

INTRODUCTION

The name, Drescher, is according to the Oxford Names Companion, a German and Jewish (Ashkenazic) occupational name for a thresher. The variations are Dreschner, Draschner, Trescher, Troscher, Trosch(e) (German) and Dresher (Jewish).

The name is quite common in Germany, and there are a significant number of Dreschers in the USA because of large scale German immigration there but only a small number in Britain.

This family history focuses on the descendants and close relatives of John Drescher who was born in about 1779 in the area of the Black Forest in southern Germany which was then ruled by the Margrave of Baden. The German state was not established until 1870.

John arrived from Germany to live in Hull between 1810 and 1817 when he first appeared in a trade directory for the city as a watch and clockmaker. He married Mary Brunner in 1823. Mary was born in Neustadt in the Grand Duchy of Baden. It is a small town at the southern end of the Black Forest. Her family were also clock and watch makers, including her brother, Engelbert. He had a shop in Mytongate, the same street in Hull where John had a shop. As the two families were so close over many years, there is a separate chapter dedicated to the Brunners.

The story traces the different branches of this Drescher family as they developed in East Yorkshire and other parts of the country through until the present day. At the time of writing John Drescher's descendents formed by far the largest family group of Dreschers in Britain. The largest number still remain in East Yorkshire.

BLACK FOREST TO HULL

We can only speculate on the reasons for John Drescher leaving the Black Forest and emigrating to England, and why he chose Hull in particular. It is possible that he may have been a regular visitor to England in the summer selling clocks that he had made in the winter. John may have decided that there was a good market for clocks which he was better able to supply if he was living and working locally while saving several weeks a year travelling. It is also important to consider the timing of his emigration. The French Army under Napoleon overran the Margravate of Baden like much of Europe. On July 25, 1806, in the wake of Napoleon's victories, the Holy Roman Empire was abolished and Napoleon formed the Confederation of the Rhine. Baden was elevated to a Grand Duchy. With the support of France, Baden grew from 3,600 square kilometres and 175,000 people in 1803 to 15,000 square kilometers with a population of almost one million by 1810. The Grand Duke, Karl Friedrich was obligated to provide a contingent of Badeners for Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812. Most of the 7,100 Badeners in Napoleon's Grand Army died in Russia. By 1815, Baden had joined Britain and the allies and became a member of the German Confederation. Baden provided 8,000 line troops and 8,000 Landwehr (local militia) to fight against Napoleon.



Black Forest House

It is unlikely that John Drescher would have been able to travel to England before 1813 when Napoleon was defeated by an alliance of Britain, Russia, Austria and Prussia. Until then Baden was under Napoleon's control. From the 17th to 20th centuries, Baden citizens were required to apply if they wished to emigrate but there is no mention of him in the Baden Auswanderer (Emigrant) records so he must have left

without applying as many others did. When John Drescher wrote to Hull Corporation in July 1849 seeking a commission for a clock for the new Baths and Washhouses he said that he had been a ratepayer for nearly forty years. This suggests that he had probably arrived in Hull soon after 1813. The first mention found for him was in a Hull trade directory for 1817. He was not included in the previous directory of 1810. In the early 19th century, Hull was England's major East Coast port and had many trading connections with continental Europe including Germany. The main German trade connection for Hull was with Hamburg but it is unlikely that John Drescher travelled from there. It is far more likely that he travelled to the Rhine from his home in the Black Forest which would not have been far from this major waterway. From there he could have taken a boat to Rotterdam before travelling across the North Sea (then known as the German Sea) to Hull. Rotterdam and Hull have had good trade connections for many centuries.

From about 1660 to 1750 England became the clock-making centre of the world. The longcase clock developed during this time reached high levels of accuracy and became very popular. Most clockmakers lived and worked in London. However, the longcase clock with a painted dial continued to be popular in the North of England during the 19th century. As a result the provincial clockmakers flourished and Hull became the home for a number of German clockmakers. Some clockmakers worked alone while other had workshops and employed several craftsmen. Dr Stuart Walker in his *Hull and East Riding Clocks* noted that Matthew Schwerer who was working in Hull by 1790 was describing himself as the original German clockmaker by 1821. There are eight other local German makers known at the time. Dr Walker suggests that Hull may have been the first place in the country where the German clockmakers set themselves up in business.



Above: Barometer in detail

Left: John Drescher Barometer, full length



Joseph Albert Drescher

Joseph Albert Drescher was born on 7 February 1840 in Hull and was baptised at St Charles Borromeo Roman Catholic Church on 14 February 1840. At the time of his marriage to Ann Foster on 24 February 1860 he was living at 28 Liddell Street, Hull and was a watchmaker. Ann Foster was living at 5 Annie Side, Hull. They were married at the Sculcoates Register Office. Joseph Albert was twenty and Ann nineteen. Both gave their ages on the marriage certificate as twenty-one perhaps because this was the age of majority and they did not have the parental consent that was needed. Ann's father was said to be a sea captain.

