

An Investigation of the Ancestors of Richard Bassett by David Attride June 2010

This is a summary of developments over the last 4-5 years in my investigation of my BASSETT ancestry. Let me first summarize the state of knowledge as of the summer of 2009:

The 1841 Census for BASSETTs in St Mary Hill parish, Glamorganshire lists:

Richard Bassett (40) Farmer
Elizabeth Bassett (30)
Elizabeth Bassett (10)
Mary Bassett (2)
Thomas Bassett (45) Ag Lab

Richard Basset (60) Ag Lab
Elizabeth Bassett (75)
Mariah Bassett (3)
Rebecca Bassett (25)
Jane Bassett (25)

Charles Bassett (75) Farmer
Christopher Bassett (25)
William Bassett (34)
Ann Bassett (45)

The 1851 Census for BASSETTs in St Mary Hill parish lists:

Christopher Bassett (32) Farmer born St Mary Hill
Ann Bassett (53) sister born St Mary Hill

Richard Bassett (51) Farmer 33 ac. born St Mary Hill
Elizabeth Bassett (44) born Neath
Mary Bassett (14) dau. born Colwinstone
Charles Bassett (9) son born St Mary Hill

Richard Bassett (75) Ag Lab Pauper born Somerset, Weldiam (see footnote 1)
Elizabeth Bassett (86) Wife born Pentyrch
Mariah Bassett (16) Grand dau. born Treforest

In nearby Llanilid parish the 1851 census lists (see Appendix 2):

John Bassett (44) Ag Lab born Llanilid
Elizabeth Bassett (41) Wife born Llanilid
Rebeca Bassett (13) dau. born Llanilid
Mary Bassett (11) dau. born Llanilid
David Bassett (9) Son born Llanilid
John Bassett (7) Son born Llanilid
Daniel Bassett (5) Son born Llanilid

Thomas Bassett (4) Son born Llanilid
Richard Bassett (9 mo.) Son born Llanilid

Daniel Bassett (41) Flour Merchant born St Mary Hill
Jane Bassett (43) Wife born St Mary Hill
Moses Bassett (16) Nephew born Llanwit Major

These census records of course do not tell us how or if these different families are related. Let us turn to the St Mary Hill parish register for some answers.

Starting with the earliest baptisms, those which list Richard & Elizabeth Bassett as the parents:

Mary 24 Mar 1799
Ann 10 July 1803
John 13 Oct 1805
Daniel May 1808
Jane 25 July 1813
Rebecca 25 July 1813

Note that Rebecca & Jane are living with Richard (born abt 1775) & Elizabeth during the 1841 census. Now what about Mariah Bassett who was aged 3 yrs and living with Richard & Elizabeth in 1841? She is the Mariah, aged 16 yrs, living with them during the 1851 census which lists her birth place as Treforest (we will come back to Treforest in a minute). The St Mary Hill baptismal record (see Appendix 3) lists the baptism of Maria Bassett, dau. of Thomas & Mary Bassett in 1850, aged 13 yrs. Who are the parents of this Thomas Bassett? We will address that soon.

So the John Bassett, aged 44 yrs, living in Llanilid parish in 1851 was a son of this Richard Bassett. Daniel Bassett, aged 41 yrs, living in Llanilid in 1851 is another son of this same Richard Bassett.

Appendix 4 shows the 1796 marriage of Richard Bassett at St Mary Hill parish to Elizabeth Edmunds. This record lists Richard as a Batchelor but lists Elizabeth Edmunds as a widow. Note that one of the witnesses was Charles Bassett who is probably the same Charles listed in the 1841 census above, aged 75 yrs. Some assumed that since Charles Bassett witnessed this marriage that he must be a relative. I had rejected that suggestion largely based upon the indication that Charles was born in Glamorganshire while Richard was born in Somersetshire and that he was an agricultural labourer while Charles was a farmer of numerous acres. New facts uncovered in November 2009 by Bob Sanders have changed my previous assessment.

Further searching of the marriages of St Mary Hill parish revealed the March 1794 marriage of Henry Edmond, Batchelor, to Elizabeth Richard, Spinster, both of the parish. No burial record has been found in St Mary Hill for Henry but it appears that this Elizabeth is the same person who married Richard Bassett 2 years later.

Tying up a loose end from the 1841 census: I am not sure if the Richard Bassett (shown above) aged 40 yrs with wife, Elizabeth Bassett, and Thomas Bassett aged 45 yrs is another son of Richard Bassett (born ca 1773) or a son of Charles Bassett of St Mary Hill. Below I will show that Charles and Richard are related. The Thomas Bassett (aged 45 in 1841) shown living with Richard is a son of Charles Bassett (St Mary Hill baptisms). The younger Richard is also shown on the 1851 census for St Mary Hill, aged 51 yrs, farming 33 acres and born at St Mary Hill. However, baptisms for St Mary Hill do not list him. His 1830 marriage record lists his residence as St Mary Hill but does not list names of parents. I have found no record showing how he came to own the 33 acres in St Mary Hill. A record of the transfer of this land would be a hint of his relationship.

Jumping ahead to John Bassett (born 1805), son of Richard Bassett (born abt 1775) Appendix 5 shows John's marriage record. In May 1837, John married Elizabeth Griffith. They are the parents of my ancestor, Rebecca Bassett (born 1838); of Mary Bassett (born 1839) and of John Bassett (born 1844). Appendix 11 shows the 1868 marriage record of this son, John, to Margaret Richards.

Turning now to what Wills can teach about the family:

The 1846 Will of Thomas Bassett of Treforest, widower appoints his brother, Daniel Bassett of St Mary Hill and John Lewis of Treforest Joint Executors. An inventory of his estate totals £21 and bequeaths it to his four children: Daniel Bassett; Elias Bassett; Moses Bassett and Mariah Bassett. Recall that the 1851 census for St Mary Hill listed a Mariah Bassett, aged 16 yrs, born in Treforest living with Richard & Elizabeth Bassett and listed as their grand daughter. The only Daniel Bassett from St Mary Hill (old enough to be Thomas' brother) is the Daniel, aged 41 living in nearby Llanilid parish during the 1851 census. This is the same Daniel, baptized in 1808 at St Mary Hill, son of Richard & Elizabeth Bassett. Together these facts show that Thomas Bassett of Treforest is also a son of Richard & Elizabeth Bassett but apparently not baptized at St Mary Hill parish (or if so then perhaps pages of the register may be missing). Letters of Administration of Thomas Bassett's estate describe Daniel Bassett as of the parish of Llanilid, Farmer. Appendix 6 shows the birth record for Mariah Bassett, 28 November 1838. It lists her father as Thomas Bassett, Labourer of Treforest, Llantwit Vardre and her mother as Ann Basset, formerly Llewelin.

British Death Registrations list for April 1840 the death of Ann Bassett at Treforest (see Appendix 7). She is listed as aged 39 years and the wife of Thomas Bassett, Labourer. So imagine the situation Thomas found himself in when his wife died in 1840. He had 4 children: Daniel, Elias, Moses & Mariah aged 12, 8, 5 and 2 years, respectively. One year later, the 1841 census shows Thomas Bassett, aged 30 as a Labourer in Crych-y-Gwas with Daniel (12) and Elias (8). The younger children are not shown with him. Mariah, of course is with her grandparents in St Mary Hill. Moses, aged 6 yrs, is shown living in Bridgend with his Uncle Daniel Bassett.

Moving to the family of John Bassett who married Elizabeth Griffiths in May 1837 at St Mary Hill: Appendix 8 shows the birth registration for my great great grandmother, Rebecca Bassett. She was born in March 1838 at Llanilid. The record lists her parents as

John Bassett, Labourer and Elizabeth Bassett formerly Morris. The last is confusing as John's 1837 marriage record lists John's wife as Elizabeth Griffith. It does not describe her as a Spinster or a Widow so it is possible that Morris is her maiden name and she married a Griffith prior to 1837.

Appendix 9 shows the death registration for Elizabeth Bassett. She died 16 Oct 1856 at Llanilid, aged 95 years. She is listed as the widow of Richard Bassett, Agricultural Labourer. It was witnessed by the mark of Daniel Bassett. Appendix 10 shows the death registration for Richard Bassett. He died 13 Dec 1853 at St Mary Hill, aged 81 years. It lists his occupation as Labourer and was witnessed by Margaret Llewellyn.

A key mystery that we wrestled with for several years was: where was Richard Bassett born circa 1775 in Somersetshire? The 1851 census lists his birth parish as WELDIAM but a gazetteer of England lists no parish by that name. Who were his parents? We could not discover these facts until recently. Late in the summer of 2009 I decided to hire Bob Sanders of Cardiff to pursue solving this mystery. Bob has a website that illustrates his keen interest in Welsh genealogy and history. I provided the key background info to him and some disconnected records that I hoped might provide some important clues. They were related to a Robert Bassett of Llangan and the 1817 Will of Jane Bassett of Welsh St Donats.

I had known of two other Bassett families living close to St Mary Hill:
Robert & Elizabeth with children: Lewis, Wm, Ann, Robert & Joan
John & Margaret, Farmer

Robert was born ca 1779 (place unknown). He first shows up on a 1790 St Mary Hill land record that says: "Demise for lives of John Jones (64 years), wife Catherine (70 years) and Robert Bassett (11 years), nephew to said Catherine; for £45 and rents and duties. [Endorsed] witnessed by Richard Mumford, Elizabeth Bassett, Charles Bassett Sold by Chas Bassett to Mr John Bevan 1828"

This document says that Robert is the nephew of Catherine but I do not know her surname. That Charles Bassett witnessed it suggests a connection between Charles & Robert. In 1849 Robert died at Llangan. His Will provides some important clues: "I am by the Will of my late sister, Jane Bassett entitled to a messuage or dwelling house at Prisk in the parish of Welsh St Donats, I give to my daughter, Ann Bassett. I give all the rest of my residue freehold, leasehold & personal property situated in the parish of Llangan to my sons: William Bassett and Robert Bassett and my said daughter Anne Bassett. I give as an acknowledgment to my son Lewis Bassett one shilling I appoint my said sons William & Robert joint Executors of my Will."

The 1851 census for John Bassett:
John Bassett (74 Lanstephen, CMN), married, Farmer of 35 acres living in Trerhyngyll Village, Llanblethian parish with wife, Margaret (38 Merthyr).

At first when I saw that John was from Carmarthenshire I mentally crossed him off my list of Glamorgan BASSETTs as a newcomer to the shire. However, earlier I had come

across the 1817 Will of Jane Bassett of Welsh St Donats. This provide a key clue for the mystery that Bob Sanders unraveled. Here is the text of her Will:

“Jane Bassett of the parish of Welsh St Donats in the county of Glamorgan, widow. I give unto my three sons Richard Bassett, John Bassett and Robert Bassett one acre of land in the parish of Welsh St Donats to be divided equally being holden of the manor of Talyvan. I give unto my son Charles Bassett of St Mary Hill the sum of 2 pounds; to my daughter Jane Bassett Spinster 10 pounds. I give to Mary the wife of Lewis David of Welsh St Donats 10 pounds and all my household furniture (except one bed which I give to Mary David her mother). I give to Catherine the wife of Morgan John of Welsh St Donats the sum of 5 pounds. I give to Elizabeth the wife of William Williams of Treos in the parish of Langan 2 pounds. Executors: sons: Richard Bassett, John Bassett and Robert Bassett.

The Mark of Jane Bassett

25 March 1817. Witnesses: Wm Howell of Cowbridge, Ann Mathew of Ystradowen and Richard Thomas, Prisk. Richard Bassett the lawful son and one of the Executors swears that the personal estate does not amount to more than 10 pounds.”

This document provides some tantalizing hints: it mentions 3 sons: Richard, John & Robert Bassett. I wondered if Robert Bassett who died in 1849 was one of them. It also mentions a son, Charles Bassett of St Mary Hill. So I wondered if our Richard Bassett (born ca 1775) was a son of this Jane Bassett and a brother to Charles Bassett of St Mary Hill – but I had no proof.

In November 2009, Bob Sanders sent the first of several e-mails that solved this mystery. He found the 1777 Will of Thomas Leyson of Welsh St Donats which added key info to the story. This Will is sufficiently important that I will show it entirely:

“In the Name of God Amen. I **Thomas Leyson** of the Parish of Welsh St Donats in the County of Glamorgan Yeoman, do make and ordain this my last Will and Testament in Manner and form following

First I give and bequeath a Lease for the Term of ninety nine Years determinated for three lives nominated in the said Lease, purchased by one of the Honorable Sir **Edmond Thomas** Bart. [baronet] of Wenvoe Castle, containing one messuage ... together with thirty acres of Land (more or less) called and known by the name of Greave farm, set, lying and being in the Parish of Wenvoe within the said County of Glamorgan.

I do give devise and bequeath the rents and profits issuing out of the rented ____ and every part and parcel ... my Daughter **Elizabeth** ... subject to pay out of the said profits the yearly sum of £6 to my Daughter **Jane**, (wife of **Thomas Bassett** officer of Excise) one of the lives nominated in the said Lease during the term of her natural life; and after the Death of the said **Jane** to be divided between her sons then living during the Term of the said Lease.

And I do give devise and bequeath twelve acres of customary Lands ten acres of the said land lying at Olymarch within the Parish of Welsh St Donnats and Lordship of Taylfan, and two acres of the said Land (be it more or less) near Caescady in the said parish and Lordship, between my two Daughter **Mary** and **Ann Leyson** and their customary Heirs forever;

I also give devise & bequeath one dwelling House where I now do dwell at present in the said parish of Welsh St Donats between my aforesaid three Daughters, **Elizabeth**, **Mary** and **Ann Leyson** ... I also give and devise eight acres of Freehold Lands in the Parish of

Ystradowen and Lordship aforesad to my son **Richard Leyson** & his Heirs for ever. I also give, devise & bequeath one dwelling House ... belonging with four acres and one half acre of customary hold Lands, one acre thereof adjoining the said house & three acres itself called and known by the name of Kaerd Kefen... situate lying & being at present in the parish & Lordship aforesaid to the use & beheaf of my son **Richard Leyson** aforesad and his customary heirs for even, nevertheless subject to pay out of the said premises the yearly sum of £3 in quarterly payments to my son **Robert Leyson** during the term of his natural life.

I also give and bequeath the rest & residue of my goods and personal Estate to my Son **Richard Leyson** and my two Daughters **Mary & Ann Leyson**, to be equally divided between them, whom I nominate and appoint joint Executors of this my last Will & Testament residuary Legatees, making void all other Wills by me formerly made: In Witness whereof I have hereunto set my Hand and Seal this thirteenth Day of February one Thousand seven Hundred and Sixty eight 1768

Signed, Sealed, published and declared signed **Thomas Leyson**

By the Testator in the presence of

George Williams Clerk

Ether Williams

Eustance Miles

10th October 1777

Richard Leyson and **Mary Leyson** Spinster the Son and Daughter and surviving Executors named in the within written Will were sworn to the Truth ...

Proved at Landaff on the Tenth day of October in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy seven before the Reverend **Benjamin Hall** Clerk M. D. the Chancellors Surrogate by **Richard Leyson** and **Mary Leyson** Spinster the son and Daughter of the said decd the surviving Executors in this Will named ...”

Key information shown by this Will is that Thomas’ daughter, Jane Leyson was the wife of Thomas Bassett, Excise Officer. This Jane Leyson Bassett is the same person who left a Will in 1817 from Welsh St Donats. An Excise Officer presumably moved from place to place as work demanded which could lead to having children born in different areas. More on this later. The 1790 Will of Jane’s sister, Mary Leyson adds some key info: 10 ac. in Olymarch (Welsh St Donats) to sisters: Catherine Jones & Jane Bassett for their natural lives and after to the **10 children** of Thomas & Jane Bassett.

Thomas Bassett’s marriage took place at Welsh St Donats on November 14, 1758: Thomas Bassett of Cowbridge & Jane Leyson of Welsh St Donats. Which establishes where Thomas Bassett was from.

Bob also found the following marriage:

16 Feb 1744 Welsh St Donats: John Jones & Catherine Leyson, both of that parish. This John Jones is the same person who is mentioned in the 1790 St Mary Hill land record above which listed Robert Bassett, aged 11 yrs, as the nephew of Catherine Jones. So this Robert must be a brother of our Richard Bassett. No baptism in Glamorgan is found for this Robert but a search of the IGI lists:

31 Oct 1779 Llangynog, CMN Robert, son of Thomas Bassot

Llangynog is about 8km SW of Carmarthen, Carmarthenshire. Since Thomas Bassett was an Excise Officer, it seems likely that he moved about a bit in Wales. This could explain how one of his sons could be the John Bassett who was born ca 1778 at Llanstephen, Carmarthenshire as shown by the 1851 census when John was living at Llanblethian, Glamorganshire.

Bob Sanders' wealth of knowledge of Glamorgan history led him to look in a little known book "Diary of William Thomas of Michaelston-super-Ely." Wm Thomas was a schoolmaster who traveled a bit and recorded local gossip and other events in his diary. Bob found the following entry:

"2 August 1786 Was this 12 months past buried over in England where he was an excise man Thomas Basset, another son of Charles Basset of Cowbridge."

This wonderful fact may explain how Richard Bassett was born in Somerset, but unfortunately, Wm Thomas' diary does not tell which county in England Thomas Basset died.

I have asked Bob Sanders to do some research from the Cowbridge area to learn more about Charles Basset. From Barry Diamond's book on the BASSETT Family I have info that Charles Bassett of Cowbridge. See Appendix page 13 for an entry in his book. Barry goes on to say that Charles Bassett Sr died at Llanblethian in April 1786 and his son, Charles died at Cowbridge in Oct 1788.

Bob Sanders is sufficiently aware of the history of Methodism in south Wales that he recognized Charles Bassett's name as one of the early leaders in the Vale of Glamorgan. See Appendix page 14 for a pair of land records that provided a meeting house for the church.

Bob next focused his search for that part of Somersetshire which would have been involved with trade with Glamorgan since Thomas Bassett's duties as an excise officer would have located him near a place of trade. He also looked for towns whose name started with a W that might have led the 1851 census enumerator into corrupting the name of the town to Weldiam. He took a stab at Wivelscombe and found online a link to baptisms tabulated by Paul Benyon

(see www.pbenyon1.plus.com/H_m_w/Wiv/Index.html)

Paul Beynon's website shows transcribed baptismal records for the Wivelscombe parish (which is located 10km west of Taunton, Somersetshire). Bob Sanders found there the following baptisms:

Catherine, dau of Thomas & Jane Bassett 6 Oct 1772

Richard, son of Thomas & Jane Bassett 30 Dec 1774

Both were baptized at St Andrews.

Next, Bob Sanders did a Google search hoping for some info on the work of Thomas Bassett as an excise officer. It is amazing what you can find on the Internet! Bob found an entry from a minute book about the excise office work at the site:

www.trease.org.uk/trb/trb17w_gg/trb17w_gg_excise.htm

“**3 of Minute Book PRO 47/304** □ □ Thursday 30th May 1776 □ John Popham Officer of Laugham 2d Ride Wales West Collection having; Ordered that he be discharged that Thomas Bassett Officer of Wiveliscombe Ride, Tiverton Collection succeed him at his own request and that William Treays, dropt assistant at Bristol be Officer of Wiveliscombe Ride or such other ride as he shall be fit for.”

Bob Sanders believes that the Laugham referred to above is Laugharne in Carmarthenshire which is about 15km SW of Carmarthen and about 8km from both Llangynog and Llanstephen were son, Robert, was baptized in 1779 and son, John was born ca 1778.

So to summarize this new timeline:

1758 Thomas Bassett, son of Charles Bassett of Cowbridge marries Jane Leyson (dau of Thomas & Elizabeth Leyson) marry at Welsh St Donats

1765 son, Charles born (but place unknown)

1768 dau, Elizabeth baptized in Cowbridge

1772 dau, Catherine baptized in Wivelscombe, Somerset

1774 son, Richard baptized in Wivelscombe, Somerset

1778 son, John baptized in Llanstephen, Carmarthen

1779 son, Robert baptixed in Llangynog, Carmarthen

1786 Thomas Bassett dies in England