

## Part III: Generation Three Myrtie's Grandparents

(Richard) Arnold Bassett and Rachel CRABTREE  
Edward HIGGINSON and Mary DONALDSON



### From Canada to Illinois to Iowa

*Then move your fam'ly westward, Good health you will enjoy,  
And rise to wealth and honor In the state of El-a-roy!—Folk song*

#### **The Crabb/Crabtree Relatives:**

From the early 1840s to 1860, the Crabb/Crabtree Relatives moved from the St. John, New Brunswick area, to Kane County, Illinois.

#### **The Higginson Relatives:**

Edward and Mary Higginson were married in Canada, not too far from Niagara, New York, in 1854, and were in Illinois, by 1855.

#### **The Crabtrees and Higginsons:**

By 1869, both families had moved to the area of Story County, Iowa.

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## Chapter 1

# (Richard) Arnold Bassett & Rachel Crabtree

*Arnold and Rachel Crabtree, had 11 children. Their son, John Lewis, my great grandfather, was their only child to live past the age of 33. John's four children were their only grandchildren that lived into adulthood; two of John's children—my grandma Myrtle Crabtree Briggs, and Cal's Grandfather, LeRoy Crabtree—had Richard and Rachel's eight Great Grandchildren.*

**R**ichard Arnold Bassett Crabb, Myrtie's grandfather, was the eighth child of Richard Arnold and Mary Giggey Crabb.

Richard Arnold Bassett was born in New Brunswick, Canada, on March 19, 1825. It seems that Arnold, as he was called, was named for his father and perhaps Great Grandfathers, Richard Crabb, and Arnold Bassett.

Arnold received at least some

schooling in New Brunswick, as he appears in an 1835 list of students and their teacher, Thomas Stapledon. Several of Arnold's cousins and three sisters also appear in the record. (The dates/ages don't always match up with other information. It seems this is a common occurrence.)

### **Rachel Crabb**

Rachel Crabb, Myrtie's grandmother, was also born in Canada, in St. John, New Brunswick. Her parents were Elijah and Priscilla Sharp Crabb.

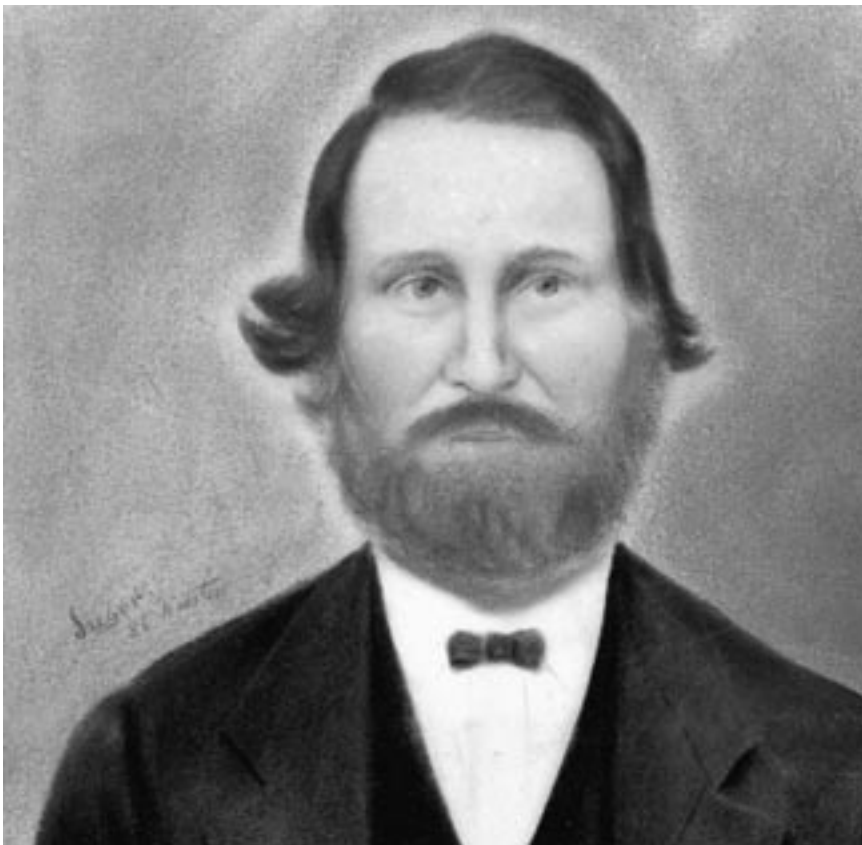
At age 15, Rachel sailed to England to work. The employer insisted on Rachel working on Sundays, which Rachel did not want to do. So, a year later, her employer paid expenses for Rachel's return home.

### **Mr. and Mrs. Richard Arnold Bassett Crabb**

In May of 1847, Richard Arnold Bassett Crabb married his first cousin Rachel Crabb in St. John County, New Brunswick, Canada. Rachel liked to say that she and Arnold were the handsomest couple in Nova Scotia.

### **Move to Illinois**

The newlyweds moved to Portland, Maine, in September of 1848. It wasn't long until Arnold and Rachel travelled over 1000



*Richard Arnold Bassett Crabtree. The original is a pastel drawing in my mother's possession and said to be drawn by a relative.*

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## 1835 School Census

### Northumberland Co., New Brunswick 1835

"Return of the number of Scholars taught by Thomas Stapledon, in District No. three in the Parish of North Esk in the County of Northumberland, for six months ending the thirteenth day of February in the year of our Lord 1835. (This is a partial list.)

Names	Ages	Birth
Fillmore, Charlotte	13	1822
Fillmore, Wm.	09	1826
Fillmore, John	05	1830
Kinney, Ruth	20	1815
Kinney, James	13	1822
Crabb, Rd. Arnold	07	1828
Crabb, Margaret	07	1828
Crabb, Amelia	12	1823
Crabb, Sarah	13	1822



*Rachel Crabtree.*

miles west to Virgil Township, Illinois, where in April of 1849, their daughter, Amy Jane (Emma), was born.

Arnold, his last name is now Crabtree (1850 Illinois census), was a shingle maker in Chicago, or so the family story goes. He bought property there by 1860, when he and Rachel have six living children; Emma and her brother Charles William had died.

### Civil War

I'm not sure what happened during the Civil War years with Arnold, Rachel, and their family. I can not find Arnold listed as fighting in the Civil War.

Grandma Myrtie told me that the Crabtree's shared the top floor of their home with Mary Higginson and her children, as Edward, Mary's husband, fought in the Civil War. Grandma also mentioned that Arnold and his friend, Edward Higginson, had agreed that one of them would fight in the Civil War and the other stay and help out the wife and children at home by getting wood and water. I (Louise) seem to be the only one that has heard this information.

The 1860 census indicates that Richard and Mary Crabtree,

Arnold's parents, had a home two houses away from Edward and Mary Higginson. So it is possible that Mary Higginson and her children lived with the Crabtrees. I'm uncertain if they lived with Arnold and Rachel or Arnold's parents, Richard and Mary. Mary Crabtree died in 1863.

Whether the stories are accurate or not, family photos and information indicate that Arnold Crabtree and Edward Higginson were friends.

After the Civil War, on February 8, 1866, Arnold Crabtree, at 40 years of age, filed a Declaration of Intent to become a US citizen in Kane County, Illinois. This document is registered on the same date, in the same place, signed by the same person in Kane County, Illinois, as the Declaration of Intent to become a US citizen of Edward Higginson, who was an Irish immigrant.

Included in some Higginson Family papers were photos of two of Arnold Crabtree's sons. One photo was Great Grandpa John who married Edward and Mary Higginson's daughter, Ida Emily.

I received a photo (see Chapter 5) from a Crabtree relative of Great Grandpa John sitting in

a friendship pose with Edward Higginson's son, also named John and also born in 1855, in Illinois.

In 1867, Arnold and Rachel's infant son Haskell died at less than two weeks old. Rachel's mother, Priscilla, and Arnold's father, Richard, also died the same year.

By 1869, the Crabtree and Higginson families had moved to Iowa. The Higginson Family settled in Hardin County. The Arnold Crabtree Family settled in Story County.

### Nevada, Iowa

Now in Nevada, Iowa, in 1869, baby Amanda (Mandy) Crabtree was born. (The Higginson's had a baby daughter born that year, too.)

In 1870, the Crabtree sons, Jerome and Arthur, worked as laborers and the younger children attended school in Story County, Iowa. Arnold's 78 year old Uncle Elijah, Rachel's father, lived with them.

George Shattuck lived next door with his family. He became a close friend of the Crabtrees. Mr. Shattuck was Ohio born and had lived in Illinois also. We'll meet him again in Chapter 4.

The Crabtrees were living in Milford Township, Story County, Iowa, when Arnold Crabtree died from consumption, also called tuberculosis, in March of 1873. In September of the same year, Arnold's friend Edward Higginson died from his Civil War wounds.

Arnold Crabtree and two of his sons are buried in the Sheffield Cemetery in Howard Township, Iowa. Arnold left a will.

### **The Crabtrees Move to Chicago**

Rachel, her father Elijah, and five children were still in Iowa in 1880. At least some of the Crabtrees returned to Illinois by 1881.

In 1881, Rachel's son, John, a shoemaker, lived in a house in the Chicago area where his Aunt Sarah, Rachel's sister, had lived.

Daughters, Mandy and Rachel Lilly, it is said, worked in Chicago for Laura and Bob Grainger, Rachel's niece and her husband.

Son, Arnold Jerome, was presumably living in Chicago, as he died there in 1883. Elijah died in Chicago in 1882, which suggests that Rachel did move back.

### **Rachel and Children Move to Nebraska**

Around 1884, Rachel went west by covered wagon with her children. Through the Homesteading Act, Rachel took 160 acres in Nebraska. Rachel's son John homesteaded the 160 acres next to her. Hiram lived with Rachel Lilly and Mandy on his mother Rachel's homestead.

On June 1, 1887, a letter of dismissal was issued by the Fourth Street Baptist Church of Chicago for John and Hiram. A separate letter was issued for Rachel, Rachel Lilly, and Mandy. It was customary for such letters to be issued as confirmation of a member's good standing in the church. These particular letters,

## **Virgil Township, Kane County, Illinois**

### **Kane County, Illinois**

There were Native Americans living in the area now known as Kane County, in December of 1818, when Illinois became the 31st state. Settlers soon took the land and forced the resident tribes west of Iowa.

The result was an uprising of the Sauk and Fox tribes, which were led by Blackhawk. US Army troops led by Winfield Scott were sent to Chicago to fight those tribes. Scott's men marched through Kane County on the way to fight Black Hawk's band in Wisconsin.

Within two years, settlers followed the trail, now known as the Army Trail Road, made by the army wagons. By January 16, 1836, Kane County, named after Territorial Judge Elias Kent Kane, was created.

### **Virgil Township, Kane County**

Most pioneers passed by the eastern lands of Virgil township in the early days. The land was too wet and cold for farming and the slough grass threatened prairie fires. In the summer and fall, the lowland swarmed with mosquitoes and was the right place for getting malaria, fever and ague.

After the land was drained and cultivated, Virgil Township had rich soil, desirable for farming, raising stock, and dairy farming.

James Outhouse, a Canadian immigrant, and an acquaintance of the Crabtree family, located a claim on land now within Virgil Township in 1836. Luther Merrill, probably the first settler in the area, had claimed all the land in sight. Jim Outhouse, rather than fight, gave Merrill his choice of \$100, or a fight for the 200 acres he selected; Merrill chose the money. Quite a number of settlers who came in 1837 and 1838, gave Merrill something for his "claim" rather than contend with him.

### **Joshua Read/Reed**

Joshua Read, a Canadian with Crabtree links, was among those that came in 1837–38. It is said that Joshua Read built the first frame house in the township. Mr. Read and his son-in-law, James Outhouse, helped to transform the area from uncultivated wilderness to a fruitful garden. (Part V has more on the Joshua Read/Reed family.)

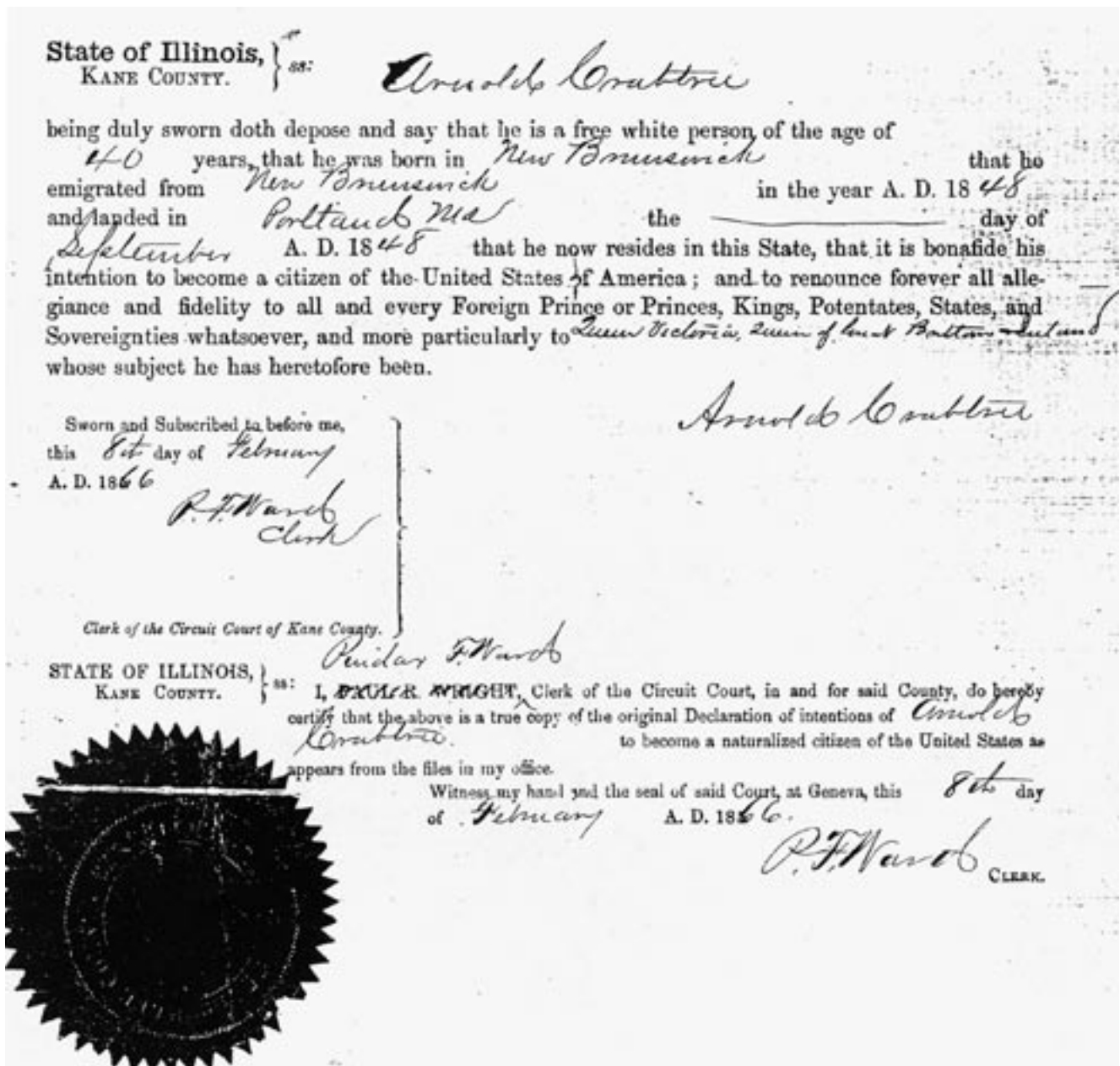
### **Lodi, Virgil Township, Kane County**

The village of Lodi, where some of the Crabtree relatives lived, was platted and surveyed at the county line on March 20, 1854. Within a year and a half, Lodi, had attracted a population of about four hundred residents. Lodi was incorporated as Maple Park, in 1872. The Crabtrees were in Iowa by then. ❀

were addressed to the Baptist Church of Springview, Nebraska. (See the Appendix, Part II and Part III for copies of the dismissals.)

In mid-1892, John moved his family to Bonesteel, South Dakota.

Rachel also went. John and Rachel Lilly were the only children left in her family. The others, including two grand babies, had died. Rachel Lilly and her husband Jim Walker also moved to Bonesteel.



Arnold Crabtree Declaration of Intent to become a US Citizen.

Granddaughter Myrtie, John's daughter, said that when they lived in Bonesteel, South Dakota, her Grandma Rachel lived next door and she could visit her whenever she wanted.

Just next door to Rachel lived Ernest and Emma Pense, who had

lived not far away in Keya Paha County, Nebraska.

Rachel's memory or her general health may have been failing at this time as her age, birthplace, and parents' birthplaces on the census record is incorrect.

Sometime after 1903, Rachel went with John (her only living child, as Rachel Lilly died in Bonesteel), when he, his wife Ida and their three children moved to Mondamin, Iowa. There John and Ida's fourth child, Mary, was born.

After three or four years

of their property flooding, the Crabtrees and Grandma Rachel moved back to Nebraska.

Rachel died November 22, 1908, at the age of 77, in John and Ida's Pine Glen home in Nebraska.

Rachel had lived long enough to meet her son John's four children, all of whom lived long lives. Leroy lived to be 77, Johnie lived to be 86 and Myrtie and Mary lived to be almost 92.

*Note: I have heard the suggestion that the deaths of 10 of 11 children—two in their early 30s, three ages 22 to 25, two teens, a six and four year old and a baby less than two weeks old—were a result of the marriage of first cousins. I don't know. There does seem to be a respiratory weakness in my side of the family. I was told that Great Grandpa John thought the reason for so many deaths was that his family did not get very good nutrition.*  
—Louise Smith

### Children of Arnold and Rachel Crabtree:

Amy/Emma Jane (1849–1855)

Charles William (1850–1855)

Arnold Jerome (1852–1883)

Arthur Elijah (1853–1875)

**John George Lewis** (1855–1927)

Truman Orlando (1857–1875)

Charles William Henry  
(1859–1872)

Rachel Lilly (1862–1896)

Hiram Oakley (1864–1889)

Haskell (1867–1867)

Amanda Antonia (Mandy)  
(1869–1891) ❀

## Arnold Crabtree

### Arnold's Will

I Arnold Crabtree of Story County in the state of Iowa of Sound mind, do make and publish this my last will as follows. That is to say I give and bequeath to my beloved wife Rachel Crabtree all of my property both real and personal and all of my rights and credits that I am in any way entitled to for her to have and to hold as long as she remains my widow and that after her marriage if she should choose to marry; and if not then after her death I direct that all of my said propertys shall revert to my children equally share and share about. It being my intention that my said wife shall use said property for the purpose of raising my family—And I hereby appoint my said wife my executrix of this my last will and I direct that she be not required to give any land.

Signed and declared in our presence by the above named Arnold Crabtree as his last will this 26th day of February.

Witnesses, T. B. Howland and John Rich

*Note: Great Great Grandpa's will is very interesting. Arnold seems to have made his will during the last month of his life. The person who wrote it is not the same one who signed his name; understandable, perhaps a lawyer or some acquaintance with experience at that sort of thing.*

*His signature is interesting in two regards: 1) the lightness suggests either pencil or a significantly different type of ink from that used to write the body of the document; 2) the letter "r" in his signature is considerably different than that in his signature on his Declaration of Intention to become a citizen.—Cal Bivens, great great grandson*

### Consumption

Consumption, or tuberculosis, is an infectious disease, usually acquired from contact with an infected person, infected cow, or through drinking infected milk.

The disease may exist for a while in an arrested or inactive state. Reactivation or exacerbation of the disease or reinfection gives rise to the chronic progressive form.

The symptoms include: fatigue, weight loss, and cough. Then to a rise in temperature in the afternoon with evening and night sweats, the victim begins to cough up thick and sometimes blood streaked sputum, as well as frothy bright red blood.

As the disease advances the victim becomes weak and emaciated and may have chest pains causing dyspnea. ❀

I, Arnold Crabtree of Stony  
 County in the State of Georgia of  
 sound mind, do make and publish  
 this my last will as follows  
 That is to say I give and be-  
 queath to my beloved wife Rachel  
 Crabtree all of my property  
 both real and personal and  
 all of my rights and credits that  
 I am in any way entitled to -  
 for her to have and to hold  
 as long, as she remains my  
 widow and that after her mar-  
 riage if she should choose to  
 marry; and if not then after  
 her death I direct that all of  
 my said property shall  
 revert to my children equally  
 share and share alike. It  
 being my intention that my  
 said wife shall use said prop-  
 erty for the purpose of raising  
 my family - And I hereby appoint  
 my said wife my executrix of this  
 my last will, and I direct that  
 she be not required to give any bond  
 and declare  
 in presence by the Rachel Crabtree  
 Richard Arnold Crabtree