

## THREE CONTINENTS, THREE BROTHERS: INDIVIDUALISTS ALL

*The story of an English family, compiled from genealogical websites.*

In 1863, **Charles Button and Mary Ann Bemrose** married at North Thoresby, Lincolnshire, where they raised three sons and three daughters. Charles, like his father John before him, was a tailor and draper by trade.

It's commonly believed that people inherit certain traits and preferences from their ancestors. However, it would be difficult to apply this theory to the male offspring of this family, who were to choose very different paths in adult life. Initially, they opted for construction — as carpenter, bricklayer, plasterer or builder. Inevitably, these new occupations drew them away from their bucolic Wolds village to the booming industrial cities of late Victorian England, such as Nottingham and Manchester. Then, in the space of four years, all took a leap of faith, emigrating to distant continents with families in tow, to chance their luck in younger, more dynamic nations.

**Brother Fritz** was the first to leave, in 1902, travelling by ship from Liverpool to Quebec in Atlantic Canada, with the ultimate destination of Winnipeg. We speculate that his objective may have been to find employment in Manitoba, where agricultural labour had recently been in short supply. A few months later he had moved further west to Fernie, a small coal-mining community deep in the Rockies, there to be joined by his wife and children. The town, built of local timber, had been repeatedly hit by disastrous fires; so, one can imagine that there would have been plenty of employment available in the building trade. Some years later, we can trace them to the prosperous fruit growing district of Okanagan in British Columbia, from where they moved to Vancouver, on the Pacific coast.

**Brother Alfred** and family followed Fritz as far as Eastern Canada, settling in Toronto. Unexpectedly, ship records demonstrate that the family returned to Britain for several years before settling again in

Toronto, this time for good. Here it appears that Alfred may have been a self-employed builder.

**Brother Arthur**, meanwhile, had taken ship, first to Buenos Aires, then to Punta Arenas, at the southernmost tip of South America. One year later, despite the challenges of an unfamiliar culture and a new language, his mind was made up: he would become a farmer. Sending for his family, he settled in the idyllic, isolated fiord country of Chilean Patagonia, which was to become his lifetime home. There, among other endeavours, Arthur made an unsuccessful attempt to establish a fruit orchard.

**Brother Fritz**, however, had not yet satisfied his wanderlust. Perhaps he was influenced by his young cousin Cecil, who had recently graduated at agricultural college in Australia. What is known is that Fritz and family took ship from Vancouver for New Zealand, continuing to Sydney, where he worked as a builder. Two years later, they moved to King Island, a temperate speck of land located halfway between the mainland and Tasmania. Here he would become a dairy farmer and respected member of the local community, until his death in 1956.

There would be no further migrations. But, what energy, what determination!

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