

Andrew Mason and his family

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Andrew (1868 - 1912) and Annie Jane (1867 - 1915) Mason immigrated to the USA in 1891. They were married in 1892. Andrew may have been working for Oliver H Payne earlier than then, as Payne often visited England on his summer cruises. In 1895 Andrew and Annie and their daughter Hilda traveled to England with Oliver Hazard Payne. They are listed on the Ellis Island site arriving from Liverpool on the S.S.

Teutonic. Andrew is listed as OHP's valet. The 1900 census for Manhattan mentions Andrew in two places: Payne's residence at 852 Fifth Avenue and also in an apartment at 217 East 70th Street, where Annie also lives with their first two children, Hilda born July 1892 and Alice born December 1895. Andrew is described as a butler in both census records.

Given Andrew's work background as valet and butler, it seems unusual that Oliver H Payne chose Andrew to be the first manager of the Esopus estate. Payne was a private person and placed enormous confidence in persons he trusted. Payne chose him to supervise the construction activity on the Esopus land. At first the Masons lived on the West Park Mountain Road until the former Pratt home was ready for occupancy by the manager. Then the family moved onto the property. While on West Park Mountain Road, their neighbor was a widow, Margaret VandeWater, with three children who maintained a farm.

On 6 Dec 1912, Andrew Mason was injured in an auto accident while on his way from Esopus to Catskill NY. He was taken to

Kingston Hospital. His leg was broken in two places below the knee and it became necessary to amputate the leg. He developed blood poisoning. Payne sent his personal physician from New York City to no avail, and Andrew died in 13 December 1912. After a funeral ceremony held in the Church of the Ascension, he was buried in Woodlawn Cemetery, Bronx NY on 16 December 1912. The Mason plot at Woodlawn contains a 12 foot tall Celtic cross. It seems likely that Oliver H Payne paid the cost of the plot and monument.

The family legend was that Annie also was killed in the accident. In fact Annie née Smith died in New York City 8 April 1915. She too is buried in Woodlawn.



Another family legend is that Hilda went to NYC to become an actress. She married a Kenneth L Harper or Philadelphia who was born in Philadelphia July 1892. The 1930 census places her in Philadelphia with her husband who is a chemist in a textile mill. Hilda and Kenneth have been married fourteen years, which places the wedding around 1915, shortly before or after her mother's death. The couple have a son, James B Harper, four years old, born in Philadelphia, which indicates the couple lived in Philadelphia about

1925. Hilda died on Christmas Day 1943 at age 50. She is buried in the family plot at Woodlawn. Her son, James B

Harper died 6 May 1987 age 61, and is also buried in the family plot.

Alice Mary Mason married John Vandewater (1892-1968). a prominent attorney of Hyde Park and Poughkeepsie NY. The couple had two children, John Mason Vandewater (1917 -1993) and Robert Barclay Vandewater(1921 - 1990). John married Julia Frances



Chatterton (1917 - 1982) of Newburgh NY, and the couple had two daughters, Julie and Margaret. Robert married Elizabeth Peelor (1922 -)

By 1920, Dorothy Edna Mason, the youngest daughter, was living in Staatsburg, New York, across the river from Esopus, as a ward of Emma Larson, who had been Payne's supervisor of the three locations: NYC, Esopus and Thomasville. In 1920 or 1921, Dorothy married Milton Bradford Miller, a native of Osage, Kansas; both his parents were born in Ohio, his father a banker. The couple spent most of their life in Kansas, where Milton practiced as a physician and surgeon in Shawnee, Kansas. They had two children: Jane Miller and Milton Bradford Miller Jr.

Essay first written 2001. Revised and amplified 1 June 2011.

Still needs photos to be inserted.