

Mary Miranda Corsa, Her Life and Loves
By Cheryl Corsa and Kathy Roberts
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“If you can't get rid of the skeleton in your closet, you'd best teach it to dance.”

--George Bernard Shaw

Mary Miranda Corsa is one of many colorful characters in the Corsa family story. Hers was a life of abundant dramatic episodes, much like a good soap opera.

Mary Miranda was born in 1843 in Westchester, Westchester County, New York.¹ It was an exciting time for this area, which was growing like crazy. The construction of the Croton Dam and Aqueduct was completed in 1842. The aqueduct, carrying water from Croton to two reservoirs in Manhattan, is considered one of the greatest engineering achievements of the 19th century. And in 1844, the New York and Harlem Railroad reached the area and small communities flourished wherever railroad stations were built.

Mary Miranda was the daughter of John M. Corsa (1809-1889) and Mary Corsa (1802-1896).² John M. and Mary Corsa were first cousins once removed. They were married December 28, 1842.³

John M. Corsa was a carpenter and contractor who spent his entire life in the West Farms, Westchester County area. He was a successful businessman and landowner who provided his family with a comfortable lifestyle. When he died, he left his wife considerable property. His parents were Isaac Corsa (1874-1826 -- the son of Andrew Corsa the Scout and his first wife, Helena) and Eliza M. Brown (1785-1850).⁴ John M.'s parents, Isaac and Eliza, had nine children, including Absalom, whose line continues to Larry Corsa, who now lives in California and with whom we've enjoyed sharing information about the Corsa family tree.

Mary Miranda's mother, Mary Corsa, was the daughter of Isaac Corsa (1773-1860) and his wife Phebe (1782 - ?).⁵ Yes, Mary Miranda had two grandfathers named Isaac Corsa! Isaac, Mary Miranda's grandfather on her mother's side, was a brother of Andrew "The

¹ U.S. Federal census of 1850, Township of West Chester, West Chester County, New York, family 69. Our file: USFedCensus1850_CorsaisaacPhoebeJohnMaryMiranda.pdf.

² Ibid. Also see: Gale Corson, "The Descendants of Andrew Corsa – part 1 of 4," *Corson Cousins*, October 2008, 28.4-18.

³ Ray C. Sawyer, comp., *Marriages Published in the Christian Intelligencer of the Reformed Dutch Church from 1840-1871 (Mss 904)* vol. 3 (14 Jan 1843). "At West Farms, on the evening of December 28th, by the Rev. Barnabas V. Collins, Mr. John M Corsa to Miss Mary Corsa, both of the County of Westchester."

⁴ Gale Corson, "The Descendants," 28.4-18.

⁵ Gale Corson, "The Descendants of Benjamin Fletcher Corson," *Corson Cousins*, July 2008, 28.3-19-28.3-20.

Scout” Corsa. Isaac and Phebe had at least two children—Mary Corsa and her brother James Isaac Corsa. The brother, James Isaac Corsa (about 1812-1900⁶), married a woman named Eliza Rabel (about 1811-1892)⁷ and they had two children who will play a role in our story later on – James I. Corsa (1847-1867) and his sister Maria T. Corsa (about 1849-1906), whom we call Maria “The Recluse” Corsa.⁸

We don’t know much about Mary Miranda’s grandmother, Phebe. Usually in land deeds written in this era, the wife was known by her first name and maiden name. This was true of Dutch church records, too. But records we’ve found regarding Phebe always just call her “Phebe” or “Phoebe” with no last name recorded. And it’s ironic – when we traveled to her burial site at Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx, we found Phebe’s husband’s stone right where it belongs. And next to it was a stone base on which Phebe’s stone had, at one time rested. It had broken off, and is now, in 2011, standing propped up against the Corsa monument in that cemetery, with its face against the massive obelisk denoting the Corsa gravesite. It’s been there for years. It has sunk into the ground so that we were unable to unearth it to turn it around and read it.

We don’t know where, exactly, Mary Miranda was born. In 1850, we first find Mary Miranda, seven years old, in the federal census record for the Township of Westchester, Westchester County, New York, living with her parents, John M. (age 41) and Mary (age 46).⁹ Living with them (or next door) were Mary Corsa’s parents (Mary Miranda’s grandparents), Isaac and Phebe Corsa. Exploring the census records doesn’t help determine exactly where in Westchester the family was living. There is no street address. John M. is listed as a carpenter; his father-in-law, Isaac, is listed as a farmer, with \$3000 worth of real estate.

Because Mary Miranda was an only child, and because her parents were older (her father was 34 years old when she was born; her mother was 41 years old, if census records are to be believed), we can imagine that she was doted on, and probably spoiled, by her parents and her grandparents. And she was a character! Her mother says, in a statement to the press when she was an old lady, that by the time Mary Miranda was thirteen, she was “wayward.”

In the 1860 federal census,¹⁰ we find the family still living together, but in a new location. The community in which they lived in 1860 was called the “Town of West Farms.” In 1846, West Farms was separated from the town of Westchester, but in 1850

⁶ “”Corsa, James I.”, *New-York Tribune*, New York, NY, August 29, 1900, 12. Our file: CorsaJamesI-Death-19000829.pdf

⁷ Gale Corson, “The Descendants,” 28.4-23.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ U.S. Federal census of 1850, Township of West Chester, Westchester County, New York, family 69. Our file: USFedCensus1850_CorsalSaacPhoebeJohnMaryMiranda.pdf

¹⁰ U.S. Federal census of 1860, Town of West Farms, Westchester County, New York, family 3991. Our file: USFedCensus1860_CorsaJohnMaryMiranda.pdf

the family was on the “Township of Westchester” pages, not the “West Farms” pages, so it looks like the family moved sometime between 1850 and 1860, probably to a larger and more splendid house, since John M. was successful in his business.

In 1860, John M. (age 47), carpenter, and Mary Corsa (age 50) were living with their 17 year old daughter, noted in the census record as Mary M. John M. owned \$2000 worth of real estate. Note that Mary Corsa, Mary Miranda’s mother, has only aged 4 years since the 1850 census, and John M. has aged 6 years! The more we look at census reports, the more we question (1) the ability of census takers to take down accurate information, and (2) people’s telling the truth to census takers! This is obviously the same family, living at the same location. But it does cause a few problems with regard to getting an accurate birthdate for some of our family members.

We don’t find Isaac and Phebe in this census, however. John M.’s father-in-law died in May of 1860.¹¹ We don’t have a death date for Phebe, but she was apparently not living with or next door to her daughter and son-in-law by August, 1860, when the census taker recorded his information.

By 1870, Mary Miranda was apparently no longer living with her parents. She was 27 years old. We find John M. (age 55) and Mary (age 57), in the 1870 federal census, still living in what was now called the town of West Farms.¹² John M. declared himself a “gardener” and owned \$5000 in real estate.¹³ We have not found Mary Miranda in a Federal census for 1870.

In fact, Mary Miranda had married Cornelius B. Schuyler (1839¹⁴-1899) around 1868.¹⁵ Cornelius B. was a successful builder, about four years older than Mary Miranda. We do not find Cornelius B. Schuyler in an 1870 Federal census.

¹¹ Gravestone of John M. Corsa, Westlawn Cemetery, Bronx, NY, reads: In memory of ISAAC CORSA who departed this life May 8 1860 aged 87 years 13 days.

¹² U.S. Federal census of 1870, Town of West Farms, Westchester County, New York, family 12. Our file: USFedCensus1870_CorsaJohnMary.pdf

¹³ In 1880, it appears John M. and Mary are living on Williamsbridge Road, 679th Enumerated District, County of NY, according to the U.S. Federal Census. See: USFedCensus1880_CorsaJohnMMary.pdf. However, this census record shows John married to “Margaret M.” It is possible that Mary Corsa also dealt in land transactions. There is a record of a mortgage involving a Mary Corsa, for example, in 1878. This may be John M.’s wife Mary. See: CorsaMaryMortgageMadisonAve24thWard187804ish.pdf. Also, in 1889, again, mortgages involving Mary Corsa: CorsaMaryMortgageMyrtleAve18890706.pdf and CorsaMaryMortgageValentineAve18890731.pdf.

¹⁴ New York, Births and Christenings, 1640-1962, index, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/FDYS-R9Y>), Cornelius Berrian Schuyler, 19 Sep 1839; citing reference , FHL microfilm 17475. See also: U.S. Federal census of 1860, Town of West Farms, Westchester County, New York, family 3048. Our file: SchuylerCorneliusBBirthRecord.pdf

¹⁵ We take the marriage date from a news story saying Mary Miranda was 19 when she married. See SchuylerCorneliusNYSun18990430.pdf. We have not succeeded in finding her or Cornelius in the 1870 federal census records. There are three Cornelius Schuylers listed in New York for that year – one in

In several news stories, Cornelius B. Schuyler contended that he was the son of John Schuyler who served in the Mexican War and the War of 1812, and that his grandfather was General Philip Schuyler.¹⁶ These were ancestors to be proud of – if his story were true.¹⁷ We know that General Philip Schuyler died in 1804 and although he had fifteen children with his wife Catherine Van Rensselaer, including a son named John Bradstreet Schuyler, born in 1765 and died in 1795 – too early to have been Cornelius B.’s father. John Bradstreet Schuyler left only one son named Philip, noted in General Philip Schuyler’s will as the son of Philip’s deceased son John Bradstreet Schuyler.

John Schuyler, Cornelius’ father, is found in the 1840¹⁸ and 1850¹⁹ Federal censuses, and his birthdate is noted as 1808. This is too late for him to have been a son of General Philip Schuyler, who died in 1804. So, unfortunately, after extensive research on ancestry.com, Google books, and the NYG&B Records, it appears that the story that Cornelius B. gave to the newspapers about his family history is somewhat distorted: he

Albany, age 74; one in New York Ward 21 District 21, New York City, about 50 years of age, and one in Danube, Herkimer County, New York, age 19. None of these fit. None of the Mary Schuylers fit, either.

¹⁶ For a brief biography of Philip Schuyler, see our file: SchuylerPhilipBornInAlbany.pdf.

¹⁷ Philip Schuyler (1733-1804) was appointed one of the 4 major generals of the Continental army in 1775. He was born and died in Albany, N. Y. and belonged to a wealthy colonial family. His father, John Schuyler, Jr., was the third generation of the family in America, when he married Cornelia Van Cortlandt, connecting the Schuylers with another prominent family. General Schuyler took command of the Northern Theatre of the Revolutionary War, and planned the Invasion of Canada (1775). He was active in preparing a defense against the Saratoga Campaign, Britain’s strategy to cut the American Colonies into two parts by invading and occupying New York State in 1777. In the summer of that year, General John Burgoyne marched his British army south from Quebec over the valleys of Lake Champlain and Lake George. On the way, he took over the small Colonial garrison of Fort Ticonderoga at the base of the two lakes. When General St. Clair surrendered Fort Ticonderoga in July, Congress replaced Schuyler with General Horatio Gates, who had accused Schuyler of dereliction of duty. The British invasion was stopped and defeated at the Battle of Saratoga by forces under the command of Gen. Gates and Benedict Arnold. That victory, the first big defeat of the British, brought France into the war on the American side. When Schuyler demanded a court martial to answer Gates’ charges, he was vindicated but resigned from the army in 1779. He then served in two more sessions of the Continental Congress in 1779 and 1780. He was a member of the NY State Senate from 1780-84, and NY State Surveyor General from 1781-84. He returned to the State Senate from 1786-90, where he actively supported the adoption of the U.S. Constitution. In 1789, he was elected a U.S. Senator from NY to the First United States Congress, serving 1789-91. He returned to the State Senate from 1792-97. In 1797, he was elected again to the U.S. Senate and served in the 5th United States Congress from 1797-98. His daughter Elizabeth married Alexander Hamilton, who was later Secretary of the Treasury. His son Philip Jeremiah Schuyler served in the United States House of Representatives. Another daughter, Margarita, married a cousin Stephen Van Rensselaer III, 8th Patroon of the name. Another daughter, Angelica married John Barker Church, a Member of Parliament. For a picture of Schuyler’s statue, see: Schuylerstatue.jpg. To view Philip Schuyler’s will, see The Last Will and Testament of Philip Schuyler, Surrogate’s Court Albany County, Recorded Dec. 12, 1804 at Vol. 3 of Wills, p. 149 found at <http://www.usgwarchives.netfile>. Our file: SchuylerPhilipWill.pdf.

¹⁸ U.S. Federal Census of 1840, Yonkers, Westchester, New York, Roll 353, Page 146, Image 1144 Family History Library Film 0017210. Our file: USFedCensus1840_SchuylerJohnFamily.pdf

¹⁹ U.S. Federal Census of 1850, The Township of West Farms, Westchester County, New York, family 453. Our file: USFedCensus1850_SchuylerCorneliusSchuylerJohn.pdf. Interestingly, the family shows up on the same census page as Andrew “the Scout’s” son James Corsa and his wife Mary Walton Corsa, along with several of their children.

does not appear to have been the grandson – or great-grandson – of the famous revolutionary war general Philip Schuyler.

Nor have we been able to find records showing that Cornelius' father, John, served in the War of 1812 or the Mexican War. Mexican War records are scarce, and if John were born in 1808, chances are he wouldn't have been fighting in 1812-1815.

We have discovered, also, that the Schuyler name was found in the Westchester area from the early 1700's.²⁰ Scharf notes that in the 1733, land along the Croton River, including properties of the deLanceys, the Cortlands, and someone named John Schuyler, Jr. "in right of Cornelia his wife," was divided. In 1753, a land agreement included "Cornelia Schuyler, widow." The John Schuyler, Jr. referenced in these land transactions was the son of Philip Schuyler of Albany and his great grandson of Gen. Philip Schuyler. He married Cornelia van Cortland (b. 1698), daughter of Stephanus van Cortland and Gertrude Schuyler who were themselves married in September 1671.²¹ Tying him to "our" Cornelius B. Schuyler, however, has proven difficult.

In 1840, the Schuylers appear on the Federal census page 144 for Yonkers.²² Also on this page are listed others we know from our genealogical research, including "Richd. Carson" whom we suspect was "our" Richard Corsa, Jhn. Valentine and several Berians. It is interesting to note, too, that on page 145,²³ we find listed Jhn Corsa, Peter Briggs, Andrew Corsa, several Bussings, and several Valentines. It was a small world – the same census taker recorded both pages, on the same date.

²⁰ John Thomas Scharf, *History of Westchester county: New York, including Morrisania, Kings Bridge, and West Farms, which have been annexed to New York city*, Volume 1, Part 1, L. E. Preston & Co., 1886 (Google eBook). Also, Edward Floyd De Lancey, *Origin and History of Manors in the Province of New York and in the County of Westchester*, New York, 1886. For selected sections regarding the Schuyler family, see our notes: [SchuylersOfWestchesterFromScharf.pdf](#).

²¹ Stephanus van Cortlandt's estate was erected into a lordship and Manor of Cortlandt created by patent of William III., June 17, 1697. The area of the estate in Westchester County, New York, contained 87,713 acres. It consisted of valuable farming land as well as vast tracts of timber and abundant water. The Manor House was one of the oldest and best known of the private residences along the Hudson River. It had been constructed to serve not only as a residence, but as fort against the Indians. Its walls were constructed of reddish freestone and were almost three feet thick. There were holes embedded to allow guns to point through. Several of the successive owners added onto the house. Those who slept there included: Washington, Franklin, Lafayette and Rochambeau. Stephanus Van Cortlandt married, in 1671, Gertrude Schuyler. Her will was made in 1718. Her father was Philip Pieterse Schuyler who came from Holland before the year 1650, and settled on land of Patroon Kiliaen Van Rensselaer, about 4 miles north of Albany, on the west bank of the Hudson; he was the captain of a foot company of Albany militia in 1667; died May 9, 1683; married, December 12, 1650. Margareta, daughter of Brandt Arent Van Slichtenhorst.

²² U.S. Federal census of 1840, Yonkers, New York, Roll 353; Page 146; Image 1144; Family History Library Film: 0017210. Our file: [USFedCensus1840_SchuylerJohnFamily.pdf](#).

²³ *Ibid.*, p 147. Our file: [USFedCensus1840F_SchuylerJohnNeighbors-page7nexttoSchuyleronpage9.pdf](#).

Cornelius B. Schuyler's family is found in the 1860 Federal census.²⁴ Cornelius B. is 21 years old, a carpenter, born in New York in 1839. He's living with his mother, Eliza (40, born in New York), his brother William (19), sister Jemima E. (15), sister Maria D. M. (7) and brother Martin V. B. (12). His father, John, is not listed, and as a result we think he may have died between 1850 and 1860. This family is found on the same Federal census page as the Christopher Walton family, indicating they were probably neighbors.²⁵ Isaac Walton, Christopher's son, was about the same age as Cornelius B. We can imagine they were friends. (Letitia Corsa Walton, Christopher's wife, was a daughter of Andrew "the Scout" Corsa.)

Cornelius B. Schuyler and Mary Miranda Corsa had two sons in the years following their marriage: Willet C. Schuyler (1872-?) and Oscar Schuyler (1877-1915). And, according to Woodlawn Cemetery records, they lost a child in infancy.²⁶ Mary Miranda never acknowledged this loss to the census taker in 1910 when she was asked how many children she had had and how many were still living.²⁷

We find the Cornelius B. Schuyler family listed in the 1880 Federal census,²⁸ though Mary Miranda is mis-named "Margaret M." She is 32 years old and living with Cornelius B. Schuyler, age 37. Cornelius is listed as a carpenter. Two children are listed. The census taker neglected to list the older, Willet, by name, but his age is 12. He is identified as female, but it looks like there was serious miscommunication between the family and the census taker. His brother is listed as "Oliver," age 10. We know from other references that his name was actually Oscar.

The family is living on Berrian Avenue in 1880,²⁹ about seven blocks east of Morris Avenue where Maria T. ("The Recluse") Corsa was living. There's much more to "The Recluse's" story to come!

Martin Schuyler, age 31, also a carpenter, is listed just a few lines down from his brother Cornelius B. in the 1880 census,³⁰ with his sisters Jemimah [Jemima] (24) and Sarah (33). Also living there is Abram [Abraham], another of Cornelius's brothers, with his wife Emma and daughter Grace.

²⁴ U.S. Federal census, Mount Vernon Post Office, Town of West Farms, Westchester County, New York, family 3048. Our file: USFedCensus1860_SchuylerCornelius.pdf

²⁵ Ibid., family 3195.

²⁶ Deed No. 408, Aff. No. 1635, Corsa plot record at Woodlawn Cemetery, Bronx, NY. "Infant of Cornelius and Mary M. Schuyler, Unknown [age], 19540, 5/2/80." Our file: CorsaPlotWoodlawnCemeteryLotOwnerMaryCorsa.jpg

²⁷ U.S. Federal census of 1910, Assembly District 34, Enumeration District 1583, Sheet 11A, New York County, New York, family 254. Our file: USFedCensus1910_SchuylerWilliamBurnhamMary.pdf

²⁸ U.S. Federal census of 1880, Enumeration District 679, New York County, New York, family 5 on Berrian Avenue. Our file: USFedCensus1880_SchuylerCorneliusMirandaOscar.pdf

²⁹ 679th Enum. District, 25 Election Dist, 24th ward, County of NY, New York.

³⁰ Family 8.

Cornelius B. was involved in property ownership; so was his mother-in-law and father-in-law. We found a land transaction for 1882 in which Cornelius B. sold property to Mary Corsa.³¹

But all was not well in the Schuyler household in the 1880's. We know that Mary Miranda had a compelling (some might say aggressive) personality – and that she must have been beautiful – or at least magnetic or charismatic. Her mother, in 1892, said of her: “My daughter had been wayward since she was 13 years old.” I truly wish we had a picture of her! Stories reveal that Mary Miranda “eloped” in the 1880's – probably around 1887 – with a man named White, leaving behind her husband and two teen-aged sons.

In those days, the term “elope” referred not to the running off to get married without a formal ceremony, but referred to a married person running off with a lover.

We continue our story with the tale of her lover, known alternately as Oliver White, Peter White, and Peter V. Haskin.

THE TRAGIC STORY OF PETER V. HASKIN³²

On the cold and blustery afternoon of January 10, 1888, the Pavonia Ferry named Delaware left its Chambers Street dock in Manhattan, bound for Pavonia Avenue, Jersey City. The Pavonia Ferry Company, which belonged to the Erie Railroad Company, was a popular commuter and long distance service for travelers bound to cross the Hudson River. Many passengers would transfer from trains to boats for the passage across the river, and board another train to continue their journeys.

On this particular afternoon, a handsome, well-dressed and very drunk 41-year-old man boarded the ferry. He stumbled about, apparently alone, and it was quite obvious to the other passengers that he had had too much to drink. As the Delaware was entering her slip in Jersey City at 5:30 PM, to the horror of those on board, the man went overboard into the depths of the frigid cold waters of the Hudson. He was pulled from the icy waters unconscious and taken to the City Hospital of Jersey City. So drunk was he that he was unable to communicate with authorities or interested journalists when he revived, but two documents were found in his pockets: a card and a will.

The card read:

³¹ Our file: SchuylerCorneliusSellsToCorsaMaryMirandasMom1882.pdf.

³² This section is taken from the following news stories: “Peter V. Haskin’s Career,” *The Sun*, New York, Thursday, January 12, 1888, 2. Also, “He Clings To His Story. The Man Who Fell Off a Ferryboat Says Mr. Haskin Reared him,” *The New York Times*, January 11, 1888. Also, “Strange Case In New York. Finding of a Queer Document on the Body of a Nearly Drowned Man.” *The Daily News*, Batavia, New York, January 10, 1888, 1. Our files: HaskinPeterV18880112.pdf, HaskinPeterNYTimes18880111Ferryboat.pdf, CorsaMaryMiranda18880110White.pdf

“Peter V. Haskin, care of T.S. Bassord, 95-99 Nassau Street, Room No. 1.”

The other document read as follows:

HOBOKEN, Jan. 9, 1888

To all whom it may concern;

I, Peter V. Haskin, my adopted name, known to the world as such, being being brought up and educated by John B. Haskin, knowing the uncertainty of life, hereby transfer and make over to Mrs. M. M. White all interest that may accrue to me in way of money, pensions, bounty, lands, etc., that may hereafter come to me from the United States government for services as an officer and private in the War of the Rebellion, and as an officer of the United States cavalry, fifth United States, and further transfer to her all moneys that may hereafter be left me in case of death.

Peter V. Haskin

Witness: Miss Nellie Louisa White

The following day, “Peter V. Haskin”, whose stomach had been pumped the night before, appeared before Justice Stilsing as a prisoner. There, he told the Court that he had been visiting friends and, having a bit too much to drink, went to the rear of the ferryboat for relief. He slipped, he told the Court, and, to his “amazement and chagrin” was plunged overboard. Justice Stilsing, offered no evidence to the contrary, let the prisoner off, even though it did appear that that the young man had actually attempted suicide the night of the mishap.

In front of the Court, “Peter V. Haskin” persisted that his adoptive father was John B. Haskin, a well-known name in the greater New York area, which is what perked the interest of local journalists. Indeed, we have found no fewer than five news stories about the event.

Born in Fordham, New York on August 27, 1821, John B. Haskin, the adoptive father, had studied law and was admitted to the bar in 1843, and practiced law in New York City starting in 1845. He was a Civil Justice of New York City from 1847 to 1849, and Supervisor of Fordham from 1850 to 1853 when West Farms had a total of 1114 inhabitants. From 1853 to 1856, he practiced as a Corporation Attorney and ran for a congressional seat. He was elected to the U.S. Congress in 1856, and subsequently re-elected, first as a Democrat, and subsequently as an Anti-Lecompton Democrat (meaning he favored slavery in the Kansas territory). He served as Congressman from 1857 to 1861.

As Congressman, John B. Haskin served as chairman of the Committee on Expenditures in the Department of the Navy (Thirty-fifth Congress), and the Committee on Public Expenditures (Thirty-sixth Congress). Following, he resumed the practice of law and served again as Supervisor of the town of West Farms, New York in 1863.

The Haskin family is important to our story because it has ties to the Bussing family. John B. Haskin, Peter V. Haskin's adoptive father, was the grandson of Benjamin F. Haskin, born in 1767 in Sheffield, MA. According to Scharf's History of Westchester County published in 1886, Benjamin, as a young man, moved from MA to Poughkeepsie, NY where he worked as a grocery store clerk and eventually became a partner in the business.³³ He married well – Elizabeth Cornell, daughter of Gilbert Cornwell who held interest in shipping companies and was the owner of several vessels.

The Benjamin Haskins had seven children. The first son, Henry Remsen Haskin, (b. 12 Oct 1794, d. 24 Jan 1848) married first Elizabeth Bussing on 10 February 1816 in Fordham.³⁴ It appears, from our research, that Elizabeth was the daughter of John Bussing and Sarah Valentine of West Farms. Elizabeth's grandparents on her father's side were Peter Bussing and Charity Williams, who were the parents of Helena Bussing who was Andrew "The Scout's" first wife. In other words, Elizabeth's aunt was Helena Bussing Corsa. Scharf doesn't make the connection. He says Henry Remsen married Elizabeth, daughter of John Bussing who lived near Williams' Bridge – where several of Andrew Corsa's children took up residence. Scharf indicates specifically that Elizabeth Bussing was a descendant of Aaron (Arent) Bussing.³⁵

The courtship of Henry Remson Haskin and Elizabeth Bussing has been preserved through time through a letter that Henry sent to Elizabeth in 1815.³⁶ Transcribed, it reads:

March 20th, 1815

Yonkers

Dear Miss,

³³ Scharf, Vol. 1 Part 2, p. 549.

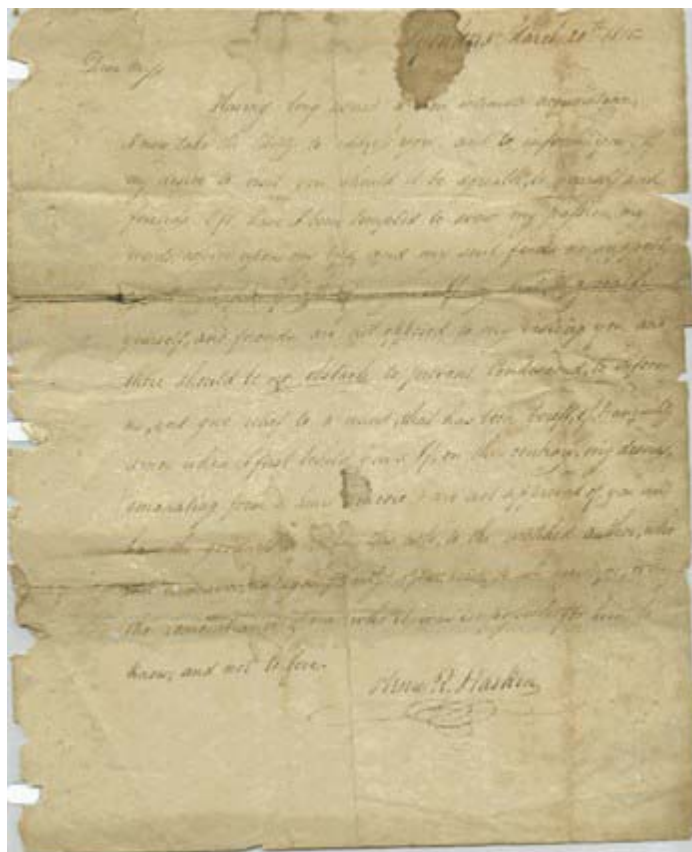
³⁴ Ibid., Vol. 1 Part 2, p. 561. Henry Remson Haskin married second (after the death of Elizabeth) Ann Lowe. They had two children, Harriet and Benjamin F.

³⁵ Bussing was a name common in the Westchester area from the 1600's, and most of these recognize Arent Harman Bussing (b. about 1656 in Harlem) as their New Netherland progenitor. In 1686, Arent Harmanse Bussing was, in fact, listed as one of twenty three grantees of land in Harlem, as per what is called the "Dongan Patent" – named for the Governor of the Province of New York, that made these grantees the Corporation of the Town of New Harlem.

³⁶ Ed Hopkins, owner of the Fallen Branches Web Site, c. 2001. Our file: LetterFromHenryRemsonHaskinToWifeToBeElizabethBussing.jpg

Having long desired a more intimate acquaintance, I now take the liberty to address you, and to inform you of my desire to visit you, should it be agreeable, to yourself and friends. Oft, have I been tempted to avow my passion, my words expire upon my lips, and my soul finds no support, against the fear of offending you. If my suit is agreeable, yourself, and friends, are not opposed to my visiting you, and there should be no obstacle to prevent. Condescend, to inform me, and give relief to a mind, that has been bereft, of tranquility since when I first beheld you. If, on the contrary, my desires, emanating from a heart sincere, are not approved of, you will have the goodness to return this note, to the wretched author, who will endeavor, though (can't make out one word) I fear will be the attempt to erase the remembrance of one who it was impossible for him to know, and not to love.

Henry R. Haskin



Henry Remson Haskin and Elizabeth Bussing were the parents of John Bussing Haskin, the adoptive father of Peter V. Haskin.³⁷

John B. Haskin (b. 27 Aug 1821, d. 18 Sep 1895) married, on 11 May 1844, in the Fordham Dutch Reformed Church, Jane Valentine, daughter of Peter Valentine (1791-1859) and Mary Briggs (1794-1877).³⁸ Jane's grandparents on her father's side, to complicate things, were Dennis Valentine (1766-1855) and Sarah/Susan Bussing (1770-?). On her mother's side, her grandparents were Walter Briggs (1761-1813) and Mary Bussing (1766-?). This is not the Mary Bussing we believe is Richard Corsa's mother. This Mary Bussing was the sister of Helena Bussing who married Andrew Corsa. (It is believed that "our" Mary Bussing was Helena Bussing's aunt.) Helena Bussing and Andrew Corsa had two children, one of whom was Isaac Corsa, whose descendants include Larry Corsa in California that we have communicated with, and whose DNA matches S. James Corsa's DNA point for point.

The Haskins family lived in the old Peter Valentine homestead farmhouse, which they "much modernized" according to Scharf.³⁹ The house was near Central Avenue, close to the old Josiah Briggs homestead and the former residence of the poet, Edgar Allen Poe, which had, for a number of years, been owned by our ancestor, Richard Corsa.

John B. Haskin and Jane Valentine had several children, including Elizabeth, Emma, John B. Jr., Adele Douglass, and Mary. Their first child, Elizabeth, was born in 1850.

³⁷ Scharf, Vol. 1 Part 2, p. 561.-562

³⁸ The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record (quarterly), selected extracts (New York: New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, 1932). For a summary of the life of John B. Haskin, see: Obituary, *The New York Times*, September 20, 1895. Also see: U.S. Federal census of 1860, Town of West Farms, Westchester County, New York, 451, family 3434.

³⁹ Scharf, Vol. 1 Part 2, p. 804.



John B. Haskin

John B. Haskin, J.B. Haskin not only served as Congressman for the district, but served at one time as chairman of the Board of Supervisors, was president of the Board of Education of School District No. 2.⁴⁰

Two days after the attempted suicide of the young man calling himself “Peter V. Haskin,” a news story appeared in New York’s *The Sun*. The former Congressman, John B. Haskin, had been interviewed about Peter V., the man who had taken the Congressman’s name, and described his Peter’s “checkered” past.⁴¹

News stories relate that John B. Haskin, just a year after getting married to Jane, and nearly four years before he and Jane had their own first child, took in a young boy, not even three months old. The boy was an orphan, named Oliver White. The Congressman

⁴⁰ Ibid., Vol. 1 Part 2, p. 561. For more on John B. Haskin and his career and family, see our files: (1) 1913JBHaskinEstateSoldOff.pdf; (2) 18581106HaskinwinsReelectionBy50votes.pdf; (3) AboutHaskinsAntiLeLecomptonDem.pdf; (4) ContestOverJBHaskinsWill-news-18960114.pdf

⁴¹ “Peter V. Haskin’s Career,” *The Sun*, New York, Thursday, January 12, 1888, 2.

said that the mother “who was in every way an admirable woman” died; the boy’s father was a carpenter. The story does not relate how John B. knew the boy’s mother; perhaps she was one of the family’s staff. We don’t know if the boy’s father died as well, or if the carpenter simply couldn’t care for an infant himself. John B. does tell us, however, that when the boy was taken into the Haskin family, they called him Peter Valentine, the name “Valentine” coming from Mrs. Haskin’s parents. Apparently, however, he was generally called “Haskin” as he was brought up and educated by John B. Haskin.

John B. Haskin goes on to say to *The Sun’s* reporter:⁴²

“He grew up a fine looking boy, and he received better advantages than my only son ever got. He attended college, and when I first went to Congress I took him along and he was a page on the floor of the House. I got him into the Naval Academy at Annapolis, but the fact of his orphanage [sic] leaked out, and, as pedigree prevailed in that institution, the boy was bilged. There wasn’t a better shot or sailor among them, but it was alleged that he was not good in mathematics. President Lincoln took a kindly interest in him, and, at his personal direction, Peter was reinstated, only to be bilged again a few months later. He came home, but didn’t like the idea of being a conductor on a railway that I was connected with, and when the civil war broke out he took the opportunity to run off and enlist. Seeing that he liked his new calling, I used my influence and secured for him a place a [sic] First Lieutenant in Gen. Devins’s regiment of volunteers, and by his merits he got to be Quartermaster. He was with the regiment at the surrender of Appomattox.

“After the war I helped him into a place under Recorder Hackett in this city. He was convivial and contracted debts, and finally lost the place. He went into the regular army. This time, through Secretary Stanton, I got him appointed Second Lieutenant in the celebrated Fifth United States Cavalry, under Gen. Emery, and he was stationed at Aiken, S.C. There he became engaged to the daughter of a rich planter. The post was changed to Indian Territory, and there the young Lieutenant fell in with Buffalo Bill. They ‘did’ the woods and Indians together, becoming fast friends.

“The time for Peter’s wedding was at hand. Elaborate preparations were made on the plantation in Aiken, and the ceremony was to be performed in the principal church in the vicinity. Peter started at the proper time, but he was detained at St. Louis. His conviviality delayed him, and when it was too late for the ceremony he was chagrined, and gave up the idea of getting married. Keeping the matter of his conduct secret he returned to the Indian Territory and resigned his place. Since then he has been employed in small places about the

⁴² Ibid. Our file: HaskinPeterV18880112_FullPage.pdf

city. He worked for several years as copyist in the Recorder's office, getting good wages. Again he was a dashing cavalryman in Buffalo Bill's show at the Madison Square Garden, and he did well there. He worked in the Custom House for a while. Of late his brother has been helping him. The Mrs. M. M. White mentioned in the will, to whom he leaves his property, which you may guess is little, is the wife of his brother, who is a ferrymaster of the Hoboken ferry. She, I believe, is a niece of Senator Wagner, and a very respectable lady. The name signed to the will as witness is that of Mrs. White's daughter. It is some years since he has been at my house. I don't know why he should try to end his life."⁴³

Our research of Oliver White/Peter V. Haskin reveals that there is more to this story. The federal census of 1850⁴⁴ shows John B. Haskin, age 29, living with his wife Jane, age 26, in the Township of West Farms in Westchester County. The household includes Peter Haskin, age 5, Elizabeth, age 4 months, Mary E. Nicholes, age 14, Robert Poison, age 15, and John Poison, age 18, all listed as having been born in New York. John Poison is listed as "laborer." Peter is listed as having attended school within the year.

The federal census for 1860⁴⁵ shows the family had grown. John B. Haskin was now 39 years old, an attorney with real estate valued at \$80,000 and personal property valued at \$4600. His wife Jane was 36 years old. Children include Elizabeth (10), Emma (6), John B. Jr. (4) and Peter O. White (14). Following these names are the names of two "Domestics," Margaret Maccole (17) and Mary Herring (25). The others are listed: Ann Haskin (50), Benjn. Haskin (17), and Harriet Haskin (13) followed by Mich Galvin (22) listed as coachman, and Emma Hunt (20). It appears that Peter O. White, age 14, was the same boy listed in 1850 as Peter Haskin. Ann, Benjn. And Harriet Haskin are something of a mystery. They are found, interestingly, in the 1850 census⁴⁶ living in New York Ward 8, New York, New York when Ann was 36, Benj. F. Haskin was 7, and Harriet E Haskin was 3 years old. Living with them was Mary Gough, age 15. Ann lists her birthplace as England in 1850, though it reads N.Y. in 1860. Are these relatives living or visiting with the rich John B. Haskin? And why isn't Adele listed? She would have been 1 year old at the time of the taking of the 1860 census. She is listed as Odelia (11) in the 1870 federal census,, along with her father John B. Haskin (48), mother Jane Haskin (46), Bessie (Elizabeth) Haskin (26), Emma Haskin (16), John B. Haskin Jr. (13) and Mary Haskin (7).

⁴³ For more on Senator Wagner, see our file: [SenatorWagnerNewYork.pdf](#) and [SenatorWagnerNewYork2.pdf](#).

⁴⁴ U.S. Federal census of 1850, Township of West Farms, Westchester County, New York, family 498. See our files: [USFedCensus1850_HaskinJohnBWithPeter01.pdf](#) and [USFedCensus1850_HaskinJohnBWithPeter012pdf](#)

⁴⁵ U.S Federal census of 1860, Town of West Farms, Westchester County, New York, family 3434. Our file: [USFedCensus1860_HaskinFamily.pdf](#)

⁴⁶ U.S. Federal census of 1850, 8th Ward, City of New York, New York, family 1237. Our file: [USFedCensus1850_AnnHaskinAndFamilyNYC.pdf](#)

By 1863, Peter White/Valentine/Haskin would have been 18 years old. Listed under the headline, MIDSHIPMEN ON PROBATION AT THE NAVAL ACADEMY, Peter V. Haskin's name appears in a New York Times article, "THE NAVAL ACADEMY. Close of the Fall Examination List of New Midshipmen,".⁴⁷ A Peter V. Bussing listed as well. This was, more than likely, Peter V., grandson of Andrew "The Scout" Corsa. Andrew and Mary Poole's daughter married Peter Bussing, who had a son Peter Valentine Bussing, born in 1843, making him about 2 years older than Peter White/Valentine/Haskin.

Indeed, it is true that Peter White/Haskin served in the Civil War, serving in South Carolina and Nebraska.

PETER V. HASKIN was born in New York. He served as a first lieutenant in the Sixth New York Cavalry from December 1, 1864, to June 17, 1865, and thereafter, in the same grade, in the Second Provisional New York Cavalry until August 9, 1865, when he was mustered out of volunteer service. He was appointed, from New York, a second lieutenant in the Fifth Cavalry, to date from June 13, 1867, and was promoted a first lieutenant December 22, 1868. He joined the regiment at Aiken, S. C, on the 12th of December, 1867, where he had station until the 12th of September, 1868, when he was transferred to frontier service and served with the Canadian River expedition and in camp near Fort Lyon, Col., during the winter and spring of 1868-69. He then marched with a battalion of the regiment across the country to Fort McPherson, Neb., and was engaged *en route*, during the month of May, in combats with hostile Sioux and-Cheyennes on Beaver and Spring creeks. He participated in the Republican River expedition of 1869, and was engaged in the affair at Rock Creek, the brilliant action at Summit Springs, the affair in the sand-hills south of Julesburg, and in the Niobrara pursuit. He had station at Fort McPherson from August 22, 1869, to March 19, 1870, when he resigned his commission and returned to civil pursuits.

-from George Frederic Price's Across the continent with the Fifth Cavalry, published by D. Van Nostrand, 1883, p. 518.⁴⁸

Another story we continue to work to resolve comes from a question on a genealogy forum that reads:⁴⁹

I am researching 1st Lt. Peter V. HASKIN of H. Company, 6th New York Cavalry, who was stationed in Loudoun County, VA during the later part of the Civil War. The 6th and 15th Cavalries were later consolidated on 17 Jun 1865 into the 2nd Provincial NY Cav.

When he became very ill and hospitalized here, his father, John B. HASKIN came

⁴⁷ Published: October 6, 1863. Our file: HaskinPeterV-Midshipman1863.pdf.

⁴⁸ Our file: Across the continent with the Fifth Cavalry.pdf.

⁴⁹ Our file: HaskinPeterVForumPost20010709.pdf.

down from Fordham, Westchester, NY and applied to take his son back home to receive medical care. This John B. HASKIN seems to match up perfectly with the Hon. John Bussing HASKIN, one time US Congressman from Fordham/West Farms, Westchester, NY. This unusual application was approved by order of the Secretary [sic] of War, again suggesting that John B. was one and the same as the former Congressman. The 1860 census does not show Peter present in the family, but he could have been away to school, etc. CRAIG TROUT, 2001.

We have responded to Craig Trout's posting, but have not heard back from him.

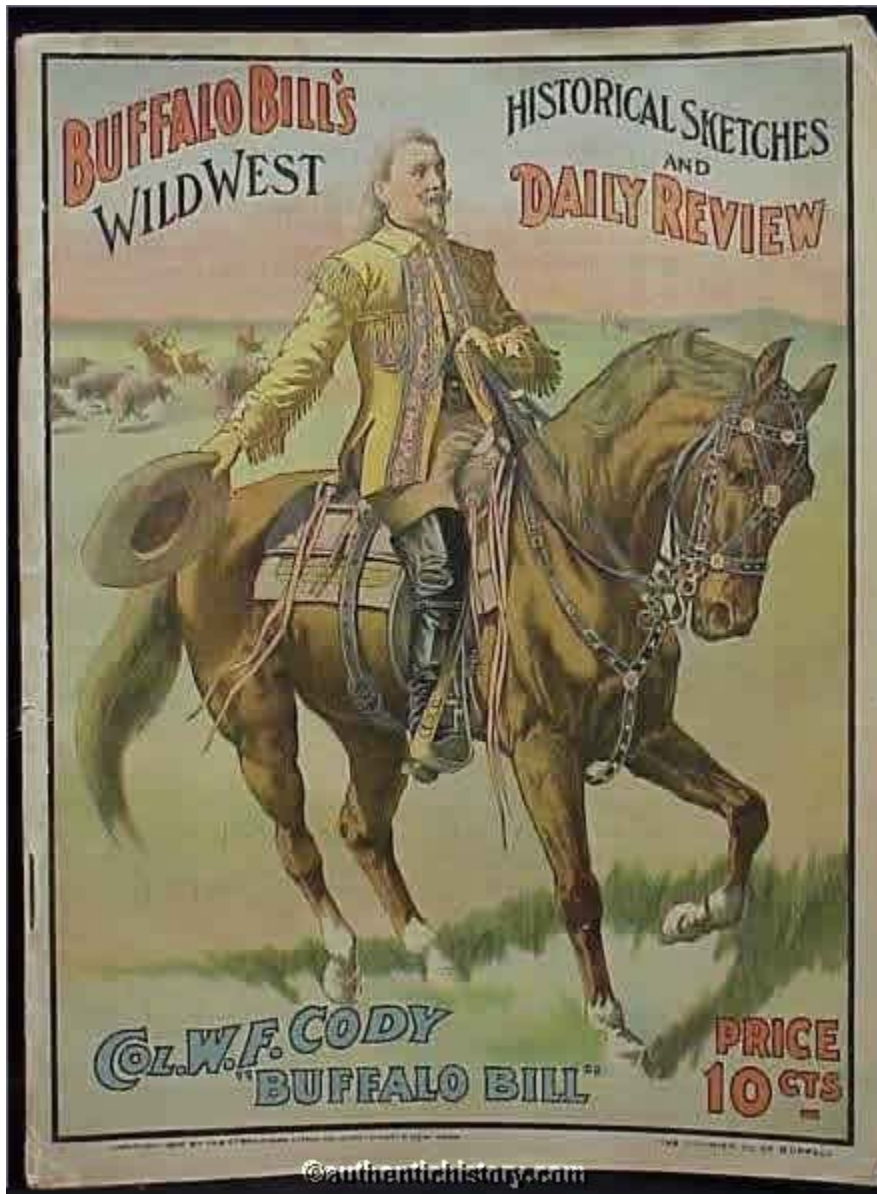
In 1870, Peter Haskin would have been about 25 years old. By this time, he had been called Peter Haskin while in school, and while in the military. That means that to the government and those who knew him, his name was Peter Haskin. In fact, his military pension would have been under the name "Haskin."⁵⁰

We have not found a "Peter Haskin" or "Peter V. Haskin" in the federal census for 1870, even if we look through all the states. He could have been traveling, or he could have used his former name, Peter White. In fact, there is a listing for a 26 year old "Peter White" with no family, working as an "Agent," living in the 4th District, 5th Ward of New York City, on Varick Street. Whether this is "our" Peter or not is unclear, though he is the right age.⁵¹

One of his war buddies was William F. Cody, who, after the Civil War, was widely known as "Buffalo Bill Cody." He was one of the most colorful figures of the American Old West, and became famous for the shows he organized with cowboy themes. Starting in 1872, he ran a show, called "Buffalo Bill's Wild West," a circus-like attraction that toured across the United States and Europe.

⁵⁰ See his military release under the name Peter V. Haskin found on Ancestry.com, citing National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C, Returns from U.S. Military Posts, 1800-1916, Microfilm Serial M617, Microfilm Roll 11. Our file: HaskinPeterV-ReturnFromMilitaryPost-1.pdf. Also see our file: HaskinPeterV-Military.pdf from the National Digital Library Program at: <http://memory.loc.gov/l1/l1ej/018/l1ej018.sgm>.

⁵¹ U.S. Federal census of 1870, 4th Election District 5th Ward District 7, New York City, New York, page 9. Our file: USFedCensus1870_peterwhiteNYC.pdf



Above: a program for the Buffalo Bill show.⁵²

In Don Russell's 1979 book, *The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill*,⁵³ we find reference to Peter V. Haskin, on page 140, serving as Lieutenant with the Fifth Cavalry, while Bill serving as scout, during the Battle at Summit Springs, an armed conflict between the army under the command of Colonel Eugene A. Carr and a group of Cheyenne Dog

⁵² Poster from Wells Fargo Archives, accessed at http://blog.wellsfargo.com/guidedbyhistory/2007/12/pony_bob_and_buffalo_bill.html. Our file: Buffalo_Bill_Program.jpg. Also see: Buffalo_Bills_Show_Ads_view1.jpg, buffalobillmadisonsqgard.jpg.

⁵³ See our file: The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill.pdf.

Soldiers led by Tall Bull (who died during the engagement). The battle, a response to a series of Indian raids in north-central Kansas by Chief Tall Bull's band of the Cheyenne, was fought near Sterling, Colorado.

After the war, Peter V. Haskin did indeed join up with Buffalo Bill's show, though in what specific capacity he participated we have not yet discovered. He was known to have been a handsome young man, so it would not surprise us to learn that he was in front of the audience as is suggested by his father's statement to the press.

During the winter of 1886, the Buffalo Bill's Wild West show moved indoors to Madison Square Garden. His show, featuring Native Americans, trick riders, "the smallest cowboy" and sharpshooters (including Annie Oakley) is said to have drawn millions of visitors to Manhattan.

On 29 Oct 1872, there is a news story in the New York's *The Sun* about a Peter Haskin, the owner of a stable of 14 horses in Westchester County, New York.⁵⁴ Twelve of his horses were sick:

⁵⁴ "Horses Dying," *The Sun*, New York, October 29, 1872. Our file: HaskinPeterNYSun18721029Horse.pdf.

HORSES DYING.

Yesterday seventeen horses died in private stables, and the officers of Mr. Bench's society destroyed seven more by orders of the owners—the same having been condemned by the surgeons.

A valuable horse which was some time ago presented to Father Mooney of St. Bridget's Church, by his parishioners, has been seriously ill with the malady, but is recovering.

THE MALADY IN WESTCHESTER.

The disease manifested itself in White Plains for the first time on Sunday night. One of Mr. Peter Haskin's horses was taken with the malady, and yesterday morning twelve out of fourteen in his stable were visibly affected. Mr. Haskin keeps a livery stable. From Mr. Haskin's stables the malady spread to Mr. Frederick Brundages stables. None have died, but nearly all of the horses attacked are unable to work and refuse to eat. The farmers' horses of the surrounding country are gradually becoming affected. But as farmers have little use for their animals at this time of the year no inconvenience will arise from temporary illness.

Two cases of death are reported in Morrisania. Mr. Okler, a brewer, and Mr. Strouse, a liquor dealer, have lost one each.

At Fleetwood Trotting Course there are fifty horses. The disease has appeared among them. Joe, the trotter, owned by Mr. Wallace, has a severe attack. He is not believed to be in peril.

There are a few horses at Jerome Park, but up to yesterday morning there had been no reports of the disease.

In the Morrisania street railroad stables there is no perceptible change. The horses first attacked are at work. New cases have occurred, but there has been no death. About twenty-five out of four times that number are in hospital. All the cars run from Harlem bridge to Eighth street, but between Eighth street and Fordham the trips have been reduced one-half.

This article could be referring to "our" Peter; certainly he knew about horses, having serviced with the Fifth Cavalry. White Plains, Westchester County was close to his original home. John B. Haskins did not relate to the reporter that Peter had owned a stable, but that does not mean that this is not "our" Peter Haskin.

Then, in 1888, there were multiple news stories about Peter V. Haskin's attempted suicide. Here's one of them from *The New York Times*, published the day after his rescue, Wednesday, January 11, 1888:⁵⁵

HE CLINGS TO HIS STORY.

THE MAN WHO FELL OFF A FERRYBOAT SAYS MR. HASKIN REARED HIM.

"Peter V. Haskin," who fell into the river from a Pavonia ferryboat Monday night, was allowed yesterday to seek his abiding place in this city. He had spent the night in the City Hospital of Jersey City, where he was duly pumped out and toned up. In the morning an officer took him before Justice

⁵⁵ Our file: HaskinPeterNYTimes18880111Ferryboat.pdf

Stilsing. The prisoner said that he had been visiting friends, and, having taken a glass too much, went to the rear of the ferryboat for relief from the effects thereof, when his foot slipped and, much to his amazement and chagrin, he was plunged overboard. Justice Stilsing let the prisoner off.

The man persisted that his name was what he represented it to be, and that he was engaged upon steel improvements on Brook-avenue, Fordham. John B. Haskin, he repeated, reared and educated him and allowed him to use the name of Haskin as his own. Mr. Haskin and his friends denied all knowledge of such a person. On John B. Haskin's behalf it was said that he has but one son, who bears the father's entire name, and was not adopted. Major William Haskin, the brother of the Tuscarora chief, has two sons, one of whom is an adopted son. He declared yesterday that he knew nothing of the victim of the Jersey mishap. His manner of denial left the impression that he wanted to be evasive. There was one story told yesterday that the man had at one time borne the relation to John B. Haskin that he claimed, but had been discarded by the old man because of the younger's conduct.

The next we hear of Peter Haskin is this:

The Sun, New York, NY, Friday March 2, 1888
Page 1⁵⁶

DEATH OF PETER V. HASKIN.

After Trying Suicide in Vain he Dies from an Accidental Fall.

Peter V. Haskin, an adopted son of John B. Haskin of Fordham, died yesterday, aged 41, at the house of John M. Corsa, near Bedford Park, Fordham, where he had been living for three months. His death was the result of an accident on Wednesday night. He fell, while under the influence of liquor, and his skull was fractured by striking against an iron staple in a stone gate post.

Peter V. Haskin, whose real name was Oliver White, was educated by John B. Haskin. He was a page in Congress, and attended the Naval Academy. When he was dismissed at Annapolis, President Lincoln, who had taken an interest in him, had him restored to his class. His reckless habits cost him his place in the army, and finally separated him from his foster father, and he became dissipated and a wanderer.

He tried to commit suicide by jumping from a Hoboken ferryboat in December last, but he was rescued. In his pocket at the time was a will executed on the same day, in which he left all his property, which really amounted to nothing, to his sister, Mrs. M. White of Hoboken, whose husband is a ferrymaster. He said afterward that he drew the will up for a joke.

⁵⁶ Our file: HaskinPeterVDeathSun18880302.pdf

He has done no work for the past three months, and had paid to Mr. Corsa nothing for his board. The body will be buried by Mr. White, his brother-in-law.

And this, in *The New York Times*:⁵⁷

Friday, March 2, 1888

CITY AND SUBURBAN NEWS
NEW - YORK

Peter Haskin, a son of ex-Congressman John B. Haskin, fell off the steps of his residence in Fordham some days ago and fractured the base of his skull, from the effects of which he died yesterday. He was 42 years old.

There are some obvious inconsistencies in the news stories about Peter Haskin that are found between January and March of 1888. However, some interesting facts are revealed in a later story, published in 1899, a portion of which is reproduced here:

New-York Daily Tribune, New York, NY, Monday, April 3, 1899
Page 11⁵⁸

DEATH OF CORNELIUS B. SCHUYLER.

Cornelius B. Schuyler, who in March, 1895, obtained a divorce from his first wife, whose maiden name was Mary M. Corsa, and a month later married Sophie Schoers, a German servant, died on Saturday at his home at Decatur and Brookline sts. His marital troubles and sudden marriage to Miss Schoers caused much talk at the time the facts became known. His second wife was at his bedside when he died. It was reported yesterday that he had left all his property, the value of which is estimated at \$150,000, to her, and that his two sons, who are married, would probably contest the will.

Mr. Schuyler was sixty-five years old, and was a descendant of General Schuyler of Revolutionary fame. He had lived in Fordham for more than half a century. In April, 1888, his first wife eloped with an orphan named White, who had been adopted by ex-Congressman John B. Haskins and assumed his benefactor's name. Young Haskins and another man were named as co-respondents in the divorce suit which followed. Before the divorce suit was brought young Haskin fell and sustained a fractured skull. He died from the injury. . . .

⁵⁷ Our file: HaskinPeterNYTimes18880302Fracture.pdf

⁵⁸ Our file: SchuylerCorneliusDeathNYTribune18990403.pdf

We'll get to the rest of this story soon.

We don't know how Mary Miranda and Peter came to know each other. We can only speculate. In 1888, the year that Peter V. Haskin met his demise, he was 41 years old. Mary Miranda was 45. We know that the date of the elopement mentioned in the news story was wrong; he was dead by April, 1888.

So imagine this: a handsome man meets a drop-dead-beautiful and charismatic Mary Miranda, a mother with two teen-aged sons sometime in the mid 1880's. They fall in love, and she runs off with him. Perhaps they ended up in New Jersey. That's where Peter was headed when he tried to commit suicide in January of 1888. Perhaps she had decided to leave him and go back to her husband and children. We know that he was drunk on the ferry in January of 1888. We know from the news stories that, two months after Peter's initial suicide attempt, he died, drunk, at the home of Mary Miranda's parents, in West Farms. He had, according to the news report, been living there for three months. Was Mary Miranda living there, too? Or had she convinced her parents to care for him and in return went back to her husband? We know that Mary Miranda's mother called her "wayward," and her father must have disliked Peter for stealing her away from her husband who was a successful businessman who was probably able to give Mary Miranda anything she wanted. Peter was, after all, an orphan, a drunk, unemployed, and apparently homeless.

Remembering the will that authorities found in Peter's pocket after his attempted suicide, we must reflect on who M. M. White, his beneficiary, would be. In the news story in the New York newspaper, *The Sun*, published Thursday, January 12, 1888,⁵⁹ about his near-fatal fall into the Hudson, John B. Haskin reportedly said:

"The Mrs. M. M. White mentioned in the will, to whom he leaves his property, which you may guess is little, is the wife of his brother, who is a ferrymaster of the Hoboken ferry. She, I believe, is a niece of Senator Wagner, and a very respectable lady. The name signed to the will as witness is that of Mrs. White's daughter. It is some years since he has been at my house. I don't know why he should try to end his life."

The same news story relates:

Ferrymaster White, when asked if Peter V. Haskin was his brother, answered: "I have nothing to say. The man hasn't been in my house for two years. I wish he had succeeded in the effort to make away with himself. Would to God I had never met him! I will not say whether he is my brother. The name in the will of the person to whom he says he leaves his property is not the name of my wife."

⁵⁹ Our file: HaskinPeterV18880112.pdf

And so we again need to speculate. Mary Miranda. M. M. White. White was Peter's real birth name. M. M. are Mary Miranda's initials. Did they marry? Did she take his name? Was it wishful thinking – to have Mary Miranda as his wife? Or was this will indeed just a joke as Peter V. suggested to the authorities?

It's clear why Peter wanted, at his death, to be known to the world as Peter V. Haskin rather than by his birth name. His war records used the name Peter V. Haskin, and whatever pension he would have been entitled to would have been in that name. But could he – would he – have wanted Mary Miranda to benefit at his death? They may have had some tough times (and we can only imagine that they did) but if he was truly in love with her, he may have called her "Mrs. White" and "M. M. White" in his will may well have referred to Mary Miranda.

In searching for the witness to the will, Nellie Louisa White, we find one living in Hoboken, New Jersey.⁶⁰ In 1880, eight years before the witnessing of Peter V.'s will, she was fourteen years old, according to the federal census, living with her parents James and Fanny White and her siblings. In 1888, she would have been 22 years old, eligible to sign as witness to Peter's will, supposedly signed the day he attempted suicide. She could be Peter's niece if her father is the ferryman White discussed in the news stories of the day.

A search of James White, who is listed as "carman" in the 1880 census, does not turn up additional useful information. However, the term "carman" in the 1880's denoted, generally, someone who worked for the railroad. The ferry that Peter V.'s brother worked on was owned by the Erie Railroad. It is possible that he would call himself a carman.

It is worth noting that James White's wife is listed as Fanny, not M.M. When interviewed for the attempted suicide news story, ferryman White said the beneficiary in the will was not his wife.

Did Peter V. Haskin have a brother? If so, where did he end up when his mother died and the Haskin family took in Oliver/Peter? James White living in Hoboken in 1880 was 50 years old, about eight years older than Peter V. Was this Peter's brother?

The Ferryman White who responded to reporters' questions upon Peter V.'s attempted suicide and death a few months later seemed quite angry at Peter. Again there are no clear answers.

⁶⁰ U.S. Federal census of 1880, Enumeration District 51, Hoboken, Hudson County, New Jersey, family 614. Our file: USFedCensus1880_NellieWhite.pdf

Did Peter's brother bury Peter somewhere in Hoboken? Or did he end up in a potter's field? We have searched for Peter both in the Haskin family plot and the Corsa family plot at Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx and found no sign of Peter's burial place.

Marrying Peter would have constituted bigamy on the part of Mary Miranda Corsa. She was still married to Cornelius B. Schuyler through 1888.

In a news story about Mary Miranda having to do with a different incident, in 1895, we read the following:⁶¹

The Sun, New York, NY, Monday, February 22, 1892, Page 3

Mary Burnham's Dilemma.

. . . Schuyler left his wife five years ago, but promised her mother not to sue for divorce while the old lady lived.

And we also read in an article in *The Sun*, New York, New York, Monday, January 21, 1896,⁶² after the death of Mary Corsa, mother of Mary Miranda:

Mr. Schuyler said last night that he had married Mrs. Corsa's daughter many years ago

. . . "After that," said Schuyler, "my wife eloped and I got a divorce from her. Mrs. Corsa thought the world of me and my sons, and made a will in the boys' favor. I have that will. . . ."

If, indeed, Schuyler left his wife "five years ago," the elopement of Mary Miranda and Peter White/Haskin took place about 1887-1888, shortly before Peter's attempted suicide and eventual death.

It's not surprising that Cornelius B. Schuyler sued for divorce. His suit indicates that Peter V. was just one of Mary Miranda's lovers. More on this later.

Cornelius Schuyler was involved in some outrageous activity of his own. He did not get along well with the Town Clerk and Fire Commissioner, Henry D. Purroy, who happened to be his next door neighbor. In October 1887, Cornelius committed to moving an old house belonging to a cordwainer (shoemaker) from the location at which it sat near Kings Bridge Road to the property of his neighbor, Henry D. Purroy. Apparently, it ended up on his own property. Purroy demanded that Schuyler move the building another 30 feet, onto his property. Another suit ensued. Purroy won this one, too, as

⁶¹ Our file: SchuylerCorneliusNYSun18920222.pdf

⁶² Our file: CorsaMaryWedsAt93Sun18960131.pdf

Cornelius was obliged to move the house from his own property onto Purroy's. Purroy declared he was going to use it to set up a billiards room. A tongue-in-cheek article published in *The New York Times* on May 9, 1888 tells the story of the eventual resolution, along with a history of billiards playing among New Yorkers.⁶³

In another instance, a lawsuit was filed in about 1895 when a piece of property owned by Cornelius, but which had an easement held by Purroy, was condemned by right of eminent domain by the local government for the building of a road. Cornelius sued, declaring he should get the entire monetary award. He lost and appealed and lost again.⁶⁴

I'm not sure if this Henry D. Purroy is the same as the one who apparently summered in Saratoga. He is described as "Commissioner Purroy," so it seems likely. If so, the story that Purroy and others purchased, in 1889, the "old Schuyler mansion" for a Democrat club, describing the property as "full of rubbish and tradition, with a ghost story and subterranean passage."⁶⁵ If he boasted of this, Schuyler, a staunch Republican, would certainly have been angered at the thought of an old Schuyler homestead becoming a Democrat club. This event could have created additional animosity between the two.

Mr. Purroy was, politically, connected to Tammany Hall. In fact, he had a Tammany clubhouse on his property. During the presidential campaign of 1896, Cornelius erected on top of a house on his property⁶⁶ two wooden cannons pointed directly toward Henry D. Purroy's house, according to his obituary and a news story that appeared just after election day, 1896, when voters elected a Republican president:

The Evening Telegram, New York, NY, November 11, 1896
Page 2⁶⁷

CANNON POINTED AT MR. PURROY.

Its Muzzle Stares Him in the Face as He Gets Out of Bed in Fordham Every Morning.

⁶³ Our file: SchuylerCorneliusBilliardsArticle-18880509.pdf. More information about the condemnation suit can be found here: PurroySchuyler1898-CorneliusBSchuylercondemnationsuit.pdf.

⁶⁴ "Award for Fee and Easement," *The New York Times*, March 29, 1898, 14. Our file: SchuylerCorneliusPurroyEasementResolutionNYTimes18980329.pdf. See also: The City Record, New York, New York, Municipal Services Administration, Vol. 23, Part 1, Feb 1895. Our file: SchuylerCorneliusPurroyHenryAwardFromCity1895.pdf.

⁶⁵ "For the Kayaderosseras. A Quaint Saratoga House Formally Reopened," *The New York Times*, July 7, 1889. Our file: 1889PurroyBuysSchuylerMansionInSaratoga.pdf

⁶⁶ It's possible it was this property, found in this article: "New Buildings," *The Evening Post*, New York, April 23, 1896, 7. Our file: SchuylerCorneliusNewBuilding18960423.pdf. We know that he built a stable and workshop on Brookline and Decatur Sts. in 1896.

⁶⁷ Our file: SchuylerCorneliusEveningTelegram18961111.pdf.

ON CORNELIUS SCHUYLER'S "FORT."

How a Revolutionary Soldier's Descendant Rejoices Over McKinley's Victory.

When County Clerk Purroy tumbled out of his bed at his home, Webster avenue and Brookline street, Fordham, this morning, he looked from the front window and trembled like an aspen leaf. It takes a whole lot to frighten the County Clerk, for he is a man of superb nerve. As president of the Board of Fire Commissioners he has looked upon the records of devastating conflagrations in the city without a tremor, and lists of dead were to him mere records of mortality, while they made plain people shudder.

But two cannon, made of hard wood, painted an ominous black and perched on a roof so that one pointed almost directly into the window of his sleeping room, while the other momentarily threatened to obliterate the Little Tammany Club house, a short distance away, are likely to shatter the nervous system of the hitherto undaunted Purroy.

Cornelius Schuyler, one of Fordham's ancient and best known residents, is responsible for the presence of these formidable weapons. No amount of persuasion or threats, he says, can induce him to remove them or take down the flag that he raised from the roof of the building on the day that William McKinley was elected.

Schuyler is a unique character. He is a descendant of General Schuyler, of Revolutionary days, and dates his ancestry back in this country to the seventeenth century. His father fought in the War of 1812 and also in the Mexican War. Nearly sixty-five years ago he was born in Fordham, where he has since resided.

Early in the political career of the County Clerk he conceived a bitter dislike for him, believing that he affected too much for a newcomer in the district. The feeling of dislike has been intensified of late years.

When the first returns came announcing McKinley's great victory he procured a flag, and, constructing a crude flagpole on a building that he owns, at the northwest corner of Brookline street and Webster avenue, raised the starry emblem to the night breeze.

"Take that flag down!" some one shouted.

"No, I won't!" Schuyler hotly replied. "My ancestors fought to create those stars and Stripes, and my father fought to preserve them. The person that touches that emblem of liberty will be shot like a dog."

He placed two long, wooden cannon the next day on the roof of the house, on either side of the flagpole. The building, which he calls Fort Schuyler, is two stories high. At first he turned one of the cannon toward Purroy's bedroom, but some one told him that he could be sued for doing that, and he promptly shifted it a little to one side.

“I’m doing this in honor of the victory of sound money,” he said to me, “and in repudiation of the cause espoused by Purroy and Tammany Hall. My building is situated between the former’s residence and the latter’s headquarters, and I think it a good thing to turn the cannon toward them.

“I intend to have a lot more cannon placed on the roof and turn it into a fortress. The old flag that we fought to save at the last election is still floating, and I intend to keep it there, whether Mr. Purroy or the Tammany men like it or not. I am an American, first, last and always, and love the dear old flag better than life itself.”

Schuyler’s action in raising the flag and wooden cannon on the roof of the building has caused considerable talk in the neighborhood. It is feared that an attempt will be made to remove the cannon and flagpole some dark night, the friends of Mr. Purroy considering the cannon obnoxious and an insult to him and the party that he represents. Schuyler says he’ll shoot the first one that he catches committing and depredation on his property. He is reputed to be worth \$100,000.

The story was so good, other newspapers picked it up as well. We enjoy it so much, we’re providing another version, this one from the *New York World*:

New York World, New York, NY, November 11, 1896
page 9⁶⁸

GUN TRAINED ON PURROY.

Old Cornelius Schuyler Has a Battery of Cannon Ready for Action

POINTED AT THE BEDROOM WINDOW.

Another is Aimed at Little Tammany Hall and a Flag Floats Mockingly Above.

SCHUYLER WAITS, REVOLVER IN HAND.

He Dislikes Democrats in General, but He Hates Purroy, and Says He Is Ready to Shoot.

Cornelius B. Schuyler, grandson of Gen. Philip Schuyler, of Revolutionary fame never smelled battle smoke himself, but his father fought during the Mexican war and the war of 1812, and warlike blood flows in his veins.

⁶⁸ Our file: SchuylerCorneliusPurroyCannon-2ndversion-NYWorld1896.pdf

"I didn't fight myself," says Cornelius to his neighbors when they twit him, "but I paid \$700 for a man to fight for me, and there's many a man as only paid \$300."

Cornelius is sixty-five years old. A year ago he created a sensation by marrying a young servent girl. His beard is long and spare, and for the past thirty years he has lived in Fordham at the junction of Decatur avenue and Brookline street. Brookline street is the name the Board of Aldermen gave it at the request of Henry D. Purroy, the Tammany firebrand, but old Cornelius insists that the street is and always will be Schuyler place.

Schuyler has money. He owns property for blocks around. His nearest neighbor and greatest enemy is Mr. Purroy, whose handsome, spacious residence is diagonally opposite the Schuyler homestead.

Mr. Purroy and Mr. Schuyler have never been known to agree. They have quarreled over property, politics and religion since the war. Their dogs quarrel. Their cats cannot agree. Mr. Schuyler accused Mr. Purroy of stealing some of his property when Decatur avenue was widened, and the case is still pending in the Supreme Court.

Mr. Schuyler put an Italian shoemaker at work in a little house under Mr. Purroy's bay-window. Mr. Purroy got out an injunction, but he had to buy the property in order to get rid of the nuisance. There were other instances that showed the ill-feeling between the houses of Schuyler and Purroy.

Mr. Schuyler is a Republican and a red-hot sound-money man. He abhors free silver and Bryan. He abhors Democrats individually and severally. He abhors Tammany Hall, and, above everything—Purroy.

Nearly opposite the Purroy residence and between it and Mr. Purroy's club, the Little Tammany, stands a two-story, flat-roofed frame house, which Mr. Schuyler owns. He rents it to a man named Dalton, but then the tenant has nothing to do with this story.

One night last week Mr. Schuyler, aided by several men, dragged a long black cannon from the basement of his house on Decatur avenue. They carried it to the Dalton house and raised it by ropes to the roof. There it was mounted on a pivot and pointed direct at Mr. Purroy's bedroom window.

Another cannon was dragged out and mounted on the opposite corner of the roof and this the old man trained on the side of Little Tammany Hall. Between the two pieces of ordnance he raised a flag staff, on which he floated the Stars and Stripes.

When Mr. Purroy awoke next morning his heart beat high at the threatening aspect of the guns. He ate breakfast hurriedly and rushed downtown and away from the grim menace of the cannon. That night when he returned the cannon still pointed at his bedroom window and his sleep was not sound. Some persons up there say that the rotund Mr. Purroy is losing flesh.

Old Cornelius seems to have grown correspondingly happy. He threatens to shoot anybody who touches his flag or his cannon, and sits up far into the night with a revolver at hand.

“They won’t tear down that flag,” said he last night. “My father and grandfather helped to make it by fighting for it. I mean business, and the new Fort Schuyler is no slouch. I hate Purroy.”

MARY MIRANDA CORSA SCHUYLER BURNHAM

The next time we read about Mary Miranda Corsa Schuyler, after the death of her lover Peter V. Haskin, she is known as Mary Burnham. Sometime between her affair with Peter V. in 1888 and February of 1892, she took the name of Mrs. Theodore Burnham. We have not found a marriage certificate. We know little of Mr. Burnham. He was born in 1857-1858, according to the 1900 Federal census.⁶⁹ That census also reports that Mary Miranda is his “wife” and gives her birth year as 1856 – quite a jump from 1843 which is probably her real birthdate. If she had been born in 1856, she would not have been found in the 1850 census with her parents, at age 7! Mary Miranda was, then, possibly 15 years older than Theodore Burnham.

We have found what looks to be Theodore Burnham’s family, living in the 14th Election District, 22nd Ward, County of New York, in 1870.⁷⁰ The address is 9th Avenue between 48th and 49th Streets. Theodore’s father, Henry Burnham (65), listed as “laborer” and born in England, and his mother, Mary (55), are living with their children Rebecca (24), Joseph (22), Theodore (17), Charles (13), and Caroline (10). Mary is listed as having been born in England; according to Theodore’s 1900 census record, his father was born in England and his mother in Canada, so this record is not a perfect match. Also, Theodore’s age of 17 in 1870 would translate to an age of 37 in 1900 and a birth year of about 1853, about a 4-5 year discrepancy from one record to the other. If the 1870 census is accurate, Theodore Burnham was only 10 years younger than Mary Miranda.

The 1880 federal census record for this Burnham family⁷¹ shows that Theodore had moved out. This father, Henry (73) has aged only 8 years since the 1870 census. He has “no occupation.” Theodore’s mother, Mary (62) has aged 7 years from the last census. This is just another example of census takers collecting approximate information on their rounds. Theodore’s mother, Mary Burnham, “Khouse” which we assume means she “keeps house.” Theodore’s sister is listed as “Carrie”, probably short for Caroline as she is listed in the 1870 census. She is now 20 years old. She does housework.

⁶⁹ U.S. Federal census of 1900, Enumeration District 1014, Bronx, New York, family 462. Our file: USFedCensus1900_BurnhamTheodoreMary.pdf

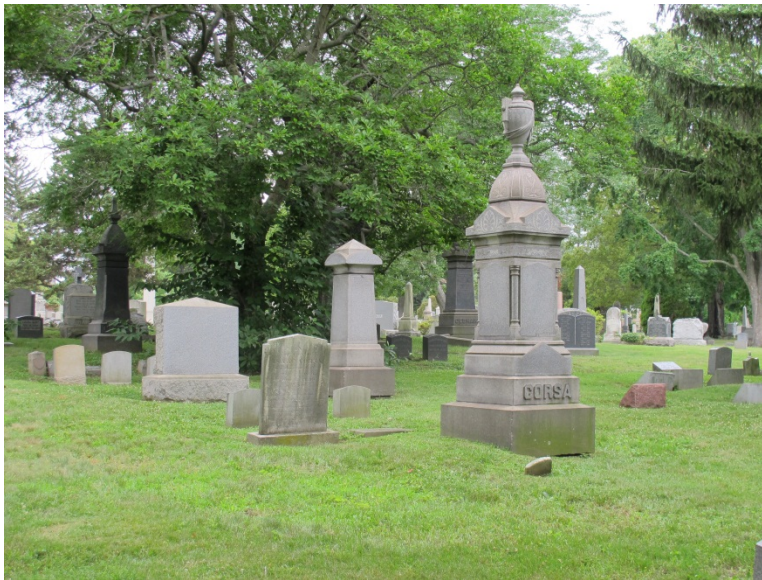
⁷⁰ U.S. Federal census of 1870, 15th Election Dist., 22 Ward, New York County, New York, family 705. Our file: USFedCensus1870_BurnhamTheodoreManhattan.pdf. If his birthdate is inaccurate here, it’s possible that Theodore Burnham served in the Civil War. See: Annual Report of the Adjutant General of the State of New York, Vol. I, Albany, NY, 1865, trans. to the Legislature Jan. 12, 1865, p. 167. Our file: AG_Report_1864-Page167-BurnhamTheodorepage167.pdf.

⁷¹ U.S. Federal census of 1880, New York City, New York, Enumeration District 442, 3rd Election 17th Assembly District, family 401. Our file: USFedCensus1880_Burnham.pdf

Theodore's brother, Charles (23) is a receiving clerk. Here, Henry Burnham lists the locations of his birth, his father's birth, and his mother's birth as "England." His wife, Mary, says she was born in Canada, as were her parents. The two children listed were born in New York. The family is, at this time, living in the 3rd election 17th Assembly District, County of New York.

As part of our research for this story of Mary Miranda, we traveled from our homes here in Pennsylvania to the Woodlawn Cemetery. There were news stories we had read regarding the death and burial of Mary Miranda's mother, Mary Corsa, so we knew she was buried there. When we found the Corsa monument in the Cedar Plot at Woodlawn, we were intrigued to find the following inscription on one of the four flat sides of the substantial Corsa monument:

CHARLES E. BURNHAM
Born Jan. 11, 1858
Died Sept. 4, 1898



Above: the Corsa monument at Woodlawn Cemetery, 2011.⁷²

It appears to us that this Charles E. was the brother of Theodore (as per the 1870 census record for the Burnham family, showing Charles & Theodore as teenagers) with whom Mary is found to be living in 1990. Mr. Burnham is listed in the 1900 census as Theodore Burnham. In several news stories, he is identified as John Burnham. Whatever the name of this man it appears that Mary Miranda considered him family enough that when Theodore's brother died in 1898, she saw that he was buried in the Corsa family plot. There is no stone or inscription bearing Mary Miranda's name,

⁷² CorsaPlot.jpg.

though Woodlawn records show she is indeed buried in the same plot. There is no indication in Woodlawn records that Theodore is buried there.⁷³

In 1900, Theodore and Mary (Miranda) Burnham are found living on Sheridan Avenue, between 158th and 161st streets, which we think was the home of Mary Miranda's mother, Mary Corsa, though Mary Corsa is not listed on the same census page. They have been married (or at least she's been calling herself married), according to the 1900 census, for two years, which implies the marriage of Mary Miranda to Theodore Burnham occurred about 1898. Whether this marriage actually took place or not can be disputed. Possibly Mary Miranda simply took his name in about 1898. She was known as Mary Burnham at her death in 1922.

It is interesting to note that Mary Miranda was involved in a mortgage transaction as a borrower in 1900.⁷⁴

The 1900 census also indicates that Theodore Burnham was born in New York. His father was born in England, and his mother's place of birth is listed as Br. Canada. It makes sense that, in 1898, just as Theodore and Mary married (or she came to take his name without an actual marriage) if Theodore's brother died, then Mary Miranda would have him buried in the Corsa plot. It is ironic that his name and death date are noted on the Corsa monument at Woodlawn, and that there Theodore is not listed in Woodlawn's records as having been buried there, and that there is no stone or inscription for Mary Miranda herself.

MARY MIRANDA WANTS HER MOTHER LOCKED UP

Mary Miranda's father died in about 1889 at age 81. Her mother, Mary Corsa, is found in several news articles transacting business about this time.⁷⁵ Mary Corsa, in 1892, was living in a house she owned on Sheridan Avenue at 160th Street.⁷⁶ Mary Miranda

⁷³ *Annual Report of the Adjutant General of the State of New York*, Vol. I, Albany, NY, 1865, trans. to the Legislature Jan. 12, 1865, p. 167. This lists a Theodore Burnham serving with the 17th Brigade out of Herkimer and Oswego Counties in NY, Battery A, District _____. Is this "our" Theodore?

⁷⁴ *The Evening Post record of real estate sales in greater New York*, Vol. 3, Conveyances, 1900, 152. Accessed on 12/3/2012 at: <http://books.google.com/books?ei=L8u8UOj7NaWy0QH-0oHwAw&id=oeJOAAAAAAAJ&dq=the+evening+post+record+of+real+estate+1900&jtp=152>. Our file: CorsaMaryMirandaBurnhamMortgage1900.pdf.

⁷⁵ For example, in 1890 she assigned a mortgage to John Bussing, Jr. See: "Assignment of Mortgages," *The Sun*, New York, NY, May 4, 1890, 19. Our file: CorsaMaryAssignsMortgageToJohnBussing1890.pdf. See also: "Recorded Mortgages," *New-York Tribune*, New York, NY, December 28, 1909, 10. Our file: CorsaMaryMortgage19091228.pdf. See also: "Superior Court of the City of New York," *The American Gentleman's Newspaper*, February 21, 1895, 689. Our file: CorsaMaryRuland18950221.pdf.

⁷⁶ Today, there is no 160th and Sheridan Ave. There is 159th and 161st, perpendicular to Grand Concourse, very close to Bronx County Clerk's office. Also, note another article says it was 168th st & Sheridan.

was living with her at the time. When Theodore Burnham moved into the Corsa house is not clear, but this was his address at the time of the 1900 federal census.

As Mary Miranda's mother, age 89, was sitting and quietly sewing by her window on a chilly February morning in 1892, a policeman came to her door. He gently persuaded her to come with him, telling her a lie about where they were headed. They both entered the taxi cab in which he had arrived, and arrived at the courtroom of Justice Welde, who had issued a warrant for her to appear.

Mary Corsa's, Mary Miranda, had filed for the arrest warrant, swearing that her mother was insane, threatened Mary Miranda with violence, and wanted her mother committed to a lunatic asylum:

The Sun, Friday, February 19, 1892
Page 7⁷⁷

WANTED HER MOTHER LOCKED UP.

Aged Mrs. Corsa Convinces Justice Welde that She is Sane.

A woman who gave her name as Mary Burnham applied to Justice Welde in the Harlem Court yesterday morning for a warrant for the arrest of her mother, Mary Corsa, and took a lawyer to court to help her get the warrant. To quote the affidavit, she swore that her mother "talked in an incoherent manner and was disordered in her senses and unfit to be at large." She declared that her mother frequently threatened her with violence.

Justice Welde issued the warrant, and gave it to Policeman Finnegan to execute. Mary Corsa is upward of 89 years old and well to do. She lives with her daughter in her own house at Sheridan avenue and 160th street. Policeman Finnegan took a cab to the house for the convenience of his prisoner.

He found the old lady seated by the window quietly sewing and showing no evidence of being insane. Finnegan told her that her brother-in law wished to see her and had sent a cab for her. She had no idea that she was a prisoner until she reached the court. Being confronted there by her daughter, she trembled with excitement, but talked in a rational manner, and told a story which so thoroughly convinced Justice Welde that her daughter was trying to railroad her into a lunatic asylum simply to get rid of her that he discharged the old lady and told her daughter that if she did not like her mother's actions she had better leave the house.

"My daughter had been wayward," Mrs. Corsa said, "since she was 13 years old. She is not married to that scoundrel whose name she has taken and whom she is living with. They have robbed me of everything they could lay their

⁷⁷ Our file: CorsaMaryMiranda18920219NYSun.pdf.

hands on, and now she wants to get rid of me.” She said she had taken \$300 to court with her, because she was afraid to leave it in the house.

Mrs. Burnham, as she calls herself, made but little effort to contradict her mother, but said; “You don’t know how she acts in the house. The house doesn’t belong to her anyway. She signed it over to a man only a little while ago.”

Justice Weld questioned Mrs. Corsa on the matter.

“The house is mine unless I have been swindled out of it,” she said. “I put the house in a man’s hands to sell for me.” Mrs. Corsa accused her daughter of trying to poison her two weeks ago.

Although Mrs. Corsa hands trembled with excitement and her face is deeply furrowed by age, she walks erect and is remarkably vigorous for one so old. She is estimated to be worth between \$40,000 and \$50,000. She is the widow of J. M. Corsa, a farmer who died three years ago. He left her a farm at Williamsbridge, the house on Sheridan avenue, and one or two other houses in Fordham. Mary, the complainant, was their only child. She married a builder named Cornelius Schuyler, who left her, and she has since lived with Burnham.

When discharged, Mrs. Corsa said she did not care to trust herself in her daughter’s home again, and would go to her brother-in-law’s house in Yorkville. Policeman Finnegan was sent to see that she reached her relative’s house safely.

The World also carried a story:

The World, New York, NY, February 19, 1892

Page 8⁷⁸

SAID HER MOTHER WAS CRAZY

The Daughter’s Charge Disproved, and Mrs. Corsa Allowed to Go Free.

A woman who called herself Mrs. John Burnham made an affidavit in the Harlem Police Court yesterday morning that her eighty-year-old, widowed mother, Mary Corsa, talked incoherently, used threatening language and was not fit to be at large.

Judge Welde sent for Mrs. Corsa. She was brought to court in a cab, under pretense that she was being taken to the home of a brother-in-law. Her form was bent with age, her hair was white, but her eyes snapped with indignation when she was told of the change her daughter had made. After listening attentively to it, Mrs. Corsa tottered forward and in a trembling voice said:

“This is false; It is a wicked lie! I own the house in which I live. My daughter lives there, too, with a man who is a scamp. They steal everything from me they can lay their hands on. I had to bring \$300 with me today for fear

⁷⁸ Our file: BurnhamMaryMotherCrazyTheWorld18920219.pdf

they would take it. My daughter has been incorrigible since she was thirteen years old. About two weeks ago she tried to poison me. She put something in my tea that made me sick for three days. Now she is trying to make out that I am insane so that she can get my property.

"I think that the woman is perfectly sane," said the Judge.

"You don't know how she gets at home, though," persisted the daughter.

"Well, you are not obliged to live with her. If you don't like it you can leave. The house is your mother's isn't it?"

"No, it isn't; she made it over to a man."

"Is that so"? asked the Judge.

"No," replied the mother. "I gave the house to a real-estate man to dispose of, that is all."

The old woman on being discharged murmured her gratitude. She went to the home of John Corsa, her brother-in-law, in Yorkville. Mrs. Corsa was the wife of J. M. Corsa, who died three years ago. He was once a farmer in the neighborhood of Williamsbridge and accumulated property valued at \$40,000. The real estate included a house and lot at Sheridan Avenue and One Hundred and Sixtiest street. This as well as other properties he bequeathed to his widow. The only daughter married Cornelius Schuyler, a builder of Fordham. Schuyler separated from his wife. When Mrs. Schuyler's husband left her her father allowed her to start housekeeping in his own house. Soon after a man named John Burnham went to live with Mrs. Schuyler and she took his name, although it is asserted they were never married.

Cornelius Schuyler was apparently outraged at the preceding event. Just a few days later, he hauled Mary Miranda into court and charged her with perjury. He says that she called herself Mary Burnham but her name, in fact, is Mary Schuyler. He had not divorced her. And if she was indeed married to Theodore Burnham, she had committed bigamy:

The Sun, New York, NY, Monday, February 22, 1892

Page 3⁷⁹

Mary Burnham's Dilemma.

The woman who called herself Mrs. Mary Burnham when she appeared against her mother, Mrs. Mary Corsa, at Harlem Court last Wednesday and made a charge of insanity, which was dismissed, was present in court yesterday in answer to a summons charging her with perjury. The complaint was made by Cornelius B. Schuyler, a builder, of Fordham, who declared that he is her husband, and that when she swore that her name was Burnham she committed perjury. If she has married the man Burnham, with whom she is living, Schuyler said, he will charge her with bigamy. She was paroled for examination on

⁷⁹ Our file: SchuylerCorneliusNYSun18920222.pdf

Wednesday. Schuyler left his wife five years ago, but promised her mother not to sue for divorce while the old lady lived. When Mrs. Corsa found that her daughter was trying to have her put in an asylum she released Schuyler from his promise.

Cornelius Schuyler didn't waste any time starting divorce proceedings, once Mary Miranda's mother gave him her blessing:

The World, New York, NY, Friday, April 29, 1892
Page 4⁸⁰

THE SCHUYLER DIVORCE SUIT.

Scandal Affecting Two Old Families Brought Into Court

Papers have been filed by Cornelius B. Schuyler, a descendant of the old colonial family, of Fordham, in a suit for divorce from his wife, Mary M. Schuyler, whom he married twenty-five years ago. Mrs. Schuyler was Mary Corsa, of the prominent Fordham family of that name.

Mr. Schuyler sues on the statutory grounds, and alleges that his wife left him in 1881 to live with Peter V. Haskin, adopted son of ex-Congressman John B. Haskin, of Fordham. Young Haskin died about four years ago, and since then the husband avers that she has taken up her residence with John Burnham, of the Standard Oil Company, at One Hundred and Sixty-first street and Sheridan avenue, and has been known by the name of Mrs. Burnham.

The trial is listed for the second week in May in the Supreme Court.

These days, we complain constantly about the quality of reporting in our local newspapers. But note that even in the 1800's one had to take information found in the papers with a grain of salt.

First, it is unlikely that Mary Miranda left Cornelius to live with Peter V. Haskin in 1881, as reported. In the New York *Sun* article on 22 Feb 1892, it is reported that Schuyler left his wife "five years ago" which would have meant 1887 or 1888.

The fact that Mary Miranda began calling herself Mrs. Burnham, though she was not married to Burnham, tends to support the proposition that she may have indeed called herself M. M. White after eloping with Peter V., lending credence to Mary Miranda being the M. M. White, the beneficiary of Peter's will.

Apparently, the divorce action that was supposed to take place in May, did not. The next we hear about Cornelius' suit for divorce, Mary Miranda requested that the suit be

⁸⁰ Our file: CorsaSchuylerDivorce18920429.pdf

transferred from state court to district court. This article appeared 7 months after the article above:

The World (Evening Edition), New York, NY, Tuesday, November 15, 1892
Page 1⁸¹

SHE ASKS FOR A JURY.

Mrs. Schuyler Wants Her Divorce Case to Be Public.

Mrs. Mary M. Schuyler, of Fordham against whom her husband, Cornelius B. Schuyler, brought suit for divorce last April, has made the somewhat exceptional request from a defendant in a divorce suit to have the case transferred from the Supreme Court to the Circuit Court, in order that the evidence can be thoroughly sifted before a jury. Justice Andrews granted the transfer.

The husband claims in his affidavit that Mrs. Schuyler maintained unlawful relations with John Burnham, of Sheridan avenue and One Hundred and Sixty-eight street, and that in 1888 she eloped with a West Point cadet named Peter Haskin. The couple have three children.

We note three important things in the preceding article. First, Mary Miranda is called Mrs. Schuyler, not Mrs. Burnham. Remember, she had been Mary Burnham in the census of 1890. The second note is that although the article says the Schuylers had three children, they in fact only had two, Willet and Oscar, although an infant who did not survive was born to them.

Third, the article mentions "John Burnham." The 1890 census shows Mary Miranda living with a Theodore Burnham, who calls himself a "clerk." Because we know so little of Theodore except for the census record, we have searched for a John Burnham, employed by Standard Oil, as suggested by the news story, and have not succeeded in finding anything.

There is a John Burnham, inventor, who, in 1866 filed for a patent, but he was apparently from Illinois:

Cultivator. John Burnham and WC Lattrup, La Salle, Il. This invention relates to a cultivator of that class in which the plows are arranged so as to be adjustable both laterally and vertically and it consists in a novel arrangement of the parts whereby the device may be manipulated with the greatest facility the team

⁸¹ Our file: CorsaSchuylerDivorce18921115.pdf

relieved of weight on the neck and the device rendered capable of being converted into a single or double one for plowing one or two rows of plants. 57.858.

Scientific American, Vol. 15, Munn & Co., 1866.

Another version of the divorce story appeared in *The Sun*:

The Sun, New York, NY, Tuesday, November 15, 1892
Page 5⁸²

Says His Wife Eloped with Young Haskins.

An action of Cornelius B. Schuyler for an absolute divorce from Mary M. Schuyler, has been sent by Justice Andrews of the Supreme Court from the Special Term to the Circuit for a jury trial on motion of Edward J. Nicholson, counsel for Mrs. Schuyler.

The plaintiff is a contractor at Fordham. He alleges that in 1888 Mrs. Schuyler eloped with Peter Haskins, [sic] a graduate of West Point and the adopted son of ex-Congressman John B. Haskins [sic]. Schuyler was left with their three children. On Haskins's [sic] death as the result of a fall soon after the alleged elopement, Mrs. Schuyler returned to her mother's home at Fordham.

We know a little more about the divorce suit from an article that appeared after Cornelius's death. New York's *The Sun* newspaper reported on 30 Apr 1899:⁸³

. . . Cornelius B. Schuyler was an old resident of Fordham. In 1868 he married Mary M. Corsa, who was then 19 years old. In 1892 he began proceedings for divorce from his wife, naming two co-respondents, one of whom, a young man named Haskins, had died from a fracture of the skull received by a fall at the house of Mrs. Schuyler's parents, with whom she was then living. In 1895 Mr. Schuyler obtained the divorce and a month or two later he married Sophie Schoers, his German cook.

We assume that the second "co-respondent" mentioned above was Mr. Burnham, with whom Mary Miranda was, at the time, living.

By 1910, Mary Miranda was living with her son, Willet, according to the federal census,⁸⁴ and she says she is a widow. Theodore must have died, then between 1900 and 1910. Interestingly, she did not bury him in the Corsa family plot at Woodlawn.

⁸² Our file: CorsaSchuylerDivorce18921115NYSun.pdf

⁸³ "Married His Cook," Left No Will," *The Sun*, New York, Sunday, April 30, 1899. Our file: SchuylerCorneliusNYSun18990430.pdf.

A search of divorce records has not revealed additional information about the rift between Mary Miranda and Cornelius Schuyler. Neither has a search of NY district court records.

CORNELIUS B. SCHUYLER OPENS HIS MOTHER-IN-LAW'S COFFIN⁸⁵

It was a cold and dreary January morning, with a stiff breeze blowing off the Bronx River, as sixty year old Cornelius B. Schuyler and his entourage arrived at Woodlawn Cemetery on Sunday, January 19, 1896. With him were his son, Oscar, his brother-in-law Corsa, and Dr. Crump of Williamsbridge. They had arrived for the burial of Cornelius B.'s mother-in-law, Mary Corsa.

Cornelius barely noticed the cold. Dressed in his long, gray overcoat with a black satin collar and a felt derby, his hands encased in black deerskin dress gloves, the man was exhilarated, ready for the confrontation he knew lay before him.

Cornelius knew of her death because of a telegram received the day before by Mrs. Corsa's brother-in-law (Andrew the Younger??) The telegram not only said she had died on Friday, January 17th, but also that her body would be buried in the family plot in Woodlawn on January 19, following her funeral service.

Cornelius had been worried about his mother in law. She owned a house close to his, where she had been living with her daughter Mary Miranda and Theodore Burnham, until Mary Miranda filed an affidavit with the Harlem Police Court in 1892 that her mother was not fit to be at large. An arrest warrant for the old lady had brought her to court, where she was found by the judge to be "perfectly sane." Cornelius had, before the commitment hearing, promised his mother in law that he would not divorce her daughter, Mary Miranda, after she eloped in about 1888 with Peter White/Haskin, the "adopted" son of ex-Congressman John B. Haskin and, later, took Theodore Burnham as a live-in lover. But, outraged at her daughter's actions, knowing that her daughter wanted her out of the way so she could take control of her mother's property, and scared for her life because she was sure that Mary Miranda intended to do away with her now that she had proved her own sanity, Mary Corsa finally gave Cornelius her blessing on divorcing Mary Miranda. And she had promised Cornelius that she had drafted a new will, cutting out Mary Miranda and leaving her entire estate to Cornelius and Mary Miranda's two children, Oscar and Willet, sole heirs to the fortune that her

⁸⁴ U.S. Federal census, Assembly District 32, Bronx, New York, family 474. Our file: USFedCensus1910_SchuylerWilliamBurnhamMary.pdf..Mary Miranda's residence, 1910 census. Listed as Mary Burnham. Listed as head of HH. Age 59. Living with "William" Schuyler, age 37. Listed as Wd for widowed. Listed as having had 2 children, both living. Listed as renting the house they are living in.

⁸⁵ Compiled from the following: "He Opened Her Coffin," *The World*, New York, January 21, 1896, 16. Also: "Had the Coffin Opened. Cornelius D. Schuyler Heads Off Mrs. Corsa's Funeral.," *The Sun*, New York, January 21, 1896, 6.

deceased husband had left her. Cornelius had Mary Corsa's will safely locked up in his home, near Bedford Park, and that the will was made in favor of Schuyler's sons.

But Cornelius had lost contact with his mother in law. When Mary was released after that court event, it was not to her own home that she returned, but to her "brother in law's" home in Yorkville.⁸⁶ It's not clear who this was. Her brother, James Isaac Corsa (abt 1812-1900) lived in Fordham at the time, and at the time of his death in 1900 had lived in Fordham for 30 years, according to his obituary. Her husband, John M., had a number of siblings. But Absalom had died in 1872, so it wasn't him. Andrew "The Younger" Corsa was alive. In 1880 he had been living on 143rd Street with the Hunt family. There is no 1890 census, and Andrew "The Younger" would have been 83 years old at that point. We know he died in 1894 and at that time his residence had been the NY State Asylum.

It is clear, though, that Mary Corsa was not comfortable living in her own home in 1892. She was sure her daughter was trying to poison her. Her lover, Mr. Burnham, living in the house with them, was a "scamp" who treated her badly. She believed that the two of them were stealing from her.

By the summer of 1892, Mary had disappeared. She had moved from her home. Cornelius traced her to Newburg, where she had gone with Dr. W. J. Morgan of Bedford Park, and his wife. Dr. Morgan was a veterinary surgeon.

Mary Corsa may have purchased a 158 acre farm just outside of Newburg, NY. Cornelius had tried to see his mother in law, but had been unsuccessful. Letters that he sent to her via registered mail were receipted in a handwriting that was different from Mary's. Cornelius was sure she had never received or read the letters. His suspicions were focused on Dr. Morgan, and he became convinced that Dr. Morgan held undue influence over his mother in law. And that meant that Dr. Morgan might also have convinced Mary to change her will again. After all, the old woman was in her nineties. Impending death had to be on her mind.

⁸⁶ Yorkville is a neighborhood in the greater Upper East Side, in the Borough of Manhattan in New York City. Yorkville's boundaries include: the East River on the east, 96th Street (where Spanish Harlem begins) on the north, Third Avenue on the west and 72nd Street to the south. Its southern boundary is a subject of debate. Some sources and natives consider 59th Street (the southern boundary of the greater Upper East Side, bounded by Central Park and the East River) to be the southern boundary, while others consider it being 86th Street. Its western half was at one time called "Irishtown." The neighborhood's main artery, East 86th Street, was sometimes called the "German Broadway."

So when Cornelius heard of her death and the plans to bury her on January 19th, 1896, he suspected that Mrs. Corsa had actually died months before, and that Dr. Morgan had profited by Mary's estate for possibly half a year.

Immediately, Cornelius arranged to travel the three miles from his home to Woodlawn Cemetery.⁸⁷ There, he asked authorities there to make sure that, when the coffin arrived, it be opened to ensure that her body was in it. He told them that "I am not going to be flim flamed! I believe she died months ago and that they are only telling us of her death now."

But the Woodlawn Cemetery authorities refused Cornelius's request, saying that they would need written authority from Mary Miranda to open the coffin when it arrived. Not surprisingly, Cornelius did not pursue this. Instead, he went to police headquarters in the Bronx and told them of his suspicions. We can only imagine their reaction to his conspiracy theory claims. News stories say the police "raised their eyebrows in wonder" and did nothing.

Cornelius contacted his lawyer, and then decided to investigate Mary Corsa's death himself. Cornelius, who was never one to do anything half way, collected his son, Oscar, his brother in law (?) Corsa, and Dr. Crump, and headed to back to Woodlawn the day of the burial.

Cornelius demanded to see their records for Mary Corsa. He wanted the officials to tell him whether the Corsa family plot had been opened within the past six months. The officials refused to give him any information. Schuyler told them he'd get a mandamus to compel them to show their books, at which point officials at the cemetery told him that the plot had just been opened and that Mrs. Corsa's body was expected to arrive within the hour.

Oscar was ordered to go to the gravesite, plot 698 on Cedar Avenue in the cemetery. Cornelius himself headed down the steep grade to the Woodlawn railroad station, which was located about ¼ mile from the cemetery office. Woodlawn was a popular cemetery, and many coffins arrived there by train daily, from across the New York area. Schuyler searched around the train station until he found a coffin marked "Mrs. Mary Corsa" under the care of an undertaker.

Cornelius hurried back to the gravesite, huffing and puffing, as one can imagine, up the steep slope from the train station to the Cedar Avenue plot. There, he found Oscar and the rest of his entourage lying in wait for the funeral party.

⁸⁷ For more on Woodlawn Cemetery, see our file: Woodlawn.pdf.



Hearse, c. 1900.⁸⁸

The Corsa plot was one with which Cornelius was thoroughly familiar. Measuring 18.6' by 16', it was the final resting place of his former wife's grandparents, Isaac and Phoebe Corsa, and her father, John M. Corsa. The open hole in the ground lay beside John M.'s burial site.

As they stood and waiting, Oscar Schuyler, then only nineteen years of age, had no idea that in less than 20 years, he, too, would be buried there – seven years before his mother, Mary Miranda, would find it her final resting place as well.

Oscar pulled up the collar of his overcoat to cover his ears. The mid-afternoon sun did nothing to warm the air on this frigid Sunday in February. Cornelius removed his leather gloves for a moment to check the gold pocket watch attached by a gold chain to his black satin vest.

The funeral party finally arrived at the site. The coffin, made of hardwood, with brass carrying handles, was carried to the plot. The gathered officials and mourners were unprepared for Schuyler's contingent, and especially for Cornelius who "stamped up and down and stormed," making every attempt to stop the burial from proceeding.

"You shan't bury that coffin until you open it!" he cried. "I will look into it. How do I know what's in it? There may be the body of an old woman who died six months ago; there may be no body; there may be bricks. You shall open it!"

"I believe she's been dead for six months," he cried, "and I have a doctor here to find out."

⁸⁸ Our file: HearseCirca1900.jpg.

Schuyler raised such a rumpus that the cemetery officials finally gave in and permitted him to have the coffin opened. Right then and there, the lid was removed. The funeral party stepped back. Inside, small and still against the black satin interior lay the body of the elderly Mary Corsa. Dr. Crump examine the body carefully, and announced to Cornelius that Mary Corsa had been dead only two or three days.

The interment was then made.

This is not the end of the story, however. Mr. Schuyler told news reporters at the New York paper, *The Sun*, that he had married Mrs. Corsa's daughter many years ago, and that Mary always believed that her daughter intended to poison her. After the daughter caused the mother's arrest and charged her with insanity, he said, his wife "eloped" (with Theodore Burnhan, supposedly) and he got a divorce from her.

"Mrs. Corsa thought the world of me and my sons, and made a will in the boys' favor. I have that will. I believe that for the fast six months she has been under restraint. I suppose another will will be sprung now, but I'll fight it to the bitter end."

Mary Corsa		DEED NO. 408	AFF. NO. 1,635
BEQUEST NO.			
1 - Isaac Corsa, 80 yrs. 1438	5/7/60		
2 - Phoebe Corsa, 70 yrs. 1439	6/4/1854		
3 - Infant of Cornelius and Mary M. Schuyler,	Unknown 19540	5/2/80	
4 - John M. Corsa, 76 yrs. 37441	10/7/90		
5 - Mary Corsa, 94 yrs. 48663	1/17/96		
8 - Charles E. Burnham, 40 yrs. 53852	9/4/98		
7 - Ansalem G. Hart, 40 yrs. 72666	12/27/1907		
1 - Oscar Schuyler, 37 yrs. 90462	10/21/15		
9 - Mary M. Burnham, 76 yrs. 109984	11/1/22		

Wilson

Keese

16-02

18-5

18-5

15-15

Galvins

Mitchell

Rutgers -

Lowell

Fronts East

3 from Rutgers Avenue

3 South of North 6' Walk

Lowell
BERRIGAN

*Above: Record of Woodlawn Cemetery for the Corsa family plot.*⁸⁹

The Sun, New York, New York, Monday, January 21, 1896

Page 6⁹⁰

**HAD THE COFFIN OPENED.
CORNELIUS D. SCHUYLER HEADS OFF MRS. CORSA'S FUNERAL.**

**He Feared the News of Her Death Had Been Withheld - The Woman Left an
Estate Estimated at \$2,000,000.**

Mrs. Mary Corsa, who came from a revolutionary family, died on Saturday on the Valley Farm estate, near Newburgh. She was 94 years old, and was reputed to be worth \$2,000,000. Her funeral took place yesterday afternoon, the interment being in Woodlawn Cemetery.

Mrs. Corsa's son-in-law, Cornelius D. Schuyler, had been looking for her for the past six months. He was very anxious to keep track of her, as he had her will safely locked up in his house, near Bedford Park. The will was made in favor of Schuyler's three sons, and Mr. Schuyler feared that the old lady would be influenced by other persons to make a new will in favor of Dr. W. J. Morgan, a veterinary surgeon, with whom she boarded. So when Schuyler was informed of Mrs. Corsa's death on Saturday he told his friends that she had probably died six months ago.

"I am not going to be flim flamed." He said:

"I believe she died months ago and that they are only telling us of her death now."

Then Mr. Schuyler called on his lawyer, and decided to make an investigation. With a party of friends, among whom was a doctor. Mr. Schuyler went up to Woodlawn Cemetery yesterday and demanded to see the records.

He wanted the officials to tell him whether the Corsa family plot had been opened within the past six months.

The officials refused to give any information. Mr. Schuyler talked of getting a mandamus to compel them to show their books, and finally they told him that the plot had just been opened and that Mrs. Corsa's body was expected to arrive within an hour.

⁸⁹ See our file: CorsaPlotWoodlawnCemeteryLotOwnerMaryCorsa.jpg. So who is Ansaalem G. Hart also buried in this plot? See our files: ANSALEM_G_HART_2.pdf; Ansaalem G Hart 456566_INFORMATION_SLOT_MACHINE.pdf; ANSALEM_G_HART.pdf. If this was, indeed, the final resting place for the inventor, we can only imagine that, perhaps, he found himself in NY, where he was attempting to sell his slot machine to Coney Island, or some such place, and died. Perhaps Mary Miranda knew him, or maybe she just sold the plot to him.

⁹⁰ Our file: SchuylerCorneliusNYSun18960121.pdf. For another news story based on these events, see our file: CorsaMaryNYHerald18960121.pdf.

Schuyler then lay in wait for the funeral party. When he saw a train stop at Woodlawn he ran up to the Corsa plot and headed off the funeral. The coffin was carried over to the plot.

Then Mr. Schuyler insisted upon having it opened. He wanted to be sure that it contained the body of his mother –in – law.

“I believe she’s been dead for six months,” he said, “and I have a doctor here to find out.”

Then he raised such a rumpus that the cemetery officials finally gave in and permitted him to have the coffin opened.

The lid was removed and Mr. Schuyler’s doctor examined the body. The appearance of the corpse was satisfactory to Schuyler and the doctor and they went away. The interment was then made.

Mr. Schuyler said last night that he had married Mrs. Corsa’s daughter many years ago, and that Mrs. Corsa always believed that her daughter intended to poison her.

The daughter caused the mother’s arrest and charged the old lady with being insane. She was arraigned before Judge Welde and discharged.

“After that,” said Schuyler, “my wife eloped and I got a divorce from her. Mrs. Corsa thought the world of me and my sons, and made a will in the boys’ favor. I have that will. I believe that for the past six months she has been under restraint. I suppose another will will be sprung now, but I’ll fight it to the bitter end.”

The World, New York, NY, Tuesday, January 21, 1896

Page 16⁹¹

HE OPENED HER COFFIN.

Cornelius B. Schuyler Made Sure It Contained His Mother-In-Law’s Body.

THERE MAY BE BRICKS IN IT, HE SAID.

His Two Sons, Willett and Oscar, Were the Old Lady’s Heirs, and He Was Suspicious.

SO HE WAITED IN WOODLAWN CEMETERY.

He Was Wrongly Suspicious of Dr. Morgan, with Whom Mrs. Corsa Passed Her Last Days.

Cornelius B. Schuyler is a descendant of the Schuyler family, of revolutionary fame, and dates his ancestry in this country back to 1616. He is sixty years old and lives at Bedford Park. About thirty years ago he married Mary

⁹¹ Our file: SchuylerCorneliusOpensCoffinTheWorld18960121.pdf

M. Corsa, eldest daughter of John M. Corsa, who died in 1889, leaving an estate valued at \$40,000 to his widow. Cornelius B. Schuyler has two sons by his wife, Willett and Oscar.

In 1858 Mrs. Schuyler ran away with an adopted son of John B. Haskin, the ex-congressman, who died lately.

Schuyler took his wife's elopement philosophically. His revenge soon came, for in March, 1889, Haskin fell, fractured his skull and died. Then Mrs. Schuyler went to live with a man named John Burnham.

Schuyler, still philosophical, got a divorce from her. Then his former wife became Mrs. John Burnham. Last March the descendant of the Schuylers married Miss Sophie Scholles [sic], who was forty years younger than he. She came from Germany eight years ago, and up to the time of her lucky marriage – for Schuyler is worth \$150,000 – had been a domestic in a family named Schwab who lived near Mr. Schuyler.

In February, 1892, Mrs. John Burnham went to the Harlem Police Court and made affidavit that her widowed mother, who was eighty years of age, was not fit to be at large. Old Mrs. Corsa was in court. Her form was bent, her hair was white, but her eyes snapped with fire when she heard her daughter's accusation against her.

"It is false! It is a wicked lie! She wants my property!" exclaimed the old lady.

Justice Welde decided that Mrs. Corsa was perfectly sane. Incensed at her daughter the old lady made a will leaving her property to her daughter's sons, Willett and Oscar.

The old lady lived there until the summer of 1892. Then, Mr. Schuyler says, she disappeared. He traced her to Newburg, where she had gone with Dr. W. J. Morgan, of Bedford Park, and his wife. Mrs. Corsa bought a farm of one hundred and fifty-eight acres just outside of Newburg. Schuyler grew suspicious of Mr. Morgan's influence over her. He says he tried to see her, but unsuccessfully. He sent registered letters to her, but they were receipted for in a strange hand.

On Saturday last Mrs. Corsa's brother-in-law got a telegram. It told him that she was dead, and that her body would be buried in the family plot in Woodlawn yesterday. Schuyler's suspicious care for his sons' inheritance grew. He thought Mrs. Corsa might have died six months ago, while Dr. Morgan had profited by the estate for half a year.

Determined to convince himself, Schuyler went to the authorities of Woodlawn Cemetery on Sunday.

"When Mrs. Mary Corsa's coffin arrives to-morrow I want it opened. I want to make sure she died last Saturday," he said.

The authorities refused, saying that written authority from Mrs. Corsa's daughter would be necessary. Of course Schuyler would not ask that. He went to Police Headquarters yesterday morning and told his suspicions. The police raised their eyebrows in wonder and did nothing.

Then, with his son, Oscar, his brother-in-law, Corsa, and Dr. Crump, of Williamsbridge, Schuyler hurried to Woodlawn. He sent Oscar to the plot, No. 698, on Cedar avenue, in the cemetery where Mrs. Corsa was to be buried. Then he went to the railroad station. Coffins were constantly arriving there. Schuyler searched around until he found one marked Mrs. Mary Corsa, in the charge of an undertaker. Then he hurried back to the grave. When the coffin arrived Schuyler stamped up and down and stormed.

"You shan't bury that coffin until you open it," he cried. "I will look into it. How do I know what's in it? There may be the body of an old woman who died six months ago; there may be no body; there may be bricks. You shall open it."

To pacify him the coffin was opened. Dr. Crump examined Mrs. Corsa's body and assured Schuyler she had been dead but two or three days.

But to make sure that his sons get their grandmother's money, Mr. Schuyler will to-day file a copy of Mrs. Corsa's will in Orange County and here.

New-York Daily Tribune, New York, NY, Monday, April 3, 1899
Page 11⁹²

DEATH OF CORNELIUS B. SCHUYLER.

Cornelius B. Schuyler, who in March, 1895, obtained a divorce from his first wife, whose maiden name was Mary M. Corsa, and a month later married Sophie Schoers, a German servant, died on Saturday at his home at Decatur and Brookline sts. His marital troubles and sudden marriage to Miss Schoers caused much talk at the time the facts became known. His second wife was at his bedside when he died. It was reported yesterday that he had left all his property, the value of which is estimated at \$150,000, to her, and that his two sons, who are married, would probably contest the will.

Mr. Schuyler was sixty-five years old, and was a descendant of General Schuyler of Revolutionary fame. He had lived in Fordham for more than half a century. In April, 1888, his first wife eloped with an orphan named White, who had been adopted by ex-Congressman John B. Haskins and assumed his benefactor's name. Young Haskins and another man were named as co-respondents in the divorce suit which followed. Before the divorce suit was brought young Haskins fell and sustained a fractured skull. He died from the injury. In January, 1896, Schuyler caused a scene at the burial of the mother of his divorced wife in Woodlawn Cemetery. He alleged that the aged Mrs. Corsa had been kidnapped from the old Corsa Homestead, overlooking Bronx Park, several years before her death, and that she had been taken to Newburg, where, he said, she had been secreted. He alleged that there was a dummy in the coffin, and they were trying to defraud him. He arrived at the grave just as the

⁹² Our file: SchuylerCorneliusDeathNYTribune18990403.pdf.

casket was being lowered. He forced the grave-diggers to raise the lid. He found the corpse was that of Mrs. Corsa.

MARY CORSA'S WILL DISPUTE

Did Cornelius B. prevail in seeing that his sons received their due from Mary Corsa's estate? And did Mary Miranda get cut out of the will?

These are unanswered questions. A search of Surrogate Court records in Westchester County's archives did not reveal Mary Corsa's will.

In fact, the story grows even stranger, as it appears that Mary Corsa may have written a second will or even third will after the one that Cornelius said he had safely tucked away on the day of her burial.

Just days after the burial of Mary Corsa, Mrs. Morgan, with whom Mary Corsa had been living in Newburgh for three years, told reporters that Mary had indeed written another will, excluding her daughter Mary Miranda, giving a small sum to her grandson Oscar Schuyler, and the remainder to Mrs. Morgan's daughter, Louise Gladys.

The Sun, New York, NY, Monday, January 22, 1896
Page 8⁹³

Mrs. Corsa Made a Second Will.

NEWBURGH, Jan. 21. – Mrs. Mary Corsa made another will than the one supposed to have been her only one by her son-in-law, Cornelius B. Schuyler of New York, who compelled the opening of the casket at the grave in Woodlawn yesterday, so that he might be satisfied that she had died only recently. Mrs. Morgan, with whom Mrs. Corsa had lived near this city for three years, says another was drawn up last October by a New York lawyer named Grossman. It cuts off her daughter, gives a small sum to her grandson Oscar Schuyler, and the bulk of the remainder to Louise Gladys, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Morgan. Instead of being worth \$40,000 the estate will not foot up \$18,000.

And a week later, a news story revealed a new wrinkle – apparently Mary Corsa had re-married while living in Newburgh. The new husband was supposedly Wesley Morgan, a relative of Dr. and Mrs. Morgan with whom she had been living. The marriage occurred, according to the news story, in February, 1893, less than a year after she had moved away from her home in the Fordham area. Mary Corsa would have been about 93 years

⁹³ Our file: CorsaMaryNYSun18960122.pdf.

old at the time; Wesley Morgan was, according to the news story, about 71 at the time of the marriage.

We question if that marriage actually occurred. After all, her burial record reads, “Mary Corsa,” not “Mary Morgan.”

A search of church records in Newburgh and a search of marriage records on ancestry.com has not revealed a marriage between a Wesley Morgan and Mary Corsa. We also searched for surrogate records and wills for Mary Corsa in Westchester County and found nothing. Orange County wills are not easily searchable; we checked out sampubco.com for Orange County wills and found nothing for either Corsa or Morgan in Orange County.

Albany Evening Journal, Albany NY, Friday, January 31, 1896
Page 1⁹⁴

MRS. CORSA LEFT A HUSBAND.

A Discovery That Will Complicate Disposition of Her Property.

Newburg, Jan. 31. – The discovery was made to-day that Mrs. Mary Corsa who died Friday, January 17, at the home of Dr. W.J. Morgan, near the city, leaving a fortune of \$50,000, also left a husband, to whom she had been married less than three years. Mrs. Corsa was 93(?) years old and was supposed to be a widow.

It will be recalled that on Monday following her death Cornelius B. Schuyler, Mrs. Corsa’s former son-in-law, had her casket opened in Woodlawn Cemetery, making a charge it contained only stones.

Dr. Morgan admitted this afternoon that Mrs. Corsa had been married at his home about three years ago to a man now probably 74 years of age. He would not tell his name. It is learned, however, that the husband is Wesley Morgan, and the ceremony was performed on February 7, 1893.

Dr. Morgan intimated that Mrs. Corsa’s later marriage will probably _____ both the will that Mr. Schuyler claimed to have in his possession and the one that her attorneys had at the time of her death.

The Sun, New York, NY, January 31, 1896⁹⁵

MRS. CORSA WEDDED AT 93.

⁹⁴ Our file: CorsaMaryAlbanyJournal18960131.pdf.

⁹⁵ Our file: CorsaMaryWedsAt93Sun18960131.pdf.

The Marriage was Kept Secret and Her Estate Is Unsettled.

NEWBURGH, Jan 30. – It is said her to-night that Dr. W. J. Morgan has admitted that Mrs. Mary Corsa, who died at his house near this city at the age of 94, had a husband when she died. Upon this fact depends the distribution of a fortune. In 1892 Mrs. John Burnham appeared at the Harlem Police Court and said her widowed mother, Mrs. Corsa, was not capable of taking care of her affairs. Mrs. Corsa, who was present, exclaimed that her daughter's statements were wickedly false and that they were made because she wanted to get her money. Justice Welde held that Mrs. Corsa was sane, and then the old lady was said to have made a will cutting off her daughter, leaving her estate to her daughter's sons, Oscar and Willett. She came to the Morgan farm to live, and died there on Jan. 17.

Cornelius B. Schuyler, a former husband of Mrs. Burnham and father of Oscar and Willett, thought that Dr. Morgan was exerting undue influence over the old lady. He said he had tried to see her and failed. He had sent her registered letters, but it was not her handwriting that receipted for them. When he got word that her remains were to be interred in Woodlawn Cemetery he went there and demanded that the coffin be opened so that he could make sure her body was in it. He identified the body.

The complications arose as to whether Mrs. Corsa had married again. She had become a widow in 1889. From what Dr. Morgan said it was supposed that Mrs. Corsa had not wedded again. It now appears that she was married, the ceremony taking place about three years ago and when she was over ninety years of age. A direct question was put to Dr. Morgan to-day by a reporter, and he said that it was a fact that she had been married three years ago at his house. He would not reveal the name of the man, but said the Rev, Dewitt B. Thompson, then the pastor of Grace M.E. Church⁹⁶ of this city, now of Dobbs Ferry, had performed the ceremony.

From another source it was afterward learned that Wesley Morgan, believed to be a relative of Dr. Morgan, was married by Mr. Thompson to Mrs. Corsa on Feb 7, 1893. His age was given at 70 years, his occupation a farmer, and it was said he had already been married three times. This complicates the settlement of the estate. Messrs. Grossman and Voorhis of New York have one of the two wills Mrs. Corsa is said to have made, and they have been anxious to learn the truth of the report that she had married recently.

CORNELIUS SCHUYLER: LIFE BEYOND MARY MIRANDA

⁹⁶ See our file: GraceChurch.pdf.

Cornelius B. Schuyler did succeed in divorcing Mary Miranda, the mother of his children, though we do not have a primary source telling us when the divorce became final. One news story in 1899 says he divorced her in 1895 and, a few months later, married a second time, a woman named Sophie Schoers,⁹⁷ who had been a maid or a cook to a household living close to Schuyler's home in Bedford Park. The two are buried together, with a single stone marker, in Woodlawn Cemetery.

Cornelius was 54 years old in 1895. He lived until 1899. According to news accounts, he was ill for several months before he died:

Democrat Chronicle, Rochester, NY, Saturday, January 7, 1899
Page 1⁹⁸

Son of an Old Family Dying.

Special Dispatch to Democrat and Chronicle.

New York, Jan 6. — Cornelius Schuyler is at the point of death at his home at Decatur avenue and Brookline street, Fordham. He is suffering with influenza and general debility. Mr. Schuyler is a descendant of General Philip Schuyler, the Revolutionary hero. He has a fortune of about \$150,000. His first wife was Miss Mary A. Corsa, whose father was wealthy. He married, in 1895, Sophie Schoers, a German housemaid, and the event evoked social exclamation points for some months afterwards. He is about 70 years of age. It is said that all of his property has been willed to his wife.

In fact, Cornelius died without a will several months after this story appeared.⁹⁹ He did, however, make several large transfers of property just before his death. He gifted property at Decatur and Brookline streets to both Sophie, his second wife, and his younger son, Oscar. This did not make his older son, Willet, happy. He sued for his share of the estate. We do not know the final outcome of the distribution of Cornelius B.'s estate.

New-York Daily Tribune, Monday, April 3, 1899
Page 11¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ SchuylerCorneliusMarriageToSophieNYMarriageRecord.pdf.

⁹⁸ SchuylerCorneliusDemocratChronicle18990107.pdf

⁹⁹ His funeral notice appeared in the *New York Sun* on Apr. 2, 1899. The funeral was held on Tuesday, Apr. 4th at his late residence, corner Decatur av. and Brookline st. See our file: SchuylerCorneliusObitTheSun1899.pdf.

¹⁰⁰ Our file: SchuylerCorneliusDeathNYTribune18990403.pdf. His obit in the *New-York Daily Tribune* on April 3, 1899, p. 11. Also in the *Corning Journal*, April 8, 1899, p. 4. See our files: SchuylerCorneliusObitTribune18990408.pdf and SchuylerCorneliusObitCorningNYJournal18990405.pdf

DEATH OF CORNELIUS B. SCHUYLER.

Cornelius B. Schuyler, who in March, 1895, obtained a divorce from his first wife, whose maiden name was Mary M. Corsa, and a month later married Sophie Schoers, a German servant, died on Saturday at his home at Decatur and Brookline sts. His marital troubles and sudden marriage to Miss Schoers caused much talk at the time the facts became known. His second wife was at his bedside when he died. It was reported yesterday that he had left all his property, the value of which is estimated at \$150,000, to her, and that his two sons, who are married, would probably contest the will.

Mr. Schuyler was sixty-five years old, and was a descendant of General Schuyler of Revolutionary fame. He had lived in Fordham for more than half a century. In April, 1888, his first wife eloped with an orphan named White, who had been adopted by ex-Congressman John B. Haskins and assumed his benefactor's name. Young Haskins and another man were named as co-respondents in the divorce suit which followed. Before the divorce suit was brought young Haskins fell and sustained a fractured skull. He died from the injury. In January, 1896, Schuyler caused a scene at the burial of the mother of his divorced wife in Woodlawn Cemetery. He alleged that the aged Mrs. Corsa had been kidnapped from the old Corsa Homestead, overlooking Bronx Park, several years before her death, and that she had been taken to Newburg, where, he said, she had been secreted. He alleged that there was a dummy in the coffin, and they were trying to defraud him. He arrived at the grave just as the casket was being lowered. He forced the grave-diggers to raise the lid. He found the corpse was that of Mrs. Corsa.

His death was reported in *The Sun*.

The Sun, New York, NY, April 2, 1899¹⁰¹

CORNELIUS B. SCHUYLER DEAD. Leaves \$175,000 and a Handsome House to The Domestic He Married.

Cornelius B. Schuyler of Decatur avenue and Brookline street, Fordham, died of the grip yesterday morning. He was born in Fordham seventy years ago and was a descendant of Gen. Philip Schuyler. In 1888 he was divorced from his wife, who had been Miss Mary Corsa of Bedford Park, and married a German servant in his own employ, forty years his junior. He leaves her \$175,000 and the handsome residence he had built for her.

Before his death, he gifted some property:

¹⁰¹ Our file: SchuylerCorneliusBObitTheSun18990402.pdf

REAL ESTATE TRANSFERS.	
5th-ave, Nos 1,346 and 1,348, 50x100; Samuel W B Smith to Moses Zimmermann.....	\$1
Kingsbridge Road, e s, 50.5 ft s of 184th-st, 25.3x 92.10x25x96.3; Louise N Rechenberg to Anna E Rechenberg	6,000
Decatur-ave, s w corner Brookline-st, 34.11x42.6x 35x42.6; Cornelius B Schuyler to Sophie Schuyler	Gift
Brookline-st, s s, 42.6 ft w of Decatur ave, 42.6x 35; Cornelius B Schuyler to Sophie Schuyler....	3,000

Recorded Real Estate Transfers.	
Saturday, Jan. 28.	
AUDUBON AV, n e corner of 167th St, 28.7x95; M C Milnor, referee, to Henry de Peyser.....	8,950
AUDUBON AV, e s, 26.7 ft n of 167th St, 25x95; M C Minor, referee, to Leopold Gusthal	2,300
BEEKMAN PLACE, w s, 60 ft n of 50th St, 20x75; Hulda Wittner to Jacob Levy.	1
BROOKLINE ST, s s, 85 ft w of Decatur Av, new line, 63x86x63x35; Cornelius B. Schuyler to Oscar Schuyler.....	Gift
GREENWICH ST, 74, w s, 23.5x99.10x23.5 x99.11, with alley on rear; Eugene H. Pomeroy to George M. Miller, trustee ...	25,000
JEROME AV, e s, 108.5 ft n of Garfield St, 28.6x165.11x26x152.3; Ellen McCue to Agnes McCue	1
MADISON ST, s s, 52.2 ft w of Jefferson St, 23.1x100; Wolf Fein to Lena Price..	36,000
MANGIN ST, w s, 55.4 ft s of Stanton St, 15.9x100; Bankson T. Morgan, referee, to William P. Dixon and another, executors and trustees	15,000
PEARL ST, 486, n e s, 26x42x irregular; Pearl St, n e s, at s w corner of the above, 5.3x60x irregular; William T. Read, referee, to Clara J. Walgrove...	40,000
PLOT 175, North Morris Park Av, and 522 East Unionport Road, runs w 97.6x n 75x e 97.6x 75; also Morris Park Av, n s, 522 ft e of Unionport Road, 45x250; Ephraim B. Levy to David L. Gluck.....	100
WEBSTER AV, s w corner of Brookline St, new lines, 33.8x104.1 to Decatur Av, x34.4x108.1; Cornelius B. Schuyler to Oscar Schuyler.....	Gift

¹⁰² Our file: SchuylerCorneliusGiftsPropToSophieTribune18981115.pdf

¹⁰³ SchuylerCorneliusTransfPropOscarJan1899NYTimes.pdf

¹⁰⁴ Our file: SchuylerCorneliusTransfPropOscarJan1899DailyTribune.pdf

REAL ESTATE TRANSFERS.	
71st-st, n s, 30 ft e of Columbus-ave, 20x102.2; Samuel S Slater, referee, to Paul Dartiguenave.	\$2,200
60th-st, s s, 200 ft e of 1st-ave, 25x100.5; Harry P Disbecker, devisee, to Frederick J Schillinger.	6,500
112th-st, s s, 100 ft w of Boulevard, 25x142.11 to old lane x27.9x180.10; James McClenahan et al, executors, to Jacob Lawson.....	18,000
Pearl-st, No 96, n e s, 26x42x irregular; Pearl-st, n e s, at s w corner above, 5.3x60x irregular; William T Read, referee, to Clara J Walgrove.	40,000
Brookline-st, s s, 85 ft w of Decatur-ave, new line, 63x36x63x35; Cornelius B Schuyler to Oscar Schuyler.....	gift
Webster-ave, s w corner Brookline-st new lines, 83.8x104.1 to Decatur-ave x84.4x108.1; Cornelius B Schuyler to Oscar Schuyler.....	gift
Mangin-st, w s, 55.4 ft s of Stanton-st, 15.9x100; Banksop T Morgan, referee, to William P Dixon and another, executors and trustees.....	15,000
Greenwich-st, No 74, w s, 23.5x99.10x23.5x99.11, with alley on rear; Eugene H Pomeroy to George M Miller, trustee.....	25,000
Audubon-ave, n e corner 167th-st, 26.7x95; M C Milnor, referee, to Henry de Peyster.....	8,950
Madison-st, s s, 52.2 ft w of Jefferson-st, 28.1x100; Wolf Fein to Lena Price.....	26,000

The Sun, New York, NY, Sunday, April 30, 1899
Page Unknown¹⁰⁵

MARRIED HIS COOK; LEFT NO WILL.

Schuyler's Elder Son Finds That the Property Is Deeded Away and He Sues.

Willett Schuyler, elder son of Cornelius B. Schuyler, who died at his home at Decatur avenue and Brookline street in Fordham on April 1, has brought action through Meyer & Friend, his attorneys, to have set aside deeds by which the greater part of the father's property was transferred to his second wife, Sophie, and the younger son, Oscar. Undue influence is alleged. The action was brought against both the widow and the younger son.

Cornelius B. Schuyler was an old resident of Fordham. In 1868 he married Mary M. Corsa, who was then 19 years old. In 1892 he began proceedings for divorce from his wife, naming two co-respondents, one of whom, a young man named Haskins, had died from a fracture of the skull received by a fall at the house of Mrs. Schuyler's parents, with whom she was then living. In 1895 Mr. Schuyler obtained the divorce and a month of two later he married Sophie Schoers, his German cook.

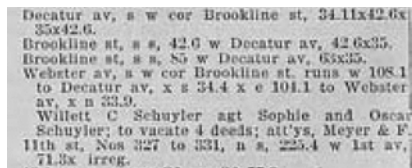
¹⁰⁵ Our file: SchuylerCorneliusNYSun18990430.pdf

In the Presidential campaign of 1896 he erected on his house a wooden cannon pointed toward Henry D. Purroy's house. He began to fail in health, it is said, in the fall of 1898, and he died on April 1 last of some lung complaint, aggravated by an attack of the grip.

He left no will. His property was said to amount in value to about \$150,000. He owned a number of lots in Williamsbridge and among his other property was a row of houses on Brookline street between Webster and Decatur avenues. He had two sons by his first wife. The elder son Willett, is married, is a carpenter by trade and lives at 830 East 136th street. The younger son, Oscar, lived with his father in the house which the old man built when he married his second wife.

It was discovered the larger amount of the property had been deeded by Mr. Schuyler to his second wife and his younger son. What the elder son could have got was a part of some property in Williamsbridge, but he refused to accept that. The first wife is still living.

From: *Real estate record and builders' guide* (v.63), New York, F. W. Dodge Corp.
Lis Pendens: April 26, 1899¹⁰⁶



For a look at where this property is located, see Bronx map, circa 1900:¹⁰⁷

A "lis pendens" indicates that there is a lawsuit pending. Willet Schuyler did sue his stepmother, Sophie, and his brother, Oscar; we know Cornelius B. owned a number of lots in Williamsbridge and also a row of houses on Brookline St. between Webster and Decatur Avenues. At the time, Willet was living at 830 East 136th Street, and was a carpenter. We don't have further information regarding the distribution of Schuyler's estate.

About 1891, Willet Schuyler married Julia L. Mooney, who was born about 1865,¹⁰⁸ the daughter of Thomas J. Mooney (b. abt. 1840)¹⁰⁹ and Annie M. ___ (b. abt 1846)¹¹⁰. They had two children, Irene A. Schuyler (b. 1892) and Jerome C. Schuyler (1896-1976).¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ Our file: LisPendens1899WilletOscarAfterCorneliusDies.pdf. Also see: SchuylerOscarAndWilletVacateDeed-18990429.pdf.

¹⁰⁷ Our file: Bronxmap.jpg.

¹⁰⁸ U.S. Federal census for 1870, Town of Morrisania, Westchester County, NY, family 126. Our file: USFedcensus1870_MooneyJuliaWifeOfWillet.pdf

In May of 1892, Willet Schuyler and wife transferred property for \$1 to Cornelius B. Schulyer, his father. The property was described as: "Bounded westerly by Old Williamsbridge Road, northeasterly by Mosholu Parkway, and southerly by a lane called Bussing's lane."¹¹² Note that this was the same year that Cornelius B. started divorce proceedings against his wife, Mary Miranda.

Willet is found in the 1900 census with Julia and their two children, shortly after Cornelius B.'s death.¹¹³ They are living in the Borough of the Bronx, on Avenue B between 12th and 13th Streets. Here, though Willet's birth year is accurate (1871), in the fine tradition of females everywhere, it seems, Julia lists a birthdate of June, 1872, making her appear about 7 years younger than she actually is. Willet lists his occupation as "carpenter." Their children are Irene A. (7) and Gerome (3).¹¹⁴

Willet also appears in the 1910 federal census.¹¹⁵ This time, however, he is living in the Bronx with his mother, Mary Burnham, at 1001 180th Street. She is listed as the head of household, renting the home. He's listed as her son. (His name is listed as William, but it does appear to be our "Willet.") Willet and Mary Miranda are both listed as "widowed." She is 59 years old; he is 37 and a carpenter. It appears that Julia has died between 1900 and 1910. The two children of Willet and Julia are found, in 1910, with Julia's parents and unmarried children, living in a rented house in the Bronx.¹¹⁶ We don't know why Willet chose to give up his children after Julia died. In addition, we find Mary Miranda Burnham assigning a mortgage to Charles Hallock in 1910.¹¹⁷ The property is not identified in the record we have.

¹⁰⁹ Born in Washington, DC according to Julia's Federal census record from 1900. See: U.S. Federal census for 1900, Enumeration District 1051, Bronx Borough, New York City, NY, family 306. Our file:

USFedCensus1900_SchuylerWilletJuliaIreneGerome.pdf

¹¹⁰ Born in Ireland, according to Julia's Federal census record from 1900. Ibid.

¹¹¹ From FamilySearch.org, Texas Deaths, 1890-1976 for Willet Schuyler. Our file:

SchuylerJeromeCorneliusDeathRecord19760801.pdf. Also, SchuylerJeromeDeathCertificate.pdf.

¹¹² "Transfers," *The Evening Post*, New York, NY, May 26, 1892, 9. Our file:

SchuylerWilletTransPropToSchuylerCorneliusNYEveningPost1892.pdf

¹¹³ U.S. Federal census of 1900, Enumeration District 1051, Bronx Borough, New York City, New York, family 306. Our file: USFedCensus1900_SchuylerWilletJuliaIreneGerome.pdf

¹¹⁴ See: <http://www.faqs.org/people-search/schuyler-texas/#ixzz1UIhflPpA>. Our file:

SchuylerJerome.pdf.

¹¹⁵ U.S. Federal census of 1910, Enumeration District 1583, Bronx, New York, family 254. Willet is misnamed "William." Our file: USFedCensus1910_SchuylerWilliamBurnhamMary.pdf.

¹¹⁶ U.S. Federal census of 1910, Assembly District 32, Bronx, New York, family 474. In 1910, Irene and Jerome Schuyler were living at 447 East 137th Street in the Bronx with their maternal grandparents Thomas J. and Annie M. Mooney and uncles Ralph and William. Our files: USFedCensus1910_SchuylerJeromeIrenePart1.pdf and USFedCensus1910_SchuylerJeromeIrenePart2.pdf.

¹¹⁷ "Assignment of Mortgages," *New-York Tribune*, New York, NY, November 24, 1910, 10. Our file: BurnhamMaryAssignmentOfMortgage1910.pdf. Also see: *New-York Daily Tribune*, July 11, 1910. Our file: CorsaMaryMirandaMorgage1910.pdf.

We do not find Willet Schuyler in further Federal census records, either on familysearch.org or ancestry.com. We do not know when he died; nor do we know where he was buried. There is no record of him in the Woodlawn Cemetery records. It is interesting to note that John Devoe, in his attempt in 1917 to contact all family members, does list him, though admits he cannot find an address. We know he communicated with Willet's mother; she was served notice of DeVoe's petition to act as administrator of what was left of Mary Bussing's estate. We can only imagine that she would have told him that he was dead if he were at the time. He is not buried with his mother and brother at Woodlawn Cemetery, according to their records.

However, there is a "William Schuyler" married to a woman named Emma listed in the 1930 U.S. Federal Census, living in Las Vegas, NV, whose age matches pretty well (age 55 in 1930).¹¹⁸ It is possible this is "our" Willet.

There is a G(J)erome C. Schuyler, possibly Willet's son, appearing in the 1920 federal census as a private at the El Paso, TX Military District. He has joined the Army. He's listed as being 21 years of age – "our" Jerome would have been about 2400 and came from New York.¹¹⁹

In 1930, the federal census¹²⁰ shows a Jerome C. Schuyler living in a rented house on Andrews Avenue in the Bronx (Assembly District 8). He's 33 years of age and is married to Anna K. (age 29). They are living with Jerome's sister or sister in law, Irene A., age 35, and her husband, James O. Stanton (age 35). It appears to us that Jerome and his sister Irene married a brother and sister – the Stantons. Irene is a teacher. Her husband is a real estate agent. Jerome is a "pattern maker" of dresses and his wife, Anna, was born in Northern Ireland. James Stanton is also from N. Ireland. Both Jerome and James are listed as veterans of WW1. Also – in 1935, when Jerome and his wife Anna traveled to Belfast, Northern Island, probably to visit family there, she called herself "Anna Stanton" – probably sister of James O. Stanton.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ U.S. Federal census of 1930, Enumeration District 7, Las Vegas, Clark County, NV, family 387. Our file: USFedCensus1930_SchuylerWmLasVegas.pdf.

¹¹⁹ We find Jerome in the 1920 U.S. Fed. Census, living at the El Paso Military District (part of the U.S. Army). See: U.S. Federal census 1920, Enumeration District 93, Fort Bliss, El Paso, Texas. Our file: USFedCensus1920_SchuylerGerome.pdf

¹²⁰ U.S. Federal census of 1930, Enumeration District 597, Assembly District 8, Bronx, New York, family 246. Living with his sister and brother-in-law. Our file: USFedCensus1930_SchuylerJeromeAndIreneFamilies.pdf

¹²¹ SchuylerJeromeAndAnnaStantonShipToBelfast1935.pdf from Ancestry.com, New York Passenger Lists, 1820-1957, record for Jerome Schuyler. Accessed from: <http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?h=22631948&db=nypl&indiv=try>.

LIST OF UNITED STATES CITIZENS
(FOR THE IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES)

S.S. "CALIFORNIA" Sailing from RELFAST, 1935, Arriving at Port of NEW YORK, 29 AUG 1935

No. on List	NAME IN FULL	Given Name	Age	Sex	IF NATIVE OF UNITED STATES, GIVE DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH, CITY OR TOWN AND STATE.	IF NATURALIZED, GIVE NAME AND LOCATION OF COURT WHERE ISSUED NATURALIZATION PAPERS, AND DATE OF BIRTH.	ADDRESS IN UNITED STATES
1	PARKS	Marion.	37	F	Chilsea, Mass. 20th September 1866		Returning to- Hotel V. Moore, Boston, Mass.
2	ROCKS	Rose.	37	F	New York, N.Y. 20th November 1897		Returning to- 6924 Crville Street, Forrest Hill, N.Y.
3	ROCKS	Patrick.	24	M	Brooklyn, N.Y. 22nd June 1911		Returning to- 2877 Andrews Avenue Bronx, N.Y.
4	SCHUYLER	Jerome.	38	M	New York, N.Y. 4th October 1896		Returning to- 2877 Andrews Avenue, Bronx, N.Y.
5	SEARON	Anna.	38	F	New York, N.Y. 23rd September 1898		Returning to- 54 Chandler Street West Somerville, Mass.
6	WHITCOMB	Howard.	30	M	Rushville, Ind. 10th May 1888.		Returning to- 7428 Luella Avenue, Chicago, Ill.
7	COFFEY	Elizabeth	31	F	Chicago, Ill. 20th October 1893.		
8	COFFEY	Phyllis.	28	F	Port Haven, Mich. 21st October 1898		
9							
10							

H. S. Marley Aug 29/35 945

According to a family tree posted on Ancestry.com, Jerome C. Schuyler married a second time, to a much younger woman, Margaret Mary Tarver, b. Apr. 8, 1920 in Queens, daughter of Herbert McKinley Tarver (1896-1971) and Margaret Veronica (1898-1954). Jerome and Margaret Mary had a daughter who is still apparently living, who married a Sexton, also living. This Schuyler-Sexton family has a daughter posting on Ancestry.com – Jennifer Sexton Spencer. Jerome would have been her grandfather, so it's hard to ignore her connection to "our" Jerome.

Oscar, the younger son of Cornelius B. Schuyler, married, in 1899, Florence E. Daniels (b. 1883), the daughter of George Daniels (b. 1856) and Onetta E. Hunt (b. 1859).¹²² Florence had two younger siblings, Clifford E. and Richard. They can be found in the 1900 federal census records, living with their parents, in the Bronx. Florence and her new husband, Oscar, were living there, too. Florence was only 17 years old; Oscar was 22.

Their son, Cornelius W., was born in 1900.

In 1903, Oscar, age 20, made the news when he shot off the ear of a friend while in pursuit of a burglar:

The New York Times, August 4, 1903
Page unknown¹²³

SHOT FELLOW-PURSUER

Two Burglars Got Away, but with No Booty.

¹²² Our file: SchuylerOscarMarriagerecord1899.pdf.

¹²³ Our file: SchuylerOscarBurglarStory-19030804.pdf.

Exciting Chase Through a House and Across a Lawn – Vincent Mulholland's Ear Suffered from Oscar Schuyler's Revolver.

Two burglars in the home of Calvin D. Hickok, in Brookline Street, near Decatur Avenue, the Bronx, were chased out of the house last night by Oscar Schuyler, Vincent Mulholland, and Delos Hickok, and, though Mr. Schuyler discharged a revolver at the fugitives, he succeeded only in hitting Mr. Mulholland's ear, while the burglars ran down the road and finally disappeared.

Mr. Hickok's family, with the exception of Delos Hickok, twenty-four years old, are spending the Summer at Chatham, N.Y., so that when the latter attended a small party at the home of his neighbor, Oscar Schuyler, last night, the house was left deserted.

Mrs. Schuyler, while wandering about her lawn, happened to glance toward her neighbor's house, and saw a light moving about inside. Knowing that the house had been left deserted her suspicions were aroused, and she notified her husband. He called Mr. Mulholland and Mr. Hickok to his aid, grabbed up a revolver, and started for the house. Some of the other guests followed at a distance.

Mr. Schuyler was startled, perhaps, when he ran against somebody in the front hallway, but he made a good attempt to seize the unknown, and chased him through the hallway and down the cellar stairs. There he seized the fugitive, but the latter broke loose and ran up the outside cellar steps, with Mr. Schuyler close behind. The burglar ran across the lawn, and it was then that Mr. Schuyler discharged his revolver.

Mr. Mulholland, who was close behind Mr. Schuyler in entering the house, heard some one moving in the parlor. As he entered he saw no one at first, but as he moved slowly around the room a man suddenly sprang from behind a table and leaped through an open window.

Mr. Mulholland jumped through after him and pursued him across the lawn. The man had just leaped over the hedge, when Mr. Schuyler and his quarry appeared from the cellar. Mr. Schuyler possibly took Mr. Mulholland for a burglar. At any rate the bullet from his revolver took some flesh off Mr. Mulholland's ear, though the latter was not aware of his injury until the excitement was over. The two burglars ran down King's Bridge Road to Jerome Avenue, and thence into Berian Farm, where all trace of them was lost. The pursuers had been reinforced by other guests and by persons who had heard the hue and cry, but in the thickets of Berian Farm pursuit was vain.

It was later found that nothing was missing from the house. Mr. Mulholland's injury was found to be scarcely more than an abrasion of the skin of the ear.

And of course *The Sun* wrote its own version of the story which includes Cornelius Schuyler's neighbor, Mr. Purroy:

BEDFORD PARK BURGLAR HUNT

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S PARTY TURNS INTO A POSSE.

Two Thieves Chased out of a Neighbor's House and Pursured With Popping Revolvers With Never a Policeman in Sight – Noise Didn't Wake H. D. Purroy.

Oscar Schuyler, who lives at the corner of Decatur avenue and Brookline street, Bedford park, entertained some twenty neighbors at his home on Sunday night. Shortly after midnight, as the guests were making ready to depart, some one noticed a light in the kitchen of a house next door occupied by Charles D. Hickok and his family. Delos Hickok, who was in the party, said that the family were at their country place at Chatham, and that the light looked suspicious.

Mr. Schuyler, young Hickok and Dr. Vincent Mulholland set out to investigate. They armed themselves with revolvers and going to the back of the Hickok house found that the kitchen door had been forced. In the basement Hickok and Dr. Mulholland "fell among thieves and the thieves sprang up and choked them." There were two of the thieves. After a tussle [sic]

One of them got out of a window, followed by Dr. Mulholland. Mr. Schuyler, who had been searching the upper part of the house, heard the scuffling below and ran to the basement in time to see the pair go through the window. He fired a shot at the burglar and the bullet clipped Dr. Mulholland's ear. The doctor clapped his hand to his ear, and the man he was chasing turned and hit him in the face, sending him sprawling. The thief made off in the direction of Brookline street. The other thief got away from young Hickok and ran out of the back door of the kitchen, following his pal. The guests at Mr. Schuyler's party, including the women, had gathered next door armed with what revolvers they could find, and also with rolling-pins and pokers. With the three explorers they now formed a pursuing party. Passing the home of James Roberts, an ex-policeman, they fired several shots and woke him up. The ex-cop joined the party, reinforcing it with two revolvers. The expedition tried to arouse Henry D. Purroy, the Bronx politician, but he slumbered on. The chase continued up Brookline street to the old Cornelius Berrian farm, which is deserted. A volley of shots near here aroused Fireman Patrick Boylan, who, with his three sons and as many shotguns and lanterns, joined in the chase.

The pursuing posse ran over the hill leading to Kingsbridge Road and near the Jerome avenue bridge made out the forms of two men in the brush

¹²⁴ Our file: SchuylerOscarBurglarStory-19030804-190308042ndversionNYSun-includesPurroy.pdf

alongside the road. A volley was fired over the top of the bushes and a single shot whizzed over the pursuers' heads in response.

A council was called at which Fireman Boylan and Roberts, the ex-cop, suggested that the party circle about the bushes and charge the two men. They did; but the burglars had not waited for them. The posse then returned to the Hickok house and it was found that while the place had been considerably upset nothing had been taken. There have been several burglaries in Bedford Park recently.

"This state of affairs is outrageous," said Mr. Schuyler last night. "In all that chase, during which revolvers were fired, we didn't run across a single policeman. We've appealed to Capt. Schultz at Bronx Park station time and again without results. The residents to-night have decided to form vigilance committees and they will patrol the section nightly. We're going to take the law into our own hands and will shoot any burglars on sight."

In March of 1905, there is a notice in *The New York Times* of a foreclosure suit on Oscar's property:

Brookline st. s.s, whole front between Webster and Decatur aves; Rebecca K. Porter vs. Oscar Schuyler et al; atty. A. Knox. (The New York Times, March 9, 1905, p. 9).¹²⁵

Also in 1905, Oscar is mentioned in a news story when he identified a mangled body of a neighbor near Pelham Station. The man had been run over by a train and it was unknown, according to the story, if he had committed suicide or if it had been an accident.¹²⁶ The interesting part of the story is that it gives Oscar's address at the time as No. 683 East 193rd street. We find him in the 1905 New York census at that address, taken in June, living with Florence and his five year old son, Cornelius. He is listed as a carpenter.¹²⁷

In 1906, we hear about Oscar once again as part of the Maria "The Recluse" story which we'll cover later.

And in 1910, Oscar is found in the federal census living with his wife, Florence, at 362 193rd Street, with his wife, Florence, and their son, Cornelius. Oscar is said to be 36 years old; Florence is 27, and Cornelius is age 9. They've been married 10 years,

¹²⁵ Our file: SchuylerOscarForeclosureSuit-19050309.pdf

¹²⁶ "Motorman Finds Mangled Body Near Pelham Station," *The Evening Telegram*, New York, December 15, 1905, 20. Our file: SchuylerOscarIdentifiesMangledBody19051219EveningTelegram.pdf

¹²⁷ New York census of 1905, 35th Assembly District, 54th Election District, Bronx, New York, family 688. Our file: SchuylerOscarNYCensus1905.pdf

according to the census. Oscar is a “carpenter” in the “building” industry. They own their home free of mortgage.¹²⁸

Next door, at 2573 Decatur Ave. Sophie, Oscar’s stepmother, is living there with two lodgers. Sophie is “widowed” and age 50. She owns her home, free of mortgage.

In 1912, Oscar transferred his property, located at 133rd St. s.s 35 W. Decatur Avenue, Bronx, to his wife, Florence.¹²⁹ This address is directly opposite St. John’s College; it closes the “U” look of Kingsbridge Rd. The same year, he took a \$16,600 mortgage on the property at the Webster Avenue s. w. corner of Brookline St.¹³⁰

Oscar Schuyler died in 1915. He was buried in the Corsa family plot at Woodlawn.¹³¹

In 1920, his son, Cornelius W., age 19, is living in Poughkeepsie ward 7, District 56, with his grandparents, George H. Daniels (age 63) and Onetta E. Daniels (age 60), and Onetta’s mother, Onatilda Hunt, age 79.¹³² There’s no sign of Florence. There’s no indication that Florence is dead; she does not appear in the Woodlawn Cemetery records as having been buried in the Corsa family plot.

The story of Mary Miranda, her family, loves, and life are told most deliciously in the local newspapers of the times. The Corsa family and the Schuyler family were well known in the community and the press followed their adventures with rabid attention. The news stories often contain misinformation and inconsistencies but capture the drama of the times. We recognize they are not the most reliable of sources – but have given us a fine Corsa story! We hope you are as delighted by them, and by the life and loves of Mary Miranda Corsa, as we are!

¹²⁸ U.S. Federal Census of 1910, Assembly District 35, Enumeration District 1635, Bronx, New York, family 24. Our file: USFedCensus1910_SchuylerOscarAndFlorence.pdf

¹²⁹ “Transactions Recorded,” *The Sun*, New York, NY, September 5, 1912, 15. Our file: SchuylerOscarTransPropToWifeFlorenceTheSun19120905.pdf

¹³⁰ “Mortgages: Bronx,” *The Sun*, New York, NY, May 4, 1912, 17. Our file: SchuylerOscarMortgageOnPropTheSun19120504.pdf

¹³¹ See plot listing, above.

¹³² U.S. Federal census of 1920, Enumeration District 56, Poughkeepsie, Dutchess, New York, family 151. Our file: USFedCensus1920_SchuylerCorneliusSonOfSscar.pdf