

FRANCIS ROSEVEAR BAWDEN  
1912-1992

**CHILDHOOD and CORNWALL, 1912-1934**

Francis Rosevear Bawden, the first of two sons of Francis John Bawden and Katherine Angelina Higgins, was born in Bisbee, Arizona, on September, 23, 1912.<sup>1</sup> Frank's middle name comes from his paternal grandmother, Sarah Bawden, nee Rosevear. (This name is an Anglicization of the Cornish *ros veur* which means "great heath" and is what etymologists have termed a "location name".) In fact, soon after Frank was born, he and his parents travelled to see his Cornish grandmother. "During this period, we went back to Cornwall to, as my father said, 'to show-off my son,' to my grandmother [Sarah Bawden]," Frank explains. "We lived in Cornwall for a couple of years."<sup>2</sup> It is important to note that the family travelled to Cornwall aboard a ship – the only way to cross the Atlantic at that time – and that the journey occurred little more than a year after the tragic voyage of the *Titanic* in 1912.

Frank recalled many of the events of that trip to Britain, most notably those surrounding episodes related to World War I which began in July of 1914. Here is one such memory:

One of the things I remember vividly was being bombed by the Germans while we visited London. We were visiting some friends – or relatives I suppose they were – in a suburb of London called Croydon. Croydon was a Royal Air Force airbase for the little fighter planes they used in World War I. Every night or so, the German would send over the Zeppelins. They would fly so high over London that the fighter planes couldn't reach them. The only thing that could reach them was the search-lights from the ground. We use to go out every night and watch for the Zeppelins coming over. They'd come over and throw a few bombs out,

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<sup>1</sup> Francis Rosevear Bawden, birth certificate (1912), Arizona Territorial Board of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, territorial number 5, county registrar number 405. Copy of original held by the author.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Francis Rosevear Bawden, by Mary Bawden, held in Eureka, California, in December 1989. Tape recorded copy held by the author.

turn around, and go back to Germany... You could see them in the search-lights. The little fighter planes would buzz up like little bees. They could only go so high and then they would drop off.<sup>3</sup>



Left to right: Sarah Bawden (nee Rosevear), Francis John Bawden, Francis Rosevear Bawden, and Katherine Angelina Bawden (nee Higgins).

Frank's father returned to the United States in August of 1914, leaving Frank and his mother with Frank's grandmother Sarah at Number 9 Rose Cottage, Camborne.<sup>4</sup> However, there was soon a new arrival. Frank's younger brother – Lawrence Charles Bawden – was born six months his father had departed.<sup>5</sup> The family wasn't to remain in Cornwall long though. Frank, along with his mother and brother, left Falmouth,

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<sup>3</sup> Interview, Francis Rosevear Bawden, December 1989.

<sup>4</sup> Francis John Bawden entry, *S.S. Franconia*, Passenger Manifest, August 22, 1914, page no. 95-96, line no. 17.

<sup>5</sup> Lawrence Charles Bawden, birth certificate (1915), General Register Office, Southport, Merseyside, U.K. Copy of original held by the author.

Cornwall, on February 26, 1916 aboard the *S.S. Rotterdam*. The ship's manifest notes that the family had been living with "Mrs. F. Bawden, Rose Cottage, Camborne," and were travelling to Butte, Montana, to join Frank's father. The document also provides us with a physical description of the passengers. Kate – Frank's mother – was 5' 8" tall with hazel eyes and blond hair. Both boys had blues eyes.<sup>6</sup>

Frank also had a clear memory of part of this trip:

We had passage on a Dutch boat, which was a neutral nation in World War I. Theoretically, anyway, the Germans were allowing them to pass. They did, but they stopped the ship [we were on]. It was the *S.S. Rotterdam*, Holland-American Line, and they stopped the ship in the English Channel, not far off the coast of Cornwall. I can still picture this German officer coming aboard the ship from the submarine. The submarine surfaced right along side of the ship. The typical German guttural voice – you know, the voice you hear on the movies – demanding that the captain take him to the bridge and explain who his passengers were and where they were going. [He did] apparently, to the satisfaction of the German submarine commander, because he stomped back down the gangway and climbed back aboard his submarine and away we went.<sup>7</sup>

The family was living at 148 East Daly, Walkerville, Montana – just outside of Butte – by June of 1917.<sup>8</sup> Frank's uncle, William Bawden, and his family were also living in Walkerville at this time.<sup>9</sup> Sadly, Kate died not long after they returned to the U.S. She passed away on November 11, 1918 in Bisbee, Arizona,<sup>10</sup> during the Spanish Flu pandemic that swept through the world that year, killing millions of people. While

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<sup>6</sup> Sarah Bawden entry, *S.S. Rotterdam* Passenger Manifest, February 26, 1916, page 694, line 4. Copy of the original held by the author.

<sup>7</sup> Interview, Francis Rosevear Bawden, December 1989.

<sup>8</sup> Francis John Bawden entry, World War I Draft Registration Card, June 22, 1917. Copy of the original held by the author.

<sup>9</sup> William Bawden entry, World War I Draft Registration Card, May 24, 1917. Copy of the original held by the author.

<sup>10</sup> Francis Rosevear Bawden, manuscript, date unknown. Original held by Nora Jones (nee Bawden). Copy of the original held by the author.

the rest of the world celebrated the end of World War I, Frank, along with his father and younger brother, were mourning the loss of Kate.

Following his mother's death in 1918, Frank and his brother lived with their Aunt Mary Watts (nee Higgins, Kate's sister) and her family in Bisbee, Arizona. One of Mary's daughters stated that she and her sisters were raised with the two boys and thought of them as their brothers.<sup>11</sup> How long they lived with the Watts family is unclear. The family doesn't appear on the 1920 U.S. census.



Left to right: Mildred Watts, Marian Watts, Francis Rosevear Bawden, and Lawrence Charles Bawden.

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<sup>11</sup> Nancy McGonigal, "Bawden/Higgins Family History," January 29, 2008, personal e-mail (January 29, 2008). Nancy is the great-granddaughter of Mary Watts.

We do know that Frank's father took the boys back to Cornwall once more, again onboard the *Rotterdam*. The family arrived in Plymouth – just across the River Tamar from Cornwall – on July 19, 1925.<sup>12</sup> Their final destination, not surprisingly, was Rose Cottage, Camborne. This decade would become known as the Roaring Twenties, the era of the Charleston Dance craze, the first talking movies, and the like. However, Cornwall was in many ways still holding on to its Victorian past. Frank, now a teenager, had this to say about his second trip back to Camborne and his grandmother's home – Number 9 Rose Cottage:

She lived in a very typical Cornish rowhouse, built out of stone, brick and stone. Plastered upper walls. Two bedrooms upstairs and the living area downstairs with an open kitchen. The stove was a coal stove. A big, flat surface of cast iron called a "slab," that's where she did her cooking. They didn't refer to this cooking devise as a stove. It was a slab. She used to polish it with black stove polish once a week. The brass handles, the brass hardware on the doors, and the knocker on the front door all got a polishing once a week. She considered anyone who failed to do that as a poor housekeeper.

The heat was from a small fireplace they called a "grate." [It was] a basket holding a few coals, but it produced quite a bit of heat. My chore, while we were there, was to go up to the nearby coal-yard and buy 50 pounds of coal, every week, and bring it home in a little wheeled basket. Everybody in the neighborhood did this, on Saturday. It was common to take you little basket, like a shopping cart, go up to the coal yard, and buy 50 pounds of coal to do you for the week.

Other things, like milk and bread, were delivered by deliverymen. Fishmongers [would] come with fish carts to sell you fish. Milk, you brought your own container out to the milk cart, and he ladled it out into your own container.<sup>13</sup>

Frank also recalled that his father "made it a point to take us to London and nearby points of interest like the mythical King Arthur's castle – Tintagel. It was a

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<sup>12</sup> Francis J. Bawden entry, *S.S. Rotterdam* Passenger Manifest, July 19, 1925, page 4, lines 105-107.

<sup>13</sup> Interview, Francis Rosevear Bawden, December 1989.

magical area. It was suppose to have been King Arthur's castle. There was all kind of interesting things in Cornwall like Saint Ives, Saint Michael's Mount, various historical spots."<sup>14</sup>

Again, it has been difficult to determine how long the family remained in Cornwall; however, Frank's father remarried in 1927 in Bisbee, Arizona. He married Winifred Grigg, nee Uren. Winifred was the widow of Matthew Chapman Grigg and had three daughters with her first husband: Enid, Phyllis, and Lucille.



Left to right: Seated, Lawrence Charles Bawden, Francis John Bawden, Francis Rosevear Bawden, Winifred Bawden (nee Uren), and Lucille Grigg. Standing, Francis Rosevear Bawden, Enid Grigg, and Phyllis Grigg

In 1928, Winifred's brother, Richard Uren, reported that Frank's father and step-

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<sup>14</sup> Interview, Francis Rosevear Bawden, December 1989.

mother were living in Victoria, British Columbia.<sup>15</sup> It is not clear why John and Winifred were in British Columbia, but Judy Caldwell Schmidt, one of Winifred's granddaughters, states that, "I do believe that they left for England from British Columbia, but [I'm] not 100% sure."<sup>16</sup> Also, Frank's oldest son, Francis Patrick Bawden, has a vague memory about someone in the family owned a "substantial amount of land in the Peace River Valley in British Columbia."<sup>17</sup> This property allegedly had something to do with the railroad. Nevertheless, by 1930 the entire family was living in Butte, Montana at 829 West Copper Street.<sup>18</sup> Frank's uncle William Bawden and his family were still living in nearby Walkerville.<sup>19</sup> So it is safe to posit that the two families were very close for many years.

Of course, only months earlier the Stock Market Crash of 1929 had occurred heralding in the decade of the Great Depression which obviously had a deep impact on Frank and his family. Frank turned 18 years old in 1930, and he reported that he briefly attended the Montana School of Mining in 1932.<sup>20</sup> In that same year, Frank's enigmatic grandfather, William Francis Bawden, died in Nevada City, California (For more details about William aka "Pretty Bill," see his biography on [www.bawden.info](http://www.bawden.info)).

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<sup>15</sup> Judy Caldwell Schmidt, "Affidavit," January 21, 2005, personal e-mail (January 21, 2005).

<sup>16</sup> Judy Caldwell Schmidt, "Affidavit," January 21, 2005, personal e-mail (January 21, 2005).

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Francis Patrick Bawden, by Francis Shawn Bawden, held in Salem, Oregon, on May 1, 2010.

<sup>18</sup> Francis J. Bawden household, 1930 U.S. census, Butte, Silver Bow County, Montana, population schedule, enumeration district 47-16, sheet 4A, dwelling number 72, family number 83, line 13.

<sup>19</sup> William Bawden household, 1930 U.S. census, Walkerville, Silver Bow County, Montana, population schedule, enumeration district 47-1, sheet 7B, dwelling number 166, family number 166, line 74.

<sup>20</sup> "Employment Counselor welcomes New Job as chance to help people," *Press-Courier* (Oxnard, California), July 4, 1964, page 3.

However, these were only the beginnings of the changes that Frank was about to face. 1933 was not only the year that Franklin D. Roosevelt was first inaugurated as President, but was also the year that Frank's stepmother Winifred travelled to Number 9 Rose Cottage, Camborne, with her youngest daughter Lucille.<sup>21</sup> Perhaps they were going to care for Sarah, who was in well into her 70s at that time, although Winifred had family in Cornwall too. Frank's father soon joined the women in Cornwall, but the reunion with Sarah must have been short-lived. Frank's beloved grandmother passed away in December 1933.<sup>22</sup> Also, there is no evidence that Frank saw his father again after he returned to Cornwall this last time.

Next...**ARMY, the SOUTH PACIFIC and ASIA, 1934-1936**

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<sup>21</sup> Winifred Bawden and Lucille Grigg entries, *S.S. Aurania* Passenger Manifest, July 16, 1935, page 26, lines 1 and 2.

<sup>22</sup> Sarah Bawden, death certificate (1933), General Register Office, Southport, Merseyside, U.K. Copy of original held by the author.