

Charles Hicks: Case Study by Sarah Healy

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Charles Hicks died on January 7, 1891. The listed cause of death is “Liver Disease, ‘inflammation of the liver and intermittent fever.’” He was born in Jericho, Long Island and died at Black Stump. His approximate age at his time of death is listed at 60, which means he was born around 1831. Various federal census records for Charles Hicks contain contradictory dates of birth, but list consistently and record the same names of other members of his house, namely his wife, Sarah A Hicks. Most records for Charles Hicks contain approximations of his official date of birth and were dependent on the census taker’s thoroughness, so trying to collect information that could tell us about his life requires a lot of guesswork.

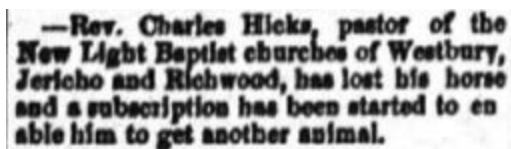
It is easy to find mentions of the name Charles Hicks in the NY Historic Newspapers archives, but assessing whether each one is referring to the Charles Hicks interred at Old Town of Flushing Burial Ground is another matter. Most of the mentions are very brief, and do not offer much identifying information that I could compare official records and Stone-Hartmann Index. One of the earliest mentions is in *the Long Island Farmer*, where a draft list of hundreds of names from October 4, 1864 listed a Charles Hicks among dozens of men drafted into the Union Army from North Hampton. It is very possible that a 33-year-old Charles Hicks served in the Union Army in the Civil War alongside his neighbors. No other identifying details are given so all that can be confirmed from this is that fighting in the war was common for local young men.



L O Sherburne
John Foster
Alfred Benney
Charles Hicks
Samuel Davis
George Thaler
Charlie Leitzl

The *Roslyn News* has a brief item on December 8, 1888: “Rev. Charles Hicks, pastor of the New Light Baptist Churches of Westbury, Jericho, and Richwood has lost his horse and a subscription has been started to enable him to get another animal.” Now this Charles Hicks not

only was a community leader in Jericho, where the Charles Hicks of the Stone-Hartmann Index was born, but he was also able to own a horse and had a community to rely on during times of hardship. This news item does not mention Rev Charles Hick's race or age, which would help confirm whether this was the same Charles Hicks found in the Stone-Hartmann Index;but it is very possible that a Charles Hicks who was born in Jericho, returned from army service and joined religious ministry. However this is hard to prove with archival fragments. Other news items in the *Roslyn News* and the *Long Island Farmer* provide details about the life of possibly one man named Charles Hicks, or, men who lived in the same place and at the same time as him. Both can help us construct the world inhabited by the Charles Hicks buried at the site.



—Rev. Charles Hicks, pastor of the New Light Baptist churches of Westbury, Jericho and Richwood, has lost his horse and a subscription has been started to enable him to get another animal.

The *Roslyn News* mentions a Rev. Charles Hicks again in a item from the town of Westbury: “The colored republican club met in the basement of the Baptist church, Westbury, on Wednesday evening and organized with the following officers: William Cobb, president; Thomas A Cartman, vice president; Townsend Levi, secretary; Oliver T. Coulter, corresponding secretary; Rev. Charles Hicks, treasurer.” This tells us again, how involved Rev. Charles Hicks was in his community as an officer of a Black political organization. This also confirms that he is the same race as the Charles Hicks in the Stone-Hartmann Index, and while this does not definitively confirm that it is the same person, it does open a window into the political and community organizing Black men were pursuing in the area where Charles Hicks was living. It is important to remain realistic about how much fragments of archival information can tell us about one person's life. With that in mind these fragments become an opportunity to piece together the world they inhabited.

WESTBURY.

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Edward Jackson, who was arrested