

HENRY CRANE (abt. 1621- 1709)  
 TABITHA (ELIZABETH) KINSLEY ( -1682)

Henry was born in England, probably Suffolk Co., about 1621. His parents were John (Samuel) and Elizabeth Crane. His father was referred to as John by some writers and Samuel by others. Henry was in America with his parents in 1637 at which time he would have been about 16 years of age. They were settled in one or another of the villages that today make up the greater Boston. One record states there were three children in the family but only Henry and his brother Benjamin appear on record in the available sources.

William Richard Cutter wrote, among other things, that the Cranes in England were "classed among the families belonging to the country of Suffolk . . . it is among the records of Suffolk that we find delineated the long roll of aristocratic Crane landowners in a line of succession from father to son, covering a period of time marked by hundreds of years. Here in Suffolk, their estates are to be found recorded for nearly three hundred years." <sup>1</sup> (map 1 #22)

New England was wild and sparsely settled at the time that Henry landed in the Boston Harbor with his father. Only in a few cleared spaces could the smoke be seen spiraling from log huts near the shores of the bay.

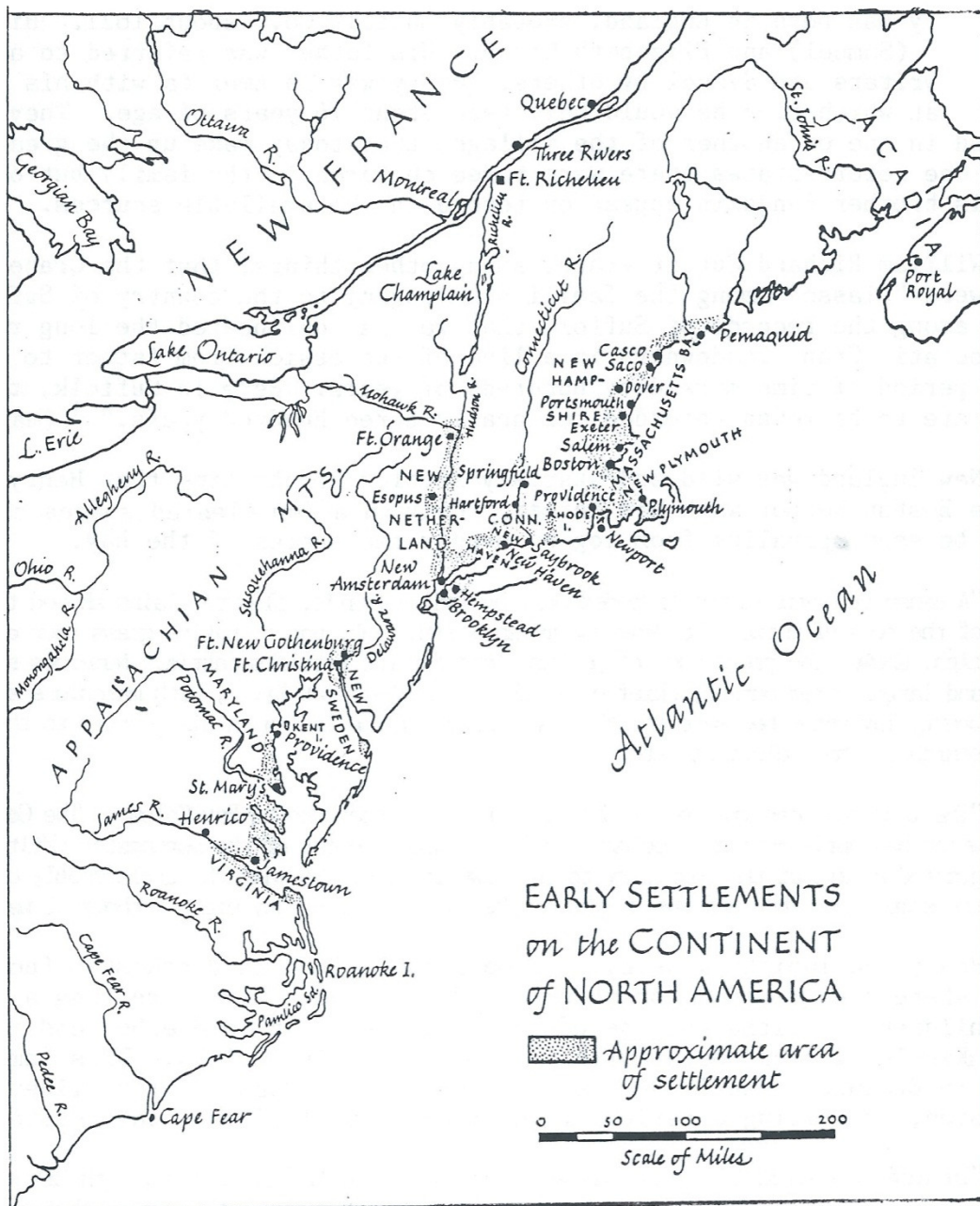
"A dense primeval forest threaded only by Indian trails, cleared plains showed the waving of the rows of maize. Meadows and marshes with rank, uncut, native grass four or five feet high, showed the prevalence of pasture land for the settlers cattle. Numerous small streams and larger watercourses, chief of which was the Neponset River, with matchless and varied beauty lay untouched save for the light canoe of the Indian in his journey to the falls in search of shad, alewives, etc. . .

"The land had been granted by Charles I to the Massachusetts Bay Colony. The General Court, which had jurisdiction in colonial affairs, upon request of the Dorchester (Milton) pioneers granted a part of the territory to the town in 1636. To make the title doubly clear, at the same time, the land was bought of the Indians for twenty eight fathoms of wampum." <sup>2</sup>

Henry and Tabitha Kinsley were married in 1654 at Dorchester (now Milton) Mass. where they resided for the remainder of their lives, rearing a family of ten children. Tabitha was one of five children born to Stephen and Marie (Spaulding) Kinsley who had been married in Boston 29 April 1624. This family had lived in Braintree and in Dorchester (now Milton) Mass. Emily Wilder Leavitt of Boston, in writing a review of Henry Crane in 1893 made this statement:

"In 1654 Stephen Kinsley, who was at Mount Wollaston, Mass., in 1639, with his sons-in-law, Anthony Gulliver and Henry Crane, were settled on adjacent farms in that part of Dorchester which was later, incorporated as Milton." <sup>3</sup>

The DAR research reveals that Henry's father, Samuel Crane, who was at Braintree (then called Wollaston) in 1639 and was selectman there in 1640, was holding office on the same board of selectman with Mr. Kinsley, who became Henry's father-in-law. <sup>4</sup> This evidenced the association of the Crane and Kinsley families, even before the marriage of Henry and Tabitha.



The period of time between 1630 and 1642 is called the "Great Migration" to the Massachusetts Bay Colony. During these years some 16,000 settlers arrived from England. A charter had been granted by the king which allowed the Bay Colony to legally govern its affairs in America. It was not long, however, that, because of Archbishop Laud's dislike of the Puritan Commonwealth, the king made an attempt to recall the charter but was unsuccessful. Self-government was an experiment of ups and downs, but the charter did promote immigration. See the related story in Adams (7-59, p. 688).

"Henry bought a farm of 120 acres in Dorchester Sept. 1654 (the year of his marriage) and 'a road was laid out to his house over Milton Hill from Braintree to Roxbury, passing through Dorchester. This road could be seen from his house to the southeast following "the old beaten way." The street that passed Henry and Tabitha's house is now Adams Street in Milton, a section that has been known as 'Crane's Plain.'" <sup>5</sup>

Each settler became earnest in their desire to be planting and building. The acquisition of a home with a small area cleared for farming and a larger area left for timber and pasture was of uppermost concern. To build a house in those days of early New England, required cutting some of the timber from the woods nearby. Furniture was crude hewn and only bare necessities made up what pieces might be required. This did not seem a sacrifice to the early settler for the homes in England had little more at this time, so they were used to simple hand-made things. A log home in America with its huge fireplace was considered a domain to be proud of. So long as they could share the benefits of some meadowlands for their livestock and plant a small acreage to supply the staples for their humble table, they were affluent, indeed.

"Henry Crane was chiefly a husbandman; yet with a tendency to land speculation. In 1683, Henry Crane, of Milton, bought land of Moses Payn, innholder, at the south end of Boston. . . bounded east by the highway to Roxbury, south by Thomas Smith's land, northerly by the land belonging to Theophilus Frary's heirs; together with the beach and the flats to the seaward; while his later years were much employed in giving and reducing mortgages on his possessions. He was one of the selectmen of Milton in 1679, 1680 and 1681, and was one of the trustees of the first meeting-house built in Milton." <sup>6</sup>

"He was an iron-worker by trade and was part owner of the iron works. When the General Court prohibited the holding of Indians as servants or slaves, he had a man, woman and child in his service and an autograph letter from him to the General Court is to be seen in the State Archives (vol. 30; p. 239) in reply to an order for him to send away the three Indians. It is well phrased and written, asking for more time to carry out the will of the Court." <sup>7</sup>

Another author, Leavitt, put it in these words: "It is written in fine, clear, flowing lines, and both composition and spelling show that he must have received some scholarly training." <sup>8</sup>

Henry Crane and his wife, Tabitha, raised a large family, all born in Dorchester, Mass. The listing of the children in the DAR report agreed with the list recorded by Albert Crane.

1. Benjamin Crane, b. abt. 1656; who, when but eighteen years old, enlisted in Captain Johnson's company, in King Philips war, and was severely wounded in the battle of Narragansett Swamp (now central Rhode Island) Dec. 19, 1675
2. Stephen Crane, b. 1657; md. Mary Denison (7-21) July 2, 1676; died 1738
3. Henry Crane Jr.
4. John Crane, b. 30 Nov. 1658; md. Dec. 13, 1687, Hannah, dau. of James and Hannah Leonard; lived in Taunton, Mass.
5. Elizabeth Crane, b. Aug. 14, 1663; md. 1st in Milton, May 20, 1682 Eleazer Gilbert of Taunton; he died March 29, 1701; she md. 2nd, April 27, 1705, George Townsend of Taunton, Mass.

6. Ebenezer Crane, b. Aug. 6, 1665; md. 13 Nov. 1689, Mary, dau. of Thomas Tolman Jr. and Elizabeth \_\_\_\_\_
7. Mary Crane, b. Nov. 22, 1666; md. Mar. 28, 1690, Samuel Hackett of Taunton
8. Mercy Crane, b. Jan. 1, 1668
9. Samuel Crane, b. June 8, 1669; died Sept. 14, 1669
10. Anna Crane, b. abt. 1671 and lived at Taunton <sup>9</sup>

(Albert Crane gives Anna's birth, however, as 1687, but if that be true then she was a child by Henry's second wife).

It will be observed that some of the immediate posterity of Henry and Tabitha Crane located in Taunton, and the towns of Dighton, Berkley and Norton became places of some of the Crane descendants.

Henry's first wife, Tabitha the mother of at least nine of the children, died at Milton 23 Oct. 1682, and he married, second, about 1683, Elizabeth \_\_\_\_\_ who may have been the mother of the tenth child. His second wife survived him; he died at Milton, Mar. 21, 1709/10. If his birth date is correct he was 88 years of age at the time of his death. <sup>10</sup>

1. #21 Vol. 4 p. 1672
2. #140 v. 17
3. #77 p. 3
4. #71 pp. 39, 40
5. ibid
6. #77 p. 4
7. #71 p. 40
8. #52 p. 3
9. #71 p. 40 also #77 (a) pp. 3, 4
10. #77 p. 4