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URL: www.natstand.org.uk/pdf/CrotchWR000.pdf Root person: Crotch, Rev W. R (1799 - 1877) & sons

Description: The Crotch family of Taunton & Weston

Creation date: 2019 October 30 Prepared by: Richard Middleton

Notes:

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About Natstand family documents:

A Natstand family document is intended to provide background information concerning the family of a deceased naturalist. It is hoped that such information will form a framework which will help interpret their surviving correspondence, specimens and records. In some cases it will also give an insight into the influences on their early lives and the family constraints within which they worked and collected. We have found that published family data concerning individuals rarely contain justification for dates and relationships and not infrequently contain errors which are then perpetuated. The emphasis in Natstand family documents will be on providing references to primary sources, whenever possible, which will be backed-up with transcriptions.

Although a Natstand biography page will always carry a link to a family document, in many cases these documents will be presented without any further biographical material. We anticipate that this will occur if the person is particularly well known or is someone we are actively researching or have only a peripheral interest in.

The following conventions are used:

Any persons in the family tree with known natural history associations will be indicated in red type. Any relationships will be to the root naturalist unless otherwise stated.

Dates are presented Year - Month - Day

e.g. **1820 March 9** or **1820.3.9 1820 March** or **1820.3**

Dates will be shown in bold type if a reliable reference is presented in the document. In cases where an exact year cannot be given (e.g. it is derived from an age at death), the date will be presented in normal type and preceded with "c" – e.g. c1798. There are some cases where a date is available from a secondary source only (e.g. a published obituary), in these cases it will be presented in italics – e.g. 1823.7.21

Data sources:

Census data have been used, whenever possible, to confirm relationships; they are not considered a reliable source of data concerning age. Contemporary newspaper family notices are considered as reliable sources of relationships and dates; reports and obituaries are treated more cautiously. Parish records generally provide a reliable source of data and digitised images have been used whenever possible. Any difficulties with transcription will be made clear. In some cases only transcripts have been available; errors here are usually confined to spelling. The most important source of this material is the International Genealogical Index compiled by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Utah. National Civil Registration Indexes are considered reliable, as are probate records.

Richard Middleton James Robert Middleton

The family of William Robert Crotch (1799 - 1877)

William Robert Crotch was the eldest child, and only son, of William Crotch, the professor of Music at Oxford University and celebrated child musical prodigy. All of his sisters died unmarried and young.

Born in Oxford, W R Crotch was admitted as a scholar to New College, Oxford, in 1818 where he became a fellow in 1820 and was awarded a BA in 1822. He was ordained as a priest in Hereford Cathedral in August 1824. In 1826, he was awarded an MA.

He was appointed master of Taunton College School in 1831, a post he retained for more than 20 years. Later in 1831 he was married to Elizabeth Duppa (1800 – 1848), daughter of Thomas Duppa of Bridgenorth, Shropshire. Elizabeth died in 1848 leaving William with a family of two sons and a daughter, another son having died in early childhood. In 1841 he was also elected chaplain to the Taunton and Somerset Hospital.

In 1848 his widowed father died suddenly at William jun.'s residence in Taunton. William was the major benefactor of his father's estate valued at around £18,000.

In 1853 he resigned his posts as headmaster of Taunton College School and chaplain to the Taunton and Somerset Hospital, his career at the former being later reflected upon in less than enthusiastic terms –

Mr. Crotch held the headmastership of the Taunton College School; though, unfortunately, with but very indifferent success. A man of genius and intellectual culture, the routine of school life and teaching appears to have possessed but little attraction for him, and the practical duties of the school becoming gradually superseded by pursuits more congenial to his taste, the number of the boys declined to so low a point that, representations made him on the subject, be was led, in the latter part of the year 1855, to tender his resignation. (*Taunton Courier and Western Advertiser 1877 May 23)

Later in the year of his resignation he married his cousin Elizabeth Bliss, although she died only a few years later.

A Freemason from 1832, he was chaplain to the Lodge of Unanimity and Sincerity. In 1855 he was elected to the Chair of the Taunton Lodge. In this year William was a secretary of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, a position that would have undoubtedly brought him into contact with G A O St Brody, author of "Flora of Weston-super-Mare" (1856). It was not, however, until just after this that he moved to Uphill, Weston-super-Mare, from his residence at Stoke Court, Taunton, but since both his mother had died in Weston in 1851 he may have had earlier links with the town; herbaria contain plant specimens that he collected there from as early as 1848 (MANCH).

In 1865 he married for a third time, his new wife, Flora Lawrence was the youngest daughter of Rev Robert Lawrence, rector of Bleadon. Flora was only two years older than his daughter and survived him by almost twenty years.

Throughout his life William Robert Crotch seems to have occupied himself in various aspects of natural history. Newspaper reports show that he frequently delivered sermons and gave lectures on a wide range of topics including general science, geology and both natural and local history. He was a member of the Botanical Exchange Club of London and his herbarium was purchased by C O Groom (Kent and Allen 1984). He was the author of various papers on Natural History in the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society's Proceedings.

Late in 1872 he was instituted to the vicarage of Catherington, Hampshire, where he died in 1877.

His two surviving sons, neither being burdened with the need to earn a living, were enthusiastic naturalists and both were elected fellows of the Linnean Society. The eldest, Robert Duppa Crotch (1832-1903) travelled extensively in Norway and wrote papers on birds, mammals and insects. His younger brother, George Robert Crotch (1842-1874), despite his early death in Philadelphia, became a noted entomologist. Neither of the brothers had children and both left legacies to Cambridge University for the purchase of zoological specimens (the Crotch Fund – Appendix 1).

Unless otherwise stated the information used in the above was collected from contemporary newspaper reports.

All relationships shown are relative to William Robert Crotch (1799 – 1877)

Michael Crotch (1741.2.11 - 1813) ←←←Grandfather carpenter – three children *** ?married Isabella ()

father **Dr William Crotch** (1775.7.5 - 1847.12.29) youngest son, b. Norwich

mother*** married Martha Bliss (1776.6.12 – 1852.10.20) on 1797.7.10

Rev William Robert Crotch (1799.7.23 - 1877.5.8) Oxford

**1 married Elizabeth Duppa (1800.8.24 - 1848.10.30) on 1831.7.21

son William Duppa ²Duppa Crotch FLS (1832.7.31 – 1903.8.25) b. Taunton

*** married ³Mari Blackwell née Svee (c1837 - 1895)

on **1868.10.5**

No Issue

son **Edward Thomas Crotch (1834 - 1837)** b. Taunton

daughter Catharine Elizabeth Duppa Crotch (1837 – 1917.9.17) b. Taunton

*** married Samuel Thomas Nicholls (c1840 – 1914.11.8)

on **1865.7.27**

No Issue

son ⁴George Robert Crotch FLS (1842.1.14 – 1874.6.16) b. Taunton

Unmarried?

**2 married Elizabeth Bliss (1807.3.13 - 1856.10.19) on 1853.7.5

No Issue

**3 married Flora Lawrance (1835 - 1897.4.9) on 1865.7.29

No Issue

Unmarried

sister Jane Catherine Crotch (1810.8.4 – 1832.5.30)

Unmarried

sister **Sarah Charlotte Crotch (1810.8.4 – 1826.9.19)**

Unmarried

Sources:

1776 June 19: Baptism Register, St Mary the Virgin, Oxford

Born June 12, Baptised June 19, Martha daughter of Robert & Martha Bliss..

1779 March 20: *Norfilk Chronicle

HOME NEWS. On Monday last died at Cambridge, William Crotch, the musical child, and son of Mr. Michael Crotch, carpenter, in this city.

[Fake News?]

1797 July 10: Marriage Register, St Mary the Virgin, Oxford

Marriage of William Crotch, bachelor of this parish and Martha Bliss of the same, by licence. Witnesses Robert Bliss and Joshua Dix.

1799 August 18: Baptism Register, St Mary Magdalen, Oxford

William Robert son of William & Martha Crotch was born July 23 and christened August 18th 1799.

1801 February 1: England, Births and Christenings, 1538-1975. Salt Lake City, Utah Baptism of Elizabeth Duppa, daughter of Thomas and Catharine Duppa, Shifnal, Shropshire. Born 1800 August 24.

1801 January 14: Baptism Register, St Mary Magdalen, Oxford

Isabella Martha, daughter of William & Martha Crotch was born Decr 19th 1899 and christened Jany 14th 1801.

1807 April 23: Baptism Register, St Peter in the East

Baptism of Elizabeth, daughter of Robert and Elizabeth Bliss, born 1807 March 13.

1810 September 13: Baptism Register, St Marylebone, Westminster

Baptism of Jane Catherine, daughter of William Crotch & Martha his wife. Born 4th August. Baptism of Sarah Charlotte, daughter of William Crotch & Martha his wife. Born 4th August. Twins.

1813 January 7: *Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette

DIED. At Norwich, aged 73, Mr. Michael Crotch, father of Dr. Crotch, professor of music, Oxford – Near Montmorency, the celebrated musical composer, Gretry: he was born at Liege on 11th Feb. 1741.

1821 January 30: *Star (London)

DIED. Tuesday, at North End, Fulham, aged 20, Isabella Martha, eldest daughter of Dr. Crotch, Professor of Music in the University of Oxford.

1826 September 25: *British Press

DIED. On the 19th inst., in her 17th year, Sarah Charlotte, the twin daughter of Dr. Crotch.

1831 August 3: *Hereford Journal

MARRIED. – 21st inst [ult!] at Bridgenorth, the Rev. W. R. Crotch, M. A. Fellow of New College, Oxford, to Elizabeth, second daughter of Thos. Duppa, Esq. of Bridgenorth.

1831 August 18: *Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette

BATH, Wednesday, August 17 ...

The Rev. W. R. CROTCH, M. A., fellow of New College, Oxford, has entered upon the duties of the Taunton College School.

1832 June 2: *Sun (London)

DIED. On the 30th ult. at Acton, Jane Catherine, daughter of Dr. Crotch, Professor of Music, Oxford.

1832 August 2: *Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette

BIRTHS. July 31, the lady of the Rev. William Robert Crotch, M. A. of Taunton, a son.

1834 November 27: Baptism register, St Mary's, Taunton.

Baptism of Edward Thomas, son of William Robert and Elizabeth Crotch of Castle Green, Bishops Hull, Clergyman.

1835 May 1: England, Births and Christenings, 1538-1975. Salt Lake City, Utah Baptism of Flora Lawrance, daughter of Robert and Elizabeth Susannah Lawrance, Milford, Hampshire.

1837 August 23: Burial Register, Bishops Hull, Somerset

Burial of Edward Thomas Crotch, 2 years and 10 months, Bishop's Hull.

1837 December 10: Baptism register, St Mary's, Taunton.

Baptism of Catharine Elizabeth Duppa, daughter of William Robert and Elizabeth Crotch of Bishops Hull, Clergyman.

1842 January 26: *Taunton Courier, and Western Advertiser

BIRTHS. On the 14th instant, the lady of the Rev. W. R. Crotch, of a son.

[Baptism records show this to be George Robert Crotch.]

1848 January 8: *Cambridge Chronicle and Journal

Death of Dr. Crotch—One of England's most eminent musicians has been gathered to bis fathers, namely. Dr. Crotch, who died on the 29th of December, at the residence of his son, the Rev. R. Crotch, master of the grammar school at Taunton, aged 72. At the very early age of three years he performed several pieces on the organ in a most extraordinary manner: some of the passages were produced by his knuckles tumbling over the keys. He possessed a most acute ear, and could name any note struck on the pianoforte without seeing it. In the course of time Crotch became a very profound theorist, and at the age of 22 (just 50 years ago) was appointed Professor of Music in the University Oxford, which conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Music. In 1822 Dr. Crotch was appointed principal of the Royal Academy of Music. He composed a vast number of pieces for the organ and pianoforte, and several very charming vocal pieces. He also composed the oratorio of Palestine, and several didactic works, among which were his Elements of Musical Composition and Thorough Bass," three volumes of various kinds of music of all nations, &c. The last time the worthy doctor performed in public was during the Royal festival in Westminster Abbey in 1834, when he presided at the organ on the third day. Dr. Crotch was born at Norwich in 1775; for some time past resided at Taunton. Although his dissolution was not unexpected, and he was fully prepared for it, yet it was awfully sudden, for it took place while surrounded by the family at dinner.

1848 November 15: *Taunton Courier and Western Advertiser

Deaths. Oct. 30, at Daneford Cottage, near Bridgenorth, after a long illness, Elizabeth, wife of the Revd. W. R. Crotch, of Taunton.

1851: Census – College School, Bishops Hull, Somerset

William R Crotch	head	widr	51	Master of the Endowed school Chaplain to Hospital Tavis?	Oxford
W Crotch G Crotch M Crotch	son son mothe	unm un er widov	18 9 w 74	Scholar Widow of musical doctor	Taunton Taunton Oxford

1852 October 30: *Morning Chronicle

DIED. On the 20th inst., at Weston-Super-Mare, aged 76 years, Mrs. Martha Crotch, widow of the late Dr. Crotch, of Taunton.

1853 July 7: *London Evening Standard

On the 5th inst., at Barnes, Surrey, the Rev. William Robert Crotch, of Stoke Court, Somerset, to Elizabeth, eldest daughter of the late Robert Bliss, Esq., of Rose Hill, Oxford. [They were married by Rev Joshua Dix, rector of all Hallows, Broad-street. She was a cousin, her father was the brother of his mother.]

1856 October 30: *Morning Post

DEATHS. CROTCH. – On the 19th inst., at Weston-super-Mare, Elizabeth, the wife of the Rev. W. R. Crotch, of Stoke Court, near Taunton.

1861: Census - Uphill, Somerset

Wm Robt Crotch	head	widr	61	Clergyman without the care of souls M A Oxford	Oxford
Wm Duppe Crotch	son	unm	28	B A Oxford	Taunton
Catharine E D Crotch	dau	un	23		Taunton
Charlotte E Dix	cousin	un	16	Newlyr	n Truro
[Plus four servants.				·	

Charlotte Elizabeth Dix (1845 -) was the daughter of Rev Edward and Martha Dix.]

1865 July 27: Marriage Register, Uphill, Somerset

Marriage of Samuel Thomas Nicholls (bachelor full age) gentleman of Weston-super-Mare, son of Samuel Nicholls, gentleman, and Catharine Elizabeth Duppa Crotch (spinster full age) of Uphill, daughter of William Robert Crotch, Clerk in Holy Orders. Witnesses Caroline Ester Nicholls and A H [?] Nicholls.

[Samuel was Catharine's cousin, their mothers were both daughters of Thomas Duppa.]

1865 July 29: Marriage Register, Bleadon, Somerset

Marriage by licence of William Robert Crotch (widower full age) Clergyman of Uphill House, son of William Crotch, mus. doctor, and Flora Lawrence (spinster full age) of Bleadon Rectory, daughter of Robert Lawrance, Rector of Bleadon. Witnesses Wm Duppa Crotch, Mary Kerr and Emily F Boultbee.

[Flora was the Rector's youngest daughter.]

1868 October 14: *Wolverhampton Chronicle and Staffordshire Advertiser

MARRIAGES. On the 5th instant, at S. Mary Magdalene's, Bridgenorth, by the Rev. S. Bentley, vicar, William Duppa Crotch, of Uphill, and of Helmdalen, Norway, to Mari, widow of the late E. J. Blackwell, Esq., of Ampney Crucis, and daughter of Thor Svee, of Vaage, Norway.

[Mari's deceased husband, Eardley John Blackwell, had been the close friend of William Duppa Crotch and Theodore Rathbone. The group had spent much time hunting in Norway.]

1871: Census – Rectory, Wolverton, Warwickshire

William Robert Crotch	head	mar	71	Temporary Curate	Oxford
Flora Crotch	wife	mar	35		Milford
Susannah Hill	hkpr	wid	58	Housekeeper	Hackney
Sarah Ann Whitling	serv	unm	24	Servant Domestic	Terington? Wilts

1874 August 8: Probate Register (Principal Registry)

Records the death of George Robert Crotch, late of Uphill House, Somerset, in Philadelphia USA on 1874 June 16. Probate to William Pierson Gordon and Samuel Thomas Nichols of Bridgenorth. [He was buried on 19 June in Woodlands Cemetery, Philadelphia.]

1877 May 19: *John Bull

May 8, at Catherington, William Robert Crotch, M.A., Vicar of that place, late Fellow of New College, Oxford, only son of the late William Crotch, Mus. Doc., Oxon, in his 78th year.

1895 August 2: Essex Record Office; Chelmsford, Essex, England; Essex Church of England Parish Registers

Burial of Maria Blackwell (56) at St Peter Ad Vincula, Coggeshall, Essex.

[This is widely cited by the family as being Mari Crotch but why she should be using the name Blackwell has not been resolved. William Duppa Crotch is described as a Widower in the 1901 census.]

1897 July 3: Probate Register, London

Records the death of Flora Crotch, widow, of Hllesley-rectory, Woodbridge, Suffolk, on 1897 April 9. Probate to Rev Robert Lawrence, clerk, and Rev Thomas Francis Boultbee, clerk.

1903 December 2: Probate Register (London)

Records the death of William Duppa Crotch of "Asgard", Richmond, on 1903 August 25. Probate to Mary Rathbone, spinster, and Samuel Thomas Nicholls, solicitor [his uncle].

1914 December 17: Probate Register (London)

Records the death of Samuel Thomas Nicholls of Bridgenorth, Shropshire, on 1914 November 8. Probate to Benjamin Ellis Morgan esq. and William Henry Taylor, solicitor.

1917 December 1: Probate Register (London)

Records the death of Catharine Elizabeth Duppa Nicholls, widow, of Bridgenorth, Shropshire, on 1917 September 17. Probate William Henry Taylor and Claude Ellis Morgan, lieutenant H. M. Army.

Appendix 1: The Crotch Fund

Both William Dupa Dupa Crotch and George Robert Crotch bequeathed money in their wills to the University of Cambridge.

Statutes and Ordinances of the University of Cambridge (Statute E Trusts chapter xxxvii https://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/so/2017/statute_e-section37.html viewed 28 October 2019)

THE CROTCH FUND

- 1. The investments from time to time representing the endowments given to the University under the will of George Robert Crotch dated 22 June 1872 and the will of William Duppa Duppa Crotch dated 15 August 1903 shall together constitute a trust fund called the Crotch Fund.
- 2. The income of the Crotch Fund shall be used for the purchase of books and specimens for the Museum of Zoology or otherwise for the general purposes of that Museum as may be provided by Ordinance.

1905 November 24: *Western Times

By the will of the late Mr. William Crotch, of Richmond, the University of Cambridge receives a bequest of £8,000 in trust for the Museum of Zoology.

1935 May 29: *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer

CAMBRIDGE Museum of Zoology to benefit from £6,000 bequest.

It is announced that the museum of Zoology at Cambridge will shortly benefit from the bequest of the late W. D. D. Crotch. The capital passing to the University is about £6,000, and a Grace recommending that a new endowment be added to the capital of the Crotch Fund, created out of the bequest of his brother, the late G. R. Crotch, will be submitted to the Regent House on June 1.

Appendix 2: A little light relief ...

1859 June 11: * Weston-super-Mare Gazette and General Adveriser *CORRESPONDENCE.*

To the Editor of the Weston-Super-Mare Gazette, and Clevedon Journal Uphill House, Wednesday, June 8, 1859

SIR, - We have now, I am happy to say, a flourishing Natural History Society in this town, but that there are dangers to be incurred – to the ears at least – in such pursuits as this society would favour, will appear from the following facts.

As my brother and myself were returning from Weston on Saturday evening last, we were struck by the appearance of some insects on the last lamp on the beach, and as many of our greatest entomological rarities have been obtained in such situations, we endeavoured to capture them - my brother climbing the lamp for the purpose, whilst I remained at the bottom with a net. We had just captured a moth, seldom, if ever previously obtained in the county, when we were salted by cries of "Get off that lamp," and two persons (one of whom I have heard is Lieut. Fowler, and who caries his left arm in a sling) ran up, and the latter told us to be off, in language so plentifully interlarded with oaths, that I decline printing it. I replied that the lamps were public property, and that he at least had no rights to order us from them. His answer was, "It is a lie, that lamp is mine; you put it out the other night, and if a policeman were here I would give you both in charge." I remarked that I had not been in Weston lately in the evening, and could not therefore have put out the lamp. "I don't believe you," was again his reply, stripped of the expletives. I now thought it right to say that such language was not usual between gentlemen. "I don't believe you are gentlemen," was the response. Upon this I tendered my card, and was met by, "Put you[sic] card in your pocket where the monkey put the nuts, and go to hell and be d—d: now you have it!" I immediately followed the first portion of this gentlemanly suggestion: as regards the latter, he threw it out so often that I concluded that it was his ordinary mode of rounding a period, and after a wistful look at his maimed right hand, I took no further notice. Mr Fowler at length entered his gate, and a bystander, who heard the whole dialogue, remarked "Be he drunk, Sir?" It was the only charitable conclusion, but as I have addressed a note to the lieutenant in question without receiving any reply, I take the only course now open to me. I will only mention further, that I am informed that the lamp that was extinguished was the one opposite Belvidere - not Fern Villa - and had water in the pipe! Apologising for the length of my letter on so absurd a subject, to which I shall not again recur,

I am, Sir, &c., W. D. CROTCH.

1859 June 18: *Weston-super-Mare Gazette and General Adveriser *CORRESPONDENCE.*

To the Editor of the Weston-Super-Mare Gazette, and Clevedon Journal SIR, - On the principle of audi alteram partem, allow me to offer a few remarks upon a letter signed W. D. Crotch, which appeared in last week's Gazette. For several nights previous to the night in question, I had been considerably annoyed in consequence of some person having extinguished three of the gas lamps contiguous to my residence. Now on the Saturday morning I had lodged a complaint at the gas works, trusting means would be hit upon to bring the offender to justice, and you may judge my indignation, when, upon returning home about 11p.m., I observed a man in the act, as I supposed, of turning off the gas from the lamp opposite my own gate; I desired the individual to descend at once, but instead of complying, he told me he should remain where he was as long as it pleased him; I was naturally excited by such very strange behaviour, and informed the person (for I could not for one moment suppose the aggressor to be a gentleman), that if I caught him there again I should unquestionably give him into custody. He certainly offered me his card, which I as decidedly refused, still being under the impression that his object was to extinguish the lamp: and it is very probable, that considering the annoyance and provocation I had received, that I made use of a few strong expressions, upon what I conceived to be the audacity and impertinence of an individual, whose position, to say the least of it, was extremely suspicious. Upon the Monday after I received the following letter:-

Uphill, June 5th, 1859

Sir, - Your language and demeanour on Saturday evening last was so insulting and ungentlemanly to my brother and myself, that I must beg you to apologise, or accept the alternative of seeing an account of the circumstances in the paper. I am, sir, yours obediently, W. D. CROTCH.

Whenever a misunderstanding occurs between gentlemen, I believe every one conversant with the usages of society is perfectly aware that it is customary for a friend of the aggrieved party to wait upon the aggressor (real or imagined), when in 19 cases out of 20, explanations are given and received, satisfactory to both parties: but Mr. W. D. Crotch thought proper to take another course, and as his missive contains a threat, I could take no notice of it, although I am bound to confess that it was a capital method of advertising an excellent society.

I must certainly beg your forbearance for troubling you with such a long letter upon a subject that assuredly should have remained a private, and not have been made a public matter, and will only say in conclusion, that Mr. W. D. Crotch's allusion to my wounded arm – a wound I trust I have no occasion to feel ashamed of – was uncalled for, unfeeling, and ungentlemanly.

I am, Sir, yours, &c., Fern Villa, June 15th, 1859. GEO FOWLER.

P.S. – Under no circumstances shall I deign to notice any further communications upon a subject that should never have been brought before the public.

[The Weston-super-Mare Natural History Society had been established early in 1859]

Notes:

¹ The date of Dr William Crotch's birth, 1775 July 7, is taken from his memorial stone in the churchyard of St Peter & St Paul, Bishops Hull, Somerset. *Find A Grave*, image (https://images.findagrave.com/photos/2001/222/crotchwilliam.jpg: accessed 26 October 2019).

² It is not clear when the second Duppa arrived; its only use seems to have been in his death registration and probate data.

³ Mari's daughter Emma (Blackwell) had been born in Norway and married Rev Francis F Sclater. Mari is with the couple in 1881 and 1891. Her other daughter was Kari Blackwell.

⁴ George Robert Crotch was a noted Coleopterist. An extensive obituary is given by Edward Newman in *The Entomologist* (1874) **7** 236-240.