



Notice Board

➤ Trip To The London Metropolitan Archives

It sounds like it was another successful day and some of you came away with some good findings. Others it may have been your first visit and an interesting one I hope. However there were many of us (including myself) who were unable to make Saturday and wanted to come, so hopefully we will plan other visit to the LMA in the not too far future. Also a big thank you again to David for coming along and helping people with their research. (I know James has had a breakthrough just by listening to some of David's research tips!)

➤ Engineers & Professional List

Professional list **New Engineers**
Finding out about your ancestor's occupation and achievements allows the family historian to build a more complete picture of your ancestors' past.

www.familyrelatives.com

➤ New Wills Search

The LMA website has added a new will search on their website which may be helpful to some of you.

<http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/wills/>

➤ National Archives

The archives can be very over whelming. Perhaps you've been struggling to make sense of their catalogue references, or maybe you're not sure why records for one person can be found in several different places. Here on their website are some guides which may help.

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/gettingstarted/understand-the-archive/>

Beyond Parish Registers and Censuses 1



It is hoped that by sharing a few instances of the research that I have been doing, it may give others an idea about what kind of information could be waiting to be unearthed about your ancestors. I am writing a series of biographies about each of my direct maternal ancestors – the Alexander's. I started with my grandfather and I have nearly completed one about my 5x great grandfather who was born in 1703.

I must admit I am lucky as my ancestors for the most part lived in Essex and I live close to the Records Office. The research hasn't always been easy, and has involved a lot of time going through original documents. It has also involved an element of expense, as I have a motto – if it doesn't move, then I'll have a photocopy please! I appreciate that not everyone has the same degree of time, accessibility and funds available. However, for me, playing the part of a detective has been both stimulating and rewarding, not least because I have no idea what I might find along the way.

Hopefully this series of articles could give you some idea of what evidence may have survived over the centuries and could provide a deeper understanding of the lives of our forebears beyond just names, dates and places.

Betsey Alexander was baptised in Mountnessing, Essex on 21st July 1816, the first child of Charles and Martha. Charles was a yeoman and part-time beer seller. When Betsey was aged 23, she married George Silversides who had been born in Barling, Essex.



(The Silversides family was also landowners, having moved down to Essex from Yorkshire during the previous generation).

As was the habit of a number of the Alexander's, Betsey married by **license**, and both the **marriage bond** and **allegation** have survived. (The actual license rarely survives). At the time of the marriage, George, who had also been baptised in 1816, was the innkeeper of the Sun Commercial Inn in nearby Billericay and the Post Office **trade directories** list him in 1845 and 1846. However, the **birth certificate** of their first child, George William, dated 5th September 1846, shows that the family had already moved to London, as he was born at the Lying-in Hospital in City Road. Without a copy of the birth certificate, I would not have known when the family had moved to London, other than from the 1851 Census. At this time George Senior, was employed as a waiter. On 7th December 1850 a second child, Ann Watson, named after her grandmother's maiden name, was born and her birth certificate shows the family was living at 102 Cornwall Road, Lambeth and George was now a turncock.

From information I had previously obtained about George's later life, I decided to find out more about this family, and at the London Metropolitan Archives I came across several entries in the **Poor Law Records** for the for the Princes Road Workhouse in Lambeth. (I originally spent quite a long time going through the relevant microfilm, however, these records have now been made available through the Ancestry website).

These records cover the period from 14th September 1852 until 4th July 1857, and show that the family was in and out of the workhouse several times, sometimes for a few days, sometimes for a few months. Sometimes George would be admitted alone, to be joined at a later date by the rest of the family, or Betsey and the children would be admitted separately. As an example, their third child Caroline Susan was born on 15th September 1862 – in fact Caroline was baptised in the Workhouse. The records show that George was working as an ostler at this time.

Although it was only an assumption initially, I thought that George's health might have been the reason why the family was unable to support themselves. On 16th August 1856 George was admitted on his own, and was not discharged until 21st February of the following year. Just seven days later he was re-admitted, but by now the Workhouse authorities had decided that enough was enough and they did not want to carry the financial burden of looking after him. On 17th April the results of an inquiry established that George had a legal settlement in Barling and that the parish authorities there should in future maintain him. A **removal order** was issued and on 4th July George was taken from Lambeth to the Rochford Union Workhouse, which included Barling. (The removal order contained some interesting background information on the Silversides family).

George died on 23rd October 1859 having spent the remainder of his life in the Rochford Workhouse. His **death certificate** stated that he died aged 43 of Phthisis, also known at the time as Consumption – although it is now known as tuberculosis. He is buried in an unmarked grave in the Barling churchyard.

As to the rest of the family, George Junior, disappeared after the 1861 census, Ann died as an infant and Caroline became a schoolmistress in Mountnessing, thus continuing an Alexander tradition. Betsey returned to Essex where she worked as a servant in Great Burstead until her death on 18th December 1865, aged just 49.

Article By David Humphries

If you want to contribute to the newsletter or share your research please feel free to contact myself
Cheryl Horncastle
Email: Cheryl@familypast.co.uk