

[Dobbin, Hugh W.]

Death of Gen. H. W. Dobbin

Gen. H. W. Dobbin, one of the most aged and prominent lay members of the Universalist denomination in Central New-York, departed life in Geneva, N.Y., on Thursday, the 27th ult., aged nearly 90 years. He was one of the earliest settlers in Geneva, and has ever stood high in that community as an honorable and exemplary citizen, an honest man, and benevolent friend and neighbor. He bore a prominent part in the last war with Great Britain—having held a high commission in the public service, and been engaged, we believe, in several actions on the lines. For many years, he had been a sincere and devoted believer in the world's redemption, and had faithfully and generously devoted of his means to build up that faith. As long as his health permitted, his venerable form was seen constantly and invariably in the Geneva Universalist church, whenever public services were held therein—an example well worthy the imitation of many younger persons.

We greatly regret that the efforts made to procure the services of a Universalist clergyman at his funeral were unsuccessful. The obsequies taking place on Sunday, our preachers in the region round about were prevented by their previous engagements, from being present... We copy the following interesting account of the exercises which took place at the funeral of Gen. Dobbin, from the *Geneva Gazette*:—

The time intervening between the death and burial of the late Gen. Dobbin, (from Thursday evening to Sunday afternoon) gave opportunity for extending notice of the mournful event... No noise or bustle preceded the sad obsequies to the honored dead. The deserted streets, the quiet stillness peculiar to the holy Sabbath in a country village, prevailed up to the very moment announced for the funeral. At one o'clock, however, as if a common feeling and impulse to pay tribute to the memory of the revered soldier pervaded our community, the streets leading to the Universalist Church, where the religious services were to be performed, were thronged with people. The living tide was swelled to a torrent as the military (the "Geneva Union Guard") and the Masonic Fraternity, preceded by the Geneva Brass Band, made their appearance. Long lines of carriages, buggies, &c. with their human freight were also added to the throng.

It was the request of the deceased while living, that he should be buried with Masonic ceremonies. In accordance therewith Dr. Stevens, W.M., of the Ark Lodge, commenced the same at the house... The coffin was then borne to the hearse, by a few of Gen. D's surviving comrades of the war of 1812. The procession was formed and moved to the Church—as it approached which, it being evident that not one-quarter of the people present could find ingress, it was determined to

[Dobbin, Hugh W.]

hold the religious services in open air. The people gathered as closely as possible about the steps in front of the church, and the exercises were continued by the Rev. Wm. H. Goodwin, of the M. E. church. This clergyman was called upon, and promptly responded, after a vain effort to procure the attendance of one of the same persuasion of the deceased.—Gen. Dobbin lived and died a firm believer in the doctrine of Universal Salvation. In view of the peculiar circumstances of the case, Mr. Goodwin appropriately abstained from any remark that could wound the feelings of the most sensitive Universalist. His discourse was founded upon the passage from Job, "I would not live always," and was one of his ablest extempore efforts. In closing, he made pathetic [i.e. full of pathos] allusions to the relations of the deceased, the handful of old veterans present, and the mystic brotherhood, and lastly to the bereavement of the family.

The religious services ended, the funeral cortege proceeded to the place of sepulture, a beautiful sand-knoll on the farm of the deceased's grand-son, E. R. Dobbin, three miles north of the village. The procession, embracing the Band, the military, the Masonic fraternity, the bereaved family, and thousands of sympathizing friends, in carriages and on foot, formed one of the most grand and imposing spectacles ever witnessed in Geneva.

Arrived at the grave, the "Guards" took position on the right, a few feet distant, the Masons in a circle about it, and the mourners near the foot. The Masonic ceremonies were continued, ending with depositing a white apron, and by each brother a sprig of evergreen, in the grave. A quartett sang a beautiful dirge, "Thou art gone to the grave, but we will not deplore thee." The Rev. Mr. Goodwin closed with prayer and benediction, when the ground was cleared and the "Guards" fired a *feu de joie* [a salute] over the place where rested the departing hero.

Thus honorably was consigned to the tomb the mortal remains of a brave, generous, useful and beloved citizen.

Christian Ambassador, Auburn NY, Sat. 6 Oct 1855
[a Universalist newspaper]

Transcribed on 6 Sep 2008 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY