

The following reminiscence of life in Red Hook during the Second World War and years following was written by Ethel Zotz Wilken, sometime in the 1980's.

Mrs. Wilken came to Red Hook in 1938, following her marriage to Herbert C. Wilken at Rhinebeck's Church of the Messiah. Born in 1910, Mrs. Wilken graduated from the Albany State Teachers College, now SUNY Albany, during the depths of the Great Depression. One of only a few members of her graduating class to secure a teaching job, Mrs. Wilken taught history at the old Rhinebeck High School from 1933 to 1938.

Adhering to the custom of the time that mitigated against married women working as teachers, Mrs. Wilken became a full-time housewife and mother of two sons. She was an active member of the Upper Red Hook Historical Society, the Red Hook Garden Club, and Christ Church. During a teacher shortage during the early 1950's, she returned to professional life, teaching high school history and English at the Red Hook Central School until her retirement in the early 1970's. Mrs. Wilken died at 86 in 1996 and is buried in a small family plot in St. Paul's Lutheran Cemetery.