



Early Life

Levi was born in Osgathorpe and baptised there on the 18th January 1829, his parents were Joseph (a labourer) and Elizabeth.

The 1841 census shows 12 year old Levi living with his 30 year old mother, Elizabeth, a framework knitter. He had a sister Ann, 9 years old and a one year old brother Hezekiah. Hezekiah had been baptised at Osgathorpe on the 22nd September 1839, the baptism record did not list a father, so the Baker family probably faced an element of social stigma.

By the 1851 census 22 year old Levi had joined his widowed mother Elizabeth as a framework knitter. Ann was a 19 year old farmer or framer and 11 year old Hezekiah a farmer's boy. Elizabeth had also given birth to 7 year old Edmond who attended the national school and 3 year old Charlotte.

Marriage To Sarah Kent 1859

Levi married Sarah Kent (a servant) on the 1st December 1859 at Osgathorpe. His occupation as a labourer could have referred to work at a farm, mine or quarry. On the 30th September 1860 their son Joseph was baptised at Osgathorpe.

Labourer and Stoker

Levi's occupation is over the years was described as:

- Marriage 1st December 1859, labourer
- Baptism son Joseph 30th September 1860, labourer
- Census 1861, works pit whimsey.
- Baptism son, Henry, 3rd August 1862, labourer

- Baptism son, George, 17th April 1864, labourer
- Baptism daughter, Sarah Ann, 15th April 1866, engine tenter
- Baptism daughter, Harriett, 20th September 1868, engine tenter
- Census 1871, engineer

It is impossible to tell whether all of the above relate to the role of stoker as the role was also described as fireman, engineman's assistant, labourer in mine etc.

As a stoker Levi's job would have been one of the most secure in the mine. Whether production increased or decreased, miners were working full or short weeks, an engine man and stoker would be required.

Califat Overwind 1863

Leicester Journal - Friday 05 June 1863 - inquest report:

Levi Baker on being sworn, stated : I am stoker at No. 2 pit, and was in the engine-house on Friday afternoon last, the 29th ult. R Lakin came into the engine-house about half past five; I had been cleaning the indicators; the engine-man, W Walker, had just gone out to the pumping engine, which is about 60 or 70 yards distance, for a bucket. The signal was then ringing.

Lakin said "Why don't you turn those men up?" The signal had not been answered from the top which it should have been before the engine started. I had charge of the pit top at the time; he said "Turn those men up." I told him I would not have anything to do with it; he went towards the engine handle and I went out and left him.



There was no one in at the time; directly I got out he started the engine, no signal was given. I was going to the pit to give the signal.

I was at the pit's mouth. I saw the cage come out with two men in it. When I saw it did not stop, I turned to get away as it might fall on me. I fell down and when I got up again I saw a man on the cross beam over the shaft; that was Clements. I never saw the other man; I cannot recollect that more than one signal was given by the men below. There might have been more; never saw Lakin turn men up before. Saw him turn a tub of coals up. The engine-man was in at that time. The engine-man was gone altogether about five minutes.

By Mr Lakin (who had been allowed to be in the room during the time the evidence was being given): Had not the bell been ringing some time before I came to the engine-house? - I do not remember. Did I not ask you to turn the men up? - Yes. Did I not say if you would go and mind the pit mouth I would turn them up? - I believe you did.

Did you not go to the pit's mouth and return before I set the engine going? - I cannot remember.

Several questions were here put to the witness by the jury, but he became so confused that he was unable to answer, or did not remember.

Giving evidence to a coroner's court would probably have been new to Levi who could have found it stressful. The stress plus the incident happening so quickly could explain his confusion.

Death of Sarah Baker (nee Kent) 1869

March 1869 was a disastrous time for Levi, his wife Sarah was buried on the 4th and daughter Sarah Ann on the 14th. Levi was fortunate that his mother could take control of the domestic side of the household. The 1871 census was this:

- Levi Baker, 41 engineer
- Joseph Baker, son, 11 scholar
- George Baker, son 7 scholar
- Harriett Baker, daughter 2
- Elizabeth Baker, mother 60
- Edmund Baker, brother 28 coal mine labourer
- William Baker, brother 18 coal mine labourer

Marriage to Phoebe Goldstraw 1874

By 1881 Levi had left the coal industry and was an agricultural labourer, living with his second wife Phoebe, a child from each of their previous marriages and their son Isaac.

In 1891 Levi was a coal dealer living with Phoebe and their 15 year old lime quarryman son Isaac. By 1901 widower Levi 73 was receiving relief, while living with 25 year old limestone quarryman Isaac. Levi 78 was buried in in Osgathorpe on the 2nd May 1907.