

Part V: The Move West

by Cal Bivens

The move from New Brunswick, English Canada, to Portland, Maine, to Lodi, Kane County, Illinois. The Higginson family joins the Crabtrees that move to Iowa and Nebraska.



It is 1427 miles, or about 22 hours by car, from St. John, New Brunswick, to Lodi (Maple Park), Kane County, Illinois.

El-a-noy Folk Song

Then move your fam'ly westward, good health you will enjoy,
And rise to wealth and honor in the state of El-a-noy.

Way down upon the Wabash, such land was never known;
If Adam had passed over it, the soil he'd surely own.
He'd think it was the garden he'd played in as a boy,
And straight pronounce it Eden in the State of El-a-noy.

She's bounded by the Wabash, The Ohio, and the Lakes.
She's crawfish in the swampy lands, The milk-sick and the shakes;
But these are slight diversions And take not from the joy
Of living in this garden land, The state of El-a-noy.

Away up in the northward, Right on the borderline,
A great commercial city, Chicago, you will find.
Her men are all like Abelard, Her women like Heloise,
All honest virtuous people, For they live in El-a-noy.

Then move your family westward, Bring all your girls and boys,
And cross at Shawnee Ferry to The State of El-a-noy.

Chapter 1

The Crabtrees Go West

The Move from New Brunswick, Canada, to Nebraska

by Cal Bivens

The Crabtrees Move to Illinois: 1840 through 1859

A very large group moved down from Canada: Crabtrees, Reeds, Giggys, Wallaces, Dobsons, Fillmores, and a few more.

The Crabtrees did not all come to Illinois at one time and much to my surprise, there were more of them than I had known about. It seems that Charles William Crabtree and his brother, George, sons of Richard and Mary Giggey Crabtree, came first.

Charles W. Crabtree and his wife Charlotte, may have been the first of the family to arrive. They settled in Kane County, Illinois, by 1844, according to family records and land records. By 1847, Charles had purchased 40 acres for \$1.25 per acre. Charles and his family moved to Chicago by 1850. He died there in 1852.

George Crabtree bought 40 acres in Kane County for \$1.25 per acre in October of 1850, and married Sarah Jane Fillmore in 1851. They moved to Iowa about 1868. Sarah died in Iowa and George married Martha Hill in 1873. They moved to Minnesota by 1880, and to Washington state in 1889. George and Sarah's son Silas married Dora Dobson, daughter of Abram Dobson.

Great Great Grandpa Richard Arnold Bassett Crabtree (Jr.) and

his new bride, Rachel Crabtree, entered the United States at Portland, Maine, in September of 1848. They were in Kane County, Illinois, by spring of 1849. Ten of Arnold and Rachel's 11 children were born in Kane County, and that is where their first two children (ages 5 and 6) died in 1855. Arnold bought property there by 1860.

Thomas and Amy (Crabtree) Beacham came also in 1849. They appear in the 1850 census living with Charles and Charlotte. They eventually moved to Nebraska, where Amy died in 1885, and Thomas in 1894. Thomas and Amy's son, James, was a Civil War soldier from Illinois, and later moved to Iowa.

Another brother, James Crabtree, arrived about the same time. James was married in New Brunswick, in 1849, and came to the US soon after. In 1850, James, a shinglemaker, lived in the 6th Ward of Chicago. At that time the town had a population of just under 30,000. James moved to Amboy, Illinois, in 1851/52, and ran a sawmill there. He moved to Michigan in 1857. He was a veteran of the Mexican and Civil Wars. He seems to have been quite a self promoter, and if it is all to be believed, quite an adventurer.

Edmond Hay Wallace was a Crabtree in-law. He was married to Fanny Crabtree, daughter of

Richard and Mary. The Wallaces were in Illinois by 1850. One of Edmond and Fanny's 14 children, son Arnold, married Cynthia Fillmore, and was a Civil War veteran. Fanny died and Edmond remarried. He died in 1882, in Kane County, Illinois.

Richard Arnold Sr. and Mary Giggey Crabtree, parents of those mentioned, probably came to the United States at the same time as their son Arnold. They are in Kane County by May 31, 1849, when their daughter Margaret married Eliphalet Reed. Richard and Mary remained in Kane County. The 1850 federal census, 1855 state census, and 1860 federal census show them there.

William Henry, (Billy) Crabtree, (G. W. in one of the census records), nephew of Richard and Mary, and son of Elijah and Priscilla Crabtree, probably came in 1849. Around that time Billy married Margaret. Billy was there certainly by 1850, according to the census records. He bought a house there by 1860, and moved to Chicago by 1880. Billy died in Chicago perhaps in 1915. The family story is that he lived to be over 100, but no birth or death records have been found.

Joseph Crabtree, Billy's brother, came to Illinois about 1849, also. Joseph appears in the 1850 census sharing a house,

with Billy and Margaret. His subsequent whereabouts are unknown to me.

William (a cousin), Arnold, and George, appear to have been counted twice in the 1850 census. I find them at Lodi and in Chicago, where they were employed as shinglemakers. The family folk-lore says that Arnold worked in Chicago as a shinglemaker. It has not been an uncommon practice among both my family and ancestors for the men to work some distance from home. Since Lodi was some 45 miles west of Chicago, it was probably not a daily commute to work.

By 1850, Richard Arnold and Mary Crabtree, and their family (except for Sarah and her husband John Kinney) were in Illinois: James and his family, Charles and his family, George, Arnold and their wives and daughter, Amy Beacham and her husband, Thomas and family all lived at Lodi (now Maple Park), Virgil Township, Kane County. Richard's nephews, Billy and his wife Margaret and Joseph Crabtree and wife Sarah were also there. James and wife Mary, as already noted, settled in Chicago.

Old John Fillmore, a friend and in-law arrived in Lodi. He and his wife, Sarah, had three daughters, Cynthia, Charlotte, and Sarah, that married into Richard and Mary Crabtree's family. Becky Fillmore, married Abram Dobson in 1854, in Lodi, Illinois. Their daughter, Dora L. Dobson, married Silas Crabtree, grandson of Richard and Mary. (You will find letters of Dora Dobson Crabtree Palmer, including one to Great Grandpa John Crabtree, in Chapter 3, and more details about the Dobson, Fillmore, and Reed families in Chapter 4.)

Traveling in the 1800s

New Brunswick to Illinois

It would be interesting to know the travel route the New Brunswick relatives and friends used to travel to Illinois. Perhaps they used a combination of water and road travel.

They may have sailed aboard a vessel from the St. John, New Brunswick area, to Portland, Maine. Then they could have taken the King's Highway to Boston.

New York State had a major canal system including the Erie Canal. It would make sense that they traveled the Erie Canal like the Read Family (see below) did when they went from New Brunswick to Illinois. There is a secondary road that follows Lake Erie, so perhaps they followed that and worked their way to Virgil, Kane County, Illinois.—*Louise Smith* ❁

Read/Reed Family Travels to Illinois

The Reeds, one of the families that moved to Virgil Township, Illinois, from New Brunswick, went part of the way on the Erie Canal.

Joshua and Priscilla (Chapelle) Reed were parents to 12 children. Their son, Otho, was born in Sackville, Westmoreland County, New Brunswick, on October 5, 1825. At the age of 13, Otho and his family traveled West by way of the Erie Canal and became some of the earliest settlers in Virgil Township, Section 24, in 1838. Franklin Township (which was renamed Virgil Township in 1850) had initially attracted few pioneer settlers due to the land being wet and swampy. However, as the years passed, cultivation and careful drainage of the land yielded soil especially rich and fertile for farming in the area.

We met the Read/Reed family in Part IV, and there is more about their family in Chapter 4. ❁

The King's Highway

The first section of the King's Highway was built in Massachusetts, in 1653. The highway soon extended to Portland, Maine, and eventually connected to the New Brunswick frontier. Over the years it was improved, and various spur roads allowed travellers on the King's Highway to go inland.

It became a route used by everyone, including some Loyalists who re-established their family ties to the United States.

Portland, Maine, a city Richard and Rachel Crabb lived in for a short time and Elijah and Priscilla Crabbe lived in about 10 years, is on this route. ❁



King's Highway Marker.



1840 travel routes.

Elijah Harris Crabtree (brother of Richard Arnold) and his wife Priscilla, parents of Joseph, Billy, and Rachel, moved to Maine, in 1849. Elijah and Priscilla remained in Portland, Maine, through most of the 1850s. By 1859, they had followed the others to Lodi. Elijah appears in the 1860 Illinois census.

The Illinois Crabtrees all lived in close proximity to each other. Nearby were the Reed, Outhouse, Dobson, Fillmore, Walker, Sharp, and Wallace families, also from New Brunswick. Many of them also appear to have ties to former Loyalists.

It is interesting to see that there were so many shoemakers among the Crabtrees and relatives and acquaintances. Several of these families, Crabtrees, Reeds, Giggys, Wallaces, Dobsons, and Fillmores, had at least one shoemaker.

1860

By 1860, cousins, Arnold and Billy Crabtree owned homes in Lodi. Joseph Crabtree and Thomas Beacham and their families had left Lodi by this time. One of their sons did turn up in Iowa in 1880.

Elijah and Priscilla had arrived from Maine with son, Jonathan, also called John, who lived with the family of a farmer named A. Terry, for whom he worked. Elijah was a carpenter. The rest of the men had turned to farming.

There were other new arrivals in Lodi by 1860. George Giggy, who seems to be a cousin of Arnold, brought his family. Edward Higginson (incorrectly written Hickerson on the census), an Irish immigrant, brought his wife, Mary, and began a family. They had come from Buffalo, New York area. They were to become friends of the Crabtrees.

Also, more of the Reeds arrived.

In 1863, Richard Crabtree's wife Mary died. Richard died four years later and both of them are buried in the Van Vlack Cemetery in Maple Park, Illinois.

Iowa

By about 1868, Arnold had moved his family to Milford Township, Story County, Iowa, near Nevada, Iowa. Mandy, their youngest was born there in 1869. By 1870, Jerome and Arthur were working as laborers. The Crabtrees sent their children to school. Elijah was living with them. He was then 78 years old according to the census record.

Cousin, George Giggy, was living nearby with his family and hired help. George Shattuck lived next door with his family. He became a close friend of the Crabtrees. Shattuck was Ohio born and had lived in Illinois also. He was to marry Great Great Grandma Mary Higginson, in 1890, after both their spouses had died, but that's ahead of the story.

Family sources say Arnold Crabtree died of consumption (tuberculosis) March of 1873. They were living in Milford Township, Story County, Iowa, at the time, and he was buried in the Sheffield Cemetery in Howard

Township. Arnold left a will which is in Part III.

The Crabtree and Wallace families were spread over a three county area at least. George Crabtree lived in Wright County, Arnold Wallace and Silas Crabtree lived in Hardin County in the Alden-Iowa Falls area. Arnold Bassett Wallace, Silas Crabtree and others are buried in the Alden Cemetery.

It seems that Rachel Crabtree and her children may all have gone back to Chicago before the move west. Hiram maintained his membership in the Fourth Street Baptist Church, which may indicate that he did return to Chicago. I am curious what Jerome and Hiram did while there. The girls are said to have worked for Bob Grainger, who married Sarah Crabtree Gill's daughter Laura.

Nebraska

The trip west seems to have been made in 1883 or thereabouts. Rachel went with her children and took a homestead in Nebraska.

The Crabtrees left Chicago for Nebraska during one of the "Dakota Booms"; there were several between 1879 and 1886, roughly coinciding with several gold strikes. Under the Homestead

The Crabtrees Travel to Nebraska

There is a photo of a wagon and a buckboard in the old family album and an anecdote of the trip with it. The story tells of an incident one night when the wagons made camp too close to the railroad track. They seem to have followed the course of the railroad—a sensible thing to do. The horses were unhitched and the seat removed from the wagon so the folks would not have to sit on the ground. Along came a train and the shriek of the locomotive's whistle spooked the horses which got loose and bolted through the camp, leaping over and narrowly missing a couple of the children.—*Cal Bivens* ❀

Act of 1862, a person could stake out a claim of 160 acres (a quarter section) in the public domain and file it with a \$10 filing fee. They were obliged to settle or cultivate the land for five years, at which time they could obtain a deed of ownership.

Rachel and her children went west with a wagon train. There is a photo of a wagon and a buckboard in the old family album.

I got the impression that the Higginsons and some of the other future in-laws went out at the same time. My guess is that the mail or telegraph was somewhat busy as they planned to go. It would seem logical that John, Hiram, and their mother and sisters probably decided to go after Elijah and Jerome died. They may have considered it before Jerome died.

By June of 1885, John and his mother, and sisters Rachel Lilly and Mandy were settled on their homesteads in Keya Paha County, Nebraska. They lived near Darnall, a post office in the central part of the county, eight miles from Springview. Brother Hiram had a place near Springview. They were enumerated in the state census of 1885, and appear to have been in place in 1884 or before.

The Higginson's moved from Iowa to Nebraska around 1884. Mary's husband Edward had died in 1873. The Higginson family members, Charlie and Carrie Williams, Ed, Mary, and Ida Higginson, as well as Jim Walker, the husband-to-be of John's sister, Rachel, lived near Darnall. James Higginson settled at Meadville.

Hiram Crabtree transferred real estate in Story County, Iowa, on February 20, 1886, after the move to Nebraska. He sold land to Jacob Jacobson for \$1400.

The description I have is quite brief: NW NW 3, 84, 23, qc. This may mean the Northwest half of the Northwest quarter of section 3, township 85, range 23 or something to that effect.

Hiram's future in-laws, William and Ursie Akers, were at Springview. Mandy Crabtree's future husband, Stephen Kuntz, and his father, Philip, settled near Enterprise.

John Crabtree had 160 acres of land that was unimproved: houses, fences, buildings valued at \$400; farm implements and machinery valued at \$110; \$225 worth of livestock including three horses.

Settling In

On December 15, 1886, John Lewis Crabtree filed a claim for a homestead at the US Land Office at Valentine, Nebraska. He built a sod house on the place.

The 1890–91 Business Directory and Farmer's list of the Nebraska State Gazeteer shows the Crabtrees and their neighbors having spread out a little.

At Springview: Willam and Joseph Akers, John Donaldson, and Hiram Crabtree (whom I didn't expect to find). At Darnall: John Crabtree, Rachel Crabtree, Jim Walker, Frank Williams, Charlie Williams, Edward D. Higginson. Philip Kuntz lived at

Enterprise, William Reynolds lived at Marlbank, J. Van Koten and Jim Higginson lived at Meadville.

South Dakota

When son John moved to South Dakota with his family in 1892, Rachel Crabtree went, too. Jim Walker and wife Rachel Lilly Crabtree, Rachel's only other living child, may have gone at the same time. John first had a trading post (post office) and then added a wagon repair shop and blacksmith building at Bonesteel. Rachel lived next door. Her memory or perhaps her general health may have been failing at this time as some of the information—age, birthplace, and parents' birthplaces—on the census record is incorrect.

Iowa Again, Then Back to Nebraska

From Bonesteel, John and Ida Crabtree's family, including Rachel, John's mother, went to Mondamin. Rachel Lilly had died in Bonesteel. The Crabtree family was in Mondamin only a few years and moved back to Nebraska, where Rachel died in 1908—the last of the New Brunswick Crabtrees in my immediate family.

Note: Beginning with the move to Illinois, it is almost all my own leg work or computer work as the case may be.—Cal Bivens ❀



Originally, I (Louise) thought this photo was the Crabtree's or Higginson's moving west to Nebraska. It is actually John L. Reynolds, a Higginson descendant, helping a brother-in-law, Homer Shattuck, move to Dunning, Nebraska, probably in 1913.