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Death of Capt. Benjamin Caryl

Br. Benjamin Caryl departed life in Buffalo, on Saturday, the 8th inst., at the advanced age of eighty-three years. He was one of the founders of the Universalist Society in Buffalo, and through the vicissitudes of a long life, has maintained a high position as a zealous supporter and defender of our faith, a sincere christian, and an honorable and useful citizen. We copy the following interesting biography of the deceased from the editorial columns of the *Buffalo Morning Express* of the 10th inst.: [abridged]—

Under our obituary head, to-day, will be found the notice of the demise of BENJAMIN CARYL, Esq., one of the pioneers of Western New York, at the period of his decease, the patriarch among the citizens of Buffalo. The intelligence of his departure will be received with emotions of sincere regret by the large circle of friends whom his many virtues and his guileless life had attached to him by bonds of unusual strength; though none, even of the nearest of those friends, could have desired the longer continuance of life in one to whom its cares were irksome, and whose every thought had long been centered upon the bright prospect which the Hereafter revealed to his anxious gaze. Disease, painful and wearying, made tedious the last few weeks of his existence, and the struggle between a constitution once remarkable for its healthy vigor and the decay incident to the closing of a life prolonged far beyond the average, was at once grievous to the sufferer and harrowing to the feelings of that affectionate group, whose melancholy pleasure it was to watch at his side, and minister to his latest wants. But, firm in the religious faith which he had cherished for half-a-century, the patient believer looked ever forward to a happy issue of his long probation here, and when finally summoned to depart, expired without a struggle.

Mr. Caryl was born in the town of Hubbardton, Massachusetts, on the 12th of October, 1773, and we have often heard him remark that his was the first baptism celebrated in the meeting-house of that place. When the subject of our notice was about five years old, his father emigrated to Chester, Vermont, and there his [father's] children remained after the death of their parents, for many years.—Benjamin was destined to a mercantile life, and engaged in trade after serving the apprenticeship then considered necessary to the preparation of all business men. He failed as a merchant in Chester, and as early as 1804, emigrated to Long Point, Canada West, whence he came to Buffalo in the autumn of 1807. Here he was more successful in the profession he had chosen, and at the breaking out of the war [of

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1812] with England, as the senior member of the firm of Juba Stores [Storrs] & Co., was considered one of the ablest, as well as most enterprising and honorable business men on the frontier. In 1812 he removed to Williamsville, or Eleven Mile Creek, where the firm had a store and several large mills. Having extensive transactions connected with the supply of the army, the deceased personally took charge of the Williamsville interests, leaving the Buffalo establishment to the care of his partners, Messrs. Juba and Lucius Stores [Storrs], both of whom survive him.

The burning of Buffalo [during the war] involved a loss to this firm, of a large amount of property, and the alarms of war several times compelled Mr. Caryl to remove his family and household from the exposed situation which they occupied at Williamsville, to places of refuge more interior; but during all the trials incident to that time of peril and distress, the deceased retained his hopefulness, and never wearied of extending to his fellow-sufferers all the relief which a heart only too full of human sympathies could dictate and encourage. Often was his house at Williamsville left to the free occupancy of the fleeing inhabitants of the border, and his property was shared ungrudgingly with those who needed the kind offices of friends and appealed to him for succor. Such was the prominent characteristic of that noble nature whose pleasure, constantly renewed, it was to do good wherever opportunity presented, be the sacrifice to himself what it might.

In 1820, after serious reverses of fortune, Mr. Caryl returned to Buffalo and for a short time kept the "Mansion House," then a modest country tavern, at the terminus of the Albany stage road.— Subsequently, he was for many years Collector of canal tolls at this point, and also held other offices by appointment of the State authorities. In March, 1846, the partner of his life and sharer of all his manhood's fortune, was taken from him, and from the effects of this blow he never entirely recovered. One of the last acts of his life was to walk, supported by two of his children from his bed to the adjoining room, and to gaze, with calm attention, upon the portrait of her who had gone before.

Some months since, Mr. Caryl was compelled by increasing weakness to forgo the outdoor exercise, and especially the attendance upon divine worship, which had theretofore afforded him so much gratification. From that period he gradually but steadily declined, suffering at times great distress of body, until the afternoon of Saturday, when his pure life was brought to a happy conclusion.

Mr. Caryl leaves behind him three daughters and two sons; twenty-two grandchildren, of whom the writer is the eldest, and six great-

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grandchildren... Down to the taking away of the patriarch of this flock, the family counted members of four generations in Buffalo....

...The book of his earthly experience his closed, but the lessons which it taught, of piety abiding and faith unadulterated, of hope and charity, of mercy and love, remain for the thoughtful study of those who tarry here yet a little longer.

Since the above was in type, we have received the following notice of the death of Capt. Caryl from Rev. E. W. Reynolds:—

Br. Austin:—I write to inform you of the serious loss sustained by our Society and city in the death of FATHER CARYL, who departed from this earthly scene on the 8th inst., in his 84th year. He was, as you are probably aware, one of the pioneers of Western New York, the oldest surviving citizen of Buffalo, and one of the principal founders of our Faith in this city. A convert to Universalism in early manhood, he cherished the doctrine through the vicissitudes of his long life—as had his departed companion through the meridian and decline of hers—and both died happy in its ample promises and glorious hopes. As a member of our Society he was liberal of his means, untiring in his efforts to propagate the faith, and full of interest and zeal to the last. He maintained a deportment honorable to his profession, and left a memory unsullied as the sunset of his life was unclouded.—He was buried from the Universalist Church on the 11th inst., under the care of the Masonic fraternity, and after an appropriate address by the writer. A very large concourse of people attended the service—among whom were several members of the clergy, and the most distinguished citizens of Buffalo—who thus united to honor the memory of the upright man and the faithful Christian.

Yours very Truly
E. W. Reynolds

Buffalo, Nov. 15, 1856

Christian Ambassador, Auburn NY, Sat. 22 Nov 1856
[a Universalist newspaper]

[Transcriber's note: I have corrected several "typos" without comment.]
Transcribed on 5 Sep 2008 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY