

THE FAMILY COSSITT

The Cossitt Family first came to the United States in the early 1700's after their first descendant Rene Cossitt, sailor, was captured by the British during the Quadruple Alliance war on the coast of Newfoundland, Canada. The War of the Quadruple Alliance was caused by Spanish attempts to recover territories in Italy and France worked on the side of Italy to prevent Spain from changing the treaty of Utrecht. Speculation on the Cossitt.Org website states belief that the Cossitts were able to move to New England, Connecticut after making a deal to never return to their homeland of France. The Cossitt family in the early 1700's spelled their name "Cosset", but after moving to the United States changed the spelling to "Cossit" and established the Episcopal Church in Claremont N.H in 1871¹. Later the family name was changed again to what we know it as today, Cossitt.

The Cossitt family mausoleum was purchased by Frederick Cossitt, the son of Rene Cossitt Jr. Frederick Cossitt was a dry goods salesman and real estate investor in New York and Tennessee. The mausoleum purchase information is not known, but was completed a year after the death of Frederick Cossitts wife Catherine, so is believed to have been purchased by Frederick. The mausoleum can hold sixteen people, but only has eleven slots filled, being three of Fredericks children (Frederick H. Cossitt Jr, May Cossitt, and Elizabeth Cossitt), Frederick Cossitt and his wife, the spouses of Fredericks daughters, and Fredericks grandchildren². The exterior of the mausoleum is made of granite in three finishes and stone with remnants of biological growth on the building's roof. While the interior of the mausoleum is marble with a Beveled Stained Ripple.

¹COSSITT FAMILY ASSOCIATION. <http://cossitt.org/>

² Funkhouser, Neil. n.d. "Frederick Henry Cossitt (1811-1887)." Find a Grave. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/126524443/frederick-henry-cossitt>

Moisa Wroy
10/11/2022

Glass with Jewels, and pilaster columns. The ceiling has carved detailing in the shape of a flower and what can be perceived as a cross and has water damage along the left corner of the ceiling.

The Cossitt family was one of the first families to settle in Connecticut, and though there is no record of the families early work, Fredericks uncle Rene Cossitt Jr became the reverend of the community church in Connecticut, while his uncle Germain Cossitt became a dry goods merchant in Tennessee. Fredericks father, Asa Cossitt, was buried in Granby Connecticut and the earlier generations of the family were buried behind the old family farm which is now private land and taken care of by the current owners in spring and winter.

After the death of Frederick's father in 1826, Frederick moved to Memphis, Tennessee to live with his fathers brother, George G Cossitt,³ and learn about the family's dry goods business. Frederick brought up about two dry goods businesses in Tennessee, one in Mississippi, and one in New Jersey, in as early as 1849, but did not officially have the businesses under his name until 1861, two years after he had moved to New York to participate in the real estate business. Moving to New York in 1859 with his wife Catherine and four children, Frederick invested in 14 businesses. Some property holdings believed to have been given to Fredericks eldest daughter are 462-464 Broadway, 495-497 Broadway, 140 Fifth Avenue, 1,596-1602 Broadway, 724-780 Seventh Ave⁴. These can be found in the will of Helen Cossitt Juilliard, along with three properties in Madison Ave where Frederick worked in investing as director, trustee and vice president of The

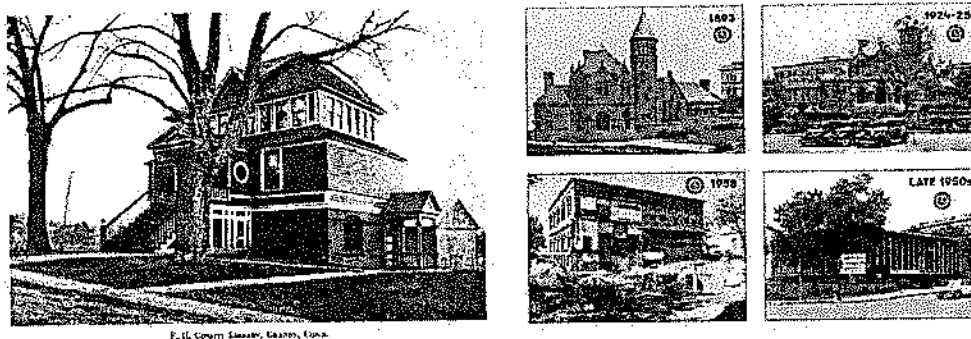
³ "Frederick Henry Cossitt." Ancestry® | Family Tree, Genealogy & Family History Records.
<https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/family-tree/person/tree/54529466/person/27330477447/facts>.

⁴ Presa, Donald G. 2010. *SOHO-CAST IRON HISTORIC DISTRICT Designation Report*. NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission.

Moisa Wroy
10/11/2022

Mutual Life Insurance Co, The Central Trust Co, The Atlantic Mutual Insurance Co and The Greenwich Savings Bank and one of his places of residence⁵.

Frederick Cossitt died in 1887, three years after his wife, but their Mausoleum was assumed completed between the years of 1885-1886. In Frederick Cossitt's will he requested that two libraries be built as pictured below, one in Memphis, Tennessee, the first public library in its neighborhood and the other in Granby, Connecticut which resembles the family home and may be



the family home of Frederick Cossitt growing up⁶. The Cossitt libraries, both still stand today, though the one in Tennessee has gone through four iterations, pictured below, and is now in danger of being torn down as it no longer has many patrons⁷.

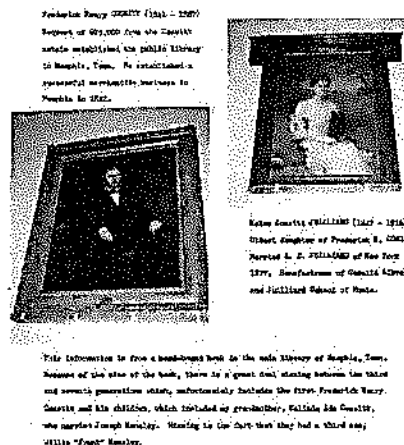
As the family was beloved in Connecticut, they held a family reunion every 50 years in the town of Granby where they retraced their families heritage. The reunion would begin in the town center and the family would visit the Cossitt Library, family burial plot, home of Rene and Asa Cossitt and the church. This tradition has since ceased, but many of the Cossitt members today find ways to communicate online.

⁵ Newspapers, Historical. "Mrs. Juilliard Left Million to Husband." *New York Times*, June 24, 1916.

⁶ Kuhl, Ken. "Frederick H. Cossitt's gift to Granby." granbydrummer.com/. October 1, 2019.
<https://doi.org/https://granbydrummer.com/2019/10/frederick-h-cossitts-gift-to-granby/>

⁷ "Thomas Charles Cossitt." cossitt.org. April 11, 2008.
<https://doi.org/http://cossitt.org/family%20stories/family%20story%202.htm>

Of the known Frederick Cossitt properties, two located in Broadway (462-464 Broadway and 495-497 Broadway) are part of SoHo's landmarks and the one located on Seventh Avenue (724-780 Seventh Ave) is protected as part of the Ladies Mile. The financial holdings of Frederick are not well known, but after his passing his eldest daughter married Augustus Juilliard, founder of the Juilliard School of Music. Helen's cousin Jennie Beatrice Cossitt gave lectures on Community Music at the Juilliard School of Music, but other family members' connections to the school are unknown. Some of the family property holdings were gifted to Helen and are seen as part of her will.



Helen Cossitt Juilliard was known for her philanthropic ventures, establishing two hospitals on the sea, which provided a refuge for low income families in New York and Wilmington, Delaware⁸. She also worked closely with the Lincoln Hospital and Home and St John's Guild, eventually establishing foundations of support under her fathers name in these two hospitals. When Helen Cossitt passed away, a New York Times article was released with all the donations she left in her will. She left the largest gift to her husband Augustus Juilliard, One Million Dollars in 1916 and then divided up 4 Million among charities she worked with during her life. ¼ of her estate was given to the Metropolitan Museum of art and the other to St John Guild⁹.

⁸ Kuhl, Ken. "Helen Cossitt Juilliard and the Floating Hospital." [granbydrummer.com/](https://doi.org/https://granbydrummer.com/2020/10/helen-cossitt-juilliard-and-the-floating-hospital/), October 31, 2020.

⁹ Newspapers, Historical. "Mrs. Juilliard Left Million to Husband." *New York Times*, June 24, 1916

Moisa Wroy
10/11/2022



The sea hospitals she established were dedicated to her namesake and as she had no children, she had 1 Million dollars gifted to her brother's son Frederick Henry Cossitt, the 3rd son of Frederick Henry Cossitt Jr, born 1884. It is said that Helen was placed in her fathers family mausoleum, but later moved to the Juilliard mausoleum with her husband, but there is no documentation to say when and if/how that happened. Augustus Juilliard died 3 years after Helen Cossitt Julliard, in 1919 and they bore no children, so upon his passing he donated the same amount to the charities his wife supported and then divided up at 15 Million dollar will among his family and the few surviving Cossitt family members whom he was in contact with.

Frederick Henry Cossitt the 3rd, son of Frederick Henry Cossitt Jr was the last known member of the Cossitt family to hold the family name. Born in 1884, Frederick grew up with his father, where he attended Princeton college. Frederick married Antonio Durgo in 1906 and was gifted 1 Million dollars by his aunt Helen Cossitt Julliard as a wedding gift and was adopted by Helen as her own. On his honeymoon, Frederick Cossitt the 3rd, having a fear of the ocean, chose to take the train to meet his bride who traveled by boat to their honeymoon and was killed in a train wreck in Wiltshire, England¹⁰. Fredericks wife was widowed and as they had no children to carry on the Cossitt name, he is the last of the Cossitt line to carry the name.

¹⁰ "On a Wedding Trip." *New York Times*, July 7, 1906

On Wedding Trip.
New York, July 2.—Frederick Henry Cossitt, who was killed in the wreck of the American express at Salisbury, England, was a nephew of Mrs. George Eggleston Dodge and of Mrs. A. D. Juillard, of this city. He married Miss Antona Dugro, daughter of Judge and Mrs. P. Henry Dugro, New York, on June 18, and the young couple were on their wedding trip. They had planned to spend the early summer in travel in Europe, and Judge and Mrs. Dugro were to sail for Europe next Tuesday to join them.

MRS. JULLIARD LEFT MILLION TO HUSBAND

Estate Valued at More Than
\$5,000,000 Bequeathed to
Charity and Relatives.

FRIENDS AMONG LEGATEES

Metropolitan Museum of Art and
St. John's Guild Each Get One-
fourth of the Residue.

Though, surprisingly, in the 1970's a man by the name of Thomas C. Cossitt, a 6th descendant of the Cossitts on the Rene family tree side, started The Cossitt Family Association. Today the association has 11,400 individuals and 3,985 marriages recorded as potential Cossitt family descendants from the 1700's to the present¹¹. The Cossitt Association has begun to take DNA samples from willing members to trace the family line back to Rene and Ruth Cossitt, the family founders, and has a DNA research page with over 28 potential family members to trace a Cossitt descendant back from.

That being said, Frederick H Cossitt's line remains the most intangible, as it is shown that his childrens heirs passed away before having children, so unless there is a undocumented birth or adultery, those taking care of the mausoleum may not be Cossitts, but descendants from Fredericks siblings or spouses family members, as two of the men buried in the mausoleum are spouses two of his daughters Elizabeth and May Cossitt. Materials on Thomas Cossitt can now be found in the Brockville Museum in Ontario, Canada, where his work was donated after his passing in 1982.

¹¹"DNA Research Project." 2020. COSSITT FAMILY ASSOCIATION.

