

*Genealogical Notes***THE CRONIN FAMILY***By Jon Harlan Livezey***Introduction**

Harford County's Cronin family, although not among the largest or oldest in the region, has in a few generations produced a number of individuals influential in their home base of Aberdeen and the larger Maryland community. This article is an attempt to identify the adult persons of the name who remained in the Maryland area (exclusive of the youngest generations) and to set out their relationships and summarize their personal history. Much of the data cited here was collected by Elizabeth Cronin Prevas and Nancy Cronin Osborn or taken from the clipping files of the Maryland Historical Society and the Historical Society of Harford County's Genealogical Library, as supplemented by records on file in the Harford County courthouse. Citations have been eliminated in line with the nature of this type of presentation, but are available from the compiler. Superscript numbers indicating the generation in Harford County to which the individual belongs have been employed for clarity.

The surname in its full Irish form - O'Cronin - means descendent of someone whose single given name was the Irish Gaelic equivalent of Cronin, a descriptive name meaning brown or swarthy.

This article concerns the descendants of **William Cronin**, an Irishman who married a member of a well-established local family. There have been a few Cronins in Harford County who were not members of William's family. In the 19th century, **Patrick Cronin** (ca. 1846-1862), said to have been born in County Cork, and listed in the census as deaf and dumb, is buried in St. Ignatius Cemetery at Hickory. They had two daughters, Catherine (b. ca. 1853), who married Jeremiah Callahan, and Mary, who married John Armstrong. In the middle of this century, a local girl, Mary Rolfe James (sister of Sen. William S. James) married **Henry Joseph Laurence Cronin** (d. 1965) of Massachusetts, a career army officer, and they had sons Henry, Jr., and John Rolfe and a daughter Charlotte Ashton. In recent years, there have been other Cronins among the numerous families who came to the area in military service or have joined the suburban growth in the county, but they are not within the scope of this article.

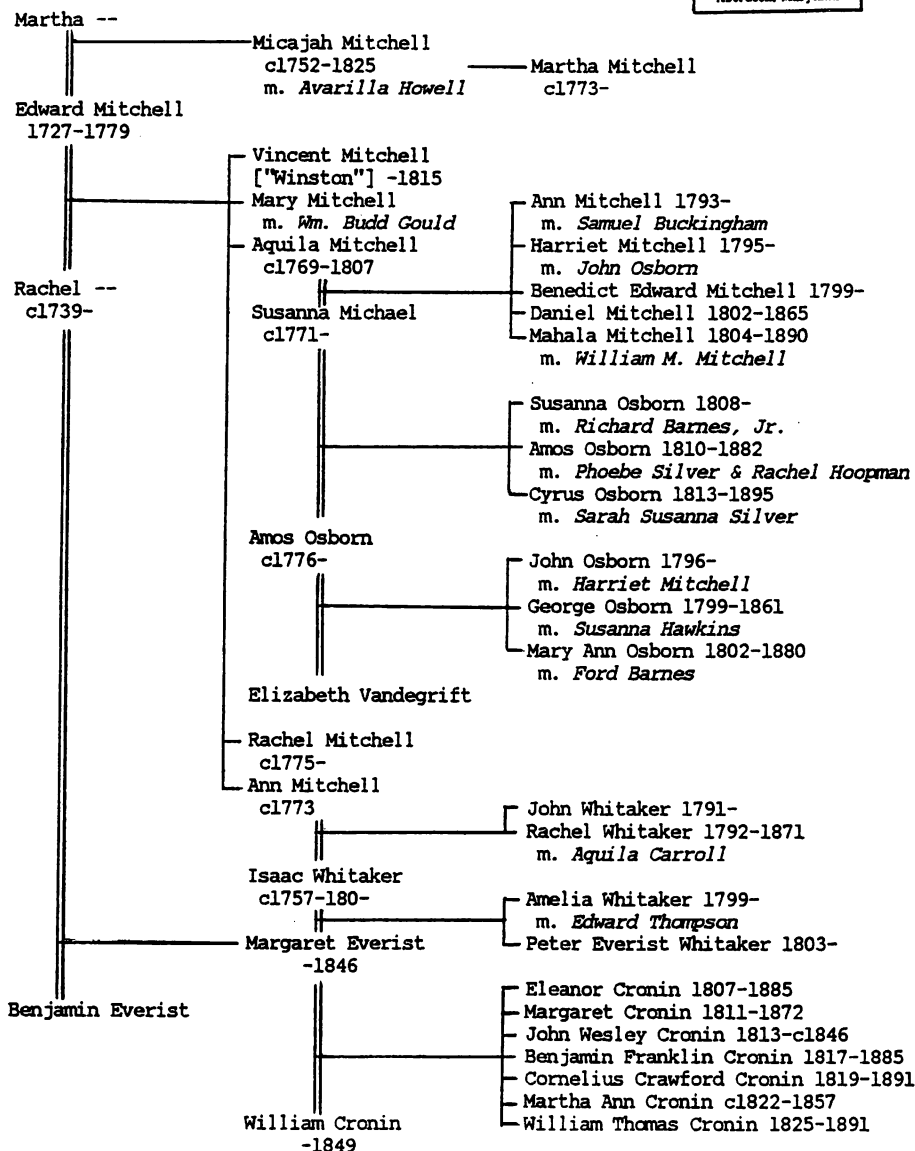


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### *First and Second Generations*

**William<sup>1</sup> Cronin** (? - 1849) married in 1806 Margaret (Everist) Whitaker (? - 1846), a widow with two children and two stepchildren (see accompanying chart for familial connections). Her family property, part of the *Royal Exchange* tract off Paradise Road where it crosses Swan Creek, now in the city limits of Aberdeen, became the Cronin homestead. They had seven children who grew to adulthood, including three maiden ladies (there have been quite a few Misses Cronin, often long-lived, in the family). The daughters, buried in Grove Presbyterian Cemetery, were Eleanor/Ellen (1807-1885), Margaret (1811-1872), and Martha Ann (ca. 1822-1857). The four sons, discussed hereafter, were John Wesley, Benjamin Franklin, Cornelius Crawford, and William Thomas.

### *Second and Third Generations*

(Rev.) **John Wesley<sup>2</sup> Cronin** (1813-?1846) was a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Harford County and later on the Shrewsbury Circuit and in Carroll County. He married Sarah Augusta Michener (ca. 1821-1857) in 1840 and had three daughters: Margaret Rebecca (b. 1841; m. L. Wesley Ayars), Mary Ellen (b. 1844; m. Charles T. Saulsby), and Sarah Wesley (1845-1857). The widow and two younger daughters are buried in Salem Methodist Cemetery, Lower Chanceford Township, York County, Pennsylvania.

**Benjamin Franklin<sup>2</sup> Cronin** (1817-1885) farmed the homeplace at Aberdeen. He was one of the organizing members of the Methodist Episcopal Church South in Aberdeen in 1866. In 1846, he married Sarah Elizabeth Courtney (1820-1899). They had eight children: John Wesley (1846-1870), Benjamin Franklin, Jr., of whom further, Katherine (b. 1850; m. Zachery Taylor Gilbert), Adla Augusta (b. 1852; m. Edward Hall Bradford), Cyrus Courtney, of whom further, Fannie Belle (1856-1954), Emily Courtney (1859-1941), and William Hays, of whom further.

(Rev.) **Cornelius Crawford<sup>2</sup> Cronin** (1819-1891) was a Methodist Episcopal minister, first to black congregations in Anne Arundel County and Baltimore, and in later years in Harford County including the Aberdeen Circuit. He married Ann E. (last name unknown) (?-1901). His only son Emory P. (d. 1890) died a year before he did. He was survived by his widow and daughter. He and members of his family were buried at Mr. Olivet Cemetery, Baltimore.

**William Thomas<sup>2</sup> Cronin** (1825-1891), a cooper in 1850, farmed in the Perryman area. In 1857, he married Elizabeth Hoopman (1828-1918), daughter of the Rev. Jacob Hoopman of the Methodist Protestant Church. They had four children: Kate Augusta (1857-1858), Robert Clinton, of whom further, Ella Virginia (1862-1957), and Thomas Arthur, of whom further. This family is interred in Spesutia Cemetery, Perryman.

### Third and Fourth Generations

**Benjamin Franklin<sup>3</sup> Cronin, Jr.** (1848-1930), known as "Frank," farmed in the Wilna area. In 1875, he married Lydia A. Hopkins (1847-1929). They had three sons: Walter Harris (b. 1876) who married Susanna Cordelia Jones (1878-1943) in 1903 and lived in Baltimore; Frank Howard (1878-1949), who lived in Kennett Square and northern Delaware, and married in 1909 Mary Ethel Page, who died in childbirth in 1910 with their son, and then Helen Fry; and Randall Cornelius, of whom further. Frank and Lydia are buried at Cokesbury.

**Cyrus Courtney<sup>3</sup> Cronin** (1854-1929) married his first wife Sarah Rebecca Smith (1856-1890) of Churchville in 1883 and they had five children, the last of whom was only two weeks old when her mother died. The children were Clifford Courtney (1884-1898), Carrie Smith (1885-1908), Florence Hanna (1887-1973), William Franklin (1888-1889), and Sarah Helen (1890-1991). Florence and (Sarah) Helen, who lived in Aberdeen, were long-time teachers in the Harford County school system, and were among the organizers of the Aberdeen Bible (now Bible Baptist) Church. In 1901, Cyrus married Charlotte Christina Kriete (1857-1945), older sister of Dr. Charles H. Kriete of Aberdeen. They had one child, Sadie Scott (1902-1903). This family was buried at Cokesbury Methodist Cemetery, Abingdon.

**William Hays<sup>3</sup> Cronin** (1862-1930) lived his life on the *Royal Exchange Farm*, and died there from an attack of a bull. In 1895, he married Clarice Lorine Smith (1866-1958), whose sister had married William's brother Cyrus. They had nine children, six sons who are discussed hereafter: John Wilmer, George Harold, Richard Franklin, William Bertram, Cyrus Courtney, and Norman Paul, and three daughters: Margaret Cassandra (Mrs. Marvin D. Umbarger), Anne Elizabeth (Mrs. James Prevas), and Virginia Smith (Mrs. Harry W. Burruss). William and Clarice were interred in Grove Cemetery.

**Robert Clinton<sup>3</sup> Cronin** (1860-1927) ("Clinton") lived at Perryman, where he and his wife, Mary Catherine ("Mollie") Gallup (1865-1952) (m. 1884) had two sons: Edgar Leigh and Robert Clinton, Jr., of whom further.

[Dr.] **Thomas Arthur<sup>3</sup> Cronin** (1869-1963) ("Arthur") was Aberdeen's first dentist and was, with Dr. Eugene Dell, co-founder of its oldest pharmacy. In 1912, he married Jessie May Baker (1878-1931), daughter of Congressman William B. Baker. They had two sons: William Baker and Lewis Eugene, of whom further.

### Fourth and Fifth Generations

**Randall Cornelius<sup>4</sup> Cronin** (1883-1974) was a civil engineer in Colorado before returning to Harford County where he was on the staff of the State Roads

Commission. He married a Nebraska native, Grace Leslie Baker (1887-1979) and they had four children: three sons, Cornelius Farnham, Frank Harford, and Randall Courtney, of whom further, and a daughter Maryland (now Mrs. John Passwater).

**John Wilmer<sup>4</sup> Cronin** (1895-1982) ("Wilmer") who has been honored by the installation of his portrait in the Harford County courthouse among distinguished local citizens, was a long-time lawyer in the town of Aberdeen, which he served as commissioner and honorary mayor. He was editor and publisher of the *Harford Democrat*, a delegate and state senator, and a political leader in the Democratic party. He and his wife, Mary Sigourney Farrell (1894-1972), for many years a member of the state board of education, had three children, Mary Elizabeth (Mrs. Harry B. Wolfe) (their son Christopher A. Wolfe is a leading member of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra), William Royall, of whom further, and Anne Lorine (Mrs. Francis L. Keith).

**George Harold<sup>4</sup> Cronin** ("Harold") was a career officer in the U.S. Air Force. He and his wife Cordia Gereau Windsor had four children: Anne Elizabeth (Mrs. Jerold C. Jayne), Virginia Smith, George Harold, and Margaret Cassandra.

**Richard Franklin<sup>4</sup> Cronin** (1899-1989) ("Dick") lived on the home farm and was employed at Aberdeen Proving Ground. He authored histories of Aberdeen and of Grace Methodist Church. He and his wife Laura Maxwell Hanway had a son Richard Franklin (1928-1930) and three daughters: Marian Clarice (Mrs. Henry J. Sandlas, III), Patricia Hays (Mrs. Harold E. King, Jr.) and Sara Hanway (Mrs. Albert P. Rudder, Jr.).

**William Bertram<sup>4</sup> Cronin** (1901-1953) ("Bert"), an engineer, for many years lived in Colorado. He married Georgia Margaret Boroughs and they had two sons, William Bertram and John Robert.

**Cyrus Courtney<sup>4</sup> Cronin** Operated a coal business in Aberdeen. He married Sarah Mildred Coale (1911-1983) and they had three children: David Courtney who married Linda Lee Smires, Mildred Lorine (Mrs. Daniel J. Hickey), and Molly Anna (now Mrs. Joseph Alfred Kelly).

**Norman Paul<sup>4</sup> Cronin** ("Paul"), like his older brother Wilmer, practiced law in Aberdeen for many years. He was a trial magistrate and real estate broker and investor. He married Anne Elizabeth Kent and they have two daughters, Carol Kent and Mary Jane (formerly Mrs. Budnick).

**Edgar Leigh<sup>4</sup> Cronin** (1885-1973) ("Lee") was an accountant in New York and retired in Aberdeen. He married Margaret Rebecca Stewart (?-1966) and later her niece, Margaret Stewart Wicks. There were no children.

**Robert Clinton<sup>4</sup> Cronin, Jr.** (1894-1982) ("Bob") married Ethel Bernshouse (1894-1984) of Hammondton, New Jersey [whose mother had been a Taylor from Perryman]. They had four children: Nancy Leigh (Mrs. J. Grafton Osborn) [their daughter Barbara Osborn Kreamer served on the Harford County Council and in the House of Delegates], Mary Rosabelle (Mrs. Eric G. Flannagan, Jr.) of Henderson, N.C., Robert Barrington of Moline, Illinois, and Helen Christine (Mrs. Robert E. Snyder) of Wilmington.

**William Baker<sup>4</sup> Cronin** ("Bill") resides in Annapolis. His wife, Dorothy Anne Wells (?-1991) had two children: Thomas Wells and Wendy Anne, the latter who has been a medical technician working in Nepal with the Dooley Foundation.

[Dr.] **Lewis Eugene<sup>4</sup> Cronin** ("Gene") began his science career as a biology teacher at Bel Air High School, and after graduate work at the University of Maryland, was a biologist at the Chesapeake Laboratory, during which time he earned a Ph.D. He subsequently was director of the Marine Lab at the University of Delaware, and in 1955 became the head of the Chesapeake Biological Laboratories at Solomons. He married Alice Angeline Weber and they have three sons: John Arthur, David Weber, and Lewis Eugene.

### ***Fifth and Sixth Generations***

**Cornelius Farnham<sup>5</sup> Cronin** ("Corny") of Bel Air was a partner in Cronin & Archer, a concrete block business and later was president of the Commercial and Savings Bank of Bel Air. He married Elizabeth Lee Irwin and they had five children: Mayfield Leslie (now Mrs. Joseph D. Reedy), Cornelius Charles (1945-1951), Wendell Lee (Mrs. James Dennis Smith), Elizabeth Lyle (Mrs. Patrick J. Barrett), and Meredith (Mrs. Stephen M. McKeon).

**Frank Harford<sup>5</sup> Cronin** was a natural athlete in contact sports at the University of Maryland and was an officer in World War II before becoming assistant boxing coach at the university, where for many years he was the golf coach. He married Eva Sue Irwin and they had three sons, Frank Harford, Craig Irwin and Scott Allen.

**Randall Courtney<sup>5</sup> Cronin** married Adeline Rosalie Moseburg and lived in Pennsylvania. They had three children: [Dr.] Randall Courtney, Alinda Mae (Mrs. E. Bevan Stanley), and William Cornelius.

**William Royall<sup>5</sup> Cronin** is a member of the bar and was for many years one of the editors of his father's newspapers. A past president of Md-Del-DC Press Association, he married Charlotte Virginia Garretson, who is curator of the Aberdeen Room, and they had a son John Garretson, now with the Naval Institute Press in Annapolis, and a daughter Cheryl Marie, a health educator (wife of Dr. Dean Levitan).

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Charlotte Garretson Cronin** lives in the Aberdeen area of Harford County where her ancestors settled in the seventeenth century. She is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, did graduate work at Johns Hopkins University, worked at the Ballistic Research Laboratory and is founder and curator of the Aberdeen Room Archives and Museum. She is on the Board of Directors of the Historical Society and writes about historical subjects as a columnist in Harford County.

**Dr. Lewis Eugene Cronin** grew up in Aberdeen as the son of the first Aberdeen dentist and pharmacy owner. He began his career as a biology teacher in Bel Air High School, and after receiving his Ph.D. at the University of Maryland, he was the Director of the Marine Laboratory at the University of Delaware, and later became head of the Chesapeake Biological Laboratory at Solomons. He lives in the Annapolis area, and has written extensively.

**John Harlan Livezey** lives, and is an attorney, in Aberdeen. A graduate of Johns Hopkins University and the University of Maryland Law School, he is a past president of the Harford County Historical Society. The initiator of the Harford Historical Bulletin, he was also the founder of the Harford Genealogical Society and periodically contributes informal articles on local genealogy to the Bulletin. He has been researching area families for many years.

**George B. Prettyman, Sr.** is a graduate of the University of Delaware and lives in Zion, Cecil County and has written extensively. He was a teacher, an assistant principal at Aberdeen High School, and retired as Public Relations Director for the Harford County Board of Education. He is an avid baseball enthusiast which is reflected in his weekly newspaper columns.

**James T. Wollon**, a restoration architect from the Havre de Grace area, is a regular contributor whose last article was in the Summer 1992 issue of the Bulletin.