

## Henry Christopher Rowlands



Henry Christopher was born on June 4<sup>th</sup> 1871 in Kensington and baptised on August 9<sup>th</sup> in St Matthew's Church, Bayswater. At the time, his parents, Arthur and Emma, were living at 32 Pembridge Villas, Kensington, having married in 1862 in Notting Hill. Arthur was the son of Christopher Rowlands, a goldsmith, and Emma, the daughter of William Rowlands, a gentleman. Arthur (1826-1903) was a goldsmith, and came from a family of goldsmiths who traded in Regent Street in London. They were also clockmakers.

Emma Rowlands (1828-1897) was the daughter of William Rowlands, also a goldsmith and clockmaker, and the brother of Christopher Rowlands (1830-1916), who moved to the Isleworth area and was living at 'The Rift', Woodlands Road, from 1894. Christopher was awarded the Freedom of the City in 1851 through the Company of Goldsmiths and Clockmakers and patrimony with his father William Rowlands. Henry Christopher appears on the 1881 census, aged 9, with his sister Mabel Henrietta, born in 1865; the family also employed a nurse, a cook and a household servant. By 1891, his family had moved to 'The Marians, Barnett Lane, Elstree and living at home were his sisters: Mabel Henrietta and Elizabeth Cobden, born in 1869 and his brother, Arthur William, born in 1867 who was a practising artist.

Henry Christopher travelled widely as a young adult and became a mining engineer. He sailed from Liverpool to New York in 1892, although he did not have a trade then, others on board included some mining engineers. In 1896 he is recorded travelling on the 'Parisian' from Liverpool to Quebec, bound for Victoria, aged 25. On November 19<sup>th</sup> 1902, he married Mary Lewis, from Garston, Lancashire in Alameda California; their daughter Mary born in 1905 in America. In 1905 aged 34, and destined for Washington, USA, he was a mining engineer, at the border crossing. In 1906, Christopher, 34, a mining engineer and Mary 35, and Mary, 1, arrived at San Diego California from Mexico on the St Denis. In 1913 July he sailed back to Liverpool with his family, then as a cotton broker, on SS Asian, Leyland Line; the two women had embarked in Mobile, Christopher had embarked from Vera Cruz; he was last resident in Mexico, his wife and daughter resident in California. On 17<sup>th</sup> March 1915, as a mining engineer, on SS Appam, he disembarked at Plymouth, having embarked at Sekondi, Ghana, destined for Kensington, aged 43, and with the British and African Steam Navigation Company. This ship was seized by Germany in May 1916 and became the subject of a Supreme Court judgement in 1917, when it was returned to its British owners. *See photo left from the George Grantham Bain Collection, Library of Congress.*



By 16<sup>th</sup> November 1915, having enlisted at Shepherd's Bush, Henry Christopher was in France. He served with the Royal Engineers, 312027, and formerly the Royal Fusiliers, 3458. He received wounds received in action, and was sent to Queen Mary Military Hospital, Whalley in Lancashire, which had been converted to its use in 1913, with a new branch line and a long covered platform to shelter the wounded, who arrived in trains from places as far away as Hull, Dover and Southampton, in carriages marked with a letter, designating stretcher, sitting or walking wounded. Corporal Henry Christopher Rowlands died there on 13<sup>th</sup> April 1918 and was buried in St Nicholas's Churchyard, Elstree, where other members of his family had been laid to rest, a few days later. His

uncle. Christopher Rowlands, living in the Woodlands Isleworth, arranged for Henry Christopher to be remembered on the Isleworth Memorial, and also in the Memorial Chapel at All Saints Church, Church Street, Isleworth. In his will, Henry left £7, 501. 2s. 7d, and his address was 5, Melbeck Court, Kensington. Henry's brother Arthur William, also died in 1918, his sister Mabel (1865-1938) married William William Box, a solicitor; His sister, Elizabeth Cobden Rowlands (1869-1940 married Herbert Edwin P H Stanton and one of their children, Blair Hughes Stanton became a famous artist. In 1930, Henry's wife and child returned from San Francisco to London on the Pacific Exporter.