Moisa Wroy
10/11/2022

Thomas Cossitt was one of the family reunion hosts in North Granby in 1977 and presented the family markers for their first generation ancestors Rene and Ruth Cossitt¹².

Today, the Cossitt Family association is still active and still trying to see how far the Cossitt line extends. One of the association heads, Richard Frey, did share their belief that the Cossitt family mausoleum was “endowed when the mausoleum was built, or by his daughter, Helen, who married Augustus Julliard and is in the Julliard mausoleum at Woodlawn who may have set up some way to pay for continued care and upkeep,” but they are unsure of this accuracy. The question of the Cossitt family wealth remains a mystery, as does information on the mausoleum, but when looking at the entire Cossitt family, it is quite rich in many avenues in the early 18th and 19th century.



¹² “Cossitt Reunion Time Arrives.” 1981. *The Hartford Courant* (1923-); Hartford, Conn., (AUG), B6a.

- Cossitt, Pearl S. 1879. *Cossitt family: a genealogical history of Rene Cossitt, a Frenchman who settled in Granby, Conn., 1717, and of his descendants. (to) 1879; and continued to 1925.* Private Press.
- "The Cossitt Library at 100." 1990. *The Hartford Courant (1923-); Hartford, Conn., (August), 1.*
<http://ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/cossitt-library-at-100/docview/1729768927/se-2?accountid=10226>.
- "OBITUARY: FREDERICK H. COSSITT ARCHBISHOP LEROY." 1887. *New - York Tribune (1866-1899); New York, N.Y., (September), 5.*
<http://ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/obituary/docview/573312134/se-2?accountid=10226>.
- "Cossitt Graveyard." <http://cossitt.org/>. January 1, 2009.
<https://doi.org/http://cossitt.org/family%20stories/family%20story%205.htm>.
- Kuhl, Ken. "Frederick H. Cossitt's gift to Granby." granbydrummer.com/. October 1, 2019.
<https://doi.org/https://granbydrummer.com/2019/10/frederick-h-cossitts-gift-to-granby/>.
- Kuhl, Ken. "Helen Cossitt Juilliard and the Floating Hospital." granbydrummer.com/. October 31, 2020.
<https://doi.org/https://granbydrummer.com/2020/10/helen-cossitt-juilliard-and-the-floating-hospital/>.
- "Cossitt Reunion Time Arrives." 1981. *The Hartford Courant (1923-); Hartford, Conn., (AUG), B6a.*
<https://www.proquest.com/docview/546465494/citation/AA1789875EDD4756PQ/1?accountid=10226>.
- "The Cossitt Library in Memphis." Cossit.Org. September 1, 2009.
<https://doi.org/http://cossitt.org/family%20stories/family%20story%2013.htm>.
- "Mrs. Juilliard Left Million to Husband." *New York Times*, June 24, 1916.
- "On Wedding Trip." *New York Times*, July 7, 1906.
- "Thomas Charles Cossitt." cossit.org. April 11, 2008.
<https://doi.org/http://cossitt.org/family%20stories/family%20story%202.htm>.

Moisa Wroy
10/11/2022

- Presa, Donald G. 2010. *SOHO-CAST IRON HISTORIC DISTRICT Designation Report*. NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission.
- "Frederick Henry Cossitt." Ancestry | Family Tree, Genealogy & Family History Records.
<https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/family-tree/person/tree/54529466/person/27330477447/facts>
- "Frederick Henry Cossitt (1811-1887) - Find a..." Find a Grave.
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/126524443/frederick-henry-cossitt>.
- "DNA Research Project," 2020. COSSITT FAMILY ASSOCIATION.
http://cossitt.org/DNA%20research/DNA_research.htm.
- "Frederick Cossitt Family Tree." n.d. Ancestry.
<https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/family-tree/person/tree/54529466/person/27330449572/story>.
- Kaminkow, Marion J., ed. 2012. *Genealogies in the Library of Congress: A Bibliography*. N.p.: Genealogical Pub.