

[Dunham, Albert Burdette]

DEATH OF SUPERVISOR, ALBERT B. DUNHAM.—

Supervisor Albert B. Dunham, died at his home at Bridgeport, Sunday afternoon about 3:30 o'clock. His death was easy and apparently painless. But it was a sad day in Bridgeport; not only did the family friends feel keenly their great loss, but it extended throughout the whole community and the county. The announcement of his death soon brought together little groups of men discussing the fatal result of his illness and the loss to their village, and on every man's face was painted the picture of deep sorrow. Friend and foe alike agreed upon his ability and value to the town. He had been sick just five weeks and the announcement of his death was not unexpected. Taken first with pneumonia, he had partially recovered from this when fever set in, and the attending physician pronounced the direct cause of his death pneumonia complicated with malaria fever.

Albert Burdette Dunham was the second son of the late Dr. David Dunham, and was born in Bridgeport, April 3rd, 1842. His father had come there when a boy only eight years old, and Albert had spent his life in that village with the exception of two months when his father having sold his practice, resided in New Hartford. Albert was educated at the district school in Bridgeport and the old Yates Polytechnic in Chittenango, but he followed this schooling with years of study which resulted in his being of great service to his neighbors in Sullivan. Old residents of Bridgeport remember him in his school days and say that then he was recognized as a promising lad, reliable and decisive. At the age of 19 he entered the mercantile business with his father, and later, in 1866, entered in business for himself, and with the exception of a partnership for a few years, and about two years out of business, he had always conducted a store in Bridgeport. He was married to Miss Jennette Rector, December 24, 1864.

His recognized ability early made him a leader in his community, and over twenty years ago he was elected Justice of the Peace on the Democratic ticket and held the office continuously, with the exception of one year, up to the time of his death. In 1878 he accepted the nomination of his party for Supervisor, but a factional fight in the then strong Democracy of Sullivan, in which he took part the year before and aided the defeat of the late D. D. Walrath, turned, and by this fight and the liberal use of money he was defeated by a large and not flattering majority. In 1882 he was again nominated and this time elected by the handsome majority of 264, and since that time has represented Sullivan in the Board of Supervisors, every year being elected by good majorities and often with little or no opposition. The Republican party recognized his service to the town and many of them preferred his election to their own candidate, and this feeling very often extended to the opposition candidate himself.

In the Board of Supervisors, although the Democrats were greatly in the minority, his advice was sought and recognized and his name was always found upon the list of important committee. He was a valuable member in the Board, and there was no member who was not friendly disposed toward him. He had

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assisted the new members and manifested a disposition to do right by his constituents and the county.

Albert B. Dunham was a man of rare practical sense. His judgment was valuable on any subject on any subject that he would give it, and he was too much of a man to give judgment on a subject he was not familiar with. There was no can't in his makeup. He was in no possible sense a little big man, nor a pretender. He looked a man, and was one. His opinion was sought after and relied upon by his neighbors, and differences between them were settled by his advice. The confidence that his people in and about his home had in him is the best commentary on his worth we can give.

He easily was the leader of his political party in this town. Not infrequently there were jealousies, but he was too keen to allow those elements to give him trouble, and when it is considered that he lived in a locality where the political majority was his way and that during the years of his political control he was enabled to hold such distinction without purchasing it, we have a fair measure with which to estimate his ability. He was a good judge of men, and at heart despised the men who flocked to his aid to promote their own pecuniary interests.

He had an influence with greater men of his party in the State known only to the few who knew him intimately, and it was known by a very few of his friends that at the time of the death of Hon. Samuel J. Tilden plans were in progress whereby he was to have been handsomely recognized by his party.

His death while yet in the prime of life, and apparently enjoying the best of physical health and ability, calls forth many expressions of regret, throughout Central New York. It is an especially great loss to Sullivan and his friends here, and the bereaved widow has much sympathy in her bereavement.

The funeral services were held at the house Wednesday afternoon. The heavy storm prevented the attendance of many from abroad who intended to pay this last sad honor to their friend, still [the] funeral was largely attended. The Rev. Dr. Fisk of Watertown, Universalist, officiated, and found a text for an eloquent sermon in the deceased's ability and willingness to serve his people, and serve them well.

The deceased leaves a wife, and two brothers and a sister: Edward G. Dunham of Cicero, and Dr. David G. Dunham of Bridgeport, and Mrs. Alice Gearhart of Palmyra, who sadly feel the loss of a good husband and brother.

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Transcribed on 15 Dec 2010 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY