

[Mudge, Ebenezer]

EBENEZER MUDGE

Passed Away at the Ripe Old Age of 93 Years.

Ebenezer Mudge, who passed his 93d birthday on April 6th of this year, died at his home, 5 River-st., in this city, this morning. He was one of the oldest residents of the county. He had been in good health, though obliged to be prudent and careful about going out of doors, until one of the first days in April, when he had the misfortune to fall in his sleeping room. Though no bones were broken, the shock was sufficient to cause him to take to his bed, and he has gradually failed till the end came today. Until within a few days his mind has been perfectly clear.

The funeral arrangements have not yet been made.

The following sketch of Mr. Mudge was published in The Standard of Monday, April 8, 1907, immediately following his 91st birthday on Saturday, April 6, and was from the pen of his pastor, Rev. U. S. Milburn. There is little to add to it except that reference is made to his wife as being ill at that time. Mrs. Mudge died March 26, 1908, at the age of 79 years, 9 months and 23 days.

Five grandchildren also survive: Clayton E. Mudge, Mrs. R. E. Caldwell, Halsey M. Collins, Miss Anna O. Collins and Miss Katherine E. Collins.

Mr. Milburn said [then]:

It is very seldom a man reaches his 91st birthday with the possession of his mental faculties, and with no serious physical infirmity. When one does, it is worthy of more than passing note, it being a matter in which the public has an interest. Last Saturday such a birthday was quietly celebrated by one of Cortland's oldest and much respected citizens, Ebenezer Mudge, of 5 River-st., who was born April 6, 1816.

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Ebenezer Mudge is the second son of seven children of Abram Mudge and his wife, Dimmis Millard, both of English descent, possessing strong personalities and receptive minds. Charleston, Montgomery Co. New York, can claim the honor of being his birthplace. His schooling was meager in the strict sense of the word, but he has always been and still is a learner. He learned the miller's trade, and when 16 years old, 1832, he took charge of his father's flour mill, and successfully conducted the business. This was two years before McCormick invented the reaper, and all the grain he ground was reaped by hand.

In 1839 Mr. Mudge and his father drove the one hundred intervening miles to Cortland, and together they purchased the mill, water right and site now known as the Wickwire mill, the site, including the mill-pond, being about fifty acres. He at once took charge of the mill, and has been a resident of Cortland since that time, he having sold the mill to Carr & Moses

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in 1866. His father died in 1869, the Rev. Samuel J. May of Syracuse, the noted Unitarian divine, officiating at his funeral.

Mr. Mudge was married to Hannah Hodge in 1837. Four children were born to them, one dying in infancy. Olivia died while a student of the Cortland academy, of diphtheria, the first time that dread disease had ever made its appearance in the place. Another daughter, Mary, became the wife of Charles W. Collins and died March 31, 1889. Powers C., the only son, is a resident of Cortland.

Hannah, his wife, died Oct. 23, 1868, and on June 29, 1870, he married Harriet E. Phelps, and for more than thirty-five years these two have journeyed life's pleasant paths together. In his old age Mr. Mudge is blessed and cheered by his five grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

To grow old and not lose one's grip of things and events—that is a joy. Mr. Mudge is a man who has not lost his grip. He takes a keen interest in the vital questions of the day. Always possessing a strong character, with a sense of absolute honesty in thinking, and inheriting from his father a liberal turn of mind, he has never been hampered by precedent, a striving after popularity or governed by what other people think. In the early days he was in politics a Democrat, but when new issues came up he joined the forces of the new Republican party; and when its work was done he saw the need and possibilities of the Prohibition party and has since been its ardent supporter.

In religious belief he can be classed among the liberal wing of the Universalist communion, receiving with avidity utterances expressing the very latest thought. He is a member of the Universalist church, being its deacon and moderator for years and was in his pew at the recent Easter service, with mind active and alert. He will be found any day in his quiet home with the very latest scientific, political or religious periodical which he reads and discusses.

*Cortland Standard*, Cortland NY, Fri. 16 Apr 1909  
[considerably abridged]

Transcribed on 24 Feb 2016 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY

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FUNERAL OF EBENEZER MUDGE  
Held at His late Home, 5 River-st., Monday Afternoon

The funeral of Ebenezer Mudge was held on Monday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock at his late home, 5 River-st., and was largely [well] attended by old friends and neighbors. The services were conducted by Rev. W. D. Potter, pastor of the Universalist church, of which the deceased had long been a member. Mr. Potter read selected portions of scripture and offered prayer. He also read several short poetical selections which were very applicable to the life of the deceased. In his remarks he paid a warm tribute to Mr. Mudge as a man, a citizen, a home builder, as one of a vital religious faith, and referred also to the generous gift which he had recently made of \$1,000 to his church.

Mrs. Homer Howard and Mrs. Fred I. Graham sang with fine effect, "Some Day," "No Sorrow There," and "The Christian's Good Night."

The bearers were the son, son-in-law and two grandsons: Powers C. Mudge, Charles W. Collins, Halsey M. Collins and Clayton E. Mudge.

The burial was in the family lot in the Cortland Rural cemetery.

*Cortland Standard*, Cortland NY, Tue. 20 Apr 1909

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EBENEZER MUDGE

The writer wishes to pay a word of tribute to one who bore the above name and who died at his home in Cortland, N.Y., on April 16th, at the ripe age of 93 years, 10 days. Brother Mudge was the oldest man in Cortland County at the time of his demise. Born in Charleston, Montgomery County, he came to Cortland with his parents at the age of 23, and has been a useful citizen of the place for 70 years. He was received into church fellowship by the Rev. Thomas J. Whitcomb on Jan. 11, 1842, and has been an active and devoted member for more than 67 years. This is a record which has few equals. He was a man of rare simplicity and of charming personality; had strong home ties and was without guile, and thus having the enviable power of making friends and drawing them to himself. It seemed above question, at the time of his death, that he was not only the best known but also the best and most universally beloved man in Cortland County.

We cannot forget his gift to the local church on Nov. 1st last, for the sum of \$1,000, as it was so unselfish and proving the inspiration for the raising of the entire indebtedness of \$3,300 by January 1st. It was the primal condition of our church jubilee on Jan. 13th, which marked a new epoch in our progress. He thus gave, only to enjoy it while he lived—a fine example of serving a cause. Since the church was dedicated in 1839, it is probably true that no one person has been so generous in his giving, both of himself and his money, as our loyal friend and brother, the late Ebenezer Mudge.

We are especially grateful today, after his long and useful life...for the lasting example of his unselfish efforts to promote the cause of Universalism...

W. D. POTTER

*The Convention at Work*, Herkimer NY, May 1909  
[a publication of the NY State Convention of Universalists]

Transcribed on 11 Aug 2013 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY