

AMERICAN
EPISTOLARY CORRESPONDENCE
COLLECTED FROM THE LETTERS

OF MY BROTHERS

JAMES SAMUEL AND CALEB

COMPILED BY

JOSHUA LANKTREE

COMBER

21st July 1834

The Book into which these letters were copied is preserved as a family heirloom. The small red book, hand made, was given to my grandfather by his sister Anna. The pages are frayed and torn. The handwriting of Joshua (my great-grandfather) is fine and the lines are closely written. The ink, in places, had faded so that there were several words not legible. The style of penmanship and the general appearance of this book of letters suggest that Joshua might have had some book-keeping experience.

Copied from the original by Florence Elizabeth [Smith] Schwalm.
Re-copied 1952-1954 by James Henry Langtry
[Edited and annotated by Stephen Langtree Haynes, August 2017]

To my brother Wilbur, my first “Sister” – Ann – and your two lovely daughters, Florence and Susan – I hope that reading over and having these letters will give you all as many fascinating hours as they have given to me.

J.H.L.

11-3-54

The father of the men who wrote the original letters was Matthew, a Methodist minister who lived in Newtownards, Ireland. He spelled his name “Lanktree.”

In the back of Joshua’s book, in the handwriting of his son, James Henry, were the following names. They may not all have been Matthew’s children.¹

MARY	This may have been Matthew’s wife, the mother. ²
ARABELLA [1814-66]	Her death is mentioned in Samuel’s letter 1 Sep 1833. ³
CATHERINE [1818-50]	
SARAH [1807/12-bef. 1827]	
MATTHEW [1800-33]	His death mentioned in Samuel’s letter 14 Sep 1833. His wife was named Jane, Samuel left from their home to go to America.
JOHN [1806-76]	A miller in Ireland.
JAMES [1808-aft. 11 Jun 1869] ⁴	Came to New York in 1832 ⁵ from Newtownards; wife was Mary Jane [White]; one son, Johnny, is mentioned, and there were other children. Taught school at North East, Maryland. Tall, gaunt, had high cheek bones; chewed tobacco; twisted his hair. He was spoken of as a “Tippler” and as a consequence, was wretchedly poor, and a scapegrace. In later years he may have lived in or near Louisville, Kentucky. ⁶
CALEB [1813-74]	Came to New York in 1832 from Newtownards. There he taught ornamental penmanship; later taught school in Elk Neck, Cecil County, Maryland. Later lived in Little Rock, Arkansas. He bristled when spoken to, and was referred to by his brothers as a “good for nothing.” (Caleb and Joshua may have been twins.)
THOMAS [1812-1866]	A lawyer in Ireland. He also wrote a book. ⁷
GEORGE STEPHEN	A printer in Ireland, his death mentioned in Samuel’s letter dated 1 Sep

¹ - Comments in following table by Florence Langtry Smith; bracketed entries by SLH.

² - Not likely – Matthew’s principal wife and mother of most of his children was Catherine Daly. Some sources name a wife who preceded Catherine, Jane Kellett, and their son, Joseph, who died in infancy, whereupon Jane died soon thereafter. The reference to “Mary” is mysterious.

³ - No; Samuel does refer to a “sickly” Arabella, but she is never said to have died. In fact, she died in 1866 in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, wife of John Wilson.

⁴ - SLH: My 2x great grandfather.

⁵ - No; James and Mary Jane arrived 19 Sep 1831.

⁶ - Not likely; see Letter #14 in this collection. More likely moved from Maryland to Indiana.

⁷ - Actually, at least three books. He eventually immigrated to Australia, dying in Melbourne, 16 Apr 1866.

- [1816-82] 1833.
- SAMUEL DALY [1810-42] Came to New York in 1832. Surgeon, also author. Editor of *Knickerbocker Magazine* in 1833 and '34. Had a fiery temper, emotional, quick-witted. Lived by his wits most of the time. Egotistical. Liked to dramatize himself. Vain. A spendthrift. Changed the spelling of the name to "Langtree."
- JOSHUA [1813-51] Wanted to be a sailor. Spoken of by his brothers as having "Much Enterprise." Name of first wife not known.⁸ Two children were born in Ireland, Sarah and Belle.⁹ All came to America from Comber, Ireland about 1849 and lived in Madison, Indiana. The youngest child by first marriage was George.¹⁰ Second wife was Martha Nutting Barton, who was Irish. James Henry¹¹ was born in Madison County, Indiana, in 1851. Joshua worked on Ohio River steamboats and was drowned when son James Henry was nine months old.
- MARTHA [1821-59]
ELIZA [No record of a child named "Eliza."]
WILSON [Husband of Arabella]

⁸ - First wife's name now known to have been Agnes McDowell (1818-), who may have died in Ireland ca. 1833-34 before Joshua and three of his children emigrated.

⁹ - "Belle" was Josephine Belle Langtree (sometimes "Belle Josephine"), 1844-1909; no daughter "Sarah" is known. The first daughter was "Mary Elizabeth" (1838-1906). In fact, three children were probably born in Ireland, the missing one being George Stephen Langtry (1841-1919).

¹⁰ - FES note: "George was last located in Louisville, Kentucky, according to his half-brother James Henry. Had a large family but they did not impress James very favorably, and he cut them off his visiting list.

"Joshua's second wife, Martha Nutting Barton, died in Madison [in 1889] – approximate age 66 [69]. Buried in Madison, Indiana. Annie Barton Powell, daughter of James Barton, Martha's niece and first cousin to James Henry, lived in Madison in 1940, Kate Barton Taylor (Mrs. G.S.), lived in St. Paul, Minnesota. The other eleven children of: James and Lydia Barton are buried in the same cemetery in Madison as are Joshua and Martha."

¹¹ - Re-copier James Henry Langtry's grandfather.