

THE WASHINGTON SOCIETY, WORLD.  
MARRIAGE OF SENATOR BAYARD'S DAUGHTER

—A RECEPTION AND TWO BANQUETS.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 25.—The wedding of Miss Mabel Bayard, eldest daughter of Senator Bayard, of Delaware, and Mr. Samuel D. Warren, Jr., of Boston, took place at the Church of the Ascension this morning in the presence of a distinguished company of invited guests. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. Dr. Elliot. There were 10 ushers

## THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY

ornaments were a string of gold beads around her throat. Her hair was of white roses, and the head by Samuel D. Warren and Louis D. Brandeis. The bride wore a dress of white tulle, with a train of white tulle. The bridesmaids wore dresses of white tulle, with a train of white tulle. The bridesmaids carried bouquets of colored roses in their hands.

The reception that followed at the residence of Senator Bayard was a large affair, and the house was crowded until the bride and groom departed to take the 4 o'clock train for the North. An elaborate collation was served in the dining-room. The reception was presided over by the bride and groom, with a 2010 Foreword by Steven Alan Childress.

and Mrs. Pendleton, W. V. and wife, Mr. Morrill, and Miss Swar. rellinghuy- sen, Mrs. Brewster, Mme. Catalano, Mrs. Stephen Field, Mrs. John Davis, Mrs. George B. Loring, Gen. and Miss Schenck, Mr. and Miss Yulee, the Rev. Dorus Clark, and Mr. and Mrs. Warren. Senator Bayard gave a dinner of 14 covers at Wormley's this evening to the party of Boston friends who came here to be present at his daughter's wedding.

Senator Hoar gave a dinner at Wormley's this evening. Covers were laid for 32 persons, and the board was profusely decorated with flowers. A border of flowers surrounded the table and three large oval baskets of flowers were placed in the centre. A ball of flowers hung from the ceiling over the middle of the table. The host sat at the centre of the table, with Mrs. D. B. Haskell of Boston on his right. The other guests were Gov. Morrill, and His Representatives Rice, Cr. woman, Candler, Morse, Ranney, Re. sell, Harris, Jo. ng, the Hon. Messrs. Hud- so. cFarland, Pa. acs, c

Legal Legends Series

QUID PRO

LAW BOOKS

# THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY

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Samuel D. Warren  
and  
Louis D. Brandeis

*with a 2010 Foreword  
by Steven Alan Childress*

*Legal Legends Series*

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## FOREWORD

When Boston law partners Samuel Warren and Louis Brandeis penned the 1890 article “The Right to Privacy,” they changed the world. Seldom is that feat accomplished by stuffy works of legal academe published in the tony journals of U.S. law schools, even the *Harvard Law Review*. Most law review articles are hardly read, much less effective and influential. But this one was not stuffy – it was elegant and painstaking, clever and readable. And it hooked into an emotional sense of privacy that resonated with readers and lawmakers for decades, and still hits home today.

This article was more than just influential. It has become, starting out of the gates and throughout more than a century of legal change, one of the most cited law review articles in history – and very likely the most important, game-changing piece of legal scholarship ever. It invented a whole field of law. Later its spillover repercussions, some unwittingly perhaps, were felt in more current debates over informational privacy, abortion, contraception, the “right to die,” government surveillance, medical disclosures, drug testing, and sexual orientation. Beyond tort law, as simply put by Judge Richard Posner in a 1995 opinion, “the legal concept of privacy . . . originated in a famous article by Warren and Brandeis.”<sup>1</sup> When you see pro-life activists picketing clinics and the U.S. Supreme Court, you can trace their outrage back to the recognition that privacy matters and is a legal right.

