

The LANDER FAMILY
in AMERICA



By SARAH LANDER BREARLEY
August, 1948



A Tribute and Foreword

BY BARBARA RALSTON

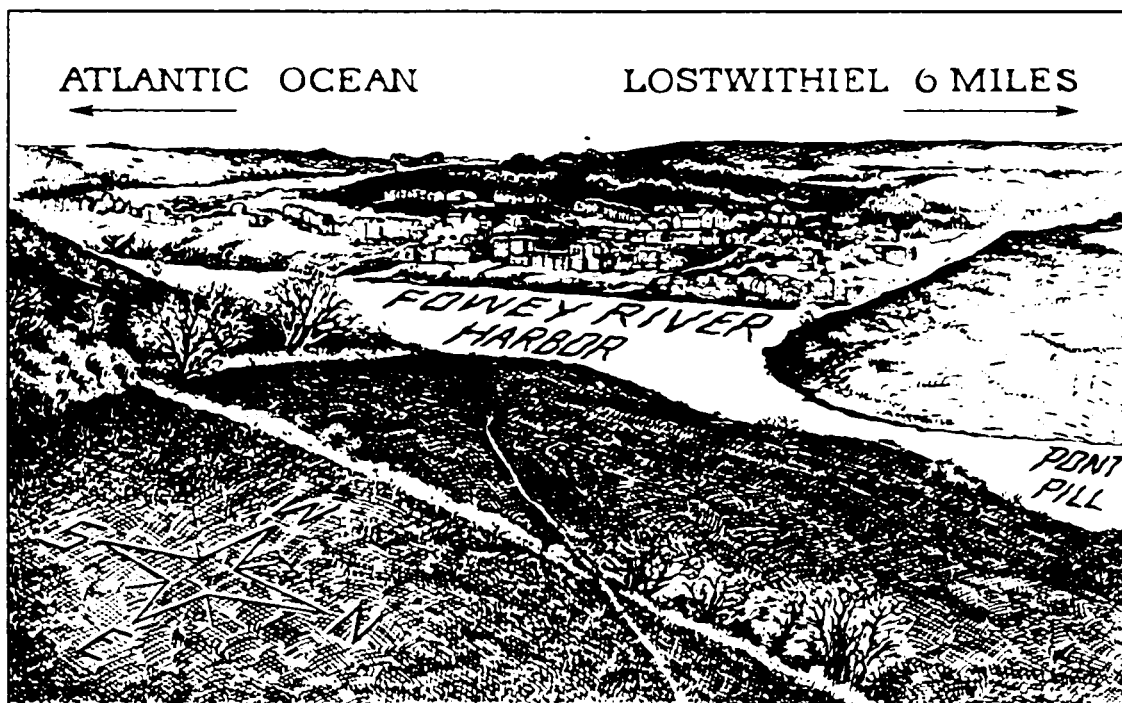
ALMOST 100 years ago my grandmother, Sarah Lander Brearley, came to America from England with her parents, brothers, and sisters. Today she is the only surviving member of the Lander family that came from England, although her brother, E. J. Lander, born in this country is still living. Her appreciation is very great for her father and mother, who had the fortitude and courage to sever all ties in the old country and embark with eight children for a new country with all the unknown problems, hardships, and dangers which surely would be theirs in such an undertaking. And today there are many of us who look back with pride and gratitude on those ancestors we never knew.

Since the age of six, my grandmother's entire life has been spent in Rockford. Her principles, ideals, and standards of living have never changed nor wavered, but through the years she has kept her mind ever open to the new and beautiful things of life. She has a great love and charity for all mankind and an abiding faith in her God.

Her activities in the city have been varied and numerous. For several years she was president of the Ladies' Union Aid Society, a civic organization founded in Rockford at the close of the Civil War for the purpose of aiding returning union soldiers and their families. She continued as president for two more terms, when the Ladies' Union Aid merged with the Public Welfare Society, and she is still a member of that body today. For several years under different administrations, she served as a member of the library board of this city.

As a member of the Second Congregational Church, she has served as president of both the Home and Foreign Missionary Societies and was later president of the Womans Society of the church. At the present time she is president of both Current Events and Mercredi clubs of this city.

Today this grandmother of mine is the vital link that keeps the now widely separated Lander family a living entity. She is an inspiration to her family and hosts of friends, and my own great love and admiration I have tried to convey in this brief foreword.



FOWEY, CORNWALL, ENGLAND

I want to acknowledge with sincere thanks the assistance given me by my nephew, Clarence Lander, who worked with me with great interest in arranging, compiling, and writing out my notes.

The author also wishes to express her appreciation to Dan Johns for the excellent pen and ink drawing of Fowey River Harbor which shows location of town from which the Lander Family emigrated. After close of World War II he spent a short leave, traveling and studying in the Cornwall Section of England.

The Lander Family in America

BY SARAH LANDER BREARLEY

ON the 11th day of April in 1854 a group of people from Lostwithiel, England, and vicinity, boarded the sailing vessel "Good Intent" at Fowey on a voyage to America. Leading the party were two men — John Davey and Christopher Lander who, with their families, were leaving their native soil to make new homes in America. For years the men had worked together on the estate of Lord Fortescue where Christopher's eldest brother was custodian.

The Davey family consisted of John Davey, his wife, their one child, John, Jr., and two sisters of Mrs. Davey (Mary and Jane Wellington). The Daveys' destination was Rockford, Illinois, where Mrs. Davey had a married brother and a sister, Mrs. Luke. In time John, Jr. married Elizabeth Berridge and they adopted two children. The boy married, but the girl, Florence, still lives in the old Davey home on Corey's Bluff. Mrs. Davey died on January 9, 1948, at the age of 99.

In the Lander family were Christopher, his wife

(Jane Brown), and eight children, Thomas born 1837, Mary 1839, Christopher 1844, Annie 1845, George 1848, Sarah 1850, John and Jane 1854. Another child, Jane 5, had died and was buried in Lostwithiel before the departure from England.

The long seven-week trip was an ordeal made even more severe by the fact that the "Good Intent" picked up both crew and passengers of the "Black Hawk" which vessel had been ravaged by fire at sea. The crowded conditions and the insufficient nourishment were doubtless the causes of the death of both twins, John buried at sea, and Jane who died soon after the family reached Canada.

Hamilton, Ontario, was the chosen destination of the Lander family where already Mrs. Martyn, a sister of my mother, was living. My father also had a sister who lived at Coburg. It was on a farm near Hamilton that Rebecca, my sister, was born on October 25, 1855, and it was here we remained until a letter from Mr. Davey arrived telling Father of a good job awaiting him at Bartlett's Mill in Rockford where Mr. Davey himself was employed.

We left Hamilton in September of 1856 and arrived in Rockford by train at 3:00 a. m. After a

station employee had taken Mother and Father to the mill, one of the workers there came back with them and guided us to the Davey's home on North Madison Street. There we were heartily welcomed, fed, and housed until we settled in a house on North First Street.

When the Luke family, who had a house in the fifth block on 7th Street moved to Michigan, we took over this home as it gave father an excellent opportunity to work on the corner lot which he had purchased in the 6th block on 7th Street. The east side of this street was still a well-wooded forest, but the west side had been cleared for planting. I remember my father put in two apple trees which bore very poorly, but a cherry tree which he also planted gave us fine Richmond cherries for many years.

Early in 1857 a great sorrow came to the family. George, who was then nine years old, had been dismissed from school, which was located on North First Street where the Lutheran Church now stands. This school, incidentally, was the only public school Rockford had at that time. As it was his first day in school after a long illness, Chris had taken him to school but had forgotten to pick him up again

at noon. With several other small children, George was sliding down the hill when a sleigh loaded with wheat ran over and killed him. The accident had been unavoidable, and the grief stricken farmer offered Father anything in his power to give. The schoolmates of George attended the funeral, and I remember they sang "I Think When I Read That Sweet Story of Old" and "Around the Throne of God in Heaven, Ten Thousand Children Stand."

In the early summer of 1857 we moved into the new house that had been built on Father's lot. This was to be the family home for many years. While we were living there, a band of Indians was encamped in the woods across the street for several days. Father soon bought a cow, built a coop, and fenced in a yard for chickens. We also raised potatoes, cabbages, turnips, and other vegetables in our garden, enough to last through the entire winter. About once a week a butcher came around with fresh meat. Cows were allowed in the street for years, but later on a pasture was secured. We then had two cows, and sold milk and eggs which I delivered to the neighbors. In the early days Tom and Mary worked on the adjoining farms to the northeast of

us. It was Mrs. Davey who knew the farmers and arranged for this employment.

Edward John, the last child, was born in 1860 and in October of the same year Mary was married to George Milner. Four years later the Milners, with their two children, John and Evelyn, moved to Freeport where George and his brother had a brewery which they operated for many years. Five more children were born in the ensuing years — Flora, Alice, George (who died in his first year), Joseph, and David who died at the age of two. During an epidemic of diphtheria in the spring of 1880, three of the children mentioned above all died within a few weeks of each other. Another son, Fred, was born in that same year, grew up in Freeport, and was for many years after his graduation from high school associated with the Stover Manufacturing Company. He later went to Chicago, where he married Minnie Arnesen in 1915. They returned to Freeport where his mother, Mary, died in 1930 and his sister, Evelyn, in 1935. George Milner, Sr., had died in 1921. In 1937 Fred and his wife moved to Rockford where he died in 1942. His wife, Minnie, still lives in Rockford.

In the early sixties, Father rented what is now known as the Glenny farm about two miles out of Rockford on the Rockton Avenue Road. Tom and Chris worked this farm while Annie kept house for them. Later they worked on a farm which Father had purchased, located about three miles farther out on the same road and which he sold to Chris, reserving for himself 60 acres on the east side of the road where he planned to build a home for Mother and himself to spend their later years. I lived on the farm with Tom and Chris and taught for one year at the school nearby.

Many changes came to our family in 1869. Tom was married on January 14 to Sarah Lake whose home was on Main Street Road. A party and dance for them was held in a new barn, and they began housekeeping with the Nashold family while they were building their own home on the farm a little west of Owen Center that Tom had purchased. Tom later bought an adjoining farm to which they moved. One of their daughters, Gertrude, married John Patterson and they had one son, Lander, who now lives in Rockford. Gertrude died in 1941. Jesse, the other daughter, married Robert Worsley and

also had one son, Robert, who married Gertrude Newby in 1937 and now lives in Chicago.

Another family tragedy occurred on February 20, 1869, when Father lost his life when struck by a train as he was going to work in the morning about seven o'clock. He had met this same train every morning for over twelve years. I was at the time eighteen years old, teaching school in the country, and old enough to realize what a tragic blow this was to the whole family. Mother continued to live in the home on 7th Street, but soon after the last one of her children, Edward J., left home in 1883, she went to live with my sister, Rhea, whose home was on Elm Street next to St. Mary's Church. She had her own apartment with Rhea until she died in 1895.

On March 23, 1869, Chris married Annette Haskell, and I finished my year staying with them. In 1870 Herbert C. was born and Clarence H. the following year on the farm near the Owen township school. Chris wanted a change and decided to try his hand at the mercantile business, so in 1872 he rented his farm and moved to Rockford where he ran first, a flour and feed store and then after that a grocery store with Sam Haskell. Rhea helped in

these business ventures as bookkeeper and clerk. Chris was still not satisfied with these undertakings and became anxious to get back to farming, and as a result, he sold out and moved to a new farm on the flats a short distance from town on the Rockton Avenue Road. Here Ettabel was born in 1874. From here they moved back to the farm in Owen, but he finally purchased the Dr. Hammond farm a mile nearer town on the same road. This became his cherished possession, and it was here that Lurena was born in 1879. From 1892 on, the family spent winters in Rockford in their home on Franklin Place or in the South. The farm is now owned and managed by Lurena and two of Chris's grandchildren, Malcolm Brown and Helen Giessel of Madison, Wisconsin. Christopher died on October 8, 1933, and his wife, Annette, on December 10, 1943. Herbert left Rockford at the age of 18 and spent many years in the employ of his uncle, Edward J. Lander, who was engaged in the real estate business in Grand Forks, North Dakota. Herbert married Ella Moore in 1892, and they had two daughters, Edna and Carrie. After the death of his first wife, he married Bessie Tufford in 1915, who still resides in Great

Falls, Montana. Herbert later moved with his family to Great Falls, where until his death in 1945 he looked after the affairs of the E. J. Lander Company in that section. Edna was married first to Charles Withers and afterwards to Hugh Kanehl and now lives in Western Oregon. Carrie married Roy Bowker, and they had three children — Robert, Marion, and Marjorie. Robert married Irene Schanche, and they live at Great Falls with their one daughter, Sharon Lee. Clarence graduated from the University of Michigan, and from Harvard University, and took a Master's degree at Peabody College for teachers. He has spent over 40 years in the public schools in Cleveland, and in Florida, and at the Peabody College in Nashville, Tennessee. After the death in 1936 of his first wife, Maude Lindsey, he married Pearl McGaha in 1941, and they reside in Delray Beach, Florida. In 1899 Ettabel married Oscar Brown who was in the insurance business in Rockford for many years. Her husband passed away in 1939, and Ettabel on June 15, 1948. For many years she had been active in church work and civic organizations. Their son, Malcolm, graduated from Armour Institute of Engineering and is at present

superintendent of buildings and grounds for the state at Madison, Wisconsin. He and his wife, Margaret Spence, whom he married in 1929 have one daughter, Barbara.

Helen attended Rockford College and graduated from the University of Wisconsin. After serving as chief dietician for several years at the Wisconsin General Hospital, she married E. C. Giessel in 1929 and now lives in Madison, where Mr. Giessel is state director of budget and finance. Lurena graduated from the department of music at Rockford College and stayed with her mother and father throughout their lives. She now owns one-half interest in the farm with which she assisted for many years, and in which she continues to take a leading part while living in the family home on Franklin place.

In the same year that Tom and Chris were married, 1869, Annie was married to Joseph McKee of Freeport and went to that town to live. During that eleven years they remained there, five children were born — Edith Mae, William, Lillian J. (Jennie), Bertha, and Florence (Daisy). Shortly after their return to Rockford in 1880, Daisy died and here in 1884 another daughter, Ethel G. (Grace), was born.

From Rockford, the family moved to the vicinity of Chicago where Joseph died in 1909 and Annie in 1932. Mae married Elijah Smith, an engraver, who lived in Chicago. Their one son, Ira, born in 1898, became a dentist and married Myrtle Cater. He died in January 1948, after having served in the First and Second World Wars. Mae died in 1932 after her husband's death. Ira left one daughter, Beverly, who now lives in Chicago with her mother.

William married Mamie Gunderson and lived in and around Chicago throughout most of his life. At one time he was mayor of Park Ridge, where he was living at the time of his death in 1939. Their daughter, Rhea, married Edward Belsche and went to Round Pond, Arkansas, to live. They have one daughter, Martha Re.

Jennie McKee married Joe Gelin and lived in Chicago. Their one daughter, Lillian G. (Grace), married Clyde Duncan, a dentist, and now lives in Casper, Wyoming. The Duncans have two sons, Clyde Emerson a graduate of Amherst now attending Harvard Law School, and Martin who is now living in Albuquerque, New Mexico. After the death of her first husband, Jennie married Will Cline.

Together they moved to California where she died in 1926.

Bertha married Edward Carney and lived for many years in Niles, Michigan, and Geneva, New York. Later they moved to Florida, where Ed died in 1947. Since that time Bertha has made her home with her sister, Grace, in South Bend, Indiana. Grace married William Smith, and they lived in Michigan until he died. Grace was remarried in 1942 to Walter Palmer. Since Walter's death in 1945, Grace continues to live in South Bend, usually spending winters in Florida.

In 1869-70 I taught at the Owen Center School, then in the Davis district school, and then in the country school on the North Main Street Road near where I was then living with Mrs. Calvin Haskell. From there I was called to fill a vacancy in the second grammar room at the school on North Court Street, later known as the Lincoln School. Again I was transferred after just a year to a new school in South Rockford where I remained until the holidays of 1878. I was married on January 16, 1879, to Albert C. Brearley, who was at that time employed at the Rhodes & Utter Paper Company. He later

established the Rockford Clothing Company in which he was active for many years as president and general manager. Finally, about 1905 he purchased all the outstanding stock, and then sold out the business. The building at Church and Chestnut was retained, and is still owned by the family. In a portion of this building he conducted a hosiery jobbing business until his death in August, 1936. We lived for many years in the house we had built at Cherry and Horsman Streets and where our four children — Alice 1881, Walter 1883, Laura 1886, Lucy 1891 — were born. In 1913 we moved to a much larger house on Harlem Boulevard, where I now reside with my unmarried daughter, Alice. She has been a faithful and devoted daughter to her father and me these many years. Walter worked a year after his high school graduation in his father's company, and then attended the University of Illinois, where he completed the agricultural course. In 1905, he went to Montana with a school friend, Andrew Williams. They rented and finally bought a large sheep ranch, which they managed successfully until 1921, when Walter sold out his interest and returned to Rockford. Here he soon established a

manufacturing business known as the Brearley Company which he continues to operate. Walter married Anne Carter in 1914 in Montana where one child, William, was born on December 15, 1915. Two other children were born in Rockford — Elizabeth in 1922, and John in 1925.

William was married in 1941 to Lois Blue after his graduation from the University of Illinois. His untimely death occurred in 1945. He had been associated with his father in his business — an unusually fine boy, loved and honored by all who knew him.

Elizabeth attended Stephens College and the University of Illinois, where she met Philip McDonald. They were married on August 28, 1943, and have two sons, Philip, Jr., born September 21, 1944, and Bruce born June 20, 1946. Philip is associated with the Brearley Company.

John, after finishing high school, served in the army overseas for over two years and is now a junior at the University of Illinois.

Laura, my daughter, attended Rockford College and studied music, which she so dearly loved. She died in June, 1920, while we were visiting Walter on his ranch, her life — a hallowed memory.

Lucy, our last child, graduated from both Smith and Rockford College. She then worked as a secretary in the First National Bank of New York until her marriage to Stuart A. Ralston in October, 1923. They have one daughter, Barbara, born November 26, 1924, whose commencement exercises at Smith College I attended in 1946 making the trip east by plane, my first experience in the air. The following year Barbara received a fellowship to the Sorbonne in Paris, where she studied for two years. Her mother and father spent the summer of 1947 touring Europe with her. *see last page.*

Rhea Lander spent one year teaching school near Durand. In April of 1877 she married Elka Smith, and they lived at the old Smith home on Elm Street. After having operated a harness shop on State Street for several years, Elka's health failed and he remained a partially paralyzed invalid until his death in 1907. Rhea continued to live in the house on Cherry Street that Albert Brearley had built for them near to our own home so that Albert and I could more easily aid Rhea in caring for her husband. She was a remarkable woman, active in church work, helpful to all, generous, industrious, uncom-

plaining, and even with a very meager income, she always had funds for any need that might arise. She died in April, 1939.

My youngest brother, Edward, after graduation from high school worked for the Taylor and Raymond tack factory and later for the Agard and Ross grain elevator. In 1883 he went to Grand Forks, North Dakota, where he started a real estate company, calling it the E. J. Lander Company. He is still operating this flourishing business at the age of 87. From his marriage to Jessie Krause in 1894 in Montreal, Canada, one son, Miles, was born in 1895. Miles married Miriam Yoder, and they now live in Waterloo, Iowa. Both their sons, Edward born 1922, and Bob, 1924, served in the army overseas during the last war. A graduate of the University of North Dakota, Edward is now doing graduate work and teaching at the University of Minnesota. Robert is married and in business in Waterloo.

So ends my chronicle of the Lander family in America. It is, of course, but a brief outline, but my hope is that it will be of some interest and value to those of the family now living, and to their children and grandchildren that will follow on. God bless you all.

*Editorial from The Rockford Morning Star,
October 19, 1948*

Some people never grow up, no matter how long they live. Others — the fortunate and lovable few — never grow old, though their years may be many. Sarah Lander Brearley, who was 98 years old last June 21, and to whom death came Sunday morning, October 17, 1948, was one of those who never grow old.

With a mind that was livelier, quicker to sense the significance of what was happening in the world, and much better equipped than the minds of many of her “contemporaries” only half her age, Mrs. Brearley was one of Rockford’s most remarkable women. She would have been remarkable in any community, no matter how large, no matter how cosmopolitan. To her, age meant a deepening of the mind, a new tenderness of the heart.

It is not how long you live, but how you live, that is important, she used to say. Not that she preached to people about how they should conduct their lives; her preaching was done by example, not by precept.

She outlived her husband, the late Albert C. Brearley, by many years; she outlived many of her best friends, and co-workers of the days when she took an active, constructive part in philanthropic work here. But the sorrows that the passing years brought never turned her glance backward; she lived in the present, and, through the generations that succeeded her, in the future.

Just before she celebrated her ninety-sixth birthday two years ago, she flew east to see a granddaughter graduate from college. Perhaps, on the plane on which she winged her way across a thousand miles, she thought of the startling contrast between that quick journey and the long, arduous one that had brought her to North America from her native England when she was a three-year-old. Her parents had told her about the rigors of that long sea voyage in the early 'fifties. But if, on her air trip, she permitted her memory to take her back briefly to the mid-nineteenth century, she most certainly did not let her thoughts rest there. Her twentieth-century outlook was enriched by her appreciation and understanding of the past, but never hampered or narrowed by a desire to return to the past and live in it.

For 92 years, this city was her home. But the boundaries of Rockford set no boundaries for her mind and spirit. She was as completely a citizen of the world as she would have been if she had lived in the world's great capitals.

