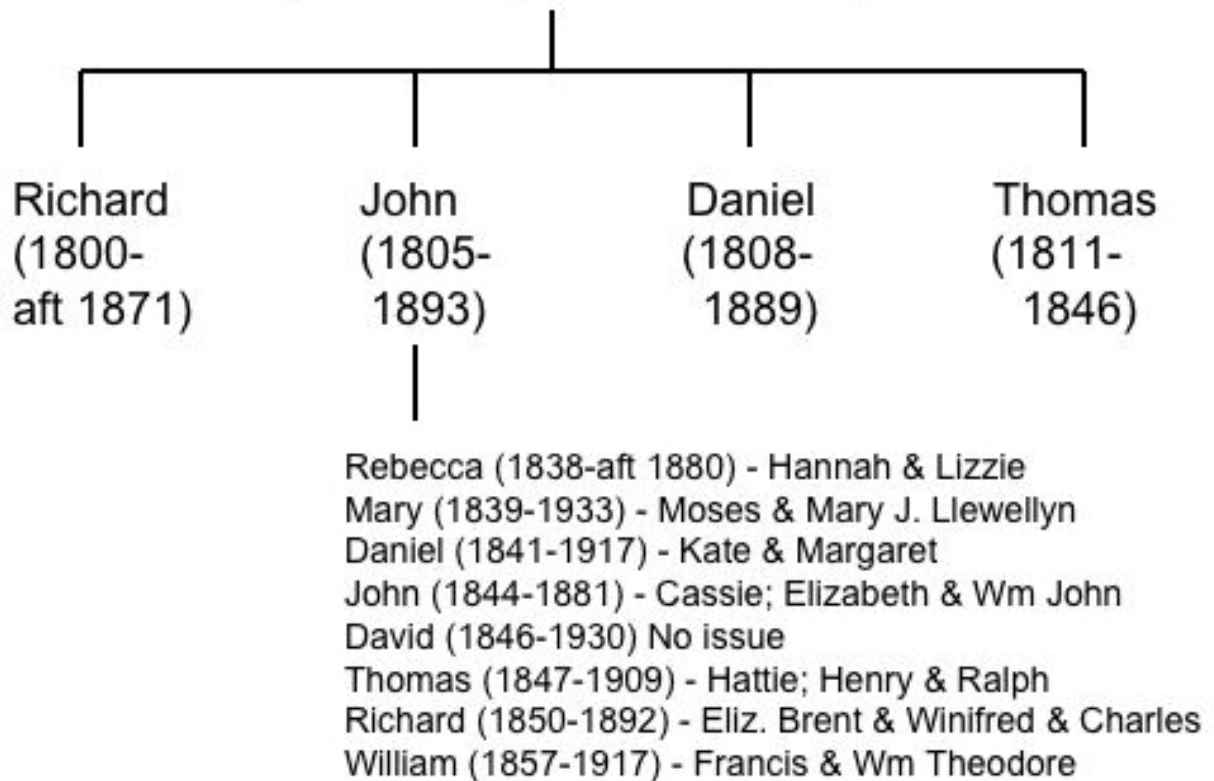


Bassett Line 117B – St Mary Hill (from Somersetshire)

Bassett Line 117B

Richard Bassett + Elizabeth Richard
(1773-1853) (abt 1763-1856)



My name is David Attride. I am descended from Welsh Bassetts on my paternal grandmother's side. As I developed an understanding of my Welsh ancestors (Bassett & Griffith & Williams) I came to tell people that in the 1870s my ancestors grew tired of being poor Welsh coal miners and decided instead to become poor Pennsylvania coal miners. When I began trying to unravel and understand the various members of my Bassett ancestry, I decided it would be much easier to collect records about any BASSETT that I encountered and to sort them out according to families.

Therefore, I have scoured:

all the Glamorgan census records (1841-1901)

Glamorgan Baptism Index (1569-1837)

Glamorgan Marriage Index (1569-1837)

Glamorgan Burial Index (1569-1841)
Parish registers for about 20 Glamorgan parishes
Bassett Wills from the National Library of Wales (90 in all)

This quest reached its culmination when, through sheer luck, I stumbled upon Barrie Diamond (of Cardiff, Wales) and learned that he had spend 20 years thoroughly researching Glamorgan Bassetts. More on that later.

Here is a photo of the St Mary Hill Church (about 20 miles west of Cardiff):



My research indicates there are 3 different Bassett lines living in St Mary Hill and nearby Llangan and Llanilid parishes in the mid-19th century. The eldest members of these families still living in 1841 are:

Brothers: Robert, (ca1780-1849) and John (ca1778-1851) born in Llanstephan parish, Carmarthenshire. Their mother's name was Jane but their father's name is not known for sure but may be Thomas (based on an IGI entry of a 1779 baptism in Llangynog parish, Carmarthenshire).

Charles, Gentleman (1768-1849) born in Ystradowen parish, Glamorganshire

Richard, Agricultural Labourer (ca1773-1853) born in Somersetshire

Here is a map of that part of Glamorganshire that shows the parish of St Mary Hill at the upper left (about 20 miles west of Cardiff) and the nearby parishes of Llanilid and Llangan.



While Y-DNA samples have been submitted from several descendants of Richard, unfortunately, no descendants of Robert, John or Charles have submitted their DNA to allow comparison. The Y-DNA samples from descendants of this Richard do not match those of more well known Glamorgan Bassett families such as the Beupre Bassetts and the descendants of Lewis Bassett of Lavernock. Line 117B DNA does match that of Charles Bassett born ca 1857 in Staffordshire (son of Joseph Bassett born in Worcestershire).

9144	#66B Lewis Bassett of Wales	13	25	16	11	13	17	11	13	11	12	11	28	15	8	10	10	12	24	15	19	30	14	14	15	16
47974	#292 Bassett of Beaupre, Wales	13	25	16	11	14	17	11	13	11	12	11	28	16	8	10	10	12	24	15	19	29	14	14	16	16
80460	#202 Bassett of Llanelly, Wales	13	25	16	11	13	17	11	13	11	12	11	28	15	8	10	10	12	24	15	19	30	14	14	15	16
80687	#202 Bassett of Llanelly, Wales	13	25	16	11	13	17	11	13	11	12	11	28	15	8	9	10	12	24	15	19	30	14	14	15	16
12161	#117B Bassett of St. Mary Hill	13	25	14	11	11	14	12	12	12	13	13	29	16	9	9	12	11	25	15	19	29	15	15	16	16
55816	#128B Charles of England	13	25	14	11	11	14	12	12	12	13	13	30	16	9	10	12	11	26	15	19	29	15	15	17	18
56212	#117B Bassett of St. Mary Hill	13	25	14	12	11	14	12	12	12	13	13	29	17	9	9	11	11	25	15	19	29	15	15	16	16
74711	#117B Bassett of St. Mary Hill	13	25	14	12	11	14	12	12	12	13	13	29	16	9	9	12	11	25	15	19	29	15	15	16	16

The earliest record I have of Richard Bassett is his marriage in St Mary Hill in 1796. Here is the transcription of that event:

14 Dec 1796 St Mary Hill parish marriage: Richard Bassett, Batchelor of this parish and Elizabeth Edmunds, of this parish, Widow. Signed by Richard Bassett and mark of Elizabeth. Witnessed by Charles Bassett, the mark of Ann David and signature of William Williams.

Note that the marriage was witnessed by Charles Bassett who lived in St Mary Hill parish. Some have assumed therefore that Charles Bassett, (born 1768 in Ystradown parish) was a brother of this Richard. I have found no evidence to support this.

Fortunately, Richard survived to be enumerated in the 1851 Glamorgan census which provides some key information:

1851 St Mary Hill parish:		Rel. to		Age	Rank	Where Born
Name of Place	Name of Person	Head	Cond	Age	Rank	Where Born
Four Ashes	Richard Bassett	Head	Mar	75	Ag Lab Pauper	Somerset, Weldiam
	Elizabeth	Wife	Mar	86		Glamorgan, Pentrych
	Mariah	dau	Un	14		Do, Treforest

The key information provided by this census record are:

- 1) Richard was born in Somersetshire, not Glamorgan (although no parish by the name of Weldiam exists anyone in England or Wales)
- 2) Richard is listed as a Agricultural Labour, Pauper – so he was not a man of means or a yeoman
- 3) Mariah (listed as his daughter, but most likely really his grand daughter) was born in Treforest

the will of Thomas Bassett (below) was proved in Treforest

Ag. Lab. Pauper	Somerset. Weldiam
d. wife	Glamorgan. Pentrych
Scholar	d. Treforest

Back to Charles Bassett (ca1768-1849) of St Mary Hill, son of Charles (bef 1750 - 1788) and the potential that the younger Charles may be a brother of Richard (ca1773-1853) of St Mary Hill. As the census record above shows, Richard was not a land owner and was poor. The 1849 will of Charles Bassett calls him Gentleman. An inventory of his estate shows it valued at £81.

Unfortunately, the elder Charles did not leave a will. These facts suggest to me that Richard was not related to Charles Bassett of St Mary Hill. Now on to some information regarding parish records and British Wills.

To the researcher with English ancestry, parish records are a vital resource. In 1538 Henry VIII decreed that every parish priest would record all baptisms, marriages and burials. However, the Welsh have not always been obedient subjects and were slow to comply. It is estimated that only

about 25% of the parishes in Glamorgan have records prior to 1700. Therefore, in assembling a picture of a Welsh ancestry, wills are a vital part of the research.

Before we get to our first will, first a little about the structure of will probation in Great Britain. The book “Welsh Family History – A guide to Research“ is a wonderful collection of lectures about Welsh Genealogical research and provides an excellent chapter on the background of wills. Searching for wills in the United States is rather straightforward. You look at the county where you believe probate took place. Such is not the case in the Great Britain. Due to its church-state history, wills in the UK prior to 1858 were probated by the Church. In the event the testator died without a will, the next of kin obtained letters of administration to distribute the estate. In Wales wills and letters of administration (Bonds) were proved at Bishop’s Consistory Courts at Bangor, Chester, Hereford, Llandaff, St Asaph and St David’s. Llandaff diocese covered all of Glamorganshire (except the far western end which was part of St David’s diocese). If the testator owned property in other counties, including England, they had the right to request probate in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury or the Prerogative Court of York. This somewhat complex history requires that one search in several places to be sure a suspected will is found. No central index to all wills of Great Britain yet exists. Fortunately, the National Library of Wales has scanned and indexed most of the wills probated in dioceses within Wales. Their web site enables one to search for a surname within a diocese. For most of the wills located in the index digital images can be viewed. To get to their website, do a Google search on: National Library Wales Wills

In 1858 Civil jurisdiction replaced Church jurisdiction. The National Library of Wales has a year-by-year alphabetical index *Caldendar of Probate (1858-1972)*. A copy can be seen at the Glamorgan County Record Office in Cardiff.

For wills that may have been proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, do a Google search on “A2A Wills“ which will take you to the website of the National Archives for a search of Wills. If you find a will you are interested in seeing, you can purchase an excellent digital copy on-line.

The oldest Will that I have found for a member of the Bassett Line 117B is that of Thomas Bassett (1811-1846), a son of Richard. This will was written in 1844 and proved in 1848 in Llandaff diocese. Here is the text:

Thomas Bassett of Treforest, widower:

I bequeth unto: Daniel Bassett; Elias Bassett; Moses Bassett and Mariah Bassett all my leasehold property at Treforest ... to be sold at auction and divided between my above named children being the issue of my former marriage. In the event of my getting married again I request that my wife and the issue of such marriage if any, are to have equal share ... I appoint my brother, Daniel Bassett of St Mary Hill and John Lewis of Treforest joint Executors this 30 day of July 1844.

Signed by the mark of Thomas Bassett.

Letter of administration for his estate:

5 Nov. 1846 Daniel Bassett of the parish of Llanilid, Farmer, and John Lewis of Treforest in the parish of Llantwit Fardre, joint Executors of the Will of Thomas Bassett late of Treforest in the parish of Llantwit Fardre, Labourer, who died on 4 Sept 1846, duly swore that the goods chattels and credits of the deceased are under the value of £100.

15 Oct 1846 Inventory of the estate of Thomas Bassett of Treforest:

Lease of premises in Treforest hold for 99 years and 90 years unexpired
annual value £9 2 shilling
reserved rent £1 16 shilling
profit £7 6 shilling
Household furniture £5 12 shilling
Wearing apparel £2.

Total Value: £97 & 12 shilling. (PM-407.4)

Debts of the late Thomas Bassett, Treforest: (PM-407.5)

Funeral Expenses £7

to Mr Robt Miles, Shopkeeper £2 & 5 shilling

to Mr Thomas Morris, Shopkeeper £1 & 15 shilling

rent of seat in Baptist Chapel £0 & 7 shilling

pd toward erecting the Baptist Chapel £0 & 7 shilling

Paid by the Widow of the late Thomas Bassett £11 & 13 shilling

What is Unpaid:

rent money by James Avory £2

balance due to Wm Bew of money lent £3

money lent on lease by Thomas Jones £10

due for ___ attendancies £1

to Wm Evans, shoemaker £1

to Traherne Williams, taylor £0 & 11 shilling

lent money by Richard Edwards £1 & 12 shilling

due to Wm Phillips, brewer £0 & 5 shilling

to Morgan Williams, miller £2 & 2 shilling

Total £21 & 16 shilling

I have found no parish baptismal record for this Thomas Bassett. Initially, I listed him as a son of Charles Bassett (1768-1849). Then I found the 1838 birth registration for Mariah Bassett (fortunately a rare forename). Her birth registration lists her parents as: Thomas & Ann Bassett formerly Llewelian and the father's signature says "The mark of Thomas Bassett father Treforest Llantwit Fardre." Remembering the Mariah Bassett, aged 14 yrs on the 1851 census, I realized that she was living with her grandparents, Richard & Elizabeth Bassett in St Mary Hill.

I am indebted to my 4th cousin, Bruce Kappeler for researching the descendants of Thomas Bassett and for obtaining a Y-DNA sample from one of his male Bassett descendants.

Thomas Bassett had a brother, John (ca 1805 – 1893) who is my great great great grandfather.

John Bassett married Elizabeth Griffiths on May 6, 1837 at St Mary Hill. They had 10 children, of whom 8 reached adulthood. Those 8 are shown in the family tree above.

Rebecca (my ancestor) married Wm Griffiths in 1861, had 2 children: William and Mary.

Rebecca's husband, William, was killed in a coal mine in 1862. Rebecca married Evan Davies in 1866, and had 4 more children (Thomas; Hannah; Elizabeth and John) and then left Wales in 1876 for Pennsylvania.

Mary had a child, Moses out of wedlock in 1839 in St Mary Hill. Len Cooke of New Zealand is a descendant who has researched her line. At Bridgend, Glamorgan in 1873, Mary married James Vallance (of Somerset) and had 3 children: William; John and Mary Jane (who married Evan Llewellyn in 1902).

Daniel married Mary Evans in 1868, stayed in Glamorgan and had 5 children: Thomas; Elizabeth; Wm David; Margaret and Katherine.

John married Margaret Richards in 1868, also stayed in Glamorgan and had 4 children: Catherine "Cassie"; Elizabeth; Ann and Wm John.

David Bassett left Wales in 1870 settling in Marin Co., California. He first married Alice J. Bailey in 1879 and then in 1902 married Daisy Dye. David made a handsome living owning and running a dairy farm. His wonderful will of 1930 will be dealt with later.

Thomas Walter left Wales for Marin Co., California in 1869 and married Mary Ellen Bailey (a sister to Alice J.) in 1877. They had 3 children: Mary Hattie; Robert Henry and Thomas Ralph.

Richard married Catherine Williams in Glamorgan in 1873 and had a daughter, Elizabeth (who married Edson Brent in Pennsylvania in 1893). Catherine died in Llantrisant, Glamorgan in 1876 and Richard left Wales for Marin Co., California by 1880. In 1882 he married Sarah Ann Williams and had 3 children: Winifred, John David & Charles William.

William left Wales for Marin Co., California in 1875 and married Laura Asenth Bailey (another sister of Alice J.) in the early 1880s. They did not have children. Laura died in 1894 and William married Celia Watkins in Glamorganshire in 1896 bringing her back with him to California. They had 3 children: Elsie M.; Frances Dorothy and William Theodore.

Much appreciation to my cousin, Walter Degear of the San Francisco Bay area for gathering all the information about these California Bassetts.

In the work history of these brothers we see some of the transformation of Glamorgan that took place in the latter part of the 19th century. John Bassett (1805-1893) spent his entire life in agriculture in the Vale of Glamorgan (St Mary Hill area). Among John's children, the following worked in agriculture their entire lives: John; David; Thomas Walter and William. The Vale of Glamorgan was an agricultural area in the 1840s and 1850s. Coal mining was active in eastern Glamorgan (Rhondda Valley) such as Merthyr Tydfil by 1841. As it expanded it drew more and more workers from farming areas such as the Vale of Glamorgan. By the time Richard Bassett married in 1873, he was a collier working in Gyfeillon. By 1880 he was a Dairyman in Marin Co., California. However, his youngest child, Charles, was born in Butte, Montana in 1887 which provides evidence that Richard had gone back to mining.

The photo below is the tombstone of John & Elizabeth Bassett who lived in the St Mary Hill area and are buried at the nearby parish church of Llanilid. The John Griffiths buried with them is the brother of my great grandmother, Mary Griffiths (dau. Of Wm Griffiths & Rebecca Bassett).

JOHN BASSETT

OF ST MARYS HILL

WHO DIED JULY 7TH 1893

AGED 89 YEARS

ALSO ELIZABETH

THE BELOVED WIFE OF THE ABOVE

WHO DIED MARCH 18TH 1901

AGED 91 YEARS

ALSO JOHN CRIFFITHS

GRANDSON OF THE ABOVE

WHO DIED APRIL 1873 AGED 12 YEARS.

GWYLIWCH CAN HYNMY AM WA

WYDDOCH NAR DWR NAR AWRY DAW

DEB Y DAW

ALSO MARY

DAUGHTER OF THE ABOVE

WIFE OF JAMES VALLANCE

As a teenager, I first asked my grandmother about his ancestry. She told me that she was descended from Williams who were Welsh coal miners and that on her mother's side she had a wealthy great uncle who had lived in Marin County and that he had left her mother \$500 back in the 1930s. Walter Degear discovered the will of David Bassett (written in 1929 and probated in Long Beach, Calif. in 1930) which proved a treasure trove of family information. David was married twice but never had any children. He farmed in Marin county close to several brothers and appeared to have stayed in touch with family back in Glamorganshire. The text of his will provides a list of living relatives as shown below:

The last Will and Testament of David Bassett

Know all men by these presents: That I, David Bassett, a resident of the County of Los Angeles, State of California, over the age of seventy-eight years ... do hereby make, publish, and declare this as and for my Last Will and Testament.

FIRST: I declare that all my estate of every kind and character is my sole and separate estate, the same having been acquired by me prior to my marriage with my wife, Daisy D. Bassett.

SECOND: I hereby give, bequeath, and devised to my said wife, DAISY D. BASSETT, absolutely and forever, the ranch I own consisting of about one hundred sixty-two and one-half acres near the Town of Tomales, County of Marin, State of California, together with all the personal property thereon.

THIRD: The foregoing provision, and all other provisions in this Will to my said wife, are made in full satisfaction to her and shall be so received by her in lieu and in full satisfaction of all claims which she may have against my estate, as well as all rights which she may have as such surviving widow, including homestead, rights by succession, and every other right. In case she do not abide and accept the terms of this will, then I leave her no portion of my estate.

FOURTH: All sums heretofore advanced to my wife, aggregating Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00), I make no charge against her and waive all claim thereto on behalf of myself and my estate.

FIFTH: I hereby direct my executrix hereinafter named to pay all my just debts and funeral expenses as soon after my demise as can be lawfully and conveniently done.

SIXTH: I hereby give, devise, and bequeath to each of my nieces and nephews hereinafter named the sum of Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) each, to wit: Two nieces in Pennsylvania whose Last name before they married was Davis, but whose present names I do not know; Lizzie Day, Maggie Thomas, Kittie Davis, Cassie Diamond, Lizzie Price, Wm. John Bassett, Moses Bassett, Hattie Winn Sales, Elizabeth Brent, Henry Bassett, Ralph Bassett, Winnie Beebe, Francis Bassett, and Wm. Theodore Bassett.

SEVENTH: I hereby give, devise, and bequeath to my nephew, Harold Rowan, the sum of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00).

EIGHTH: I hereby give, devise, and bequeath to my niece, Mary I. Llewellyn, the sum of Six Thousand Dollars (\$6,000.00).

NINTH: I hereby give, devise, and bequeath to my nephew, John Llewellyn, the sum of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00).

TENTH: I hereby give, devise, and bequeath to my niece, Kethy Llewellyn, the sum of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00).

ELEVENTH: I hereby give, devise, and bequeath to my grandnephew, Willie Llewellyn, the sum of One Thousand Dollars.

TWELFTH: I hereby give, devise, and bequeath to my grandniece, Daisy Llewellyn, the sum of

One Thousand Dollars.

THIRTEENTH: I hereby give, devise, and bequeath to R. H. Bailey, the sum of Two Thousand Dollars (\$2,000.00).

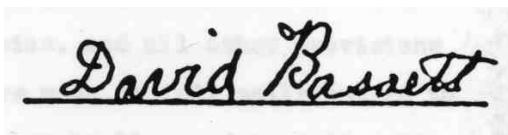
FOURTEENTH: I hereby give, devise, and bequeath to the Trustees or Directors of the PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF TOMALES, Marin County, California, the sum of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) to be used by them for the benefit of said church.

FIFTEENTH: I hereby give, devise, and bequeath all the rest, residue, and remainder of my property, both real and personal, of whatever kind or character and wherever situated, of which I may die possessed, to my wife, DAISY D. BASSETT, and to my nephew, HAROLD ROWAN, share and share alike.

SIXTEENTH: I hereby nominate and appoint my wife, DAISY D. BASSETT, as the Executrix of this, my Last Will and Testament, to act as such without being required to give bond, and I hereby expressly authorize and empower my said executrix, if she shall so elect, to continue and operate, during the probate administration of my estate, any business operation or enterprise in which I am interested at the time of my demise, all profits and losses therefrom belonging to and falling upon my estate and not upon my said executrix personally, and also that she may sell, lease, or mortgage the whole or any portion of my estate, except as herein otherwise specifically devised, at either public or private sale, with or without notice, without securing any previous order of court therefore, and upon such terms and conditions as to her may seem best, but subject, however, to confirmation by court as provided by law.

Lastly: I hereby revoke any and all other wills and codicils to wills made by me.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 2 day of January, 1929, as Long Beach, California.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Bassett". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

With this will in-hand, Walter Degear & I began comparing our partial Bassett family tree to the list of names in the will, checking off all those we knew about. Walter continued searching California obits, etc and found all the key information about the descendants of David's brothers: Richard, Thomas & William. I focused on those who stayed in Glamorgan and my gg grandmother, Rebecca. Through the help of British Marriage Civil Registration records found through Ancestry.com, I learned of Rebecca's 1866 marriage to Evan Davies. Welsh census records filled in the gaps on the children of Daniel & Mary Bassett. John Bassett and his children proved to be a hard nut to crack since there were 25 different John Bassetts in the 1871 Wales census.

Next serendipity smiled at me! I printed a map of Glamorgan and circled the area in the vicinity of St Mary Hill parish. Recently I had done an Internet Welsh phone directory search for BASSETT. I searched through it for any John Bassett (since that name kept appearing in my family tree) in the vicinity of St Mary Hill. I made 3 telephone calls asking if they knew anything about their family history and if they were connected to Bassetts of St Mary Hill. The last call connected me to a family who said their daughter was much interested in her family history and that I should ring back. I called a few days later and spoke with Jayne Bassett (who is descended from the BASSETTs of Bonvilston). She said she could not immediately help me but said that she had some papers from a local researcher and would send them to me. A week later, an envelope containing

20-25 pages of nicely typed genealogical notes arrived. It did not have any information about any Bassetts from St Mary Hill. My initial disappointment evaporated when I noted on a few of the pages, a header:

Researched by:

Barrie Richard Diamond

70 Ashcroft Crescent

Fairwater, Cardiff

Date: 1991

As soon as I saw the surname of the researcher, my heart skipped a beat! DIAMOND, I remembered that surname. I went back to David Bassett's 1930 will and checked the names of those listed in the will that Walter & I had not located on our family tree. I found the name, Cassie Diamond (a niece of David's). I went back to my Internet Welsh Telephone directory and searched for DIAMOND in Cardiff. Sure enough, I found Barrie Diamond on Ashcroft Crescent. I waited until the weekend to call and found him at home. He is elderly and was somewhat puzzled as to who I was and why I was calling. I explained that I had BASSETT ancestors from St Mary Hill, that I had some papers showing that he had done Bassett research and next asked if the name Cassie Diamond meant anything to him. "Well, yes, certainly. Cassie Diamond is my grandmother." I almost dropped the Telephone! My persistent searching had not only lead me to a dedicated researcher of Glamorgan BASSETTs but I had stumbled on a 3th cousin!

To identify a few individuals named in David Bassett's will who are not Bassett descendants:

Harold Rowan was a nephew of Daisy Dye Bassett

R. H. Bailey (b. 1863) was a brother of David's first wife, Alice Bailey

Postscript: After learning of the 20 or so years of research Barrie Diamond carried out, I happened to do a search on the LDS Family History Library catalog for any books about BASSETTs. I saw that they had a 180 page monograph donated to them by Barrie Diamond. The library was kind enough to agree to microfilm it so this invaluable monograph is available to anyone who visits their local LDS family history library. The monograph contains some wonderful background on earliest history of Glamorgan Bassetts; Bassetts of Beaupre and will be referenced in future stories. Three years ago I was fortunate enough to make a genealogy trip to Wales. First, I spent several days at the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth. Barrie Diamond invited me to stay with him in Cardiff. Unfortunately, he is in his late 70s and at the time was suffering the ill effects of a severe eye infection and other general health problems. Discussing family history was not possible but he provided me full access to his notes. I am greatly indebted to him for his years of excellent and thorough research (imaging pre-Internet, digital census, etc).

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PS I welcome inquiries re. Glamorgan BASSETT ancestry