

RENDELLS AND LATHROPS IN THE U.S.A.

When Bert Dean made his fateful decision to sail to America in the Titanic he was not the first in his family to choose emigration to the States.

Colin Dowell from Cwmbran in Wales recently visited Branscombe with his family. His grandmother was Olive Gush who married Lewis Dowell (1890-1953) and lived at Manor Mill in Branscombe. Colin used to come to Branscombe with his father David and has fond memories of the village and of his great-aunt Lily Gush. When Lily died David inherited a suitcase containing photographs and papers. When David died Colin rescued the suitcase from his mother's loft and he has now very kindly lent the contents to the Branscombe Project. They include an exercise book in which one of Lily's American cousins set out a detailed history of the Rendell and Lathrop families in the U.S.A.

Olive and Lily Gush's mother, Mary Ann (Poll) Rendell, was one of nine children of William Rendell (1830-1925) and Sarah Lathrop (1837-1879). William was a Branscombe labourer and married Sarah in 1853. After the birth of his first child in 1856 he moved to Southleigh. Sarah died when the youngest child was only five, and William returned to Branscombe. Eventually, as Lily Gush said, five of his sons emigrated to America. His daughter Mary Ann married Edwin (Ned) Gush and had four children Walt, live, Dorothy and Lily. They lived at Little Seaside and William came to live with them.

Frank Taylor Rendell (1859-1955) was the first to emigrate. He left in July 1881, when he was 22, and is said to have walked from New York to Kansas where he settled. He did well enough to be able to send money for his four brothers to follow him. By 1900 he was a farmer at Ridgeway, Osage county, Kansas and owned his home on a mortgage, but in 1920, when he became a U. S. citizen, he was farming at Topeka and in 1925 was a labourer there living in a rented home. He became a home owner again in 1930, when he worked as a truck driver for a railroad. He married twice and had four children

and is buried in Carbondale cemetery.

William Rendell (1866-1949), working as an agricultural labourer in Branscombe in 1881, joined Frank in 1882, aged 16. He rented a farm at Ridgeway and became a U. S. citizen in 1906. He married, had four children and is buried in Scranton cemetery.

Harry Rendell (1856-1940), the eldest brother, joined his younger brothers at Ridgeway in 1885. He was 29, a gardener at Branscombe. He was accompanied by his wife Elizabeth (Lizzie) Bennet (1849-1914) whom he had married in Branscombe in 1877, and by their two children Elizabeth (Bessie) (1878-1947) and William Charles (1880-1945). A daughter Maud was born in Kansas in 1887. He was a farmer and became a U. S. citizen in 1906. Elizabeth died before 1915, and by 1920 Henry was retired and living with his daughter Maud Caldwell's family, eventually moving with them to Latah, Idaho, where he died. He is buried at Carbondale.

Walter (1871-1939) was already working as a farmer's boy in Branscombe at the age of 10 in 1881, arrived at Ridgeway in 1890. He became a farmer, next door to Frank, became a U. S. citizen in 1896, and married in 1898. After 1910 he worked as a school janitor in Ridgeway. He appears to have had no children, and is buried at Carbondale.

Alfred (Fred) (1874-1963) was working as an agricultural labourer in 1891, and emigrated in 1892 aged 18. In 1900 he was still a farm labourer in Fairfax, Osage county, but later he rented and finally bought a farm at Fairfax, and then another at Elk, Osage county. He married Maggie Greenfield in 1903 and they had one son. He and his family are buried in Overbrook cemetery, Osage county.

The Rendell boys may also have been following in the footsteps of their mother's brothers. Sarah Lathrop had come to Branscombe from Ottery St Mary, and one of her brothers, Harry, a blacksmith, had married a Branscombe girl. Three of her other brothers emigrated to the U.S.A. William

Lathrop (1827-1880) and his family are buried in the cemetery at Carbondale, Kansas. Francis (Frank) Lathrop also went to Kansas, from where his granddaughter Ruth (b 1902) moved to Chicago. A third brother, Samuel Lathrop, apparently emigrated too.

Harry Lathrop stayed in England, but his son Francis (Frank) Lathrop emigrated to the U.S.A. with his wife and two children in 1910, two years before his cousin Bert Dean tried to do the same. Frank and Marion Lathrop lived at Kanakee, Illinois, and were buried there when they both died in 1957.

The Rendells and Lathrops married in America and have many descendants. Other surnames among their American descendants are Spiller, Flieger, Caldwell, Wright, Dale, Guthrie, Shoecraft, Watson, Ferguson, Henderson, Goben, Rake, Meirs, Haines, Neihart, Kirven, Chaffee and Minick.

The book includes an eyewitness account of the Alaska earthquake of 1964.