

## [French, James Gilmore]

### DEATH REMOVES JAMES G. FRENCH

A Former Resident and at One Time One of the  
Prominent Men in This City Died in New York City

The death of James G. French, at the home of his daughter Mrs. Charles Close in New York City yesterday, removed a former prominent resident of this city and county whose activities as a member of the Board of Supervisors, whose knowledge of real estate values and whose fine personality and social distinctions will be remembered by a host of friends who esteemed and respected him. His death will be sincerely mourned by all his former admirers, who number many in this city.

It is nearly ten years ago since Mr. French left this city, and he had spent those years between Newport and New York City. At the time he left Utica Mr. French was one of the best known men in this city and county, as his appeal to the State Board of Assessors—when in 1880 the Board of Supervisors, of which he was a member, made large and unwarranted increases in the real estate valuation of Utica—met a spontaneous response in the heart of every taxpayer in this city. The State Board of Assessors declared that the increased valuation of \$1,500,000 was not only not justified, but the Supervisors should have reduced the valuation to the extent of \$300,000. Mr. French was chairman of the committee which selected the site of the present jail and had charge of its construction.

James G. French was born in New Hartford November 9, 1823. His father was John French, who was born in the same house in 1798. His grandfather, John French, Sr., came to this section from New Hampshire with Judge Jedediah Sanger and located in New Hartford. John Jr. was a prominent citizen and figured largely in the history of the time. He died in [1886?]. His wife was Almira, daughter of Robert Gilmore, another pioneer of New Hartford. James G. French came to Utica in 1839. He read law with Dexter Gilmore and was admitted to the bar in 1847. He practiced successfully until 1864, when he engaged in the insurance business. In 1866 he accepted a clerical position in the Oneida County Clerk's office and held it through various administrations until January 1, 1898, when he became city assessor. His record of 32 years in one position shows how acceptable his services were. In politics he was first a Whig and a Republican since the organization of the party. Mr. French was for three years clerk of the Board of Supervisors. He served as a member of the Board for 11 years, representing the seventh ward.

For seven or eight years Mr. French was appraiser of Utica property for the New York Mutual Life Insurance Company. He had also appraised considerable Utica real estate for investors, in company with Peter Davies and James Lynch. It was because of his peculiar qualifications in this

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direction that Mr. French was nominated for the office of city assessor by the Republicans of Utica in the fall of 1897, when the new law for a board of three assessors for Utica went into effect.

During his many useful years he always maintained a keen interest in all sports and for many years he was a member of the Utica Field and Game Protective Association. He loved curling and was a favorite and frequent figure at the Curling Club's rink on Rutger street. As late as his seventieth year Mr. French was a member of a cricket club, and in the matches against the Syracuse club he entered into the spirit of the game with an enthusiasm that was the envy of most of the younger men.

Mr. French was one of the oldest members of the [Universalist] Church of the Reconciliation and was an ardent champion of his faith. Although he was advanced in years he naturally attracted the attention of the younger men, who admired him for his fine social qualities and his youthful spirit. While he had outlived most of the friends of his youth, he made new ones daily and clung to them.

Mr. French is survived by a sister, Mrs. Abigail Prendergast of New Hartford; a daughter Mrs. Charles Close, formerly Mrs. W. T. Smith of New York, and numerous nephews and nieces of New Hartford. Six brothers, Francis M. of Morehouseville, William M., Thomas D., John, Daniel W. and Henry C., and a sister, Mrs. Jane A. Lord, all of New Hartford, have died within the last 15 years.

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