CORNELIA N. MILLEN

A Brief Biography

by

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CONTENTS

Introduction ........................................ 3
Family ................................................ 4
Personal Life ....................................... 6
Business Dealings ................................... 8
Death .................................................. 11
Summary .............................................. 12
Notes .................................................. 13
Geneology ........................................... 16
INTRODUCTION

The object of this research was to find as much information as possible on the subject in the space of seven weeks. Thus, the work found here is incomplete to say the least. Much more research would be necessary to get the whole picture; however, this work does provide a glimpse of Cornelia Marston Millen which would otherwise not be found. Miss Millen was the subject of this research. The information found here relates primarily to her life but also includes information on her immediate family members. The research for this paper was done in Savannah, Georgia. The major information sources were the Georgia Historical Society, Chatham County Courthouse, and Laurel Grove Cemetery.
FAMILY

On 6 May 1796, George C. Millen and Margaret Dennis were married in Savannah. As most families of their era they had a large family. Unfortunately, tragedy struck them after only ten years of marriage. Margaret died during the childbirth of her fifth child on 4 October 1806. The infant also died.

Cornelia seems to have been the third child. She was born in 1801; no fixed date of birth could be found. The year was compiled only through her gravestone which declared her 78 years old at her death in 1879. She was also the only girl in the family.

The oldest brother appears to be John Millen. Born in 1797, John was the youngest at death. He had married Ann Simms in 1814 at the age of 17. John was elected to the United States Congress in 1842, but died before taking his seat.

Cornelia’s second brother was George D. Millen. Information on George D. is sketchy however. It is known that he married Mary Bush on 18 June 1817. Besides this though, little was compiled. The main problem here was the confusion of George D. with his father George C. and possibly another George Millen also in Savannah at the time.

The youngest brother was Richard D. Millen. He was born
in 1804. Richard was married several times. His first wife was Mary J. Robinson; she died in 1839, leaving five children.\textsuperscript{6} The second wife was Georgia Ann Walsh; she and Richard were married on 26 February 1850.\textsuperscript{7} Georgia Ann died during the Civil War in 1863, while Richard was fighting.\textsuperscript{8} Despite this setback, though, Richard wasted no time; he remarried on 1 June 1864.\textsuperscript{9} His final bride was Charlotte Wilson and they lived together until his death in 1875.\textsuperscript{10}

This has been a brief look into Cornelia's family. Her story will follow, but some background information may be necessary in connecting the following sections.
PERSONAL LIFE

As mentioned in the introduction, little information has been obtained on Cornelia's early life. The earliest facts which were obtainable dealt with Cornelia's early business dealings, but these will be covered in the following segment. Besides this information, Cornelia's earliest public recognition was in 1844. In that year she assumed the position of administrator of her brother John's estate. John had died in 1843 without leaving a will, Cornelia was thus chosen along with Mr. Jacob Waldberg to serve in the administrator positions.11

Cornelia's earliest mention in the Census Records was the 1850 Census. Again she was listed in the 1860 census. A humorous note was that Cornelia gave her age in 1850 as 36, while in 1860, she said it was 40. Undoubtedly she had discovered the fountain of youth, if she could only age four years in a ten year period. The true age was of course 59, in 1860.

On the basis of the information obtained by earlier researchers, it is known that Cornelia lived at and built a house at 7 E. Jones Street in 1851.12

In 1858, Cornelia was living at 101 Jones Street.13 The following year Cornelia had moved to the SE corner of Jones and Bull.14 Cornelia did not appear in the city directory again until 1866, when she was again listed at Jones and Bull.
However, it is unlikely she left the city during this time on the basis of her business transactions during this period. Cornelia was again listed in 1867, at the same residence. She again took a 9 year break in the City Directory and did not reappear until 1876, when she was listed at 121 Jones Street. Cornelia did not appear again until 1879; this time she was listed at 72 S. Broad Street.

Throughout this time Cornelia was never married nor held any type of job. Thus, she has no family except those already mentioned. According to the censuses she did have some people living with her at times. It is possible that she may have had boarders over the years, but there is really no documentation to support this idea except on the basis of a newspaper article in 1856. Cornelia may have been living with her nephew, John M. Millen and his wife. In 1856, their son died, and the funeral was held at the Millen's "Jones Street residence." Chances are that John M. Millen was living with Cornelia and that John was probably Cornelia's brother John's son.
BUSINESS DEALINGS

Cornelia M. Millen's earliest dealings seem to have been in stocks. She held shares in both the Planter's Bank and the Central Railroad. Cornelia also held stock in the Southwestern Railroad.

Cornelia seems to have made most of her money in land dealings in Chatham County. It is the view of the author that Cornelia was left a sizable estate on her father's death, but with no evidence of her father's will, this is only an hypothesis.

On 12 March 1850, Cornelia bought lots 17 and 18 Columbia Ward from her lawyer Robert G. Guerard for $333.33.

On 12 July 1853, Cornelia sold a family of slaves: Nancy, Lewis and an infant. David R. Dillon purchased them for $712.50.

On 1 October 1853, Cornelia made two purchases. The first was 10 acres near Millen Farm from Oliver M. Lillibridge for $1. The second buy was for 20 Acres from Francis Truchelut for $1. This property was also near Millen Farm. Why each was bought for one dollar is unclear. A further discussion of this matter will follow this section.

On 24 October 1853, Cornelia sold lot 13 Montgomery Ward to James Ker for $1100 plus eight percent interest for six months.

On 12 August 1854, Cornelia again bought 10 acres on Millen Farm from Oliver M. Lillibridge for $1.
On 24 April 1855, Cornelia sold 10 acres of land at Millen Farm to Thomas Mahan for $800.  

On 8 March 1856, Cornelia sold the slave Backus to W. R. Waring for $600.  

On 8 April 1858, Cornelia sold a parcel of land, 748 feet long by 150 feet wide, to the Savannah-Albany-Gulf Railroad for $600.  

On this date she bought farm plot nine, 10 acres, at Millen Farm from Fred Brodbaker for $1.  

However, immediately before this transaction she had sold Brodbaker the 10 acres for $2500.  

This is clearly mind-boggling. Also on this day Cornelia made her last recorded purchase. She bought another 10 acres at the farm from Charles Schwarz for $1.

Three days later on 28 May 1863, Cornelia sold 10 acres of the farm to Mr. Eppstein for $2500.

On 17 June 1863, she sold 20 acres at the farm to John Bilbb for $5000.

On 29 December 1863, Cornelia sold Mr. Schwarz his 10 acres back for $2500.

Cornelia's last known sale was on 31 May 1871. Mr. William M. Davidson bought lot 7 Montgomery Ward from her for $1200.
Though this last entry concludes Cornelia's land transactions, it leaves many questions.

First, where is Millen Farm. The only reference in the deeds was to a Lovers Lane; however, it no longer exists. Most likely the farm was located in today's Garden City area.

Second and most of all, how did Cornelia manage to make such unbelievable profits as in the cases of Brodbaker, Schwarz, and the others. Cornelia invested only $1005 in the lands near Millen Farm and sold them back for over $13,000. How and why she could do this is still a mystery. One possibility is that perhaps it was some type of blackmail, but this is only the author's suggestion. Beyond pure conjecture there are no recorded signs or inferences to explain these strange sales; the sales simply did take place.

As for all of her dealings, Cornelia collected $16,262.17. In addition, she undoubtedly made substantial sum in interest. Thus, Cornelia was a wise business woman, or was she? Cornelia may not have cleared all of that $16,262.17. This assumption is based on history. Cornelia collected $12,498 of the $16,262.17 during the period of the American Civil War. Thus, the 12000+ dollars were in Confederate money, and totally worthless at the end of the war. These facts help explain the absence cash money in Cornelia's will.

Cornelia made no other public actions before her death.
DEATH

Cornelia M. Millen died in September 1879.  Cornelia left her stockholdings in the Central Railroad and the Southwestern Railroad to John Guerard, her lawyer, to establish a trust fund for her nephew George R. Millen's children. George appears to be Richard's son. Once the last child reached 21 years the money was to be divided equally.

Clara R. Rittenburg, undoubtedly a friend of Cornelia, received several city bonds. In addition, a $1000 bond went to Alfred Millen, son of George D., and another to a Kate Brown.

The remaining monies went to pay debts, while the majority of her other belongings went to George R. Millen, Clara Rittenburg, and Kate Brown. The administrator of the will was Guerard.

Cornelia Millen is buried in Laurel Grove Cemetery lot 175.
SUMMARY

Cornelia Marston Millen was born in Savannah in 1801. Her parents were George and Margaret Millen of Savannah. She had three brothers, and she, herself, never married. Little is known of her life except her land transactions in Chatham County. Because she had no profession little is available on her role in Savannah. She had several dealings in which she purchased land for $1 and then sold the same land later for over $2500. The reasons behind these actions are unclear; none of the deals were with family members. Cornelia died in 1879, after a short illness.
NOTES

1. *Chatham County Marriage Records, 1733-1801.*


3. *Chatham County Marriage Records, 1801-1852.*

4. From information found on John Millen's gravestone, Laurel Gove Cemetery, lot 175.

5. *Chatham County Marriage Records, 1801-1852.*

6. From information found on Mary's gravestone. Their is no known date of marriage, it is assumed to be in the 1820s.

7. *Chatham County Marriage Records, 1801-1852.*


10. From information found on Richard's gravestone, Laurel Grove Cemetery, lot 175.

11. This information was obtained by an examination of John Millen's will. *Chatham County Courthouse will #294.*


13. *Savannah City Directory, 1858.*


15. *Savannah City Directory, 1867.*

16. *Savannah City Directory, 1876.*

17. *Savannah City Directory, 1879.*

18. Cornelia Millen has no marriage records and in all of
the city directories examined was never reported as holding a job.

22. Cornelia M. Millen's will, Chatham County Courthouse

will #566.

25. Chatham County Deed Book 3-N, p. 43.
27. Chatham County Deed Book 3-O, p. 76.
29. Chatham County Deed Book 3-O, p. 42.
30. Chatham County Deed Book 3-P, p. 76.
33. Chatham County Deed Book 3-V, p. 393.
34. Chatham County Deed Book 3-V, p. 392.
35. Chatham County Deed Book 3-V, p. 394.
36. Chatham County Deed Book 3-V, p. 388.
37. Chatham County Deed Book 3-V, p. 416.
38. Chatham County Deed Book 3-W, p. 87.

40. From information found on Cornelia Millen's gravestone, Laurel Grove Cemetery, lot 175.
41. Chatham County Courthouse will #566.
42. Chatham County Courthouse will #566.
43. Chatham County Courthouse will #566.
44. Laurel Grove Cemetery Records.
George C. Millen-Margaret Dennis  
d. 6/17/1819 (5/6/1796)  
d. 10/4/1806  

John-Ann Simms  
(1814)  
b. 1797  
d. 1843  

George D. Mary Bush  
(6/18/1817)  
b. 1800  
d. ?  

Cornelia  
b. 1801  
d. 1879  

Richard - Mary Robinson  
(c 1820)  
b. 1804  
d. 1875  

George R.  
4 others  

Georgia Ann Walsh  
(2/26/1850)  
b. ?  
d. 1863  

Charlotte Wilson  
(6/1/1864)  
b. ?  
d. ?  

Alfred  
?
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Daily Georgian. 10 May 1839, p. 2, c. 4.

Daily Georgian. 1 January 1844, p. 4, c. 5.

Daily Morning News. 3 March 1856, p. 2, c. 4.

Daily Morning News. 9 March 1857, p. 2, c. 4-5.

Daily Morning News. 4 March 1863.

Laurel Grove Cemetery Records. Volume II.

Savannah City Directory. Savannah, Georgia. 1858, 1859, 1866, 1867, 1876, and 1879.

United States Census. Chatham County, Georgia. 1820, 1850, and 1860.