

# HISTORIC RED HOOK

## **Jacob H. Stahl**

1858 - 1918

## **Martha A. Holsapple Stahl**

1856 - 1921

St. John's Church Cemetery, Upper Red Hook

*Behind the church, a few rows west of the access road. The monument resembles a tree with severed limbs and a scroll.*

Many monuments have images inspired by nature: flowers, willow trees, acorns and oak leaves. The Stahl memorial is interesting because it shows a tree trunk with the limbs cut off, probably emphasizing the tree of life or a family tree, and yet it also resembles a cross and symbolizing death overcome and everlasting life via salvation. The gravesite of Jacob H. Stahl (1857-1918) and Martha A. Holsapple Stahl (1856-1921) offers us a reminder of the symbolism of life after death.

Jacob Henry Stahl (or Stall) was born October 27, 1858, and later baptized at St. John's Church in Upper Red Hook by his parents Jacob Stall and Diana Prentice. His wife Martha A. Stahl was the daughter of Chauncey E. Holsapple and Catherine M. Pulver of Red Hook. Jacob married Martha circa 1879, and they had three daughters: Margie who married Norman Traver; Nevada, (possibly the namesake of Nevada Myers Teator, also of Upper Red Hook) who married Philip Smith; and Laura, who married William Young.

Jacob was a painter of houses and other structures including St. John the Evangelist Church in Barrytown. He and James E. Kerley (who was another Upper Red Hook son who lived next door to the Stahls at one point and whose baptism was recorded on the same page as Jacob's) had an annual springtime gig in New York City around the turn of the century to paint "day boats" that traversed the Hudson River.

The Stahls were asked to witness the will of their wealthy neighbor, Ella Mooney, perhaps indicating a strong friendship of trust between them. Ella Mooney, who is also buried at St. John's, was the daughter of the renowned portrait painter Edward Ludlow Mooney and, "On her father's death in 1887, she gave a stained glass window in his memory for the front of St. John's Reformed Church," as well as land for the building of All Saint's

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Episcopal Chapel, according to Roger M. Leonard's *Upper Red Hook: An American Crossroad*. Ella's father Edward Mooney, known for his portraits of esteemed persons and a member of the National Academy of Design, painted the portraits of Benjamin and Ann Maria Mooney Pier that are on view in Historic Red Hook's Elmendorph Inn's south room. He and his wife Laura A. Blanchard lived in an Upper Red Hook home, the former Lyle house, which they named Maple Hill, writes Leonard. It would have been a testament to the Stahls that Ella chose them to witness her will.

Jacob died in 1918, and Martha had a stroke before she died in 1921. In December of 1921 Jacob and Martha's daughters erected a brass plaque at the All Saints Chapel in honor of their parents as reported by the *Rhinebeck Gazette* of December 24, 1921: "On Sunday, Dec. 11, at All Saints chapel, Upper Red Hook, a handsome brass tablet was unveiled and dedicated to the memory of the late Jacob H. Stahl and his wife Martha A. Stahl. The gift was by their three daughters, Mrs. Norman Traver, Mrs. Philip Smith and Miss Laura Stahl."