

Emma Beaumont ID11453 per *St Vincent* 1850

Emma Beaumont aged 26

Central Criminal Court October 1848

Enticing to the commission of arson

15 years transportation

Gaol report – Not known

Petition Series – HO 18

Piece Number 215

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The prisoner's brother states that she is of weak mind and that she was worked upon by others.

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To the Right Honourable Sir George Grey Her Majesty's Principle Secretary of State for the Home Department.

The humble Petition of William Beaumont of No 13 King Street Long Acre, brother to Emma Beaumont late of No 53 Long Acre but now a Prisoner in Her Majesty's gaol of Newgate (under the sentence of 15 years transportation for inciting one Mary Fitzgerald to commit the crime of arson) on the prosecution of the Westminster Fire Insurance Company of King Street Covent Garden and also the Petition of the respective persons whose names are hereunder signed.

Sheweth

That the said Emma Beaumont was found guilty at the Central Criminal Court Old Bailey on the 30<sup>th</sup> October last before the Honourable Mr Justice Wightman and sentenced to be transported for 15 years together with the said Mary Fitzgerald aged 36 who was found guilty of setting fire to the premises. That your Petitioners

father held for many years previously to 1818 in Chatham Dockyard as Cockswain of the Clerk of the Checks boat, Mr Smith, who also occasionally acted as Clerk and who afterwards superannuated.

That your Petitioners family have held possession of the said premises for 20 years during which time all rent and demands have been duly paid. That upon the death of your Petitioners mother the business of the Coffee House was carried on by his unfortunate sister the prisoner, who is unmarried and who has lately lost money on the account of the depression of trade and other unforeseen circumstances happening to her, and not being friendly with her relations and therefore your Petitioner believes that she was led from the path of rectitude by designing mercenary persons who for the sake of a promised reward prayed upon the weak mind of his unfortunate sister that induced her to be led to allow the unfortunate act to be performed and which in truth and in fact she was forced to let be done by the reason of threats held out by the said Bagster and Fitzgerald who well knew that in the event of a failure that the said Emma Beaumont would have to suffer the greatest penalty of the Law. That it was stated by Mr Charnook of Council for the prisoner Beaumont that insanity was an hereditary complaint and that a first cousin is now in the Harwell Lunatic Asylum for the malady whose name is Henry McKenzie and that it was the opinion of the family that she was so afflicted. That your Petitioner otherwise cannot account for the crime his unfortunate sister has been found guilty of – and which was upon the evidence of Byster a low fellow working in Covent Garden Market as a Porter and who in point of fact was equally criminal as the testimony showed, that he was to set fire to the place and be paid £10 for doing so, that he received £3 on account with which he went into the country and expended and after returning he helped the prisoner Fitzgerald plunder the place, and lived with the prisoner Fitzgerald as man and wife.

That the said prisoner Fitzgerald was as expected and as it appeared in evidence to have £20 for her share of the transaction and when it

is considered that it was her hand that did the deed your Petitioner hopes that his sister will not be considered the most guilty party.

That your Petitioners belief is that if the sentence is carried into effect, that it will greatly tend to shorten the life of his unfortunate sister who is 31 year of age and in a bad state of health, so much so, that it is the opinion of her friends and relations that is she is sent out of the country she will not live to make the passage beyond the seas.

That your Petitioners sister is a waistcoat maker and would be found useful in instructing other prisoners in any House of Correction in this country.

That your petitioner begs to state that his unfortunate sister is very penitent and is [consumed] of the enormity of the offence , but which very fortunately did not extend further that the premises she occupied and that not any other persons property was uninjured.

That the prisoner had some good qualities she being a subscriber to Sir H [Duncomfields] [ ] School and having supported a sister much afflicted with paralysis and who is now not had the [ ] of life, and who joins in this Petition for mercy.

Your Petitioners therefore most humbly pray that Her Majesty will be pleased to commute the sentence of transportation for 15 years to a term of imprisonment in England.

And your Petitioners will ever pray.

William Beaumont.

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E Beaumont

John Humber

R Spice

G Russell

And a further 67 signatures

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2<sup>nd</sup> Application

The prisoners brother alleges that her health and intellect are impaired and prays that enquires may be made upon the subject.

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Enquiry to be made

GG

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Letter to the Medical Officer at Newgate

3 January 1849

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7<sup>th</sup> November 1848

11 Hart Street

Bloomsbury Square

These are to apprise that I have known and professionally attended the parents and family of the unfortunate Emma Beaumont and can testify as to their respectability and good conduct. As to the [unpleasant] woman Emma Beaumont I am decidedly of opinion that she is and has been of unsound mind and was not aware of the enormity of the crime which she contemplated but being as I have stated of weak mind was [ ] on by persons more wicked than herself but more cunning and therefore have not made themselves available to the Law. I have not seen her since she has been in prison but I understand she is in very bad health.

