

HISTORIC RED HOOK

Family of Justice James Paulmier

1811 – 12 Mar 1881

Red Hook Methodist Cemetery

Tiered marble obelisk toward the north end of the cemetery

James Paulmier married Sarah Sophia Brown on February 3rd, 1831 at a Methodist church in New York City. Together they had many children, including sons Frank, James, Thomas, George, and Stephen, and daughters Emily, Frances, and Mary. Emily, Thomas, Stephen, and George are buried here with their parents just around the corner from the house they called home on Graves Street. At least three sons fought in the Civil War, including Stephen—see the separate entry for more information about him.

Sophia Brown's father was from England. She appears to have usually gone by S. Sophia just as her name is engraved on her tombstone, but was recorded as Sarah in the 1860 census. She was 77 years old when she died at Newark, NJ, probably while residing with her daughter Emily De-Hart and her husband.

Sophia's bachelor brother Thomas Brown ("an odd old character" according to Edmund Bassett) lived with the family for many years until at least 1875. He died in the "County House" (a genteel term for the poor house) in 1880. Those who found themselves in poor houses were mostly foreign men and women, the elderly who had no one to care for them, and indigent, infirm, and mentally ill people. How or why judge Paulmier's brother-in-law ended up in one is a mystery, but perhaps his being an "odd old character" was too much for his family to handle.

George F. Paulmier (1841–1882) was a harness and saddle maker by trade. He was a private in the Civil War with the 7th New Jersey Company A, having enlisted in August of 1861 for three years and again in 1864. Before the war ended in March of 1865 he was promoted to Corporal and participated in the battles of Bull Run (presumably the second one), Gettysburg, Chancellorsville, and the "Seven Days Fight" (or the final battles of the Peninsula Campaign, June 25th–July 1st, 1862). It does not appear that he married or had any children. He died at 40 years of age in Red Hook.

Thomas Brown Paulmier (1830–1885) served in Company F of the 150th New York Infantry. He married Mary Prentiss before 1860 and had a number of children including Mariah, Frank, Bartlett, Mary, Ann, Charles, William, Grace, and Mabel (1866–1947) who married Everett G. Hill. Mary survived him by



more than three decades and moved to Connecticut to live with their daughter Mabel's family. According to the papers, Thomas had a stint as a door-to-door salesman, peddling a three-volume set of the works of John Bunyan (who wrote *Pilgrim's Progress*).

Emily (or Emma as she was known) H. Paulmier (1850–1903) married Virgil Group on January 8th, 1868 at the Methodist Church in Poughkeepsie. They had three daughters, Anna, Agnes, and Carrie Group. Carrie died in 1876 at the age of only six months, Anna did not appear with her mother again after the 1875 census and dropped off entirely after 1900, and Agnes married Thomas Henry Curtiss and died in 1955 in Yonkers. The Curtisses are both buried in the Red Hook Lutheran Cemetery.

In the 1870s, Virgil Group had a fish market in Red Hook "just west of Gedney's store" where he sold "a variety of fish, oysters, clams, sweet potatoes &c." He died May 29th, 1877. Emma remarried doctor and widower John Newton DeHart of New Jersey after Virgil's passing and they resided there for a number of years, but then he died at 54 in 1896. In 1900, Emma returned to Red Hook and was recorded in the 1900 census as a housekeeper in the home of undertaker Frank Burnett, his wife, and their adopted daughter. She died at age 53 at her daughter Agnes Curtiss' home in Peekskill.

Per the 1875 New York State census of Red Hook, James Paulmier was born in England, his father was born in France, and his mother in Ireland. Other records say it was New York. He was a painter and wall-paper hanger by trade who also served as justice of the peace in Red Hook. Except for two years when someone else won over him, he held the position from 1864 until his death in 1881.

As was often the case, when court proceedings were reported in the newspaper in the 19th century, they were often verbose in unhelpful ways or vague as to the details which makes it hard to recount the sessions James oversaw. Some of the descriptions can be deeply unpleasant to modern sensibilities regarding how those of different class, race, and sex were treated by the legal system and remarked upon by the men of the time. A great many cases he saw were common, such as theft, violations of fishing law, and selling liquor without a license, but some were as harrowing as assault and battery, incest, and animal abuse.

In 1870 it was reported that James was running for justice of the peace that year on the "Anti Dram Shop Party" ticket. Charles S. Wilbur reflected that Paulmier was "quite a politician and frequently made speeches." An "old and respected citizen of this village," James Paulmier died after a brief illness at the age of 71.

Research and writing by Sarah K. Hermans, 2025

Sources:

1850 Federal Census, Red Hook, Dutchess Co. NY, James Paulmier.

1860 Federal Census, Red Hook, Dutchess Co. NY, James Paulmier.

1870 Federal Census, Red Hook, Dutchess Co. NY, James Paulmier.

1875 New York State Census, Red Hook, Dutchess Co. NY.

Bassett, Edmund. *Reminiscences of Some of the Highways and Byways of RED HOOK*, p11.

Connecticut, U.S., Deaths and Burials Index, 1650-1934 FHL Film Number 3180

[findagrave.com/memorial/147392256/mary-g.-paulmier](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/147392256/mary-g.-paulmier)

[findagrave.com/memorial/42985953/s-sophia-paulmier](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/42985953/s-sophia-paulmier)

[findagrave.com/memorial/42985956/james-paulmier](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/42985956/james-paulmier)

[findagrave.com/memorial/42985969/george-paulmier](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/42985969/george-paulmier)

[findagrave.com/memorial/42986010/thomas-brown-paulmier](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/42986010/thomas-brown-paulmier)

[findagrave.com/memorial/42986022/stephen-h-paulmier](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/42986022/stephen-h-paulmier)

Herrick, Margaret E. *Death notices, Dutchess and Columbia County, New York, 1859-1918 from Red Hook newspapers*.

Methodist Episcopal Church Records in New York City and vicinity. P.130 Manuscripts and Archives Division of the New York Public Library; New York, NY.
New York Herald, 18 Nov 1884.
PoorHouse Blog about almshouses of America poorhousestory.com/NY_DUTCHESS_Timeline.htm.
Poucher, J. Wilson. *Old Gravestones of Dutchess County, New York*, 1924.
Poughkeepsie Eagle News, 30 Aug 1877
Poughkeepsie Eagle News, 9 Jun 1869
Poughkeepsie Journal, 29 Feb 1880
Red Hook Advertiser, 18 Apr 1868.
Red Hook Journal, 16 Apr 1886.
Red Hook Journal, 18 Mar 1881.
Red Hook Journal, 20 Jan 1882.
Red Hook Journal, 21 Oct 1870.
Red Hook Journal, 29 Jun 1888.
Red Hook Journal, 4 Nov 1870.
Red Hook Journal, undated c. 1916.