

Oral History

In February 1975 I visited William Large (1881-1981) at his house in Butley Street and he told me that Fanny Crosby had informed him that she had walked to Ipswich, when she was young, to see a man hanged. He had placed his hands together, bowed to the crowd and declared himself innocent.

Mr Large went on to say Fanny had borne several children by a man named Reeve and some were named Crosby and others Reeve. I decided to explore the latter information first, and finding no sign of her children in the baptismal records, turned to censuses.

The earliest census, that of 1841, listed her aged 12, daughter of John Crosby the village blacksmith.

One of her sisters was Mary, the subject of the postscript elsewhere in this *Bulletin* (please see above). By 1851 she was listed as Fanny Reeve, and the blacksmith had three grandchildren named John Crosby, Elizabeth Reeve and Samuel Reeve, a baby. Ten years later the blacksmith's wife was dead and Fanny was described as 'the wife of a wheelwright'. A new baby, Henry Reeve, was listed but there was no sign of young John Crosby. There was a ten-year gap between the births of Samuel and Henry. Was the father Reeve or another man?

By 1871 Fanny was head of the household and her last three children were living with her, Mary Ann, William and Hannah, along with Eliza, Henry and