

THE SPARSHOTT FAMILY

The object of this report is to describe our research into the paternal ancestry of Thomas Edward Sparshott who was born in 1849 in Southwark, south London. At the outset, we received a good deal of helpful information, which may be summarised as follows:

Alfred Paul Sparshott was born on 30 March 1920, the elder son of Alfred George Sparshott, a grocer of Battersea, south London, and his wife, Eva Jane formerly Driver. Alfred George died in 1957; he was born on 20 September 1885 in Bermondsey, south London, the youngest of three children of Thomas Edward Sparshott and his first wife, Amelia, daughter of Samuel Shepherd. Thomas Edward remarried to Hannah Margaret Hearn and died on 11 March 1895 in Bermondsey. Thomas Edward and Amelia were married in Rotherhithe, south-east London, on 6 June 1875, and the marriage certificate described him as the son of William Sparshott, a cooper. Thomas Edward's birth certificate shows that he was born on 31 July 1849 at 3 Etham Place, Southwark, south London (then in Surrey), the son of William Sparshott, a cooper, and his wife, Elizabeth Mary formerly Strong. The earliest civil registration certificate given to us was the marriage certificate of William Sparshott and Elizabeth Mary Strong, which showed they were married on 23 January 1842 at St Olave, Southwark. He was then a cooper of 22 Great Maze Court, Southwark, the son of Thomas Sparshott, who was also a cooper. Elizabeth Mary lived at the same address and was the daughter of John Strong, a scale maker.

William and Elizabeth Mary Sparshott were traced in the 1861 census living at 5 High Street, Deptford, Kent. William, who was then an ironmonger, gave his age as 42 and his place of birth as Winchester, Hampshire. Apart from Thomas Edward, there were four other sons, these being William (who was born in Southwark in January 1843), Henry who was born in about 1847/8, Alfred who was born in about 1854/5 and George who was born in about 1860/1. There were also two younger sisters, Annie and Clara, born in 1856/7 and 1858/9 respectively. Finally, Elizabeth Mary's widowed mother, Rebecca Strong, who was born in about 1793/4 in Devizes, Wiltshire, completed the household. Ten years later, when the 1871 census was taken, William Sparshott was still living in the High Street, Deptford, and gave his age as 53; he confirmed that he was born in Winchester. He was still living when the 1881 census was taken, but had died by 1890 when Thomas Edward remarried to Hannah Hearn.

We began by carrying out searches in the 1851 and 1841 census returns, since recently these have both been fully indexed by name. In particular, we hoped to trace William Sparshott living as a bachelor with his parents in 1841, and possibly his elderly parents living in Winchester in 1851. Decennial census returns were instituted in England, Scotland and Wales in 1801. Personal returns survive from 1841 but these give very limited information: ages tended to be rounded down to the nearest multiple of five, and birthplaces were only indicated in answer to the question "Were you born in this county?" Precise ages, birthplaces and relationships were given from 1851 onwards. The index to the 1851 census

revealed William Sparshott living in Kent Street, Southwark, south London, with his wife Elizabeth M(ary) and their four young children (see Appendix):

Census, 30 March 1851

National Archives, London; ref: HO107 1562, fol 273

3 Kent Street, parish of St George the Martyr, Southwark, Surrey

					<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Where Born</i>
William Sparshott	Head	mar	33		Cooper & greengrocer	Hants, Winchester
Elizabeth M Sparshott	wife	mar	30			Surrey, St John Horselydown
Willm Sparshott	son		8			"
Henry Sparshott	son		3			"
Thomas E Sparshott	son		1			"
Emma Sparshott	dau		2m			Surrey, St Geo the Martyr
Rebecca Strong	visitor		55	Servant		Wilts, Devizes

This confirms that William Sparshott was born in Winchester in about 1817/8, but unfortunately does not reveal in which of the 12 ancient parishes that make up the city. He appears to have been working as a greengrocer as well as a cooper. The names of their children agree with later census returns, although the youngest child shown here, Emma, who was born in about January / February 1851, probably died young since she was not listed in 1861. William's widowed mother in law, Rebecca Strong, who born in 1795/6 in Devizes, Wiltshire, was also living with them, but there was no trace of William's parents.

The index to the 1851 census showed no one called Sparshott / Sparsholt living in the City of Winchester in 1851, although (as we shall see) the index is far from perfect. We did note the household of Henry B. Sparshott, who was a cooper and licensed victualler in the rural parish of East Tisted, which lies about 14 miles east of Winchester:

Census, 30 March 1851

National Archives, London; ref: HO107 1679, fol 234

Anchor Inn, East Tisted, Hampshire

					<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Where Born</i>
Henry B. Sparshott	Head	mar	37		Cooper & licensed victualler	Hants Winchester
Mary Sparshott	wife	mar	43			Oxon Churchill
Henrietta Sparshott	dau		14	Scholar		Surrey London
Thomas Sparshott	son		9	Scholar		Hants Farringdon
William Sparshott	son		6	Scholar		Hants Farringdon
Fanny Sparshott	dau		4			Hants Farringdon
Edward Sparshott	son		2			Hants Farringdon

Our later research showed that Henry was William's elder brother. Again the census does not specify in which Winchester parish Henry was born in about 1813/14. The only other person of the surname shown to have been born in Winchester (according to the census index) was John Sparshott, a pauper, widower and servant, aged 50, who was living in the Workhouse at Islington, north London, in 1851 (*National Archives, London; ref: HO107 1500, fol 799*).

We carried out a similar survey of the surname in the index to the 1841 census, again looking for a Thomas Sparshott / Sparsholt in Winchester or nearby. We followed up several possibilities in Hampshire, but none could be identified as the ancestor. However, we did trace his son, William, working as a cooper in Southwark:

Census, 7 June 1841

National Archives, London; ref: HO107, Book 1, fol 14
Freemans Lane, St John (Horsleydown) Southwark, Surrey

			<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Where Born</i>
Jane	Baily	50	Ind(ependent)	No (ie not born in Surrey)
Wm	Sparshott	21	Cooper	No
Christr	Yateman	71	Ind(ependent)	No

For our purposes, it was disappointing to find that William had left home and had moved up to London to work as a cooper at least a year before his marriage.

At this point we turned to local sources in Winchester, and as we have mentioned the city was divided between 12 ancient parishes, which reflects its great size and wealth in the early Middle Ages. By the early nineteenth century many parishes had become very small and depopulated. There are no indexes to speed up the searches, and thus it was a lengthy process to cover the baptism registers of six churches between 1813 and 1824 before we encountered the Sparshott family:

St Thomas, Winchester, Hampshire

Original Parish Register, Hampshire Record Office
Searched Baptisms 1813 to 1821
Nil for Sparshot(t) / Sparsholt

St Lawrence, Winchester, Hampshire*Original Parish Register, Hampshire Record Office*

Searched Baptisms 1813 to 1824

Nil for Sparshot(t) / Sparsholt

St John, Winchester, Hampshire*Original Parish Register, Hampshire Record Office*

Searched Baptisms 1813 to 1824

Nil for Sparshot(t) / Sparsholt

St Maurice, Winchester, Hampshire*Original Parish Register, Hampshire Record Office*

Searched Baptisms 1813 to 1824

Nil for Sparshot(t) / Sparsholt

Chilcomb, Winchester, Hampshire*Original Parish Register, Hampshire Record Office*

Searched Baptisms 1813 to 1824

Nil for Sparshot(t) / Sparsholt

St Michael, Winchester, Hampshire*Original Parish Register and Bishop's Transcripts, Hampshire Record Office*

Searched Baptisms 1811 to 1829 and Burials 1813 to 1851

Baptisms

2 Aug 1812 Elizabeth daughter of Thos and Martha Sparshott

30 Oct 1814 Henry Bartlett, son of Thomas and Martha Sparshott of Canon Street, Winchester, cooper

17 Mar 1816 Joseph, son of Thomas and Martha Sparshott of Canon Street, Winchester, cooper

26 Oct 1817 William, son of Thomas and Martha Sparshott of Canon Street, Winchester, cooper

8 Jun 1820 Edward and Martha, twin children of Thomas and Martha Sparshott of Canon Street, Winchester, cooper

Burials

Nil for Sparshott

NB: Original registers faded and illegible from ca 1823 onwards: Bishop's Transcripts searched instead

It will be seen that the ancestor, William, was baptised on 26 October 1817, the son of Thomas and Martha Sparshott, who lived in Canon Street, a narrow street lying on the south side of the city, running east/west, very close to Winchester College and the Cathedral. William had an elder sister, Elizabeth, who was baptised in August 1811 and two elder brothers, Henry Bartlett (whom we have already encountered living in East Tisted in 1851) who was baptised in October 1814 and Joseph who was baptised in March 1816. Finally, he had a younger brother, Edward, and a sister Martha, who were twins and were baptised together in January 1820. We made an extensive search of the burial register (using

Bishop's Transcripts¹ because the original registers are defective), but there was no trace of the name Sparshott between 1813 and 1851 in St Michael's Winchester.

We hoped to find out more about Thomas Sparshott from trade directories for Winchester, and fortunately he was listed as a cooper, first in Canon Street, and then from 1844 to 1852/3 in the High Street, Winchester:

Pigot's Hampshire Directory, 1823/4

Nil for Sparshott / Sparsholt

Pigot's National Directory, 1830

At Winchester, under "Coopers":

Thomas Sparshott 20 Canon Street

Pigot's Hampshire Directory, 1844

At Winchester:

Thomas Sparshott Cooper 17 High Street

Post Office Directory, Hampshire, 1847

Coopers in Hampshire:

H. B. Sparshott (of) Farringdon, Alton

T. Sparshott (of) High Street, Winchester

Slater's Directory of Hampshire, 1852/3

At Winchester, under "Coopers":

Thomas Sparshott 17 High Street, Winchester

This shows that Thomas Sparshott apparently survived to at least 1852/3, and thus we returned to the 1851 census, and looked at the returns for the High Street, Winchester:

Census, 30 March 1851

National Archives, London; ref: HO107 1674, fol 205

17 High Street, St Maurice, Winchester, Hampshire

					<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Where Born</i>	
Thomas	Sparshott	Head	wid	64	Cooper emplg 1 man	Hants	Cheriton
Elizth	Sparshott	dau	un	36	Housekeeper	Hants	Winton ²
Martha	Payne	niece	un	32	Dressmaker	Hants	Southsea
George	Simmonds	appr	un	18	Cooper's apprentice	Hants	Winton

¹ Bishop's Transcripts were contemporary copies of the original parish registers, sent annually by the incumbent to the diocesan archives. While they are not usually as complete as the original registers, and do not always survive, they sometimes give extra details and are, of course, invaluable if the originals are unavailable.

² "Winton" was an ancient name for Winchester

In 1851 Thomas was a widower but still working as a cooper, with one employee and an apprentice. He lived with his eldest daughter, Elizabeth, who was a spinster (and actually aged 38, not 36, since she was baptised in August 1812); his niece, Martha Payne, who was also a spinster and presumably the daughter of his sister, and his apprentice George Simmonds. For our purposes, the most helpful information is that Thomassaid he was born in about 1786/7 in the rural parish of Cheriton, which lies about six miles east of Winchester.

Before turning to the parish registers of Cheriton, we searched for the marriage of Thomas Sparshott to Martha. According to the International Genealogical Index (the IGI), which is an index to baptisms and marriages compiled by the Church of Latter-day Saints, more commonly known as the Mormon Church, Thomas Sparshott married Martha Brown on 6 October 1811 at St Thomas, Winchester. However, the original register of St Thomas's, which we searched between 1808 and 1813 for marriages, contained no such entry. When we turned to the Bishop's Transcripts, the correct entry was found:

St Thomas, Winchester, Hampshire
Bishop's Transcripts, Hampshire Record Office
 Searched Marriages 1811

6 Oct 1811 Thos Sparshott and Martha Brown

There can be no doubt that this relates to the parents of the ancestor William Sparshott.

We next made extensive searches in the parish registers of Cheriton, covering baptisms between 1780 and 1809, marriages (using transcripts) between 1770 and 1790 and burials between 1786 and 1847. Although we found evidence of a very promising Sparshott family, it was disappointing to find no trace of Thomas's baptism in about 1786/7:

Cheriton, Hampshire
Original Parish Register, Hampshire Record Office
 Searched Baptisms 1780 to 1809, Marriages 1770 to 1790 and Burials 1786 to 1847

Baptisms

29 Jan 1790	John son of Thomas and Mary Sparshott
27 Dec 1791	Edward son of Thomas and Mary Sparshott
30 Aug 1795	Elizabeth daughter of Thomas and Mary Sparsholt
7 Dec 1800	Mary daughter of Thomas and Mary Sparsholt

Marriages

8 Jan 1772 John Sparsholt of Beauworth and Ann Pavey of Beauworth, by banns
 2 Aug 1772 William Sparsholt of Droxford, bachelor, and Elizabeth Cosen of Cheriton,
 spinster, by license

Burials

4 Nov 1795 Elizabeth wife of Mr William Sparshott
 21 Aug 1813 Mr William Sparshott, yeoman of Cheriton, aged 77
 13 Apr 1814 Elizabeth Sparshott of Cheriton, aged 18
 20 Apr 1823 Peter Sparshott of Cheriton, aged 80 years 10 months

Also Noted:

Contributors to a collection for “the sufferers at the Battle of Waterloo”, 27 Aug 1815:
 Mr Sparshott 2 shillings

It appears that Thomas and Mary Sparshott arrived in Cheriton shortly before January 1790, when their son John was baptised. Thereafter they presented another son, Edward, for baptism in December 1791, and two daughters, Elizabeth and Mary, in August 1795 and December 1800 respectively. Neither Thomas nor Mary Sparshott was buried in Cheriton, but the family probably remained here at least until April 1814, since their daughter Elizabeth was buried here at the age of 18. It will be seen that there is evidence of an earlier generation called Sparshott in Cheriton: Mr William Sparshott, a yeoman who was born in 1735/6, was probably the man from the nearby parish of Droxford who married Elizabeth Cosen in August 1772. Elizabeth died in November 1795, and her widower William died in August 1813, aged 77. Peter Sparshott of Cheriton, who died aged 80 in April 1823, was a few years younger than William. The designation “Mr” suggests that William and Peter Sparshott were rather more prosperous than Thomas Sparshott, but we do not know the identity of “Mr Sparshott” who contributed two shillings to the “sufferers” at the battle of Waterloo in 1815.

Returning to the IGI, we noted a possible baptism for Thomas Sparshott at Droxford, which lies about six miles south of Cheriton. We therefore turned to the registers of this parish, and made a limited search, with the following result:

Droxford, Hampshire*Original Parish Register, Hampshire Record Office*

Searched Baptisms 1784 to 1790 and Marriages 1784

Baptisms

19 Nov 1784 Henry son of Thomas and Mary Sparshott of Droxford
 17 Apr 1786 Thomas son of Thomas and Mary Sparshott

Marriages

27 Jul 1784 Thomas Sparsholt of parish of Exton, and Mary Herbert of this parish, by
 banns.
 Witnesses: Sarah Page, Elizabeth ... (illegible)

It will be seen that Thomas and Mary Sparshott presented two elder sons, Henry and Thomas junior, for baptism here, in November 1784 and April 1786 respectively; thereafter they disappeared from Droxford. There can be little doubt that the baptism of Thomas on 17 April 1786, is that of the ancestor. The family must have moved to Cheriton very shortly after this, which accounts for his statement in the 1851 census that he was born in Cheriton. Finally, we noted that Thomas Sparsholt (so spelt) and Mary Herbert were married in Droxford on 27 July 1784. The entry helpfully adds that Thomas was a native of the parish of Exton, which lies less than two miles north of Droxford.

Finally, we investigated probate records for Hampshire. Before 1858 wills were proved, and administrations of estates of intestates were granted, by the ecclesiastical courts. There were many of these courts, corresponding roughly to the dioceses and to archdeaconries within the dioceses. There is now a consolidated index to wills and administrations from all the local probate jurisdictions covering Hampshire, and from this we noted all entries for the surname Sparshott and its variants between 1750 and 1858:

Index to Hampshire Wills and Administrations

Noted all Sparshott / Sparsholt entries 1750 to 1858

1754 John Sparshatt, yeoman of Exton: Will
 1758 John Sparshatt, butcher of Portsmouth: Will
 1761 Elizabeth Spashatt, widow of Portsmouth: Will
 1764 John Sparshott, yeoman of Little Creek, Hambledon: Will
 1774 William Sparshott, yeoman of Exton: Admon
 1793 Simon Sparshatt, blacksmith of Portsea: ? Will
 1800 Elizabeth Sparshott, wife of Cheriton: Will *
 1802 John Sparshott, yeoman of Forest of Bere: ? Will

- 1815 James Sparshott of Hambledon: Will
 1817 Sarah Spasshatt, wife of Portsea: Will
 1825 William Spasshatt, gent of Portsea: Will & Admon
 1856 William Sparshalt, coachmaker of Weston Patrick: Will

Although it was disappointing to find nothing for the name Thomas Sparshott / Sparsholt, this list gives a helpful indication of where the surname was to be found, and it will be seen that it was concentrated in Portsmouth and the eastern half of Hampshire, around the Meon Valley. In the time remaining, we were able to examine one will in detail, that of Elizabeth Sparshott of Cheriton, which was proved in 1800. Before the Married Woman's Property Act of 1882, it was unusual for a married woman to make a will, since her husband was legally deemed to be owner of her property. However, in this case Elizabeth, wife of Mr William Sparshott of Cheriton, was apparently entitled to dispose of her land and property as she wished:

Consistory Court of Winchester Will

Will of Elizabeth Sparshott, wife William Sparshott of parish of Cheriton, Co Southampton
 All my freehold and copyhold estates which I have surrendered to the use of this will: to husband William for his life, then after his death all my said freehold and copyhold lands and property (with exception of a cottage with a curtilage of bondland in Tything of Cheriton called The Island): to Peter Sparshott, grocer of Bishops Waltham, Hampshire, for his life, provided he pays the following legacies:
 To Elizabeth wife of Robert Woodley, carpenter of Droxford: £300
 To cousin Mary, wife of John Adams, labourer of Warnford, Hampshire: £300
 To cousin Thomas Wheatley, labourer of Beauworth, Hampshire: £50
 To cousin Richard Passingham the younger, serving man of Portsmouth: £100
 After Peter Sparshott's death: said property to go to his son William Sparshott (except "The Island")
 Cottage and property called "The Island" to said Elizabeth Woodley, according to custom of manor of Cheriton; she and Mary Adams to have all my wearing apparel (except best silk gown)
 Best silk gown to Sarah wife of Peter Sparshott
 Residue to husband William Sparshott, he to be executor
 Dated 30 Apr 1795
 Witnesses: John Grover, Robert Camis, Jas Browne
 Proved 16 Oct 1800. Personal estate worth under £100

It was disappointing to find no mention of the name Thomas Sparshott in this will, since we had hoped that William and Elizabeth Sparshott might have been his parents or closely related to him. After the death of her husband William, the testatrix requested that her freehold and copyhold property in Cheriton should go to Peter Sparshott, who in 1795 was a grocer in the nearby town of Bishops Waltham. As we have seen, Peter moved to Cheriton, where he died aged 80 in 1823. Peter also had a son called William, who was to inherit the

property on his father's death. So far we have no direct evidence, beyond naming patterns, as to how Mr William Sparshott, yeoman of Cheriton, and Peter Sparshott (who were probably brothers) were related to the ancestor, Thomas Sparshott senior, but it would be surprising if they were not related. It will be seen that when William Sparshott married Elizabeth Cosen in Cheriton in 1772, he was described as of Droxford, where we know the ancestor was settled in the following decade.

In conclusion, the mobility of the family within Hampshire has meant that our research has not been entirely straightforward, but nevertheless we have made reasonably good progress, and have traced the line back to Thomas Sparshott senior, who married Mary Herbert in July 1784 at Droxford, east Hampshire. We know that Thomas's origins almost certainly lie in the nearby parish of Exton, and should further research be desired, we should search the registers of this parish. There is plenty of scope to search other sources apart from parish registers, and it will be seen from our listing of probates that there were two testators, John Sparshott (1754) and William Sparshott (1774) who were yeomen of Exton: there is a good chance that both these men were ancestors. Overall, we are optimistic that further research would be worthwhile.