



KNOW YOUR ROOTS

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MARY ANN CRANE THE LAST OF OUR IMPORTANT GRANDMOTHERS

This was the year of the grandmothers. The year for those whose names have been in our heritage but we might never have known about them. This was the year to bring them to the forefront to give them their rightful due.

Some we didn't need to be reminded about, namely the most recent grandmothers Minnie Kuhnert and her mother Wilhelma Wiggenhorn.

Rebecca Free is also someone most of the family knows, but what was unknown was that her family probably can be traced back prior to William Penn in Pennsylvania. That story has been told, plus another grandmother linked to Rebecca in a later month, the story of Ann Bevan, our only Quaker link.

Then there was Rebecca's mother, Mary Elizabeth Elson, whose forebearers in England had land named for them. These grandmothers were all on the Free side.

On the Durland side here were Margaret Caskey, Dorothy Budd, and Sarah Youngs, three grandmothers whose families we don't know much about with the exception of Dorothy Budd, but they all contributed their genes to ours today.

We came to Elizabeth Shuler, a grandmother who bore eleven children of which our Mary Ann was one. Elizabeth's story was told through her family.

The list includes Phebe Meeker whose ancestor was another early settler and gave the name Meeker to Mary Ann Crane's father.

All our grandmothers had stories to tell but their names could have been lost to us even though they were as important as their fathers who preceded them. So we end our year with Mary Ann Crane, the last of our important grandmothers.

Her ancestors on our shores began with Jasper Crane who was one of the original settlers of the New Haven Colony in 1639 and was one of the fathers of New Jersey along with Captain Robert Treat.

Azariah Crane, his son, continued with his father's works and became very famous in his own name. Each succeeding Crane in our history made a name for himself. John, the son of Azariah, owned so much property that his land became known as Cranetown. Following was Benjamin who served in the Revolution. Finally we come to Mary Ann's father, Obadiah Meeker, who for a short time was elected to the Indiana legislature.

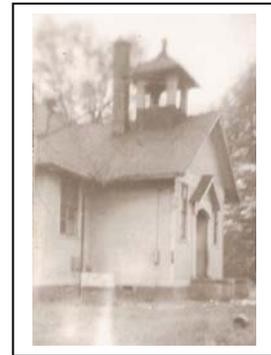
So it is fitting that our year of grandmothers should end with Mary Ann, one who brought the name Crane into our heritage. Mary Ann was born in 1816 on a farm in

Hamilton County, Ohio. Her mother was Elizabeth Schuler who was also featured in our grandmother year. Mary Ann had ten siblings when her father, Obadiah Meeker Crane, decided to move to Brownstown, Indiana and farm there, and that is where we pick up the story of Mary Ann.

In a pamphlet of letters written by Durland cousins and printed before 1890, in writing to another cousin about his siblings Nelson Durland writes, "In process of time Robert married a girl of the neighborhood, a Miss Mary Ann Crane. And brought her home. They farmed and prospered. After my mother's death...finally sold the old homestead... and moved to Flora, Ill. and went into the hardware business."

Before Mary Ann and her family moved to Flora, their home in Indiana was the home of the preacher, not of the Methodist preachers only but of preachers of other denominations as well. It was also the home of the public school teacher whom they boarded free of charge. This was in the days when, because of small salaries, free board for teachers was furnished them by the patrons of the school and Mary Ann had six children to educate. In fact the school house was on their property. How convenient for the children.

Mary Ann and her husband did well after they moved to Flora. The hardware store prospered and Robert bought many acres of land besides becoming the director of the bank. Unfortunately her husband died in 1879 and Mary Ann, at 63, with the other owner took over running the business. Imagine not only in 1879 was it unusual for a woman to take over a business, but at the age of 63 it was amazing. However, since her three sons had been clerks at one time or another in the store, they bought out the



other partner and then Mary Ann retired. Our brother was James Durland and the other two were Maurice and William. They divided up the buying, selling, and managing and it went well and flourished.



This is a picture of their house in Flora. As you can see, Mary Ann and Robert are on the porch watching their children and grandchildren playing in the yard.

Mary Ann lived a long life with her children all around her. She died in 1907 at the age of 91, a wonderful example for us to remember and a blessing to have had in our family, and a fitting ancestor to close the stories of all the grandmothers whose names we don't often think about. They added so much. We are all the sums of those who have gone before us.



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