

## The Berrymans of Towednack, Cornwall

I stumbled across this family while trying to work out the relationship I had with a person who shares 1 percent of my DNA. At first look our two trees, mine and hers, appear to have no common ancestors. However, she had several branches that emanated from Cornwall and since I also have Cornish ancestors on my mother's side, I thought I'd start with trying to work out whether the connection is there. We should share x5 Great Grandparents or closer.

My prospective 4<sup>th</sup>- 6<sup>th</sup> cousin has ancestors by the name of Berryman. To be specific Wilmot Curnow Berryman born circa 1823 the daughter of John Berryman and Wilmot Curnow. I'm still not sure whether and if so, how, I might have shared ancestors with this person. The Berrymans are not the only Cornish people in my prospective cousin's tree so there are other options. However, as I dug into the Berrymans I discovered a very confusing and complicated and contradictory set of on-line trees based on conflicting research and the following is my attempt to untangle that and try to develop a coherent and consistent picture of several like named families.

The name is variously spelled Berriman with an 'I' but for ease I am using the spelling Berryman with a 'Y' throughout this paper.

Starting off with Wilmot born circa 1823 in Uny-Lelant, Cornwall she was baptised in the parish of Towednack on 2 November 1823 to parents John and Wilmot Berryman. Wilmot's parents were, I believe, the couple John Berryman and Wilmot Curnow who married at Towednack on 25 January 1823. They appear in the 1841 census at Bosoljack in the parish of Gulval. John was a farmer and I believe they had the following children –

- Wilmot born circa 1823
- Elizabeth " " 1825
- John " " " 1829
- William " " 1831
- Edward " " 1834
- Margaret Jane " 1836, and
- Mary Ann " " 1838.

John and Wilmot show up again in the 1851, 1861 and 1871 censuses still residing at Gulval. Wilmot died on 28 February 1879 and is buried at Saint Gulval's churchyard cemetery. Her husband John died around four years later in 1883 and he's buried in the same plot. John's age at death was 87 giving him a birth year of around 1796. Census records for John consistently give his place of birth as Towednack.

And this is where things get a little bit complicated because there are potentially at least two records of baptisms that took place around that time in the parish of Towednack that could be of our John. They are –

- ◇ John Berryman baptised 8 January 1797 to Andrew and Mary Berryman, and

◇ John Berryman baptised 24 February 1799 to James and Christian Berryman.

Obviously the earlier of the two baptisms better fits a birth occurring in 1796 however, there is another John Berryman in other researched trees competing for that baptism and for those parents.

The other John Berryman of Towednack in the frame is a man who first married a woman named Martha Curnow at St Ives on 26 April 1818. He had at least three children with Martha; a daughter named Christian baptised at Towednack on 15 November 1818, followed by a son named James baptised at Newlyn East on 27 April 1823 and a second son named John baptised at Towednack a year later, on 22 April 1824. Tragically Martha appears to have died in childbirth delivering John and was buried on 22 April 1824 aged 33 years, the very same day of her baby John was baptised. It may come as no surprise, but sadly baby John died at 10 months.

The now widower John Berryman, a miner, married again to Jane Berryman, a spinster on 28 April 1825. John and Jane had three children of their own: another John born around 1827, Elizabeth born around 1829 and Matthew around 1831. The second John and his sister Elizabeth were baptised on the same day 12 April 1829 at Towednack however the census and other records indicate that John was two years older than Elizabeth.

In census records the miner John Berryman is consistently described as having been born in Towednack. He died in January 1868 at the age of 70 suggesting his birth was circa 1797. There are number of trees on the Ancestry platform that have this John, husband of Jane, as the son of Andrew and Mary Berryman who baptised their son in January 1797.

Obviously, Andrew and Mary only had one son baptised John and he cannot be both the farmer John who married Wilmot in 1823 and the miner John who firstly married Martha in 1818 and then Jane in 1825.

Each John belongs to just one alternate set of parents. But whom and which?

Firstly, it's worth noting that baptism dates are not birthdates. Clearly a person cannot be born before their baptism, but christenings can and often do take place months sometimes years after the birth. In these families we already have such an example where John and his sister Elizabeth, as referenced above, were baptised on the same day yet all the evidence suggests James was a toddler whilst Elizabeth was a babe in arms.

Both husbands John had their age recorded when they died and were buried. Unfortunately, this calculates an approximate birth year of 1796/7 in both cases. So that is not much help.

I think the only thing that can rescue us here are the names of their offspring. Not for the first time have naming conventions come to my rescue in unravelling Cornish families.

As noted above from the two baptism records we have parents for John named Andrew & Mary and James & Christian. Looking at the parents' names of each of our Johns' spouses we get Martha Curnow baptised at Towednack 10 March 1791 the daughter of William & Martha, while Wilmot Curnow was baptised at Towednack 1 May 1796 the daughter of Stephen & Margaret.

John and his first wife Martha named their first two children Christian and James respectively. And it seems to be more than a coincidence that these are the two names of the parents of the John who was baptised in early 1797. I realise this is far from conclusive but for the moment I am assuming that the miner John Berryman named his first two children after his mother and father and that he is the son of James and Christian Berryman.

Therefore, by a process of elimination, the farmer John Berryman, husband of Wilmot Curnow was the son of Andrew and Mary Berryman and was baptised in the Spring of 1799. Well, that's my story anyway and I'm sticking to it.

These couples proved not to be the only persons on Ancestry with disputed parents. The miner John Berryman's second wife Jane is recorded in a number of trees as Jane Martin of Towednack and whilst it is correct that there was a Jane Martin of Towednack who married a John Berryman they were a completely different couple.

Jane Martin married the miner John Berryman of Ludgvan at Towednack in 1828. John of Ludgvan was born circa 1805. He is recorded in the 1851 English census as being born in Ludgvan but I cannot find a baptism record that fits. The nearest I can find for that time and place is the 5 May 1805 baptism of a John Berryman at Towednack to the single mother Sarah Berryman.

Whilst these two John Berrymans were both miners, both with wives named Jane and both baptised children at Towednack at around the same time we can with reasonable confidence distinguish which baptisms relate to the children which couple.

Firstly, John and Jane M emigrated to Australia in 1857 aboard the ship *Omega* and the names of all their surviving children are recorded in the ship's manifest. Also, while both couples spent periods of time in the parish of Towednack they were living in different places, and these were recorded in the baptism records. John and Jane B were living at Skillywhadden when they baptised John, Elizabeth and Matthew.

John and Jane M baptised Elizabeth Jane at Towednack in 1837 while living at Treveja and by the time Grace was born around 1840 they had moved to Embla which is where they stayed at least until they baptised Nancy in 1843. I'm unsure where they went after that. I cannot find a baptism record for Johanna who was born circa 1845 while the next record I have is 1851 where they are in St Ives at Halsetown. This address is given in the March 1851 baptism records of Thomas and Isaac and in the census that was taken that same month.

Just to keep everyone on their toes there is a third couple named John and Jane Berryman. At Towednack parish church on 12 April 1836 the bachelor John Berryman married the spinster, Jane Berryman. Five months later, on 18 September their daughter was baptised Mary Jane. She seems to have been their only child. John was also a miner but would later become an engine driver.

I have annexed below each of the separate Berryman families. Undoubtedly, they are all probably interrelated somewhere along the way. Many thanks to all those who share their research online and I hope this helps take the stories of these respective couples forward with a little more accuracy than error. As ever I will be grateful for any pointers on where I have got things wrong. Just send me an email. My research can be found in my Palmer Rogers tree on the Ancestry.com platform.

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## ANNEX

Andrew Berryman (m) Mary Curnow

- ↳ John Berryman bpt. 08/01/1797 (m) Wilmot Curnow
  - ↳ Wilmot Curnow Berryman bpt.02/11/1823 (m) Thomas Noy
  - Elizabeth Berryman bpt. 09/03/1825 (m) James Noy
  - John Berryman b.13/04/1829
  - William Berryman bpt. 25/09/1831
  - Edward Berryman bpt. 28/05/1834 (m) Amelia Mary Hill
  - Margaret Jane Berryman b. 26/03/1836
  - Mary Ann Berryman bpt.11/11/1838

James Berryman (m) Christian Sampson

- ↳ John Berryman bpt. 24/02/1799 (m1) Martha Curnow
  - ↳ Christian Berryman bpt.15/11/1818 (m) Samuel Uren
  - James Berryman bpt. 27/04/1823 (m) Clarinda Nicholas
  - John Berryman bpt. 22/04/1824
    - (m2) Jane Berryman
  - ↳ John Berryman bpt.12/04/1829\* (m) Margery Thomas
  - Elizabeth Berryman bpt.12/04/1829\* (m) William Kneebone
  - Mathew Berryman bpt. 24/12/1831 (m1) Ann Stevens
  - (m2) Emma May

?? Sarah Berryman ??

- ↳ John Berryman bpt?? 05/05/1805 (m) Jane Martin
  - ↳ John Berryman bpt. 01/02/1829 (m) Loveday Daniel
  - James Berryman bpt 23/03/1834 (m) Ottillie Friebe
  - Elizabeth Jane Berryman bpt. 13/08/1837 (m) Nicholas Bennett
  - Grace Martin Berrimman bpt 07/12/1840 (m) John Butson
  - Nancy Berryman bpt. 01/11/1843 (m) Richard Watters
  - Johanna Berryman circa 1845 (m) Rudolf Fischer
  - Thomas Berryman b. 25/12/1846 (m) Elizabeth Williams
  - Isaac Berryman bpt. 02/03/1851

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- John Berryman b. circa 1808 (m) Jane Berryman
  - ↳ Mary Jame Berryman bpt.18/09/1836 (m) John Pearce Nicholas

\*John was likely born 2 years before his sister Elizabeth baptised the same day.