

# Sold! Artful Invoices Trace Red Hook's Businesses

By Claudine & Chris Klose, February 13, 2025

At the touch of a button, swipe of a credit card or online order, business transactions today are digital, delightfully quick, but contactless and impersonal. Other than for bookkeepers, accountants, and those storing them for tax purposes, paper invoices and receipts usually end up in the wastebasket.

To the history-minded, however, these small pieces of commerce offer a close-up of the person-to-person, everyday life of the past. In this regard, we are forever grateful to Clara (Weller) Losee (1917-1997), who first recognized the powerful glimpses of Red Hook to be seen in the late 19th and early 20th centuries through business invoices and receipts. Her collections form part of the initial Egbert Benson Historical Society and now, Historic Red Hook's expanding archives of local history.

When we were producing last year's Then & Now festival, "Farms, Food & Families," we drew from Losee's file: "W. S. Teator Bills." William Seward Teator (1860-1930) was a prominent Upper Red Hook apple grower and shipper ([see Teator story on our website](#)) who had stashed away more than 100 invoices and receipts.

We marvel at the artistic graphics that head his MeadowBrook Farm invoices, as well as those of other local firms marking their own trades, products, and brands. Other vivid reminders of Red Hook at its height of agricultural activity include bills from the Red Hook Creamery, Red Hook Steam Cider Works, J&A Curtis (tinware dealers), and Philip E. Fraleigh's hardware store.


From Barrytown, we have bills from Israel Snyder's cooperage, maker of wooden barrels. Representing the horse-and-carriage business, we have farriers George Storms and George W. Veach and then, early in the 20th century, businesses catering to the automobile, one operated by (we presume the same) George W. Veach, and another by Traver Bros.

Last year, Mary Kay (Fraleigh) Budd shared a trove of family memorabilia with us, including invoices from the 1880s made out to her great-grandfather Irving Fraleigh's "Carnright & Fraleigh & Co." steamboat freight service. Their river barge "Sarah Smith" was a familiar sight as it was towed carrying loads of grains, goods, and other farm products between Barrytown and New York City. As other bills attest, Fraleigh was an astute entrepreneur and prosperous farmer, also a principal in Oriole Mills and Red Hook Mills, which milled the wheat and ground the grain grown by Red Hook farmers.

You can see many of the bills from [our collections online](#). And we have selected a few and paired them with photographs from our collection, evoking a deeper sense of the slower-paced, rural Red Hook that was.



Red Hook, N. Y., May 1<sup>st</sup> 1898  
 M<sup>r</sup> W<sup>m</sup> Teator

TO CURTIS & BENNER, Dr.  
 Hardware, Tinware, Stoves AND Ranges  
 Plumbing, Steam and Hot Water Heating. Roofing and Tinning.  
 LOCAL AND LONG DISTANCE  
 TELEPHONE CONNECTION.  JOBBING A SPECIALTY.

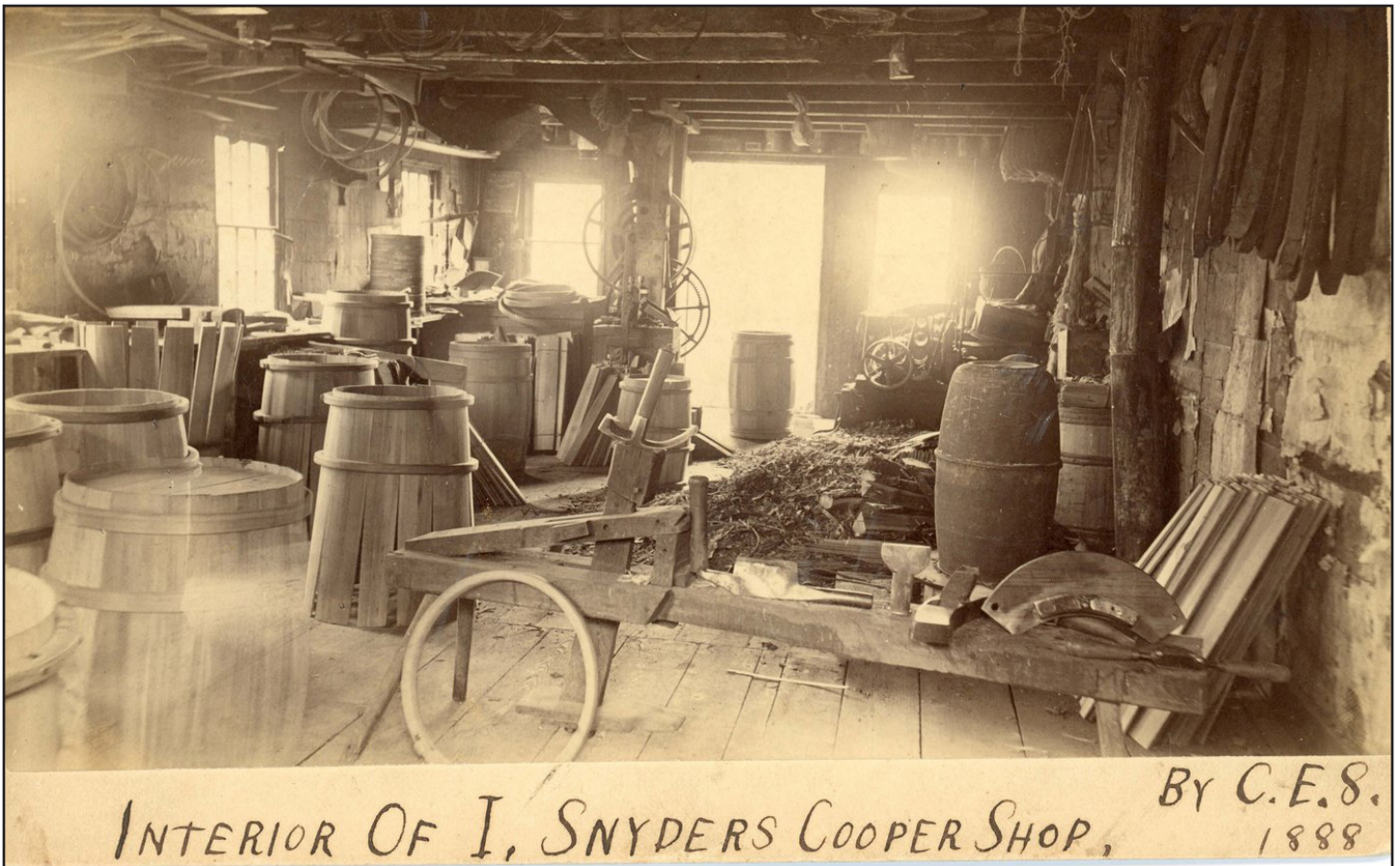
Mch	5	266 2/3 sq ft green wire cloth	\$ 88	
	18	266 2/3 — — — —	\$ 88	
	26	1 Roll neponset roofing	265	10 41

In 1895, the Curtis & Benner Co. acquired the hardware business formerly known as L.B. Curtis Company. John Curtis and his son Legrand Beaumont had begun selling stoves, tin roofing, and tinware in the mid-19th century. Towards the end of the century, third-generation roofing and tin specialist John A. Curtis partnered with J. J. Benner, whose expertise was in the 'hot water and steam fitting business.' The letterhead on their May 1, 1898 invoice to W. Teator, for roofing materials, clearly identifies their building and the products they offer.





Sometime in the early 20th century, the Curtis business reverted to one name 'J. A. Curtis' and then in 1932 went out of business, selling to Carl J. Stockenberg who opened another family hardware business called Stockenberg's. The building now houses an outlet for Williams Lumber.



In the mid-late 19th century, the dock at Barrytown (then known as Lower Red Hook Landing) was a passenger and freight stop for the new Hudson River Railroad and a lively place of business. Israel Snyder's Cooperage, conveniently located on the road to the railroad station and dock, made and repaired wooden barrels, tubs, and casks used for storing and shipping goods, as seen in this 1888 photograph of the interior.





In this 1893 photograph of the exterior, the original one-room Barrytown schoolhouse appears in the background.



RETURN IN 5 DAYS TO  
**ISRAEL SNYDER,**  
**COOPERAGE,**  
MANUFACTURER AND DEALER IN  
Fruit Barrels, Baskets, Crates, Etc.  
MEAT CASKS IN THE SEASON.  
BARRYTOWN, N. Y.  
(Box 57.)



*Mr W. S. Teator,  
Upper Red Hook.  
N.Y.*

1  
2 *Barrytown Feb 24<sup>th</sup> 1898*  
3 *Received of W. S. Teator*  
4 *Twenty five dollars on  $\gamma$*   
5 *Israel Snyder.*  
6 *Thanks.*

7 *This comes very acceptable*  
8  
9  
10  
11

12 *you may bring the grain I need it*

In an envelope postmarked February 25, 1898, Snyder sent William S. Teator a receipt dated one day earlier for \$25.00. We don't know what Teator had purchased, but Snyder notes that Teator should bring grain that he needs.



**RED HOOK MILLS.**

Red Hook, N. Y., *Nov 20 1902*

Received of *W. S. Teator*

*2440* lbs. *Bush.*

Dollars.

\$ *18.86*

RED HOOK MILLING CO.

Per \_\_\_\_\_

STATEMENT PHONE 16-F 4

## RED HOOK MILLING COMPANY


DISTRIBUTORS OF THE  
**CELEBRATED PURINA CHOWS**


The Best Feed for Horses, Cows, Pigs, Steers, Calves, Poultry and Pigeons

**Buckwheat and Rye Flour -- Cider and Cider Vinegar**

Red Hook, N. Y., *Dec 1st 1926*

*Mr. Wm. S. Teator*





<i>Oct 26</i>	<i>1000# Mincorn</i>	<i>2518</i>	
	<i>100 Corn Oats</i>	<i>230</i>	
	<i>1 Bu Salt</i>	<i>65</i>	<i>#</i>
			<i>28.13</i>

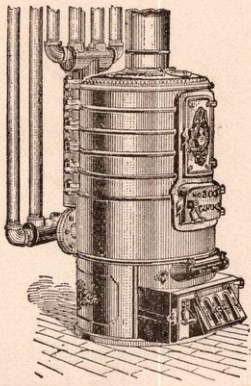
Irving Fraleigh was a principal in Red Hook Mills, which milled the wheat and ground the grain grown by Red Hook farmers. A Feb. 27, 1896 invoice made out to W.S. Teator clearly identifies Irving Fraleigh & Co. as millers and dealers in flour, feed and grain. A November 20, 1902 receipt shows that they milled 2440 lbs. of grain for W. S. Teator. We suspect the colorful 1925 invoice for the Red Hook Milling Co., made out to W. S. Teator for feed, oats and salt, represents a later iteration of the business.



Red Hook Mills, once located at Sawkill Creek pond (Mill Pond) on Mill Road . Photo by Harriet Martin, from glass plate negative, 1899.



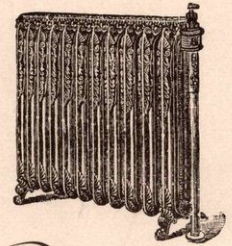
Interest will be Charged after Three Months.



GURNEY HEATER.

146 Red Hook, N. Y., Jan. 1 1895

**P. E. FRALEIGH,**  
HARDWARE, STOVES, PLUMBING, & C.  
HOT WATER HEATING.



Sold to Mr. W<sup>m</sup> S. Teator

May 22	Discount on Note	39	
May 5	2 Plow Shares	1 00	
29	95# Twisted Wire	3 33	
	2 1/2# Staples	1 3	
June 21	1-5 ft H. Mower	42 00	
29	2# Paris Green	60	
Sept 4	2 Cake Pans	16	
15	12 Links	85	
20	1 Plow Share	50	
	Gr.	48 96	
July 10	By Note	40 00	\$ 8 96

On New Year's Day, 1895, Philip E. Fraleigh, son of George Fraleigh & Regina Waldorf of Rose Hill Farm, totaled up several items purchased by W.S. Teator the year prior, including plow shares, twisted wire, staples, mower, cake pans, links, and paris green (a highly toxic chemical insecticide no longer used).





In the age of do-it-yourself repairs and building projects, hardware stores were essential. P. E. Fraleigh's hardware shop, originally owned by Stickle and Ring, was located just down the road from the Curtis hardware store, on what is now East Market Street.