History and Genealogy of Captain Robert Cranton, (1750—1794) and His Descendants

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This is a draft document (as of August 11, 2015), and still a work in progress. Please email me with comments, suggestions, corrections, additional data, etc.: elmer@drcranton.com

INTRODUCTION

Early history and genealogical data concerning Captain Robert Cranton (born ca. 1750, deceased 1794) and his descendants was taken from books, genealogies, deeds, wills, parish records, and other historical documents. Family histories of the Margaree region are contained in books by MacDougall, Hart, Jost, and Johnston. Several of those books, mostly full-text copies, are posted online at the official Cranton Family Genealogy website The Margaree branch of the Cranton family centers primarily in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, beginning in the 18th century.

Much of this story relies on family lore, passed down orally from generation to generation, which has resulted in some inconsistencies. By comparing the various written histories, it is clear that different authors were familiar with each other's writings and often repeated the same uncertainties. Many mysteries remain.

Available government records of the early days are often incomplete, illegible, or contradictory—especially for the Dorset/Somerset regions of southwestern England. That geographic region is commonly referred to as Devon or Devonshire, Hampshire and Somerset; and seems the most likely place of origin for early Cranton ancestors who migrated from England to Newfoundland, and thence to Nova Scotia, spreading out from there in the 19th century. Some moved westward across Canada and others migrated south to the new United States. A number of Cranton families were living in the lower American colonies of New England and New York even before the revolutionary war. Where they came from is uncertain, but available evidence points to southwestern England.

This narrative will focus principally on the Cranton family surname. More research is needed to explore the equally important and fascinating genealogy of the many women who took on relinquished the Cranton surname through marriage. For example, my great grandmother, Elizabeth Catherine Crowdis, wife of Henry Levi Cranton, was a direct lineal descendant of the Plantagenet kings of England.

There is full agreement that Robert Cranton was a sea captain of English origin and that he staked a land claim at Carmarthen (later known as Margaree Harbor), Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, ca. 1793. At that time
Captain Cranton is said to have owned two schooners, with which he operated a coastal shipping company based in Newfoundland. His home port was probably in Trinity Bay, Newfoundland, where a business office was managed by Thomas Ethridge. Ethridge later married the Captain’s widow and became stepfather to Robert Jr. The Margaree area was largely unsettled at the when Captain Robert Cranton first arrived, and it is unlikely that he spent much time there before being lost at sea.

The Margaree River valley extends inland from the harbor, providing a virtual Garden of Eden for the Captain's descendants who later migrated upriver and settled that area. The river's wide, fertile shores provided excellent farmland and pasture. The river itself was rich with fish. Forests provided abundant game, furs, and timber. Fast flowing tributaries supplied power for watermills and irrigation.

It was reported that Capt. Robert Cranton was lost at sea in the late fall of 1794 on his ship named Bridget, when returning from a voyage to Halifax. What actually occurred is not known. Hostile French warships and privateers operated in the vicinity at about that time, so it is possible that he was attacked at sea. Piracy was common, without regard to nationality. This was also the time of year when tropical storms and cyclones blew up from the south, energized by warm waters of the Gulf Stream. Historical records list a hurricane moving up the coast of north America toward Nova Scotia that fall.

In 1799, approximately nine years after the Captain's loss at sea, his five year-old son, Robert Cranton Jr., emigrated to Margaree from Newfoundland with his mother, the Captain's widow, Anne Stone Cranton Ethridge. They were accompanied by Thomas Ethridge, whom Anne married after the Captain's death at sea.

In August 1811, Robert Jr. filed a formal land grant claim for 200 acres at the Margaree Harbor mouth (misspelled as "Cranston" on a Crown lease survey document). A full-text copy of this is posted online. This is assumed to be the Captain's original settlement.

In a later land grant application with his stepfather, Robert Jr. stated that he had sold that his property near the Harbor entrance when he settled permanently inland, on a large farm in the N.E. Margaree valley—known as "the Cranton Section."

Robert Cranton, Jr., and his stepfather, Thomas Ethridge, stated in their joint land grant application, filed in 1825, that they initially settled on their farms in the N.E. Margaree river valley in 1804, but that they had arrived at Margaree Harbor earlier, in 1799, approximately five years after the Captain was lost at sea. They filed another land grant document in 1832.

Oral histories are notorious for changing with repeated tellings. Misspellings and phonetic spellings in documents written by semi-literate or inept clerks and census-takers, have left us with a confusing and incomplete story. Despite that, a consistent overall pattern does emerge from the
limited amount of information we still have available. The course of events suggested in this narrative is therefore speculative at times. Events as described here have been pieced together from scattered historical records, and interpreted in the context of more lengthy published histories. Some of the full text history books of that era are also posted on the family website. The Appendix at the end of this narrative contains a partial listing of references. Records of that time were often illegible and contradictory. Spellings varied and were often only phonetic. This story will thus be a patchwork and will not always flow smoothly. It should nevertheless be a good a starting point for a future project.

Before reading further, the reader might find it helpful to first scan down through the various pictures, tables, appendices, and source-documents below.

ANCIENT ORIGINS OF THE CRANTON FAMILY SURNAME

The Cranton surname seems to have originated with the medieval, Anglo Saxons who settled the Scottish lowlands, south of the Firth of Forth, in what later became Edinburgh County. During the 13th century, the region became known as the Barony of Cranston, and had long been occupied by ancestors of that noble family.

"Cranton" was originally an Anglo Saxon "place-name," that designated the area or settlement occupied by people who were later identified by appending that name. The first element in the place-name is the Olde-English, "Cran", meaning crane (dating back to the early dark ages, 7th century or before). Cran was a nickname used to denote a tall, thin man with long legs. The second element was derived from the Olde-English "tun," meaning an enclosure or settlement. Various forms of this Cranton place-name were appended to first names of individuals who originated in the "Cran" settlement. The original Cranton clan was thus of Anglo Saxon, lowland Scottish origin—as distinguished from the Highland Gaelic and Pictish Scots, who settled further to the North and West.

Surnames became necessary when governments introduced personal taxation. In England, known as Poll Tax. Throughout the centuries, surnames in every country continued to evolve and "develop." This led to astonishing variants of the original spellings. Many factors contributed to the establishment of a family surname system. For generations after the Norman Conquest of 1066 a few dynasts and magnates passed on hereditary surnames, but most of the population, who had a wide choice of first-names out of Celt, Old English, Norman and Latin, avoided ambiguity without the need for a second name. As the population grew and society became more stabilized, there was property to leave in wills, the towns and villages grew, and the labels that had served to distinguish a handful of folk in a friendly village were not adequate for a growing number of inhabitants. Many householders were engaged in the same trade so not even their occupations...
could distinguish them. Because some first names were gaining a tiresome popularity, especially Thomas after 1170, the hereditary principle in surnames became necessary, first among the gentry. The poorer folk were slower to apply it. By the 15th century however, most of the population in Great Britain had acquired a second name.

Because most or all residents of that Cranton settlement were given the same "place-name," we will never know how many actual founding families existed there. We should consider, however, that during the dark ages, such rural settlements were very small, travel was limited, and most residents eventually became cousins of some degree or other. There is a saying that if they could not walk or ride a horse to a place, they did not go there. This kept their gene pool relatively confined and limited their choice of mates.

During the later Middle Ages, as residents migrated away to find jobs or otherwise seek their fortunes, it became the custom to permanently adopt their former village names as a fixed means of identification—leading to wide dispersal of descendants with the same family name. By the 15th century, middle names were slowly added, to designate parents or grandparents or a specific branch of a family trees. The use of such fixed surnames or descriptive family names commenced in France in about the year 1000. That custom was introduced into Scotland and England by the Normans a hundred years later—although it did not become wide-spread until many years afterwards.

The earliest recorded spelling of a variant of the Cranton family name is believed to have been Elfric de Cranston, dated circa 1190, in "Collections concerning Scottish History, by Sir James Dalrymple", who lived in Scotland during the reign of King William The Lion of Scotland, 1165 to 1214. As recorded in a list of various spellings (Cranston, Cranstoun, de Cranystoun, Scranton, and Cranton), this is a surname of Scottish origins, originating in "The Barony of Cranston," in Midlothian, Scotland.

There is evidence that the Cranton surname reverted back to the original, shorter form, "Crant," in 19th century Newfoundland, and that the many Newfoundland Cran families are related.

Another variant of the surname, Cranton, was recorded in the late 12th century as Thomas de Cranystoun, during the Scottish reign of Alexander II (1214-1249). Thomas de Cranystoun made a donation of some lands lying near Paistoun in East Lothian to the hospital of Soltr, for "the welfare of his own soul and for the souls of his ancestors and successors." Early records in Scotland from the 12th and 13th centuries spell the name in different ways, often changing spellings between parent and child. Some of those early records use our present-day spelling of Cranton.

An early record of that surname is Hanna Cranton, who married William Crafts in London on January 21, 1643, at the church of St Andrew by the Wardrobe. Slightly earlier, on December 22, 1622, Daniel, son of William
and Jane Cranstone, was christened at the church of St. Martin in the Fields, Westminster. Throughout the centuries, surnames in every country have continued to develop, leading to several variants of the original spelling. Names were commonly spelled phonetically in official records by officials with limited literacy, with widely variable results. Different spellings of Cranston, Cranstoun, de Cranystoun, and as applied to descendants in well documented family trees, even changed at times from one form to another from father to son. This leaves little doubt that subsequent Cranton variants down through the years have a common origin in southern Scotland.

Written records and ancient charters of twelfth century Scotland list the name Cranestone, and another Anglo-Saxon spelling variant, Craenston. In those times of limited literacy, Cranton ancestors spelled their names phonetically in a many different ways: i.e., Cranston, Scranton, Cranton, Crantoun, Cranstoun, Crayntoun, Cranystoun, Creinstoun, Craneston, etc. It is believed that all these variable but similar families are related and can be traced back to a common place of origin. Several early Cranton gentry were listed on the Ragman Rolls, in which knights and magnates of Scotland subscribed allegiance to King Edward I of England at the Conference of Norham, in May, 1291. The Ragman Rolls contained the following entries:

Hon. George Cranstoun, Lord Corehouse, (also of The Bannatyne Club)
Richard Styward (Stiard) de Craneston, of Edinburgh County
Huwe vicaire del Eglise de Craneston

There seems little doubt that the later "Cranston" and "Cranton" families in North America shared the same ancestral roots in Scotland. There are examples in Scottish wills, deeds, parish records, genealogical records, etc., where a grandfather, a father and a son would each spell their last names differently, using variations as listed above. This would explain the continued close relationship between Cranton and Cranston descendants in North America—in both 18th century Connecticut and in Nova Scotia. In Guilford, Connecticut, at the time of the 1790 census, the Cranton and Cranston families lived closely together in adjacent housing.

After Great Briton unified as the United Kingdom, the Cranton (Cranston, Cranstoun) families spread south and southwest across England, and then across the Atlantic ocean to North America and elsewhere. Those who kept the "Cranton" spelling, seem to have moved to Southwestern England, to the Devon-Dorset-Somerset region, eventually migrating further to North America. During Victorian times, we find Cranton families scattered globally over the British Empire—India, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, East Africa, Rhodesia, Canada, and especially in the United States. By scanning through 18th and 19th century parish, military, and census records around the world, we find that only a small percentage of descendants used the "Cranton" spelling. Slightly more spelled their name "Cranstoun, while most spell their names as Cranston, or Scranton at the
present time, especially in America. (More details and late middle age records are appended below at the very end of this document in an Appendix)

**SUMMARY AND OVERVIEW**

A genealogical search of the Margaree branch of the Cranton surname clearly leads back to 17th century southwestern England. Clusters of Cranton families are found in late 1600 and early 1700 parish records of the region referred to as Devonshire—including Dorset, and southern Somerset—extending eastward into bordering parts of Hampshire.

Many centuries ago, long before the voyages of Columbus, hundreds of fishing vessels sailed westward from Europe each spring to the Grand Banks of Newfoundland. Distance to the fisheries was shorter and prevailing winds were more favorable from seaports in Southwestern England. Increasingly during the 18th century, fishing ships were accompanied by trading vessels sailing westward each spring from western England, returning with barrels of dried and salted fish. Poole Harbor, on the south coast of Dorset, was a principal port for this fisheries trade. Able young men from throughout Dorset were aggressively recruited by Poole Harbor merchants and fishing captains—both to man their ships and to staff their Newfoundland trading stations. The map below shows the towns and hamlets where crews and employees were commonly recruited.
There existed at that time an acute shortage of able-bodied workmen in the continental American colonies. This serious labor shortage extended from Maine down to the Carolinas (collectively then known as "New England"). To fill that need, English fishermen were often enticed to desert their ships on the Banks and flee to the lower colonies, where good paying jobs were plentiful, opportunities abounded, and life was generally pleasant. Yankee fishermen sailed north from New England in large numbers each summer to harvest cod, and upon returning home they would provide free passage for deserting English fishermen—who were said to have been hidden at times in codfish barrels. In many such cases, the deserters abandoned their apprenticeship obligations, or otherwise defaulted on contracts with their fishing captains. Some may have fled indenture.

Parliament looked on Newfoundland fishing ships as an important training ground to crew British Naval ships. Flight to the American colonies was considered a crime, and posed a serious future loss to the Navy. The practice was so common, however, that fishing captains were at times required to post bond for return of their crewmen to England.
A scattering of Cranton surnames can be found in the early mainland colonies at that time and it is probable that some arrived by this route. By whatever route, they did arrived, and written records indicate that a number of Cranton men had already emigrated from Dorset to the American colonies during the mid1740s, establishing families in New England. Written records of the Cranton name in Canada cannot be found prior to 1790, not even in Newfoundland.

During the revolutionary war a handful of Cranton men fought for the Yankee cause. Their names can be found on payrolls and musters of the Continental Army. By the late 1700s, almost as many Cranton surnames can be found in the American colonies as lived in England.

**Cranton Men as Yankee Patriots**

Cranton men who were listed in musters and payrolls of the Continental Army from 1775 through 1783 are listed below. Cranton families found in the mainland colonies seem to have been Yankee patriots. No records can be found showing the Cranton name to be Crown Loyalists during the Revolution.

- John Cranton, Albany County Militia, New York;
- Tory Cranton (elsewhere as Torrey), Sgt., Connecticut Line Regiment;
- Josiah Cranton, Pvt., New Hampshire Regiment;
- Samuel Cranton, Rhode Island Regiment;
- John Crinton (sic), Connecticut militia;
- Ben Cranten, (sic), (Benjamin is a common Cranton name) N.J. militia.

**Other Cranton Families Found in New England**

Records show the following Cranton families who were born and resided in America before the revolutionary war:

- Benjamin Cranton, born 1740 in Conn;
- Benjamin Cranton, born 1760 in Conn. (father and son?);
- Nathaniel Cranton, born 1740 in Conn;
- Eli Cranton, born 1773 in Conn, d. 1870 NY (living in Hartford Conn. for the 1860 census);
- Erastus Cranton, b. 1777, Mary Cranton, his wife, b. 1786, and their children Mary Prudence Cranton and Albert Cranton, born about 1815;
- Patience Cranton, married in Dartmouth Mass, 11 Feb 1778;
- O. Cranton, living in Vermont in 1786;
- H. J. Cranton, born 1795, whose father was born in Connecticut ca. 1770, and who lived in Wilson, Niagara, NY, during the 1880 census.

The first official United States census of 1790 (completed in 1792) listed 39 Cranton's individuals comprising 8 different families, all residing in adjacent housing in Guildford, Connecticut—several of whom may also be listed above in wartime payroll records.
The Cranton and Scranton families of Guildford, Connecticut were recorded in closely adjacent housing, as neighbors in Guilford, Connecticut, at the time of that census. Other records indicate that the Cranton and Scranton surnames were also related in Nova Scotia, but the exact nature of the Scranton/Cranton connection remains a mystery.

So where does Captain Robert Cranton, a ship owner with a coastal trading company based in Newfoundland during the late 1700s, come into this picture? The Cranton surname cannot be found in Newfoundland records of that time—although several large fires have destroyed many early records.

Prior to 1760, there existed only a very small year-round population in Newfoundland. A few crewmen and merchants remained during the winter months as skeleton crews to maintain claims on more favorable shoreline and preferable locations for the next summer season. Other than that, Newfoundlander was consistently refused permission by the admiralty to winter-over, even if they wanted to settle that island more permanently. During most of the 1700s, Newfoundland was a lawless frontier. Inhabitants remained only for the summer season as fishing and merchant crews, and returned to their homes in England for the winter.

Beginning ca. 1750, year-round families began to settle more permanently in Newfoundland (often without permission). Slowly women began to be welcomed as resident families were established. Permanent merchant centers and shipping hubs were also created in some of the larger harbors.

Among the first permanent communities in Newfoundland (ca. 1750-1760) was Trinity Bay, belonging to Dorset merchant companies sailing out of Poole Harbor, Dorset. A major trading port and commercial hub in Trinity Bay, Newfoundland, was centered around the Old Perlican and Trinity settlements. The number of resident families in Trinity Bay soon doubled and then tripled over the next 50 years, from 1750 to 1800. Smaller coastal vessels were increasingly berthed permanently in Trinity. They ventured forth from there to service many smaller coastal communities and outports along the northern coast of Newfoundland and southeastern Labrador (see map and table below, skip down 3 pages).

Family surnames that can be found in the few remaining Trinity Bay records for that time include Stephen March, a commissioner in Old Perlican, whose sister was married to a Cranton, becoming Ann Cranton (possibly married to Richard Cranton in Dorset (from the will of Stephen March). The Stone and Ethridge families (refer to the Table below, skip down 2 pages), who later emigrated to Margaree, were among the earliest permanent Trinity Bay residents. Robert Stone was a constable in 1794, and we know that Captain Robert Cranton's wife was Ann Stone. The Cranton name cannot now be found there, however.
The Captain's business partner and clerk was Thomas Ethridge. The James Etheridge family lived in Trinity Bay with his wife and 4 sons. We here have clues that Captain Robert Cranton and his wife, Ann Stone, may have also lived in Trinity or Old Perlican during the latter 1700s—along with Thomas Ethridge—who subsequently married the Captain's widow.

Family lore relates that Ann Stone was born in India and that her father was also a sea-captain. It seems possible that Ann Stone's father may have been a ship captain for the East India Company, before resettling his family in Newfoundland. The East India Company fell on hard times during an economic crisis in the mid-18th century, which caused similar migrations.

Official Nova Scotia death records for Captain Robert Cranton's son, Robert Jr., who later became stepson to Thomas Ethridge, clearly state that Robert Jr.'s father's name was "William Cranton," not "Robert Cranton," giving evidence that the Captain's first name may have been William, not Robert. His middle name could well have been Robert, or vice versa. It was not uncommon at the time to use a middle name in preference to a given first name.

Digging deeper (more detail below), we find a parish record for William Cranton, son of Daniel and Bettey (sic) Cranton, christened in Broadwindsor, Dorset, England, on November 22, 1750. This is a speculation, but may be evidence for the birth of Captain Robert Cranton, full name William Robert Cranton. The date and geographic area are a fit. Poole merchants recruited their employees and crews aggressively in the Broadwindsor area—at a time when a William Robert Cranton would have been at an age to set forth begin his prosperous seafaring career.

Let us further speculate that William Robert Cranton was an ambitious and highly intelligent young man, with a strong aptitude for the sea, who migrated from Broadwindsor to Newfoundland in his teen years. He worked his way up as a valued employee at the merchant hub in Trinity Bay, progressively assuming more responsibility in the coastal trade, becoming a ship's officer, ship's captain, and eventually owner of his own ship(s). Note on the map below that hundreds of coastal voyages originated in Trinity every season, to trade with and provision the many other coastal communities around the island. By then Newfoundland had established a busy shipbuilding industry and was producing its own schooners.

By custom, the "ton" suffix of the Cranton surname indicates an English town (ton) or village of origin in earlier times. It seems reasonable to believe that going back to the 17th century, the Cranton family name was "Crant" and was located in a hamlet named for that family, leading to the name "Cranton." That was the naming custom in medieval England. In other European languages, the prefix De, Van, Von, etc. were used in a similar manner to indicate their place of origin.

In Newfoundland the name, Cranton, appears to have been shortened back to “Crant.” Both forms of the Cranton name appeared briefly together
in one Newfoundland town, following which only the "Crant" surname survived on that Island. A number of "Crant" families appeared suddenly out of nowhere in Newfoundland, continuing to the present day (described in more detail below), while the "Cranton" name itself disappeared there, surviving in Nova Scotia, in mainland America, and in England. For one generation, however, in the 19th century, the Crant and Cranton names existed in the same location.
In his history of Newfoundland, “Soe longe as there comes no wom en, Origins of English Settlement in Newfoundland” W. Gordon Handcock writes that Trinity Bay settlements in the second half of the 18th century were populated predominantly by Dorset employees of Poole Harbor merchants and crews of fishing fleets operating out of Poole Harbor, Dorset. The principal Poole merchant companies in Trinity Harbor—at the time when Captain Robert Cranton would have begun his career there—were Benjamin Lester & Co. and Jeffery & Street. Those companies are well known to have recruited aggressively for both crew and merchant employees throughout Dorset and nearby districts—where the earliest Cranton families were
recorded in parish records. Records for that time are scarce, but those we can we find indicate that the Ethridge, Stone, Cranton, and March families who settled during the mid to late 1700s in Trinity Bay, Newfoundland, migrated there from Dorset, England, and environs.

These families all originated in the Dorset region of S.W. England, near Poole Harbor, and also from nearby Christchurch, Hampshire (Etheridge). Parish records show a cluster of Cranton families living in Dorset and on the Dorset/Somerset border. Many young men from that area sailed forth to Newfoundland as crew on fishing vessels and on merchant ships. Poole Harbor merchants, who serviced smaller coastal settlements on Newfoundland, established a permanent trading hub in Trinity Bay. From there a fleet of smaller coastal ships serviced settlements in many bays and coves around the island—and also in Labrador.

If we follow this trail of bread crumbs, it we might speculate that young William Robert Cranton from Dorset got his start in Newfoundland on a Poole Harbor merchant or fishing vessel, and eventually settled at Trinity Bay, where he married Ann Stone and began a family. As seems to have been a custom of the time, he used only one of his first names, ignoring the “William” and thenceforth became known simply as Robert Cranton. By the 1760s Trinity had become a major supply hub for much of Newfoundland, surpassing even St. Johns. St Johns come into prominence somewhat later and settlers at St. Johns more often originated from further east along the south coast of England and from London. Detailed documentation can be found in the following named book: “Soe longe as there comes no women, Origins of English Settlement in Newfoundland”, (posted in full text) Refer especially to tables and diagrams on pages 122, 123, 141, 147. 148, 149, 192, 194, 221, 223, 269, 273, and 281.) As shown in the insert above, by the late 1760s Trinity had become the major supplier and trading port for much of Newfoundland, especially the northern region and southeastern Labrador.

At the commencement of the American Revolutionary War, ca. 1776, the Continental Congress outlawed all further trade with England and all other English colonies, including Newfoundland. Likewise, British Parliament banned all trade with the rebellious Yankee colonies—without consideration the great hardship this created for inhabitants of Newfoundland, who depended on much closer colonies for many of their essential needs.

Without easy access to the much closer and less expensive food and trade goods from nearby New England, year-round settlers on Newfoundland became threatened by famine. The New England colonies were very close at hand and had provided most of the essential food and trade goods for Newfoundland, and at more favorable prices compared with England. To import from England would require sailing 4,000 miles each way across the Atlantic, paying monopolistic prices to English merchants. To obey these wartime Parliament edicts and to suspend all trade with the American
colonies, would have caused great hardship and even famine for Newfoundland. The table below, taken from a book entitled, "Eighteenth Century Newfoundland, by C. Grant Head, shows the great extent to which Newfoundland relied on imports of food and essential supplies from the mainland colonies before the war. There was no way that this could be stopped without great hardship. It would also have been difficult and expensive for England to make up the slack.

Although technically considered smuggling, historical records show that Newfoundland continued to import from America during those war years. The very survival of Newfoundland required such technically illegal trade—which might be looked upon as "voyages of mercy" rather than smuggling—although it was undoubtedly also very profitable to those engaged in such trafficking. (Summarized from: "Eighteenth Century Newfoundland by C. Grant Head, McClelland and Stewart Ltd, Toronto © 1976)

It seems possible in retrospect, based on the records we have and other hints, that the Cranton names found in Guilford, Connecticut, and the Scranton seafaring family names, also of Guildford, Connecticut, were somehow related to this banned wartime trade. This might explain subsequent connections between Cranton and Scranton names in Guysborough County, and Margaree, Nova Scotia. (reported in Guysborough Sketches and Essays by Dr. A.C. Jost, 2009 edition, and explained in more detail below)
CRANTON GENEALOGY

The following excerpt is adapted from: A detailed history of North East Margaree by Rev. C H C Johnston, formerly a United Church Minister in North East Margaree, and later of Guysborough—transcribed from an earlier handwritten document by Norma Day, of North East Margaree, first written in the early 1900s and more recently published by the Cape Breton Genealogy and Historical Association.

Captain Robert Cranton, a native of England, and said to have been a naval officer, came in his own ship to Margaree Harbour from St. John's, Newfoundland, where he had been in business. His wife was Ann Strong [sic, perhaps a typographical misspelling of Stone], said to have been the daughter of a brother officer and born in India. He took up 200 acres immediately west of Carmarthen, as Margaree Harbour was then known. [He thus seems to have already had some type land claim to property in Margaree before 1794 when he was lost at sea, although an official Crown grant cannot be found.] He was drowned on a return voyage from Halifax [ca. 1794 in other reports]. Many years later the wreck of his ship was washed ashore at Isle Madame and was recognized from the ship's name which was that of his own daughter [Nancy].
Captain Cranton's only son was born after his death and was named Robert Jr., [1795-1872]. This small boy had several sisters, all much older than himself [the Captain's children were born over period of 20 years. There is some speculation that the Captain had more than one wife, but no evidence for that can be found].

Mary Ann [b 1790 Newfoundland] while on a visit to her family at Margaree met and married a Mr. Doodley [elsewhere spelled Doody] of Grand Etang.

Susan [1788-1874] married Jonathan Murray first of that name.

Sarah [1779-1820] married Capt. John Phillips first of the

Bridget [b. 1776, St. Johns Newfoundland, d ?] never came to Margaree and was reported to have married in St. John's.

Nancy [b. 1776-1864, born the same year as Bridge [unusual in that era because breast-feeding and lactation suppresses ovulation] married William Burton [born in Dorset, England, arrived Margaree in 1803], first of the name.]

In May, 2013, an email was received by this author from a Cranton cousin, Jean MacGregor Simon of Huntsville, AL, who is 4th great granddaughter of Capt. Robert Cranton, and 3rd great granddaughter of the Captain's youngest daughter, "Nancy" and William Burton. She is therefore this author's 4th cousin once removed. Jean believes from her personal family lore that that Nancy was either a nickname or a middle name and that this Nancy Cranton's christened name was actually Ann Cranton."

Thomas Etheridge [sometimes spelled Ethridge] was Captain Cranton's business manager in Newfoundland. He married the Captain's widow, Ann [possibly Mary Ann] and immigrated to Margaree several years after the Captains death.

Captain John Lyon Phillips (or Philips): born December 12, 1774 in Pomfret Township, Windham, Connecticut, became skipper of a second schooner owned by Captain Robert Cranton and married the Captain's daughter Sarah. John Phillips' and his parents emigrated to Canada from New York with the great migration of United Empire Loyalists in 1783, when John was 9 years old. He was son of Bernard Phillips and Levinia Lyon of Windham, Connecticut. Bernard Phillips eventually received a land grant in Cranbourne, Dorchester County, Quebec, where he died after 1844. (from Genealogy Forum by Richard Ripley, Kitchener, Ontario, 2001). John Phillips history and life at Margaree are clearly recorded, but his early history is unclear.

A ship's manifest from 1783 showed the Phillips family arriving from New York at Port Roseway, on the south-west shore of Nova Scotia. This was a very inhospitable location on a wild and primeval coastline, where it was necessary to clear away brushwood, even before migrants they could pitch tents or build shanties for winter.
The senior Phillips family soon moved further west to receive a land grant in Quebec. Good documentation concerning John Phillips between 1783 and 1794 cannot be found—so must speculate using the only information we have. When John Phillips arrived at Port Roseway, Captain Robert Cranton was apparently a coastal sea trader along the coastlines of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Labrador, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland. He would surely have called in on Port Roseway, which was in great need of food and trade goods at the time. Captain Cranton would have been about 33 years old in 1783, with no sons. Could he have taken on young 9 year-old John Phillips in Port Roseway, as a cabin boy or midshipman apprentice. We will probably never know, but in some manner, before the age of 20, John Philips met and became closely associated with Captain Robert Canton, made his way to Newfoundland, married his daughter, Sarah, and eventually captained one of his ships.

On their arrival In Newfoundland, John Phillips and his brother, stated that they had come directly from England, where they had been born. He alleged that he and his brother had run away from England at a young age to make their fortunes in Newfoundland. But there is no reliable documentation for that and a plausible reason why it might have been otherwise. Throughout his life, John Phillips kept to the story that he was native-born in England. Second generation sons born in the colonies, were commonly treated as second class citizens by English-born colonials. They were treated as inferior to full-fledged Englishmen. An example of this is the Navigation Acts that restricted trade with England to ships crewed and operated by native-born Englishmen. A bit of deception may have allowed a more favored status in the Island colony and allowed him a position as ship's crew. Evidence suggests that John Phillips first came to Canada from a Loyalist family in Connecticut. It is also possible that he came directly from Connecticut to Newfoundland with Captain Phillips on a trading mission during the war years.

In 1794 John Philips, age 20, sailed from Newfoundland to Margaree Harbor in a vessel owned by Captain Robert Cranton [from McDougall]. When he crossed from Newfoundland to Cape Breton Island, Sarah Cranton, age 15, a daughter of Captain Robert Cranton, was in the same ship. In 1798, Sarah Cranton became the first wife of John Phillips. Capt. Phillips' second wife after the death of Sarah in 1820, was Harriet Ingraham, who like Phillips was also from a Connecticut family, and first immigrated to Canada in similar circumstances. Although John Phillips claimed that he had arrived directly from England and was a native Englishmen, that may not have been true. Debby McKay, of Inverness (now deceased), was an amateur genealogist and descendent of Captain Robert Cranton. She researched the Cranton family tree, searched old newspaper archives from the Inverness/Margaree area further confuses this story. Debby was active on genealogy websites in the 1990s and posted an entry online in which she
stated that Sarah Cranton was born in Connecticut in 1779 and that her father was named Captain "Robert Timothy Cranton." She lists John Phillips as also born in Connecticut. She quoted from an Inverness newspaper article that along the way some individuals changed their family name from Scranton to Cranton. Two faded photos of John Phillips and his wife Sarah are posted on the crantonfamily.com website.

Robert Cranton Jr., the Captain's son, was married on September 26, 1816, at age 25 (elsewhere age 21), to Catherine Rice, aged seventeen, born July 16, 1799. Fourteen children came to that home: Mary Ann, November 5, 1817, died 1905; (Mrs. Jeston Timmons); William, May 4, 1819, died 1824; Robert, March 29, 1823, died February 15, 1824; Ann, 1824, died 1911; Thomas January 8, 1825, died as an infant on May 24, 1825. Robert, January 1, 1826; John Beriah, January 26, 1829, died 1890; David Parker, October 15, 1831, died 1883; Frederick, January 3, 1834; died 1881; Henry Levi, [this author’s great grandfather] August 31, 1836, died 1913 in Vermont; Catherine, January 25th, 1839, died 1839; Thomas Stephen, November 24, 1840, died 1881; Sarah Jane, March 12, 1843, died 1890, (Mrs. John T Phillips)."

Canada Deaths and Burials Records, for Robert Cranton, Jr
record title: Canada Deaths and Burials, 1664-1955
Death Date: 20 Sep 1872
Death Place: Margaree
Age: 81
Birth Date: 1791 [sic] Birthplace: Newfoundland Marital Status: Widowed
Father's Name: Wm Cranton [sic, not Robert Cranton?]
Mother's Name: Sarah Cranton [sic, not Ann Cranton?] Indexing Project (Batch) Number: B02920-4
System Origin: Canada-EASy
Source Film Number: 1298881
Reference Number: p73 no153.

Robert Cranton, Jr., lived with his son, Henry Levi Cranton throughout the last 10 years of his life. Therefore, Henry Levi Cranton most likely provided information for his own father, Robert Jr's, official death record, by giving the recording clerk Robert Jr’s father’s first name, [Captain Robert Cranton’s first name] as “William,” not Robert, and that Robert Jr’s mother was “Sarah,” not Ann. The clerk also recorded that Robert Jr. was born in 1791, although 1795 seems likely the correct date. His mother’s maiden family name is listed in the Johnston genealogy as “Strong” and her christened name is recorded in her son's death record as “Sarah.” This remains a puzzle.
Historical and genealogical records point to the Dorset/Somerset districts of England's west country as the origin of Newfoundland, and Margaree Cranton families—and probably also of the Connecticut Cranton families who immigrated to America decades earlier. Christening records show a William Cranton born in Dorset in 1750. Census and Parish records show a cluster of Cranton’s still living in the Dorset locale throughout the 1800s. Refer to a copy on the next page.

It has long been a custom in the Cranton family, even into the mid 20th century, to arbitrarily ignore either a first or middle name in everyday use, even continuing throughout life. For example, the various census records over the years of Henry Levi Cranton’s family show that some of his children gave only their first name and others only their middle name to the census taker, with no mention of other given names. This author’s own grandfather [a son of Henry Levi Cranton] was recorded as “John George Cranton” as an infant, but throughout life he was known as only “George Cranton” and the first name “John” was totally ignored (although his grave marker strangely lists “George J Cranton” with “J” as a middle initial). His son, my uncle, was always known as “Hartley” Cranton. Hartley was his middle name, while his given first name, “George,” was ignored throughout his life. Few people even knew that his first name was "George." This consistent pattern seems to have occured across four generations, where some Cranton's ignored their given first names in favor of their middle names. It is speculated that the same occurred in the instance of Captain Robert Cranton?
It seems plausible that Captain Robert Cranton (ca. 1750-1794), the father of Robert Cranton Jr. (1795-1872), had his name recorded in various documents taken from earlier oral histories as “Captain Robert Cranton”, and used that name in day to day activities, but that his son Robert Cranton, Jr. may have correctly informed his own son, Henry Levi Cranton (who provided the information for Robert, Jr.’s, death record), that Robert’s father's first name was actually “William”. With the name ‘Robert’ himself, it seems unlikely that he would not state that his father’s name was also “Robert”, if such were the case. Yet, the Captain’s other children stated that their father’s name was “Robert”. An explanation for these discrepancies might be that the full name of Captain Robert Cranton was “William Robert Cranton” or possibly “Robert William Cranton,” and as was a family custom, one of those names was rarely used. Of importance in this context may be the fact that Robert Jr. named his first son “William,” not Robert, as would otherwise have been the custom. This provides fairly good indication that his father,
the Captain, was a William and not first named Robert. Robert Jr. then named his second son Robert.

To further confuse this picture, in a Guysborough county history authored by A. C. Jost (revised in 2009) he states of the Guysborough “Scranton” family:

“Not all of these [Scranton's] were in Guysborough County, however, for this was one of the families whose members formed the group [the 1783 Hallowell Grant recipients, a Crown Loyalist group of settlers in Guysborough County] who went to make new homes for themselves in the Margaree district about the year 1809 [that group included, among others, Irad Hart (my third great grandfather); Hezekiah Ingraham (my fourth great grandfather); and Mark Crowdis (my third great grandfather)]. The Margaree family altered their names to some extent, eventually, and are now known as Cranton's.”

The only other place we find evidence for a Scranton to Cranton name change is in an email from Debbie McKay, cited below. The fact that the Scranton and Cranton families lived together in Guilford, Connecticut, in 1792 may also be significant. Is does seem possible that, as Jost writes, a Guysborough County "Scranton" moved to Margaree and changed their family name to “Cranton” The Scranton line came to Guysborough, Nova Scotia from Guildford, Connecticut, and Guildford was later used as a given first name to a male descendant in the Cranton family tree. From a published Scranton genealogy book we find a “William Scranton” who disappeared from view in Connecticut, who was born to a seafaring Scranton family in Guildford, Connecticut. He was the son of Job Scranton, also a seaman.

The third recorded child of Captain Robert Cranton was Susan Cranton, Robert Jr’s older sister—who was a full nine years older. Because of this age difference, it has been speculated that Susan may have been by a different mother, perhaps an earlier wife of the captain. There is no evidence for this, but the 20 year time span for the Captain’s six children opens that possibility. Wives more often died of childbirth complications at that time, causing male family heads to marry multiple times. Before scientific birth control became available, a 9 year time lapse between children would have been unusual.

Susan (Cranton) Murray (1788-1874), the Captain’s daughter, was married in Margaree to Jonathon Murray (b. in Connecticut ca. 1789, d. after 1861 in Pictou County, NS). Her official NS death record follows:

**Death Record for Susan (Cranton) Murray, daughter of Captain Robert Cranton**

record title: Canada Deaths and Burials, 1664-1955
name: Susan Murray
Susan’s mother is listed as “Mary.” Is this possibly the name of an earlier wife of Captain Robert. Or was her mother’s full name Mary Ann, the same as the captain’s fifth daughter? Ann may have preferred to use only her middle name. This is all conjecture and we may never know for sure.

Susan named her second daughter “Sarah.” Nancy (Cranton) Burton, the Captain’s second daughter, also named one of her daughters “Sarah.” “Sarah” is the name appearing as his mother on Robert Jr’s death record. There are a number of contradictions here.

Jean MacGregor Simon of Huntsville, Alabama, a living direct descendant of the Captain's first daughter, "Nancy", believes that Nancy's christened first name was probably "Ann Cranton."

Robert Jr. named his first daughter “Mary Ann,” and his first son “William,” further suggesting that the Captain’s full name might have been William Robert Cranton and that his mother might have been “Mary Ann.” If he was himself a Junior, his first son should have been “Robert III.”

The son of Robert Jr. who was named William, potentially a third generation William, also named his first son “William.” So we have other indications that the Captain himself may have been “William Robert Cranton”

An additional Cranton of unknown relationship was a Charles Cranton, who was residing in Cumberland County, Nova Scotia (near Guysborough), in 1818. He had a son named David Cranton born in 1818. More is not known of that branch of the Cranton clan, or of any relationship to the Margaree Cranton’s. On the basis of probability alone, we might surmise that Charles Cranton also originated in 17th century Dorset and migrated with the fishing fleet.

**Death record for David Cranton son of Charles Cranton.**

record title: Canada Deaths and Burials, 1664-1955

name: David Cranton
gender: Male
deathe date: 12 Dec 1867
death place: Cumberland Co., Nova Scotia, Canada
age: 49
birth date: 1818
father's name: Charles Cranton
**Further Comments and Speculations, A Trail of Bread Crumbs:**

1) The Captain’s wife is named above in the Johnston genealogy as Ann “Strong.” That name does not appear any other place in the family history. “Strong” and “Stone” are close in spelling and thus a name written initially in script as "Stone" and later transcribed as "Strong" seems likely to be a typographical error in transcription—from Stone to Strong.

2) Robert Cranton Jr’s father is listed officially in Robert's death record as “Wm.” Robert Jr. also named his first son “William," after his own father as was the custom. Since his own name was Robert, he would more likely have named his first son Robert, if Robert had also been his father’s name (in that case, he was not a true Junior).

3) Other possibilities: The Captain named his fifth daughter “Mary Ann.” His fourth daughter, “Susan,” had her mother listed as “Mary” in the official death record (see above). Robert Jr. also named his first daughter, “Mary.” Robert’s younger sister, who seems to have died in infancy, was also named “Mary” (was this mother an earlier wife of the Captain who perhaps died in childbirth?). There is some indication that the Captain's daughters Susan and Sarah both had a mother named “Mary” (or “Mary Ann”) while their much younger brother, Robert Jr., has his mother listed as “Sarah” in his official death record, perhaps from a second marriage of the Captain. Women tragically tended to die young in that time, often in childbirth, leading to multiple marriages by the father. Before effective birth control, children also tended to be born close together. Sarah and Susan were born 9 years apart. Mary and Robert were born 5 years apart. Perhaps the good Captain had one or more prior wives, who escaped being recorded in the historical record? The mother of Susan Cranton, the wife of Captain Robert Cranton, is identified as "Mary Crantown" sic, in her official Nova Scotia death record. The mother of Robert Cranton, Jr. may possibly be a second wife of Captain Robert Cranton, who is identified as “Sarah Cranton” in his death record, or perhaps her full name was “Sarah Ann Stone” (or alternatively “Ann Sarah Stone,” or even “Mary Ann Stone.”). Available records are confusing. Her preferred given name was most certainly “Ann” as this was well recorded when she became a widow in 1794 and when she was subsequently remarried to Thomas Ethridge.

4) The father of Susan Cranton (1788-1874) and the father of Robert Cranton Jr. (1795-1872) are known from multiple sources to be the same person. In the above listed death records, this father is named
‘William’ by his son Robert, and called ‘Robert’ by his daughter Susan. So we have an indication that this father, commonly known as ‘Captain Robert Cranton’, may have been “William Robert Cranton,” or similarly “Robert William Cranton.” There is a more doubtful indication that his last name at some point in his life was “Scranton” and changed to Cranton for unknown reasons. If he had been engaged in sea trade between New England and Canada during the revolutionary war, a time of extreme hardship, shortages and famine in Newfoundland, when trade was made illegal by both governments, it may have become expedient to adopt a fictitious New England identity during his time at the Guildford, Connecticut, seaport. He could have used “Scranton,” as a Connecticut name, an alias when on the New England end of his clandestine trade route. The indication for that is recorded in Jost’s history of Guysborough County. That contention was also stated in the year 2000 in an email by Debbie McKay (now deceased), a descendant of Captain Cranton and an amateur genealogist. The only other clue of that type is the very close neighborly association between several Cranton and Scranton families in the official 1790 Guilford, Connecticut, census, including one person's name spelled both ways.

The 1790 Connecticut Census

"Cranton" was an uncommon name in the pre-revolutionary American colonies, although a number of Yankee Cranton’s can be found in musters and payrolls of the Continental Army. Cranton was also an uncommon name in the post-war United States up until the early 1800s, after which Cranton family members began migrating south into the United States from the Margaree district of Nova Scotia—with an occasional immigrant from England.

During the first official census for the new United States in 1790 (actually completed in 1792) 39 individuals in 8 different Cranton families appeared, seemingly out of nowhere, all together in Guilford, Connecticut. Those eight Cranton families were listed together on the same handwritten census page. Assuming that the census taker walked from house to house with questions, these 8 families with 39 individual Cranton's all lived in closely adjacent housing. They all recorded on the same census page in the census recorder’s hand-written entries (copy below)

Immediately after that 1790 census, all of those Cranton families largely disappeared from official and historical records in the new United States and, until the early 1800s, also from Canada. The exception was a seafaring captain named Robert Cranton from Newfoundland, who is recorded as establishing a trading post at the mouth of Margaree Harbor, Cape Breton Island, in approximately 1793. There was a 10 year period between the great loyalist migration from New England to Canada in 1783 and the good Captain's death. Historical documents indicate that during that
lengthy decade Captain Cranton operated a maritime trading company, based in Newfoundland, with at least two of his own schooners, sailing between Newfoundland, Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. (At that time “New England” was a term applied to all mainland territory from Maine in the north, extending southward to the Carolinas.) Captain Cranton lost his life in 1794 when his ship was lost at sea just south of Nova Scotia while on such a trading voyage.

Captain Cranton’s family subsequently migrated to Margaree from Newfoundland in 1799, approximately five years after the Captain was lost at sea, a date clearly stated in Robert Jr.'s Margaree Land Grant application. Oral family history suggests that Captain Cranton was an officer in the English Navy, but British Admiralty records of the time, which are very complete and available, show no evidence to support that fact. Nor can he found as skipper of a registered English merchant ship. He could well have been a merchant sea captain and owner of his own schooner(s), operating out of Newfoundland, but he was almost certainly not in the British Navy. The Navigation Acts enforced by Parliament would have required that all commercial shipping between the Canadian colonies be conducted using only ships owned, captained and crewed by native-born Englishmen, not colonials. That may have made a bit of subterfuge by the Cranton enterprise politically and economically convenient.

There is good evidence that the Cranton family name did originate in western England, but at an earlier time. A search of historical, parish, and genealogical records reveals a cluster of Cranton surnames centered in the Broadwinsor, Dorset, area of southwestern England (near the Dorset/Somerset border). A man named William Cranton was born there in 1750 (as documented above). That name and age provide a potential match for the elusive Captain, in the context of other contradictory records as detailed above.

Quite a number of Cranton families lived in the Dorset area from the late 1600s through the late 1800s, often with the same given names (or close enough to be phonetic spellings) as names on the 1790 Guilford, Connecticut, U. S. census. Because given names tend to be passed down by custom from generation to generation, they tend to remain thus in a family tree. This border shifted back and forth between Dorset and Somerset at various times and some of the Cranton names were recorded in Somerset.

Given names for Cranton’s in Dorset records include two Benjamin’s (likely father and son). The Guilford, Connecticut, 1790 census, shown below, also lists two Benjamin’s, perhaps the same two, who may have moved back to Dorset, or at least the same family. A search of Dorset parish records from that time, and for a century afterwards, show an increasing number of Cranton surnames.

Entries are handwritten in these old records, are often difficult to decipher, with ink smears, and misspellings (i.e., Cranten). Edward Cranton
can be found in Dorset of about the right age and he was possibly recorded as Edmond in the 1790 Guilford census. Also a Joseph Cranton in Dorset may have been recorded as Josiah in Guilford. In 1773 a Cornwall legal record briefly mentions a town or village in Somerset, close to Dorset, named “Cranton,” but neither that town not records from there can be found elsewhere. Bear in mind that the "ton" suffix in Cranton indicated a town of origin where the "Crant" family name originated.

At a later time, the official 1881 British census lists 22 Cranton families, also concentrated in Somerset, close to the border of Dorset—more than twice as many Cranton families as in the next largest cluster anywhere in England. There existed only 46 Cranton families in all of England on the

### 1881 census UK

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Frequency %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Staffordshire</td>
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<td>Hampshire</td>
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</table>

The link below will access a multipage pdf file on the crantonfamily.com website with copies of multiple online internet records, documenting a sampling of Cranton and Ethridge families in the Dorset/Somerset area of England in the 18th and 19th centuries. This is a lengthy document with 19 pages so it may take time to load and require you scroll down from page to page to see it all.

[http://crantonfamily.com/media/cranton_dorset.pdf](http://crantonfamily.com/media/cranton_dorset.pdf)

Available data shows strong links between the Margaree Cranton's and the West Country of England, specifically Dorset and nearby Somerset—and also with Guilford, Connecticut. Note that Thomas Ethridge, Captain Cranton’s business partner and clerk, who married the Captain’s widow and became stepfather to Robert Cranton, Jr., was born in nearby Christchurch, Hampshire, closely bordering Dorset. Thomas Ethridge (various spellings, i.e. Etheridge) confirms this as his date and place of birth in his land grant application in the Margaree District.
Poole Harbor on the coast of Dorset was home to the "Poole Merchant Princes," where Georgian mansions stand today as evidence of their prosperous 17th century commerce in Newfoundland and New England.

Many merchant and fishing ships bound for Newfoundland sailed forth from Dorset each season. Unlike the fishing vessels, merchant ships commonly sailed multiple times each year to and from Newfoundland, and also between Newfoundland and New England. Prior to 1760, most fishing crews and merchant seamen kept their permanent homes and families in England, while Newfoundland remained a harsh and lawless frontier environment, with only a few year-round residents. Shipping, church, parish, court, and other records of that time in Dorset could be a rich source for more information.

Gordon Cranton of Margaree Centre once mentioned the possibility of a link to the “Cranstoun” family name in England or France, but nothing more about that can be found.

Official 1790 U.S. Census for the name "Cranton" in Guilford, CT
(Not completed until 1792)
Source Citation: First Census of the United States, 1790 (NARA microfilm publication M637, 12 rolls). Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29. National Archives, Washington, D.C. Year: 1790; Census Place: Guilford, New Haven, Connecticut; Roll: M637_1; Page: 124; Image: 210; Family History Library Film: 0568141. ALL ON THE SAME PAGE, ASSUMED TO INDICATE MOVEMENT BETWEEN ADJACENT HOUSING BY THE CENSUS TAKER.

**Total of Guilford Cranton Family Members**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Husband and wife</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin Cranton</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin 2 Cranton II</td>
<td>1 son, 2 daughters</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmond (Edward?) Cranton</td>
<td>2 daughters</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josiah Cranton</td>
<td>3 sons, 4 daughters</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luther Cranton</td>
<td>2 sons, 1 daughter</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathaniel Cranton</td>
<td>1 daughter</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathaniel Cranton 2</td>
<td>1 son, 3 daughters</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathaniel 2nd Cranton II</td>
<td>2 sons, 1 daughter</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL Crantons: 39 individuals in 8 families

When the same first name is listed twice, it is assumed to represent a father and a married son with his separate family—i.e., two Benjamins and two Nathaniels.

Of special interest, on that same handwritten census page, and thus close neighbors, were listed 2 heads of household named “Timothy Scranton.” The name Timothy Scranton is also listed in parentheses in the
LDS records as "Timothy Cranton," adding to the mystery about the Scranton association. One Scranton family had a daughter, with a total of 3 in the family. The one listed as Timothy 2, Scranton II [spelled as Timothy Cranton II in LDS records], consisted of husband and wife, 3 sons, 1 daughter, with a total of 6 people in the family. Here we have evidence for a close association between 8 Cranton families and 2 separate Timothy Scranton families in 1792 Guilford, Connecticut, all living together in adjacent housing—although what that close association means, along with a close similarity of last names, remains a puzzle.

A copy of that original handwritten census record is inserted below on the next page.

The fact that these two “Timothy Scranton’s,” also listed as “Cranton’s” in LDS records, gives credence to an internet posting by Debbie McKay in the year 2000 (Debbie was a Cranton/Ethridge descendant, now deceased) who wrote in an email posted on a genealogy website that Captain Robert Cranton changed his name from “Timothy Scranton.” The Guilford census record shows Cranton and Scranton families living together in Guildford, Connecticut in 1792, suggesting such a connection. Jost, in his history of Guysborough County, Nova Scotia, wrote that at least some of the Cranton families of Margaree had changed their names from Scranton. A search of that same 1790 U.S. census for the name Scranton in Guilford, Connecticut lists a total of 90 other Scranton's.

It is well documented that the Hart’s of Guysborough County, N.S., who later migrated to Margaree, were Loyalists from Connecticut (originally from the Hartford area and for whom Hartford was named). Most Scranton names were well documented as Yankee patriots (see Appendix), and a “Timothy Scranton” appears on the payroll muster of the Continental Army (Source: New England Genealogy Association). While at least one Connecticut Scranton is named in a Crown regiment. Many colonial families at the time were split in their allegiance, with siblings and cousins fighting on opposite sides of the rebellion.

So where did these Guilford, Connecticut, Cranton men come from? They seem to have arrived after 1783 when hostilities ceased, stayed only briefly and then departed. Where did they depart to? Why does a worldwide search for those 39 Cranton families including Canada, England and the USA, before and after that 1790 census, fail to clearly reveal them? The most notable cluster of Cranton's, some with the same given names in subsequent generations, can be found in a late 1800s British census for the Somerset/Dorset area of Southwestern England—close by Christchurch, Hampshire, the original home of Thomas Ethridge.
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<th>Name</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<td>Nathaniel Buck</td>
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<td>Joseph Grant</td>
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<td>William Clark</td>
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<td>Elizabeth Smith</td>
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<td>Sarah Brown</td>
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</table>

Total: .256
In the 1880 U.S. census for the city of Wilson, Niagara County, New York, we find Mr. H. J. Cranton, age 85. His birthplace is listed as Connecticut, ca.1795. His father’s birthplace is also listed as Connecticut, which would more likely have been before 1775. These father and son Cranton's cannot be found in the Barbour records or in any other
Connecticut records of the time. This may represent a sanitizing of records in the newly sovereign United States to remove evidence of prior loyalist sentiments. This same H. J. Cranton’s father may have been one of the Cranton’s recorded briefly on the 1790 Guildford census.

By obscuring traces of evidence for loyalist wartime activity, some of the Guildford Cranton’s, like others who returned after the war, might have intended to claim prewar property rights, collect legal damages, seek inheritances, etc. It seems possible that some Cranton's may have remained on the Loyalist side, while others served the rebellion. If wartime loyalist activity had become known, any such rights would summarily have been denied in the newly founded United States. They would have been deported empty handed—after having records of their prewar homes in Connecticut expunged. Property and valuables would have been expropriated and sold to Yankee patriots for a pittance—a common practice after the war.

The Revolutionary War ended in 1783, but, the Continental Army and citizens committees continued for years thereafter to persecute known Loyalists and their descendants who remained or who later returned. Many loyalists were driven out during and immediately after the war, but subsequently returned in a vain attempt to reclaim lost property rights. It is possible that the Cranton’s who briefly returned for the 1790 Guilford census, could have been loyalist Cranton's who had earlier fled to England or Canada. They may have returned to Connecticut in an attempt to return to their former family lands, or to make claims on their parents' or deceased relatives' wills, in hopes of receiving monies, properties, land, legacies, behests, etc. But it is unlikely that they could have succeeded in the anti-British climate of that time and would have left empty-handed.

Committees scattered throughout the post-war United States to ferret out such returning Loyalists and to send them again on their way. Loyalist lands were seized and sold at auction, often at only token prices to patriot friends of Committee members. Loyalist returnees, heirs, and descendants were branded as enemies of the state, and were deported to Canada, England, Florida, the Indies, or elsewhere.

A important year for this activity was 1792, when the new United States was forming these “Patriot Committees” to adjudicate land claims, wills, and inheritance disputes arising from the war. The Committees vigorously sniffed out and chased away anyone they considered to be "Tory Traitors," or descended from such. That would seem one possible reason why 39 Cranton family members can be found in only one record, the 1790 Connecticut census, but not after.

It is also possible that some of these 1792 Guilford Cranton’s subsequently returned to Newfoundland, where their records were destroyed in several large fires that occurred during the 18th and 19th centuries—or that the family name was later abbreviated to "Crant," as we know happened to other family names in that largely illiterate society.
example, records show that the Thornton family name was shortened to "Thorn" in 19th century Newfoundland. Many public, church and community records in Newfoundland were lost forever. So, the question remains unanswered: Whatever happened before and during the war in Guilford, Connecticut to prompt this brief return and subsequent disappearance of eight Cranton families?

Guildford, Connecticut, lies close across Long Island sound from New York, which was defended throughout the entire war by Crown loyalist militia. Some of these militia groups were known as "Associated Loyalists," and were not listed on any payroll or muster. They were thus absent from official records. They were organized into small groups, some with their own small ships, and subsisted instead on loot and prize money from their raiding parties. Because official musters, payrolls or other records were not kept, we cannot know if any Cranton's (or Scranton's) served as any such "Associated Loyalists."

Like privateers, ship captains and officers who fought as "Associated Loyalists" could potentially earn large sums of prize money from the Crown, if they successfully captured Yankee shipping. They also gathered loot during shore raids on rebel towns and cities along the shore. That may have been a potential source of seed money to fund post war ship ownership and business capital.

**Cranton Names Found in Official U.S. Census Records later in the Nineteenth Century**

The official 1800 U.S. census shows no Cranton names—although, there were a few named Crandon, Cramton, and Granton, which could have been phonetic misspellings. We find no clues to the whereabouts of the 1790 Guildford Cranton families. First names from the Guildford census appear in Dorset and Somerset, England, but not in the later U.S. records excerpted below.

In 1810 we find only Jas [sic] Cranton in New York City.

In 1820, John Cranton lived in Georgia, Stafford Cranton in Rhode Island, and Ephraim Cranton in Maine.

In the 1830 census, Littleton Cranton is listed in Alabama, John Cranton in New York state, and Albert Cranton also in New York. In earlier records we find George Cranton and his wife Frances living in New York City in 1805, with a large family of children. That family later moved to Indiana.

In 1840 Samuel Cranton lived in New Hampshire, Catherine Cranton in New York City, Lyman Cranton in Pennsylvania, and a G. C. Cranton in Ohio.

By 1850, Cranton families had expanded to a total of 19, all born in the USA, and scattered around the country—except for May Cranton who was born in Ireland 1827.
In 1860 we find a Joel Cranton in New York City, who was born in Massachusetts in 1804, Charles Cranton, born in England, living in New York City, and Joseph Cranton born in 1809 in New York City, a registered merchant seaman.

The number of Cranton's expanded exponentially thereafter, spreading across the United States.

Using recurring first names as our best clue, the Cranton families to be found in the early 19th century Dorset/Somerset area of England most likely emigrated back from Connecticut.

**CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH AND THE CRANTON FAMILY**

Cranton families in the Margaree district and also Dorset, England, (and also the Scranton families of Connecticut), were predominantly affiliated with the Congregational Church—referred to in England as a nonconformist church, originating in 17th and 18th centuries. This is perhaps more evidence that the Margaree Cranton’s migrated from Dorset. Many loyalist settlers who were deported to Guysborough County, Nova Scotia, in 1783, who moved on to Margaree in 1805, brought with them their Congregationalist Church. The Hart, Crowdis, Ingraham and David Scranton families (among others) of early Guysborough County, Nova Scotia, were largely Congregationalists. They were known as Hallowell grant settlers, Tories who fled from Connecticut during the great migration of 1783. The Congregational Cemetery in Margaree Centre is the final resting place of rest of many Cranton’s.

Early Congregational churches were called “nonconformist,” and separatist, from the predominant Anglican church of 18th century England. Congregational churches became widely established in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and later throughout New England. A distinguishing characteristic of Congregationalists was full autonomy of the local congregation. (This author, born 1932 in Massachusetts, the 3rd great grandson of Captain Robert Cranton, was baptized in the Congregational Church of Groveland, Massachusetts.)

Early Congregationalists were called separatists or independents to distinguish them from similarly divergent Calvinists and Presbyterians. Some Congregationalists in Britain still call themselves Independents. The Congregational Church in Dorset, England, seems to have first been founded ca. 1670.

Religious dissent appeared in Newfoundland in 1775 connected to establishment of the Congregational Church at St Johns. In 1782 Governor Campbell granted permission for continuation of its services. All Christian denominations henceforth enjoyed equal freedom of worship in Newfoundland. John Jones, labeled in documents of the time as a "dissenting preacher," established a Congregational Church in Newfoundland in 1782. Available records indicate that the Ethridge family, Robert Cranton, Jr., and
others who migrated from Newfoundland to Margaree at the end of the 18th century came as Congregationalists.

The Congregational church is thus another possible link between the Cranton and Scranton families, along with other Hallowell grant settlers from Connecticut who migrated to Guysborough County, Nova Scotia, with family roots extending initially from southwest England, thence to Newfoundland and to Connecticut. The Scranton family history parallels the Cranton’s.

**LIVING CONDITIONS IN NEWFOUNDLAND DURING THE LATE 1700s, WHEN CAPTAIN CRANTON WAS SAILING AND TRADING ALONG THE MARITIME SEACOAST**

In their written application for a Crown Land Grant for farms in NE Margaree, filed in 1825, Thomas Ethridge and Robert Cranton, Jr., jointly stated that they had immigrated to Margaree 26 years earlier, (presumably from Newfoundland but possibly from England via Newfoundland). That would have been 1799, approximately 5 years after Captain Robert Cranton was lost at sea, and when Robert Jr. was about 4 years old.

Thomas Ethridge, son to the Captain’s widow and Thomas Ethridge, Sr., was born in England, in 1796, two years after Captain Robert Cranton was lost at sea. This indicates that the Thomas Etheridge family lived for a time in England, before moving to Margaree, and may explain why more records cannot be found in Newfoundland. Their youngest son, John Ethridge, was born in 1798 in Newfoundland, the year before the family moved on to Margaree. This suggests the possibility that Captain Robert Cranton maintained his family in England in the years before his death, or for part of that time, traveling back and forth from England to trade in Newfoundland and environs. He may have kept residences on both sides of the Atlantic, to be subsequently used by the Thomas Ethridge and his wife, the Captain’s widow.

Family recollections and histories of the era indicate that Captain Robert Cranton was a prosperous sea merchant and owner of two fast schooners. He could have sailed swiftly back and forth across the Atlantic, and there is no reason to believe that he remained soley in Newfoundland. He may have kept his family safely in England, at least part time, rather than raise his young children in the relatively lawless and forbidding fisheries environment—as Newfoundland was at that time. If he did have a home in England, that would support the assertion that he was an English sea captain, albeit a merchant captain. The same might apply to Captain John Phillips.

Schooners were highly favored ships where speed and windward ability were required, as was the case for coastal shipping, privateering, smuggling, and blockade running. They were also commonly used on the Grand Banks fishing grounds. Schooners were used to carry cargo in many different environments, ranging from deep ocean voyages to coastal runs.
They were popular in North America for their speed and seaworthiness. They were favored by the Royal Navy to rapidly carry dispatches between North America and England. Many such schooners were built in New England and also in Nova Scotia during the 1700s—eventually also in Newfoundland. The historical record states that Captain Robert Cranton owned two such schooners, and that one was skippered by his future son-in-law, young John Phillips.

For centuries West Country English seamen sailed across the Atlantic from permanent homes in the west country of England, where they maintained their families in a friendlier and safer environment, compared with Newfoundland, especially over the winter. From the evidence we have, seems possible for Captain Robert could kept his family in principally England. History books written in the 19th century give us clues about conditions in early Newfoundland, as summarized below. A search for the name “Cranton” in church records, gravestone records, legal documents, wills, etc., in Newfoundland reveals very little.

There exists a bit more evidence for the name, Stone, the maiden name of the Captain’s wife. In 1750 there was a constable recorded near St. John’s named Stone, who could have been the father or uncle of Ann Stone, although there is no direct evidence for that assumption. Stone was also a principal family surnames in the later 18th century that was listed for Trinity Harbor in the Table above. Ann’s father may have been another merchant captain, sailing to and from England, or sallying forth on coastal trading routes from Trinity Bay. That would support the long-held family lore that Ann’s father was a fellow sea captain of Robert Cranton.

An Ann Stone was christened in India at about the right time, which might satisfy stories that she was born there. An infant girl named “Ann Stone” was christened on 29 Sep 1764 at Fort St. George, Madras, Tamil Nadu, India, of British parents—(John Maxwell Stone, the father, appears to have been the son of John & Mary Stone, christened 11 Sept 1728 in Fort St David, Tamil Nadu, India. That John and Mary seem to be the first Stone’s recorded in India. They had 5 children who were baptized between 1714 and 1719 in Fort St George, and 1728-1731 in Fort St David). They were most likely East India Company officials or a military family posted there. This Ann Stone would have been 14 years younger than our proposed Captain Robert Cranton and perhaps too young to have mothered his first children. (from Sterling Edwards 2004 GenForum genealogy.com)

Yet another Ann Stone was born in Portland, Dorset, England in 1760. The British East India Company was booming in the 1750s and many young men flocked to India to make their fortunes (so-called Nabobs). Jonas Stone may have been among them. By 1760, however, an economic crash occurred, and many fortune-seekers returned westward to their homes. We might speculate that Jonas Stone returned a home in Newfoundland before his daughter, Ann, was born. Or perhaps Ann was born in India, before their
departure, and her birth was first recorded in St. John’s on arrival there—a hasty christening in India would have been insurance against a loss at sea. We will probably never know which if any of these speculations might be factual.

A Jonas Stone, married to Miriam Tucker Stone, was recorded in Trepassey, a fishery harbor in southern Newfoundland in the mid-1700s. His daughter, named Ann Stone, was reported born in St. John’s, Newfoundland, in 1760. That Ann Stone is believed by at least one Cranton descendant in Margaree to have been the good Captain’s wife, but, again, further documentation cannot be found.

A few records that have survived in Newfoundland suggest a continued Cranton presence there. In the small outport, Wreck Cove, a 19th century record of William Cranton and his wife Hannah can be found. They had a daughter named Elizabeth, born June 10, 1851. In another record, Mary Cranton had a daughter, Alice Maud Mary Cranton, born in Gaultois, Newfoundland, close to Wreck Cove, on Sept. 25, 1851. Also in Gaultois, is an entry for Thomas and Ann Crant (“Crant,” not Cranton), who had a son John, born 1869 and a daughter Sarah Jane born 1875.

The suffix “ton” in a family name represents a town or village where the family originated in earlier times—much like the "von" prefix in German names. There is at least one other instance in Newfoundland records showing a Thornton family that dropped the “ton” and subsequently used "Thorn" alone as their family name. This seems to have occurred with the Cranton name in Newfoundland, later shortened to "Crant." Crant remains a somewhat common family name in Newfoundland to this day. That Crant surname popped up out of nowhere in mid-19th century Newfoundland and its earlier origin cannot be traced. It thus seems reasonable to assume that the present-day Crant families descended from Cranton’s.

Early records were made in an era of poor literacy, which could explain such an abbreviation. The surnames Cranton and Crant can both be found in records of the same town at the same time period, after which Cranton disappeared and Crant continued.

There are also many instances of the name “Craint” in later 19th century Newfoundland, with no prior record of that name—even in England. Craint may have been another phonetic misspelling of Crant and Cranton. Crant and Craint remain up to the present as common family names in Newfoundland, while the "Cranton" name has disappeared on that island.

In his last will and testament, dated September 1875, Stephen March, a former coal merchant from St Johns, Newfoundland, who retired to Torquay, Devon, England, wrote, “I give and bequeath to my sister Ann Cranton the sum of fifty pounds, I give and bequeath unto the Newfoundland Branch of the Bible Society the sum of fifty pounds the same to be spent in Newfoundland.” In other Newfoundland records we find Stephen K. March, living in Old Perlican, Trinity Bay, in 1771, a time when we assume that
Captain Robert made a home or been based there. March's coal business, later managed by his sons, was listed in the St. John's directory for 1875. It may be that in the early 1800s, Stephen March's sister, Ann March, married a Cranton either in Newfoundland, or England, but with a clear Newfoundland connection as documented in this will.

In his history of Newfoundland, published in 1865, Pedly describes the late 18th and early 19th centuries as follows: "Winter months in Newfoundland were largely deserted. The fishing ships, governing authorities, and merchant traders, commonly referred to by Parliament as "merchant adventurers," returned to England every year. During the winter months there was, "scarcely a ship to be seen in the harbours—when through those dark dreary months the inhabitants remained shut up within an ice-bound coast, all law and authority having ceased to exist, they were left to the unrestrained caprices and passions which are so rife for evil in the human heart, especially when associated with that ignorance which is the parent equally of abject superstition and lawless crime."

According to testimony of one credible record, the island became during the winter, "a sanctuary and refuge for them that broke in England" [a haven for criminals], . . During these deserted winter months, disorder prevailed to a frightful degree."

Both the English governing authorities and West Country merchants commonly left Newfoundland during those long winter months and returned the following spring for another fishing season. With a few exceptions, it was forbidden to build permanent homes, commercial structures, or even to fence off plots of land. Houses and other buildings constructed in violation of these ordinances were destroyed by governing officials during the following fishing season. Recently written histories soften this picture somewhat after 1770, when the Poole Harbor merchants established a year-round trading post and in Trinity Bay. After that time, families increasingly wintered over.

The first post office and the first newspaper in Newfoundland were not established until 1805, 6 years after the Captain's widow, Ann Cranton Ethridge, departed with her husband, Thomas Ethridge, for Margaree, with two of their own children and the Captain's young son, 4 year-old Robert Cranton, Jr. Historical documents describing conditions in Newfoundland at that time give reasons why the family might have come directly from England, and were not year-round residents of Newfoundland. But, by then, they may have lived full time in Trinity Bay, or perhaps have moved to St. Johns. We will probably never know.

Customs and Legal Practices Relating to Sea Trade and Commerce from 1770 through 1795

The years from 1775 through 1790 a time were when Captain Robert Cranton conducted his sea trading enterprise. He is said to have owned two schooners, with one skippered by his son-in-law, Captain John Phillips. The
British Navigation Acts required that British colonies throughout the world import and export all trade goods of any kind directly to and from English ports in English owned ships with English born crews (including to and between America, Canada, India, West Indies, Bermuda, and the Bahamas). This was a strict monopoly. Cargoes were inspected by Crown customs agents and duties paid. In England merchants used their influence in Parliament to enforce this trade monopoly.

Goods imported to any English colony in America or Newfoundland were required by law to first pass through merchants in the British Isles. Goods exported from those colonies were required to be first shipped to merchants in England, before being exported to overseas markets. Those laws, if strictly enforced, also applied to trade within the American colonies, including trade between New England and Newfoundland. If the letter of the law had been followed, England would have imposed import and export duties on all such transactions. British merchants attempted through Parliament to establish enforce their monopoly resulting in very profitable markups. In return, members of Parliament were well rewarded by their merchant constituents to maintain this monopoly. Corruption of this type was the rule. Understandably, those laws were often ignored. Practices that would technically be termed smuggling were therefore common—with a wink and a nod and a bit of money under the table to Crown customs agents. Trade goods often landed undetected and stealthily in secluded harbors and coves all along the colonies, in both New England and Canada.

During the 17th and 18th centuries, the term “New England” referred to all American colonies from Maine in the north, extending south to the Carolinas. Sharp-witted continental traders were referred to in early histories as "New Englanders," and later as "Yankees." Newfoundland provided a very profitable market. Yankees traded flour, tobacco, molasses, rum, pork, beef, furniture, hardware, clothing, and much more directly with Newfoundland, bypassing customs, at handsome profits—but at prices much lower than costs for those same goods when purchased from England (as required by English law). Using subterfuge, bribery, and stealth, customs duties, British profits, and Crown taxes were thus circumvented.

On their southward return voyages, back to New England, Yankee ships smuggled many Grand Banks fishing crewmen back home, who were in great demand to meet the labor shortage in New England at that time. English crewmen sometimes fled their legal contracts of indenture with fishing captains. If successful, they would start a new life in the American colonies, without need to pay passage from England. Men were sometimes smuggled in large barrels or hogsheads, otherwise used to transport fish.

Other types of smuggling were also rife. Following is a report to Parliament from the Naval Commodore in Newfoundland: "...what I would more particularly represent to your Lordships is the clandestine and illegal commerce carried on between the New England men, and several of the
British masters, especially the fishing admirals, who, after they have qualified themselves in England for fishing ships, depart for France, Spain, or Portugal, where they freight with wines and brandies, which early in the year they carry directly into Newfoundland in barter with the New England men for supplies for Newfoundland.

**British Naval Records**

In 1999 a Cranton relative, Ray Marion Bourquin, posted on the Internet Genforum website that he had hired a professional genealogy researcher in London to search for Captain Cranton's name in Royal Navy and Admiralty records. No mention of the Cranton surname was found. Detailed records for the British Navy remain available back to the Restoration. It therefore seems unlikely that Captain Robert Cranton was ever an officer in the English Navy. He was more likely a merchant seaman, apprenticed as a young man on a ship out of the Poole Harbor, Dorset, region, who worked his way up over the years in the Newfoundland and New England coastal trade to become a ship’s captain and eventually a ship owner himself.

Another possibility is that Captain Robert operated as a privateer during the war, or as a ships officer on a privateer, and that he accumulated enough prize money to fund his own ship ownership and mercantile seafaring venture.

Microfilmed British records show that more than 2,000 British Letters of Marque were issued by the Lord High Admiral to British and Loyalist merchant ships, acting as privately owned and armed warships, between the years of 1777 and 1783. The names of the ships and officers cannot found at this time, partially because the professional British Navy did not look on privateers as reputable. Professional Navy men considered privateers to be little better than pirates (except when the Navy was under attack and needed their help). If Captain Cranton owned an armed merchant ship or was a ship’s officer operating from Newfoundland or New England during the war, he may have been an "Associated Loyalist," for whom no records were kept. Or he may have personally received a Letter of Marque from the Lord High Admiral, that was not recorded in the British Naval records. This would explain the absence of Captain Robert Cranton's name in otherwise very complete English naval records of the time. He could also have sailed from time to time to England from Newfoundland and America as a licensed privateer, which would have made him an English Naval captain, of sorts, just as early histories and family lore suggest.

**Little Distinction was made between Legitimate Commerce, Piracy and Privateering in the early American Colonies**

Britain and France both augmented their navies in the 17th and 18th centuries by liberally recruiting privateers—privately owned warships and
armed merchantmen, empowered by their respective governments, which issued "Letters of Marque" that legalized the attacking and looting of enemy shipping and ports. Continental congress did the same for privately owned American ships. The law required that captured ships and cargoes, "prizes," be condemned by a proper court of law before they were disposed of by auction. But privateering was so lucrative that privateering captains often dispensed with formalities and reverted to out-and-out piracy—attacking vessels of any country, including their own. There were only two things for them be concerned about. One was being caught and hanged. The other was disposing of the loot. (cite: Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898 by Burrows and Wallace) To digress a bit with examples that reveal the spirit of those times, the following history of the early New York colony is cited:

Benjamin Fletcher, the Crown Governor of New York in 1692, personally financed commercial ventures with known pirates. He was a personal friend of at least one of pirate, Thomas Tew, also known as the Rhode Island Pirate—a 17th century English privateer-turned-pirate. Governor Fletcher accepted personal bribes permitting pirate ships to deliver and sell their goods in New York without undergoing customs inspections. He reaped huge profits from those illegal dealings. He and his merchant friends bribed or appointed judges, government officials, and soldiers, allowing pirates free entry into Crown ports without fear of prosecution.

Governor Fletcher rolled out the red carpet for pirates, allowing them and their crews to enter the city of New York without fear of arrest, to dispose of their treasure, and refit for another voyage—all for payment of a mere one hundred Spanish dollars each. New York, a British colony, then hosted a remarkable collection of villains and cutthroats.

Some of New York's best-known captains hoisted the black flag of pirates and sailed off to ply the waters between Africa and India, trailing mayhem and murder in their wake. Richard Glover, captain of the Resolution, seized two East India Company ships off the coast of Aden, burned their crews alive, and blockaded the port of Calicut for ransom. Edward Coates came home to New York with stolen goods valued at sixteen thousand pounds (including twenty-eight hundred pieces of eight) and gave Governor Fletcher his ship, the Jacob, as a present. William Mason, captain of the Charming Mary, returned to New York with booty worth thirty thousand pounds. Mason's quartermaster, Samuel Burgess, subsequently went into the business on his own account and became one of the most feared pirates along the east coast of Africa.

New York merchants diversified their risk by investing in such pirate cruises. They provisioned pirate ships, and smuggled pirate contraband back into New York, at that time an English Colony. Merchants invested heavily in an illegal trade between New York and Madagascar, a notorious haven for marauders, where goods of both colonial and European origin—clothing, shoes, tobacco, rum, sugar, and firearms—fetched fantastic prices. A cask of
wine worth nineteen pounds in New York was said to sell for three hundred pounds on Madagascar. New York merchants could make profits of ten thousand pounds on a single voyage. Some maintained their own agents on St. Mary's Island, just off the Madagascar coast, where a former New York mariner, named Adam Baldridge, set up a trading post for merchants and pirates.

All told, this illegal trade was worth a hundred thousand pounds per year to the New York colony. Tavern keepers, whores, retailers, and many others flourished when buccaneers swaggered through the streets with purses full of hard money—Arabian dinars, Hindustani mohurs, Greek byzants, French Louis d'or, and Spanish doubloons. Merchants reaped huge profits, as much as 400 percent, according to the Rev. John Miller, on silk carpets, muslins, ivory fans, ebony and teakwood chairs, East India cabinets, looking-glasses, vases of hammered silver and brass, and other exotic merchandise, whose provenance could not bear close scrutiny. The most successful merchants built fine new residences, prompting Dr. Buvillant to remark on the "multitudes of great & Costly buildings" that went up in New York locations during Fletcher's administration.

In addition to protection money he collected from pirates, Fletcher extorted bribes from American Indian traders, bilked the English customs service, padded military payrolls, and embezzled funds raised to pay the provincial debt.

Similar practices continued in other parts of New England throughout the 18th century. John Hancock, a very prominent Boston statesman and a famous signer of the Declaration of Independence, accrued a vast personal wealth as a smuggler.

**APPENDIX**

Various source documents are listed or excerpted below in no particular order.

**REFERENCES**

The Record of Connecticut Men in the Military and Naval Service During the War of the Revolution, 1775-1783
Rolls and Lists of Connecticut Men in the Revolution, 1775-1783
Some Early Records and Documents of and Relating to the Town of Windsor, Connecticut, 1639-1703
Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society
Rolls of Connecticut Men in the French and Indian War, 1755-1762
Connecticut Historical Society
Rolls of Connecticut men in the French and Indian War, 1755-1762
Connecticut Historical Society
"History of Maritime Connecticut during the American Revolution 1775 - 1783, by Louis F. Middlebrook"
Connecticut Men in the Revolutionary War, Provo, UT, USA
Heads of Farms at the First U.S. Census, CT, by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1908
Families of early Guilford, Connecticut, Vol. II
http://openlibrary.org/subjects/time:revolution_1775-1783 A large number of online databases
Guysborough Sketches and Essays by Dr. A. C. Jost (2009 edition)

RECORDS OF THE CONNECTICUT SCRANTON FAMILIES
Included because of the mysterious connection between Scranton and Cranton families discussed above

Scranton names listed in “Yankee Musters and Payrolls, and references Revolutionary War” with page numbers in that reference. It seems that the Scranton line was split between the Yankee and Loyalist side.

Source Citation: Volume: 187; SAR Membership Number: 37309


Other Scrantons

James Scranton was a loyalist who served as a drummer in the Prince of Wales regiment.

David Scranton of Guysborough, NS, was originally from Guilford Connecticut. Excerpt from “Guysborough Sketches and Essays by Dr. A. C. Jost (2009 edition, excerpt page 175 ) “David Scranton was accompanied
by his wife and one child when he came to Nova Scotia, bringing, it is said, some at least of the other settlers with him. He was a sailor, and the captain of his own little seventy ton sloop, the Nancy, in the intervals when farming did not occupy his attention. His acquaintance with Chedabucto Bay dated to a stay made in its waters, during the course of a trading voyage made to Quebec, and so favorable was the impression then received, that, the war being over [thus after 1783 and during the loyalist immigration], he left the States for the purpose of taking up a home in Nova Scotia. With him came some, if not all, the other [Hallowell] settlers. For a number of years after his arrival, he continued to follow both his chosen vocations, farming his land, or, when freight offered and the prospects of trading allured, hieing forth in his sloop on freighting or trading voyages. He could trace his descent through Abraham, his father, Samuel, his grandfather and Thomas his great-grandfather to John Scranton, the first settler in Guilford, Connecticut, who moved to Connecticut from Guilford, England, in 1639. David was twice married, the first wife being Phoebe Curtis of Durham, Conn. His second wife, Lorain Strong, and his infant daughter Sarah, born in 1786, accompanied him to Nova Scotia. He died on the 5th of March, 1838, and at the time of his death, four of his ten children, thirty-four out of thirty-nine grandchildren and thirty-two out of thirty-five great grandchildren, born before his death, were still living. Not all of these were in Guysborough County, however, for this was one of the families whose members formed the group who went to make new homes for themselves in the Margaree district about the year 1809. The Margaree family altered their names to some extent, eventually, and are now known as Cranton's.

There are many suggestive similarities between David Scranton of Guilford, Connecticut, who migrated to Guysborough, Nova Scotia, and Captain Robert Cranton. They were both ship captains who owned their own ships. They both had daughters named Sarah and Nancy. The Hart and Ingraham families, prominent in Margaree, were among the group who moved from Guysborough to Margaree ca. 1809.

Another possible link to Guilford was a Torrey Scranton, b. 1752 in Guilford, and a Torrey Cranton listed on the Yankee Continental army payroll. Guilford also later became a given first name of a Margaree Cranton descendant.

A number of Scranton men were recorded as Yankee seamen, some prominent.

John G. Scranton was a resident of Boston, Massachusetts. [NRAR, 334] Scranton was commissioned as a Lieutenant in the Continental Navy in 1776. On 29 November 1780 he was commissioned to the Massachusetts
Privateer Sloop Dolphin. [NRAR, 272; Allen, Massachusetts Privateers of the Revolution, 118] He was commissioned to the Massachusetts Privateer Schooner Hero on 10 September 1781. [NRAR, 334, Allen, Massachusetts Privateers of the Revolution, 175] On 21 January 1782 Hero fell in with the British sloop Shuldham (Walter Symonds), with a cargo of dry goods, and drove her into Norwalk, Connecticut. She was seized there by Major Benjamin Tallmadge and other soldiers of the Continental Army. Although Scranton made application to the Maritime Court for part of the prize money, the prize was condemned to Tallmadge on 4 April 1780. [Middlebrook, Maritime Connecticut During The Revolution, II, 121-122] Hero was recommissioned on 7 August 1782, again under Scranton. [NRAR, 335; Allen, Massachusetts Privateers of the Revolution, 176] Scranton was again commissioned to the sloop Dolphin on 27 November 1782. [Allen, Massachusetts Privateers of the Revolution, 119]

John Scranton, commander of the armed galley Hero, duly commissioned by Congress, while on cruise in Long Island Sound on Jan. 21, 1782, fell in with the British sloop Shuldham, causing her to seek asylum in Norwalk, where she was seized by Major Tallmadge and others and libeled, as shown by the following. Captain Scranton made application to the Maritime Court for a share of the prize money. His petition states that the Hero mounted two swivel guns and had a crew of 20 men, with 20 muskets and 20 cutlasses. Petition on file with Major Tallmadge's papers.

John G. Scranton was commander Privateer schooner Hero, then corvette Dolphin, a Massachusetts Privateer Sloop, 9 guns, crew 29, captured off Blue Point 20 Feb 1783, and sent to NY. The crew was tried and condemned by the English Vice Admiralty Court.

William Scranton was listed as crew on Hibernia, taken by H.M.S. Charon, a 44-gun frigate (5th rate frigate) and Cornwallis’s flag ship.

Daniel Scranton was listed as crew on the privateer, Minerva

Thomas Scranton was commander of a armed Yankee privateer, the General Mifflin, with a crew of 130, 20 guns, acquired in 1777. Its last known service was in 1779. The General Mifflin conquered the English storeship, Elephant, off Newfoundland Banks. It also took two other prizes, the Pricilla, and Rebecca.

**Miscellaneous Sources**

*Email: Posted on an Internet Forum by: Judy Cluett (Brown), October 18, 2008 in Reply to David Cranton*
RE: Cranton name apparently shortened to "Crant" in Newfoundland.

Hi David,

At the moment I am in Newfoundland and have spent a couple of days (including today) at the archives searching for the name Cranton. After much frustration of bringing up "nothing" I decided to research another family name.

In the process I ended up in a little known outport, Wreck Cove, and discovered a William Cranton and wife Hannah, who had a daughter named Elizabeth. The date was June 10, 1851. (Sorry, I forgot to note if it was her birth or baptism)

Right below it, was an entry for a Mary Cranton who had a daughter, Alice Maud Mary. This child was born in Gaultois which is not far from Wreck Cove, on Sept. 25, 1851.

I then checked the Gaultois records and found in that community only one possibility but I believe it is a significant one.

This entry said, Thomas and Ann Crant. They had a son John, born 1869 and a daughter Sarah Jane born 1875.

It is my personal feeling that Crant is a shortened name for Cranton. From what I have read, the Crant family has a lot of questions regarding the origin of their surname and there is really nothing known. However, it is a surname found here in Newfoundland. I looked in the book of surnames at the archives (Searles, I believe) and the entry for Crant looks like this: Crant??.

The location of these communities can be found in the Harbour Breton area.

I hope this will give you some encouragement. A relative of ours told us that she knows of many families whose surname has been shortened. So perhaps that is what has happened.. If I come across any more, I will let you know.

I am related to the Cranton’s through the Phillips’ and Etheridge families.

Judy

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^

ILL TREATMENT OF LOYALISTS ATTEMPTING RETURN TO THE NEW UNITED STATES AFTER 1783

Reference: Continental Jackets and Horse-whippings: The Persecutions of 1783 copyright Stephen Davidson, Loyalist Trails, February 14,, 2014

A letter that Sir Guy Carleton wrote in the first week of April 1783 spoke of a troubling trend that he was powerless to stop—patriots’ persecution of loyalists as they prepared to depart for Nova Scotia. The British commander-in-chief asked a patriot official to send him a report on the "state of the prosecution against the persons concerned in plundering the house of Caleb Jones in Jersey in December last and ill-treating him and
his family." The attack on Jones would be the first in a series of malicious assaults on loyal Americans.

The May fourth letter of Cavalier Jouet gave a long and detailed description of how vicious this "ill-treatment" could be. He wrote to Carleton in the hope that the commander-in-chief would bring the matter "up in his conferences with General Washington." Jouet went to New Jersey "after the publication of an armistice between the belligerent Powers" to get a feeling for the "spirit and temper of the times there". He was trying to determine if he could continue to live in New Jersey as a loyalist.

Jouet went to Woolbridge where he had lived on parole as a prisoner of war. Despite being their prisoner, the people of the town treated Jouet -- a man who demonstrated "the strictest loyalty and fidelity to the cause of my rightful Sovereign"-- with civility so he had every reason to believe that he would be allowed to continue living among them after the Revolution.

Instead of a warm welcome, Jouet, "received the most outrageous insults, and narrowly escaped the most shameful and degrading abuse. A number of fellows came about me with sticks and whips (the most of whom had formerly treated me with great courtesy)". The men of Woolbridge said that Jouet had no right to be there because he had "proved a traitor to my country and had joined the enemy, and they were determined that no such damned rascals should ever enjoy the benefits of the country." They were determined—Jouet wrote Carleton—to either give him a "continental jacket" (tar and feathers) or a whipping. Others called out "hang him up, hang him up!"

When he appealed to a local magistrate, Jouet was told that this was how loyalists were commonly treated. "It was with infinite difficulty I escaped their clutches" Jouet wrote. Had it not been for the intervention of a clergyman and a patriot who had been kindly treated by one of Jouet's sons, Jouet would certainly have come to harm. He told Carleton that he could have written of more examples of "a most intolerant spirit prevailing among" the patriots, but he felt his Woodbridge story would be sufficient to illustrate the plight of loyalists.

Later in that same month, Oliver DeLancey wrote a letter describing how he had received "maltreatment as a loyalist by {a} party of about fifty men under the command of Israel Honeywell." The tide of hate was rising. Just a week later, John Mitchell, of Cow Neck, Long Island "was attacked in his house in the night by a number of men and his grandson {was} shot." The home invaders had crossed the Sound from Connecticut and made false accusations "to incriminate the refugees {loyalists}."

The loyalists of Westchester County, New York wrote Carleton seeking redress from "lawless banditti" who preyed upon them because of their "position between the British and American lines." In early June, Prosper Brown told Carleton about "barbarous and inhuman treatment at the hands of the Americans" and begged to be allowed to sail with the fleet to
Nova Scotia. John Leonard, who described himself "as far advanced in life and unused to labour", confessed to Carleton that had to "abandon the idea of remaining in this country and intends to go to Nova Scotia." He asked for an allowance of a dollar a day and for some Nova Scotian land.

Edmund Ward wrote the commander-in-chief asking for some financial relief. In addition to being banished by the patriots of Westchester County, Ward’s farm had been confiscated and his wife had been ordered to leave the property. For many loyalists, Nova Scotia or Canada had become their only options.

Later in June, Carleton received more news of persecutions. Three loyalists, Nathan Hubbill, John and James Wall and Josiah Fowler, wrote to say that they were ill-treated when they visited near Stamford, Connecticut, "being set upon by a party of men and beaten with split hoop poles, the reason assigned for the abuse being solely that they were refugees and had fought for the King." Samuel Clarke reported that he had been beaten with clubs and canes and was "scarce able to walk."

Things were no better in Rhode Island. Having successfully settled his financial matters in Martha's Vineyard, Thomas Hazard returned to his Rhode Island home. He anchored his schooner in a convenient harbour and went ashore to see his family. Rebels arrested him, and imprisoned him for five days. They confiscated his vessel and seized all of its contents. The rebels then threatened to execute Hazard unless he paid "the most extravagant charges" to let him go. Ransoming himself, the loyalist was told never to return to Rhode Island "upon pain of death". Hazard was furious. He concluded his letter to Carleton by saying "if the friends to Government are to be treated in this manner and no notice taken of it, I should be glad to know how to conduct myself for the future."

According to a spy employed by Carleton, the persecution of the loyalists seemed to be abating by August of 1783. The unnamed (and apologetic) secret operative had been ill and with the "cessation of hostilities in America" had not been able to submit regular intelligence reports. Nevertheless, when he submitted the results of his latest espionage activities, he said he believed "the vindictive spirit against the loyalists is subsiding". The states were at loggerheads over a variety of issues, there was a lack of confidence in Congress, and he believed that the people "are sick of democratic government."

The spy's report was a bit premature. Thomas McDaniel had lived in Pauldings, Dutchess County where, during the Revolution, he served (and suffered) for the crown. In the last days of August, 1783, McDaniel was driven from his home by eight armed men, publicly horsewhipped and ordered to leave the state within four days. Little wonder, then, that he asked to go to Nova Scotia "on the same footing as other loyalists".

No wonder the number of refugees flooding into New York City swelled with the approach of the fall. The 1783 rebel persecutions pushed into exile
thousands of loyalists who would otherwise have been content to stay in their home colonies. All through September, October and November, Carleton scrambled to find enough evacuation ships to take these abused colonists to Nova Scotia, England, and the West Indies. His efforts secured the refugees’ safety, giving them a second chance at a life free of continental jackets and horse-whippings.

A Selection of photos and other historical documents below
One to a page, so scroll down after each

Margaree Harbor Entrance, called Carmarthen in Earlier Times
Aerial photo of the site of Capt. Robert Cranton's original Land Grant Application Margaree Harbor in 1794
Recent Overview Photo of NE Margaree Valley
Marriage Certificate and Photos, Henry Levi Cranton and Liza Crowdis
18th Century Map of Southwestern England
Map of 18th Century Poole Harbor and the Dorset—Christchurch Region
Painting of St. John's Harbor 1770

Watercolor of St. John's ca. 1770
# 1792 Census Guilford, CT, from LDS Files

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<th>Number of Free White Males 16 and Over</th>
<th>Number of Free White Females</th>
<th>Number of All Other Free Persons</th>
<th>Number of Slaves</th>
<th>Number of Household Members</th>
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<td>Jesse Churchill</td>
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J. H. Cranton Born in Connecticut abt 1795
Benjamin Cranton Married in Beaminster, Dorset 1769
Benjamin Cranton Born in Beaminster, Dorset 1771
Benjamin Cranton Death in Beaminster, Dorset in 1848
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</tr>
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<td>Christening Date</td>
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<td>Mother's name</td>
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Save This Record
Attach this record to a person in your tree as a source record, or save for later evaluation.

Source Citation: Place: East Stower, Dorset, England; Collection: ; BTs; Date Range: 1740 - 1763; Film Number: 1239247.

Source Information:

Description:
This database contains information extracted from birth and christening records from various counties in England and Wales. The records date from 1530 to 1906. The records included in this database do not represent all localities in England and Wales and for any given area, coverage (both records within a year and total year range) may not be complete. Some parishes and counties are more complete than others. Learn more...

An Ann Stone Born in East Stower, Dorset, 1759
Edward Cranton Married in Broadwinsor, Dorset, 1760

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Source Citation: Place: Broadwinsor, Dorset, England; Date Range: 1746 - 1781; Film Number: 1279487.

Source Information:

Description:
This database contains information extracted from marriage records from selected various counties in England and Wales. The records date from 1538 to 1940. The records included in this database do not represent all localities in England and Wales and for any given area, coverage (both records within a year and total year range) may not be complete. Some parishes and counties are more complete than others.

Learn more...
A Village Named Cranton, Somerset, 1773
Samuel Cranton Married in Allington, Dorset, 1824
Margaret Cranton Died in Beaminster, Dorset, 1851
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christening Date:</td>
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<td>Christening Place:</td>
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<td>Father's name:</td>
<td>Joseph Cranton</td>
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<td>Mother's name:</td>
<td>Sarah</td>
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**Save This Record**

Attach this record to a person in your tree as a source record, or save for later evaluation.

**Source Citation:** Place: Broadwinsor, Dorset, England; Date Range: 1746 - 1781; Film Number: 1279487.

**Source Information:**

**Description:**
This database contains information extracted from birth and christening records from various counties in England and Wales. The records date from 1530 to 1906. The records included in this database do not represent all localities in England and Wales and for any given area, coverage (both records within a year and total year range) may not be complete. Some parishes and counties are more complete than others.

**Learn more...**

**Thomas Cranton Born in Beaminster, Dorset 1748**
Thomas Ethridge (spelled here as Ethredg), who was Capt. Cranton's Business Manager, who Subsequently Married his Widow, was Born in Christchurch, Hampshire, 1748
Jane Cranton Born in Woolminstone, Somerset, 1786
19th Century Platte Map of the Cranton Section
N.E. Margaree River Valley
FAMILY HISTORY BELOW DATING FROM MEDIEVAL TIMES

CRANTON FAMILY HISTORY FOUND IN VARIOUS MEDIEVAL HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS IN THE UK
Partially excerpted in the narrative above with duplication in the following text.

Individuals variants of the Cranton name occurred in a number of early charters, wills, deeds, political, military, and parish records. Elfric de Cranston was witness to a charter by William the Lion to Holyrood." During the reign of Malcolm Ceannmor (1057-1093), the latter directed his noble subjects, after the custom of other nations, to adopt surnames from their territorial possessions. He created, "The first Earls that ever was in Scotland." Thomas de Cranstoun was provost of Edinburgh in 1423. Thomas de Creinstoun was ambassador of James, king of Scots in 1449.

Variants of the Cranton or Cranston surname were recorded many times in official records and parish records of the 12th Century and later. Thomas de Cranystoun, living in the reign of Alexander II (1214-1249), made a donation to the hospital of Soltre of some lands lying near Paistoun in East Lothian for, "the welfare of his own soul and for the souls of his ancestors and successors."

A Coat of Arms granted to that family has three silver cranes on a red background, within a silver border—the Coat of Arms being a crane's head. The motto reads "I desire not to want". An early recorded spelling of that family name was Elfric de Cranston, dated circa 1190, in "Collections concerning Scottish History, by Sir James Dalrymple", during the reign of King William "The Lion" of Scotland, 1165 - 1214.

A parish on the eastern verge of Edinburghshire now bears the name of Cranston. In charters of the twelfth century it was written Cranestone, or as the Anglo-Saxon Craenston—signifying the territory or resort of the crane, a bird which, when armorially carried, as by all families of the name of Cranston, was considered an emblem of piety and charity.

In a charter of King William the Lion to the abbacy of Holyroodhouse, Elfric de Cranston is witness. He is also witness to a convention betwixt Roger de Quincy and the abbot and convent of Newbottle in 1170. In the reign of Alexander III., Andrew de Cranston is witness to a charter of Hugo de Riddel—knight, the proprietor of the district, from whom one portion of it
acquired the name of Cranston-Riddel— to the abbacy of Newbottle. Hugh de Cranston was one of the Scottish barons who swore fealty to King Edward I in 1296. Radolphus de Cranston, dominus de New Cranston, son and heir of Andrew, lord of Cranston, made a donation to the abbacy of Newbottle 27th May, 1338, and confirmed to the monastery of Soltray, totam illam terram in territorio meo de Cranston, quem habui ab antecessoribus neis, betwixt 1330 and 1340; in which confirmation his son, John de Cranston, is particularly named. From King David the Second, Thomas de Cranston got a charter of the lands of Cranston.

In the year 1582 Thomas Cranston of Morristoun, or Murieston was one of the jury on the trial of George Hume of Spott, indicted in the murder of Lord Darnley. Hume was acquitted. In 1591.

John Cranston of Morristoun was granted, with his wife, Barbara, a reversion of the lands of Toderick. In the following year Thomas Cranston, younger of Moriestoun, and his brother John Cranston were amongst the persons summoned on a charge of treason, and forfeited, for assisting the turbulent earl of Bothwell in his nocturnal attack on the palace of Holyroodhouse. Thomas Cranston was denounced as a rebel for not appearing to answer for the same. William Cranston, the son of the above Thomas Cranston and Barbara his wife, married Sarah, daughter and heiress of Sir John Cranston, the first Lord Cranston. Afterwards noticed. On June 11, 1600, Sir John and his son William were indicted for the reset of the said Thomas Cranston, a declared traitor. On 19th June they produced the king’s warrant that proceedings should be stayed against them, when they were commanded to their lodgings. John Cranston did not receive a remission of his forfeiture till 1611.

Another family of the name, the Cranstouns of Corsbie in Berwickshire, were at one period of some consideration on the borders. In 1530, Jasper Cranston of Corsbie was one of the Berwickshire barons who were proceeded against for neglecting to fulfil their bonds, “to keep good rule within their respective bounds,” as was also John Cranston. They found surety to stand their trial, when required, and also submitted themselves to ‘the king’s will.’ On June 20, 1548, Cuthbert Cranston of Dodds found George Lord Hume security for himself and fifteen others to underlie the law for treasonable assistance afforded to “our old enemies” of England, and on 9th October Cuthbert Cranston of Mains found caution to answer for the same crime.

Cuthbert Cranston of Thirlestonemains and Thomas Cranston were among thirty-two border barons who subscribed a bond at Kelso, on 6th April 1569, for preserving the peace of the borders, against the thieves of Liddesdale, Eskdale, Euesdale, and Annandale, the Armstrongs, Johnstones, Elliotts, etc. On November 9, 1570, Sir William Cranston of Dodds, commissary of Lauder, found security to underlie the law for the slaughter of James Brownlee. In Birrell’s Diary, under date October 20, 1596. There is
also the following entry: “Gilbert Lawder slain at Linlithgow by the Cranstouns.”

In March 1612, Alexander French of Thorniedykes and James Wight, his nephew, were found guilty of the slaughter of John Cranstoun, brother of Patrick Cranstoun of Corsbie, and beheaded on the Castlehill of Edinburgh. On 3d September 1613, Gilbert Cranstoun, uncle of the said Patrick, was tried and found guilty of stealing a gray stallion from the stables of his nephew, and of various other acts of theft, and of shooting George Home of Bassendean in the thigh, committed in September 1609, and hanged for the same on the Castlehill of Edinburgh.

Of the Cranston-Cranton name were several ministers eminent in their day. The first minister of the parish of Liberton, Midlothian, after the Reformation, was Mr. Thomas Cranstoun, who had previously been minister of Borthwick. He entered to his stipend, (which only amounted to two hundred marks, or eleven pounds two shillings and twopence,) at Lammas 1569, and was translated to Peebles at Whitsunday 1570. Mr. John Cranstoun was minister of Liberton from 1625 to 1627.

In August 1563, a serious disturbance took place at Edinburgh, in consequence of the queen’s domestics at Holyrood, during her absence at Stirling, being found attending mass at the chapel there. Patrick Cranstoun, “a zealous brother,” as Knox styles him, entered the chapel, and finding the altar covered, and a priest ready to celebrate mass, he demanded of them how they dared thus openly to break the laws of the land? The magistrates were summoned, and peace restored with difficulty.

In the reign of James the Sixth, Mr. Michael Cranstoun was minister of Cramond. Calderwood characterizes him as a timeserver, but he seems to have been decided in his opposition to the measures of the court regarding the church. With other ministers he was ordered to be apprehended for the treasonable and seditious stirring up of the tumult and uproar in Edinburgh. On the 17th December 1596, his share in that memorable affair being that he read the history of Haman and Mordecai to the people assembled in the Little Kirk, while certain commissioners appointed by them went to King James, who was then sitting in the Tolbooth administering justice—in consequence of which he entered in ward, but did not long continue in it, as his majesty’s fury was chiefly directed against Mr. Robert Bruce, and the other ministers of Edinburgh.

In the same reign, Mr. William Cranstoun was minister of Kettle in Fife, of whom Calderwood relates that on the 18th August 1607, on the meeting of the Synod of Fife, when the king sent four commissioners to force Archbishop Gladstanes on the synod as moderator, Mr. William Cranstoun, moderator of the previous synod, walking in the session house, which was within the kirk, at his meditation, and finding himself troubled at the closeness of the air, went up to the pulpit, not knowing that any other was appointed by the commissioners to preach, and while sitting in the pulpit, a
messenger came to him with a letter, which he put in his pocket without reading it. A little while after another messenger was sent, in the lords commissioners' name, to bid him come down. He answered that he came to that place in the name of a greater Lord, whose message he had not yet discharged, and with that named a psalm to be sung, because he saw the people somewhat amazed. Then one of the bailies went and whispered to him that he was commanded by the lords to desire him to come down. He replied, “And I command you in the name of God, to sit down in your own seat, and hear what God will say to you by me.” The bailie obeyed at last. When he was commencing his prayer, the conservator of the privileges of the merchants in the low countries, being a councillor, went to him, and desired him to desist, for the lords had appointed another to preach. “But the Lord,” said Mr. Cranstoun “and his kirk have appointed me, therefore, beware how ye trouble this work;” and immediately proceeded with his prayer and preaching. [Calderwood’s History, vol. vi. page 674.] For his conduct on this occasion he was afterwards put to the horn. On the 10th of May 1620, John Spottiswood, archbishop of St. Andrews, held a court of high commission in that city, when he deprived this aged and worthy minister of his charge.

Lord Cranstoun, a title in the peerage of Scotland, was possessed by a family of the same name, descended from Thomas de Cranyston who, in the reign of King David the Second, had a charter from the earl of Mar, of the barony of Stobbs, within that of Cavers, in the shire of Roxburgh. His grandson, Thomas de Cranstoun, scutifer regis, was a personage of considerable influence in the reign of James the Second. Along with Sir William Crichton, the chamberlain, and William Fowles, keeper of the privy seal, he was in May 1426, sent ambassador to Eric, king of Denmark, Norway and Sweden, to adjust the debt due to him for the relinquishment of the Hebrides to King Alexander the Third, which they amicably settled. He was afterwards much employed in negotiations with England. He had letters of safe conduct, with Lord Crichton, chancellor, and others, commissioners for treating of peace, 3 April 1448; again in 1449, 1450, and 1451. In the latter year he was one of the conservators of the truce with England, and in 1453 he and William de Cranstoun, his son, were conservators of the truce; again in 1457 and 1459; and in the latter year Thomas de Cranstoun was one of the wardens of the marches. He died about 1470. On a pillar on the north side of where the altar stood in the church of St. Giles, Edinburgh, is his family crest. He had two sons, the younger of whom was ancestor of the Cranstouns of Glen.

William de Cranstoun, the elder son, is designed of Crailing in a charter to William Lord Crichton, 7th April 1450, in his father’s lifetime. On 2d March, 1451-2, he had a charter to William Cranstoun of Cralyn. He appears among the barons in parliament, 18th March 1481-2. He died in 1515. William de Cranstoun had two sons, John and Thomas. John, the elder
son, married Janet Scott, and died in 1552. His eldest son, Sir William Cranstoun, had a charter to himself and Elizabeth Johnstone his wife, and John Cranstoun, their son, of the lands of New Cranstoun, in the county of Edinburgh, 30th May 1553. On the 25th June 1557, dame Janet Bethune, Lady Buccleuch, and several persons of the name of Scott were accused of going to the kirk of St. Mary of the Lowes, to the number of two hundred, ‘bodin in feire of war,’ (that is, arrayed in armour,) and breaking open the doors of the said kirk, in order to apprehend the laird of Cranstoun, for his destruction, and for the slaughter of Sir Peter Cranstoun. On July 14, 1563, William Cranstoun of that ilk, James his brother, and another, found caution to underlie the law at the next court at Selkirk, for art and part going to the steadng of Williamshope, belonging to Alexander Hoppringill of Craigleith, and hamstringing and slaying three of his cattle. By his wife, who was the daughter of Andrew Johnstone of Elphinstone, Sir William Cranstoun had two sons, John and Thomas, and two daughters. The elder son, John, married Margaret, eldest daughter of George Ramsay of Dalhousie, by whom he had a son, also named John, who seems to have died without succeeding to the estate, and seven daughters.

On the 23d August 1600, Mr. Thomas Cranstoun, one of the earl of Gowrie’s attendants, was, with two others of his retainers, executed at Perth, for drawing swords in the time of the tumult during the mysterious transactions of the Gowrie conspiracy. He was the brother of Sir John Cranstoun of Cranstoun, a zealous professor of religion, with whom Mr. Robert Bruce the celebrated Edinburgh minister passed some time in retirement at Cranstoun in 1603, when persecuted by the court.

Sarah, the eldest of the seven daughters of the above John Cranstoun, married William Cranstoun, first Lord Cranstoun. He was the son of John Cranstoun of Morriestoun, and captain of the guard to King James the Sixth, by whom he was knighted. He was raised to the peerage by the title of Lord Cranstoun, by patent, dated 17th November 1609, to him and his heirs male bearing the name and arms of Cranstoun. On the 20th August 1617, his lordship, with the lords Sanquhar and Buccleuch, William Douglas of Cavers, sheriff of Teviotdale, and three others, the landlords of the east and west marches, appeared personally before the lords of council, and bound themselves to make their whole men, tenants and servants, answerable and obedient to justice, and that they should satisfy and redress parties wronged, conform to the laws and acts of parliament, and general bond made in 1602, which was the strictest ever made on the borders.

On December 22, 1622, Daniel, son of William and Jane Cranstone, was christened at the church of St. Martin in the Fields, Westminster, London.

The first Lord Cranstoun died in June 1627, having had four sons and one daughter. James, the second son, was in 1610 brought before the council for sending a challenge to the son of Sir Gideon Murray, and
committed to Blackness castle, while the latter for concealing the same, with
the intention of meeting his opponent, was warded in Edinburgh castle.
James Cranstoun, for repeating the offence, was afterwards banished forth
from his majesty’s dominions. The fathers at the same time were bound for
all of their sons come to man’s age, under the pain of ten thousand marks,
that they should keep the peace with each other.

John, the eldest son, second Lord Cranstoun, married first, Elizabeth,
youngest daughter of Walter first Lord Scott of Buccleuch; secondly, Helen,
youngest daughter of James, seventh Lord Lindsay of Byres, but had no
issue by either. He was succeeded by his nephew, William, son of James,
master of Cranstoun, above mentioned, the second son of the first lord. This
gentleman was twice married; first, to Margaret, only daughter of David
Macgill of Cranstoun-Riddell, by whom he had a daughter Margaret, who
became the wife of Thomas Craig of Riccartoun, in the county of Edinburgh;
and, secondly, to Lady Elizabeth Stewart, eldest daughter of Francis earl of
Bothwell, and had a son, William, third Lord Cranstoun, and three daughters.

William, third Lord Cranstoun, marched into England with King Charles
the Second in 1651, and being taken at the battle of Worcester, was
committed prisoner to the Tower. He was particularly excepted out of
Cromwell’s act of grace and pardon, April 1654, by which his estates were
sequestrated, but a portion of the lands, of the yearly value of two hundred
pounds, were settled on his wife and children. He married Lady Mary Leslie,
third daughter of Alexander, first earl of Leven, and had a son, James, fourth
Lord Cranstoun, who married Anne, daughter of Sir Alexander Don of
Newton, in the county of Roxburgh, baronet, and had two sons, William, fifth
Lord Cranstoun, and the Hon. Alexander Cranstoun, who died at Darien,
without issue.

William, fifth Lord Cranstoun, the elder son, supported the treaty of
union in the last Scots parliament. He died 27th January 1727. By his wife,
Lady Jane Ker, eldest daughter of William, second marquis of Lothian, who
survived him forty-one years, he had seven sons and five daughters.

About the history of the Hon. William Henry Cranstoun, the fifth son,
born in 1714, there is something very uncommon. He was a captain in the
army, and married at Edinburgh on the 22d of May 1744, Anne, daughter of
Mr. David Murray, merchant in Leith, who was the son of Sir David Murray of
Stanhope, baronet The marriage was a private one, on pretence that its
being known might prevent his preferment in the army, as she was a Roman
Catholic. No witness was present but a single woman. The clergyman was
brought by Captain Cranstoun, and was not known to Miss Murray or the
other woman. They lived together, in a private manner, till sometime in July
thereafter.

Then the lady went to an uncle’s house in the country, while the
captain staid among his own relations till November, and then proceeded to
London. A close correspondence was kept up between them as husband and
wife. Before he left she acquainted him of her being in the way of becoming a mother, and he, in consequence, in his absence wrote very affectionately both to herself and her uncle, acknowledging her to have been his wife from the middle of the preceding May, but still insisted on the marriage being kept secret. He afterwards informed all his relations of it, and they visited and corresponded with her as his wife. At her confinement she was attended by one of his sisters. A daughter was born at Edinburgh, on February 19th, 1745, and was baptized by a minister of the established church, in presence of several of the relations on both sides. The child was held up to baptism by one of the captain’s brothers, and named after his mother, by express orders from himself.

Notwithstanding all this, Captain Cranstoun disowned his marriage in 1746, alleging that they were never married; that he had only promised to marry her in case she should turn protestant; that double the time agreed for her changing her religion was now elapsed, without her doing so; that what he had said to his friends was only to amuse them and save her honour; and that now he would never marry her, but was willing to support her to the utmost of his power.

The lady raised a declarator of her own marriage, and of her daughter’s legitimacy, before the commissaries of Edinburgh, the summons of which was executed in October 1746. In the process a great number of letters written by the captain and the lady were produced, and after a tedious litigation the commissaries, on the 1st March 1748, decreed them to be married persons, and the child to be their lawful daughter; on the 7th of April following, they discerned the captain to pay the lady an annuity of forty pounds sterling for herself, and ten pounds for their daughter so long as she should be alimented by her, both to commence from the date of citation, and on the 11th of May, they ordained him to pay her forty pounds of costs, and nearly sixty pounds for extracting the decreet. Captain Cranstoun advocated the case to the court of session, but he was equally unsuccessful there. It seems that during the proceedings he courted a young lady in Leicestershire, but all hopes of a union with her were put a stop to, when the match was nearly concluded, on the lady’s friends hearing that he was already married.

About the year 1746, having gone to Henley to recruit, Miss Mary Blandy, the daughter of a retired attorney at Reading, possessing, according to report, ten thousand pounds, fell in love with him, and as her father disapproved of the captain’s addresses, on account of his having a wife alive in his native country, she poisoned him on the 5th of August 1751, with some powder which Capt. Cranstoun had sent her from Scotland, in a packet containing Scots pebbles, and labelled “to clean pebbles with,” having mixed it in his gruel. For this heinous crime she was tried at Oxford in February 1752, and being found guilty she was hanged on the Castle green of that city, on the 6th of April thereafter. In Miss Blandy’s statement after her
condemnation, she alleged that the powders were sent to her by her lover to be given to her father as love-potions, to make him kind to them both, and induce him to consent to their marriage, and that he had written to her that he had consulted a Mrs. Morgan, “a cunning woman” in Scotland, who had assured him that they would have that effect, which she thoroughly believed. There does not appear to have been any grounds for supposing that the captain was in any way accessory to the murder. He died 2d December 1752, a few months after Miss Blandy’s execution.

His younger brother, the Hon. George Cranston of Longwarton, the seventh son of the fifth Lord Cranston, married Maria, daughter of Thomas Brisbane of Brisbane, in Ayrshire, and had by her, two sons and three daughters. He died at Edinburgh 30th December 1788. The second son, George Cranston, was an eminent judge of the court of session, under the judicial title of Lord Corehouse. He was originally designed for the army, but studied the law. He passed advocate, 2d February 1793, was appointed one of the depute advocates in 1805, and sheriff depute of the county of Sutherland in 1806. He was chosen dean of the faculty of advocates, 15th November 1823, and elevated to the bench, on the death of Lord Hermand in 1826, from which he retired in 1839. His title was taken from his seat near the celebrated fall of Corra linn in Clydesdale, one of the most beautiful and romantic places in Lanarkshire, where he was visited by Sir Walter Scott in 1827. His acquaintance with the author of Waverley began in the winter of 1788, when they were both students of civil law in the university of Edinburgh, and their intimacy lasted during life. When practising at the bar, Mr. Cranston was the author of the celebrated jeu d’esprit, entitled the “Diamond Beetle Case,” (inserted in Kay’s Edinburgh Portraits, vol. i. pp. 384-387,) in which the judicial style and peculiar manner of several of the judges, in delivering their opinions, are most happily imitated. He was a superior Greek scholar, which rendered him a great favourite with Lord Monboddo, who used to declare that Cranston was the only scholar in all Scotland. Lord Corehouse was an excellent judge and a first-rate lawyer, especially in all feudal questions.

His eldest sister, Margaret Nicolson, married, 25th February 1780, William Cunninghame of Lainshaw, in Ayrshire. The second, Jane Anne, afterwards countess of Purgstall, was an early confident and correspondent of Sir Walter Scott. She was the first person to whom, in April 1796, he read the manuscript of his first published piece, the translation of Burger’s Lenore, and she early predicted his poetical excellence; writing to a friend in the country at that period, she said, “Walter Scott is going to turn out a poet – something of a cross, I think, between Burns and Gray.” On the 23d June 1797 she married Godfrey Wenceslaus, count of Purgstall, a German nobleman who had been some time residing in Edinburgh. He was a count of the Holy Roman empire, of noble and ancient descent, and possessed large estates in the province of Styria. “This lady,” says Lockhart in his Life of
Scott (under date 1821,) “had undergone domestic afflictions more than sufficient to have crushed almost any spirit but her own. Her husband, the count Purgstall, had died some years before this time, leaving her an only son, a youth of the most amiable disposition, and possessing abilities which, had he lived to develop them, must have secured for him a high station in the annals of genius. This hope of her eyes, the last heir of an illustrious lineage, followed his father to the tomb in the nineteenth year of his age. The desolate countess was urged by her family in Scotland to return, after this bereavement, to her native country, but she had vowed to her son on his deathbed, that one day her dust should be mingled with his, and no argument could induce her to depart from the resolution of remaining in solitary Styria (south-central Austria). By her desire, a valued friend of the house of Purgstall, who had been born and bred upon their estates, the celebrated orientalist Joseph Von Hammer, compiled a little memoir of ‘The two last Counts of Purgstall,’ which he put forth in January 1821, under the title of ‘Denkmahl,’ or Monument.” The copy of a letter of acknowledgment of the receipt of this work by Sir Walter Scott to the countess, but which by some inadvertence was never sent, will be found in Lockhart’s Life of Scott. An account of a Visit to the Countess de Purgstall during the last months of her life by Captain Basil Hall, has been published. See his Schloss Hainfeld. Of Helen d’Arcy, Lord Corehouse’s youngest sister, the wife of Professor Dugald Stewart, a notice follows.

James, sixth Lord Cranstoun, succeeded his father in 1727, and died at London 4th July 1773. He married Sophia, daughter of Jeremiah Brown of Abscourt in Surrey, with whom he obtained twelve thousand pounds, and she afterwards succeeded to a larger fortune. She had an estate in the West Indies, and a jointure of seven hundred pounds. Her ladyship remained only four months a widow, as she took for her second husband, on 10th November, 1773, Michael Lade, Esq., councilor at law, and died 26th October 1799. By this lady, Lord Cranstoun had five sons and two daughters. The eldest, William, and the third, James, successively enjoyed the title. The Hon. George Cranstoun, the fifth son, born in 1761, was captain of an independent company of foot in Africa, which was reduced in 1783. In 1795 he became captain in the 131st foot, was appointed major of a West India regiment in 1796, and the same year was promoted to the lieutenant-colonelcy of that corps. In 1801 he was appointed lieutenant-colonel of the 64th regiment of foot, which regiment he commanded at the capture of Surinam in May 1804, when he was wounded. He had the rank of colonel in the army 1st January 1805, and died at Surinam, 8th March 1806, in his 45th year, unmarried.

William, seventh Lord Cranstoun, the eldest son, born at Crailing, 3d September, 1749, succeeded his father in 1773, and died unmarried at London, 1st August 1778, aged 29. His brother James, the third son, eighth Lord Cranstoun, was a distinguished naval officer. He was born in 1755, and
had the rank of lieutenant in the royal navy, 19th October 1776, and of captain, 31st January 1780. He commanded the Bellequieux, of 64 guns, in the engagements between Sir Samuel Hood and the Count de Grasse, off St. Christophers, 25th and 26th January, 1782. After the victory over De Grasse gained by Admiral Lord Rodney, 12th April 1782, he was sent home with the dispatches announcing it, in which his lordship declared that Lord Cranstoun had acted as one of the captains of the Formidable during both actions, and that he was much indebted to his gallant behaviour, on both occasions. He commanded the Bellerophon in Admiral Cornwallis’ squadron, 17th June 1795, when, with five ships of the line and two frigates, he sustained an attack of the French fleet, of thirteen ships of the line, seven frigates, seven rasees and two brigs, and obliged them to give over, after a running fight of twelve hours, wherein eight ships of the line were so shattered that they could not engage any longer. In his dispatches the admiral stated that he considered the Bellerophon as a treasure in store, having heard of her former achievements, and observing the spirit manifested by all on board, joined to the activity and zeal showed by Lord Cranstoun during the whole cruise. The thanks of parliament were, on 17th November 1795, voted to the admiral, captains, etc., "for the skill, judgment, and determined bravery displayed on this occurrence, which reflected as much credit as the achievement of a victory.” In 1706 his lordship was appointed governor of Grenada and vice-admiral of that island, but before he could set out to his government, he died at Bishop’s Waltham in Hampshire, 22d September 1796, in the forty-second year of his age. His death was occasioned by drinking cyder impregnated with sugar of lead, from being made in a leaden cistern. He was buried in the garrison chapel at Portsmouth. His character, both as a man and a naval officer, was most honourable. The contemporary journals said that “his death would be felt as a public loss by those who knew his professional merits, and will be long and deeply lamented by all who were acquainted with his exemplary worth in private life.” He married at Darnhall, 19th August 1792, Elizabeth, youngest daughter of Lieutenant-colonel Lewis Charles Montolieu, sister of Lady Elibank, but had no issue by her. She died at Bath, 27th August, 1797, aged twenty-seven. His lordship was succeeded by his nephew, James Edward, ninth Lord Cranstoun, the son of the Hon. Charles Cranstoun, (who died in November 1790,) fourth son of the sixth lord by his wife, Elizabeth Turner, of the county of Worcester.

James Edward, the ninth lord, married at the Retreat in St. Christophers, 25th August, 1807, Anne Linnington, eldest daughter of John Macnamara, Esq. of that island, by whom he had two sons and two daughters, and died 5th September 1818.

His elder son, also named James Edward, tenth Lord Cranstoun, born 12th August, 1809, is unmarried. His brother, the Hon. Charles Frederick Cranstoun, born in 1813, is the heir presumptive.
CRANSTOUN, HELEN D’ARCY, authoress of the beautiful and pathetic song of ‘The tears I shed must ever fall,’ was the third daughter of the Hon. George Cranstoun, youngest son of William, fifth Lord Cranstoun, and was born in 1765. On the 26th of July 1790 she became the second wife of Dugald Stewart, of Catrine, Ayrshire, professor of moral philosophy in the university of Edinburgh, and died at Warriston House, in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, 28th July 1838. A copy of verses, attributed to her, beginning “Returning spring, with gladsome ray,” which breathe the same strain of tender feeling as her justly admired song, ‘The tears I shed,’ is inserted among the Notes to Johnson’s Musical Museum, last edition.

From The Snell Exhibition, University of Glasgow to Baillol College, Oxford, 1901

GEORGE CRANSTOUN of Corehouse. 26th November, 1789. Born 1771. Second and youngest son of the Hon. George Cranstoun, who died at Edinburgh, 30th January, 1789 (seventh son of the fifth Baron Cranstoun), and Maria (who died at New Cairnmuir, 27th October, 1807), daughter of Thomas Brisbane of Brisbane, Ayrshire.

The Exhibitioner had three sisters, (i) Margaret Nicholson, who married, 25th February, 1780, William Cuninghame of Lainshaw, Ayrshire, (2) Jane Anne (an early confidante and correspondent of Sir Walter Scott), who married, 23rd June, 1797, Godfrey Winceslaus, Count of Purgstall, a German nobleman who had been for some time residing in Edinburgh, (3) Helen D'Arcy, who married, 26th July, 1790, Dugald Stewart of Catrine, Ayrshire, Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh. She was authoress of the beautiful and pathetic song, "The tears I shed must ever fall."

The Exhibitioner’s uncle, Captain William Henry Cranstoun, fifth son of the fifth Baron, figured in a tragedy, arising out of his secret marriage with Miss Murray, of Leith, and consisting of a parricide committed by a Reading lady who also fell in love with him. The latter was hanged for the crime in the Castle Green of Oxford on 6th April, 1752, and Captain Cranstoun died on 2nd December of that year. It is not supposed that he was really accessory to the murder.

The Cranstoun Peerage became extinct in 1869. The Exhibitioner studied at the University of Glasgow for at least four Sessions, namely, 1785-86 to 1788-89. Gained the following Class and other Prizes: 1785-86, Logic (first Division), second for the best Specimens of Composition, on various Subjects of Reasoning and Taste, prescribed and executed during the Session; Greek, first for Exemplary Conduct during the Session. 1786-87, Second Mathematics Class, second for general eminence; Moral Philosophy, first for the best Vindication of Divine Justice and of a Moral Administration, and first for the best Illustration of the Natural Rights of
Mankind; Logic, first for the best Vacation Essay on Sublimity of Style; Greek, first for the best Critical Essay on the Nubes of Aristophanes, and first for the best Poetical Translation of the first Chorus of the Choephora of Ischylus. 1787-88, University Silver Medal for the best Essay on Volcanoes. 1788-89, the Gartmore Gold Medal for the best Essay on the Revolution. Studied at the University of Edinburgh for three Sessions, namely, 1791 (Civil Law and Scots Law), 1792 (Scots Law), and 1801 (Ethics).

Became acquainted with Sir Walter Scott, when both were members of the Civil Law Class in 1791, and their intimacy lasted during life. Matriculated at Balliol College 26th March, 1790, and remained there three years. Resigned Exhibition early in 1793. Was originally in the Army, but for a short time only. Admitted Advocate 2nd February, 1793. Advocate-Depute, March, 1805. Sheriff of the County of Sutherland, 1806. Dean of the Faculty of Advocates, 5th November, 1823.

Senator of the College of Justice (Lord of Session) under the judicial title of Lord Corehouse, 21st November, 1826. Retired from the Bench in 1839. His title was taken from his estate near the celebrated fall of Cora Linn, one of the most beautiful and romantic places in Lanarkshire, where he was visited by Sir Walter Scott in 1827. The estate, which he placed under entail, is now possessed by Charles Joseph Edmondstoune-Cranstoun, Esq. When practising at the bar, the Exhibitioner wrote the celebrated jeu de Fesprit entituled "The Diamond Beetle Case" (inserted in Kay's Edinburgh Portraits, vol. I., pp. 384-387, and in the Court of Session Garland, p. 99), in which the judicial style and peculiar manner of several of the Judges, in delivering their opinions, are most happily imitated. His superiority as a Greek scholar rendered him a great favourite with Lord Monboddo, who was wont to declare that Cranstoun was the only scholar in Scotland.

Died at Corehouse, unmarried, 26th June, 1850.