

HISTORIC RED HOOK

Jane Cross

Born 1819 Died Jun 24, 1878

Red Hook Methodist Cemetery

HRH ME Cemetery Map Location: 67 A, north side, toward the back, center

Born into slavery in Maryland in 1819, Jane Cross was employed by John Winthrop Chanler “...my great-grandfather Chanler,” says local historian J. Winthrop Aldrich, who adds this about Jane:

“[He] hired [Jane] to help care for his innumerable young children when he was first elected to Congress and lived in Washington. She lived and traveled with the family, ending up at Rokeby where she was loved by the orphans and where she died of a heart ailment in the 1880s. Every Easter my Grandmother would bring flowers from

our greenhouse to decorate these four graves and that of Jane Cross. I’m not sure why the Methodist cemetery was chosen for these burials.”



*Jane Cross c. 1880.
Photo from The Astor Orphans
by Lately Thomas*

In the 1880 federal census of Red Hook in the home (Rokeby) of Armstrong Chanler, Jane’s age is recorded as 40 when it should be 60. She was one of 12 servants (including Mary Meroney), coachmen, and a tutor living with the family and only one of two black people—the other being Julia Carey, also of Maryland, age 36. The others were mostly either from Ireland or England of first-generation descendants of the same. Jane died in Red Hook at 66 years of age on May 22nd, 1885. Her tombstone reads “Faithful unto Death.”



Research and Writing by Sarah K. Hermans, 2021

Sources:

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/19593042/jane-cross>

J. Winthrop Aldrich former Red Hook Town Historian (memories)

1880 Federal Census, Red Hook, Dutchess Co NY, Armstrong Chanler

The Astor Orphan by Alexandra Aldrich p.24

Death notices, Dutchess & Columbia County, New York: From Red Hook newspapers