

A Journey of Voices

Stewards of the Land

Diane McAdams Gladow

Cover image: Philip Crume's land in the Shenandoah Valley, Virginia. Photo by Dean Gladow.

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Note: Please use the generation charts at the back of the book beginning on page 300 to clarify the names of individuals and their families as you are reading.

1 Introduction

"Gladys Prune, Gladys Prune," my mother was mimicking some kid from her childhood in a high, sing-song voice. When she was young, Mom was not too happy with her family name. Crume was a fine, Scottish-Irish name with a rich history, but it was too easy to rhyme it with something unfortunate or misspell it to make it Crumb. She had to endure many teasing incidents as a kid.

Hesitant to comment much for fear of encouraging my mom to start talking about our family history, I ventured to ask a question, "How did you handle the teasing?"

Mom quickly replied, "I mostly tried to ignore it. It was either that or smack that kid every time he opened his mouth."

"When did you change your mind about your name?" I was curious enough for the moment to ask.

"Well, of course, my name changed when I married your dad, but before that when I started teaching, respect for my name was expected. Also, my parents, your grandparents, were always respected members of the community, so when I became an adult, I took my place beside them. I really became proud of the name after I started researching it."

My mother's research into the family was very familiar to me by this time, and this was why I hesitated to get my mother started talking about family and the past. At my young age, her enthusiasm had not yet captured my imagination. Her research had begun with the opening of an old, weathered, hump-backed trunk and the discovery of the Crume family treasures, including old letters, pictures, and artifacts saved and passed down through the generations. Related to the Crumes were the Jordans, Fergusons, Withers, Lincolns and other families who had

immigrated to America from the British Isles – Scotland, Ireland, England, and Wales. Upon reaching the new world, they grouped themselves together with other families from the home countries, their children married the other families' children, and they spread out across America together, mostly seeking a better life on new land. The names of America's cities and towns, mountains, rivers, and lakes reflect the large number of cultures that came together in America, including the native peoples who were already present when the "new people" arrived. Those names tell their own story about where people chose to live in this vast land, rich in opportunity.

As a child of a mother on a quest, I had already become accustomed to seeing trunk treasures scattered about: a Civil War vintage letter lying on the dining room table ready to be transcribed, an old "last" used for constructing shoes during the Civil War serving as a door stop, and genealogical records and old pictures in piles covering the dining room desk. However, of all the objects preserved in the old trunk, the pliers used to pull teeth fascinated me the most. Old family stories related that the pliers had been used by ancestor land owners to "cure" their workers' toothaches. The pliers had most likely belonged to my great grandfather Crume. In addition, antiquated eyeglasses and pipes, straight razors, watch chains, Bibles, school books and slates, and even a paint set became familiar objects to charge the imagination.

Mother tried her best to get me interested in her research project and in the old family treasures, but it just didn't happen to any great degree until much later when finally my curiosity and love of history pushed me into picking up where my mother had left off in her research. Shining light on my family's past was my heritage, and it could only be delayed so long. After my mother died, my father brought me the old trunk, and my fate was sealed. I was to be the next "keeper" and researcher. My brother and father also got involved, traveling around the United States and even to the British Isles, collecting information, especially concerning my father's side of the family. I also did some traveling and collecting of records, but my greatest interest was in the letters and old papers found in the trunk. Many were not in

very good condition – mouse-chewed, faded, the handwriting barely legible, not to mention the fact that the spelling and sentence structure belonged to an earlier time. But the voices I discovered in the old letters called to me, and my desire to know the people behind the voices grew as I read and transcribed the letters.

My grandmother, Lanora Belle Ferguson Crume, had not been born a Crume but had married into the Crume family, making her a Crume for most of her adult life. She began to learn about the family even before she married into it because her father, John T. Ferguson, had married a second time late in life and to a much younger woman, Ada Belle Crume, the sister of the man Lanora was later to marry. Her stepmother became also her sister-in-law! In visiting with the Crumes before her marriage and after, Nora, as she was known, discovered that her husband came from a family with a rich history, but it did not occur to her to delve very deeply into the family's past. In those days, most people were too busy to worry about what happened years before their time. However, Nora carried into her marriage an old trunk full of Ferguson and Jordan keepsakes, and to this collection she added many Crume letters, documents, and pictures. As a result of her doing this, her voice became an important one in my journey to discover more about my family. Before I could do this, I, as my mother had done before me, had to go backwards in time nearly to the beginnings of America when the first Crume arrived on the east coast of the “new world,” possibly between 1700 and 1715. Mother's research, her quest, had found what was then known about this man as well as the others in her long Crume line.

"Mom, just last week I was studying about the first settlers to come to America. Do you suppose that our Crume ancestors were like them?"

"Our ancestors were not among the first settlers to arrive in this country, and so when they came, they had some assurance that the American colonies had developed some semi-civilized towns and settlements. They didn't have to be totally fearless as the first settlers were. I cannot even imagine what courage it took for those people to cross the Atlantic, not knowing what they

would find at the end of their journey if they could even complete the journey," Mom enthused. She always liked to encourage her children's interest in history. "Our family came by ship to the settlements on America's eastern shore, fortified themselves, and then moved out to the land that they were seeking which eventually turned out to be in Virginia's wilderness country. They were farmers, stewards of the land, and finding good land for this occupation was their ultimate goal."

"Do you think that they knew what they would find and that they would be successful?" I asked one final question.

"I think they knew what they wanted, and with God's help, some luck, and their own hard work, they felt they could build a life for themselves, a life on the land. They must have asked themselves, 'What more could we want?' They didn't lack courage or determination, and their success was in their own hands."

The Immigrant to America

A man, merely a dark silhouette, stood at the rail of a ship that was fast making its way towards its destination. The bright light from the moon revealed quiet seas, nothing but water for as far as the eye could see. Although the breeze was brisk but not fiercely cold, the man had thought to bundle himself in an outer coat which swirled around him, rather like large wings. The only sounds to be heard were the rushing water and the flapping sails as the ship made its way onward -- and occasionally, a shout from one of the sailors manning the ship. A few tendrils of fog were enshrouding the ship, occasionally blocking out the multitude of stars and the moon, giving an eerie, somewhat lonely feeling to the night. The man was without a doubt thinking of the future and what lay ahead at the end of his journey across the seemingly endless ocean. He had left his home in the British Isles behind and was risking everything, including perhaps his present or future family, on the promise of a new land and a new start. Had he made a mistake? It was too late to worry about that now. Instead, a small shiver of excitement ran down his spine when he thought about what lay ahead.

"New is the right word," he thought as he stood at the ship's rail, "and it is a good word, full of hope for all that the future might hold." There was nothing to stop him but his own fear or lack of ambition and hard work. Those things were not going to be a problem. As he stood watching the water pass by the ship as it hurried on its way, he felt strong and capable and ready to get started. A Crume was coming to the American colonies in the new world. And thus it began for him as it had begun for

countless others – on a ship surging towards a new future in a new land.

The family stories and traditions concerning Daniel Crume, the most likely first Crume man to come to America's shores, are varied, but actually very little is known conclusively about him and his origins. What is known is that a Daniel Crume was married to Elizabeth Brooks either in the British Isles or in Virginia and had at least one son, Philip, born on August 9, 1724, in Virginia. Many years later Philip Crume listed in his family Bible his parents' names, Daniel and Elizabeth Brooks Crume. Other than these facts, many theories exist which have been developed over the years by various researchers and family members with little or no factual evidence or sources provided to support them.

According to some, Daniel was supposedly born September 1, 1680, in Scotland, the son of Daniel Croom, known as "the old." Other researchers have proposed that the elder Daniel was the immigrant to the colonies, bringing with him his three sons, one of whom was Daniel born in 1680. One account has Daniel, the immigrant, as an ambassador from the king on official business in America, and another account says that he came to America to fight in the Indian wars. Many believe Daniel sailed from Edinburgh and originated from Kilmonarch, Scotland. Others propose he may have come from Ireland or England and perhaps have come to America by way of Barbados. Two members of the Crum family, Henry and Lucinda Crum Coger, lived in the same counties as Daniel's son Philip and could be related, but again, no evidence has been found to confirm this. Other relationships to people living in Philip's time period in Virginia have been pursued, including a DNA link to a Daniel Croome in Henrico County, but thus far, nothing has been proven. It is even possible that Philip as a young man was the immigrant to America and his father Daniel never left the British Isles.

A long-held story in the family concerning Daniel's death says that he left the colonies to return to Scotland to settle an estate and was lost at sea, leaving his family in America to continue on without him. If this occurred, it would have been

after 1724 when his son Philip was born. Another version of this story has Daniel's father, "the old," being the one who returned to the old country. Still another version of this story has Daniel with twenty-eight children immigrating from Scotland in 1702 with fourteen of them. When he returned to Scotland to retrieve the other fourteen, he was lost at sea, leaving Philip in charge of the children in America.

No family accounts have been found which were written by either Philip or his children or grandchildren who would have possibly known Philip's background. Philip's grandson, Jesse, wrote a diary late in his life, but other than the parental relationship between Philip and Daniel, nothing about the early family was recorded there. Someone else, in a different handwriting, added to the diary his or her theory about the early Crume history. This could have happened much later than the date of the diary, and the researcher did not provide sources or evidence for what he or she wrote. Furthermore, very few public records in Virginia exist which would be old enough to provide proof of the immigrant's identity or whereabouts, because of fires of one kind or another in the county courthouses over the years. Daniel Crume, therefore, remains a figure of mystery, but his place in family lore as the immigrant to America, or one of the immigrants along with his father, seems firm. If nothing else, he stands as the symbol and embodiment of the courage and conviction that brought the Crume family to this country. In every Crume descendant's imagination, he was the man who stood by the ship's rail, listening to the call of a new land and resolving to grasp his future with both fists.