

[Packard, Elnathan W.

DEATH OF E.W. PACKARD, ESQ.

A Great Loss to Nunda, is the Death of this Prominent and Highly Esteemed Citizen—The Whole Community Shocked at his Sudden Death

This community has received no greater shock in many a year, than the sad and sudden announcement on Tuesday noon, that E.W. PACKARD was dead. The startling intelligence went through the village on wings of wind, and everybody was saying what a loss Nunda has suffered. Sitting at our table in our office writing, just after our return from dinner, we heard the voice of Mr. John Fitch, of Portage, who was going by on the walk, saying to some one, "You have lost Mr. Packard." Running to the foot of the stairs we heard the startling report that he had just died of apoplexy. We could hardly believe it to be true, but going to his house as rapidly as possible, we found our best and truest friend lying upon the couch in his dining room, with his afflicted wife and daughter bending over their noble husband and father, convulsed with grief at the sudden and terrible loss they had suffered.

Mr. Packard had been at this office the evening previous, where a meeting of the trustees of the Universalist society was held to determine upon extending a call to Rev. J.J. Brayton to become their pastor.

To say that Mr. Packard's death is a public as well as a private loss, but feebly expresses the great sorrow which everyone feels. He was the trusted adviser and counselor of many. Widows and orphans entrusted him with the management of large estates, and he looked after their interests with the same care and attention that he would his own. He had their entire confidence, and he never betrayed a trust. They feel his loss deeply, and on every hand is heard the expression, "How can we get along without him, and who can fill his place."

Mr. Packard was an honest and honorable man in the truest and strictest sense. In every public enterprise he was the acknowledged leader and warm advocate of what he believed to be for the best interests of the whole community. In all village improvements; in the establishment and support of our union school; in the welfare of all the churches, and especially the one to which he was attached, he gave his time and money generously, and his whole heart was in every good and laudable work. He was a member of the board of education for many years, and one of its best and most efficient members.

In politics he was a Republican, and always took an active interest in the success of his party, but he recognized the rights of others to their own views, and conceded to them all that he asked for himself.

It is with a sad heart that we speak of the warm and friendly relations that have always existed and remained unbroken between the writer and our dear departed friend, for the past 30 years. It was through his advice and counsel that we came to Nunda in 1859 to establish the NEWS. He has been our constant and steadfast friend through all these years. Nothing has ever occurred to mar our friendship by either word or deed, and his sudden and lamentable death comes upon us with a great cloud of sorrow. We cannot realize that we shall never see his cheerful face again upon our streets and in his office, and it seems like some sad dream, when we think that only last evening we were conversing with him, full of health, and to-night writing of him as dead.

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He had a kindly word for all, and was everybody's friend. The children all loved him. O'er his tender face, as he lay in death, strong men wept, and women bewailed him, feeling that a friend was lost who was not only never to return, but who could never be replaced.

“And so goes life, slight wisdom, scraps of song,  
With smiles and sighs, and much satiric art,  
And he does well—nay is in virtue strong  
Who, for the good of all, acts best his part.”

Mr. Packard was only 56 years of age, and was just in the prime and vigor of his life. He had been working hard of late, for he had many important cases on his hands. He leaves an aged mother, who is bowed down with grief over the loss of her only child, who did everything to make her life happy. His wife and only daughter mourn the loss of one of the best of husbands and fathers. He loved his family and his home, and enjoyed life by doing everything for their comfort.

The funeral services will be held from the house to-day (Friday), at one o'clock, Rev. J. J. Brayton officiating, and his remains deposited in Oakwood Cemetery, where he had provided a lot and family monument.

*The Nunda News*, Nunda NY, Sat. 1 Dec 1888

Transcribed on 9 Aug 2011 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY

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GONE TO HIS REST

Obsequies of E.W. Packard, Esq.—Honored in Death—  
Leading Members of the Bar Present at his Funeral—Press Extracts<sup>1</sup>

The last sad obsequies were tendered to our deeply lamented and highly esteemed fellow citizen on Friday of last week, when he was laid at rest. The services were held at the residence of the deceased, at 1 o'clock, where a large number of sympathizing friends and neighbors met to pay their last tribute of respect and love to one who had so long occupied a prominent and honorable place in this community.

[A lengthy list of honorary bearers is omitted here.]

The active bearers were D.S. Robinson, E.C. Olney, A.J. Frayer, H. Peck, Z.A. Miller, A.M. Dake.

Among the personal friends and relatives from out of town were Supt. of the Poor J.L. Scott, of Geneseo; Prof. Thos. B. Lovell, of Attica; Mr. and Mrs. Robert Simmons, Chas. and Henry Simmons, of Richmond, N.Y.; Mr. Chas. Reed and Mr. Nelson Packard, of Bristol, N.Y.; Mrs. Rathbone, of Oakfield.

The business places were generally closed during the hour of the funeral service, as a mark of respect to the deceased.

Rev. J.J. Brayton, the new pastor of the Universalist society, officiated, and his remarks were so interesting and appropriate, they were a great source of comfort and consolation to the bereaved relatives and friends.

Col. John Rohrbach made an excellent address in behalf of the Bar of the county, and in well chosen and eulogistic words paid a high tribute of respect to his departed friend whom he had known for thirty years. It was one of the best extemporaneous addresses that we have ever listened to on such an occasion, and as truthful and appropriate as it was eloquent, in presenting his high professional standing, and his uprightness of character in every walk of life.

The music by the quartette of gentlemen was very fine, and rendered by Messrs. Grieg, Willard, Tousey and Morse.

