

# HISTORIC RED HOOK

## Lewis W. Cashdollar

22 Jan 1843 - 24 Jul 1905

Old Red Church Cemetery, Tivoli

*North side of church, near fence. The monument has an unusual slope/arch shape and a bas-relief of a woman clinging to a cross which is also a raft on a stormy sea.*

The *Red Hook Journal* of October 15, 1897, reported that Tivoli was home to “probably the largest man in Dutchess county...the one-legged veteran soldier, Lewis Cashdollar...” His measurements are truly impressive. According to the paper, Lewis stood 6’7” tall (on one leg), weighed 310 pounds, and his waist, chest, and neck were 66,” 63,” and 22” around, respectively.

In 1862, Lewis enlisted at Red Hook to fight in the Civil War and was mustered out with the 128th regiment of NY volunteers, Company C in September of that year. Lewis’s right leg was wounded in Winchester, VA, causing it to have to be amputated, but he wasn’t officially discharged until May of 1865.

After the war he joined the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) and the Ancient Order of United Workmen (AOUW). The AOUW was one of the first fraternal organizations that sprang up in the aftermath of the war to provide insurance to help support its members in times of loss, illness, or with burial costs.

In 1874 at a G.A.R. picnic in Tivoli, Lewis lent a hand making sandwiches for about 1,000 attendees. The *Hudson Evening Register* of September 3 of that year reported that “Mr. Cashdollar was in his glory as he cut and carved, making sandwiches which reminded us of the ones our mother used to make—one would make a good meal for a hungry man and have plenty left for lunch.” They also served ice cream and “other good things too numerous to mention” to those who attended. It must have been a rollicking good time, because at “about eleven o’clock, when the dancing was at its height, the platform gave way in front of the musicians stand, but fortunately no one was hurt.”

The following year the paper reported that Lewis’s “fish car” (which was probably a vessel to contain his catch” with about 3,500 fish in it was stolen When he found out that it was moored in Athens, he went up to get it from the thieves who tried to give him a hard time and keep it for themselves. This was foolish: “But when the impudent fellows were

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told that he weighed a ton and drew six feet of water when mad, [the thieves] concluded that discretion was the better part of valor.”

Except for a short stint as a civil servant (see below), Lewis was a fisherman on the Hudson River by trade. By an account in the *Troy Daily Whig* of June 1, 1869, Lewis and his brother (presumably Albert) were a couple of fun fellows. In late May, they and another party had a row-boat race in their flat bottom sailboats on the river. In what the paper called “the most interesting and exciting sailing match of the season,” the “Pride of the Hudson” raced against the Cashdollars’ skiff the “Pirate’s Bride.” The prize for being first in this two-mile race was a box of onions, and people along the shore made wagers with bourbon and cider. The race was called for the “Pride” after the Cashdollars gave up and returned to shore for more drinks.

In 1899 Lewis, who was a Democrat, was named Overseer of the Poor under Superintendent Easton of the New York State Public Buildings Department. This was reported to be a “lucrative” appointment, but he did not survive a change in leadership. In 1895 there was a “clean sweep” of over 100 employees in the department, many of whom were Civil War veterans. The *Geneva Gazette* of October 11, 1895, said that they were “once more reminded that the Republicans love the old soldier only on election day.” Lewis spoke to the governor to try to plead his case as a wounded vet who needed the job to support his family, but got nowhere. The paper printed a long statement by Lewis including this conclusion:

*"That is the consolation all of us old soldiers get from the 'Grand old Party;' no matter what service you saw or how badly you were wounded, if you are not of their political faith you can starve. I was discharged for being a Democrat. Yours truly, a one-legged soldier, LEWIS W. CASHDOLLAR."*

Lewis was the son of Joseph S. and Margaret Cashdollar and the brother of Edward and Arthur Cashdollar. He married Mrs. Adelia A. Dallas McDonald, daughter of John Dallas and Gitty Luffman, on December 3, 1865. She was a widow seven years Lewis’s senior. Delia had a son Frank McDonald who became Lewis’s step-son, and together Delia and Lewis had two daughters, Lily I. Cashdollar (born 1868 and married to Matthew Dubois) and Georgia B. Cashdollar (born c. 1871 and married to James Moran).

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Lewis Cashdollar had been ill for some time before he died on Monday, July 24, 1905. His funeral was held in his home (as was the custom) and members of the G.A.R. and the AOYW were present. He and Delia are buried together.

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