



## Early Life

The 1841 Coleorton census lists three consecutive Walker families, it is suspected that they are related, but this has yet to be proved:

- White House (now Hall Farm) - Benjamin Walker - 55 (born 1786) - farmer (Benjamin also owned Smoile colliery and subsequently the Coleorton collieries California and Califat with William Worswick).
- Lount - Joseph Walker - 30 (Joseph was 34 as he was baptised at Coleorton on the 8th March 1807) - farmer (not to be confused with Benjamin's son Joseph Walker, born 1811, who was a victualler in Leicester in 1841).
- Lount - Thomas Walker - 32 (born 1809) - baker.

Joseph Walker's family on the 1841 census were: Hannah 30, William 8, John 6, Elizabeth 4, Ann 2. Hannah died in 1843 and on the 2nd April 1844 Joseph married Jane Sturgess at St Helens, Ashby. The 1851 census records the family living in Newbold in Worthington parish:

- Joseph Walker, 44, butcher, born Worthington
- Jane Walker, wife, 44, domestic duties, born Overseal
- William Walker, son, 18, waggoner, born Worthington
- John Walker, son, 16, butcher, born Worthington
- Elizabeth, daughter, 14, domestic duties, born Coleorton
- Ann, daughter, 11, scholar, born Coleorton
- William Collyer, nephew, 8, scholar, born Ashby

## Marriage To Sarah Ann Berkin 1854

William was described as an engine man when he married servant Sarah Berkin on Christmas Day 1854 at St Helens, Church, Ashby. They were both recorded as living in Ashby. Subsequent baptism and census records confirm William as living at Coleorton Moor (handy for the Califat mine) and working as an engine man:

- 28th December 1856 baptism Hannah (born 25th March 1855) and Mary Jane (born Oct-Dec 1856) at Coleorton - William engine driver living Coleorton Moor.
- 12th September 1858 baptism William (born Jul-Sep 1858) at Coleorton - William engine driver living Coleorton Moor.
- 7th April 1861 census William 28 engine worker, Sarah A wife 31, Hannah daughter 6, Mary daughter 4, William son 2, Elizabeth daughter 2 months, living at Coleorton Moor.

## Califat Overwind 1863

The Leicester Journal, Friday June 5, 1863 reported on the incident and inquest:

*W. Walker, engine driver, was next called, and, in answer to the coroner, stated that he had been engine man about ten years. Had been at No. 2 pit about eight years. Himself and brother John were the engine men night and day. He further said, I left the drawing engine, and went to the pumping engine to fetch a bucket, leaving Levi Baker in charge.*



*Whilst there speaking to the man in charge, I stepped on one side and saw the rope of my engine in motion. As soon as I saw that I thought it was my brother come to relieve me; we not being particular to half an hour relieving each other. His time would be six o'clock.*

*I hurried out, and when I got in sight of the engine house I saw it was not my brother, but R. Lakin, and when I saw it was him I made all haste I could to reach it. As I was passing the pit mouth the first signal rang, which is about 25 to 30 yards from the pit's mouth, and when I got to the engine house door the second bell rang, which is immediately before the cage comes out of the top. Just as I stepped into the door, I heard the cage strike the top piece.*

*Lakin had hold of the handle, and had stopped the engine himself before I got up. He said "Oh dear," and made use of some other expressions of sorrow, but I was so much put about I do not know what he said. He went away and assisted in getting Clements down and deceased up from the shaft.*

*No one had any right to meddle with the engine unless the manager gave permission. I had seen Lakin work the engine several times; he had drawn coals up during dinner time. I knew he could manage the engine before I came there. I never knew him draw men up. The engine was in good working order at the time.*

## Engineman

At the 1st June 1863 inquest into the death of John Hutchinson following the overwind incident, William stated that he had been an engine man for 10 years, which would be 1853. Also that he had been at the No 2 pit for about eight years, which would be 1855.

The 1871 census records William 38 as an enginewright, the colliery is not known but the Califat is possible. William's family were Sarah A 40, Hannah 16, Mary 14, William 12, Elizabeth 10, Joseph 6, living at Moor Town, Coleorton.

The 1881 census shows that William 48 was still at Coleorton Moor and an engine driver, most likely at the Coleorton No 3 colliery (the Bug and Wink) opened by William Checkland in 1875. Son William 22 was a fireman, perhaps he was stoking the boilers for his father's engine.

## Grocer

The 1891 census gives a precise location in Moor Town for William, Fish Pond Cottage. William 58 had undergone a career change to become a grocer. Elizabeth, 30 was a shop's assistant. Sarah Ann would also have assisted, she was buried at Coleorton on the 21<sup>st</sup> October 1898.

The 1901 census records William as a 68 year old grocer at Bell Cottage (near Fish Pond Cottage). Daughter Elizabeth 40 would have run the house, he had three grandchildren living with them.

By the 1911 census William was a 78 year old grocer and farmer at Fish Ponds. Daughter Elizabeth 60 ran the house with her niece Sarah Ann Fowkes 33, Elizabeth's nephew Joseph William Walker 23 was a grocer's assistant helping her father. The Yates family also at Fish Ponds would have provided plenty of grocery business as they had 14 children! William Walker 84 of Fishpond House was buried at Coleorton on the 29th September 1917.