

A Long Line of John Cornwall/Cornell's - 1652-1814

The Cornwall name is difficult to follow as it is spelled in various ways and the name John is repeated many times. Through Danbury Connecticut researcher, I have tried to piece together the generations since coming to North America from Wales. The following is what I have surmised.

Danbury Connecticut Museum researcher, Diane Hussan, located the following website that gave a lot of information on the Cornwall/Cornell/Cornwell family: Find My Past. This site shows **John Cornell (b 1652** in Hamstead, Long Island City, Queens, New York d 1753 in Danbury CT). He first married Experience Cole (b 1667 in Mass. d before 16 Aug. 1711 in Bristol, Mass) in 1684 in Middlesex, Mass. and second, **married Mary Starr, (b 1670** in Massachusetts, d 1747 in Danbury CT) in 1689 in New York. (His first wife went on to marry John Williams in 1695.) John died in 1753, in Danbury CT at the age of 101. The History of Danbury Connecticut 1684-1896 book states that he is one of two men known for their longevity. John and Mary had one son, named **John Cornell (b circa 1692; d 23 April 1746)** and six daughters, with various maiden names: Cornell, Cornwell and Cornwall. The daughters listed are: Abigail Cornell (b circa 1691 d after 22 Jan. 1759), Sarah Cornwell (born circa 1692 in New Haven CT), Rebecca Cornell (b circa 1697 d Apr 1739), Deborah Cornell (b 1686 d 1766), Mary Cornwall (b 25 Aug 1700 d 1740), and Hannah (b circa 1701 d 31 Dec. 1739). This John Cornell (1652-1753) would be the 2nd Gr Grandfather of my Loyalist ancestor, John Cornwall. He would then be **my 8th Gr Grandfather**.

John Cornell (circa 1692-1746) married Abiah Wheeler (circa 1693-1743) on 27 December 1727 in Middletown, Middlesex, CT. They had a large family and many of the children died in infancy. Again their surnames differed: Cornwall/Cornell/Cornwell and three of them were named "John". Captain John Cornwall was the first child born to John Cornell and Abiah Wheeler. He is listed as being born circa 1727 and died January 17, 1792, in Danbury CT. His father, John Cornell would be the 1st Gr Grandfather of my Loyalist ancestor, John Cornwall and **my 7th Gr Grandfather**.

The children born to John Cornell and Abiah Wheeler are as follows: **1 Capt John Cornwall (born circa 1727 died 17 January 1792)**, Cornwall (male child born circa 1728), John Cornwell (b 29 March 1729), Mary Cornwall (b circa 1735), Cornwall (male child born circa 1730), Sarah Cornwell (b 20 June 1731), Cornwall (male child born circa 1732), Abijah Cornwell (b 27 October 1733), Abijah Cornwall (b 21 December 1735), Cornwall (male child born circa 1738), Thomas Cornwall (b 13 April 1740)), Samuel Cornwall (b 14 September 1742), and finally John Cornwall (b 23 January 1746). All the children were born in Middletown, Middlesex, CT.

Captain John Cornwall was b 1727; d January 17, 1792 married Hannah Knapp. This John would then be **my 6th Gr Grandfather** and he would be 22 at the time his son, **John, my Loyalist ancestor and my 5th Gr. Grandfather was born**. Danbury researcher, Dianne Hassan thinks that the captaincy may have come from participation in the French Indian War (1754-1763).

Captain John Cornwall and Hannah Knapp had ten children. They are listed as: Abiah (b 1766, m Stephen Brush), John Jr. (m Mary Benedict), Francis (m Elizabeth Hoyt), Betty (m Eli Hoyt), Mary Starr (m Benjamin Gilbert), Sarah (m Ithiel Starr) and Lurana (m Samuel Taylor). Cited from Family File John Cornwall, Danbury Connecticut Museum.

The Cornwall family is of British ancestry. The Essex County Biographical states that they came from Wales. **My 5th Gr. Grandfather, John Cornwall (1748-1814)** was born and raised in Danbury,

Connecticut. He lived in a mansion, with substantial property, as a well-established gentleman. The Cornwall family had lived in Danbury CT for four generations prior to the American Revolutionary War.

John and his wife, Mary Benedict had four children, three sons and a daughter, Mary, who married William McCormick, the first European resident of Pelee Island. It is interesting to note that Pelee Island was first leased to Thomas McKee for 999 years, renewable from the Chippewas and the Ottawas, May 1, 1788. Cited from Ernest J. Lajeuness, C.S.B., *The Windsor Border Region: Canada's Southernmost Frontier – A Collection of Documents*. William McCormick and Sarah Cornwall McCormick settled permanently on the island in 1834. Cited from Pelee Island Heritage Museum site.

Since John Cornwall always attached himself to the Royal cause, he and his family were under suspicion and scrutiny from the Rebels. After continual persecution, he left Connecticut on May 2, 1776 for New York, to join one of the King's regiments. On his way, he was apprehended by the Rebels and thrown into prison at Esopus, in one of the floating jail ships, for five months. He then escaped and made his way to Albany that summer.

In May 1777 he joined fellow Loyalist, Peter Ball and the two of them led thirty-two strong men through the wilderness to Lieutenant John Butler, who was on the Susquehanna River. John Cornwall served as a sergeant that summer and winter under Captain John McDonald. In January he took the express to Detroit, where he resided until the conclusion of the war. Cited from Valley of the Lower Thames 1640-1850, University of Toronto Press.

John Cornwall received Lot 97 of the New Settlement, beginning in 1786, though these lands weren't officially granted until 1792 after the lengthy official survey by Patrick McNiff. By 1789 Cornwall had developed much of this land and sold it to John Sparkman July 23, 1789 for 209 pounds N.Y currency. The sale included a "dwelling house, one stable, crop, stock and utensils. Itemized account: 5 acres of corn planted; one acre of potatoes; one acre of turnips; 4 axes; 2 hoes; 8 pewter dishes; one tea kettle. One year-old steer; 30 hogs; one bateau; one rifle gun." Cited from Ernest J. Lajeuness, C.S.B., *The Windsor Border Region: Canada's Southernmost Frontier – A Collection of Documents*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press.

Meanwhile Mary and the four children had been driven from their home, with only the clothes on their backs. They lived with Mary's sister until the end of the war. The family joined with John in 1797, after a separation of twenty-one years.

John Cornwall was a farmer and a politician. **He succeeded Francois Baby as the legislative representative of Suffolk and Essex Counties in 1797 at John Graves Simcoe's second parliament at Newark (Niagara-on-the-lake).** His signature can be seen on the paper that documents this historic meeting. He served during the **2nd parliament of Upper Canada** that was in session from 1797-1800. John Cornwall was also the Justice of the Peace for the Western District. Cited from Project Gutenberg site.

John Cornwall's son **Joshua, my 4th Gr Grandfather** followed his father's footsteps as **a parliamentarian in Upper Canada's 7th parliament** (1817-1820), representing the County of Kent. Joshua was also a farmer and a miller. His son Nathan also served as a parliamentarian in the 13th parliament of Upper Canada (1836-1840) for Kent County. Cited from Wikipedia – Parliament of Canada sites.

Ruth Nicholson

Sources :

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Danbury Connecticut Museum, *research by Diane Hussan, 2014*

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