

HISTORIC RED HOOK

John W. Hoffman

Born 1822 Died 1883

St. Paul's Lutheran Church Cemetery, Red Hook

Large, tall, tiered granite monument near the Martin soldier, north side of the access road

Attesting to the prominence of this businessman of Red Hook, John William Hoffman's impressive granite memorial stands proudly in the cemetery. Born in Red Hook, John was one of twelve children of farmer and butcher George "Dutch" Hoffman and his second wife, Maria Waldorf. The Hoffmans, Palatine German by heritage, were one of the "very oldest and most substantial [families] in the locality, being among the pioneers" according to John's entry in the Commemorative and Biographical Record of Dutchess County, a book featuring only the most prominent citizens of the late 19th century.

John married Lydiaette Sophia Manning (1830–1907), daughter of John Manning and Margaret Raffenburg. Her name was transcribed "L-y-d-i-e-t" more than once in the census, hinting at its proper pronunciation. Her grandmother, Jennie McGregor of Scotland came to America in 1773 and worked as a nurse to revolutionary war soldiers. She fell in love with one of her patients, a soldier named Peter Raffenburg, and they had five children,



one of whom was Lydiaette's mother, Margaret, who would have nine children of her own.

Not to be outdone, John and Lydiaette had eleven children, William M., Allen H., George E., Horace A. (known as Archie), and Robert M. who lived to adulthood, as well as Orison, Elizabeth, twins Otis and Otto, Maggie, and Hattie who died young. Robert went to Yale and became a mechanical engineer.



The Hoffman Tobacco and Cigar Manufactory c.1890, located on South Broadway in the Village of Red Hook.

John Hoffman at one point owned two steamships that plied the Hudson River, the R. Donaldson and the Clifton. The former was purchased from him by the Union in the Civil War, but wrecked in fog on its way down to New York City. John ran a hotel at Barrytown for a time and ran freight via steamship from Slate Dock in Rhinebeck under the name Hoffman & Pitcher, but he was best remembered for being the proprietor of Hoffman & Co. Tobacconists in Red Hook. The factory building still stands on the south side of Tobacco Street.

By 1870, John's numerous business interests afforded him the luxury to have his profession listed as "gentleman" in the census.

Edmund Bassett (who referred to him as "John Bill") said John was "a big hearted man and a friend of the poor." John, his wife, parents, some of his siblings, and ten of his eleven children are buried in this cemetery. His son Robert removed to Chicago and is buried in Cleveland, Ohio.

Research and writing by Sarah K. Hermans, 2024

Sources:

1850 Federal Census, Red Hook, Dutchess Co NY - George W. Hoffman

1860 Federal Census, Red Hook, Dutchess Co NY - Jmmms? W Hoffman

1870 Federal Census, Red Hook, Dutchess Co NY - John W Hoffman

1880 Federal Census, Red Hook, Dutchess Co NY - John W Hoffman

Commemorative & Biographical Record of Dutchess County, NY P 861-862

[findagrave.com/memorial/78127134/robert-m-hoffman](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/78127134/robert-m-hoffman)

[findagrave.com/memorial/88544696/john-w-hoffman](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/88544696/john-w-hoffman)

North America, Family Histories, 1500-2000 / *The Genealogical and Biographical History of the Manning Families of New England and descendants*

Red Hook Journal, 28 Dec 1883.

Reminiscences of Red Hook (A story of the Village), Edmund Bassett