LUCY WARD BRAES

Sharon Bedard

Born in Loftus, Yorkshire, England on July 21, 1907, Lucy Ward was the first of three children. On March 31, 1914, Lucy, her mother, uncle and brother left Loftus on the first leg of their journey to America to join her father who had migrated to Superior, Wyoming in 1913. By train, they went to Liverpool where on April 1st, they boarded the Cunard liner, Andania.

Eleven days later the family landed in Boston, Massachusetts, unlike other immigrants who had to go through customs at Ellis Island in New York City. The next day, the family boarded another train that, four days later, would bring them to Rock Springs.

Of the voyage, Lucy remembers spending most of the time with her mother in their third class cabin. They were both seasick. However, two incidents occurred that would stay with young Lucy forever. On a particularly rough day, Lucy's uncle came running down to their cabin to tell Lucy to look through the porthole. The luxury liner, Lucitania, was passing. Lucy was so excited about seeing "her" ship, she forgot she was sick. The Lucitania was first launched when Lucy was born and since the names were so much alike, that was her ship. She remembers that the Lucitania left Liverpool two days after the Andania and arrived in New York City four days ahead of them.

The Andania's route followed that of most ships crossing the Atlantic. In April 1912, the Titanic followed the same route. One morning in April 1914, Lucy's family was in the dining room having breakfast when the boat began rocking. Suddenly, it tilted to one side, all the lights went out and a group of soldiers from the Salvation Army began to play and sing, "Nearer My God To Thee." Fortunately, the captain and crew were good at maneuvering their ship and they sailed on, unscathed..

George Alfred Ward, Lucy's father had prepared a home for his family in Superior. A dreamer and adventurer, George Ward was concerned about the strikes in the iron mines and wanted more security for his family. A cousin,

visiting Loftus, told the family of the work and opportunities waiting in Superior. Lucy tells of her father sending home his check. In the year he was separated from them, he wrote not one word but every few weeks, he would send most of his pay. Her mother figured as long as the money kept coming, he was all right.

Lucy's first impression of Superior was one of disbelief and confusion. Her father had shaved his beard and Lucy and her brother, James Francis (Jimmy), did not know the stranger who had come to claim them. Lucy remembers her mother, Eliza, saying, "My God, George, what have you brought me to?" Lucy does not think her mother ever really got over her first impression.

In April 1914, shortly after their arrival in Superior, Lucy, six years old, started second grade in the Superior school system. The school was located on 2nd B or 7th House Hill. Her third grade, however, was spent in a building at the bottom of 7th House Hill near the funnel for E Mine. That school room later became a doctors office. Lucy remembers an incident in the second grade very well. She was afraid of forgetting to end her sentences with a period so she made a little round ball. Her teacher, Mrs. Hickerson, told her several times to use a period, not a ball. Finally, in exasperation, Mrs. Hickerson called Lucy to the front of the room and caned her hands. Lucy said she never forgot again.

Transportation for Lucy's family was not a problem. Superior was so small, everything was in walking distance. It they needed to get to Rock Springs, they would take the afternoon train.

Housewives did not have to leave home to do their shopping. Salesmen would come to the homes to take orders. Lucy remembers Mr. Fletcher, a salesman for the Grand Union Tea Company. These salesmen would come about once a month. Groceries could be bought at the Union Pacific Company Store or in White City at the Union Merc or at the Workingman's Commercial (also known as the Finn Store because Mr Sturholm who owned it was Finnish).

Most of the homes in North Superior consisted of four rooms. They all had outdoor plumbing and no running water. All the water was carried from hydrants. When the water first came from the hydrants, it was black and tasted terrible. The coal used for heating and cooking was brought by horse and wagon. It was stored in a shed at the back of the house. The Austrians, living in Superior, would build a separate little shed at the back of the main house where they had a little stove to heat wash water. When the men came

home from work, the wives would have big pans of hot water ready for them to wash in.

Lucy's family was lucky in their company house. She remembers it was well built and protected from the winter winds. She recalls that some winter mornings, her Aunt Mary would wake to find snow drifts in the house.

South Superior, or White City as everyone called it, housed all the businesses not owned by the Union Pacific. The Workingman's Commercial, the Union Merc, a greek confectionary store, several saloons (12 or 14), the Crystal Theatre, a school and Joe's Ice Cream Parlor. On Saturday night, winter and summer, the Ward family and their neighbors, the D. K. Wilsons, would walk down to White City to go to the show. Afterward, they would go to Joe's for an ice cream sundae and then walk back up the hill to home.

Though strikes were not as prevalent in Superior as they were in England, they still happened. In 1919, State Troops were brought in to Superior to keep the peace. The adults were not happy about them being there but the children loved them. It was winter and Lucy remembers sledding with the younger men.

In 1923, the School District closed the High School in Superior. To enable his daughter to graduate, George Ward moved his family to Rock Springs. An English family by the name of Yates had offered to take Lucy in, but her father wanted his family to stay together. George's first attempt at finding work with the U P was unsuccessful so the family moved to Dines. He could do piece work, rent was cheaper and Lucy could ride the bus to school in Rock Springs.

Later that year, George did find work in Rock Springs and the family moved again. This time to a company house on Number 1 Hill. Several years later, the duplex that housed the family was moved to facilitate the building of the new high school (the present East Junior High). Lucy once asked Mr. Thompson, a long-time Rock Springs educator, where he thought her house would be. He told her that while she would not get into the science field, her old home would. The house made space for the school's science department.

Lucy graduated from high school in 1924. She was not quite 17. Her mother went with her while she put in her job applications all over town. At the time, the mines were only working three days in two weeks so jobs were scarce. Finally, Lucy put an advertisement in the paper, the Rock Springs Miner. The ad ran for two weeks. At the end of the second week when Lucy

went to the paper to check for responses, Mr. Crumley, the owner-editor, offered her a job. She was to fill in, for two weeks, for a regular reporter who was going on vacation. She started to work on her seventeenth birthday.

Reporters for the Miner were expected to go out and find the news. They were not allowed to gather material by telephone. Mr. Parton, who ran the Golden Rule Store and later donated the chimes to the City Hall, told Lucy that he and his girls would help her gather the news. In those days, a person had to be careful about who he gossiped to or it was liable to wind up in the paper. At the end of the two weeks, the regular reporter resigned and Mr. Crumley offered Lucy a permanent position with the Miner at $10.00 a week. She held her position until 1939 when she moved from Rock Springs.

During the fifteen years Lucy worked for Mr. Crumley, she saw many changes. Mr. P. C. Bunning became mayor in 1924 and effected many changes. Lucy credits him with bringing Rock Springs out of its cow town phase to that of a modern city. During his term, the original sewer lines were installed, streets were paved and most homes installed indoor plumbing.

Mayor Bunning and his able council were responsible for changing the Bitter Creek channel. The original channel ran through the middle of downtown Rock Springs. In the summer, when the water was very low, refuse would gather in the narrow channel causing a foul stench. The channel was moved north and widened. Besides getting rid of the odor, a park was created that has provided a bit of green for Rock Springs for many years.

Lucy remembers when people used to keep livestock in town. When the time came, they would slaughter the animals in the yard. If it was a large animal, or there were several, the blood would run down the gutters. This practice disappeared about the time Mr. Bunning took office.

During Lucy's tenure on the Miner, she saw the Crown Prince of Japan, the Crown Prince and Princess of Sweden and Alice Roosevelt Longfellow as they passed through Rock Springs on the train. It was part of her job as society editor to report these things.

Some of the affairs she attended in her capacity as reporter were the Banquet for retiring Chinese miners, International Days, weddings and funerals.

In 1925, the Union Pacific Coal Company gave a banquet in honour of several retiring Chinese miners. These miners were men who had survived the Chinese Massacre of 1884. The banquet was part of a farewell sendoff the coal

company was giving them before they returned to China. All Chinese miners wanted to return to their country to retire and to die.

During the early 1920's a Baptist minister, Reverend Stephen B. Pyle, led the church in Rock Springs. A great internationalist, he believed in all nations working and growing together. He was instrumental in organizing the first International Night in Rock Springs in 1928. During the evening, 47 nationalities gathered on the stage of the Rialto Theatre. All were holding candles. The only candle lighted before the ceremony began was that of the representative of the United States. One by one, each candle was lit and each participant would say, "As light begins light, so love begins love the world over." The program was a two day affair concluding with an international fair. Lucy remembers there were large contingents of Japanese, Chinese, Austrians, Italians and English but only one Turk: Hot Tamale John.

Hot Tamale John was a street vendor who stood on a corner on North Main Street (North Front) and sold tamales from a barrel strapped to his shoulders and carried like a big drum. Another street vendor, Mr. Roncalio, sold Italian specialties. Mr. Roncalio was the father of our former U. S. Representative, Teno Roncalio.

Lucy likes to remember her big scoop for the Miner. In the early 1920's, Wild Bill Carlisle robbed several U P trains. He was a popular character with the local people, sort of a gentlemen robber, a robin hood type. However, he was caught and served time in the state penitentiary. After serving his time, Bill moved to Kemmerer and became a steady citizen. One day, a local doctor showed Lucy an invitation to the wedding of Wild Bill and the doctor's office nurse. The wedding was the social event of the season. Lucy believes the rival paper, the Rocket, did not realize who was getting married.

She was also expected to attend the graduation exercises for the nurses from the State run school of nursing at the hospital.

In 1930, Lucy became active in an organization called the Canadian Legion of the British Empire Service League. Her father had been elected First Adjutant of the organization. Lucy was a reporter, so he felt she could write all the minutes and handle all the correspondence. Eventually, Lucy organized the Canadian Legion Social Club. This was for the wives and female relatives of the men. The Canadian Legion was active throughout the West. At a convention of the Legion in Bakersfield, California, Lucy met Alexander Braes.

On June 29, 1939, Lucy married Alexander in Rock Springs at the Episcopal Church of the Holy Communion. Alex was office manager for a plumbing firm in Delano, California so Lucy and Alex left for California a few hours after they were married. Toward the end of 1940, a work slow-down was hitting southern California and Alex was looking for a more secure position. A friend of Lucy's from the Miner placed an ad in the paper. As a result, Alex went to work for Rock Springs Fuel in January of 1941 as that company's office manager. His salary at the time was about $165.00 a month, of which $40.00 went for rent.

After her marriage and the birth of their daughter, Barbara, in January of 1941, Lucy settled down and became a housewife. A conservative Republican, Lucy believes in paying bills on time and not spending more than a person makes. Lucy does admit that had Mr. and Mrs. Crumley been Democrats, she would have been a Democrat, too. In August 1928, Lucy voted for Herbert Hoover in her first election. She also started her fifty years of work on the Election Board. She submitted her resignation to the Board in the spring of 1984. In 1932, when Roosevelt took office, the Democrats took over in Sweetwater County. Up until that time, the County had been bipartisan.

As well as being active in County politics, Lucy has been a member of the Rebecca Lodge for 50 years and is a past president of the Sweetwater County Historical Society.

NAME: LUCY W. BRAES

PRESENT ADDRESS: 906 DEWAR DRIVE, ROCK SPRINGS, WYOMING 82901

1. Present profession or occupation: Retired

2. Occupations followed in the past (give dates):
Reporter for the Rock Springs Miner July 21, 1924 to 1939

3. Date of birth: July 21, 1907 Place of birth:
Loftus, Yorkshire, England

4. Date of moving to Wyoming: April 15, 1914

5. Full name of parents (give mother's maiden name)
George Alfred Ward
Eliza Ward (Ward)

6. Names of brothers and sisters (and to whom married):
James Francis Ward (died at age 8)
Cora Ward Verhaalen

7. Schools attended (give dates):
Superior Grade School April 1914 through the 10th grade
Rock Springs High School class of 1924

8. Places of residence in Wyoming (give dates):
Superior 1914 - 1923
Dines 1923 - 1923 Rock Springs 1923 to present

9. Military service (dates, awards, area served, rank, etc.):

-0-

10. Political offices held (give dates): -0-
Served on the election boards from 1928 through the time of her resignation in 1984

11. Political affiliation:
Republican

12. Religious affiliation: Protestant - Episcopalian

13. Marriage (spouse's name, date and place of marriage):
Alexander Braes June 24, 1939 at the Episcopal Church of the Holy Communion

14. Children (names, dates of birth, grandchildren, etc.):
Barbara Alexandra Braes Heater
Alexandra Braes Lucinda Heater (Granddaughter)

15. List of clubs and societies of which you are a member:
Rebecca Lodge - 50 years
AARP
Young at Heart Senior Citizens
Sweetwater County Historical Society (Past President)