

Mary “Midnight Mary” Hart

A guide to the historical record and the legend

Evergreen Cemetery · New Haven, Connecticut

Research edition · September 8, 2026

What this collection contains

37 catalog entries, six historical page images, five factual extracts from Evergreen’s current burial search, a monument transcription, newspaper and photograph links, cultural sources and routes to missing records.

What remains unverified

No original Mary Hart death certificate, burial permit, underlying interment ledger, contemporary 1872 obituary or authenticated lifetime portrait was recovered. Later accounts do not establish a medical diagnosis or premature burial. The collection is an initial research edition, not a complete account of all surviving material.

How to use the download

Extract the ZIP and open START_HERE.html. Search names, dates, material types and included page text. Open a historical scan to read the original page. Use Catalog.txt for a plain-text search, catalog.json for data reuse or Mary_Hart.sqlite for full-text queries. Publisher and repository links need an internet connection.

Cite original evidence

Keep the MH item identifier, source author, publication, original page and access date with every extract. Page images, factual database extracts, modern retellings and research leads have different evidentiary value.

1. The grave and the date conflict

MH-001 • Mary E. Hart — Evergreen burial index

Evergreen's current search displays MARY E HART; Died: 10/18/1872; Age: 47; Section: EVERGREEN AVENUE; Plot: 50; Grave: 4.

<https://evergreencem.org/search-burial-records/>

MH-002 • Mary E. Hart — monument inscription

The inscription records birth on December 16, 1824 and death at midnight on October 15, 1872, following a collapse at noon. These dates give age 47, not 48. The inscription does not state a medical diagnosis or prove premature burial.

<https://www.damnedct.com/midnight-mary-new-haven/>

MH-004 • Fidelia Hart — nearby indexed plot

Evergreen search displays FIDELIA HART; Died: 08/14/1885; Age: 85; Section: EVERGREEN AVENUE; Plot: 50; Grave: 3.

<https://evergreencem.org/search-burial-records/>

MH-005 • James P. Hart — nearby indexed plot

Evergreen search displays JAMES P. HART; Died: 01/12/1877; Age: 60; Section: EVERGREEN AVENUE; Plot: 51; Grave: 1.

<https://evergreencem.org/search-burial-records/>

MH-006 • Joanna Hart — nearby indexed plot

Evergreen search displays JOANNA HART; Died: 01/31/1870; Age: 77; Section: EVERGREEN AVENUE; Plot: 51; Grave: 2.

<https://evergreencem.org/search-burial-records/>

MH-007 • Susan Pierpont — nearby indexed plot

Evergreen search displays SUSAN PIERPONT; Died: 07/23/1887; Age: 94; Section: EVERGREEN AVENUE; Plot: 51; Grave: 3.

<https://evergreencem.org/search-burial-records/>

Interpretation: October 18 may represent a different event or an indexing error, but that has not been established. Preserve the displayed Died label until Evergreen checks the original ledger. Nearby lot numbers do not establish kinship or exact grave coordinates.

2. The family-identity problem

MH-012 • Benham's 1872–73 New Haven directory — Mrs. Mary E. Hart, p. 261

The directory lists Mrs. Mary E. Hart at 269 Orange and James P. Hart at 269 Orange, corner Bradley. This is a contemporary name-and-address lead; the directory alone does not establish that this Mary is the woman buried in plot 50.

Public-domain historical publication. Retain author, publication and digitizing repository credits. Do not replace the documented address with the Winthrop Avenue address used in later ghost stories.

<https://archive.org/details/1872NewHavenCTDirectory>

MH-011 • Yale obituary — James Porter Hart, p. 261

The obituary reports James Porter Hart's death on January 10, 1877, aged 59, and a February 11, 1846 marriage to Mary E. Pierpont of New Haven. It says she survived him with one son.

Public-domain historical publication. Retain author, publication and digitizing repository credits. The survival statement conflicts with identifying this wife as Mary who died in 1872. The 1873 Fidelia marriage notice supplies another lead, not a conclusive resolution. The obituary date and age also differ from Evergreen's James entry.

<https://archive.org/details/1870t80obituary00yaleuoft>

MH-013 • College Courant — James P. Hart and Fidelia Pierpont marriage notice

Yale Personals in The College Courant, vol. 13, no. 12, pp. 143–144, reports the September 22 marriage of James P. Hart and Miss Fidelia Pierpont, both of New Haven. This is a related-person notice, not Mary's obituary.

Public-domain historical publication. Retain author, publication and digitizing repository credits. The issue is identified as public domain in JSTOR's catalog. Compare the actual marriage record before resolving the conflicting 1877 obituary. Notice wording was recovered from the search index. The attempted PDF returned a client challenge; its page image was not inspected.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/44975332>

Research conclusion: the shared address, nearby graves and name matches are useful leads. They do not justify silently assigning a maiden name, spouse or child to Mary without resolving the obituary's survival statement.

3. Photographs, newspapers and folklore

MH-021 • Midnight Mary inspires a Halloween poem

2011-10-28 — Jim Shelton; photograph Arnold Gold / New Haven Register

Jim Shelton reports Vincent Casanova's poem inspired by the local legend. The story documents Mary's later cultural remembrance; it does not reproduce her death certificate. Arnold Gold's accompanying photograph shows Casanova at the grave.

<https://www.nhregister.com/news/article/Midnight-Mary-inspires-as-muse-for-Clinton-man-s-11570226.php>

MH-022 • Lantern tour visits Midnight Mary

2012-10-14 — Alexandra Sanders; photograph Arnold Gold / New Haven Register

Alexandra Sanders reports an Evergreen lantern tour associated with the New Haven Museum. An Arnold Gold photograph shows Mary's grave. The article is evidence of public interpretation of the legend in 2012.

<https://www.nhregister.com/news/article/Take-a-lantern-and-go-visit-Midnight-Mary-at-New-11525692.php>

MH-023 • Midnight Mary continues to haunt Evergreen Cemetery

2017-10-20; updated 2017-10-23 — Jessica Lerner; photographs Peter Hvizdak / Hearst Connecticut Media

Jessica Lerner reports local legends, museum interpretation and cemetery manager Dale Fiore's recollection. Peter Hvizdak photographs document the monument. The supernatural anecdotes are recollections, not independently verified events.

<https://www.nhregister.com/news/article/Midnight-Mary-continues-to-haunt-Evergreen-12294839.php>

MH-024 • Connecticut Folklore: Fact or Fiction?

1987 — Carolyn F. Stephenson; Yale–New Haven Teachers Institute, 1987, IV, unit 87.04.05

Carolyn F. Stephenson's Yale–New Haven Teachers Institute unit discusses Midnight Mary on PDF pages 5–6. It presents premature-burial, ghost and curse variants as material for studying folklore. It is an early dated written account located in this search, not proof of the story's origin.

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/curriculum/units/files/87.04.05.pdf>

3. Photographs and cultural memory

MH-028 • The Curse of Midnight Mary — Loren Connors

Released 2009-02-17 — Loren Connors; mastered by James Plotkin

The artist's album page says the recordings were made at Evergreen Cemetery in 1981 and rediscovered in 2008. Nine pieces connect Mary's legend with experimental acoustic music. The artwork is a modern artistic representation, not a lifetime portrait of Mary.

<https://lorenconnorsnyc.bandcamp.com/album/the-curse-of-midnight-mary>

MH-029 • Monument photograph — Flickr

Taken 2008-01-01; uploaded 2008-07-12 — 826 PARANORMAL / Flickr

A visitor photograph identifies Mary's gravesite at Evergreen Cemetery, New Haven. It documents the monument in the modern period, not Mary during her lifetime.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/nspirit/2660901748>

MH-030 • Grave of Midnight Mary — Atlas Obscura gallery

Place entry 2012-05-21 — J. W. Ocker and credited Atlas Obscura contributors

The place entry includes contributor photographs of the grave and a folklore account adapted from J. W. Ocker's New England Grimpendum. Individual photograph dates and rights must be checked on the source.

<https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/grave-midnight-mary>

MH-031 • NHI 1: Midnight Mary — Yale inscriptions project

Page 2024-11-10 — New Haven Inscriptions project, Yale CampusPress

A Yale-hosted inscriptions-project entry identifies Mary's Evergreen monument and provides a photograph and transcription. The main page was intermittently unavailable during research; photographer identity and image date remain unverified.

<https://campuspress.yale.edu/yaleinscriptions/2024/11/10/midnight-mary/>

No lifetime portrait has been authenticated. Do not substitute the unrelated Mary E. Hart photographed in Arctic clothing around 1909, a still from the 1933 film *Midnight Mary*, or a modern illustration. Modern monument photographs remain at their credited publishers.

4. Recovering the missing originals

MH-016 • Mary's death record or certificate

No original Mary Hart death certificate, town death entry or physician's return was recovered in this research pass. New Haven Health directs researchers seeking records before 1877 to the Connecticut State Library.

<https://nhvhealth.org/vital-statistics/>

MH-017 • Burial register, permit, lot ownership and grave plan

Ask Evergreen for the underlying interment ledger, burial permit or burial return, lot-owner register and authenticated plot diagram for Mary E. Hart, Evergreen Avenue, plot 50, grave 4. Include adjoining plot 51 for comparison.

<https://evergreencem.org/contact-us/>

MH-018 • New Haven vital-record collection, FamilySearch catalog

Catalog 580583 describes New Haven records of births, marriages and deaths, 1639–1902, and indexes, 1639–1914. Locate the volume covering deaths in October 1872 and the corresponding Hart index entry.

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/catalog/580583>

MH-019 • Hale inscription survey — New Haven Museum MSS 23

The museum's MSS 23 inventory places Evergreen Cemetery inscriptions in Box 1, folders E–I. Box 3 holds the separate name index. Request the Hart and Pierpont entries with page headings and surrounding inscriptions.

<https://www.newhavenmuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/MSS-23.pdf>

MH-020 • New Haven newspapers — October 1872 search route

New Haven Free Public Library holds the Register from January 1871 and Palladium runs covering 1872. Request death and funeral notices for October 15–20, 1872, using Mary E. Hart, Mrs. Hart and Pierpont/Pierpoint variants.

<https://nhfpl.org/how-do-i/research/local-history/>

MH-035 • A claimed 1979 college-newspaper series

A reader identifying himself as John Poulton recalled a 1979 University of New Haven newspaper series about Midnight Mary in a January 2012 comment. The actual issues were not located.

<https://www.damnedct.com/midnight-mary-new-haven/>

Six unsent request drafts are supplied in Records_Request_Drafts.txt. No custodian has been contacted and no fee has been authorized. Keep new replies, images and permission statements with their original citations.

5. Classroom use and stewardship

Questions for a source-comparison exercise

1. Which date appears on the monument, and which date appears in the operator's search? What original record could explain the difference?
2. Why does a shared directory address support a research lead but not conclusively establish a marriage?
3. What does the 1877 survival statement require a genealogist to investigate?
4. What can a newspaper story about a legend establish about the period in which it was published?
5. Which images in this collection are historical documents, and which photographs are modern views of a historical object?

Preserve provenance

Source_Provenance.json records the included scans' publication details, image URLs, processing and rights assessment. SHA256SUMS.txt records package-file checksums. Save new discoveries with their full page, original wording, date, custodian and reproduction terms. Keep corrections explicit rather than overwriting conflicting evidence.

Search limits

This edition draws on public web research, Evergreen's live search, Internet Archive historical publications, indexed newspaper material and repository finding aids. FamilySearch original images were not retrieved. JSTOR supplied indexed wording but its PDF presented a client challenge. Paywalled newspaper databases, private cemetery ledgers and unscanned collections were not searched in full. An absent item is not evidence that no record survives.

Rights and representation

The six included nineteenth-century page images are public domain in the United States. Modern photographs, journalism, podcasts and music retain separate rights; their catalog links do not license reproduction. No generated illustration is used as historical evidence. The SGC bookplate is contemporary archive branding.

Edition and citation

Silent Grounds Collective, Mary "Midnight Mary" Hart collection, SGC-MH-003, research edition September 8, 2026. Add the stable MH item number, title, original publication and printed page. Catalog source access date: September 8, 2026.