



Haverford Township Historical Society



JAMES RAWSON (1851-1933) AND FAMILY

Compiled by Richard D. Kerr

[The following is excerpted from A History of Delaware County, Pennsylvania and Its People, John W. Jordan, editor, published by Lewis Historical Publishing Company, New York in 1914.]

JAMES RAWSON, a retired business man now living at Llanerch, Delaware county, Pennsylvania, is a descendant of an old and honored English family. He is a man of strong purpose and has been an important addition to the business force of the community in which his active business years have been spent.

THOMAS RAWSON, his father, was born in Halifax, Yorkshire, England, and spent his entire life there. For many years he held the position of foreman in a worsted factory and his death occurred when he was near ninety years of age. He and his wife were members of the Episcopal church. Mr. Rawson married Hannah Dickinson, also a native of Halifax, who died in her eighty-eighth year. They had children as follows:

1. Thomas Rawson, who died in England;
2. Elizabeth Rawson, married John Franklin, is now a widow and lives in Halifax, England;
3. Mary Ann Rawson, now deceased, married Aaron Squire;
4. Eliza Rawson, unmarried, resides in Halifax, England;
5. David Rawson, came to the United States in 1880, and died in Iowa in 1911;
6. James Rawson, the subject of this sketch [see below];
7. William Rawson, is a tailor; and lives in Manchester, England.

JAMES RAWSON was born in Halifax, Yorkshire county, England, August 15, 1851. The public schools of his native town furnished him with a practical education, and he was then apprenticed to the firm of Frederick Smith & Company, wire manufacturers of Halifax, remaining with them for a period of six years. During the next two years he was in the employ of Richard Johnson, of Manchester, England, and then formed a partnership with his brother, David, and a Mr. Housen, in the manufacture of wire in Manchester. This partnership was dissolved at the expiration of three years, when there was a serious business depression in all lines in England, and Mr. Rawson, who had had an excellent business offer from the city of New York, decided to try his fortune in the New World.

Upon his arrival here he accepted a position with Carey & Moen, in the same line of business with which he had been identified, and then remained with this firm for a period of two years, at which time he received a far more advantageous offer from R. H. Wolff & Co., to act as their superintendent, which he did for five years. Mayor Abram S. Hewitt, of New York City, then made him a very favorable offer to go to Trenton, New Jersey, in order to take charge of his business interests there and introduce better and more original methods, as under the old management the business had gone decidedly backward. The factory at Trenton was engaged in the manufacture of specialties, such as piano wire, watch and clock springs, etc., and Mr. Rawson had full charge for fifteen years, the factory gaining in prestige under his able management.

At the end of this time he retired, having the intention of going to England and spending the remainder of his life in his native land. Unfortunately, Mrs. Rawson was taken seriously ill before this plan could be carried out, and her health has never been so fully restored as to make the plan feasible. Mr. Rawson is still engaged as a consulting manufacturer in the line with which he was so actively connected for many years. In this direction the knowledge he has gained in the course of years of the German, French and American methods, in addition to his earlier experience in the English field, has been of inestimable value.

As Mr. Rawson was an enthusiast in all matters pertaining to athletic sports, especially cricket, he decided to make his home at Llanerch, knowing that there he would find kindred spirits. He has always been an exceptionally good cricket player, and {or many years past, has never failed to represent some club in a match during the cricket season.

Mr. Rawson is a member of the Trenton Cricket Club and the Delaware County Golf Club. His political adherence is with the Republican party, and he has served as treasurer of the Llanerch Civic Association. He and his wife are members of the Methodist Episcopal church, of which he has been treasurer for the past six years.

Mr. Rawson married, in 1878, Martha Ann Roberts, born [in 1853] in Halifax, England, a daughter of Robert Roberts and Elizabeth (Hallowell) Roberts. They have been blessed with one child: **EMILY RAWSON**, who married C. C. Haven, and lives in Llanerch, They have children: Arthur Rawson Haven, Lawrence Haven and Ethel Beatrice Haven.

Mr. Rawson is of a social and kindly hearted disposition, and makes friends readily. He has taken an active interest in the movements tending to the development and progress of the locality in which he has made his home, and has been instrumental in promoting its improvement.

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