

HISTORIC RED HOOK

Robert Worthington

June 7, 1841 - March 23, 1934

Red Church Cemetery, Tivoli

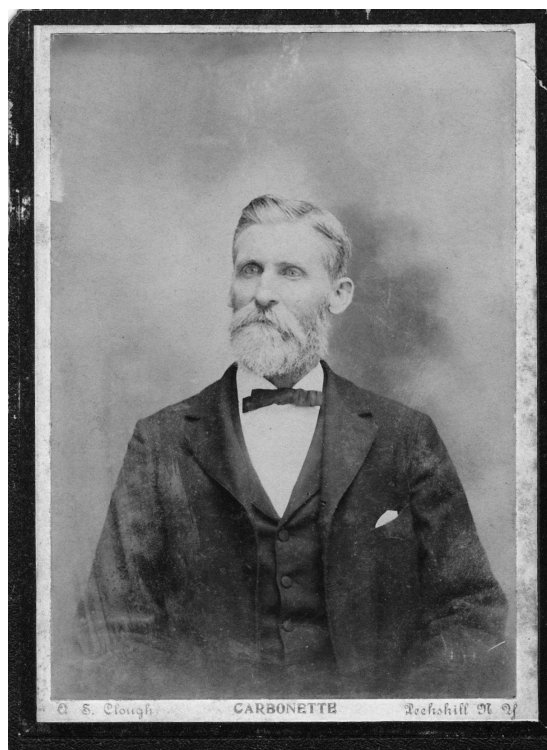
Marble tablet in the Redder plot, east of access road/C.W. Potts mausoleum in northwest section of the cemetery

It's unclear how or why Robert moved south from Canada. He can be found enumerated in the 1870 census in New York City with his first wife, Catherine Cornelia Redder and the first three of their children (presumably his connection to Tivoli). They resided in Red Hook and appeared in that census in 1875, 1880 and 1892.

Robert and Cornelia married c. 1864 and had 8 children, Mary A., John, George H., Charles Edward, Jennie, and Susan R., as well as Arthur T. and Catherine who both died young and are buried with their parents. George and his wife, and Charles and his wife are also buried in this cemetery.

When Robert was young, in the 1850s, his older brother and a close friend practiced "table rapping" following the popularity of the hoaxster medium Fox Sisters in nearby New York State. They would entertain their friends and family with this bogus supernatural trick. In Robert's own words they would:

"...sit around the table with their flat hands on it and all sit quietly for about ten minutes when he would ask if it was ready to converse with him to raise up on the south side and give one rap. If it did then they would begin to ask questions,... It would tell anyone's age to a day and it would tell secrets too. They might ask if Tom Brown was in love with Mary Smith and if she was in love with him. The mystery was, by what power those pieces of wood nailed together would obey a man's voice."



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One evening in November of 1853 when a large crowd had gathered, two loud booms terrified everyone. The following day it was discovered to be from the Gore powder mill in Hamilton, Ontario (only six miles from their home) exploding in the middle of the night.

Robert's wife Cornelia died in 1901 after the couple removed to Westchester County. He married his second wife, the widow Mrs. Sarah Brown, c.1904. Robert was a Senior Deacon of the First Baptist Church of Peekskill and attended that church for many years. While living in Dutchess County, he was a trustee of the long shuttered Baptist Church in Tivoli. It was here that Robert let his emotions get the better of him when dealing with a problematic pastor fired by his church. Rev. John H. Boyes disagreed with the trustees' decision to let him go and at services on May 3rd, 1891 he tried to push his replacement out of the way and preach as if nothing had changed, causing quite a commotion. Robert tried to stop him, resulting in a struggle in which he either slapped Boyes and told him "you ain't half a man!" or he merely tried to force him away from the pulpit and cover his mouth with his hand when he wouldn't stop talking. Either way it resulted in lawsuits against the church and Worthington, which were dropped.

As it turns out, Robert had just cause to be so angry. Boyes pulled similar stunts elsewhere—once at Atlantic Highlands Baptist Church in New Jersey in 1889, and somewhere in New York before 1886 when *Baptist Weekly* magazine reported that Boyes had a "bad record" and warned other churches against hiring him. At the time of the incident in Tivoli, opinions were split—some of the congregation and members of the DePeyster and Livingston families sided with Boyes, which might have led to the Worthington family moving out of the area by 1900.

Robert was a carpenter by trade and helped his family, church, and friends with his skills long after retirement. Even into old age he kept up with news through newspapers and radio and he loved music, and car rides. His birthday was an annual family event large enough to repeatedly make the front page of the local paper. While living with his daughter Susan, Robert Worthington died at the ripe old age of 92 quite suddenly after waking and dressing for the day.