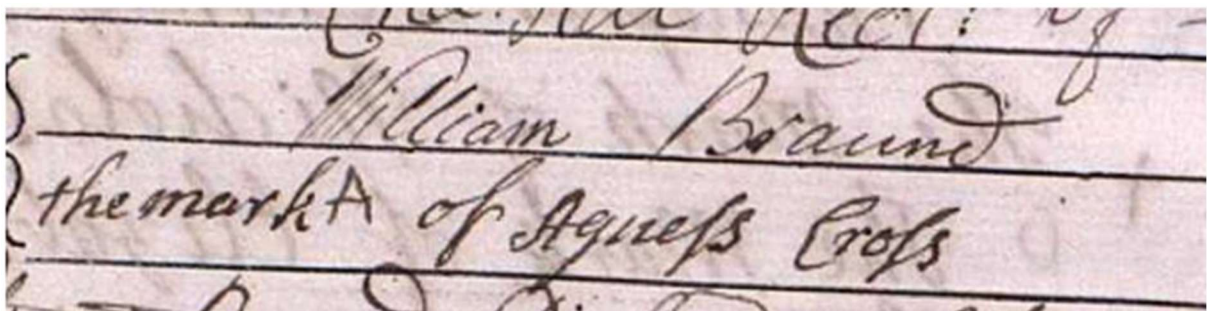


William Braund and his Wives

Branch 15

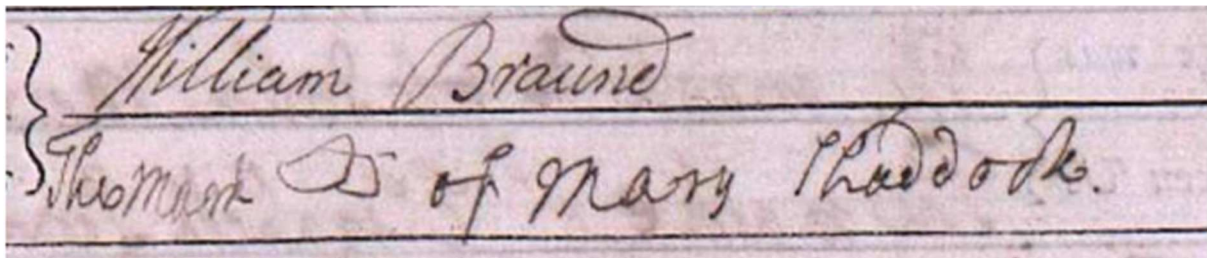
Janet Few

William Braund (branch 15) was baptised in Fremington in 1732, the son of John and Margaret Braund née Gribble. William, a carpenter 'of Fremington', went on to marry Agnes Cross in Fremington in 1770. The register gives no indication of William's marital status. He signed the register as follows:-



William Braund
the mark A of Agnes Cross

William and Agnes had five children baptised in Fremington and most present day branch 15 Braunds descend from one of them. William was in his late thirties by the time he married Agnes and it was logical to consider that he may have been married before. It was straightforward to find an earlier wife. William married Mary Shaddock in Fremington in September 1761, they had three children, two of whom died as infants, before Mary herself died early in 1770, freeing William to be remarried to Agnes.

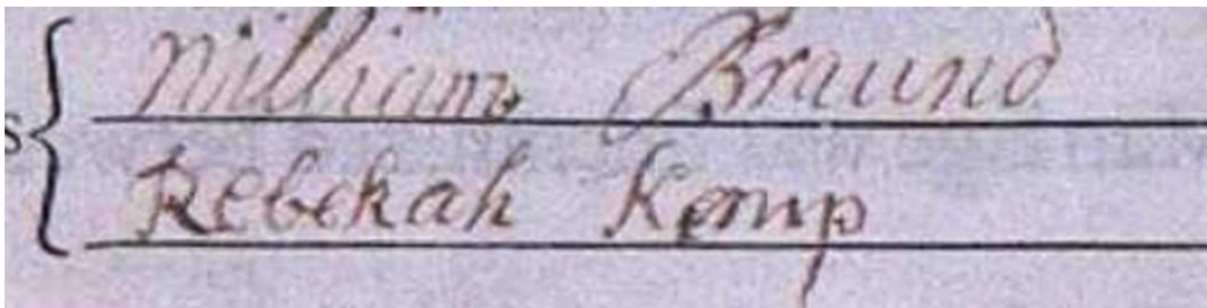


William Braund
The mark S of Mary Shaddock.

On this occasion William is a husbandman, rather than a carpenter, of Fremington but as you can see, the signatures of the two Williams are consistent. Interestingly, despite this clear signature, the clerk has written William's surname in the register as Brawn. At this

point it seems safe to assume that William had two wives and eight children in Fremington in the middle of the eighteenth century. Was there though a third wife?

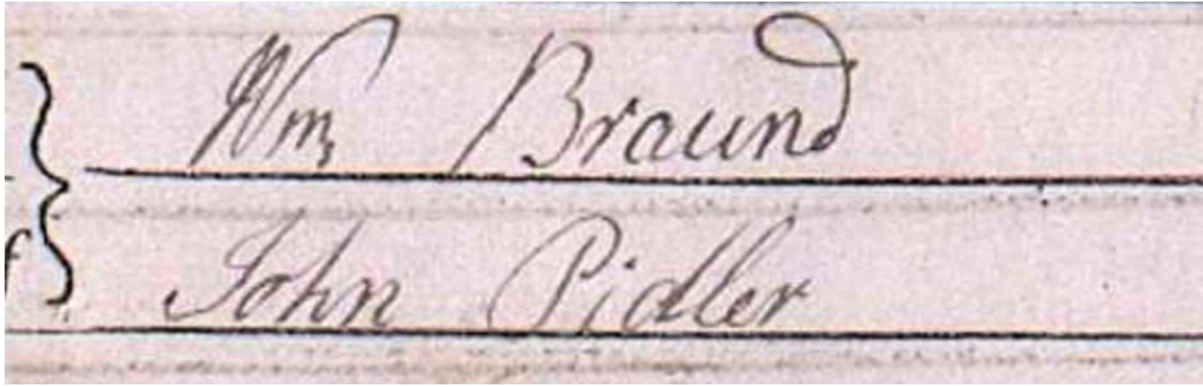
In May 1755, a William Braund married Rebecca Kemp In Tawstock. The next year a daughter, Joanna, was born, followed by Margaret and then, in nearby Yarnscombe in 1760, a son, William. Was this the same William as the one who married Mary Shaddock and Agnes Cross? The signature for William Braund when he married Rebecca Kemp is less similar but given that the pen looks much thicker, it is not so different that it could not be the same man. None of the three marriages overlap and none of the children's names are duplicated, although it was not unusual to repeat the same forenames for children by different wives.

A photograph of a handwritten signature in brown ink on a light-colored paper. The signature is written in two lines, separated by a horizontal line. The top line reads "William Braund" and the bottom line reads "Rebekah Kemp". The handwriting is cursive and somewhat slanted to the right. The ink appears slightly thicker than in the text above.

Rebecca Kemp had been baptised in Goodleigh and was buried there in June 1761, three months before the marriage between William Braund and Mary Shaddock. Fremington, Tawstowk, Yarnscombe and Goodleigh are all within a few miles of each other, near Barnstaple. Tellingly, Rebecca was buried as the wife of William Braund of Fremington. Was there any more supporting evidence that this was one William with three wives? We investigated what happened to the eleven children of these three marriages:-

The Children of Rebecca Kemp

Joanna, baptised in 1756 in Tawstock, went on to marry William Pidlar in Fremington in 1786. Her father, William, signed as a witness and this time, his signature closely resembles those on the two subsequent marriages.



Margaret, baptised in Tawstock in 1757, married Christopher Davies in Bideford in 1792, her half-brother Hugh was a witness.

William, baptised in Yarnscombe in 1760, may have gone to Plymouth and become the head of branch 18 but this is certainly not proven. The William at the top of branch 18 was born c. 1760 and did call his eldest daughter Rebecca.

The Children of Mary Shaddock

Elizabeth, baptised in Fremington in 1764 and buried there in 1770.

Thomas, baptised in Fremington in 1766, disappears from the records.

Ann baptised in Fremington in 1768 and buried there in 1771.

The Children of Agnes Cross

Edward, baptised in Fremington in 1771, died in Tiverton in 1825.

Hugh, baptised in Fremington in 1773, was a carpenter and brought his family up in Fremington. George, baptised in Fremington in 1774, became a mail contractor and carpenter in Tiverton.

The two youngest children, Eliza, baptised in Fremington in 1777 and Henry, baptised in Fremington in 1779 cannot be traced further. After all those wives and children, William's burial remains elusive.