

[Mason, Melchert D. "Mep"]

"MEP" MASON LAYS ASIDE HIS FAVORITE INSTRUMENT AT  
THE RIPE OLD AGE OF 87 YEARS AND GOES TO HIS REWARD

"Mep" Mason, old time dance fiddler, to the strains of whose music thousands of Chautauqua County folk have danced during the past half century, is dead. The end for the merry old gentleman whose fiddle and bow were as essential to a successful dance in days gone by as a saxophone is to a jazz orchestra today, came early today in the home of Mr. Eddy, near Stedman. He died at 12:39 o'clock this morning after having been in failing health for a long time. Old timers recall that Mr. Mason, who reached the ripe old age of 87 years, was in his prime [a] "Jack of all trades." He painted houses and barns, ran a boat livery at Bemus Point, and did a hundred and one odd jobs for people in that part of the countryside. When the young folks of any community in Chautauqua County wanted to put on a real swell affair, "Mep" Mason was always sought out to do the fiddling. They used to dance down the moon those days too, but the longer "Mep" played the better he got, 'tis said. Not more than 10 or 12 years ago Mr. Mason gave up dance fiddling, but in his home he used to draw the bow across the strings of the old violin with all his old-time ability, and the music was just as lively as at any barn dance when they did the Virginia Reel and "Monie Musk" with "Mep" fiddling away at a lively clip. Mr. Mason leaves a sister, Mrs. Maria Atherly, residing at the Warner Home for the Aged in Jamestown; one brother, Silas Mason of Westfield, and one daughter, Virginia Baldwin of Gowanda. Funeral services will be held from the Universalist Church in Bemus Point, Monday afternoon at 2 o'clock. The interment will be in the cemetery at Bemus Point.

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Transcribed on 18 Jul 2009 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY