



Cracroft



The History of  
The Craycroft Family  
from 1297 to 1946  
or  
A Genealogist's Nightmare

Researched and  
Retranscribed by  
Robert L. Craycroft

©December, 2003  
Robert L. Craycroft



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish that I could acknowledge the authors of this record, but all I can be sure of is John Wesley Craycroft and John Henry Craycroft. But more importantly I would like to thank Geoffrey Durward Clayton Craycroft for allowing me to take the original document back to Chicago to be copied. Without him my branch of the Craycroft family would never have seen the record.

I would also like to thank Dan Craycraft and Holly Pace for jogging a 35-year-old memory that led me to the location of the Great Craycroft Book, as this record is frequently referred to. I also thank Holly Pace and Dianne Hume for proofreading my work on this new transcription of the History of The Craycroft Family.

Thanks are also due to Denise Miller and Nancy Stull for taking time from their busy lives to do research in Virginia and Rhode Island respectively.

I also extend my thanks to the group known as the Craycraft/Craycroft Group for their support and assistance in compiling information regarding our common heritage. I have probably learned more about my family in the last two years than I have learned in the last 20 years.



## FOREWORD

I first became interested in genealogy about the time I was sixteen years old. I am now (July 22, 2002) fifty-four years old. So, off and on, for 38 years I have been searching out my ancestors. It never has been just a search for them however. I have also tried to understand them as people and as participants in history, in England, Ireland, and across the United States.

The first copy of a family history that I saw was given to me by two of my father's aunts at my wedding to my first wife, Emily Ruth Bruington (June 10, 1972). In the narration on the first page, written by John Henry Craycroft on January 1, 1942, there was mention made of The Craycroft Family Record. This was supposed to be a continuous record of the Craycroft Family, beginning with the marriage of James Cray and Susan Croft in 1297 A.D. These people were said to have combined their names to create the new family name, Craycroft. I had reason to think that there was a comprehensive Family History in existence somewhere, but I never really gave much thought to locating it until December 1999.

At that time I joined a group of amateur genealogists who had one thing in common. They were members of the Craycroft/Craycraft family who were working together to further their research and share the results of their efforts. One night I was chatting with Dan Craycraft, of Rocky River, Ohio, and Holly Pace, of Parowan, Utah, and we started to talk about what they referred to as The Great Craycroft Book. As we talked I remembered the history I had obtained 27 years earlier and told them that perhaps this Family History was the fabled Great Book. We agreed that this could be the missing Book for which they had been searching for many years. I told them that I had an idea where the Book was and that I would try to locate and contact the people who I thought had the Book.

I searched on the Internet for any Craycrofts in the area of Vandalia, Illinois, which is where I thought the Book had last been reported. I got lucky on the second phone call and reached Geoffrey Durward Craycroft. During our conversation, Geoff told me that he in fact did have The Craycroft Family History, which was transcribed by John Henry Craycroft (my 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin three times removed) from the previous "edition" which had been transcribed and typewritten in about 1883.

At the end of January 2000, I traveled to Vandalia, Illinois, and spent three days with Geoff and his family, talking about The Book and the family and comparing notes. When I left, Geoff was kind enough to loan The Book to me so that I could make copies. I have a copy of The Book and I have distributed about a dozen copies to other family members ranging from North Carolina to Hawaii.

My goal now is to present the full record as it was written. I am reasonably certain that the portion of the document up to about 1800 is a fiction. I have primary and secondary evidence confirming the existence of Benjamin Joseph Craycroft. He was born July 10, 1780. But I've disproved most or all of the events prior to that time. I'm inclined to think

that John Wesley Craycroft may have been the writer. There are comments made that indicate the writer was familiar with the events around 1780 but has no direct knowledge of that time.

I've seen three transcripts of parts of this history, including one in the Genealogy section of Newberry Library in Chicago, Illinois. There are probably more in circulation. So I feel it is important that I present the full record along with the evidence refuting this fiction so that future generations will know the truth.

This will be a complete transcription of the document created by John Henry Craycroft. But in addition to this I will also include documents that I have gathered that will either confirm or dispute statements made in the History, and my own comments regarding the statements made in the History. Any comments that I make will be presented as footnotes except where the comments are too extensive. Then I will present these comments in *italics* to set them apart. I will transcribe the document exactly as it appears with the exception of the Solemnization (or transcript) of Matrimony between James Cray and Susan Croft and of capitalization. The reason for this is to make it easier to read. All dialectic spellings and misspellings will be recreated to present this transcription as accurately as possible. I will include all maps and diagrams that are included in the copy in my possession.

Following the text in a major portion of the Book is extremely difficult. The "voice" of the text changes without warning and with no indication of who is making the comments. This change even happens in the middle of a paragraph. The narrative changes from third person to first person and back again in the same paragraph. I think that the person(s) that wrote this history got so caught up in the writing they forgot "where they were" chronologically.

One thing that I find telling is that the portion of the record dealing with the English progenitors refers to the name as "Craycroft" when from the first appearance of the family name in the early 1100's to the current time the family name in England is Cracroft.

The family crest shown above the Explanation is very similar to the one that was in John Henry's book, but I was not able to duplicate it so I have used one that I had. The only difference is that my crest shows the name spelled "Cracroft", the common spelling in England, instead of "Craycroft". It should be remembered that according to the heraldic tradition only the eldest child has right to the coat of arms, not the family as a whole.

This record is an example of one of the things that professional genealogists warn about. After so many years and retellings it is all but impossible to tell why the writer(s) have decided to embellish or fictionalize the family history. I can only guess that one possible explanation is that they wanted to make themselves and their family more interesting or intriguing than they considered it to be.

It is a shame because after digging around in history for almost four decades I've uncovered some rather interesting facts and theories about the Craycroft Family. But let the History of the Craycroft Family be a lesson for all family researchers or genealogists. There really is no need to fabricate a family history. In the end, as the old adage says, truth is stranger than fiction.

I wish that I could be more supportive of what follows but I have to be faithful to history. I present the History in its "original" form along with my conclusions and research to set the record straight. Most if not all of what is recorded for the period after 1780 appears to be accurate as far as I've been able to determine at this point.

In closing this Foreword I quote the "command" given to the Family by its "progenitors", James Cray Craycroft and Susan Croft Craycroft:

Harke ye, in the name of God, Amen.

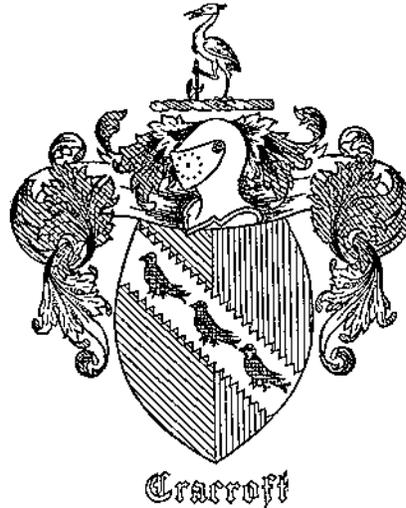
We James Cray Craycroft, and Susan Croft Craycroft, husband and wife, ye First for both, ye creator of ye family and estate name of Craycroft, ye First, make this our last Command and Wish to be fulfilled after our passing to the beyond. We command, and direct all of my, and our, descendants, their descendants, and their descendants, forever, and all ye heirs and descendants, to the end of time forever, to the End of This World, to maintain, and keep this family Record, by ye recording the Births, and Deaths, of all ye children, born in direct rotation in the name of Craycroft, and at ye death ye must leave this family record to ye most direct son and descendant, by him to maintain during his lifetime a correct record of his direct descendants.

WILL YE DO SO?

So it was handed down to me and so I hand it down to the generations that will come after me, to keep an accurate record of the Craycroft Family.

Robert Lynn Craycroft  
Hoffman Estates, Illinois  
March 20, 2000



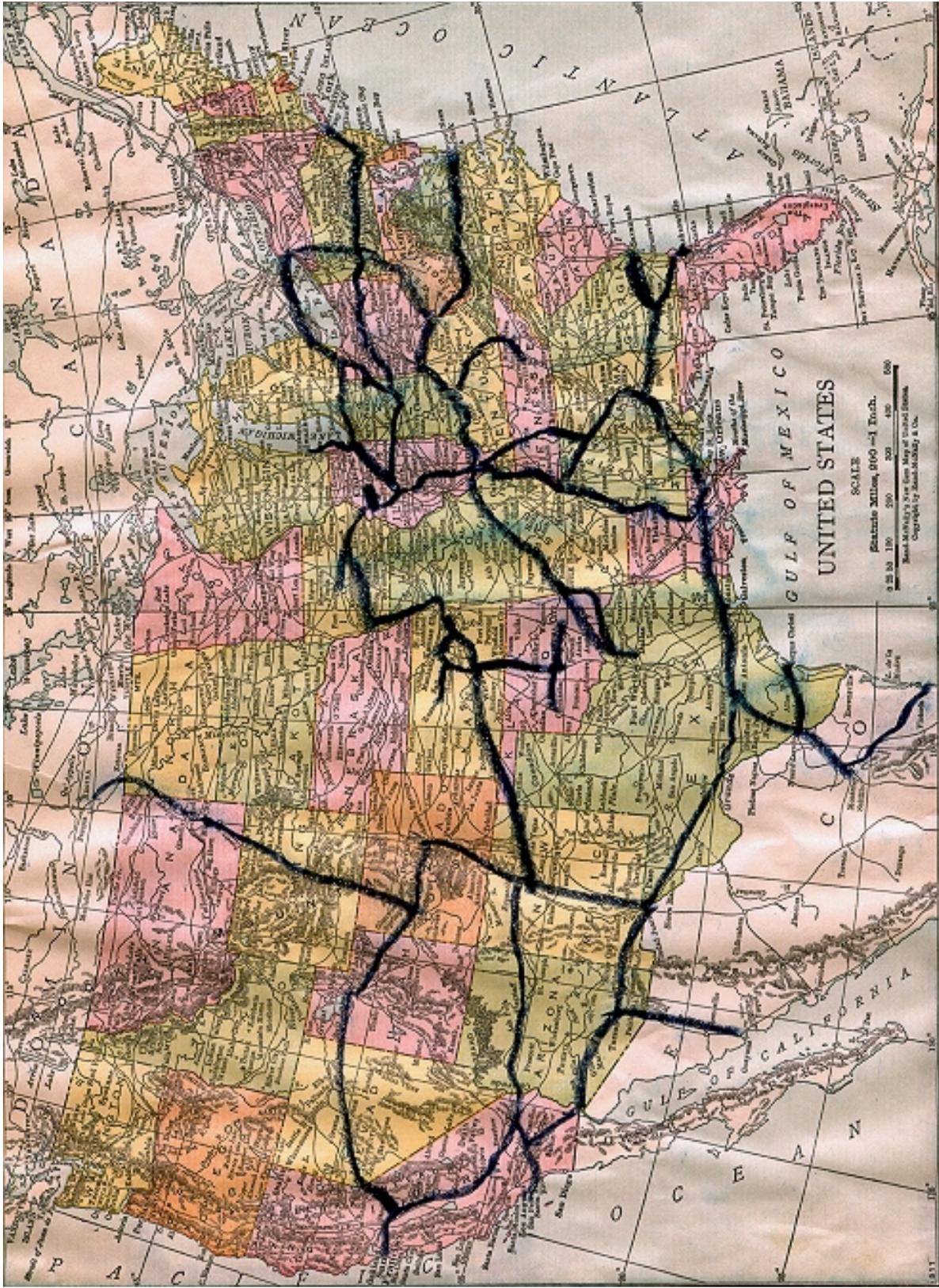


## EXPLANATION

The heavy green lines on the map on the other side of this sheet are the routes taken by the several original Craycrofts who were the first Craycrofts as shown in this family record.

This by no means represents all the Craycrofts but only shows those who are the ones who were the ones who had or stood in line to have possession of this record.

It shows where they landed in the United States and their gradual trip to the west until they reached the Mexican border and into that Republic. Then to the West coast of the United States where they have remained since 1863.



The territory in and around Maryland and Delaware was very popular with the Craycrofts. Several of the families traveled in and around Baltimore and what is now the City of Washington, D.C.

They lived mostly in covered wagons with teams of oxen. The Indians were very friendly and very few Indian raids were made. But the heavy taxes imposed by the local English Officials put such a heavy burden on the permanent residents that many moved from place to place to avoid establishing permanent homes thus becoming liable for the taxes.<sup>1</sup>

The map shows much of the territory traveled by the Craycrofts. Later some of them become permanent residents and some became very wealthy. The public records in both states have been searched to trace titles to the lands formerly owned by the family, but as all were perfectly legal there was no legal opportunity to make any claim to any of the lands by those who thought they had been cheated out of the lands by land sharks. These records were examined as late as 1882 with the above result that is they could establish no legal claim to any of the lands.

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<sup>1</sup> These is highly improbable in the case of the early Craycrofts since the first Craycroft families are known to own considerable land holdings in Maryland as proven by land records in the Maryland State Archives. In the 1990's the State of Maryland conducted an archeological dig on the plantation of Ignatius Craycroft, son of John and Anne Craycroft.



## **INTRODUCTION BY J.H. CRAYCROFT**

By careful investigation and on expert advise from different authorities on paper decay, I have come to the conclusion that the paper and ink in the family record of the Craycroft Family must be renewed. The paper and inks have become badly decayed, faded, torn, and worn by use and as time goes on they will continue to fade, and shortly it will be an impossibility to renew them as was the case many times before especially in the year of 1882, when much difficulty was encountered.

Therefore, I, John Henry Craycroft, the seventh child of Benjamin Craycroft, and Elizabeth Ann Breese Craycroft, who were married in Salem Illinois, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1861, hereby state, I am the only remaining living descendant of the above marriage, and I am the rightful owner of the record, and I feel it is my duty to do all I can to preserve the record, and as I find the records in such a badly decomposed, and badly faded condition, I deem it is absolutely necessary to renew the whole record for the safe preservation at this time by personally typewriting it on new paper furnishing new maps as near like those now in the record, which some are very badly faded and very shortly will be decomposed so badly that it would be impossible to renew them, thereby becoming absolutely worthless as a record.

I am at this time also furnishing at my own expense an iron-clad-binder, with key attached, so that the pages of the record may be kep(*t*) in book-form, and protected from decay, which has never before been done. This binder is guaranteed to last indefinitely and should with ordinary use last many generations or perhaps more than one-hundred-years, before renewal will be necessary again.<sup>2</sup>

The last time it was renewed was in the year of 1882 in Illinois and if the records had been kept in the form that I am now starting and placing them in I firmly believe they would not now have to be renewed.

Some of the records are hand-written, and the ink is so badly faded that I have decided it would be by far most lasting to typewrite the whole record. Also in the past the records have been kept in a small paper box, and as the pages were not numbered I found it quite a task to get them straightened out into consecutive order, as they were loosely laid into the box and become mixed when used. But after much time I have been able to get them into order, which I assure you I have consciously done to the best of my ability.

Most of the records from (1840 my fathers birth year) I have verified and traced by both family records and various State and County Records, besides many are from my own personal memory and knowledge. Many English words which were spelled different

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<sup>2</sup> John Henry was right. When I saw the binder it was in very good condition after 57 years, as was the heavy paper stock he used.

than we now spell them, I have purposely spelled them as they are spelled today.<sup>3</sup> For instance (you was spelled ye) (king-kyng) (day—dae) (honorably—honourably) (either—eyether) and many others. It will also be noticed that the last time in 1882 when this record was renewed, almost all English phrases and words were changed to the up-to-date-type, with few exceptions, and most of those exceptions are purposely being changed today. In some cases the change was made because our typewriters does not have some of the correct letters or characters to spell the words as they were spelled in the Old English Language used in 1297 and for many years thereafter.

This family record of Craycroft Family was personally typewritten by me.

January 1<sup>st</sup> A.D. 1942  
at Richmond California

The seventh child of Benjamin Craycroft,  
and Elizabeth Ann Breese Craycroft. I am  
seventy years of age at this time, and the last  
survivor of the above named parents

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<sup>3</sup> I wish that John Henry had left the spelling as it was originally as it would have helped to confirm the authenticity of some of the passages.

**COURT OF LONDON**  
**June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1297 A.D.**

**PUBLIC NOTICE No. 1579<sup>4</sup>**  
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NOTICE TO THE MAYORS SECRETARY, SHERIFF, AND ALL OTHERS.

Notify the General Public that this Court will hold a Special Session on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of June 1297 A.D. at which time James Cray, and Susan Croft, will be given a hearing on their application to the matter of adopting and combining and joining the two family names of Cray and Croft together and forming an entirely new family and estate name to be known as Craycroft.

The hearing shall take place in this Court at the hour of 10.00 in the morning of the above named day. The application seeks permission to use this new name on and after the marriage of James Cray and Susan Croft which is to take place in the Church of England<sup>5</sup> under the direction of the Priest Father John Daly on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1297 A.D.

Notice is hereby given that any and all who may have any objection to these parties combining, adopting, and joining these two old family names into one new family and estate names together, and having the exclusive right to use that name forever shall at that time appear and given evidence and reason for their objection. If none appear judgment shall and will be given to the above named persons.

PETER YORK  
Secretary

LORD MAYOR BRUNSWICK<sup>6</sup>



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<sup>4</sup> According to a letter from the Corporation of London (page 18), it is highly unlikely that Public Notices were issued in 1297.

<sup>5</sup> According to the World Book Encyclopedia, the Christians in England were followers of Catholicism. There was not a Church of England until Henry VIII in 1534.

<sup>6</sup> According to a letter from the Public Records office of the City of London (page 17) Sir John Breton or Briton was the Lord Mayor of London in 1297.

**COURT OF LONDON<sup>7</sup>**  
**June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1297 A.D.**

Statement of facts—court convened at 10.00 o'clock this morning. After seven witnesses were examined among which were William Cray and June Cray husband and wife, Father and Mother of James Cray the petitioner, and John Croft, and Mary Croft, husband and wife, Father and Mother of Susan Croft, who each and every one testified that they freely give their full consent to the combining, adopting, and joining the two family names together into one family and estate name of Craycroft, and there being no other witnesses to appear, and no objections were offered it is hereby ordered by this Court of London that beginning at the completion of the wedding of James Cray and Susan Croft they shall forever be and are to be known as James and Susan Craycroft, and shall be known by that name only and their combined estate shall be known only by that name, and that their children shall be born and bear that name.

ENTER THE ORDER ON THE RECORDS OF THIS COURT ON THIS DATE JUNE 6<sup>TH</sup>, 1297 A.D.

PETER YORK  
SECRETARY

LORD MAYOR BRUNSWICK

**PALACE OF KING EDWARD I**  
**LONDON, ENGLAND**

The King has had the above court Order read to him on this 7<sup>th</sup> day of June 1297 A.D. in his chambers and herewith gives his approval and sets aside the following property for the estate of this newly wedded couples estate. 10 Full-blooded French Cows. 5 Full-blooded male horses. 1 Full-blooded Stallion (French) 1 Full-blooded Bull French. 20 Female goats with 2 Billies. The tax on all of the above property shall be free for five years starting on June 11<sup>th</sup>, 1297. All of the property shall be of joint ownership by both parties James and Susan Craycroft, and shall be added to their joint estate

SAMUEL SCOTT  
Secretary to the King<sup>8</sup>

KING EDWARD 1 (The First)

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<sup>7</sup> According to the Corporation of London (letter, page 18) there has never been a “Court of London”.

<sup>8</sup> Again, according to the Corporation of London, in 1297 there was no office known as “Secretary to the King”.

Public Record Office,  
Chancery Lane,  
London WC2A 1LR.

10th May, 1973.

Mr. R.L. Craycroft,  
1910 Elm Court,  
Appartment 2A  
Bartlett,  
Illinois 60103  
U.S.A.

Dear Sir,

With refernece to your letter of 18 April, no refer-  
ence to James Gray or Susan Croft appears either in  
the Calendar of Close Rolls or the Calendar of Patent  
Rolls for the year 1297, nor is there any reference  
under Craycroft.

According to both Haydn's Book of Dignities and  
B.B. Orridge in Citizens of London and their Rulers  
1060-1867 the Lord Mayor of London from 1294-1297 was  
Sir John Breton or Briton and in 1298 was Henry Wallis,  
not a man named Brunswick.

Records of the local Courts of London are not kept  
at this office, but at the Corporation of London  
Records Office. Your letter has been passed there  
for a reply concerning the plea to the Court of London  
in 1297.

Yours faithfully,



H.E. JONES

HEJ/AH

*In the spring of 1973 I wrote to the Public Records Office of the City of London, England in the hope of finding verification of the Public Notice, the Court Order and the Proclamation of King Edward I.*

*In response I received these two letters, one from the Public Record Office and the second from Corporation of London Records Office.*

*Both letters irrevocably refute these documents. The men named in the Family History did not hold the offices attributed to them.*

CORPORATION OF LONDON

P.O. BOX 270

Records Office,  
Guildhall,  
London  
EC2P 2EJ

JRS/JL

4th May 1973.

Robert L. Craycroft, Esq.,  
1910 Elm Court,  
Apt. 1A  
Bartlett,  
ILLINOIS,  
U.S.A.

Dear Sir,

The Public Record Office has passed to me your letter of 18th April concerning the Craycroft family. I have been unable to trace any mention of the name in late thirteenth century records in this office and I am very doubtful of the authenticity of the information which you supply for a number of reasons. There has never been any court known as simply 'The Court of London' and I have never heard of 'Public Notices' being issued in medieval times. There has never been any Mayor named Brunswick and there was no high official known as Secretary to the King in the reign of Edward I. (The principal royal official was the Chancellor and John Langton was Chancellor in 1297). The name 'Samuel Scott' is scarcely plausible as a thirteenth century name.

I have also consulted P.H. Reaney's Dictionary of British Surnames but there is no entry for 'Craycroft'. I am sorry, therefore, that I am unable to help with your enquiry.

Yours faithfully,

*Betty R. Masters*

Deputy Keeper of the Records.

*This letter from the Records Office goes on to point out that there was never a "Court of London" and that Public Notices were not issued in the time period.*

*But the last paragraph states that according to P.H. Reaney's Dictionary of British Surnames there is no entry for the name Craycroft. This is a contradiction unless the writer is only referring strictly to the spelling "Craycroft" and disregarding the spelling "Cracroft" or "de Cracroft" as it was used in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.*

**1296 A.D. (MCCXCVI)**

**SOLEMNIZATION OF MATRIMONIE  
OF  
JAMES CRAY, AGE TWENTY-THREE YEARS  
AND  
SUSAN CROFT, AGE TWENTY-TWO YEARS  
JUNE TENTH 1297A.D.**

Dearly beloved friends, we are gathered together here in the sight of God, and in the face of his congregation and relatives, to join together this man and this woman in Holy Matrimony, which is an honorable estate instituted of God in paradise, in the time of man's innocence, signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt chaste and His church; which holy estate, Christ adorned and beautified with his presence, and first miracle that he wrought in Canaan of Galilee, and is commended of Saint Paul to be honorable among all men; and therefore is not to be enterprised, nor taken in hand unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly to satisfy men's carnal lusts and appetites, like brute beasts that have no understanding but reverently, discretely, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God.

Duly considering the cause for which matrimony was ordained, one cause and the most important was and is the procreation of children, to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and praise of God.

Secondly, it was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication, that such persons as be married, might live chaste in matrimony, and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ's body.

Thirdly, for the mutual help and comfort that the one ought to have the other, both in prosperity and adversity. Into which holy estate these two persons present; come now to be joined.

Therefore if any man can show any just cause why they may not lawfully be joined, let him now speak or else hereafter forever hold his peace.

I now require and charge you (as you will answer at the dreadful day of judgment, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed) that either of you do know any impediments, why ye may not be lawfully joined together in matrimony that ye confess it now. For be ye assured that so many as be coupled together otherwise than God's word doth allow are not joined of God, neither is their matrimony lawful.

Concentrate your minds on what I say to you and answer my words honestly. Wilt thou, James Cray take and have this woman to thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the Holy Estate of matrimony?

Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honor, and keep her in sickness and health? And forsaking all others, keep thee only to her, so long as ye both shall live? Ye shall from now on be known as James Craycroft a family name ye have legally adopted by the consent of the court and of our King? What is your answer?

I will, and I accept my adopted name and my entire estate shall be known by the name of Craycroft forever, to this I solemnly agree and solemnize at this moment.

Susan Croft, wilt thou have this man and take him to thy wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance in the Holy Estate of matrimony? Wilt thou obey him, and serve him, love honor and keep him in sickness and in health? And forsaking all others and keep thee only to him so long as ye both shall live? Ye shall from now on be known as Susan Craycroft a family name ye and your husband have legally adopted by the consent of the Court and of our King? What is your answer?

I will, and I wholeheartedly accept my adopted name, and my entire estate shall be joined to that of my husband and become his estate and that my name shall be Susan Craycroft forever, to this I solemnly agree and solemnize at this moment.

I, Father Daley, now demand and ask, who grivet this woman to be married to this man?

I, John Croft, give her to be married. I am her father, and my wife, Susan's mother, also give her consent. We also give our consent to them to adopt and retain forever the combined name of Craycroft as their family and estate name.

In view of there being no objections from anyone, I, Father Daley, a priest of this congregation now proceed with the marriage.

I command ye both to join your right hands together, and James Cray (old name) or James Craycroft (new name) repeat these solemn words after me. I, James Craycroft, take this woman Susan Croft, now Susan Craycroft to be my wedded wife, to have and hold from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in health, to love and cherish, till death do us depart, according to God's holy ordinance, and thereto I plight thee my troth. Also I now create and establish and adopt as our own a new and sacred family name, by joining my family name of Cray to that of my wife of Croft using the two names as one and shall be spelled Craycroft as allowed and permitted by special permission of the Court and of our King, Edward I.

My family name being Cray I now adopt your family name of Croft as part of mine, and give to you my wife my family name of Cray and here and now accept your family name of Croft, and ours and that of our children's name shall be forever Craycroft also all of our descendants shall bear that name forever.

I, Father John Daley now ask you Susan Croft Craycroft to repeat these words and answer my questions.

I Susan Croft Craycroft now take my husband's name and of my own free will give him my family name of Croft and agree that we shall be hereafter known as Craycroft. I now take James Craycroft to be my wedded husband, to have and hold from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness or in health, to love, cherish and to obey, and to serve to the best of my strength and ability, till death do us depart, according to God's holy ordinance, and thereto I gave thee my troth. Also I now repeat, I give you my family name of Croft so that we may create our new family name, as allowed by the Court and of our King, Edward I.

I, John Daly, with this ring I ask both of you to repeat after me, as I place it on your wife's finger.

I, James Craycroft. I, Susan Craycroft, with this ring I thee wed, this gold and this silver and our two families names interchanged and combined as Craycroft I thee give and with all my body and soul thee I worship, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen. I now place the sacred ring on the fourth finger of your wife's right hand, thus binding together forever you as man and wife.

Father John Daley says Let Us Pray.

O, eternal God, creator and preserver of all mankind, giver of all spiritual grace, the author of everlasting life, send thy blessings upon these servants, this man and this woman, whom we bless in thy name, that they may live faithfully together. So these persons may surely and faithfully perform and kept the vows and covenant betwixt them made on this June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1296 A.D. whereof this ring given, and received, is token and a lifetime pledge. And may ever remain in perfect love and peace together for their entire life, and live according to the laws, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

I, Father John Daly, command you both to join your right hands together again. I now announce to the world and al those that are in it, thou whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder, punishment awaits those who violate this command.

Now, you my beloved have taken a solemn oath and pledge to become and are now man and wife, and by this pledge, and by joining hands have assumed that honorable responsibility. I therefore now and forever pronounce you man and wife and your family name and estate Craycroft. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

I, Father John Daley, now bless both of you, and if you live correctly God will bless you and keep you, God the Holy Ghost lights your undertakings and maketh it a success. The favor look upon you and so fill you with spiritual benediction and grace that you may have remission of your sins in this life, and in the heavenly world to come, and life everlasting. Amen.

The witnesses will now march to the aisle near the altar and sing ye register as witnesses. (Note: there were more than 300 witnesses to the wedding but some could not be made out in making this copy).

These are some of the names of people acting as lawful witnesses of the wedding of James Craycroft and Susan Craycroft, June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1297 A.D.:

John Croft, Mary Croft, father and mother of the new wife, William Cray and June Cray, father and mother of the new husband, William Abbott, Ruth Abbott, Jule Morris, Jane Conley, Mary Frye.<sup>9</sup>

.....  
At this time the War between the Catholics and those of Protestant<sup>10</sup> Beliefs was exacting untold deaths. Protestants had to be very careful to whom they talked and never dared to express any sympathies for the Protestants under penalties of death, if not legally, they were liable to be assassinated by those unknown.

This map was replaced in 1803 the first time because it was so badly decayed that it was almost impossible to distinguish places. It was again replaced in 1882 when the record was first typewritten. Now it is being replaced by the above (*shown on next page*) map which is as near like the one shown before, but this one shows the different locations much better than the old one although this one is as near like the old one as it was possible to obtain from a Chicago map maker. This map was placed in the record January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1942, by J.H. Craycroft, Richmond, California, who is also providing an iron-bound binder locked with a key and will be a much better protector than has been provided in the past centuries.

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<sup>9</sup> This passage strikes me as unusual. I find it difficult to accept that someone recorded the marriage vows verbatim, or that there would be so many references to Father Daley. What makes it more conspicuous is that the text of this passage in the typescript written by John Henry Craycroft was in what was represented to be the original dialect, despite John Henry's statement that he corrected the original spelling to reflect "modern" spelling.

<sup>10</sup> According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word Protestant was first given to those who dissented from the decision of the Diet of Spires in 1529, in Germany. There wasn't any sort of "organized" dissent from the Catholic Church until the mid-1300's. Later passages in the history state or intimate that James Cray Craycroft was a Protestant, but this was impossible.



*At this point in the Book there apparently was a map of the world that did not survive the ages, and John Henry did not attempt to replace it. But he did include the note that followed the map in the book.*

This is a map just like one in the record, but the old one is so badly soiled, torn, and faded out so that it can hardly be read any longer. This notation is handwritten on the old one.

This map shows the Old World and the New World, and the City of London, England where the Craycroft Family originated in the year of 1297 .A.D. There are many Craycrofts in London, England up to this day.

**FAMILY RECORD OF THE OLD  
FAMILY OF CRAYCROFT FROM ITS ORIGINAL  
ORIGIN AND CREATION IN THE  
YEAR OF A.D. 1297**

Recorded continuously from its origin and adoption in the year of  
A.D. 1297 in London, England.

Recorded from family records, and from official  
Government and Catholic and Protestant church records in  
England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, France, Spain, and in the  
United States Of America.

These records have been kept and handed down from father to son for over  
Seven hundred and forty years  
In an unbroken chain.

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**Preface and Instructions to the actual  
Descendants by birthright and holding the family name of  
Craycroft**

This record and history of the family of Craycroft dates from its legal and lawful adoption by special court action and permission of our King, Edward the First, King of England, son of King Henry III in the year of A.D. 1297 and recorded in the records of the Church of England and the community records of that year.

Some of the original records have in many instances had to be renewed as early as the year of 1350 A.D. by making new copies, all being as near like the originals as was possible. This was made necessary by the fading of inks, rotting paper, and other causes. It appears that they have had to be renewed about every 70 to 100 years. Therefore, at this late date there is no original record left. But each of the renewals claim they were duplicated as near like the originals as was possible.

Almost the entire record had to be totally renewed in the year of 1882 for many of the old records, maps and original hand drawings were falling to pieces from old age, and in order to save the original subject matter therein contained this action was taken after a family consultation was had, at the home of Thomas B. Craycroft, in Salem, Illinois, and all agree that all matters should be preserved at all cost.

Therefore, on December 21<sup>st</sup>, 1882, the records were renewed as above stated, and were for the first time typewritten. All of the records before that time were handwritten, but were very badly faded. In some instances the inks that had been used had become very dim and could hardly be made out, and made it necessary to use acids to help bring them

out sufficiently in color and brightness so that they could be read and properly copied. There only were a very few words that could not be made out, but by carefully reading the missing words could and were added and made complete. But every word that could be made out was copied accurately. All dates and births, deaths were brought out and properly copied.<sup>11</sup>

Up to and before the year of 1882 all records had apparently been handed down from father to son, but at this time a family reunion was held and it was decided that as John Wesley Craycroft was a Minister of the Gospel, and as he was the second son of four brothers, he would be the proper one of the family to have possession, to keep and hold the Great Family Record. He was given possession of the records and he took them to his home in Warm Springs, California, where it remained until his death in Modesto, California, some fifty years afterward. His father died while he was only a very young boy in Missouri and his mother had preserved the records up to 1882 when at the family reunion he had full possession of them for over fifty years. It seems he “stored” them with some relative of his wife’s name Valpy or Valpie, this he claimed was necessary on account of the objection of his wife, who was never very friendly with any of his relatives. At his death he left a paper or letter to John Henry Craycroft, the son of his older brother Benjamin Craycroft, who was named after John W. Craycroft, then living at Richmond, California, telling him, John Henry Craycroft, where he could get the records.

John Henry Craycroft followed his directions and found the records in very poor shape. They were in a paper box, were all moldy from age and many were faded out badly, but by expert advice they were all put together and were renewed and put into their present shape for future generations. It might be stated here that the records were in such a mixed up shape it was almost impossible to get them into shape so that they were in rotation. But with much hard work and a lot of patience covering a period of several months success was at last obtained, and now the records will continue to be kept, but in a much better manner.<sup>12</sup>

As state above, at the time of the family reunion in Salem, Illinois<sup>13</sup>, the records were all handwritten and were quite bulky, and there were nearly 300 pages of closely written matter<sup>14</sup>. But also as stated above after being typewritten when renewed much space was saved, although no matter was left out. These copies were written on a very good quality of paper with a special typewriter ink, which was guaranteed to last almost indefinitely,

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<sup>11</sup> It is interesting to note here that John Henry Craycroft was one of the last people to actually see the last handwritten copy of the family history in 1883.

<sup>12</sup> I must state here that the preceding two paragraphs are in direct contradiction to a passage that comes nearly at the end of the record. In that passage John Henry states that he had completely forgotten about the family history. He did not know where it was until a passenger on a Santa Fe passenger train, on which he was working as conductor, talked with him about his name and later revealed that he, the passenger, was a relative of Mrs. John Wesley Craycroft (Alice Valpey). The man then told John Henry that he had the family history and wanted him to have it. In fairness to John Henry I must also point out that when he wrote this transcript he was 70 or 71 years old.

<sup>13</sup> According to the minutes of the meeting held at this reunion the meeting was actually held in the home of Benjamin Richard Craycroft in Vandalia, Illinois

<sup>14</sup> It is peculiar that records supposed to date from 1297 to 1883, a period of almost 600 years would only take up 300 handwritten pages.

but 54 years afterward, in 1936, it was found that some of these copies were also losing their color and many were so badly faded that they could scarcely be read, therefore at the earnest request and at the expense of John Henry Craycroft new copies have been made, and as the whole record has been put into book form with a metal bound cover no doubt it will last for at least a century. This copy is being made by and under the strict supervision of him, and he is taking much personal interest that the descendants can rest assured that everything will be finished in strictly first-class shape. He being the legal and direct descendant and is the legal and rightful owner of the record he will spare no expense to make it a real family record.

The continuous system that has been followed from the beginning in the year of 1297 A.D. is to hand down the records from father to son upon the death of the father. This method will continue from him for he has four sons and one of them will carry on. He also has now three grandsons who stand in a direct line to carry on. The records show in many places where it was handed down to the oldest son, and after a few years this son died leaving no son for it to go to, therefore the record rightfully must and did go to another brother who had a son who carried on. This method should be faithfully carried on in the future. In the past this system has been carried on faithfully, which was and is the will and plan of the originator, James Cray Craycroft the First, and his faithful wife Susan Croft Craycroft, the First, from 1297 A.D.

It was hoped by all the descendants heretofore that all future descendants would carry out the original plan and it is now hoped by the present generation that the future descendants will continue to carry out the plan and faithfully comply with the will and command of our ancestors father and mother, who intended that this record should be carried on to the end of civilization or to the end of the world, for the perpetuation of the family name he gave to our family so many years ago. For many reasons herein explained the record does not show all of the records of marriages, births<sup>15</sup>. History dates back and starts in the year of 1297 A.D. in London, England, for it was there, as the records show, that James Cray with his sweetheart Sarah Croft<sup>16</sup> talked it over and decided it would be a wonderful thing to start an entirely new family name and estate to combine their family names together and make it one name only, and to secure the consent of the Court and of the King to help them. It was then decided they would be married and call their name Craycroft, thus they originated and created the name as his own for his future family and estate. The name was originated, created, and adopted on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1297 A.D. by combining their two names which were highly respected Anglo-Saxon, then Catholics in religion but were discontented by some of the rulings and decisions of the Pope in Rome and while the Protestant religion was unknown at that time there were many people who resented these unjust decisions, and were about to rebel against their Pope but were afraid under the present conditions.

This was accomplished upon the marriage of the two young members of the two respective families, both of high standing and honor in their communities near London,

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<sup>15</sup> I dearly wish that the reasons really were presented. There are many holes in the record of births, deaths and marriages.

<sup>16</sup> Is her name Susan or Sarah?

England. They had the full consent of both of their families, but to make it perfectly legal they invoked the help of the Court and that of their King Edward I.

## **BIRTH OF THE FAMILY NAME**

At the close of the marriage ceremony of James Cray and Susan Croft, and when they were joined in Holy Matrimony under two distinct ceremonies, the family name of Craycroft was born and has lived ever since. The first ceremony was under their old family name of James Cray and Susan Croft. Then the second ceremony was performed immediately afterward, was by their new and adopted family name of Craycroft which in a combination of their old family names became a name which had never been used before that time<sup>17</sup>, in which the Court and the King and all other government offices sanctioned. By combining the two highly honored family names into one common name under the true English Catholic faith, in Holy Matrimony, abiding by the laws of England and its King Edward the First, they were married and forever since the name of Craycroft has flourished in many different countries of the world.

## **DATE AND NAMES OF MARRIAGE RECORDED**

James Cray aged 23 years, of London, England, and Susan Croft, of London, England, aged 22 years were married on this Tenth day of June in the year 1297 A.D. at 12 O'clock Noon in the City of London, England, by the priest of the Church of England John Doyle<sup>18</sup>, according to the laws of the Church and sanctioned by our beloved King Edward ye First, and witnessed by nearly three hundred members of the family in the community of London and nearby countryside. The family name of Craycroft now becomes a living fact at this moment, and they own exclusive rights for its use forever hereafter.

The original application and request for this special permit and this important marriage to combine and merger of the two honored family names for a new family and estate name to become the property of the two persons thereto, was properly signed and requested by both parents of the principals, by many other witnesses therefore the permit was immediately granted, and immediately after the marriage ceremony it was recorded in the Great Record and Register of the City of London. The marriage was conducted by the Priest John Doyle, M.P. of the Catholic Parsonage<sup>19</sup>. Therefore on and after June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1297 A.D. the names of the two shall be and are Craycroft.

Therefore, be it known by all people that by the authority granted by this special permit signed and sanctioned by his majesty King Edward ye First of England the marriage and estate herein described becomes a fact at high noon on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of June, 1297 A.D. and was in the chapel of the Church of England in London and the two persons are now to be and are husband and wife, and their estates are combined and shall be known only

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<sup>17</sup> Actually the name Cracraft, the English spelling, had been in use for almost 200 years by 1297.

<sup>18</sup> The priest's name was given as John Daley in the record of the marriage ceremony, given earlier

<sup>19</sup> Here again the record contradicts itself. In the record of the marriage ceremony the minister is named Daley and he is a minister of the Church of England. This is also stated in the following paragraph.

as Craycroft Estate forever hereafter, and may the blessings of the Lord, and of our King and all other peoples be with you always, Amen.

## **ORIGIN OF THE FAMILY NAMES OF CRAY AND THAT OF CROFT**

In the year of 1323 A.D. I, James Craycroft, now having children of my own and may have more, and wishing to establish a family, the birth of my parents. Then that of myself and that of my wife, then that of our first child, and next will come the record of our other children. When we the original Craycrofts have reached our span of life and pass on the great hereafter, we both command and wish that our descendants will carry on this family record indefinitely and to the end of time, no matter how many years that may be. Therefore our descendants hark ye.

Harke ye, in the name of God, Amen, we, James Cray Craycroft, and Sarah Croft Craycroft, Husband and Wife, ye first for both, ye creator of ye family and estate name of Craycroft, ye first. Make this our last command and wish to be fulfilled after our passing to the beyond. We command, and direct all of my, and our, descendants their descendants, and their descendants forever, and all ye heirs and descendants to the end of time forever, to the end of this world, to maintain, and keep this family record by ye recording the births and deaths of all ye children, born in direct rotation in the name of Craycroft, and at ye death ye must leave this family record to ye most direct son and descendant, by him to maintain during his lifetime a correct record of his direct descendants. Will ye do so?

