

[Bickford, Lyman]

Lyman Bickford was born at East Bloomfield, Ontario County, New York on Nov. 11, 1820, the son of Azariah Bickford and Philan [Elvira] Perkins Bickford. His grandfather Rev. James P. Bickford, of Scotch descent, moved from Maine in 1812 to Rochester, where he was one of the early settlers. Later he moved to Michigan, where he died at the age of 84 years.

Azariah Bickford was a blacksmith by trade, following his calling at East Bloomfield, and later moved to Victor. Lyman was the eldest of nine children and learned the trade his father followed.

His early advantages for gaining an education were meagre. What schooling he received was at the district school, supplemented by a course at the Canandaigua Academy. [On] April 28, 1842 he was united in marriage to Elvira Perkins at Victor.

The next year, they moved to Macedon, where he formed a partnership with Henry Huffman for the manufacture of agricultural implements on a small scale.

A foundry that was located at the forks of the road one-half mile west was moved to the present site Bickford & Huffman Company's machine shop, and they began the manufacture of plows, together with other general jobbing that could be procured for their shop. Thereafter, they constructed mowing machines and grain drills. Mr. Bickford turned his attention to the grain drill problem, then in its infancy, and invented what is known as the Bickford Double-Force Feed Distributor, which, being entirely different and superior to anything then in use, soon grew to be in such demand that all other branches of their business were discontinued to give their entire factory to this one product.

From the time of his coming to Macedon until November 1885, Mr. Bickford gave his attention to this factory; through prosperity and adversity he labored untiringly. In the early days, he mastered all the trades that entered into the construction of the factory's product, and for years all the machinery that was turned out was the result in part of the manufacturing of his and Mr. Huffman's hands. The business grew from a small [?] foundry to one of large proportions.

At the beginning of the Civil War, they enjoyed an extensive southern trade. Many of their machines were in the land of the Confederacy, and much of their assets were notes of farmers in arms for the cause of the South. Men of less determination would have given up at this time, but to Mr. Bickford the reverse of fortune only spurred him on, and Phoenix-like, he built a business that far exceeded what they enjoyed before.

In November, 1885, he sold his interests in the works to Helen M. Kirkpatrick, and thought to give the rest of his life to the enjoyment of what he had amassed.

Three children were born to Mr. and Mrs. Bickford, two of whom died in infancy; the other, Mary, lived to womanhood. In 1886 she became the wife of Co. Henry P. Underhill, but died two years later, leaving a daughter, who followed her mother in three months.

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In 1892 Mr. and Mrs. Bickford celebrated their Golden Wedding, and on the 23rd day of the following March, Mrs. Bickford "took her chamber in the silent halls of death."

In his declining years, favored with prosperity, the result of hard labor, when he would wish to be surrounded by his posterity, this man was alone and the world looked dreary. On June 13, 1894 he united in marriage with Miss Arminda B. Gile, who had been a member of the household for nearly twenty years, and the house was homelike again. The second Mrs. Bickford died May 22, 1898, and sorrow again entered his life, which ill health ended last winter.

Politically, Mr. Bickford was a Democrat, and Jeffersonian simplicity was one of his best traits of character. He was elected in this strong Republican town and led his party in a battle for Member of Assembly, which, while not successful, was creditable to him in its result.

Religiously, he was a Universalist, and it is due to his generosity that the church of that denomination is in Macedon. He was a firm believer in the Universal Salvation of mankind, and the cheer he derived from contemplating the second life helped him through many of the sad days of this world.

Lyman Bickford died at his home in Macedon village, Wednesday November 24, 1900, at eight o'clock in the forenoon, aged 80 years and thirteen days.

The funeral will be held Saturday morning at eleven o'clock from the Universalist Church, and will be conducted in part by the Masonic fraternity of which he was a member.

Mrs. Bertha Bortle Beal Aldridge, "Lyman Bickford 1820-1900,"
in *Macedon News Gatherer*, Macedon NY, [26?] Nov 1900

The funeral services of the late Lyman Bickford were held at the Universalist Church, Macedon, Saturday at 11 A. M. The church was filled to its utmost capacity by the relatives and friends of the deceased. Addresses were made by Rev. I. W. McLaughlin, pastor of the church, and Rev. Asa Saxe, of Rochester, after which the remains were taken in charge by the members of Macedon Lodge, No. 005, F. & A. M., of whom deceased was a member, and conveyed to the village cemetery, where they were buried with the usual impressive ceremonies of the fraternity.

Democrat and Chronicle, Rochester NY, Mon. 19 Nov 1900

Transcribed on 15 Feb 2008 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY