

Connecting Thomas Beaumont to his parents using indirect evidence

Research Question

Were Samuel and Sarah Beaumont the parents of Thomas Beaumont, who married Selina Cato on 7 December 1835?

Objective

Establish that Thomas Beaumont was the son of Samuel and Sarah Beaumont using indirect evidence.

Problem to be solved

No direct evidence or vital records connect Thomas Beaumont to his parents.

On 7 December 1835, Thomas Beaumont married Selina Cato at the Parish Church of St Mary in Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, England.¹ This is the earliest vital record that can be found for Thomas. From the information in the marriage registration, the subsequent census records for Thomas and Selina can be found. The census entries for Thomas Beaumont for 1841,² 1851,³ and 1861⁴ agree on his birthplace being in the county of Middlesex, England, but after a detailed search of Middlesex and adjacent counties in FHS records, Parish records, Bishop Transcripts, wills, probates, newspapers, local history societies and the like, no record directly tying Thomas to his parents can be found. One reason for the difficulty in finding Thomas's birth record may be due to a large number of Middlesex birth and baptism records for the period 1780-1840 that were destroyed during the Second World War. Out of approximately 12 million entries in the Pallot's birth and baptism index for the period, only 200,000 remain.⁵

¹ "Hertfordshire Banns & Marriages", database Findmypast (www.findmypast.com : accessed 12 March 2020), image of the entry for the marriage of Thomas Beaumont and Selina Cato dated 7 December 1835, Rickmansworth. Citing archive: Hertfordshire Archives & Local Studies.

² "1841 England Census", Registration District: Watford, Sub-registration District: Watford, Piece 439, Folio 5, Book 5, Page: 5, image for the entry of Thos Beaumont, accessed via "1841 England Census" images *Ancestry.com* (www.Ancestry.com : accessed 12 March 2020). This census does not give the county of birth but there is a column for "Whether Born in Same County?" in the case of Thomas and Selina the answer is "no".

³ "1851 England Census", Registration District: Watford, Sub-registration District: Bushey, Piece 1714, Folio 304, Schedule: 2, Page: 3, image for the entry of Thomas Beaumont, accessed via "1851 England Census" images *Ancestry.com* (www.Ancestry.com : accessed 12 March 2020). This census gives Thomas's birthplace as Middlesex.

⁴ "1861 England Census", Registration District: Watford, Sub-registration District: Watford, Piece 833, Folio 104, Schedule: 2, Page: 1, image for the entry of Thomas Beaumont, accessed via "1861 England Census" images *Ancestry.com* (www.Ancestry.com : accessed 12 March 2020). This census gives Thomas's birthplace as Middlesex.

⁵ Millard, Andrew, *London, and Middlesex Church Records - Birth and baptism indexes*, GENUKI Research Guide, (<https://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/MDX/ChurchRecords> : accessed 3 April 2020).

Another reason for the apparent lack of records may be the social status of Thomas and Selina. Thomas was a laborer; Selina was a charwoman, and they lived in a poor area of town. Consequently, no wills, obituaries, or land records appear to be associated with them.

Hypothesis

Thomas's parents were Samuel Beaumont (1784–1823) and his wife Sarah (1788–1841), and he had sisters Harriet (born 1814), Elinor (born 1815), Anne⁶ (born 1819), a brother James (born 1823) and two sisters who died as babies Sarah Anne (1817–1818) and Maria (1821–1821). The hypothesis will be primarily proved using indirect evidence connecting him to his sisters Ann, Harriet, and Elinor.

The proof argument will be laid out in the following way:

- Establishing the family of Samuel and Sarah and their locations.
- Thomas's connection with his sister Anne.
- Relationship between Harriet and Elinor Beaumont, Thomas's sisters, and Thomas's wife, Selina Cato.
- Family literacy and penmanship.
- Family residence and migration.
- Family naming patterns and age test.

⁶ Anne Beaumont was baptized "Anne" but used "Anne" and "Ann" interchangeably throughout her life. I have used the same version that is being used or documented at the time.

The family of Samuel and Sarah

There appears to be no registry entry for Samuel Beaumont and Sarah's marriage in available local parish records, so their marriage date is unknown. However, vital records exist for the baptisms of Samuel and Sarah's daughters: Harriet, Elinor, Sarah Ann, Anne, and Maria (figure 1).

<u>Child</u>	<u>Baptism Date</u>	<u>Baptism Place</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Father</u>	<u>Father's Occupation</u>
a) Harriett	13 Mar 1814	Stanmore, Middlesex	Sarah	Samuel	Carrier
b) Elinor	31 Dec 1815	Stanmore, Middlesex	Sarah	Samuel	Carrier
c) Sarah Ann	13 Dec 1817	Stanmore, Middlesex	Sarah	Samuel	Carrier
d) Anne	4 Apr 1819	Watford, Herts	Sarah	Samuel	Publican
e) Maria	18 Mar 1821	Watford, Herts	Sarah	Samuel	Publican
a) "London, England, Births and Baptisms, 1813-1906", database <i>Ancestry.com</i> (www.ancestry.com : accessed 27 April 2020) baptism image for Harriett Beaumont on 13 March 1814 at Great Stanmore, St John the Evangelist, Harrow, England. b) Ibid. Elinor Beaumont on 31 December 1815. c) Ibid. Sarah Ann Beaumont on 13 December 1817. d) "Hertfordshire Baptisms" database <i>Findmypast</i> (www.findmypast.com : accessed 13 March 2020) baptism image for Anne Beaumont on 4 April 1819 at St. Mary, Watford e) Ibid. Maria Beaumont on 18 March 1821.					
Figure 1: Female Children of Samuel and Sarah					

These baptism records also indicate Samuel's occupation and the location of the baptisms. Based on the baptism date of their first daughter, their marriage would likely be before March 1814.

Samuel changed his occupation from a carrier to a publican during this time. It is known from public house licensee records that Samuel was the publican of the Horns Public House in Watford in 1822⁷ and that Sarah took over as publican in 1823⁸ after his death.

The period during which Samuel and Sarah moved from Stanmore to Watford, Hertfordshire, can be narrowed down as occurring between 13 December 1817 and 2 November 1818. This is

⁷ St Albans Borough alehouse licenses and victuallers' recognizances, (image copy) for *The Horns* Public House, Watford dated 1822. The Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies, County Hall, Hertford, Hertfordshire citing reference LS/VARS/5

⁸ Ibid. Dated 1823.

the period between their daughter Sarah Ann's baptism on 13 December 1813 in Stanmore, Middlesex,⁹ and her death and burial in Watford on 2 November 1818, aged one.¹⁰

Confirming the family's move, the 1851 census documents show Ann Beaumont, born Watford, resident Watford,¹¹ and Harriet Beaumont, born Stanmore, resident Watford.¹² Later, in the 1871 census, there was Elinor Beaumont, born Stanmore, a resident of Rickmansworth.¹³ As the census indicates, Rickmansworth is in the same district as Watford. The baptisms shown in figure 1 and later census records confirm Samuel, Sarah, and their daughters' locations between 1814 and 1871. In summary, Samuel, Sarah, and their family originated in Great Stanmore, Middlesex. They moved to the Watford area in Hertfordshire during 1818, where they remained for the rest of their lives.

Thomas's connection to his sister Ann Beaumont

Ann is a witness to Thomas's marriage.

On their marriage register entry of 7 December 1835,¹⁴ besides the husband and wife, Thomas Beaumont and Selina Cato, three other people signed the marriage register: the vicar Edward Hodgson and witnesses Ann Beaumont and Timothy Rogers. This is probably Thomas's sister Ann. The Ann Beaumont signature on Thomas's marriage register is similar to Ann Beaumont's signature on the register for her 1848 marriage to Joseph Freeman¹⁵ (figure 2). Even though 13 years have elapsed, and Ann's signature has matured, the style is similar, and the "Ann" in both

⁹ "London, England, Births and Baptisms, 1813-1906", database *Ancestry.com* (www.ancestry.com : accessed 2 April 2020) baptism image for Sarah Ann Beaumont on 13 December 1817 at Great Stanmore, St John the Evangelist, Harrow, England

¹⁰ "England Deaths and Burials, 1538-1991", database *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.com : accessed 12 March 2020), image of the entry for the burial of Sarah Ann Beaumont dated 2 December 1818, St Mary's, Watford. Citing archive: Hertfordshire Archives & Local Studies, Hertfordshire Burials, page 54, no. 430.

¹¹ "1851 England Census", Registration District: Watford, Sub-registration District: Bushey, Piece: 1714, Folio: 304; Page: 3, Schedule: 65, image for the entry of Anne Freeman (Beaumont), accessed via "1851 England Census" images *Ancestry.com* (www.ancestry.com : accessed 12 March 2020). This census gives Anne's birthplace as Watford.

¹² "1851 England Census", Registration District: Watford, Sub-registration District: Bushey, Piece: 1714, Folio: 517; Page: 32, Schedule: 110, for Harriet Bone (Beaumont), accessed via "1851 England Census" images *Ancestry.com* (www.ancestry.com : accessed 12 March 2020). This census gives Harriet's birthplace as Stanstead, Middlesex. This is likely an error by the person transcribing the census in 1851, birthplace should be Stanmore.

