

# HISTORIC RED HOOK

## **Mary B. Toler**

1840 - 7 Feb 1880

*And her brother*

## **Hugh Toler**

1845 - 27 Aug 1866

Old Red Church Cemetery, Tivoli

*Northwest corner, a wide marble obelisk, a large rhombus topped with a granite scroll, and a flat marble slab inside a large fenced in plot.*

Encompassed by a sturdy rail are three monuments; two grave markers and a cenotaph which remember three members of the Toler family.

A cenotaph is a marker that recalls the life of someone who has died, but is not buried at the marker's location. Johnston Livingston de Peyster, the man whose memory this monument honors, is buried in St. Paul's Episcopal Cemetery in his uncle and namesake Johnston Livingston's vault. Johnston de Peyster was a beloved figure in Tivoli and a notable veteran of the Civil War who married Julia A. Toler. His sister Estelle de Peyster married James B. Toler—both were siblings of Mary Booraem Toler and Hugh Toler.

Their father, William Edward Toler, was a businessman from New Jersey who resided for a time in Red Hook and rubbed elbows with the de Peysters enough that he married two of his children to them. In the 1830s he was an importer of European goods with his in-laws the Booraems. In the 1870s he imported liquor and cigars. He may also have been involved with the railroads and was clearly a wealthy man.

In 1850, William and his young family lived in Red Hook with his mother-in-law, Mrs. Smith; Frances Booraem, a 21 year old from England; and children Mary 10; James 6; Hugh 5; and Anna 3. They had four servants and were enumerated next to Nathan Beckwith whose farm was on what is now Guski Road near Linden Farms. Sometime between 1850 and 1853, William remarried Meta Colt and removed back to New Jersey where he had three more children, Richard Colt Toler, Devereux Toler, and Aimee Colt Toler.

The family's wealth allowed them to move around the area and to send their children to boarding school. In 1860 Hugh and his brother James attended and resided at a school in New York City with Frederick and Johnston de Peyster. Hugh would go on to attend Hamilton College and joined fraternity Chi Psi, but lost his life somehow in his junior year.

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His classmates planted a magnolia tree on campus in his memory when they graduated. This is possibly the enormous “cucumber magnolia” that stood in front of the school’s Bristol Center that was rotting and had to be cut down in 2004.

Hugh’s was the first burial in this plot. His unmarried sister, Mary died suddenly in 1880 of pneumonia at her home in New York City at only 40 years of age. Her funeral was held at the Presbyterian Church in what is now Ossining and she was laid to rest next to her brother, Hugh.