

**Recent Research Into
The Origin Of
Joseph Ors Crane and Catherine Williams
of Sussex, New Jersey**

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Draft 2

2 February 2018

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Acknowledgments

I thank Hal B. Whitmore, whose devoted work to genealogy, which includes this family line, became the foundation I inherited and which I have been able to build upon. Thank you, thank you.

I also extend a great deal of credit to a fellow researcher, Sandra Hildreth Ball. Sandra is an accomplished genealogist, and the author of Analysis of [Children of Joseph Ors Crane and Catherine Williams](#) (2016). She has spent countless hours on this topic and has always been gracious in sharing her research notes and findings. I consider myself fortunate to have the benefit of her knowledge, experience, and perspective during the ongoing course of this endeavor. Again, many thanks.

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Introduction

I am, or believe myself to be a descendant of Joseph Ors Crane¹ and Catherine Williams by way of their daughter Sarah Crane who married Daniel Hildreth.² The origin of Joseph Ors Crane and Caty Williams (referred to hereafter as Joseph Ors and Caty) has been a brick wall in my family tree for many years now, and this is the primary research question being addressed in this article. I will discuss here my research, my analysis, my speculation, and my thoughts for how we might proceed in the future given that there is, at the moment, still no conclusion to this research question. But my hope is that others will find parts of this information helpful in such a way that we can all continue our attempts to knock down this particular brick wall.

I have organized this article into three parts:

- Part 1 reviews the information that has already been considered by me and a number of other researchers. It establishes the foundation of what we think we know about the Joseph Ors Crane family, and discusses other attempts to determine his origin.
- Part 2 covers the different geographies I have recently explored as they might relate to our primary research question. Many of these roads have also been previously traveled by other researchers, but perhaps my observations from my recent revisiting of these possible connections can add some additional clues or insights into the question at hand.
- Part 3 covers some of my experiences and observations with studying DNA results pertaining to (presumably) this Crane line.

1 The spelling CRANE is the one found in the early NJ church records, but later records show some branches used the spelling of CRAIN or CRAINE. All spellings have been considered in the course of this research.

2 It should be noted that Daniel Hildreth Sr. did not have the middle name Floyd as so many trees claim. Only his son, Daniel Floyd Hildreth, had the middle name of Floyd.

PART 1 – Let's Review

General Crane Genealogy

I have been astonished at just how prolific were those with the surname of Crane in the century from 1750-1850. It's easy to get lost when studying people of that surname because there were so many Crane families, and so many individuals who also carried the same given name. Careful attention is required.

One of the first basic questions is the ethnicity Joseph Ors Crane and Catherine Williams? One source³ presented in two volumes traces many of the early Crane families back to Suffolk county, England. One of the main branches of the Crane family discussed in that source settled in/around Newark, Essex, New Jersey, which is about 60 miles southeast of Wantage where our Crane family was known to have lived. So the Newark area is one direction to look for Joseph Ors' Crane ancestors. Some other Crane families from this origin settled in/around Goshen, Orange, NY, which is about 20 miles northeast of Wantage. So Orange county, New York is another area of interest to watch. Other Crane families I have studied seem to trace back to Ireland, so we need to be aware that not everybody with the name Crane was English nor descended from those families who originated from Suffolk county, England.

Another basic question is religion. In our case, we have some records of our family which were recorded in a Dutch Reformed Church. I want to make note, however, that the Dutch Reformed church practiced many of the same doctrines as Presbyterians, and people of one congregation would sometimes attend the church of the other. In fact, a number of Crane's were Presbyterian, including one Noah Crane who was a Presbyterian minister who preached in Hardyston, Sussex, NJ, 13 miles away from Wantage.

What We Know

We have very few records of Joseph Ors Crane and/or Catherine Williams. Those records we have include:

- A 1793 militia list of Wantage, Sussex, New Jersey. We believe the name “Jos. Ocraïn” was mistranscribed, and we are assuming it was meant to read “Jos. O. Crain.”
- Church records from the Clove Valley Dutch Reformed Church in Wantage, Sussex, New Jersey showing that Joseph Ors Crane and Catherine Williams had several children baptized: Aaron, born 1788 and John, born 1791, were both baptized in 1792, Sarah, born and baptized in 1793, and Samuel, born and baptized in 1799.
- The death record of Elizabeth Crane Stid, who died 1879 in Sandstone, Michigan; her birth place was listed as New York, and her parents were named as Joseph and Katy Crane, both with a residence in New Jersey.
- Two other children are attributed to Joseph Ors Crane and Caty Williams by virtue of name associations: *Francis W. Crane*, born 1811 in New Jersey, died 1869 in Ionia Michigan had a son named Joseph O. Crane. Also, the presumed youngest son of Joseph Ors and Caty was named *Joseph O. Crane*, born abt 1814 New Jersey, died 1848.

³ Crane, Ellery Bicknell, Genealogy of the Crane family. Worcester, Mass.: unknown, 1900.

Other record sets I have studied:

1. Because most of the early census records of New Jersey were lost or destroyed, this critical record set is not available to tell us more about the family group of Joseph Ors Crane and Caty Williams. We only know that by the time of the 1830 census, no Joseph O. Crane or Catherine Crane was enumerated in Sussex County, New Jersey, leaving us to conclude that they either had died or moved away from Sussex County, New Jersey by that time.
2. I could find no deeds in the name of Joseph Ors Crane in Sussex county before 1830. There was, however, a mortgage between Joseph Crane and Noah Crane in 1817, which is still being researched.⁴
3. I have not located any probate or other court records in Sussex County or even in New Jersey pertaining to any Joseph Crane/Crain. The earliest court record I could find for anybody of the surname Crane in Sussex county was this:⁵



Select	Case#	Name	Case Title	Case Type	County	Dates
Select	7705	Crane, David (Plaintiff)	David Crane v. Gershorn Lee	Trespass on the Case	Sussex	1780
	0221	Crane, Israel (Plaintiff)	Israel Crane v. Walter Wood	Trespass &...	Sussex	1840

4. Because Wantage, New Jersey was so close to the New York state line, and because my ancestor, Sarah Crane married Daniel Hildreth in Westtown, Orange, New York, where they lived until 1838 when they moved to Bradford County, PA, I have repeated a search for Joseph Crane in deeds and probate records in Orange County, New York – an exercise that was also done by previous researchers. The result was no records found pertaining to this search.
5. Finally, a search of New Jersey and New York newspapers for this time period has not resulted in any information pertaining to a Joseph Crane/Crain.

Other Ideas for Origins of Joseph Ors Crane

Other family trees on ancestry have named the father of Joseph Ors Crane, and so here are notes from my investigations of those. In my opinion, these family groups might have some relation, but I don't see any evidence that they were the immediate family of Joseph Ors.

Eliakim Crane

Apparently there were two Eliakim Crane's, but I'm not sure which one was the son of John Winthrop Crane who d. 1778.

1. Died in Newark 24 Oct 1800. Adm's: the widow, Polly Crane and Josias Crane; bondsman: John Crane and John J. Baldwin; inventory: Aaron Crane and John J Baldwin.

4 1817 mortgage between Joseph Crane and Noah Crane: F-243. This volume has not been digitized; see Sussex County, New Jersey, County Clerk, Mortgages, 1766-1868; index, 1770-1950; assignments of mortgages, 1843-1901; release part of mortgaged premises, 1892-1902; discharge of mortgages, 1869-1902; Mortgages, v. E-F 1810-1819, FHL film 959865.

5 Found on the [Supreme Court Case Files, 1704-1844](#) database of the New Jersey State Archives. This record has not yet been acquired or reviewed.

2. Died in Newark in 1803. According to the will abstract, he had a son named Joseph, and an executor named Benjamin Williams - a surname of interest! Benjamin Williams died in 1826, and his second wife was one Phebe Crane, daughter of Caleb Crane! But then I found another full transcription of Eliakim's will (not just abstract), and discovered that the son mentioned was not Joseph but Josias! Really? Still no Joseph.

Notes of other children: son John Crane, daughter Catherine Ward.

NOTE: Benjamin Williams also ties into Noah Crane.

Benjamin Williams and Phebe Crane (2nd wife, I think) had a son, Samuel Williams whose first wife was Mary Crane, a sister of Noah (see next section)! I have no idea, but Caty Williams could have fit into the family group of Benjamin?

David Crane Jr

1721-1794, d Newark, NJ, m1 Sarah A Dodd, presumably mother of children: Stephen, David D, Joseph, Aaron, Phebe, Anna, Jedediah; m2 Abigail Ogden. This could use more research - maybe a possibility for our Joseph O., but then if Thomas Crane of Wantage was a brother to Joseph O., we need to watch for a family group where both names, Joseph and Thomas, appear. There was no Thomas Crane in this family group.

Other Crane Investigations

Here are notes of other Crane's I have studied in hopes of finding a connection to Joseph Ors Crane or Catherine Williams. I have so far not found any definitive connections.

Simeon Crane

This guy is the supposed father of Isaac Crane, b Cranetown, son of Gamaliel Crane and Susannah Dodd, m Eunice Baldwin, lived in Delaware for 40 years, then died in Wayne, NY. I think this could be a mixup though. Many trees claim Simeon was the father of Isaac W. Crane, but so far, I've not seen the W. initial used with the Isaac in either Frankford, NJ or Bradford, PA

Noah Crane

The name of Noah Crane is of interest because there is a mortgage from 1817 between one Joseph Crane and one Noah Crane. At last, could we have found a new record of our Joseph Ors Crane? I have yet to read that mortgage, but here is the research I did men of the name Noah Crane.

There were at least two men named Noah Crane who lived in the New York and New Jersey area between 1775 to 1860, and I have found that many ancestry family trees have mixed up their identities. Here is the info that I have found so far about each person:

NOAH #1

This Noah lived in Dutchess county, NY, Cooperstown, Otsego, NY, and Southport, NY. As far as I can tell, this Noah never lived in New Jersey.

born: 6 May 1771, New Milford, Connecticut
parents: Stephen Crane and Mary Chapman
married: 26 Oct 1799, Rebecca Benjamin

died: 13 Jun 1857, probably in Chemung county where he was buried
children: Bela B, Ezra F, Vine G, Cyrenus C

sources:

+ Connecticut Town Birth Records (Barbour Collection)

+ US Federal Census: 1820, 1830, 1840, 1850

notes: The family of this Noah was associated with some fake news! In June, 1882, several PA newspapers reported that the "Celebrated Crane Case" which had been in the courts for years had finally been settled for \$60 million!!! The article claimed that the g-grandfather of EF Crane, also named Noah Crane, had purchased from the Indians most of the ground that became Brooklyn. But the line of Crane inheritance was not clear, so the case had been litigated for years and years, but finally it was settled and there were 30 Crane names who were going to inherit, including the EF Crane family which was going to get \$2 million. However, the Brooklyn Daily Eagle reported that no such case had ever been heard of by anybody in Brooklyn, and indeed, I have not been able to find any other reports before or after about such a case.

NOAH #2

This Noah was ordained as a Presbyterian minister in 1803. He was the pastor in Blooming Grove, Orange NY 1809-1811, and the Sparta, New Jersey 1816-1830. He moved back to Newark in 1845 where he died in 1851.

born: 14 July 1780, Montclair, Essex, New Jersey

parents: Joseph Crane and Hanna Lampson

married: Bethia T. Conkling

died: 16 Sep 1851, Newark Essex, New Jersey

children: Lucinda, Joseph, Henry C, Samuel, Amelia, Sarah C

sources:

+ The Brooklyn Daily Eagle (Brooklyn, New York) 18 Sep 1851, Thu, Page 2: reported Rev. Noah Crane died in Newark on 16 Sep., age 72.

+ Hardyston Memorial, A History of the Township and the North Presbyterian Church, Hardyston, Sussex, NJ, pp 139-140

+ Proceedings of the Centennial Anniversary of the Presybterian Church at Sparta, NJ Nov 23 1886

+ US Federal Census: 1810, 1830, 1840, 1850. 1840 census enumerated him as a Reverend.

As previously mentioned, I thought at first that the 1817 Sussex mortgage between Joseph and Noah Crane might be a big find until I realized that Noah #2, just discussed here, had a father named Joseph. I think that Noah #2 was never a rich man because of his ministry work and so it's completely possible that when he was a preacher in Sussex county, he needed to make financial arrangements with his father. We'll find out when I finally get to read that mortgage, but I don't have my hopes up at this point.

Part 2: Researching by Geography

Sussex, New Jersey Connections

If the only thing we know for sure about Joseph Ors Crane is that he was living in Wantage, Sussex, New Jersey from 1791-1799, then that area of New Jersey seems like a logical place to re-examine. In doing so, I think there are three Sussex connections to consider as being possibly relevant in the story of Joseph Ors Crane:

1. Thomas Crane found in the 1793 militia list of Wantage, Sussex, NJ.
2. Isaac Crane found in the 1830 census of Frankford, Sussex, NJ.
3. Samuel Degroat/Degroot, married an Elizabeth Crane of Wantage in 1805, found in 1830 and 1840 census of Sandyston, Sussex, NJ.

Thomas Crane

Thomas Crane is of interest because he was the only other Crane to appear on the same 1793 militia list of Wantage, Sussex, NJ with Joseph O. Crane. It's hard not to wonder if they were perhaps brothers. I went through a bit of a loop in my research of this Thomas Crane, but then ended up with a happy discovery!

At first, I saw there was a Thomas Crane in Wantage in the 1830 census, along with other Cranes named John, William, and Obadiah. Other family trees claim that Thomas, John (Nelson), and Obadiah were sons of Benjamin Crane of Goshen, NY. However, it took me awhile to realize that the Thomas Crane who was the son of Benjamin was born around 1795, and thus he could NOT have been the Thomas Crane found the 1793 militia list of Wantage. There was a different and older individual named Thomas Crane!

That realization sent me back to the deeds of Sussex county. Here is what I found:

Grantee:

1803, Thos Crane from Gilbert Smith, I-52 (this is only in microfilm)

1808, Thos from Agustine Anderson, R-528

Grantor:

1806 Thos Crane of Wantage to John Smith O-207

1812 Thos Crane and Mary to Thomas J Laurence Y-322

1813 Thos Crane to Samuel Fowler, Z-265

In fact, the earliest deed I can find for any Crane in Sussex county is the one in 1803 between Thomas Crane and Gilbert Smith. Who was Gilbert Smith? Here's what I found⁶:

⁶ Documents Relating to the Colonial, Revolutionary and Post-Revolutionary History of the State of New Jersey, First Series, Vol. XLI, Calendar of New Jersey Wills, Administrations, Etc. Volume XII 1810-1813, edited and indexed by Edward T. Hutchinson, NJ Historical Society, published Bayonne, NJ, 1949, p. 343. MY NOTE: This is only an abstract, and effort should be made to locate the actual will.

1811, Feb. 27. Smith, Gilbert, of Wantage Twsp., Sussex Co.; will of. Wife, Elizabeth, all cattle, sheep, hogs and household furniture. Residue of personal estate to be sold, debts paid and what is left to my wife. She is to have use of farm during widowhood. At end of that period, real estate to be sold. Out of proceeds, \$1,000 to youngest son, Jeremiah; but if he should not live to heir the money, said sum to be divided between Zephaniah Smith, Phebe Bemer and Mary Crane. Daughter, Phebe Bemer, \$100. Granddaughter, Elizabeth Smith, \$50. Grandsons, Gilbert Crane and Gilbert Z. Smith, each \$50. Residue, if any, to son, Zephaniah, $\frac{1}{2}$ thereof, and the other $\frac{1}{2}$ to daughters, equally. Executors—wife, Elizabeth, son, Zephaniah, and Lewis Adams. Witnesses—John Backster, Easter Ward, George Backster. Proved Oct. 8, 1812.

1812, Oct. 7. Inventory, \$325.50; made by George Backster, John Clay.
File 1329 S.

So, wow! Here are my conclusions:

- Gilbert Smith of Wantage had a daughter named Mary, who had married a Crane. We can see from the deeds that a Thomas Crane purchased property from Gilbert Smith in 1803, and then in 1812, Thomas Crane and his wife Mary sold some property. I conclude that Thomas Crane was married to Mary Smith, daughter of Gilbert Smith.
- Gilbert Smith also had a grandson named Gilbert Crane. I think it's reasonable to assume that the parents of the grandson were Thomas Crane and Mary Smith. We do know of a Gilbert S. Crane (~1801~1880), who we have previously assumed was a son of Joseph Ors Crane and Caty Williams, but now I think that can be debated. To my mind, Gilbert S. Crane was most likely fully named Gilbert Smith Crane, and he was most likely the son of Thomas and Mary, rather than the son of Joseph and Caty. See the appendix of this article for more discussion.

I was very excited with this find until I subsequently discovered that somebody else out there had already pieced this family group together on [familysearch](#). Even though that tree needs more sources added, it does serve to confirm my findings. There is, however, even more to the Thomas Crane story – see the section [Niagara, New York Connections](#).

Isaac Crane

In the 1830 census of Frankford, Sussex, New Jersey we find two Crane's: Samuel M. Crane and Isaac Crane. Frankford is only 12 miles from Wantage, and the age bracket for Samuel M. Crane is about right for what we know of the son of Joseph Ors and Caty. It is worth noting, however, that Samuel M. and his wife are not believed to have had children,⁷ and some children do appear in his 1830 household. Maybe Samuel had children who did not later survive, or maybe he was helping to raise children from other family members. We can't know about that point.

But then there's the name of Isaac Crane right next to that of Samuel M. Crane, who appears to be just a bit younger than Samuel. Since that 1830 Sussex census lists the residents alphabetically⁸, we can't assume that Samuel and Isaac were next door to each other, but the question of whether they were related remains.

⁷ Ball, Sandra H., "Analysis of Children of Joseph Ors Crane and Catherine Williams" (2016)

⁸ An alphabetic arrangement of names on a census or tax list often indicates the enumeration is probably a copy.

There are two possible connections to note about this Isaac Crane⁹:

- Isaac Crane married Mary Compton in Sussex in 1824. Mary Compton is believed to have been the daughter of Joseph Compton and Lydia Mitten, who can also be found in the 1830 and 1840 census of Frankford. The coincidence is that three children of John W. Crane, son of Joseph Ors and Caty, married three children of David Compton and Hannah Elyea, who also magically appear in the 1830 and 1840 census of Frankford. How David Compton and Joseph Compton might have been related is not known to me at this point, but it seems clear that Compton and Crane families were connected.
- By the 1850 census, Isaac and Mary Crane can be found in Burlington, Bradford, PA. Burlington is roughly 20 miles from South Creek, Bradford, PA where my relations, Daniel Hildreth and Sarah Crane, were living at that time. Coincidence? Maybe, but maybe not.

But how was this Isaac Crane related to the family group of Joseph Ors Crane and Caty Williams? At first I thought he might have been another son of Joseph and Caty, but it seems that he was born about the same time as Samuel M. Crane. So perhaps Isaac and Samuel were first cousins, and Isaac was the son of Thomas Crane? Isaac does seem to fit into Thomas' family group, but what bothers me about that theory is that the will of Gilbert Smith would probably have mentioned another grandson named Isaac Crane, and it did not. This leads me to think that if this Isaac Crane is related to our Crane's at all, and his father was not Joseph Ors Crane nor Thomas Crane, then there was likely another person, probably a brother to Joseph and Thomas, involved in this story. Remember there was a 1780 Sussex court case involving a David Crane who we know nothing about, and indeed this Isaac named one of his sons David. Something more to consider.

Samuel Degroat and Elizabeth Crane

The connection of this Elizabeth Crane to our family group is pure speculation, but if she was from Wantage, NJ in 1805, it's hard not think she must have been somehow related to Joseph Ors and Thomas. In fact, both Joseph Ors and Thomas named one of the daughters Elizabeth, so this is another reason to think she had some connection. I estimate that this Elizabeth Crane was born between 1780-1790, and my best guess is that she might have been a younger sister of Joseph Ors and Thomas (assuming they were brothers). The origin of this Elizabeth Crane is, however, an open question.

Niagara, New York Connections

Most researchers of this Crane family have already noted that John W. Crane and Gilbert Crane were residing in Hartland, Niagara County, NY in 1830. Unlike the New Jersey census, this enumeration sheet does not present names in alphabetical order, so we can better assume that the order of names on the sheet probably shows which people were living near one another. In this case, there were only two names between that of John W. Crane and Gilbert Crane, so they were neighbors. But the further assumption has always been that John and Gilbert were brothers, and I contend that they were instead first cousins. See the second conclusion in the section: [Thomas Crane](#) and the discussion in the appendix.

⁹ Several public family trees use a middle initial of "W" for this Isaac Crane, but so far, I haven't seen any records where that initial is used for this individual.

As I was reviewing what is known about Gilbert S. Crane,¹⁰ I was reminded that Gilbert spent most of his life in Newfane, Niagara, NY – a location about 7 miles from Hartland. However, Gilbert did apparently live in Canada for awhile and had children there, which prompted me to think Why Did He Come Back to Live in Newfane? Maybe he had family there? This thought led me to wonder what other Crane's were in Niagara early on. One reply to that question jumped out:

1830 census of Newfane: Thomas Crane
enumerated next to Samuel Demerest

M: 0-0-1-0-1-3-0-1 (oldest is 50-60 category -- so b 1770-1780)
F: 0-0-0-1-0-0-1

1840 census Thomas Crane in Wilson, Niagara, now in 60-70 category.

Having worked with early Sussex county families for some time, I recognize the surname Demerest. A search for Samuel Demerest in Newfane revealed that he was buried in the Corwin Cemetery in Newfane, next to his wife Elizabeth Crane!¹¹ Further research¹² of Samuel revealed that he was the son of David Demerest who lived in Frankford twp, Sussex, NJ and who died there in 1825. Samuel was not only named in his father's will but he was also one of the executors.

We can imagine that Samuel and Elizabeth made the move to NY after the estate of David Demerest was settled in NJ. Did Samuel follow the Crane's to Newfane or did they follow him? Who knows. I do know that Samuel and Elizabeth had these children: Austin b 1819, Margaret 1821, David 1824, Cornelius 1831, Phoebe 1833, the first three born in NJ, the last two born in NY. I believe that Samuel Demerest, son of Daniel Demerest of Frankford, Sussex, NJ married Elizabeth Crane who was probably the daughter of Thomas Crane and Mary Smith. The proof of this assertion is circumstantial but it does employ a certain amount of logic:

- Thomas Crane and Samuel Demerest were enumerated next to each other in the 1830 census of Newfane.
- Two sources tell us that Samuel Demerest was married to an Elizabeth Crane.
- The age category of both Thomas Crane and the presumed wife of Samuel Demerest shows that Thomas was 20 years (one generation) older. This supports the idea that Thomas could have been Elizabeth's father.
- We have established that there was a Thomas Crane in Wantage, Sussex, NJ as well as a Samuel Demerest of Frankford, Sussex, New Jersey in the years preceding 1830. Because these Crane and Demerest family groups were close neighbors in Sussex, NJ, it is not surprising to find them as neighbors in Newfane.

All of this is very exciting, but it only tells us more about the Thomas Crane family and not so much about the family group of Joseph Ors and Caty. The only connection we can observe is that John W.

10 Ball, Sandra H., "Analysis of Children of Joseph Ors Crane and Catherine Williams" (2016)

11 Find A Grave, Elizabeth Crane Demerest. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/41274398>

12 Demarest, Voorhis David,. The Demarest family : a record of the desMarets family in France, the Holy Land in the Crusades, again in France, Holland, the Palatinate (Germany), again in Holland, and the migration to America, 1663, Demerest Family Association, Hackensack, N.J., 1985; p. VIII-40.

Crane, whom we believe was a son of Joseph Ors and Caty, also made the trek to Niagara county, NY before later removing to Oakland county, Michigan.

Finally, just to cover the bases, I checked the deeds in Niagara county, and found that one Catherine Crane acquired property in 1833.¹³ Could this have been our Caty Williams? The deed in question is a bit hard to read, but it appears to have been between Moses Lyon of Aurelius, Cayuga county and Catherine Crane of Hartland, Niagara county. Moses sold the property for \$1 and there is reference to Catherine as his daughter! This lead me to discover that Catherine Lyon had indeed married one Asa Crane,¹⁴ who was apparently the son of Isaac Crane (of CT) and Thankful Putnam.

So the bottom line regarding the 1833 Niagara deed involving Catherine Crane is that she was not our Caty Williams, wife of Joseph Ors Crane. But she was the wife of Asa Crane, and perhaps he was somehow related to our Crane's? Is that why the New Jersey Crane's moved to New York, because they had a relation there? I believe it may NOT have been a coincidence that John W. Crane and Gilbert S. Crane landed in Hartland, where Asa Crane lived.

Tioga/Chemung, New York – Bradford, Pennsylvania Connections

This geographic area is always on my radar because it is the place where my relations, Daniel Hildreth and Sarah Crane, moved in 1838 from Minisink, Orange, NY. My relations settled in South Creek, Bradford county, which was very close to the NY state line. There's evidence to show that the family also had connections in Elmira, NY, just 12 miles or so up the road from South Creek. Research in this area can be confusing because county boundaries shifted on both sides of the state line over time, so consulting [Tri-Counties Genealogy and History](#) has been wonderfully educational and helpful.

But why did Daniel and Sarah choose to move to South Creek? Again, there could any number of reasons, but I always consider that one or both of them knew somebody already there, either family or friend. Could that have been the case here? A search for Crane in Bradford county in 1830 produced one character of interest, Ralph Crane¹⁵. He appears in Elmira, NY in 1820, and Ridgebury, PA (about 6 miles east of South Creek) in 1830-1850. In the 1850 census, researcher S. H. Ball (SHB) theorizes (and I agree with her) that Ralph Crane was mistakenly enumerated as Ralph Hildreth. If that is true, then we can deduce from that 1850 census that Ralph Crane was born in the 1790s in New Jersey. But who was Ralph Crane, and what were his origins? That is yet another unanswered question, but I speculate later in this section about his family group.

Other searches for the Crane surname in the vicinity of Bradford county have highlighted four names of interest:

- Azariah Crane, 1821-1883, born in NY, enumerated in 1850 Chemung county, NY with a Stephen Crane in his household, removed to MI by 1860.
- Ira Crane, 1822-1884, lived in South Creek his whole life, appears to have had two wives: Julia (UNK), and Harriet Weller, widow of Samuel Pierson, the latter having had a brother named Azariah Theodore *Crane* Pierson (aka ATC Pierson).

13 Niagara County, New York, Couny Clerk, Deeds, 1808-1900, Deeds v. 8-9 1833-1834, FHL film 887700; 8-385.

14 Crane Genealogy by Ellery Bicknell Crane, finished 1900. Note: pg 113 - settled in Hartland, Niagara County, New York

15 A Benjamin Crane was also enumerated in 1840 Bradford county, and I have not yet done any research about his identity.

- Charles Crane, 1827-1879, also lived in South Creek. According to research by SHB, Smith Hildreth purchased land in 1854 in Ridgebury from Charles and Rachel Crane for \$600. This land was next to Daniel and Smith Hildreth---29 1/2 acres.¹⁶
- Stephen Crane, born abt 1833 and who we know nothing else about other than he was probably enumerated twice in 1850, once in the household of Azariah Crane in Chemung, NY, and again with Smith Hildreth, and next door to Ralph Crane in Ridgebury, PA.

Many hours have gone into the research of these names with not much luck in establishing any relationship between them or what their origins were. The only clues we have are that they share the Crane surname along with my relation, Sarah Crane Hildreth, and they were all in the same proximity at the same time. It may or may not be a total coincidence that Daniel Hildreth and his wife Sarah Crane settled in the same general area with these other Crane's.

However, I would like to make note of some male names given to children in these family groups:

- Azariah had a son named Charles.
- Charles had sons named Ira and Joseph. He also had a son Lewis who named one of his sons Ralph.

