminent arrest under suspicion of spying.<sup>1</sup> On 7 April he gave an impassioned address to a large crowd on Castle Hill, Sheffield. Such was public enthusiasm for him that one couple even named their child after him.<sup>2</sup> A warrant was issued for his arrest and he was sought in Manchester, where he was said to be at the house of his 'natural mother Mrs Henstock who is a mulatto'.<sup>3</sup> Captured near Hull, apparently trying to get to Hamburg and thence possibly to Switzerland to join his brother Dr Joseph Redhead, Yorke was held for well over a year before his trial at the York Assizes in July 1795.<sup>4</sup> Originally indicted for the capital offence of treason, the charge was reduced to 'misdemeanor, conspiracy and seditious words'. He elected to defend himself, which was generally regarded as a mistake since the jury found him guilty. He then opted to retain Thomas Erskine at the sentencing hearing and was sentenced to two years in prison and fined £200. He would not be released, however, until he could find sureties of £1,000 on his own behalf and two others willing to put up £250 each.<sup>5</sup> He did not finally leave prison until 1798, after which he married 'his jailer's daughter', had a family, wrote for the *Star* and the *True Briton*, was called to the Bar and settled down, now no longer a Whig or a radical but a reformed Tory.<sup>6</sup>

Such are the basics of the story as it has hitherto been known. But it is possible to put further flesh on the bones and throw light on his immediate family, his roots and the social context in which he grew up. In the absence of this broader context, Henry Redhead has been viewed as an individual radical reacting against his background, dissociated from kith and kin. Moreover, the story has always hitherto ended with Henry's death and has disregarded what then happened to his family and descendants, who did not simply evaporate into obscurity but took their place in the British establishment. In this, Henry's story is typical of many of those referred to as 'children of uncertain fortune' by Livesay – the mixed-race offspring of the Caribbean plantocracy, educated in England and merging into the mainstream society of their fathers; their illegitimate origins and mixed-race heritage eventually forgotten.<sup>7</sup>

Henry Redhead Yorke was born Henry Redhead in August 1772 on the island of Barbuda in the Caribbean, the second son of Samuel Redhead, a successful planter and attorney (i.e. agent) for the Codrington estates, and Sarah Bullock. (No baptism record has been found but he referred to himself as being twenty-two in his Sheffield speech of 1794.) A mezzotint portrait in the National Gallery (Figure 1) shows him as born in August 1772.<sup>8</sup>





**Figure 1. Henry Redhead Yorke in 1796. National Portrait Gallery. Licensed under Creative Commons.**

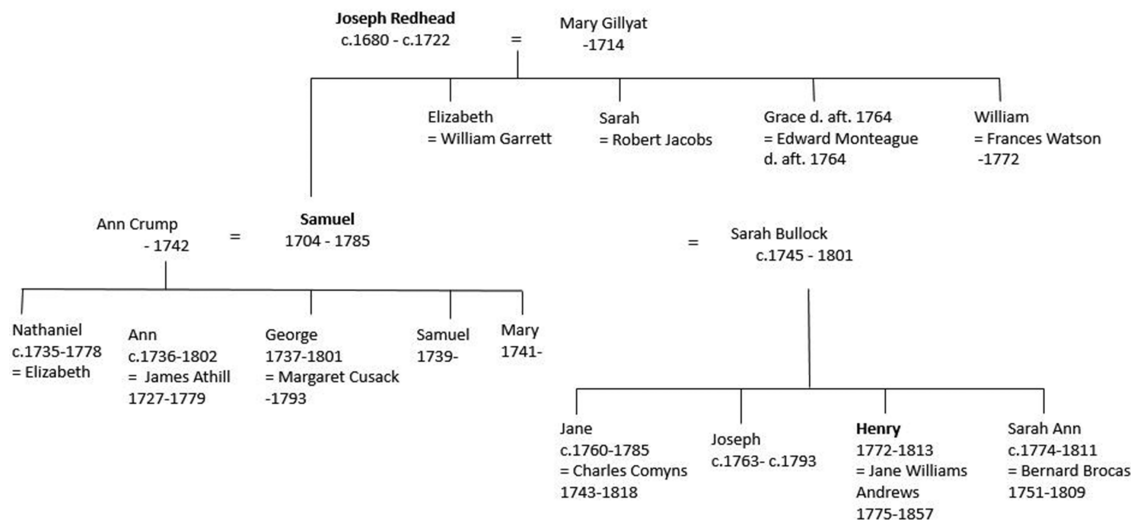
To understand Samuel Redhead and his son Henry's background we need to step back to the first generation of the family known to have been in the Caribbean. According to Titford, 'it is something of a miracle that any significant archives have survived on Antigua itself'.<sup>9</sup> Hurricanes, earthquakes, floods and fires have taken a severe toll since Antigua was first colonised in 1632. The most accessible source for anyone researching the early history of Antigua and Barbuda is the monumental work by Vere Langford Oliver, who spent several months there in 1888–89 collecting and transcribing material, and this article leans on Oliver's work for the early history of the Redhead family.<sup>10</sup>

#### **The first generation: Joseph Redhead (c.1680 – c.1725)**

Joseph Redhead was a carpenter who was present on Antigua in the first decade of the eighteenth century. His date of birth is estimated from the approximate date of death given by Oliver and the date of birth of his son Samuel.<sup>11</sup> There is no known record of Joseph's origins, but in 1707 Joseph Redhead and Thomas Hall, both carpenters, petitioned for ten acres of land on Antigua.<sup>12</sup> Their venture appears not to have profited at first as in 1711 Joseph was petitioning for food; however by 1712 he was paid £646 for work he had done, and in June 1715 he leased two proportions of land at Parham on the island.<sup>13</sup> Joseph married Mary Gillyat, from an established island family, and their son Samuel was born in about 1704 (inferred from the age on his burial record).<sup>14</sup> Samuel had at least one brother, William, a surgeon who probably went to America, and three sisters who all married on Antigua (see [Figure 2](#)).<sup>15</sup>

#### **The second generation: Samuel Redhead (c.1704–1785)**

Samuel was an energetic member of Antiguan society and a self-made man. In 1726 he obtained the post of clerk in the Registrar's Office, and in 1748 he was elected a Member of the Assembly for Willoughby Bay, by which time he was acting as attorney (managing agent) for the Codrington estates on Antigua and Barbuda and simultaneously building his own fortune.<sup>16</sup> The Codringtons were among the earliest colonisers, and subsequently among the wealthiest of the eighteenth-century sugar barons.<sup>17</sup> Samuel married Ann Crump who came from an established island family, and they had at least five children.<sup>18</sup> An indication of Samuel's character may be had from the 1756 will of his wife's brother Dr George Crump, who revoked an earlier legacy of books to Samuel's son George and bitterly revoked Samuel's former appointment as executor and trustee:



**Figure 2. Descendants of Joseph Redhead.**

He had nothing in the world of his own to begin with until my brother Nathaniel Crump deceased interested him in a third part, if I remember right, in a Sloop Cargo, the profits whereof could not be much, and but two years after that my said Brother died, when it fell to my lot to befriend Mr Redhead, which I did to the utmost of my fortune, as I reposed an entire Confidence in his Honesty, yet out of the many different Voyages he made in Trade to which I promoted him, he never has rendered the least account of his transactions.<sup>19</sup>

By 1763 Samuel had accumulated enough capital to purchase the 420-acre Fryes plantation for £20,000.<sup>20</sup> When, in his seventies, he eventually decided to retire to England, he was a wealthy man, owning 740 acres and 264 slaves on Antigua.<sup>21</sup>

Samuel's wife Ann died in 1742, leaving two surviving children, George and Ann, who also eventually removed to England.<sup>22</sup> George died in 1801<sup>23</sup> and Ann in 1802.<sup>24</sup> Samuel did not remarry but had a number of relationships with enslaved women, which may be inferred from legacies left in his will.<sup>25</sup> A letter written by Godfrey Davy in September 1779 requested freedom for his mulatto half-sister 'who has borne many children for Mr Redhead and now wishes to retire'.<sup>26</sup> Possibly she was the Elizabeth Davy mentioned in Samuel's will. The most long-lasting relationship was with Sarah Bullock, who was not approved of by Samuel's nephew James Atthill. The latter wrote in June 1779 that Samuel's faculties were declining and he had a domineering wife who 'has had art enough to make him believe he is the father of a tribe which is undoubtedly the offspring of others'.<sup>27</sup> It seems unlikely Atthill believed Samuel had married Sarah, and he probably used the term 'wife' loosely. Certainly Samuel himself did not refer to her as his wife, although she later represented herself as his widow. The 'offspring' referred to by Atthill were Jane, Joseph, Henry and Sarah Ann Redhead.

Sarah Bullock was enslaved on Barbuda on land owned by the Codrington family. She was described as a mulatto, hence the daughter of an enslaved African and a white man. Barbuda was unsuited to sugar cultivation but was used for the production of stock for use on Antigua, and Henry recorded that it was also used to quarantine sick slaves from Antigua.<sup>28</sup> In 1771 Samuel Redhead wrote to Sir William Codrington to request the purchase of Sarah and an unnamed son, likely to have been Henry Redhead's older brother Joseph.<sup>29</sup> As Jane Redhead was probably older than Joseph, it is reasonable to assume that Samuel Redhead also purchased Jane's freedom, while Henry and Sarah Ann may have been born free.

We know that Samuel brought Sarah and their four children to England some time before 1784, from references to them in his will, which was written in London on 21 June of that year. Henry (and perhaps also Joseph) may have arrived as early as 1778.<sup>30</sup> Although he left the bulk of his real estate in Antigua to his surviving son George, Samuel's will opens with generous provision for 'Sarah Bullock now residing with me in the city of London', to whom he left 'all my household goods plate linen and furniture whatsoever which shall be in or about my dwellinghouse either in England or Antigua'; an immediate payment of fifty pounds cash (doubled in a codicil) to purchase mourning and other necessities after his death and £1,000 sterling in cash.<sup>31</sup> His freed former slave companion was herself left ownership of slaves – a 'Negro Hester now in possession of Mary daughter of Elizabeth Davy of St Johns', and the 'mulatto William' who was then in London as Samuel's servant. Elizabeth Davy was probably the mulatto half-sister of Godfrey Davy, who wrote to Sir William Codrington in 1779 to ask for her freedom, referring to her as one of Mr Redhead's slaves 'who has borne many children for Mr Redhead and now wishes to retire'.<sup>32</sup> After her

death their ownership was to pass to their daughter Sarah Ann Redhead. Likewise, their sons Joseph and Henry, who each received a total of £1,500 sterling, were respectively given ownership of an Antiguan barber called Stephen and his brother John. Like her brothers, Sarah Ann also received £1,500. To give this some context, £1,000 sterling in 1785 would have a purchasing power of £116,300 or an economic status value of nearly £1.7 million at 2017 values.<sup>33</sup> Trustees were appointed under the provisions of the will, those in London being Marmaduke Trattle (1752–1831), an important West Indian merchant who had sole consignee rights over the Codrington estates, and Samuel's son-in-law Charles Comyns (c.1743–1818). Joint guardianship of the children was given to the trustees and Sarah Bullock.

It is reasonable to assume that separate provision had already been made for Jane Redhead, who had married Charles Comyns, a widowed hatter, in 1781 and given birth to their son Samuel some time before Samuel Redhead's death.<sup>34</sup> Jane was left £12 and an income from the Antiguan estates of £15 a year, to be paid after her death to her son Samuel until he reached the age of sixteen. Sadly, he appears to have died young. There is no mention of him in his father's will, although no record has been found of his burial. Despite marrying for a third time, Charles Comyns died without heirs, leaving his estate to a collection of nieces and nephews, and an annuity to his sister Anna Maria who had been witness at all three of his weddings.<sup>35,36,37</sup> Jane herself died in January 1785, shortly before her father, and both were buried at Christ Church, Southwark.<sup>38,39</sup> It is worth noting that at least eight members of the Redhead family were buried at Christ Church, Southwark between 1783 and 1813. These included Samuel's thirteen-year-old granddaughter Letitia Redhead, daughter of his son George,<sup>40</sup> and Henry Redhead Yorke, his mother, his sisters Jane and Sarah Ann, and two of his daughters (of whom more below).

Samuel Redhead was living in Bennett Street (now Rennie Street), Southwark at the time of his death (see [Figure 3](#)).<sup>41</sup> In the early 1780s it was an area not yet fully developed and close to countryside. The street runs northwards from the church towards the river, with access to Samuel's contacts in the City easily achieved via the recently completed Blackfriars Bridge. Christ Church had been rebuilt in 1741 following the collapse of its seventeenth-century predecessor, and it was then destroyed in the Blitz of 1941. This latter event also resulted in serious damage to the church registers, making it difficult to be certain just how many Redhead family events took place there.

The history of Sarah Bullock after Samuel Redhead's death is only partially established. The letter quoted above from John Griffith to Lord Hardwicke refers to her as Mrs Henstock, living in Manchester in the summer of 1794. The court papers outlining the case against her son Henry said that she lived for a time at [Little] Eaton near Derby.<sup>43</sup> Sarah Ann Redhead married Edward Henstock on 4 September 1787 at St Margaret, Westminster.<sup>44</sup> They were married by licence and Edward Henstock was recorded as of the parish of St Margaret, Westminster while Sarah Ann Redhead was recorded as of the parish of St Clement Danes and a widow. The witnesses were James Redit and his wife Prudence, the former an attorney to whom young Henry Redhead would be articulated three months later. It is worth noting that Sarah was representing herself as Samuel's widow. There is a burial at Christ Church, Southwark for Sarah Ann Henstock. The register is badly damaged but the year appears to be 1801.<sup>45</sup>

Edward Henstock was a linen draper, with premises at 140 Fleet Street,<sup>46</sup> where Charles Comyns, the hatter, also had premises at no. 146.<sup>47</sup> An Edward Henstock was assessed for the poor rate for a house at 23 Faulkner Street, Manchester and also a warehouse in Market Street Lane in 1795.<sup>48</sup> It is also plausible that Edward Henstock was the younger son of Edward Henstock of Slaley Hall, Bonsall in Derbyshire, perhaps helping to explain Henry Yorke's presence in Derby. The Henstock family of Slaley Hall had Manchester connections into the twenty-first century.<sup>49</sup> No death record for Edward Henstock has been established.

## The third generation

### *Jane Redhead (c.1764–1785)*

Nothing is known of Jane apart from her marriage, inheritance and eventual death already described.

### *Joseph Redhead (c.1770–c.1793)*

Joseph's education is referred to below, as is his political involvement in London. Prior to Henry's arrest, Joseph was living in Bartlett's Buildings on the south side of Holborn, though it is not known whether he was practising as a physician there.<sup>50</sup> The court papers detailing the case against his younger brother referred to him as a physician then living in Switzerland, where he appears to have been making arrangements with someone called Landerer for Henry to join him in Basel. It is possible he was serving in a military capacity, as a letter quoted in the case against his brother refers to 'Dr R. (meaning probably his Brother) is promoted on the staff'.<sup>51</sup> After this nothing further is known of him with certainty. It is possible he died fighting for Republican France. In a collection of letters (written while touring France with his wife in 1802) to a friend who had shared the experiences of 1792–93 (possibly William Brooks Johnson), Henry Yorke claimed that his main motive for going to France was 'to collect the ashes of a beloved and lost relative'.<sup>52</sup> If this is to be taken literally, then other than his brother, it is difficult to see whom he could have meant. This may be reinforced by an erroneous

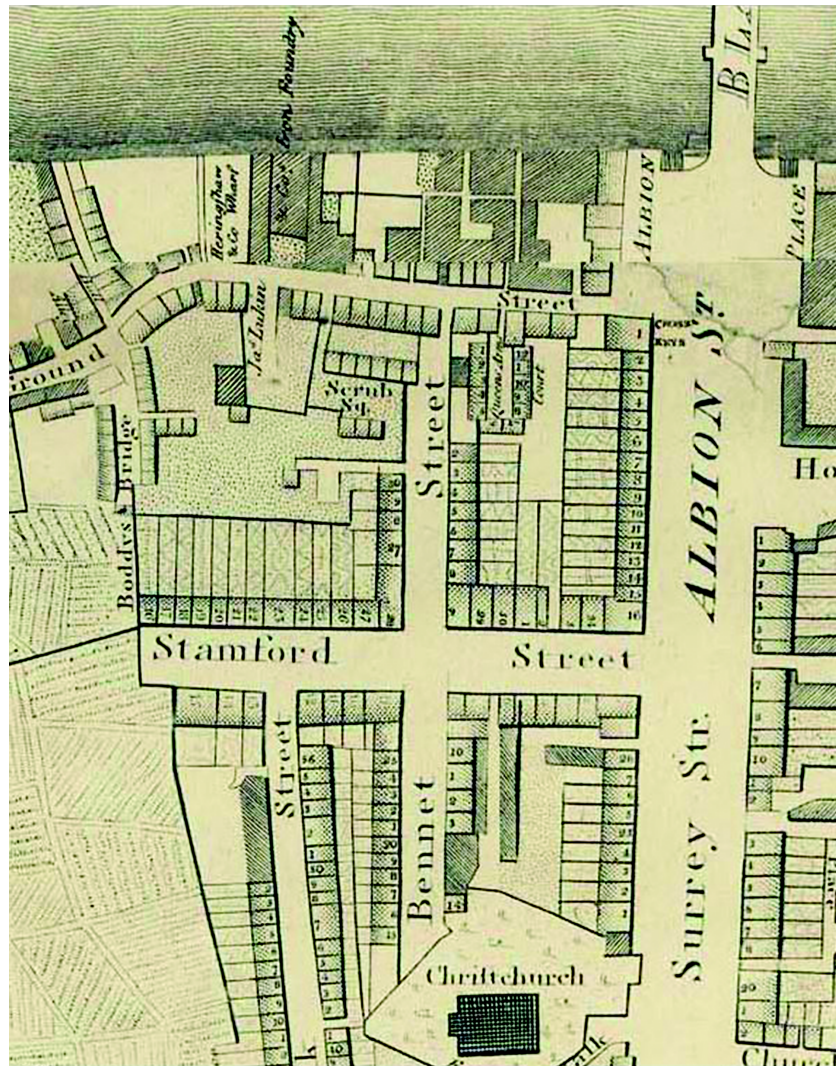


Figure 3. Bennet Street, Southwark in 1799 showing Christ Church and the approach to Blackfriars Bridge. Reproduced by kind permission of [www.motco.com](http://www.motco.com).<sup>42</sup>

obituary for Henry Yorke which appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in early 1794, saying he had died fighting for France at the battle of Hagenau, an extended offensive which took place in November–December 1793, at a time when Henry was in fact in prison awaiting trial.<sup>53</sup> The report carries an account of how he stormed the lines at Hagenau fighting on foot alongside his men, sustaining a severe wound to his arm and receiving a mortal wound at the third line of redoubts. Ironically, he was credited with saying 'I trust that my name shall not perish, but that posterity will remember, with holy veneration, the names of those heroes whom the sword of slaughter has destroyed while asserting the rights and liberties of mankind!'<sup>54</sup> This may of course be a copywriter's fancy, but it is plausible to suggest that it was Joseph, who had been confused with his better-known brother and whose name has since been forgotten. No burial record representing a reinterment of Joseph Redhead in England immediately after 1802 has been found.

### **Sarah Ann Redhead (c.1774–1811)**

It is plausible to suggest that Sarah Ann was the youngest of Samuel Redhead's children with Sarah Bullock. She was certainly a minor in 1784 when he wrote his will, and she was living with her mother in Manchester in 1794.<sup>55</sup> In March 1800 she married Bernard Brocas at St George Hanover Square.<sup>56</sup> Brocas, born Bernard Austin, was the illegitimate son of Bernard Brocas of Beaurepaire, Hampshire and Wokefield, Berkshire and he took his father's name on inheriting the estates. The witnesses at the wedding were 'Montfort' and Charles Comyns, who had also been witnesses at the marriage of Henry Redhead Yorke and Jane Williams Andrews. Sarah had five children before Bernard died in 1809.<sup>57</sup> She died just under two years later and was buried at Christ Church, Southwark with the rest of the Redhead family.<sup>58</sup>

### Henry Redhead Yorke (1772–1813)

Henry Redhead was, according to his own account, born on Barbuda and, according to the mezzotint by Reynolds, in August 1772.<sup>59</sup> He probably first came to England at the age of six to begin his schooling.<sup>60</sup> Henry's *Letters from France in 1802* give the impression that he had travelled extensively in France, Germany, Switzerland and Italy, but it is unclear when these travels took place. In December 1787 Henry was articled for five years as clerk to King's Bench attorney James Redit (who had been witness to the marriage of Sarah Ann Bullock to Edward Henstock).<sup>61</sup> Both Henry and his brother Joseph attended Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. Interestingly, Henry, although the younger, was the first to matriculate in June 1788 when he was admitted as a scholar, implying that at sixteen he was already a capable student.<sup>62</sup> His brother Joseph matriculated a year later.<sup>63</sup> Although Henry had gained an LLB and was admitted to the Inner Temple in 1790, the events of the French Revolution and politics at home overtook his ambitions for a legal career.<sup>64</sup> His clerkship finished in December 1792, freeing him to make some of his own decisions although he was still a minor, and he did not again take up the law until after his release from Dorchester Prison. Both Henry and his brother joined the London Corresponding Society, which was founded in January 1792, and both attended meetings in London.<sup>65</sup> Henry also attended meetings of the Society for Constitutional Information in Derby.

Henry seems already to have had connections with the Derby area, where his mother lived for a time at Little Eaton. Henstock is a surname concentrated in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, and so Edward Henstock most likely provides the connection between Henry, Derby and Little Eaton. (The publicprofler website<sup>66</sup> shows the surname concentrated in the Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Sheffield and Stockport areas in 1881 with only 364 instances or 13 per million in total.) In 1792 Henry wrote a pamphlet, addressed to Bache Heathcote of Littleover, Derby, defending slave ownership – after all, as we have seen, he had been left ownership of a slave himself and, having left Barbuda as a young child, may have had a somewhat rosy view of the enslaved state.<sup>67</sup> In the first of several intellectual volte-faces, he repudiated his views on the topic the following year in his 'Reason urged against precedent, in a letter to the people of Derby', dated 1 March 1793 after his return from Paris.<sup>68</sup>

The first pamphlet was written as Henry Redhead, but soon after this he adopted the additional name Yorke, recorded in the resolution of the Derby Society for Constitutional Information dated 20 November 1792, before he went to Paris.<sup>69</sup> It is unclear who suggested the name to him or why; certainly he was unwilling to reveal who it was when he was questioned after his arrest, which suggests that he feared incriminating a fellow radical.<sup>70</sup> It has been argued, by Goodrich for example, that this name change reflected a rejection of his father.<sup>71</sup> This seems to me implausible for two reasons. Firstly, Henry and his descendants retained Redhead as part of the family name right into the twentieth century, and although two publications in 1793 used only Henry Yorke, he used the full name Henry Redhead Yorke in his *Elements of Civil Knowledge* published in 1800.<sup>72</sup> Secondly, in his preamble to the published account of his trial, he wrote, 'I have never departed, I hope, from the character which a venerable father, respected by all who knew him, both here and abroad, left behind to his children, as a legacy for their imitation'.<sup>73</sup> Rather, it seems likely that Henry's romantic streak took hold and he determined on an addition to his birth name, not its obliteration. This is the man who named his first son Henry Galgacus Redhead Yorke, and the second George Charilaus Camperdown Redhead Yorke. (Both parish clerks and later transcribers have struggled with whether to treat Redhead as part of the family surname; moreover, the baptisms of the first three of Henry Redhead Yorke's children have been indexed under Williams on Ancestry.co.uk, as children of 'Henry and Jane Williams Redhead Yorke'.) Galgacus, a pen name used by Henry Redhead himself, was a supposed ancient British leader ascribed a speech against Roman imperialism by Tacitus. Charilaus was a Spartan king. Perhaps the key to Henry's own choice of name for himself lies with the selection of the 1797 naval battle of Camperdown as a name for his son George: Henry Redhead Yorke would later contribute to a book on British admirals, published after his death.<sup>74</sup> Henry claimed that his intention to adopt the name dated from before he came of age, so before August 1793.<sup>75</sup> At about this time Joseph Sydney Yorke (1768–1831) was forging a highly successful naval career that would lead eventually to his promotion to Admiral of the Blue. Did youthful idolising of a naval hero lead to his choice of alias? Henry's choice of military-style jacket in the 1796 mezzotint by Reynolds further emphasises his romantic involvement with military and naval matters. In the absence of hard information, it is impossible to know the truth, but a romantic conceit seems to me more likely than a rejection of his paternal or ethnic origins.

In the early days of the French Revolution many Britons flocked to Paris in enthusiastic support. Henry and William Brooks Johnson arrived in time to attend the trial of Louis XVI and hear him condemned.<sup>76</sup> As revolution began to turn to terror, many expatriates were denounced as spies and were arrested. According to Rogers, Henry spent some time in various jails in Paris.<sup>77</sup> He eventually fled France, leaving behind his possessions, including all his books, at his lodgings in the Rue Coqueron.<sup>78</sup> The warrant for his arrest had been signed by Jacques-Louis David. When, on his return to Paris in 1802, he queried the reason with the celebrated painter, the only response was that David had no recollection of it, and 'It was impossible always to discriminate during so great and terrible a Revolution'.<sup>79</sup> His Derby travelling companion William Brooks Johnson eventually escaped via Basel in November 1793.<sup>80</sup>

Soon after his return from France in the early spring of 1793, Henry went to Sheffield, where at short notice he was asked to speak at the public meeting on Castle Hill that resulted in the warrant for his arrest in England. Following his flight from his mother's house at Manchester, Henry was eventually detained near Hull, apparently on the way to join his brother in Switzerland via Hamburg, and he was confined in York Castle for about fifteen months.<sup>81</sup> From an intercepted letter quoted in the case against him, it appears he had been intending to fight for the French revolutionary army alongside his brother.

His time in jail at York before his trial was unpleasant and led to considerable expense – in legal fees, in keeping his servants, and in retaining witnesses (one of whom had already booked passage to go abroad).<sup>82</sup> That he had considerable freedom in jail, probably before and certainly after his conviction, is evidenced by the account of a drunken fracas involving Yorke and two visiting friends who attacked another prisoner, causing him a serious head injury.<sup>83</sup> He was moved to Newgate in November 1795 for sentencing, and from there to Dorchester Castle. While he was being transferred to Dorchester in December, the coach overturned, injuring his guards, though Henry escaped unscathed.<sup>84</sup> He was by now in a desperate financial state and it seems likely that all his inheritance and more had been spent on his defence, inhibiting his ability to put up the bond required to secure his eventual release.<sup>85</sup>

Dorchester seems to have been a model prison.<sup>86</sup> Cells had windows and were well ventilated, and prisoners had access to running water and water closets. The prison employed a chaplain who came twice a week, and a salaried doctor. All new arrivals were examined by the doctor and bathed (there was even warm water, and towels were provided) before being given prison clothing. The county provided each prisoner with an iron bedstead (better than wood for discouraging bedbugs), a palliasse, two blankets and a coverlet. All prisoners were given work and allowed to earn money, of which they kept half. Interestingly, until about 1803 many worked making hats and it is tempting to wonder whether Henry's brother-in-law, the hatter Charles Comyns, had prior knowledge of the prison's reasonable conditions.<sup>87</sup>

Henry's incarceration at Dorchester cannot have been pleasant, but compared with conditions at York and especially Newgate it could have been much worse. Moreover, it resulted eventually in his marriage to Jane Williams Andrews, whose father held the post of Keeper of Dorchester Castle. Accounts of Henry marrying the 'jailer's daughter' conjure up images of a slatternly young woman and an unkempt warder jingling a large bunch of keys. Nothing could be further from the truth. George Andrews was a man of property, owning land at Haselbury Bryan, Belchalwell and in Dorchester, and his daughter had inherited a significant legacy from her great-grandmother Jane Williams.<sup>88</sup> After his release, Henry joined the Freemasons while still in Dorchester.<sup>89</sup> It appears he briefly considered an army career (as he had done when contemplating flight to Switzerland), and he was offered a commission as Lieutenant-Colonel in Colonel Tyndale's regiment, the Royal Manchester Volunteers at Sheffield. However, this was blocked by the powers that be on security grounds as 'he is not to act in any capacity, or reside at Sheffield'.<sup>90</sup>

Henry and Jane were married in London, by licence, on 26 November 1799.<sup>91</sup> The witnesses were his brother-in-law Charles Comyns and 'Montfort', probably Henry Bromley (1773–1851) who had become the third Baron Montfort a month earlier. Henry and Jane had five children between 1800 and 1810, three of whom were baptised at Farnham in Surrey in 1805, although it is unclear whether the elder two had been born there (see Figure 4). Farnham is only about twenty miles from Beaurepaire, the home of Henry's brother-in-law Bernard Brocas, which may explain why they were living in this prosperous market town. Blanche Elizabeth Redhead Yorke was born on 10 August 1800 and died on 21 December 1811.<sup>92</sup> Her parents put a heartbroken notice in the *Morning Post* (Figure 5).<sup>93</sup> Henry Galgacus Redhead Yorke was born on 9

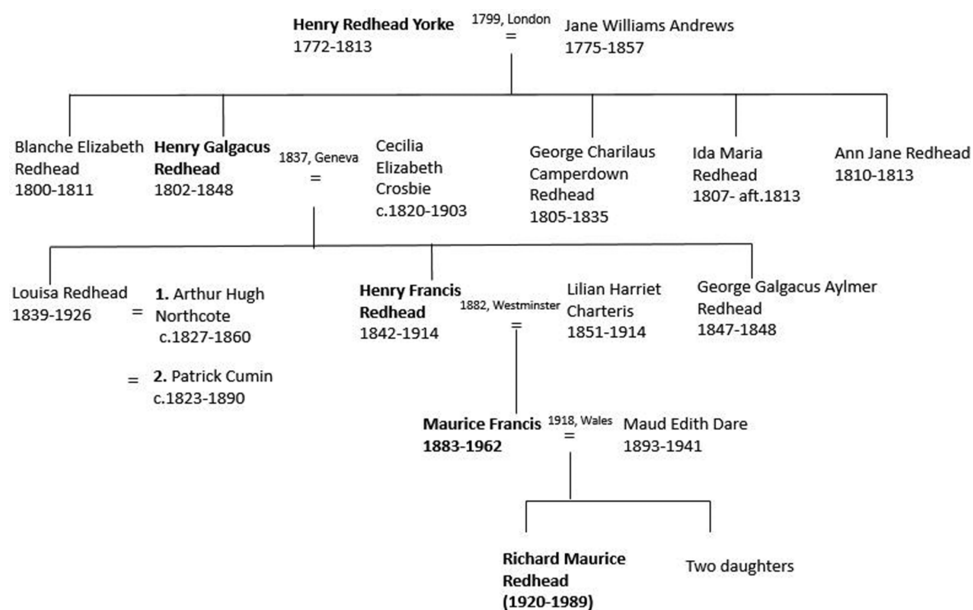


Figure 4. Descendants of Henry Redhead Yorke.

On Saturday last, to the inexpressible grief of her parents, in the twelfth year of her age, Blanche Elizabeth, eldest child of Henry Redhead Yorke, Esq. Barrister at law.

Figure 5. Death notice for Blanche Elizabeth Yorke, *Morning Post*, 25 December 1811.

December 1802.<sup>94</sup> His brother George Charilaus Camperdown Redhead Yorke followed on 11 October 1805.<sup>95</sup> Ida Maria Redhead Yorke was born on 15 December 1807, but not baptised until 1810 in Paddington.<sup>96</sup> She was probably alive at the time of her father's death, as contemporary obituaries referred to four children, but no proven record of her has been found subsequently. Ann Jane Redhead Yorke was born on 10 March 1810 and baptised on 6 June that year, also at Paddington.<sup>97</sup>

Henry Redhead Yorke died on 28 January 1813 at Chelsea, after what obituary writers described as a period of illness. He was just forty years old. In October of the same year Ann Jane, the youngest daughter, also died. Blanche,<sup>98</sup> Henry<sup>99</sup> and Ann<sup>100</sup> were all buried at Christ Church, Southwark.

In the space of less than two years Jane Williams Redhead Yorke had lost her husband and two of her children. She was left with sons aged ten and seven and one remaining daughter aged six, and may have been in some financial difficulty since Henry had been unable to earn during the last months of his life and had apparently borrowed heavily from his father-in-law before the latter died in 1808. George Andrews left a substantial legacy to Jane but placed it in the hands of trustees to provide her with a secured annual income. The provisions of the will leave little doubt that the money was being tied up to prevent Henry from spending it.<sup>101</sup>

## The fourth generation

### Henry Galgacus Redhead Yorke (1802–1848)

I have found no record of where Henry Galgacus Redhead Yorke was born on 9 December 1802, but he was baptised at Farnham in 1805 and may have been born there.<sup>102</sup> There was enough money after his father's death for the children's education, and young Henry Galgacus was despatched to Eton College and Charterhouse School, and he eventually went up to Christ's College, Cambridge where he spent only seven terms.<sup>103</sup> (Why Christ's College rather than his father's college of Corpus Christi is unclear.)

The careers of both Henry and his brother George were considerably more troubled and much more reprehensible than their father's. In about 1822 Henry Galgacus Redhead Yorke obtained an appointment tutoring Francis and Maitland Dashwood, the sons of Francis Dashwood, the illegitimate son of Sir Francis Dashwood (1708–1781). This brought Henry, and his brother, into contact with Rachael Fanny Antonina Lee, née Dashwood (illegitimate daughter of Sir Francis) and self-styled Baroness Despencer. In 1823 the brothers introduced themselves to her, making heavy hints that they knew of something to her advantage. Over a period of many months they extracted sums of money from her, frequently exhibiting bizarre behaviour. For example, in January 1823 Henry Galgacus Redhead Yorke wrote in a large, untidy, sprawling hand: 'Madam, I have a circumstance to communicate, which at the same time, that it will gratify you will prove with how much zeal I endeavour to promote your views.'<sup>104</sup> Eventually the Baroness began to suspect Henry Yorke's sanity when, in one of many incoherent missives, he wrote warning her not to contact or speak to his brother. Despite this, on 18 January 1824 she paid him the £20 he had demanded. Then his brother George wrote to her in January 1824: 'I cannot refrain from expressing my hopes that your efforts may be attended with ultimate success; and that I myself shall have the satisfaction of beholding you signally and gloriously triumph over the baseness and malignity of your Enemies!'<sup>105</sup> Throughout 1824, both young men made rambling promises and sometimes threatening demands. Eventually in April 1825, in fear of these threats and the possibility of damage to her reputation, she went into print with 'A statement, including charges against Mr. Henry Yorke'.<sup>106</sup> History has not been kind to Mrs Lee and has seen the pamphlet as an example of her instability, but the evidence and subsequent history of the Yorke brothers demonstrate otherwise.

What Henry did in the next few years is unclear, but in 1837 he married a young woman many years his junior at the British Chaplaincy in Geneva.<sup>107</sup> Cecilia Elizabeth Crosbie (c.1820–1903) was the daughter of the Rev. William Crosbie, 4th Baron Brandon (1771–1832).<sup>108</sup> Between 1839 and 1847 Cecilia gave birth to a daughter, Louisa Redhead Yorke,<sup>109</sup> and two sons – Henry Francis Redhead Yorke<sup>110</sup> and George Galgacus Aylmer Redhead Yorke.<sup>111</sup> Louisa and Henry were both born at Syston Park in Lincolnshire. Meanwhile, their father was elected as MP for York and served between 1841 and his death in 1848.<sup>112</sup>

On the morning of 12 May 1848 Henry wrote a will leaving an annuity of a hundred pounds a year to his mother, who was living in Forest Hill, and everything else to his wife.<sup>113</sup> He then walked to Regent's Park and there swallowed a vial of prussic acid that he had purchased, ostensibly to put down a sick dog. Unsurprisingly, the inquest held the following day found that he had committed suicide while in an unsound state of mind.<sup>114</sup> Evidence of his generally odd and unbalanced character was given by his butler, who said that 'he was a very eccentric man, particularly about his clothes, which he would leave about and prohibit from being placed in the wardrobe. He was sometimes very violent in temper, and complained of pain in the head in the morning.'<sup>115</sup> The doctor who conducted the post-mortem had no doubt, from the state of his brain, that he was insane. His wife soon had further tragedy to cope with, for in November of the same year her younger son George died.<sup>116</sup>

### **George Charilaus Camperdown Redhead Yorke (1805–1835)**

George was born on 11 October 1805 and baptised at Farnham.<sup>117</sup> He was educated at the Merchant Taylors' School, before becoming embroiled in the extortion plot.<sup>118</sup> After it fizzled out he went up to Cambridge<sup>119</sup> where he continued to cause trouble, provoking the resignation of the Treasurer of the Cambridge Union, and instigating a debate where his motion was defeated at a meeting with a larger turnout than for seven of the eight debates on Catholic Emancipation during the 1820s.<sup>120</sup> George was admitted to the Inner Temple in 1828 but was not called to the Bar.<sup>121</sup> Five years later he left London for America, arriving in New York on 29 October 1833.<sup>122</sup> It appears he intended to earn a living as a teacher, and may have done so for a while, but a year later, on 19 November 1834, he enlisted as a private in the 3rd Artillery Regiment at Albany, New York. His army record described him as 5'8" with hazel eyes, dark brown hair and dark complexion; his occupation was given as 'teacher' and his place of birth as Farnham. He was killed a year later in the massacre of Major Dade's Company by Seminole Indians in Florida when only three men survived out of one hundred and sixteen.<sup>123</sup> News reached the British newspapers in February of 1836, but whether George's family knew that he was one of the victims is unrecorded. He left no known descendants.

## **The fifth generation**

### **Louisa Redhead YORKE (c.1839–1926)**

Louisa Redhead Yorke was baptised at Syston, Lincolnshire on 13 January 1839.<sup>124</sup> Early in 1860 she married the Rev. Arthur Hugh Northcote,<sup>125</sup> who died before the end of that year.<sup>126</sup> Four years later she married Patrick Cumin, a barrister.<sup>127</sup> He played a significant role in the Forster Education Act of 1870 and became Secretary of the Education Department of the Privy Council, dying suddenly in 1890.<sup>128</sup> Louisa outlived him by many years and died in 1926, appointing her nephew Maurice Francis Yorke as her executor.<sup>129</sup> There were no children from either marriage.

### **Henry Francis Redhead Yorke (1842–1914)**

Henry Francis Redhead Yorke was not yet six when his father died. Seven years later, he was a naval cadet serving on the *Colossus*.<sup>130</sup> His career progressed from cadet, via midshipman to sub-lieutenant and then lieutenant in 1863. However, he resigned the service on 11 April 1865, and an undated note on his service record states '? to avoid court martial for misconduct'.<sup>131</sup> Whatever the scandal implied by this note, it was hushed up, and his obituary merely referred to his resigning because of ill health.<sup>132</sup> By September the following year Henry was found a post as Clerk to the Admiralty, where he spent the rest of his career. From 1874 to 1887 Henry was Private Secretary to Vernon Lushington, Permanent Secretary of the Admiralty, and from 1886 he was Director of Victualling at the Admiralty. On 31 July 1882 he married Lilian Harriet Charteris, daughter of the 10th Earl of Wemyss, and widow of Sir Hugh Carstairs Pelly MP (1844–1877), who had two young daughters.<sup>133</sup> Together they had one son – Maurice Francis Yorke, baptised at St Margaret's, Westminster on 26 September 1883.<sup>134</sup> He was the only male member of the family in two hundred years not to bear the name Redhead, although it was restored to his only son Richard Maurice Redhead Yorke (1920–1989).<sup>135,136</sup> He became a Companion of the Bath in 1897 and Knight Commander in 1902. Sir Henry Francis Redhead Yorke died on 12 January 1914 at Hillbrook Place, Iver Heath in Buckinghamshire,<sup>137</sup> to be followed only three months later by his wife.<sup>138</sup>

After the death of Richard Maurice Redhead Yorke, there appear to be no male descendants bearing the names Redhead or Yorke.

## Conclusion

There is a tendency to regard the development of intellectual and political ideas by Henry Redhead Yorke solely through the lens of his publications and the events surrounding his trial, and only in their intellectual and political context. This is to ignore the family and social context in which he grew up and lived. It is to ignore Henry's affection and respect for his slave-owning father, despite his ultimate rejection of slavery. It is to forget that he had a brother and sisters, a stepfather and two brothers-in-law. His formative years at school and university in England must be viewed in the context of his mercantile connections through his stepfather Edward Henstock and his brother-in-law Charles Comyns, and his connections to the English landowning class through his own marriage and that of his sister Sarah Ann. His deep affection for – and intellectual sympathy with – his older brother Joseph are hinted at through their joint membership of the London Corresponding Society and by Henry's intention to join his brother fighting for the French which was frustrated by Henry's arrest and probably ended by Joseph's death in battle. It ignores a deep family connection to Southwark and the church where he and so many of the Redhead family chose to be buried.

This article has sought to demonstrate these webs of connection using genealogical techniques, to illuminate the story of Henry Redhead Yorke through his antecedents and immediate family, and to cast light on his descendants. In two centuries the Redhead family went from humble beginnings on Antigua, to slave-owning wealth and, via the turbulent politics of the late eighteenth century, to being pillars of the British establishment. It was a very conventional ending for a family whose most famous member was the flamboyant, good-looking, political radical Henry Redhead Yorke.

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