

Otto Schneider and the Sands Family: Case Study by Amy Mackin

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Otto Schneider first drew my attention with his cause of death: murder. His initial information from the Stone-Hartmann Index was incredibly sparse - only a name, date of death, and cause of death. Unfortunately, most of the information about Otto revolves around his death. His murder was announced in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, where it's specified that he was found with his papers and photos of his parents ("The Murder of Otto Schneider," 1893) which would explain how his body was identified.

THE MURDER OF OTTO SCHNEIDER.

His Handbag Containing Papers and Pictures Found in the Meadow.

Constables Smith and Keracbel of Flushing think they have a clew that may lead to the discovery of the murderer or murderers of Otto Schneider, who was found with his skull fractured in a cornfield, on the outskirts of Flushing, October 3. Schneider died in the Flushing hospital two days later. A stone covered with blood lay near him when found in the cornfield, and, with other evidences of violence, left no doubt that he had met with foul play.

A bootblack named Jimmy Prentieze, 12 years old, found a handbag on the Flushing meadows containing papers and pictures of the parents of the murdered man. The theory is that Schneider was attacked in the cornfield and robbed and that the bag was thrown from a car window, after having been searched for valuables.

The man accused of his murder, a Frank Lijox, was arrested in Long Island City on May 25, 1894, although he claimed his innocence against multiple charges ("Fought for the Prisoner", 1894).

<p style="text-align: center;">FOUGHT FOR THE PRISONER.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Four Constables and a Policeman Tried to Arrest Frank Lijox.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Wanted Variously for Murder, Grand Larceny and Chicken Stealing.</p> <p>LONG ISLAND CITY, L. I., May 25.— There was a lively fight over a prisoner out side of the Long Island City Police Court this morning.</p> <p>Frank Lijox, a Pole, of 150 Review avenue, was arraigned before Justice Duffy on complaint of Herman Elinski, a saloon-keeper, with whom the defendant boarded, accused of stealing two gold watches from Elinski in the night of March 10. As the evidence was insufficient the defendant was discharged.</p> <p>As Lijox started to leave the courtroom four constables and Court Officer Kelly intercepted him, and said they had warrants for his arrest. The constables were John P. Krebel, of College Point; James Smith, of Flushing; Henry Siben, and Robert Williams, of College Point. They as well as Court Officer</p>	<p>Kelly produced warrants and shook them under Lijox's nose.</p> <p>Constable Smith's warrants accused Lijox of stealing, on the night of May 20, a gold watch, valued at \$50, a revolver and a valise from Charles Airy, of Flushing, and also of stealing from Edna Schultz, the night of May 16, seven chickens.</p> <p>The warrant held by Constable Krebel, charged Lijox with having killed Otto Schneider, on the McCreary farm, at Bayside, Oct. 1, 1893, by hitting him on the head with a blunt instrument. Schneider was found with his skull fractured, and died in the Flushing Hospital without being able to tell the name of his assailant.</p> <p>Constables Krebel and Williams, who have been working on the alleged murder case for some time, were lately informed by Elinski that Lijox had told him that he had been compelled to leave Bayside on account of having trouble with Otto Schneider, and that he struck him on the head with a club and did not know whether he was dead or alive when he left him.</p> <p>When Lijox learned that he was wanted for the murder of Schneider he asserted his innocence and said that he had ever made such a statement to Elinski. He said the latter was trying to send him to prison because he had some trouble with him.</p> <p>The five officers all claimed Lijox as their prisoner, and when they attempted to take him a lively scrimmage occurred. The officers all pulled out handcuffs and tried to put them on the prisoner, who was pulled about until his coat was nearly torn off his back. Lijox became very much excited and called for help.</p>
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In trying to find more information about Schneider, I found a record in New York Deaths and Burials, 1795-1952 that details an Otto Schneider who died on the same day: October 3rd 1893. However, this death record has a note under his name that says, "supposed name". Unfortunately, the original document is not available for digital viewing, so there are very few details as to what this means.

If Otto Schneider is his name, he can be found in the 1892 New York Census, where he's listed as living in Brooklyn with an estimated birth year of 1855. By looking at the original record, you can see he's listed as a conductor who is living with his wife, 26-year-old Florentine Schneider. By looking into Florentine Schneider, I discovered a birth record of their unnamed female child in 1890 in Brooklyn as well as her maiden name, Hill. Additionally, Florentine

Schneider can be found to have survived her husband by several years, appearing in the 1925 New York State Census at age 60, cementing her birth year between 1865 and 1866.

Potentially, Florentine may also be found in the 1880 United States census as Flora Hill, the daughter of Lucy Hill - with an unnamed/mentioned husband. However, it cannot be forgotten that all of this information hinges on his name, which is questioned in his death record.

After struggling to find more information on Otto Schneider, I branched out to investigate a family I found in my section of the records: the Sands family. Three girls on the list, Bessie, Florence E., and Ada are all listed as the daughter of Henry and [?] Sands. It should be noted that Ada is transcribed in the Stone-Hartmann Index as Ada Sansa but was found in both New York Deaths and Burials, 1795-1952 and New York, State Death Index, 1880-1956 as Ada Sands. Further research through the New York Deaths and Burials, 1795-1952 led me to the discovery of their mothers name, Kesiah, although the spelling of her name differs from one record to another, being spelt Kezicih, Kiseah, and Kesiah. All three girls are listed as black, with parents Kiseah and Henry Sands and born in Flushing, leaving me confident that they were sisters. I tried to branch out to find more of the family and ended up discovering a number of children.

The first child I found was an unnamed child of Henry and Kesiah Sands, found in two death records. This unnamed child was found first in New York Deaths and Burials, 1795-1952 as an 11-year-old black child of unknown gender who was born around 1884 in Manhasset and died in Flushing on December 4th, 1895 and in the New York State Death Index, 1880-1956, having died on the same day. A look at the original record in the Death Index marks the child as "F" Sands, which may be an indicator of gender or name. Next in order of birth is the aforementioned Ada Sands, found on the Stone-Hartmann Index, having been born around 1887. Ada died around the age of 1, on September 8th of 1888. Next to be born was Florence, also found on the Stone-Hartmann Index, on July 6th, 1889 and unfortunately dying four days later. Next was Bessie Sands in 1892, who survived for only two years. The second child I discovered, separate from the Index, was Kaziah Margaret Sands. Her birth is detailed in two records, from New York Births And Christenings, 1640-1962 with a birth date of September 6th, 1892. Here, Henry is recorded as being 29, giving him an estimated birth year of 1863 while Kesiah is listed as 31-year-old Kaziah Valentine Sands, with an estimated birth year of 1861. The matching (relatively, in Kesiah's case) names, race, and location led me to believe that Kaziah Margaret was a part of the same family. Interestingly, I could not find a death record for Kaziah, so she presumably survived until adulthood.

Next to be discovered through New York Death and Burials, 1795-1952, was William Henry Sands, born in Flushing in 1896, by “Kersiah” and dying only a year later on July 19th, 1897. Finally, Mary L. Sands was discovered in the New York City Municipal Deaths, 1795-1949, born in 1901 to Henry and Keziah in Queens, specifically 156 Lincoln St. She died less than a year later on June 17th, 1901.

As is the struggle with genealogical research, I did find some conflicting information on the family of Henry and Kesiah Sands in Queens. In the 1900 United States Census, a Henry and Kesiah Sands are listed as living in Queens with two children: 10-year-old step-daughter Dasie and 2 year old son, Harry. This Henry was 26 at the time of the census, making his approximate birth year 1874, a significant difference from the Kaziah Margaret Sands record that lists his approximate birth year as 1863. Her mother Kesiah is listed as 44 years old, being born around 1856, as compared to the 1861 birth year in Kaziah Margaret’s record. Potentially, Kaziah also would have been alive and living with her parents at this time, as she would have been 8 years old. As is the one of the many struggles of genealogical research, it is not clear which record is correct or if they do, in fact, refer to the same person despite the conflicting information.

From these records, we can see that Henry and Kesiah Sands lost, at the very least, four children in a span of less than ten years. Child mortality rates were high at the time, with an estimated 280 to 320 black children per 1,000 dying before their fifth birthday, with an addendum that mortality rates were most likely higher for black people living in the city. Mortality rates tell us that many children did not survive but they cannot begin to speak to the pain of losing a child, let alone several.