

8 March 1914

My Dear Niece:

I was very much surprised at the receipt of your letter of inquiry regarding the Crother family. It is a laudable desire to know something of your ancestors but I may say that I know very little more than you do-- the name Crother was abridged by your grandfather from the English spelling of the name which was Crowther, why, I don't know.; I simply follow his example in writing it. Croter.

In the early days in England an instrument of music called a "Crowth" was used. It was similar to a violin-- Players on the instrument were termed "Crowthers" which I believe gave rise to the name. In those days, when scarcely one man out of a thousand could read or write it must have required rather more intellectual ability to master such an instrument than the great majority possessed--

I never saw my grandfather Crowther. He was a soldier under Lord Hill in the Peninsular War in Spain, was in some 20 battles and survived to be discharged, on the expiration of his enlistment, in Clonmel, County Tipperary, Ireland. While in Clonmel he married an Irish girl by the name of Catherine O'Neal. He took her with him to his native town of Todmorden in the County of Lancashire, England.

They had five children, my father, your grandfather, was the eldest, then uncles William, Eli, Edwin and one daughter, Elizabeth--Grandmother Kittly O'Neal had a wearisome time among Grandfather's relatives and the people of Todmorden on account of her Irish birth and the fact that she had been brought up a Roman Catholic in religion. They were a rough, ignorant people in that day and I have heard my father say that before he was born, when his mother was carrying him, she had been refused admittance to the house of relatives there to the use of force by kicks to drive her away intimidating her to the result of affecting Grandfather's character for courage.--the boys had to fight their way among the English boys because they were looked down upon on account of being considered "half Irish" which was cause enough at that day to start a fight at any time or any place in England--Grandfather Philp (after whom I was named) was granted a pension and quarterly used to walk nine miles to Rochdale to draw his pension--his wife Kitty accompanied him--The first railway (canal? HSB) was being built. A Tunnel was being made between Rochdale And Todmorden some four or five miles long through a lonesome section of the country along which G'father & G'Mother had to walk--G'father stopped, told his wife to go on and he would overtake her--He was never again seen alive.--Some twenty years after, a man, on his deathbed, confessed that he and another man were engaged in unloading dirt drawn up through the tunnel had struck Grandfather with some instrument and robbed him for his little pension--They threw him on the dump and unloaded a carload of earth on top of him. This is what I have heard my father tell. Farther back than Grandfather I can not go. Uncles William, Eli and Edwin and Aunt Elizabeth are all dead. I am the oldest of the Vrowther family now living, three score & ten years old, not much longer to tarry here-----

If ever you visit California and will call on us we shall be very glad to meet you.
From your uncle, Philip Crother, 222 W. Islay St, Santa Barbara, California