

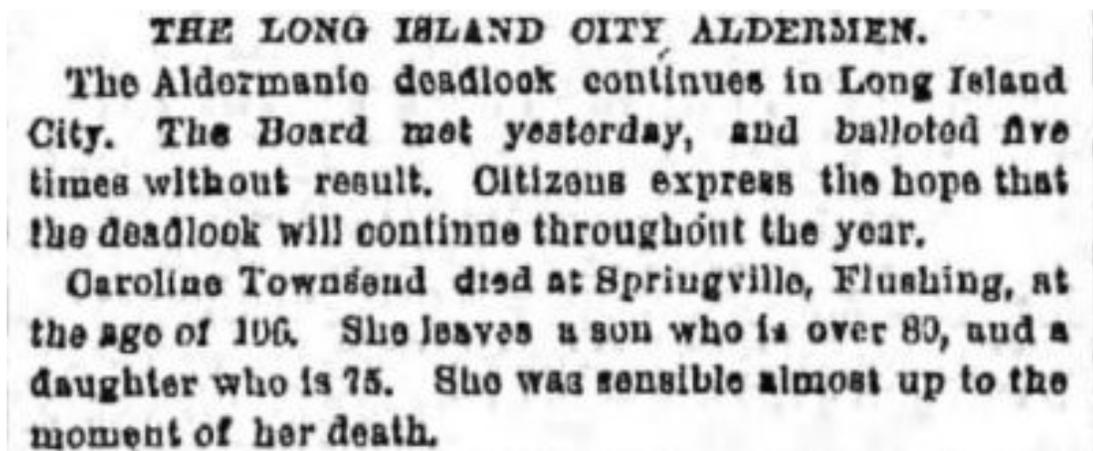
Caroline Townsend: Case Study by Carlos Rodriguez

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My case study focuses on Caroline Townsend, a black woman who lived in Flushing for many of her 112 years of life. According to Douglas C. Ewbank, from 1800 to 1880, the life expectancy of Black American women after 10 years of age was about 41 to 42 years old, a life expectancy which Caroline almost tripled. She was a widow at the time of her passing, with her cause of death listed as "general debilitation," and according to the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* newspaper published three days after her death, she "leaves a son who is over 80 and a daughter who is 75. She was sensible almost up to the moment of her death" (1883, p. 4).



THE LONG ISLAND CITY ALDERMEN.
The Aldermanic deadlock continues in Long Island City. The Board met yesterday, and balloted five times without result. Citizens express the hope that the deadlock will continue throughout the year.
Caroline Townsend died at Springville, Flushing, at the age of 106. She leaves a son who is over 80, and a daughter who is 75. She was sensible almost up to the moment of her death.

I chose to focus on Caroline Townsend due to the relatively high presence of records about her in the FamilySearch databases, including the New York Deaths and Burials 1795-1952, New York State Death Index, United States Federal Census 1880, United States Federal Census 1870, and possibly in the United States Census of 1850, 1840, and 1830. In a few of these census records, Caroline is listed with her children and grandchildren, including her daughter, Isabella Smith, granddaughter Ursula Woodby (both of whom are also interred at the Olde Towne of Flushing Burial Ground), and her great grandsons Clarence, Sebastian, Alexander, and Thomas Woodby. This volume of recorded data connected to Caroline gives us the unique opportunity to trace this lineage and discover a family history and possibly create a family tree.

I began with her oldest daughter, Isabella Smith, who passed just two years after her mother. She was widowed at some point after 1882 when her husband, Stephen Smith, passed some time after 1860 at over 68 years old. Her father is listed as Valentine, which we can assume is the name of Caroline's husband, and in census records, she was listed as the head of the household. Stephen and Isabella are listed in the 1850 United States Census with their daughters Hannah (b. 1837), Ester (b. 1840), and Percilla (b. 1843). In addition, in 1860, they

were listed as living in a home with their daughter, Caroline (b. 1844), as well as the Johnson family, whose youngest daughter Sarah J. (b. 1852) would be found in 1870 living in a home with Isabella and Caroline.