

HISTORIC RED HOOK

William Lascher

C.12 Nov 1837 – 20 Aug 1875

Old Red Church Cemetery, Tivoli

Against the fence along Rt 9, north of the church

The inscription on this young man's tall, beautifully sculpted tombstone reads:

IN MEMORY OF WILLIAM LASCHER,
DIED AUG. 20 1875
AGED 37 YEARS, 9 MO'S, 8 DAYS.
ERECTED BY HIS FRIENDS
H.R.R.R.
C.D

"H.R.R.R." stands for the Hudson River Railroad, William's place of employment, but we are unsure of what "C.D" might indicate in this context (perhaps Central Depot? Charitable Donation? Do you have a better idea? Perhaps further research will track down the meaning.). The spelling of his surname is uncommon and may be the result of those who engraved it not being familiar with the usual spelling in our area. Whatever the case, it would appear that his man's friends and coworkers chipped in to remember him in a fairly grand style.

William's unusual tombstone stands along the fence between his mother Betsy Lasher's broken stone on the right and his sister Ellen (Lasher) Figuera's stone to the left. Ellen died in Manhattan in 1893, but the newspaper reported she was to be buried at Madalin and mourners could board a 7:30 a.m. train from Grand Central Terminal to attend. Ellen and her husband Joseph Figuera (employed by "H.R.R.") can be found living together in New York City in the 1870 census, with their three children: Joseph Jr., John, and William Figuera, as well as William Lasher and James Decker (who were also employed by "H.R.R" per that enumeration) and three other families. It's possible that Joseph Figuera and James Decker were two of the "friends" who erected his tombstone.

Working on the railroad was often a dangerous job, and the newspapers often reported accidents and fatalities of both workers and bystanders; however, no story about the death of William Lasher could be found at the time of this writing. However, per the *New York*

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Daily Tribune of January 10, 1872, his nephew Joseph Figuera had his legs crushed at the Hudson River Railroad Depot at 32nd Street while coupling cars. He was 17 years old at the time.

William's sister Mary E. Lasher married Theodore Hoffman, and they are buried close by, next to the church. In the 1850 census of Red Hook, William, 16, appears as the only child residing with his parents, Philip and Betsy Lasher. Philip died before 1860, and Betsy passed away two years later.

Whatever the circumstances surrounding William's life, he had friends who wanted to commemorate him and commissioned a marker that still does so almost 150 years after his death.