We both command ye our heirs and descendants, their descendants, and their heirs, and their descendants to keep up ye record forever by handing this record completely of all the Craycrofts born under that great name, and to hand down the record from father to son forever as we will do and we charge each and everyone of our descendants to see that this record is faithfully kept as directed in an unbroken record forever. Thus preserving our name in all its glory.

We, whose names are signed hereunder are loyal subjects of our King Edward ye Second, son of King Edward ye First of England, by ye grace of God Amen, declare that this be our last command and wish, and must be obeyed forever. He who disobeys this command shall be in disgrace and will be found out by his descendants before his passing to the great beyond.

Having undertaken to and have created ye family and estate name of Craycroft, I and we hereby claim as our own, myself and wife and our descendants, as our exclusive property and no person or persons has any rights to use it for any purpose whatever, except by birth or marriage, to a direct male descendant of we two. This we do in the name of God, and King Edward ye Second, and for ye glory of God Amen. Also for ye advancement of ye Christian Faith, and our descendants and in honor for our departed King Edward ye First who died in ye year of 1307 to our sorrow, and also declare in ye name our country do by these declarations solemnly and mutually in ye presence of god, and twenty-three witnesses did combine and create ye new family name and estate by combining my family name of Cray to that of my beloved wife's family name of Croft by our holy marriage on ye 10<sup>th</sup> day of June in ye year of 1297 A.D. and we two unite and combined

ourselves together with our estates into one name and estate for our family forever,  
Amen.

We sign this command in the presence of ye many witnesses this 4<sup>th</sup> day of May in ye  
year of 1320 A.D. May all our ancestors take heed and willfully comply Amen<sup>20</sup>.

James Cray Craycroft ye first, by adoption  
Sarah Croft Craycroft ye first, by adoption

We the many witnesses to the commands of our beloved friends James Cray Craycroft  
and his beloved wife Sarah Croft Craycroft sign our different names as witnesses of our  
own free will and accord.

John Winslow, Samuel Turner, Peter Warren, Gilbert Brown, George Murray, Frederick  
Hogan, Charles Hay, James Overton, John Wilson, Thomas Arnold.

Recorded in London, England, in ye House of Records, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 1320 A.D. by Edward  
Hamilton, Public Recorder for the District.<sup>21</sup>

**The Craycroft Family Record and History,  
As given and shown in the  
Records of the Family  
From the year of 1297 A.D.**

The foundation and beginning of this old family record and the direct line of blood father  
to son descendants. Copies may be made only for those who are by birth a Craycroft.  
They may be male or female if they are born under the name of Craycroft and they are  
the son or daughter of the holder of this record. But this original must positively remain  
with the direct member of the male sex and carried on down the line of descendants for  
all time to come with no exception.

In adding valuable material to the record, it must be understood that no variation or false  
material can be entered at any time, and should be brief, and to the point, for to enter a lot  
of useless material will in time make it very bulky, and would be of little value to  
survivors<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> Note that the syntax of this paragraph is obviously false. The frequent use of the word “ye” in place  
“the”, I think, is an effort to make the passage sound “medieval”. Ye was never used in this manner in  
actual usage.

<sup>21</sup> In this previous passage supposedly written by James Cray Craycroft the writer repeatedly refers to  
James’ wife as Sarah. Is this a mistake or was her name given incorrectly earlier. Most of the records  
regarding this family line have called her Susan, but here we are being told her name is Sarah. These  
inconsistencies raise some doubt about this passage.

<sup>22</sup> This paragraph is quite ironic considering that at least a major portion of the record transpiring before  
1800 is pure fabrication. Additionally, most family historians would want to record as much as possible for  
a complete record. This just reinforces my belief that this is a fiction. It just offers an excuse for the writer  
to create less fiction.

The record very plainly shows that two brothers landed on our Eastern coast in 1641 and their descendants up to this time have played a very prominent part in the building up of this great nation from time to time. They have held many prominent positions, both civil and politically, both in peace time and in war. However most of them seem to have been quiet, home loving individuals, attending to their own affairs and not caring to meddle with the affairs of other people's business, troubles or desires. It will also be notice(d) that there were many ministers of the Gospel, farmers, lawyers, doctors, carpenters, brick masons, and other important positions in life, among the descendants. It will also be noticed that there are many names the same in former ancestors. The names of William, John, Thomas, Benjamin, Franklin, Henry and Richard are most prominent through the record, even down to this late date. Especially are the names of Benjamin, John and Franklin most prominent.

The maps and some of the pictures herein are some as near like the originals as is possible to obtain. They are not placed herein as original for they are not. All of the original maps and pictures were hand drawn and only small fragments of some of the originals wee left at the time the record was for the first time renewed, long before the records were ever brought to the United States of American in 1641 A.D.

We now appeal to you descendants to continue this record as has been in the long past, and enable your and our descendants to carry on forever. From here on is given a true and exact copy of the original will and command of our ancestors James Cray Craycroft and Sarah Croft Craycroft, husband and wife, the originals and creators of the name and estate of the Craycroft family in 1297 A.D.

**UNDER THE REIGN OF OUR BELOVED KING EDWARD SECOND  
IN THE YEAR OF 1320 A.D.**

**London, England, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1320**

**KNOW YE BY THIS COMMAND, YE SHALL BE GOVERNED BY  
YE COMMAND AND HEED THESE COMMANDS FOREVER**

**BEAR YE IN MIND OUR DESCENDANTS AND FOREVER  
HEED THESE OUR LAST WISHES AND COMMANDS**

That, This is my and my beloved wife's last wish and commands, will, and wish.

FIRST, we, my wife and myself, originally created the family name of Craycroft, by uniting both of our family names of Cray and that of Croft into one family name of Craycroft, which before that had never been used by anyone. And by Court Order and the Order of our King (Edward) 1<sup>st</sup>, became the owner of that name as our family and estate name legally and lawfully, on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1297 A.D.

SECOND, Our first child has born June 24<sup>th</sup>, 1298 A.D. just one year and 14 days after our marriage on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1297. He was named after his father James Cray Craycroft. He is the first person to ever be born by the name of Craycroft, his parents having by proper Court Order and by proper action of the King Edward First, adopted the name of Craycroft.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, for future preservation and my desire and that of my beloved wife we both hereby declare that we wish to preserve this family name forever and hereby establish a family record the beginning of which I shall record deaths, &c. of all the Craycrofts, for that would be too much of a burden, for it would require many thousands of pages of records<sup>24</sup>. The record contains only the records of the most direct descendants of the closest related family, such as father to son and son to his son and so on down the line, so that the family name may be permanently perpetuated in closest direct line. Also it carries very few names of the females, for upon their marriage they usually drop their family name of Craycroft, and adopt that of their husbands, thereby their identity becomes lost so far as Craycroft is concerned. Therefore it would only result in great confusion and accumulate a mass of almost useless records that would have little or no real value to the surviving descendants, or perpetuating the family name.

At the time the renewal of the record December 21<sup>st</sup>, 1882, the four brothers, Benjamin W., Thomas B. and Columbus J. Craycroft, investigated every clue and they found that there was and are many, many more descendants of this original Craycroft family residing in England, Scotland, France, Spain and Germany, than there is in these United States and their origin can be easily traced back to these two originals of 1297. At this time, 1882, so far as we are able to ascertain all Craycrofts here in the United States, Canada and Mexico are the descendants of the two brothers and their families who landed on our Eastern coast in the year of 1641, just twenty-one years after the landing of the Pilgrims in 1620.

In reading this record it will be noticed that there has been several attempts to start several branches of the original Craycroft family by some of the boys by spelling their name different, that is by changing a letter in the spelling of the name or even by entirely dropping a letter thus attempting to start their own branch of the old original family name. For instance one spelled the name with a K instead of a C, another left off the T, another left off the Y.

Those names all of which are branches of the original Craycroft family, which was started in 1297 A.D., are Craycraft, Cracraft, Cracraft, Bycroft, Bycraft, Kraykroft, Krakroft, Krakraft, Crawcroft, Crawcrof, Craycrof, Cracrof, Kracraft and Gracraft. All of these attempts were made in England, long before the first family arrived in America. There are a few in the United States who spell their names Craycraft, Cracraft, Bycroft and Bycroft but so far as any of the Craycroft family know none of the others have ever

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<sup>23</sup> So far all the writer has done is keep repeating the “fact” of the creation of the name and little else, as if trying to convince the reader (or himself) of the truth of this statement.

<sup>24</sup> It seems that the “voice” of the writer changes here from James Cray Craycroft to someone later. But whoever it was apparently knew little about the value of following as many descendants as possible to genealogy.

been known in these United States. But the old original Craycroft has many prominent families in this country<sup>25</sup>.

Therefore, this record is and should be considered the original basis and foundation of all the other substitutes spelled differently as given above, many of which still exist in England, Germany, France and Spain, unless they have died out since 1882 when the investigation was carried on by the original Craycroft family at some considerable expense. Quite recently investigations have been made of the one name (Craycraft) of which there are quite a large number here in the United States, and it was definitely found that it was really and truly a branch of the original Craycroft family and was started by a boy who had become estranged from his family and wishes to show his contempt by spelling his name with A instead of O. This is shown in the record later. Therefore all Craycrofts should consider this record as the basis for the rightful right to the title and holder of this valuable family heirloom, and each and every one of the sons of the father into whose legal and rightful possession this record is to go to at the time of his death meet and decide who is the rightful heir and there and then deliver this original copy to him. He must be one of the direct sons of the holder. Copies may be made and given to other direct heir's sons, but this original must go to the one who will promise on his honor to preserve it, keep it, intact and add to the record any valuable material that will preserve the tradition of the original family name directly in line from father to son. It should never be left with one who will not promise to keep it all his life and keep it up-to-date as to births, deaths &c. &c.

Each and every one of the descendants should bear in mind that this record must be surrendered to the rightful direct heir to whom it belongs by virtue of these instructions issued by the original founders of the family and name. If one should have it in his possession at the time of his death and he has no son for it to go to, then this record must be turned over to one of his brothers who has a son, and this son must assume the responsibility of preserving the record as if he had had the record in the first instance, so there will be no broken line in record. So my descendants may look back and learn many of the facts regarding their ancestors, I am hereby tracing my ancestors as far back as I can. First I can only trace my family back to my father's birth, which was September 5<sup>th</sup>, 1245 A.D. He and my mother were married when he was twenty years old, on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 1255 A.D. They had several children, but I was the youngest being born in 1275. We then had only the name of Cray. This is my old family name under which I grew up until I was married, then and ever since I have had the new name of Craycroft which name I and my wife created.

At the same time we tried to trace the family name of my wife, but we found all of the records were destroyed in the great fire of London in 1282 A.D.<sup>26</sup>, in the War and most of the records in London were destroyed so we could not get anything on her record but that from the memory of her parents. Her father was born December 20<sup>th</sup>, 1247 A.D. Her

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<sup>25</sup> The second sentence from the last contradicts itself and is also incorrect. Even in the late 1880's there were hundreds of Craycraft's in the United States, mostly in the Ohio River Valley. Today, in 2000, there are hundreds if not thousands of Craycraft's in the United States.

<sup>26</sup> The Great Fire of London actually took place September 2 – 5, 1666.

father and mother were married in London October 6<sup>th</sup>, 1257 A.D. There is no record of their deaths, and my wife does not remember but thinks they both died in 1298 or 1299<sup>27</sup>. This is about all the records we have of our parents, and most if that is guess work. But our record is correct and authentic, and we hope it always will be kept so by our descendants.

We can say authoritatively here that family records at that time were almost all destroyed by the many religious wars, and little is known of their origin and history and although they were always highly respected and wealthy, having large estates, part of which were given to us when we were married, which with other gifts gave us a good start in life. There was one member of the family that became an Earl, but as the records were destroyed we cannot trace its origin at this time.<sup>28</sup>

## **BEGINNING OF THIS FAMILY RECORD**

In this year of 1325 A.D. I again tried to get some facts to establish the origin of our original family names of Cray and that of Croft, but have failed, for I soon found that very few records of a dependable nature were available for recently there had been more furious and bloody wars had destroyed more records that we had traced up two years ago. England and in fact all of Europe was at war almost constantly, and I could find very few records, most of all records of any kind had been destroyed by warring factions. Upon this finding my good wife and I decided we would try to keep records of our own family and to request our descendants to do likewise, and add to this record from time to time as conditions and events warranted, and to perpetuate the record and name forever, by handing down the records from father to son indefinitely, which I shall do at my death.

These useless wars were almost always caused by one religious sect or faction warring on each other. The Pope was constantly demanding the abolishment of all Protestant religious property, such as churches, residences of its members, and that all its members be jailed and tortured, especially those who insisted in preaching any of the Protestant beliefs and that all must pay tribute in high taxes and worship only in Catholic institutions and that the Pope was a higher personage than the King. To this all Protestants vigorously opposed and refused to do, with the result that many Protestants were put to death, and many others were placed in prison. This action on the part of the Pope caused great suffering and the Protestants rebelled against the Pope, and declared war rather than submit to such suffering. However records were available that proved that over five million people had lost their lives in these useless wars. I secured enough reliable records to prove to me that both our parents were pure Anglo-Saxon blood and had even leaned heavily toward the Protestant belief but had never taken a stand against the Pope. So in order to avoid trouble I contented myself to accept the marriage ceremony in the Catholic religion although I at that time was not wholly in accord with

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<sup>27</sup> This passage seems to have been written by James Cray Craycroft. It seems strange that his wife would not know when her own parents died, especially if it was within 2 years or their marriage. This casts more doubt on the veracity of this "history".

<sup>28</sup> There were no religious wars in England prior to this time. To the best of my knowledge, there was no Earl in the Craycroft line.

the unjust rulings of the Pope. But now at this time after many years I have abandoned the Catholic religion and am now a Protestant, although I do not make an issue of it but keep my mouth shut and avoid arguments.<sup>29</sup>

Therefore, I James Craycroft the First and my beloved wife Sarah Craycroft the First, now have four boys and one girl by our marriage. The first boy was born June 24<sup>th</sup>, 1298, and we named him after me, his father (James Cray Craycroft the Second). John, the next, was born October 10<sup>th</sup>, 1299 A.D. Our next child, a boy, was born August 10<sup>th</sup>, 1301, making our third boy born to us. The fourth boy was born December 24<sup>th</sup>, 1303 and we named him Frederick. Mary, our only girl, came September 14<sup>th</sup>, 1307.

Mary married Samuel Wycliffe at the age of 17 and became the mother of John Wycliffe, June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1324 .A.D. in Yorkshire, England<sup>30</sup>.

They were strong healthy children and all were well raised by their good mother who educated them to the highest degree. She taught each to be able to read and write. This was an accomplishment that only the very rich could afford, and many of the richest children could not read or write. My oldest son James the Second and John became eminent Ministers of the Gospel (Protestant). The third boy became a Doctor of Medicine, although he attended Oxford for two years he graduated with high honors, and practiced many years in and around London. The fourth boy Frederick early in his life secured special education and spent much time teaching others to read and write for which he received some liberal compensation from those who could afford to pay. To this the Catholic bishops and the Pope objected for it was their desire to keep the people in ignorance, especially the poor. By so doing it was an easy matter for them to lead the poor into their traps. Frederick went right ahead and taught the poorer classes to read and write, and allowed them to pay when they could afford to. Many could not afford to pay anything, but he kept them in his classes just the same. In many cases many years after Frederick was unable to teach any more some of his former students who had profited by his teachings came to him and paid him large sums of wealth for the help he had in former years given them. The Catholic authorities at last succeeded in having laws passed especially to prevent him from teaching any longer. One of these unjust laws was he had to secure a permit from the local bishop to teach which of course was absolutely impossible, for the Pope instructed the Bishop not to issue any permits to any person or persons who had Protestant beliefs. Of course this prevented him from ever being able to teach again without being subject to arrest and jail.

James and John, the Ministers, found it very difficult to secure parchments (books on Protestant church work) all of which were barred by order of the Catholic priests and bishops and destroyed whenever or wherever found. These were all hand written, for

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<sup>29</sup> Again "James" talks about Protestants 200 years before they existed.

<sup>30</sup> After searching many sources I can find no information regarding who John Wycliffe's parents were. There is not even any certainty about his date of birth. Best guesses only place it between 1320 and 1330, probably closer to 1320.

printing with type had not been invented. These parchments were very costly, so they could not supply but a very few among those few persons that could read.<sup>31</sup>

When the boys were quite young, being at the age of twelve and fourteen years of age they could be frequently found talking and teaching small children their Protestant beliefs. Many times we, their parents, were warned by Catholics to stop our boys from this foolish teachings and talk of Protestant religious beliefs and wild ideas of the hereafter under penalties of arrest and sometimes under a threat of death. As the boys grew older Protestant scriptures could not be taught openly and it became necessary to even hold all meetings secretly. Their parchments (books) had to be secretly secured at great cost, and even then they were often discovered and arrested and their parchments destroyed, for sneaking Catholic spies were abroad and seemed to be everywhere. The two boys had earned and had become a great authority on the then small bible for only a very few parchments (books) of the New Testament had then been translated into readable English, which at that time was spoken much differently than now. These so-called books were all handwritten were studied and learned thoroughly by each boy as fast as they were secured, and taught to others, thus the Protestant beliefs spread fast for many people were growing tired of the heavy taxes and tributes being forced on them by the Catholic authorities.

King Edward the First, who was the son of King Henry III, died in 1307 and immediately his son was crowned King Edward the Second. He was the first Prince of Wales. He was very ambitious and tried repeatedly to annex Scotland but failed. Finally he was deposed in 1326 when it was proven that he was very incompetent and after much trouble he was finally dethroned in a plot in which his own wife was the instigator. This was in 1326 at which time he was imprisoned and early in 1327 he was secretly murdered. This brought his son to the throne and he was crowned under the title of King Edward the Third. His mother the plotter was appointed Regent until he reached manhood in 1330. He tried to seize the French throne but failed. All during these changes the country was in constant turmoil and wars were fought almost daily.

My son James Jr. married Jane Morris at the age of 25 years. He like myself had four sons and no girls<sup>32</sup>. John married Clara Jones at the age of 21 years and had two sons, Benjamin and Luke. Benjamin married Mary Gordon at his age of 24 years and also had four sons, three of which were killed in wars, not of their choosing.

It might be well to depart from the record for a few moments to mention a very peculiar condition that existed at this time, and was very legal up to as late as the year of 1790 A.D. in England, but was considered very bad taste by all Protestants but was very common among the middle and some of the upper classes. It was that of wife-selling.

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<sup>31</sup> These last two paragraphs seem to have been written by at least two different people. The beginning of the first of these paragraphs would seem to be written by James the First, but the end part of the same paragraph seems to be written another person because they mention things that are supposed to happen late in Frederick's life.

The second paragraph is obviously written by someone after even James and John are dead because of the reference to type not being used in Europe at that time.

<sup>32</sup> According to an earlier passage James had 4 sons and 1 daughter.

The public records of England will show that wife-selling prevailed and was legal at this time and was very common among those who wished to avail themselves of the law. In a London Review (a small paper) such sales were advertised under the inviting caption "A Bargain to be Sold" and other such attractive headlines. The women were usually some of those whom had been bought before and had become burdens on their husbands, who wanted to get rid of them, at almost any price.<sup>33</sup>

They were usually led by their so-called husbands with a rope about the neck, to the public market places, where they were sold along with cattle, with proper witnesses to sanction and cinch the bargain and the Sheriff and Town Clerk to seal the bill of sale upon the payment of the tax. The sale was not legal if this tax was not paid at the time of the sale. One outstanding record in London: a peasant sold his wife without this formality and was informed that the sale was illegal. He thereupon went several miles to find his former wife. When found he tied her with a rope, took her back home and on the next market day again sold her for half a crown, but this time he cautioned the purchaser to be sure to pay the tax of four pence to the State. Many attended these sales, but there were very few purchasers. Many sales were made privately by those who did not wish any publicity.

An interesting sidelight on the attitude of some of the husbands in these sales was demonstrated in a London Review. One day, a man advertised the loss of a horse, for which he offered a reward of five guineas upon its return to him. The next day, by a strange chance, his wife ran away. The reward he offered for her return was only four shillings, an amount much less than for the return of the horse.

James and Benjamin spent much time trying to have this infamous law abolished with very little success, but brought them much trouble from many of those natives who profited by its continuance. In several instances they were badly beaten by being waylaid. But finally in the year of 1790 the law was officially abolished.

Continuing with the direct record, Benjamin, my son, married Matilda Frazier when he was only 19 years old and they had three sons. My son John faithfully carried forward this family record and two of his sons, Edwin and Oliver, married and had five sons each. Edwin married Linda Smith August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1345, and had five sons and two girls. Samuel was born May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1370, Albert was born July 4, 1372. Peter was born September 14<sup>th</sup>, 1374. George was born March 15<sup>th</sup>, 1377. Nelson was born October 15<sup>th</sup>, 1379. Then the next two were the girls. Julia was born December 10<sup>th</sup>, 1381. Clara was born June 15<sup>th</sup>, 1384.

George was the one selected to take over these records and he kept them faithfully for several years. He was a wonderful boy and was married to Melba Foster when he was only 20 years old, and she was 19 years old. He divorced her when he was 25 years old, and married again on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1397, just 100 years after this record was started and

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<sup>33</sup> Wife-selling was not practiced until the early 1700's. So how did someone writing in the 1300's know about it? If the writer lived in the 1700's why would they mention it when writing about life in the mid-1300's?

established in the year of 1297 A.D. By his first wife he had no children, for owing to a deformity doctors told them about she could never have any children. This made both of them very unhappy and both decided on a divorce. His wife Melba died in a short time afterward.<sup>34</sup>

By his second wife he had four boys, Charles born June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1399, Thomas, born February 10<sup>th</sup>, 1401, Benjamin born November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1404, Lawrence born April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1406. Young Benjamin fell heir to these records, and kept them up in very good order. Frederick born December 30<sup>th</sup>, 1405, Willard born May 17<sup>th</sup>, 1407. Young Benjamin was married to Lillie Snook June 15<sup>th</sup>, 1422 and was the father of twelve boys and two girls, all of the same wife. He evidently was kept very busy supporting his many children and wife that he never did devote any time to keeping this record. However he did state that he had turned the record over to his oldest boy who was born November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1404 and that this boy had kept the records in good shape and correctly his name was Benjamin Jr.

*At some point in time there was a map of Europe as it was in 1360 in the Book. Somewhere along the line it was removed or became lost. The next four paragraphs are the explanation that accompanied the original map.*

This map of Europe is inserted herein to make a record of Europe as shown in the year of 1360 A.D. Many changes have taken place since that time, although much of the map still appears to be the same as at that time.

Many of the Craycroft family has traveled into many of the countries as shown but most of them remained in England, their home country. The mode of travel at this time was very slow and was mainly accomplished by foot, some by the lowly jackass (now known as the burro) others used the horse. Up to this time many Craycrofts had been to the countries of France, Castile, Portugal, Germany, Poland, Hungary, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Bulgaria, Turkey and in Morocco, Algeria in Africa.

They usually traveled in parties of fifteen or twenty, for it was usually unsafe for parties of only one or two to travel alone on account of frequent robberies and even murders. In later years some of the Craycrofts went to some of the countries and located permanently. Some of them even changed their names by dropping a letter in their names or changing a letter like this. One changed his spelling of the name thus, Kraykroft, instead of the proper way of Craycroft, another spelled his name Craycraft and later several other ways of spelling it was taken by some.

In later years a meeting was held in London, England, of all the Craycrofts and by a large vote of all those assembled (one hundred and ten) it was unanimously decided by a secret ballot that only those who spelled their names as Craycroft should become eligible to have the right to the original Craycroft family record.

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<sup>34</sup> These paragraphs confirm the idea that this part of the history is fiction. It seems that James Cray Craycroft is writing this passage, but he is writing about events that happen when he would be about 120 years old. Whoever did write this had great difficulty keeping the timeline straight.

## EDUCATED IN OXFORD UNIVERSITY

It will be noticed that many of the Craycroft children were wealthy enough to obtain their education in the Oxford University, which was originally established in 1214 A.D. by the Bishop of Lincoln, but the first foundation of learned University dated from the year of 1187 A.D. This university is among the best known and originally it was a Catholic institution but later it became Protestant. It has a long and interesting history in itself but there is no use to dwell on it here, it is sufficient to say it was the leader in education advantages from its first existence and has remained so forever afterward.

Resuming the record, Benjamin Jr. married Flora Dodge September 25<sup>th</sup>, 1441 A.D. and had only 2 boys. Rufus born May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1443, and Martin born May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1444. Rufus only lived to be four years old and died. Martin married May Smith January 25<sup>th</sup>, 1475. He had 3 sons, their first son Alexander born March 10<sup>th</sup>, 1477, Morris born April 14<sup>th</sup>, 1479, Andrew born September 12<sup>th</sup>, 1481. It will be proper to mention here that many of the sons born under the name of Craycroft are not mentioned in this record for they have no direct bearing on the record. That is to say they were born to some of the children's children and related far from the ones in a direct line from the ones that are keeping this record. It is possible for all of those children born in the name of Craycroft or any of the ones that are branches of that family name to trace it back to the original marriage and establishment of the name in 1297 A.D. although it is a hard task it can and has been done by several in late years. No doubt there are literally hundreds of Craycrofts now living that do not know, and many do not care anything about their ancestors.<sup>35</sup>

It is also proper to say here that many of the Craycroft's sons not mentioned herein grew to manhood and developed into prominent men of their time. Many of them drifted to other nearby countries among which are Germany, Spain, France, Belgium, Ireland, Scotland, Italy and many others, especially some of them that were known to have gone to Africa and even to China and Japan, but there is no dependable record that can be used here that is authentic.

It is also proper to mention here that up to this time, 1822, the record shows only those who are an immediate and direct descendant of immediate family in an unbroken chain before them. It can be depended on that the record is complete and contains the records of the last descendants alive for many generations, among them are members whose descendants were in a direct line of those who came to America many years later. Up to this time however America had not been heard of, for that was before Christopher Columbus had discovered America, and it was many years afterward that Craycrofts made their way to America.

We recently had a family gathering or reunion of the family of one of the distant relatives, one who was not mentioned in the record. He was the son of one of the boys

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<sup>35</sup> This sentiment does not ring true to me. I find it difficult to accept that the various writers would not list all the names of the siblings in each generation. It makes sense that they would want the siblings to be listed if for no other reason than that they were the writers' own sisters or brothers. If, as it says in the next paragraph, that many Craycrofts became "prominent men of their time" one would think that the writers would want to at least mention them to illustrate the family's participation in history.

whose father was a cousin of one of those who had kept the record. This man's family met at his home on his eighty-ninth birthday. His name is Oscar Craycroft. There were seven sons, of the nine who were born to him. There were twenty-six grandchildren, thirty-four great grandchildren, and five great-great grandchildren present. Making seventy-four descendants present from this one person (Oscar Craycroft). He lived in Gloucester, England and was quite wealthy and held a prominent position in the local government for over fifty years. The above family did not include the wives of the descendants. The above is related here just to show and impress on the later descendants how impossible it would be to record all of the different branches of the family. It would take thousands of pages to record them all. Therefore it has been the aim from the start of the record to record only those who were in a direct line from those before him.

At this time Benjamin Jr. the 2<sup>nd</sup> fell heir to these records at the time he married Olive Morris on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1499<sup>36</sup>. He had 3 sons. The first, George, was born September 20<sup>th</sup>, 1501. Albert was born October 17<sup>th</sup>, 1503, and James was born January 29<sup>th</sup>, 1505. James later took possession of these records and carried them throughout his lifetime. He was married to Ann Murdock June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1526, and one year later on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1527, their first child was born. They named him Hyrum. Their next child was born March 15<sup>th</sup>, 1529. Their next and last child was born August 5<sup>th</sup>, 1531. He was named John.

In 1521 Pope Leo X bestowed the title on King Henry III<sup>37</sup> for his (the King's) defense of the sacraments against Luther the Protestant. The King at this time was a strong Catholic, but he soon began to see the injustice of the decisions and high taxes exacted by the Pope in England and he decided many highly far-reaching decisions against the Pope, and soon he denounced the Pope in no uncertain terms, thus breaking with the Pope. In retaliation the Pope recalled the title Defender of the Faith. In 15?? (*date illegible in the record*) the title was reconfirmed by Parliament and was ordered placed on all English coins thereafter. James Craycroft, and many other leaders in the Protestant faith worked and preached whenever possible to encourage the people to lend all their help to the King in his fight against the Pope, and he was rewarded by the King by being given the right to hold meetings and preach in any part of the kingdom under the protection of government and often thereafter held meetings with soldiers under arms on the platform for his and his followers protection.

The 100 Years War between England and France was in full sway at this time. This was a war started in 1337 and did not end until 1453. There had been constant friction between the two nations, but the immediate cause was King Edwards III claim to the French Throne. The conflict lasted during the reigns of five English Kings. They were Edward III, Richard II, Henry IV, Henry V, Henry VI and that of five French Kings, that of Phillip VI, John II, Charles V, Charles VI, and that of Charles VII, and only ended in the expulsion of the English from France in 1453 A.D. The war was carried on into what may be called six periods. The English were holding their own alternately, until the last or sixth period, which was from 1422 to 1453. The war took a new turn with the rise of

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<sup>36</sup> Who is this Benjamin Jr.? The last named Benjamin Jr. had two sons, Rufus and Martin. Between Benjamin Jr. the first and Benjamin Jr. the second there is no other Benjamin named in the record.

<sup>37</sup> King Henry III reigned from 1216 –1272. King Henry VIII was sat on the throne in 1521.

Joan of Arc who stirred her country (France) to a resistance which finally after her death brought about the expulsion of the English from France, except from Calais, which we, the English, held until 1557 A.D. Then by treaty the war was settled. Many of the Craycroft family volunteered in this war. One of the sons of Benjamin Jr. the second named Hyrum was a captain in the English army in France. He served his full time in the army and returned an old and broken man but lived to the ripe old age of 76 years and died in London in the year of 1605 A.D. His body was buried in a plot in the London Cemetery provided for by the King and for many years was taken care of by the English army.

Returning to the record, John the son of Benjamin Jr. the 2<sup>nd</sup> was born August 5<sup>th</sup>, 1531 and took over these records at the death of his father on December 14<sup>th</sup>, 1556 A.D.<sup>38</sup> He had a great desire to become a Protestant Minister of the Gospel. He learned to read and write at a very young age. His mother taught him and helped him in every way she could and prepared him early in life to enter the ministry. At the age of 20 years he was ordained a Minister of the Protestant church at Oxford. He also studied different languages with the idea of being able to become an interpreter of three different languages, the Jewish, the English, and the Anglo-Saxon languages. His good mother had been very highly educated and was of very great help to him. She also was a fairly good interpreter of the Jewish language and continued a great help to John until her death. At the age of twenty-two years he had made quite a record as an interpreter and was often called on to interpret passages in the old Jewish bible.

Spies of the Pope soon began spying on him, and in a short time he became mixed up in religious controversies in which the Catholic King and all other Catholics were war on all known Protestants. Many murders were charged up against the Catholics. The murdered ones were always those who were Protestants. However he defied them and quietly became the private secretary of a minister of the Protestant beliefs, named James Mathews, and they together began translating some of the Jewish bible into English and Anglo-Saxon tongues.

The Roman Catholics were firmly established now in London and were much stronger now than ever because of their King Henry VIII being a devoted Catholic. King Henry VIII hated all Protestants so intently that he had many of them placed in prison on the least provocation. Many of them were cruelly murdered by mysterious methods, while others were murdered by slow starvation and many other cruel methods. Many were hanged publicly, stabbed, while others were burned at the stake and many other vicious methods. Remember my descendants, these murdered people were all Protestants. Never was there a Catholic treated thus. This cruel King Henry VIII was made king upon the death of his brother, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1509 A.D. A short time afterward he was married and within a few years, after two children had been born to them, he discovered that his wife had only presented him with two girls, and only one of these lived. Later she had many children all girls, all of whom mysteriously died shortly after birth. This aroused the King's wrath and hatred for his devoted wife, for he wanted a boy, so that he could leave

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<sup>38</sup> According to the earlier passage this John was not the son of Benjamin Jr. the 2<sup>nd</sup> but rather the third son of James, who was the third son of Benjamin Jr. the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

the throne to him. After much cruel treatment to his wife he divorced her and married Anne Boleyn, but she too failed to bear him a son. Then he divorced her and married Jane Seymour and she bore him a son, Edward V in 1537. She soon died. Then King Henry VIII began a series of marriages in the interests of political standing. His favorite pastime seemed to be divorce and executions of his unwanted wives. He died January 28<sup>th</sup>, 1547, and his sixth wife survived him. He was a disgrace to both the English people and the Church he claimed to be in favor of.

I, John Craycroft, now aged thirty years have traced back some of my ancestors, and I discovered that Mary Craycroft was the mother of the much loved and famous John Wycliffe who translated the Bible both from Latin and Jewish tongues in 1382. Although there had been many peoples who had deserted the Catholic faith before that time and were called Protestants, this translation of the Bible was and is an accepted authority as the first real translation of the Bible into the pure English tongue. My investigations show conclusively that John Wycliffe had Craycroft blood in his veins. For the benefit of my ancestors and those of the Craycroft family for the future I will give here in this record the real history of the John Wycliffe's life and his translation of our Holy bible. There no doubt will be many more translations in the future. I am slowly working on one myself, but it is extremely slow work for it must be carried on secretly. For if any Catholics find out anyone is translating the Bible for use for the Protestants they use every means they can to not only destroy the translations, but the person doing the work as well.

The first English version of the whole bible was made by John Wycliffe and several aides, who translated from both Latin and Jewish language, and published their work for the first time in the year of 1382 A.D. This, understand, was for both the Old Testament, and part of the Old Testament is in the years of 1525 to 1530 A.D. It was first printed in 1530. Miles Coverdale and his aids translated the New Testament from Greek but by some unforeseen circumstances did not complete it and publish it until 1537 A.D. at which time he issued the whole Bible in one volume.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> I don't know at this point who is "speaking" here but I do know that they have their information wrong about Miles Coverdale.

According to David Daiches in his book The King James Version of the English Bible, on page 174 he states "Coverdale made no claim to originality in his translation. The title-page of the first edition states that his Bible is 'faithfully and truly translated out of Douche (Dutch) and Latyn into Englishe,' and in the dedication he speaks of "fyue (five) sundry interpreters" whom he followed in his rendering; and again, further on in the dedication, he tells us that 'I haue (have) had sondrye translacions, not onely in latyn, but also of the Douche interpreters: whom (because of theyr synguler giftes (gifts) and speciall diligence in the Bible) I haue ben (been) the more glad to folowe for the most parte, accordyng as I was required.' The "fyue sundry interpreters" followed by Coverdale were almost certainly the Vulgate, Pagninus' Latin version of 1528, Luther's German Bible, the Zurich Bible of Leo Juda, Swingli, Pellican, and others, and Tyndale's New Testament and Pentateuch. For the Old Testament, except the Pentateuch, the Zurich Bible is certainly Coverdale's primary source, with occasional renderings of Pagninus and Luther preferred to those of the Zurich version."

I will state here the full text of my investigations I made of my distant relative John Wycliffe who was the son of my father's uncle and John Wycliffe's sister<sup>40</sup>. This investigation was completed by me, John Craycroft, in the year of 1353 A.D. At this time I am in charge of my church and have some time I can give to investigations and translation work.<sup>41</sup>

John Wycliffe I find was born in the year of 1324 A.D. in the parish bearing the name of Wycliffe, in Yorkshire, England. Very little record is shown of his early childhood in early youth. In the year of 1340 A.D. at the age of sixteen years he was admitted as a student at Queens College Oxford, which then first founded. He was soon transferred from this to Merton College of the University, which from having been longer established, possessed superior advantages and at that time could boast of having connected with it some of the most learned men of that age. The college students at that time and period devoted most of their time to the study of scholastic theology and Civil Law. Wycliffe took exceptionally high rank as a scholar.

Even the Roman Catholics' historians confess that he was a very wise and subtle disputant and second to none in philosophy. He did not confine himself to the prescribed studies. He carefully read the writings of the Fathers and although the Sacred Scriptures were then almost entirely neglected by the ecclesiastic, Wycliffe devoted much time to their study. About the year of 1360 he appeared as a bold and successful asserter of the rights of the University against Mendicant Friars, who had become so numerous and powerful at Oxford as to almost threaten the entire ruin of the University. Their endeavor was to lead young men who had entered Oxford to be educated to leave the University for the monastery, and so powerful was their influence that it was said the number of students was reduced from thirty thousand to six thousand. In testimony of their gratitude for his services and in compliment to his talents, the University made him, in 1361 A.D. Master of Balliol college, and presented him to the living of Fillingham, which afterwards exchanged for that of Ludgershall. Four years after, in 1365 A.D., he was appointed warden of Canterbury Hall in Oxford by Archbishop Islip, its founder. The diploma conferring this honor declares Wycliffe to be "a person in whom His Grace very much confided, and on whom he had fixed his eyes for that place on account of the honesty of his life, his laudable conversation and knowledge of letters." Islip died the next year, and Bishop Langham was raised to the See of Canterbury. He was a monk and was strongly attached to the religious orders which Wycliffe had boldly censured. His dislikes to the reformer Wycliffe was so great that he deprived him of the office which

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<sup>40</sup> Here the writer is strangely confused. In an earlier passage and another following a writer states that Mary Craycroft, the daughter of James Cray Craycroft and Susan (or Sarah) Croft Craycroft, is the mother of John Wycliffe. The later passage goes on to state that John Wycliffe's father was Louis Wycliffe. So how could John Craycroft's father's uncle be the father of John Wycliffe and John Wycliffe's own sister also be his mother. This only serves to at least add significant confusion to the record, if not unravel the skein of its truth.

<sup>41</sup> The preceding paragraph absolutely defies the truth. Let us concede that the first and third of these paragraphs were written by John Craycroft in 1353. Then they were written 29 years before John Wycliffe published his translation of the Bible and an unknown number of years before Wycliffe actually did the translation work. The second paragraph after this goes on to record events that happen seven, eight and twelve years in the future.

the founder of the College had conferred on him. An appeal was made at the Court of Rome: but after a delay of four years, the Pope confirmed the action of the Archbishop.

**HISTORY OF THE MOTHER AND THE BIRTH OF  
JOHN WYCLIFFE  
THE FAMOUS TRANSLATOR OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE  
BORN JUNE 19<sup>TH</sup>, 1324, DIED AUGUST 14<sup>TH</sup>, 1384 A.D.**

I am giving here a short history of my investigations of the birth and life of John Wycliffe my distant relative who was a branch of the Craycroft family. His mother was the first Craycroft girl ever born under that name. She being the only female child born to the original couple that formed that name by the combining of his and his wife's family names into one family name of Craycroft in the year of 1297 A.D.

This record is given here so that future generations may be able to trace their ancestors back, for there has been no record kept of the female branches of the family but this being an outstanding one I think it best to record it into the Craycroft record, only as a side issue, that is independent of the original record.

John Wycliffe the great translator of the Bible was really and truly a part of the Craycroft family as has been proven by my thorough investigations. He is the son of Mary Croft Craycroft, the first girl ever born under the name of Craycroft.

She, Mary Craycroft, was born September 14<sup>th</sup>, 1307 A.D. and was married to Louis Wycliffe at the age of 16 years, on March 14<sup>th</sup>, 1323 A.D. and John Wycliffe was born on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1324 just 15 months later, in Yorkshire, England.

John Wycliffe grew to manhood in this locality and was educated by his mother and spent several terms in Oxford College and became the leading translator of the bible at that time. He was looked upon as an authority as an interpreter of languages, and a translator of Greek, Jewish, and Anglo-Saxon languages into English.

As he grew older he became a firm believer in the Protestant religion and became a leader in opposing the oppressive attitude of the Pope and the Catholic Church. He suffered many indignities and insults and personal injuries caused by unjust and unlawful means to discredit him in his activities for the Protestant believers.

He suffered much and grew stronger in his work as he grew older and after his death was awarded a diploma of high honor by the King for his outstanding work as an interpreter and translator. He remained an ardent worker for Protestantism, and against the often outrageous conduct of the Pope in levying heavy taxes on the poor Protestants and at his death he left many writings that has been declared among the highest ever produced.

He was born June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1324 A.D. and died August 14<sup>th</sup>, 1384 A.D. at Lutterworth, England.

I, John Craycroft, made the above investigation at my own instigation and expense and all the statements made are strictly in accordance of the facts shown by the records in London and Lutterworth, England, and other localities in which he lived and worked. I am adding this to the Craycroft record now in my possession for the interests of all descendants.

London, England, September 26<sup>th</sup>, 1386  
John Craycroft, Descendant

Witnesses: Stanly Berk, Paul Willard, Henry Stanford, John Nelson, George Johnson, Mary Morris, Laura Jones

We the witnesses of the investigations of John Craycroft as stated in this statement herewith state we are convinced his investigation are correct and truthful in every detail. Some of us accompanied him in his work and know it to be correct.<sup>42</sup>

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In 1372 Wycliffe was appointed by the Chancellor and Regents of the University Professor of Divinity. This was the greatest honor which they could offer him and it shows conclusively the high estimation in which he was then held. He was soon called upon to take part in the controversy, which was being waged between the Court of Rome and the English Sovereign. The Pope had demanded annual payments of 1000 marks as tribute money and an acknowledgement that the Sovereignty of England was under the authority of the successor of Saint Peter. Edward the Third, the King, had for several years declined to make these payments, and it was now threatened that His Majesty would be cited to appear for trial before the Sovereign Pontiff.

Edward appealed to Parliament, who resolved to resist the charge by force if necessary, and Wycliffe maintained and defended the rights of the King against the Pope. In 1374 Wycliffe was sent to the headquarters of the Pope in Rome, upon an embassy to the Pope to treat concerning the liberties of the Church of England. He remained abroad for two years, carefully studying the policy of the Pontiff and returned to England more thoroughly convinced than ever of the gross corruption of the Romanish church while his zeal in exposing her errors and vices was considerable increased, and his opportunities for spreading his views were very great.

Wycliffe's doctrines gave so much offense to the clergy of the Romish Church, that in 1377 he was summoned to appear before a convocation, which met in Saint Paul's Cathedral in London to answer for what they termed heresies, but the assembly broke up in confusion without taking measures against him. But later in the same year the Pope commanded that he should be arrested and kept in security till further orders. The University was outraged and debated whether to receive the Pope's messenger or dismiss him disgracefully. But Wycliffe concluded to meet his accusers face to face at synod appointed for the purpose at Lambeth in January 1378.

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<sup>42</sup> It should be noted that John Craycroft presents no documentary evidence. I have not been able to find any corroboration of the statement of John Wycliffe's parentage.

Whether they would have silenced the reformer or not is uncertain for during their deliberations a mandate from the Queen Mother forbade their proceeding against him and he was dismissed with the simple command to abstain from preaching his doctrines in the future. About this time he was engaged in translating the Bible. His writings abound with sound Protestant views of the supreme authority of the scriptures as a guide to faith and practice, but his enemies took advantage of some disturbance which they unjustly charged to his teaching, and he was banished from the University in 1382 A.D. He had been mistreated so long and so unjustly and he now being an old man he retired to living at Lutterworth and he soon died in 1384 A.D.

Almost his last words were that he felt his life had not been spent in vain and that he was sure his works would live thousands of years after he died. The translation of the Bible was the chief crowning glory of his life and the powerful lever by which the Papal power in Great Britain was overthrown. Several of our family have kept close attention to this investigation and all agree and are confident that an impartial investigation and examination of our and his claims will confirm his right to be called the most important agent in producing the Protestant Reformation. Wycliffe had planted the seeds of the Reformation and with great boldness and perseverance had promulgated those principles which were to shake the Romish Church to its very center.

He was the Morning Star of the Reformation, the pioneer and patriarch of Protestantism and his name should have the highest place on the roll of its honored heroes. So much for the history of our distant relative in the interests of our Protestant beliefs. I will now proceed to give the direct history of our family history.

I had reached the age of about twenty-two years and am determined to have complete control over my religious beliefs, and I do thoroughly believe as our distant relative Wycliffe did that the Protestant belief is the one all we Britishers should believe in.

(Notice – This part of the record is being written into the record by my good wife)  
So strong is my husband's (John) belief that he often defied Catholics openly, sometimes much to his peril. He preaches wherever he can secure an audience. He even preaches on street corners and often missiles of different kinds are hurled at him. He spends much of his time among the poor people although he has many staunch friends among the rich. He could be found almost any day explaining the many complicated questions asked by those who could not read or write, but they can readily see that the Pope was exacting large unjust taxes from them for the support of Catholic institutions and the Roman Empire in far-away Rome. Many hundreds have deserted the Catholic ranks and have rebelled against both the Pope and the Catholic Church. (End of his wife's contribution to the record.)

John Craycroft the young but vigorous preacher has become so prominent that many wealthy friends arranged to pay the cost of his higher education along Protestant Christian beliefs and teachings, and have sent him to Oxford University where he is taking a special course in the study of the Jewish and Greek languages to enable him to

quickly and correctly translate more of the Holy Bible on his own responsibility. His idea is to be able to distribute these teachings among the poorer classes of people, and to all Protestant peoples, both rich and poor.

He progressed rapidly and in a remarkable short time he aroused the attention of many Catholic spies who made regular reports to the priests, bishops, and other Catholic churchmen, who in turn kept the Pope well informed who at the proper time ordered all his followers to keep an open eye on all the young preacher did as to his activities especially to closely watch his every movement when he should return from Oxford. This did even to the extent of making false reports and brought him constantly in conflict with the Catholic followers and officers and their financial and moral supporters, which were slowly dwindling by desertions to the cause of Protestantism.

They would often break up his meetings by riding swiftly running horses through the crowds that were quietly listening to his preaching, claiming the horses had gotten beyond their control. Many deaths resulted from these brutal raids, but it seemed nothing could be done to prevent it. When he and his friends appealed to the King he pretended to be very sorry and promised to see that it would be stopped and not happen again, but within a few days something even worse would happen. But John seemed to have a charmed life for a while he had many very narrow escapes. He was never seriously injured. Many of these meetings were had during his enrollment in Oxford University.

At last his term was finished in Oxford and he returned to his home in London and to his former position as private secretary to the Reverend James Mathews and they worked together translating, preaching and distributing small bits of passages from their translations of the scriptures from both the Jewish and Greek languages until Mathews' death. This sad event left John Craycroft alone and being a poor man he was unable to carry out his desires to furnish his poor friends with the handwritten Bibles and other means of learning them how to read and write, which even in these early days was a serious handicap. Less than ten percent of the people could read or write for the priests, bishops, and other Catholic people used every means they could to prevent the poorer classes from learning to read or write. Their desire to keep them in ignorance was to enable the Catholic authorities to be better able to control them, and force them to abide by their unjust demands.

Later help from a few wealthy friends enabled him to again enter Oxford for a special course and instructions for a short period after the death of his friend and employer, Mathews, and he finished his course in time to enter Cambridge where he studied and remained for two years. When he returned to London he took up his residence at Gloucestershire, at the request of many people residing there. This settlement had no Papal or Catholic domain, it being wholly Protestant. But soon after his arrival the Pope instructed his Archbishop to immediately establish as soon as was possible a Catholic domain and to import as many Catholic families as they could maintain by these Catholic families collecting a heavy tax on all of the Protestants only in the district. They pretended to collect the tax from the Catholics but positive proof was easily supplied to show no tax was being collected from Catholics. Among these Catholic families were

Catholic warriors, men who made it their life's business to create trouble and war on Protestant settlements then under the guise of maintaining the peace, they would rush in and slay as many Protestants as they could. In a very short time these brutal abuses of the Protestants became unbearable and nowhere in all England was the abuse of Catholics on the law-abiding Protestants more prevalent. Protests to the King did no good. He would pretend to be very sorry but took no action to prevent recurrences. In most cases where the Protestants insisted that some action be taken, the Catholics only laughed and took even more drastic action and inhuman action and treatment, showing positively that the King was either afraid to take any active part to curb them or was in league with them.

This map (*on the next page*) is one that took the place of another one that was with the Craycroft Family Record, but it was so old and dilapidated and soiled that it was extremely hard to trace the information it contained, but we were able to locate the different places that members of the Craycroft Family had lived. The map had only this written on it in handwriting. The places marked are some of the places members of the Craycrofts lived and raised their families.



Their minister, John Craycroft, seemed to be the target, for all Catholics started at once to try and establish a more fortified belief and action against the Protestants especially against Craycroft for he was their main leader. But their tasks and actions were not easy for the open and defiant acts plainly branded them as the guilty ones whose brutality to Protestants only resulted in much sympathy to those assaulted and helped to make many converts to the Protestant beliefs.

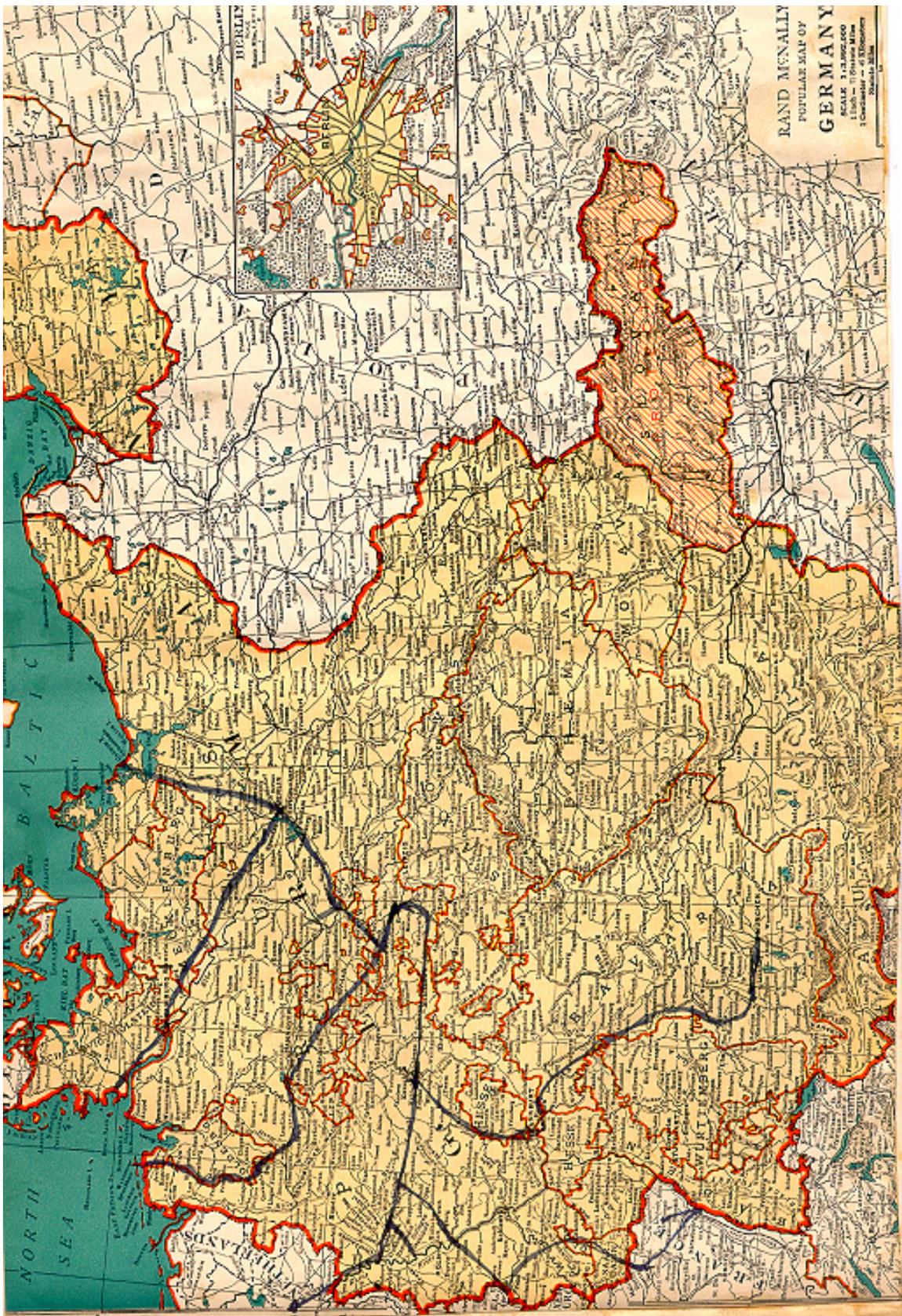
Many of the Catholics who had been imported for the special purpose of building up the Pope's Catholic residents were classed as deserters and took up the Protestants fight with the result that there were a great many outright murders committed by the Catholics. However John Craycroft worked on and spent all of his time now in defense of the Christian faith and his success was almost beyond belief. He was so sincere and was a convincing talker that he succeeded in convincing hundreds of those who a short time before were torturing those in his gatherings and in spite of the great disadvantage he was laboring under he made great headway both among the Protestants and the Catholics, which caused great alarm among the priests and bishops.

He soon incurred the intense hatred of the staunch Catholic leaders to such an extent that he dared not venture outside of his own city or even outside his own home after dark without having several friends as a bodyguard for he had repeatedly been threatened with assassination at the hands of the many Catholic spies who were now spread all over the cities and county districts and in fact were spread all over England, especially in the thickly settled Protestant districts that the Pope and bishops in an endeavor to stop the ever increasing number of sincere followers to the Protestant beliefs and churches.

John Craycroft was now the most unpopular man living among the revengeful Catholics but he was also the most popular among the Protestants and almost any of the spies would have been well rewarded had they murdered him in some mysterious manner that could not be traced back to the Pope or Catholic authorities then administering the many unjust laws.

At last, he was secretly charged with being endowed by the Devil and was arrested and summoned before a bishop who had been appointed as a local official at the request of the Pope and his followers. The bishop promptly pronounced him guilty and denounced him severely and warned him to stop holding any meetings and especially to stop teachings along these "Catholic forbidden lines" would result in his arrest and imprisonment and tried officially to deprive him of the right to serve any religious organization, except through the Pope or bishops, under threat of long imprisonment or possible death.

This is a map (*on the next page*) replacing one that was so old and soiled, torn and dim that it was necessary to renew it for the Craycroft Family. The old map had this notation on it written by hand. The heavy lines are the routes traveled by members of the Craycroft Family. Not only one family but that route of several of the families looking for a place where they could live in peace and happiness, but never found that place and at last returned to their homes in England.



With this unjust sentence caused him to promptly left Gloucestershire and returned to his former home in London and was not officially heard of for a long time, for he had assumed another name (John Murray) to temporarily hide his identity to escape the wrath of the Pope and comparatively safe from assassination. Through secret sources he received regular financial contributions from many sincere friends and Protestant believers. He carried on his work secretly for about a year, or until 1512 A.D. and part of 1513 A.D. using all the time he could spare to his regular work of translating more and more of the New Testament.<sup>43</sup> He had to write all of his work by his own hand for he was too poor to pay anyone to help him for there were so few that could read and write and almost all of them that could read and write were afraid of assassination if caught doing this kind of work. The work of translation was very slow for he went over it several times, checking it for possible mistakes. Long after his death some of his translations were used among others in the King James version of the first issues of our present Bible. Our present Bible now in common use by all Protestants was issued by order of King James of England in the year of A.D. 1611 and many of the translations of John Craycroft made by him almost one hundred years before were checked and found absolutely correct and were adopted and used by King James' Committee.<sup>44</sup>

In 1524 A.D. he was discovered by the Pope's spies and was again in great danger of assassination and became so dangerous that in May, 1524, he fled from London and in a small rowboat crossed the dangerous English Channel and landed in France and slowly made his way to Hamburg, Germany, taking all his life's work of translations with him<sup>45</sup>, thinking it would never be possible for him to again live safely in his beloved England. Here he found the Catholics as strong or even stronger than in England, so he quietly but persistently kept at his life's work of translation of the Bible. He had spent long years of translating the Bible and addition he had also translated many other works from the Jewish language to both English and Anglo-Saxon. Some of his works found ready sale, thus he was able to eke out a living, although he received some financial aid from some friends in England, he would never use any of the funds for his own personal use, but used all of it in the spreading of Protestantism.

When he fled from England he took all of his works with him, and as everything had to be handwritten by him personally (as printing with type had not been invented yet) he found his works were quite bulky and it was quite difficult task to move it around in Germany, for no one was allowed to move from one locality to another without a permit form the local police authorities. But he avoided this by locating one place for his home and carried on his translating in another place.

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<sup>43</sup> Here we are presented with yet another mystery. The last John named in the record prior to this passage was the son of the unknown Benjamin Jr. the 2<sup>nd</sup>, born in 1531, about 20 years after this John went into hiding in London. Thus we have no idea where this John came from.

<sup>44</sup> After consulting four different sources on the King James Version of the Bible I have found no mention at all of any translations used in the KJV by anyone named Craycroft. So at this point I am very suspicious about this entire passage of the Record.

<sup>45</sup> I think it must have been very crowded in that rowboat laden with all of his handwritten translations, which are described in the next paragraph as "quite bulky and . . . quite difficult task to move it around".

He had not been in Hamburg long before the Pope's spies located him again and after the local authorities had caused him much trouble he again fled the police and arrived in Cologne, where he arranged with two men also Protestants who could read and write, to make copies of his translations. These copies of course had to be made by handwriting, which was a very slow method. After a short time he was able to secure more help, and was able to turn several copies each week, which he was able to successfully smuggle into England through confederates, and were distributed among those who desired them, and who later made substantial financial contributions to a fund to carry on the good work.

His work had to be carried on with the utmost secrecy, both in making copies and the smuggling of them to England, for there were paid spies almost everywhere. He finally got bold enough to move his work to the basement in the house where he resided. This soon proved to have been a mistake for careful as they were, the spies soon located their plant in the basement of his home, and he and his partners were watched constantly and secretly, day and night for several days, but they were not aware of this sneaking procedure, but Bishop Cochlacus, a noted Catholic bishop, knocked at his door suddenly and demanded to be admitted immediately without any ceremony, which was a very uncommon thing to do among people of note and high standing. They never admitted anyone until they knew positively who they were and what their business was, therefore John Craycroft and his helpers refused to admit the Bishop, saying that this was his private home and he was a law-abiding Protestant, and that the Bishop had no right or authority to enter without permission, and that no good could come out of the Bishop forcing an entrance. However the Bishop, with the help he had purposely brought along to overcome any resistance, now forced their way into his home, where they secured several copies of the translations that were hidden under the table but did not attempt to enter the basement, where their workshop was located. With the evidence they thus secured Bishop Cochlacus immediately sent a special messenger to the Pope, explaining that the Protestant outlawed translations were being made and circulated by the Englishman John Craycroft, who had caused so much trouble in England a short time before that he had disappeared from sight and he was of the opinion that there was a big reward for his capture. The Bishop asked for instructions as to what action he should take in the matter. In a short time he received full and complete instructions, and immediately made demands on the German government, who was ruled by the Pope in all religious matters. The authorities were a little slow in taking action and were promptly reprimanded by both the Pope and Bishop. It was later learned that there were many employees in the government service who were strongly in favor of Protestant beliefs, but did not dare to let it become know for fear of losing their positions or even becoming targets for adverse demonstrations.

While awaiting instructions the Bishop prevailed upon the authorities to raid the place, and stop any further distribution of the Protestant work until such time as the messenger could reach the Pope and return, which would take several weeks at least under favorable conditions of travel. The city authorities held this was a proper action for them to take as they were all supposedly Catholics. The raid was made on the third day after the Bishop had made his unjustified demand for admittance. This delay gave John Craycroft and his

aides time to stop all work and everything was secretly hidden in another place, for only a very small amount of the work was ever kept at its original place of manufacture, for fear of just such a raid.

The raid took place but nothing incriminating was found either in the house or basement and absolutely nothing that would be of any help to the Bishop or Pope in the arrest of Craycroft and his aides, but it frightened the workers so badly that all refused to continue any more. The messenger returned in December, 1526 A.D. In the meantime John Craycroft had smuggled every finished copy into London. He well knew if any of them were found they would be burned, beside resulting in severe punishment by imprisonment for him and any others in whose possession they might be found.

After the unsuccessful raid, the Bishop became very angry and in order to cause Craycroft endless trouble he personally visited the King of England who was then a strong Catholic, explaining in a very exaggerated manner the great harm that would result should any of the Craycroft translations be released either in Germany or England, and prevailing upon the King to issue an order that all of the Craycroft translations must be captured and promptly and publicly destroyed in the public square. Long before this order had been placed in effect all completed translations had been distributed among the proper Protestant ministers, both in Germany and in England, and placed into proper hands through them to his Church.

Shortly after the special messenger who had been sent to the Pope, John Craycroft had disappeared again, and much fear was felt among his many friends that he had secretly (been) murdered. But he had not, but had located in a small locality just on the outskirts of Cologne, and was very successful in turning out hand-printed copies faster than ever before, and was shipping them into England in an odd manner. They were on small boats and landed in out of the way places on the England shores, and were not discovered by the officials who were to “search” for and destroy them. He did not establish regular routes, but used a different route each time, this being done so that if the Catholic authorities did locate a shipment they most likely would stand guard for future shipments, which would never come.

In this manner the copies were increasing in England at an alarming rate, but the authorities were powerless for they could not locate where they were being manufactured, for they were smuggled into England in the above manner, but they did not know from what country they came from. For a long time it was thought they were being made in England, in which or course they were badly mistaken, and it only caused more careful and secret searching of everything that entered at all ports of entry.

Heavy demands for more copies in other countries grew heavier and heavier. Even in Germany itself the demands were great, but almost impossible to fill, for fear of detection, and of course these copies had to be issued in the German tongue which was very hard to do for the Germans were afraid they may be caught and punished. The German Catholic authorities were far more severe in their methods of punishment than those in England, and in almost every case the punishment was barely short of death itself

for the sentence was to punish them all they could stand. But very often the punishment was carried beyond that stage and the prisoner died from its effect. But the authorities supposedly investigated the death and called it the result of an unavoidable accident.

Protestant Christianity was spreading both in England and many other European countries at this time despite the Pope and his Catholic believers and many thousands of converts were being made almost daily, and the Pope called a meeting in Rome to devise ways and means to prevent it and restore the Pope's losing his unjustified authority in the government.

But in spite of this ill-advised meeting the Protestants gained fast and gradually were successful in filling some of the higher offices of the authorities throughout England and Germany. Many of the new officers were mysteriously murdered, but the drive continued.

From time to time the Catholic authorities secured a few copies and promptly destroyed them by fire with great celebrations, but soon discovered that where one copy was destroyed more than fifty copies would take its place. At this time John Craycroft had secured several trusted men who were as anxious as he to spread the good works throughout the world and would help him carry on his work secretly without almost no pay for their work, accepting only enough pay for their time to barely pay their actual living expenses. They continued the manufacture and smuggling into England until John decided he could do much more efficient work at less expense, by his returning to England himself and leaving his present plant in charge of another Protestant name(d) Frederick Post.

So he did return to England and assisted secretly in the distribution as well as writing more and printing more of the Protestant beliefs. By this time there were hundreds of preachers of the Protestant believers in England and it soon became safer to hold meetings without fear of being arrested. All were careful for there were spies almost everywhere. They carefully disposed of each and every days work every night by making them ready to ship and transferring them to another place so if the place should be discovered there would be nothing to show just what was being printed. But careful as they were the spies at last located their plant, which was located in the basement of the residence. The house was again surrounded and raided, but nothing was found except presses and inks and some instruments used in the production of information that was always distributed among both Protestant and Catholics alike, for when they seen they were being watched they stopped making copies of their regular Protestant works and burned what copies they had finished in the fireplace. However they did discover a trail that led them to another place where there was a few copies that had not yet been smuggled out to England.

These few copies they purposely let the authorities find, but not in their possession. The authorities thought they had made a big discovery before and immediately decided that they were original copies of John Craycroft's translations and decided that he was in Germany and set about to capture him. In a short time spies located him and brought him

before the ruler of Germany, who ordered him returned to the King of England for punishment.

When he was returned to England<sup>46</sup> he was thrown into prison, where he remained several years when after much hard work and owing to the unsanitary condition of the prison he was finally brought to trial on several trumped-up charges, some of which were absolutely false. The trial was all one-sided that is he was not allowed to produce any evidence in self-defense but was found guilty and condemned to death by the King's court on June 29<sup>th</sup>, 1540 A.D. but five days before his execution was to take place he was released under a personal guard, who had to accompany him every place he went, and should he violate any of the provisions of his release the guard was to return him to the prison immediately. But he was very careful not to overstep the limitations of his freedom. They thought by this method he might lead them to the location of some of his helpers. But he never did much to their disappointment. His friends and followers were now very busy both in Church and in official capacities, and within three months he was given a full and complete pardon by the King upon the urgent request of the Queen, who was a mild sympathizer of the Protestants. The Queen cited many cases of unreliable evidence, which upon its face it was shown to be prejudiced and unreliable and when given the chance much of the evidence was proven to be absolutely false and also it was shown all of this false evidence was provided by proven spies of the Pope.

The real reason for his release was for fear of an uprising among the Protestants whom had now become very strong and rapidly growing stronger every day owing to the Pope's cruel orders and forced high taxes collected and used exclusively for the Catholics and against the Protestants.

*At this point in the Record it appears that there was another map of England and Wales which was not replaced in later versions. The following note was an explanation for this map.*

The heavy green lines indicate the travels of the Craycroft family in England while the religious wars and hatred were in progress. Many raids were made by the Bishops and priests in their meetings.

At this time John Craycroft's health was badly broken caused by his long imprisonment in the unsanitary prison and was forced by his weakened condition to abandon almost all of his Protestant work and spend the remainder of his long and useful life in the suburbs of London, where he peacefully passed away September 20<sup>th</sup>, 1516 A.D.<sup>47</sup>

After his father was buried his son John Craycroft Jr. went to France and Germany to finish his education as a physician. In France he graduated in the special study he had

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<sup>46</sup> When had he returned to Germany? Two paragraphs before this it is said that John returned to England and no mention is made about him returning to Germany.

<sup>47</sup> I assume that this is a typographical error. In a previous paragraph we see John being sentenced to death in 1540. In a following sentence it is stated that his wife followed him in death in 1557, a year after John passed away.

taken up then went to Germany, where he also graduated in the special studies he wished. Then he returned to London and became a practicing physician for many years. He took special interests in the old folks of his family and especially he was much interested in the old family home, where he lived for many years and continued his heavy practice as a physician.

At the death of his father, John Craycroft Sr., he fell heir to this family record and is the one who wrote and added to this record the long history of his father herein. His good mother died just one year after his father which occurred on October 12<sup>th</sup>, 1557, and he seen to it that she was buried beside his father which was her last request. His mother and father were a devoted couple, more than the average. She often helped him with his work in both translations and making copies of his works for distribution among the Protestants and thoroughly believed in his work and helped in many ways to make converts. She was 88 years of age at the time of her death. Then her son John Jr. seen to it that his younger brother Charles secured a good education and seen to it that he was well secured and settled in his life's work. Both of the boys could read their fathers translations fluently at the age of ten years and of course adopted the Protestant doctrine as they grew to manhood.

Charles studied much under the direction of John Jr. and was graduated as a physician in 1560 A.D. but at this time all physicians or doctors as they were called, as well as the general public in general, believed that the practice of medicine was mixed with astrology. That is the doctors were taught and believed that the position of the Moon and movement of the different planets and stars as well as the Sun and even the hour of the day affected the body.

It was even believed by many that the touching of relics of the saints brought more cures than medicine and for this reason doctors had very poor success and questionable reputations however before Charles died he was convinced and convinced many others that the proper use of a proper medicine in most cases had by far more effect in securing a permanent cure than did astrology or the touching of saints garments of relics.

He therefore experimented continuously and made many valuable discoveries in medical profession and was famous at the time of his death. John Jr. was more like his father and clung to the practice of the Protestant religion among his friends and neighbors.

He was a great friend of Martin Luther who was born in 1583 (*should be 1483*) and died in 1546 A.D.<sup>48</sup> Luther was the man who broke away from the Catholics and the Pope and established the Lutheran Churches of which many were established in England, Ireland, Germany, Belgium, and later in the United States of America. As a teacher and public

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<sup>48</sup> This seems to present a conflict. It is earlier stated that John Jr. went to France and Germany after the death of his father in 1556 to finish his studies to become a physician. According to a later passage, John Jr. was born in 1520. Now I make some conjectures. John Jr. was under 20 when his father was imprisoned and 20 when he was sentenced to death in 1540. It seems unlikely that he would be traveling abroad while his father was in prison. It also seem unlikely that he would have traveled abroad while his father was in such poor health, so it follows that it is not likely that John Jr. traveled with Luther prior to Luther's death in 1546.

speaker he was a very popular one, and owing to his very convincing attitude in his manner, won many converts to his new Protestant churches. John Jr. attended his meetings as often as was possible and the soon traveled together quite extensively throughout England, Ireland, and Germany making many new converts as they went.

John Jr. was well qualified to interpret the Bible as he had been taught by his father how to translate the words from the Hebrew and Greek tongues, and could tell the exact meaning of any of the translations that had been made by others up to that time. Now that printing by type and ink with hand-power presses and had at this time been in common use for several years it was quite easy to get much of the Bible out among the common people. It became very common for people who could read and write to hold meetings at their homes and read to many who could not read who listened attentively and were convinced to the Protestant beliefs.

Printing with type was invented by a German name(d) John Gutenberg who lived in Mai(n)z Germany. He made this great discovery in the year of 1450 A.D. when he printed several so-called books, which were very crude as compared with later issues in his establishment at Mainz Germany and three issues of the famous Gutenberg Bible. They created quite a sensation for they could be made about one-tenth the cost of the old method of writing by hand and hundreds of copies could be made in less time than one could be turned out by hand.

*At this point in the Record there is reference to another map of Europe that is not present in the current version. The following is the note that followed the map in the Record.*

This is another map of Europe which shows the route traveled by the Craycrofts at the time of their trip to print the translations of the Bible in Germany and other places. This is a replaced copy. The original map was so dilapidated, soiled, and torn that it is now being renewed to be able for descendants to preserve the record for future generations of the Craycroft Family.

Printing with movable type, his invention, was introduced into Milan and Venice in 1469, just nineteen years after Gutenberg's wonderful discovery. It was introduced into London in 1474 A.D. in which places was accepted and put into general use, by such famous printers as William Caxton and Aldus Manutius, another inventor. All of the early printers made or cast their own type, made their own ink rollers, and their own iron frames or chases with which to hold the types in their proper places. All of these new inventions were extremely crude as compared with those made just a few years later and especially those of today for then everything was written by hand only.

John Jr. went to Germany on one of his many trips of speech making and preaching and secured a position in one of the printing houses. His object being to secure at first hand how this wonderful work of printing was really accomplished. He was not specially interested in the monetary value as he was to learn exactly how the work was carried on. He worked very hard for three months then much to the surprise of his employer made arrangements with the employer to publish some of his father's translations of the Bible.

John Jr. by this time had been placed as foreman in the printing house, at an advance in compensation and while he could and did superintend the printing of his own work or order for his own books of the Bible, he never shirked in the least his work for his employer but it did fit him perfectly for the establishment of a large printing firm in England by the name of the Protestant Bibles and other religious papers.

He returned to England and was successful in securing enough capitol and help to return to Germany and secure enough type and printing presses to start turning out large quantities of bibles, printed in pure English, which up to now were very scarce indeed and also very expensive for all had to be imported from Germany now and all had to pay a heavy import tax which the Catholic officials purposely placed on every book in an endeavor to keep them out of England besides (?) they bought up many copies and destroyed them.<sup>49</sup>

The poorer classes of the population both in England and Germany were not educated above an ordinary conversation now, and only a very small number could read or write, but when the Bibles were sold so cheaply as could be accomplished on account of the printing being carried on within the boundaries of England the owners of the printing office escaped having to pay the heavy import tax, thus could sell their books at about one-tenth the cost of the German manufactured Bibles which had the immediate result of almost every Protestant purchasing one or more copies of the Bible, whether they could read or not.

The younger generation were eager to learn to read or write and private schools sprung up in many homes and other places and within a year or two these Bibles were in almost every Protestant home and in many Catholic homes obtained copies secretly for besides having the Bible printed the books contained many articles exposing the rank misuse of authority to many of the local and other officials including an expose of property and created almost an immediate war. The Catholics obtained sanction from the Pope to raid every place suspected of having any copies of the Bibles and thousands were destroyed. Many people were murdered mysteriously. Of course it was commonly known that the murders were the result of having guilty knowledge of having copies of the Bible or from where they came.

In thousands of cases where the poorer classes could not afford to buy the books, the Bibles were handed out free by the different Protestant societies of the churches. They were very crude books to be sure as compared with our books of today, but they contained the true translations of the Bible and that was what the Protestant people and churches wanted.

Within a few years there was great improvement in the education ability of the people, especially among those who that could read and write, and it was very noticeable that among the Protestant populace there was a much larger number of individuals that could

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<sup>49</sup> What did John Jr. do while he was in Germany? Did he learn to operate printing presses then print his father's translation of the Bible? Or did he complete his studies to become a physician? If he did both he would have been extremely busy.

read and write. This angered the Pope and the Bishops, Archbishops, and the priests of the Catholic population to such an extent that they attempted to destroy the books by passing a law outlawing them, but failed. The Protestant Churches were always very much in favor of educating every person at least so they could read and write while the Pope and all other Catholic officials worked to keep them uneducated, for when uneducated the Catholics could be in a better position to control them, because of their ignorance.

As the Protestants became more educated and took more interest in the running of the government they were successful in placing many of their members in official positions. This they were able to be or great help toward a general education of the masses. John Craycroft Jr. always had an important place in these movements. He had preserved the original copies of his father's manuscripts of the translations of the Bible, and these were the Bibles that were being sold and distributed in all England, Ireland, and many thousands were smuggled into Germany, printed in the German language.

The Pope issued positive orders that no Catholic should ever read this Bible, or have it in their possession at any time except to carry them to Catholic headquarters, for he claimed they were inspired by the Devil and any Catholic caught reading it should suffer expulsion from the Catholic Church and be stoned to death. With some of the people this drastic order had a very telling effect, but with thousands it only drove them farther away from Catholicism and the Pope.

*This long passage repeatedly states that the Pope and the governments of England and Germany denied access to Bibles by the common man, even to the point of committing murder on those who tried to distribute bibles. But according to David Daiches in The King James Version of the English Bible, in 1541 the King of England issued a proclamation DEMANDING that bibles be placed in every church in the land and be made available to all. The following is abstracted from pages 36-37 of this book.*

*And minding the execution of his said former, most godly and gracious injunctions: doth straightly charge and command that the Curates and parishioners of every town and parish within this his realm of England, not having already Bibles provided within their parish churches, shall on this side the Feast of All Saints next coming, buy and provide Bibles of the largest and greatest volume, and cause the same to be set and fixed in every of the said parish churches, there to be used as is aforesaid: according to the said former injunctions; upon pain that the Curate and inhabitants of the parishes and towns, shall lose and forfeit to the King's majesty for every month that they shall lack and want the said Bibles, after the same Feast of All Saints forty shillings. . . And finally, the King's Royal Majesty doth declare and signify to all and singular his loving subjects, that to the extent they may have the said Bibles of the greatest volume at equal and reasonable prices, His Highness by the advice of his counsel hath ordained and taxed: that the sellers thereof, shall not take for any of the said Bibles unbound, above the price of ten shillings. And for every of the said Bibles well and sufficiently bound, trimmed and clasped, not above twelve shillings, upon pain the seller to lose for every Bible sold contrary to this His Highness proclamation forty shillings. .*

*So we see that not only did the King promote access to the Bible, but even went so far as to set a price on bibles that was affordable to the general public. In 1542 this was reversed and bible reading was prohibited until 1547 and the accession of Edward VI. Then once more the bible as allowed and even promoted, contrary to what is presented in the Record.*

For a long time the demand for copies of the bible and other Protestant books and information were in extremely heavy demand, so heavy that it was very difficult to keep up with the limited facilities for producing them, so an order was placed for more type and presses in Germany and as soon as they arrived the printing plant was enlarged and books and leaflets and other Protestant information almost flooded the streets much to the discomfort of the Catholic leaders. It was a well known fact that thousands of Catholics were secretly studying and reading the Protestant books and pamphlets now so common on the streets, while other staunch Catholic believers were busily gathering up all the Bibles and Protestant papers and destroying them for which they received payment from the Catholic authorities in power.

The books printed created an awful outbreak among the officials both in the Catholic Church and government and included thousands of copies of pamphlets. The titles were-

1. The Bible is the Only Foundation of the True Christian Faith
2. The Pope is Not The Rightful Head of the Church
3. All True Christians Should Practice What They Preach and Not Try To Deceive All the People Like the Pope, Bishops, and the Priests Do, But Should Be Honest and Tell the Truth Always
4. All Monasteries Should Be Abolished Immediately
5. All Taxes Collected by Catholic Officials and Used Exclusively By These Officials For Unjust and Dishonest Purposes Should Be Immediately Stopped and Such Taxes Paid in The Past Should Be Refunded In Full

All of these books were written by John Craycroft Jr. and his friend Luther and as each came from the press and were distributed free on the streets they created a sensation among the still few loyal Catholics. But was heralded as an entering wedge by the Protestant Population to establish a more tolerant attitude for religious teachings among the people and discard the forced teachings of the Catholics.

The misunderstandings became so strong that at last Luther, up to now a leading Catholic priest, withdrew from the Catholic Church entirely which he had always been a member, but could no longer be a party to the dishonest and oppressive methods both of the Pope, Bishops, and the priests as well as the government officials in many instances. Therefore he served due notice on the Pope of his disapproval of many of the outstanding teachings and orders issued by the Pope that in the future he would not consider any unjust orders issued by the Pope as his duty to enforce and this is notice that my connection with the Church is at an end and that he was sending all church property to the Bishop.

This is a map replacing one old map that was so old, soiled and torn that it would not be read. But we were able to trace the routes said to have been taken by several English

Craycroft families at the time England assumed to govern Ireland. This notation was on the map.

The heavy lines shows the routes taken by the several Craycroft families in traveling in Ireland when England assumed to government of Ireland. Several Craycroft families remained in that country, but most of them returned to England after several years of suffering.



Being a monk and desiring a more high education he immediately application (*applied*) to enter the University of Wittenberg in 1508 where he studied for a time and at length became a teacher, and began teaching and preaching with great fervor.

One day the appearance of a friar selling indulgences under Papal authority aroused Luther to a question of accepted doctrine as to the forgiveness of sin. He posted these inviting academic discussion among other students. The question as to the views of the Pope and other church authorities caused a great amount of excitement and Luther was summoned to Rome before the Pope, where he failed to get satisfaction or even an honest hearing.

He however made such a good showing in his arguments that he at once became a German hero when he upheld the freedom of personal thought and belief, as against the Papal tyranny. His heresy became a very wide and interesting issue all over Germany and England, as did John Craycroft in England a few short months before. He, Luther, was summoned to the Diet at Worms in 1521 A.D. where he attempted to convince those present of his views without result. He left there under warning that if he persisted in his present views he must be outlawed under strict orders from the Pope in Rome.

He still persisted and became the object of search of spies of the Pope and Bishops. He was hidden by friends in the Castle of Wartburg in the Thuringian forest where he spent almost a year writing his and John Craycroft's translations of the Bible, and composing some of the famous hymns. Unable to find peace in his retirement he at last boldly came forward and to Wittenberg and for eight days delivered sermons to explain his absence and beliefs. From then onward Luther kept continuous battle for his highly respected reforms. He was accepted by the Protestants with open arms and with very high regard as he was overrun with requests to address many mass meetings.

Immediately upon Luther's decisive step to separate himself entirely and completely forever from the Catholic Church and ignore the orders of the Pope and Bishops in the future, of which he has been a devout adherent for so many years, for he now thoroughly believed and insists that the Bible is the complete and sufficient source of Christian inspiration and that there can be no intermediary between the believer and his Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. He, Luther, taught and believed that true Christianity rests upon the doctrine of justification by faith and accepting the holy scriptures as determining the whole policy of the church, its liturgy and its formal statement of belief.

Luther was persecuted beyond all reason for the rest of his life but he paid absolutely no attention to it and when cornered by some of his enemies he would by his kindly words and manner always make them ashamed for their uncalled for actions and in many cases would win many new converts. Finally his time came for him to depart this world and he died peacefully in 1546 A.D. but his teachings still live and will survive him for ages. The present day Lutheran Churches stand as a monument to Martin Luther, one of Germany's greatest Reformers.

John Craycroft Jr. is the third generation by that name in direct descendency of the first or original John, and now becomes the direct descendant and the ancestor of the future Craycrofts of this long line of family record.<sup>50</sup> This John Craycroft the third was born July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1520 A.D. and died June 27<sup>th</sup>, 1591 A.D. He was the father of eight sons and one daughter. His first son he named Luther in honor of his good friend and co-worker Luther. This son was born April 26<sup>th</sup>, 1542. James, born August 26<sup>th</sup>, 1544. Seth born December 14<sup>th</sup>, 1548. George born January 20<sup>th</sup>, 1550. Louis born January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1547. Marion born October 14<sup>th</sup>, 1549. George born January 20<sup>th</sup>, 1554. Thomas born February 26<sup>th</sup>, 1557, and Louise the only girl was born January 24<sup>th</sup>, 1559.

All of these children were well educated. They were taught mostly at home by their highly educated mother, when possible they attended the regular schools, which were conducted by the Protestant churches. The only girl Louise died at the age of twelve years. All of the boys lived to be very old men, and each married and raised large families. As they grew into manhood they seemed to scatter to different localities and to many foreign countries. Some of them changing the way of spelling their family name in an effort to establish the starting of an entirely new family estate and name. Thomas the youngest of the eight boys preferred to remain close to home while most of the others departed separately to France, Germany, Spain and Ireland, where special inducements were held out to these highly educated men to enter many different businesses. Thomas remained in London and (*married*) Jane Smith July 25<sup>th</sup>, 1576, when only twenty-two years old.

Another of the boys married Amanda Jones, this was Robert<sup>51</sup>, their marriage took place June 16<sup>th</sup>, 1569. The third boy Seth married Mary Crawford June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1570. This marriage resulted very badly for the two principals. The Crawford girl was the only child in the Crawford family and as the family wished to preserve the Crawford family name they insisted that before they would consent to the marriage Seth must drop his name of Craycroft and adopt the name of Crawford and be married by that name and always have the family name of Crawford for his family name forever afterward.

After some delay he consented to this and was married and threw away his own name of Craycroft and became a Crawford thereafter. They were always known by the name of Crawford and in some manner later was able to attach to his name the worthless and useless title of Sir. No Craycroft ever went to the trouble to ascertain how he attained the title they were so disgusted. But we did know he was known by the name of Sir Seth Crawford as a sad result for them, they were totally ignored by all the Craycrofts and lost to the entire Craycroft family. Although they lived in London the entire Craycroft family completely lost track of them and disowned them because he discarded the entire family name of Craycroft when he married the Crawford girl.

Had he retained only part of the family name the balance of the family would not have been so severe on him and sanctioned the marriage but as the Crawford's insisted that the

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<sup>50</sup> John Craycroft Jr.'s father was John, and his grandfather was John, but the "original" John was 11 generations removed from John Jr. The original John Craycroft was the son of James Cray Craycroft.

<sup>51</sup> According to the paragraph above there is no Robert.

total name of Craycroft be eliminated and the complete adoption of their name of Crawford they unanimously decided the many Craycrofts that they all ignored them forever. Therefore nothing is known of their family history for so far as Seth is concerned his total existence ended on the day of his marriage to the Crawford girl.

Robert became the heir and direct ancestor of the Craycroft family record. He was married in London to Elizabeth Sproat July 25<sup>th</sup>, 1576. His marriage was an exceedingly happy one and very productive one, for he became the father of ten boys and two girls. He too, like many of his forefathers, was of a religious turn of mind. He studied and taught the Protestant Bible and did much for the advancement of the Protestant faith. He continuously pointed out and taught the great difference between the Protestant Christian faith and that of the oppressive teachings of the Catholic Church and of the Pope, bishops and priests. He also pointed out to all that after all was said and done each and everyone, both Protestant and Catholic individuals, were seeking the same objective, namely the salvation of their souls. Really and truly the only great difference is in the different methods used in which they hoped to accomplish the great tasks. One used force, the other used persuasion. He dwelled continuously on these only differences:

1. Both believe in the Fatherhood of God and the Sonship of Jesus Christ.
2. Both believe in the Trinity in atonement of Christ.
3. Both believe in the founding of the church for the salvation of the people and the guidance of their lives.

There are three and only three points of differences between the Protestant and the Catholic faiths that may be deemed fundamental. These are:

1. The Protestants recognizes one and only one source of faith and that source is the Bible and the Bible only. While the Catholics recognize three sources which are the Bible, tradition, and the decrees of the Popes and councils.
2. The Protestants believe in justification by faith alone. They believe that salvation is a gift of divine grace and that no man has the power to say he can forgive sins or administer it. While the Catholics believe or at least are taught to believe that the Church and the Pope can be and (*are*) a mediator between God and Man. They believe that no individual has any right to private judgment or interpretation of the Holy Scriptures and that he must accept only that which the Pope and Church teaches, and that all prayers must be made to the Pope or Holy Father, as he is known by all Catholics.<sup>52</sup>
3. The Protestant believes he is a free moral agent and can be saved by sincere repentance and that a marriage conducted under the Protestant procedure is as sacred a contract as anyone can make, and that the children of those marriages are as sure of blessings as are those of any Catholic or any other kind of marriages.

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<sup>52</sup> I was born and raised in the Catholic religion and am slightly familiar with the history of the Church and I was always taught that God was the only one to direct your prayers. This passage directly contradicts that teaching.

These marriages do not have to have the permission of any Protestant minister or any other church official, but must comply to the laws (?) wherever the marriage takes place. The Catholics must comply with these laws too just the same as anyone else whether they secure permission from a priest, bishop or the Pope. In this connection the Catholics believe that unless one is a Catholic, he or she or both, are a total loss spiritually, and that a marriage made under the Protestant proceedings is not recognized by God and that the parties thereto are simply living together in adultery which no Protestant ever did believe and never will and many Catholics don't believe it either, but just comply with it because they do not wish to be criticized by others.

Robert was in great demand in any locality where he happened to be for both Protestants and Catholics listened almost spellbound at the flow of his words from his mouth which seemed to fall out more like a machine than from a man. He was a large man and made friends wherever he went, and was successful in the turning of many Catholics to the Christian faith. He now became the owner of these now famous Craycroft translations of the Bible that had been handed down to heirs in the Craycroft family now for over two hundred years, also the family record which had its inception in the year of 1297 A.D.

Just a short time before he died on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 1603 A.D. he called to his bedside all of his relatives that could be found and secured their unanimous consent to donate the translations of the Bible of the original John Craycroft, his forefather, and his descendants to a committee then being formed by famous men appointed by King James for the purpose of investigating the different translations of the Bibles that are in use by both Catholics and Protestants and decide upon their reliability and their sources and all facts connected with their true facts.

At this time King James, a Protestant King of England, sought to preserve and perpetuate the true books of the Bible and establish an accurate and true translation of the what is now the New Testament or the King James version of the Holy Scriptures.<sup>53</sup> The King appointed a committee of learned men for this purpose which were among the brightest and most highly educated Protestant minds of this day and age. Honest men whose honesty and integrity is beyond reproach and gave them explicit orders and instructions to investigate thoroughly at every angle the dependability of both Protestant or Catholic sources the honest information in regard to him whether it be Protestant or Catholic he wanted the information secured from a reliable historical source to be handed down to future generations and above all it must be backed up by absolute facts that can be proven by actual records or incidents. There was no prejudices in this committee but they went to work with an open mind to really discover real records, data, and actual facts both from the Protestant records and Catholic records.

King James was a devoted Protestant, was very kind-hearted, and true to his people when they were right but when wrong he let it be known his convictions and gave them a chance to correct any dishonest or mistaken idea they may have presented but when he

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<sup>53</sup> This is not an accurate statement. The King James Version of the Bible is composed of the Old and New Testaments.

made a decision it was final and he seldom ever changed his mind but he always went to the bottom of every matter brought before him before he finally made his decision. He was a monarch of every strong and determined convictions and the progress of England made under and during his administration and reign was wonderful and his record will survive forever. Immediately after he was crowned King he made a great speech in which he bade his people to obey the laws and orders and impressed upon them his divine right to the throne, declaring it seditious for any subjects to dispute anything that a King may do or say for as he advised them the King is always right for before he decides any question he thoroughly investigates and secures the absolute facts then the decision must stand as ordered.

He was noted for his kindly manner and decisions, but once made they became the law and must be obeyed explicitly. When he made this his first speech, the Puritans were very strong and growing class in England who contended that the Church of England (Protestant) was not sufficiently reformed and had retained too many of the Pope's and Catholic practices to which they could not and would not adhere to. Many of the Puritans openly and steadfastly refused to conform (*conform?*) with the Church of England and other of the Churches requirements and were called nonconformists (*nonconformists?*), while others separated from it entirely and were called separatists. Later developments plainly marked all of both factions as being extremely cruel in their punishments of those who did not obey their teachings and orders. This attitude was taken advantage of by the Catholics and used as an entering wedge to intimidate the new King, but he stood steadfastly and ordered all cruelties on all sides including Protestants, Catholics and Puritans to cease at once under heavy penalties. This order had immediate effect of a very quieting effect among all classes and for a long time each faction did not openly teach cruel punishment but in many cases it came to light that some cruel action had been taken but as punishment by orders of the King the practice soon died out.

The Puritans demanded much of the new King. He listened to their every complaint and remedied those which appeared to be unjust or punished those persons who insisted upon violating the laws. While he was on his way to London to be crowned King a great petition that had been signed by a great number of Ministers of the Gospel and common people was presented to him praying for certain reforms in the Church of England, which was now Protestant. The King promised to investigate each and every one of the demands but asked patience and enough time to properly investigate and obtain facts which he did later.

In consequence King James I arranged immediately for the Hampton Court Conference which met the following January. The King himself presided. The Puritans made such unreasonable demands and endeavored to force their demands so strongly that the King soon lost almost all respect for them. They soon discovered that they could expect no special favors from the King, but that their demands must be submitted along with the others and they would receive the same attention and consideration as all others in their regular order. The King made it plain that each and all would be heard and that none would be overlooked.

The Puritans were so insistent that he ruled them out of order many times and at last told them “You must conform yourselves to the laws or I will expel you from our lands”. It was this what they termed harsh treatment of the Protestant King that late caused the Pilgrim fathers to go to Holland and in later years to the shores of the United States. This memorable meeting accomplished one great and lasting thing the result of which has lived even to this day and will live forever. The main object of the meetings was to build up and settle many questions of a religious nature and that was accomplished, and after many years of investigation and earnest work and the members of the conference and the King arranged to issue a truthful and reliable and exact translation of the true Bible records and reliable translation in English for the English-speaking peoples of the World.

Therefore fifty-four leading scholars who at the time were the most highly educated and learned men of England were selected, but after several short sessions seven were dropped from membership of the conference and only forty-seven finished the work. This great gathering of the brightest and brainiest men of that period of the times finally completed their work and produced the present file that is known and accepted by the world as the Authorized Version of the King James Bible. They finished their long and worthy task in 1611 A.D. and our King James Version of our present Bible was authorized, accepted and issued and immediately adopted by all Protestant Churches and people and is being used today by hundreds of millions of people all over the world and is accepted as authentic and inspired.

Robert Craycroft, having retained all of the original translations of the original John Craycroft, Sr., his great, great grandfather, which the original John Sr. had spent many years of translating and of hard work and real suffering to complete and pass down to an unbroken (*line*) of descendants and they in the long run to pass on to the world. Remember these translations were all made from the original material from the Jewish and Greek tongues in the years of 1520 to 1525 A.D. When the committee to which Robert Craycroft had offered the translations to submitted them to the Conference with their history, the conference accepted them and later every one was investigated, checked and rechecked and in the year of 1607 A.D. were officially accepted and filed with many other records and translations to be used or discarded later. Later developments proved that all of the Craycroft translations were used, and John Craycroft Sr. was honored by this conference as one of the original translations of our present Bible, and indications are such at this time in the year of 1607 A.D. this Bible will live forever.

The works he translated were original records and laws of the Jews and Greeks who had handed these translations or laws down in their original forms from generation to generation for thousands of years both before and after the birth of Jesus Christ. When the King James version of our bible was completed and printed it was found that it contained the following facts besides the inspired spiritual information. It has 66 books, 773,746 words, 31,173 verses. The word “reverend” appears but once. The word “Lord” appears 1855 times, Ezra, Chapter seven Verse 22 contains all of the letters of the alphabet but the letter J. The word “and” appears 46,227 times. The longest chapter is in Chapter 8, Verse 9. The shortest verse is in St. John, Chapter 11, Verse 35.

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NOTICE. There are several pages of the family record at this place that has faded out so badly that it is almost impossible to make out correctly. However we are able to trace many of the lines and are sure we have reproduced the more essential facts, although we are confident that any matter left out was not of any great importance for it appears that most it deals with was and misunderstandings with France, Italy and the Pope. This notation is made here so that if any matter should be mentioned later in this record or if something is mentioned that refer to some special passage it might be that these few pages are the ones that is referred to.

It looks like some of the few lines that are invisible do not amount to very much but of course it is impossible to state just how important they may be. But one thing we are sure of and that is that it does not break the complete record of the unbroken line of descendants of the family and that there has been no births or deaths in that time.

The cause of the record having such a bad place of being damaged seems to be it had been very badly damaged by water, probably by rain, or possibly might have been in a flood.



Continuing with the record.

Robert Craycroft's son Marion, his youngest son, was the next to fall heir to these important Craycroft family records. Marion married Jessie Townsend on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1588. Their first son was born May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1590, and had three brothers and one sister, but no record was kept of their births, deaths or names. Therefore it is assumed they all probably died early in life, for Marion the oldest son fell heir to these records. His name was William. William was married to Josephine Harris on December 25<sup>th</sup>, 1611 A.D. which was the same year our present Bible came into being.

William had four sons and one girl. The oldest boy was born December 10<sup>th</sup>, 1612 A.D. and was named William Jr. Arthur was born October 31<sup>st</sup>, 1613. Christopher was born April 4<sup>th</sup>, 1615 A.D. George was born September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1617 A.D. and Benjamin was born July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1619 A.D. Mary the only girl was born June 26<sup>th</sup>, 1621 A.D.

George and Benjamin were married the same day in a double marriage ceremony in which both started their married life with their wives together. This ceremony was celebrated on December 20<sup>th</sup>, 1640 A.D. in London, England. George married Jane Morrow and Benjamin married Sally Frye, both boyhood friends living on adjoining streets. Almost everyone was talking about the new country of the Colonies in America, then called English colonies of the West, and the newly married brothers sought the consent of their brides to sail for this new country, which was later called the United States of America<sup>54</sup>.

In a short time after their marriage the two couples joined a large party of emigrants bound for the new country, later called the United States, on a small sailing vessel called

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<sup>54</sup> This paragraph offers another mystery. Who wrote this passage? Obviously the American Colonies wouldn't be known as the United States of America for over 200 years. This would indicate that whoever wrote this had to be far into the future of 1640.

the Sparton and after a long and dreary sailing of two months finally landed at Jamestown, Virginia, on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 1641 A.D. and joined the local beliefs and the Pilgrims who had been here for nearly twenty years seemed to have full control over most of the few churches. They found the natives (which were called Indians) very hostile with few exceptions, and most of them very treacherous to even talk to. They seemed to resent the very presence of all white people and declared that the whole country belonged to them (the Indians) and that all the whites must get out.<sup>55</sup>

Both families remained in Jamestown, Virginia, for almost three years, when they moved to Providence, Rhode Island, where they resided many years, raising their family. So far as any records that has ever been found these are the only Craycrofts that ever came to these United States therefore there is absolutely no doubt that George and Benjamin Craycroft and their wives are the only ones that established the Craycroft families in this country, and are the original foundation and start of the many Craycroft families in these United States of America, and Canada, and other American families.<sup>56</sup>

No doubt exists in the belief that these records establish an unbroken record that all Craycrofts now living is a near or distant relative of each other, but as it is now more than three hundred years since their arrival that it is a very hard task to trace all families. But it is a fact that the original copy of this Family Record was brought over to this country from England in the year of 1640-1641 A.D. by two brothers, George and Benjamin Craycroft, that much has been verified many times by records in Virginia and Rhode Island<sup>57</sup>, and from those two pioneers the Craycroft family has grown to many thousands of families in the United States. One great fact seems well established and that is there was never a Catholic known by the name of Craycroft in these United States up to the present time. But in the beginning of the name in 1297 A.D. they were Catholics, but soon thereafter changed to Protestants and have forever thereafter been Protestants and no doubt all will forever remain so.

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<sup>55</sup> According [www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com) there was a relentless struggle between the Powhatan Indian confederacy and early English settlers in the tidewater section of Virginia and southern Maryland. The conflict resulted in the destruction of the Indian power. English colonists who had settled in Jamestown (1607) were at first strongly motivated by their need of native corn (maize) to keep peace with the Powhatans, who inhabited more than 100 surrounding villages. The emphasis on cooperation was strengthened by the efforts of the Powhatan chief Powhatan and his daughter Pocahontas.

By the time of Powhatan's death (1618), settlers had discovered the highly profitable tobacco crop and were pressing increasingly into Indian territory for rich new land to cultivate. In resistance to this incursion, the confederacy's new chief, Opechancanough, Powhatan's elderly brother, in 1622 led his people in a sudden attack against colonists throughout the area, massacring 347 of a total of about 1,200. Intermittent warfare followed for 14 years; an uneasy calm was shattered in 1644 with a final Indian uprising in which 500 whites were slain. Determined British opposition, aided by Christianized Indians, broke the power of the warring confederacy the same year, and Opechancanough was killed.

<sup>56</sup> According to "The Early Settlers of Maryland, An Index to Names of Immigrants Compiled from Records of Land Patents, 1633-1680, in the Hall of Records, Annapolis, Maryland" edited by Gust Skordas, Assistant Archivist, State of Maryland, John and Ann Creacroft Immigrated to Maryland in 1665.

<sup>57</sup> A search was conducted in 2000 in both Rhode Island and Virginia, particularly early records of Jamestown, and no record was found confirming the presence of any Craycrofts in either area during this time period.

Several of the Craycroft boys in England at different times wished to establish a family clan of their own. Thus some of them spelled their names by dropping a letter or adding a letter to their names. In the years of 1430 to 1497 then from 1526 to 1575, then from 1601 to 1624 no less than thirteen of the sons of Craycrofts decided to make this change, thus creating the names of Craycraft, Cracroft, Cracraft, Crawcroft, Craycrof, Cravrof, Bycroft, Bycrof, Kraykroft, Krakroft, Krakraft, Gracroft, Gracrof, Grakroft. Every one was barred from the use of this family record except those who retained the original name of Craycroft. Some of these deserters from the name have reached these United States and some of these names are in use at this late date, 1941 A.D. and all of them are a branch of the original name of Craycroft, created in the year of 1297 A.D. in London, England.<sup>58</sup>

#### SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT AND NOTICE

In the year of 1882 a diligent search of all available records both by State records in England and these United States, and all records show conclusively and it was definitely established from all records at hand that these two brothers, George and Benjamin Craycroft, and their wives are the forefathers and foremothers of all the Craycroft's in the United States. Since that time several different families have seemed to spring up from some remote localities who pronounce their family names about the same as the original Craycroft but spell it the same as some of those names given above and no doubt they are a branch of the original family but are also descendants of those Craycrofts who are classed as deserters from the original family name and a are some of those who came to the United States in later years after the original Craycrofts came in 1640 A.D.<sup>59</sup>

These two brothers, George and Benjamin, and their wives lived in Providence, Rhode Island, for several years then became separated when George moved to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Benjamin remained in Providence for several years where most of his children were born. Benjamin was the father of four boys and three girls. Benjamin Jr. was born November 15<sup>th</sup>, 1642 A.D. and was the first Craycroft child ever born in the United States. Richard, born March 5<sup>th</sup>, 1644 A.D., Franklin born August 10<sup>th</sup>, 1646 A.D., Horace born October 10<sup>th</sup>, 1647 A.D., Sarah born December 20<sup>th</sup>, 1648 A.D., Catherine born March 16<sup>th</sup>, 1650 A.D., Isabel born February 12<sup>th</sup>, 1651 A.D. Two of the girls were murdered by Indians, their names Sarah and Catherine. The murders were the result of a surprise raid by a band of about three hundred Indians on the outskirts of Providence on April 18<sup>th</sup>, 1659 A.D. About one hundred of the settlers were killed and a like number of the raiders also lost their lives. This raid had the result of the settlers becoming better prepared to cope with any other raids that may accrue in the future by securing more arms and erecting a large bell to be rung only when danger appeared. But after several years it was deemed unnecessary to keep in repair and it was discontinued for there were no more raids by Indians. The bell was then given to a Protestant church.

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<sup>58</sup> It is amazing that if this were a true family history, with so little information about individuals how do they know how many men changed their surnames.

<sup>59</sup> This is not an accurate statement at all. It is proven that many times the spelling of the name Craycroft was changed to one of the previously mentioned spellings as a result of misunderstandings by civil officials in recording the names or subsequent people incorrectly reading and/or transcribing the name in official documents and the spelling change stuck.

The large family lived in Providence until September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1667 A.D. when they moved to Boston, Massachusetts, where they lived until both parents died in 1672 A.D. of some mysterious ailment thought to have been poisoned by the medicine of the cooking of roots and herbs by a local doctor named Doctor Henry Davis. No investigation was ever made so far as any of the Craycroft records show. Benjamin Jr. joined the local Army when only seventeen years of age, where he remained until August 10<sup>th</sup>, 1663 A.D. Upon his retirement from the Army he returned to Boston for a Christmas celebration December 25<sup>th</sup>, 1663 A.D. where he was married to Louise Paterson after an acquaintance of only six hours, it apparently being a rare case of love at first sight. It proved to be a real love case for they lived together very happily and raised a large family.

They had ten boys and three girls born as follows. Benjamin Jr. III their first child was born June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1665 A.D., Edna born January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1667 A.D., Thomas born January 6<sup>th</sup>, 1669 A.D., Jonathan born January 10<sup>th</sup>, 1670 A.D., Samuel born December 20<sup>th</sup>, 1672 A.D. Attention is directed to the births of Thomas and Jonathan for it is very unusual for it will be noticed the two were born within only one year and four days of each other.<sup>60</sup> They both were exceptionally strong and healthy children. Ralph born August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1674 A.D., Mathew born February 27<sup>th</sup>, 1676 A.D., Timothy born December 18<sup>th</sup>, 1676 A.D., George born September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1687 A.D., Douglas born July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1680 A.D., Marie born November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1683 and Ida born May 16<sup>th</sup>, 1685 A.D. All of these children lived to an old age and raised large families even the three girls married and imparted the family name among well-known families of Adams, Burns and Johnson, by their marriage to men of these names. Many of the Adams family became famous in later years by occupying prominent positions in the service of the Army and government.

Benjamin Jr. III became the lawful owner and heir of this family record at the death of his father in 1687 A.D. who was Benjamin II. In the course of a few years the record passed into the hands of one of the sons of Benjamin III named Ralph, who was married to Jennie Armstrong on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1692 in Boston, Mass. He was the father of three sons and two girls as is herein shown. Herbert born March 27<sup>th</sup>, 1693 A.D. just nine months and twenty-two days after their marriage. James born November 10<sup>th</sup>, 1694. Albert born October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1696 A.D. Arthur born October 15<sup>th</sup>, 1697. Martha born December 9<sup>th</sup>, 1699 A.D. and Cynthia born May 29<sup>th</sup>, 1702 A.D.

Herbert became the rightful owner and heir of these records at the death of his father on August 30<sup>th</sup>, 1708. Herbert married very young he being only eighteen years of age when he married Hattie Wilson on December 25<sup>th</sup>, 1710 A.D. Two other boys, James and Albert, joined the Hudson Bay Company to go on an exploring and fur hunting expedition in the far North. There were only a few native Americans among the fur traders, most of them being French, who were very treacherous and dangerous men. These two boys were never heard of directly after they left for the cold North. But indirectly it was said that they had been shipwrecked and drifted back to civilization by an overland and Lake Michigan route. This very likely was started by some of the

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<sup>60</sup> Consecutive children being born within 12 months of each other is really not that rare. This is commonly referred to as "Irish twins". Later in this same paragraph it would appear that two other brothers are born with 10 months of each other.

Frenchmen who it is believed murdered them with others in order to get possession of their furs. However nothing definite has ever been learned of or about them, but later years there was several families who claimed the name of Craycroft located in different parts of Canada and Northern Michigan and Wisconsin and it is possible that these were children of the two brothers who had so mysteriously disappeared and supposed had been shipwrecked and had been saved. This thought had been based mostly because many of these people who carried the Craycroft in these parts were of mixed blood, they having married or at least lived with some of the native women and had children by them. It seems no further record has been kept of them in this family record, consequently so far as this record is concerned that part of the family name has long since died out. At this time all of the land laying west of Boston in 1709 and 1710 A.D. belonged to France and was know as New France.

After waiting for several years for the return of the two brothers and they never did return, then Herbert and wife and Arthur and wife decided to return to Maryland<sup>61</sup> and did return there for about a year to two then they decided to go farther west, as many of the natives had did so and reported great prosperity, so they with their children and about thirty other families started on this western trip which proved very disastrous one for all. Herbert and his family turned back after having gone about seventy-five miles west in this then wild Indian infested territory. With four other families who also turned back they reached their old home near Baltimore, Maryland, where Herbert and his growing family remained until the year of 1720 A.D. They now had four boys and two girls. William born June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1712 A.D., Franklin born August 20<sup>th</sup>, 1714, George born October 10<sup>th</sup>, 1716, Roger born December 24<sup>th</sup>, 1718, Ruth born November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1719, and Olive born May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1721 A.D. Their father Herbert died August 10<sup>th</sup>, 1722 A.D. leaving his wife with a large family of children to care for. She received some help from other members of the Craycroft family, but even with this help she had a very hard time to get along, for very often the Indians made raids and often made away with much of the needed supplies on hand not only from her family but that of others in the vicinity.

Bad luck seemed to follow this faithful little mother for in a short time, only three months, after the death of her husband she was taken ill and narrowly escaped death, but she survived this illness, but was again stricken and died two years later in Baltimore, Maryland, and was buried in the cemetery at that place. The youngest children were taken care of by several neighbors until word could be sent by horseback to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to another brother of the father Herbert who immediately came to Baltimore and took all of the children to his home in the little settlement now Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and kept them and made them a good home until each one was able to take care of themselves.

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<sup>61</sup> It is curious that the record says that Herbert and Arthur returned to Maryland when according to the record the family came to Jamestown, Virginia, then to Providence, Rhode Island, and Boston, but no mention of the family ever being in Maryland prior to this time. Why would the writer say this if the family wasn't there before? Could this be an indication that this line of the family is actually a branch of a Maryland group of Craycroft's?

Checking the Maryland State Archives I find no records of Herbert of any of his family. There are, however, numerous records dating to 1687 naming John Craycroft and Ignatius Craycroft, his son.

In about two years the two oldest boys were old enough to help neighbor farmers with their light work in driving ox teams in hauling logs and plowing. These were William and Franklin. They were strong and each was exceptionally hard working boys and were in great demand in the neighborhood by those who needed extra help and always received the highest pay for their services. In 1729 William began learning the carpenter trade and his brother Franklin started to learn the butcher's trade, but after three days work resigned and returned home for he said it was impossible for him to stand by and see the pitiful look on the faces of sheep, lambs and hogs when they were standing with their throats cut and slowly bleeding to death, which was a most cruel manner to kill them.

Soon a little later Franklin secured employment in a nearby sawmill and as he was still near his home he worked hard and availed himself of every opportunity to study and learn to read and write. He studied every book and paper he could secure and with the help of some of the good neighbors he secured a fair education and with the help of his uncle he was able to spend a year at a school in Baltimore. As he grew older he was able to hold positions of trust that required the knowledge of figures. He soon returned to his old home in Baltimore where he secured a position in the bank where he remained for twelve years and became quite wealthy by securing much of the cheap land around Baltimore.<sup>62</sup>

The constant talk of almost everybody was to go west. Then on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 1735 William and Roger joined and signed up with an expedition of about fifty-five families consisting of one hundred and ninety-four persons who were going as far west as it was safe to go. The Indians resented the gradual influx of the whites and it was a dangerous proposition to be seen alone almost anywhere. They were headed for what is now Indiana.<sup>63</sup> The two boys were hired specially to drive an eight-ox team and a six-ox team and after about a week on the road they overtook another party of about seventy-five people who were also bound for Indiana.

They all agreed to join up together as a protection against the Indians who were constantly raiding all travelers. Just before they started from this point it was discovered that an uncle by the name of Arthur Craycroft born October 15<sup>th</sup>, 1698 was in the crowd overtaken and had his family of four children besides his wife and his wife's brother's family. The Indians made several unsuccessful raids on the camp but were driven off but never without a few of the party being killed or wounded. Often many of the Indians were killed and left lying where they fell. It was learned afterwards that this was a mistake for it left evidence of death to the Indians and many times it made the Indians so angry that they attacked any and all whites whenever found. After many months of weary traveling by this very slow method of traveling, at last they reached a small settlement on the banks of the White River where Indianapolis now stands. Here they lived for about two and a half years. During this time many other parties arrived and departed, some going west, some south, some northwest.

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<sup>62</sup> I have not been able to find any land records in Maryland showing a Franklin Craycroft owned land in the area of Baltimore.

<sup>63</sup> At this time Indiana was still under French control and the French were very hostile towards English incursions into their territory. For this reason it is extremely unlikely that any English colonists would have been allowed to settle in Indiana.

About a year after the party in which William and Roger belonged it was discovered that two other families name Craycroft had arrived and still another arrived and left their original party and joined up with the one in which William and Roger belonged. This party of Craycrofts proved to be the younger brother George whom had been left with the uncle and had not been heard of for a long time. He was now a large, well-developed man and had a wife and one child. All of the Craycrofts agreed to stick together and while living here both of the older boys married. William married Jane McIntire August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1738 and Franklin married Mary Moore September 20<sup>th</sup>, 1738. Both were married by the Reverend Silas Gilbert who was one of the party traveling together that had arrived first at the Fort. In due time Roger fell heir to these records, because both of his older brothers did not care to devote their time to keeping it up to date.

Roger made a long trip on horseback to the old home in Baltimore and secured some financial assistance from his older brother in the bank there in the form of farm machinery, horses, cows, hogs and other farm needs. He started west to Indianapolis with these articles but was attacked by Indians on the way near where Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, now stands and lost everything and almost lost his life. But after much trouble he at last reached Indianapolis and the rest of his family and relatives. While in Baltimore he was able to verify much of the family records in that vicinity. He was able to carry these verifications back to Indianapolis where he added them to the original records.<sup>64</sup>

His main object in returning to Baltimore was to try to locate the records and the land mentioned in some of the records he had secured when a small boy. These records show that the lands did at one time belong to his father. He located some of the lands which lies about fourteen miles from Washington D.C. The records plainly show that this particular land had passed through several hands in the form of wills and sales to several different persons, and had at last reached the Craycroft family to a George Craycroft of Genosee Valley in Pennsylvania. At this time there were several Craycroft families living in nearby settlements. He tried to trace relationship down to himself, but was unsuccessful for very few of the person that carried the name of Craycroft had no record of their origin beyond their father and mother, a few knew their grandfather and grandmother, but beyond that all knew absolutely nothing.<sup>65</sup>

He did find records showing the graves of several Craycroft men who had been cruelly murdered by roving bands of Indians. After spending several weeks in his investigations he returned to Baltimore and secured the help above spoken of and started west again. He visited Boston, Mass., while on this eastern trip and located several near relatives of his father's, but could (*not*) throw any light on the lands he was investigating, although some of them claimed to have heard of some kind of a kidnapping by a pirate by name of McKay many years before, who had some kind of a contract with Lord Baltimore for a

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<sup>64</sup> It seems strange that if Roger did in fact do these verifications he did not locate the other Craycrofts who are known to have been in the Baltimore area at that time. There were at least two Craycroft families in this area in the mid-1700's.

<sup>65</sup> This is difficult to believe. John Craycroft was a prominent citizen in the Baltimore area. Being born in England he certainly would have known his ancestors pretty well.

large tract of land in that vicinity, but none could give any definite information as to its location or where any records could be found about it.

There are many records about Craycroft lands in and around Baltimore but he could not connect any lands with the records he held.<sup>66</sup> Many of the records it was shown of Craycroft lands but none could be found that to include this branch, the original branch of the Craycroft family. There is absolutely no doubt but that all of these Craycrofts in and around Baltimore are distant relatives for there is also absolute proof that all of the Craycrofts are direct descendants of the two brothers that landed in this country in 1642 A.D.<sup>67</sup>

Roger located a Douglas Craycroft in Boston, Mass., and they were convinced that he was a brother of Roger's father<sup>68</sup>, consequently was Roger's Uncle Douglas. The convincing fact was that he, Douglas, had in his possession some of the copies of the family records that read exactly as those he, Roger, had. It had been kept up from the time of the landing of the two brothers in the year 1642 A.D. but had run in another branch of the family, who was a brother of this Douglas Craycroft.

Roger took some of the copies or rather he took copies of the copies and returned to his home in Indianapolis and compared the new copies to that of his and found them true copies, therefore there is no doubt that these newly found copies true copies. At this time it appeared that these family records were of vast importance to the existing Craycroft families now living, and as they were now growing quite bulky, there being many hand drawn maps and all were handwritten and contained about two hundred sheets of closely handwritten large sheets, he, Roger, became worried that should they be accidentally destroyed or burned in some of the many Indian raids. There was no place where he could place them for safekeeping so he constructed a medium sized box of heavy oak timber. One that the top would fit on as near waterproof as was possible.

In this box he placed his records after he had written instructions with them and at night he went to bury them in the box he had constructed. He had selected a place on high ground on a high bluff above the White River. There were many trees around but he knew these trees might be cut into timber in later years, so therefore he must dig the burial place at some place at some point where there was a permanent government landmark so he or others could locate the burial place in later months or years, if it should become necessary to leave it buried that long. He never did dig it up and it lay buried there for many years. He made a will and in it he gave the location of this box as follows.

My heirs will find a wooden box buried in which there are some very valuable and ancient historical papers and records of the original Craycroft family. These are papers that have been carried down from father to son for many hundreds of years, and it is my wish that these records be continued in an unbroken record of my ancestors according to the instructions given in the buried papers. They are buried in a wooden box near the outskirts of Indianapolis, Indiana. Starting at the

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<sup>66</sup> Around this time Hackthorn Heath, home of John Craycroft, would have been easily found.

<sup>67</sup> Although no proof seems to be offered in the record.

<sup>68</sup> There is no indication of Roger's father having a brother named Douglas.

United States monument of government surveys for that district<sup>69</sup>. Go directly north exactly 2150 feet where you will find a large stone about the size of mans head, buried two feet under the surface. After finding this stone, then face directly east 197 feet. Then fact directly north 136 feet and the box will be found buried under three feet of earth with 10 smaller stones about the size of a man's two fists folded together, laying on top of the box. The first large stone will be identified by my having cut my initials on its surface deep into its surface. I have watched this spot for more than five years and I do not think it ever will be discovered without these instructions, therefore I am sure you will find it as directed. Be exact in your measurements. If you do not find it I am sure you have made a mistake in your starting point or your measurements. It is there. Find it. Their real value lies in the ancient history of the Craycroft history and other connected history.

These papers were left buried many, many years, when at last they were discovered by the directions given in some of the old papers and wills were located in an old box trunk by some of the direct heirs of William Roger Craycroft. These papers claimed title to some land near Baltimore. This record is being copied word for word because some of the old papers were very badly decayed, and the ink used is so dim that it will not be strong enough to be seen very long. Some parts had to be brought out by chemicals to make them visible.

Roger, as he was called by the family and friends he preferring to use that name instead of his first that of William, had six boys and three girls, born as follows: Roger Jr., born August 20<sup>th</sup>, 1739, Thomas, born August 14<sup>th</sup>, 1741, Franklin, born September 16<sup>th</sup>, 1743, Thomas, born November 10<sup>th</sup>, 1746, Benjamin, born February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1748, Earl, born August 30<sup>th</sup>, 1751, Ruth, born November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1752, Olive, born July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1753, and Melba, born September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1755. All were born in and near Indianapolis. The United States government or rather the colonies were busy at this time surveying all the lands recently acquired or claimed, and there was a great demand for experienced surveyors.<sup>70</sup> Roger Sr. was an excellent surveyor and he with some of his oldest boys made up a good crew to do some of this surveying. New settlers were now arriving almost daily. The Indians had been driven farther west, but many remained in sparsely settled districts, and still continued to make a few raids about every so often. Many settlers continued their trip to points farther west where the Indians told them of a great river, which later proved to be the great Mississippi River. Roger Sr. and the boys assisted in surveying lands in Indiana, both north and south of Indianapolis. Their surveys reached as far north as the coast of Lake Michigan.

One of the sons married a girl named Amanda Collins on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1765. He and his bride moved to Vincennes, Indiana. Vincennes was only a few miles south of

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<sup>69</sup> This sentence casts serious doubt on the entire passage, leading me to think that this event never took place. First, at the time that this event is supposed to have taken place the United States did not exist as it was still an English colony. Second, there was no known survey taken of this area until after 1800.

<sup>70</sup> As I've noted in the italicized notes on the next page, England would not gain control of Indiana until 1763.

Indianapolis<sup>71</sup> and was the oldest settlement in that vicinity, as some of the older settlers had settled there as far back as 1735 and they claimed a few had settled there even before that, but the real bona fide settlers dated from 1735.

*Looking at the history of Indiana and Indianapolis I have found the following:*

*In 1679 Robert Cavelier, Lord de La Salle, traveled by boat from Michigan down the St. Joseph River. To the south, traders from the Carolinas and from Pennsylvania settled on the Ohio and the Wabash river shores, threatening the French traders, to whom the region was a means of connecting Canada and Louisiana. To protect the route to the Mississippi, the French built Fort-Miami (1704); Fort-Ouiatanon (1719), near present-day Lafayette; and Fort-Vincennes (1732), one of the first permanent white settlements west of the Appalachians.*

*In 1763 the area, part of what came to be known as the Northwest Territory, was ceded to England, which forbade further white settlement. The prohibition was largely ignored, and in 1774 Parliament annexed the lands to Quebec. During the American Revolution Virginia, Connecticut, and Massachusetts made claims on the land, and in 1779 George Rogers Clark secured the area for the rebelling colonies by leading his troops on a surprise march from Kaskaskia to Vincennes. (Encyclopedia Britannica)*

*It is highly unlikely that Roger Craycroft lived in Indianapolis or the land later to bear that name, or that his children were born there. "The first white residents of the (Marion) county, Mr. Duncan (before referred to) says, were Judge Fabius M. Finch, his father and family, who came to the site of Noblesville or near it in the spring of 1819, "that region being then a part of the county, but separated in a few years. In the fall of 1818 one Dr. Douglass came up the river from below to the Bluff and remained there a short time, and in January, 1819 James Paxton came down the river from the upper waters to the site of the city (Indianapolis), and came again a year later in 1820 The first settler in the present area of the county will probably remain an unsettled question for all time, as it was a disputed point in 1822, has been ever since and is more peremptorily disputed now than ever. The prevailing tradition is that George Pogue, a blacksmith from the White Water settlements, came here March 2, 1819, building a double log cabin on the line of Michigan Street a little way east of the creek on the high ground bordering the creek bottom, and lived there with his family the solitary occupants of Marion County within its present limits till the 27th of the following February, when John and James McCormick arrived with their families and built cabins on the river bank near the old National road bridge." (HISTORY OF INDIANAPOLIS, MARION COUNTY, INDIANA By: B.R. Sulgrove, 1884)*

*So we see that the area of Indianapolis was not settled until almost 90 years after Roger Craycroft supposedly came to the area.*

This map of Indiana (*missing from the record*) shows the route the Craycroft family traveled on their long tiresome and dangerous trip from Baltimore, Maryland, to Indianapolis and Vincennes, Indiana and return. After several years of hardships and

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<sup>71</sup> Actually Vincennes is about 120 miles southwest of Indianapolis.

suffering they decided to return to Baltimore. The dark line is the old original road built by the government and kept up along which almost all settlements were built and were the safest to use as a protection against hostile Indian raids. The line from Indianapolis north to Lake Michigan is along the territory that was surveyed, and the road that Henry Roy Craycroft took on his trip north and never returned.

After William Roger Craycroft Sr. buried the family records at Indianapolis he continued to keep records of the family, intending some day to return to Indianapolis and recover those he had buried for safekeeping or if he did not he was killed by Indians, those surviving could add his later records to those buried if and when they were recovered if ever.

They were now making their home about eight miles from Vincennes and on account of several other families and neighbors living at from half-mile to several miles, he felt fairly safe from Indian raids. But this confidence did not prove any too safe as we will relate presently.

Again speaking of the records, he was the only one so far as he knew that had any records of the family and he felt they were safe in being buried as has been related above. Living in Vincennes was the next oldest of the family was his brother Stephen Lawrence Craycroft<sup>72</sup> aged sixty-four years. One of the girls, Mary, married Jasper Ketchum when she was twenty years old. He was twenty-four years old. They set up housekeeping in a house he built on the same plot of ground as Stephen L. Craycroft. Here they had several children, but on account of she being a female and married Ketchum, she did not carry her family name of Craycroft but acquired the name of Ketchum the record did not keep any of the records of the female Craycrofts and that prevailed in this case. But this much is known to be true.

She lived to be one hundred and eight years old. And she died at the old family home near Walnut Hill, Illinois, early in 1879 and was buried in the Walnut Hill Cemetery. She was the oldest Craycroft ever known to pass the hundred-year mark. She is mentioned in this record later, for she was making her home with one of the Craycroft family at the time of her death.<sup>73</sup>

Franklin Roger Craycroft, Jr. is now the holder of the family record because his father Franklin Roger Sr. felt that he would never be able to return to Indianapolis to get the ones he had buried. In this he was mistaken for in about three years after he had buried them he made a special trip up to Indianapolis and recovered all the papers and returned to Vincennes with them. But upon his death later all of his other sons that on account of

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<sup>72</sup> According to the previous list of Roger's siblings the next oldest brother was George, not Stephen.

<sup>73</sup> According to the 1870 Illinois Census for Walnut Hill, Marion county, an Elizabeth Ketchum lived next to John and Elizabeth Fouts (she being married to Benjamin Craycroft previously) and Thomas Benton and Lydia Craycroft. Elizabeth Ketchum was 90 at the time of the census and was born in North Carolina, as was John Fouts. It is possible that she was John's mother. John was 68 at that same time. If I am correct that John Wesley Craycroft wrote this part of the history it is quite possible that he knew about Mrs. Ketchum but was unclear about her relationship to the family.

their father desiring that William Roger Craycroft Jr.<sup>74</sup> have the records they consented to his last desire, and the boy was given full right and possession of the records.

It will be remembered the family was at this time living about eight miles from Vincennes and he was about fourteen years old. He often proved himself a very lively and dependable boy and was constantly doing things that would be credit to one much older than himself. One noticeable trait was he seemed to dwell on the tactics of Indian fighting, and was often seen playing at fighting Indians. He had often seen Indians tricks both in play fighting and in actual battles, and would play fighting with friendly Indian boys and used their tricks in tracking wild animals. This would consist of crawling along on their stomachs for long distances. Often very fast, then again creeping along in a stooped crouching position depending on just how far he was from the intended victim. The closer he came the slower he would go, until he was close enough to shoot or in some cases he would jump up and outrun the victim and make a capture.

When there was an uprising or raid of the Indians, which occurred quite often, Roger always begged his father to let him go with the posses or soldiers to fight and capture or kill the Indian raiders and be beside his father, but his father would not let him go, much to his disappointment. And of course his good mother would never consent either, also resulting much more to his disappointment and anger. He never got a real chance to fight Indians until one day when he was about fourteen years old his chance came very suddenly.

As already stated the family home was on a clearing about eight miles from Vincennes. After much hard work a place had been cleared of timber and brush consisting of about possibly ten acres and put into cultivation. It was a warm day. His father had driven to Vincennes on business leaving the boy, his mother and several other small children, when suddenly there appeared a dozen raving Indians. They appeared out of the woods quietly only a short distance from the house. When first seen by the boy they were sitting still on their ponies and apparently talking and making signs which seemed to be that some of them were to follow the woods line and keep out of sight and get on the other side of the house. The boy was quick to understand their signals and told his mother they were planning to attack the house. After some little delay which of course was for the purpose of allowing those who had returned into the woods to get concealed out of sight and to reach the other side of the house. At a signal from those on the other side, those still standing near the edge of the woods prodded their horses into as fast a run as possible while those on the other side of the house also did the same. In a matter of seconds both reached both sides. In the meantime the small family had barricaded the doors and made every arrangement for their defense. The Indians had firing arms, although they seemed to only have three or four, the majority having only spears and bows and arrows. Roger had stopped up all peek-holes except to open those as it was necessary to peek out or to poke a rifle out to fire.

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<sup>74</sup> According to earlier passages William Roger buried the records and they were not recovered until long after his death.

Hi picked up his father's rifle and as the Indians got close to the house opened fire and brought down the one in the lead, then passed the rifle to his mother to reload, and took another rifle and fired again, keeping this up until he had downed five Indians. He then crossed the room to the other side of the house, and repeated the shooting, with the same result until he had four Indians lying on the ground. He realized that his time for really fighting Indians had at last arrived he went to work with a vengeance. When his first shot injured the first Indian, the others stopped and went back to him then whirled around and started toward the house again. Then four more were shot and fell from their horses, with a loud whoop they all turned and fled away to a safe distance and stopped. All five Indians never got up again for Roger's deadly aim struck them squarely and in a short (*time*) all were dead.

When Roger started picking them out on the other side of the house they did almost like the others did. That is they stopped and looked at their injured companions then jumped on to their horses and started toward the house, but did not go far until they decided to stop, turned around and returned to the edge of the woods.

The mother and children thought surely they were doomed for they could not see the result of Roger's aims as they were inside of the house and were too busy loading guns to look out through peepholes. They had plenty of ammunition on hand, and several muzzle-loading rifles. Two other rifles of extra-large bore were also there. These two had been used specially for deer and other large game that was plentiful in that vicinity. These were always kept loaded with buckshot about the size of small beans and were very dangerous, for unlike the regular rifles the several buckshot would spread and as a result some of them would strike whatever they were aimed at. While some of the Indians were standing beside their wounded companions Roger had climbed up to the attic or gable in the roof, which had purposely been provided with peepholes for just such an emergency. He took the two big rifles with him. These peepholes were so constructed so that they could be opened and let anyone inside of the attic to look out and also shoot, but could not be seen by anyone outside the house, even at a short distance.

Roger lost no time, but promptly opened one of the peepholes and waited only until the Indians got very close together then opened fire with one of the largest rifles and immediately two Indians fell, and neither ever got up with their own help, but later they were found a little ways inside of the woods and were dead. After that Roger never fired a shot unless he was sure that his shot would reach its mark. About half an hour Roger seen two Indians creeping along behind a small fence made of rails, which ran diagonally across the open space that was in cultivation. He waited until they reached the end of the fence when one of them stuck his head out to take a view of the situation that was his last look, for Roger aimed at his head with one of the big rifles and afterward it proved that he had shot the Indian almost through his ears and it was doubtful if the Indian ever knew what hit him. The other Indian took one look at his companion and started to creep back to his companions. When he reached them he apparently told them of the killing of the other Indian, as they immediately began screaming their Indian war whoop, which they were going to kill everyone in the house. They immediately threw the wounded Indian on one of their ponies and started to run away, but the pony objected for he began to buck and the dead or injured Indian fell off and they left him and raced away. Roger did not

shoot any more for they were now too far away to be sure of striking, and he preferred to save his ammunition to be used at closer range. As the smoke cleared away and the Indians disappeared down the road the small family, badly scared, did not open the doors but remained inside. As the Indians went past the injured Indian with a broken leg, one of them stopped and placing him on the horse jumped on behind and disappeared into the woods with the others.

William Roger, the father, did not arrive until nearly dark, and they were afraid the raiding Indians would return after dark, but they did not, although the father and Franklin stood guard all night. Roger, the fourteen-year-old boy, had saved the family and his good father and mother never lost an opportunity to praise him. The first news of the raid the father had was when he was a short distance from the house he saw the dead Indians close to the house. The family saw him and as he reached the house they opened the door to let him in and was greatly surprised when they told him of the fight.

The father had for a long time been thinking of returning to their old home in Maryland but had taken no real action in that direction, but this narrow escape of his family spurred him on now to make a decision and put it in action as soon as possible.

There were no schools in that vicinity and both father and mother was anxious that all of their children should have as much of an education as was possible. But there was absolutely no possible opportunity for them to secure one in Vincennes or surrounding country. Both the father and mother could read and write a little and fully realized the advantages of an education so they had learned their children as they grew up to learn to count up to one hundred and to learn the alphabet.

The entire family had been through much hardship and had had so much trouble with the Indians that they took the lead in talking among other families the idea of forming a caravan or train to return east. Had it not been that there was an abundant supply of wild game such as wild pigeons, wild turkeys, deer, etc. they and others would have surely perished. But by trapping and shooting and other means they were enabled to always have a supply of meat on hand.

They soon discovered that many other persons were in the notion of returning east, especially the women folk. Finally about February 1, 1741 A.D.<sup>75</sup>, Franklin and others called a public meeting to be held on February 10<sup>th</sup>, for the purpose of organizing a train of those who desired to return to New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland and other places. They had left to settle in the west and were tired of the hardships.

The meeting was attended by almost everyone within a radius of five to ten miles or more around Vincennes. Some coming as far away as Indianapolis<sup>76</sup> and several as far as 100 miles. A count was taken and it was found there was one hundred and thirty-five persons

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<sup>75</sup> Here I must make an assumption that this date is a typographical error and should be 1752. A later passage says that the group mentioned left Vincennes in March, 1752. The reason for this assumption will be explained in a later footnote.

<sup>76</sup> Indianapolis was not settled until 1818.

(135). This of course included children. Seventy-two over the age of twenty years of age and twenty-seven were heads of families.

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Sidney Wallace and was immediately nominated for permanent chairman and unanimously elected by a voice vote. William Roger Craycroft was unanimously elected secretary-treasurer. The meeting was immediately opened by the chairman, who spoke along the lines of their hardships, Indian raids, scarcely of food, and the government's lack of furnishing protection from Indian raids.<sup>77</sup>

He made it very plain that he wanted every one present to have their say, no matter whether they wanted to return east or stay. At first the only speakers to take the platform were those who desired to return east, until about ten had spoken. The chairman then spoke up and called their attention that he did not want this meeting to be a one-sided affair and that up to now ten persons had spoken and all were in favor of returning east. Surely there are some who wish to stay, let's hear from them. He then ruled that he would let ten of those who desired to stay speak and then would alternate and allow one who desired to return and then one who desired to stay.

The meeting then enlivened up and many on both sides made elegant talks for and against the idea of returning east. About four hours was spent in these talks, then the chairman called for someone to make either a motion to return east or to remain here. There was quite a long silence, as no one seemed to have a motion ready or was undecided just what they wanted to do. Finally, Franklin Roger Craycroft asked for and got the floor and made this motion.

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<sup>77</sup> This is difficult, if not impossible, to accept. In 1752 this area was still under the control of the French and there was in fact a French fort at Vincennes for just this purpose and had been since 1732.

## MOTION MADE

I desire to make this motion to be voted on by this assembly—We the people of the surrounding country of Vincennes hereby desire to bring the subject up before this meeting. It seems that many of us desire to form a train of wagons for the purpose of returning to several States from which we came and some do not wish to return. Therefore those desiring to return east will vote Yes and those desiring to stay will vote No. No one will be allowed to vote but those men with families, that is those who are married and have a wife, and are at least twenty years of age. No women will vote. (Second by John Taylor)

The vote taken and carefully counted with this result:

For returning east (31) thirty-one

Against returning east (104) one hundred and four

The secretary announced the result of the vote. After some argument the chairman decided that the intent of the motion was to find out those who desired to return east therefore those 31 who voted could proceed to organize a train of those who desired to return east and those who desired to remain here could do so without any further ceremony. The secretary then announced that he had prepared a paper which reads as follows:

## AGREEMENT

The undersigned men and their families desiring to return to our old homes in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland and other eastern localities hereby agree to join up with the several others in forming a caravan or train to travel together and protect each other from Indian raids and other dangers until we reach our several destinations. Those signing will state the number of persons in their families, and it is specially agreed that after the parties signing this agreement no others will be allowed to sign or become a party or parties of the train without first taking a vote of those that has signed and voted to accept them, and that a majority of those voting will have to be secured and that all heads of families must vote. This precaution is taken for our protection so that any objectable persons can become a member and travel with us without being voted in against our will.

SPECIAL RULES – any one accused can demand and get a trial. The captain will select at random 10 members. These ten men will by a secret ballot select even out of their number. Then by a secret ballot select one of their number. The first selected will be the chairman or judge. The second selected will be the prosecutor. The remaining five (5) will be the jury and will hear all of the evidence and decide by a secret ballot on the guilt or innocence of the accused. The penalty will be given by these five, whether if found guilty or innocent. If guilty the penalty can be expulsion, a fine, which can be worked out or paid otherwise. There will be no appeal from the decision.

By a majority vote of all members any objectable person or persons may be expelled and denied further membership or benefits to travel with the train, and upon being expelled hereby agrees to take his family and belongings and sever his connection with the train.

All of these desiring to join the train will sign now by gathering around the secretary's table and listen while I read the conditions and rules that will be our guiding rules, so that all may know just what he is agreeing to, then all those who may sign, and we will begin at once to prepare for the long trip and try to be ready within (10) ten days and not over (15) fifteen days.

There being no further business to come before the meeting is permanently adjourned. Immediately there was a loud cheer and many shouted We are ready to start tomorrow. It was also agreed that nothing would be added to the agreement without a meeting of all members and then only by a majority vote.

However, management meetings may be held by those persons elected to act as directory or managers of the train.

The first to be elected will be a captain, the second will be his lieutenant and will be second in command, and all orders issued by either will be obeyed by all, but the Lieutenant will be junior in command to that of the Captain. The third to be elected will be a secretary-treasurer. Should any orders be issued that is objectionable the objector may demand a hearing as provided as stated above. Their decision will be final, and must be held within (3) three days. They may call on any of the members as witnesses and all witnesses will promptly be present at the hearing. No one will be allowed to testify that is not a party belonging to the train.

We the undersigned agree to all of the Rules and Conditions herein.

Names	# in family	Names	# in family
William Roger Craycroft, Sr.	5	B.W. Byer	2
Henry Roy Craycroft	1	B.M. Smith	3
G.S. Abbot (his mark)	2	P.W. Howard	3
C.T. Abernathy	4	J.M. Hibbard	2
G.L. Frost	2	W.T. Sanderson	2
B.P. Fuller	6	R.L. Savage	4
F.W. Wright	3	Henry Rand	3
C.L. Gray	5	J.M. Reed	2
E.M. Yates (his mark)	2	C.T. Bailey	2
R.M. Yale	3	D.W. Tufts	2
G.G. Bennett	2	F.G. Van Buren	6
G.G. Bradley	2	L.M. Rowley	2
R.L. Campbell	2	N.P. Young	3
M.P. Cardwell	3	P.J. Peacock	3
H.W. Crump	<u>3</u>	S.M. Ketchum	<u>2</u>

Total persons including children – 91 (according to record, but actual total is 88)

The total number signing is (91) ninety-one (*actually* 88) persons including women and children. A close check later proved that all combined had (16) sixteen wagons and (37) thirty-seven horses and (1) team of oxen numbering (6) animals.

Preparations were begun almost at once which included the repair of wagons, schooners, harness, tents, rifles and numerous other necessary articles to make the trip with. After one week all were ready by two wagons and one schooner and they were delayed on account of not being able to secure supplies to make the repairs. But they were secured in two days and all was in readiness to start. A meeting was called and it was decided to start at daylight, which was about 6 o'clock on the morning of March 16<sup>th</sup>, 1752 A.D. That day and hour arrived and everybody and everything was all ready and the captain blew his horn which was the signal to start and William Roger Craycroft was the leading wagon and he and his family started, following the lieutenant who was on horseback.

They planned the entire trip to follow mostly the route they had come on their trip when they came out from the east. Their first stop for their first night's rest was about 35 miles, an extra long days travel for most of the horses and an extra heavy day's travel for the oxen. But everyone seemed to think that the animals could stand to start again about eight o'clock next morning, which they did. They reached Indianapolis on the evening of their third day out, and decided to stay there at least a couple of days to let the animals rest for now they began to show the effect of their hard drive.

This staying two days to visit friends they had known when they lived in Indianapolis. It also gave one of the party to decide to accept employment with an outfit that was going to make a trip to the far north. This was one of the Craycrofts, Henry Roy Craycroft, the only unmarried man in the train. He was a brother of William Roger Craycroft Sr.<sup>78</sup> This left only 90 in the train. He owned one of the heavy loaded wagons in the train but turned it over to his brother and agreed that they would settle for it when he returned from his ventureous trip to the far north. But he never returned, nothing was ever heard from him or any of his party. It was naturally presumed that they had met death at the hands of Indians. It was agreed that when he returned from his trip he would come to the old home in Baltimore, Maryland, and that his brother would pay him for his team and the wagon he gave his brother in Indianapolis. But he has never returned.

William Roger Sr. had always said that he wanted his son William Roger Craycroft, now only about 14 years old to have the family record, and this wish was carried out after the death of his father which will be related later when it occurs. It will be remembered that William Roger Craycroft Jr. was born August 20<sup>th</sup>, 1739, and at this time was nearly fourteen years old. His two other brothers is still with the train. Thomas was born August 14<sup>th</sup>, 1728 A.D., George Benton, born September 10<sup>th</sup>, 1730 A.D.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> According to an earlier passage that listed the siblings of William Roger Craycroft Sr., he had no brother named Henry Roy.

<sup>79</sup> According to an earlier list of William Roger Jr.'s siblings there is a Thomas born August 14<sup>th</sup>, 1741, and another Thomas born November 10<sup>th</sup>, 1746. He had no brother named George. William Roger Sr., according to an earlier list had no brother named Thomas, and had a brother George born October 10<sup>th</sup>, 1716.

Their father spent much time as he could looking over the recovered papers and in explaining how he wanted the records to be kept up as had been done in the past, making sure that all understood, including his faithful wife. It left the impression with the boys and his wife that he thought he might not live very long.

Among the old papers recovered was hand-drawn maps, old contracts for the purchase of lands near Baltimore. All were handwritten and printed by hand. Many of them seemed very valuable. But he had little or no memory of most of them. So he decided that as soon as he reached Baltimore he would call on all of the Craycrofts in and around there to see if he could locate some land that might belong to him. This he did on arrival.

I should record here that at Vincennes before he left on this trip he disposed of his interests in the home and land he occupied by trading it to Oscar Dibble for a 4-horse team and a heavy wagon. Exchanges and trades had to be made with exchange of property, for there was no money there then.

Returning to Indianapolis, as that is where they were now, they left Indianapolis on the morning of the fifth day out on the road from Vincennes. They met many large and small trains, all headed west. Some had had fights with Indians and others had no trouble at all and were very helpful. None of our party ever talked against their going west, although many asked many questions, but our leaders cautioned all not to discourage any one from going to the so-called promise land. About the only answer all would give these westbound travelers was “we have property in parts of the east and are going back to dispose of it.”<sup>80</sup> Leaving the impression that we would all return west when that was accomplished. But in fact none of us ever intended to return west for all had had enough and were hopeful that we would reach our eastern destination safely and soon.

We met another lot of Craycrofts headed west, but we could not tell just how near or far we were related. We were traveling almost every day now, sometimes making fifteen miles a day and sometimes twenty miles a day. It all depended whether we could reach a good camping place and security from Indian raids. These we located by inquiring of those who were headed west.

### HISTORICALLY

Special information is here given to the reader regarding the country in which the train is now traveling so that the reader will be better able to understand where, how, when and locality our party is using on the return trip east.

(Indianapolis, Indiana, and Ohio) Indiana originally was part of the New France, and subsequently was the North(*west*) Territory. La Salle opened trade with the Indians in 1669 A.D. on the banks of the Wabash River near Vincennes. Later trade was opened with the Indians at Indianapolis in 1702 A.D. Later French-Canadians established several trading posts in the interior of both Indiana and Illinois.

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<sup>80</sup> It seems highly unlikely that anyone in this position would not warn travelers headed into unknown territory of any dangers that they would have been aware of.

In 1763 thirteen years after the first Craycroft family arrived<sup>81</sup> in Indianapolis the country was to the English. Then in 1778 A.D. Colonel Clark and his Virginians captured Vincennes with several of the largest canons and much military supplies. Then the treaty of 1783 with Great Britain included Indiana into the United States.

The Indians were very savage and resented the white people occupying their lands and killing their game. This attitude greatly impeded the settlers, and as a result many deadly raids were carried out and many white people lost their lives. Often they would descend on large settlements of whites and exterminate all men and most women, but often capturing some of the women, but often taking young women in captivity, never being seen again by white men. Indian wars of 1788 to 1795 caused great distress among both white settlers and the Indians caused by their inhuman raids. But luckily the Craycroft family having the family records had made the entire trip and arrived in Baltimore, Maryland and remained in that vicinity and took an active part in the Declaration of Independence, July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1776 A.D.<sup>82</sup>

THE FOREGOING HISTORY WAS GIVEN FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE READER SO THAT HE WILL NOT BECOME CONFUSED IN DATES, LOCATIONS AND OTHER FACTS.

NOW WE WILL RETURN TO THE HISTORICAL TRIP AND RECORD IT AS IT HAPPENED.

In the meantime many other Craycrofts had left their eastern homes and settled both in and around Indianapolis and Vincennes, and other localities, some had even settled in Illinois. The returning train from Vincennes was well on their way to Baltimore and so far has had no trouble with the Indians.

They had about one thousand, one hundred miles to travel yet before reaching their destination, Baltimore, Maryland. The slow, hard and very dangerous trip actually took them one hundred and twenty-five days. They thought when they first started out they could reach their destination on about ninety days, but owing to the many delays from various things over which they had no control, such as Indian raids, sickness, deaths, rests, and swimming and fording of many rivers as there were no bridges. After two hundred miles had been covered the one oxen team completely exhausted had to be disposed of and a trade was made with two farmers for horses. But we got only two horses for all of the oxen. But by changing our teams around we were able to place these horses and wagons that they could pull and place other horses on the heavy supply wagons that the oxen had been pulling.

They pulled into Baltimore August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1840 A.D. very tired but happy. Next day the news spread that a party had arrived back from the front of the great Western territory, and immediately most of their time was taken up by visitors that wanted to know all about the west. Now their attitude had changed from neutral to that of telling the exact

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<sup>81</sup> According to the earlier passage they arrived in Indiana in 1735, eighteen years before this time.

<sup>82</sup> This statement is very hard to believe. None of the delegates to the Continental Congress were Craycrofts.

truth of the actual conditions and hardships out on the front and in between. Within a few days they were visited by a military General who made it clear that they must not talk against people deciding going out west toward the frontier, under penalty of imprisonment if they did. For the government was doing all it could to induce them to move the hostile Indians farther west.

*The reader will have noticed the obvious error in the date of arrival back in Baltimore. I don't think that the arrival date is an error, but instead the date of departure is an intentional error. The balance of this last paragraph goes towards confirming this suspicion. If this party did leave Indiana in 1752, it is unlikely that they would have been approached by anyone from any part of the government to warn them to tone down their comments because in 1752 the colonies had no official presence in Indiana because this land was still a part of the French empire. It is more feasible that this statement may have been made for the reason stated, but without the threat, at the time stated, that is August, 1840.*

*Because of all the glaring inconsistencies in the commentary about the Craycroft trip to Indiana and their experiences there I seriously doubt that any Craycrofts traveled to Indiana before 1800. I have yet to identify, in any manner, who these Craycrofts were, but I am certain that it was not a William Roger Craycroft. At this time (March, 2000) the earliest Craycroft that I am confident of is Edward Scott Craycroft, born September 25, 1809, in Georgetown, Maryland.*

In a few days after their arrival the Craycroft family living in and around Baltimore, and there were many, arranged for the Craycroft family reunion to which those from the west were the special guests, to be held on the old original homestead near Baltimore to which there were 47 persons in attendance including children, all named Craycroft.

The trip was so long and hard that William Roger Craycroft was so busy with his duties of secretary that he could not write anything about the trip in his family record, so now that he had some spare time he devoted much of his time to the writing of incidents of the trip.

He and his family settled on a strip of land set aside for him on the outer edge of the old homestead or estate as it was then called. His father who now was about ninety years old wanted to arrange his worldly affairs so that each of his relatives would get that part of his large estate divided as he wanted it to be, for he expected death almost any time, so he transferred this particular piece of land to William Roger Craycroft Sr. and a smaller piece of land adjoining it to his son Roger as he was known, although his name was also William Roger Craycroft Jr. The father only lived about eight months afterward and died and was buried in the Craycroft family bur(y)ing plot which was located on the family homestead. Here the family lived for many years, in fact for about twenty-six years. In the meantime William Roger Craycroft Sr. and his wife died and were buried in the same plot. But not until the Indian fighting Roger had grown to manhood and married.

He seen to it that his 15-year-old son Roger was appointed the one to have and keep this family record and to attend school as much as possible. In fact he wanted all of his

children to attend school but he desired especially that Roger did so, for Roger was his special child and he showered almost all his devotion and love on him. The instructor in the school was his own sister and he often made her substantial presents so that she would pay special attention to give Roger much attention in his studies.

While on their long trip from Vincennes and Indianapolis they had reached a point on the Miami River near what is now Dayton, Ohio, they were attacked by a large drove of savage Indians. This is his account of the attack when twenty-seven persons were murdered.

We had retired for the night, when about eleven o'clock we were awakened by the screaming of many of our women, and the shouts of men. When we started on the trip we had arranged a danger signal that would be sounded only when real danger was at hand and it was the signal for all men to grab their arms and begin protecting our train. This signal was three blasts on a horn and to be repeated every 10 seconds until the whole camp became aroused and on their feet. Our trumpeter was among the first to be aroused. He promptly seized his horn and wildly sounded the alarm viciously. Within a few seconds all were up and dressing, and within five minutes all were dressed and ready to fight<sup>83</sup>. Someone kept repeating "Indians, Indians, Indians" and that was of course promptly understood. It soon developed that a few Indians had already crept up inside our camp and had killed several with their tomahawks. Our men did not waste ammunition by shooting those close in but used their clubs and when one of our clubs descended on the head of an Indian he was a dead Indian and it was the same with the Indians, for when they got in a lick on our men, women or children that person was dead. The moon was shining and shadows could be seen for quite a distance. It took our men only a few minutes to kill every Indian within our circle. Then our captain should "Don't waste ammunition, but make every shot count, and kill as many as each of you can."

Before starting on our long trip it was arranged and understood that every night when in camp we would always arrange our camp by placing our wagons as near in a circle as was possible by placing our schooners in the most dangerous places and heavy wagons in the next positions and the lighter wagons in the least dangerous positions. The children would be placed on one side of the camp, the men and wives on the other side. Those that could make their beds in their wagons or schooners *were* to do so.

It did not take long to discover that *we* were entirely surrounded by a lot of murderous Indians and our only salvation was to kill or wound as many of the Indians as was possible and do it as quickly as possible. We soon discovered that the Indians did not have much ammunition. We judged this because they did very little shooting, but depended on hand to hand combat which proved much to our advantage, for as soon as an Indian got within a short distance we would pick him off with one or two shots. We saved our ammunition by picking each other to make a certain shot and after he had fired and the Indian did not fall then the next to him that had fired would fire and they seldom missed bringing down their Indian. Although the Indians had done almost all of their

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<sup>83</sup> I find it unusual that anyone would take the time, five minutes, to dress when they were under attack by Indians within their encampment. With enemies among them a five-minute delay would mean the difference between life and death literally.

killing when they first attacked us we were able to keep them at a distance because of our being able to pick them off as they approached by shooting them before they could get close enough to strike any of us with their tomahawks.

The Indians lost heavily and after about thirty minutes they mounted their horses and rode away. We could not tell just how many had fled or how many had been killed or wounded until daylight. Several of the wounded had crawled away toward the river so they could wash the blood off their wounds, we found several that had died quite a ways from our camp but they were dead. We adopted the Indian style of braining all those that were wounded or captures (?), none were allowed to go free they would only be menace to other travelers. So we slayed them with much pleasure.

The next day a detachment of English soldiers arrived and ordered us to bury all of the slayed Indians. So we dug separate graves for each of our own dead, except in the case of husband and wife and their children if any, but we dug one long trench about four or five feet deep and dumped the Indians and their tomahawks into it and after all *were* in we covered it over and dragged tree limbs over the trench to cover as near as possible that it was a grave for when Indians discovered any graves it only had the effect of making them all the more bloodthirsty against the whites.

The troops guarded us for two days and when we reached a distance of about thirty-five miles from where the fight took place they stopped and made camp. We however kept on forward alone. This was the only raid of Indians we had on the entire trip but had many escapes. We kept meeting many trains all going west that told us of many raids having taken place in territory that we yet had to pass through. After this raid and on the advice of those we met we kept at least two men on guard all night long to guard against any surprise attack, but none ever took place although we had many Indian visitors which we thought was a forerunner of an attack, but were mistaken.

We met up with many people who wanted to join us on the trip but after a meeting and a vote was taken none was accepted and we arrived in Baltimore with only those who started with us only those that died or were killed in this Indian raid and except the one Craycroft who deserted us at Indianapolis to join a northern expedition and was never heard of again.

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After getting settled in Baltimore as stated previously and the boy Roger, whose full name was after his father and was in fact William Roger Craycroft, but went only by the name of Roger, proved an excellent scholar studying under his aunt and learned very fast and when he was about sixteen years old he began spending much time down at the waterfront of Chesapeake Bay and was often picking up some wealth by checking out on cargo for the vessels then in port. He was always in demand because he could read and write, therefore was very valuable in checking and sorting freight at its being loaded and unloaded. In this manner he was able to keep his father in acquiring more land adjoining their home. He was often offered well paying jobs to become a permanent member of the crew and sail to different parts of the world, but was a faithful son of his father and mother he would not accept a place on their ships, especially because both would not give

their consent. It was not until he was past twenty years old (20) when he actually signed up on one of the large ships for his first trip on the sea.

*At this point in the book there is an indication that there was another map that is now missing. It appears to have been a map of Ohio. The next paragraph is the caption for that map.*

The red line is the one taken by the first Craycroft's on their trip west and return. This map of Ohio shows the route the Craycroft family traveled on their long, tiresome and dangerous trip from Baltimore, Maryland, to Indianapolis and Vincennes, Indiana, and return. After several years of hardships and suffering they, with others, decided to return to Baltimore, as is told in this family record. This map is not the original map, but is one that was secured as near like the original. However, the making of the route is the one as is shown on the original. The original was in such badly decayed condition that it was absolutely necessary to be renewed by this substitute.

This ship was plying between Baltimore and New York to England, Scotland and then returned to New York then on back to Baltimore and it usually took about sixty (60) days to make the round trip. This first trip was a good and profitable for him and in due time they returned and was welcomed home, and he brought home a lot of goods he had traded for in both Scotland and England. These goods he sold in Baltimore at a large profit. They were in port about two weeks when he signed up for another trip to Scotland and England. In fact he made several trips on the same route with the same crew and captain and because of his nice gentle manners became a favorite among the crew especially with the captain. He did this for about a year. Then the owners of the ship decided to expand their business and contracted to sail the ship to include landings in Belgium, France, and Portugal then back home. On the first trip he met up with a beautiful English girl named Ellen Moore and the immediately fell in love with each other and spent every minute of their spare time with each other they could and when he had to sail they had agreed to wait for each other, which they anxiously did.

Both kept very silent about their interest in each other, but each were anxious to see the other the very minute the ship landed in about two months later. In the meantime the father of the girl had promised her in marriage to a young Englishman in London, the son of a wealthy business partner. He was a fine man and well liked by his associates but the girl did not love him like she did her American boy, and the boy (Roger) had never met a girl that he had paid the slightest attention to except her. Roger wanted to marry her in London, but she knew her father would never give his consent, and as a daughter she did not dare to even think of marriage without his consent. So they plotted against the father to marry anyway.

It was the regular custom for the captain of all ships to entertain the most prominent residents of the port just before sailing on each trip. Usually this took place either the day of sailing. The custom was faithfully carried out on this trip. At the appointed time many of the citizens including the father, mother, and a brother and sister of the girl was on the boat just a few minutes before it was cleared for sailing. The girl made a point to spend almost all of her time with her sister away from her father and mother and when

the captain called out “All Ashore” she made some excuse to her sister and told her to go ahead to shore with their parents and she would soon follow as she wanted to bid Roger good-bye. The sister gladly complied never suspecting that she was giving aid to their plot. No attention was paid about the girl until the ship was well out on Chesapeake Bay<sup>84</sup> and on its way to crossing the Atlantic Ocean with the girl still on board. Those on board the ship could see there was great commotion on the wharf they had just left, but none but the captain, the girl and Roger knew what it was all about. The ship kept on its way and paid no attention to the wild waving and running up and down the shores. The girl was a beautiful girl, full of life and only nineteen years of age and a willing party to the plot of marrying Roger even if she had to elope in doing so.

When she left her sister she secreted herself in the women’s room under some bed clothing and did not show herself until they were well out and on their way to America. The captain had previously entered the plot with Roger as he had entered her correct name as a passenger on the ship’s passenger list but this was not discovered until they *had* been out to sea for over an hour. All went well the entire trip back to America. The captain performed the marriage ceremony when they were well out on the Atlantic Ocean and made them man and wife. But the couple wanted a church marriage ceremony and immediately upon arriving in Baltimore they looked up a minister and were married by him, after a little delay in securing the necessary papers. This was done before Roger went to his home and his parents, and when he did arrive there he sprung the greatest surprise of their lives by introducing the girl as his lovely wife.

Her father and mother on shore in England raved when he discovered the girl was still on the vessel and of course thought she had accidentally stayed on and made a big fuss at the landing and demanded that the port officials secure the fastest sailing vessel in the port and chase the vessel the girl was on and rescue her, for now he began to think she had been kidnapped by the sailors. They told him there was no vessel fast enough to overtake the vessel and besides they had no right to do so. Of course all vessels were the flow sailors of that time. As the captain had properly signed all papers correctly there was nothing anyone could legally do anything.

*There is supposed to be a map of Pennsylvania at this point in the record, but it is missing. The following three paragraphs are apparently the caption for this missing map.*

The map of Pennsylvania as is shown on the other side of this sheet is not the original map that was with this record when recovered, but is one that was the nearest like the original that could be secured. The original map was in such a badly decomposed condition that it had to be replaced in order to preserve the record route.

The zigzag route is exactly the same as is shown on the original and is the original route built and maintained by the government, along which the most prominent settlements were built. This road was the safest and the best-kept road at that time in Ohio and very few Indian raids were ever made on it. There were a few and one of the worst was the

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<sup>84</sup> Chesapeake Bay is a long way from London, England. Is this a typographical error or a slip up?

one just related in this family record and is expected to be kept in the Craycroft family and can be verified by government records.

It was written by William Roger Craycroft shortly after the raid by him and added to the family record. He was one of the leaders in the travelers and he thinks he killed at least two of the raiders and he also thinks his young son (Roger) killed at least two of the Indians.

The father not be outdone arranged passage on the next ship that would come to Baltimore but it would not sail for at least two weeks but he was on hand when the ship (Standard) sailed, and in due time arrived in Baltimore. He was sure in his own mind that the girl had been kidnapped by the ship's crew and he had many wild imaginations as to what her fate might be. But he also hoped that by following the ship to Baltimore he might be able to locate the ship, her crew and the girl. He was not long in locating all of the objects of his search. Much to his great surprise he located his daughter and was in an exceedingly happy frame of mind and very muchly married having been married twice since he had seen and talked with her in England. He was not at all pleased when he learned that she was married, for remembering he had promised her to his partner in business son in marriage, he flew into a rage and threatened all kinds of dreaded things of destruction. But soon calmed down when the authorities took a hand and informed him that he was in America and not in England, and that we here in America do not permit any such threats and that no matter what his authority was in England, his authority in America was just as much as any other American. No more, no less, and it would be much better for his personal advantages if he would look at the situation in a different light.

He looked at his daughter and then at her husband (Roger) both smiled at him and Roger offered to shake hands with him, but he backed away screaming "No, no, never." The daughter jumped forward, threw her arms around his neck and kissed him many times, and with tears streaming down her beautiful cheeks said, "Father, I'm married. I married the only man I love. Please forgive us but we love each other and please forgive us." The old man also had tears in his eyes and after a moment's hesitation kissed her and held out his hand and gave Roger a hearty handshake and when he could get loose from the girl stepped over and also kissed Roger. There were several people present and they set up a big hearty cheer, and everyone there stepped forward and shook the father's hand vigorously, then turned to Roger and his beautiful wife and shook their hands and wished them a long and happy life, and the officials made it very plain that they welcomed her as an American citizen with open arms and said they hoped many more like her would come to our shores permanently.<sup>85</sup>

The three, that is the father, Roger and his wife, were then ushered to the home of Roger's father and mother, where they were the guests of honor and of course they told the old man all about their plot as was carried out just before sailing from England. They

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<sup>85</sup> It is strange that the writer keeps referring to America, and authority in America versus England. When this episode is supposed to have taken place (1749, stated in later passage) America was still an English colony and not really America. If Ellen's father had any authority in England it would be just as effective in the colony.

made it plain that they were afraid to take him into their confidence for fear he would object and prevent their marriage, so they decided on the elopement, intending to let him know at the earliest possible moment what had happened. But when he showed up in Baltimore much to their surprise they almost had heart failure. At first both Roger and the girl were afraid to venture back to England for fear her father might do something rash once he got them on English shores, so Roger gave up his job on the ship and decided he would take no chances, but would stay in America.

But finally they were convinced that the old man was sincere in his promises to accept the situation as it was, but wanted both of them to return to England with him and see the rest of the family who he knew would be anxiously waiting to know the facts and what actually became of the girl. He was so insistent that he missed the first three ships that sailed for England but when the fourth ship sailed all three were on it on their way to England for a visit to the family and the girl's many friends in London. After much explaining and with the help of her father the family accepted their explanations and received them with open arms into the family. They spent three months on this visit, and then set sail back to America. During their visit in London her father offered several excellent propositions to get into business with him in London, but Roger would accept none of them and his wife upheld his decisions. Several months *later* her mother, the other daughter and son came to Baltimore on a visit and stayed two months. Several visits were made by both to each other's homes both in America and in England.

Soon after this eventful happening Roger's father died and his large estate was divided up among his several children and other near relatives. His estate was large for his father had passed on before leaving practically all of his vast land holdings to be divided up among only three survivors.

On their long trip from Vincennes all of the Craycrofts as well as all others in the train met much extreme hardships, often running very short of foodstuffs. Several days after the Indian raid they came upon a surveying party that was in charge of a very young man, he being only eighteen (18) years of age. He had a small detachment of military men for their protection from vicious Indians. We learned that this young man's name was George Washington and he was being paid by the government to survey the lands in that locality. At first about the only important thing that we took notice of was the extremely young age of this young man. They had never seen such a young individual youngster the head of such important post as that of Chief Surveyor. However, he was approached and informed of our shortage of provisions. He listened to our appeal and then turning to another man said, "You go ahead of them and inform the officials at the fort that they will arrive there about noon tomorrow and that they will be very short on their provisions and must be stocked up before they can proceed on the trip home." He then issued an order to check over our provisions and to provide us with the necessary provisions to reach the fort. We thanked him and left about 9 a.m. and thought no more of it for several years later when our own Roger Craycroft met George Washington to check up on some surveying he had finished some time before.

This time Washington had been appointed County Surveyor of Culpepper County, Virginia. It was learned that the influence of his good friend Lord Fairfax had been used

to secure this good position, but his unexcelled ability also figured much in his appointment.

*This is where the narration falls apart again. According to an earlier passage the Craycroft family left Indiana to return to Baltimore in 1752. In 1752 George Washington was 20 years old, not 18. George Washington was appointed Chief Surveyor of Culpepper County, Virginia, in 1749. In the winter of 1751 George went to Barbados with his brother Lawrence, who was quite ill at the time. They returned in December of 1751. In the spring of 1752, when the Craycrofts were fighting the Indians and later supposedly met George Washington in Ohio, George was in fact at Mount Vernon settling his deceased brother's estate and taking possession of Mount Vernon. So it is impossible for the Craycrofts to have met George Washington in Ohio in the spring of 1752. This is confirmed by the Encyclopedia Britannica and "Washington – A Biography" by Noemie Emery. It can only be concluded that this passage is a fabrication.*

At this time money was very scarce and land was often offered for sale at very low prices, as taxes had to be paid on time or the land would be taken away from the owners. Washington was an expert in land values, which he had obtained by his employment as surveyor, which made it possible for him to purchase many valuable tracts at low prices. He never bartered with owners in trying to get the land cheap. When an owner came to him and offered to sell Washington would always say, "Set your price for your land, then I will go look at it, and if the price is acceptable I will pay you spot cash in full for it. If it is too high, then I do not want it." In this manner he invested practically all his cash in land and in some special cases he borrowed money temporarily to finish the deal. In later years he was able to sell some of these lands at prices several times higher than what he paid. In selling he used the same tactics he had used in buying, that is he would set a price and tell the prospective purchaser and if it suited the purchaser's idea the deal was made, if it did not, then the sale was off. He would not try to get any of the prospective purchasers to change his offered price, nor would he offer to sell at a lower price.

Later he became a Major in the English troops, at a salary of about \$750.00 a year. At this time he was loyal British subject. The surveying work had just about played out for all or at least most of the land had been surveyed except far out to the west and he did not care to go very far from his home at Mount Vernon. For many years after this we did not hear directly from him. But only heard indirectly of his many battles with opposing soldiers from other countries, who was trying to obtain and control lands that did not belong to them or their country. Our home was only a few miles from his but we had to cross Chesapeake Bay to get to his home and that alone was quite an expense, besides we were always kept busy at our own tasks and work. We knew his attitude toward the Mother country (England) was always of real affection and ties that bound the colonies of the Old World were not to be lightly broken. He appreciated the service that the British government that had been rendered to the provincials in the French and Indians Wars. He always advised patience until patience ceased to be a virtue. The extremely high taxes kept creeping higher and higher until it appeared to him and thousands of others that there was no hope to overcome the steady drain on them, and a committee was sent to England to investigate. This committee did investigate thoroughly and found that

nothing could be done. But one thing they did find out was that hundreds of useless family dependents such as Dukes and lesser individuals and their families were drawing very high incomes from the government and did not render absolutely any service for it, and that all of this income to them came from high taxes collected from those settlers in the United States. This committee made their report against the advise of the officials in England.

George Washington advised patience and to go slow, until they could see if they would secure at least a small reduction in taxes when they had to pay taxes again. When the Assessments Lists were again issued in 1774 A.D. it was promptly decided by practically all that the limit of forbearance had been reached. Washington was a leader and he advised that further submission seemed like folly for the heavy taxes had now become so heavy it was absolutely impossible for thousands to pay them and shortly the regular proceedings was invoked to take their property away from them, which included both land and personal property. Even George Washington who was now among the richest family in the land had to dispose of some of his most valuable holdings to be able to pay his taxes. While he was very slow to make a decision he finally made up his mind to rebel, and once he made up his mind he seldom if ever changed his mind. So he threw his lot with the other colonists that the time had at last arrived that they must fight for their rights or basely yield to lose not only their property but to lose their self respect too.

In the years 1775 to 1780 A.D. were years of testing, and some of the seemingly strongest revolutionists were tried and found wanting. Washington proved to made of different stuff. He had the qualities of a great leader and his inspiring example as well as his leadership carried the day. There were moments of fearful anxiety and dark hours when failure stared them in the face. Though many despaired Washington never lost courage. He never wavered in his confidence of the ultimate success of the colonists' cause. He reasoned that if the worst came and they should be driven from their homes, as many had been, on the seacoast he knew that they could retire to the interior of the continent and there found an empire in the west, where they would be safe and free from British interference.

The time now had arrived for help from all sources and all of the Craycroft family that had made the trip west for over 1200 miles many years before suddenly was in great demand to make speeches and inform all revolutionists all they knew about the western country between Maryland, Virginia, New York, Pennsylvania and further west. Therefore July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1776 A.D. must always be regarded as one of the principal dates in the world's history for it was the real beginning of a new era in the annals of mankind. Americans do well to celebrate and honor the day when the Declaration of Independence was signed and also to honor those who signed it. National independence was not won in a single day nor was it the work of one or two men. Our country at this time stood in need of all of its patriots, heroes and sages. Franklin's shrewdness, Henry's eloquence, Jefferson's learning, Samuel Adams' impassioned logic and George Washington's foresight, sagacity and generalship were all leading matters to our final independence. These gifts were all needed and fully utilized and carefully guarded. To extol only the part Washington did in the long and hard-fought struggle for independence is not to depreciate the share of the other colonial generals and statesmen. Nor should the deeds

of valor and patience and sacrifices of the rank and file be forgotten; and praise is due to the loyal workers at home who sacrificed much to supply the hard-earned sinews of war, and helped achieve the victories of the armies in the field. Also the cooperation of the foreign nations too must be remembered for the contributed much to the success of American arms in this war. Yet when all this is borne in mind it is not too much to say that our leader Washington was the presiding spirit without whom all might have failed.

It is a matter of record at this time that many of the Craycroft family was serving either directly in the armed forces or on the supply lines, but as this is strictly a Craycroft family record I will only record those who will be the direct heirs of this record.<sup>86</sup>

Roger Craycroft was closely associated with Colonel Washington in the army of 1774 to 1780. I held different places under his direct command. I was his orderly, his lieutenant, his personal bodyguard, his doorkeeper, and several other minor places I will mention later as time progresses.<sup>87</sup> My good wife has been very anxious for me to try to sever my relations with the army and come home, which I will do as soon as we have reached the point where it is safe

In May 1775 A.D. when we met in the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia we took a vote and unanimously decided by that vote that the time had now past for petitions and united action should be taken immediately and immediate preparations for war must be made, for blood had already been shed a Lexington, where the New England militia met the fire of British regulars. On June 15<sup>th</sup>, 1775 A.D. Col. George Washington one of the delegates from Virginia was unanimously elected commander of the colonial army. Later Washington's great success with his armies are memorable incidents as is shown by U.S. army records that were kept in Washington D.C., some of which are Saratoga, Brooklyn, Yorktown and many other localities in and around that vicinity, in the summer of 1776 and 1777 A.D. such as Boston March 17<sup>th</sup>, 1776 and 1777, Trenton December 26<sup>th</sup>, 1776, Princeton January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1777, and Yorktown October 19<sup>th</sup>, 1781 A.D.

On May 17<sup>th</sup>, 1759, George Washington was married to a charming young widow by name of Martha Custis, a daughter of Mr. John Dandridge. She is known in United *States* history as Martha Washington. He spent nearly 15 years in the quiet of his peaceful and happy home, engaged in agricultural pursuits and performing many acts of kindness for his many friends and neighbors. Then at the age of forty-three years, he was called to begin his career of honor and glory, and render those inestimable services to his country and to mankind, which have made his name immortal and never to be forgotten.

One of the most dramatic incidents I can recall to my mind in closing history of my personal knowledge of George Washington is the attempted betrayal of the fortress of West Point to the British by the traitor of Benedict Arnold. By the taking of Major Andre, the spy, with Arnold's letter in his possession the plan was frustrated. Arnold fled in time to save his life, September 25<sup>th</sup>. Arnold received a big reward for his treachery

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<sup>86</sup> In reality, over the course of more than 200 years only one Craycroft has been identified as serving in the continental Army. He was Major Charles Craycroft.

<sup>87</sup> Searching many biographies of George Washington I've never found any mention of a Craycroft serving on Washington's staff.

amounting to £6,300 but was immediately detested forever after. Andre, the British officer who arranged the affair with Arnold, was captured and hanged as a spy.

Washington took final leave from the Army November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1783 A.D. and by General Orders he had an affectionate farewell interview with his principal officers on December 4<sup>th</sup>, 1783 A.D., resigned his commission to Congress then assembled in Annapolis, Maryland.<sup>88</sup> He then returned to private life at the age of fifty-two (52) years to resume his favorite occupation, that of a farmer and planter, at Mount Vernon. But he was always considered such valuable public servant that he was not allowed to live a secluded life, for shortly the country seemed to be fast verging towards anarchy and confusion through its inadequate government and badly needed his services. Then on April 6<sup>th</sup>, 1789 A.D. in the presence of the two houses, having received every vote from the ten states took party in the election and was declared the President of the United States. On April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1789 A.D. he was inaugurated President of the United States in New York City.

On August 25<sup>th</sup>, 1789, Washington's mother passed away from her long and useful life. When the sad news passed on to him although it was not unexpected he was deeply moved by it. He served the full term as President, but looked with pleasure to his retirement and return to his home at Mount Vernon. But on the repeated entreaties of his many friends after a long and painful hesitation he finally consented to be a candidate for re-election, and he received the unanimous vote of the electors, which reflected the very popular vote, and entered upon his second term of the office of President on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 1793 A.D.

He served this second term amid much trouble and anxiety and when the term was nearing its end he was again approached and urged, and almost begged, by all to accept a third term, but no amount of appeal would he retire from his stand on his refusal to serve. He issued a farewell address to the people of the United States, full of wise councils and warning, and I was one of his very interested listeners. Both Houses of Congress adopted replies to the farewell address expressing their unshaken confidence in the wisdom and integrity of Washington and during the winter of 1796 and 1797 nearly all of the State legislatures adopted similar resolutions. On the evening of December 14<sup>th</sup>, 1799, George Washington breathed his last at his home in Mount Vernon in the presence of his good wife and some intimate friends. He died as General Washington for he was still at his death the Commander-in-Chief of the American Army. On the 18<sup>th</sup> day of December, 1799, he was laid to rest at Mount Vernon. The news of his death was received with expressions of deep regret and profound sorrow, not only from the people of the United States, but from those of other lands and nations.

George Washington was born February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1732 A.D. and died December 14<sup>th</sup>, 1799 A.D. and was 67 years old and was buried with much honor and with great sorrow and will go down in history as one of the greatest men of his time.

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<sup>88</sup> Just as a point of information, Washington actually resigned his commission on December 23, 1783.

George Washington was not a relative of any of the Craycroft family, but this reference is being inserted in our family record purposely by W. Roger Craycroft because many of the Craycroft family were in exceptionally close association with him personally and took a very active part in government, army and many other important positions, and at least two members sacrificed their lives in active service directly under the supervision of Washington. Many of us, in fact all of us, took a very active part in the elections, both first and second elections, that elected him the first and second President of the United States, and I will state here that if this record is as faithfully carried forward by our descendants for the next five hundred and over years as it has been for the past five hundred years it will I believe be honored with pride by them to be able to claim and prove that the name of Craycroft served with such an honorable and distinguished place in the independence of the United States in 1774 A.D. with and for the first and second President of the United States. Washington was truly one of the most distinguished leaders of his time.

It is hoped by me that my true story of Washington will always remain in this record and that the record will be carried forward by my descendants as long as there are any direct descendants left.

Signed: William Roger Craycroft (The Second)

This special letter was wrote and given to William Roger Craycroft as a news article July 30<sup>th</sup>, 1791----

Beginning March 21<sup>st</sup>, 1791, I, George Washington, President, left the city of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on a Presidential tour of general inspection that took me as far south as Savannah, Georgia. I did not reach Philadelphia on my return trip until the middle of the month of July the same year.

The journey was a very tiresome and wearing one and I was very glad when it was over with. I was accompanied by seven persons the entire trip one of which was you William Roger Craycroft, my Secretary, the other six persons were servants. My equipage consisted of a "chariot, and four horses, and drove in hand, a light baggage wagon pulled by two horses, five saddled horses and the fifth bay horse for my personal use". In the north, many roads were equipped, fords across many other rivers were ill-equipped and actually very dangerous to use. In the south, I was so distressed on one occasion I arose at five in the morning to avoid these well wishers, thus avoiding of much discomfort by the dust. This letter is given you my faithful Secretary in writing at your request so that you can preserve it as a personal memento from me.

GEORGE WASHINGTON, PRESIDENT, signed personally

*Because of the following quote from "All Cloudless Glory, Volume II, The Life of George Washington, Making a Nation" by Harrison Clark, published by Regnery Publishing, Inc., Washington, D.C., page 201, I must conclude that the letter above is a forgery.*

*"The President left Philadelphia on March 20 (1791) for a planned absence of about three-and-a-half months in the southern states, a trip which would include his work on*

*the national capitol. Accompanying him were his secretary, Major Jackson; five servants; eleven horses; and a chariot and baggage wagon.”*

*I have deleted a paragraph from the history here that has no bearing on the history itself. It is merely an editorial aside by a previous writer. If I had left it in it would only serve to confuse the reader.*

It will be remembered that the boy, young William Roger Craycroft, born about 1728 or 1729 A.D. and was about 15 years old when they arrived back in Baltimore, Maryland from their long weary and dangerous trip from Indianapolis and Vincennes, Indiana and that he started to a school, and at about 18 years old he secured a position on a sailing vessel that plied between Baltimore and London, England, also Belgian ports. On one of these trips when he was twenty years old May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1749, he was married to a beautiful English girl, she willingly eloping with him to America on the vessel he was employed on.<sup>89</sup> They was married just one year and two months July 15<sup>th</sup>, 1750 A.D. when their first child was born, a boy, and they named him Roger Mason Craycroft. This boy grew up to manhood and was a well-educated man. Then September 19<sup>th</sup>, 1752, another child was born to them and he was named Clarence Miller Craycroft. Then December 19<sup>th</sup>, 1754 another child was born and they named her Susan Molly. Another child was born April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1756. He was named Charles Mosher Craycroft. Their 5<sup>th</sup> child was born March 30<sup>th</sup>, 1758, and they named him Joseph Walton Craycroft. Their last child was born August 21<sup>st</sup>, 1760, which was their sixth child. He was named Oliver Washington Craycroft. All of the children were given all the advantages of education prevailing then. All of them were living well and in good health at this time, September 25<sup>th</sup>, 1760 A.D. Later we record here that all of the children grew up to maturity and married at early ages, but the large Craycroft estate near Baltimore, Maryland, had met with financial reverse and much of it had to be sold to be able to pay the very high taxes. The estate had to be cut up several times now and sold until in 1765 it consisted only of about 100 acres. Even this had to be sold in 1768 A.D.

Most of the family had scattered some going north to New York, some to Pennsylvania, some to Boston, and other places. Joseph Walton Craycroft though only a boy of about eleven years old, born March 30<sup>th</sup>, 1758, was the only rightful heir to what was left of the once large estate. He also fell heir to the Craycroft family record. He was raised by other relatives who also preserved the family record until he was married, then turned it over to him. He moved to Georgetown, Maryland, and married Jessie Freeman April 15<sup>th</sup>, 1778, and their first child was born July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1779, and was named Benjamin Joseph, his father being quite young, only about twenty-one years old when his first child was born. He had taken up the trade of carpentering and made a specialty of building homes and made a very comfortable living. His second child was born December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1781, and was named Samuel Moore Craycroft. His third child was born about two years later,

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<sup>89</sup> Again the writer has confused the timeline of his narration. It was earlier reported that it was 1752 when the Craycrofts returned to Baltimore. But if William Roger was born in 1728 or 1729 and 15 when this trip was made then the trip would have been in 1743 or 1744. If this is true then the family could not have met Washington in Ohio while on the trip, as Washington would have been only 11 or 12 years old. But if the trip was in fact made in 1752 then William Roger could not have married his wife in 1749. Either way, large parts of this history are untrue.

February 15<sup>th</sup>, 1783, and their fourth child was born August 25<sup>th</sup>, 1785, and was named Sarah Phoebe Craycroft. Their fifth child was born October 10<sup>th</sup>, 1788, and was named Bladen Craycroft, was twenty years old he had moved to Baltimore, Maryland, in 1811 and was a student in a law school there. He graduated from the school in 1813 and practiced law in Baltimore for several years, becoming a very prominent figure in local and state politics.

Benjamin Clark Craycroft was born July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1780<sup>90</sup>. He attended school in Georgetown, Maryland, and was very highly educated. He was a local merchant for many years and when he died in 1817 he was quite wealthy. He was only 38 years old when he died. Before this however, he married Martha Thompson December 25<sup>th</sup>, 1803, when he was 23 years old. Their first child was born October 20<sup>th</sup>, 1806, and was named Aaron. His second child was born September 25<sup>th</sup>, 1809, and they named him Edward Scott Craycroft. His third child was born June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1812, and they named him Benjamin. This child was later to become the one that was the father of the Illinois and Missouri Craycrofts and known as Benjamin Craycroft Senior in this family history later. His fourth child was born February 26<sup>th</sup>, 1816, and she was named Ellen Mary Craycroft. All of the children were given extra good educations being taught a great part of the time by their mother who also was well educated.

Benjamin Clark Craycroft was a very hard worker and demanded his hired help to work hard for their pay. He also demanded that each of his children have a certain task to do as they grew up in the family. At the early age of 4 years and 5 years he had them help their mother do the house work, such as wash dishes, sweep the floors of the rooms, carry in the wood for heating the house, and other tasks, some easy others hard for their ages. As they grew older their tasks also grew both in number and harder, for at from the young ages of from 7 to 8 and 9 years of age he had them deliver orders to his customers from his store. Still farther on as they grew older 10, 11 and 12 years old they became regular clerks in his store. No one was ever idle around the store or home or farm. The children were deprived of much of their childhood playing even at school, for often at recess the boys would be required to make some deliveries from the store, for the store was close to the school.

The result was that as the boys grew to manhood they left their home and secured work and pleasures among outsiders and let it be known that they much preferred that to their home life. The oldest boy Aaron left home at the age of fifteen years and secured employment as a clerk in Baltimore, Maryland. His father threatened him many times but Aaron decided to risk the result of his father's threats and remained on his place of employment. But his father also objected and made many threats against him, but the residents knowing of the hard life in the Craycroft family decided to stand behind the boy and nothing was ever done. At the age of twenty-one years of age Edward opened a store of his own and was very prosperous.

Benjamin Craycroft tried very hard to withstand the harsh treatment and stayed home a full year longer than the other boys, for he did not leave home until he was sixteen years

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<sup>90</sup> In the previous paragraph this person is listed as Benjamin Joseph, born July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1779.

of age. When he left home he followed his older brother Edward to Rockville, and worked for a time for his brother in the grocery store. He was very thrifty and his brother paid him liberally for his work and in a few months he had about \$100 saved up. One of his cousins and he had been studying the history of the west and intended to make a trip to the west as soon as conditions was right.

They met nearly every Sunday and other holiday and planned and discussed their contemplated trip to the west. Benjamin's father visited him at his brother's store one day and made such awful threats against him that the boy became very nervous and irritated. He tried to explain to his father that he did not want to return home on account of various reasons, but his father insisted that he was still a minor under the law and that unless Benjamin returned home within a week he would invoke the Minors Law and have him brought home or put in jail. This threat forced the boy to make up his mind which he did that very night. He consulted his cousin George Craig Craycroft and they decided to immediately start on their trip to the unknown to them west. They had a week to make arrangements for Benjamin's father had given him that long to return or suffer the consequences. So they began immediately to arrange their trip. After two days preparations they left. Benjamin's brother helping him only to the extent of paying him in full for his work and making him a present of \$50, they agreeing that he could pay it back whenever he could and if he never could, it would be alright, just consider it as a present. That night the brothers kissed each other goodbye and the two boys, Benjamin and George Craig Craycroft his cousin, left on their long and eventful trip to the west. In a few days they found themselves in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where both secured employment at various tasks, not steady employment but at odd jobs of helping load boats plying on the Ohio River. At last they did secure steady employment, Benjamin in a grocery store and George in a wagon-making shop. They stayed here until about 1830. They secured employment on an Ohio riverboat named Crescent Star that was being loaded for landings south toward the west and New Louisiana. They had tried for a long time to secure employment on one of these riverboats but would not take the positions before for they wanted to get a place on the same boat for both of them. This being the first opportunity they had to get a place for both on the same boat they immediately accepted it with glee. They did not know the work was of the very hardest kind of hard labor consisting of being on regular duty for not less than sixteen hours every day and often eighteen and twenty hours a day. However they talked it over and decided to stay with it as long as they could stand it, and decided to stay at least until they could draw their pay. Money was very scarce and it was hard to get their pay for the captain was afraid if he paid his help in full they would get on shore and not be ready to go when the boat was loaded. They were completely worn out to almost exhaustion when they reached Cincinnati, Ohio, and appealed to the captain to at least give them enough money to be able to consult a doctor. After much appealing and promises the captain had them sign a paper and gave them their pay right up to that day. They went ashore and never returned to the boat. The captain very shrewdly offered to give them a dollar or two more than their pay, but the boys refused this for if they had accepted this the captain would have had them arrested and brought on the boat on the grounds that they was in debt to him and was attempting to evade payment. The boys had seen and heard of many cases of this kind so they were prepared to avoid any complications.

After several days delay the boat left and they looked around and both secured work. Benjamin went to a grocery store as was usual and George to a wagon shop. They left Cincinnati after a few weeks by signing up on a boat headed down the river toward Cairo, Illinois. This was farther than they had decided to go now for they wanted to go only as far as Evansville, Indiana, for Benjamin had heard about the famous trip the Craycroft family of his forefathers had made to Indianapolis and Vincennes, Indiana, and he wanted to visit that part of Indiana, for no doubt it had by now been settled up by more settlers.

They signed up with the captain to work only to Evansville, Indiana, and when they reached that place they promptly drew their pay and left the boat. They had no trouble in securing contracts for clearing land for cultivation, for there was a great rush of settlers and many of them wanted to clear their lands quickly and get in their crops as early as possible. The boys learned quickly that good prices were being paid for this work and in placing their bids on the work pointed out that their bids was for a strictly first class job. They lost some of the jobs for their bids were too high. But they did not care much for they wanted to make a trip to Vincennes and Indianapolis and if they got some good paying jobs they would take them. But if they lost them they did not worry. But their guarantee of giving a strictly high-class honest job had its weight and they began a very highly paying business. In fact they soon had to begin turning down some good jobs for they could not secure enough help to do the work. In the late fall the rains and cold weather and floods of the Ohio River slowed up their work almost to a stop. Now they agreed was a good time to make their trip to Vincennes and Indianapolis. There was a stage line in operation between Edwardsville and Vincennes<sup>91</sup>. They purchased passage and were soon on their way to Vincennes. Arriving there they soon located several families named Craycroft, who were very friendly and all welcomed them with every hospitality they could offer.

They spent much time talking to these near and distant relatives, each trying to locate just how near related they were to the two boys. They spent nearly two weeks here and they announced they were going to make a trip to Indianapolis. There was no regular transportation between the two places, which compelled the two lads to seek employment on one of the wagon trains of freight wagoning that hauled freight regularly between the two places. Upon securing a place to work they left one morning as helpers to drive part of each day and to help take care of the stock of horses and oxen of the train. It took them nearly twelve days to make the trip. They learned the foreman on the wagons was in no particular hurry for he worked by the month for his pay and he said he was just as well off in one place as another. That his pay went on just the same, no more no less, so why hurry.

Arriving in Indianapolis they located themselves in a hotel then set about to locate them some of the Craycroft family if any. The first day they did not locate any but secured several directions as to where they could locate one or two families out on the outer edges of the town. Then by directions from this first family they were able to locate several Craycroft families. It was just like these in Vincennes each family wanted to trace their

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<sup>91</sup> It is curious that a stagecoach would run from Edwardsville, Illinois, to Vincennes, Indiana through Cairo since Edwardsville is over 100 miles north of Cairo and Cairo was nowhere close to a direct line between the two cities.

ancestry and see just how close related these two boys were related. Some were able to apparently able to trace themselves directly back to the original William Roger Craycroft who had made the long trip from Baltimore and back nearly one hundred years before. They also learned that there was an enormous travel westward of trains of settlers headed west. As many as four and five trains each day passed through Indianapolis. Some were headed west and some southwest, some northwest, and some just headed anywhere they had no destination. They were going until they came to some place that looked good to them and then they would stop and try to get located.

The two boys almost decided to join some of them. But they remembered that there was an excellent chance to get settled in Edwardsville and at last decided they would stay in Indianapolis for another week and then return to Edwardsville. They did this and had to work their way back to Vincennes, then they were able to get a stage back to Edwardsville. When they arrived they soon discovered that there was a big movement on to build a lot of levies along the north bank of the Ohio River and other smaller streams emptying into the Ohio, to keep the flood waters from flooding the lowlands every winter<sup>92</sup>. They listened to talks made in public places almost every night and soon became convinced that there was a great opportunity to make a lot of money by taking contracts to build these levies. The building of these levies was a big undertaking and there was no one that would take a contract to build more a *than* a mile or two at a time, for help was scarce and one or two men could not build a levy very fast. But they began taking contracts to build levies and when the rains stopped and the overflow waters flowed back into the Ohio River they started to work. They put all of their capitol into equipment such as horses, wagons, plows and harness. They soon started with a force of about thirty-five men on their first levy building.

After almost a year of this work they sold out everything and moved on to Shawneetown, Illinois. They arrived here in the early part of 1832 and it was just as they had learned or heard while in Edwardsville, that is that Shawneetown was a lively place and plenty of work. We had been taking contracts so long and was so successful that we no longer desired to work for others, for when we took contracts we knew we had and did make a profit on other men's work and now we still wanted to make profit on the work of others. The most prominent contract work to be had in and around Shawneetown was the clearing of land for the cultivation of yearly crops grown in that part of the state.

As we had had some experience in this kind of work at Evansville it stood us well in hand for there were many others who also were taking contracts in clearing land, therefore competition was a little keen and close. However we soon learned that most of the other contractors were taking contracts at very *high* prices and were making handsome profits. We therefore decided to find out as much as possible as to their bids and that was not hard to do in most cases, then we based our figures on theirs and cut our prices down at from 5% to 10% below theirs. In most cases we got the contract, but in some cases the contracts were given to some higher bidders. We didn't care so much about this for we soon had all the work we could do because we had some trouble in securing good help

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<sup>92</sup> It is a little confusing here. Is the writer saying that they were building levies near Edwardsville? Edwardsville is over 100 miles north of the Ohio River. Does the writer perhaps mean Cairo?

without which we could not do the work in the stipulated time therefore lost money on the contract. We were only two boys just a little over 18 and 19 years of age therefore we attracted a lot of attention and many older contractors prophesied that we would go broke because we were so young and inexperienced. We did lose money on some of our contracts but we made sufficient profits that we stayed in the business for nearly two years and six months. The work became scarcer and competition got closer and more complicated that owing to the fact that their work had dwindled down so that it took only one of them to supervise it so in May, 1836 Benjamin decided he would make a trip back to their old home in Rockville and Baltimore, Maryland.

Benjamin left Shawneetown on a stagecoach being pulled by four horses May 6<sup>th</sup>, 1836, which took him to Evansville, Indiana, and his cousin George Craig Craycroft continued to run their business. We had agreed that I Benjamin should make the trip this year and that George would make the trip next year and as stated Benjamin started on the long trip May 6<sup>th</sup>, 1836. Arriving in Evansville, Indiana, late the next evening it gave him a little time to look up some old friends but late he went to his room in the hotel and retired for the night.

*Here in the record mention is made of a map reported to show the route taken by Benjamin Craycroft's return trip to Maryland from Illinois. The map is not in the book at this time. The following passage is the accompanying description of the map.*

It will be understood that the two boys dissolved partnership at Shawneetown, Illinois, and Benjamin Craycroft went west and his cousin George Craig Craycroft wanted to go south into Kentucky, which he did. However Benjamin went west then north in Illinois. The two boys never saw each other again so far as the record shows.

So that the future descendants may be able to know the exact identity of the future Benjamin's please make note of this important information.

That this particular Benjamin Craycroft, the one that this record is of, will be called Benjamin Craycroft Senior for very shortly he will be married and his first son will be named after him and will be known and referred to as Benjamin Craycroft Junior. This is to be able to identify each as the years go on. This will enable all to distinguish which of the Benjamin's it was that came down the Ohio River and on to Beardstown, Illinois, married, then went on to Cape Girardeau, Missouri, in 1837 where he lived until 1849 when he and his large family returned to Illinois where he died.

Route no. 1 (marked in red) as shown on the map of Indiana is the route used by William Roger Craycroft, one of the forefathers that made the first and original trip from Baltimore, Maryland, nearly one hundred years ago. He made a round-trip that is from Baltimore to Indianapolis and Vincennes, Indiana, and back to Baltimore encountering much suffering caused principally by wild Indian raids besides there were no railroads or other means of transportation and only horses, mules, and oxen was the only means of transportation.

Their route across Indiana was from Richmond to Indianapolis and on to Vincennes where they lived for sometime then decided to return to Baltimore over the same route and back through Richmond and on through Ohio, Pennsylvania and Maryland.

Route no. 2 marked in green ink down the Ohio River is the one traveled nearly one hundred years later by Benjamin Craycroft who later became the Benjamin Craycroft Senior mentioned many times in later years. He came down the Ohio River as far as Evanstown (*should be Evansville*), Indiana, and then on down the Ohio River to Shawneetown, Illinois, where after a year or two he continued his trip farther in Illinois north (*actually northwest*) to Beardstown, Illinois.

But before this he made a trip back to his own hometown of Baltimore, Maryland. He used the stage then in operation. This route is shown in green ink from Shawneetown, Illinois, to Cincinnati, Ohio. From there on the route is shown on the map of Ohio and Pennsylvania and Maryland in this record. He, Benjamin Craycroft, also used this same route when he returned to Shawneetown later, and after a year or two delay he continued on into northern Illinois where he married and then went south into the state of Missouri where he lived and raised a large family of two girls and four boys then returned to Illinois where he died in the year of 1849 and died very suddenly 1851.

*Here we are returned to the record.*

About three o'clock in the morning a fire broke out in the store building next door to the hotel and he had a narrow escape for his life but escaped without a scratch but it was a very narrow escape for the entire side of the hotel building was on fire when he jumped out of the second story window of his hotel room. I got no more sleep that night and was very tired, but my stage left that morning at six o'clock and I had to be on it or lose my place. I was on it and spent many weary and tired hours in making the trip to Cincinnati, Ohio. It was a long hard trip for owing to a breakdown on the stage, we were nearly a week reaching Cincinnati and had very little rest the entire distance. Normally it took them only a little less than three days<sup>93</sup>. Then after an all night's rest we started from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, after four days struggle, resting for two days we left and after three days we reached Baltimore, Maryland.

His relatives received him with open arms. He soon learned that his father had died in 1817 soon after he, Benjamin, had left home<sup>94</sup>. The estate of his father had been divided up among his other children, leaving absolutely nothing to or for Benjamin. He had never communicated with any of them, so they just considered him as dead and he had left home without his father's consent therefore when his father died he only left him \$5 in his will. At first this made Benjamin very angry and he was going to try to open up the case again in court but the three other brothers called a meeting of the four brothers and after some long and almost fighting talks the other brothers agreed to contribute into a fund and put five hundred dollars into this fund and give it to Benjamin which was just

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<sup>93</sup> It is highly unlikely that a stagecoach could make the trip from Evansville, Indiana, to Cincinnati, Ohio in three days. This is a distance of over 200 miles. The stagecoach would have to cover 70 miles a day. It makes more sense that this trip should normally take a week or more.

<sup>94</sup> This cannot be correct. The younger Benjamin was born in 1812 and left home at age 16, in 1828.

about one quarter of the amount he should have gotten out of the estate. However he thanked them in the end and after about two months visit he returned to Shawneetown, Illinois.

During the discussion about the settling of the amount they would give him the question of who should have the permanent possession of the Craycroft family record *arose*. They all agreed to give it to Benjamin and he took it back to Shawneetown with him.

Upon his return to Shawneetown business seemed to go to pieces. Money got very scarce and general hard times seemed to settle on the town and they soon decided to close up their business and leave there as soon as they could. It took them well into January 1837, to dispose of all of their horses, mules, plows, wagons, harness all other equipment. They still had a small amount of land, which was some town lots in the town. They were worth only a few hundred dollars so they had just about decided to let them stand as they were and probably come back at some future time and dispose of them. But at a last try they offered them to a man named J.R. Robinson who had just come into the place from Kentucky and wanted a place to build a home and large barn and the location and size just happened to suit him so they closed the deal at a good price. We had closed up everything by March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1837.

They had already decided where each was going. Benjamin wanted to go west and north in Illinois and George Craig Craycroft, his cousin, wanted to go south to Kentucky. They could not agree on this so each went in the direction he wished. They paid all debts they owed and counting their combined wealth found they had exactly \$7,250 (seven thousand, two hundred and fifty dollars) each by dividing the \$15,500 (fifteen thousand, five hundred dollars) they had accumulated since leaving their homes in Maryland.

When Benjamin was back in Baltimore on his visit he learned that some of the Craycrofts and others had collected a large sum of money to finance a party to go to Indiana and Illinois and Missouri to investigate the country and conditions there and make a report. This committee had been gone several months and had just returned and made their report just two or three days before Benjamin had started back to Shawneetown, Illinois. He had attended the meeting of this report and was very favorably impressed by their report. Some of the Craycroft boys was now organizing a train to start west to Illinois in a few days and invited Benjamin to join them. But he had to refuse for he already had big business interests in Shawneetown and had to go back there. The idea of the Craycrofts was to form a large colony to settle down in some place in Illinois or Missouri. They later settled in and around Macon. The Macon settlement was their destination when they started and reached there early in 1837 A.D.

When we left Shawneetown we bought a new wagon and I had two good horses and harness. We furnished the wagon so that we could live in it and placed a good canvas top on it to keep out the rain. In this we started and traveled about twenty miles a day. My partner's name was Samuel Kinsley Dayly. He also wanted to go a few hundred miles north. In that we made a good team and got along wonderfully. We reached Vandalia, the state capitol, after several days of hard travel. It was a town at this time of about 2,000 inhabitants or this is what they claimed it was. I had the largest part of the

investment so he paid a little more than I did each day. We got along fine no disagreements at any time. There was much agitation about the building of a railroad through Vandalia, but this did not occur until many years later. In fact it was not until 1852 that the Illinois Central Railroad was built through Vandalia. Later we learned that the capitol had been moved to Springfield.

*At this point in the record there is mention of a map of Illinois, which was not replaced in the last transcription. The following is the accompanying text.*

This map of the State of Illinois shows the important routes and roads traveled by Benjamin Craycroft Senior.

Starting at Shawneetown, Illinois, which is in the southeastern part of the state he traveled east about 70 miles, then turned straight north about in the center of the state. Going north to a settlement named Macon where he found several families named Craycroft. He learned some were settled in this locality when he was back to his old home in Baltimore some time ago.

On his way to Macon he passed through Vandalia which was the capitol of the state at the time, although there was a big movement to move the capitol to some other place, such as Alton, Springfield, Shawneetown and other places and a vote was soon to be taken in the entire state to decide the issue. Benjamin and partner only stopped at Vandalia a day or two then went on their way toward Macon.

He remained here a short time and met a pretty girl and after a short courtship they were married and left almost immediately for Missouri and settled permanently in a small town known as Cape Girardeau, Missouri. Here they lived from 1837 to 1849 when they returned to Illinois where he died in 1852 at a place near Macon.<sup>95</sup>

*This ends the map text.*

After several days travel we came to a camp they called Macon and still maintains that name. In my investigations I learned that a family of Craycrofts was living about a mile from this camp in the country. I visited them and when they learned my name was Craycroft I was warmly welcomed into their home. After much talk and comparing births and other information it was decided and proved that they were near relatives of Bladen Craycroft, a lawyer in Baltimore, Maryland, and of course were distant relatives. They insisted that I stay with them until I could decide just what I wanted to do and where I would locate. Therefore I spent a full week with them. Land values had advanced rapidly and scarcely no land for sale at less than \$12.50 per acre and most of it was selling for as high as \$20.00 per acre and a few sales. Most of it had cost the present owners about \$1.25 per acre.

*The paragraph above raises a question. According to a history of the Edward Craycroft branch of the family, written by Benjamin William Craycraft (which will be included at*

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<sup>95</sup> The 1850 Illinois Census does show Benjamin, Elizabeth, Matilda, Benjamin, John W., Thomas H.B. and Columbus Craycroft living in Macon County in an unnamed township.

*the end of this transcript), the three brothers of Benjamin Senior, Aaron, John and Edward Scott, settled southeast of Elwin, Illinois. This would be in the vicinity of Macon, Illinois. It should be noted that an uncle of all four men was a Bladen Craycroft. This information is fairly reliable since Benjamin Craycroft was given this information by two of his uncles, who were in turn grandsons of Edward Scott and they would have likely known this information to be true. So if the writer of the above paragraph was in fact Benjamin Senior then he would have known that this Craycroft family was that of one of his brothers, not distant relatives as is stated. It is likely that the writer was instead a descendant of Benjamin Craycroft Sr.*

I had heard that a lot of work was being done in and around Beardstown which was located on the Illinois River, which was constantly overflowing and flooding the bottom lands and parts of the town. There was a public movement being made to build a big levy on each side of the river to keep the waters within the river inside of its own banks.

It being only about 75 miles to Beardstown I decided I would drive over there and look over the situation. My partner or traveling friend had already departed on his own resource when I decided to stop for a while at the Craycroft farm near Macon. In a day or two I arrived in Beardstown which proved to be one of the most lively localities I had seen since I left Edwardsville (*Evansville?*), Indiana, and after a stay of only two days I decided to locate there if I could get a contract to help build some of the levies. The people seemed so nice there and treated everyone with a marked consideration that it immediately imbedded a desire to become their friend. They had many public gatherings also religious denominations were holding their meetings nightly. One of the denominations, the Methodists, was holding their meetings almost nightly and was taking in new members constantly with a very convincing minister by the name of Reverend Clayton M. Johnson preaching nightly. I was not and am not now of a very religious turn of mind although I do enjoy going to church when convenient. As there was no decent place to spend the evenings I was attending his meetings nightly. It was my 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> night I attended his meeting that a family by name of Dixon I had become acquainted with introduced me to a very pretty and attractive girl by name of Miss Elizabeth Pate. I must say right here that I fell violently in love with her immediately the very moment I was introduced I was in love.

Although she was very young she displayed very much intelligence and charm and her every movement was fascinating. I was flushed and nervous at the introduction to her that I could scarcely talk and I noticed that she was also groping her way in attempt to hold an intelligent conversation.

The next day I lost no time in finding where this beautiful girl lived with her parents and I spent a great part of the day a short distance from their house in an attempt to supposedly by accident meeting some member of the family coming out of the house so I could ask them directions to a certain person's home whom I was supposed to be looking for but in reality was not but was just using that as an excuse to get contact with some member of the family and possibly later on get to meet the girl again in daylight. After a long wait her father came out of the house and luckily for me turned up the street toward me and I immediately started walking up the street toward him. When we were only a few feet

from each other he recognized me as the young man his friend Mr. Dixon had introduced him, his wife and daughter to the night before at the church meeting. He stopped, shook hands warmly, and we stood several minutes talking and finally went our way after I made it a point to let him know I was attending the church meetings every night and he stated his wife, daughter and himself were nightly attendants also. I was at the church meeting early that night and met them as soon as they arrived and when we secured a seat I was sitting beside the girl. We talked freely and at the close of the meeting I asked her if I could take her home. She blushing told me she would be pleased to have me take her home but I would have to secure the consent of her parents. No time was wasted in taking the question up with her father, Mr. R.G. Pate, I apologized and then asked him point blank and he promptly said "My boy she is only seventeen years old and seldom ever goes out with boys." I argued that I meant no harm and that I had her consent providing he would give his. I see she is a very obedient girl and I sure admire her in this wonderful trait. He said a few more words and then asked his wife if she approved. She said "It is up to you Bob, if it is alright with you it is with me." Then Mr. Pate turned to me and said, "Alright my boy you may take her home, but don't keep her out later than 10:30 o'clock and that don't mean 11 o'clock," and we all laughed and I thanked both him and his wife and the girl and I started off. I mention this in my part of this record for in years to come it may prove amusing to some of my descendants. I had never spent such a pleasant evening in my whole life. We walked slowly towards her home. In fact we walked past her home as we had some time yet to be together before our allotted time would expire and both seemed to enjoy each other's company immensely so we wanted to spend all the time we could. When we finally went inside the gate to her home she suggested that I come in and sit on the porch a little while and of course I accepted. We sat there on the porch until about 11 o'clock when I told her I thought it best for me to go for I certainly did not want to make her parents angry at me. Before leaving I asked her if I could see her again the next night she answered with a beautiful smile, "Yes certainly." We met again at the church meeting but before I left her I had told her she was the only woman I had ever paid the slightest attention to which was a fact.

We kept seeing each other every meeting until the meeting was brought to an end, which was in about two weeks after we first met. But before this time I had asked her to become my wife. At first she asked for time to think it over. I consented to wait a week for her answer. At the end of the week she agreed to be married providing her parents consented. We agreed that I was to go to church Sunday night then I was to come to her home Monday at noon for dinner and at that dinner I was to talk before her parents arm in arm and that I was to ask the consent of both parents for their consent to our marriage. I arrived at the home about 11:30 Monday morning and the girl and I were given the exclusive use of the nicely furnished living room while her lovely mother busied herself cooking the dinner. About 12:30 noon we were invited into the dining room for the lovely dinner Mrs. Pate had cooked. It was exceedingly good chicken dinner. Just before we took out seats at the table I announced "Mr. And Mrs. Pate, before being seated at this lovely dinner I wish to say a few words to both of you, and I respectfully ask your indulgence for just a few moments." We all stood up at and around the table.

Then I said, "Mr. And Mrs. Pate, your lovely daughter and I are in love with each other and want to be married. We have talked this important matter over many times in a

thorough manner and we both are sure we are in love and the only solution is our marriage. I am fully able and willing to support a wife and family and it only remains now to make our happiness complete is your consent, which we both pray for. I now ask both of you for your full consent for our marriage at an early date the quicker the better. It is true we have not know each other very long, but in talking matters over we have discovered that the very moment we first met it was an absolute case of “love at first sight” and that love has grown more and more since that time. We have both agreed on all of the details of our wedding but she being the faithful and obedient daughter she is, she insists that we secure your consent. I am now pleading with you for that consent and I promise you with all the sincerity at my command that neither you nor Elizabeth will ever have cause to regret having given your consent. May we have your consent?”

All was very quiet until I had finished, then the two parents looked at each other then looked at the girl then looked at me. This took several minutes before another word was spoken by anyone. Then Elizabeth broke the silence and said, “Father, Mother, please. I love him and I know both of you will love him too when you know him better. Please say yes. It is my only and most cherished wish, please.”

There was a slight appearance of tears in her mother’s eyes. I stood there almost breathless. I think my heart was skipping beats. At last Mr. Pate said, “My boy both of you are very young, especially Elizabeth is only (17) seventeen years old. I hope you both fully know and realize that marriage is a serious step in everyone’s life. It is not a thing to be tampered with. It is a lifetime contract and cannot be treated lightly. You must realize that one you are married it means you are tied to each other for life, and not for a week, month, or a year or two, but for life. Do you understand? For life, for your whole life?”

We both answered together, “Yes.”

Mr. Pate then said, “Well we have almost spoiled a good dinner, I suggest that we postpone further action in the matter until immediately after we finish our dinner. I am almost starved and if we wait much longer everything will be too cold to be good.”

I spoke up and agreed with him that we would wait until all had finished our dinner. The whole subject was dropped and scarcely a word was said about the marriage. We talked about almost everything that could be brought up for discussion. I told them about my parents, where they lived, and about our family history, about the Craycroft history in George Washington’s time as told in the family history, which I had read several times. They also told some of their family history. After we had all finished our dinner, I whispered to Elizabeth and told her I would like to talk to her father confidentially for a few minutes. She told her mother and Mr. Pate and I then went out on the front porch and I began my talk to convince him that I meant business in my marriage to Elizabeth. We talked for the greater part of an hour. By that time Elizabeth and her mother had cleared away the dishes and food from the table. We then went inside and seated ourselves around the table as we were seated at dinner. We sat there until about four o’clock. All had talked in turn but me. It then came my time to talk. I stood up and with as pleasant a smile as I could, I said, “I am going to start in right now on a regular

practice that I shall keep up the balance of my life. It is this. You, Mr. Pate, shall be known and called by me as 'Dad' and you Mrs. Pate shall be known and called by me as 'Mother'." All joined in a big hearty laugh. Then I said to Mr. Pate, "I am ready Dad and Mother for your consent."

Both answered "Yes and God bless you both." And Mrs. Pate said with tears in her eyes, "Benjamin I have talked this serious matter over with my girl Elizabeth and I am convinced that she would not be happy unless I consented to this marriage, and my greatest desire as a mother is to do all I can for her happiness, so I hereby give my consent," and she turned away to hide her tears. I thanked her and Mr. Pate, and walked to Mrs. Pate and holding her in my arms I kissed her several times. Then I turned around to Elizabeth and grabbed her in my arms and smothered her with kisses and they were returned as earnestly as mine were given.

That ended my nervous waiting and from that moment on we began planning for our wedding and agreed that it would take place on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1837 A.D. Promptly on that date everything was in readiness so at exactly 10:30 A.M. on the morning of June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1837 A.D. Benjamin Craycroft and Miss Elizabeth Pate were married by the Rev. Clayton M. Dobson, the local minister of the Methodist Church meeting place in Beardstown, Illinois.

Mr. and Mrs. Pate insisted that I move into their home with my bride until such time as we could decide just what we intended to do or we could provide a place of our own. I moved in but after one week we had decided to make a trip partly as a honeymoon and partly as a business trip. So we improved the outfitted wagon I had been traveling in and set out. We intended to return and settle in Beardstown if we did not find another location we liked better. We left the Pate home on June 12<sup>th</sup> on our trip and headed directly toward the home of the Craycroft family on the farm near Macon. They welcomed us enthusiastically and offered to help us all they could if we decided to locate in that vicinity. After a stay of two days we started out and headed south and west toward St. Louis, Missouri. I had heard a lot of Missouri and wanted to see what it looked like and after almost a week of slow traveling we reached St. Louis. We found that place a small town on the banks of the Mississippi River, full of life. But we also heard that the country south was being settled up by eastern people and the more I talked to persons who seemed to know the country south the more I wished to go there and investigate for myself. We spent almost a week in St. Louis then started directly south and after several days travel we reached Cape Girardeau, Missouri. Here we found a lively little settlement of a very sociable eastern people. We both liked the locality and the people and soon learned that there was a great opportunity to get into the levy contracting business. I took two contracts and started to work. Help was very scarce so I made a trip up to St. Louis to try to get more help to work building levies around overflowed land. I was able to secure 14 men and we returned to Cape Girardeau and went to work. Shortly after that several other contractors arrived with a lot of heavy equipment and began underbidding us so that after my first contract was finished I was underbid. Then the opportunity to get into the stock raising business was good. Especially there was a big demand for horses and mules for the United States government was paying handsome prices for good stock for the army.

After finishing my levy contract I decided to purchase a piece of land and enter stock raising on a reasonably large basis. At first we had bought a small house and lot inside of the town. It was not very large, but made a fairly good house to live in. Shortly after we got settled in this house my wife Elizabeth became ill and it instilled the fear that possibly the climate did not agree with her as it was a little low land and also a little swampy. There was quite a lot of ague and swamp fever. She seemed to feel very ill early in the mornings. Vomiting freely after which she would feel much better the rest of the day. We called in the only doctor in that locality and after the third call he called me outside of the house and said, "Well Mr. Craycroft don't be alarmed or worried about your wife's illness for it is only a case of she is going to have a baby. So don't worry for it is only nature taking place and within a month or two she will be all right.

This information relieved me very much and I immediately started to get into the stock raising business. We had now been married nearly two months and we were both very happy at the prospect of becoming the parents of a real child, either boy or girl would be all right with us. It turned out just as the doctor had said it would, that is her illness got better and she got to feeling as well as she had ever felt in her life. I took new interest in getting into stock raising work. In my investigating I met a pair of married people that had a small farm just outside the outer limits of the town that had fell heir to a reasonably large fortune by the death of the man's father in Pennsylvania. He had just returned from that state to settle up his affairs in Cape Girardeau so they could return to Pennsylvania to make their permanent home. He was offering his farm for a price of \$5,250 which was a very reasonable price considering all that it included, which was 40 acres of good non-overflowing land, a good log house of 4 rooms, all had board floors air tight, two wells, one 65 feet deep, the other 70 feet deep, both have a good supply of good water, a good barn, all of the place well fenced with a good rail fence six rails high, about 28 acres cleared of all trees and stumps and under cultivation. Two teams of four-year mules well broken to work, one team of five year old horses, three wagons, one light buggy, two plows, six sets chain harness, one set of buggy harness, twenty-six chickens, four ducks, three cows and one bull. After offering him \$4,500 spot cash he promptly turned it down with the advice that his offer could not be replaced short of about \$7,000. He told me that if I could pay him \$5,000 spot cash he would let me have it at once. I then offered him \$4,000 cash and the other \$1,000 in two years at 6% interest. But he turned it down saying he wanted to leave there with everything sold and paid for, for he never expected to return to that place again and he did not want to ever own anything there again. I had the cash to pay him but I wanted to purchase some brood mares and if I had all cash I could purchase them at a much better price than if I purchased on time. That was my reason for trying to pay as small amount as was possible. But we finally closed the deal at his price and Elizabeth and I moved in the last of that week, just as soon as they got out. They sold most of their household furniture and personal articles. But they had quite a lot that they could not sell and had to leave it. It was worth possibly \$150, they offered it all to me for \$50 but we did not really need any of it, so we would not buy any of it. At last the day for them to depart and they said "Well Craycroft, you are a hard man to deal with, but I like to deal with you, so I will make you a present of everything we leave on the farm." I thanked him and they left. I got two letters from him in about six months saying to please send him the \$150 for the furniture. I never answered either

of them and never sent him any part of \$150 for I did not owe him anything according to our understanding

I immediately began laying plans to get into the stock raising business, besides taking a few small contracts of levy building and kept busy all the time and within another month I had rented some 500 acres of low swamp land for pasture and had secured twenty brood mares. I had to make several trips to Illinois and one trip as far as Vincennes, Indiana, to be able to pick up the brood mares for I only bought good stock. At last I was really and truly in the stock raising business. Luckily I was able to keep fairly busy with my levy building and land clearing contracting.

Then on the morning of March 12<sup>th</sup>, 1838, our first baby was born. I had hoped it would be a boy but it was not and I was glad for Elizabeth was so pleased. We pondered for nearly two weeks over finding a suitable name for her. At last we settled on a name and called Matilda West Craycroft. She was a strong youngster and thrived right from the start and grew into a beautiful girl and looked very much like her mother.

I had been able to purchase another 40 acres of land adjoining our home place at \$7.50 per acre and I immediately fenced it with a good rail fence and used it as a pasture for my stock. I had also succeeded in renting more of the lowlands for pasturage. Now I had several young mules, which I had bought to raise, for all of them were to young to work, ranging at from two weeks to three months old. I purchased these at from \$0.00 to \$15.00 each.

Then June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1840, I thought I missed some of my stock. I got an officer and we made a thorough check and we found six mules missing. All were nearing the age of three years, the age they were being broken to harness. I had not started to break any of them but intended to start soon. All of the land was well fenced. We made a trip around the entire acreage to be sure they had not been able to jump over the fence or tear it down sufficiently to get out. Satisfying ourselves of this we then went to the headquarters of the military staff and asked for help which was given immediately.

In about ten days the mules were located in a pasture about 35 miles northwest of Cape Girardeau. They were promptly identified by my brand. The military officials turned the mules and the owner of the pasture to the sheriff and he returned them to me and the thieves (two in number) spent nearly a year in jail waiting their trial for horse stealing or rather mule stealing which amounted to the same thing. I had no more trouble until August 1848<sup>96</sup> when thieves made another raid on my pastures. This time they took 12 of my best and oldest mules. We were only able to locate three of them but the thieves got wind of our coming and departed before we could arrest them. But we did get three of the mules they had sold to farmers near De Soto, Missouri. It took some time and a lot of expense to get them back for the farmer fought giving them up unless I gave him back what he had paid for them. I would not do this for they were stolen property and I was the owner. I finally got a court order to get them and taking the sheriff with me we went to the stable where the court had ordered them kept until a decision was made. I took

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<sup>96</sup> Could this instead be 1840, since in the next paragraph the writer indicates that around November 1840 Benjamin sold out his stock raising business to become a grocery store owner.

them home and my health had began to fail because of too much overwork and I began trying to sell out.

In the meantime our second child was born on November 12<sup>th</sup>, 1840 and it was a boy this time. Both Elizabeth and I were elated. Elizabeth insisted that he be named Benjamin and named especially for me. This is the beginning of Benjamin Senior and Benjamin Junior. I soon was able to dispose of my stock raising business and bought out grocery store. I had learned some about the ins and outs of the grocery business back in Maryland and thought by slowing up on my hard working my health would be better. In this I was right for in a very short time I had improved in my health to a marked degree. I remained in the grocery business for several years during which time we had several children.

Our third child was born April 18<sup>th</sup>, 1842, and was named John Wesley Craycroft. Then our fourth child was born March 9<sup>th</sup>, 1844, and we named him Thomas Benton Craycroft. Our fourth child was born 1846. (No date given in the record, only the year of 1846. We will try to locate the exact date of birth later. If we do not we will write it in with pen and ink.<sup>97</sup>) This boy was named Columbus Joel Craycroft. All of these children were born in Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

My health has not been very good for the last year or two. We decided we would sell out the grocery store and our small land holdings and return to someplace near Decatur or Macon, Illinois. We had a few head of good mules and horses yet but a well organized bunch of horse thieves working in and around Cape Girardeau kept everyone worried for we could never tell from one day to the next whether we would have any of our stock left the next morning or not. We now have succeeded in disposing of all of our property and intend to move to Illinois within the next month. We will take our best team of horses and move on a wagon taking our time on the way. My health seems to be gradually getting a little worse and on account of so many of my mules and horses having been stolen my venture in the stock raising business can really be considered almost a complete failure for about every few months some of my best young stock was stolen and most of it was never recovered. This loss coupled with my illness has reduced my income very materially, so we have decided to get out while we can.

We at last moved to Illinois at a point near Macon. We bought a small farm of 10 acres and while here our last baby was born. It was a girl born October 16<sup>th</sup>, 1850. This was the last item recorded in this record by Benjamin Craycroft Senior for he died December 11<sup>th</sup>, 1853. He had a very sick horse and was giving him some medicine that a horse doctor had prescribed for a disease they called black-leg. The skin of the horse turned black, very black. In giving the medicine to the horse he (the horse) struggled very hard to avoid taking it from a large bottle and in the struggle he knocked Benjamin Senior down and injured him very badly and knocked a large place on his skin on his arm and leg off. It is not known if the horse bit him with his teeth or not but there was a large spot

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<sup>97</sup> I have conflicting information regarding his actual birth date. I have one date of December 13, 1845, and another of May 30, 1846. According to a biography of C.J. in Fresno, California and another biography compiled for the Soldiers and Sailors Historical and Benevolent Society the December date would seem to be the correct one.

on his arm that looked like a bite, and it was thought by his doctor that the horse had really bitten him on the arm, thus communicating the dreaded disease of black-leg to him. Diphtheria set in in a few days and he died with a combination disease of black diphtheria and black-leg August 24<sup>th</sup>, 1852<sup>98</sup>, and was buried in the cemetery near Decatur, also near Macon, Illinois.<sup>99</sup>

This sudden death of her husband was a real calamity for the widow for now she had a family of six small children to look after, the oldest being a girl only about fifteen years old and the youngest another baby girl only two years old. The first girl name(*d*) Matilda and the baby named Eliza. However the widow stood up under her responsibilities very bravely just as she had always done in her entire married life. Her neighbors were very kind and offered and did give her many kind favors. Her father and a brother came to her rescue. But of course their help was limited for they had their own homes and families to look after. She struggled along for several years and with the help of her two oldest boys, Benjamin Junior and John Wesley Craycroft, she got along reasonably well. Her main object was to keep all of her children together and with her, and while it looked very gloomy very often she succeeded.

There were several other Craycroft families living quite near in and around Macon. Some were closely related and some quite distant related and some that could not trace their relation back far enough to be sure they were related or just how close if at all. They were all very kind in their relations toward the widow and all of her children. The two oldest boys were very young, especially the two oldest boys seemed to realize the importance of their mother's loss as well as their own loss of their father and did everything they possibly could to help her. They worked at everything they could do both at home and at other relatives and even neighbors they would do all they could to make a little money to help their mother. True it was not much but anything even ever so little would help and they did it so willingly that everyone noticed it and went out of their way to help these willing young boys help their widowed mother. They proved their worth especially in the fall of the year in the hard task of shucking of the crops of corn. Although very young they could and did shuck as much corn as most of the older men did and as a result they had not trouble in always having a place to shuck corn when there was any to do.

Thus the family lived and got along in finances for several years. As all of the children especially these two older boys grew up and got stronger they were able to secure work regularly on some nearby farms and they always contributed most of their earnings to their mother's support and to that of the expenses of her family.

In March 1857 a man by *the* name of John Fouts, then living at Canton, Illinois, some distance north of Macon<sup>100</sup>, the widow's home, was introduced to her. He was a mild-tempered man and was in the grocery store business in Canton. On account of the

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<sup>98</sup> This data conflicts with the date of death given at the beginning of this same paragraph. It also conflicts with the date on Benjamin's grave marker.

<sup>99</sup> Benjamin was buried in Salem Cemetary, South Wheatland Township, Illinois, next to Benjamin Jr.'s first wife Elizabeth Ann Breese Craycroft.

<sup>100</sup> Canton is about 100 miles northwest of Macon.

widow's deceased husband having been in the grocery store business in Canton<sup>101</sup> many years in his boyhood days and in the later years of his life, the two found much to discuss and talk about. Mr. Fouts also traveled around the country buying up corn for resale to other farmers located in his district at Canton. He visited Decatur, Macon and other corn raising localities on these trips and when in the locality of Macon always paid a visit to the widow. There was a short courtship of a few months and on August 28<sup>th</sup>, 1857, they were married.<sup>102</sup> He was a few years older than she was. John Fouts was born December 24<sup>th</sup>, 1803, near Canton, Illinois<sup>103</sup>, therefore he was about 17 years older than she was. He was 53 years of age and she was 37 years of age. They lived a very busy and happy life together until he died. They became the parents of two children, both boys. The first one was born in the year of 1859. No exact date is recorded. He was named Charles Fouts. He only lived a few months and died. Then another son, and their last child, was born in Walnut Hill, Illinois, July 30<sup>th</sup>, 1861 and they named him William Fouts. He survived and at the time this record is being retyped (January 10, 1947) he is still living on the same farm he was born on near Walnut Hill, Illinois. The reason for this being retyped is because the record had been left out in the open where it got very wet and moldy and in order to save it, it had to be retyped or renewed in order to preserve it for if it had not been retyped it would have been rotted and spoiled in a short time. He is now well past 85 years of age and is still in fairly good health and may survive many years yet. We hope so.

His father, John Fouts, her second and last husband was the father of several children before he married Elizabeth Pate Craycroft Fouts and as stated was also the father of two sons by this Craycroft-Fouts marriage. He, John Fouts, was born December 24<sup>th</sup>, 1803, and died September 24<sup>th</sup>, 1888, at the age of 85 years of age. They operated a sugarcane crushing plant and manufactured sorghum molasses for many years where small farmers could bring small amounts of sugarcane, have the juice crushed out of it, and boiled so that it turned into sorghum molasses which we used instead of sugar. Sugar can be obtained but is sold at a very *high?* price of from 18 to 25 cents per pound. The two oldest Craycroft boys were not in favor of their mother's marriage to John Fouts but did nothing to prevent it only by expressing their opposition and offering to combine their efforts to support her and the other children as they had been doing the last few years. But their mother went ahead and married John Fouts anyway and their marriage proved a good one for they spent many happy years together.

At the time of the marriage the two boys had taken a contract at Macon to plow and raise a 40-acre plot of land to corn and harvest it in the fall of the year. When the Fouts-Craycroft families moved to Walnut Hill after marriage these two boys had to remain in Macon to fulfill their contract, but in December of that year, 1857, both closed out all of their holdings of corn and also went to Walnut Hill. They bought passage on a train on the Illinois Central Railroad and it was the first time that either had ever rode on a train. They rode from Macon, Macon County, to Centralia, Marion County, and as *Walnut Hill*

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<sup>101</sup> This must be an error on the part of the writer. Benjamin had worked in his brother's store in Baltimore, Maryland.

<sup>102</sup> I have a certified copy of their marriage certificate. It shows the date of their marriage as August 29, 1856.

<sup>103</sup> According to the 1870 Illinois Census, John Fouts was born in North Carolina.

was only six miles east of Walnut Hill<sup>104</sup> they set out and walked to that place. We were all very much surprised at their arrival. We knew they were coming to our house but we did not really expect them until Christmas.

The two boys were very successful in securing work in and around Walnut Hill and surrounding territory. They did not spend much of their time at the Fouts home. They were satisfied to only visit there occasionally. Their step-father and his wife, their mother, encouraged them to make their home with them and the other Craycroft and Fouts children, but they enjoyed making their own way and only visited the Fouts home occasionally. Their cane-crushing and sorghum-making business proved a very good paying business and they were kept busy well into each fall of each year. One year the two Craycroft boys were hired to work in the cane-crushing plant. But the next year they secured work on a brick-making plant and the next year they opened a plant of their own.

Elizabeth Pate Craycroft Fouts died in their family home in Walnut Hill, Illinois, September 18<sup>th</sup>, 1891, at the age of 71 years, 7 months, and 2 days. She spent a clean and honest life and became a member of the Methodist Church when only a girl at Beardstown, Illinois at the age of only 15 years old, in 1835 and remained a continued faithful member throughout her long and useful life.

She was buried in the Little Grove Church Cemetery in Walnut Hill, Illinois September 20<sup>th</sup>, 1891. Rev. James Snow officiating. There was a very large attendance which consisted of almost everyone living in and around Walnut Hill, testifying to the respect and love in which she was *held* by the community and its sympathy with the bereaved children and relatives among which sons, daughters, grand-children, and great-grand-children.

It must be recorded here that her oldest daughter, Matilda West Craycroft, made her home with her mother and stepfather John Fouts up to the time she was married to C. Tate Morris<sup>105</sup>. She then moved to Lamar, Missouri, where she lived and raised a large family and died in 1879. Her history is given in more detail elsewhere in this record.

*The above referenced detail was included in the previous transcript on two separate pages earlier in the record. I am putting these pages in here at this point to make the flow of information easier on the reader (and myself). Part of these pages also include additional information on her father, Benjamin Senior.*

Benjamin Craycroft Senior in many ways was a very remarkable man. Being born in Baltimore, Maryland, where he grew up with three other brothers. His father was a hard-working man and as his boys grew up he insisted that *they* also do hard work and seen to it that everyone did his full share of the work assigned to them. As the boys grew up they gradually secured employment from others than his father for they found they did not have to work nearly so hard and secured much more pay and thanks.

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<sup>104</sup> This should be Centralia.

<sup>105</sup> I have a certified copy of her marriage certificate and it shows her husband as William E. Morris, and they were married on August 30, 1857.

When Benjamin reached the age of sixteen years he left his father's home for conditions were not to his (young Benjamin's) liking. His father objected for he had plenty of work for all of his boys and wanted them to stay at home and help him. The boy worked hard all his life right up to the time of his death. Immediately after his marriage to the pretty girl Elizabeth Pate in Beardstown, Illinois, they worked hard together and made a fairly good estate. But unfortunately much of it had to be spent on account for medicines for his health.

They spent a very happy life together and raised a family of two girls and four boys, all strong and happy until the tragedy of his death. The map on the reverse side of this sheet (*not available in the record at this time*) shows the route they traveled together. The exclusive (red line) is shown in red to show the route taken by the oldest daughter Matilda West Craycroft Morris and her family.

Many Craycrofts have made their homes in the state of Missouri. The first was Benjamin Craycroft Senior. He and *his* family lived in Cape Girardeau from 1837 to 1849. Another branch of the Craycroft family lived in Sedalia. One of them a Benjamin Craycroft was Mayor of Sedalia in 1888 and 1889 and had one girl and two sons, one named Benjamin and the other Frank. The girl's name was Grace Wright.

#### THIS IS THE LIFE RECORD OF MATILDA WEST CRAYCROFT MORRIS.

She was the first child of Benjamin Craycroft and Elizabeth Pate Craycroft, the last named (Matilda's mother) married John Fouts of Walnut Hill, Illinois. This is mentioned only for identification purposes only.

Matilda was born in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, in 1837, lived there many years then moved to a place near Macon, Illinois, with her parents. She lived with them many years after he mother married her second husband, John Fouts. She was making her home with them at the time she married. On this occasion she was visiting her grandmother, Mrs. R.G. Pate in Beardstown, Illinois. While here she met and married Mr. C. Tate Morris and they almost immediately went to Lamar, Missouri, and purchased a farm and lived there for many years, and raised a large family. She died in Lamar in 1879.

Their children's names as given in a family record owned by their half-uncle named John P. Craycroft<sup>106</sup>, of Sedalia, Missouri, is:

1. Sarrah Elizabeth, 2. Charles M., 3. Minnie Lemon, 4. Mytrly (?), 5. Leslie B., 6. Ella M., 7. Nancy Jane, 8. Franklyn C., 9. Louis A. Morris. All of these children were born in or near Lamar, Missouri. He gave not dates of any of the births. Eventually most if not all of the children moved to California, where they married too and raised families.

This short record of Matilda West Craycroft Morris is placed in this part of the record because it has not been customary to keep the records of the female members of the family because when the women marry they do not carry the family name of Craycroft.

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<sup>106</sup> John P. Craycroft was the half-brother of Benjamin (father of Benjamin Senior), Aaron, and Edward Scott Craycroft.

The intention of the founders of this family record is to preserve the old family name of Craycroft created in the year of 1297 A.D. and that can only be *done* by the male or men of the family because only they carry the family name of Craycroft even after marriage.

SIGNED John P. Craycroft

## FAMILY RECORD OF BENJAMIN CRAYCROFT SENIOR AND HIS DESCENDANTS

This record has been re-checked from the year of 1780 to 1947. It is from the father of Benjamin Craycroft Senior on down to this year (1947).

The father of Benjamin Craycroft Senior was born July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1780 at Georgetown, Maryland. He married when young and had a family of four boys<sup>107</sup>, their names being Aaron, Edward, Benjamin (Senior), and John<sup>108</sup>.

1<sup>st</sup> child Aaron born October 20<sup>th</sup>, 1806 at Georgetown, Maryland.

2<sup>nd</sup> child Edward born September 25<sup>th</sup>, 1809, born in Georgetown, Maryland.

3<sup>rd</sup> child Benjamin (Senior) born June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1812. Born in Baltimore, Maryland. This is the Benjamin Senior of whom this family record is of. The word senior is being used for identification purposes, for he is the real senior of this particular branch of the family, who have faithfully kept the record moving from father to son since June 1297 A.D. There are many Craycrofts closely and distant<sup>ly</sup> related but this one is the one that has kept the record from father to son all these past years. Now that he is identified we start on his own family record.

He married a beautiful girl named Miss Elizabeth Pate, 17 years old, on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1837 at Beardstown, Illinois. They moved almost immediately to Cape Girardeau, Missouri, where they established their home from 1837 to 1849 and raised a family of two girls and four boys. Their children are:

1<sup>st</sup> child, Matilda, born March 12<sup>th</sup>, 1838, born in Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

2<sup>nd</sup> child, Benjamin Junior, November 12<sup>th</sup>, 1840, in Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

3<sup>rd</sup> child, John Wesley, born April 18, 1842, in Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

4<sup>th</sup> child, Thomas Benton, born March 9, 1844, in Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

5<sup>th</sup> child, Columbus Joel, May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1846, born in Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

6<sup>th</sup> child, Eliza Jane born October 16, 1850, in Macon County, Illinois.

This is a complete list of all of his children. All grew up to maturity and had families of their own later. Their histories are told in this record in the following pages.

### History and Deaths

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<sup>107</sup> It is interesting to note that the record does not indicate a daughter, Ellen Mary, born in 1816.

<sup>108</sup> John is probably John P., a son by what is presumed to have been his first marriage, to Nelly Prather.

The father of Benjamin Craycroft Senior lived all his life in Maryland and in and around Georgetown and Baltimore.

He worked hard all of his life and when he died he was ordinarily wealthy. He died in 1817 and because his son Benjamin Senior left home and came west against his will he disinherited him in the settlement of his will and estate.

The family record does not show the deaths of the first and second children born before Benjamin Senior was given possession of these records, shortly after his father's death when he went back to Baltimore, Maryland, in May, 1836. His other brothers felt he had been mistreated in the settling of their father's estate and each chipped into a purse and gave him a sum of money that amounted to less than one-third of what he was justly entitled to. They also agreed that he should have the original family record and he brought it west with him. He worked hard all his life and in his declining years his health broke and he died in Blue Mound, Illinois, in 1853. He was buried in the Salem Cemetery, Macon County, leaving a large family for his widow to support.

She married John Fouts in 1858 in Macon, Illinois. They soon moved to Walnut Hill, Illinois. She had 2 sons by Fouts, Charles and William in 1859 and 1861. She died in 1891 in Walnut Hill, Illinois and is buried in the cemetery there.

Their first child Matilda married C. Tate Morris<sup>109</sup> in Beardstown, Illinois, moved immediately to Lamar, Missouri, where they raised a large family. C. Tate Morris died, but no date given. She died in 1879 in Lamar. Her children's names are Sarrah Elizabeth, Charles B., Ella May, Nancy Jane, Franklin c., and Louis A. Morris. Their children were all born in or near Lamar, Missouri. After her death the family disposed of the family holdings and moved to California and settled in Banning, some later going to Bakersfield, Oakland, Madera and Santa Cruz, California. However most of them remained in Banning.

The second child was a boy, named after his father Benjamin and was known as Benjamin Junior until his father Benjamin Senior died in Blue Mound, Illinois, in 1853. Then this boy Benjamin dropped the title of Junior and simply used the name of Benjamin ever since. He was born in *Cape Girardeau*, Missouri, November 12<sup>th</sup>, 1840, died in Vandalia, Illinois, March 19<sup>th</sup>, 1917, aged 76 years 4 months., buried in the Craycroft family burial plot in the cemetery at that place<sup>110</sup>.

*This concludes the inserted section about Matilda West Craycroft and her father Benjamin Senior.*

Continuing about the two Craycroft boys, Benjamin Junior and John Wesley Craycroft seemed to want to be together and work together as much as was possible. The year they started into the brick making business seemed to start them on their way to remain in that

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<sup>109</sup> I am confused by the repeated reference to Matilda's husband as C. Tate Morris, when I have their marriage certificate and it shows his name as William E. Morris.

<sup>110</sup> I have a photo of his grave marker.

business. The next year they started a brick making yard in Centralia which was about six or seven miles west of Walnut Hill, Illinois.

Then the war came on under Abraham Lincoln and John Wesley sold his part of the brick making business to his brother Benjamin and went out to California. But before this we spent much of our time in Walnut Hill where my mother and her second husband John Fouts had their home.

John Wesley Craycroft was very much interested in becoming a Minister of the Gospel (preacher). At an early age he began systematically studying the bible and at an early age was ordained a Minister of Christianity by his church. He was appointed as the pastor of the congregation at Walnut Hill.

Owing to the facts directly connected with the life of our famous President Abraham Lincoln, I am placing in this Craycroft family record some of the true and noteworthy happenings of some of the family with and about our great President. On July 16<sup>th</sup>, 1864, President Lincoln issued a call for 500,000 volunteers for active duty in the Southern States to put down the so-called Confederate War. Almost immediately my two younger brothers, Thomas Benton Craycroft and Columbus Joel Craycroft, enlisted in Company C, 11<sup>th</sup> Illinois Infantry. They fought many battles and both were wounded in battles. Both returned home at the end of victory of the war. Later both drew substantial pensions from the United States government on account of their injuries.

I did not enlist for I was a Minister of the Christian Church and to do as much good as I could by spiritual advice. I had been converted to Christianity at the age of seventeen years and at once decided to become a Minister of the Gospel. In looking over our family record I found that several former Craycrofts had been ministers with much credit to themselves by rendering valuable service and families. I had worked at many different jobs, among which were farming, logging, woodcutting, rail making, brick making and preaching at every opportunity. I had saved enough from my small savings to pay the expense of a special training for the ministry and on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1860, I was ordained a Minister of the Christian Church. I remained in and around my new hometown of Walnut Hill, also in the nearby towns of Centralia and the county seat of Salem and often made visits to the old state capitol Vandalia to preach on Sundays to the small Christian congregations located in those cities. On all of these trips the collections made at the meeting never paid my actual expenses although I traveled by my own horse and buggy. I knew I was doing a great amount of good so I willingly kept it up until later I went to faraway to California.

Up to this time there was no Christian Church in my own town of Walnut Hill so we had to meet in the town hall located on the corner of the Main Street and the road that went north past the John Fouts and his wife's, my mother, home about ½ mile north of this corner. Then a long time later we met in a schoolhouse located about ½ a mile west of this same corner. We did not have to pay any rent for either of these places.

I made a desperate effort to collect funds enough to build a Christian Church in Walnut Hill but failed to accomplish this self-appointed task, but I did succeed in collecting about

\$500 and a Board of Trustees was elected and the fund was turned over to them before I left for California later. I was told years later that this Board with the help of another minister succeeded in building a church but I never learned whether it was a Christian Church or a community church where all the different denominations could meet. I was told years later on which the church was finally built was donated by Richard Breese, a wealthy landowner in Walnut Hill, who years afterward became the father-in-law of Benjamin Craycroft, my oldest brother, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1861.

I occupied the pulpit for the Christian Church for quite a long time after President Lincoln issued his call for volunteers of 500,000 July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1864, and as stated before by me in this record two of my younger brothers almost immediately enlisted, I think it was on July 16<sup>th</sup>, 1864, and left at once for army duty. They tried very hard to get me to enlist but I did not for several good reasons. But they did succeed in getting a neighbor boy named S. Jack Shaw to enlist so they all left together. This boy, S. Jack Shaw, later married my only living sister Eliza when they returned from army duty. This marriage took place in Salem, Illinois, December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1866. I was then in California and could not attend the wedding. After the two brothers and my friend Shaw left I resigned Pastorship of my church and left for California. I want to mention here that my oldest brother Benjamin Craycroft was married to Miss Elizabeth Ann Breese January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1861 at Salem, Illinois.

When I left Walnut Hill, Illinois to go to California I went to New Orleans, Louisiana. After a weeks delay I secured a ship for the Isthmus of Panama and landed at (*the writer, thought to be John Wesley Craycroft, does not say where this was*)

We made several landings before we reached our landing place in Panama, some of which I never learned their names, for I was seasick most of the time and was in bed at several of the landings. But I do remember we landed some place in Mexico, Brazil<sup>111</sup> and two other places I do not know. After about three weeks we finally landed and were informed that this is the place you go across the Isthmus of Panama and get another ship to wherever you are going. I told them I was going to San Francisco, California. After landing we learned that all of us would have to take our turn at crossing the Isthmus. That meant that all first-class passengers would be taken across first, and that would take a least a week, after which second-class passengers would be lined up and taken across next. I held second-class passage, therefore had to wait for several days before I could even start across. It was only about 31 miles by stage road across, but was a very dangerous road to travel on account of the extreme heat and mosquitoes of which there were an unlimited number, any of the female specie could cause death from fever. We went around every day with our heads wrapped in a cloth called Mosquito-Bar over our entire heads and hands for fear one might bite us. Some of the second-class passengers, weary of waiting, started out and walked across the isthmus and thought they could and would make it in not more than two days at most. Some of them never succeeded in arriving at the western side of the isthmus, but fell very ill on the way and most of them

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<sup>111</sup> Brazil is not a likely port-of-call on a trip from New Orleans to Panama as it a very long distance from Panama. Belize, Honduras, is much more likely.

died. Some got across but were too ill to get on the boat when it sailed, while others succeeded in getting on the boat, but died at sea, and had to be buried at sea.

All of us were warned by the officials and others also warned by the natives not to try to walk across, but all of us thought they only did it so that the state companies could get the money it would cost us to ride across. But in this we found later that we were badly mistaken, for as we went across on the stage, we could see many of those who were well and hearty on the boat were staggering along the road and we could plainly see that they were just about staggered out. The stages could not pick them up en route for they were loaded to full capacity before starting across. It was the most horrifying sight I have ever seen. Even the horses and mules used in pulling the stages had to be protected from the bites of the deadly mosquitoes. Some were coated with some liquid concoction while others were covered with Mosquito-Bars like the passengers.

Arriving at the western terminus where we would be taken by small boats out to the larger sailing vessels that would take us up the western coast of Mexico and California to San Francisco, we found another delay of possibly another week at least and perhaps longer. For in some instances the sailing ships were badly delayed by storms at sea and many times were wrecked, so there was absolutely no permanent way that we could tell just when we would be able to set sail. The only real way we could be partly certain was after we were actually on the boat and even then we might be delayed a day or two on account of a heavy storm. It was a long, hard, dangerous and weary trip and I shall never forget it and I am giving this account to be placed in the Craycroft family record for a permanent record for our future descendants. I am writing it now and will send it to my oldest brother Benjamin and ask him to place it in the record.

I arrived in San Francisco on March 29<sup>th</sup>, 1863, and was seasick a greater part of the way from Panama. But after a few days rest I had my strength partly back and began making plans. First I found out all I could about the gold mining and found that anyone could get a job in the mining district up in the Sierra Nevada Mountains east of Stockton. A riverboat line could be had as far as Stockton or Sacramento, California, then from there on a stage had to be used. I did not know anything about mining but I was assured that I would find plenty of work at good pay if I went up the river. I delayed for a few days more in San Francisco and could plainly see that there was a community that needed spiritual guidance so I tried to preach to them for a few days and evenings without very much success. I could see quickly that the people were much more interested in digging for gold than they were in saving their souls.

After some delay I thought of a plan, of going up to the gold digging country near Placerville, California, and secure a job digging gold. It was just as I had been advised that is I had no trouble in securing a job. I went to work. Each working place had one or two men who did nothing but inspect the pans of each digger as they washed the rocks and sands as they panned out the gold. If there was any gold in the pan he would place it in a small sack and write the name of the man who washed it out, this being done in each case for each worker got a small percent as a bonus for each week's gold he found and washed out. My supply of money was getting quite low so I kept this job for several weeks until I had accumulated about \$550 then I thought I would try my own hand at

prospecting and if I were successful I might make a cleanup like some had done in the past. Then I could return to San Francisco and devote my entire time to the ministry. I put in about a month at this and found that it looked like all the gold bearing streams had been taken up by others.

I then returned to working for others in the daytime and holding meetings at night. I could always have from twenty-five to fifty in my meetings and the collections were fair, but very few would come forward and confess and become members of the church. I found it was more than I could stand to work hard all day then dress up and hold meetings at night. I found it was too much for my strength so had to abandon either working or my meeting. It did not require an accountant to show that the donations or collections would not be sufficient to even pay my actual living expenses let alone pay for the use of a hall to hold the meetings in. At last I had to give up my meetings. I had been purchasing songbooks, bibles and other religious matter and upon request was handing them out to my audience free, paying all of the expense and cost out of my earnings panning out gold. After about a year of this hard work and plainly unsuccessful church effort I had to decide to return to San Francisco and get into something like farming or contracting like I had followed in Illinois. I found a place in a general supply store in San Francisco located on the waterfront facing the San Francisco Bay. I worked at this for several months then I went south to the town of San Jose, California, which was then a small thriving locality. Here I found little farming but met many different sheep-raisers and cattle-raisers among who were Henry Shaw, the Martinez families, the Crutners, Valpey's and many others.

I had in the last year saved about \$1,500 which I had made mostly in several trades I made in real estate and on the advice of some of the above good businessmen I purchased a small band of sheep and entered the sheep-raising business vigorously. I had very good luck and made a good start in my life. Although I am not wealthy I have made a good start. I went into debt and bought several pieces of real estate, which I succeeded in selling at a good profit. In one case I more than doubled my investment. I had made enough profit that I purchased a tract of land near a settlement north of San Jose, California. This tract of land became my home for many years. On July 28<sup>th</sup>, 1868 I was married to Miss Alice Valpey in San Jose, California. We immediately set up housekeeping on my farm as soon as I could have a residence built. Here we lived for many, many years and here is where all of my children *were* born which consisted of two boys and one girl.

I continued with my work for the church, also continued in the sheep-raising business but after a long time I was able financially to employ the full-time of a man to herd my sheep. My business grew and in a year or two I had increased my band of sheep to three different bands.

In the summer of 1875 my older brother Benjamin arrived at my home and after a short time he also entered the sheep-raising business. He had three children still living out of his former seven, four having died. He had arranged with our brother Thomas, who had recently married our stepsister, she was a daughter of John Fouts our stepfather. When they married they went to Salem, Illinois, and he entered the brick making and

contracting business. Brother Benjamin arranged with him to take care of his (Benjamin's) youngest son John and he also arranged with our mother to care for the girl, Lulia, and he brought the oldest boy Benjamin Richard, Dick, with him to California.

As already stated he immediately entered the sheep-raising business and rented a section or two of land in a large valley then known as Panoche Valley, about 80 miles southeast of my home. He also filed a claim on a 160-acre homestead of government land located near Gilroy, California. He and his young son Richard, Dick, able to herd and look after his sheep.

This family record was left with our mother Mrs. Elizabeth Pate Craycroft Fouts, in Walnut Hill, Illinois. She, it will be remembered, married John Fouts some years after our father's death, near Macon, Illinois.

In 1879 brother Benjamin decided to return to Illinois on a visit intending to return to California after a short visit, but he never returned. For when he reached brother Thomas' home in Salem, Illinois, he found that Thomas had invented and patented a brick making machine on May 27<sup>th</sup>, 1879, that had almost revolutionized *the* brick making business, for while men could only make less than 3,000 to 4,000 bricks per day at hard work, this machine could make 30,000 to 35,000 and even make 45,000 to 50,000 if put under steam pressure instead of horse power and brother Thomas was very busily engaged in manufacturing and selling these famous machines, and placing them on the market with very good success.

There was good enough for a good salesman who had experience in the brick making business and as Benjamin had both, brother Thomas engaged brother Benjamin's service at once to both sell and erect these machines and guarantee the successful operation of every one of these machines. In a very short time Benjamin had met a young woman named Miss Elizabeth M. Honecker in Centralia, Illinois, and after a few months of courtship they were married at the home of brother Thomas in Salem, Illinois, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1880. After that time brother Thomas Benton Craycroft sold all of his patent rights to a firm named W.R. Gerhard located at the old capitol of Vandalia, Illinois. This was a new establishment and everything connected with the manufacture of the brick making machine was moved to Vandalia, Illinois, including the continued employment of brother Benjamin Craycroft. I mention this fact in this record in order to show just why Benjamin Craycroft never returned to California in 1879 or 1880 as he intended. This man, W.R. Gerhard, in a short time met with severe financial reverses and the bank and other creditors closed him out and took over the machine shop and foundry including all rights of and patents of the Eagle Brick Machine. In a short time all was sold to brother Benjamin.

He took immediate charge of all of the property and was very successful from *the* start. Therefore he was now well established in business and decided he had far better prospects of success than any he had in California. In November 1883 I decided to go back to Illinois on a visit. This would be my first visit to my boyhood home for over 19 years and I was quite anxious to make the trip. Besides I had made a contract with the Southern Pacific and with the Central Pacific and they made a contract for me with

several other railroads in the east for me to act as an emigration agent between the East and California. In this work I would be paid a small sum *of* cash and a commission on each family or person I secured to go to and settle in the State of California.

I was quite successful on this trip both financially and pleasure. It was not quite near the Christmas holidays of the year of 1883 and brother Benjamin was arranging for a big family reunion to be held at his home on Christmas Day, December 25<sup>th</sup>, 1883, where all four of the brothers and Eliza, the only sister, and other relatives would be present besides our mother. This would be the first time we had all been together for nearly twenty years. The celebration was held as scheduled and all present had a wonderful time. During the meeting the question of who should have the permanent possession of the famous Craycroft family record. Up to this time it had been considered by all of the four brothers as rightfully belonging to the oldest boy and that was Benjamin. But he, Benjamin, insisted a vote be taken at this meeting and by that vote it be decided which one of the four would be the holder of it permanently.

THIS IS A MEETING HELD AT THE HOME OF  
BENJAMIN CRAYCROFT, AT VANDALIA, ILLINOIS AT A  
CRAYCROFT FAMILY REUNION ON DECEMBER 25<sup>TH</sup>, 1883, FOR THE  
PURPOSE OF DECIDING BY A SECRET VOTE WHICH  
ONE BETWEEN FOUR BROTHERS WHICH ONE  
SHALL HOLD THE RECORD PERMANENTLY

So that future descendants of this branch of the Craycroft family shall become the permanent owner and possessor of this famous family record this meeting is being held at this time to take a vote from all four brothers as to which one will be selected. All four are eligible under the regulations of the record. But only one can have permanent possession at a time. Benjamin Craycroft Junior has always *been* considered the rightful one to have it, but he insists that at this meeting a vote be taken to establish from now on who shall kept it permanently until his death.

All four brothers, one sister, our mother, all of their husbands and wives were invited to be present at this reunion. The following persons are present when the meeting was called to order by Benjamin Craycroft, the oldest in years of the four brothers.

Mrs. Elizabeth Pate Craycroft Fouts, mother of all 4 boys and 1 girl

Benjamin Craycroft Junior, Elizabeth Honecker Craycroft, his wife, Benjamin Richard, Lulia Jane, and John Henry, all his children

John Wesley Craycroft, of Warm Springs, California

Thomas Benton Craycroft, Lydia Fouts Craycroft, his wife.

Columbus Joel Craycroft, of Fresno, California

Eliza Jane Craycroft Shaw, of Danville, Illinois, S. Jack Shaw, her husband and William A. Shaw, their son.

Total number of person present was twelve.

Total number of persons entitled to vote was four. It was ruled that only the four boys were the only ones to be allowed to vote for they were the only ones that could hold the possession of the record.

By a unanimous vote Mrs. Lydia Fouts Craycroft, wife of Thomas Benton Craycroft, one of the candidates, was elected Secretary-Treasurer.

The Chairman made a detailed statement that in the past he had supposedly been the one in possession of the Craycroft family record, but as a matter of fact that for many years he had allowed it to remain in the possession of his mother for convenience, for he had been in so many different parts of the country that it was very inconvenient for him to always have it in his possession and besides he was such a poor writer that it was his desire to take a vote and elect someone else to take it and keep it. All of the others present spoke and it was finally decided that they would write the name of the one whom they thought should have it.

It was understood by all that the only ones *who* would be eligible to have it would be one of the four brothers. They agreed that each should write only one name on the slip of paper and the one receiving the most votes would be the one elected.

Thomas Benton Craycroft and his wife Mrs. Lydia Fouts Craycroft was elected to collect the ballots and openly count them. After the votes were counted it was found that all votes were for John Wesley Craycroft, therefore he was unanimously elected to have possession of the record and would be allowed to take it to California.

In the discussion it was agreed that the record should be typewritten for now it was mostly handwritten and only a few pages were typewritten, which made it very cumbersome and bad looking. Besides some of the pages were badly faded out and could hardly be seen. It was also agreed that the secretary, Mrs. Lydia Fouts Craycroft, would have this work done as soon as possible and that the expense would be paid by each one of the brothers paying one-fourth of the cost. Mrs. Lydia explained that she could not type it but would hire the work done by someone else.

She was instructed to have the work done and send her bill to Benjamin who would notify all of the others. Lydia informed them that she did not want any pay for any of the work she could and would do. They voted her a vote of thanks.

Then the chairman asked "Is there anything else to be brought before this meeting?" After several moments silence the chairman announced "It seems there is nothing to be brought before the meeting, therefore I declare the meeting closed permanently."

Benjamin Craycroft, Chairman, Mrs. Lydia Fouts Craycroft, Sec. Treasurer

Witnesses: Mrs. Elizabeth Fouts, Benjamin Craycroft, John W. Craycroft, Thomas B. Craycroft, Mrs. Eliza J. Shaw, S. Jack Shaw

After that the family celebration continued and a good time was expressed by all. This celebration was remembered by all for many years for never afterward did all of the brothers, sister and their mother ever meet at the same time. The celebration ended with all wishing good luck and a long life for each other.

After some delay the record was typed in good order and was very neatly stapled together by Mrs. Lydia Craycroft, our stepsister and sister-in-law, and the record was turned over to me. The cost for typing it cost \$20, which was paid to the girl Miss Grace Tracy of Salem, Illinois, Lydia Craycroft paid this amount and was promptly reimbursed by the four brothers, which amounted to \$5 each.

I left there in four days to complete my contract for the different railroads. On June 20<sup>th</sup>, 1884, I reached my home after having completed my contract. My trip and work was fairly successful, for I was able to contract with a total of 878 persons to move to California from eight different states, which were Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Wisconsin, Kentucky, Missouri, Kansas and Kansas (?).

*There was a map at this point in the record, some time in the past but there is no map now. There only remains the following "explanation".*

The lines marked in red ink *are* the routes or lines the Rev. John Wesley covered in his work in 1883 and 1884 for the Southern Pacific Railroad in his work to get families and individuals to move to California.

In October 1883 I went to San Francisco, California, on business and while there I consulted an acquaintance, an official of the Southern Pacific Railroad about the cost of a round-trip ticket to Centralia, Illinois, the nearest railroad station to my old hometown of Walnut Hill, Illinois. Walnut Hill was not on any railroad. I was intending to spend the coming Christmas in my old home.

In our conversation my friend suggested that if I could start on my trip about two months before Christmas and would be willing to do a little work for his company he believed he could have it arranged so that I would be provided with passes by the company that would not cost me anything. The idea sounded too good to be true, but it was true as I soon found out.

He took me upstairs before two different officials, introduced *me*, and he explained that I was going to make a trip east to spend Christmas and he thought I would be willing to do some emigration work in several states now open for assignment. After a long conversation with them we signed a contract assigning me to several states centering around Illinois. They mapped out the territory and routes I was to cover, and I started on my work early in November 1883.

My contract was for a period of six months. The company was running large advertisements in many of the large newspapers and the arrangement was that as they received answers to their advertisements they would send them to me and I would contact each person and explain the advantages of conditions in the lovely state of California, and if possible sign them up to move to California. I was quite successful in the work and

spent December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup> and January 1<sup>st</sup> visiting my mother and brothers. Then on January 2<sup>nd</sup> I started out on my work again and completed it just as our contract provided.

This part of his report of his trip is placed in this particular place in this record for it was not a part of his report about the family record but a personal account of his trip.

In checking over the record I see that there is no record of the births of any of my three children, consisting of two boys and one girl. So I will place it in at this late date, December 25<sup>th</sup>, 1884, Christmas Day.

Our first child was born on April 10<sup>th</sup>, 1870. We named him William Wert Craycroft. Our second child was born November 19<sup>th</sup>, 1873. We named him Harry J. Craycroft. Our third child was born August 26<sup>th</sup>, 1876. It was a girl, and we named her Franke Craycroft. The name Franke for a girl was an old Valpey family name of my wife's and she insisted that we use that name in honor of her family located in Nova Scotia.

All of our children were born on our home farm near Warm Springs, California, and were educated in the local school and in San Jose, California.

**SPECIAL NOTICE. THIS IS IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING THIS RECORD AND SHOULD BE REMEMBERED.**

The above record was the last ever placed in the Craycroft family record by Rev. John Wesley Craycroft. The date on it shows he entered this last information in regard to the births of his children on December 25<sup>th</sup>, 1884, and so far as we are able to trace the mysterious disappearance of the record for a period of forty-four years, it was lost and everyone knowing anything of its existence had either died or forgotten about its existence.

It was not until after the death of Rev. John Wesley Craycroft on August 20<sup>th</sup>, 1935, that anything was ever heard about it, and that information was accidentally discovered in 1936 on a Santa Fe Railway train running between Oakland and Bakersfield, California. A full account of this discovery will be given in detail, by the person who discovered it, who was a nephew of the Reverend John Wesley Craycroft and was named John in honor of the minister back in Illinois at his (the nephew's) birth. It is a startling revelation and should be and will be recorded in full detail in this Craycroft family record.

Since the passing from this life of Rev. John Wesley Craycroft a very startling and important discovery has accidentally come to light in regard to this family record for 44 years of the past 60 years, in which no records has been made in the record.

By an accidental discovery of this unwarranted lapse of time and entries in the record a thorough investigation had been made and the more we investigate the more it is shown that the jealousy and whims and a determined mind of one individual woman was and has been the entire cause of this unfortunate break in the keeping of the record. It is intended by the present holder of the record to collect what authentic information that can be

verified that should have been entered during the period from December 25, 1884, and August 20, 1935 when the Rev. John Wesley Craycroft passed away in Modesto, California.

The whole matter reduced to a few words is this woman spurred on by jealousy and other self-imposed reasons secured possession of the Craycroft Family Record soon after the last entry was made in 1884 and stored it in a building of one of her relatives farm near San Jose California. Here it stayed for many years. Although a diligent search was frequently made by the proper owner, the Rev. John W. Craycroft, it was never discovered until accidentally discovered by a distant relative of the woman in the year of 1936 and turned over to the writer after a thorough investigation so that he could prove he was the proper person to have possession of it.

It is especially recorded here that there is a period of fifty-two years between the year of 1884 and 1936 that nothing was recorded in the record for the simple reason that it had disappeared and could not be found.

It should be noticed that the Rev. John Wesley Craycroft made his last entry, which is an entry of the births of his three children. This entry was made Christmas Day, December 25<sup>th</sup>, 1884, but the discovery of the record was not made by me until after the death of the reverend until 1936, quite a while after the death and burial of him, and even then it was purely accidental.

It would serve no good purpose to give all the details of the discovery and recovery of the record here, for it is a long, long story and only shows just how far some people will go to carry out their jealous desires and as she also has passed on from this life, we will give only the necessary details to show how, where and when the recovery was carried out, and the record placed again in its proper place, and in proper hands.

First I want to say firmly and without reservation that I thoroughly believe and am convinced that this record is genuine and is the true record as was and is shown to be the real record of the Craycroft Family. As proof of my belief, I want to state for the record in this record. In another place in this record it gives an account of the family reunion given at my father's home December 25, 1883, at Vandalia, Illinois. I was at this meeting at that time. I was a boy nearly 13 years of age, and remember it thoroughly. I also remember that at this meeting at the request of my father a vote was taken in favor of turning the record over to my father's brother, my uncle, the Rev. John Wesley Craycroft.

But I must confess that as the years passed since 1883 I had forgotten about the record until 1936, for it had been in California all these years, and so far as I was concerned there was no reason for ever having it brought to my attention or memory. For many years I remained a resident of Illinois, and resided in several other states, besides in Old Mexico. In the meantime I had grown to manhood, and entered railroad work until 1946 when I retired.

After working on several other railroads I entered the services of the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railway in train service, working between Oakland and Bakersfield on March 17, 1900 and remained with this company until April 30, 1946, when I retired.

On or about January 2, 1937 I was working on a passenger train on regular duty, when one of my passengers on my train, with a ticket from Oakland to Los Angeles California asked me if I knew a man name Craycroft working on the line name (Craycroft). I told him that my name was Craycroft.

He then said "I would like to talk to you when you have time." I told him I could talk to him now, for my train would not stop for the next 30 minutes, and I sat down in the seat with him. He started in by asking me a lot of different questions, such as, my name, where I was born, how long I had been in California, I told him John W. Craycroft was a brother of my father, and that he was my uncle.

I then asked him what the object was of his wanting to know all of these things. He answered, "I think you are the man I have been looking for, for the past 6 months. I am quite sure I have some important information that you should know." We continued to talk until we reached Bakersfield, where all passengers, including him leave the train and board a bus to go to Los Angeles. But before he left we had arranged to meet each other in Oakland California in about 3 weeks. He told me a long detailed story about knowing a Craycroft family in fact he said they were distant relatives of his. He stated that when he was a small boy they lived at a place called Warm Springs California, but many years ago they left that place and moved either to Fresno, Merced or Modesto, he did not know for sure. But he said he had heard lately that John W. Craycroft had died and was supposed to be buried in Fresno. He stated many times that he was a distant relative of the Rev. John Wesley Craycroft, and his wife Alice, but had not seen them for many years, on account that the Reverend's wife made it very plain that she did not want to be bothered with any of his or other relatives, and as a result he had never bothered them for many years, although in his babyhood and boyhood days he had visited the Craycrofts at their home and played often with all three of the Craycroft children at Warm Springs.

I could see by his familiar reference to all the members of the family that he knew them intimately and there was no doubt in my mind that his startling information was true in every detail, and it made me very anxious to obtain every bit of information I could from him. There is a lot more of the details, but it would serve no purpose here, and would only take up a lot of unnecessary space, so I will simply say we did meet in Oakland as arranged and he brought the Craycroft Family Record and we spent the day together in Oakland.

The record was in a very badly decomposed condition, and plainly showed it had either been stored in a wet or damp place, or had been allowed to be rained on continuously for a long time in the past years. In fact a lot of it was so dim that it could not be read at all then. Most of it was covered with a thick coat of moldy green moss. I thought at first that it was a complete useless condition. Much of the ink used had run together and was very dim.

Of course I thought his object in delivering the record to me was he would expect me to pay him a goodly sum of money for it, and I made up my mind that in its condition I would not pay any great moment, although I did want it very badly, because I knew it went back into the Craycroft Family so far.

After we had spent most of the day talking and visiting different sights in and around Oakland I ventured to say, "How much do you want for the record?" He stopped abruptly in his tracks, and gave me a look of either surprise or disgust and said "Why my dear fellow I don't want you to pay me anything, I am only too glad to give it to you, but of course if you don't want it I can give it to someone else." I was quick to beg his pardon and explained that my thanks had no bounds, and the incident ended.

In the course of our day long visit he told me how Uncle John's wife had taken the record out of their home, years before this man was born and stored in some out side building, (possibly the barn) and told them that she did not want such a thing in her home and not under any circumstances bring it back to her home or ever tell Uncle John anything about it.

He told me this in such a firm and convincing manner that I must say that there is absolutely no doubt in my mind but that every word of this is true. One thing that helps to convince me of its trueness is, I myself have been one of the victims of her not wanting relatives around their home, although she spent a full week as a guest at my home once when I lived in Fresno. I think her real reason for spending this time in my home was, there was no other place for her to stay except in a hotel, and she did not want to be out the expense. But it did get under my hide some of the things she pulled off while there. One of these was, she had many persons to come to visit her among which was a prospective bride of her eldest son. This girl came to my home and she (uncle's wife) took her into our parlor, shut the door and entertained her for several hours and kept the door shut and locked and did not, and would not even introduce her to my wife and myself. This made us very angry, but we did not make an issue of it. A few years afterward I happened to be in Modesto where they lived, and thought I would stop and say hello. I went around to her home, went up on the front porch, rang the doorbell several times, and just about decided that on one was home. Then I seen one of the window shades move and I could see her very plainly peeking out to see who it was at the door. I waited and rang the doorbell several times, and could hear it ring, but after about ten minutes I left. She deliberately would not come to the door. I have never given her the slightest consideration. I merely mention this in this record to show how selfish and self-centered, a person she was.

About two years ago I accidentally met one of her sons, on my train. We had an agreeable long talk between stations and in our conversation he made this remark. "My father was the most hen-pecked man I ever knew." His father no less a person than this selfish woman's husband.

To my own personal knowledge he was a very mild-tempered-man, and being a minister he was a very kindly person, but he lived a very dominated life. His only daughter is exactly like her mother. It is fortunate that she (the daughter) became an old maid, never married, and at this time is 69 years old and of course has no descendants. She is now living a slow, lonesome, and selfish life.

It is appropriate for me to state here that owing to the many facts in my father's past life, among which is the fact that he having been the rightful possessor and owner of the record before he insisted on taking a vote that the result of the vote was to turn the record over to Rev. John Wesley Craycroft in 1883 and that I am father's only survivor of a family of seven children of his first family, that now I am the proper owner and possessor of this Craycroft family record. But I shall allow any direct descendants of his to make a copy of it at any time they want it. But this copy must and will go to one of my four sons. I will close this long and correct report of the mishandling for many years of this Craycroft family record and will state positively that I believe it to be an honest, correct, true and correct record of the long lives of the old Craycroft family that came into being in the year of 1297 A.D. and I hope it will be continued for at least as many years more. This report is being recorded this first day of January in the year of 1947 A.D.

We will not put on record all of the facts we possess that should have been placed on record during the time the record was hidden out from 1884 to 1936 A.D.<sup>112</sup>

#### NOTICE

When we first secured possession of the family record it seemed there was very little prospect of ever being able to secure a complete copy of it owing to its badly decayed, and very badly faded condition of all of the typewritten pages. But after much experimenting and the expensive work of a chemist and his chemicals he and we have been able to get this good copy *to* continue the record indefinitely.

The manner we are now placing this copy in an iron bound, locked binder we are confident that it will not need retyping for at least one hundred years, unless it is allowed to get wet like it did in the last few years.

We will repeat the last item made by Rev. John Wesley Craycroft so as to connect it with the last item on page 87 (*page 134 of this new transcript*) made just before the record mysteriously *disappeared* in the year of 1884 and was absent for nearly forty-four years.

Our children *were* born on our home farm near Warm Springs, California. On August 14<sup>th</sup>, 1904, we sold our home place near Warm Springs and moved to Modesto, California, located in the great San Joaquin Valley, where I entered the brick making business. You will remember I was in that business before I came to California.

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<sup>112</sup> I can't help wondering why John Henry chose not to update the record. So much information was lost by his decision.

In justice to the Rev. John Wesley Craycroft it should be repeated here that he was a very mild-tempered, mild-natured, honest and to a great extent an easygoing man. It can be truthfully said that he was his worst enemy. His life was not his own, for almost his every movement was dominated by his boss, “dominating” self-centered, superiority-complexed wife Alice. They lived together in a way for many years until his death.

He seldom, if ever, asserted his authority or rights as head of his household. It was already stated they were the parents of three children, two boys and one girl. The oldest boy was William Wert Craycroft, educated in the public schools in Warm Springs, California. When he reached the high school stage he was then sent to San Jose High School. Graduating from high school he was sent to San Francisco College of Dentistry, where in due time he graduated as a dentist. He followed this profession all the rest of his life, and in many different localities in California, among which were Fresno, Stockton, and sever different locations in and around Los Angeles. His worst enemy was liquor. The use of this curse brought him into several bad and unattractive and unprofitable situations and trouble. He left no children, therefore his branch of the Craycroft family died out.

Their next child was also a boy. He was Doctor Harry J. Craycroft, an admirable individual and well liked by all. He was also educated in the Warm Springs schools until he reached the high school age, then he was sent to the high school in San Jose, when he graduated he then entered the Cooper Medical College in San Francisco, California, and in due time graduated as an M.D. and carried the title of Doctor and he proved to be a good one too. He immediately located in Fresno, California, where he became a prominent and widely known physician and surgeon since 1907.

He married the daughter of a wealthy lumberman name Shaver. He died June 27<sup>th</sup>, 1933. Surviving him was his widow Grace Shaver Craycroft, a daughter Marian and one son name Burr Charles Craycroft, who attended the Stanford University where he graduated as an M.D. or a physician and surgeon. He was also survived by his mother Mrs. Alice Valpey Craycroft, and a sister, Miss Franke Craycroft of Modesto and a brother William Wert Craycroft, dentist of Long Beach, California.

Rev. John Wesley Craycroft and his wife Alice Valpey Craycroft were the parents of only one daughter. She was born on their farm home in Warm Springs, California, and lived with them practically all of her life. She never married and was still living in the year of 1947, a very lonesome, bossy, self-centered old maid. Both parents and one brother are dead, and only one brother *is* still living and he has no descendants. She has followed closely in the footsteps and traditions of her mother and although she never married she interfered in the family affairs of her own and the affairs of other relatives and friends until practically everyone just ignores her. Hence her loneliness.

She inherited the entire estate of both her father and mother and has been able to live a long, lonesome and unprofitable life on the small estate they left her. We are well informed that her only living brother, the dentist, voluntarily contributes liberally to her support but this is only hearsay. At this time he is over 76 years of age.

She will leave no descendants as she is now past 70 years of age and was never married.

Her mother was the wife of Rev. John Wesley Craycroft. Her full name was Mrs. Alice Valpey Craycroft of Modesto, California, and she was the mother of Doctor William Wert Craycroft, dentist, Doctor Harry J. Craycroft, and the one girl Franke Craycroft. She died at her home in Modesto, California, 1202 13<sup>th</sup> Street, Saturday morning, August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1934. She was born in Nova Scotia on April 16<sup>th</sup>, 1849, and was 85 years of age at the time of her passing. She and her mother came to the United States when she was a small girl with her parents. They lived in Yarmouth, Mass. for about a year. Then they moved to Boston, Mass. After a stay here a short time they moved to New York City. This was the first time any of them had traveled on a railroad train. California was drawing people to that state like a huge magnet. Her father made arrangements with some of his relatives living in New York City for Alice and her mother to live with them until he could go out to California and investigate possibilities of moving out there permanently.

Mr. Valpey then left for California by way of Panama, crossed across the Isthmus of Panama to the Pacific Ocean and boarded a sailing vessel for San Francisco, California. He spent several months in his investigations and at last he purchased a farm near San Jose, California, and sent for his wife and daughter, Alice, in New York City. They also took a sailing vessel for the Isthmus of Panama, crossed the isthmus and again boarded a sailing vessel and arrived in San Francisco, California, and Mr. Valpey met them and took them to their new home near San Jose. Here they lived for many years, where she, Alice, married Rev. John Wesley Craycroft September 11<sup>th</sup>, 1867 A.D. The balance of the history of Rev. John Wesley Craycroft has been given on the many pages of this family record in the past.

It has been necessary to give some unfavorable detailed information of this family on account of so many unfortunate circumstances connected with it that a clear understanding can be given and understood by future descendants.

Thus ends the family history of Rev. John Wesley Craycroft whose long life has ended. He was a man loved by all who knew him. His kindly approach to give up his ministry work almost entirely although he always practiced Christianity in an honest and practical way.

It was unfortunate that through the jealousy and traditionally selfish and dictator attitude of his wife he lost the personal possession of these records for so many years, for no doubt he would have entered many events that should have been recorded on these pages.

However, this record has been restored to its rightful owner which is the son of Benjamin Craycroft who would have been the owner if it had never been given to the Rev. John Wesley Craycroft in 1883 or 1884 in Vandalia, Illinois. So far as has been possible the record has been brought up to date.

THE FAMILY RECORD OF BENJAMIN CRAYCROFT AND HIS DESCENDANTS FROM HIS FATHER BORN IN BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, AND MARRIED IN BEARDSTOWN, ILLINOIS AND ALL BUT ONE OF HIS CHILDREN WERE BORN IN CAPE GIRARDEAU, MISSOURI. NOVEMBER 12<sup>TH</sup>, 1840 – MARCH 19<sup>TH</sup>, 1917.

Benjamin Craycroft, Senior was born in Baltimore, Maryland on June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1812 A.D. He is the father of Benjamin Craycroft, Junior, and married Benjamin Craycroft, Junior's mother in Beardstown, Illinois on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1837. This is stated here for the purpose of being sure to identifying the right person, for there has been so many persons named Benjamin in the last 150 years that some people may get the wrong persons lined up.

The following three pages is the Craycroft Family Record of the Benjamin Craycroft born November 12<sup>th</sup>, 1840, at Cape Girardeau, Missouri, located on the Mississippi River and who passed away March 19<sup>th</sup>, 1917, *in* Vandalia, Illinois, at the age of 76 years and 4 months. He was the father of 12 children.

His second marriage took place sometime in 1874 or 1875. This marriage was a complete failure and only lasted a few months when he secured a divorce. Soon after this short marriage we went to California and did not return until 1879.

When he returned from California to his old home in Illinois it was his intention to stay in Illinois on a short visit and then return to California permanently, but upon arrival on his visit he found one of his brothers had invented and patented a brick making machine that almost revolutionized brick making and he was engaged immediately by his brother to set up and put the machines in full operation on a guaranteed basis. He eventually became the owner of the patents and also the owner of the foundry and machine shop where they were manufactured<sup>113</sup>. Becoming so well established in this business he soon gave up all intentions of returning to California.

Early in the year of 1880 he met an attractive young lady by *the* name of Miss Elizabeth Honecker in Centralia, Illinois, and after a vigorous courtship they were married on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1880, and soon afterward moved to the old capitol of the state, Vandalia. Here they both lived a long and happy life and raised a family of two boys and three girls.

He made several pleasure trips to California to visit his brother Rev. John Wesley Craycroft, also to visit one of his sons that had lived in California for many years. On his last trip before his passing to the beyond he related an incident in his younger life over which he had a great laugh. It was about his first ride on a train in the year of about 1857. He had been living in a small town in Illinois named Macon when it became necessary for him to go to Centralia, which was about 110 miles south. He had never seen a train nor never had rode on one before but this day he rode from Macon to Centralia and he laughingly stated he had never before experienced such a thrill. This railroad was built through Illinois in the year of 1857 and opened up for business September 27<sup>th</sup>, 1856.

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<sup>113</sup> This company was known as the Eagle Brick Machine Works according to a letter written on the company letterhead, of which I have a photo static copy.

The following three pages is the record of all of his children. Space has purposely been left so that other important records may be entered later as the years pass.

This record starts with the father of Benjamin Craycroft Senior who was born in Baltimore, Maryland, in the year of 1812, and his mother, who was born in Beardstown, Illinois, in the year 1820. Benjamin Craycroft of Vandalia, Illinois, was named after his father therefore up until his father's death in 1853 he was called Benjamin Junior, but after his father's death in 1853 the prefix (*should be suffix*) of Junior was dropped and he was known only as Ben and always signed his legal signatures Ben J. Craycroft but was always known as and called Ben. He was married three times and was the father of twelve children.

Starting with the father of Benjamin Craycroft of Vandalia, Illinois.

The father of Benjamin Craycroft. He was born in Baltimore, Maryland, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1812. Died on a farm near Decatur and Macon, Illinois, in 1853, and was buried near Macon, Illinois, in 1853<sup>114</sup>.

After the father Benjamin died, his wife Elizabeth married John Fouts August 28<sup>th</sup>, 1857. Her second husband was born December 24<sup>th</sup>, 1803, near Canton, Illinois<sup>115</sup>. He died in Walnut Hill in 1888 and was 85 years of age at that time. He was buried in Walnut Hill Cemetery. His wife, the mother of Benjamin Craycroft Junior and also the mother of two of Fouts children died in Walnut Hill on September 18<sup>th</sup>, 1891, and was buried in Walnut Hill Cemetery September 20<sup>th</sup>, 1891.

In her first marriage to Benjamin Craycroft Senior they had a family of two girls and four boys, whose names as born were Matilda, Benjamin Junior, John Wesley, Thomas Benton, and Columbus Joel, and their last child a girl named Eliza Jane Craycroft.

Now the correct history and record of Benjamin Craycroft Junior starts on this line. Most of the above is history of his father and mother and their lives.

Benjamin Craycroft Junior was born in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, on November 12<sup>th</sup>, 1840. He lived there with his parents until 1849 when his parents moved to a farm near Macon, Illinois. His father was badly bitten by a diseased horse and died with a combination disease of black leg and black diphtheria. He was buried in the cemetery near Macon, Illinois, in 1853. This unfortunate happening left the widow with a large family of six children, the youngest of which was a girl about 2 years old named Eliza Jane and the oldest about 13 years old. They lived here on their farm until their mother married John Fouts then they sold the farm and moved to Walnut Hill, Illinois.

Benjamin, whose history is given in a detailed story in another part of this record, died in Vandalia, Illinois, March 19<sup>th</sup>, 1917 at the age of 76 years, 4 months. He was buried in the cemetery at Vandalia, Illinois, in the Craycroft family burial plot.

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<sup>114</sup> Benjamin is buried in Salem Cemetery in South Wheatland Township, Illinois, southwest of Decatur.

<sup>115</sup> According to the 1870 Census of Illinois, John Fouts was born in North Carolina.

## His First Wife

He was married to Miss Elizabeth Ann Breese in Walnut Hill, Illinois, on ?? 1861<sup>116</sup>. She was born on a farm near Walnut Hill, Illinois, on August 13<sup>th</sup>, 1844, was the daughter of Richard Breese. She died in Walnut Hill, Illinois, March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1873, as a result of childbirth of her last child John Henry Craycroft. She left 3 small children named Benjamin Richard, Arlulia Jane, and the baby, John Henry Craycroft. She was the mother of seven children, four of which died before she did. She was buried in the cemetery near Macon where two of her baby children were buried<sup>117</sup>. Tombstones were later erected by her husband and father of her children, Benjamin Craycroft.

## Their Children

(First) Amanda Ann Craycroft was born on a farm near Macon, Illinois, on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1862<sup>118</sup>. She died at the same place on January 12<sup>th</sup>, 1865, aged 11 months and 3 days. Was buried in the cemetery near Macon, Illinois. Her mother was many years later buried beside her.

(Second) Their second child was born on a farm near Macon, Illinois, on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1862. Died December 21<sup>st</sup>, 1862<sup>119</sup>. Lived only 3 months. Was buried in the Craycroft burial plot, beside her sister. Her name was Josa Craycroft. Buried in cemetery near Macon, Illinois.

(Third) Their third child, Benjamin Richard Craycroft, Dick, was born on a farm near Decatur, Illinois, October 31<sup>st</sup>, 1864. Died in Sacramento, California, July 15<sup>th</sup>, 1933 as the result of a paralytic stroke. Body shipped to his old family home in Vandalia, Illinois for burial, according to his last request, and was buried in the Craycroft burial plot there. The stroke was brought on by the extreme hot day. He was on his way by automobile as a delegate to a convention of advertising men held in Indianapolis, Indiana, when he reached Needles, California, the day was extremely hot, it being more than 116 in the shade. Near Needles he suddenly had a stroke. He was returned to his home in Sacramento, California, when after six days he had another stroke, which resulted in his death on July 15<sup>th</sup>, 1933. He was 68 years and 8 months of age.

(Fourth) Their fourth child, John Craycroft was born in Walnut Hill, Illinois, January 5<sup>th</sup>, 1867. Lived only three hours. Died same day as born. Was buried in the cemetery in Walnut Hill, Illinois. Aged three hours.

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<sup>116</sup> On page 127 this record states that Benjamin and Elizabeth were married on January 3, 1861.

<sup>117</sup> Elizabeth is buried in Salem Cemetery in South Wheatland Township, Illinois, next to Amanda and Josa and her father-in-law, Benjamin.

<sup>118</sup> My records indicate that Amanda Ann was born January 15, 1864 and died January 12, 1865, three days short of one year. In mid-December, 2001, I received a photocopy of cemetery records from Salem Church Cemetery that indicates a "Josie" Craycroft, daughter of Benjamin and Elizabeth Craycroft died Jan. 12, 1865. I think that this is actually Amanda.

<sup>119</sup> The date of death on Josa's grave marker is Dec. 24, 1863. I have a photograph of this stone. The two children are buried next to their mother, Elizabeth Ann Breese Craycroft and grandfather, Benjamin.

(Fifth) Their fifth child, Robert Ellis Craycroft, was born February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1868, in Walnut Hill, Illinois, and died September 23, 1868, and was buried in the Craycroft burial plot in the Walnut Hill Cemetery. His age was seven months and 21 days.

(Sixth) Their sixth child was born in Walnut Hill, Illinois, July 18<sup>th</sup>, 1869. She died April 6<sup>th</sup>, 1913, aged 44 years and 8 months and 18 days. Died in her father's home in Vandalia, Illinois, where she had lived all of her life. That is ever since his last marriage. She was buried in the Craycroft burial plot in the cemetery in Vandalia, Illinois. She never married. She was named Arlulia Jane Craycroft.

(Seventh) Their seventh child, John Henry Craycroft, was born on a small farm 3 miles northwest of Walnut Hill, Illinois, October 15<sup>th</sup>, 1871. He was the second child to be named John in honor of his father's brother the Rev. John Wesley Craycroft then in California. This uncle took these family records with him to California in 1884 and they were stolen from him about Christmas, 1885, and never heard of again until 1936 nearly 51 years, when they were discovered and recovered from a distant relative of the wife of the Rev. John Wesley Craycroft and turned over to the last living son of the first family of Benjamin Craycroft, John Henry Craycroft, who is retyping and will pass them on to the proper surviving descendants. He is now nearly 76 years of age and will leave four sons and at present 4 grandsons as descendants.<sup>120</sup>

At this time he is the only living descendant of the original Benjamin Craycroft (Ben) now living, of the first family. Benjamin Craycroft was married three times. Therefore there is more descendants of his from the later families.

This is the record of Benjamin Craycroft's second marriage, which was a very unfortunate incident of his life. There was a marriage in Salem, Illinois. But after a short duration he secured evidence upon which he had no trouble in securing a divorce of the grounds of adultery. After he secured this divorce there was a child born, but it was not his. All of the evidence proved this as all legal and medical calculations proved. The time elapsed after the separation was much too long to make possible for him to be its father. Therefore no record is made in this Craycroft family record of this unfortunate incident because it should not be made any part of the family record. It is very unfortunate in the extreme and he put an end to it as soon as was possible.

### **The third marriage and children of Benjamin Craycroft.**

Miss Elizabeth Mary Honecker, the third wife of Benjamin Craycroft, was born in Waterloo, Illinois, on July 29<sup>th</sup>, 1859. Her father died when she was quite young, leaving the widow (her mother) with a family of several children. The family soon moved to Centralia, Illinois, where after a few years her mother married a man name George D. George. Elizabeth met Benjamin Craycroft and they were married in Salem, Illinois, at the home of Thomas Benton Craycroft, brother of Benjamin, on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1880. This

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<sup>120</sup> It should be noted that John Henry Craycroft died on February 12, 1949, and, like his brother Benjamin Richard, was returned from Richmond, California, where he died, to be buried in the Craycroft burial plot in Vandalia, Illinois. I have a photo of his tombstone to verify this.

marriage was a very successful one and lasted until he died in the year 1917. They had 5 children, 3 girls and 2 boys as shown below.

### **Their Children**

First child. Charles Edward Craycroft was born in Salem, Illinois, July 27<sup>th</sup>, 1881. He died July 21<sup>st</sup>, 1882, aged 11 months, 25 days. The family had previously moved to Vandalia, Illinois, and he was buried in the Craycroft family burial plot in Vandalia Cemetery.

Second child. Margaret Mary Craycroft was the second child, was born October 10<sup>th</sup>, 1883 in Vandalia, Illinois. Was educated in the Vandalia public schools and lived there until she married.

Third child. Harry Benjamin Craycroft was the third child, was born in Vandalia, Illinois, on April 29<sup>th</sup>, 1885. He was educated in the Vandalia public schools. At the time this record is made, in 1947, still lived in the old home he was born in, and is a well known businessman in Vandalia, Illinois.

Fourth child. Lettia Florance Craycroft was the fourth child, was born in Vandalia, Illinois, on December 24<sup>th</sup>, 1887, and was considered a grand Christmas present by the whole family. She was educated in the Vandalia public schools and lived in the old Craycroft home until she was married.

Fifth child. Ethel Irene Craycroft was the fifth child, was born in Vandalia, Illinois, on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1895. She was educated in the Vandalia public schools and lived in the old Craycroft home until she was married.

*This is the last entry in the "Great Craycroft Book" made by John Henry Craycroft. All that follows is written by me, Robert Lynn Craycroft. I can reliably trace my line back to Edward Scott Craycroft. This is as far I have been able to find primary documentary evidence. First I will offer up my own conclusions drawn from research that I have conducted in an effort to confirm or refute information presented in this record. Secondly I will present a document about the Edward Scott Craycroft branch of the Family that was given to my by two of my father's aunts, Jesse May Craycroft Cornthwaite and Edna Ferne Craycroft Veech on the day of my marriage to my first wife, Emily Ruth Bruington. Edward is who I am descended from. Finally I will present my own addition to the latter document and a descendants report beginning with Benjamin Joseph Craycroft, the father of Edward Scott Craycroft and continuing down to the present day, May, 2000.*

## CONCLUSIONS

Now that you have read the entire document you probably have a headache, like I have had, from trying to make sense of the poor writing in most of The Book. It surely made it very difficult to read at times. But I want to address the accuracy of the “facts” presented in The Book, not the grammar and spelling.

When I first saw the comparatively brief transcript of The Book in 1964 I was impressed and awed by the story of James Cray and Susan Croft. I was proud, also, of being connected with such an event. Then in 1973 I wrote to London in an effort to secure some type of document (referred to as a primary document by genealogists) that would verify this wonderful story. What I received instead are the letters shown on pages 17 and 18. They seem to disprove the story of James and Susan. Other attempts have been made by others to prove this marriage but they too have failed. The narration also states the ceremony was conducted in the Church of England by a minister or priest of the Church of England. This was impossible since the Church of England did not come into being until 1534 when the Act of Supremacy was passed by the Parliament. I can only conclude that this fairy tale marriage is just that, a fairy tale.

Another thing to consider is that surnames (the last name) did not see common usage until the last half of the 1300's. This is one more reason to think that someone wrote or created this passage at a much later date.

After the retelling of the wedding ceremony, The Book goes on to tell of the Craycroft family's involvement with the Reformation and the compilation of the King James Version of the Bible and the family's relationship with Martin Luther. After searching through a couple histories of the King James Version of the Bible, and the Encyclopedia Britannica I have located 50 names of people involved in translating and compiling the KJV but none of them were Craycrofts, as was stated in this record. Another possibility is that the John Craycroft purported to be the translator could have been fashioned after William Tyndale, an early translator of the Bible into English.

The record also consistently mentions the Protestants in the 1300 and 1400's, but the word Protestant, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, was first given to those who dissented from the decision of the Diet of Spires in 1529, in Germany. This gives us two options on this point. Either the writer was writing these passages after the fact, which doesn't seem to be the case judging by the tense used, or this is fabrication based on the then current existence of the Church of England, in as much as it gives Craycroft family members credit for participation in the named events.

The record goes on to say that three brothers emigrated from England to Jamestown, Virginia, and after about a year moved on to Providence, Rhode Island. Initial investigations by Denise Miller and Nancy Stull uncovered no Craycrofts living or arriving in either town. While this is not conclusive it is not very hopeful either. It is known through historical documents in the Archives of the State of Maryland that a John Craycroft was an extensive property owner in Maryland in the mid and late 1700's.

Later in the record there are passages that state that certain members of the Craycroft family met or worked directly with or for George Washington. The first incident states that shortly after being attacked by Indians in western Ohio, in 1752, the Craycroft family met with an 18 year old George Washington who was on a survey trip for Virginia. In fact, George Washington was 20 in 1752 and at the time of the Indian raid he was in residence at Mount Vernon, which he had just inherited from his brother. Also, Washington was no longer working as Chief Surveyor of Virginia at that time.

The record includes what is purported to be a letter from President George Washington (page 99) to William Roger Craycroft II. The letter says that Roger (as he was commonly referred to) was the secretary to President Washington and the letter was written to thank William for his service. On page 97 Roger says that he also served as orderly, lieutenant, personal bodyguard, doorkeeper, and several other minor places. After reading two different biographies of George Washington and referring to the Encyclopedia Britannica I have found no mention of any Craycroft being a member of Washington's staff at any point in time. After searching the Revolutionary War records I have not found any mention of a William Roger Craycroft serving in any capacity. If he had actually served on Washington's staff he would have surely been listed on the muster rolls.

As for William Roger Craycroft acting as secretary to President Washington in 1791, as I showed in an italicized note following the Washington letter on page 99 President Washington's secretary was actually a Major Jackson.

Because of these and other errors I have pointed out in the body of the record in footnotes and italicized notes I am forced to conclude that the passages referring to Craycroft involvement or participation in certain historical events, prior to 1800, are fabrications on the part of one or more unknown persons for unknown reasons. The letters from the City of London on pages 17 and 18 refute the supposed marriage of James Cray and Susan Croft and cast serious doubt on their existence. Further, without any primary or secondary documents, other than this record itself, I seriously doubt that any of the Craycrofts named as living prior to about 1750 were ever born. The oldest primary document I have in my possession is the marriage license for Edward Scott Craycroft and Elizabeth Bohner issued in 1848. This at the least confirms the existence of Edward who, according to secondary information I have, was born September 25, 1809. Beyond this all information I have is secondary, that is hearsay or secondhand information. I have hoped for many years that this record would be accurate but unfortunately I have to think otherwise.

Now after all this there is one thing I want to bring to your attention. If this is not the first time you have seen all or part of the History of The Craycroft Family you are probably disappointed to some degree. The first time I saw this document I was caught up in the romance that the early passages evoked and you may have been also. Believe me when I say that I was very disappointed when I saw the whole document and researched as much as I could. But the important thing to remember is that this is still an

important document. The Craycrofts named from about 1750 to 1800, I think, are accurate. I've been able to confirm almost all of the persons after 1800 through one means or another. This makes the history valuable because it acts as a guidepost to our past, to the History of The Craycroft Family. Use it well.