

HISTORIC RED HOOK

Dr. A.G. Benedict

Born Nov 13, 1790 Died Oct 4, 1862

Red Hook Methodist Cemetery, Village of Red Hook

Tall obelisk and footstones with first names on them on the east side of the cemetery

First it's important to note (so visitors are not confused) that Dr. Abijah Gilbert Benedict had a son, Dr. Abijah Gilbert Benedict born in 1832 who has his own slightly shorter obelisk on the western side of the cemetery.

Dr. Benedict (born 1790) was the son of Benjamin (a farmer) and Elizabeth (Gilbert) Benedict from South Salem, Westchester County, NY. The family moved to Patterson when he was young. He studied medicine with a doctor in Pleasant Valley, got his license in Dutchess County in 1815, and married Charlotte Hopper Newcomb a year later in Poughkeepsie. Charlotte was the daughter of Thomas Newcomb and Rachel Hopper of Pleasant Valley and was educated at Sarah Pierce's Female Academy in Litchfield, CT. One can read a diary she kept at age 15 in the holdings of the Litchfield Historical Society. The couple moved to Red Hook in 1818 and in addition to his medical practice, Dr. Benedict was on the Board of Supervisors for Dutchess County and served in the New York State Legislature in 1835 and 1836. It was remarked that "he was a friend to children" and was "cautious and prudent" in his "obstetrical and consultation practice". He belonged to the Dutchess County Medical Society and served as its president in 1841.



Portrait of Abijah by portraitist Ammi Phillips, Springfield Museum of Art



The Benedicts made their residence at the corner of East Market and Cherry Streets in Red Hook, but they also owned a farm. After his death, Dr. Benedict's son of the same name sold off his horses, cows, and various other animals and farming equipment.

The doctor and his wife were prominent enough to afford to have their likenesses painted by the well-known nineteenth-cen-

ture portrait artist Ammi Phillips. The paintings are held by the Springfield Museum of Art. Dr. Benedict is illustrated next to a table with books and a letter addressed to him in Red Hook, Dutchess County.

Dr. Benedict and Charlotte had nine children, Mary E., Cornelia A. (married Asahel Howe), Getrude R., Thomas N. (an Episcopal minister), Charlotte H., Catherine E. (married Edgar Traver), Charles B. (removed to Massachusetts, then went south), Abijah G., and Eugene F. (removed to Ohio), many of which are buried in the cemetery. Three of their daughters never married.

Dr. Benedict had been working the day before he died in his sleep at 72 years of age due to heart disease.



Portrait of wife Charlotte by portraitist Ammi Phillips, Springfield Museum of Art

Research and writing by Sarah K. Hermans, 2024

Sources:

Death notices, Dutchess and Columbia County, New York, 1859-1918 from Red Hook newspapers, Losee, Losee, & Herrick

findagrave.com/memorial/43538658/abijah-gilbert-benedict

findagrave.com/memorial/43538676/charlotte-hopper-benedict

Red Hook Advertiser, 7 Nov 1868

Red Hook Journal, 18 Apr 1873

Red Hook Journal, 5 Mar 1863

Red Hook Journal, 9 Oct 1862

Reminiscences of Some of the Highways and Byways of Red Hook, E. Bassett