



Benjamin Gaines 1886-1918

Benjamin was born in Leeds on 17th April 1886. His father was also Benjamin Gaines, a Brewery Labourer and later a Publican born in Huddersfield in 1844 and died in 1912. His mother was Eliza Jane (nee Chase) born in Willenhall, Staffordshire in 1855 and died in 1912. They were married on 7th February 1876 in St. Jude's Church, Hunslet, Leeds.

Their other children all born in Leeds were: Mary, born in 1876, Martha, born in 1878 and died in 1881, John Thomas, born in 1880, Ann Elizabeth, born in 1882 and died in 1893, Lilian, born in 1884, Samuel, born in 1889, Joseph, born in 1892 and died in 1912 and George (sometimes Edgar George or George Edgar), born in 1895. Mary, Samuel and George all emigrated to Canada and the two brothers served in the Canadian Expeditionary Force in World War 1.

Benjamin Snr. was previously married to Mary Ann Gerard (born in 1851 and died in 1874) at St. Peter's Church, Leeds on 21st September 1868.

On the 1891 Census the family lived at 3, Lincolnsfield Terrace, Leeds, by 1901 they had moved to Dewsbury where Benjamin Snr. became the Landlord of the Royal Oak Public House in Church Street near to the corner of South Street; they were still there in 1911.

Benjamin attended Dewsbury Parish Church School and later worked in his father's Public House. He was married on 7th May 1906 to Laura Senior (born in 1876 and died in 1969) at St. Michael and All Angels Church, Thornhill; they had a son, Ben, born three weeks later on 26th May. He sailed from Liverpool to New York on 12th December 1907 on the White Star Liner S.S. Baltic. On embarkation he was described as a single miner, but on arrival on 21st December he was recorded as a married glass hand. It is not known whether Benjamin was ever reconciled with his wife and son but he is recorded by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission as "Husband of Laura Gaines, 83, Hall Lane Cottages, Thornhill, Dewsbury, England". The epitaph on his headstone reads; *"A loving husband, a father kind, a treasured memory left behind"*.

He enlisted at Winnipeg on 29th November 1915, giving his occupation as coal miner using the alias Benjamin Evans and reducing his age by 3 years. He served as Sapper 829389 in the 1st Tunneling Company Canadian Engineers; his true identity was discovered in March 1919. He was killed in action during the First Day of the Battle of Amiens on 8th August 1918. The Canadian War Graves Register contains the following statement: *"During an attack and just at the 'jumping-off' trench, he was hit by shrapnel. Immediate attention was given to him by stretcher-bearers but he died immediately."* He was buried in Longueau British Cemetery, Somme, France. Benjamin was awarded the British War Medal, the Victory Medal and the Canadian Silver Memorial Cross (Mother's Cross).

Longueau British Cemetery is situated on the south-eastern outskirts of Amiens. It was begun in April 1918, when the Allied line was re-established before Amiens; the cemetery contains 204 First World War burials, 14 of which are unidentified.

Benjamin is commemorated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour kept in Dewsbury Central Library and on the War Memorial Plaque to the Old Boys of Dewsbury Parish Church School and on the War Memorial in St. Michael and All Angels Church, Thornhill and in the Canadian Book of Remembrance at Parliament Hill, Ottawa.

In Memory of

Sapper

Benjamin Gaines

829389, 1st Tunnelling Coy., Canadian Engineers who died on 08 August 1918 Age 32

Husband of Laura Gaines, of 83, Hall Lane Cottages, Thornhill, Dewsbury, England.

Remembered with Honour

Longueau British Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

