

The Edward Mooney House

We are continuing our research. The Lombards, the Jones family who lived here formerly, the Red Hook Historic Society and members of Hudson River Heritage all have contributed to these notes and we will continue to refine our information.

This house stood in Upper Red Hook by the 1770's. There is evidence there was a house here as early as 1752 and the owner was Peter Pitser, son of a Dutch Patroon.

The house was advertised for sale in a local paper in 1784 by Henry Livingston.

The house was purchased by Henry Van Allen Lyle a noted lawyer and Whig. He and his wife Gertrude (Gitty) and seven children are said to have lived here for almost 50 years.

Our report states that the same person, Garret Van Benthuyssen built both this house and the Red Brick Tavern. That the Lyle house was built first but the owner wanted higher ceilings so built the tavern.

The house was next sold to John Cruger at auction and he in turn sold it to Edward Mooney the portrait painter. (1954) Mooney, with his wife and daughter Ella lived here until his death in 1887. Edward Ludlow Mooney (1813-1887) was a highly admired nineteenth century artist who studied portraiture with the more famous Henry Inman. Mooney was awarded many commissions by the city of New York and was honored by the National Academy of Design. Ella, his daughter, willed to the National Academy the majority of her father's paintings then in her possession upon her death.

In the book, Recollections of Upper Red Hook by Burton Barker Coon, it is reported that both Edward Mooney and his daughter Ella painted. They, with Mrs. Mooney lived rather apart from the rest of the community "in the large house on the hill opposite the hotel."

The Mooneys called their house "Maple Hill." While Mooney lived his studio was on the fourth floor--now the private quarters of the Lombards. Edward Mooney and his wife were members of St. John's Episcopal in Red Hook. He donated a stained glass window to St. Johns and is buried in the cemetery.

The Mooneys were known to be charitable. The daughter gave most of the land and the means for building the Episcopalian Church in Upper Red Hook. It is behind the house. Ella Mooney lived in her father's house until the early 1900's. A companion, Miss Ina Russell, stayed on after her death when the house was given to the church and used to house retired deaconesses. It is still called the Deaconess House by some local residents. The room that is now a kitchen was once a chapel built by Ella.

John Losee, a neighbor who lived in The Thomas House or Red Brick Tavern during these years tells the story of pumping water for the deaconesses every day after school. He would fill the tank on the third floor which must have been part of a gravity feed system by working the pump in the basement.