

Isabella Libassi
HP Studio I
Exercise 5
10/13/20

Levin Family at Woodlawn

Located between Park and Pine Avenue in Woodlawn Cemetery, lot 11699 in Chestnut Hill has become the permanent resting place of the Levin family. Designed by C.E. Tayntor & Co. and originally purchased in 1906 by Emma B. Levin, it is assumed that the plot was purchased for her daughter, Anita Levin Cook who had passed away on May 19, 1906 at their residence in NYC.¹

Anita was not the first Levin to die, however. On October 28, 1887, Emma's husband, Martin Henry Levin died at the age of 63 and was buried at Green-Wood cemetery beside his first wife, Caroline A. Levin, who died on October 24, 1857 in Brooklyn.^{2, 3} After Emma purchased this plot at Woodlawn in 1906 for her daughter, she had her husband and his first wife moved to the new site in Woodlawn Cemetery.⁴ It appears that she also had two children moved to the site – Martin H. Levin, who was six years old, and an unnamed infant. Other individuals interred in this mausoleum include Emma B. Levin and some of her other relatives – such as her sister, Sarah Maria Gurney, her son, Clarence Levin, and her niece and nephew-in-law, Grace G. and Walter E. Lambert.

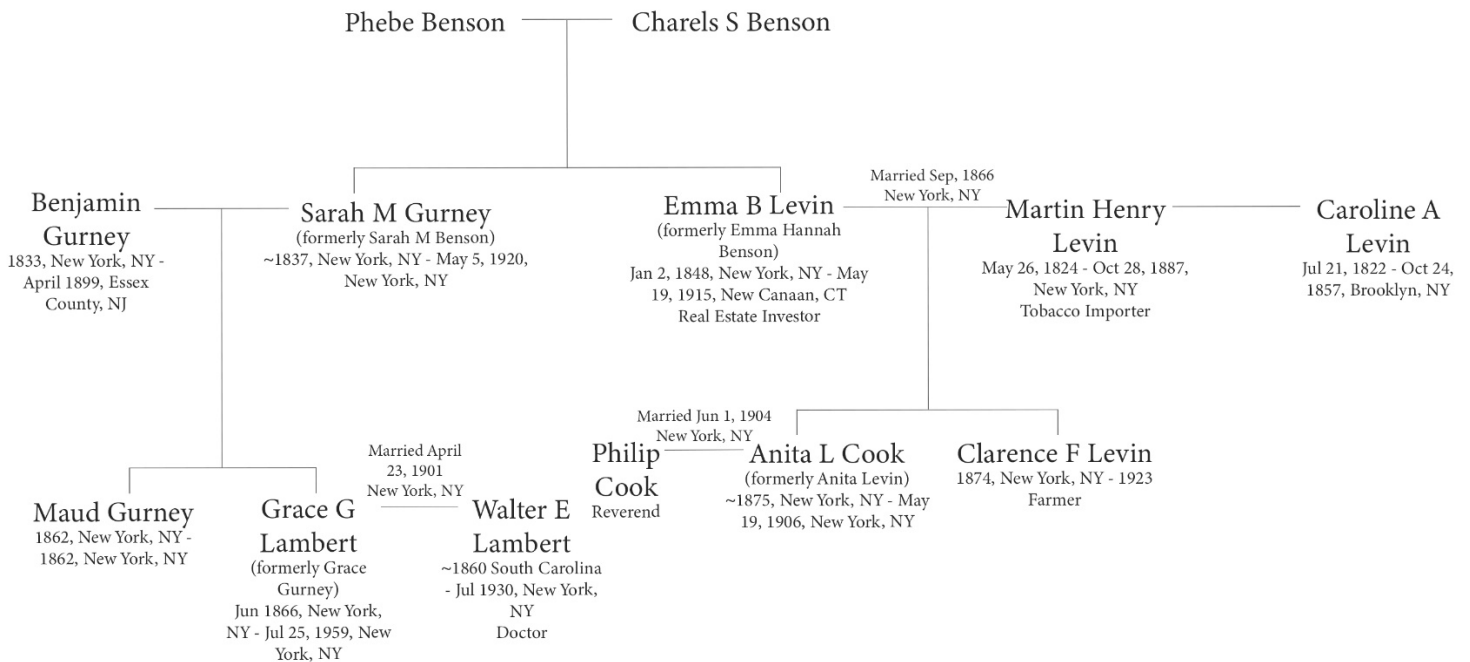
¹ "Died," *New York Tribune*, May 22, 1906, p. 7.

² Neil Funkhouser, "Martin Henry Levin (1824-1887)," Find a Grave (Find a Grave, September 2, 2017), <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/182938834/martin-henry-levin>.

³ *New York Evening Post*, October 26, 1857, p. 67.

⁴ Neil Funkhouser, "Caroline A Levin (1822-1857)," Find a Grave (Find a Grave, September 2, 2017), <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/182938817/caroline-a-levin>.

Benson-Levin Family Tree



Emma B. Levin was born January 2, 1848 in New York – with the name Hannah Emma Benson – to Charles S. Benson, a grocer from Connecticut, and Phebe Benson, from New York.^{5,6} Emma was one of six children and had four older siblings – one being her sister Sarah Benson, later known as Sarah M. Gurney.⁷ In 1860, the Benson family resided at 217 Bleecker Street in New York, New York.^{8,9}

On September 20th, 1866, at the age of 18, Emma married the 42 year old Martin Henry Levin at her mother’s residence.¹⁰ Martin, who had been married before to Caroline Auguste Levin until her death in October 1857, was an importer of tobacco.¹¹ Though he originally

⁵ Neil Funkhouser, “Emma Benson Levin (1848-1915),” Find a Grave, September 2, 2017, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/182938798/emma-levin>.

⁶ “1850 United States Federal Census,” *1850 United States Federal Census*, 1850, pp. 25-26.

⁷ “New York Ward 18 District 4.” *1860 United States Federal Census*, 1860, p. 32.

⁸ “New York City Business Directory, 1859,” *New York City Business Directory, 1859* (New York, New York, 1859), p. 104.

⁹ “New York Ward 18 District 4.” *1860 United States Federal Census*, 1860, p. 32.

¹⁰ “Married,” *The New York Times*, September 22, 1866, p. 5.

¹¹ H. Wilson, *Trow's New York City Directory* (New York, New York: John F. Trow, 1857), p. 487.

worked and lived in Brooklyn, it appears that he moved to Manhattan after his marriage to Emma in 1866. Once they were married, Martin and Emma are listed as living at the Brevoort Hotel at 15 Fifth Avenue at Eighth Street in present day Greenwich Village, with Martin's work address listed as 162 Pearl Street.^{12, 13, 14, 15} Martin's work address remained 162 Pearl Street until his death in 1887.¹⁶ It is assumed that Martin and Emma lived at the Brevoort Hotel until Martin's passing in 1887, as it is listed as their address again in the New York City Directory from 1883.¹⁷

Martin remained an importer of tobacco, specifically Havana Tobacco, until his death.¹⁸ This is where a lot of the Levin family wealth came from. Other importers of tobacco in New York were also located predominantly on Pearl Street and its parallel Water Street, in the present-day Financial District of Manhattan.¹⁹ This was typical of industries in New York at the time – they tended to group together.

¹² "New York, State Census, 1855," *New York, State Census, 1855* (Provo, UT: Ancestry.com, 2013), p. 48.

¹³ H. Wilson, *Trow's New York City Directory* (New York, New York: John F. Trow, 1868), p. 610.

¹⁴ Bernice Abbott, *Hotel Brevoort, 15 Fifth Avenue at 8th Street*, photograph, *Museum of the City of New York* (New York City, n.d.), Museum of the City of New York,

<https://collections.mcny.org/Collection/Hotel%20Brevoort,%2015%20Fifth%20Avenue%20at%208th%20Street-24UAKVKUZLUK.html>.

¹⁵ H. Wilson, *Trow's New York City Directory* (New York, New York: John F. Trow, 1868), p. 610.

¹⁶ *Trow's New York City Directory* (New York, New York: The Trow City Directory Company, 1883), p. 965.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ *The Tobacco Business Directory 1882 & 1883. Embracing the Name, Address, & Factory Number of the Cigar & Tobacco Manufacturers of the United States & Havana; Also the Name and Address of the Cigarette Manufacturers; Importers of Havana & Sumatra Tobaccos; ... and Other Matters of Interest & Value to the Tobacco Trade* (New York, New York: Trade Mark Pub.co., 1882), 277.

¹⁹ Ibid.



Figure 1: Brevoort Hotel²⁰



Figure 2: Brevoort Hotel with Mark Twain House²¹

After her husband's death, Emma remained at the Brevoort Hotel until around 1890. By 1891, Emma moved to 180 West 59th Street where she resided until at least 1894, if not later, with the last record of her living there listed in the 1894 New York City Directory.^{22, 23} Over the next few years, beginning in August 1897, there are records of Emma purchasing property, predominantly from men, in New York, specifically in the Bronx. These records show real estate being transferred to, aka bought by, Emma Levin for anywhere from \$2,800 to \$6,000, and in some cases more.^{24, 25} In 1897 alone, Emma invested in at least four properties. This suggests that Emma became a real estate investor, which was incredibly unusual for a woman at the time.

²⁰ Bernice Abbott, *Hotel Brevoort, 15 Fifth Avenue at 8th Street*, photograph, *Museum of the City of New York* (New York City, n.d.), Museum of the City of New York, <https://collections.mcny.org/Collection/Hotel%20Brevoort,%2015%20Fifth%20Avenue%20at%208th%20Street-24UAKVKUZLUK.html>.

²¹ Bernice Abbott, *Brevoort Hotel with Mark Twain House*, photograph, *Museum of the City of New York* (New York City, n.d.), Museum of the City of New York, <https://collections.mcny.org/CS.aspx?VP3=SearchResult&VBID=24UP1GM8HBG1N>.

²² "New York City Directory, 1891-92.," *The New York City Directory, 1891-92.*, n.d., p. 802.

²³ *Trow's New York City Directory* (New York, New York: Trow Directory, Printing and Bookbinding Company, 1894), p. 819.

²⁴ "Auction Sales This Week: To Take Place at 111 Broadway Unless Otherwise Specified," *The New York Times*, August 1, 1897, p. 6.

²⁵ "The Building Department: List of Plans Filed for New Structures and Alterations.," *The New York Times*, March 25, 1898, p. 10.

The last records that show Emma purchasing property are from May 27, 1904.²⁶ Emma was not only involved in the real estate industry, however. In May, 1898, the New York Elevated Railroad Company and the Manhattan Railway Company were in debt \$68,816 to Emma.²⁷ Emma either made an investment in the Railroad companies or had given them a loan and they now owed her money back. This is an example of the position the Levin family was in financially and shows the types of major investments that Emma made at the time.

At some point between 1894 and 1900, Emma and her daughter, Anita, moved from 180 West 59th Street to 155 West 58th Street in New York.²⁸ Evidence of Emma and Anita's travel is provided in a magazine called *The Home Journal*, among other sources, which followed the people of New York society as they traveled throughout the year. These announcements, which can also be found in *Town and Country* magazine and the *New York Tribune*, show Emma, sometimes accompanied by Anita, traveling predominantly to the Somerset Inn in Bernardsville, N.J.; the Loon Lake House in the Adirondacks; her "country residence" and the home of her son, which was called "Meadows," located in the Genesee Valley in Avon, NY; and Laurel-In-The-Pines in Lakewood, N.J.^{29, 30, 31} The Levin women would spend months at a time in these locations – sometimes traveling multiple times per year. Emma's ability to travel this frequently, not to mention the magazines and newspapers announcement of it, suggest that Emma was a member of the upper class.

After Emma's daughter, Anita, got engaged in 1903 and married on June 1, 1904, Anita accompanied her mother less often on these trips. Anita spent a lot of time in Europe, traveling

²⁶ "The Building Department: List of Plans Filed for New Structures in Manhattan and Bronx.," *The New York Times*, May 27, 1904, p. 15.

²⁷ "Business Troubles," *The New York Times*, May 19, 1898, p. 11.

²⁸ "Social Record: Social Movements," *The Home Journal*, October 4, 1900, p. 17.

²⁹ Morris Phillips, "Social Record: Social Movements," *The Home Journal*, July 19, 1900, p. 12.

³⁰ "Front Material 1 -- No Title," *Town and Country*, June 14, 1902, p. 3.

³¹ "Lent at Lakewood: Outdoor Attractions to the Fore -- The Threshold of Spring," *New York Tribune*, March 8, 1903, p. A9.

with her husband – Rev. Philip Cook – in the few months after their marriage, but they spent the winter with Emma at her NYC residence.^{32, 33, 34}

Unfortunately, a year or so into marriage on May 19, 1906, Anita died suddenly while at her residence on West 58th Street.³⁵ The death of Anita in 1906 is what initiated Emma’s purchasing of the plot at Woodlawn Cemetery.

After the death of her daughter, records of Emma’s life in New York and her travels become fewer. In the 1910 census, Emma is recorded as a guest in a house in New Canaan, CT.³⁶ It can be assumed that Emma stayed here for a short period of time, permanently residing in another house in New Canaan which was owned by her son-in-law and which she died in on June 22, 1915.³⁷

Emma’s will provided the most information on her life. For example, as stated earlier, she lived and died in her son-in-law’s house in Connecticut. “My son-in-law, Philip Cook, having given me his bond and mortgage on the property owned by him and now occupied by me at New Canaan, Connecticut, I authorize and direct my executors, or such of them as may qualify, to cancel and discharge the said bond and mortgage without payment, if they should remain uncanceled and undischarged at the time of my death.”³⁸ So, by 1911, when Emma wrote her will, she lived in Philip’s New Canaan house, which she paid the mortgage off of after her death. Philip was not the only one mentioned in Emma’s will, however.

³² “Social Movements, New York,” *Town & Country*, October 3, 1903, p. 3.

³³ “Town & Country Life,” *Town and Country*, June 4, 1904, p. 21.

³⁴ “Front Material 1 -- No Title,” *Town and Country*, September 30, 1905, p. 3.

³⁵ “Died,” *New York Tribune*, May 22, 1906, p. 7.

³⁶ “1910 United States Federal Census,” *1910 United States Federal Census*, n.d., p. 17.

³⁷ Emma B Levin, “New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659-1999,” *New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659-1999*, n.d., pp. 300-301.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

Emma gave her sister, Sarah, a monthly allowance of \$50 at the beginning of each month, along with many personal items as well. Among the items on the list were her "...mother's diamond earring pendant. My sister Ada's toilet silver and miniature in silver frame. Tortoise shell and black lace fan. Two black jet fans and one jet card case. My Point Lace. Baby lamb fur coat. Shell handled parasol. Shepherdess miniature of my daughter Anita. Blue enameled opera glass. Silver card case which belonged to my mother. Large picture of Anita in wedding dress. Seven Japanese dessert plates (Mother's). And all my clothing and wearing apparel."³⁹ Other family members and friends also received various miscellaneous objects – ranging from ruby rings and diamond pins, to hand painted plates, etc. – all of which show the wealth of Emma and her family. For example, Grace G. Lambert, her niece, received Emma's pearl collar, hand embroidered towels, and hand painted plates, among other items, while her son-in-law, Philip, got Tiffany silver candle sticks with silver shades and his choice of furniture from her New Canaan house, among other things.⁴⁰

Emma's one child who outlived her, Clarence Levin from "Meadows" in Avon, NY, was given the rest of her belongings, which included the remainder of her wealth. "[All] the rest, residence and remainder of my property of whatsoever kind or nature and wheresoever situated, I give, devise and bequeath to my son Clarence F. Levin, if living at the time of my decease..."⁴¹

In addition, she left \$1,700 to Woodlawn Cemetery to use for the maintenance of the Levin family mausoleum, and for the planting of trees and flowers, etc. Emma also specified who was to be interred in the mausoleum, "...Martin H. Levin, Caroline A. Levin, Martin H.

³⁹ Emma B Levin, "New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659-1999," *New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659-1999*, n.d., pp. 300-301.

⁴⁰ Emma B Levin, "New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659-1999," *New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659-1999*, n.d., pp. 302-303.

⁴¹ Emma B Levin, "New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659-1999," *New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659-1999*, n.d., pp. 304-305.

Levin Jr., Anita Levin Cook and her infant child of all of whom the remains do now repose in said mausoleum, and myself, my sister Sarah M. Gurney, my son, Clarence F. Levin and Harriet Lindsey, his wife, and Philip Cook, my son-in-law, and such other persons as may be designated by my son Clarence F. Levin, and no others.”⁴²

Emma left various items to her relatives and a few friends – all of which provide information on her life, her wealth, and those who were important to her. Though she divided these various objects up, her son, Clarence, received the remainder and bulk of her fortune.

After Emma died in 1915, her sister, Sarah, followed shortly after and was interred in the Levin mausoleum in 1920. Clarence, Emma’s son, was then interred in 1923. Following Clarence was Walter, Emma’s nephew-in-law, in 1930, and then eventually Grace, Emma’s niece, in 1959.



⁴² Emma B Levin, “New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659-1999,” *New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659-1999*, n.d., pp. 304-305.

Bibliography:

Abbott, Bernice. *Brevoort Hotel with Mark Twain House*. Photograph. *Museum of the City of New York*. New York City, October 24, 1935. Museum of the City of New York.
<https://collections.mcny.org/CS.aspx?VP3=SearchResult&VBID=24UP1GM8HBG1N>.

Abbott, Bernice. *Hotel Brevoort, 15 Fifth Avenue at 8th Street*. Photograph. *Museum of the City of New York*. New York City, n.d. Museum of the City of New York.
<https://collections.mcny.org/Collection/Hotel%20Brevoort,%2015%20Fifth%20Avenue%20at%208th%20Street-24UAKVKUZLUK.html>.

“Anita L Cook in the New York, New York, Extracted Death Index, 1862-1948,” 2014.

“Assignments of Mortgages.” *The New York Times*, August 3, 1901.

“Auction Sales This Week: To Take Place at 111 Broadway Unless Otherwise Specified.” *The New York Times*, August 1, 1897.

“Avon, Livingston.” *State Population Census Schedules, 1915*. Albany, NY: New York State Archives, 1915.

“Brooklyn City, Ward 06.” *New York, State Census, 1855*. Provo, UT: Ancestry.com, 2013.

“The Building Department: List of Plans Filed for New Structures and Alterations.” *The New York Times*, December 6, 1898.

“The Building Department: List of Plans Filed for New Structures and Alterations.” *The New York Times*, March 25, 1898.

“The Building Department: List of Plans Filed for New Structures in Manhattan and Bronx.” *The New York Times*, May 27, 1904.

Burke, Edward. Publication. *Tobacco Manufacture in the United States: a Report Adopted in Convention of the Trade Held at Cooper Institute, New York, December 7th and 8th, 1864*. New York, New York: American News Company, 1864.

“Business Troubles.” *The New York Times*, May 19, 1898.

“Clarence F. Levin.” *The New York Times*, June 8, 1923.

“East Orange Ward 2, Essex, New Jersey.” *1900 United States Federal Census*, 1900.

“Died.” *New York Tribune*, May 22, 1906.

“Front Material 1 -- No Title.” *Town and Country*no. 2927, June 14, 1902.

“Front Material 1 -- No Title.” *Town and Country*no. 3098, September 30, 1905.

Funkhouser, Neil. “Caroline A Levin (1822-1857).” Find a Grave. Find a Grave, September 2, 2017. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/182938817/caroline-a-levin>.

Funkhouser, Neil. “Emma Benson Levin (1848-1915).” Find a Grave, September 2, 2017. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/182938798/emma-levin>.

Funkhouser, Neil. “Martin Henry Levin (1824-1887).” Find a Grave. Find a Grave, September 2, 2017. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/182938834/martin-henry-levin>.

Goulding's New York City Directory for 1875-76. New York, New York: Lawrence G. Goulding, 1875.

“In Memoriam.” *New York Tribune*, May 20, 1915.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/468888174/?article=177bc9b8-3d75-4c42-bae7-6148eae7f7c2&focus=0.8662016%2C0.29183745%2C0.99689895%2C0.31291416&xid=3355>.

