

55 Wroughton Road
Battersea
London
SW11 6AY

Mr E.H. Cross
601 Cypress Station Drive #309
Houston
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USA

23 April 2000

Dear Mr. Cross,

It was a real surprise to receive your letter regarding your researches into your great grandfather. This house dates from about 1890 and so your relatives may well have been the first owners. Battersea is a very large area of houses built at around the same time – I enclose a photocopy of a map of the area from 1893 which shows lots of open space – the houses rapidly reached Clapham Common which is still public open space as is Wandsworth Common. The area is relatively close to the centre of the City and - because of the large amount of open space and relatively large houses - is popular with families with young children. Our house has four bedrooms and two bathrooms – it has larger rooms than most as we are one of a block of four which seem to have been built first in the road – I imagine it was built for middle management of the 1890s.

Our house is marked on the map. Broomwood House, on the corner of Broomwood Road and Wroughton Road, was the home of William Wilberforce who was a member of the Clapham Sect – the prominent campaigners against slavery. The house was replaced with smaller houses shortly after the map was drawn.

We have been unable to find any trace of your great grandfather in local records. However, the street directory from 1905 shows the resident as Edgar Henry Cross, as does the 1908 directory. The 1908 directory shows William Cross living in Brixton, Clapham and Brockley. By 1920 a second Cross is recorded on the electoral roll at 55 Wroughton Road – Arnold Tracey Cross. Is this a son of E.H. Cross?

I am sorry that we have not been able to turn up anything specific about your great grandfather – it is clear that the family lived here for some time. Census information becomes public after 100 years and this shows all the residents of houses so you may well be able to find your relative in returns from the late 1890s.

Good luck with your researches – we often wonder who lived here in this house 100 years ago and how they lived. How they earned their living if they had servants who lived in the house or a daily maid?

Yours sincerely,



Dr Peter Bedson