Letters and telegrams of sympathy were received from Dr. Wm. Q. Huggins, of Sanborn, N.Y.; Hon. A.J. Abbott, Geneseo; Frank S. Smith, Esq., New York, and Hon. Norman Seymour, of Mt. Morris, who refers to the deceased as "an esteemed member of the Livingston County Historical Society, who was preparing a memorial to be read at its annual meeting in January, of one of its members, the late F.D. Lake, but at the Master's call gathered up the record of an eventful and beautiful life, and hastened to his reward. Thus one by one our loved ones are called away, but the memories of their noble deeds, their many virtues and unselfish lives will cheer our pathway to that beautiful city where partings are unknown."

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Letters of condolence have also been received from Hon. Wm. White, of Utica, S.A. Ellis, Supt. of Public Instruction at Rochester, Col. J.J. Carter, Mr. Chas. Gibbs, Mrs. Dr. Fox, and others.

The family of the deceased desire to express their sincere and heart-felt thanks to the numerous cherished friends for their kindly acts and expressions of sympathy which came to them from so many sources that they are unable to make a personal response to each.

BIOGRAPHICAL

E.W. Packard was born in Rochester, N.Y., August 22d, 1832. He was the eldest son of Horatio Nelson Packard and Lydia Phillips Jones.

He studied law in Nunda with Benedict Bagley, Esq., attended law school at Balston [Ballston] Spa and Po'keepsie, N.Y., and was admitted to the Bar in Po'keepsie in 1853, a short time before he was 21. He went to St. Paul and opened an office with L.U.C. Dayton. He married Martha Williams Leach, of Po'keepsie, April 17th, 1855. He came from St. Paul during the same year, and opened an office in Nunda, and remained here until about 1860 or 1861, when he went to New York, and commenced the practice of law with Huntington Lee, at 240 Broadway. For about two years he conducted the Stevens House in New York, and afterwards was made Inspector of Customs, holding that position until Johnson's administration, when he resigned and returned to Nunda, where he has since remained and practiced law.

The deceased left a will which was made in March '87, making his wife and daughter executors, and dividing his property equally between them. It was before the surrogate on Monday, and admitted to probate, E.C. Olney, Esq., and C.K. Sanders appearing as witnesses. He leaves his family in comfortable circumstances. His unfinished legal business, and the large number of important papers belonging to other people, in his office, made it important for some one to look after his affairs at once, and his old and true friend, Gen. Jas. Wood, has been here this week, at the request of his executors, to look after these matters of importance.

<sup>1</sup>[Several press extracts are omitted here.]

*The Nunda News*, Nunda NY, Sat. 8 Dec 1888

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[Packard, Elnathan W.

(from The Early Families)

[Horatio Nelson Packard's only] son, E. W. Packard, whose given name was Elnathan, was a graduate of Nunda Literary Institute and studied law with Benedict Bagley, early Nunda attorney. He went on to Poughkeepsie Law School, was admitted to the bar in Poughkeepsie in 1853, a short time after his 21st birthday, and started the practice of law in St. Paul. But he came home and opened a law office here in 1855, the year he married Martha Leech of New York. It had been expected he would settle down here, but when he was offered a position with the Huntington Lee firm in New York City in 1860, he accepted it.

He was a regular contributor to the Nunda News from the time it was established in 1859 and sometimes took over the editorial desk for brief vacation periods, so it was only natural that he would write to his Nunda friends through the columns of the "News" to tell them about the invitation he received from the newly elected President, Abraham Lincoln, while Mr. Lincoln was at the Astor House in New York en route to Washington in 1861.

Somehow, Packard had become acquainted with the venerable Joshua Dewey of Brooklyn, then 94 years old. Dewey had voted for George Washington and at every subsequent Presidential election including Lincoln's and was very proud of having voted for both Washington and "Honest Old Abe." Dewey was a veteran of the Revolution, having enlisted in the Continental Army at the age of 15. He also was the oldest living graduate of Yale and the oldest retired New York State legislator in 1861.

Mr. Packard therefore thought Lincoln ought to know about him. So he had a framed photograph prepared and wrote a letter, dated Feb. 19, 1861, to accompany it, saying of Mr. Dewey, "Full of years and honors, yet with eye undimmed and intellect unimpaired, with a firm step he now treads our streets and gladdens our firesides, and with undiminished devotion prays for the preservation of our country." (This is a typical example of Mr. Packard's eloquence.)

The following day a note came saying that Mr. Lincoln received with much pleasure the photograph of Joshua Dewey and extended his most cordial thanks. "Mr. Lincoln will be happy to see you and Mr. Dewey, should you favor him with a call," the note concluded. It was signed by another history-making name, "John H. Hay, Secretary," and probably was a cherished memento of E. W. Packard's as long as he lived.

During some of his years in New York Packard was a U.S. Customs Inspector, an office he held until Andrew Johnson's administration. He resigned in 1867 and returned to Nunda, this time to stay. His home was the present David Essler residence, 7 Mill Street, either then or before he went to New York, perhaps both.

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He was a member of the Universalist Church, one of its trustees for 20 years. superintendent of its Sunday school and aided liberally in construction of its brick building. He was counsel for the Genesee Valley Canal R.R. (the "Pennsy") in 1881 and had previously assisted in establishing the right of way for the old "Swains Branch." Corporation law was his forte.

E. W. Packard died here Nov. 27, 1888, and there was no one to carry on the name. However, his daughter, Mary Packard Richmond, owned the present B. W. Thompson home at the corner of Buffalo and Gibbs street for some time and will be remembered by some present-day residents as the gentlewoman that she was.—M. Frost, Nunda Town Historian.

*The Nunda News*, Nunda NY, Thu. 9 Jun 1977

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