

# HISTORIC RED HOOK

## John Harrison Hagar

September 9th, 1841–March 31st, 1909

## Sarah Ophelia Scott

April 22nd, 1840–December 4th, 1892

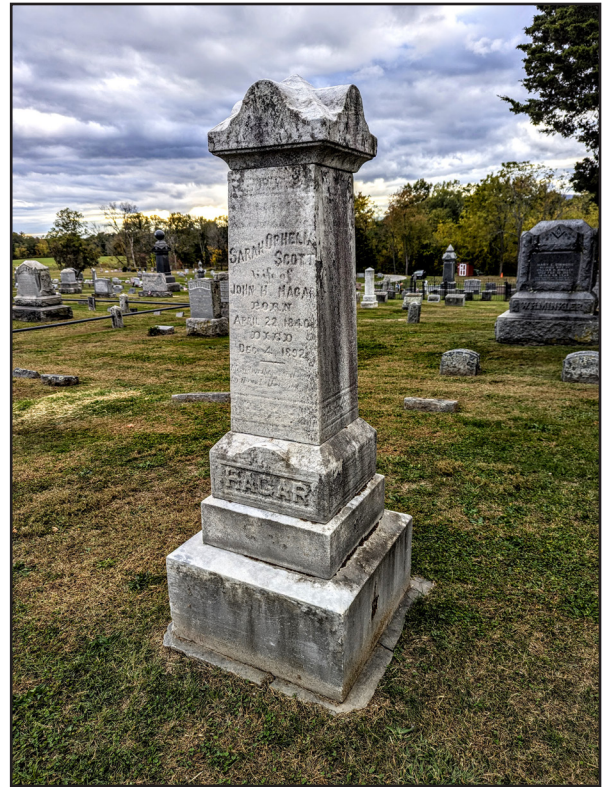
Old Red Church cemetery, Tivoli

*Crowned square column marble monument with three-tiered base very close to the south side of the church.*

Teacher John Harrison Hagar came to Tivoli from Herkimer County some time before 1860 when he was recorded in the census in the home of James Starr Clark, headmaster of the Trinity Academy and first President of the Village of Tivoli. This living arrangement seems to indicate that Hagar was employed to teach at the Academy at least in the year 1860.

Hagar married Sarah Ophelia Scott from Dutchess County and shortly afterwards had to put his marriage and career on hold as the Civil War demanded his involvement.

While living in Madalin in August of 1862, John Hagar



*The Three Cardinal Principles of the Grand Army of the Republic. ca. 1884. Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2003670397/>.*

enlisted in the 128th NY Regiment for three years. By November, he was promoted to sergeant, then almost a year later to 2nd Lieutenant, then 1st Lieutenant in December 1863. He was taken prisoner in 1864 and held at Camp Ford in Tyler, Texas, but was exchanged in a swap after about seven months. At the close of the war, Hagar was discharged in July of 1865. Many men who were taken prisoner never made it out of the squalid camps they were held in, and if they did, their lives were cut short by the experience, but Hagar lived to 68—a good run in those days. Hagar was elected vice president of the “Volunteers of the Co. C. 128th Regiment, Tivoli Division” (under president Johnston L. DePeyster) and attended reunions held locally.

It seems that when he returned to Tivoli at the conclusion of the war, Hagar did not go back to the Academy, but to the Union Free School in Tivoli where he would teach for 40 years. In 1895 the papers reported his employment had been renewed for another year to teach second grade. This sounds vague, but at the time, teachers

were expected to instruct a room full of kids all day on reading, writing, arithmetic, and other subjects.

With Sarah Scott, John Hagar had four children, John H 1863, Frances (born 1872, married Frederick Ross), Mary S. (1874–1926, married James Polmatier) and Walter Scott Hagar (1877–1936). Walter had a brush with death as a toddler, accidentally ingesting the rodenticide/pesticide known as Paris Green. He was saved by the local pharmacist who administered an antidote. He would not be so lucky when, at 59 years or age, Walter most likely had a fall at home and suffered a fractured skull that took his life about a week later.

After his first wife's death, John Hagar remarried Barbara Feller of Clermont in 1894. She was 22 years his junior and gave him another generation of children 20 years younger than his first set, Marvin L. (1894–1945, a WWI veteran and car salesman) and Donald Hagar (born 1897).

Lt. John H. Hagar died of pleuropneumonia on March 31st, 1909. Having been a warden of Trinity Episcopal for many years, a memorial tablet to honor his "long and faithful services to the church" was installed in St. Paul's church in Tivoli where it can be seen to this day.

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Research and writing by Sarah K. Hermans, 2025

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1860 Federal Census, Tivoli, Dutchess Co. NY - James S Clark

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1915 NY State Census, Red Hook, Dutchess Co. NY - Frederick A Ross

*Columbia Republican*, 1 Feb 1910

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*Red Hook Journal*, 5 Jan 1894

*Rhinebeck Gazette*, 3 Apr 1909

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"Trinity Military Institute in Tivoli became internationally known" BY Anthony P. Musso, *Poughkeepsie Journal*, 4 Aug 2020.