

[Lutes, Catherine M. Bonesteel]

MRS. CATHERINE M. LUTES

Came to Rochester When It Was a Hamlet, Away Back in 1827

Mrs. Catherine M. Lutes, widow of former Mayor John Lutes, died in this city last Thursday. She was born April 6, 1822 in Brunswick, Rensselaer county, N.Y., and came to Rochester in 1827 with her parents, Henry and Anna Bonesteel. They made the journey on a packet boat on the canal, it taking them one week to reach Rochester, which at that time was a woodland village.

The first school she attended was in a little clearing in the woods at the spot that is now Brown Square. The children were carried to and from school on ox sleds in the winter. She married John Lutes, Oct. 23, 1842 and was a resident in the Ninth and Second wards all her life.

Mrs. Lutes had the honor of making the first presidential flag, when Polk was elected in 1844. This flag was so large that a neighbor had to stretch it from a window in order to finish it. The pole for the flag was erected in the spot on State street where the old [Bantel?] Hotel now stands.

Mrs. Lutes was gifted with a remarkable memory and recalled all the noted incidents of her time: Sam Patch's fatal leap; the first murder and murderer, Barron; the cholera epidemic; the building of the first Andrews street bridge; the first balloon ascension in 1836; the erection of the first churches. She was one of the first workers in the Universalist Church, when services were held in the Court House. She attended all of the parties given by the City Dragoons and Masons in 1852.

Although in her eighty-third year, Mrs. Lutes kept her sight and was a great reader, keeping up with the late books and magazines, and was well informed on all subjects. She was the last member of the Bonesteele family, and the last of the five families that came to Rochester in 1827. She was a kind and devoted mother, always thinking of others, and she will be deeply mourned by a host of friends.

*Democrat and Chronicle*, Rochester NY, Sun. 9 Oct 1904

Transcribed on 3 Mar 2008 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY