

[Pratt, Ira F.]

ANOTHER PIONEER GONE

The subject of this sketch, Ira F. Pratt, was born in Bridgewater, Vt., August 19th, 1796, and died March 16th, aged 88 years. He left Vermont for Oneida Co., N.Y., in 1807, the journey being made alone, on foot when a boy not 10 years old. His father Jonathan followed in 1811, leaving a farm, but in 1813 moved to Plymouth, N.Y., where he bought a farm, and where he died in 1818. About 1814 Mr. Pratt started out on foot and alone for the "Genesee Country" but on his way came upon some of his old Vermont acquaintances at Manlius Corners where he engaged to teach school for the winter at \$12.00 per month and board. At the close of the term he made out his bill (\$48.00), was paid off, and with this large amount of money, and a strong heart (though not overstrong physically) he started back to where his brother-in-law Joel Cook lived viz Sangerfield, Oneida Co., where he remained until 1818. It was about this time that he made his second start for the distant "Genesee Country," accompanied by his brother William, two years his senior. After a long and tedious journey they arrived in Batavia. Here Ira F. met a cousin (who was attending court), who lived in Middlebury and who strongly urged him to go home with him, naming as an inducement that it was more healthy than Batavia, there being so much fever and ague at the latter place. This was enough, and he at once accepted his proposal. It was very soon after his arrival in Middlebury that he decided to become a merchant and having a good opportunity engaged as clerk in a store in Wyoming village or near there. Not long after this he entered into co-partnership with James C. Ferris, so well known throughout the country as "Judge" and after a short time the "Judge" sold his interest to Mr. Pratt and he carried the same on successfully. In 1823 he was married to "Phebe Locke" of Wyoming (sister of Mr. Myron Locke now living in Castile). Soon after their marriage he moved to Gainesville Creek where the greater part of his life was spent, excepting a few years of mercantile life in Attica (and after quitting the business) a few years passed with one of their daughters in Scottsville, N.Y. Nine children were born to them, five of whom survive, viz Joseph and Collins of Silver Springs, N.Y.; Mrs. Daniel Post of Buffalo, N.Y.; Lyman of Nebraska and Mrs. Henry R. Buck, of Scottsville, N.Y.

Mr. Pratt was for many years a Jacksonian democrat but in 1848 with many of his party became a free soiler, and subsequently a republican. He was a number of consecutive years supervisor of the town of Gainesville and at one time commissioner of United States deposit fund for the county, also for a long time post-master at Gainesville. Integrity was a marked characteristic of the man. He was unapproachable when anything not absolutely right was involved; intrinsically honest, he had the confidence of

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all. To the poor his hands were always open and never empty. Cheering words were as natural as the breath he breathed. His whole life was a benediction and many who have not known him long years will find that as the read of his decease a friend has gone and the world is poorer for it. In religion he was a Universalist, a believer in conversion, prayer, and a regular and devout reader of the Holy Scripture. His last days were those of trust, confidence and a sure hope of future immortality. His life-long companion still survives but the longed-for reunion can be but short at best and she waits the hour to come with sad but trustful confidence in Him "who doeth all things well." Such in brief is the life and death of one whose name will not soon be forgotten or influence lost. His funeral services took place at Silver Springs at the home of his son, March 17, '85, Rev. J. C. Long officiating, and he was buried in the new cemetery grounds at Gainesville. Thus passed away another honored pioneer of "Genesee Country."

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