“Lent at Lakewood: Outdoor Attractions to the Fore -- The Threshold of Spring.” *New York Tribune*, March 8, 1903.

Levin, Emma B. “Wills, 1016-1018, 1914-1915.” *New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659-1999*, n.d.

“Manhattan Assembly District 10, Enumeration District 759.” *1920 United States Federal Census*, 1920.

“Manhattan Ward 21, Enumeration District 1173.” *1910 United States Federal Census*, 1910.

“Marriage Announcement 1 -- No Title.” *The New York Times*, April 25, 1901.

“Married.” *The New York Times*, September 22, 1866.

“New Canaan, Fairfield, Connecticut.” *1910 United States Federal Census*, n.d.

New York City Business Directory, 1859. New York, New York, 1859.

New York Evening Post. October 26, 1857.

“New-York Society.” *New York Tribune*, June 1, 1904.

“New York, State Census, 1855.” ProQuest. Provo, 2013.

“New York, Tobacco.” *Goulding's Business Directory of New York, Brooklyn, Newark, Paterson, Jersey City, Hoboken, and Elizabeth*3. New York, New York: I. G. Goulding, 1873.

“New York Ward 15 Western Half.” *1850 United States Federal Census*, 1850.

“New York Ward 18 District 4.” *1860 United States Federal Census*, 1860.

“Newspapers.com Marriage Index, 1800s-1999.” *The New York Times*, May 29, 1904.

NY State Death Index. Albany, NY: New York Department of Health, 1923.

Phillips, Morris. “Social Record: Social Movements.” *The Home Journal*55, no. 20, July 19, 1900.

“Real Estate Transfers, Recorded Mortgages.” *The New York Times*, March 21, 1901.

“Recorded Mortgages.” *The New York Times*, April 5, 1901.

Rejnis, Ruth. “Lakewood Hotels Struggling.” *The New York Times*, December 22, 1974.

“Sarah M Gurney in the New York, New York, Extracted Death Index, 1862-1948,” 2014.

“Social Movements.” *Town & Country*56, no. 14, June 15, 1901.

“Social Movements.” *Town & Country*56, no. 29, September 28, 1901.

“Social Movements, New York.” *Town & Country*58, no. 17, July 4, 1903.

“Social Movements, New York.” *Town & Country*58, no. 30, October 3, 1903.

“Social Movements, New York.” *Town & Country*58, no. 31, October 10, 1903.

“Social Record: Social Movements.” *The Home Journal*55, no. 20, July 19, 1900.

“Social Record: Social Movements.” *The Home Journal*55, no. 31, October 4, 1900.

“Society: At Home and Abroad.” *The New York Times*, May 29, 1904.

The New York City Directory, 1889-90., 1889.

The New York City Directory, 1891-92., n.d.

“Tobacco.” *The Cultivator*7, no. 12, December 1840.

The Tobacco Business Directory 1882 & 1883. Embracing the Name, Address, & Factory Number of the Cigar & Tobacco Manufacturers of the United States & Havana; Also the Name and Address of the Cigarette Manufacturers; Importers of Havana & Sumatra Tobaccos; ... and Other Matters of Interest & Value to the Tobacco Trade. New York, New York: Trade Mark Pub.co., 1882.

“Town & Country Calendar: Social and Travel Notes.” *Town & Country*60, no. 12, May 27, 1905.

“Town & Country Life.” *Town & Country*59, no. 13, June 4, 1904.

“Town & Country Life.” *Town and Country* no. 3029, June 4, 1904.

Trow's New York City Directory XCVI. New York, New York: The Trow City Directory Company, 1883.

Trow's New York City Directory CVII. New York, New York: Trow Directory, Printing and Bookbinding Company, 1894.

“Wills for Probate.” *The New York Times*, August 17, 1930.

Wilson, H. “The New York City Directory, 1867-8.” *Trow's New York City Directory*. New York, New York: John F. Trow, 1868.

Wilson, H. “The New York City Directory, 1856-7.” *Trow's New York City Directory*. New York, New York: John F. Trow, 1857.

“Woodlawn Cemetery.” Maplets, 2015. <http://www.mobilemaplets.com/showplace/13175>.