¹³ "1871 England Census", Registration District: Watford, Sub-registration District: Rickmansworth, Piece: 1383, Folio: 107; Page: 9, Schedule: 41, image for the entry of Ellen Beaumont, accessed via "1871 England Census" images *Ancestry.com* (www.ancestry.com : accessed 12 March 2020).

¹⁴ "Hertfordshire Banns & Marriages", database *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.com : accessed 12 March 2020), image of the entry for the marriage of Thomas Beaumont and Selina Cato dated 7 December 1835, Rickmansworth. Citing archive: Hertfordshire Archives & Local Studies.

¹⁵ Hertfordshire Banns & Marriages; database *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.com : accessed 12 March 2020), image of the entry for the marriage of Joseph Freeman and Ann Beaumont dated 26 November 1848, St Mary's, Watford. Citing archive: Hertfordshire Archives & Local Studies.

signatures is almost identical. It would not have been unusual for Thomas to have had his sister as a witness to his marriage.

Ann and Thomas live on the same street.

In the census of 1841, Ann is living with her widowed mother, Sarah, on Watford High Street¹⁶ in Watford. Thomas and Selina are living close by, also on Watford High Street.¹⁷ There are no other Beaumont entries in this census district. During this period, even though there was some basic help for the extremely poor, often in a workhouse, family members frequently provided social and economic support. In the 1841 census, Ann had a child out of wedlock, and Sarah was a widow; they possibly struggled domestically and financially. Therefore, as the eldest son, it is possible that Thomas would have wanted to be nearby to provide what support he could to his mother and sister.

Relationship between Harriet, Elinor, and Selina Cato

Selina Beaumont (Cato) is the sister-in-law of Elinor and Harriet.

Six years after Thomas's death, on 29 January 1870, Ellen (Elinor) Beaumont was attacked and left seriously injured. The case against her alleged attacker was tried in the local crown court in July 1870. The trial was reported at length in the local newspaper.¹⁸

During the case and deposition of witnesses, Selina Beaumont (Thomas's wife) stated that she was the sister-in-law of Elinor Beaumont and was living at Well's Yard, Watford.¹⁹ Selina was also residing at Well's Yard in the 1871 census.²⁰ This confirms that Selina is Thomas's widow based on her location at Well's Yard.

If Selina is Elinor's sister-in-law, then Elinor must be Thomas's sister.

¹⁶ "1841 England Census", Registration District: Watford, Sub-registration District: Watford, Piece: 439, Folio: 7, Book: 5, Page: 10, image for the entry of Ann Beaumont [incorrectly transcribed as Ann Beason], accessed via "1841 England Census" images *Ancestry.com* (www.ancestry.com): accessed 14 March 2020).

¹⁷ "1841 England Census", Registration District: Watford, Sub-registration District: Watford, Piece: 439, Folio: 5, Book: 5, Page: 5, image for the entry of Thos Beaumont, accessed via "1841 England Census" images *Ancestry.com* (www.ancestry.com): accessed 14 March 2020).

¹⁸ "Alleged Malicious Wounding at Watford", *Hertford Mercury and Reformer*, Hertford, 23rd July 1870, British Newspaper Archives, scanned print edition of newspaper article, (www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk): accessed 2 April 2020) page 4, columns 3 and 4.

¹⁹ Ibid. "*Selina Beaumont, living in Well's Yard, stated that she was sister-in-law to the prosecutrix* [Elinor Beaumont]"

²⁰ "1871 England Census", Registration District: Watford, Sub-registration District: Watford, Piece: 1381, Folio: 140, Schedule: 126, Page: 26, image for the entry of Selina Beaumont (Cato), accessed via "1871 England Census" images *Ancestry.com* (www.ancestry.com): accessed 20 March 2020).

The alleged perpetrator²¹ was a friend of Thomas's daughter, Harriet, who was named in the court as the niece of both Elinor Beaumont²² and John Bone.²³ John Bone had married Harriet Beaumont, Thomas's sister, in 1849.²⁴ John Bone is, therefore, Thomas's brother-in-law through his marriage to Harriet, which would also make Harriet Thomas's sister.

These relationships, as reported in the court case, are evidence that Thomas is the brother of both Harriet and Elinor.

Literacy and penmanship match

The family show similar levels of literacy and penmanship.

In the 1840s, about a third of men and about half of women in England were illiterate,²⁵ although literacy rates varied from town to town. The most readily available documents that have signatures for the period are the parish marriage registers, which were typically signed by the bride, groom, vicar, and two witnesses. Reviewing the Watford, Rickmansworth, and neighboring districts' parish marriage registers for 1810 to 1850, several entries were signed by a person named "Beaumont." Many have an "X mark," indicating that the person was illiterate.²⁶ All the marriage registers for Samuel and Sarah's children have been signed (figure 2).

Two points here support the hypothesis that Ann, Elinor, Harriet, James, and Thomas are brothers and sisters. First, all the brothers and sisters are literate. Secondly, even though signatures change over time, and they were using nib pens dipped in an ink well, all the signatures show reasonable penmanship for the time. One can imagine that they may have been taught by the same person or in the same schoolhouse.

²¹ The alleged perpetrator was found innocent and it appears that the court believed that the attack was carried out by John Bone, the widower of Harriet Beaumont. who was described in court as "... a *hasty-tempered man when he has had beer*". After Harriet's death her sister Elinor had become the live-in housekeeper of John Bone. She was still living with John Bone as a housekeeper in the 1881 census eleven years after the attack.

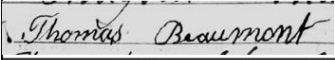
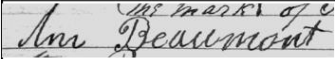
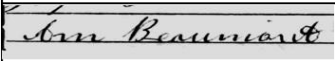

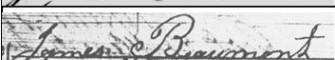
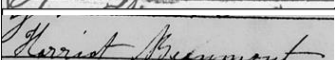
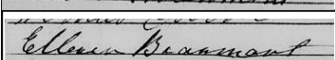
²² "Alleged Malicious Wounding at Watford", *Hertford Mercury and Reformer*, Hertford, 23rd July 1870. "*Harriet Beaumont, a young woman said: The prosecutrix [Elinor Beaumont] is my aunt*"

²³ Ibid. "*Witness [Elinor Beaumont] said to her niece Harriet [Beaumont], "Before you go your uncle (Mr. Bone) wants to see you"*"

²⁴ England marriage certificate (certified copy) for the marriage of Harriet Beaumont and John Bone on 13 March 1849, registered Q1 1849, district: St George Hanover Square, vol 1, page 35.

²⁵ Max Roser and Esteban Ortiz-Ospina, "*Literacy - Literacy rate in England and the UK since 1580*" Published 2013 online at *OurWorldInData* (<https://ourworldindata.org/literacy> : accessed 4 Apr 2020).

²⁶ Hertfordshire Banns & Marriages, database Findmypast (www.findmypast.com : accessed 12 March 2020), image of the entry for the marriage of Susan Beaumont and James Temple dated 18 January 1835, St Stephen's, St Albans. Citing archive: Hertfordshire Archives & Local Studies. This is a local example of illiteracy, both Susan and James signed with mark "X".

	a) Thomas Beaumont on his marriage 1835
	b) Ann Beaumont witness to Thomas's marriage 1835
	c) Ann Beaumont on her marriage 1848
	d) James Beaumont witness to Ann's marriage 1848
	e) James Beaumont on his marriage 1843
	f) Harriett Beaumont on her marriage 1849
	g) Elinor Beaumont witness to Harriett's marriage 1849
<p>(a,b) "Hertfordshire Banns & Marriages", database Findmypast (www.findmypast.com : accessed 12 March 2020), image of the entry for the marriage of Thomas Beaumont and Selina Cato dated 7 December 1835, Rickmansworth.</p> <p>(c,d) Hertfordshire Banns & Marriages; database Findmypast (www.findmypast.com : accessed 12 March 2020), image of the entry for the marriage of Joseph Freeman and Ann Beaumont dated 26 November 1848, St Mary's, Watford..</p> <p>(e) England marriage certificate (certified copy) for the marriage of James Beaumont and Anne Harrison on 31 December 1843, registered Q4 1843, district: Watford, vol 6, page 1051. General Registry Office, (https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content)</p> <p>(f,g) England marriage certificate (certified copy) for the marriage of Harriett Beaumont and John Bone on 13 March 1849, registered Q1 1849, district: St George Hanover Square, vol 1, page 35.</p>	
<p>Figure 2: Signatures of Thomas, Ann, James, Harriett and Elinor Beaumont</p>	

Residence and migration

Thomas's location on various dates matches his family.

Although there are no available birth records for Thomas, two different census records reveal that he was born in the County of Middlesex in approximately 1808 (derived from census records) and lived in Watford, Hertfordshire, in 1841,²⁷ 1851,²⁸ and 1861.²⁹ His death certificate of 1864³⁰ has him at the same Watford location as the previous two census records.

²⁷ "1841 Census of England", Watford, Hertfordshire, District: 4; Page: 5; Line: 20. Ancestry.com database entry for Thos Beaumont

²⁸ "1851 Census of England", Watford, Bushey, Piece: 1714; Folio: 304; Page: 3. Ancestry.com database entry for Thomas Beaumont

²⁹ "1861 Census of England, Watford, Sub-district, Watford; Piece: 833; Folio: 104; Page: 1. Ancestry.com database entry for Thomas Beaumont.

³⁰ England, death certificate (certified copy), for Thomas Beaumont death date 28 October 1864, registered Q4 1864, district: Watford, vol 3a, page 224; General Registry Office, (<https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>)

Thomas moved from Middlesex to Watford sometime between 1808 and his marriage in 1835.³¹ These dates and locations match his sisters, who moved from Middlesex to Watford in 1818 (figure 1). After 1818 Thomas, his parents, surviving sisters, and brother remained in the Watford area until their deaths.

Naming patterns and age test

Thomas uses the same names for his family as his parents.

In 19th-century England, it was common for children to be named after their parents, grandparents, aunts, or uncles. Often the same names are reused generation after generation, which can be a strong indicator of family ties. There are five reused names in Thomas and Samuel's families (figure 3). Thomas named two of his children after his parents, Samuel and Sarah. Thomas was also the name of Samuel's father, Thomas Beaumont, 1759-1819,³² so this name carries through at least three generations. Thomas's daughters are named Sarah, Harriet, and Ellen, after his mother and sisters. Thomas and Selina only have one child that does not match a family member of the previous generation, George, born in 1836.

Other local Beaumont families use Christian names such as Joseph, Ruth, Ezekiel, and Elizabeth. Thomas's children's names do not map to other local Beaumont families in the same way that they map to Samuel's children.

<u>Children of Samuel and Sarah</u>	<u>Children of Thomas and Selina</u>	
a) Thomas (1808)	b) Thomas (1849)	a), b), d), f), h) "1851 Census of England", Watford, Bushey, Piece: 1714; Folio: 304; Page: 3. Ancestry.com database entry for Thomas Beaumont (aged 43), Thomas (aged 2), Harriet (aged 6), Ellen (aged 9), Sarah (aged 7)
c) Harriet (1814)	d) Harriet (1845)	c) "England, Births and Baptisms, 1813-1906" database Ancestry.com (www.ancestry.com : accessed 27 April 2020) image for the entry of the baptism of Harriett Beaumont on 13 March 1814 at St John the Evangelist, Great Stanmore
e) Elinor (1815)	f) Ellen (1841)	e) Ibid. Elinor Beaumont baptized 31 December 1815
g) Sarah Ann (1817)	h) Sarah (1844)	g) Ibid. Sarah Ann baptized 13 December 1817
Anne (1819)	i) Samuel (1851)	i) "1861 Census of England", Watford, Watford, Piece: 833; Folio: 104; Page: 1, Ancestry.com database entry for Samuel Beaumont (aged 9)
Maria (1821)	George (1836)	
James (1823)		

Figure 3: Family naming patterns

Samuel and Sarah's ages work for the birth of Thomas

³¹ "Hertfordshire Banns & Marriages", database *Findmypast*, image of the entry for the marriage of Thomas Beaumont and Selina Cato dated 7 December 1835, Rickmansworth.

³² "England Births and Christenings, 1538-1975", database *Familysearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:N8TP-YYW> : accessed 15 March 2020) entry for the baptism of Samuel Baymond [Beaumont] 17 October 1784 at Elstree, Hertfordshire. Father: Thomas, Mother: Mary: Citing Film No. 1040802, page 22.

Samuel and Sarah were born between 1784 and 1788, respectively. This would have put them in their early twenties when Thomas was born in 1808. Not having a marriage record for Samuel and Sarah is a problem, but their respective ages are ideal for having a son in 1808.

Conclusion

There are no vital records of Thomas's birth or baptism. He spent his adult life as an agricultural laborer of modest means; he did not buy or sell land or leave a will. He was born too early to be connected to his parents in census records.

Confirming Samuel and Sarah as his parents necessitated looking deeply into his family, their locations, and social interactions

The naming of Selina as the sister-in-law of Elinor and Harriet, sworn before a judge as reported in a local newspaper, even though it happened six years after Thomas's death, is the most substantial evidence of the relationship. His other sister, Ann, is a witness to his marriage and a neighbor in 1841. The relationship with his sisters is in the context of close family unit, living in the same locations, at the same time, using the same Christian names. These points, taken together, confirm the hypothesis that Thomas is the son of Samuel and Sarah.