

## **Benjamin Joseph Faux (~1814-1879)**

If the ages given in the census records of 1851 and 1861 are accurate, Benjamin Joseph was born between mid-December 1813 and 30th March 1814. The census records state the place of birth as Limehouse, London. Ian Wilson's records show that he was baptised late in life, 7 July 1826, at St. Mary's, Lambeth. It would appear the family had strong links to Lambeth - Benjamin Joseph's sister married James Samuel Hughes there (and was baptised shortly after the birth of the Hughes' first child) and Mary Ann Jones, his wife, also came from Lambeth.

Benjamin Joseph was baptised (film ref XO38/006 at the London Met Archive p205, p3) July 7th 1826 Parents Joseph and Mary of Vauxhall - Stonemason'.

Benjamin Joseph's marriage took place in 1837 in Lambeth to Mary Ann Jones. His occupation at this time was "Engraver on Stone" and he lived at 101 Tyers Street. When their son, Benjamin, was born in 1844 his occupation is described as "Letter Cutter (in stone)" and their address is 11, Parnham Street, Limehouse. In 1848 (London Directories) and 1851 (census), the family lived at 2, Old Road, St Annes Limehouse. By 1853, however, they had moved to 2, Stepney Old Road. The family clearly moved again, because at the time of the 1861 census, their address is 24, St Thomas Road, Mile End Old Town.

There are 14 people (2 families) living at 24 St Thomas Road at the time of the 1861 census - it is hard to imagine how difficult life must have been. Much of London was slum land. In "A History of London" by Robert Gray we read:

"...original leases had not guarded against multiple occupation and the landlords lacked the will, resources and lawyers to reverse the inevitable decline into slum land. There was no chance of redemption for the industrial ring which had hemmed in the city since the seventeenth century: a great arc of squalor stretched from Finsbury through Shoreditch and Stepney, spilling over the river into Bermondsey and Southwark. 'A polynesian savage in its most primitive condition' reckoned one nineteenth century critic 'did not endure conditions half so savage, so unclean and so irreclaimable as the tenant of a tenement in an east London slum'."

The conditions were likely worse towards the earlier part of the nineteenth century than later - the population of Stepney declined from 154,000 in 1821 to 99,000 in 1851.

At the time of their son Benjamin's marriage in 1864, Benjamin's address is given as 4 St Thomas Road (which may have been the family address). Benjamin Joseph's occupation is now "Monumental Engraver", a skill taken up by his son, Benjamin.

Benjamin Faux of Harlow provided a photocopy of Benjamin Joseph's Victorian business card indicating that his business as a "Monumental Engraver" was established in 1826 with an address of 38 Vansittart Road deleted and 10 Talbot Road overwritten, both in Forest Gate East.



It is curious that the Bible Slip refers to William Henry James Faux as "the only son of Benjamin, only son of Benjamin Joseph". Certainly William Henry James was the only son of Benjamin Faux to survive to adulthood, but Benjamin Joseph had four sons (Benjamin, Henry, Alfred, James) who produced offspring.

Benjamin Joseph's children were christened at St. Anne's Church, Limehouse. St Anne's Limehouse is a Hawksmoor Church. It was consecrated in 1730, one of the twelve churches built through the 1711 Act of Parliament. The church was gutted by fire on Good Friday 1850, and restored between 1851 and 1854 by Philip Hardwick.