Warren and Brandeis undoubtedly did not intend all these currents downstream from the ripple they instigated, and some of the argument’s logical implications have proved troublesome in light of the First Amendment free-speech positions that Brandeis famously took when he became a [great]

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<sup>1</sup> Anderson v. Romero, 72 F.3d 518, 521 (7th Cir. 1995). Even critics agree that it is “the most influential law review article of all.” Harry Kalven, Jr., *Privacy in Tort Law – Were Warren and Brandeis Wrong?*, 31 Law & Contemp. Probs. 326, 327 (1966). Of course, if Brandeis were a law professor today, he would have to overcome, with his tenure committee, the problem that the article was *co-written* and published while he was a practitioner. Plus it was useful. But he might be aided by the possibility that the work had less usefulness in England, as recently asserted by Neil Richards & Daniel Solove, *Privacy’s Other Path: Recovering the Law of Confidentiality*, 96 Geo. L.J. 123 (2007-2008).

Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. Nevertheless, the power they unleashed went beyond the common law argument they fashioned.

The article and its affirmative sense that the law must protect individuals in their multiple spheres of private life remain poignant in modern times and in a variety of legal contexts. It has even influenced the *constitutional* law applied in U.S. courts today, although the article was never about constitutional limits on privacy as such. Yet even in its more modest realm of the common law (well, modest on hindsight, as it may have been quite radical at the time), in recognizing within the law of states a civil and non-contractual right of protection against invasions of privacy, the article was nothing short of momentous.

It is also a good read, for lawyer and nonlawyer alike. These two knew how to write, and they picked a subject people care deeply about. There is every historical evidence that they cared deeply about it, too, in ways they do not let on in the article itself. They had something of an agenda at work here, and the back story is interesting. But even standing on its own – and not simply as a polemical reflex from a Warren personally touched by a nosey press, or a young Brandeis’s opening salvo in what would become a rock star life in the law – it is a fascinating read that stands the test of time. Plus it foreshadowed big chunks of that time.

Even pop culture may owe some debt to this article. It has to be the most important byproduct in human history of a possible *paparazzi* incident (more on this later), and could have taught Sean Penn a lesson or two. Moreover, we may not have a cult of personality today, or talk so openly about individuality and privacy beyond law, had these two men not put their finger on, and articulated, the concept of an “inviolable personality.” Their evocative prose touches on many themes in law and culture, and even seems inadvertently to use emoticons. That’s a stretch, to be sure, but they did allude to the theft of that personality as “piracy” and denied this was about “judicial legislation” (because of the law’s “elasticity”) in a way that some would recognize as not only modern, but *postmodern*.

Another very modern theme of this article is its emphasis on emerging technology as a threat to personal privacy as well as a reason, in turn, to develop the law: indeed, they say (at note 40) that law’s “greatest boast” is “its adaptability to new conditions, the capacity for growth,” which reacts to “an ever changing society” to meet its needs. Their era’s tech may seem quaint today – they fret about cameras that do not require the subject to sit

for minutes (so allowing surreptitious photography)<sup>2</sup> and the expansion of the print media (so allowing widespread distribution of secrets). But the idea that this makes a difference in what the rule of law should *be* seems fresh today, even as the particular technologies have changed and have, some would say, multiplied these concerns geometrically. Yet just in pushing a theme that technology means change and change means legal reform, this article is a crucial advancement in legal thought. Their argument gave specific attention to one fast-changing example of what Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. had previously called the law's need to respond to the "felt necessities of the time."<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, the article's influence has extended beyond substantive tort law, even past the far broader notions of privacy enforced by courts today. Apart from its take on the specific subject, it appears to be, less famously, a pioneering and educational model of what a great legal article or book should be.<sup>4</sup> It has influenced generations of law professors, practitioners, and judges in how to write about law and to fashion a persuasive argument – in articles, briefs, and judicial opinions having nothing whatsoever to do with privacy or individualism. Warren and Brandeis demonstrated, in effect, the consummate advocate's brief about law reform, and the model is no doubt used by many today to change law without even realizing that heritage.

Brandeis himself later became famous for the "Brandeis Brief" filed in actual court cases, and that term refers to a more systematic use of nonlegal, factual, and expert sources to drive home a point of law (as he used successfully in 1908, in arguing for employment protection laws). Nonetheless, it is not a big leap to see this article as the first Brandeis Brief of sorts, targeting not a specific court in a real case, but all courts in all such cases. The authors offered a sweeping change in the law while presenting it, perfectly, as the inevitable outgrowth of existing strands of doctrine. It was far more than that.

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<sup>2</sup> Also, truly *amateur* photography, without a contract as Warren and Brandeis discuss, had become the craze by 1890, notably with the sale of George Eastman's new "Kodak" camera.

<sup>3</sup> Oliver W. Holmes, Jr., *The Common Law* 1 (1881). Holmes' classic work is also part of the Legal Legend Series (Quid Pro Law, forthcoming 2010).

<sup>4</sup> Almost immediately it was recognized as "one of the most brilliant excursions in the field of theoretical jurisprudence," Elbridge L. Adams, *The Right of Privacy, and its Relation to the Law of Libel*, 39 Am. L. Rev. 37, 37 (1905). It remains so today.

So why did they care so much about privacy and about (they probably admitted to themselves) the lack of explicit recognition of such a right in common law precedent? For Warren, the impetus was personal, or at least so the story goes; for Brandeis, there may have been an ambition and restlessness of his powerful mind – he had not much earlier graduated from Harvard Law at age 20, sporting its highest average ever – that saw his friend’s plight and gave detail to it, and found a way to make a difference beyond his law office work.

Samuel Warren’s back story is legendary, though like many such legends it has become increasingly clear that layers of tradition and legal storytelling turned it into more myth than reality. He was incensed when a yellow-journalism photographer invaded his daughter’s wedding and printed photos of discrete moments. As an established lawyer in Boston’s elite bar, and a member of a recognized family, Warren did not need that invasion or publicity. He was personally repulsed by the press’s conduct and attention to him.

Or at least that is, roughly and simplistically perhaps, how the story goes. Furthermore, the legend had the backing of none other than the later “Dean of Torts,” William Prosser (a real dean, famously, at Berkeley from 1948-1961). Prosser eventually shaped and cajoled the new tort of privacy into four categories of accepted law<sup>5</sup> – appropriation of name or likeness, intrusion upon seclusion, false light, and publicizing private facts – all while spinning the yarn about the Boston press versus the blue-blood Warrens and their daughter’s wedding.

Turns out, it could not have happened that way. Warren’s oldest daughter (of his eventual six children) was, at most, seven years old at the time. She hardly went crying to daddy about those mean *paparazzi* ruining her big day.

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<sup>5</sup> See William L. Prosser, *Privacy*, 48 Calif. L. Rev. 383 (1960). Implementation of the four privacy torts was effectively a coup on his part. He wrote the famous article, finding in Warren and Brandeis’s work the emergence of four distinct privacy interests. Then as Reporter for the American Law Institute’s project on the Restatement of the Law, he set forth these four torts. Then as author of the leading hornbook, *The Law of Torts*, Prosser cited the Restatement for its recognition of four privacy torts. Circular, but effective: state courts quickly recognized the four torts of privacy, even in the *civil* law jurisdiction of Louisiana.

The myth was thoroughly debunked in 2008 in a fascinating essay by Amy Gajda.<sup>6</sup> Gajda, then a professor of journalism and law at the University of Illinois (now joining us on the law faculty of Tulane), scoured more than sixty newspaper clippings of the day to put to rest the Prosser-fueled myth of the daughter's nuptials and even other, more plausible accounts.

Out of this research is born, or at least suggested, a new legend: Warren married a U.S. Senator's daughter and thereby fell into the world of "gossip-mongers" and sensational journalism, a "social blight" that follows only those in the public eye. He seemed to be an unwilling conscript to this attention, and reacted negatively to newspaper reports and photos of his own wedding – wedding crashers, to him, were apparently not welcome at the Senator's daughter's ceremony and two after-parties.

It was, wrote *The Washington Post*, the "marriage of the season." But what about successful lawyer Samuel Warren? "There was a bridegroom, too, but bridegrooms are seldom much noticed on occasions of this kind, and he may be passed by with this remark, that there was a bridegroom."<sup>7</sup> Ouch.<sup>8</sup> At least he may have achieved, with the even-less-mentioned Brandeis's help, some measure of revenge on the *Post* (something Richard Nixon could hardly claim).<sup>9</sup> It also may not have helped matters that the press had a field day reporting, a year before the article was published, all over his father-in-law's marriage to a woman twenty years younger than the groom<sup>10</sup> (and not much

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<sup>6</sup> Amy Gajda, *What If Samuel D. Warren Hadn't Married a Senator's Daughter?: Uncovering the Press Coverage That Led to "The Right to Privacy"*, 2008 Mich. St. L. Rev. 35. Other scholars had noted the temporal problem in the face of the "canon" (or just stated their perplexed nature at Warren's motivation), but Gajda's effort is the most sustained and snopes-esque. Before, it was increasingly perceived that Warren's own appearances in the Boston press were surprisingly few (in light of the myth, at least), and fairly benign.

Some of the photos and clippings relevant to this article are included in this work, and were generously provided by Prof. Gajda from her research. The editor thanks her for allowing their inclusion in the ebook.

<sup>7</sup> See Gajda, 2008 Mich. St. L. Rev. at 36-37.

<sup>8</sup> True, but ouch. Facts though entirely true may really harm, as the article makes clear in distinguishing the common law of libel for false facts that affect reputation.

<sup>9</sup> Though interestingly, the attorney later arguing in the Supreme Court for the right to privacy in the face of a new constitutional defense asserted by the press? None other than private citizen Richard Nixon, in losing his clients' claim under a privacy tort. See *Time, Inc. v. Hill*, 385 U.S. 374 (1967). He often expressed outrage about press invasion of private people, like his clients, in statements echoing the Warren meme. Nixon was also present in Dallas the day Kennedy was killed, for a meeting with Pepsi executives. Small world.

<sup>10</sup> See Gajda, 2008 Mich. St. L. Rev. at 41-42.



older than Mrs. Warren). This attention, and speculation about the relationship between the Senator's daughters and their new stepmom, may have prompted Warren to write, though ironically his plea for privacy made him . . . famous.

"It is probably no coincidence," Gajda writes, "that much of the coverage" of the Warren family over the years "is contained in articles headlined with the word 'gossip.'"<sup>11</sup> Fourteen, in fact. The word, and variations on the theme, appear throughout the 1890 article: gossip has become a "trade" which "attains the dignity of print," these legal legends lamented.

That lament, from whatever motivations the two shared, spawned the most significant law review project ever.

*Steven Alan Childress*

New Orleans, Louisiana

April 2010

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### ***Biography***

*Samuel Dennis Warren* was born in Dedham, Massachusetts, in 1852, the son of wealthy and prominent New England parents. He attended Harvard Law School and graduated in 1877 second to only one other student – Brandeis. They eventually formed a law firm and practiced law in Boston. Warren's marriage to Mabel Bayard, daughter of a Senator (and presidential candidate, Secretary of State, and ambassador to Great Britain), began in 1883.

Before Warren published "The Right to Privacy" in 1890, he coauthored two other articles with Brandeis in the new *Harvard Law Review*. By the time of their famous article, Warren had actually withdrawn from their law partnership to run his recently deceased father's paper company. Warren himself died in 1910 at the age of 57. His obituary, below, was ironically spare

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<sup>11</sup> *Id.* at 44.

in light of the reporting before which had caused him to make a federal case out of it.

*Louis Dembitz Brandeis*, born in 1856 in Louisville, Kentucky to Jewish immigrants, became one the most important legal figures in American history. He attended Harvard Law School and graduated in 1877, briefly practicing law in St. Louis before returning to Boston to work with Warren. Brandeis married in 1891, the year after “The Right to Privacy” was published, and eventually he and Alice Goldmark Brandeis had two children. In addition to his influential writings and advocacy for liberal causes exemplified by the “Brandeis Brief,” and earning him the nickname “the people’s attorney,” in 1914 he wrote the nicely titled book *Other People’s Money, and How The Bankers Use It*, opposing large banks, monopolies, and corporate power.

Over the years, he became a frequent supporter of educational, political and Zionist causes (many of which he secretly continued, questionably under current concepts of judicial ethics, long after he joined the Court).<sup>12</sup>

Brandeis became an Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court in 1916. Appointed by Woodrow Wilson but not easily confirmed as the first Jewish member of the Court (and as a “radical,” averred former President William H. Taft, later his colleague on the bench), Brandeis served there until 1939. He died in 1941 at age 84.

On the High Court, he became known for his powerful dissenting and concurring opinions, and many times his magnificent dissenting opinions outlived their immediate effect of falling on the losing side of a case. They withstood the judgment of history, and several became the Court’s accepted rule years later. While many of his opinions showed deference to legislative power and reluctance to a constitutional judicial activism, his opinions

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<sup>12</sup> The little-discussed reality of his continuing political activism and private consulting to politicians and causes, in ways that would not be acceptable today (and probably were not then, had they been known), are well documented in the excellent book by Bruce Allen Murphy, *The Brandeis/Frankfurter Connection* (1982). Justice Felix Frankfurter, appointed in 1939 as Brandeis was retiring, continued this tradition even while proclaiming publicly that “this Court has no excuse for being unless it’s a monastery.” *Id.* at 9. His official position was that he was a “political eunuch.” The truth for both Justices was far more complicated, as Murphy debunks some of the myths surrounding these legal giants.

promoting the free speech right influenced constitutional doctrine for generations, particularly his powerful concurrence, as joined by Holmes, in *Whitney v. California*, 274 U.S. 357 (1927). On civil procedure and federalism, he penned the landmark decision in *Erie Railroad Co. v. Tompkins*, 304 U.S. 64 (1938), ending the reign of federal common law.

Notably, too, Brandeis wrote about freedom from government intrusion into privacy, in a wiretapping case. Dissenting in *Olmstead v. United States*, 277 U.S. 438 (1928), against the majority opinion by Chief Justice Taft, Brandeis found in the U.S. Constitution the Framers' intention for people to have "the right to be let alone – the most comprehensive of rights and the right most valued by civilized men." Some of the same language, and much of the sentiment, is found in his 1890 article, though this time it was in service of a constitutional right. (The Supreme Court overturned *Olmstead* in 1967, in yet another posthumous victory for Brandeis.)

Some of Brandeis's developing First Amendment views do not seem to be, on reflection, entirely consistent with the governmental power against the press that would follow from recognizing the privacy tort he envisioned – though perhaps you will find reconciliation in the article's final section on the limits of the new right to privacy and its test for matters in the public interest. In any event, the inherent tension between a free citizenry and press, and the asserted right to be left alone,<sup>13</sup> is but one of the sub-stories and after-effects of his landmark article that make it so intriguing.

-- S.A.C.

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<sup>13</sup> In a forthcoming 2010 article, Neal Richards, a law professor at Washington University, explores this famous tension and offers his own reconciliation, arguing that Brandeis's view of privacy morphed over the years (as enabling an active citizenry) to become consistent with his championing of free speech rights. It is a very good article to read (available so far only on SSRN) both to learn about the usual view of this tension and his own response to it.

### ***What to look for in this edition of “The Right to Privacy”***

I have tried as much as possible to recreate the article exactly as Warren and Brandeis published it, in the nascent *Harvard Law Review*. My effort turned out to be surprisingly rare because the online and digital versions I compared to the original source article all failed to produce it accurately. Several even edited their own words into the material without indicating so. Needless to say, they did not improve it. I determined to let the words live without channeling through me; the reader deserves that respect, as do these giants of legal thought.

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[Digital version of The Right to Privacy.]

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### **About this edition and its editor**

The *Legal Legends Series* is discussed above, on the copyright page. The ebook edition contains two versions. In the second, the original page numbers are re-inserted for use in legal citation. **The publisher welcomes comments, questions, corrections, and formatting suggestions, as well as suggestions for new additions to the Series with original and descriptive Forewords.**

*Steven Alan Childress* is the Conrad Meyer III Professor of Law at Tulane University, where he teaches legal ethics, torts, and evidence. Alan earned his law degree from Harvard and a Ph.D. in Jurisprudence and Social Policy from Berkeley. He writes about ethics, federal courts, and the First Amendment. He co-authored *Federal Standards of Review*. Its fourth edition, published by LexisNexis in three volumes, is available in 2010; previous editions have been cited by law professors and over 300 courts, including the Supreme Court. He co-edits the *Legal Profession Blog*. Alan is a member of the California and District of Columbia bars, Phi Beta Kappa, and the Law and Society Association.

