

In the *Biographical History of New Jersey* we learn the following about Henry Heyward Isham:-

“H. H. Isham was born in Brooklyn*, New York, October 12, 1847 of old New England stock.

His father Ralph Henry Isham, was born in Colchester Connecticut; his mother, Ann Heyward Trumbull, though a Jersey woman by birth, was a great-granddaughter of Jonathan Trumbull, the famous Governor of Connecticut, whose name holds so important a place in our country’s history. Mr. Isham can also claim, as an immediate ancestor, Thomas Gibbons, who, along with Aaron Ogden and Jonathan Dayton, was prominent in the earlier part of this century in Elizabeth where their names were associated with the history and upbuilding of the place with its ferry, its steamboats and all of its best interests. Like his great-grandfather, Thomas Gibbons, the subject of this sketch has closely identified himself with the business and landed interests of Elizabeth, where he has particularly devoted himself to the locating and building manufactories. Mr. Isham has been instrumental – probably more so than any other one man – in bringing into the City of Elizabeth large manufactories, whereby city interests have advanced in all departments. Among the important manufactories, located by him, we mention the Singer Sewing Machine Company, employing four thousand hands; the A.F. Brown Manufactory, four hundred hands; the Ball and Wood Engine Company, over two hundred hands; Yates & Co., carpet and rugs, one hundred hands, and the Moore Brothers Company, iron founders and machinists, about two hundred hands. Many smaller concerns might be named.

As trustee of the Trumbull property, Mr. Isham has fully understood and embraced the advantages given by the natural superiority of its location, and while working for the highest interest of the estate, he has most truly benefited the whole community. Although affairs connected with real estate are those in which he is principally occupied, Mr. Isham has given time and attention to other matters. He was one of the incorporators of the Citizen’s Bank of Elizabeth, and has been, from its formation, been one of its Board of Directors; he was one of the incorporating directors of the street railway known as the Green Line, and also one of the incorporators and presidents of the Moore Brothers Company, Iron Founders and Machinists. He was for three years president of the State Agricultural Society, and is now one of its vice-presidents. Notwithstanding his many business interests and the calls upon him by the trusts reposed in his hands, Mr. Isham has found time to devote to the affairs of the city’s welfare, in its department work, and its social interests, as evidenced by his active service upon the Board of Trade, and as a founder of its Town and Country Club”.

* a number of historical records claim that Henry Heyward was born in Colchester, but his official biographical sketch and the 1880 census give New York as his birthplace.

Henry Heyward Isham followed a family tradition of spending time in court. As early as 1891 he was embroiled in legal actions with the August T. Post & Co. estate. As soon as Mr. Post died, Henry put in a claim for \$25,000. Henry said he had given Mr. Post \$25,000 belonging to a trust. He had given it to Mr. Post to loan the money. Mr. Post did what he was instructed and did lend the money to Mills, Robeson and Smith, a company that was later revealed to be in receivership at the time of the loan. According to the *New York Times* (Oct. 7, 1891), “...Mr. Isham had hurried into Mr. Post’s office one day, handed over \$25,000 and asked Mr. Post to lend it for him – money then commanded a 50 to 50 percent interest – and Mr. Isham, it is said, represented that the money was his own.” The \$25,000 was lost when it was learned that the securities upon which the loan was being made was a forgery. Henry’s lawyers claimed that Post was wrong in lending money that was part of a trust. The Post estate claimed that having had a 15-year relationship with Henry, that his word was his bond and that despite the fact that he signed his name as a trustee, he verbally said it was his own money. The court ruled in favor of the Post estate.

“H. H. Isham”, as he was largely known in the press, was not satisfied with his role as a real estate mogul. He had his eyes on the railroad industry. But instead of developing a relationship with a profitable railroad, H. H. took advantage of the bankruptcy of the Marietta, Columbus & Cleveland Railroad (1909) by taking control of it and becoming its president.

Financial experts believed that H.H. saw the ultimate financial reward in buying the railroad despite its financial troubles. He was more interested in what he could gain by eventually selling off the railroad’s assets than he was in operating a railroad.

Nothing, however, seemed to stop H.H.

Even a major blaze (1900) that nearly leveled the newly built Isham Building in Elizabeth, New Jersey, did nothing to deter him. Henry Heyward Isham’s business life was one area where he executed complete control. He did not have the same level of control over his personal life. To what extent that was his fault cannot be determined, however, there is sufficient evidence to support the theory that he suffered greatly as a result of his marriage to Juliet Calhoun Marsh (**F 1**).

Henry Heyward had avoided/escaped marriage for close to 40 years. His reasons for not marrying when he was a young man and those for why he waited until he was older than most grooms at the time will never be known. Perhaps it might have had something to do with a tradition common among those who had inherited empires that they had taken to the next level.

Dying without a direct heir might have plagued Henry.

The reason for his marriage to the much younger Juliet Calhoun Marsh (born in 1857) on Christmas Day in 1886 is lost to history. On the surface, Juliet, who was approaching her 30th birthday when she married Henry, was also older than most brides at the time

NOTE: A search of marriage records for December 25, 1886 in the five boroughs of New York, and in the states of New Jersey and Connecticut showed no certificate of marriage for Henry and Juliet.

There were also no newspaper listings for said marriage. A newspaper article written in 1895 did state that the couple were married in New Jersey, this despite the fact that there is no record of said marriage.

“H H Isham” died at Union Station on a train on May 15, 1922. It was taking him home to New Jersey from Florida. He was 74 years old.