

750 Members Breakstone Clan Gather for Reunion

By Associated Press

CHICAGO, Aug. 16.--There will be a remarkable family gathering here today when the greater part of the 750 known members of the Breakstone clan gather in a family reunion. Representatives of the clan have come from New York, Pennsylvania, Iowa, District of Columbia, Ohio, West Virginia, Mississippi, Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, New Jersey and Canada.

The clan springs from a common ancestor bearing the name of Bregstone.

The Breakstone-Bregstone family traces its origin to a small town founded by the clan in Lithuania, called Ponienon. The family name was adopted in the early part of the nineteenth century, following an edict of Nicholas the First of Russia compelling every family head to assume a surname, a practice theretofore unknown in that part of the world.

A remarkable thing stamps this family in that five brothers and two sisters, all married and with families of their own, found shelter under the same roof in Ponienon, all living in a patriarchal state similar to that known to biblical times. They occupied a large estate still known as the "Bregstone Estate," each member of the family enjoying it as if he owned it all, yet possessing nothing, the eldest brother being the patriarch of the clan. His word was law, although he ruled by persuasion and inherent leadership rather than domination.

With the empire taking its course westward, the tide found with it many members of this pioneering family. There are about 750 of them in the United States. The father of the five brothers and sisters, named Beryl, was the first to assume the family name. Of those living now in this country Irving Breakstone is serving a second term as State's Attorney for the County of Deouto, Wisconsin; Philip P. Bregstone recently completed a term on the bench in the Probate Court in Chicago, Dr. Benjamin H. Breakstone is the surgeon who came into international prominence when he was called in to perform the operation upon the famous Siamese twins; Abraham Breakstone is attorney to the sheriff of New York county; Isadore Levy, nephew of Dr. Breakstone won a scholarship abroad, having had one of his paintings exhibited in the Paris Salon. One Etienne Bregstone of Amsterdam, Holland, bought all the wheat for Holland during the world

war, holding a position similar to that held by Herbert Hoover in this country.

The family contributed 75 members of the A. E. F. during the late war, more than 25 per cent of whom were commissioned, and all of whom were in combatant branches of the service. In the World War members of the clan were fighting on every battlefield, according to Jerome S. Breakstone, chairman of the family reunion.

Middlesboro Daily News

8/16/1923

THE MATTER OF NAMES.

The Philadelphia court after all decided that the Kabotchuik family of Philadelphia, late of somewhere in Europe, might legally adopt the name Cabot, heretofore sacred to descendants of a distinguished colonial gentleman, some say of the adventurous sailor Sebastian Cabot himself. The protesting Cabots now have but one means of preserving their ancestral identity. They must build a family tree warranted to be so complete in all its branches that there will be no room for a single limb to which pretenders in future years may climb, and they must hold reunions.

Indianapolis Star 8/21/1923

There was a reunion of the Breakstone family in Chicago the other day, its representatives numbering 700. They came from many states, but apparently no members have greatly distinguished themselves, for the name is not familiar to American ears. They are not an old family so far as this country is concerned, for in the early years of the nineteenth century the clan lived in Lithuania in a small town called Ponelmon. It did not have any surname then, but Nicholas I of Russia compelled every family to take a name. "Bregstone" was the original name chosen by this tribe. If it means what its English form indicates, then it may be assumed that the chief occupation was that of stonecutters, or perhaps roadmakers.

The Breakstones seem to be a prolific family. The Cabots, in line with New England tendencies, are not so. If the new Cabots increase as rapidly as the Breakstones they may in the course of a generation or so, or at least in a hundred years, so far outnumber the colonial Cabots that they will be "the" family of the name in the United States.

A good deal is being said in one way or another lately about names and unfamiliar ones are coming to the front. There, for instance, is Mr. C. Bascom Slomp, President Coolidge's new secretary. C. Bascom Slomp sounds Dickensian. If he had chosen to call himself Campbell B. Slomp, no one, even a suspicious member of the opposition, would be half so likely to lift an inquiring eyebrow.

Views of the People.

A TYPICAL AMERICAN FAMILY.

To the Editor of *The Star*:

In the most roundabout way the editorial which appeared in your issue of Aug. 21, 1923, entitled "The Matter of Names," has been brought to my attention. As a matter of introduction, I simply state that I am the titular head of the Breakstone family in this country—titular, I say, because I have just reached my thirties.

The family is grateful to you for the comment and publicity given our little effort at family solidarity. A number of people in this country, especially in New York, have assumed the name "Breakstone," and, of course, while we do not like it, yet we are happy in knowing that the name is one to be proud of. We are just plain folks, healthy, hard-working and law-abiding.

Out of the approximately 1,500 of us there are only a few cases of insanity and tuberculosis, and these we have traced to collateral origin. A Breakstone has never been in jail, either in this or the other side of the water, and we have the respect and assume the leadership in every community where we happen to locate. In all but a very few instances we make good livings, in other words, we are no more and no less than good, solid people in every sense of those words.

A reference to the fourth paragraph of the story given the Associated Press last year indicates that we have some members in the family somewhat above the average.

There is no desire to burden you with a lot of "reading dope," knowing you must have enough of it, but inasmuch as our convention of last year attracted your attention to the extent of causing you to comment editorially upon it, we felt that, perhaps, we are obligated to keep you informed from time to time of our activities. The movement is a splendid one, especially in these days of no conventionalty and extravagance, when it is so necessary for retrenchment in government expenditures and the like.

Chicago. J. S. BREAKSTONE.