

[Gates, Daniel]

DEATH OF DANIEL GATES¹

A Pioneer in Railroad and Telegraph Enterprise

Daniel Gates, a very prominent, and one of the wealthiest men in Central New York, died at his home in Chittenango last week Thursday. He was born in Chittenango, November 3, 1812, and received his education in that village. In Mr. Gates' early business career, Chittenango was more of a business center than it is today. Among those who were engaged in business at that time were the Crouses, Walraths and others, who were prominently identified with the business prosperity of Central New York.

Mr. Gates was possessed of keen business instinct, and when the railroads were laid through Central New York, he became identified with the projects, and from the earliest date of his connection with these interests, until the time of his death was a large stockholder in the New York Central & Hudson River rail road, and his first step toward the amassing of his fortune was his investments in railroad stocks.

Mr. Gates enjoyed the intimate friendship of Commodore Vanderbilt, Senator Chauncey Depew, Dean Richmond and other prominent railroad magnates and was always a welcome visitor in New York at meetings of the stockholders and railroad officials. He had been interested in the Western Union telegraph company and in the early days of the match industry, was engaged in the manufacture of the famous "blue match." He was a believer in the possibility of making Chittenango Springs a famous summer resort and did much to advance the scheme. In political belief he was a staunch Republican.

He was benevolent, possessed a genial and social disposition and very few men in central New York were as widely known and highly respected.

Mr. Gates is survived by two children, Frank G. [Francis H.] Gates of Chittenango [who would later become a state senator] and Mrs. Helen M. Gridley, of Syracuse.

Cazenovia Republican, Cazenovia NY, Thu. 15 Mar 1900

¹ Transcriber's note: Be aware of the great differences in the two memoirs that follow: in who his biographers thought this individual was, and in what they considered was important—and true—about him.

[Gates, Daniel]

Death of Daniel Gates

Daniel Gates of this village, and a well known citizen of Central New York, passed away at his home, Thursday night, March 8th, having survived his wife nearly two years. His funeral services were held at the house, Sunday afternoon, the Rev. F. [Frederick] W. Betts of Syracuse officiating. His remains were buried in the grounds near what is now known as "The Gates Homestead," his six grandsons acting as bearers.

Daniel Gates was born on the homestead, November 3, 1812, of a long lived ancestry, his father and mother having reached the good old age of eighty-six and eighty-five, respectively. He married Lany, daughter of Henry Ehle, December 29, 1836. He is survived by a son, Francis H., of this town, and a daughter, Mrs. D. W. [Helen] Gridley of Syracuse, seven grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

He moved from the farm in the spring of 1865 into the little home where he died. He was a hard working, painstaking farmer, as is shown by the fact that twice in succession his farm took first premium as the best managed farm in Madison county. He was one of the original stockholders of the old Chittenango bank, and was for many years president of the same, only relinquishing that position when it was merged into the First National Bank of Chittenango.

For nearly forty years he was associated with A. A. Howlett, T. D. Leash and others in the management of the Salt Springs Bank in Syracuse, and up to the time of his death no man had a greater solicitude for the good name of the Bank than he. He was one of the original stockholders of that part of the now New York Central railroad system between Syracuse and Utica, paying in part for his stock with his team helping to clear a roadway through the woods. He became the owner of quite a block of the stock in later years, dividing with his children from time to time, but he never sold a share. He enjoyed the confidence of the leading officers of the road, who frequently gave him points, very much to his advantage financially. He was a frequent attendant at their meetings, and at the meetings of the Western Union Telegraph Company when in later years he became interested. These were his pets; he believed in them, bought them, and with a liberal hand gave them to his children and grandchildren. He never in his life put a dollar into anything that he did not believe would return to him a dividend. He never was a man of large wealth as men are rated in these days, and in his later years his pride had been, not how much he could accumulate but how much he could give his family, having a desire to know while he lived the uses to which they would put it. His advice was frequently sought and by some prized.

[Gates, Daniel]

For more than fifty years he had been a Mason, a respected member of his lodge, and for many years its Master; he believed in it, believed that the man who lived up to its teachings would be the better for it. He believed in the doctrine of universal salvation, and when in his younger days meetings were held in surrounding towns, he was a frequent attendant, and gave liberally to their support.

He was a staunch Republican, never failing to present himself at the polls, firmly believing that he had a duty to perform. He was a modest man, making no pretensions to be what he was not, believed (as Mr. Betts said in a few remarks made at his funeral) "that a man was known for what he was, what he did, and not for what he pretended to be or do." His little home satisfied him. He was a loyal man, loyal to his kin, with a loyalty that knew no abatement; loyal to all business interests, loyal to his religious convictions, loyal to his lodge. His familiar form will be seen no more, his pleasant word heard no more, but by some will be long remembered. His decline for the last few weeks had been rapid, but he did not (want to have?) it known. Without a pain (??) he passed away.

Madison County Times, Chittenango NY, Fri. 16 Mar 1900

Transcribed on 2 Aug 2018 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY