

# HISTORIC RED HOOK

## **Rev. Evan Valentine Evans**

February 1860, England - 1 Jan 1911, Poughkeepsie

St. Paul's and Trinity Parish, Tivoli

*Tablet monument on rectangular base, close to line of vaults at top of hill, centerish.*

Rev. Evans was the rector of St. Paul's Episcopal church in Tivoli from 1897-1903. Evans (40) and his wife Margaret (35) resided at 148 Broadway in Red Hook in 1900. They were both originally from England (though he was most likely from Wales). They did not have any children.

Evans was an active rector, performing marriages and baptisms and on at least one occasion he traveled to New York City on church business to "preside at a meeting" there.

On Sunday, March 11th, 1903, Rev. Evans had a mental break during services at St. Paul's where "he walked down out of his pulpit into the body of the church and began crying and praying, making disconnected statements and talking incoherently." When the committee of St. Paul's vestry met in June, someone stated for the record that they spoke with Margaret and she said that he had "acted strangely and seemed filled with delusions as to his work and writings." Dr. Churchill A. Pritchard attended but could not help him and a few days later Evans was declared incompetent. He was sent to New York City to a private sanitarium and less than a year later to the Bloomingdale Insane Asylum in Morningside Heights (where Columbia University is now). The cause of his suffering was described in the newspapers as "overwork".

In March of 1904 his wife Margaret (represented by Tivoli lawyer and wife of Dr. Pritchard, Mary Pritchard, see information about her family in the Old Red Church cemetery) had a committee appointed to "look after his affairs" for her. Meanwhile, the congregation raised nearly \$1,700 (about \$58,000 in 2022 money) by subscription to offset the cost of his confinement.

Sometime between 1904 and June of 1910 when the census taker came around again, Evans was transferred to the Hudson River State Hospital, presumably where he died on January 1, 1911 in Poughkeepsie. His funeral was held at St. Paul's on Thursday, January 5th

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and he was buried in lot #15 its cemetery. He was only 43 years old. His gravestone, paid for by the church, reads:

Rev. Evan Valentine Evans  
Son of  
Thomas Evans Esq  
Born in England 1860  
Died in Poughkeepsie 1911  
Rector of St. Paul's church  
1897-1903

The *North Wales Express* newspaper of May 25, 1883 announced those ordained by The Lord Bishop of Chester at Chester Cathedral on Sunday, May 20th of that year. Among a short list of those ordained was Evan Valentine Evans, who had attended St. Bees College and was licensed to St. Thomas parish in Hyde.

In July of 1888 in Monmouthshire, England, Even Valentine Evans was convicted of fraud for impersonating a clergyman in order to obtain free lodging, food, and drink. Although he himself was a legitimate clergyman, he would introduce himself as Ernest Charles Evans, son of the wealthy General Evans. He obtained this name from the 1886 "Crockford's Clerical Directory", in which he himself also appeared. When he was arrested, police found this book on his person with a mark next to Ernest Charles' name. Evans not only conducted services under this stolen identity, but also lied about his finances and asked for board and lodgings from taverns and individuals and never repaid his debts. Several Welsh papers described the trial and a "petty-session" in which Evans' father, Thomas Evans (a farmer from Cynwyl-Caio, Carmarthenshire who spoke only Welsh) testified that he had no idea who General Evans was, but that Evan Valentine Evans was indeed his son. At the petty session, Evans denied the false pretenses, but did say "he was very sorry for it for his brother clergy as well as himself." He was in prison for 12 weeks awaiting trial, then found guilty in July. The prosecutor said he felt for the man's plight and the court sentenced him to what we would call one week and time served. Presumably Evans was a free man in mid-July of 1888.

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Evan and Margaret Evans of Red Hook had been married 11 years (approximately in 1889) when they were enumerated in the 1900 census. They were also listed as having arrived in the US in 1892. 15 years after his conviction for fraud, Evans lost his mind in the middle of worship services on a late winter Sunday in Tivoli due to overwork, but given the facts, it's likely he suffered much longer and for more reasons significantly deeper than were reported in the newspaper.