

HISTORIC RED HOOK

James L. Freeborn

Born Feb 8, 1871 Died Oct 17, 1950

St. Paul's and Trinity Parish Cemetery, Tivoli

*Marble tablet with border and arched top in the Stamm/
Freeborn plot*

James Livingston Freeborn was born into wealth and privilege, the son of businessman William Freeborn who immigrated from Canada in 1835 and Eliza Crawford Livingston, a descendant of Robert Livingston, first lord of Livingston Manor. He had only one sibling, Wilhelmina, who never married, but was heavily involved in the Tivoli community and in many lineage societies. The Freeborns had a home in Tivoli they called "The Homestead" as well as a residence in New York City, and spent winters in Florida. After 1870, the family relocated briefly to San Rafael, Marin Co. California where William conducted business as a stock broker. They were back in Tivoli by the time the 1892 New York State census was recorded. Being descended from families of means, the Freeborns hobnobbed with other upper-class locals, such as the Livingstons, Enos, Donaldsons, Astors, Frosts, and Zabriskies.

While living in Portland, Maine for a time, James married Alice Eloise Adams of Boston in 1895 and had one child, William Livingston Freeborn in 1896, but the marriage was short-lived. Alice remarried Charles Hawley and removed to Chicago. James was not found in the 1900 census, but was home with his widowed father, sister, and son William in 1910. He was listed as having attained the rank of Lieutenant Commodore in the US Navy Reserves during WWI while residing at 44 W 44ths Street in Manhattan. In 1920 at 48 years of age James worked as an insurance agent in New York, the same year he remarried Beatrice Dwight of New York City who was almost 30 years his junior. The couple would have a secondary residence in Columbia County and raise two daughters, Alida and Beatrice.

James attended NYU where he studied to be a civil engineer, but his career would be in insurance, working for The Travelers and founding a carrier of his own, Employers Mutual. He established an agency, Freeborn & Co., in 1915 that his son William took over after his departure. William called Tivoli home and was also heavily involved in his community. James served as president (or mayor) and postmaster in Germantown as well as on the board of Bard College. Like his sister, he was a member of many lineage



societies and was a vestryman at the church that overlooks his gravesite.

James died at age 79 on October 17, 1950 at his summer home, "Chiddingstone," in Germantown after a brief illness. His parents are buried in Clermont, presumably together in a vault, and his second wife and children are buried in this cemetery with him.

Research and writing by Sarah K. Hermans, 2024

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