

LEG BURIED IN WEST SALEM CEMETERY

This is an odd story found in the *Mt. Vernon Register* from the early 1900s. A man named Edward Crosnoe from Jefferson County had the misfortune of being hit by a runaway railroad car in the yards of St. Louis in 1909. His right leg was severed, and he received serious internal injuries, from which—the newspaper reported—he might not recover. The strange part of the story is that he wanted the limb buried in West Salem Cemetery. His brother, Elmer, picked up the leg, brought it to Mt. Vernon (don't ask how), and buried it in the cemetery.

About two weeks later on October 29, 1909, the *Mt. Vernon Register* had a follow-up story about the incident. Mr. Crosnoe had to have his left leg amputated because of the injury he received in the accident. Guess what? He wanted it buried in West Salem Cemetery also. This time his brother, Walter, picked it up, brought it to Mt. Vernon (still don't know how), and had it buried in the cemetery. This article was more positive about Mr. Crosnoe's recovery. It said: "It is believed that Mr. Crosnoe, who was thought to be fatally injured, has some chance of recovery."

And recover he did. In the 1920 census he was living in Wood River, Madison County, Illinois, with his wife (Myrtle), son (Cecil), brother (Walter), and mother (Mary). His father was living in Mt. Vernon. He had divorced Edward's mother and had a different wife.

Edward Crosnoe died in East Alton, Madison County, Illinois, on January 5, 1935. He was sixty-five years old. His occupation was listed as "police magistrate." He somehow managed to find work and live sixteen more years after the accident that caused him to lose both of his legs.

No doubt you want to know: Where was he buried? Was he reunited with his legs? Those were difficult questions to answer. He was not listed among those buried in West Salem Cemetery. Of course it could be that he was buried in an unmarked grave. His father, Thomas J. Crosnoe, is buried in the West Salem Cemetery, which suggests that Edward might be there as well. The Illinois Death records say that Edward Crosnoe was buried in Mt. Vernon Township, but doesn't state the name of the cemetery.

A search of the *Mt. Vernon Register News* for January of 1935 finally answered the questions. A small notice in the newspaper stated: "Funeral services for Ed Crosnoe of Alton, which were announced for this afternoon have been changed, and the funeral will be held Tuesday afternoon when services will be held in Bethel Tabernacle, 1064 South Tenth Street, conducted by the Rev. Ace Summers, at 1:30 o'clock. Burial will be had in West Salem Cemetery."

So although no stone survives—if there ever was one—Edward Crosnoe was buried in West Salem Cemetery and was reunited with his legs.

But the story doesn't really end here. Edward Crosnoe had another crisis earlier in his life, long before his accident. In 1897 Edward Crosnoe married Myrtle Shehorn. They had a child named Cecil in 1899.

That same year Myrtle began talking of committing suicide. She took poison but that failed to accomplish her goal. The *Daily Register* had an article about this situation as well.

According to the story this is what happened. Myrtle and her sister, Della, came to the Shehorn family residence on South First Street about 11:00 o'clock. Myrtle asked her mother for a revolver. She was told it was under the pillow on the bed. Myrtle took it and left the house, saying that she "was going to have some fun." (It seems odd that her mother would let Myrtle have the weapon after her repeated statements about killing herself.)

About 12:00 o'clock Myrtle Crosnoe pulled out the weapon and announced to her sister that she believed she would kill herself. She pulled the trigger, but her sister knocked the gun upward so that the bullet missed. She fired again and inflicted a serious wound to her chest. The article suggested that she might not survive. It said: "At noon today her condition was reported to be rather critical and her recovery regarded as very doubtful."

But she did survive. She died in 1934, about a year before her husband passed away. There is no information as to where she might be buried. So Edward Crosnoe and his wife, Myrtle (Shehorn) Crosnoe had more than their fair share of trouble. But both made it through a serious crisis and apparently had normal lives thereafter. And both are probably buried near Thomas Crosnoe's grave (shown below the list of sources) in West Salem Cemetery.

Sources

1. Jefferson County GenWeb website
2. Illinois Deaths and Stillbirths, 1916 – 1947
3. Illinois Statewide Marriage Index
4. U.S. Census
5. Family Search.org
6. *Mt. Vernon Register*, May 19, 1899
7. *Mt. Vernon Register*, October 16, 1909
8. *Mt. Vernon Register*, October 29, 1909
9. *Mt. Vernon Register News*, January 7, 1935



CROSNOE



THOMAS J.
1849 — 1932

HESTER A. HIS WIFE
1860 — 1924

*Rest on dear one,
thou art only sleeping
God has seen fit
to call thee home.*