

Myths to Live By: *Uncovering the Veiled Past of Actress/Artist Minnie Ashley* by Roy Collins
William A. Chanler, Editor

On or about June 16th, 1845, 17-year-old Bridget Lyons set sail by ferry from County Cork, Ireland to Liverpool, England. From Liverpool she gained passage aboard the packet ship *Concordia*, bound for Boston, Massachusetts in the United States.

The year 1845 marked the beginning of the ill-fated Potato Famine in Ireland, a dark period that would last six years. It brought mass starvation, poverty, and a multitude of deaths across the island. During the famine period, it was typical for Irish families to send their able-bodied children to seek opportunity in Europe and across the Atlantic to North America.

The exact location of the residence where Bridget had resided in County Cork remains uncertain. We know only that later in life Bridget Lyons (then Bridget Tully) would marry John Campbell in Fall River, Massachusetts in 1861. On that marriage record her father was listed as William Lyon and her mother as Catherine (Curly) Lyon. The letter “S” at the end of the surname may have been dropped when transcribed by the town clerk as it was the only time the surname was spelled without the “S.”

Most emigres traveled to the United States and Canada on the well-established Mc Corkell Line which offered sea-worthy sailing ships equipped to haul both passengers and freight. Depending upon the fare paid for passage, emigres had the choice of either a small cabin or state room, comparable in size to a small hotel room. Passengers lodging in these private spaces were given well-prepared meals at regular intervals. The alternative to the small but comfortable berths, was placement in “steerage” located between the top deck and lower hold area.



Photo circa 1898 by Benjamin Falk



The Packet Ship “Concordia” Painting on Glass. Artist Unknown

Photo courtesy: Poole Museum Service UK

Steerage was designated for passengers who could not afford the expense of comfort and privacy. The large open layout in steerage was without walls. Passengers ate, sleep and socialized together in a dark, cramped space. The English government provided rationed low-grade food products that had to be cooked by the passengers in make-shift fireplaces.



19th Century illustration of Irish immigrants departing Liverpool

The transatlantic sea voyage from Liverpool to Massachusetts took about six weeks and arrived at near the end of August. During the voyage, passengers in steerage would rarely have the chance to see light from the ship's main deck or breathe the fresh air. Passenger abuse occurred frequently and at varying degrees between one another and by the ship's crew.

How well young Bridget withstood the hardships of her transatlantic voyage is unknown. What is known is that passengers who endured lengthy sea travel, particularly those in steerage, often developed severe communicable diseases on board that frequently led to death. Even the emigres that appeared healthy would often develop symptoms after leaving the ship. This resulted in the spread of the disease into the communities where they were destined to live.

Bridget Lyons	
Massachusetts, Boston Passenger Lists, 1820-1891	
Name:	Bridget Lyons
Event Type:	Immigration
Event Date:	1845
Event Place:	Boston, Suffolk, Massachusetts, United States
Gender:	Female
Age:	17
Nationality:	Ireland
Birth Year (Estimated):	1828
Birth Country:	Ireland
Page:	815

For the poor Irish emigres, this disease problem was compounded by the Catholic faith to which the vast majority adhered. Protests and anti-Irish Catholic sentiment by the Protestant citizens of Boston was vicious, forcing Irish immigrants to settle their families together into decrepit tenements and run-down boarding houses in Boston's East End, close to the shipyards.

There were no listings for residents with the Lyons surname in the 1845 Boston Street Directory. Single women were not listed in the city directories unless they were widowed or divorced. The names and number of children were not listed either. Yet five years later, in the 1850 US Census for Boston, MA there were over two dozen residents listed with the Lyons surname.

By 1850, Boston was known as the financial center and transportation hub of America. This prosperity was due to the American Industrial Revolution with its innovation in railroad and steamboat technology and the manufacturing of textiles for world-wide trade. The rapid growth of the Boston economy offered plenty of opportunity for any hard-working laborers willing to work long hours. This was a welcome relief for poor Irish immigrants to earn decent wages that enabled them to eventually fulfill the dreams that had in their

motherland. It is not certain if Bridget Lyons had planned to become a permanent resident of Boston or if she planned to travel further. In the 1850 U.S. Census for Boston, MA, listings of residents with the Lyons surname were recorded but Bridget Lyons did not appear among them.

It would seem apparent that Bridget's stay in Boston was temporary, but for how long? In that same 1850 census year, Bridget Lyons' name would be recorded as a resident in the city of Fall River MA, some 45 miles south of Boston. That five-year period from the time of her arrival in Boston until her Fall River listing revealed her age to be 22. Her place of birth was listed as Ireland (not shown in the cut out below).

There is still the unanswered question as to where and with whom was Bridget residing during the five years of absentia. For unknown reasons, Bridget decided to leave the congested, vibrant city of Boston for the suburban layout of the small town of Fall River. Yet in many ways Fall River mirrored the economic prosperity enjoyed by Boston and other larger American cities. Since the late 1700's Fall River had been a key player in the building of textile mills for the manufacturing of print cloth and clothing.

Just as important was its innovation in steam technology for steamboat and train transportation for both passengers and freight. Since the Great Fire of 1843, Fall River had been steadily rebuilding the Market Square section which required construction laborers to help rebuild nearly the 200 buildings that had been destroyed. Immigrant laborers were the at the forefront to meet the opportunity. Fall River would become a city in 1854.

Bridget probably took the railroad from the Boston Terminal via one of its four southern routes into Fall River with date of arrival unknown. The 1850 listing in the U.S. Census reported that she was boarding on Stanley Street, not far from the Alm's House situated on 175 acres of farmland. It is close to where BMC Durfee High School is located today in the northeast highlands of Fall River.

Seven boarders had also been listed as residing with Bridget; Fidelia Durfee (age 42) with her three children (all born in from Rhode Island). In addition, there was a single mother, Sarah Leslie (age 27) born in Scotland, and Sarah's daughter (Eliza, age 8), born in New York.

United States Census, 1850

16			Clarence	1	M
17		348	Julia Murphy	20	F
18			Chas Sampson	53	M
19	283	349	Jacob H.	25	M
20			Fidelia Durfee	42	F
21			George A.	18	M
22			Bradford	15	M
23			Peche B.	8	F
24			William Kirby	22	M
25			Sarah Leslie	27	F
26			Bridget Lyons	22	F
27	284	352	Eliza T. Leslie	8	F
28			Hale Remington	36	M



Alms House 'Poor House Farm' was acquired by the City of Fall River in 1835
Bridget Lyons lived down the street. Photo: Public Domain

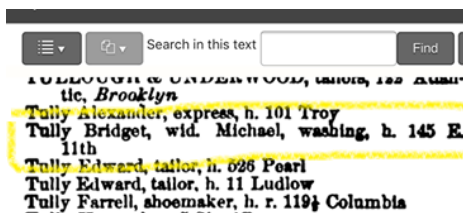
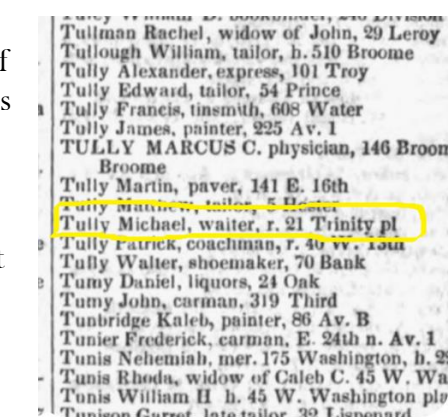
In the city of Fall River there were no other residents beside Bridget with the Lyons surname. Yet, in the town of Berkeley, just north of Fall River, there was a boarder named David Lyons (age 23), born in Ireland. In the town of Somerset, just across the Taunton River, there lived a 22-year-old resident named Marty Lyons, also from Ireland. Did Bridget know any of these Irish compatriots?

Maybe they met in their travels, or it was it a temporary arrangement until something else became available? Employment had been offered in urban areas in the south of Fall River and along the Taunton River downtown, but it appears that Bridget did not stay in the area long enough to get established. The local street directory for the following years no longer listed her or the Leslie family as Fall River residents.

Eight years later, Bridget's name was discovered in the New York Street Directory. Yet instead of her "Lyons" surname, Bridget's last name was changed to "Tully", followed by the words "wid." "Michael", "washing" signifying that Bridget was the widow of Michael Tully and was self-employed as a launderer. Her address was on East 11th Street. This find came by surprise when I learned from an older relative that Bridget was once married to a man named Michael Tully, and that he died young in New York. If there was a listing for Michael Tully residing in New York for the years Bridget went missing from Fall River, it could be reasoned that there might a record for them both living in that city.

Michael Tully was easy to locate as there were only a few males with the Tully surname in New York. His name was listed in the local street directories 1848 through 1857. His Trinity Place address had been the same through the years but in the 1858 street directory there was no listing for Michael Tully. On the same page of the street guide, just a few lines up, the name Bridget Tully appeared for the first time as the widow of Michael. A record of his death verified that he died in 1857. The family gossip turned out to be correct, He died at age 39.

As previously stated, Bridget would not have been listed in a city street directory if she were single. The term "widow" in her listing revealed that she either was married, or that she simply lied.



familysearch.org

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Michael Tully
New York, New York City Municipal
Deaths, 1795-1949

Name:	Michael Tully
Event Type:	Death
Event Date:	26 Feb 1857
Event Place:	Manhattan, New York, New York, United States
Address:	20 Trinity Place
Gender:	Male
Age:	39
Marital Status:	Unknown
Occupation:	Porter
Birth Year (Estimated):	1818
Birthplace:	Ireland
Cemetery:	Calvary

Images Available

As children were not recorded in annual street directories, there would be no way of knowing if a child was living with her mother. Michael's marital status was listed as "unknown".

It is important to understand the near impossibility of tracking the moves of a single woman without having access to public records that could pinpoint where they resided, where they worked, if they were married or had children. The 10-year US census would have been the most reliable for that undertaking. City listings came out annually but recorded (usually) the male heads of household only. Yet birth, marriage, and even death records were not filed properly and frequently lacked in detail. False names and ages were regularly given and omissions for birthplace and employment were par for the course. The major reason for these problems was due to the discrimination of immigrants and their fear of deportation.

Michl Tully New York Passenger Lists, 1820-1891	
Name:	Michl Tully
Event Type:	Immigration
Event Date:	1845
Event Place:	New York City, New York, United States
Gender:	Male
Age:	27
Birth Year (Estimated):	1818
Ship Name:	Tarotinta

In the eight-year period, from the time Bridget left Fall River to the time she met up with Michael Tully in New York, Bridget would give birth to Eliza Tully (b.1854) and three years later witness Michael's death. No marriage document or record of birth for their daughter has been located.

Michael Tully was born in Ireland in 1818 and had emigrated from Liverpool in 1845. It was the same year as Bridget's departure, but both would travel on different ships to different states. Michael landed in New York, and Bridget in Massachusetts. Their ships arrived approximately two months apart. Did Bridget and Michael know each other while living in Ireland or did they meet in the U.S.?

Michael had been living at Trinity Place in lower New York from the time he arrived at port in Manhattan until his death in 1857. According to the NYC Street Directory of 1848, Michael was employed as a waiter. At the time of his death his occupation was listed as a "porter". Lower Manhattan had been known as New York City's major shipping port on the Hudson River and the crews of the luxury liners were always in need of cooks, waiters, and porters as well as a mechanics, and general help. One such luxury steamboat line docked on the Hudson was owned by the Bay State Steamboat Company called the Fall River Line.*



Fall River Line, Pier 14 New York City circa 1900:

Photo: Public Domain

**Captain Thomas C. Collins had worked for the Fall River Line for twenty-five years, from the mid-1850's to the early 1880's and frequently operated the luxury steamboats from Fall River to New York. The Fall River Line steamboats docked at pier 14 on the Hudson River in New York City. Captain Collins was considered a competent and faithful captain, and at varying intervals operated the steamers Providence, Puritan, Bristol, Priscilla, and Newport. Had Bridget (Lyons/Tully) and daughter Eliza been passengers upon one of the Fall River to New York steamers between 1858 and 1880, it likely would have been commanded by Captain Collins. Bridget's daughter Eliza Tully would later marry Captain Collins' son, George William Collins.*

The steamboats left daily from Fall River with passengers from Boston that arrived by train at the Fall River Wharf. The Boston rail passengers, along with the Fall River passengers, then boarded a steamer that would journey through Narragansett Bay and Long Island to the Hudson River dock. The whole journey would begin in the late afternoon with dinner served later while live entertainment performed. Passengers would then sleep through the night and be awakened by a porter once the steamship had reached its New York destination.

The Fall River wharf was located off Water Street, just a short walk from City Hall. Was the Fall River Line where Bridget Lyons met Michael Tully, the Irish porter who had been working for that steamship line?

Michael's daughter, Eliza Tully was three years old when Michael died in 1857. Eliza's mother, Bridget Lyons (then Tully) was twenty-nine years old.

John Campbell
Massachusetts Marriages, 1841-1915

Name:	John Campbell
Event Type:	Marriage
Event Date:	27 Mar 1861 • Edit
Event Place:	Fall River, Bristol, Massachusetts, United States • Edit
Gender:	Male
Age:	40
Birth Year (Estimated):	1821
Father's Name:	John
Mother's Name:	Margaret Fogg
Spouse's Name:	Bridget L. Lyon Tully
Spouse's Gender:	Female
Spouse's Age:	31
Spouse's Birth Year (Estimated):	1830
Spouse's Father's Name:	William Lyon
Spouse's Mother's Name:	Catherine C...Ly Lyon

The original may contain more information than was indexed.

Record Collection:

It is unknown how much longer Bridget (Lyons) Tully would stay in New York with her daughter before resurfacing in Fall River. Finding Bridget this time would not be as difficult as had been previously since the “widow” prefix to the Tully surname made searching documents straight forward. The document found was a marriage record dated for year 1861. Widow Bridget (Lyons) Tully had now become Bridget Campbell who was living with her husband, John Campbell on Columbia Street, just below Fall River’s Irish quarter known as Corky Row.

Since Bridget’s ten-year absence (1850-1860), a small Irish community known as Corky Row was established in Fall River.



This ethnic enclave developed after an unprecedented number of Irish immigrants, mainly from County Cork, came to seek opportunity as mill workers and builders. Anti-Irish sentiment, compounded by a housing shortage, forced families ineligible for mill housing to seek inexpensive multiple-family tenements (often called row houses) on the side streets east of South Main near the Market Square center. Bridget and John Campbell would live on the outskirts of this supportive ethnic community until 1889, the year John died.

Eliza Tully would have been seven-years-old when her mother married John Campbell, a liquor dealer who owned “package stores” on Columbia and John Streets. Up until 1862, Columbia Street had been considered Fall River’s southern border with the northern section of Tiverton, Rhode Island. The location had long been in dispute between both states since the colonial period. In 1862, the dispute went to the US Supreme Court and it was decreed that the boundary marker be extended deeper into Rhode Island, thus allowing the City of Fall River to acquire nine square miles of valuable territory as well as the property upon it. This included the Town Farm, Town House, Engine House with Engine and six school buildings.

The new boundary line was set back from Columbia Street to Globe Street and the new community became known as Globe Village, an area already important for the opportunities offered in the thread and cotton mills that had recently been built near Cook’s Pond. Along with the acquisition of land came the sorely needed impetus for the City of Fall River to begin renovations of its dirt roads with sidewalks and street cleaning, the building of new schools, taller business buildings, churches, parks, banks, hotels, and retail shops.

The Fall River renaissance would continue through the Civil War years (1861-1865) with its manufacturing machine focused on making shoes and uniforms for soldiers. The loss of population due to the war effort was minimal within the city proper. Of close to 1,800 enlisted Fall River soldiers and sailors nearly one-third were of Irish descent. The total number of those who fell during the war was 163. Even with all the new construction and renovation of infrastructure going on during the war period, Fall River would suffer only a slight financial dent during the nation-wide depression near the tail end of the decade. After the war, most mill factories were able to recoup losses due to a significant increase in population and the ability to hire more workers.



Fall River mill workers, hand-colored photo circa 1860

Photo Courtesy Keeley Library

As stated earlier, Eliza Tully was seven when her mother married John Campbell in 1861, at a time when Fall River began to overhaul its school system. Previously, the education system was predominately privatized. Children were taught in small rooms of homes, detached barns, and in churches. Not all teachers were qualified to teach the remedial courses and consequently subjects in areas where teachers excelled tended to dominate. In essence, more focus was placed on subjects such as dancing, music, singing, sewing, navigation, geometry, drawing, etc. Since education was paid for by the students’ family, this made it difficult for all students to be educated.

This system was later divided equally between private and public sectors and numbered 28 school “institutions”. In 1863, the Board of Adlmen ordered the old school system abolished and handed over its duties to the Public Property Committee of the city. The new committee was dedicated to consolidating old school buildings and building new ones where needed. Their duties later evolved into the regulation of standard courses for the public schools, and for setting a method for qualifying teachers.

In the end, the final count for public schools in Fall River numbered to twenty. This number included ten primary (elementary) schools, four grammar schools, five intermediate schools and one high school.



Fall River High School mid-19th Century
Photo: Public Domain

Students were mandated to learn how to read and write before entering the work force. A department to investigate truant students was formed to make certain students went to school. The children found violating the attendance mandate were detained and placed in the poor house (Alm’s House) for some time to discourage illiteracy. The cost of books and school supplies by parents would be discontinued in the early 1870’s when increased taxation enabled the city to pay for books and supplies.

In the Campbell family’s neighborhood (Ward 2) there was a primary and an intermediate school near their residence on Columbia Street. The grammar school closest to their residence was the Annawan School, off Pearl Street. In 1868, the N.B. Borden School opened on the west side of South Main Street (Ward 1), just south of Columbia Street. The N.B Borden School, later known as the Morgan Street School, included both grammar and intermediate classes*



Morgan Street. School. Photo: Public Domain

**Lizzie Borden (1860-1927) who was famous as the prime suspect in the 1892 axe murders of her father and stepmother (later acquitted), lived one street north of Columbia Street, at 12 Ferry Street from years 1861 through 1872. During those same years Eliza Tully/Campbell had lived with her family on Columbia Street until 1870. Lizzie Borden was six years younger than Eliza, and one year older than Eliza’s sister Margaret. In 1868, Lizzie Borden finished with her primary school studies and began grammar school at the Morgan Street School. The Morgan Street School was located on the west side of South Main Street, and a few streets south in Ward 1. After 1872, Lizzie Borden moved to Second Street just north of the Morgan Street School. Lizzie continued her studies at The Morgan Street School and at 14 went directly to the High School that was located off North Main Street between Locust and June Streets.*

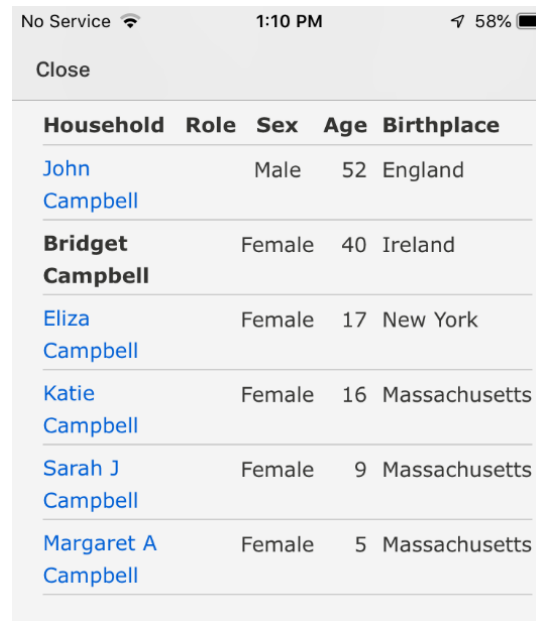
There was only one high school in Fall River, appropriately named The High School, located on the north side of Main Street off June and Locust Streets. At less than a half mile, the high school was within walking distance from the Campbell residence.

Eliza would have been too young to attend school while living in New York. Her father died when she was three, and social services, although limited, was available to help families in need. There was the Society for the Relief of Poor Widows and Small Children that provided food, firewood, clothing, shoes, and meal tickets. The Humane Society offered much of the same, and the State of New York offered municipal funds. The Bellevue Institution was a large complex of buildings on 26 acres of land that offered a wide variety of services to the poor and seriously ill. Beside basic services, the institution included a school, living quarters, trade workshops, a penitentiary, greenhouse, and morgue.

Was school even an option for young Eliza given her age and level of grieving she and her mother recently witnessed? Perhaps the services provided by Bellevue would have been the most logical route for both Bridget and Eliza to take. What alternatives were left given the dire situation they were in? Maybe a network of close friends to help with food and shelter? After her move to East 11th Street, Bridget became a “washer”, a term used mainly for women who did local laundry work at home. 1858 was the last year Widow Bridget Tully was listed as a resident in the New York Street Directory. There would be a three-year lapse of time before they were discovered living in Fall River again. Why did Bridget choose to return to Fall River?

The circumstances for both Bridget and Eliza changed dramatically when Bridget married John Campbell in March of 1861. Yet good fortune began for John as well. John had been married previously to Catherine Moor (b. 1833 England) and they had a child Catherine (Katie), born on Feb. 1, 1854 in Fall River, a year after they married. In 1860 Catherine Moor Campbell died of illness at age 25 leaving John to raise his daughter Katie alone.

Katy Campbell was seven when her father married his second wife Bridget Tully. Bridget’s daughter Eliza (Tully) was the same age as Katie. On January 18, 1861, John Campbell and Bridget had a daughter together, Sarah Jane. Two months later, on March 27, John and Bridget married. Three years after the marriage a second daughter, Margaret (Maggy) was born (October 12, 1864.)



The image is a screenshot of a mobile application interface. At the top, it shows 'No Service', a signal strength icon, the time '1:10 PM', and a battery level of '58%'. Below this is a 'Close' button. The main content is a table with the following columns: 'Household', 'Role', 'Sex', 'Age', and 'Birthplace'. The table lists six individuals:

Household	Role	Sex	Age	Birthplace
John Campbell		Male	52	England
Bridget Campbell		Female	40	Ireland
Eliza Campbell		Female	17	New York
Katie Campbell		Female	16	Massachusetts
Sarah J Campbell		Female	9	Massachusetts
Margaret A Campbell		Female	5	Massachusetts

Photo circa 1898 by Benjamin Falk

With one older and one younger sister, and one sister her own age, Eliza (Tully) Campbell* had plenty of time to comfortably blend in with her extended family.

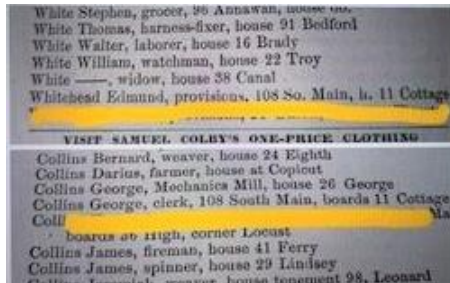
**The 1870 U.S. Census index list for Fall River shows that Eliza’s surname was changed from Tully to Campbell.*

The Campbells were not the only Fall River families that experienced personal loss. Due to poverty, early childhood death from inadequate medical care, unsanitary living conditions, the horrors of immigration and the ravages of the recent war led many of the bereaved to seek comfort in alcohol, and extra-marital affairs. Sadly, there was enough hardship for everyone to share.

The face of Fall River had undergone a modern makeover since Eliza's childhood. The following decade would see Fall River evolve into a thriving metropolis. For the adult Eliza, the year 1870 would mark the beginning of a series of personal events that would test the core of her inner strength. By coincidence, those trials would parallel the hardships undertaken by her mother Bridget, that also began at age 17.

Around the corner from Columbia Street at 108 South Main Street was Whitehead's Market, a provisional market that specialized in freshly cut meats.

Whitehead's Market was owned by Edmund Whitehead who lived on 11 Cottage Street with his wife Sylvia (Borden) and 1-year old child Andrew.



Whitehead's Market South Main Street, Fall River, MA. Photo: Public Domain

A young butcher named George W. Collins (b. 1853) resided with the Whitehead family on Cottage Street and worked as a clerk at Whitehead's Market.

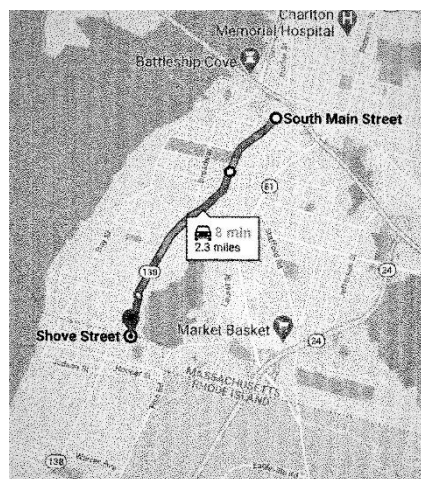
George's parents were Captain Thomas and Mary (Baker) Collins who lived in Tiverton, Rhode Island. Captain Thomas Collins worked for the Old Colony and Fall River Steamship line. The young butcher might have been friends with Eliza from their high school days or developed a relationship while working at the market.

Before long, George Collins and Eliza would fall in love and in 1872 got married. They moved to their own apartment, conveniently located at 91 South Main Street, across from Whitehead's Market. A few months after their marriage, Eliza gave birth to John (Edward) Collins.

MARRIAGES Registered in the Town of Scituate R. I.					for the Year ending December 31st, 1873.				
DATE OF MARRIAGE	FULL NAMES OF GROOM AND BRIDE	RESIDENCE OF EACH AT TIME OF MARRIAGE	AGE OF EACH	OCCUPATION OF EACH	DATE OF BIRTH	NAME OF OFFICIAL RECORD OF MARRIAGE BY	NAME OF OFFICIAL RECORD OF MARRIAGE BY	NAME OF OFFICIAL RECORD OF MARRIAGE BY	NAME OF OFFICIAL RECORD OF MARRIAGE BY
May 18	Louis & Anne Mary A. Walker	Fall River Mass 30	20	Aggrav.	William & Ellen Davis	3	Rev S. G. Warr	Rev S. G. Warr	Rev S. G. Warr
June 9	David H. Shorsware Annex Westgate	Scituate	32	Sailor	John & Mary A. Walker	1	Rev S. G. Warr	Rev S. G. Warr	Rev S. G. Warr
June 17	George Arthur Probr Eliza Brown	Randolph Mass 21	21	Doct. Mar.	Essex & Mary Sherman	2	Rev S. G. Warr	Rev S. G. Warr	Rev S. G. Warr
June 20	William H. Cook Sarah P. Bailey	Scituate Mass 19	19	Carriage	William H. & Mary Westgate	1	Rev S. G. Warr	Rev S. G. Warr	Rev S. G. Warr
June 20	Robert L. Peckham Eliza S. Hunt	Scituate Mass 23	23	Farmer	Essex & Mary Sherman	2	Rev S. G. Warr	Rev S. G. Warr	Rev S. G. Warr
July 11	Esther A. Kovaly Samuel A. Chabre	Fall River Mass 21	21	Farmer	John & Mary A. Walker	1	Rev S. G. Warr	Rev S. G. Warr	Rev S. G. Warr
July 29	George William Collins Eliza S. Bailey	Scituate	21	Black	William H. & Mary Westgate	1	Rev S. G. Warr	Rev S. G. Warr	Rev S. G. Warr

At the time of John Edward's birth, Fall River would number close to 300 residents of Irish descent. Of that number less than a dozen were families with the Lyons' surname. Were any in that small group related to Bridget and Eliza? There was John Lyons and his son (both stone cutters) living at 22 Columbia Street, and the family of Timothy and Mary (Harrington) Lyons around the corner on Annawan Street, and Patrick Lyons, the laborer who was boarding with his family on Morgan Street.

John E. Collins	
Massachusetts Births, 1841-1915	
Name:	John E. Collins
Event Type:	Birth
Event Date:	08 Sep 1872
Event Place:	Fall River, Massachusetts
Gender:	M
Father's Name:	George W Collins
Mother's Name:	Eliza F



The Collins family lived only a few streets over from Eliza's family. Baby John Edward's grandparents lived on Rhode Island border where South Main Street branched off at Shove Street on the RI border (once part of Fall River) two miles away.

Prior to the construction of the Academy Building* across from where the young Collins Family resided, both sides of South Main Street were lined with small wooden buildings, housing residents and retail shops, that extended from Market Square south to Morgan Street. Street widening and sidewalks were under construction. The main street was still a rutted dirt road but kept clean by frequent watering to minimize the waste left by horse-drawn carriages.

*The Academy Building was built in 1875, one year after demolishing the entire block on the east side of South Main Street, from street numbers 68-114. The four-storied structure was designed by Hartwell & Swasey and featured polychrome brick and carved stone details. It was constructed by Hull Brothers of Providence for the Borden Family. The Academy of Music was located within the block and eventually became prominent as a local cultural center that hosted orchestral and theatrical events as well as drama, stage acts and a variety of local events such as political rallies. In addition to the Academy of Music, the Academy Building included commercial shops located at street level and office space on the upper levels. Eliza and her Collins family lived across the street and was not affected by the renovations.

It was a closely-knit little community where most residents lived close to their workplaces and where their basic needs were met.

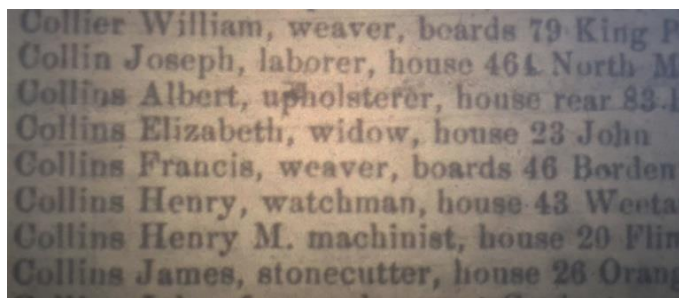
After 1874, one strand of this closely-knit community would begin to unravel due to the sudden death of Eliza's husband, George W. Collins. The logistics of how any single mother perseveres after the loss of a loved one requires incredible inner strength, emotional and financial support to maintain a semblance of normal functioning. For Widow Eliza Collins, her parents and in-laws were there for her and John Edward's support.

Within a few months after her husband's death, Eliza gave birth to a second child, George Thomas Collins, thus doubling the need for assistance. This would mean having to eventually give up her apartment and move with both children to live with her parents in their cramped flat on Columbia Street.

One can imagine the problems that occur in the small rooms of a household shared between a



South Main Street circa 1870. Photo: Public Domain



mother and her adult daughter. Add to that two pre-teens, a toddler, newborn baby and with one male adult as the bread winner. From the culmination of stress, cramped living space, family bickering, crying babies, and limited income Eliza moved with her two sons to a boarding house at 23 John Street near her stepfather's liquor store.

Eliza would then take the drastic step of leaving her oldest son John Edward in the custody of her parents and her two half-sisters Sarah and Margaret. For the next two years, Eliza managed to survive with her youngest son George Thomas at the 23 John Street address.

Household	Role	Sex	Age	Birthplace
John Campbell	Self	Male	61	England
Bridget Campbell	Wife	Female	50	Ireland
Sarah Jane Campbell	Daughter	Female	19	Massachusetts United States
Maggie Campbell	Daughter	Female	15	Massachusetts United States
John Edward Collins	Grandson	Male	7	Massachusetts United States

US Census 1880 Fall River, MA

Sometime after 1878, for reasons unknown, Eliza left her John Street rooming house and took her youngest son, George Thomas to live with her Collins in-laws in Tiverton, Rhode Island. She gave them full custodial rights. For a little more than a year after taking leave of her parental responsibilities, Widow Eliza Collins was recorded as having an “illegitimate” birth in the town of Dartmouth on Fall River’s eastern border. Her child, a daughter, was named Minnie W. Collins (b. May 7, 1880). Her mother’s birthplace was listed as New York. In as much as the birth record was incomplete, without a residence address, father’s name, or mother’s occupation, there would be little evidence left to determine the validity of the birth record.

May 7, 1880	Eliza Deane Reed	F	Dartmouth	Edward H. Adams & (Horse)	Dartmouth	Carpenter	Dartmouth	Concord
May 7, 1880	Letia Deane's Braham	F	Dartmouth	Thomas J. Mary (Gut)	Dartmouth	Farmer	Guernsey Island	Guernsey Island
May 7, 1880	Minnie W. Collins	Illegitimate	Dartmouth	Eliza Collins	Dartmouth			New York
May 7, 1880	Harshen	F	Dartmouth	Corinne & Edwin (Horse)	Dartmouth	Farmer	Wetland	Wetland
May 7, 1880	Elizabeth Monley Allen	F	Dartmouth	Edmund J. Allen (Dread)	Dartmouth	Farmer	Dartmouth	Wetland
June 6, 1880	Arthur's Francis Ryder	F	New Bedford	William H. Ryder (Alphon)	Dartmouth	Horse Cutter	Dartmouth	New Bedford
June 6, 1880	Thomas H. Linn	F	Dartmouth	Joseph & Mary Thomas	Dartmouth	Labourer	Agree	Agree

The 1880 U.S. Census for the Town of Dartmouth did not record a female head of household with a name and information that could identify Eliza Collins as a resident.

A hospital did not exist in Dartmouth until the 1920's. A visiting doctor or local midwife may have assisted with Eliza's labor. Why did she choose the inconvenience of Dartmouth? Birth registration laws had been in effect since 1849 in Massachusetts. Whoever the attendant was when Minnie was born, was required to register the birth information at the Town Hall.

Eliza had a married friend, a butcher named George Ashley (b.1845) was living in Dartmouth when Minnie was born. A few years later, Eliza and Minnie would move to Boston with George Ashley and take his surname. It is uncertain how or where they met. Owing to the fact that Eliza's deceased husband was a butcher, who worked for butcher Edmund Whitehead in Fall River, it seems plausible that all three butchers had done business together in the past. Prior to his death, Eliza had lived with her husband for two years in the apartment across the street from Whitehead's Market and remained at the same address for a few years after her husband's death as a single parent.



Pictured above is butcher Charles S. Ashley, cousin to George W. Ashley (later to become Mayor of New Bedford, Massachusetts.) Photo: Public Domain

		Alexander	W M 2	Son	1				Hears	Hears
		George	W M 1	Son	1				Hears	Hears
		Andrew	W M 17	brother	1				Geland	Peland
178	193	Ashley George	W M 25		1			Farmer Laborer ✓	Vermont	Hears
		Ashten	W F 34	Wife	1			Butcher ✓	Hears	Hears
179	100	Lillian Gilbert & H.	W F 62		1			Baking House ✓	Hears	Hears
					1			Gas Co ✓	Hears	Hears

"Minnie Ashley was born in Fall River, Massachusetts, in 1875. Her family name was Whitehead. When she was very young her father and mother separated, her mother going to Boston and taking Minnie with her. The Mother afterward was married to a man by the name of Ashley, and it was as Minnie Ashley that dainty actress was always known during her childhood in Boston."

If George Ashley was not Minnie's father, as she herself had attested in the Strang interview, and if George Collins had been deceased six years prior to her birth, then both butchers, named "George" can be discounted from the paternal side of Minnie's pedigree. What about the Whitehead surname and why was there no record of a marriage to him? Eliza's Collins was clearly written on Minnie's birth record and so was her place of birth, New York.

As there were over a dozen Whitehead families living in Fall River in 1880, the task of finding Minnie's biological father would entail additional work. The name "Edmund" was first that came to mind since he had been close with the Collins family from the time when George was his employee at the Whitehead Market. This theory soon broke apart when it was discovered that Edmund was one of seven brothers (and four sisters) that emigrated from Lancashire, England in successive waves over a period from 1840 through 1855.

The Whitehead emigration to Fall River began in the late 1840's, when the two sons of John and Martha (Berry) Whitehead would leave Lancashire, England. Philip (1804-1876) was the younger of the two sons and was accompanied by his wife Martha (b. 1806) and their only daughter Anne. His older brother John. B (1802-1870) and John's adult son, John S (1829-1911) travelled with them. By 1855, after two subsequent voyages,

John Whitehead's wife, Sarah Drinkwater (1804-1882), and their three adult children would arrive in Fall River. By 1880 the third generation of this Whitehead pedigree would near adulthood.

The Fall River Street Directory for year 1880 listed the names of 12 male Whitehead residents. Of that number all, except one, were of the same Whitehead family pedigree. However, Samuel Joseph Whitehead (1860-1919) a weaver, descended from a different Whitehead family line that arrived in Fall River after 1865 from England to either Canada (or Portsmouth, New Hampshire), then south into the United States. Their journey took over five years, maybe longer, as their first U.S. census record for Fall River appeared in 1870.

Samuel Joseph Whitehead was born in Exeter, New Hampshire in 1860 and his sister, Sarah was born in Rhode Island, two years later. Their parents were Joshua Whitehead (b.1834) and Margaret Holland (b.1836). Margaret travelled with her mother, Sarah Holland (b. 1809) and Mary Holland (b. 1853) who was Margaret's child from a previous relationship. Is it possible that Margaret's husband Joshua was somehow related to the established Whitehead family in Fall River before them?

WHITEHEAD CHARLES, hostler, boards 42 Borden mills block
WHITEHEAD EDMUND, provisions, 102 South Main, h. 64 Middle (see page 531)
 Whitehead Edmund, 2d, clerk, 102 South Main, boards 22 Union [Hotel
 Whitehead Edward, stable, 129 Second, bds. Narragansett
 Whitehead Edmund J. clerk, 398 South Main, boards at Tiverton, R. I.
 Whitehead Frederick C. clerk, 127 South Main, b. 50 Bank
 Whitehead Hilton, weaver, house 106 Division
 Whitehead James, butcher, 39 North Main, house 160 do.
 Whitehead John, chief clerk, Post-office, house 50 Bank
 Whitehead Philip Mrs. house 182 Second
 Whitehead Richard, house East John, near Pleasant
 Whitehead Robert, fruit, 111 South Main, house 22 Union
 Whitehead Robert, jr. laborer, boards 22 Union
 Whitehead Samuel, weaver, h. 27 Narragansett mills block
 Whitehead Samuel, weaver, house 24 Buffinton
 Whitehead Sarah, widow, house 13 Cambridge

Fall River Street Directory 1880

**Charles E. Whitehead left his family in Tiverton when he was 17, to marry Agnes Sutherland in June of 1879.*

Charles grew up on Shove Street in Tiverton, Rhode Island, which was still part of Fall River prior to its border being changed in 1862. Eliza's in-laws, Captain Thomas and wife Mary Collins also lived on Shove Street with Eliza's son, George Thomas. On occasion Eliza would visit her son at their residence. Eliza probably knew Charles through his sister Hannah, who was one year younger than her. The slim chance of having an affair with Eliza three months after marrying Agnes would appear too great a risk and he should also be eliminated from the list.

Eliza Ashley's birth year was 1854. Since all the Whitehead males from the Fall River listing who were born before 1836 would be nearly 20 years older than Eliza, they could be eliminated from the list as being Minnie's father. The males born after 1860 (the offspring of the older Whiteheads) would be younger than 17 when Eliza first conceived Minnie, and therefore too young to fit the profile as Eliza's mate* From this process of elimination, five Whitehead males remain on the list. Of those five, four were married with children and could not risk losing their families and breaking ties with their Whitehead siblings. Edmund would have taken the greatest loss, since his Whitehead Market business would also be put into jeopardy.

Likewise, his brothers James, Richard and Robert would fall into the same "high-risk" category for the additional responsibility of taking care of a single mother and three children. This would leave Samuel Joseph Whitehead as being the most suitable mate for Eliza and would fit the profile as Minnie's father. Samuel was six years younger than Eliza and was unmarried. Yet, within a year after Minnie's birth, Samuel would marry Annie Holland and they would have three children. Modern DNA testing might hold the best method for determining paternity and social media platforms today offer genealogy groups that can aid in family tree search efforts. More accurate than my "theories."

Shortly after Eliza and Minnie moved to Boston, the city of Fall River continued to grow exponentially. Its streets were fitted with steel rails for the regular movement of street cars across the city and railroad depots evenly spaced throughout Fall River. Horse carriages began to disappear while telephone and electric service became widespread.

The number of schools, parks and churches began to spread to the farthest reaches of the city. Minnie "Ashley" however, would grow up in the city of Boston without her brothers and sisters. She would find her calling in the theater arts and dancing under bright lights, surrounded by and audience of unfamiliar faces. The burning "lime lights" had nearly blinded her. As an adult she would move to New York, where both her mother and grandmother once struggled to survive. There, she would marry into wealth, have two children and struggle to overcome her past by finding solace in art, literature and in organizing humanitarian causes.



Bridget (Tully) Campbell became a widow for the second time in 1889, when her husband John Campbell died. Bridget's name was listed on John's death record as his wife, and his burial place was given as Saint John's Cemetery in Fall River. Bridget later moved from Columbia Street to live with her daughter, Sarah and her husband, Anthony Lima, in Somerset, Massachusetts. In the 1910 U.S. Census for Somerset, MA, inaccurately listed Bridget's maiden name as "Lynch". In 1916 Bridget died from pneumonia and was buried with husband John Campbell.

Bridget Lynch Campbell Massachusetts State Vital Records, 1841-1920	
Event Type:	Death
Event Date:	20 Jan 1916 • Edit
Event Place:	Pottersville, Somerset, Massachusetts, United States • Edit
Name:	Bridget Lynch Campbell • Edit
Gender:	Female
Age:	86
Father's Name:	William Lynch • Edit
Birth Year (Estimated):	1830
Spouse's Name:	John Campbell

The first recorded residence for George Ashley in 1886, was at 404 Tremont Street, not far from Harvard Street (then called Castle St.). This Tremont address is based on an article about Minnie Ashley in the *Boston Globe* Sept. 7, 1886.

Note in the same news article (right) that Minnie Ashley was 6-years old when that incident occurred. This age thus confirms the same year Minnie (Collins) Ashely was born (1880). Since most city street directories across America at this

the recipients of several flags.

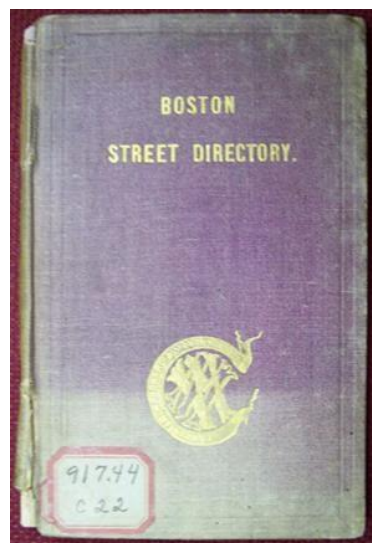
BURNED, BRUISED, BROKEN.

Injuries Recorded at the Police Stations and Hospitals.

Minnie Ashley, 6 years old, living at 404 Tremont street, while playing on the roof of the house next to her own yesterday afternoon, fell through the skylight to landing below, a distance of fifteen feet. She received serious internal injuries.

John McDonald, 24 years old and living at 7 Florence street, while alighting from a horse-car at the corner of Washington and Worcester streets, was knocked down by a car coming from the opposite direction, and received a bad cut over the right eye, also several bruises.

Mabel Wetmore, 3 years old, living at



time listed only the names of heads of household at each residence, it would be difficult to know for certain. There were four additional residences where George Ashley (butcher) had lived in Boston from 1886/87 to 1888 (taken mainly from the *Boston City Directory* Sampson & Murdock publisher). After George Ashley died in May of 1888 a new street listing appeared with the head of household's name, Eliza F. Ashley, widow of George W. So clearly, there was no doubt that Eliza and Minnie had previously been living either with or near George W. Ashley during the past four years. In the 1889 listing, Eliza was referenced as George Ashley's "widow". No marriage record existed for George and Eliza "Ashley" during the time they lived together in Boston. Both Eliza and daughter Minnie retained the Ashley surname.

1886/1887

Ashley Alfred, wharfinger, Cunard wharf, Belmont sq.
 " Edward H. h. 37 Worcester
 " Edwin M. h. 33 Cambridge, Chsn.
 " George, carpenter, h. 112 W. Sixth
 " George W. butcher, h. 10 Hotel Helen

1887/1888

Ashley Alfred, supt. Cunard whf. h. 187 Webster,
 " Edward H. h. 37 Worcester
 " Edwin M. h. 33 Cambridge, Chsn.
 " George, removed to Blackstone
 " George W. butcher, h. 82 Harrison av.
 " Homer, cashier American Express Co. 43

Ashley Alfred, supt. Cunard whf. h. 187 Webster,
 " Edward H. h. 37 Worcester
 " Edwin M. h. 33 Cambridge, Chsn.
 " George, removed to Blackstone
 " George W. butcher, h. 82 Harrison av.
 " Homer, cashier American Express Co. 43

1889/1889

Ashley Alfred, supt. Cunard whf. h. 187 Webster
 " Charles A. 63 Summer, bds. 240 W. Canton
 " Edward H. h. 37 Worcester
 " Edwin M. upholsterer, 57 Harvard, Chsn. h.
 " 33 Cambridge, do. [pl.
 " Eliza F. widow of George W. h. 1 Lovering

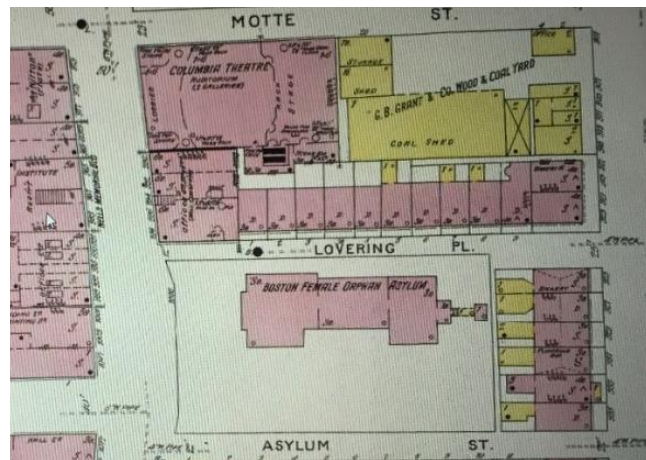
1889/1890

It is not known how long the Ashley family lived on Tremont Street, prior to moving later that year to Hotel Helen at 10 Castle Street at the corner of Harrison Avenue. In 1887, the Ashley family relocated to a tenement on 82 Harrison Avenue in Chinatown and by 1888 they moved into a flat next door at 70 Harrison Avenue. After George W. Ashley's death, Eliza and Minnie moved to #1 Lovering Place, less than half a mile south of Kneeland Street, at the corner of Washington Street, just below Castle Street (now Herald Street).



1905 post card of Harrison Avenue looking north from Kneeland St. The Ashley's lived in the third building on the right

Lovering Place, the last known residence where Eliza and Minnie lived was a small row house identified in the 1895 fire insurance map to the right. It is marked by a black dot to the left of the word "Lovering" in the middle. Lovering Place was a tiny cross street between Washington Street and Harrison Avenue. To the left, on the corner of Washington St. is an office building attached to the Columbia Theatre, whose front faced Motte St.



The locations of the various residences where George W. Ashley and family lived from 1886-1888 were heavily traveled with roads crisscrossed by horse drawn carriages and train tracks. Local and interstate rail depots and steamboat services to Providence, Fall River and New York was available. Although the main streets were frequently congested with traffic, it was relatively easy getting around town. The city of Boston, at that time, had designated a market area for butchers and meat packing businesses that was located on the periphery of the North End and Back Bay area, next to the banks of the Charles River.

It is likely that George W. Ashley would have found employment in this area, while living in Boston with his family. The commute from any street from the various places where the Ashley family had resided, to the butcher's market would have been only a short distance by streetcar.

In 1886, when George Ashley and his family were first listed as Boston residents, Minnie would have been six years old and would have been in the first grade at a public school in district 8, in Boston Proper. Based on their former Harrison Avenue address in Chinatown, their choice of Grammar schools could have been either the Warren Grammar School on Summer Street in Chinatown, or the Shurtleff Grammar School, located one street over on Tyler Street.

After their move to the lower Washington Street neighborhood, Minnie's age would have been approximately 8-years-old. In an article from the Boston Sunday Globe dated January 10, 1904, (p. 52) titled *Miss Minnie Ashley-Mrs. William Astor Chanler*, the author stated that "the little girl never went to the public schools, but received instruction at the Barnes' Memorial, which was then connected to the Warrenton St. Church." How long this continued is also unknown.

It is unlikely that Minnie attended secondary school during this time as she was fully immersed in the world of dance and theater. How and when Minnie became involved in the theater arts during this time is left to speculation. Local news articles and reports from entertainment circles in Boston during the late 1800's, revealed that Minnie Ashley's singing ability and acting in public began with other schoolmates at children's festivals in the old Music Hall in Boston.

This popular and stately venue for classical music and theater was located at the top of Harrison Avenue near Tremont Street by the Boston Common. Participation in these children's festivals lasted for a couple of years, until Minnie's talent as a solo performer gained the attention of personal dance instructor, Isabelle Florence, who tutored Minnie for free and eventually helped to shape Minnie's ability to perform at a professional level. Minnie Ashley's determination to become a professional performer soon became firmly resolved and she continued her dance and acting lessons, which eventually resulted in the opportunity to perform at summer resorts in the White Mountains.



Boston Music Hall, Hamilton Place Entrance, photo circa 1896

DEATHS REGISTERED in the City of Boston for the Year eighteen hundred and eighty-eight												
DATE OF DEATH.	DATE OF RECORD.	NAME AND SURNAME OF THE DECEASED.	SEX.	EDUCATION (School, College, etc.)	AGE.	DISEASE, OR CAUSE OF DEATH.	RESIDENCE, AND PLACE OF DEATH, AND BURIAL (If elsewhere).	OCCUPATION.	PLACE OF BIRTH.	NAMES AND BIRTHPLACES OF PARENTS.		
May 11		Ellen C. Flynn	F	S	1 1	Diphtheria	150 Saline St.		Boston	David	Irish	
		Charles F. Millock	F	S	7 4 1		13 Frederick St			James F.		
		Unknown	M		50	Small Pox	Hosio Street	Harmer				
		William A. Sanford	F	S	2	Pneumonia	121 1/2 Concord St		Boston	Frederick	English	
		George H. Ashley	M	H	42	Convulsions	70 Harrison St	Doctor	Rutland Vt	Elizabeth	Scott	
						Marshall St. East				George		
										Charles		

It was around this time, when Minnie was eight-years-old, that Widow Eliza's paramour, George W. Ashley, succumbed to a disease and died in a hospital on May 11, 1888, in Westfield, MA. Note on his death register (above) that the line specified for the birthplaces for his parents was left blank.

Research on burials in the 1800's for the unclaimed deceased in Westfield, MA would have been interred either at the Pinehill Cemetery or the Mechanics Cemetery. A later inquiry revealed a flood destroyed the burial records.

Since Azuba (Collins) Ashley was still the wife of record at the time of George W. Ashley's death it most likely would have presented a legal challenge for Widow Eliza (Collins-Ashley) to make the claim; not to mention Eliza's inadequate financial means and the logistics of transporting his body back to Boston. In addition, there are no records for George Ashley's burial either in his birthplace of Rutland, VT or in Dartmouth, MA where most of his ancestors were buried.

~~ORIGINAL SOURCE~~

REEVES COLORED COMPANY JAILED.

[Special Dispatch to the Boston Herald.]

HALIFAX, N. S., Dec. 10, 1890. The Reeves Colored Dramatic Company came here from Boston last week. Their season was a failure, and they were jailed for their hotel bill. Today a 10-year-old girl named Minnie Ashley arrived from Boston under an engagement to play with the Reeves company through the province at \$10 a week. All but two members of the company returned to Boston today. The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children took charge of the child and refused to allow her to play with the two men, and will send her back to Boston.

NATIONAL BOARD OF CONTROL

Shortly after the death of George W. Ashley, a curious and somewhat defiant change was noticed in Minnie Ashley's behavior. There were two newspaper articles that account two separate instances where her rebellious behavior was shown apparent.

The first in 1890, at the age of ten, when she boarded a passenger ship alone from Lewis' Wharf in Boston to Halifax Nova Scotia, to be featured in a play with the *Reeves Colored Company*. Once discovered, the members of the black drama company were jailed and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children took charge of Minnie and sent her back to Boston.

The second incident took place in Boston in 1895, while Minnie was at the old Boston Museum preparing for a debut role in the play called *The Chorus Girl*. When a local sheriff entered the theater, Minnie deducted that he was seeking her arrest as an under-aged actress. By disguising herself in a theater costume, she was able to thwart the arresting officer and escape the building. The following day she took a train to New York where she had the good fortune of winning a place in a theater group managed by Augustin Daly. Minnie was then 15 years old.

A year later, Minnie made her first Broadway appearance in the play "Little Christopher". In 1896, when producer De Wolf Hopper brought out the production of "El Capitan" at the Tremont Theater in Boston, Minnie was chosen for a role in the chorus while working as an understudy to Hopper's wife, actress Edna Wallace Hopper. It was in October of 1896 when the rising starlet married New York actor William (Jones) Sheldon in Baltimore. Minnie was sixteen-years-old. She continued to use the Ashley name when not on stage.

There is not much known about Minnie Ashley's first husband, William Sheldon, born William Jones in Ohio, in 1876. William's older brother was Walter Jones (1875-1922), also an actor, well-known as the comic "Tramp" in early theatrical performances. Walter had previously worked alongside Minnie Ashley in the 1894 performance of "1492" and introduced Minnie to his brother. William Sheldon's father was the respected Ohio doctor, Isaac Newton Jones (1840-1901) and his mother was actress Harriet Sheldon, born 1854, in New York.

It is not clear if Sheldon was Harriet's true surname or simply her stage name, but off-stage Harriet frequently used the Jones surname even though she and Dr. Jones lived apart for most of their lives. There is no record of a marriage between them. According to the U.S. Census of 1900 for the State of Ohio, Dr. Isaac Jones reported that he had been "married since 1880" and his wife was from New York. The wife's name was not recorded. From the U.S. Census of New York for the same year (1900) Harriet Jones, the actress was living as "head of household" with her two adult sons, actors, Walter and William Jones at West 36th Street, NYC. (see below):

William Sheldon	Walter Jones	Isaac Newton Jones	1876	1875	1874
Harriet Jones	Walter Jones	Isaac Newton Jones	1876	1875	1874
Walter Jones	William Jones	Isaac Newton Jones	1876	1875	1874
William Jones	Isaac Newton Jones	Isaac Newton Jones	1876	1875	1874

William (Jones) Sheldon's marriage to Minnie Ashley was brief and they separated when Minnie and her mother moved to Great Neck, New York, in 1899. Prior to this move Minnie Ashley, along with members of the *Museum Company* performed in a musical comedy called "The Chorus Girl" and other popular plays such as "The Geisha", "The Circus Girl" and "Prince Pro Tem." Her growing recognition as an actress and a beauty queen kept her in the Boston limelight.

In late 1899, when the play "The Greek Slave" opened in New York, Minnie Ashley became an overnight sensation for her part as Iris in that production. Her move to New York had proven successful both with her acting career as well as her modeling stint for the then popular "cabinet card" industry. These "cabinet cards" were small yet handsome photo portraits attached to heavy stock paper board that were meant to stand alone or on top of furniture cabinets. Their commercial success however was short-lived.

When Minnie's New York City schedule became too busy to commute back home to Long Island, she would regularly stay overnight at the Hotel Hatfield on East 29th Street. It was during this time when Minnie began to experience serious eye problems, due to the prolonged exposure while on stage under heated theatrical lime lights.

From 1900 to 1901, at the height of her career Minnie Ashley's eyesight worsened. She was unable to perform with the grace and confidence she had prior to her eye problems. Around 1902, Minnie was courted by William Astor Chanler, a dashing explorer, army captain, congressman and affluent great grandson of John Jacob Astor, the richest men in America at the time. With their relationship growing more endearing and with William Chanler's support, Minnie's decision to discontinue her acting career seemed imminent. William Randolph Hearst was another "Backstage Johnny" who coveted her attention.



William Astor Chanler, Photo: Public Domain

Minnie's decision to finally quit the stage came late in 1902 at the end of her last performance of "The Country Girl" at Daly's Theater in New York City.

The talk of a marriage between Minnie and Willie came next. That could only be made possible by getting Minnie's estranged husband, William (Sheldon) Jones to agree to a divorce. Without much convincing, William (Sheldon) Jones agreed to the divorce. The pleading was slated to be heard in Cincinnati, Ohio for November 19, 1903. On December 3, 1903, two weeks after Minnie Ashley's divorce from William (Sheldon) Jones had been finalized, Minnie changed her name to Beatrice Winthrop Ashley and married William Astor Chanler at Saint George's Rectory in New York City in a private ceremony. Beatrice's mother, Eliza Ashley, was the only member of the family member of the bride in attendance.



Beatrice Ashley Chanler circa 1911

Photo: Public Domain

Soon after the marriage, two sons were born to Mr. and Mrs. William A. Chanler; William Astor Jr. (1904-2002) and Sidney Ashley (1907-1994). During this time Beatrice Chanler's mother, Eliza Ashley had moved to West 67th Street into a studio apartment in New York City. By 1908, according to *The World Almanac and Book of Facts*, Beatrice Chanler's family was listed as one of America's top Multi-Millionaires. After being married for seven years, Beatrice and her husband separated amicably in 1909. He moved to Paris to pursue both business and personal endeavors.

Beatrice's creative energy began to resurface as her children grew older. With her vision somewhat improved, she made the decision to become a sculptor. Working with a tactile medium and three-dimensional form was more suited to her limited vision. A short apprenticeship followed with noted sculptor, Victor Salvador and soon thereafter, Beatrice opened a studio in her townhouse at 141 East 19th Street.

Beatrice Chanler's brother-in-law, Robert Chanler, was an acclaimed American artist, who owned a townhouse next door at 147 E. 19th Street. His studio, known as "The House of Fantasy" was a popular meeting place for artists, during New York's modern art movement and served as a gallery for Robert Chanler's fantastic and surreal murals and stained glasswork. The gallery also served as a social center for New York City's progressive art community to which Beatrice was an active participant. Painter George Bellows lived across the street from the gallery.

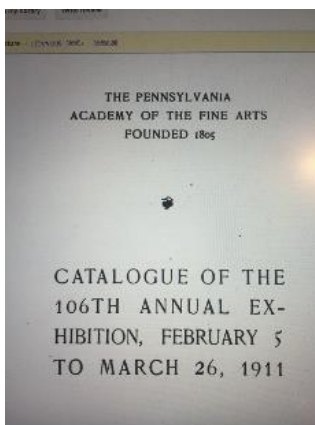
At some time between 1910 and 1912, Beatrice Chanler's brother, John Edward Collins, then a 36-year-old art dealer, made the decision to move with their mother, Eliza Ashley to the active modern art community on East 19th Street.

John Edward apparently preferred using his middle name as his first name, dropping "John" and adding an "F" as his middle initial. Their apartment was located one city block from Beatrice's art studio at 207, East 19th Street. How this family reunion came to be at such a late period in their lives was perhaps a bit more than Edward's chance to invest in Modern Art. It was also to assist his aging mother who injured in a recent car accident and was previously living alone. Eliza and her son "Edward" Collins lived at the same address until their deaths.

Assembly District No. 12, County New York

NAME	RELATION	COLOR, SEX AND AGE		NATIVITY
		Color	Sex and Age	
Price Mary A	Head	W F	60	US
Price Sarah	Sister	W F	58	US
Daly John J	Head	W M	34	Ireland
Daly Marie M	Wife	W F	31	"
Hogan Annie	Sister in law	W F	21	"
Ashley Elizabeth	Head	W F	55	US
Collins Edward F	Son	W M	34	US
Albrich Johannes	Head	W M	49	Austria
Albrich Michaela	Wife	W F	49	"
Stegedal Francis	Head	W F	19	"
Wallace Hugh	Head	W M	59	US
Wallace Katharine	Sister	W F	61	US
Kopp Frederick H	Head	W M	48	US
Kopp Rose	Wife	W F	37	US
Kopp William A	daughter	W F	17	US
Amelt Augusta	Head	W F	79	Germany

1915 New York State Census



Bust of William A. Chanler Jr.

Artist: Beatrice Chanler;

Photo Credit: by William Chanler



As a sculptor, Beatrice Chanler became increasingly more competent. In 1911, Beatrice Ashley Chanler exhibited in the USA Pavilion at the Roman Art Exposition and was included in the 106th Annual Exhibition at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. At both venues Beatrice displayed her art alongside the most popular visual artists in America, such as Mary Cassatt, Thomas Eakins, Winslow Homer, and next-door neighbor, painter George Bellows.

Beatrice's greatest achievement as an artist was realized a few years later when she was commissioned to create a forty-foot bas-relief frieze for the Vanderbilt Hotel on Park Ave. and 34th Street. The only evidence of this work is from an old photograph that depicted a portion of the frieze on the wall behind the tiled column (above the window). The frieze was destroyed when the hotel was renovated.



*Bas-relief Frieze by Beatrice Chanler
in the lobby of the Vanderbilt Hotel*

In 1913, Beatrice visited her estranged husband in France for a short time while he was recuperating from a serious leg injury* (the affected leg was amputated 2 years later). Three years after WW I broke out, Beatrice returned to France and became active in World relief organizations. She served as president of the American Committee of the French Heroes Fund and was a member of the National Allied Relief Committee. Both committees were established to aid French wounded soldiers and their families, and to publicize their experiences of the Allied nations in war.

To enable these projects to be realized, Beatrice and husband William A. Chanler, negotiated the purchase of the childhood home of the Marquis de Lafayette. This building was converted into a school for orphans and refugee children, as well as a medical facility and later a museum.

Passenger application records for Beatrice Chanler during this time reveal several inconsistencies regarding both her age and birthplace. Was that information intentional to conceal the background of her family that was not so well off as the Chanler pedigree? Whatever the reasons for all the name and date changes made in Beatrice's life, it could not conceal her true artistic talent nor her valor in raising funds for international aid projects during the First World War. Her selfless devotion to humanitarian aid and philanthropic programs during the war period had given Beatrice little time for her artistic endeavors. Most of that free time was taken over by writing. In 1934 she published *Cleopatra's Daughter: Queen of Mauritania*. It was the same year in which her husband William A. Chanler died in Menton, Alpes-Maritimes, France.

** A pistol duel between William Chanler and prize fighter, Frank Moran took place in France shortly before Moran was slated to fight boxer Jack Johnson, the first black U.S. World Champion, for the 1914 World Heavyweight Championship in Paris. Johnson, at that time was a fugitive who had recently been convicted in the U.S. by a white jury on a false charge of interstate pandering and was living in France. Chanler was backing Johnson for the title fight when a dispute between Chanler and Moran arose. Moran shot Chanler in the right leg which required several surgeries and never healed. Two years later, Chanler's right leg was amputated and he became addicted to morphine for several years following. Jack Johnson beat Frank Moran in the title fight by unanimous decision.*

In 1939 Beatrice Chanler moved into the Fred F. French building on East 54th Street in New York City. The building was an architectural marvel shared by such notables as the Alfred Stieglitz, Georgia O'Keefe, Thomas C. Eastman, and Peggy Skinner. In September of the same year Beatrice's mother Eliza Ashley died. Her body was sent to Fall River, MA to be buried at Oak Grove Cemetery in the same family plot as her husband, George W. Collins.

OWNER			Robert T. D. Collins - <i>Letter M. Collins to E. A. Collins - 6/16/61</i>	
			Age	Lot Number 3545
INTERMENT				
1	Thos. C. Collins	10,586	<i>Years 7/1/16</i>	<i>NO P.C.</i>
2	Mary E. Collins	10,587	<i>60+</i>	<i>NOTE: ORDER TAKEN 7/1/16</i>
3	Chas. D. Collins	10,588	<i>55+</i>	<i>BY TOM EATON</i>
4	Geo. W. Collins	10,589	<i>17+</i>	<i>15'</i>
5	Helen G. Collins	10,590	<i>22+</i>	
6	Edgar B. Collins	10,591	<i>23+</i>	
7	Harriet J. Collins	10,592	<i>3 mos.</i>	
8	Eliz. Ashley	30,947	<i>24 days</i>	
9	George T. Collins	39,583	<i>7 mos.</i>	
10	Sarah E. Collins	42,078	<i>30 days</i>	
11	George A. Collins	42,468		
12	ERNEST T. COLLINS	45,193		
13	George A. Collins	50,294		
14	MARGARET C. COLLINS	52,920		

Other information in the record of Edward F. Collins from New York, New York City Municipal Deaths	
Name:	Edward F. Collins
Event Type:	Death
Event Date:	14 Mar 1940
Event Place:	Manhattan, New York, New York, United States
Address:	207 E. 19th St.
Residence Place:	Manhattan
Gender:	Male
Age:	65
Marital Status:	Single
Race:	White
Occupation:	Salesman Art Gallery
Birth Year (Estimated):	1875
Birthplace:	U.S.A.
Burial Date:	16 Mar 1940
Cemetery:	Fresh Pond Crematory
Father's Name:	George
Father's Birthplace:	U.S.A.
Mother's Name:	Eliza Tully
Mother's Birthplace:	U.S.A.

One year after Eliza Ashley's death, Beatrice's brother, "Edward" Collins died in his apartment on 19th Street in New York City. From his Record of Death from New York City 1940, Edward Collins' mother's name was reported as Eliza "Tully" and his father's first name listed as "George".



Portrait of Beatrice Ashley Chanler
Artist: Julius LeBlanc Stewart.
Photo Courtesy of William Chanler

Why was his mother not named Eliza Ashley, as it was listed in the 1915 New York Census when she and son "Edward" Collins were first recorded as New York City residents? "Tully" was his mother's maiden name prior to her marriage to George William Collins.

On June 19, 1946 Beatrice "Minnie" Ashley Chanler died on a train traveling from New York to Portland Maine in route to *Yellow Sands*, her summer home in Islesboro ME. She was buried in the Trinity Church Cemetery, Manhattan, NY.

Beatrice Ashley

Timeline



1818	John Campbell born in England
1818	Michael (Mick) Tully born in Ireland
1828	Bridget Lyons born in Ireland
1845	Irish Potato Famine Begins. Irish citizens immigrate to USA
1845	Bridget Lyons arrives in Boston, MA
1845	George W. Ashley born in Rutland, VT
1845 (abt.)	Michael Tully arrives in New York City, NY
1850 (abt.)	Bridget Lyons arrives in Fall River, MA
1851 (abt.)	Bridget Lyons moves to New York City
1853	George Williams Collins is born in Tiverton, RI
1853 (abt.)	Michael Tully Marries Bridget Lyons (unknown location)
1854	Eliza Tully is born in Fall River, MA
1857 (abt.)	Michael Tully dies of illness in New York City
1861	Bridget Lyons Tully Marries John Campbell in Fall River, MA
1864	George W. Ashley Marries Azuba Collins in Taunton, MA
1872	Eliza Tully Marries George William Collins in Tiverton, RI
1872	John "Edward" Collins is born in Fall River, MA
1874	George William Collins dies of Cholera in Fall River, MA
1874	George Thomas Collins is born in Fall River, MA
1875 (abt.)	Widowed Eliza Collins moves with George and John "Edward" Collins into the Campbell Home in Fall River, MA
1878 (abt.)	Eliza Collins places first son John "Edward" Collins with her parents in Fall River, MA then places second son George Thomas Collins with his grandparents in Tiverton, RI
1880	American Vaudeville Begins
1880	Minnie W. Collins is born in Dartmouth, MA
	Statue of Liberty arrives in New York Harbor

- 1882 (abt.) George W. Ashley abandons wife Azuba and moves with Eliza and Minnie Collins to Boston, MA
- 1884 (abt.) Eliza and Minnie Collins change their last name to Ashley
- 1885 Minnie Ashley gains attention in Boston for her singing and acting ability while being tutored by a local dance instructor
- 1885 United States President Chester A. Arthur dedicates the Washington Monument
- 1886 The “Ashley Family” relocates to the Chinatown district in Boston.
- 1888 George W. Ashley dies of disease in Westfield Hospital, MA
- 1889 Eliza and Minnie Ashley move to Boston’s South End near the Roxbury Line.
- 1889 Benjamin Harrison is sworn in as the 23rd President of the USA
- 1890 Dutch artist Vincent van Gogh moves to Auver-sur-Oise near Paris
- 1892 Lizzie Borden accused of ax murder of her mother and father in Fall River, MA
- 1895 Minnie Ashley sings in the chorus of the play “1492”
- 1895 Jack Dempsey, American heavyweight boxer is born.
- 1896 Minnie joins the Museum Company of Boston and lands a second chorus role in “El Capitan” working as understudy to Edna Wallace Hopper.
- 1896 Minnie Ashley marries NYC actor William H. Sheldon (Jones) in Baltimore, Maryland
- 1899 Minnie Ashley Sheldon takes lead role in the “Greek Slave” that is performed in New York and becomes an overnight sensation.
- 1899 Minnie and William Sheldon (Jones) separate. Minnie moves with her mother Eliza Ashley to Great Neck, NY
- 1900 Modern Art begins to take root in USA
- 1900 Minnie Ashley Sheldon begins to experience eye problems from repeated exposure to heated lime lights while on stage
- 1901 Minnie Sheldon uses the name Minnie Ashley only for stage performances
- 1901 Minnie Sheldon frequently rooms at the Hotel Hatfield while working in NYC
- 1902 During “A Country Girl” performance in NY Minnie (Sheldon) Ashley meets William A. Chanler
- 1903 Minnie Sheldon divorces William Sheldon and changes her name to Beatrice Winthrop Ashley then marries William Astor Chanler
- 1903 Beatrice Chanler moves into the Chanler residence in Great Neck, New York
- 1904 Eliza Ashley moves into studio apartment on West 67th in Manhattan, NY
- 1904 Beatrice Chanler gives birth to a son, William, Jr.

1905	Theodore Roosevelt is sworn in as President of the USA
1907	Beatrice Chanler gives birth to second son Sidney
1909	Eliza Ashley gets injured in automobile accident. Her chauffeur is found at fault and charged
1909	Beatrice and William Chanler agree to an amicable separation of marriage
1909	Beatrice Chanler becomes apprentice to sculptress Malvina Hoffman
1910	Beatrice Chanler opens studio space for her sculpting at 141 East 19 th Street, Manhattan
1910	First filmed version of Mary Shelly's Frankenstein is published
	Beatrice becomes apprentice to noted sculptor Victor Salvador
1911	Beatrice Chanler exhibits in the Roman Art Exposition and at the 106 th Annual Exhibition at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts
1912	Vanderbilt Hotel commissioned a 40-foot bas relief frieze by Beatrice Chanler for lobby
1913	Beatrice Chanler visits estranged husband William in France while he is recovering from gunshot wound to his leg.
1914	World War One begins
1914 (abt.)	John "Edward" Collins changes his first name to Edward and drops "John" his former name.
1915 (abt.)	"Edward" Collins and his mother Eliza Ashley move together into an apartment on 207 East 19 th Street, Manhattan
1915	William A. Chanler has injured leg amputated and fights addiction
1916	Bridget Lyons Tully/Campbell dies in Somerset, MA and is buried with John Campbell at St. John's Cemetery in Fall River
1917	Beatrice Chanler became active in World Relief organizations in France
1920	Jazz Era begins in USA
1922	Novel written about prosperous Long Islanders of 1922, <i>The Great Gatsby</i> by F. Scott Fitzgerald
1927	Beatrice Chanler publishes <i>Le Pean du Neaveau Monde</i>
1934	William A. Chanler dies in France
1934	Beatrice Chanler publishes <i>Cleopatra's Daughter: Queen of Mauritania</i> .
1938	Beatrice Chanler moves into Fred F. French Building on East 54 th Street, Manhattan
1938	Germany invades Poland. World War Two begins
1939	Eliza Ashley dies in her 19 th Street apartment. Buried at Oak Grove Cemetery Fall River, MA
1940	Edward Collins, Beatrice Chanler's half-brother dies in his apartment on 207 East

19th Street, Manhattan, NY

- 1941 Japanese attack US Navy at Pearl Harbor. US enters war.
- 1945 Japan surrenders to US General Douglas McArthur and the Allies.
- 1946 Beatrice Ashley Chanler dies aboard train in route from New York to Portland Maine. Buried at Trinity Church Cemetery in New York