Because of these faint associations, I speculate that Ralph Crane may have been the father of all or some of these Crane's of interest who lived in Bradford county. But more evidence is needed. While the hunt for paper evidence goes on, it would be interesting to find out if any descendants from any of these Crane lines have taken a DNA test and match one another, and also if any such descendants match anybody else in either the Thomas Crane or Joseph Ors Crane line.

Finally, there was one more clue to surface that caused me some excitement, but which unfortunately did not pan out. Nevertheless, I want to include that information in this research report in case it is helpful to somebody else.

I found this newspaper clipping from the Elmira (NY) Morning Telegram, 21 Aug 1910 :

ing in this city and in Watkins.
 --Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Stevens, of
 Doty Hill, attended the Roushy-Crane
 reunion held in Elmira recently.
 --Miss Lucy M. Ryll, of Roe avenue,

Clarence Stevens was the son of Norman Stevens and Evelinda Hildreth, the latter being a daughter of Daniel Hildreth and Sarah Crane. For them to be attending a Crane reunion seemed like a sure shot into learning about Crane origins. What I discovered after some digging was that one Bela B. Crane 1803-1884 married one Anna Roushy and they lived in the Chemung region of NY. Bela was apparently the son of Noah Crane and Rebecca Benjamin, but for the life of me, I could not figure out how that family group tied into our Crane family. Well, the answer was they don't, or if they do, then not very directly.

¹⁶ Bradford County Land Records, Book 45 p 486.

My mistake was that I assumed the Crane connection was to Clarence Stevens, who was the grandson of a Crane. BUT NO! The connection was to Roushy on the wife's side. Clarence A. Stevens married Minnie Bentley, the daughter of William G. Bentley and Josephine Roushy, the latter of whom was the daughter of Hiram Roushy and Sarah Buckbee. Apparently it was MRS. Clarence Stevens who was related to the Roushy's and the Crane connection is just a coincidence! Hopefully, nobody else will fall into this trap as I did.

Michigan Connections

Several researchers have done some great work on the Crane families that settled in Michigan, so I have not spent much time studying that area. However, I wanted to see if I could recognize any naming patterns in the families of the Michigan relations which might point back to those we have been discussing in this article. The family of John W. Crane 1791-1858 is of particular interest.

First, I want to comment that many public family trees have assigned a middle name of William to John W. Crane. So far, I haven't seen any documentation that spells out his middle name other than with the initial of W. However, if John's middle name truly was William, then I'd like to suggest that perhaps even that isn't quite right. Assuming that this John W. Crane truly was the son of Joseph Ors Crane and Catherine Williams, I can't help but wonder if John's middle name (as well as that of his brother Francis) wasn't WILLIAMS. This kind of detail is important, and one that often gets lost.

Second, I want to quickly summarize the life of John W. Crane so we know who we're talking about. John W. Crane was apparently the second child and second son of Joseph Ors and Caty. He married Sarah "Sally" Jones, who was born in Goshen, NY, the daughter of Nathan Jones I, and Temperance Sawyer. All of their children were born in NY, which suggests that if John W. Crane was truly born in Wantage, New Jersey, he was living in NY (probably around Goshen) by 1815. In 1820, I think he was in Parma, NY, and in 1830, as previously mentioned in this article, he was found in Niagara, NY enumerated close by Gilbert Crane. By the time of the 1840 census, he had migrated with his family to Novi, Oakland, Michigan.

Now, here is a list of the children who have been associated with John W. Crane and Sarah Jones:

Nathan Jonas, John W. Jr, Samuel M, Gilbert J, Aaron Thomas "AT", Sarah Jane, Louisa, Victoria, and possibly Althea.

The first child, Nathan was obviously named for Sarah's father, and the second child after John W. himself. John W. had a brother named Samuel M., so we might imagine that is how the third child was named. Gilbert was likely named for Gilbert S. Crane, who, if we are correct in our assumptions, was a first cousin to John W. Then we get to Aaron Thomas, aka A.T. Crane. Aaron was probably named after John W.'s older brother, and Thomas was likely after John W.'s uncle Thomas, the one last seen in Niagara, NY. As for the female names, I can guess that Sarah Jane was named for her mother, and as for the other girl children, I have no name association to suggest.

To carry the name association just a little bit further, let's look at the children of John W. Crane Jr. He married Harriet Arden and they had a son named Aaron Thomas Crane (1840-1910), who married Clara Dunham, and their oldest son was named Ralph J. Crane. Ralph married Elmie Sargent, and they named their oldest son Thomas (Tom). All of these repetitions of the name Thomas tell me that John W. Crane was probably close with his uncle Thomas Crane because Thomas' given name was passed down for several generations. And the appearance of the name Ralph could be entirely random, or it could very well point back to the Ralph Crane of Bradford county, PA discussed earlier in this article.

Finally, I think it might also be worth noting that the youngest son of Joseph Ors and Caty, Joseph O. Crane 1814-1848, named his oldest son Ira, another name found back in Bradford county. All of these associations could be random and coincidental, but it appears that some of the Michigan Crane's named several of their children with given names that appeared in either Niagara, NY or Bradford, PA. This is not proof of anything, but I do think people of that time period named their children for those they were or had been close with. These are clues that are important to keep in mind.

Part 3: Around the Mulberry Bush with DNA Matching

There are two topics I want to discuss in this section. One pertains to an example of Crane DNA matches that lead me astray and what I learned from that. The second pertains to a series of Crane DNA *non-matches* and what that might mean to all of us who believe we are related to Joseph Ors Crane and Catherine Williams.

Before I launch into this discussion, I fully acknowledge that there is a good deal of skepticism about the reliability of autosomal DNA test results. First there's the simple fact that not everybody inherits DNA from every ancestor, and that should be understood up front. Secondly, each testing company has different algorithms, thresholds, and tools, and many inconsistencies can be noted in the results reported by each company, and even more so when comparing between different companies.¹⁷ I could go into more detail about what I mean, but I won't because I find this topic and the arguments for and against to be exhausting – and believe me, I myself can and have argued for and against on this topic. I have also read and re-read and keep reading about this science in the effort to educate myself, but I think we should all take a breath and recognize that DNA testing for genealogy is not quite as foolproof as the industry likes to make us think it is. And certainly it is evolving. The information ancestry.com reported about my DNA matches a year ago is not the same as what appears today, and why? Because they have changed their algorithms in an effort to improve their service, and even then, the accuracy of their match reports can be debated all day. Like I said, exhausting and proving nothing.

So why am I talking about this at all? Because I feel that this brick wall about the origin of Joseph Ors Crane and Catherine Williams exists because there is a lack of documentation that we would otherwise rely upon. It may be that some documentation has yet to be found, but the truth is that several very qualified and smart individuals have focused many hours/weeks/months on this topic, and the getting nowhere is because the documentation does not exist. So in my mind, that leaves me two options if I still want to pursue this research question.

- a) Continue the associative studies that has been started here, and look for places where logic can be applied to suggest if not provide conclusions.
- b) Keep an open mind to new and different angles, which includes DNA results. I would not think to use DNA results alone to prove a genealogy case without accompanying documentation. But in the absence of documentation and in the presence of DNA results, I think the DNA results should be considered as some kind of evidence even if no conclusion can be reached from those results. The study of DNA results is both mind-boggling and time-consuming, but in the absence of any other data, I am personally willing to explore this evidence when there is a reasonable cause to do so.

¹⁷ I highly recommend the use of the website GEDmatch because they accept results from all the various companies and provide helpful tools for deeper analysis.

Gone Astray with Virginia Crane's

First let me paint the circumstances that lead to my wandering astray. On the FTDNA database, I searched for matches to both me and my sister with others who have Crane or Crain in their family tree. I came up with two matches (beyond those I don't already know about) whose trees traced their ancestors to John Terry Crane and Frances Pond of Pittsylvania county, Virginia. I then switched over to ancestry, and lo and behold, I found another match between me and somebody who has John Terry Crane and Frances Pond in their family tree. OK! That's three matches whose family trees point to the same Crane ancestors, so I thought it was worth exploring more.

I did explore with great gusto for about a week, and while it was fun learning all about these Virginia Crane's, I began to weary of not finding the slightest connection between these families and my Joseph Ors Crane family back in Sussex, New Jersey. I had to back up and start looking at the validity of the family trees associated with each match. In the end, here are the Lessons Learned I came away with:

- You can't really know the quality of the family trees attached to DNA results. To verify the claims in another's tree, you almost have to go research that line yourself. This is a very time-consuming task, which you can't know at all if the effort is worth spending. So after some study, I determined that the family trees associated with each of the matches with John T. Crane and Frances Pond each had some kind of fatal flaw. Maybe it's not the DNA results per se that we have to take with a grain of salt, but the family trees that people have created with so little attention to correctness.
- You have to double-check for other ways the match might be appearing. In this case, for example, the CRANE/CRAIN name appearing in the match's family tree did not mean that I'm not related to that match in some other way. In fact, for one match, that was exactly the case – I was related to that match through a German ancestor having nothing to do at all with John T. Crane and Frances Pond of Virginia!

So, there you have my Crane DNA misadventure. I don't, however, regret having taken this little side trip. The truth is that Joseph Ors Crane (or his parents) could have come to Wantage, Sussex, New Jersey from any place on earth, so why not consider Virginia if three matches were pointing in that direction? Especially where brick walls are concerned, I have learned to be open to those possibilities that seem far-fetched and remote. In this case, I had good reason to explore so I explored, I learned, and I moved on to the next strategy for learning the origins of our Joseph Ors Crane.

Crane Non-Matches – What's Up?

Finding definitive DNA matches between those whose paper genealogy leads to Joseph Ors Crane and Catherine Williams has been surprisingly difficult, much more so than I have experienced with other lines in my family tree. Here are notes about my observations.

First, let's start with two Crane branches which we suspect are related, Joseph Ors Crane and Thomas Crane. We suspect these two men might have been brothers, or possibly first cousins. While there are several individuals who have been tested who supposedly descend from Joseph Ors, I don't believe I have yet located any one descended from Thomas Crane¹⁸. We should keep in mind that Gilbert S.

¹⁸ We must remember to look for matches from those who descend from Samuel Demerest whose wife we believe was a daughter of Thomas Crane.

Crane is now thought to have been a son of Thomas rather than of Joseph Ors, so a match from any descendant of the line of Gilbert S. Crane might require extra study.

Now, let's look at the branches of the children we think belong to Joseph Ors Crane and Catherine Williams:

1. Aaron Crane: 1788-1844. First, I want to say that I don't feel this individual has been proven to be a son of Joseph Ors and Caty. There is some circumstantial evidence, but I think the genealogy of this person needs more proof. That said, I have located two individuals who descend from this Aaron Crane, and neither one matches other descendants for Joseph Ors and Caty.
2. John W. Crane: 1791-1858. I have located one individual from this branch who has been tested; again there is no match to other descendants of Joseph Ors and Caty.
3. Sarah Crane Hildreth: 1793-1872. This is my branch, and I know of at least 6 individuals from this line who have been tested, using two companies, FTDNA and ancestry. The results here are very confusing because not all of us are matches between each other, never mind worrying if we match to anybody in other branches.
4. Samuel M. Crane: 1799-1855. He supposedly did not have children.
5. Elizabeth Crane Stid: 1803-1879. I have not yet located anybody from this branch who has been tested.
6. Francis W. Crane: 1811-1869. I have not yet located anybody from this branch who has been tested.
7. Joseph O. Crane: 1814-1848. I have not yet located anybody from this branch who has been tested.

Finally, I haven't yet located any individuals who descend from the other Crane's who I have studied in this article, specifically: Isaac Crane, Ralph Crane, Azariah Crane, Ira Crane, or Charles Crane. We are certainly interested to find out if anybody who descends from these lines finds any matches at all to the more documented lines of Joseph Ors and Caty, or even to Thomas Crane and Mary Smith.

As noted in the introduction to this section, there can be any number of reasons that the DNA test results between the Crane descendants who seem to be related on paper are not matching with more confidence, and I don't deny that any of those reasons could very well be a valid explanation. The fact that the DNA matches are not there or not very confident is NOT proof that we Cranes who believe we descend from Joseph Ors and Caty are unrelated. But as the number of Crane descendants getting tested increases, I can't help but wonder if the rather consistent lack of matches isn't trying to tell us something. That is my real concern, and a reason for all of us to watch and consider our Crane DNA matches carefully while double-checking all our assumptions in our paper genealogies.

I have started a spreadsheet to keep track of Crane DNA matches, so please feel free to contact me if you have been tested and believe you are related to the family group of Joseph Ors and Caty. With more people testing and generating more results to compare, perhaps a clearer picture, one that corresponds in some way with our paper genealogy efforts, will begin to emerge. Maybe then, those collective results can be more informative in pointing back to the origins of Joseph Ors and Caty, which is, after all, the research question at hand.

Conclusions

Even if I am not that much closer to knowing the origin of Joseph Ors Crane and Catherine Williams, I have learned a lot from this recent research study. Most of the news from this go-round highlights Thomas Crane and Niagara, New York, and honestly, I think more research of Crane's in the Niagara county area might be helpful. I've also learned a lot about other Crane's who lived in the Chemung NY/Bradford PA region, but there is absolutely no evidence to connect them to us except by name associations found in Crane families who migrated to Michigan. Not much to go on. Still there is some chance that learning the origins of those Crane's of Interest could help to identify the origins of our Joseph Ors.

Which leads me to the middle name of our Joseph Crane: ORS. A great deal of time has been spent trying to understand that name as a clue, and if Ors was really the name. It certainly appears to be what the pastor of the Clove Valley Dutch Reformed Church wrote down, but was that just what he heard? All attempts to figure out "ORS" have been like wheels spinning in mud. The ORS name is the most obvious clue we have been handed, but there's something about that name that we don't quite understand yet. Let's keep our eyes peeled for more clues about this name.

Finally, I will continue to watch for other names associated with our Crane's, especially those that trace back to New Jersey and New York. Among those names highest on my watch list are COMPTON and BURTON/BARTON. Both of these families married into our Crane line multiple times, so we might guess the families were close. Maybe some Compton descendant inherited a clue about our Crane's? Who knows, but but all these clues are worth keeping in mind.

Appendix: Further Discussion

About Gilbert S. Crane

Thanks to the sharing of other researchers, a family record has been located which was written by Mary Eliza "Lide" Plowman 1845-1929, whose mother was Elizabeth Crain, believed to be a daughter of Joseph Ors Crane and Catherine Williams.¹⁹ Here is an excerpt that certainly applies to this discussion:

"Mother [Emily Crane] was born in Orange Co., New York in 1824. After her mother Elizabeth Crane married Mr. Stidd, who was not kind to her, she went to live with Uncle Sammy and Aunt Sarah Crane. She was then about three or four. They first migrated to Ohio and later when Mother was about fourteen to Oakland County, where many of Uncle Sammy's relatives lived. Besides his sister, our grandmother, he had brothers Francis, John, Joseph, Aaron, Gilbert (called Gil) and others I do not recall ."

According to this remembrance, Gilbert Crane is identified as a brother of Samuel M. Crane, and Samuel has been identified as a son of Joseph Ors and Caty. But given the evidence that has surfaced in these recent investigations, I believe we have reason to question this source.

In my view, Lide's story is a record of her memories of her own experiences as well as some things her mother told her. But when did her mother tell her these things? When Lide was a child or when she was a woman? Was Emily's memory good at the time of the telling? And what about Lide's memory? We know that Lide was 77 when she recorded what she did, and even she admits to "and others I don't recall". Did she ever meet Gilbert? She might not have since he lived in NY, so unless he traveled to MI or Lide traveled to NY, she may not have ever met him (although at least one of his daughters later moved to MI). However, I contend that Gilbert was close with his cousins because he grew up with them all along, and so it's not surprising that his name would be included in the family memory.

So given all these questions, I consider Lide's account on this subject of whether Gilbert was a son of Joseph as a secondary source because a) her account was not a first-hand experience, but a recounting of somebody else's memory which can't be proved right or wrong, and b) she did not write the account at the time it happened (when Gilbert was alive). To me this example is akin to a biography which is considered a secondary source because it was written after the subject died.

I have found that it's not uncommon for recorded family stories to contain occasional little "facts" that just didn't match up with the records. In this case, we have these records:

- an 1803 deed where Thomas Crane bought property from Gilbert Smith in Wantage
- the will of Gilbert Smith who died 1811 in Wantage. It names his daughter Mary Crane and his grandson Gilbert Crane.
- an 1812 deed naming Thomas Crane of Wantage twp and Mary his wife as grantors

It seems reasonable to conclude that Gilbert S. Crane (probably middle name was Smith) was a son of Thomas Crane, but clearly Gilbert was known and close with the children of Joseph O. Crane to be remembered in their family history.

¹⁹ See "Analysis of Children of Joseph Ors Crane and Catherine Williams" by S. H. Ball (2016)
Also see "[The Plowman Family: Lide Remembers Mother, part one](#)" by Jim Winegar, (2009)