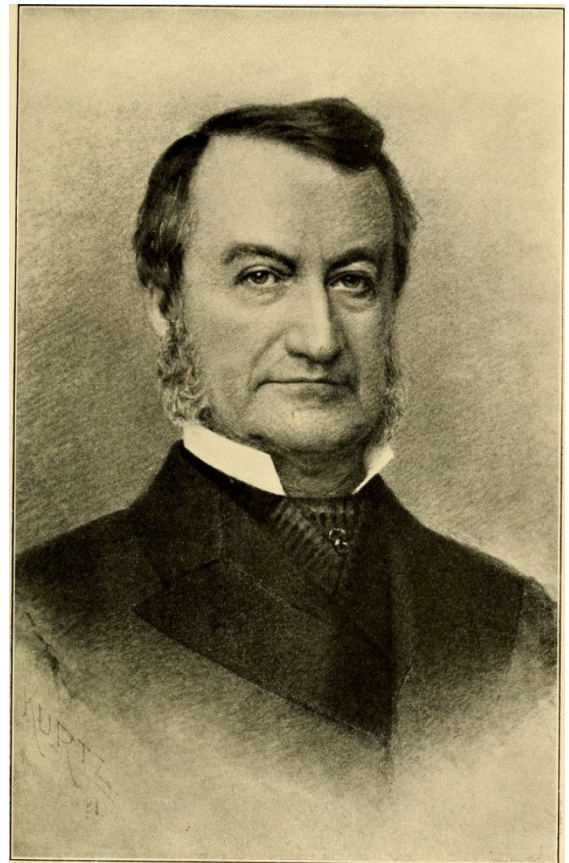


TRIVERS CIRCLE

1. LOUISA T. GRAY 1870-1883
2. MARY T. HECKSCHER 1847-1900
3. WILLIAM R. TRAVERS 1819-1887
4. MARIA L. TRAVERS 1827-1893
5. JOHN TRAVERS 1851-1888
6. REVERDY TRAVERS 1864-1892
7. WILLIAM R. TRAVERS 1861-1905
8. SUSAN TRAVERS 1857-1904
9. HARRIET T. FEARING 1850-1931

William Riggin Travers was born in Baltimore in 1819. He began studying at West Point but resigned his appointment and finished his education at Columbia College. After several failed attempts at business in Baltimore, he moved to NYC where he became an investment broker and bought a seat on the NYSE. He maintained a brokerage partnership and friendship with Leonard Jerome for the rest of his life. Travers was known for his interest in horse racing and the Travers Stakes at Saratoga Racetrack is named for him. Travers married Maria Louisa Johnson in Baltimore and had eight children.

Travers was a very popular figure in NYC because he was a very gregarious man with a charming stutter. He was known for his athletic prowess in tennis and yachting.





Travers and his family bought the estate of Thomas Hitchcock of New York before 1869. It stood at the corner of Narragansett Avenue and Ochre Point Avenue. He hired Richard Morris Hunt, the architect of the original house, to add a ballroom. The house was subsequently made part of another estate and is now the site of Miley Hall at Salve Regina University.



Travers also had R.M. Hunt design and build the Travers Block in Newport in 1870-72, which runs from Memorial Blvd. to the Newport Casino along Bellevue Avenue.

Travers died of complications of diabetes in Bermuda in 1887.ⁱ

Maria L. Travers was born in Baltimore in 1827 to Reverdy Johnson, Attorney General of the United States under Zachary Taylor. She and husband William R. Travers had eight children and spent their summers at the Travers mansion at the corner of Narragansett and Ochre Point Avenue. After her husband died in 1887, Mrs. Travers leased her estate to William Whitney and took up residence at one of the nearby Pinard Cottages in the same neighborhood. She died there after a two-year battle with Bright's Disease.ⁱⁱ

Mary Travers Gray/Heckscher, the oldest daughter of William Travers married Henry Winthrop Gray at Trinity Chapel in New York in 1865. After about ten years of marriage, Gray fought a duel with his good friend, John G. Heckscher in Canada, and the New York Times intimated that something untoward was going on between Heckscher and Mary Travers Gray. Gray divorced his wife soon after, and she “retired from society,” resumed the use of her maiden name and went to live with her parents. She and John Heckscher did not see one another after that until after the death of Heckscher’s first wife in 1892, Mary Travers married Heckscher in Philadelphia. They remained married until her death in 1900.ⁱⁱⁱ

John Travers was born in 1851. In 1887 he was declared insane and confined to an insane asylum. He died the following year at the age of 36.^{iv}

William Riggin Travers Jr. was born in 1861. He married Lillian Harriman in 1889 and spent his time looking after his father’s estate. The couple separated in the 1890’s and had no children. Travers apparently became quite depressed and drank to excess. When his wife filed for divorce in 1905, Travers committed suicide.^v

Reverdy Johnson Travers was born in 1864 and died of heart disease at the age of 29 in 1892. A few months after his death, a woman filed an action with the courts of New York City claiming that she and Travers has married two years before his death. She claimed she was entitled to his house at 128 70th Street in New York City that was estimated to be worth \$200,000 (nearly \$7,000,000 in 2023). Travers’ mother and brother denied that Reverdy Travers had ever married, and the woman’s claim was denied.^{vi}

Susan Travers was born in 1857 and never married. She died of pneumonia at Redwood Cottage on Redwood Street in 1904.^{vii}

Harriet T. Fearing, born in 1850, married a Newport neighbor ten years her senior. In 1871 she married a member of her social circle in both New York and Newport, Colonel George Richmond Fearing. That same year he commissioned a French architect to design a French Chateau for them directly across



Narragansett Avenue from the Travers estate. The house was erected by George Champlin Mason by 1873 and still stands today. The Fearings had one son, George Richmond Fearing Jr. Harriet Fearing's obituary noted that she lived in France from 1894 until the outbreak of World War I. She was decorated by the French government for launching several stage careers for others while there. She returned to the United States in 1914 and was living in a hotel in Boston at the time of her death. Colonel Fearing preceded her in death in 1920.^{viii}

Louisa T. Gray was born to Mary Travers Gray and her first husband, Henry Winthrop Gray and died in 1883 at the age of 13.

ⁱ "William Riggins Travers Dead," *New York Times* (28 March 1887), 2; "Hitchcock-Travers Villa" House Histree, www.househistree.com/houses/hitchcock-travers-villa.

ⁱⁱ "Death of Mrs. Wm. R. Travers," *New York Times* (17 July 1893), 1.

ⁱⁱⁱ "J.G. Heckscher at 70 Weds a Young Widow," *New York Times* (20 October 1905), 9.

^{iv} “John Travers Declared Insane,” *New York Times* (23 November 1887), 8; “John Travers Estate,” *New York Times* (23 May 1888), 9.

^v W.R. Travers Ends Life After Divorce,” *New York Times* (30 September 1905), 1.

^{vi} *Alexandria Gazette*, District of Columbia (26 July 1892), 2; *Alexandria Gazette*, District of Columbia (1 October 1892).

^{vii} “Recent Deaths,” *Newport Mercury* (10 December 1904), 1.

^{viii} “Mrs. G.R. Fearing Dies in 82d Year,” *New York Times* (4 March 1931), 27; “The Orchard,” Vanderbilt International Properties Ltd. WWW.theorchardri.com.