# Crossett Hill Cemetery Duxbury, Washington County, Vermont



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# The Crossett Hill Cemetery, Duxbury Vermont

#### Introduction

The Crossett Hill Cemetery is a mid to late  $19^{th}$  century burial ground located on a rise southwest of the intersection of Devlin Road and Hayes Road in Duxbury, Washington County, Vermont (Figure 1). The cemetery is about .28 acre (1120m sq) in size and is delineated by a fieldstone wall (Figure 2). The stonewall surrounding the cemetery is about .5 m (1.6 ft) wide and varies in height from .4m (1.3 ft) to about 1.5 m (4.9 ft) (Figure 3). The wall is fairly short in the southwestern section but where the landform drops off quickly, on the eastern and northern sides on the cemetery the stonewall is built into the side of the hill with the top of the wall flush with the cemetery's ground surface. Several large white pine trees have grown up within the cemetery probably since the late  $19^{th}$  century.

The Crossett Hill Cemetery is primarily a family cemetery. Most of the nineteen known interments, made between 1853 and 1895, were members of Roswell Crossett's family. At least fourteen members of this family were buried in the eastern section of the cemetery. Probably all of the family members originally had headstones, although most of them are now broken and somewhat scattered. A few other burials, non-family members, were placed in the western section of the cemetery. At least two individuals there had regular headstones. In addition, there are five small, unmarked stones (approximately 47x15x5cm or 18.5x6x2 in) in this section of the cemetery. As of 2003, two of these small unmarked stones had fallen over or had otherwise been displaced from their original location. At first glance, these stones appear to be footstones rather than headstones (Figure 4), but such an assumption could prove to be inaccurate. Several similar stones were located in the eastern part of the cemetery near the existing headstones (see Figure2).

Table 1 presents a list of the known burials in the Crossett Hill Cemetery. The table combines information from five sources: stones existing in 2003; a list of stones made by Mrs. John Devlin, a neighbor, in 1979 and provided to this study by a Crossett family descendant, Mr. John Mears; a short list of stones decorated in Duxbury for Memorial Day in May of 1897; the State of Vermont's Vital Records, and local informants. However, it is believed that there are more burials actually within the cemetery. Indeed, a number of long time residents believe that there was, at one time, more standing stones. Furthermore, there is some circumstantial documentary evidence for three to five additional burials and there is always the possibility of completely unrecorded and unmarked burials.

#### **Brief History of Duxbury**

Duxbury is a rather mountainous town that lies on the northeastern side of Camels Hump, the second tallest mountain in the state (1,277m/4,188ft). The Winooski River, an important east-west corridor through the Green Mountains, borders the town on the north. New Hampshire's Governor, Benning Wentworth, granted Duxbury to investors mostly from Newark, New Jersey, in 1763. The town was first settled in 1786 (Child 1889:243, 247). Most of the upland soil, including the area of the cemetery, is derived from glacial till and is quite rocky. Only about one half of the town is suitable for cultivation. The tillable land is restricted to the Winooski River Valley and the more moderate slopes stretching away from several brooks including; Ridley, Crossett, Welder, Munson and Dowsville Brooks (Child 1889:246). By 1830, the town's population broke 500 (at 652) and thirty years later, in 1860, the population hit its peak at 1000 (Arnold 1980:26). In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the farms in Duxbury produced butter, wool, and maple sugar as well as raising staple crops of corn, oats, hay, potatoes, and wheat. In addition to agriculture, lumbering was an important pursuit. The town was well timbered and had a number of good mill locations. After the 1880s, the population slowly declined reaching a low of 489 in 1950 before beginning to rebound (Arnold 1980:26).

#### **Roswell Crossett**

Roswell Crossett was born on June 3, 1794 in the town of Shutesbury in western Massachusetts (Baird 1996:46). He was one of eleven children born to Edward Crossett (1749-1820), and Elizabeth Cady (1754-1826) who were married on January 25, 1774 (Baird 1996:33-34). Roswell Crossett emigrated to Duxbury with his father and several siblings (i.e. Jason, Hosea, Edward, Achsah, and Chloe) ca. 1804-1806 (US Population Census 1800 and 1810, Duxbury Land Records [DLR] 4:83; 4:151, 4:199). In April 1814,

when he was about 20 years old, Roswell Crossett established his own farm with the purchase of 49 acres in the south half of Lot 25 of the second division, up on Crossett Hill (DLR 5:169).

On Christmas Eve in the difficult "year without a summer" (December 24, 1816) Roswell Crossett married Eunice Wells in Duxbury (Baird 1996:46). Together they had ten children: Reuben (1819), Lysander (1820), Burton C. (1822), Rebecca Calista (1823), Edgar (1825), John C. (1826), Polly Louisa (1828), Byron (1831), William W. (1832), and Lestina H. (ca. 1836) (Baird 1996:46; Washington County Probate Records Book S:238; US Population Census 1860).

Eventually, Roswell Crossett owned 250 acres before retiring and selling most of his property ca. 1850-1860 (US Agriculture Census 1850; Washington County Probate Records Vol. I:128-137). The federal agricultural census taken in the mid 1800s indicates that Roswell Crossett was mainly a dairy farmer specializing in butter production (US Agriculture Census 1850). Late in life, Roswell Crossett lived on Crossett Hill Road, not too far east of the cemetery (Figure 5). A subsequent owner abandoned the house sometime between 1873 and 1924 (Beers 1873; USGS 1924; Walling 1858).

The first recorded death in Roswell Crossett's family was Reuben, the first child, who was born February 13, 1819 and died on March 20, 1819 (State of Vermont Vital Records). However, there is no stone or record to indicate where this infant was buried. It is not known if this is when the Crossett Hill Cemetery was established or not.

#### **Known Interments**

The first known burial in the Crossett Hill Cemetery occurred in 1853, when Roswell Crossett was about 59 years old. The burial was that of a grandchild. Roswell's son, Lysander, married Orpha S. Hobbs, the daughter of James and Charlotte Hobbs of Moretown, Vermont, who was some thirteen years his junior (State of Vermont Vital Records). Lysander, like Roswell, was a farmer and operated a 150 acre farm on Crossett Hill (Washington County Probate Records Book S:238-40). One of Lysander and Orpha's children, a son named Frank, died on September 30, 1853 (Baird 1996:46; State of Vermont Vital Records). The boy was, according to the State's records, one year, nine months, and eleven days old (State of Vermont Vital Records). To most transcribers, his stone appeared to say that he was only nine months and fourteen days old. After reviewing the rubbings of this stone it does indeed clearly show 9mo 14d. Frank Crossett was buried in the southeast section of what would become the Crossett Hill Cemetery. Less than a year after the death of Frank Crossett, another grandchild, Edna Crossett, also a child of Lysander and Orpha Crossett, died on July 9, 1854 at only two months and seventeen days of age (Baird 1996:46; State of Vermont Vital Records). Lysander Crossett himself died on June 18, 1855 at the age of 34 and he was buried near his children. His widow, Orpha, married Berusa F. Freeman of Moretown on September 13, 1857 and probably moved away (State of Vermont Vital Records).

The next known interment in the Crossett Hill Cemetery was that of Roswell's daughter, Rebecca Calistia (Crossett) Turner. Rebecca Crossett had married Lyman V. Turner, the son of Lyman C. Turner and Betsey Bruce (State of Vermont Vital Records). Together Lyman and Rebecca Turner had at least five children Albert, Bryon, Lyman, Alma, and an un-named infant who died on August 3, 1856 (Washington County Probate Records Book Z:393). Rebecca Turner died on August 5, 1856 at age 33, just a few days after the 11-week-old un-named infant daughter with whom she shares a gravestone (State of Vermont Vital Records). It appears that, Lyman Turner moved briefly to Enosburg and then married Roswell Crossett's youngest daughter, Lestina H., on February 25, 1857--despite a notable age difference (State of Vermont Vital Records). Lyman Turner returned to Duxbury sometime before 1860 (US Population Census 1860). That year, his household consisted of himself (age 35), his wife, Lestina (22), and his children from both marriages including: Albert (11), Bryon (10), Lyman (8), Alma (6) and Hattie (2) (US Population Census 1860). No more burials from this nuclear family are known to have been placed in the Crossett Hill Cemetery.

Roswell Crossett endured the death of one more close family member before his own death. His son, Byron Crossett, also a farmer in Duxbury, died of pleurisy on March 5, 1858 at the age of 27 (State of Vermont Vital Records). Roswell Crossett himself died on November 27, 1859 of a fit (possibly a stroke or heart attack) at the age of 65 (State of Vermont Vital Records).

A small partially illegible stone within the Crossett family group marks the grave of Ann M. Crossett who died at an unknown date sometime in the late 1850s or early 1860s (State of Vermont Vital Records). State records only reveal that she was the 16-month-old daughter of "E and H.L. Crossett" (State of Vermont Vital Records). It is believed that she was the daughter of Edgar Crossett (son of Roswell) and Edgar Crossett's first wife, Harriet Loraine Corse of Bakersfield, Vermont (State of Vermont Vital Records). Vital records indicate at least two children were born to this couple while they lived in Duxbury, one on August 11, 1859 [Jane?] and the other on November 2, 1861 [?] (State of Vermont Vital Records). In 1860, Edgar Crossett's family, then living in Duxbury, included his wife, Loraine, and three daughters: Mary or Marion (5), Clara (3) and Jane (1) (US Population Census 1860). Eventually, Edgar Crossett had five daughters. In March of 1863, Edgar Crossett sold his 110-acre farm in Duxbury and moved his family to Montgomery, Vermont (DLR 11:155; 12:183). Later in 1863, Edgar Crossett enlisted in the Civil War for Duxbury. He served in Company D of the 10<sup>th</sup> Vermont Infantry from December 1863 to June 1865 (Peck 1892:392). Whether he was inspired by patriotism, enticed by a large bounty or driven by a family tragedy into the ranks is not known. At any rate, on September 2, 1865, Edgar Crossett married Minevra A. Corse in Montgomery, Vermont (State of Vermont Vital Records). Edgar Crossett died in Montpelier, Vermont, May 7, 1891 of heart disease at 66 years of age (State of Vermont Vital Records, Vermont Veterans Graves Register 1783-1930). Only one member of his family, Ann M. Crossett, is believed to be in the Crossett Hill Cemetery.

There were two burials in the Crossett Hill Cemetery in 1863. William W. Crossett, another one of Roswell's sons, a shoemaker who had lived close to his father on a small 1.5 acre lot (see Figure 5) died on January 27, 1863 at age 30. He was survived by his wife, Phebe A., and at least three children: Bertha, Fanny, and Fred (US Population Census 1860, State of Vermont Vital Records). The other interment in 1863 was that of an 18-year-old Civil War soldier named Hiram Hazen who died on March 26, 1863. His gravestone, located in the western section of the cemetery, indicates that he was a member of Company B, 13<sup>th</sup> Vermont Infantry. His burial in the western section of cemetery suggests he was not directly related to the Crossett family. He is believed to be the first non-family member buried in the Crossett Hill Cemetery. Although he is included in the Vermont Veteran Grave Register and his stone was apparently decorated annually on Memorial Day, there is no record of a Hiram Hazen in any Vermont regiment nor for that matter in the entire Union Army (Peck 1892, Waterbury Record 1897). There is, however, reason to believe that Hiram Hazen is actually or at least also known as Hiram Foster who is listed on the rolls of Company H of the 13th Vermont Volunteers (Peck 1892:497). The 13th Vermont was raised late in 1862 for a term of nine months. The regiment spent the winter of 1862-1863 at Wolf Run Shoals in Virginia and participated in the Battle of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, July 1-3 1863, before returning to Vermont. Hiram Foster's short biography in the 13th Vermont's Regimental History is worth quoting in full.

"Hiram Foster volunteered from Duxbury, Vt., in August at the age of 18, and joined Company H by transfer. He was not very rugged and pretty young for soldier life. The arduous duties of the fall and winter and exposure was too much for his delicate constitution. Was taken sick, sent to the hospital where he died March 26, 1863. Such was the fate of many of the patriotic boys who volunteered in this regiment" (Sturtevant and Peck 1910:661).

Hiram (Hazen) Foster was probably younger than the age he gave the military. The 1860 US Population Census for Duxbury, lists Hiram Foster, at age 14 as living in the household of George W. Hills. George Hills was a farmer who, according to the Walling 1858 and Beers 1873 maps, lived on the west side of present day Route 100 just south of the intersection with the South end of Crossett Hill Road. Hiram (Hazen) Foster's close geographical tie to the Crossett Hill Cemetery may explain his presence there. The only other Foster within the town of Duxbury in 1860 was Lucy Foster, age 42, who worked as a domestic servant for Henry Bowman, a farmer, his wife and their four children aged 2 to 12 years of age (US Population Census 1860). No direct link between Hiram and Lucy Foster has yet been proven. However, given the possible circumstances it is not hard to image a variety of reasons that may have drawn the young man into the army.

On November 3, 1865 Roswell's son, Burton C. Crossett died in New York City at the age of 43 (State of Vermont Vital Records, Washington County Probate Records Vol. I:210-211, 268). His remains

were apparently returned to Duxbury and were interred in the Crossett Hill Cemetery. He was joined soon afterwards in the burial ground by his brother John C. Crossett who had stayed in Duxbury to establish his own farm. John Crossett died on July 17, 1866 at the age of 39 of delirium tremors (alcohol withdrawal) (State of Vermont Vital Records).

After Roswell Crossett's death in 1859, his widow, Eunice, went to live with their unmarried son, John C, (US Population Census 1860). But she, as seen above, outlived him too. She died on May 20, 1869 at the age of 71 and was buried in the Crossett Hill Cemetery next to her husband (State of Vermont Vital Records). On April 9, 1875 at the age of 17, Ann F. Crossett, a daughter of William Crossett died and was buried in the Crossett Hill Cemetery. Shortly after Phebe Crossett, the widow of William Crossett, died on June 30, 1875 at the age of 38 (State of Vermont Vital Records). Also in 1875,

The last two known burials within the cemetery were not Crossett Family members. On May 21, 1878, Eliza P. Meaker died at the age 38 years 9 months and 24 days. Eliza Meaker was buried in the western section of the cemetery, away from the Crossett Family and she may be the second non-family burial within the grounds. On the back of her stone it reads "My Wife". She was the wife of S.G. Meaker. Mrs. Meaker's stone, which was legible in 1979, is now broken.

The last burial, for which there is evidence, was made in 1895. According to local informants, Ralph Morse, Donald Welch, and Judy Douglas, Lilla Belle Tompson who died on January 15, 1895 at the age 4 years, 5 months and 24 days of diphtheria, a prevalent and too often fatal childhood disease in 19<sup>th</sup> century Vermont, was buried in the Crossett Hill Cemetery. It is reported that all of the young girl's clothing was burned after her death to prevent the spread of the disease. Lilla Thompson was the daughter of George C. Thompson, a native of Cambridge, Vermont, and Lora (Lacey) Thompson, originally from Missouri (State of Vermont Vital Records). They reportedly lived on the farm on the knoll south of the cemetery where Linda and John Devlin lived in the 1980s. Lilla Thompson was buried "on the westerly side of the cemetery as you enter the gate" (Ralph Morse/Donald Welch Personal Communication 2004).

#### **Other Civil War Soldiers/Veterans**

In local memory, the Crossett Hill Cemetery has long been associated with Civil War soldiers. Hyde and Hyde reported in 1977 that the Crossett Hill Cemetery "appears to have at least 5 Civil War graves with flag holders and small marble markers" (Hyde and Hyde 1991:365) (see Figure 2). In 2003, volunteers cleaning up the cemetery actually located parts of six GAR [Grand Army of the Republic] flag holders or markers in the western section of the Crossett Hill Cemetery. The Grand Army of the Republic was a veterans' organization created after the Civil War. It was social and political association. It organized reunions and gatherings for veterans. It provided services and support to veterans, widows, and orphans. It also represented a powerful nationwide voting block and lobbied for pensions, reconstruction policies, and other issues important to veterans. However, one of the organization's most visible activities was the decorating of soldiers' graves each Memorial Day. The cast iron markers used by the GAR to mark the graves to be decorated consisted five-pointed stars sitting atop a stem or pin by which the marker could be set into the ground. In the Crossett Hill Cemetery each iron star bore the number of "Post 22." GAR Post 22, also known as the Dillingham Post, was organized in Waterbury, Vermont, but its members came from several different towns, including Duxbury. Unfortunately, all of the GAR markers in the Crossett Hill Cemetery were displaced and/or broken and none of them, except for the pieces found near Hiram (Hazen) Foster's grave, were found in positive association with any stone (see Figure 2).

In 1897, the *Waterbury Record* listed the graves to be decorated by the Dillingham Post that year in the Crossett Hill Cemetery. The list included Hiram (Hazen) Foster, a man named Shakleford, and a man named Danford (*Waterbury Record* 1897 4:3). Military records show that there were only three men named Shakleford in the entire Union Army: one in the 94<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry, one with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ohio Infantry, and one in the 5<sup>th</sup> Colored Heavy Artillery. A few scenarios could account for the presence of men from other state regiments in Duxbury. For example, the soldier's family could have still lived in the town and if the solider was killed during the war they could have brought the individual home. Another possibility would be a veteran of another town or state moving to Duxbury after the war and eventually being buried here. There were a total of seventy-three men with the surname Danford in the Union Army. Only one, Francis E. Danford, was from Vermont. Francis Danford was credited to Woodbury and served in the 11<sup>th</sup> Heavy Artillery/Infantry Regiment from 1862 to 1865 (Peck 1892:443). Again, while no direct connection between this man or any other Danford and the Crossett Hill Cemetery has been established, it is certainly possible there is a Civil War soldier with that name in the graveyard. Finally, if the count of six GAR markers is correct and if three soldiers have been somewhat identified then, there should be at least three more soldiers somewhere in the Crossett Hill Cemetery.

#### Conclusion

In 1867, the combined estates of Roswell, Bryon, and John C. Crossett were sold to Jacob Foss except for a one-acre parcel with a house held by Phebe Crossett and "a parcel of land occupied as a burying ground" (DLR 12:386; 12:387). Foss sold the property to Roderick and Mary Phillips in February 1868 with the same reservations (DLR 12:444). The intention of these deeds was undoubtedly the preservation of the Crossett Hill Cemetery. Although protected, the cemetery was largely forgotten, except by a few kind visitors, until its restoration by a number of concerned citizens in 2003. Please see Appendix II for a list of individuals and organizations that worked together to help ensure the future of the Crossett Hill Cemetery.











Figure 2. Sketch map of the Crossett Hill Cemetery, Duxbury, Vermont, 2003.





Figure 3. Entrance to the Crossett Hill Cemetery, looking north, 2003.

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# Table 1

# Known Burials in the Crossett Hill Cemetery, Duxbury, Washington County, Vermont

Name	Date of Death	Age	Source of Information				
			Existing Stone	1979 List	Vital Records	GAR 1897	Local Informant
Frank Crossett	September 30,1853	9 mo	0	•			
Edna Crossett	July 9, 1854	2 mo	•	•			
Lysander Crossett	June 18, 1855	34		•			
Turner Infant	August 3, 1856	11 wks					
Rebecca Calista Turner	August 5,1856	33	•	•			
Bryon Crossett	March 5, 1858	27	•				
Roswell Crossett	November 27, 1859	65					
William W. Crossett	January 27, 1863	30	•				
Hiram Hazen (Foster)	March 26, 1863	18	•	•		•	
Burton C. Crossett	November 3, 1865	43		•	•		
John C. Crossett	July 17, 1866	39	•	•			
Eunice Crossett	May 20, 1869	71	•				
Ann F. Crossett	April 9,1875	17	0				
Phebe A. Crossett	June 30, 1875	38	•	•			
Eliza P. Meaker	May 21, 1878	38	0				
Lilla Belle Thompson	January 15, 1895	4					
Ann Maria Crossett	NA	16 mo	•				
Shakleford	NA	NA					
Danford	NA	NA				•	

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Figure 4. Unmarked stones in the west section of the Crossett Hill Cemetery, looking south, 2003.

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Figure 5. Approximate locations of the Crossett family farms and residences within the study area ca. 1858 (after Walling), base map USGS 1980. "E, Crossett" could be either Edgar or Edwin C. Crossett; both of whoem lived in Duxbury ca. 1860. "B. Crossett" is either Burton or Bryon Crossett; both were sons of Roswell Crossett.





Figure 6. Gravestones belonging to members of the Roswell Crossett Family, looking east, 2003.

# Appendix I: Gravestone Inscriptions from the Crossett Hill Cemetery, Duxbury, Vermont

### Crossett Family

#### Ann F. Crossett

Daughter Wm. & Phebe Crossett Died April 9, 1875, Age 17 yrs, 8 mo

#### Ann Maria Crossett

Daughter of E. & H.L. Crossett died ---, ae 16 mo. Rest in peace sweet babe till the resurrection morn.

## Burton C. Crossett

Died Nov. 3, 1865, ae 43 yrs

#### Byron Crossett

Died March 5, 1858, ae 27 yrs

#### Edna Crossett

Daughter of L. & O. Crossett, Died July 9, 1854, 2 mos 17 days

#### Eunice Crossett

Died May 20, 1869, ae 71 yrs, wife of Roswell Crossett

#### Frank Crossett

Son of L. & O. Crossett, d.--- 1853, 9 mos 14 days

#### John C. Crossett

Died July 17, 1866, ae 39 yrs

## Lysander Crossett

Died June 18, 1855, ae 34 yrs

#### Phebe Crossett

Wife Wm. W. Crossett Died June 30, 1875, ae 38 yrs

## Rebeca Calista Turner

Wife of Lyman V. Turner died Aug. 5 1856, ae 33 yrs Also infant daughter, Died Aug 3, 1856, 11 wks

#### Roswell Crossett

Died Nov. 27, 1859, ae 65 yrs, husband of Eunice Crossett

#### William. W. Crossett Died Jan. 27, 1863, ae 30 yrs

#### Other Individuals

## Hiram Hazen Of Co. B. 13 Reg. V.V. d. March 26, 1863, ae 18 yrs.

Eliza P. wife of S G Meaker Died May 21, 1878, ae 38 yrs, 9mo, 24 days.

## Appendix II: List of Individuals and Organizations Involved in the Crossett Hill Cemetery Project in 2003.

Ralph Ainsworth Barre Granite Association John Castaldo (Barre Granite Association) Bill Carter Judee Chatot (North Barre Granite) Linda Devlin Charles Dindo (Dindo Drafting) Judy Douglas Representative Robert Dostis (VT State Representative) Jim Eaton Skip Flanders John Grace Kate Kenny (Historian for UVM consulting archeology program - Report preparation) Chuck Kletecka Louie Koonz Stephanie Koonz Maurice LaVanway (Buy Monthly Publishing) Old Vermont Cemetery Association John Mears Marcy Millett Peter Millett Michael Omitz (North Barre Granite) Ed Patterson Jim Perry Myra Perry Shawn Perry Eric Potter (Potter's Tree Health Care) Mike Riley David Rogers Brent Sargent Ken Spencer Jill Smith Jen Surat Dan Travis Greg Trulson Waterbury VFW Waterbury Rotary Club Don Welch Sharon Wilson

# Appendix III: Miscellaneous Notes for Further Research

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Another individual that may be of interest is Ann (Crossett) Davis who may have died between 1855 and 1858 (Washington County Probate Records Book S:238, 240 and Book Z:100-101, 121, 393). Her relationship with the Roswell Crossett family is not clear at this point. Ann Crossett married Silas Davis of Enosburg on December 1, 1837 (State of Vermont Vital Records). She is included in Lysander Crossett's will but only her children (Laura, Alfred, Burton, Sarah and Emma) are mentioned in the will of Bryon Crossett (Washington County Probate Records Book S:238, 240 and Book Z:100-101, 121, 393).

There is some circumstantial evidence that Polly Crossett, may also be in the Crossett Hill Cemetery. First, Polly Louisa Crossett was a daughter of Roswell and Eunice Crossett. Secondly, there is no record of a marriage for her in the State of Vermont's records. However, it should be kept in mind that these records are incomplete at best. Finally, Polly Crossett is not mentioned in the 1857 will of Lysander Crossett who left bequests to all his sisters, married or not (Washington County Probate Records Book S:238). This suggests that Polly Crossett could have died sometime before 1857 and before she was about 25 years of age.

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- 1866 Bryon Crossett, Book Z:100, 101, 121, 393.
- 1866 Burton Crossett, Vol 1:210-211, 268.

1866 John C. Crossett, Vol. 1:134-136, 556-9. 1866 Roswell Crossett, Vol. 1: 128-133.

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