

# ***History of 24 West Broadway***

*~ The "Judge Allen Craig" Mansion ~*

*Compiled by Liza Ezbiansky & Brian C. Evans, [jacmansion.com/s/history.pdf](http://jacmansion.com/s/history.pdf)*

Built circa 1857, this home was registered in 1869 to Belle Craig, daughter of an early owner of the Lehigh Coal & Navigation Company, and wife of Allen Craig, attorney, who became lead prosecutor in the trial of the Molly Maguires, State Representative, then district judge and State Senator. The Craigs were the third owners in its first 15 years, and it remained in their family until 1924.

24 West Broadway, then "Lot 16", was purchased by Anna Isabelle "Belle" Douglas Craig on April 6, 1869. In the 1870 census, the value of real estate is noted as \$9000; the value of her personal estate: \$30,000. Allen Craig, then 34 and beginning his career as an attorney after serving in the Civil War, was cited at \$3000. Their son Douglas was born in 1868, Henry, born 1871, and daughters Harriet, 1879, and Gay, 1881.

Allen Craig was born December 25, 1835, in Lehigh Gap. He graduated from Lafayette College in 1855, studied law with Milo Dimmick, and had become an attorney when was drafted during the Civil War. In the 1870s, Allen Craig was district attorney of Carbon County and a lead prosecutor in the 1876 trials against the Molly Maguires. Craig would go on to become a Representative of Carbon and Monroe Counties in the State Legislature, then State Senator, and Judge of the 43rd Judicial District of Pennsylvania. He died on Jan 1, 1903.

Douglas Craig, eldest son of Belle and Allen, who had also become an attorney, was listed as the head of household in the census of 1910, where he lived with his wife Bertha, children, and mother Belle.

Belle Craig died on Sep 14, 1914. Ten years later, after Douglas Craig passed, the property was sold to Sadie P. Weiss by Ira G. Ross, executor of the will of Belle Craig. The home was in the Weiss family for nearly 90 years, from 1924 until it was sold in 2013. It has since undergone restoration that continues today by current owners Liza Ezbiansky and Brian Evans.

## ***Record of Deeds***

1856	Lehigh Coal & Navigation Company
1857	Alfred W. Fellows
1859	Marietta Kline and husband Frederick
1869	Belle (Anna Isabelle Douglas) D. Craig, wife of Allen Craig
1924	Sadie P. Weiss, wife of Samuel Weiss, Jr.
1981	Gertrude Bloom, daughter of Sadie Weiss
2013	Denise and Jerry Rossano
2020	Liza Ezbiansky and Brian Evans





Portrait of Judge Allen Craig from  
Portrait and Biographical Record of Lehigh, Northampton, and Carbon Counties, 1894



Portrait, signed Robert Gordon Hardee, presumed to be Allen Craig



## ***History Detail***

In December of 1856, the board of the Lehigh Coal & Navigation Company had decreed to sell Lot 16 on West Broadway, in the Borough of Mauch Chunk, for \$800. The “surviving Grantees” or Trustees of the Lehigh Coal & Navigation Company, Caleb Cape and James Cox, President, were named as mortgage indentures on Mar 7, 1847, and sold the property, on Dec 4, 1857, to Alfred W. Fellows. It was at the time already bounded on the east by the First Presbyterian Church of Mauch Chunk, and on the west by Lot 18, still owned by the LC&N.

In this deed, it is specified that the LC&N may elect to change the course of the Mauch Chunk Creek, which runs through the property, or to require that the grantee of the property “build and keep in repair on each side of the creek a secure wall...to maintain a clear passage for the water of no less than twelve feet in width.”

It is not indicated on any of the deeds whether the house had already been built, but I suspect it was completed before the LC&N’s official decision to sell, around 1856, or by Fellows in 1857-1858.

On Jul 9, 1859, after only a year and a half in Fellows’ possession, Lot 16 was sold by Alfred and wife Susan to Marietta Kline, wife of Fredrick C Kline for \$1400. In this deed, no mention was made of the Mauch Chunk Creek.

Nearly ten years later, on April 6 of 1869, it was purchased by Belle (Anna Isabelle) D Craig , wife of Allen Craig, for \$7000. Their son Douglas was born in 1868, Henry, born 1871, and daughters Harriet, 1879, and Gay, 1881. In the 1870 census, the value of real estate is noted for Anna Isabelle Douglas Craig as \$9000, and the value of personal estate \$30,000. The personal estate of Allen Craig, then 34 and listed as Attorney, was cited at \$3000.

The back lot of the property, across Hill Road, was sold to Belle Craig by the LC&N on Sep 7, 1896, at the time bounded by property owned by Betrine S Erwin to the east and Joseph A Horn to the west.

1900 census of Broadway (no house number listed) shows Allen Craig (b 1835 occupation “President Judge”), wife Isabell, children Henry (b. 1871, occupation Druggist), Harriet, and Gay, servants were Chrissie Beltzner of PA and Margeret Morgan of Wales. This census was not thoroughly filled out and is missing ages, as well as house numbers.

Allen Craig, b. Dec 25, 1835, in Lehigh Gap, was a district attorney of Carbon County and a lead prosecutor in the 1876 trials of the Molly Maguires. Craig would go on to become a Representative of Carbon and Monroe Counties in the State Legislature, State Senator, and Judge of the 43rd Judicial District of Pennsylvania. He graduated from Lafayette College in 1855, then studied law with Milo Dimmick, and was listed as an attorney when he appears to have been drafted during the Civil War [on Jul 31, 1863](#). He [died on Jan 1, 1903](#). (More information can be found in "[Portrait and Biographical Record, 1894](#)" [http://www.northampton.pa-roots.com/Portraits/craigjudge\\_allen\\_.htm](http://www.northampton.pa-roots.com/Portraits/craigjudge_allen_.htm) )

Douglas Craig, eldest son of Belle and Allen, who had also become an attorney, was listed as the head of household in the census of 1910, with his wife Bertha, mother Bella, servants Helen Melley and Rhoda Heffner.

Belle Craig [died on Sep 14, 1914](#). Ten years later, on Apr 28 of 1924, the property was sold to Sadie P. Weiss by Ira G. Ross, surviving executor of the will of Belle Craig. She stipulated in her will written Nov 15, 1910, that the house should be sold within one year of her death should a fair price be gotten, and otherwise that her son Douglas or daughter Gay should be allowed to live there, or if they do not want to live in it, it should be sold at whatever price could be attained. Both son and daughter had died by 1924 (Douglas on Nov 5, 1924), and the house was sold for \$10,000 to Weiss.

On Feb 4, 1963, the Sadie P. Weiss and her husband Samuel Wiess Jr. appear to have sold all their properties to themselves for \$1, including lot 16 on West Broadway and the rear property (along with properties on East and West Ridge Streets in the Borough of Lansford, and a property on the corner of Spring Alley and Broadway in Jim Thorpe), perhaps because the deed in 1925 does not appear to be signed.

Upon Sadie Weiss' death, her son and daughter, Marvin Weiss and Gertrude Weiss Bloom were deeded the property and on Aug 20, 1981, Gertrude Weiss Bloom purchased the property for \$1 from herself and her brother, including the property on Hill Road, which was still unnamed in the deed.

In 1988, 112 sq ft under the front side window to the front of the property was sold by the owner of the church, Anita Shapolsky, to Gertrude Bloom. By this time, Hill Road had finally been named.