

David Miller (L.I. 1954-1961) writes: *I looked further into Ephraim's background towards the end of 2024 and thought the following outcome from my investigation might be of interest.*

Ephraim Frost first appears as a 24 year-old Head of Household in the 1851 Census with his 26 year-old wife Martha and 1-year old daughter Elizabeth. Ephraim was born in the Toxteth Park District and is shown as an Omnibus Conductor by occupation. At the time, they were living at 15 Nile St. A lodger, 29 year-old engineer William Lockett and his three month-old son Thomas was also in residence. Elizabeth Wareham, a 14 year-old servant, completed the household.

In the 1861 Census, taken two years after his letter of introduction to his American cousins, Ephraim is shown as Head of household, aged 32, born in Liverpool, living at 10, Parliament Place with his wife Martha, three daughters and two sons including 4 year old Ephraim jnr. His occupation is shown as "Keeper of Liverpool Institute". Ann Frost, Ephraim's sister, employed as a general servant and Hannah Haston aged 31 complete the household. Hannah's relationship with Ephraim is unclear. The hand-written census form is partly illegible, the entry appears to read as 'Drefsmaster'. Ancestry transcribes it as 'daughter'. Clearly impossible given the one year age difference between Ephraim and Hannah. 'Ancestry's transcription also reads as "Hannah Haston (Hannah Frost)". Equally implausible. Best guess would be that Hannah was a dressmaker.

Significant perhaps that Ephraim's mother Sarah, living with him at the time of his 1859 letter, is absent from his household when the census was taken both in 1851 and 1861.

The 1871 Census again shows Ephraim as 'Keeper of the Institute' now living with wife Martha, his son John and daughters Emily and 13 year-old Sarah at 43 Knight Street, a short walk from the Institute.

The record also shows that Ephraim's daughter, Emily Seddon Frost, 20 year-old spinster of 43 Knight Street was married between 1870 - 1873 at St. Peter's, Everton District. The occupation of her father Ephraim Frost is shown as 'iron moulder'.

Ephraim Frost, age 52 approx, died in the Jan-Mar 1879 quarter (West Derby, Lancs. Rg. District). Ephraim's wife Sarah had not long pre-deceased him. She died on August 3rd 1878 aged 51 at 5 Fernhill Street according to her death notice of 10th August 1878 which made no mention of her family when it appeared in the Liverpool Weekly Courier. Fernhill Street, Toxteth was still standing in the 1970's but was subsequently redeveloped into Fernhill Drive. Could Ephraim have spent his last days working for the nearby Mersey Steel and Iron Company which went into liquidation in 1881?

Why Ephraim chose to use Queen's College rather than the Liverpool Institute in the address line of his 1859 hand-written letter and then request that any reply be addressed to the Institute is a matter for conjecture. We can likewise only speculate as to why he should have neglected to mention his role either at Queen's College or at the Institute in a letter which served as his personal introduction to his American cousins. It is reasonable to suppose that as Keeper of the Institute one of Ephraim's duties would have been to take delivery of the mail and to control its distribution.

As an aside, one of two wanted ads. for "A Keeper to the Mechanics' School of Arts" appeared in the Liverpool Albion on 18th July 1831. "Tenders" were required before 21st Inst. Applications to the Secretary at the Institution Rooms, Slater Street.

Required character traits were specified but no mention of remuneration. Surely 'tenders' in this sense did not require applicants to indicate the wage they would require to fulfill the role?

But then again . . at the close of 1830 the Mechanics' School of Arts was in deficit and was still strapped for cash in 1832, the year in which the name was changed to the Liverpool Mechanics' Institution: "During 1831 and 1832 the general position did not improve and every effort was made by the Directors towards economy . . . the accounts of 1832 show . . . the keeper's salary was lowered". Tiffen, p25."