

Red Hook Women's Suffrage Walk

You are invited to take a short walk across a long history...

Bill Jeffway | May 31, 2020



This is a printable version of an online tour so some references may not read correctly.

You can sit at your desk and scroll down. Or walk along South Broadway with your cellphone and swipe. Either way, I hope you'll learn a little bit about how the women of Red Hook got involved in the women's suffrage movement, or experienced it as it happened around them. August 2020 is the 100th anniversary of women gaining the right to vote nationally. Prior to that, suffrage advanced state by state. Interestingly, it was the western states that first made progress. New York granted the right to its women in a successful November 1917 referendum that had failed two years earlier, in 1915.

I would like to acknowledge the following sources, DCHS Collections, Claudine Klose and Historic Red Hook, as well as Fulton History and NY State newspaper search, both free, which can be found at DCHS Online Research Toolkit. ~ *Bill Jeffway*

Western States Were Leaders in Women's Suffrage



The state-by-state effort for women's suffrage started with success in western states as this political poster shows.

Susan B. Anthony Speaks

Our tour starts at the southeast corner of the center of the Village of Red Hook, recognizing an icon of the earliest organized efforts for women's suffrage. Susan B. Anthony spoke in Red Hook on New Year's Day, 1879 at the hall in the Massonneau Building, which still stands today. By then, she had spent 28 years in partnership with Elizabeth Cady Stanton on the suffrage issue. She was 5 years into what would be a 15-year run with the stump speech, *Woman Wants Bread, Not the Ballot*. It was a 90-minute talk she gave without notes, a 20-minute portion of which can be heard below in a contemporary voice. Spoiler alert: the way for women to get bread is *through the ballot!*



The fact that Anthony had spoken the day before, on New Year's Eve in Rhinebeck, shows the depth of her commitment. Her Red Hook audience was described as engaged "...but smaller than expected." Critics in local newspapers in other towns at the time called her talk, "mischievous and dangerous, [advocating] trades unions, strikes and communistic ideas..."

The Pilgrims of December 1912

Reporting on the famous *Woman Suffrage Procession* in Washington D.C. that took place March 3, 1913, the *Woman's Journal* chose for its front page a photo of Inez Millholland on her white horse, and "General Rosalie Jones in Pilgrim Costume." Only 8 weeks earlier, the iconic Gen. Jones and a handful of other pilgrims had spoken at, and spent the night at, Red Hook, while marching from New York City to Albany. The fact that Susan B. Anthony had died six years earlier, in 1906, at the age of 86 reflects how long the suffrage movement was taking.



At the southwest corner of the village center stood the Red Hook Hotel.

1



The "pilgrims" marched from NY City to Albany with a pro-suffrage message for the Governor. By walking, they hoped to demonstrate the depth of their commitment, and were able to give speeches along the way. It was Monday, December 23, 1912 when several hundred people greeted them upon arrival, including the Village President, Wm. Massonneau. The Hotel was festooned in the "Votes for Women" colors. The Chocolate Factory, a quarter of a mile east, sounded its whistle and workers were allowed to assemble on South Broadway.

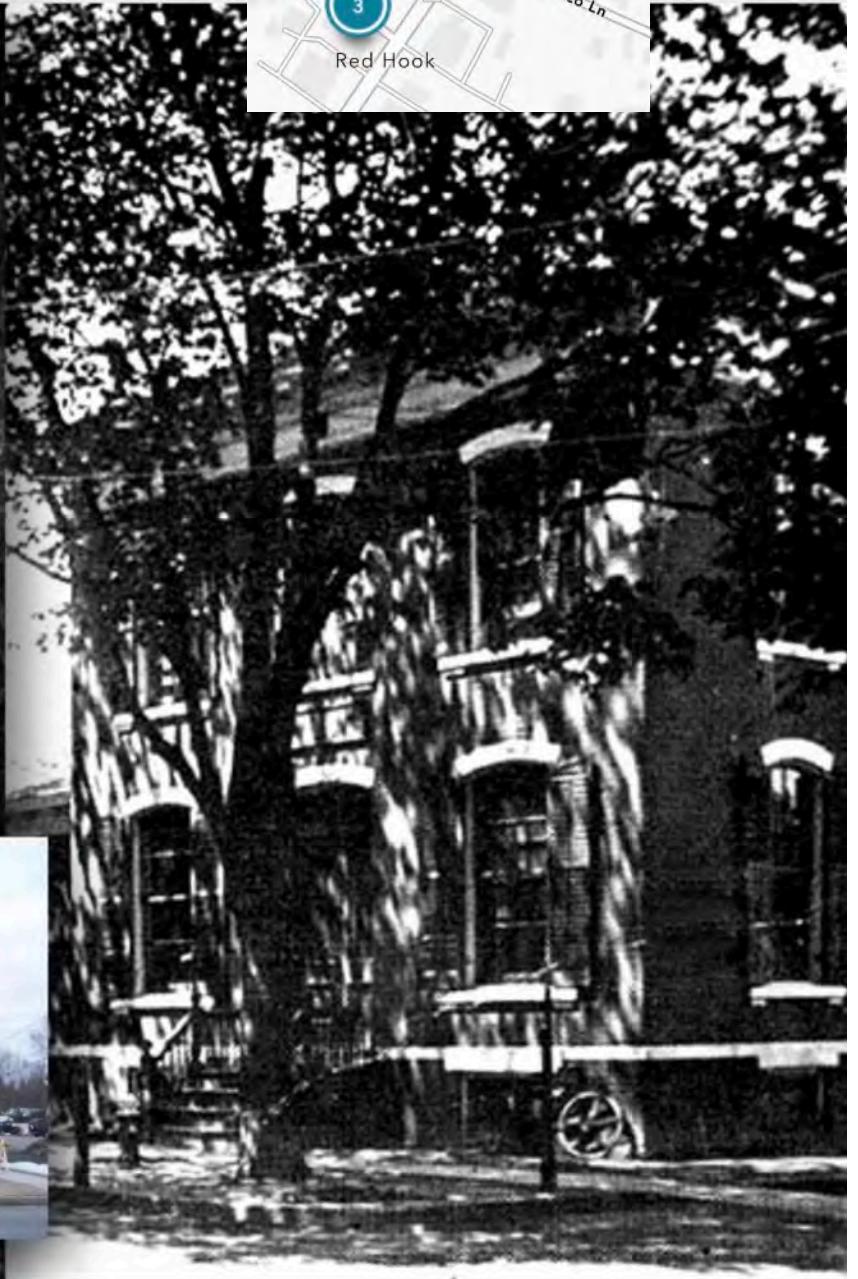
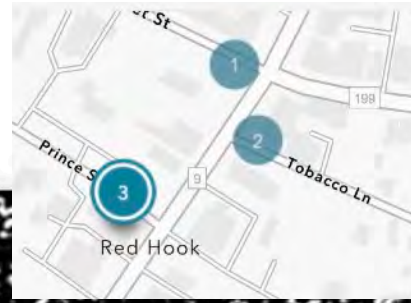
2 Workers and management of the Tobacco Factory came out and assembled.



The Massonneau family had settled here for several generations and founded the Tobacco business that was a big employer at the time. On this December day both employees and managers came out to receive the "pilgrims" as they stopped outside the Red Hook Hotel to give a speech. The building still stands today. Photo courtesy Historic Red Hook.

3

First National Bank.



Like the Tobacco Factory, the First National Bank was founded and run by the Massonneau family. We can be sure its employees and management ventured outside as well. Wm. S. Massonneau, shown here in a much later photo, was Village President when Jones arrived. Although providing a welcome reception, overnight accommodations would end up being two miles north in Upper Red Hook.

4

Overnight accommodations on the fly.

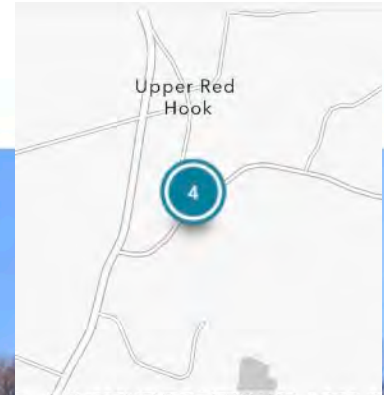
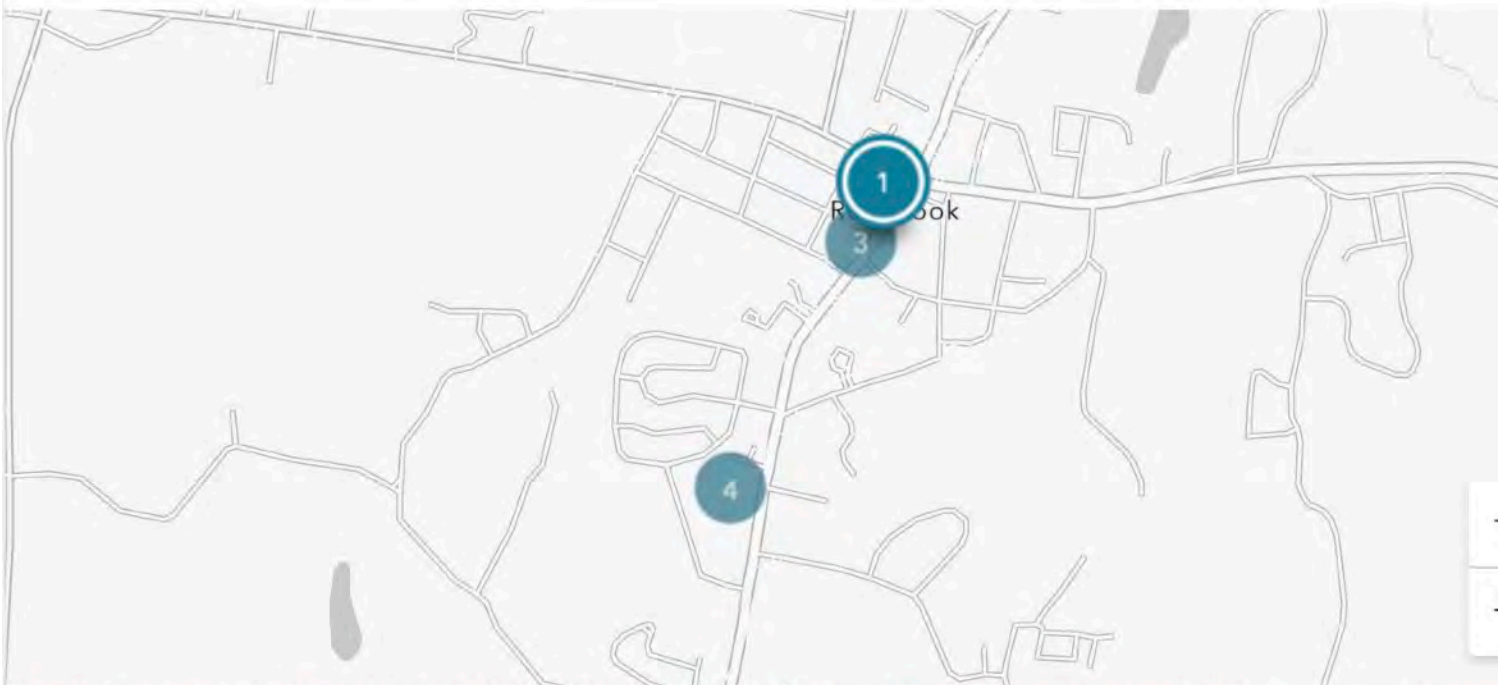


Photo Courtesy
Historic Red Hook

The group spent the night two miles north. For some reason the overnight accommodations had to be sorted out on the spot. Mary Ham, wife of the Upper Red Hook Postmaster and Storekeeper, Alvin Ham, managed to find space for the pilgrims. When they woke the next morning it was snowing, but they would *carry on!*

Organized With An Eye on November 1915 Referendum

These two homes, next to each other, are the homes of two women who formed the Red Hook Suffrage Workers organization in January of 1914, with a view to positively affecting the November 1915 referendum.

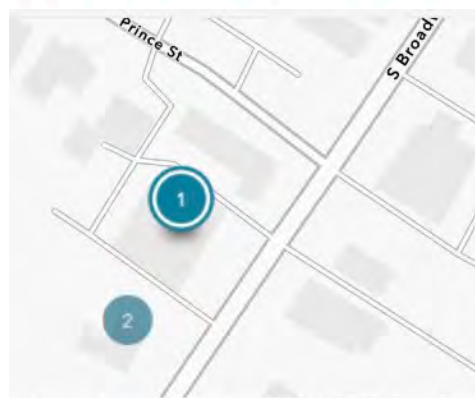


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Christine Sayre Eno



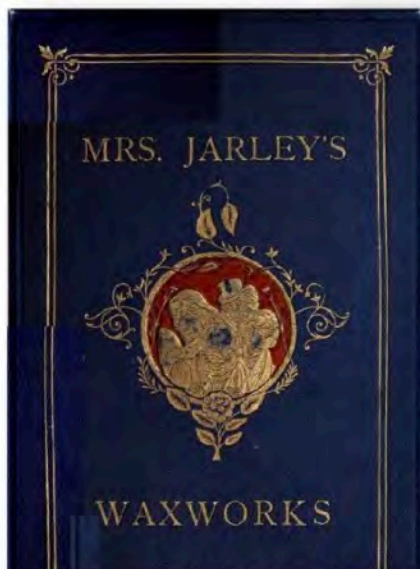
Christine Sayre Eno acted as President of the Red Hook Suffrage Workers (RHSW). She lived at the house that is now the Burnett & White Funeral Home with her husband, Dr. Charles Eno. Many RHSW meetings were held in the house and important suffrage guests like the nationally known Jesse Belle Hardy Stubbs (shown lower-right inset) were overnight guests. *Local photos courtesy Eno family.*



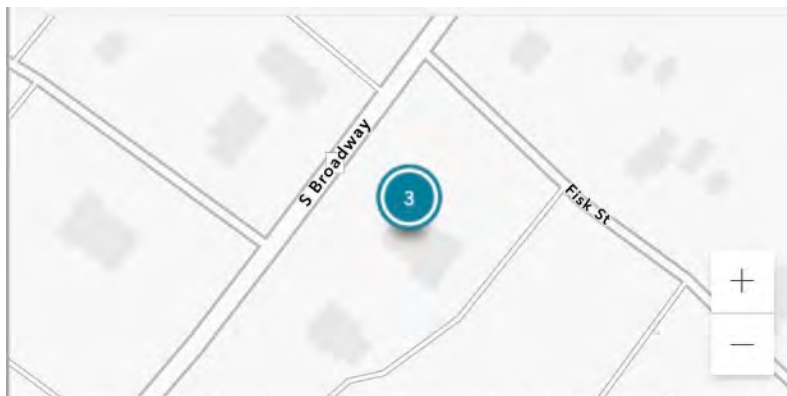


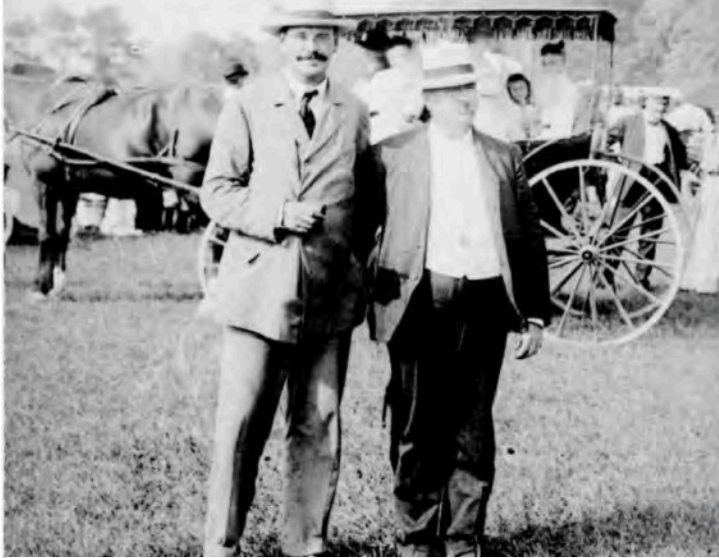
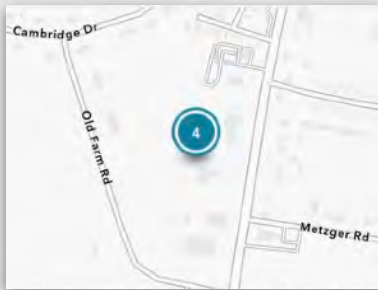
3

Mrs. Jarley's Waxworks.



In 1914 the Red Hook Suffrage Workers organized a performance of Mrs. Jarley's Waxworks in the Lutheran Chapel that stands today. Proceeds went to benefit the local library. The Massonneau family was involved with the Lutheran Church and are interred in its cemetery. (Play photo from another upstate NY town).





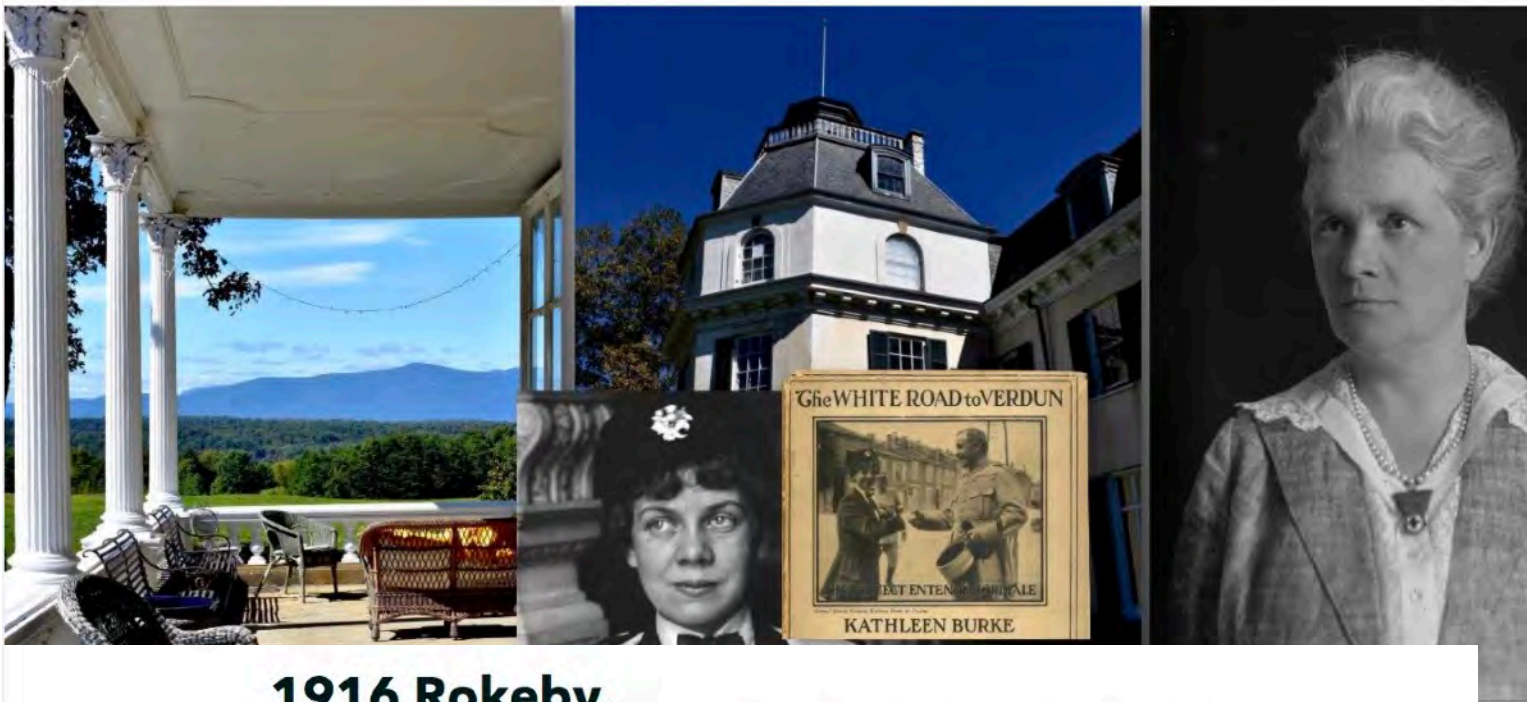
The nearby Rokeby river estate remains today the home to generations of a single family from about 1811. Marriages brought the ancestry of Armstrong, Livingston, Astor, and by the early 1900s, Chanler and Aldrich to the residence. Among the family members involved in politics was Robert Chanler (the gentleman on the left of two men standing). Chanler was elected a NY State Assemblyman and Sheriff of Dutchess County, and was a world class artist. His brother was at one time Lieutenant Governor of NY State. You will learn more about his sister, Margaret Chanler Aldrich shortly. "Sheriff Bob" gifted the use of Chanler Park to the townspeople, which no doubt helped politically. In the summer of 1915, the regular Red Hook Field Day was organized and operated there. Nationally known suffrage leader Rose Winslow spoke (shown, oval inset). Businesses are built on the site today, but the curve in the Old Farm Road aligns perfectly with the southwest curve of the former racetrack. A colorful description of the 1906 clambake attended by 3,000 people just prior to Chanler's announcement that he would run for County Sheriff is [provided by the Poughkeepsie Evening Enterprise](#).

The November 1915 Suffrage referendum failed



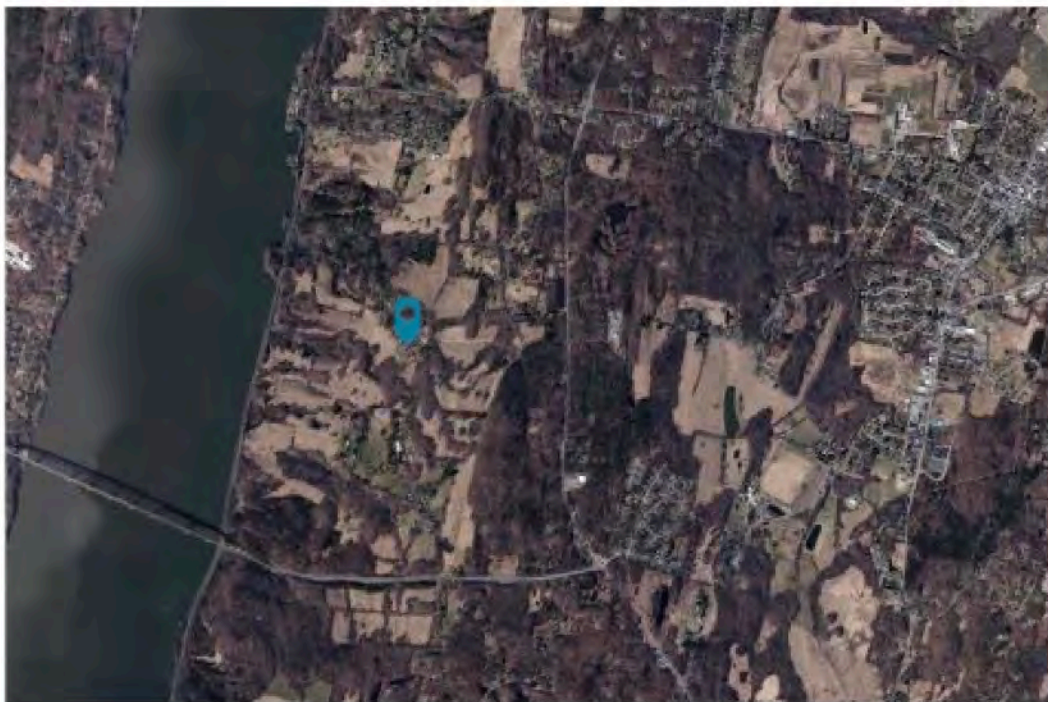
Eye On 1917 Referendum, The Effect of WW1

The failure of the 1915 referendum immediately sparked an even greater determination by the suffragists to win at the very next opportunity: 1917. Despite local newspaper advertisements explaining why a No vote was essential, and visible "antis" like Sara Roosevelt, FDR's mother, the November 1917 NY State referendum granting New York women the right was successful at a NY State level. The success came about, in part, because of the collaboration of the wide spectrum of social classes. Briefly referenced earlier, Margaret Livingston Chanler (who married Richard Aldrich) was an international and local leader in the Red Cross and Women's Suffrage. Congress recognized her Red Cross work during the Spanish American War in Cuba with a gold medal, personally presented by President Franklin Roosevelt in 1939. Active in the Red Hook Grange, she moved easily among townspeople in support of local agriculture and children's health.



1916 Rokeby.







In the Spring of 1916, Margaret Chanler Aldrich arranged for Kathleen Burke to speak at a large gathering of townspeople at Rokeby. Aldrich was hosting the event as a fundraiser to support a local nurse who would be made available to the general public. Burke had created the Scottish Women's Hospital which deployed 2,000 women and young girls during World War One.









WW1.

The clear and constant clarion call for democracy at all costs, combined with very visible, extraordinary efforts of local women once the US declared war on Germany in April of 1917, pushed the issue of women's suffrage over the top. Just in time for New York's November 1917 suffrage referendum. Both US President Wilson and General Pershing called for support of women's suffrage. Women's suffrage passed at a state level with 54% support. Support at a Dutchess County level moved from 40% in 1915 to 48% in 1917, just shy of a majority. Results of both elections below. *Photo courtesy Historic Red Hook.*

	1915 % YES	1917 % YES
NEW YORK STATE TOTAL	 40%	 54%
NEW YORK CITY	 43%	 59%
NY STATE EXCLUDING NYC	 42%	 50%

	1915 % YES	1917 % YES
DUTCHESS COUNTY TOTAL	 40%	 48%
<i>HIGHEST:</i> POUGHKEEPSIE WARD 1	Unsure	 73%
<i>LOWEST:</i> STAATSBURG HYDE PARK	Unsure	 32%



Now What?



Esri Community Maps Contributors, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, INCREMENT P, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, N... Powered

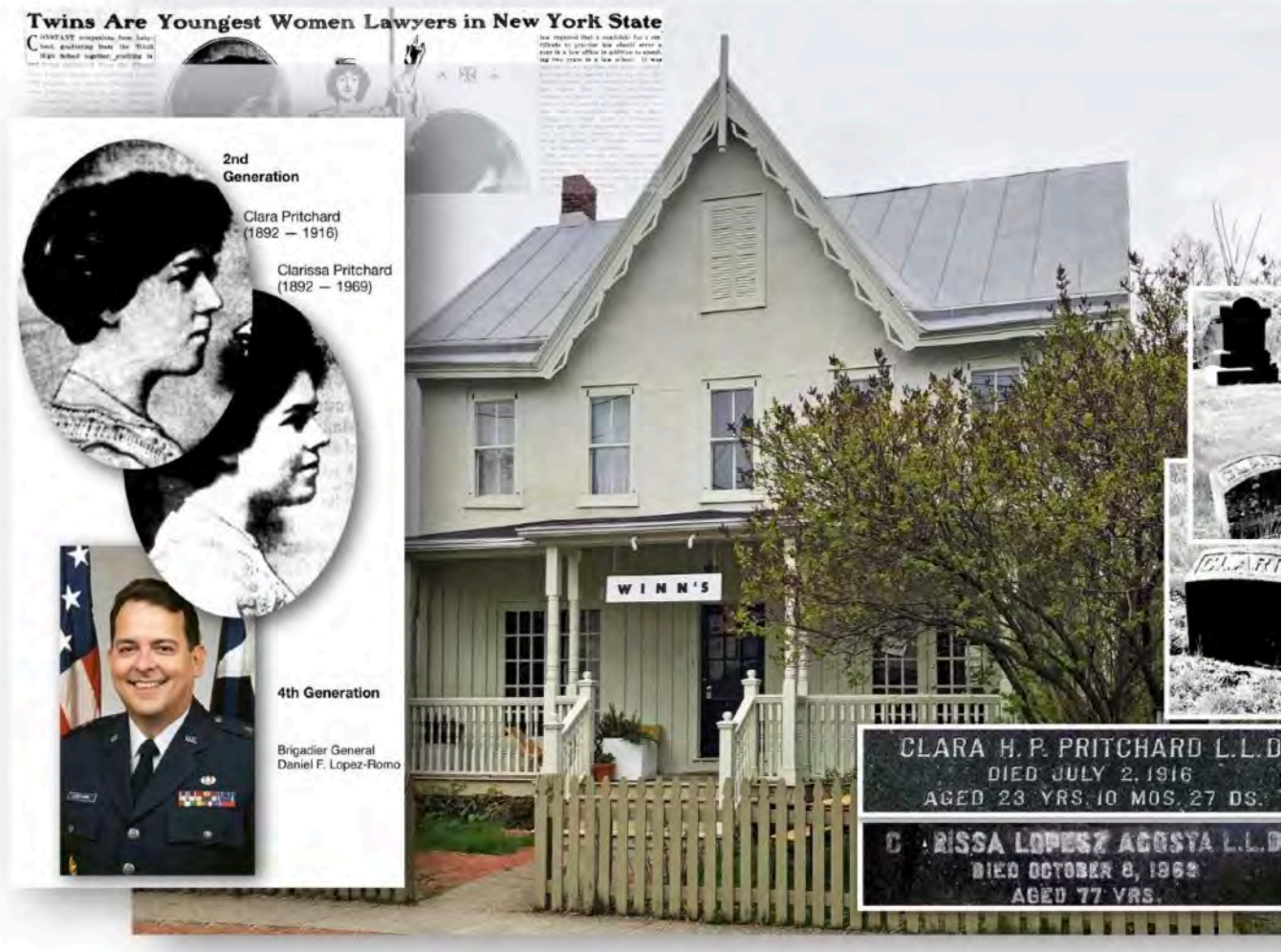
1 First Woman in the county to become Village President.



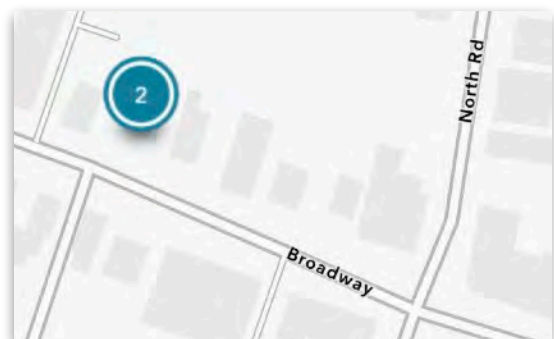
Once women gained the right to vote after the successful November 1917 referendum, they could also be candidates. (See [an evolving list of countywide first women candidates](#)). The first local election year for them to do so was 1919. Among the women to run for office, in this instance with no opposition, was Justine de Peyster Martin. Her success was repeated in her re-election in 1921. Another woman in 1919, Wilhelmina Freeborn, was elected to the Village Board, also unopposed. Justine de Peyster Martin was born and grew up at the river estate Rose Hill, currently a private residence of the Hudson River.

2

First county woman to pass the NY Bar heads four generations of lawyers.



While you are in Tivoli, either literally or digitally, note the home of three women who were important in women's equality in the legal profession. January 1914 headlines announced that twin sisters Clara and Clarissa Pritchard, born in the house shown in 1892, passed the Bar and would be the youngest women lawyers in NY State saying, "They are believers in woman suffrage, but have never taken any active interest in the movement."



Their mother, Mary Ellen Hoover Pritchard was the first woman in Dutchess County to pass the bar in May of 1903. She had an office in their Tivoli home (see contemporary photo) that she shared with her husband and ten year old twin daughters. She is described this way at the time, regarding her home office, *"She believes that a woman's first duty is to her husband and children but she [proposes] demonstrating to the world that woman may make a professional career while at the same time fulfilling all the obligations of marriage and the duties of motherhood."*

Mary Pritchard practiced very successfully, reported to have never lost a case. But as she approached the first anniversary of her practice, she tragically died of pneumonia at the home in March of 1904. Clara and Clarissa were 11 years old at the time. They decided to practice law and were honor pupils at Albany Law School, about to graduate, when it was discovered that they were not yet of age (21 years). They had to receive their diploma's at the following graduation in June of 1913.

They made headlines when they were both admitted to the Bar in 1914. Clara was reported to have been admitted to practice in US Federal Courts in 1915, one report saying she was the first woman to do so. They had said they planned to practice together, and I believe they did, in Albany. But in another tragedy, reminiscent of their mother's early passing, Clara died July 2, 1916.

Clarissa married an attorney and moved to his native home in Puerto Rico. Clarissa's son became a Superior Court Judge in Puerto Rico. Two grandsons became lawyers, one of whom, serves as Brigadier. He is General Daniel F. Lopez-Romo in the Puerto Rico Air National Guard and is profiled by the Department of Defense. Clarissa died in October 1969 and is buried in Red Hook's Red Church cemetery with her sister and father. Mary Ellen Hoover Pritchard is buried in Canada with her father.

That's it!

For this tour, anyway. Of course there is a lot more to learn.
More at www.dchsny.org . Let us know any comments, ideas
or suggestions at contact@dchsny.org .

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