Louis Brandeis



THE WASHINGTON SOCIETY, WORL'D.  
MARRIAGE OF SENATOR BAYARD'S DAUGHTER  
—A RECEPTION AND TWO BANQUETS.

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The reception that followed at the residence of Senator Bayard was a large affair, and the house was crowded until the bride and groom departed to take the 4 o'clock train for the North. An elaborate collation was served in the dining-room, and souvenirs of wedding cake were provided for the guests. Many handsome presents were made, but were not displayed. Among those present were the Russian, Danish, Argentine, Portuguese, and Spanish Ministers and their families; Senator and Mrs. Cameron, Senator Jones, Senator and Mrs. Pendleton, W. W. Story and wife, Mr. Morrill, and Miss Swan, Miss Frelinghuysen, Mrs. Brewster, Mme. Catalano, Mrs. Stephen Field, Mrs. John Davis, Mrs. George B. Loring, Gen. and Miss Schenck, Mr. and Miss Yulee, the Rev. Dorus Clark, and Mr. and Mrs. Warren. Senator Bayard gave a dinner of 14 covers at Wormley's this evening to the party of Boston friends who came here to be present at his daughter's wedding.

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## **RICH MEN'S CONDUCTOR DEAD.**

**Engineer of "Millionaires' Express,"  
Taken Ill Same Day, near Death.**

David Sanderson, conductor of "the Millionaire Express," running between Morristown, N. J., and Hoboken for the last twenty-five years, died yesterday at his Morristown home after an illness of two weeks. Engineer Benjamin Day of the same train is lying desperately ill in the railroad's hospital at Scranton, Penn., where it is said his chances for recovery are small.

Both Engineer Day and Conductor Sanderson finished their morning run from Morristown to Hoboken two weeks ago, and reported sick. Sanderson requested that he be allowed to go to his home, and Day asked that he be sent to the company's Scranton hospital.

Sanderson had been in the railroad business all his life, and conductor of "the Millionaire Express" since the inauguration of the train twenty-five years ago. He was 67 years old at the time of his death, and was known to every commuter between Morristown and Hoboken. He is survived by a wife and two children.

### **Samuel D. Warren Dead.**

BOSTON, Feb. 20.—Samuel Dennis Warren died of apoplexy to-day at his home in Dedham. Mr. Warren was the son of Samuel Dennis Warren, and was born in 1852. He was graduated from Harvard in 1875 and from the law school in 1877. For a time he was in partnership with Louis D. Brandeis, now counsel for L. R. Glavis, at Washington. In 1890 he relinquished the law and became a paper manufacturer, with mills in Maine. His wife was Miss Mabel Bayard, daughter of Thomas F. Bayard, whom he married at Washington in 1883. She survives him with six children.

### **Dr. Monroe Budd Long.**

Dr. Monroe Budd Long, one of the best-known physicians in New Jersey, died yesterday at his home, 546 Park Avenue, Plainfield, N. J. Dr. Long was born in Martinsville, N. J., in 1849. He was graduated from the College of Physicians and Surgeons in this city in 1874. The next year he settled in Plainfield, and later became associated with Dr. Joel Suthen. He succeeded to the practice when Dr. Suthen died in 1885. Dr. Long leaves a widow, three daughters, and two sons. Mrs. Long before her marriage in 1877 was Miss Cora Goodman of Newark.

### **J. S. Cram's Mother Dies; He Is Away.**

Mrs. Katherine Sergeant Cram, widow of the late Henry A. Cram, the lawyer, and mother of J. Sergeant Cram, died on Saturday at her home, 5 East Thirty-eighth Street, in her 87th year. She had been ill about two weeks. Her daughter, Miss Lillian Cram, and her granddaughter, Miss Charlotte Cram, lived with her. She also leaves another daughter, Mrs. J. Woodward Haven of 18 East Seventy-ninth Street. J. Sergeant Cram is in South Carolina on a hunting trip, as the guest of R. T. Wilson. Messengers have been sent into the woods to notify him of his mother's death.

**The New York Times**

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