

HISTORIC RED HOOK

Cordelia A. Jackson

1825 – March 10, 1905

Red Hook Methodist Cemetery

[*ME Cemetery Map: 34 A, east side, past the large Benedict plot near Fraleigh & Waldorf plots*](#)



Miss “Delia” Jackson was born around 1825, but her parentage is elusive. In 1833 when she was about eight years old, Ephriam Jackson allowed William Waldorf to be given her guardianship until she turned 14. John Curtis makes reference to her “going home” for a while to Mr. Waldorf’s after receiving some stressful news regarding her cousin Gideon Martin having killed a man in self-defense in 1856. How the Jackson, Waldorf, and Martin clans meet is unclear, but there is a Methodist connection at the least.

Delia was a Methodist for much of her life, cited as a member of the Red Hook congregation as early as 1843. She was remembered by Edmund Bassett in his “Reminiscences” as having taught the “primary grade” at a school on West Market Street on property belonging to John Curtis. Their house and the school were situated, according to Bassett, just to the west of the hotel which formerly stood at the corner where the gas

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station is today. Her obituary states that she taught public school and “later conducted a private school for a number of years.” She also taught Sunday School at the Methodist Church in Red Hook.

Delia most likely resided with the Waldorfs as a child before the census could confirm it. In 1870 she lived in John and Jane Curtis’s home with their family, and in 1880 she was boarding with the Benedict family, all of whom are buried in the Methodist cemetery. A few years later, she went west to teach at the “Spencer Academy, an Indian Mission School of [the] Choctaw Tribe” in Indian Territory. This is supposedly the place where “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” was first written and sung by a slave owned by Choctaw who worked for the missionaries. She spent two years in what would become Oklahoma (1884–1886) before returning to Red Hook.

Miss Jackson is pictured on the porch at Rose Hill, the Fraleigh farmhouse. The Fraleigh, Curtis, and Waldorf families were all related to each other.

She died at the home of Herbert Jackson Curtis (born 1858 and died 1924, son of John A. Curtis and most likely Delia’s namesake) in Red Hook at 80 years of age on March 17, 1905.