



The Tobacco Factory, 7486/84 South Broadway

This building at the corner of Tobacco Lane and Broadway was the home of the town's long-running industry, founded by Germanius Massoneau and said to date to 1812. Built around 1830, the tobacco factory dried, cut and prepared chewing tobacco and cigars for about 100 years. The Massoneau, Hoffman, Hendricks, Hevenor and Miller families were all associated with the tobacco business, which employed up to 50 workers at times. A bell tower once topped the clapboard building, tolling the start of the workday and the noon hour. Around 1864, the company adopted a red cargo hook as their symbol. Today a copy can be seen on the Village Building, just across the street. It houses apartments, shops, and offices.

RHHG: The factory was built in the 1830s and until the 1920s was a thriving industry and source of employment for Red Hook and surrounding countryside. It had a heavy bell tower with a bell to summon workers. Loads of tobacco were brought up the river by sloop or overland of sleighs in the winter to be made into cigars, pipe and chewing tobacco. Both men and women were employed at the peak of the production period. Sheds for drying tobacco can still be seen.

Basset: We now come to Red Hook's oldest industry, the tobacco factory. This business was started by one of the Massonneau family in the past soon after they located here. At first the tobacco was cut by hand and it took a real man to turn it. I remember when Walter Shafer, the shoe man, was killed by a knife that came off a cutting machine while in motion. I also remember when one of our reckless young men, while intoxicated, broke into the tobacco factory and stole a large quantity of cigars. He was arrested and sent to the Albany Penitentiary. Most of the cigars were recovered so the poor fellow received a light sentence but he died there before his time had expired. I remember the factory building was enlarged and when they installed the patent process of drying the tobacco. In the days of J. & P. Hendricks they cut tobacco at the Red Hook Mill. Those were the days when they sold tobacco by the barrel. I remember when they first adopted the Red Hook as their trade mark.