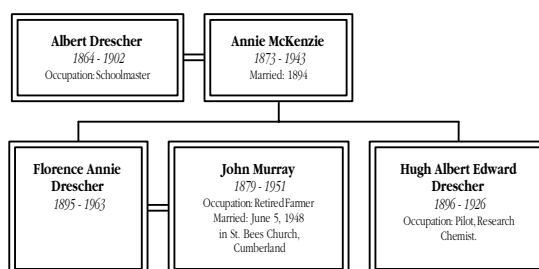
T h i r t e e n C h i l d r e n

Joseph Albert and Ann had thirteen children (eight boys and five girls) with nine surviving to become adults. Their first child, John Henry, was born in the March quarter, 1861 and died on 4 August 1864 aged 3 after suffering from croup for three days. They were even less fortunate with their second child, Margaret. She was born on 8 December 1862 and died of convulsions 12 days later on 20 December. Margaret had been born at 9 Marlborough Terrace, Hull but by the time their next child, Albert, was born on 1 February 1864 they were living in Cottingham (near Hull) at Finckle Street. They were also living in the village on 11 February 1866 when Annie Elizabeth was born, and 12 June 1868 (Broad Lane then) when Margareta was born. They were back in Hull and living at 15 Kate's Terrace, off Alexandra Street when Henry was born in October or November 1870. He died there of hydrocephalus convulsions on 6 April 1871 aged 5 months. This must have been a very sad time for Joseph Albert and Ann as only three of their six children had survived. Their luck was about to change

for the better. They had seven more children and all but the last one survived to adulthood.

DESCENDANTS OF JOSEPH ALBERT DRESCHER

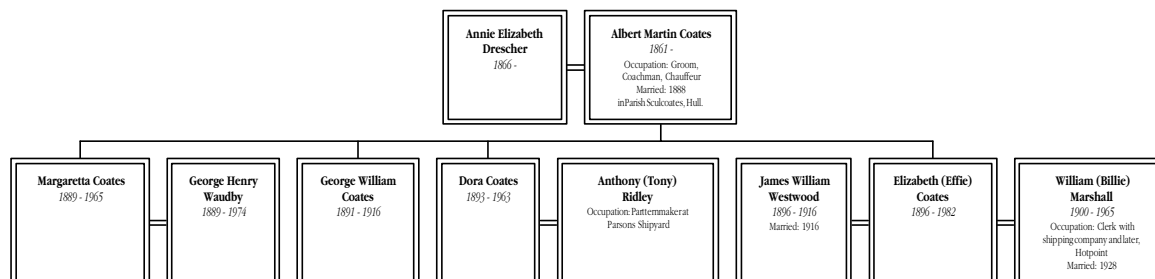
Albert Drescher (1864 – 1902): School teacher



Married Annie McKenzie in Whitehaven in 1894. They had two children Florence (born 1895 – died 1963) and Hugh Albert Edward (born 1896 – died 1926). Albert was a School Teacher at Threlkeld near Keswick in Cumbria when he died in 1902 of pulmonary tuberculosis. His brother, Henry Foster (then aged 21), was present at his death and informed the Registrar. Annie died in 1943 at the age of 70.

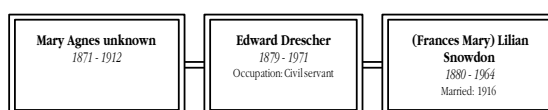
Hugh led a short but interesting life winning a BA and MA at Oxford and becoming a pilot in the First World War. He was a research chemist in Scotland when he died in a motorcycle accident at the age of 30. Hugh was unmarried. Florence married John Murray in 1948 and died on 20 March 1963. Neither Hugh nor Florence had children so this line then ended.

Annie Elizabeth Drescher (11 February 1866 - Unknown)



Married Albert Martin Coates who was then a coachman and later a chauffeur in 1888. They had four children. George William Coates (born 1891) died on 17 June 1916 while fighting in the First World War. He was a Corporal in the East Yorkshire Regiment. Dora was born in 1893, Elizabeth (Effie) in 1896 and Margaretta in 1889. Effie's first husband, James Westwood, died in the Somme in September 1916. They had one child, Joyce Mary Westwood who was six months old when her father died. Effie married her cousin, Billie Marshall, in 1928. Effie and Billie's only child, Eric Marshall, was born in 1930.

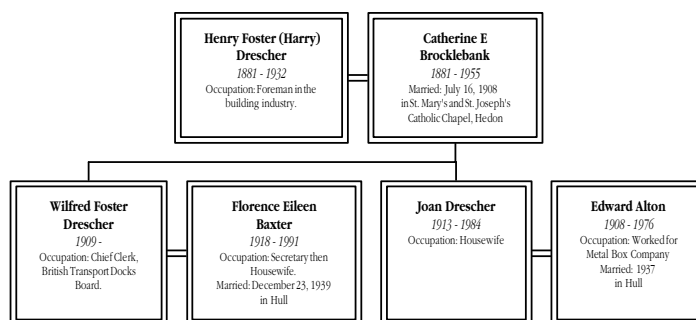
Edward Drescher (9 May 1879 - 1971): Civil servant



Edward was on the passenger list for SS Oceanic which arrived in New York from Liverpool on its maiden voyage on 6 December 1899. Details from the ship's manifest show that he was 20 years old, single, an insurance agent and that his last residence had been Hedon. He paid for his trip to New York himself and had \$50 cash. Edward had returned by the 1901 census when he was a grocer's clerk living with his parents at 74 Market Place, Hedon.

Edward married Mary Agnes Gardner in 1906 but she died on 18 August 1912 aged 41. He married his second wife, Frances Mary Lilian Snowdon in 1916. She died on 14 December 1964 aged 80, and Edward died in 1971 aged 92. He was a civil servant for most of his working life. There were no children by either marriage.

Henry Foster (Harry) Drescher (18 May 1881 - 13 October 1932): Foreman Joiner



Harry, like his brother John, was a joiner's apprentice at the 1901 census. He married Catherine ("Kitty") Brocklebank at the Roman Catholic Church of St Mary and St Joseph in Hedon on 16 July 1908. They had two children, Wilfred Foster born on 7 May 1909 and Joan on 3 February 1913. Harry was working as principal foreman joiner for J Taylor and Son when he died in an accident at the Swan Flour Mills on 13 October 1932. Kitty was living with Joan when she died on 20 March 1955.



Left: Henry Foster Drescher photograph and pocket watch given to him for his 21st birthday.

Below: Henry Foster Drescher with wife Kitty, son Wilfred and daughter Joan.



Wilf Drescher married Florence Eileen Baxter on 23 December 1939. They had two children, Brenda Catherine who was born on 3 November 1941 at Ingleton, Yorkshire and Brian Robert who was born on 16 April 1947 at Priory Road, Hull. Wilf died on 1 April 2002 aged 92, and Eileen on 26 January 1991 aged 72. He had been a Chief Clerk with the British Transport Docks Board at Grimsby and Hull.

Joan married Edward ("Ted") Alton in 1937. Robert Edward, their only child was born on 16 July 1943 and died in November 2004 when he was living at Bearsted, near Maidstone, Kent. Joan died on 11 September 1984 aged 71, and Ted on 15 November 1976 aged 68.

C O N C L U S I O N

Descendants of John Drescher are now spread across England although the majority are still living in and around Hull where there are a number of Marshalls, Greens, Coates and Veritys as well as Dreschers who are related. The majority are descendants of John and Mary's son, Joseph Albert, but a small number are descendants of Henry Salvadore, their youngest son. Over forty are expected to attend the Drescher family reunion, organised by Carole Verity, and to be held in Hull and Hedon on 17 September 2005.

John Drescher died in 1858 and by the 1871 census many of his sons had moved to Lancashire. John Francis was an accountant/auditor living at Chorlton on Medlock, Salford; Henry Salvadore was a brush maker and he and his mother, Mary, were living at Castleton, Rochdale. No trace has been found of either Charles or Edward then but both were definitely living in Lancashire later. Charles was a basket maker living with Henry and his sister-in-law, Esther, when he died in 1878; and Edward who was last picked up on the 1865/66 electoral roll was living at Birkenhead, Cheshire in 1881. He had married Martha Glenton in Rochdale in 1876 when she was living with Henry. Only Edward was a watch and clock maker. Charles, Edward and Henry stayed in the North West and died there but John Francis moved to London where he became a commercial traveller and lived in South London.

It would be interesting to know why so many of the family moved from Hull. The main reasons may have been economic. Lancashire was booming in the mid-nineteenth century on the back of the prosperity from the flourishing cotton industry. This was particularly the case in the Manchester area where most of the brothers moved. All the brothers with the possible exception of John Francis had been trained as watch and clock makers but John Francis, Henry and Charles decided to turn to new trades and Henry became a successful Lancashire businessman. Competition from continental watch and clock makers particularly French and also from American makers and generally from mass production techniques made it increasingly difficult for small businesses to survive as the nineteenth century progressed.

The other factor may have been the damage to the family's reputation caused by Matthew's imprisonment for stealing watches. It may have been difficult for Henry and Charles to become employed as watch and clock makers when their elder brother had betrayed his employer's trust. This may also have affected their ability to secure other

jobs. The bad name of one member of the family could affect the reputation and employment prospects of all the others.