Praise for *Vivian Maier Developed*

"Astonishing."—*People*
"A book not to miss."—*USA Today*
"Must read."—*Town and Country*
"Riveting."—*Vogue*
"Engrossing."—*Newsday*
"Compelling."—*Kirkus* (Starred Review)

"This definitive account will leave readers in awe."
—*Publisher's Weekly* (Starred Review)

"Marks opens doors and fits scattered pieces together, illustrating her precise narrative and thoughtful analysis with nearly 400 of Vivian Maier's stunning, witty, and unnerving portraits, self-portraits, and street photographs, many published here for the first time."
—*Booklist* (Starred Review)

"*Vivian Maier Developed* is a thorough, fascinating overview of an artist working for art's sake. Marks tells Maier's life with the intimacy of a scrapbook. Her selection of photographs, artifacts, and documents is judicious and satisfying."
—*The New York Times*

"[Marks brings] a panoply of talents: extraordinary sleuthing skills, intuition, resourcefulness and persistence; profound empathy; an astute visual aesthetic and highly developed powers of observation; and last but not least, a logical and lucid prose style. . . . Considering hardly a thing was known about Maier when Marks began her project, her achievement in documenting Maier's peregrinations and troubles with such clarity and feeling is remarkable. . . . [Vivian Maier] would likely love—the astounding work Marks herself has done in creating this biography. You will surely close this excellent book feeling inspired."
—*The Washington Post*

"A gorgeous artifact that deepens our understanding of the mystery and then methodically unravels it. Far and away the most complete picture we have of the photographer to date."
—*The Wall Street Journal*

VIVIAN MAIER DEVELOPED

The Untold Story of the Photographer Nanny

ANN MARKS

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Page ii: Circle self-portrait, New York, 1955 *(Vivian Maier)*

To my mother, Harriet Marks,

public television's first publicist and the pioneer

promoter of Mister Rogers,

who passed away at the age of ninety-five

during the final preparation of this book.

To photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed.

It means putting oneself into a certain relation to the world.

—Susan Sontag, *On Photography*

CONTENTS

Self-portrait, Chicago, 1956 *(Vivian Maier)*

INTRODUCTION

American/French • Authoritative/Reserved • Caring/Cold
Feminine/Masculine • Fun/Strict • Generous/Unyielding
Jovial/Cynical • Neat/Packrat • Nice/Mean • Passionate/Frigid
Personable/Stern • Polite/Brusque • Responsible/Inattentive
Social/Solitary • Feminist/Traditional • Visible/Reclusive
Mary Poppins/Wicked Witch

—Descriptions of Vivian Maier by those who knew her best

The story begins in 2007, at a foreclosure auction in Chicago. When one of the buyers, John Maloof, closely examined his purchase—abandoned boxes stuffed with photographs he hoped to use for a book project—he uncovered a treasure trove: thousands of negatives shot by an unknown photographer. Maloof was only twenty-six years old, but his instincts told him that the pictures were special. He hunted down other buyers who had attended the sale and bought their boxes of prints and negatives. In fits and starts, he scooped up the majority of the photographer's work.

The original buyers were able to identify the photographer as Vivian Maier because the name appeared on processing envelopes in their boxes. In an effort to find her, they repeatedly searched the internet but, time and again, they came up empty-handed. That is, until April 2009, when an obituary popped up revealing that a recently deceased Chicago nanny was the one who had taken all the pictures. She was called a "photographer extraordinaire" and "second mother to John, Lane, and Matthew." Excited and intrigued, Maloof tracked down the family that had placed the death notice to learn more.

At the same time, after devoting the bulk of his savings to the purchase of Vivian's photographs, Maloof contemplated the best way to share and market

the work. Seeking feedback from those more expert than himself, he prepared a blog containing some of his favorite Vivian Maier photographs to link to the Hardcore Street Photography group on Flickr. When he clicked "Share," everything changed. Vivian's images were met with such enthusiasm that they began to go viral, with admirers sharing and resharing the photographs all over the globe. While relatively small in number, the original two dozen Flickr images were full of character and emotion, featuring a diverse array of topics and people: there was literally something for everyone.

Eventually, Maloof partnered with another buyer, Jeffrey Goldstein, to prepare and archive their combined portfolios. Few of the more than 140,000 images they had purchased were prints; most existed only as negatives or undeveloped film. Examination of Vivian's materials as a whole brought the stunning realization that she had only seen seven thousand of her photographs, the number that existed in hard copy. In fact, 45,000 exposures had never even been developed. Master photographer Mary Ellen Mark considered this highly unusual circumstance and articulated what everyone else was thinking: "Something is wrong. A piece of the puzzle is missing."

As Maloof and Goldstein rolled out their portfolios, evidence of Vivian's achievement and talent mounted. A nonstop cycle of shows, lectures, books, and accolades ensued, fueled by media that couldn't stop talking about the new nanny wonder. Newspapers, magazines, websites, and television networks the world over breathlessly told her story. The *New York Times' Lens* blog exclaimed, "The release of every new image on the web causes a sensation."

Vivian Maier Archive Components

65% negatives

30% undeveloped film

5% prints

Original images shared on Flickr *(Vivian Maier)*

The *Los Angeles Times* wrote that Vivian's work was "characterized by a crisp formal intelligence, a vivid sense of humor, and a keen grasp of the serendipitous choreography of daily life." She was called a "genius" by the Associated Press and "one of the most remarkable stories in American photography" by *Smithsonian* magazine. The *New York Times*' venerable art critic Roberta Smith claimed that Vivian's initial exhibits "nominate a new candidate for the pantheon of great 20th-century street photographers."

Vivian Maier debut, Chicago Cultural Center, 2011 *(John Maloof)*

Concluding that the story of hidden talent and its improbable discovery would make a compelling documentary, Maloof began to research Vivian's background. He was proven right when interviews with a dozen of her Chicago employers revealed that they knew almost nothing about the woman who had lived in their homes and cared for their children. While many were aware she had taken pictures, they never imagined the extent of her photography. Some offered completely contradictory descriptions of their nanny's personality and behavior. The more Maloof discovered, the more mysterious Vivian became.

The resulting 2014 film, *Finding Vivian Maier*, received an Academy Award nomination and launched the photographer nanny into a rarefied stratosphere of fame. The documentary's global audience was just as enthralled by her baffling background as by her pictures. The filmmakers found genealogical records revealing that Vivian had spent six years with relatives in France as a child and had lived in Manhattan until she was thirty, but were unable to locate anyone in New York who remembered her or her family. She spent the remainder of her life in Chicago, yet none of Vivian's employers could accurately relay where she was born, where she had been raised, if she had family or friends, why she started

taking pictures, why she hadn't become a professional photographer, why she didn't process much of her work, or why she didn't share it with others. These questions were posed in the documentary but many remained unanswered, leaving millions of fans hoping that someone might unlock the nanny's secrets.

This was precisely when I entered the orbit circling Vivian Maier, and my involvement was as unlikely as that of all others associated with the photographer. I am a former corporate executive, and for three decades my purview included research and analysis geared toward understanding the desires, motivations, and behavior of everyday people. For me, no detail is inconsequential, and no question is left unanswered. My greatest passion is solving quotidian mysteries—the more convoluted, the better. One wintry afternoon in late 2014, I wrapped myself in a blanket and watched Maloof's documentary in advance of the upcoming Academy Awards. Like many, I was captivated by the photographs but puzzled by the opposing descriptions of Vivian's personality, the lack of understanding surrounding her photographic behavior and goals, and the absence of information about her family and personal life. But where most saw an impenetrable mystery, I saw gaps that needed filling, and felt compelled to unravel the story that had confounded so many.

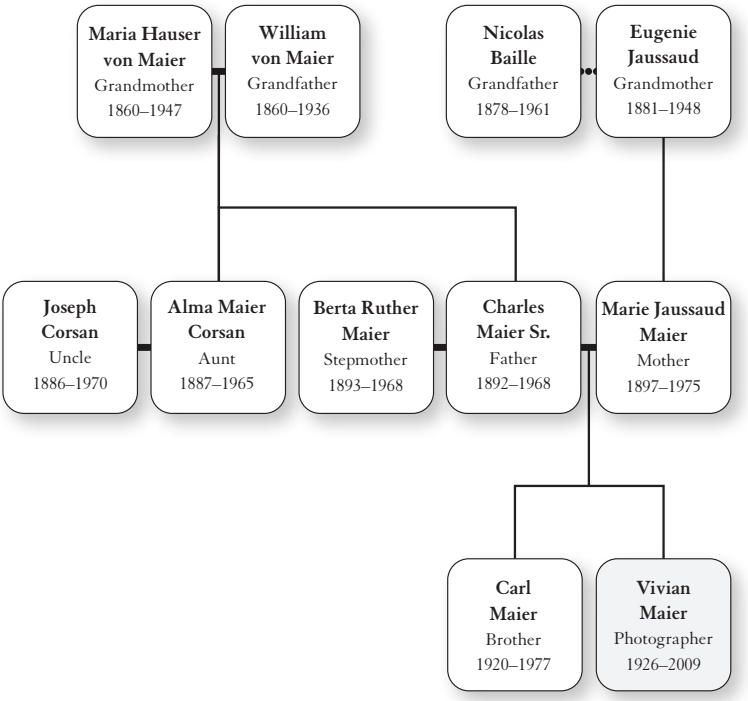
Within weeks I had contacted John Maloof and Jeffrey Goldstein with an offer to collaborate. They told me of a pressing need to find out what happened to Vivian's brother, Charles, who became untraceable after the 1940s. As the direct heir to her valuable estate, it was imperative that he and his descendants be found. A few months later, I discovered a baptism record for a Karl Maier that had rested for almost a century in the cavernous archives of Manhattan's Saint Peter's Lutheran Church. This finding led to confirmation that Vivian's brother never married or had legitimate children—and that he had passed away in New Jersey in 1977. His death affirmed what most had suspected: there was no clear heir to Vivian's estate. The *Chicago Tribune* featured me on their front page and the Cook County estate administrators reached out to exchange information. Suddenly and unexpectedly, I became part of the Vivian Maier phenomenon.

As my research continued, Maloof and Goldstein independently requested that I write a comprehensive and authoritative biography of Vivian Maier and offered me access to all of their photographs. Thus, I became the only person in the world to examine their combined archive of 140,000 images, which served as the cornerstone of this biography. They graciously furnished the technical expertise that I lacked by connecting me to industry experts, and the administrators of Vivian's estate generously granted me permission to use her photographs to help tell her story. I was further armed with other materials from Maloof's

collection: tape recordings, films, records, and personal artifacts. All this ultimately amounted to the tip of the Maier family iceberg; buried deep under the surface was a hidden history of illegitimacy, bigamy, parental rejection, violence, alcohol, drugs, and mental illness.

My first task was to construct a family tree to create a framework for the world into which Vivian Maier was born. The companion burial map that I prepared revealed an uncommon story: Vivian's ten New York family members were all buried in the metropolitan area, but in nine different places! Most people, logically, share cemetery plots with close relatives, often with a broader collection of kin. This family's final places of rest signaled a clan at such odds in life that they had intentionally separated for eternity.

My hunch was that Vivian's brother—who had left no education, employment, or relationship trail—was the key to unlocking the family's history. I hypothesized that he had been incapacitated through either illness or incarceration, which would explain his lack of records. It was an unsubstantiated guess, but I nonetheless spent months sifting through asylum, hospital, and inmate files on instinct alone. And indeed, after peeling back layers of data from the New York



Vivian Maier's family tree

State Archives, I came upon a 1936 reference to a "Karl Maier" at the New York State Vocational Institution, a reformatory in the town of Coxsackie. It was not at all obvious that this was the right person—there were hundreds of Karl, Carl, and Charles Maiers in the tristate area—but when I was apprised of the inmate's birth date, a chill traveled down my spine. It matched the baptism record from Saint Peter's. To access Carl's folder, I acquired written permission from family members in France, although the material was subsequently certified for public availability. The New York State archivist informed me that the records were in a nearby storage locker and could be retrieved quickly, so off to Albany I went.

A volunteer at the archives greeted me with a knowing smile, and handed over a three-inch-thick folder. Crammed with letters and records, it contained the complete family story, told from six different perspectives—that of Carl, his two grandmothers, both parents, and the reformatory. Tucked among the reports were Carl's mugshots, the only pictures ever found of Vivian's brother.

At the time, I was also working to secure Carl's military file, having identified online records associated with his enlistment and post-service death. I was informed that the material had been lost in a 1973 fire at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis. It quickly dawned on me that this couldn't be true—Carl's death had been posted to his public-service record in 1977, *after the fire*. With some pushback, the military archive was searched again, and a large Karl Maier folder surfaced, revealing critical information not only relating to his service, but to the remainder of his life. When I received copies of both the military and reformatory files in the same week, I felt like I had won the Vivian Maier genealogical lottery.

But that was only the beginning. To prepare a proper biography, I judged it necessary to trace and interview individuals who had known Vivian during each stage of her life. The fact that photographs had few annotations made this an almost impossible task, and for years I painstakingly overlaid clues from the pictures with other information in an attempt to identify their subjects. Stories of my most important quests can be found in appendix C, including the convoluted, sometimes preposterous lengths I would go to track down my quarry.

Ultimately, I interviewed thirty people who had known Vivian as a child or young adult or had spent time with her immediate family members. Identifying and locating these individuals posed the project's greatest challenge, but offered the most exhilarating rewards. In addition to garnering new and important details, I had the unparalleled pleasure of sharing Vivian's photos from long ago with their surprised subjects. After six years of examining countless genealogical records; studying the entire archive of images; conducting firsthand interviews in New York, California,

and Chicago; visiting the French Alps; and reviewing the extensive materials John Maloof had collected for his film, a full picture of Vivian Maier finally emerged.

The first art books featuring the photographer's images offered limited corresponding information, but by ordering them chronologically, I have been able to place and date many and prepare a timeline of where Vivian lived, worked, and traveled. The result is essentially a daily diary of her life, interests, and view of the world—an incomparable resource in constructing a biography and understanding its subject's actions and motivations. The chronology simultaneously documents Vivian's artistic development, including the revealing progression of her self-portraits. Most of all, a marriage of images with all other forms of information—artifacts, records, and interviews—provides the first-ever opportunity to place Vivian's photographs within the context of her life.

After Vivian's pictures were discovered and money and fame came up for grabs, guesswork and accusations quickly clouded what was initially an unadulterated celebration. The debate that played out in the media questioned if the two men who purchased the bulk of her photographic material had the rights, qualifications, and experience to manage her archive and whether she would have wanted to share her work with the public. Numerous historians, journalists, and critics egregiously maligned Maloof and Goldstein in the press, and accused them of exploiting Vivian for financial gain. These controversies are examined in appendix A, with the conclusion that almost all the aspersions were misleading or unsubstantiated. In fact, that two amateurs who frequent storage-locker sales purchased and prepared Vivian's archive gives the story a satisfying symmetry.

With intelligence, creativity, passion, and a great eye, Vivian developed a massive and broadly relatable portfolio reflecting the universality of the human condition. Today, exhibits and lectures continue around the globe, and museums have begun to acquire her work. Some have mentioned her name in the same breath as masters of street photography—Berenice Abbott, Lisette Model, and Robert Frank—and we can look forward to how experts will ultimately place Vivian Maier in the canons of photographic history.

The odds that Vivian's exceptional body of work would ever surface were infinitesimal, given the chain of improbable events that led to its rescue and dissemination. If even one of those steps had failed to occur, the photographs could have disappeared forever via their almost certain dumpster destiny. The photographer had to be a singular talent who saved all her work. Due to financial or other constraints, she had to default on payment for storage lockers that housed her archive. An auctioneer had to buy the unorganized containers, believing they held items worth

selling. John Maloof had to be untethered from school and employment, preparing to write his first book, which required visuals from the period in which Vivian worked. Living but a stone's throw from the auction house, he had to walk into the establishment exactly when her negatives were on sale and join others in purchasing the lots. These buyers had to save their materials and sell them to Maloof and Goldstein when they came to call. The two men, entrepreneurial risk-takers, had to be willing and able to invest in and prepare the archive of an unknown photographer. They had to have the artistic know-how to bring in professionals and adopt proper methodologies to organize, develop, exhibit, and promote Vivian's work. Perhaps most important, they had to have the insight to introduce the images online.

This narrative focuses on Vivian Maier the person, covering her entire lifespan. I use her first name throughout because this is how most people know and speak about her. My priority has been accuracy and objectivity, secured through an emphasis on primary research, firsthand and transcribed interviews, expert opinions, and photographic evidence. I believe the disclosure of Vivian's past is justified because negative perceptions of her can now be debunked and her remarkable personal story can be shared. It is clear that a family history of mental illness is a crucial chapter of her story, an element that so far has been largely ignored or dismissed as irrelevant, as if acknowledgment would stigmatize or devalue her accomplishments. Vivian's talent stands alone, but it is only through the prism of her childhood experiences and psychological makeup that we can understand her motivations and actions as they relate to her work.

From the beginning, others projected their own values and expectations onto Vivian. Perhaps the greatest myth associated with her is that she felt marginalized, unhappy, and unfulfilled—that her life story is sad. In fact, the opposite is true; Vivian was a survivor and had the fortitude and capabilities to break away from family dysfunction and exponentially improve her lot in life. She bulldozed through every obstacle that stood in her way with limitless resilience. Her concern was for the fair treatment of the disadvantaged, never for herself. Until late in life, she was mostly upbeat, action-oriented, engaged, and well-informed, perpetually living life on her own terms. Her creative and intellectual brilliance, progressive outlook, and independent thinking resulted in an unusually rich—even extraordinary—existence, one that was inextricably entwined with her photography.

Vivian Maier lived the life she wanted to live. This biography is written with the hope that readers will find relevance, even inspiration, in her story and body of work. By book's end, key questions will be answered, including the one everyone asks: "Who was Vivian Maier, and why didn't she share her photographs?" Mystery solved.

Beauregard, Saint-Julien, 1950 *(Vivian Maier vintage print)*

1

FAMILY: THE BEGINNING

I'm the mystery woman.

—Vivian, describing herself

Considering its improbable ending, Vivian Maier's story begins conventionally enough: it's a tale of two European families who left everything behind at the turn of the twentieth century, seeking a better life in New York. The path toward the American Dream was far more treacherous than most immigrants imagined, and the pressures of its pursuit left many fractured families in its wake, including the one into which Vivian was born.

Her father's ancestors, the von Maiers, were culturally German, and came from the small town of Modor, now called Modra, in present-day Slovakia. They were of distant noble ancestry, as evidenced by their inherited German prefix "von." William, Vivian's grandfather, was one of ten children from a large Lutheran family, and had owned a butcher shop. His wife, Maria Hauser, was from nearby Sopron. Their home, a former evangelical prayer house, was one of the most beautiful and valuable in town. The family that purchased it from the Maiers more than a century ago still occupies it today.

In 1905, William and Maria immigrated to New York with their daughter, Alma, age eighteen, and son, Charles, thirteen. They took a step down in stature from the life they had previously enjoyed and settled into a typical tenement rental on Manhattan's Upper East Side, a neighborhood flooded with new arrivals wedged into tight quarters. Charles, Vivian's father, had it better than most, receiving two years of tutoring to qualify as a licensed engineer. From all appearances, they were a highly functional and hardworking family, although no longer business owners. They joined Saint Peter's Lutheran Church, which conducted services in German.

New owners in the von Maier home, Modra, Slovakia, 2015 *(Michal Babincak)*

Alma left the family quickly, marrying a Russian Jewish immigrant from Chicago in 1911. By 1915, she had divorced, moved back to New York, and gotten remarried, to successful clothing manufacturer Joseph Corsan, also a Russian Jew. They had no children but happily spent the rest of their lives together while helping to support the elderly Maiers. If affluence was the goal of the immigration, Alma was the only one to grab the brass ring: she would go on to accumulate a large stock portfolio and live with Joseph on posh Park Avenue.

Vivian grew up having minimal contact with her Maier relatives, but her maternal French family, the Pellegrins and Jaussauds, would influence her in almost every way. Originally farmers and shepherds, the Jaussaud clan settled in the Hautes-Alpes of southeastern France during the fourteenth century. The region's villages, collectively called the Champsaur Valley, are removed from major transportation routes and comprise a patchwork of impossibly picturesque farms encircled by zigzagging alpine peaks. While rural, the area's residents possess a refined aesthetic sensibility and cultural appreciation. A scholar of the region, Robert Faure, describes that a Champsauran is "someone who is, above all, in love with freedom, who wants to be his master and has difficulty accepting constraints." Today, the cobblestoned streets of the main town, Saint-Bonnet-en-Champsaur, are still lined with pristine stone homes adorned with pastel shutters and patterned lace curtains. Visual details abound: woven straw nests cradle

warm eggs at breakfast, heavy cream is poured from thick glass pitchers, and tilted berets signal the joviality of the villagers. Authenticity and thrift trump quantity; wool is hand-spun, shoes are crafted from real leather, and food is homegrown. This valley would capture a piece of Vivian's heart.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, many residents of the Champsaur were poverty stricken. Long, harsh winters limited farming and families invariably had many mouths to feed. Typically, a baby was born every two years and was raised in a multigenerational home. The valley's society was patriarchal, and male children were most desired due to their usefulness as laborers. Day-to-day life was dominated by strict adherence to Catholic mores, and women dressed modestly in long-sleeved white blouses and black skirts that skimmed the ground. Even though the Jaussauds owned farmland throughout the region, they struggled like everyone else.

Grandmother Eugenie Jaussaud, Naturalization, 1932 (*USCIS*)

In 1896, Vivian's great-grandfather Germain Jaussaud purchased Beauregard, an important estate in the commune of Saint-Julien-en-Champsaur that was built by a nobleman three hundred years before. Germain and his wife, Emilie Pellegrin, who was twenty-four years his junior, had three children: Joseph, Maria Florentine, and Eugenie, Vivian's grandmother. With marriage and procreation of primary importance, it was highly unusual that the siblings would produce just one child, setting the stage for Vivian's lack of heirs. Eugenie and her parents moved to their new residence ahead of the others to prepare the homestead, hiring young fieldworker Nicolas Baille to help. Up until then, fifteen-year-old Eugenie had led a chaste and bucolic life, but invariably, setting two teenagers loose on a far-flung property was asking for trouble. The

Grandfather Nicolas Baille, France, 1951 *(Vivian Maier)*

inevitable pregnancy came quickly and was treated as a family catastrophe, made far worse when the farmhand refused to wed Eugenie or admit paternity. This decision, made by a frightened seventeen-year-old boy more than a century ago, would set into motion three generations of family dysfunction, the nature of which provides the key to unlocking the story of Vivian Maier.

On May 11, 1897, Vivian's mother, Marie Jaussaud, was born. Because she was illegitimate, she carried no rights or status in France; thus, the baby girl was welcomed into a world where she officially didn't exist. In the deeply religious community, the entire family bore the stigma of the "bastard" child. Germain passed away two years later, leaving his wife, son, and daughters to manage Beauregard's thirty-five acres. While holding on to the land was a priority, his survivors periodically sold off plots to fund their livelihood.

On Marie's fourth birthday, the ostracized Eugenie temporarily abandoned her daughter and fled to America to start a new life. This was likely planned in conjunction with her family and was not necessarily a selfish act. In the United States, she would have the opportunity to earn money to support Marie while relieving her family of the source of their shame. By then, many residents of the Hautes-Alpes had already immigrated to California and other parts of the American West to take advantage of the Homestead Act, which offered them free land if they agreed to develop and farm it for five years. Men of the Champsaur possessed the ideal experience and endurance to thrive in the rugged territory, and viewed the opportunity as a road to riches. Typically, they would immigrate alone, and after accumulating substantial savings would either return to the Haute-Alpes or send for their families to join them. At the time, virtually every household in the valley had relatives in America. In fact, just a few months after Eugenie left France, Nicolas Baille immigrated to Walla Walla, Washington, an enclave of French farmers. No one appears to have had more of an influence on Vivian than Eugenie, whose life took an improbable course. Her experiences and their implications help inform a deeper understanding of Vivian.

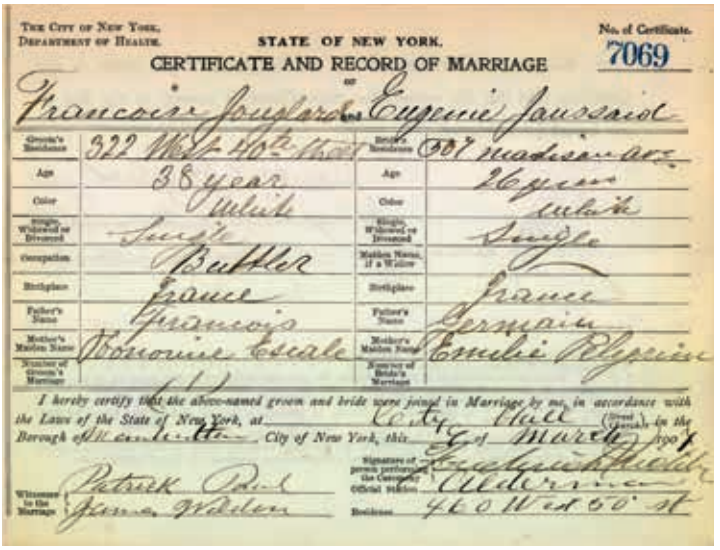
Unlike almost all others leaving the Champsaur, Eugenie's destination was the East Coast of the United States, where she would live with relatives of her family's Saint-Julien neighbors. In May 1901, she arrived at Cyprien Lagier's farm in Litchfield County, Connecticut. The only other Champsauran family that had settled in the county were the Bertrands, whose daughter Jeanne was the same age as Eugenie. When Jeanne Bertrand first immigrated in 1893, she worked in a needle factory, but within a few years she had finagled employment at a local

photo studio to escape the grind and became a highly skilled photographer. By the time Eugenie arrived, Jeanne's father had died and her mother had resettled the family in Oregon, leaving her and a brother behind. In 1902, the beautiful and talented young Frenchwoman was featured on the front page of the *Boston Globe*, and was well on her way to becoming a society photographer. While Jeanne enjoyed an upward career trajectory, Eugenie landed more conventional employment as a housekeeper. But once she ascertained that French cooks were in great demand among the elite, she grabbed an apron and never looked back. Within a few years, Eugenie had become a cook for the rich and famous.

HIGH-LOW LIFE

While establishing herself in the kitchens of the well-to-do, Eugenie met Frenchman François Jouglard who was fifteen years her senior. François had also immigrated to the East Coast in 1901, along with his wife, Prexede, and two children. After a visit with relatives, his family returned to France while François stayed on to make money, securing work in the burgeoning mill town of Cleghorn, Massachusetts. His ten-year-old daughter died while he was abroad, a sadly common occurrence at a time when 20 percent of French children failed to reach the age of five. Eugenie's parents themselves had lost a child, Albert, at age four.

Whether they met through French connections or by chance, twenty-five-year-old Eugenie and forty-year-old François formed a relationship that was not limited to friendship or even an illicit affair. Eugenie and François *married* each other in Manhattan's city hall on March 9, 1907. It makes sense that Eugenie would want a husband: she desperately sought a facade of legitimacy for Marie, and her own mother, Emilie, had found comfort and security from an older man. The marriage certificate states that they were single and it was a first marriage for both. Before the wedding, the pair had been living apart in Manhattan where François was working as a butler and Eugenie was likely a cook, although the marriage certificate did not capture the bride's employment. It can only be assumed that the religious Eugenie would find bigamy unacceptable, and was unaware of her husband's marital status. If she did know, François must have convinced her that he had split from his spouse and changed plans to remain in the United States. Court documents would later reveal that he was neither separated nor divorced, and that his wife and son were eagerly awaiting his return, oblivious to his hijinks in America.



THE CITY OF NEW YORK, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH.

STATE OF NEW YORK.

CERTIFICATE AND RECORD OF MARRIAGE

No. of Certificate 7069

Groom's Residence	322 West 40th Street	Bride's Residence	507 madison ave.
Age	38 year	Age	26 years
Color	white	Color	white
Single, Widowed or Divorced	Single	Single, Widowed or Divorced	Single
Occupation	Butler	Maiden Name, if a Widow	
Birthplace	france	Birthplace	france
Father's Name	Francois	Father's Name	Germain
Mother's Maiden Name	Veronine Escale	Mother's Maiden Name	Emilie Pilgrim
Number of Groom's Marriage	1	Number of Bride's Marriage	1

I hereby certify that the above-named groom and bride were joined in Marriage by me, in accordance with the Laws of the State of New York, at City Hall (Street) in the Borough of Manhattan City of New York, this 6th day of March 1907

Witnesses to the Marriage: Patrick Reid, Jane Walen

Signature of person performing the Ceremony: Eugene Allerine

Official Station

Residence 460 West 50th St

Busted: François Jouglard's bigamous marriage, New York, 1907 *(NYCA)*

The newlyweds set out to find employment together just as another French couple from Litchfield resigned their positions as cook and butler for the Witherbees, a fabulously wealthy clan in upstate New York. François and Eugenie were the perfect replacements, and once hired, they moved into the family's mammoth home overlooking Lake Champlain in Port Henry. The Witherbees were owners of iron mines and benevolently ruled the town. Walter Witherbee was knee-deep in planning the tercentennial of the discovery of Lake Champlain, a once-in-a-lifetime commemoration which was to take place in the summer of 1909. Over five days in July of that year, a raft of notables—governors, senators, congressmen, prime ministers, cardinals, bishops, ambassadors, generals, and the vice president and president of the United States—descended on Port Henry and the surrounding towns.

The festivities kicked off with a small luncheon for the governors of New York and Vermont at the Witherbee residence, most likely prepared by Eugenie. It is impossible to overstate the magnitude of the celebration that followed: there were Native American pageants, battle reenactments, big band parades, a water carnival, and fireworks. The US Secretary of War brought troops to march in formation, as did the Canadian premiers. Discoverer Simon de Champlain was honored with original poems and songs, a bronze bust, and a life-size replica of his ship. A Rodin sculpture was

Starter job: Walter Witherbee and his mansion, Port Henry, New York, 1909 *(LOC)*

commissioned for future delivery. As a nod to Champlain's heritage, events had a decidedly French flavor and as a subsequent thank-you, Walter Witherbee would be crowned a knight of the Legion of Honour by France. It can only be assumed that the outsize festivities left the relatively impoverished butler and cook with a serious case of culture shock.

The 1910 census indicates that the couple had remained with the Witherbees and falsely states they had been married for thirteen years, timing that perfectly corresponds with Marie's birth. By positioning François as Marie's father, Eugenie could optically right her wrongs and invent a new personal profile. But given the underlying duplicity, it is no surprise that the relationship was too good to be true, and François would be revealed as a dishonorable and violent man. Early in 1910, for unknown reasons, Eugenie's brother, Joseph, traveled from Saint-Bonnet to Port Henry to visit his sister, but did not bring thirteen-year-old Marie along. He remained in America for two years and by early 1912, both he and François traveled back to France, possibly together. Eugenie would never see either man again.

Joseph returned to managing the Saint-Julien farm and was exempted from military service due to his role in supporting his family. Just five years later he would die at home at age twenty-nine, followed a month later by his mother, Emilie. With their passings, Eugenie and her sister, Maria Florentine, became the sole owners of Beauregard.

After being away from his family for almost eight years, François Jouglard rejoined them in Saint-Bonnet. His wife, Prexede, sensed a change in her husband and in 1913 she filed for separation, citing his abusive behavior. Court transcripts include allegations that François hit her with a pickax, punched

her face so hard that he broke her tooth, and threw an open knife at her head, which miraculously missed. Due to the dire circumstances and in anticipation of a permanent split, the court ordered the conjugal home sealed and an inventory taken. It was completed just days later, down to the soupspoons. Records from the proceedings portray Prexede as strong and resourceful, noting that she had launched a mattress business to support herself and her son during her husband's absence. But as is the case with all too many battered women, her options were limited and she remained in the marriage. Prexede appeared to be none the wiser regarding François's "American wife."

Retrospectively, it can only be hoped that Eugenie was not also abused—however, at the very least, her "husband" had almost certainly misled and abandoned her. It is possible there was a pregnancy during the more than five years they spent together. Eugenie had demonstrated herself to be fertile and was an unlikely candidate for birth control, but there is no evidence of a birth one way or another. She understandably tried to keep the marriage secret; there is no reference to it in family letters or records.

After her estrangement from François, thirty-year-old Eugenie set about carving out a life as a domestic and appears to have been finished with men for good. She became friendly with other Europeans, self-described as servants, some of whom would later offer lifelines for Vivian. Eugenie in fact led a progressively remarkable life by establishing herself as a family cook for a "Who's Who" of New York society, in households where staff outnumbered family. Hardworking, likable, and undoubtedly an exceptional cook, over the next forty years she would attract a steady stream of upper-crust employers. Residing in their lavish penthouses and sprawling country estates, she fed many of the most famous people in the country. Through Eugenie, Marie and her children would experience a kind of high-low existence, exposed to the riches of the city's elite but knowing that they didn't belong.

Eugenie joined the congregation of Saint Jean de Baptiste, a stunning Catholic church in Manhattan founded in 1882 to cater to French Canadian immigrants. Going forward she doctored all records to portray herself as a widow, making just one disguised mention of her husband. In her 1931 naturalization petition, she depicted herself as the widow of a man named François whom she had married in "Saint Barnard," France, on March 9 (her real wedding day), 1896—just in time for him to have fathered Marie. This fictional François was born in 1871 and had sadly passed away in 1900 at twenty-nine, the same age her brother, Joseph, had been when he died.

Gibson girl, 1890s

Ensign Farm, Bedford, New York *(Google Earth)*

Toward the end of her career, Eugenie worked in the tony horse town of Bedford, New York, for the family of a little boy named Charles Gibson, the only person ever found to remember the cook. He lived with his mother, stepfather, brother, and six servants on an estate called Ensign Farm. His grandfather was Charles Dana Gibson, the artist whose iconic "Gibson Girl" was an embodiment of beauty, wealth, education, and independence, a sort of fictional Jackie O of her time. Charles fondly recalls Eugenie as a warm, wise, and private woman who expressed herself in charming broken English. He found her sweet and amenable, although wizened beyond her years from hard work. As a boy, he once proudly shot and dragged home a woodchuck. In her element, Eugenie skinned, cleaned, and roasted the animal, serving it on a fancy platter for the family dinner and winning the boy's heart. In fact, in all the letters and records associated with Eugenie, no one has a negative word to say. She would emerge as the only stable and loving force in Vivian Maier's life.

By 1913, Eugenie had moved back to Manhattan to cook for Fred Lavanburg, a noted philanthropist who owned an upmarket dress business, which was run by his close friend Louise Heckler. Historical transcripts describe lunches held at the Lavanburg residence when Eugenie was his cook. At the end of the year, when the company's gown designer quit under contentious circumstances, Heckler quickly hired a replacement and booked a buying trip to France. With World War I on the horizon, Lavanburg arranged for Eugenie's daughter, Marie, to accompany his colleague on her return voyage to the United States, serving as Heckler's maid. They left Europe in June 1914, in the nick of time—within weeks the war would begin and Germany would invade France.

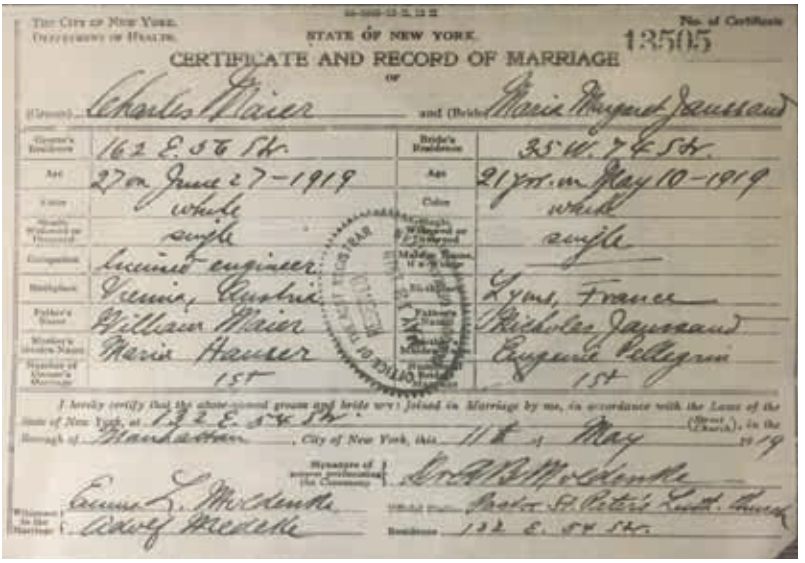
Marie had been raised by her grandmother at Beauregard, but later gave others the impression that she had been sent to a convent. (It is possible that she attended a convent school.) Predictably, rejection by both parents and the stigma of illegitimacy as a child would have a negative impact on her mental health, with serious consequences for her children. Marie was seventeen when she was finally reunited with the mother she barely knew, joining Eugenie in the Lavanburg apartment. The country girl, who grew up without electricity or plumbing, now lived in a luxurious tower adjacent to Central Park, where she endeavored to learn English and adapt to the clamor of the city. Such a change would intimidate anyone, and in possession of a fragile ego and with only her mother for support, she undoubtedly struggled to make the adjustment. From the moment Marie set foot in New York, Eugenie wholly devoted herself to her daughter.

Toward the end of the decade, Lavanburg suffered a nervous breakdown and temporarily left Manhattan. Eugenie moved on to work for Henry Gayley, a steel fortune beneficiary who lived on Park Avenue with his wife, two children, and three servants. By Christmas of 1920, Gayley was dead, but Eugenie stayed on for several more years. While her mother lived on Manhattan's east side, Marie briefly resided on the west side, serving as a governess for the children of stockbroker George Seligman.

THE PARENTS

Vivian's father, Charles Maier, was also firmly ensconced in Manhattan. He had lived with his parents in a tenement apartment at 220 East Seventy-Sixth Street for almost ten years, working as a licensed steam and electrical engineer. The first floor of his building was leased to commercial outlets, one of which placed classified advertisements. As was the norm, the Jaussauds and the Maiers occasionally purchased such ads to sell belongings and seek employment, and it is possible that Marie and Charles met at the Seventy-Sixth Street office.

Whether there or elsewhere, Lutheran Charles Maier and Catholic Marie Jaussaud came together, and the unlikely pair were married in Saint Peter's Lutheran Church on May 11, 1919, Marie's twenty-second birthday. Nuptials were conducted by Reverend Moldenke, with only his wife and the church custodian as witnesses. Consistent with family convention, Marie fabricated her lineage for the marriage certificate. She noted that her mother



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

STATE OF NEW YORK. No. of Certificate 13505

CERTIFICATE AND RECORD OF MARRIAGE

(Groom)	Charles Maier	(Bride)	Marie Margaret Jaussaud
Groom's Residence	162 E. 56 St.	Bride's Residence	35 W. 74 St.
Age	27 on June 27-1919	Age	21 yrs. on May 10-1919
Color	white	Color	white
Condition	single	Condition	single
Occupation	Licensed engineer	Occupation	—
Birthplace	Vienna, Austria	Birthplace	Lyons, France
Father's Name	William Maier	Father's Name	Nicholas Jaussaud
Mother's Maiden Name	Maria Hauser	Mother's Maiden Name	Eugenie Pellegrin
Number of Groom's Marriage	1st	Number of Bride's Marriage	1st

I hereby certify that the above-named groom and bride were joined in Marriage by me, in accordance with the Laws of the State of New York, at 132 E. 57 St. (Street, Church), in the Borough of Manhattan, City of New York, this 11th day of May 1919

Signature of person performing the Ceremony: Geo. B. McClenehe

Official Title: Pastor St. Peter's Luth. Church

Residence: 132 E. 57 St.

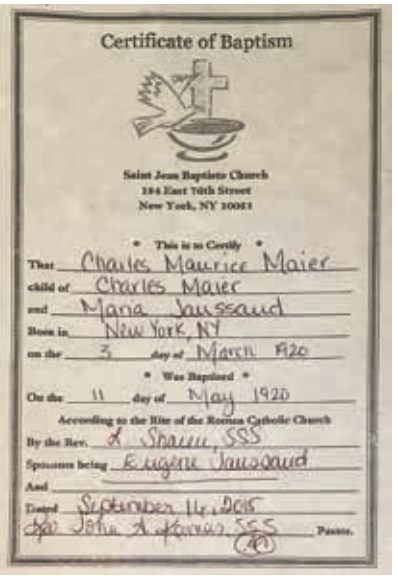
Witnesses to the Marriage: Emma L. McClenehe, Adolf McClenehe

Star-crossed union: Marie Jaussaud and Charles Maier, Saint Peter's Lutheran Church, May 11, 1919 *(NYCA)*

was named Eugenie Pellegrin and her father was Nicolas Jaussaud, justifying her surname and camouflaging her out-of-wedlock birth. Just to be sure, she also entered an incorrect birth date and place, obstacles to tracing her real identity. These pervasive record falsifications would send future researchers into genealogical tailspins.

The newlywed Maiers had little in common except difficult personalities. In New York, Charles held a steady job at the National Biscuit Company, but lost money through gambling and complained that his wife refused to work, cook, or clean. Marie was lazy and argumentative, and presented herself as being more refined than her husband, asserting that he was a cheap drunk and a poor provider. According to their families, the bickering never stopped, effectively ending the marriage before it ever really began.

On March 3, 1920, just nine and a half months after their nuptials, Charles Maurice Maier Jr. was born, adding pressure to a situation that was already on the verge of exploding. The baby's Catholic baptism took place at Saint Jean de Baptiste, on May 11, 1920, Marie's birthday and the couple's first anniversary, with devout Eugenie as witness. To level the playing field, Charles requested a Protestant ceremony, resulting in an unusual double dip. Two months later, at Saint Peter's, the baby was christened Karl William Maier Jr. in honor of his paternal grandfather,



Certificate of Baptism

Saint Jean Baptiste Church
184 East 76th Street
New York, NY 10021

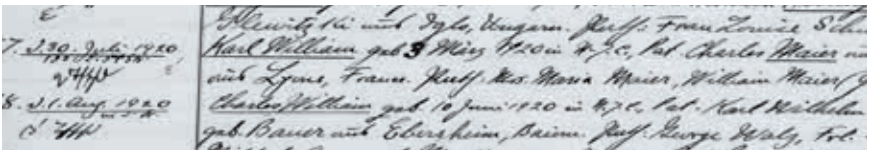
* This is to Certify *

That Charles Maurice Maier
child of Charles Maier
and Maria Jaussaud
Born in New York, NY
on the 3 day of March 1920

* Was Baptized *

On the 11 day of May 1920
According to the Rite of the Roman Catholic Church
By the Rev. A Shaun, SSS
Sponsors being Eugene Jaussaud
And
Dated September 16, 2015
John A Hannan SSS Pastor.

Baptism 1: Saint Jean de Baptiste Catholic Church, New York,
Charles Maurice Maier Jr., May 11, 1920



Baptism 2: Saint Peter's Lutheran Church, New York,
Karl William Maier Jr., July 30, 1920

the official name he would use for the rest of his life. He called himself Carl, as did the Maiers, but the Jaussauds referred to him as Charles, or Charlie. (This narrative refers to his father, Charles Sr., as "Charles" and his son as "Carl," which was written as "Karl" in most official documents.) The child's identity issues had only just begun.

When they first wed, the couple lived with Charles's parents and their two boarders, but once Carl arrived they moved to their own apartment, which was furnished by Eugenie. Marie struggled after the birth of her son, becoming so thin and weak her mother feared she might die. Unexpectedly, word came that Marie's father, Nicolas Baille, was returning to France after working in Washington State for twenty years and planned to stop in New York to visit his

daughter. Marie was desperate for his recognition and financial support, but was left anxiously awaiting an arrival that never came. Eugenie complained to her sister in France that the selfish man had first abandoned her and now had done the same to his daughter.

In early 1921, desperate for cash to support Marie and her baby, Eugenie sold the inheritance rights for her half of the Beauregard estate to her sister, Maria Florentine. Marie's relationship with her husband had become intolerable. As the marriage crumbled, Charles turned heavily to drink and lost all his money at the racetrack, while Marie's sense of superiority and prickly temperament only escalated their differences. Their son, Carl, was raised amid constant turmoil and conflict. Again and again, his parents separated and got back together, and in between Marie sought support from the courts and local charities.

The state-of-the-art Heckscher children's home had recently opened on upper Fifth Avenue in partnership with the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. The project was funded by enlightened German philanthropist August Heckscher, who had provocatively pronounced that "there are no bad children" and blamed parents for poorly behaved offspring. Marie met with the New York State Charities Aid Association, who placed jeopardized children into such temporary facilities after which the vast majority were adopted.

In 1925, Carl entered the Heckscher home, where he spent most of the fifth year of his life. He ultimately escaped adoption when his paternal grandmother sought and was granted legal custody of him. While Carl was in the institution, his parents were living together on East Eighty-Sixth Street. Even though she wasn't working, Marie couldn't or wouldn't take care of her son. The rancor between the couple continued, prompting their own mothers, Eugenie and Maria, to bond over their mutual disdain for their children, with the unlikely outcome that they became very close friends.

Everyone expected the unsuited pair to permanently separate, but they came together at least one more time, resulting in another unwanted pregnancy. Already deemed unfit to be parents, Charles and Marie reunited for the upcoming birth.

Sylvain, Marie, and Vivian, Saint-Bonnet, 1933 *(Courtesy of Sylvain and Rosette Jaussaud)*

2

EARLY CHILDHOOD

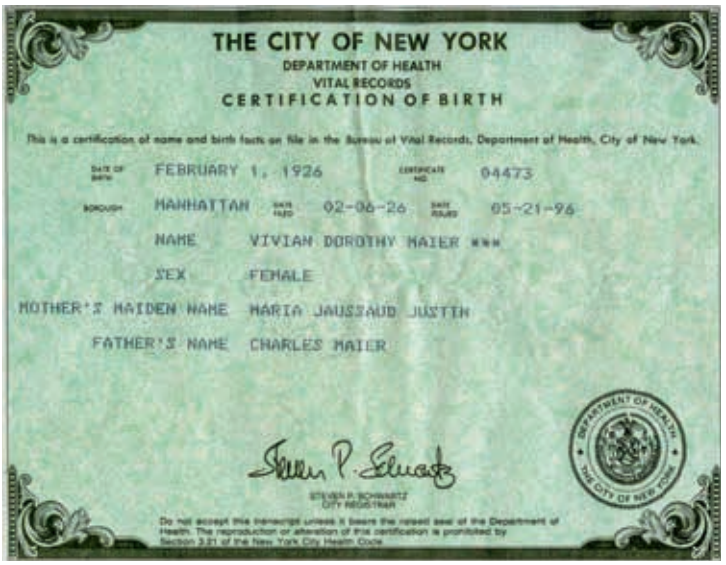
My mother didn't take care of me.

—Vivian, confiding to an employer

Vivian Dorothy Maier joined her dysfunctional family on February 1, 1926. Her birth certificate listed Charles Maier as father and as mother, perplexingly, Marie Jaussaud Justin—a new surname that came out of nowhere and then disappeared. Marie was doctoring records again so that her maiden name was not the same as her mother's. Unlike her brother, Vivian was baptized only once, in Saint Jean de Baptiste, on March 3, 1926, Carl's sixth birthday. He served as a "witness," but Eugenie was unavailable and sent Victorine Benneti, a French governess from Oyster Bay, in her stead.

The following year, Charles and Marie separated for good, and Marie sued her husband for being an abusive parent. Vivian and Carl were raised apart from their father and from each other. Grandmother Maria Maier stayed at home to raise Carl, and Vivian was all but prohibited from mingling with the Maiers. Like Eugenie, Maria was described by everyone in very positive terms; grandfather William Maier remained in the background and worked until he was seventy-five to support his family. Eugenie fully supported Marie and Vivian and helped out with Carl.

For the first years of her life, Vivian was raised solely by her mother, who perpetually turned to others for help. She took Charles to court for lack of support and tapped into the resources of Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish charities. Although she worked on and off, Marie was never known to hold a steady job. When she was employed, or was otherwise indisposed, it is likely that she placed Vivian into temporary care. The Heckscher facility had opened an



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
VITAL RECORDS
CERTIFICATION OF BIRTH

This is a certification of name and birth facts on file in the Bureau of Vital Records, Department of Health, City of New York.

DATE OF BIRTH: FEBRUARY 1, 1926 CERTIFICATE NO. 64473
BOROUGH: MANHATTAN DATE FILED 02-06-26 DATE ISSUED 05-21-96
NAME VIVIAN DOROTHY MAIER ***
SEX FEMALE
MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME MARIA JAUSSAUD JUSTIN
FATHER'S NAME CHARLES MAIER

STEVEN P. SCHWARTZ
CITY REGISTRAR

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Do not accept this transcript unless it bears the raised seal of the Department of Health. The reproduction or alteration of this certification is prohibited by Section 3.21 of the New York City Health Code.

Vivian Maier birth certificate; New York, February 1, 1926 *(John Maloof Collection)*

Sibling resemblance: Carl Maier, 1936; Vivian Maier, 1950

infantorium for healthy babies, which would have served as an expedient solution as would have the Swiss Benevolent Society of New York. In a 1932 classified ad that Marie placed seeking employment, it was this institution's telephone number that she provided for contact. Much later, Vivian took a