

[Bissell, Luther A.]

ONEONTA PIONEER PASSES

Luther A. Bissell, Sixty-Three Years A Resident Of Oneonta
Well-Known Truckman Succumbs to Attack of Pneumonia
Wednesday Afternoon After Short Illness—
Conspicuous Example of Man on the Job—Funeral Friday Afternoon

In the death of Luther A. Bissell, occurring at the family home at 84 Chestnut street Wednesday afternoon shortly before 3 o'clock, Oneonta loses not only one of the very last of the generation of sturdy men who have seen Oneonta grow from a small hamlet to its present sizable dimensions for an inland city and who have contributed to this upbuilding, but also a man of much more than average ability and intelligence—one whom perhaps few outside of a small circle of more intimate associates appreciated for his true worth. His life was a notable example of "the man on the job," his devotion to his work and his abhorrence [sic] for the lazy and indolent being a feature of his life. While thus active to the very last his mind was equally active and he enjoyed good reading and his admiration for the choice productions of literature was known to many. His mind was keen and humor of the most original sort, his droll expressions having afforded amusement often to those who conversed with him.

Born on Bowe hill in the town of Hartwick, Nov. 6, 1836, the son of Horace and Amanda Bissell, one of a family of 10 children of whom he was the youngest and the last to survive, he grew to manhood on the parental farm, developing the staunch traits which have aided so many sons of the farm to make a success in other callings. When 17 years of age he went to Westford, where for a couple of years he was associated with his brother, the late C. H. Bissell, in the egg business. Nearly 63 years ago he removed to Oneonta and entered the employ of his brother, the late William D. Bissell, doing teaming between Oneonta and Fort Plain until the arrival of the D. & H. railroad from Albany in the summer of 1865 when he purchased the outfit of horses and wagons from his brother and commenced the business of a truckman and drayman which business he conducted until his death—his anxiety in the delirium of his illness being to "make the train."

Save during a long illness from typhoid fever in 1869, and a day or two now and then at widely separated intervals, he has been at the D. & H. station to meet practically every daytime passenger train arriving there, and without doubt nowhere in the land can be found so constant and unfailing application to work as Mr. Bissell had displayed throughout the 53 years since the railroad's advent in Oneonta. It was not the money that he coveted, for while he was frugal he would rather lose a dollar than take a penny from another that was not rightfully his, but he preferred to be at

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work. Within a few weeks of his death he told a friend that he knew he would not live two weeks after he left the wagon. He always minimized his ailments and he had doubtless been suffering from pneumonia for several days before he gave up. He was at work Monday morning but returned to the house later, then consenting that a physician be called. He failed steadily from noon that day until his death on Wednesday as stated.

Surviving Mr. Bissell are the widow, formerly Miss Rebecca A. Jacobs of Roseboom, to whom he was married Sept. 29, 1854; two sons, Ambrose of Milford and Frank of Oneonta Plains; and two daughters, Mary A. and Harriet M., both residing at home. The funeral will be held from the residence Friday afternoon at 2 o'clock. Rev. William Gaskin of the Chapin Universalist church, of which he was an attendant, will officiate and interment will be in the family plot in Riverside cemetery. The services will be private but relatives and persona friends are invited. The family requests that flowers be omitted.

In politics Mr. Bissell was a staunch Democrat although in local affairs he considered men [e.g. personalities] rather than political affiliations. He had firm convictions relative to a Divine Being and of immortality. Not only by those who will miss his familiar face from the D. & H. passenger station but [also] by very many who had come to have more than a superficial knowledge of the man, his memory will long be honored.

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Transcribed on 23 Jul 2009 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY