

COUNTY OF NEW YORK

CITY OF NEW YORK

STATE OF NEW YORK. CERTIFICATE AND RECORD OF DEATH

No. of Certificate, 6091

Caroline Virginia Foster

I hereby certify that I attended deceased from March 12 1896 to February 21 1896 that I last saw her alive on the 21st day of February 1896 that she died on the 21st day of February 1896 about 3 o'clock A.M. or P.M. and that to best of my knowledge and belief, the cause of her death was as hereunder written:

Chief Cause, Asthenia
Contributing Cause, Cirrhosis of the Liver
Duration of Disease, 4 years +

Witness my hand this 1st day of February 1896
Place of Burial, Fresh Pond (SIGNATURE)
Date of Burial, Feb 25 1896
Undertaker, Joseph Greedy
Residence, 104 East 20th St

Burial permits issued at 307 Mott Street, Room 2, Week days, 7 A.M. to 6 P.M. Sundays and Holidays, 9 A.M. to 3 P.M.

Table with columns: Date of Death, Roll Name, Age in years, Sex, Color, Religion, Occupation, Birthplace, How long in U.S. if foreign born, How long resident in New York City, Father's Name, Mother's Name, Mother's Birthplace, Place of Birth, Last place of Residence, Class of Dwelling, Cause of Death, Direct cause of Death, Indirect cause of Death, and other details. Handwritten entries include: February 21st 1896, Caroline Virginia Foster, 58, White, Roman Catholic, Married, Domestic, New York City, Isaac M. Singer, Sarah A. Singer, Married, New York City, 157th Street, Asthenia, Cirrhosis of Liver.

R2468/2

OFFICE of VITAL STATISTICS

CERTIFIED COPY

BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS

STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

File No. 3804

1 PLACE OF DEATH

County Dade

CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

Registered No. 145

Product (Write name, not number)

Registration District No. 1101

Registered No. 145

City Miami, Fla.

Primary Registration Dist. No. 11511

(If death occurred in a hospital or institution, give its NAME instead of street and number)

City Miami, Fla. (No. Rayview, Hospital) Ward

2 FULL NAME Augustus C. Foster

(a) Residence No. New York, N.Y. St. New York Ward

(Usual place of abode)

(If nonresident give city or town and State)

Length of residence in city or town where death occurred

PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

3 SEX Male 4 COLOR OR RACE White 5 SINGLE, MARRIED, WIDOWED, OR DIVORCED Widowed

16 DATE OF DEATH (Month, day and year) April, 6, Th 1919

5a If married, widowed, or divorced HUSBAND of Caroline S. Foster (or) WIFE of

17 I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended deceased from April 1919 to April, 5, Th 1919 that I last saw him alive on April, 5, Th 1919 and that death occurred, on the date stated above, at 12 P.M.

6 DATE OF BIRTH October 5, 1884 (Month) (Day) (Year)

7 AGE 73 IF LESS than 1 day, hrs. or min.

8 OCCUPATION OF DECEASED (a) Trade, profession, or particular kind of work Rat. rad. (b) General nature of industry, business, or establishment in which employed (or employer) Caplist. (c) Name of employer

9 BIRTHPLACE (city or town) New York (State or country) U.S.

10 NAME OF FATHER Calvin J. Foster

11 BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER (City or town) (State or country) U.S.

12 MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER Lin. Bogert

13 BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER (city or town) (State or country) U.S.

(Signed) James M. Garrison M. D. 18 (Address) Miami, Fla.

\*State the Disease Causing Death, or in deaths from Violent Causes, state (1) Means and Nature of Injury, and (2) whether Accidental, Suicidal, or Homicidal. (See reverse side for additional spaces).

14 Informant (Address) Muterville B. Foster Sound Beach Conn.

19 Place of Burial, Cremation, or Removal New York Date of Burial or Removal April 7, 1919

15 Filed Apr 6, 1919 P. Allen Finch Registrar

20 UNDERTAKER John J. Skilleman Miami

THIS IS A CERTIFIED TRUE AND CORRECT COPY OF THE OFFICIAL RECORD ON FILE IN THIS OFFICE

BY C. Meach Briggs State Registrar

MAR 30 2008



WARNING: 11392091

THIS DOCUMENT IS PRINTED OR PHOTOCOPIED ON SECURITY PAPER WITH A WATERMARK OF THE GREAT SEAL OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA. DO NOT ACCEPT WITHOUT VERIFYING THE PRESENCE OF THE WATERMARK. THE DOCUMENT FACE CONTAINS A MULTI-COLORED BACKGROUND AND GOLD EMBOSSED SEAL. THE BACK CONTAINS SPECIAL LINES WITH TEXT AND SEALS IN THERMOCHROMIC INK.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

DOH FORM 1564 (10/99)

CERTIFICATION OF VITAL RECORD

VOID IF ALTERED OR ERASED

## FLIGHT DELAY.

Difficulties of British  
St. John's.

April 6.—A heavy  
led to the difficul-  
preparations for an  
atic flight by Harry  
Commander Mac-  
tish aviators. The  
t to complete the  
gether the Sopwith  
ile of the week.  
ts will be the next  
es. As the ground  
still very wet it will  
e the machine can

## s Canonized.

Pope Benedict and  
he Catholic Church  
the Vatican at the  
onization of Joan of  
resent were Admiral  
d other officers of

ors Mrs. Kohns.  
Beth-El Sisterhood  
In honor of the fif-  
in office of their  
zarus Kohns, to-  
onle Club. The Di-  
will be present and  
ide guests.

TTAN  
r. 25th Street  
Rivington St.  
or. Essex St.  
18th & 49th Sts.  
. 124th St.  
nton St.  
ngton & 3d Aves.  
27th St.

IX  
. 148th St.

LYN  
ngston St.  
bevoise St.  
ckaway Av.

## Miss Post's Engagement Broken.

It was announced yesterday that the engagement of Miss Harriette A. Post, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George B. Post of 3 East Fifty-first Street, to Captain Leopoldo Belloni of the Italian Flying Corps, has been broken. The engagement was announced in THE NEW YORK TIMES last December. Captain Belloni, after serving here as a member of the Italian High Commission, recently returned to Italy.

## Obituary Notes.

JAMES WILLIAMS MARTENS, Jr., associated for twenty-five years with the saddlery firm of Smith, Worthington & Co., 40 Warren Street, died suddenly on Saturday of heart disease at his home at Shrub Oak, Westchester County, at the age of 60 years. He retired about twelve years ago.

MAURICE JOSEPH, son of Emile Joseph, one of the largest dealers at the Washington Market, died Friday of pneumonia at his home, 215 West Ninety-eighth Street, in his twenty-seventh year.

FRANCIS ARMSTRONG MIDDLEDITCH died yesterday at the home of his parents, the Rev. and Mrs. Robert Henry Middleditch, 516 Boulevard, Westfield, N. J., in his twenty-first year.

THOMAS J. O'NEILL, a millionaire merchant of Baltimore, is dead at his home there. He was widely known for his aid to many charities of the Roman Catholic Church.

THOMAS W. DUNN, head of a firm of glue manufacturers at 248 Front Street, Manhattan, died of pneumonia yesterday at his home, 604 East Eighteenth Street, Brooklyn, in his sixty-ninth year. He was born in New Britain, Conn.

AUGUSTUS C. FOSTER, a retired hotel man and formerly President of the International Zinc Mining Company, died Saturday in a sanitarium at Miami, Fla., where he had spent the last six Winters. The body has been shipped to New York for burial.

# DUTTON'S EASTER CARDS

Particularly appropriate  
and in large variety.

681 FIFTH AVENUE,  
Opposite St. Thomas Church

EDWIN A. SMITH, Secretary

FIELD.—On Friday, April 4, 1919, Currie Bradhurst, widow of Hazard Field and daughter of Stillwell Bradhurst and Mary Funeral service will be held at St. Thomas Church, Park Av. St., on Monday morning, April 8 o'clock.

HASKELL.—At Daytona, Fla., on day, April 2, 1919, Frank W. husband of Clara L. Seymoure of Benjamin Haskell and the late B. Seele. Funeral services at residence of his brother, Leonard C. 27 Morris Place, Bloomfield, 2 Wednesday afternoon, April 9, of 2:30 train from Hoboken. at Bloomfield Cemetery.

HEGEMAN.—Suddenly, at Rosedale, Maryland, Sunday, April 6, John Hegeman, in the 75th year of age. Funeral services at Salem Baptist Church, New Rochelle, on Wednesday, April 10, 11:30 A. M.

HERMAN.—Suddenly, at Atlantic City, April 6, aged 30 years, Florence Herman, beloved daughter of Emanuel and Mollie Lauferty, from the Chapel of Saul, A. R. 2,003 7th Av., on Tuesday, April 8, 11:30 P. M.

HUNT.—On Sunday, April 6, at St. Vincent's Hospital, West 106th St., Ellen of Rome, N. Y. Funeral services at Rome, N. Y.

JOHNSTON.—Samuel Powel, beloved husband of the late Robert J. and Catherine Johnston, at Baltimore, Md., morning, April 6, 1919. Funeral services private at Zion Church, Douglaston, Monday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock (R. I.) and Baltimore (Md.) please copy.

LEMKE.—At Bayonne, N. J., Hedwig, beloved wife of Theodore R. Lemke, devoted mother of Percival, E. Martha, and Robert, entered into rest April 5, 1919. Private services held at her late residence, Crow Bay, Bayonne, N. J., on April 8, 1919, 11:30 A. M.

LEVY.—April 5, in his 65th year, F. loved husband of Johanna and father of Vera, Kleinbaum and Oettinger. Funeral from his late residence, 1,990 7th Av., Monday, April 7, at 10 A. M.

LEVY.—Rosa, (Leavey,) dearly loved mother of Sophie Wagner, Be Woodward, Martha Mandell, and C. Leavey. Funeral services at St. Ann's Church, April 7, at 1 P. M., from Martha chapel, 239 Lenox Av.

LEWKOWITZ.—H. After a short illness, his 52d year, beloved husband of and father of Lillian and Ethel. Tuesday, April 8, 10 A. M., from his late residence, 3 Rutherford Place, corr. St., between 2d and 3d Av., New York City. Interment Washington Cemetery.

P24684

Lockport

**Ancestry.com**  
The No. 1 Source for Family History Online

Home	Search Records	Family Trees	Message Boards	Genealogy Help	Ancest
------	----------------	--------------	----------------	----------------	--------

Search &gt; Cook County, Illinois History &gt; Results

Welcome, Charles Hurst (Log Out | E

## Full Context of Cook County, Illinois History



### Viewing records 10573-10582 of 10953 Matches

<< Previous 10 | Next 10 >>

\* DE WITT CLINTON NORTON, superintendent Singer & Talcott Stone Company, Lemont, was born October 25, 1826, at Denmark, Lewis County, N.Y., where he received a common school education, and passed his boyhood and early youth. At the age of seventeen years he removed with his parents to Lockport, Will County, where, in 1847, after attaining his majority, he engaged in general merchandising, in which business he continued for ten years. He then engaged in stone quarrying at Lockport, and has been almost constantly engaged in stone business since that time, except an interval of a few years when he was superintendent for Messrs. Norton & Co., millers, at Lockport. He came to Lenient in 1866, and entered the service of the Singer & Talcott Stone Company as foreman, which position he held until he was made superintendent. He also superintended the work of deepening the Illinois & Michigan Canal, which work was done in the winter time between 1866 and 1870. He began as superintendent for L. P. Sanger & Co.; then was a member of the firm of C. B. Kimball & Co., and, upon the completion of their contract, he took an interest in the firm of Norton, De Clereq & Co. The work in which he was interested comprised two sections of the canal in the vicinity of Lemont. During the last eight years, Mr. Norton has held the position of superintendent of the Singer & Talcott Stone Company at Lemont. This is one of the largest stone companies in the country. He has on an average about 250 men under his charge. Mr. Norton is a man of sterling qualities, a good citizen, who works for the welfare anti prosperity of the village. He is an active Republican in politics, and exerts a leading influence in local party affairs. He has been a member of the Board of Village Trustees three years, and for the last two years has been President of the board. He married Miss Maria L. Singer, or Lockport, November 3, 1847. by whom he has six children--Isaac C., Frederick D., Clinton S., Libbie M., Horace S. and Mamie L.

Add Comment

\* ALEX REID, merchant and Postmaster Sag Bridge was was born in Sctland.in 1824, son of John and Margaret Reid. He came to Cook County in 1842. and for four veers was engi-neet on the lakes. He was second engineer subsequently on the "James Madison," and subsequently first engineer on the "Great Western," with headquarters at Chicago and Buffalo, N.Y. In 1846 he located in Lemont, and was engaged from then until 1851, during which time he built two steam dredges, which were worked on the Calumet feeder. After completing the canal work, in 1851, he was engaged in engineering until 1854, when he began merchandising at Sag Bridge, which he has since followed. He has been Postmaster of Sag Bridge since 1873. He owns a farm of 160 acres, and a stone quarry of about seventy-five acres, in which he employs about 100 hundred men, and is vice-president and general

Add Comment

manager of Enterprise Stone Company. Mr. Reid was married in 1849 to Miss Margaret Bagnell, daughter of John and Margaret Bagnell. They have five

R24681's

children--John, Ida, Margaret, Ella and Jane. Mr. Reid has been school treasurer for num-bet of years, Commissioner of Highways for twelve years and Justice of the Peace eight years.

 Add Comment

JOSEPH B. ROOD, M. D., Lemont, was born September 29, 1844, in La Salle County, Ill. His father, Levi H Rood, Esq., was one of the earliest best settlers of La Salle County, and a prominent citizen of that part of the State until his death, which occurred in 1872. The subject of this sketch remained upon his father's farm until he entered Beloit College, Wis. After a three-years coupe at Beloit. he entered Monmouth College, Ill. During his junior year at this institution a company was raised among the students, in response to I resident

 Add Comment

incoln's can for ninety-day men, and he enlisted as a private in this company, in May, 1864. The company was assigned to the 138th Regiment Illinois Volunteer Infantry, designated as Company A. The regiment was stationed at Ft. Leavenworth, Kan. After serving its full term, the regiment. returned to Springfield to be mustered out of service, but a rebel force having at this time entered Missouri, threatening St. Louis, they were called ripen to go to its defense. Tim question was put to vote, mid the regiment gallantly responded to the call, anti was sent to St. Louis, whence they went out on the Iron Mountain Railroad, about forty miles. They fortified a position and held it for two or three weeks, when they were relieved and returned home. After his return from the army Dr. Rood began the study of medicine with Dr. Patchen, of Men-mouth, Ill., with whom he remained six months. He then continued his studies under Dr. William P. Pierce, of Lisbon, Kendall County, who was really his preceptor. In 1867 he entered the Medical Department of the University of Michigan, at Ann Arbor, attending a full term of six months. He then entered Bush Medical College, Chicago, from which he graduated in February, 1868. In Alarch of tile same year he began the practice of his profession at Lemont, where he. has ever since remained in active practice. Dr. Rood is an able physician and surgeon, and by his skill and success in practice has won the conlidence and esteem of the community, and a large and remunerative practice, extending into five or six townships. He is a member of the illinois State Medical Society, and in 1876 was a delegate to the American Medical Society. He was elected in September, 1882, a member of the Medical Board of Cook County Hospital, which position he at present holds. Though not an active partisan. Dr. Rood is a Republican in politics and has held local offices. He was a member of the illinois State Republican Convention at Springfield in 1880. He married Miss Amelia A. Wells, of Lemont, July 25. 1872, by which marriage he has had four children, of whom Flavilla and Georgie G. are now living.

 Add Comment

HORACE M. SINGER, president of the Singer & Talcott Stone Company, Lemont and Chicago, was born October 1, 1823 at Sch nectady, N.Y. When he was about a year old his parents removed to Ohio, settling on tim Western Reserve, in Ashtabula County. In October, 1836, they came to Illinois, his father having a contract for the construction of a portion of the Illinois & Michigan Canal, then being built by the State. His work was near Lockport, where he settled his family. The subject of this sketch helped his fat her until the suspension of the work, in 1840, when the State defaulted, then, buying a team he was, ngaged in freighting between Chicago and points within a radius of one hundred and twenty-five miles, in Illinois, Michigan and Indiana. Work was resumed upon the canal by the trustees for the bondholders in 1845, and Mr. Singer entered their employ, in the engineering department. He arose from the position of axman to that of superintendent of repairs, and continued his connection with the canal until the opening of navigation in 1852, when he engaged in the stone business, which be has since followed. His first work was the construction of the breakwater, from Park Row north, in Chicago, in which he used the waste stone taken from the canal. In 1854 he became associated with the late Mantel Talcott, under firm name of Stager & Talcott. This partnership continued until 1872, when the

R224/08/6

company was organized under charter from the State, with its present title. The business association established in 1854, between Messrs. Singer and Talcott, continued uninterrupted until about a year before the death of the latter, which occurred June 5, 1878. Mr. Singer is to-day the oldest quarryman in the stone district along the Illinois & Michigan Canal, and probably the oldest in the State. The Singer & Talcott Stone Company is one of the largest stone companies in the country, employing in quarrying, manipulating and transporting about three hundred men. Probably no man has done more than Mr. Singer to promote the business interests and the material welfare of the town of Lemont. He has held several local offices. was a member of the General Assembly of Illinois in 1866, and was elected a member of the Board of County Commissioners in 1872 or 1873, and was Chairman of the Building Committee, having charge of the construction of the North Side courthouse and jail. He is a member of the I. O. O. F. Married Miss Harriet A. Roberts. of Lockport (a native of Niagara County, N.Y.). April 6, 1847, by whom he has three children--Edward T. (now secretary of the Singer & Talcott Stone Company), Charles G. (residing in New York City) and Walter H. (in the employ of the Singer & Talcott Stone Company at Chicago). Mr. Singer's mother is still living, at the ripe age of eighty-four, and will not yet acknowledge that she is getting old. ANNA COLLINS SINGER

 Add Comment

DANIEL C. SKELLY, Justice of the Peace and real estate agent, Lemont. was born in the county of West Meath, Ireland, November 9, 1814. At the age of seven he came to the United States with his parents, locating at New York City. where he received his education and remained until the fall of 1839, when he came to Illinois. He located at Batavia. but a year later removed to Chicago, and engaged in stone-cutting. In 1848 he bought extensive quarry property in Lemont Township. but continued to reside in Chicago until 1858. when he came to Lemont. and developed his quarries. Having been Captain of the Emmet Guards. of Chicago, for several years, at the outbreak of the War of the Rebellion he entered the volunteer service, enlisting as a private in Company B. 23d Regiment Illinois Infantry. He was soon after commissioned a First Lieutenant, and assigned to Company G of his regiment. He was in several engagements and skirmishes with the enemy in Missouri, and participated in the battle of Lexington, Mo., with the gallant and lamented Colonel Mulligan. Here he was taken prisoner. with the remainder of his command. and paroled by the Rebel Price Soon after the re-organization of the regiment, Lieutenant Skelly's health began to fail, and he resigned and returned to his home in Lemont, where he has ever since resided. He continued in the stone-quarrying business until 1865, when he sold his quarry, which is now known as the Walker Quarry. Mr. Skelly is one of the best known of the "old settlers," and has always held a leading position in the affairs of the county and town. He is Democratic in politics, and has been frequently called to office. He has held the office of Justice of the Peace fifteen years, has been a member of the Board of County Commissioners of this county, and has been treasurer of the township school board twelve years. He married Miss Susan Cosgrove. of Utica, N.Y., November 23, 1841, by which marriage he has had seven children, of whom William H., John C., Thomas F. and Roger E. are now living. [p.855]

 Add Comment

MANCEL TALCOTT was born in Rome, Oneida Co., N. Y., October 12, 1817, and was the son of Mancel and Betsey Talcott. His early childhood was passed in the county where he was born and where he received such educational instruction as the common schools of those days could afford. In 1834, and when yet in years a mere youth, he came to Chicago to begin in life for himself. Locating on a farm near Park Ridge, he followed the quiet pursuits of a farmer until in 1850, attracted by the excitement following the discovery of gold in California, he went to that State. He returned at the end of two years. with a considerable sum as the result of his labors in the gold fields, and two years later he formed a partnership

## The Singer family.

Isaac Merritt was born in 1811, the eighth child of destitute German immigrants, Adam and Ruth Singer. However, he left home at the age of twelve when his divorced father remarried. In Rochester (NY) he apprenticed himself to a lathe operator and showed such aptitude that he soon became a journeyman machinist. Whilst there he went to his first play and became captivated with the theatre, a love he was never to lose. [When he built his "Wigwam" in Paignton, he incorporated his own theatre in the design]. At various times he worked as ticket-taker, scene-shifter and prop-boy, using his lathe skills only when he was desperate for money. He finally played minor parts, being physically suited to being an actor on stage. Of Herculean build, he had a mass of auburn hair and prominent features. His vitality was enormous, which was probably hereditary as his father lived until aged 102 and his mother until 96. Known on stage as "Isaac Merritt", he craved to play Shakespeare. When he did eventually play *Richard III*, it was said to be "more with enthusiasm than skill".

At the age of 19 he married Catherine Haley (who was only 15 years old). Soon afterwards and having two children, he returned to his lathe where he acquired additional skills in cabinet-making and printing, both of which were to prove useful to him later on.

When aged 21 he joined a New York theatre company and with it went barnstorming across America, leaving Catherine and family to fend for themselves. In Baltimore he met Mary Ann Sponsler, who was not aware he was married and, over a ten year period, she bore him ten children. During this time he sired six more children by two other women.

In 1839, when stranded in Illinois, he became a labourer on the *Illinois-Michigan Canal* project. The massive boulders to be moved inspired his first invention, a mechanical excavator. Patented later, he sold it for \$2,000 and, with the proceeds, founded the *Merritt Players* and, with the faithful Mary in tow, toured the "wilds" of America. This enterprise eventually ended in a welter of debts in Fredericksburg. Whilst living there, he invented a type-carving machine which he took to Boston to sell. His landlord made and sold SEWING MACHINES which were grossly unreliable and always being returned. Although Singer knew nothing about them, he suggested a shuttle going back and forth while the needle went up and down. With two others a partnership was formed and a prototype was started, the "Jenny Lind". It took eleven days "sleeping but three or four hours out of 24". When the parts went together it did not work. Adjusting the tension of the upper thread, it finally sewed five stitches without breaking. The Singer Sewing Machine was born. Originally intended for the clothing trade, it was met with indifference so he began

using his theatrical skills to sell it to ordinary people through demonstrations at country fairs, church suppers, circuses and carnivals.

The "Sewing Machine War" followed. There was strife and legal actions for some years but it did result in a shrewd lawyer, Edward Clark joining Singer and becoming his partner. The "Turtle-back" was put on the market and was highly successful. The company was soon producing its own components, including the cabinets which came from the company's own woodland.

Singer's success was due to:

1. Clark introduced the trade-in system in 1856, a \$50 allowance being made towards the purchase of a new machine, against a used one of any make, in any condition.
2. He also introduced hire-purchase [not the instalment plan] in 1856, \$5 down and \$5 a month. The purchase was painless - and profitable. Contracts did not mention interest or service charges.
3. He introduced price-cutting. Singer became the showman again. He created puns and jokes - "it seems so good" - and hired sewing teachers to give free lessons. He put attractive seamstresses in prominent shop-windows, all sewing away on Singer machines. He also gave clergymen and teachers 50% discount and machines were placed in schools free of charge. Modern business still copies his sales methods.

He set up his former wife Catherine, now divorced, and his mistresses in separate establishments in New York . Mary Ann also sued for alimony and named eight co-respondents. It was after the formation of the Singer Company, and no doubt with his matrimonial problems unresolved, that he fled to Europe.

While in Paris, he stayed at a small but elegant hotel owned by a widow named Boyer, who had a daughter Isabella Eugenie, beautiful, intelligent and just 21. He proposed and they returned to New York to marry. Back in Europe in 1867, the Singers settled in Paris where their third son was born, named appropriately, Paris. Isabella bore him six children, making the total of his known progeny to 24.

When the Franco-Prussian War broke out in 1871 the family hastily left France and came to Torquay, staying at the *Victoria & Albert Hotel*. Singer first tried to purchase the Brunel estate at Watcombe but he also looked at other properties with space to build his dream mansion. He finally chose the Fernham estate, moving into "Little Oldway" until his new house was built. After the "Riding & Exercise Pavilion" was finished in 1873, he kept two special carriages there (he did not like rail travel); one was for travelling and picnicking, the other a tall four-horse coach in which he attended race meetings. Frequently seen at Plainmoor when the Races were held there, it created much attention. He died before the house was completed in 1873 at the early age of 63. Peggy Parnell, the theatre historian records: "On his 62nd birthday his children produced extracts from *Henry VIII*, *Cardinal Wolsey* and *Cromwell* all rendered by Mortimer. Mortimer and Winaretta performed *Spooning in the Sands* and *Courting in the Rain*. In *Breaking*

R2488/9

*the Spell*: a comic opera, the part of Jenny Wood was played by his illegitimate daughter, Alice Merritt, who had recently arrived from the USA. She went on to become an actress under the name of Alice Eastwood.

Isaac's funeral was a great spectacle. His body was taken to the family vault in Torquay Cemetery in a glass-sided hearse, specially modified for the occasion. The deceased was attired in a black morning suit and lay on a satin-covered couch in the innermost of three coffins. The cortege was headed by a large cross made of maidenhair, and other ferns, Japanese lilies and the rarest of exotic flowers. When the hearse was passing the Strand (it went via the Babbacombe Road), the last carriages, filled with local business people, were still passing Livermead Sands.

The fornicator and litigant from the USA had "become a benevolent man who gave his money to the poor regardless of need. At Christmas several hundred-weights of meat and provisions were distributed to the poor of Paignton. The red letter days which he particularly distinguished by his generosity to the poor were Christmas Day, the 4th of July and his birthday".

Singer left an estate valued at \$13 million. There were legal wrangles again for many years. In 1875 the Torquay Directory reported: "The Singer Estate is before the Westchester County Court as the Will is being contested. His first wife Catherine, whom he married about 1830, has two children who survive and are to some extent provided for. His second wife, Mary Ann, had ten children, eight still living and who between them get \$2 million; his ex-wife receives nothing". Mary Ann alleged that "Isabella Eugenie Singer is named in his Will but is not his lawful wife": Washington, Mortimer, Winaretta Eugenie, Grant, Paris and Isabella were thus not the lawful children of Isaac Merritt Singer. The case was continuing.

The Singers were a strange family; some ran through their money in no time. Eight of his children died relatively poor. Twelve of the 31 of his grandchildren had marriages which ended in divorce, each with huge legal costs and alimony payments. Other Singers did well marrying into European nobility (with mixed success), warranting entries in *Burke's Peerage* and the *Almanack de Gotha*.

**Paris** was born in Paris in 1868, the third of the last four children. After he grew up he took over the Oldway estate from his father's trustees and, through the *Paignton & District Development Company* of which he was governing director, developed parts of Preston, Oldway and Barcombe. He was keenly interesting in motoring (he was at one time Hon. Secretary of the AA) and was one of the first people in the Westcountry to see the possibilities of aviation as a means of transport, having his own hangar built on Preston Green.

After the World War 1, crippling taxation forced him to St. Jean, Cape Ferrat, Paris but he also had a residence in London. At the time of his death in June 1932, he had four sons (including Cecil, who lived at Occombe) and a daughter (who

22468/10

became Lady Leeds). He too was buried in the Singer vault.

His liaison with **Isadora Duncan** has been well documented. The *Times* in April 1913 sums up the death of their son Patrick: "The car... left Mme Duncan's house in the Rue Chauveau at 3.20 pm in order to take the children for a drive to Versailles. It had only gone a few hundred yards when the driver had to pull up suddenly to avoid a taxi-cab. Masserand [her chauffeur] had to leave his seat to turn the crank before the car could be restarted. In all probability he had not properly adjusted the speed lever, since before he could remount the car it started of itself and proceeded at a rapid rate across the Boulevard Bourdon... down the grassy bank of the Seine and from whence it plunged into the river". Firemen were called and a large motor-boat requisitioned but it was an hour and a half before the car could be hauled ashore when the children were found clinging to their dead nurse. "The elder child Deidre, aged six [daughter of Edward Gordon Craig, the stage designer] was like the nurse, manifestly dead. The younger, a boy named Patrick, was thought to be showing signs of life, and the doctors from the American Hospital did everything possible to revive him, but in vain." Isadora herself died some years later when her flowing scarf became entangled in the wheel of the car in which she was travelling.

Also attending Paris's funeral was his sister **Winaretta**, the Princess de Polignac. She was said to mix "quite happily with many of the well-known artists of the day including Degas". In the early 1880s she met Gabriel Fauré for the first time when she was 16 and he at least 20 years older but "she remained for at least a decade, something of a confidant to him, providing him in times of difficulty and stress with moral support, and more discreetly, with material help". She married Louis de Scey-Montbéliard but divorced him in 1891. subsequently petitioning the Vatican for an annulment. In February 1892 the Curia declared the marriage null in the eyes of the Church. de Cosserat says: "Nobody knew why the marriage ended abruptly but the truth was that Winaretta developed lesbian tendencies sometime before 1887. Possibly her father with his flamboyant life-style had made her nervous of heterosexual relationships". [Louis was said to have homosexual inclinations]. She later married Prince Edmond of Polignac, who died in August 1901. He too asked to be buried in the Singer vault in Torquay so his body was brought from Dieppe in the Vellada owned by his brother-in-law, the Duc de Cazes. Some of the wreaths measured more than five feet across.

**Washington Merritt Singer** was too ill to attend his brother's funeral though he did not die until February 1934 at Benet Wood in the Warberries. Although he inherited \$1 million from his father, he decided to go ranching in the Far West but was discouraged by his brother. Instead, he took to hunting and started a stud of horses. One of his horses, "Challacombe" won the St. Leger in 1905. After he married he lived at "Stearfield House" which he enlarged and improved (this later became the Palace Hotel). His stables were at the junction of Manor Road and old

R22468/11

Torquay Road. He also provided blocks of flats for working people which were built at St. Michael's with frontage on the Totnes Road. In 1891 he gave as founder, by enrolled deed "together with Mortimer and seven others including Richard Mallock as grantees", the field known as "The Crofts" with a 243 foot frontage as the site for the *Paignton Cottage Hospital and Provident Dispensary*. One proviso was "no one [to be] admitted suffering from and infectious or incurable disease, or is not at the time living within the parishes of Paignton and Marldon". Washington later lived at "Leihon" at Manaton.

The last of the "Boyer" children was **Mortimer**, later *Sir* Mortimer Singer of "Astra House", in Warren Road, Torquay. He was a benefactor to the people of Torquay (including gifts to the Torbay Hospital). Whilst in Egypt in 1910 he was badly injured falling out of an aeroplane [but must have made a full recovery]. The "J" class yacht *Astra* raced under his ownership for some years.

**Franklin** was once described as "Washington's Singer's brother and the Princess de Polignac's sister". He died in the American Hospital in Paris in 1939 and was brought back to Britain in his yacht *Xarifa* to be buried in the family vault in Torquay Cemetery.

© copyright John Pike

[Return to: \[html - The Singer family.\] details](#)



All images are copyright and subject to an [acceptable use policy](#).  
All content © Torbay Council Web design by © [Xebit Ltd.](#)  
Last modified: Mar 22 04



New Opportunities Fund  
LOTTERY FUNDED

LOCAL STUDIES EDUCATION SERIES

Q2468/12

# ISAAC SINGER

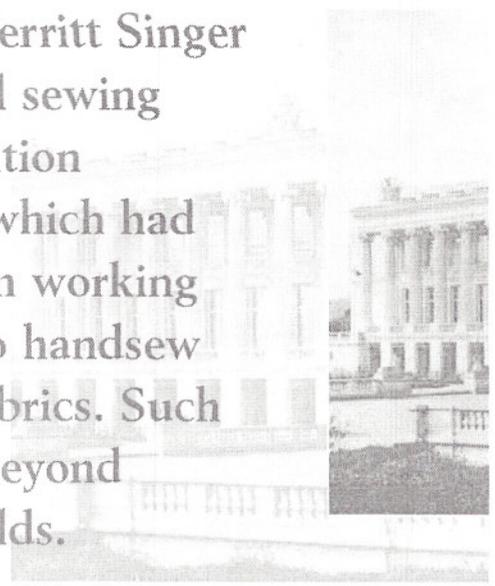


THE INVENTOR OF THE SINGER  
SEWING MACHINE

*(1811-75)*

22/68/13

American engineer Isaac Merritt Singer developed the first practical sewing machine in 1851. His invention revolutionised an industry which had previously employed women working in 'sweatshop' conditions to handsew garments and household fabrics. Such items were expensive and beyond the means of poor households.



# ISAAC SINGER

THE INVENTOR OF THE SINGER SEWING MACHINE

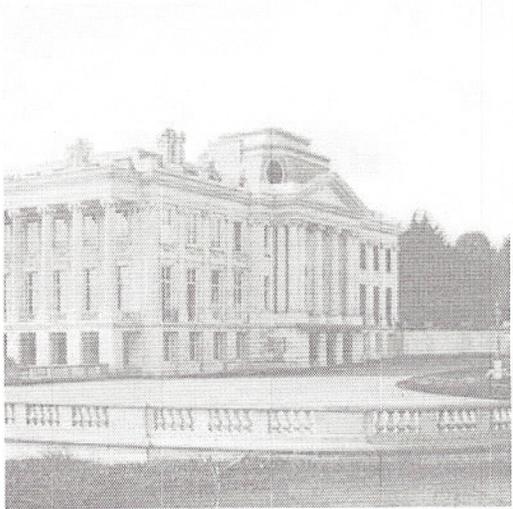
In an age when there were no domestic devices such as washing machines and vacuum cleaners, it was the housewife who made clothes, curtains, tablecloths and bedding for their families. A Singer sewing machine was affordable for the home and meant that women no longer had to endure laborious hand sewing chores.

Born in the State of New York, Isaac left home at the age of twelve. During the next ten years he had a variety of jobs, got married and had two children. He then pursued his dream to become an actor and toured America with a theatre company. When the work dried up he was forced to take a job as a labourer digging a canal. It was then that he discovered his

real talent when he invented the first mechanical excavator. He sold his idea to fund a return to the stage, but his venture as an actor-manager ended with huge debts and he began a full-time career as an inventor. He made his fortune by greatly improving the performance of existing sewing machines and introducing hire purchase agreements, which allowed people to buy goods from his company by a method of easy instalments.

Singer had a tangled love-life. He left his family and lived with another woman for twenty-five years before divorcing his wife. This relationship produced ten children. During this period he also had a string of affairs with other women resulting in a further six children. He

R24 68/14



## OLDWAY MANSION

"Build me a big wig-wam" were the instructions given to Paignton architect George Soudon Bridgeman by Isaac Singer. Singer had bought the Fernham Estate, with two villas and several cottages, but required a grand mansion to house his family.

Mrs Singer laid the foundation stone for the mansion on 10 May 1873. Her eldest son, Mortimer, placed a bottle in a cavity in the stone containing English, French and American coins, copies of local newspapers and photographs of those who took part in the ceremony. His sister, Winnaretta, then covered the stone with a brass plate recording the proceedings. Dinner was provided for the 140 workmen who took two years to construct the building. The Singer family moved in as soon as the mansion was habitable, although Isaac died two months before the completion of his dream home, which was later considerably altered by his son Paris in the style of the French Palace of Versailles.

After World War One, the Singer family used Oldway only as a holiday home and in 1927 the house became the home of the Torbay Country Club. At the end of the Second World War, Paignton Council purchased the Oldway Estate for £46,000 for use as local government offices. Lady Leeds, granddaughter of Isaac Merritt Singer, performed the official opening on 18 December 1946. Oldway Mansion now also provides an elegant setting for civil marriages, though the first wedding to take place there occurred in July 1875 when one of Isaac Singer's daughters got married just nine days before her father's death.

# GER INE (1811-75)

assaulted his live-in lover during an argument about one of these other women and he fled the country to avoid arrest. Isaac went to France where he met, married and had six children by Isabella Boyer. This proved to be a lasting relationship and when the Prussians invaded France in 1870, the Singers moved to England and built Oldway Mansion at Paignton. According to Isaac this was the happiest period of his life, which ended on 23 July 1875. In his Will he left a vast fortune estimated at £15 million - accumulated by the famous "Inventor of the Singer Sewing Machine".

## DID YOU KNOW?

Isaac Singer 's birth sign was Scorpio. He was born in America on 27 October 1811.

Isaac's ambition was to become a Shakespearian actor.

His wife, Isabella, modelled for the sculpture of the Statue of Liberty.

Before settling in Paignton, Singer tried to buy land at Watcombe once owned by railway engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel.

When a circus visited Paignton, the Singers bought tickets for local children.

To celebrate the wedding of his daughter, Singer paid for 800 children to have a party at their schools.

Oldway Mansion was used as an emergency hospital for wounded soldiers during the First World War. In the Second World War it was used by the Royal Air Force.

Following Isaac's death, his son Paris completed the building of Oldway based on the style of the Palace of Versailles in Paris - the city of his birth.

Paris Singer had a long affair with famous American dancer Isadora Duncan who died tragically in 1927. She was a passenger in an open-top car when her long flowing scarf got caught in the rear wheel and tightened around her neck.

Scenes for the 1968 film Isadora starring Vanessa Redgrave were shot at Oldway.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Books about the life of Isaac Singer available from Torbay Library Services include:

Singer and the Sewing Machine - Ruth Brandon (1977)

Stories of Oldway - Joyce Packe (1988)

The Singer Saga - Charles Eastley (1983)

For more about the history of Torbay - visit the Local History Collection at Torquay Central Library or view the Torbay Council website ([www.torbay.gov.uk](http://www.torbay.gov.uk)) for information on the following subjects:

History of Torbay/Torbay's Heritage/ People and Places/Famous People. The site also contains opening times, news of forthcoming events and general information about the following historic buildings and museums which are all well worth a visit:

Torre Abbey Historic House & Gallery, King's Drive, Torquay. Torquay. Tel: 01803 293593

Torquay Museum, 529 Babbacombe Road, Torquay. Tel: 01803 293975

Oldway Mansion, Torquay Road, Paignton. Tel: 01803 201201

Brixham Heritage Museum, Bolton Cross, Brixham. 01803 856267



LIBRARY SERVICES

# Biography.ms

## Isaac Singer

*For the Jewish American writer [Isaac Bashevis Singer](#), see that article.*

### Related Links

- [Isaac Bashevis Singer quotes](#)

**Isaac Merritt Singer** ([October 26, 1811](#) - [July 23, 1875](#)) was an [inventor](#), [actor](#), [entrepreneur](#), and notorious serial [polygamist](#). He made important improvements in the design of the [sewing machine](#) and was the founder of the [Singer Sewing Machine Company](#).

## Biography

### Early years

Singer was born in [Utica, New York](#), the son of Adam Singer, a [Saxon](#) immigrant to America, and his first wife Ruth. He entered a machinist's shop as an apprentice at the age of nineteen, but stayed there only a few months, leaving to become one of a touring group of actors. His income came alternately from work as a mechanic and as an actor. In [1830](#) he married Catherine Maria Haley.

In [1835](#) he moved with Catherine and their son William to [New York City](#), working in a press shop. In [1836](#), he left the city as an advance agent for a company of players, touring through [Baltimore](#), where he met Mary Ann Sponsler, to whom he proposed marriage. He returned to New York, where he and Catherine conceived a daughter, Lillian, born in [1837](#).

After Mary Ann arrived in New York and discovered that Singer was already married, she and singer returned to Baltimore, presenting themselves as a married. Their son Isaac was born in [1837](#).

### First inventions

In [1839](#) Singer obtained his first [patent](#), for a machine to drill rock, selling it for \$2,000. This was more money than he had ever had before, and in the face of financial success, he opted to return to his career as an actor. He went on tour, forming a troupe known as the "Merritt Players", and appearing onstage under the name "Isaac Merritt", with Mary Ann also appearing onstage, calling herself "Mrs. Merritt". The tour lasted about five years.

A  
B  
C  
D  
E  
F  
G  
H  
I  
J  
K  
L  
M  
N  
O  
P  
Q  
R  
S  
T  
U  
V  
W  
X  
Y  
Z

[Home page](#)

In 1844 Isaac took a job in a print shop in Fredericksburg, Ohio, but moved quickly on to Pittsburgh in 1846 to set up a woodshop for making wood type and signage. Here he developed and patented a "machine for carving wood and metal" on April 10, 1849.

At thirty-eight years old, with two wives and eight children, he packed up his family and moved back to New York City, hoping to market his machine there. He obtained an advance to build a working prototype, and obtained an offer to set up one of his machines in Boston. Singer went to Boston in 1850 to set the machine up at the shop of Orson C. Phelps, where Lerow and Blodgett sewing machines were being constructed. Orders for Singer's machine were not, however, forthcoming. Phelps asked Singer to look at the sewing machines, which were difficult to use and difficult to produce. Singer noted that the sewing machine would be more reliable if the shuttle moved in a straight line rather than a circle, with a straight rather than a curved needle.

Singer obtained financing, again, from George B. Zieber, becoming partners, with Phelps and him, in the "Jenny Lind Sewing Machine", named for Jenny Lind. Singer's prototype sewing machine became the first to work in a practical way. He received a patent in relation to improvements on the sewing machine on August 12, 1851. When eventually marketed, the machine was no longer the "Jenny Lind" but the Singer sewing machine.

## Sewing machine design

Singer didn't invent the sewing machine, and never claimed to have done so. By 1850, when Singer saw his first sewing machine, it had been "invented" four times. All sewing machines before Walter Hunt's produced a "chain stitch" which had the disadvantage of easily unravelling. Hunt's machine produced a "lock stitch", as did all subsequent machines, including Lerow and Blodgett's, which Singer improved in Phelps's shop. Elias Howe independently developed a sewing machine and obtained a patent on September 10, 1846.

War broke out between Howe and Singer, with each claiming patent primacy. Singer set out to discover that Howe's improvements had been reinventions of existing technology, and found one of Hunt's old machines, which indeed created a lock-stitch with a shuttle. Hunt applied in 1853 for a patent, claiming priority to Howe's patent, issued some seven years earlier. A lawsuit, *Hunt v. Howe*, came to trial in 1854, and was resolved in Howe's favor. Howe then brought suit to stop Singer from selling Singer machines, and protracted litigation ensued.

## I. M. Singer & Co

In 1856, manufacturers Grover, Baker, Singer, Wheeler, and Wilson, all accusing the others of patent infringement, met in Albany, New York to pursue their suits. Orlando B. Potter, a lawyer and president of the Grover and Baker

Company, proposed that, rather than sue their profits out of existence, they pool their patents. This was the first patent pool , a process which enables production of complicated machines without legal battles over patent rights. They agreed to form the Sewing Machine Combination, but for this to be of any use they had to secure the cooperation of Elias Howe, who still held certain vital uncontested patents which meant he received a royalty on every sewing machine manufactured by any company. Terms were arranged, and Howe joined on. Sewing machines began to be mass produced: I. M. Singer & Co manufactured 2,564 machines in 1856, and 13,000 in 1860 at a new shop on Mott Street in New York.

Sewing machines had until now been industrial machines, made for tailors, but smaller machines began to be marketed for home use. I. M. Singer expanded into the European market, establishing a factory in Clydebank, near Glasgow, controlled by the parent company, becoming one of the first American-based multinational corporations, with agencies in Paris and Rio de Janeiro.

## Financial success

The financial success gave Singer the ability to buy a mansion on Fifth Avenue, into which he moved his second family. In 1860, he divorced his first wife, on the basis of her adultery with Stephen Kent. He continued to live with Mary Ann, until she spotted him driving down Fifth Avenue seated beside one Mary McGonigal, an employee, about whom Mary Ann had well-founded suspicions, for by this time Mary McGonigal had borne Isaac Singer five children. The surname Matthews was used for this family. Mary Ann (still calling herself Mrs. I. M. Singer) had her husband arrested for domestic violence. Singer was let out on bond and, disgraced, fled for London, taking Mary McGonigal with him. In the aftermath, another of Isaac's families was discovered: he had a "wife" Mary Eastwood Walters and daughter Alice Eastwood in Lower Manhattan, who both adopted the surname "Merritt". By 1860, Isaac had fathered and recognized eighteen children (sixteen of them remaining alive), by four women.

With Isaac in London, Mary Ann began setting about securing a financial claim to his assets by filing documents detailing his infidelities, claiming that though she had never been formally married to Isaac, that they were in fact wed under Common Law (by living together for seven months after Isaac had been divorced from his first wife Catherine). Eventually a settlement was made, but no divorce was granted. However, she asserted that she was free to marry and married John E. Foster in Boston in 1862. Isaac now contended that in fact they had indeed been married under Common Law and accused Mary Ann of bigamy, and forced her to sign a renunciation of their prior financial settlement.

Singer then began seeing Mrs. Isabella Eugenie Boyer Summerville, said to have been a model for Bartholdi's Statue

of Liberty, who left her husband and married Isaac on June 13, 1863, while she was pregnant. Mary Ann, unaccountably, did not sue Isaac for bigamy.

## Final years in Europe

In 1863, I. M. Singer & Co. was dissolved by mutual consent, with the business continued by "The Singer Manufacturing Company," enabling the reorganization of financial and management responsibilities. Singer no longer actively participated in the firm's day-to-day management, but served as a member of the Board of Trustees and was a major stockholder.

He now began to increase his new family: he would eventually have six children with his wife Isabella. Unable, probably because of Isaac's chequered marital past, to enter New York society, the family emigrated to Paris, never to return to the United States. Fleeing the Franco-Prussian War, they resided first in London, then in Paignton, (near Torquay) on the Devon coast where he built a large house, Oldway Mansion. He brought some of his other children to live there. Nine days after the wedding of his daughter Alice Merritt to William Alonso Paul La Grove, Isaac Singer died of "an affection of the heart and inflammation of the wind-pipe." He was interred in Torquay cemetery.

## Estate and legacy; his family after his death

Singer left an estate of about \$14,000,000, and two wills disposing this between his family members, leaving some out for various reasons. Suits followed, with Mary Anne claiming to be the legitimate "Mrs. Singer". In the end Isabella was declared the legal widow. Isabella subsequently married a Belgian musician, Victor Reubsaet, who inherited the title Vicomte d'Estemburgh, and the Vatican title of Duke of Camposelice.

Isaac's 18th child Winnaretta Singer married Prince Louis de Scey-Montbéliard in 1887, when she was 22. After annulment of this marriage in 1891, she married to Prince Edmond de Polignac in 1893. She would become a prominent patron of French avant-garde music, e.g. Erik Satie composed his Socrate as one of her commissions (1918). As a lesbian she became involved with Violet Trefusis from 1923 on. Another of Isaacs daughters, Isabelle-Blanche (born 1869) married Elie, duc Decazes (Daisy Fellowes was their daughter). Isabelle committed suicide in 1896. A brother to Winnaretta and Isabelle, Paris Singer, had a child by Isadora Duncan. Another brother, Washington Singer, became a substantial donor to the University College of the South West of England, which later became the University of Exeter; one of the University's buildings is named in his honour.

## References

---

- Brandon, Ruth, *Singer and the Sewing Machine: A Capitalist Romance*, Kodansha International, New York, 1977.
- ISAAC MERRITT SINGER, detailed biography (in German)

de:Isaac Merrit Singer es:Isaac Merrit Singer

The Wikipedia content included on this page is licensed under the GFDL

### ISAAC MERRITT SINGER'S LATTER DAYS AT PAIGNTON.

In 1867 Isaac Merritt Singer and his French wife Isabella Eugenie left America for ever and settled in Paris where two of their six children were born - Paris Eugene in 1867 and Franklin Morse in 1870; little more than a fortnight after Franklin's birth the imminent Siege of Paris (Franco Prussian War 1870) caused the Singers to flee to England, ultimately visiting Torbay with a view to settling in this locality.

The Singers were staying at the Victoria and Albert Hotel in Torquay which was being enlarged at the time, the work being designed and supervised by a young Paignton Architect George Goudon Bridgman whom Singer commissioned. The site selected was the Fernham Estate comprising two villas "Little Oldway" and "Fernham" with surrounding parkland; with several cottages and an inn, all of which were pulled down.

The Singer family took up residence at Little Oldway and first erected a "Riding and Exercising Pavilion" (now known as The Rotunda), which building was completed at the end of 1873. Very reminiscent of the Albert Hall, this circular building besides accommodating many equipages was provided with a moveable wood floor which was laid when the building was used for entertaining, principally for children's parties of which Isaac was very fond. On such occasions he would provide lavish entertainment, usually climbing to the Gallery to make a speech of welcome.

Isaac had two special carriages made locally - one for travelling by road, as he did not like railway travel, fitted with every convenience for picnicking, the other a high coach for four horses to attend race meetings - the latter carriage caused a local sensation!

Although the "Riding and Exercising Pavilion" was erected first, plans for the Mansion were prepared at the same time. Mr. Singer's instructions to the Architect

Isaac Merritt Singer's funeral cortage to the Torquay Cemetery was followed by 2000 mourners, shops were closed and flags flown at half mast.

After Mr. Singer's death and the departure of the family to the Continent, the great house was left quiet and unfinished and in the care of the Executors for several years until the children came of age and Mr. Paris Eugene Singer took over the Estate.

Mrs. Laura M. Goss, daughter of the Architect - G.S. Bridgman in a paper entitled "Reminiscences of Old Paignton" (1948) records her childhood memories of Isaac - "he was most impressive in appearance. A handsome old gentleman of medium height, with a white "Father Christmas" square cut beard, and when dressed in his party attire, he was to us children, magnificent. He felt the cold very much owing to his illness, and usually wore an overcoat, but for a party this overcoat was of velvet lined satin. I remember a large garden party (before the Oldway grounds were disturbed for building) of children and grown ups. He was immaculately dressed in morning attire, but with a long coat of royal blue velvet, lined with primrose satin. It had a striking effect, but it seemed to suit him and looked quite in order - for him! On other occasions, similar coats in different colours".

He was kind and generous to all. Gave freely to all the charities in existence and promulgated others".

C.H. Patterson in his "Story of Paignton" (1951-2) adds to Mrs. Goss's recollections of the great Isaac when he records -

"Mr. Singer emulated "le grande seigneur" in the town. During the building operations he was constantly visiting the works and drove about the district behind a four in hand".

"On one occasion a fete was being held in a field where Grosvenor Road now stands. The equipage pulled up with a flourish at the entrance".

"What is going on here?" demanded Mr. Singer of the gatekeeper. "Oldfelloes Pete" Sir was the reply. "Throw the gates open to everyone who will accept my hospitality

Paris, as the resident, at 'The Wigwan' undertook the development of large areas of land in Paignton and between 1904-07 transformed 'The Wigwan' into the Oldway of today. His goodwill towards Paignton was expressed in a wish before he died in 1932 that Oldway might some day become the property of the town. This came to pass in 1946 when this unique property which still contains much of Isaac Merritt's "dream house" became the Civic Centre - an Estate that at a conservative estimate had cost £,200,000 to develop was offered to the town at the low figure of £45,000.

Of the sons of Isaac Merritt Singer, the late Mr. W.O. Gouldrey said "I was associated with them in many of their ventures and am quite sure that they had no thought of making financial profit to themselves by means of them". Although Isaac during the few years that he lived in Paignton showed great generosity - his sons in their turn carried on the tradition that he had set, and as G.H. Patterson says in his "Story of Paignton" - "Let that be their lasting memorial - 'No thought of profit to themselves'".

\*\*\*\*\*

F. RALPH PENWILL

Engineer and Surveyor.

Municipal Offices,  
Oldway  
PAIGNTON.

# Eric Satie, Isaac Bashevis Singer, the Princesse de Polignac, and the Sewing Machine



Sylvia Kahan, *Music's Modern Muse: A Life of Winnaretta Singer, Princesse de Polignac*, Eastman Studies in Music. University of Rochester Press, 2003.

Sylvia Kahan, *Music's Modern Muse: A Life of Winnaretta Singer, Princesse de Polignac*, Eastman Studies in Music, University of Rochester Press, 2003.

Michael de Cossart, *Food of Love: Princesse Edmond de Polignac (1865-1943) and her Salon*, Hamish Hamilton, 1978.

Michael de Cossart, *Food of Love: Princesse Edmond de Polignac (1865-1943) and her Salon*, Hamish Hamilton, 1978.

During the great days of early twentieth century Paris, one of the leading patrons of the arts was the Princesse de Polignac, who commissioned major works by Stravinsky, Satie, Poulenc, and others. She was the widow of Prince Edmond of Polignac and the ex-wife of Prince Louis de Scey-Montbéliard -- though neither marriage had been consummated. The first marriage, arranged by the bride's mother against Winnaretta's will, had been annulled, but the gay Prince Edmond de Polignac fortunately had no desire for consummation.

This all sounds ever so sophisticated, decadent, and continental, but the Princesse was born Winnaretta Singer -- one of the twenty-two children (by five wives) of Isaac Merritt Singer, the former Shakespearean actor and jack-of-all-trades who (with a little help from Elias Howe) had invented the Singer Sewing Machine. In 1875 Singer died and left fifteen million dollars to be divided among his wives and children (or most of them, anyway). In 1875 that was real money, and Winnaretta was able to buy her way into high society.

Princess Winnaretta obviously had no children, but when her sister Isabelle-Blanche committed suicide, Winnaretta took charge of her daughter, Marguerite Séverine Philippine Decazes de Glücksberg, and Margeurite's 1910 marriage to Prince Jean Amédée Marie Anatole de Broglie (also reputed to be gay) produced three more princesses. After the Prince's death, Marguerite then married a cousin of Winston Churchill, taking the name of Daisy Fellowes; Daisy was an author and, as a patron of Else Schiaparelli, had an important influence on the world of fashion.

Much later, still another Singer heir, Anne Labouisse Farnsworth Peretz, (whose exact relationship to Singer I've been unable to ascertain) loyally funded Martin Peretz's New Republic until all her money had been used up and he had to sell the magazine. To me this sounds a bit like coming down in the world.

#### Conclusions:

1. The novelist is known to us as "Isaac Bashevis Singer" because before him there already had been a famous American named Isaac Singer.
2. Parvenu princesses from rich but disreputable families often perform as well as real

princesses. I'm presently reading several biographies of Erik Satie, one of my favorite composers and eccentrics, and will remain forever grateful to Winnaretta.

3. Well-born people have more names than we do.

4. And really -- what kind of hillbilly name is Winnaretta, anyway?

[Comments \(2\)](#) | [Trackback \(0\)](#)

## NOTE

---

[1] The first Isaac Singer was only somewhat Jewish. Ultimately he was baptized as a Christian, probably for purposes of marriage; his German biography rather vaguely says that Isaac's father "came from a Jewish family named Reisinger in Saxony".

## LINKS

[Winnaretta Singer](#)

[Winnaretta Singer the bull dyke](#)

[Daisy Fellowes](#)

[Isaac Singer and music](#)

Photo of Winnaretta. Isaac Singer had a beautiful voice and made sure that all of his children had musical educations; he even favored musicians when hiring for his company. Promoting his sewing machine he commissioned songs and put out trading cards of opera singers and of songbirds. (The name "Singer" sometimes is a German surname, but apparently it had not been the family's name in Germany).

[Isaac Singer](#)

Isaac's widow Isabella (Winnaretta's mother) was Bartholdi's model for the Statue of Liberty. Lots of interesting details.

Isaac Merritt Singer  
Wikipedia -- many links.

German biography of Singer

Patent lawsuit with Howe over the sewing machine

More Isaac Singer info  
Isaac's early life as a mechinist, etc., in Newark near Rochester.

### **Appendix**

Besides the Princess of Polignac herself (and a yacht in Monaco and a room in the old Singer mansion in the UK, both presumably named for her), the following are all the Winnaretts I could find via Google. By the evidence, Winnaretta is a British name. All of them might have been named after Winnaretta Singer, however.

Winnaretta (McNamara) Howe, gave birth to daughter, 1907, NB, Canada.

Helma Winnaretta Randel, b. 1913, UK.

Winnaretta Raven, b. 1917, UK.

Chrixtena Winnaretta Gillespie, married 1906, BC, Canada.

Winna R Mitchelmore?, b. 1914, NZ.

I am emersonj at gmail dot com.

Original materials copyright John J Emerson

Return to Idiocentrism

# Biography.ms

## Winnaretta Singer

**Winnaretta Singer** (8 January 1865-26 November 1943), the Princess Edmond de Polignac, was an important musical [patron](#), [lesbian](#), and heir to the Singer sewing machine wealth.

One of the younger of the more than twenty children of [Isaac Singer](#), she married Prince Louis de Scey-Montbéliard in 1887. This marriage had been arranged by her mother, against her will. The marriage was [annulled](#) in 1891 by the [Catholic church](#) (which might indicate it was not consumated ).

However, in [1893](#), at the age of 29, she stepped consciously into a "separate beds" marriage with the 59 year-old [gay](#) Prince Edmond de Polignac , an amateur composer: he died in 1901.

From 1923 till her death her partner was [Violet Trefusis](#).

She commissioned several works of the young composers of her time, amongst others [Igor Stravinsky's](#) *Renard*, [Erik Satie's](#) *Socrate* (by her intercession Satie was kept out of jail when he was composing this work), and [Francis Poulenc's](#) *Two-Piano* and *Organ Concertos*. Her salon in St-Leu-la-Forêt was frequented, amongst others, by [Marcel Proust](#), [Jean Cocteau](#), [Monet](#), [Diaghilev](#), and [Colette](#). [Manuel de Falla's](#) *El retablo de maese Pedro* was premiered there, with the [harpsichord](#) part performed by [Wanda Landowska](#). (Kahan 2003)

Singer also acted as [patron](#) for many others, like [Nadia Boulanger](#), [Clara Haskil](#) , [Arthur Rubinstein](#), [Vladimir Horowitz](#), [Ethel Smyth](#), [Adela Maddison](#) , the [Ballets Russes](#), [l'Opéra de Paris](#), and [l'Orchestre Symphonique de Paris](#).

She had some part in the raising of her niece [Daisy Fellowes](#).

Winnaretta Singer is described (amongst others by [Violet Trefusis](#)) to have few physical charms, while generally she was considered to have a formidable character. As a [patron](#) she used to keep some distance to her protégés (e.g. when a work dedicated to her was presented to her she used to sit in front on a separate fauteuil, other selected guests, often not including the composer, way behind her) - in style this was very different from the more relaxed kind of patronage exerted by e.g. the contemporary count Etienne de Beaumont .

### Related Links

- [John Singer Sargent quotes](#)
- [Peter Singer quotes](#)
- [Bryan Singer quotes](#)
- [Isaac Bashevis Singer quotes](#)
- [Dr. June Singer quotes](#)

A  
B  
C  
D  
E  
F  
G  
H  
I  
J  
K  
L  
M  
N  
O  
P  
Q  
R  
S  
T  
U  
V  
W  
X  
Y  
Z

Home page

As a lesbian she can be considered as one of the earliest documented examples of a butch, preferring to dominate women with a whip, dressed in riding boots . Her sympathies towards militarist displays (like in early fascism advocated by Ezra Pound) might not surprise when seen from this angle. Eventually in the 1920s some scandal about her lesbianism was in the press, for a short time: she appeared too big for scandal to stick. It is said that this was one of the major reasons why Alice Keppel did not object her daughter to carry on a lesbian relationship with her.

Apparently aware of her impending death, Singer summarized: "*Faced by what seems to be the end of it all for an old lady like me, I proclaim that I always loved music, paintings, and books more than anything else, and I was right!*"

### Further reading

---

- Sylvia Kahan (2003). *Music's Modern Muse: A Life of Winnaretta Singer, Princesse de Polignac*, Eastman Studies in Music. University of Rochester Press. ISBN 1580461336.
- Michael de Cossart , *Food of Love: Princesse Edmond de Polignac (1865-1943) and her Salon*, Hamish Hamilton , 1978. ISBN 0241897858

de:Winnaretta Singer

# Biography.ms

## Daisy Fellowes

**Marguerite Séverine Philippine Decazes de Glücksberg** (29 April 1890-13 December 1962), better known as **Daisy Fellowes**, was a celebrated 20th-century society figure, acclaimed beauty, minor novelist and poet, erstwhile editor of Harpers Bazaar, fashion icon, and an heiress to the Singer sewing machine fortune.

### Related Links

- [Daisy Bates quotes](#)
- [Daisy Donovan quotes](#)

She was the only daughter of Isabelle-Blanche Singer (1869-1896), who committed suicide, and Jean Elie Octave Louis Sévère Amanieu Decazes (1864-1912), 3rd duc Decazes et Glücksberg. Her maternal grandfather was Isaac Merritt Singer, the American sewing-machine pioneer, and she was largely raised by her mother's elder sister, Winnaretta Singer, Princess Edmond de Polignac, a noted patron of the arts, particularly music.

Her first husband, whom she married on 10 May 1910, was Prince Jean Amédée Marie Anatole de Broglie , whom she reportedly caught in bed with the family's chauffeur. He died of influenza in 1918 while serving with the French Army in Algeria, though malicious observers gossiped that he actually committed suicide as a result of his homosexuality having been exposed. They had three daughters: Princess Emmeline Isabelle Edmée Séverine de Broglie (later Countess de Castéja), Princess Isabelle de Broglie (a novelist who married the Marquis de La Moussaye), and Princess Jacqueline de Broglie (later Mrs Alfred Kraus). Of her Broglie children, the notoriously caustic Daisy once said, "The eldest is like her father, only more masculine. The second is like me, only without the guts. And the last is by some horrible little man called Lischmann."

Her second husband, whom she married on 9 August 1919, was Hon. Reginald Ailwyn Fellowes , a banker cousin of Winston Churchill and a grandson of a duke of Marlborough. They had one daughter, Rosamond Fellowes .

Among her lovers was Duff Cooper, the British ambassador to France.

Fellowes wrote several novels and at least one epic poem. Her best-known work is *Les dimanches de la Comtesse de Narbonne* (1931, published in English as "Sundays").

She also was known as one of the most daring fashion plates of the 20th century, arguably the most important patron of the surrealist couturier Elsa Schiaparelli.

A  
B  
C  
D  
E  
F  
G  
H  
I  
J  
K  
L  
M  
N  
O  
P  
Q  
R  
S  
T  
U  
V  
W  
X  
Y  
Z

[Home page](#)

This is an excerpt of Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

**Isaac Merritt Singer** (\* 27. October 1811 in Schaghticoke, New York, USA, â € 23. July 1875 in Paignton, Devonshire, GB) be a American entrepreneur and inventor. It made substantial contributions for the development of the sewing machine.

**Table of contents**

1 Biographie

1.1 early years

1.2 first inventions

1.3 Ith M. Singer & Co

1.4 financial success

1.5 the last year in Europe

2 inheritance and descendant

3 literature

4 Web on the left of

**Biographie**

**Early years**

Singer was born in Utica, New York as a son of Adam Singer, a Saxonian Immigraten and his first Mrs. Ruth. At the age of nineteen years began it a theory in a mechanic workshop, however already left these after few months, in order to follow a group of actors. Its living costs earned himself he alternating as mechanic and an actor. 1830 he married Catherine Maria Haley.

it pulled 1835 with Catherine and its common son William to New York, where it began to work in printering. It already left woman and child in New York to 1836, in order to work as an agent of a group of tours from actors to. In Baltimore he became acquainted with Mary Ann Sponsler, to which he offered the marriage. After its return to New York it resumed the marriage life with Catherine; its common daughter Lillian was born 1837. Mary Ann Sponsler found out after its arrival in New York fast that Singer was still married. Together with it it returned to Baltimore, where they spent themselves as married pair. Its first common son Isaac came also 1837 to the world.

**First inventions**

Its first patent received Singer 1839 for a rock drill press. It sold its patent for 2.000 USD and had thereby for the first time a larger money. It decided to take up its career as actors again. It created a group of tours, the " Merrit

Players " called themselves and arose as Isaac Merritt; Mary Ann was also an actress in this troop and called itself "Mrs. Merritt".

1844 began to work Isaac Singer in Fredericksburg again in printering, moved however soon after Pittsburgh, where he created 1846 a carpenter's workshop, in which it prints manufactured. Here it developed its "machine for wood and metalworking" and let these on 10 April 1849 patent.

At the age of thirty-eight years, with two women and meanwhile eight children, he pulled again to New York around there this machine to marked out. It received an offer from Boston, where it moved 1850, in order to design in the workshop from Orson C Phelps for its machine a prototype. In Phelps workshop also the sewing machines were designed by Lerow and Blodgett. Since nobody ordered Singers "machine for wood and metalworking", Phelps Singer asked to argue with sewing machines more exactly. The sewing machines, which stood to this time for order, were not only complex in the production, but also difficult in the use. Singer stated soon the fact that the sewing machines would be less susceptible if instead of in a circle would move the needle in a straight line. Also a straight needle in place of bent the so far would make the machines more reliable.

With the help of a financing by George B. Zieber, who became common with Phelps its partner, created it the "Jenny Lind sewing machine". Singers prototype was the first sewing machine, those was really operational and in acknowledgment of its improvements received it for it on 12 August 1851 a patent. Mark out became the sewing machine however not as "Jenny Lind" to separate as Singer sewing machine.

### **I. M. Singer & Co**

Singer did not invent the sewing machine and this also never maintained. 1850, when Singer got the first time a sewing machine to face, were it became "invented" already four times. All sewing machines up to the advancement by walter Hunt produced a chain pass, which dissolved however rapidly again. The pass of Hunt machine was characterised however by a pass, with which this does not happen. This was a characteristic of all machines produced thereafter, inkluse from Lerow and Blodgett, which developed Singer further in Phelps workshop. Independently of it also Elias Howe developed a sewing machine and received for it on 10 September 1846 a patent.

Between Howe and Singer on it a patent war broke out which went out in favor of of Howe. Singer paid thereupon for each produced sewing machine and Co "began a fee at Howe with the mass production of sewing machines as" I. M. Singer &. 1856 was already manufactured 2,564 machines; 1860 was it already 13.000. Isaac Singer expanded to Europe and developed a further company in Glasgow.

## Financial success

Financial success made it possible to Singer to buy to the distinguished Fifth Avenue in New York a mansion into which it drew with its family. it could 1860 be separated from its first wife; Separating reason was their adultery with Stephen Kent. Singer lived together further with Mary Ann, until she found out that he maintained a relationship with its employee Mary McGonigal. At this time Mary McGonigal had brought already five children to the world, whose father was Isaac Singer. These children received all to the surnames *Matthews* .

Mary Ann (still the Mrs. I.M. Singer called itself) let its life companions arrest because of domestic force. Singer was released on bail and sat down thereupon to London off; Mary McGonigal accompanied it. At the same time further by Isaacs families "one discovered": It maintained a relationship with Mary Eastwood walter, with which it had a common daughter named Alice Eastwood. Both used the surname "Merritt". In the year 1860 Isaac thereby was father of at least eighteen children of four different women.

While Isaac Singer in London lived, tried Mary Ann divides the fortune for itself to secure. It argued with the fact that it married niemlas formally with Isaac was that they were to be regarded however after the "Common law" as a married couple, since they would have lived together more than seven months, after Isaac Singer of his first Mrs. Catherine could be separated. A financial agreement was finally reached, without a formal divorce was expressed. Since Mary Ann assumed to be bound to no marriage promise now she married 1862 John E. Foster in Boston . Isaac Singer argued thereupon that it complained after Common Law as married to actually regard its, Mary Ann of the Bigamie on and forced her to cancel the before getroffenene financial agreement.

Singer began a relationship with the married Isabella Eugenie Boyer Summerville, which separated from its married man and married on 13 June 1863 Singer. It expected a child of Singer at this time already. Mary Ann did unexplainable-proves without it Isaac also of Bigamie to accuse.

## The last year in Europe

1863 were dissolved the company Ith M. Singer & Co. and as "The Singer Manufacturing company" again based. Thus a reorganization of the management of this company was possible. Singer did not play no more active role in the work-daily line of the company, was however member of the supervisory board and substantial shareholder

During its its new family grew; with his new Mrs. Isabella it had six common children. Due to Isaac Singers lebensfuehrung was refused it an active role in the New Yorker society. It lived therefore together with its family up to the French-German war 1870/71 in Paris and emigrierte during wartime back to England and built themselves after a stay in London a large mansion at the coast of Devonian. It persuaded some of its children from earlier relationship to live there together with it. Nine days after the wedding of its daughter Alice Merritt Isaac Singer at heart failure died. It was buried in Torquay, Devonian.

***Inheritance and descendant***

Singer left at that time a fortune of over \$14.000.000 and two wills, substantial for conditions, which this fortune divided on different members of its family. Some its Nachkomen for different reasons was not considered, what entailed law case. Mary Ann complained that it would be the legitimate "Mrs Singer", but Isabella as the legal widow was explained. Isabella married in the consequence Belgian musicians named Victor a Reubsaet, which should inherit the titles of the Vicomte D'Estemburgh and the prince of Camposelice.

Isaacs 18. Child, Winnaretta Singer married the prince Edmond de Polignac after short, annulierter marriage with the prince Louis de Scey Scey-MontbÃ©liard and became an important Kunstmaezenin. A further daughter of Singer, Isabelle Blanche, (born 1869 ) married Elie, duc Decazes . Daisy Fellowes came out from this marriage. One of the sons, Paris Singer witnessed together with Isadora Duncan a child and a further son, Washington Singer, became an important founder for the later University OF Exeter . Today one of the buildings carries its name.

***Literature***

- Brandon, Ruth, *Singer and the Sewing Machine: A Capitalist Romance* , Kodansha international, New York, 1977.

***Web on the left of***

- ISAAC MERRITT SINGER, detailed Biographie of Isaac Singer ( [http://home.arcor.de/veritasklub/singer\\_person/seite01.htm](http://home.arcor.de/veritasklub/singer_person/seite01.htm) )