

[Green, Seth]

## DEATH OF SETH GREEN

### The World-Famous Pisciculturist Passes Away

The Fatal Illness—Sketch of the Distinguished Sportsman's Varied Career—  
His Great Achievements—A Tribute From A Friend.

Seth Green died at his residence, 212 Alexander street, at five minutes after one o'clock this morning. Death was the result of a general decay of physical and mental faculties, but was hastened by an accident in January last when he was thrown from a cutter. The muscles of his back were severely strained, but no bad effects manifested themselves for about five or six weeks. He had been confined to the house since February, but did not take to his bed until Wednesday last. From that time until the end he was unconscious. Mr. Green's robust health first commenced to fail about six years ago, when he suffered from an attack of pleuro-pneumonia, from the effects of which he never entirely recovered.

Seth Green was born in Irondequoit March 19th, 1817, and when he was still young his father moved to what was then known as Carthage in the northern part of this city. He obtained common school education, and became remarkably expert as a fisherman and hunter. Indeed he was passionately fond of these sports and naturally drifted into kindred business. For several years he kept a large fish market on Front street. He conceived the idea of artificially propagating fish in 1837 when on the banks of the Salmon river, a small stream thirty miles north of Coburg, Ont. The incident is described in Johnson's encyclopedia in these words:

"His attention was arrested by the appearance of a number of salmon and from their movements he judged that they were about to prepare a nest for their spawn. Perched in the branches of a tree he carefully watched them continuously for forty-eight hours. He observed that as soon as the spawn was cast the male salmon and other fish ate all they could find and that there were but a very few eggs un-consumed and these the female was sedulously covering with gravel for concealment. He had never read up on the subject, but from what he then observed he became convinced that fish could be artificially hatched."

From this time until 1861 Mr. Green experimented more or less and thought a great deal upon the subject of the propagation of fish. The greater proportion of trout or salmon obtained by artificial means was twenty-five per cent, and in 1864 Mr. Green decided to put his theories into practice. Accordingly he purchased a small piece of land through which the Caledonia creek runs and erected a small one room house on the water's edge. By reducing the quantity of water mixed with the "milt" of the \_\_\_ he finally secured a product of 95 per cent. The first eggs hatched were salmon, then trout and other species were rapidly added, including white fish, German, California mountain, rainbow, brook, lake and salmon trout, carp, striped and Otsego bass, sturgeon, muscalonge, grayling, herring, wall-eyed pike, white and yellow perch. His

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success soon became a topic of general discussion and the little Caledonia hatchery famous. In 1867 he was invited by fish commissioners of four of the eastern states to come to Holyoke, Mass., and try his process upon shad spawn. The local fishermen at first gave him no encouragement, but in two weeks when he had succeeded in hatching 15,000,000 fry, their demeanor changed. The next year 40,000,000 fry were secured, and one of the pleasantest incidents of his life was a visit to Holyoke in 18??, when the people turned out in masses and greeted him as their great benefactor. Similar gratifying results were obtained on many other rivers. In 1868, the New York State Fish Commission was organized. The members of the first commission were appointed by Governor Hoffman. They were Seth Green, Robert B. Roosevelt and ex-Governor Horatio Seymour. Mr. Green retired soon after and was succeeded by G. G. Cooper of this city. Mr. Green was made superintendent of the commission, a position which he had since filled with remarkable fidelity to the interests involved. In 1871 he transported the first shad ever taken to California. As a result 1,000,000 shad were sold along the Pacific coast in 1886. In 1875 Mr. Green leased sufficient ground to build a State hatchery on Caledonia creek to supply the trout hatchery established by him in 1864. Up to this time he had confined himself largely to hatching salmon trout and whitefish, to distributing mature fish and to the hatching of shad in the Hudson. But now his sphere of usefulness was widened. He hatched artificially the spawn of about twenty kinds of fish, and also hybridized striped bass with shad, shad with herring, brook trout with salmon trout, brook trout with California salmon, salmon trout with whitefish and European trout with American brook trout. The distribution of brook trout has been a special feature and great numbers of fish have been sent to all parts of the state. The fish are furnished free by the state.

Mr. Green corresponded extensively with fish breeders in Europe and received several gold medals from the Societe d'acclimation of Paris. He had also been awarded several medals by American fairs and expositions. He often appeared at Albany to urge legislation favorable to the fishing interests which were in his charge. For several years Mr. Green's name stood at the head of the fish culture department in the American Angler. The distinguished fisherman invented many pieces of apparatus used in the propagation of fish, and was the author of the following works: "Trout Culture," "Fish Hatching and Fish Catching" and "Home Fishing and Home Waters."

There is no necessity to speak in detail of Mr. Green's many notable characteristics. His was essentially a whole souled, genial, positive, outspoken disposition which made firm friends of all with whom he came in contact. He numbered his friends all over the Union and in his death Rochester loses one of her most deservedly distinguished citizens.

Seth Green was married February 14, 1838, to Miss Helen Cook, a native of this city, who with two sons, Chester K., and William C., and two daughters,

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Helen L., and Alice G., mourn his death. He also leaves two sisters and one brother, Monroe A. Green, who has been associated with him in his life work.

A friend of the late Mr. Green pays the following tribute: "He is truly great who confers lasting benefits upon mankind. The benefits are various and diversified. Some have risen to greatness in the various departments of science, have discovered natural laws that have rendered simple what before was incomprehensible. By constant discovery of natural laws has our present civilization been reached and much is yet to be learned. Seth Green has given to the world a knowledge of nature which has made it practical for man to produce fish in abundance, and to fill on rivers and lakes with an article of food. He was not scientific. He learned from and studied nature only; a close observer of the habits of fish. Lying upon the banks of streams and observing their habits he was enabled to hatch a larger percentage of spawn than would be done by the natural process. He believed only what he saw. He knew nothing theoretically. He expressed no fact until he had demonstrated and proved its truth. He reasoned from cause to effect. Reason and observation were his only guide. Honest, he feared not to say he did not know. He credited the animal world acknowledge above mere instinct. Nature made him a sportsman. His travels through the primeval forest in search of the antlered deer, his wanderings along the streams in search of 'speckled beauties,' rendered him familiar with nature and nature's God. What he had thus learned he knew, and the ipse dixit of no man, however learned or scientific, shattered his belief.

"Born in Irondequoit, Monroe county, he early developed into a sportsman. He could tie a fly or leader for trout fishing; could make a spoon or gang for trolling; could knit any kind of a net; could row or sail a boat; he was an expert pistol, rifle or wing shot; he was the equal of the most expert in shooting, fishing or sailing; he was perfectly acquainted with the habits and feeding grounds of all fish and game. He drew his inspiration from nature alone. He never wronged man nor woman. In his intercourse with his fellows he was courteous and kind. He has approached that end that all humanity must reach. He feared not death, as he was conscious of having done no wrong. Reason and observation were his guides. Honest in all things, and to do good to his fellow man his ambition. He died as he lived, believing that the future has no terrors for him."

*Union and Advertiser*, Rochester NY, Mon. 20 Aug 1888

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THE FUNERAL OF THE LATE SETH GREEN

Yesterday afternoon at 3 o'clock the services on the occasion of the funeral of the late Seth Green were held at the family residence on Alexander street. The attendance was large and included many of Rochester's oldest and most prominent citizens. Among those present were William Mudgett, James E. Pierrepont, Dr. Lewis E. Swift, Mayor Parsons, N. Osburn, United States Commissioner Husbands, Colonel Brackett, J. Moreau Smith and Mr. Mosely. The deceased had been a member of the Rochester Whist Club and quite a number of its members were in attendance. The remains looked exceedingly natural in the casket, the face wearing the calm, self-contained expression so familiar in life. The floral tributes were few and simple. A bunch of ferns was placed at the foot of the casket. It was sent by the Floral Workers of the First Universalist Church. At the head of the casket was a pillow from the family with the word 'father' in [immort??les]. Mrs. Gilman H. Perkins sent an ivy wreath, and Mrs. Edward Pierrepont a floral anchor. Cut flowers were tastefully arranged around the room.

Rev. Dr. Asa Saxe [his pastor] officiated at the services, which were peculiarly impressive. He spoke of the many useful and noble qualities of the deceased, and paid an eloquent tribute to his worth as a naturalist and discoverer. He dwelt particularly upon the honest, manly way in which he had ever discharged his duties as a citizen, and concluded by referring to his simple habits and the quiet happiness of his domestic life. A quartette composed of Mrs. P. P. Dickinson, soprano; Mrs. L. S. Kendall, contralto; Philip Fried, tenor, and W. H. Learned, bass, sang appropriate selections.

Following is a list of the pallbearers: William H. Bowman, Samuel [Winter?], C. C. Morse, Mortimer F. Reynolds, Hon. Frederick Cook, Benjamin F. Freeman, George W. Archer and John H. Rochester.

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