



Hugh Nesbitt Cosgrove in 1905



Back Row: Hugh Nesbitt Cosgrove, Lavina (Sinclair) Cosgrove in 1905
Front Row: Granddaughters Ethel Lavina Cosgrove, Loretta Jessie Cosgrove

THE COSGROVE FAMILY

GENERATION III

HUGH NESBITT CROSSGROVE

Civil War Soldier

HUGH³ NESBITT CROSSGROVE (*John*², *John*¹) was born 7 September 1838 in Westfield, Chautauqua County, New York.¹ He died on 9 December 1922 in Denver, Denver County, Colorado.² On 3 September 1873, he married in Springdale, Leavenworth County, Kansas, LAVINA SINCLAIR, the daughter of ROBERT SINCLAIR and ELEANOR (HINSHAW) SINCLAIR.³

EARLY LIFE

Little is known of HUGH's life before the Civil War. Presumably, he led the life of a typical farm lad of Ulster Scot/Presbyterian heritage on the family farm at Westfield, Chautauqua Co., New York, on the shores of Lake Erie. He was christened before the age of one at the Westfield Presbyterian Church to which his family belonged.⁴ Presumably, he was educated in whatever schooling provisions the community provided at that time.

CIVIL WAR SERVICE

Seventy-eight years after America's War of Independence, which was, in fact, a civil war within the British nation, a second and bloodier war began, the so-called Civil War, which was *not*, in fact, a civil war but, rather, a war between the states. The latter war began on 12 April 1861 when a Southern cannon fired the first shot upon Fort Sumter, Charleston, South Carolina. President LINCOLN immediately issued a proclamation calling for 75,000 militia for three months' service to suppress the rebellion, and on 3 May called for 42,034 volunteers for a three-year tour of duty.

Governor MORGAN of New York, responding to an appeal from President LINCOLN for 15,000 men from that State, issued a proclamation on 25 July 1861 calling for a volunteer force. At Westfield, the home of our CROSSGROVE family, a branch depot was set up for the organization of regiments. It was there that the 9th Cavalry Regiment of New York State Volunteers began its organization in September 1861.⁵

Immediately, our HUGH's older brother, JOHN CROSSGROVE Jr, 24 years old, volunteered to serve his country. He enlisted on 10 September 1861 at Westfield for a three-year tour of duty, and on 1 October 1861 was mustered in at Albany as a Private in Company I, Third Battalion, 9th New York Volunteer Cavalry Regiment,⁶ "drawn to the cavalry, perhaps, by a love of

horses and the glamour of a uniform and sabre," to quote Taylor in *Saddle and Sabre*.⁷

No doubt stirred by the courage of his older brother JOHN, as well as by his own patriotism and willingness to fight for causes in which he believed, HUGH at age 23 enlisted in the infantry on 22 Aug 1862 at Westfield, was enrolled in Company E of the 154th Infantry Regiment of New York Volunteers, and on 24 Sep 1862 was mustered in as a Private in Company E of the 154th at Jamestown, Chautauqua Co., New York.⁸

HUGH fought in some of the most significant and bloody battles of the Civil War, including those of Chancellorsville, Va., Gettysburg, Pa., and Chattanooga, Tenn. At Chancellorsville, HUGH's Regiment sustained its greatest losses of any one battle during the War: 31 men killed, 10 mortally wounded, 78 wounded, and 162 captured by the enemy—a total of 281 battle losses. Following that battle of 2 and 3 May 1863, HUGH's Regiment marched north to Gettysburg, arriving there on 1 July and going directly into battle.⁹

At Gettysburg, HUGH's Regiment fought under the following chain of command:

11th Army Corps	Maj. Gen. OLIVER O. HOWARD, Commanding Officer
2nd Division	Brig. Gen ADOLPH von STEINWEHR, C.O.
1st Brigade	Col. CHARLES R. COSTER, C.O.
154th New York Vols.	Lt. Col. DANIEL B. ALLEN, C.O.

In the Battle of Gettysburg, HUGH's Regiment fought on only the first day of the three-day battle that raged from 1 July to 3 July 1863. The 154th Regiment lost only 11 men to death or mortal wounds in the Battle, with 29 wounded and 172 captured. But the carnage was so great in what has been described as "the greatest battle fought in the Western Hemisphere" that, of the 163,000 men who fought there, an almost unbelievable 51,000 Union and Confederate soldiers were killed during those three fateful days.¹⁰

It must have been to Gettysburg that HUGH was referring in later years, on one of the few occasions that he was able to talk about the War, when he said that the dead bodies of slain soldiers covered the battlefield in such huge numbers that the living piled the dead atop each other and used them as a protective barricade from behind which they fired at the enemy.¹¹

Following Gettysburg, HUGH's Regiment marched south and encamped at Alexandria, Virginia, from 8 August to 26 September 1863. On that date, the Regiment was moved by train to the west and south, passing through Columbus, Ohio, Indianapolis, Indiana, Louisville, Kentucky, and Nashville, Tennessee, arriving at Bridgeport, Alabama, on 2 October 1863. From there, they moved northeast, sustaining losses in the battles of Wauhatchie on 28 October and at Chattanooga on 23 and 24 November. After much suffering during a grueling winter march on frozen ground to northeastern Tennessee

and back, on 14 December they set up their Winter Camp at Lookout Valley in Georgia near the Tennessee State line.¹²

On 16 January 1864, whilst the Regiment was encamped at Lookout Valley, and on the recommendation of his Company Commander, Captain J.M GALLAGHER, HUGH was promoted to the rank of Sergeant by his Regimental Commander, Colonel PATRICK HENRY JONES, the effective date of the promotion being 8 September 1863.¹³ Perhaps this advancement was in recognition of bravery shown by HUGH during the Battle of Gettysburg in July 1863.

On 4 May 1864, the Regiment left their Winter Camp and marched down through Georgia, sustaining additional losses in the battles of Rocky Face Ridge (8 May), Resaca (15 May), New Hope Church (25 May to 1 June), Lost Mountain (15-16 June), Peach Tree Creek (20 July), and near Savannah (9 December). The Union forces were spared the planned all-out storming of Savannah's defensive lines when, on 20 December 1864, the Confederates retreated from the city. On 21 December HUGH's Regiment marched into Savannah and was assigned a portion of the Forsyth Place city parade grounds for encampment.¹⁴

In Savannah, the Regiment found a welcome respite from battle. Dunkelmann and Winey relate in *The Hardtack Regiment* that:

The stay of the Hardtack Regiment [*the 154th*] in their comfortable quarters at Savannah was but little more than a month. The soldiers found the old city a pleasant place. Their provost duty, guarding houses, stores, and warehouses, was light. The men enjoyed watching the bustle on the waterfront, and developed a taste for oysters. During the occupation, smallpox broke out, and a resolution was passed to prevent all Negroes from entering the camp. One day three "big wenches" strolled into the camp of the 154th. They were subjected to a favorite game of the soldiers, tossed into the air from a blanket ringed with the men, an amusement many of the slave children following the army had enjoyed. The women were wild-eyed with terror, however, and shouted "that the Resurrection day had come." [*General*] Geary's division, as the first to enter Savannah, was the only occupying troops. The destruction of the march [*through Georgia*] ceased, and the city life soon resumed its normal pace under the Union rule. The men heard rumors that the division would remain to garrison the city, under the command of General Geary as military governor, but they were disappointed. On January 26, 1865, orders were received to march at 8:00 A.M. the following day. A final difficult campaign faced (General] Sherman's veterans.¹⁵

HUGH was not amongst those who marched that Thursday. For, on 23 January 1865, three days before the orders to march were received, HUGH fell ill and was hospitalized for the "ague," which, according to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, is "A malarial fever, marked by successive fits or paroxysms,

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consisting of a cold, hot, and sweating stage." A memorandum from the Adjutant General's Office, Washington, D.C., dated 25 July 1866 (and quaintly signed "I am, Sir, very respectfully, Your obedient servant, Sam. Breck"), reported that

on the Muster Roll of Company E of that Regiment, for the months of March and April 1865, he [*Sergeant HUGH N. CROSSGROVE*] is reported "Sick in Hospital since January 23d 1865."¹⁶

Thus, HUGH was in hospital from 23 January 1865 to sometime in April 1865, a period of two and a half to three months. The Regiment, Brigade, Division, and Corps maintained a hospital—tents in camp, and medical wagons and ambulances whilst on march. The 154th hospital was staffed by the Regimental Surgeon, HENRY Van AERNAM, and his assistants, Doctors CORYDON RUGG and DWIGHT DAY,¹⁷ and it was probably these men who treated HUGH.

HUGH's Regiment was marching through North Carolina when, on 9 April 1865, General LEE surrendered at Appomattox and the Civil War ended.¹⁸ HUGH was discharged from service on 11 June 1865 near Bladensburg, Prince Georges County, Maryland, just outside Washington, D.C. His discharge document, co-signed by Company E's Commanding Officer, Captain JAMES M. GALLAGHER, describes HUGH as being "five feet eight-1/2 inches high, Dark complexion, Gray eyes, Black hair, and by occupation, when enrolled, a Farmer."¹⁹

HUGH returned home from the War. It was a bittersweet homecoming. For, of the two brothers, only HUGH had survived the War; his beloved brother JOHN had been killed and would never again come home to his family.

A history of HUGH's Regiment during the Civil War is caringly set forth in Dunkelman and Winey's fine book *The Hardtack Regiment*. It dramatically recounts the story of HUGH's Regiment with its triumphs and defeats and miseries. The horrors of war (and none could exceed the Civil War's level of sheer human slaughter), the extremely poor living conditions, as well as the loss of his dear brother JOHN to the enemy, left lifetime scars on HUGH, and resulted in the granting of his disability pension. As his granddaughter, ETHEL COSGROVE STOCKMAN, later said, Grandpa HUGH throughout his life very rarely was able or willing to talk about his experiences in the War, so utterly painful were his memories of the horrors that he had encountered in the deadly conflict.

THE SACRIFICE OF HUGH'S BELOVED BROTHER JOHN

Before his first three-year tour of duty expired, JOHN CROSSGROVE, HUGH's older brother, had made the fateful, if patriotic, decision to re-enlist for another three years, and he did so on 31 January 1864. He had been

promoted to the rank of Sergeant on 1 November 1862, and sometime after 10 April 1863 had been promoted to First Sergeant,²⁰ which ranked him above all of the Company's enlisted men.

On 10 June 1864, JOHN's Regiment was one of the four regiments comprising the Second Brigade (under Colonel THOMAS C. DEVIN) in the First Division (commanded by Brigadier General ALFRED T.A. TORBERT) of the Cavalry Corps under the command of Major General PHILIP H. SHERIDAN. (The First Brigade was commanded by Brigadier General GEORGE A. CUSTER of historical reknown.)

On that 10th day of June, the First Division, including JOHN's 9th Cavalry Regiment, engaged the Confederate forces who were posted behind barricades in dense timber in the Louisa Courthouse Road near Louisa, Louisa County, Virginia. Forty of JOHN's comrades fell before the enemy's fire, but JOHN and the rest of the Regiment pressed on and drove the remainder of the Confederate forces back out of the woods.²¹

The next day was Saturday, 11 June 1864. As dawn broke the "air was chilly, the sweet-scented clover dripping with dew, and a bracing breeze coming from the dark mountain ridges," according to a contemporary account by a Confederate cavalryman, Private EDWARD L. WELLS.²² On that day, the 9th Cavalry Regiment again engaged the enemy, this time at Trevillian Station, a railway depot about three miles from the previous day's battle and nine miles from Gordonsville, Orange County, Virginia.²³

When given the "Forward" command by Lieutenant Colonel WILLIAM SACKETT, the 9th New York Cavalry's Commanding Officer, JOHN and his comrades charged the enemy's lines. Within minutes a bullet struck Colonel SACKETT's abdomen and he fell, mortally wounded. Taken to the nearby log hut of a Mrs BIBB, he was left behind when SHERIDAN later retreated, and died there on 14 June.²⁴

Private WELLS's account states that "The Yankees displayed pluck and splendid courage that day in their attempt to drive us away, but were sadly in lack of a good cavalry leader."²⁵ Another Confederate cavalryman, Sergeant JOHN GILL, recounted that "Trevilians was a desperate encounter, with varying success to both sides, but finally terminated in Sheridan's retreat."²⁶

It was during the fighting on that fateful Saturday at Trevillian Station that our JOHN was struck down. The Casualty list disclosed that he had been "Wounded in action at Trevillian Station, June 11, '64 and left in the hands of the enemy."²⁷ Confederate cavalryman Sergeant JOHN GILL wrote that, upon General SHERIDAN's retreat, the Confederate General HAMPTON

followed him in hot pursuit. Our division, however, moved into Trevilians Station the next morning to find a large number of [*Confederate*] prisoners and wounded men [*Yankees*] left on the field. Orders were given to

A SERVICE PENSION, A KANSAS FARM, AND MARRIAGE

Now back at home in Westfield following his discharge from military duties, HUGH, on 23 March 1866, applied for and received a disability pension because of the ". . . Ague [*i.e.*, *malarial fever*] and disease in the Chest & Lungs arising therefrom," a condition that he had contracted during his military service and which affected him throughout the rest of his life.³⁴

In about 1873 or before, HUGH left Westfield, New York, and migrated to Kansas where he took advantage of the Federal Government's Homestead Act of 1862 to obtain land for a farm at McLouth, Jefferson County, Kansas. Presumably, it was after his arrival there that he met LAVINA SINCLAIR, daughter of ROBERT SINCLAIR and ELEANOR (HINSHAW) SINCLAIR. HUGH and LAVINA were married in Springdale, Leavenworth County, Kansas, on Thursday, 28 August 1873, by The Reverend H.D. HEALY, Minister of the Gospel.³⁵

At his McLouth farm over the next thirty years, HUGH successfully provided a living for his family, and there he and LAVINA raised their three children.³⁶

A SURNAME MODIFICATION

The writer clearly remembers that, even though his grandmother, GERTRUDE CLINKENBEARD COSGROVE, spelt her married name "COSgrove," she regularly pronounced it "CROSgrove." Unknown to the writer at the time, GERTRUDE had clear precedent for using that pronunciation, which was one that coincided with the most frequent spelling used by the family up to the latter half of the 19th-century. For as far back as presently-known records go, the family name is recorded as having been spelt "Crosgrove" or "Crossgrove," the third variation, "Cosgrove" (which is the most common spelling today) appearing only infrequently. Through at least 1866, when HUGH filed his disability pension application, he variably used one or the other of the first two spellings of his name.³⁷

However, by the time of his marriage in 1873, HUGH had dropped the first "r" from his family name, henceforth employing today's more common spelling of "Cosgrove."³⁸ By 1891, HUGH's brothers also had adopted the latter spelling for their family name, the change being dramatically illustrated in the papers relating to the Will of HUGH's father, JOHN CROSSGROVE. In the document proving the Will, JOHN's name is spelt both "Crossgrove" and "Crosgrove," whilst on the same page his four sons' names are spelt "Cosgrove."³⁹ Other branches of the family (e.g., the descendants of WILLIAM CROSSGROVE [c.1767-1846]) have retained the "Crossgrove/Crosgrove" spellings up to the present. Despite the minor differences, the spellings remain simply variations of one and the same name, a situation that was common prior to the standardization of spelling in the mid-19th century.

RETIREMENT AND REMOVAL TO DENVER

At retirement age (when he was 68) HUGH and LAVINA sold their farm and moved to Denver along with their son and daughter-in-law, JOHN and GERTRUDE (CLINKENBEARD) COSGROVE, and their grandchildren ETHEL, LORETTA, and WALTER COSGROVE. That was in 1906 ("I was three when the family moved to Denver," recalled ETHEL LAVINA [COSGROVE] STOCKMAN).

HUGH's father, JOHN CROSSGROVE, had died in 1890 in Westfield, New York, and in his Will had bequeathed to his son HUGH, and to HUGH alone amongst his children, \$300 in addition to HUGH's equal share of the balance of the Estate of \$8,617.63.⁴⁰ Why HUGH received this special bequest is unknown, but it was surely at least partially in recognition of HUGH's sacrificial service in the Civil War and his resulting lifetime disability.

It was probably this inheritance that enabled HUGH to purchase in Denver four fine two-storeyed brick houses, one each for his three children (which in his kindness he gave them as gifts), and one for himself and LAVINA. After LAVINA's death in 1909, he asked to live with his son and daughter-in-law, JOHN and GERTRUDE. His request was warmly accepted, and it was there that he was at home for the next 13 years.⁴¹

HUGH'S FINAL DAYS

On the day of his death, 9 December 1922, HUGH's granddaughter ETHEL, then 19, took his breakfast tray to his room where he had been confined to bed for awhile. He said to her, "I'm not hungry, Ethel. Take my breakfast back to the kitchen and you eat it." A short time later, he died, quietly and peacefully—a good death that was well-earned after the wartime horrors that he had experienced on the battlefield and the exemplary life that he had led. He was 84 years of age.⁴²

HUGH will always be remembered as a courageous soldier; a man of commitment to his principles combined with a willingness to fight for them; and as a good, faithful, loving and beloved son, husband, father, and grandfather. He was true to his Ulster Scot blood and heritage.

THE CHILDREN OF HUGH AND LAVINA COSGROVE

The children were all born in McLouth, Jefferson County, Kansas.

- + i. JOHN MARION COSGROVE: born 10 March 1878; died 28 January 1940 in Los Angeles, Calif.; married 14 February 1902 in McLouth, Jefferson Co., Kans., to GERTRUDE MAY CLINKENBEARD; children: ETHEL LAVINA COSGROVE, LORETTA JESSIE COSGROVE, and WALTER HUGH COSGROVE.
- ii. NETTIE JANE COSGROVE: born 16 December 1881; died January 1969 in Denver, Denver Co., Colo.; married HENRY L.

- GIESEKER; children: FREDERICK GIESEKER, HOMER GIESEKER, LAVINA GIESEKER, LUCY GIESEKER, CLARENCE GIESEKER, and ROY GIESEKER.
- iii. CLARENCE EARL COSGROVE: born 7 July 1885; died 13 August 1963 in Calgary, Alberta, Dominion of Canada; married June 1913 in (Denver?), Colo., to NELLIE DOUGAN; child: EARL DOUGAN COSGROVE.

SOURCE REFERENCES

- ¹ Death Certificate of Hugh N. Cosgrove: Colorado State Bureau of Vital Statistics, No. 10962.
- ² *Ibid.*
- ³ Marriage Certificate of Hugh N. Cosgrove and Lavina Sinclair: Clerk of the District Court, Leavenworth County, Kansas; Marriage License No. 1766, (207).
- ⁴ Letter of Virginia Barden, Ripley, New York, to J.E. Stockman dated 20 March 1995, quoting the records of the Westfield Presbyterian Church, Westfield, New York.
- ⁵ Gray Nelson Taylor, comp., *Saddle and Saber: Civil War Letters of Corporal Nelson Taylor, 9th New York State Volunteer Cavalry Regiment* (Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, Inc., 1993); pp. x-xi; in library of J.E. Stockman.
- ⁶ Civil War Muster Records of John Crossgrove, Jr.: New York State Archives, Cultural Education Center, Rm. 11D40, Albany, N.Y.
- ⁷ *Saddle and Saber.*
- ⁸ Civil War Army Promotion, Discharge, and Pension documents of Hugh N. Crossgrove; originals in possession of J.E. Stockman.
- ⁹ Mark H. Dunkelman and Michael J. Winey, *The Hardtack Regiment: An Illustrated History of the 154th Regiment, New York State Infantry Volunteers* (London, Toronto, East Brunswick, N.J.: Associated University Presses, 1981) p. 71ff; in library of J.E. Stockman.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹ Oral history given by Ethel Lavina Cosgrove Stockman to J.E. Stockman.
- ¹² *The Hardtack Regiment*, p. 98.
- ¹³ Civil War Army documents of Hugh N. Crossgrove.
- ¹⁴ *The Hardtack Regiment*, pp. 129-131.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 131.
- ¹⁶ Civil War Pension Records of Hugh N. Cosgrove: General Reference Branch (NNRG-P), National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C., File No. SC 84,175.
- ¹⁷ *The Hardtack Regiment*, p. 88.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 139.
- ¹⁹ Civil War Army documents of Hugh N. Crossgrove.
- ²⁰ Civil War Muster Records of John Crossgrove, Jr.
- ²¹ *Saddle and Saber*, p. 155.
- ²² Walbrook Davis Swank, Col. USAF Ret., *Battle of Trevilian Station: The Civil War's Greatest and Bloodiest All-Cavalry Battle* (Mineral, Va.: Walbrook D. Swank, 1994); p. 71 in library of J.E. Stockman.
- ²³ *Saddle and Saber*, p. 155.
- ²⁴ *Battle of Trevilian Station*, pp. 7-8.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 79.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 103.
- ²⁷ Civil War Muster Records of John Crossgrove, Jr.
- ²⁸ *Battle of Trevilian Station*, p. 103.
- ²⁹ Civil War Muster Records of John Crossgrove, Jr.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Saddle and Sober*, p. 156.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 159.

³³ *Battle of Trevilian Station*, p. xv.

³⁴ Civil War Pension of Hugh N. Cosgrove.

³⁵ Marriage Certificate of Hugh N. Cosgrove and Lavina Sinclair.

³⁶ Oral history given by Ethel Lavina Cosgrove Stockman.

³⁷ Will of John Crossgrove (1807-1890) dated 2 April 1883, Probate Decree dated 30 March 1891, and Estate Accounting dated 28 May 1894; Clerk of Surrogate's Court, Mayville, New York.

Also, Civil War Records of Hugh N. Cosgrove.

Also, Civil War Army documents of Hugh N. Crossgrove.

³⁸ Death Certificate of Hugh N. Cosgrove. Also, Marriage Certificate of Hugh N. Cosgrove and Lavina Sinclair.

³⁹ Will of John Crossgrove.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Oral history given by Ethel Lavina Cosgrove Stockman.

⁴² *Ibid.*