

HISTORIC RED HOOK

Dr. John E. Losee

Born 1826 Died 1900

St. John's Reformed Church Cemetery, Upper Red Hook

Large, dark gray granite monument on the hill close to the north-south access road

John Eckert Losee was born in the Town of Washington to Simeon Losee from that town and Sarah Eckert from Stanford. Simeon was of "Dutch" descent (which was probably Waloon) and the Losee family was among the first white settlers of Bushwick. Sarah's Eckert line was West-Camp Palatine German and both of them had a father or grandfathers that fought in the Revolutionary War.

John had six siblings, three brothers and three sisters. When he was very young his parents moved their family north to Saratoga County where they were farmers and some of them, including brother Egbert Losee, remained there for generations. John's brother Harvey S. Losee became a lawyer and removed to Alexandria, Louisiana in the late 1850s and due to this residency fought for the Confederacy during the Civil war. His descendants moved back to Dutchess County and some can still be found here.



John E. Losee, c.1855
photo credit Sarah K. Hermans

John and his brother Alexander both studied medicine, graduating from Albany Medical College. The brothers lived together in Milan in 1850 and John started practicing medicine in 1853. He moved to Upper Red Hook and went into practice with Gamaliel Wheeler until Wheeler's death in 1859 when John assumed both his practice and his home - The Thomas House on Spring Lake Road, not far from this cemetery. In 1862 John married Mary Elizabeth Knickerbocker, daughter of Edwin Knickerbocker from Madalin and Eliza Ann Beckwith from Red Hook. Together they had two sons, Dr. Edwin Knickerbocker Losee (grandfather of Dr. Ron E. Losee, the famous "Doc" of Ennis, Montana) and Dr. Harvey Losee (named for John E.'s brother, and father of John who was the husband of local historian Clara Weller Losee). Both brothers also studied medicine at Rutgers and served the people of Red Hook for

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decades. There remains a Dr. John Losee as of this writing, his 2nd great-grandson, Dr. John L. “Jay” Losee of West Virginia.

John E. Losee was a typical “country doctor” who primarily made house calls to his rural patients, though some were seen at the Thomas House. Via a wagon or sleigh, he rode all over the landscape to help the sick. He, like his contemporaries, both prescribed and mixed his own medicines, keeping the components in his many-drawered, large, blue, milk-painted apothecary chest.



*John E. Losee & Mary E. K. Losee
at home in the Thomas House
photo credit Sarah K. Hermans*

He was a friend of his seasonal neighbor, the nineteenth-century portrait artist Edward Ludlow Mooney, who painted his likeness, as well as that of his wife and father-in-law.



*John E. Losee's apothecary chest
photo credit Martha Losee Hermans*

Per one of his obituaries, John E. Losee “possessed a philanthropic spirit and was a very helpful member of the Reformed Church at Upper Red Hook.” He died in 1900 at his home at 75 years of age after being ill and house-bound for a year. He and many members of the Losee family are buried in his plot, the most recent in 2021. The Thomas House passed out of Losee family hands in the 1950s.

Research & writing by Sarah K. Hermans, his second-great-granddaughter, 2022

Sources:

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/82315618/john-e-losee>

Losee family records

In 1850 he lived with his brother Alexander and his wife in the Town of Milan.

Pine Plains Register, 28 Dec 1900

Marriage Record of St John's Low Dutch Ref. Church of Upper Red Hook 1795-1898

Poughkeepsie Evening News, 24 Dec 1900

Leonard, Roger. Upper Red Hook: An American Crossroad. 2012.