J Hunter

Surgeon

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13 King Street

Long Acre

25<sup>th</sup> November 1848

In presenting the within Petition to the Right Honourable Sir George Grey , Her Majesty's Principle Secretary of State for the Home Department on behalf of Emma Beaumont now a prisoner sentenced to be transported for 15 years.

I beg most sincerely to state that the same is defined by upwards of fifty respectable persons whose addresses are noted are set opposite to their respective names which may be found to be correct on reference to the Post Office Directory and that six thereof are Surgeons acquainted with the general state of health of the prisoner, and who believe that she is labouring under at times unsoundness of mind and which Petition is to the effect of praying that Her Majesty's Government may be pleased to recommend Her Most Gracious majesty to mitigate the term of 15 years transportation to some lesser time in England on account of the weak state of health of the prisoner and her inability of mind which in reality is the case, as such certificate states, as in termination of the blood to the head is a family complaint and the prisoner has been treated for such, and her head has been shaved several times when so afflicted, and upon visiting her I find that she is now so unwell that she begged of my sister who saw her to get the Doctor to put leeches to her head and let it be shaved for she is fearful of a severe attack and which unfit end in a very serious manner, for one other of your humble servants sisters had suffered so severely from such affliction that it brought on paralysis that has taken away the proper use of her limbs, and most likely for life.

I beg to apologise for troubling you so much at length and deplore much the monstrous crime assaid against my unfortunate sister and

do not attempt even to palliate it any sense but feeling [ ] that she was led away by mercenary [ ] persons to allow the act to be committed, and also, that it may not be lost sight of it, that she at times is confused as such certificate shows and that if sent beyond the seas it is by her family suspected that she will not survive but that a [ ] madness may ensue in consequence thereof.

I therefore humbly beg for the [ ] that the execution of the sentence may be stayed, for a short time, and if removed from Newgate that she may be sent to a place of detention there to await same time so that the Medical Authorities may have proper time to judge of the state of health of my unfortunate sister and for which myself and the family of the delinquent will feel very grateful if by the Rules of the Office an answer can be sent to this letter I shall be very thankful

I am Sir

Your most humble and obedient servant

William Beaumont

PS

I beg most respectfully to state that since writing the above Dr McMurr the Surgeon of Newgate had been consulted upon the prisoners state of mind and who stated that he believed the prisoner to be silly or so far affected with respect to her intellect that he could not consider her to be quite right in her mind, and that if he was consulted by the Authorities he could but so report, may I therefore beg of you to let the proper enquiries be made with respect to the state of health of the prisoner, when it will be found as before stated, that she is not of sound mind.

W B

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Newgate

Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January 1849

Medical Report of Emma Beaumont

The prisoner is of sound mind

Being desired to give my opinion as to the state of mind of Emma Beaumont a prisoner now in Newgate, I beg to report that I consider this prisoner to be of sound mind and responsible for her actions

Gilbert Mac[                    ]

Surgeon

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3<sup>rd</sup> Application

Enquiries have been made into her illness and she is in effect of sound mind

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The prisoner's brother again urges that she is of unsound mind.

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2<sup>nd</sup> February 1849

Mrs Matthews

5 York Street Borough

Re E Beaumont a prisoner in Mill Bank Prison

Honourable Sir

I beg most gratefully to acknowledge the receipt of a letter stating that you did not see it consistence with your Public Duty to recommend this case to Her Majesty's Government for mitigation; at the same time I cannot help observing upon the numerous and respectable inhabitants of Long Acre who had signed the Petition, and upon the Medical Certificate and signatures sent with the same. I beg most respectfully further to state, that as unsoundness of mind is a family complaint and as there cannot be a doubt of my unfortunate sisters absence of mind, I hope that she will be kept some length of time here before being sent abroad, and that having received a letter from her which is far from being plain to understand, I would deem it a very great favour of you Honourable Sir, would oblige me with an Order to see her as I cannot understand what it is requested by the letter.

I beg most humbly to state a sister of the prisoner who was afflicted with termination of blood to the head, was upon a sea voyage much afflicted with sea sickness which brought on paralysis which has taken away the use of her limbs, and which it is the opinion of the faculty is likely to afflict the prisoner if sent beyond the seas, it being at all times likely to afflict persons that are so ailing.

I most respectfully solicit Honourable Sir your kind attention hereto.

I am Right Honourable Sir

Your most grateful and obedient humble servant

William Beaumont

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