Cornelius Vanderbilt II was born on November 27, 1843 on Staten Island, New York to William Henry Vanderbilt (1821–1885) and Maria Louisa Kissam.[1] Vanderbilt was active in numerous organizations including the Saint Nicholas Society of the City of New York, YMCA, Red Cross, Salvation Army, Trinity Church, St. Bartholomew's Church, Sunday Breakfast Association, and the Newport Country Club.[1]
On February 4, 1867, he married Alice Claypoole Gwynne (1845–1934), daughter of Abraham Evan Gwynne and Rachel Moore Flagg.[5] The two met at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church where both taught Sunday School.

Together, they had:[2]

- Alice Gwynne Vanderbilt (1869–1874), was born in 1869 but died of a childhood illness in 1874 at the age of five.
- William Henry Vanderbilt II (1870–1892) died of typhoid fever while attending Yale University.
- Cornelius "Neily" Vanderbilt III (1873–1942), whom he disinherited for marrying Grace Graham Wilson (1870–1953) without his approval.[6]
- Gertrude Vanderbilt (1875–1942), who married Harry Payne Whitney (1872–1930)[7]
- Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt (1877–1915), who died aboard the RMS Lusitania, and who married Ellen French, and after their divorce, Margaret Emerson (1884–1960).[8]
- Reginald Claypoole Vanderbilt (1880–1925), who first married society debutante Cathleen Neilson, and later Gloria Morgan.[9]

A stroke in 1896 compelled him to reduce his active business involvement. He died of a cerebral hemorrhage shortly after 6 a.m. on September 12, 1899, at his home, West Fifty-seventh Street, in Manhattan, New York City.[1] On his death in 1899, family leadership passed to his first brother, William Kissam Vanderbilt. His philanthropy had been such that he did not increase the wealth that had been left to him.[2] His estate at the time of his death was appraised at $72,999,867, $20 million of which was real estate.[11] $73 million is equivalent to $2.27 billion[12] in 2020 dollars.[12]

Descendants

Through his son, Reginald, he was the grandfather of Gloria Laura Vanderbilt, the socialite and fashion designer, and the great-grandfather of news anchor Anderson Hays Cooper.[2]

Through his son, Alfred, he was the grandfather of William Henry Vanderbilt III, Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt Jr., and George Washington Vanderbilt III.[2]

Legacy
The Fifth Avenue mansions he, his brothers, and his sons lived in have been demolished, but the Newport, Rhode Island vacation home he built, *The Breakers*, still stands as a memory of his lifestyle.[2]

### See also

- The Breakers
- Vanderbilt Family

### References

3. "Wm. H. Vanderbilt Dead. He is Prostrated by Paralysis While Talking to Robert Jarrett, President of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and Dies Without Speaking. His Vast Wealth Estimated at Two Hundred Millions" (https://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/washingtonpost_historical/access/277689512.html?dids=277689512:277689512&FMT=ABS&FMTS=ABS:FT&date=DEC+09%2C+1885&author=&pub=The+Washington+Post&desc=WM.+H.+VANDERBILT+DEAD&pqat=google). *The Washington Post*. December 9, 1885. Retrieved August 1, 2008. "William H. Vanderbilt died at his residence in this city, of paralysis, at half-past two o'clock this afternoon. He arose this morning at his usual hour, and at breakfast served to the members of the family, most of whom were present, he appeared to be in his usual health and in a more than usually happy frame of mind."
Further reading