

[Rogers, Harper W.]

HARPER W. ROGERS
He Passed Away Sunday Morning—A Remarkable Career

Hon. Harper W. Rogers, one of the best known men in Columbia county, died Sunday morning, soon after the break of day, at his home on Green street in this city. He was in the 82d year of his age. The end came peacefully. He had been ailing for several years, but was able to be up and around most of the time, and only a few of his most intimate friends were aware that he was dangerously ill, as he was sitting up on Saturday and was in his usual cheerful frame of mind. During the night he began to feel worse and about 6:15 in the morning he lapsed into unconsciousness while surrounded by the members of his family, who were at his bedside throughout the night.

Mr. Rogers was one of the most prominent and influential citizens of Hudson, and during his long and busy life it was characteristic of him to devote his personal energies to every enterprise which enlisted his interest, his friendship or his allegiance, and to contribute the very best of his judgment and experience to its welfare. He was unselfish and patriotic—willing even to lead an unpopular contest, if convinced that such contest was required in the interest of good government or better citizenship. In this way, and during his long and useful life, he often became a leader in the public services, respected and honored in this city which he loved and served so loyally. By his death this community loses one of her best citizens. As a mark of respect to his memory the flag on the City Hall is at half mast.

Mr. Rogers was born on the 28th of September, 1819, at Queensborough [Queensbury], Warren county, N. Y., where he resided on a farm till ten years old. He then removed with his parents to Stockport, Columbia county. His ancestors were natives of Rhode Island and ranked among the most prominent of the early settlers. His grandfather, Samuel Rogers, was a Revolutionary soldier and distinguished himself for bravery and patriotism throughout that struggle. His father, whose name was also Samuel, was in early life an extensive lumber merchant, but afterwards engaged in agricultural pursuits.

Harper followed the occupation of a farmer until 1845, when he removed to the city of Hudson, and engaged in mercantile business on Columbia street, carrying groceries and provisions, until the year 1867. During a portion of that time he was considerably interested in the manufacture of paper. About the year 1867 he commenced a series of investments of lands near the city, which he still owned when he passed away. Most of these are devoted to farming. Mr. Rogers also owned considerable city property. In 1889 he discontinued the manufacture of paper and has since lived a retired life.

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In early life his educational advantages had been limited, but he possessed a natural aptitude for business. From boyhood he had been imbued with strict principles of honor, integrity and industry, and with these as his ole capital he embarked in the pursuits of life. Both branches of his business above referred to prospered under his management, and gradually increased in extent and profit until he found it necessary to relinquish the mercantile branch, and twenty-two years later he retired as a paper manufacturer to enjoy the fruits of his labor.

Mr. Rogers was always a strict Democrat, and although never seeking political preferment, was always considered a prominent man in his party. In 1864 he was elected Mayor of the city of Hudson by a large majority and became very popular, as his administration was marked with ability, impartiality and active endeavors to promote the welfare of the city. He was urged to accept a renomination under the assurance that no opposing candidate would be run against him, but he declined the flattering honor upon business considerations. Much against his inclination he gave way to the urgent solicitations of his party and was elected Mayor of the city for a second term in 1868, making another excellent record for himself. The same year he accepted the nomination for Member of Assembly, after it had been given him by solicitation without his knowledge. He was elected by a majority of 418 in his district, and served one term with credit to himself and satisfaction to all concerned. In 1872 he was one of the four ex-Mayors who were chosen Aldermen, Mr. Rogers representing the Fourth ward in the Common Council, the other ex-Mayors chosen at that election being Jacob W. Hoyradt, John C. Dormandy and Joshua T. Waterman. They were known as the "Big Four."

Mr. Rogers was a man of more than ordinary intellectual endowments. He was an extensive reader and close [?] a remarkably friendly and urbane, and possessed a liberal and generous nature. Physically he was a man of commanding presence, and readily won the confidence and respect of his associates. For many years he was prominent in some of the most important public enterprises of this city, and was always a liberal supporter of all measures calculated to promote the general welfare.

He joined the Hudson fire department in 1847 and was a member of old Rip Van Winkle Hook and Ladder Company. He took such an active interest in firemanic matters and the good of the department in general that when steamers came into use to take the place of hand engines, one of these was named after him, and H. W. Rogers Hose Company still exists in the department.

In 1854 Mr. Rogers joined the Masons, becoming a member of Hudson Lodge No. 7, F. & A.M. He was one of the oldest, if not the oldest, Mason in

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the city, and his funeral will be conducted with Masonic rites on Wednesday afternoon.

During the Civil war he was a great friend of the soldiers and his generosity to the "boys in blue" was seemingly unbounded. He was a trustee of the Hudson Savings Institution, a director of the Farmers' National Bank, one of the incorporators and a member of the first board of trustees of the Hudson City Hospital and one of the early directors of the House of Refuge for Women. He was also identified with the Columbia Agricultural and Horticultural Association and served for many years on its board of directors. As a member and trustee of the First Universalist Society of Hudson he has contributed liberally to its support and to the erection of the present church edifice. He was of a generous nature, and his kindly acts to those in distress as well as the other charities he bestowed were done without any show or ostentation.

Mr. Rogers was married in 1840 to Agnes M. Coventry, of Stockport, who died February 11th, 1848. By this union he had three children, two of whom are living. He married for his second wife, in August 1849, Catharine Miller, of Claverack, by whom he also had three children, two of whom survive. Colonel Charles S. Rogers, the well known wholesale and retail grocer of this city, is his youngest son.

The death of Mr. Rogers is the severance of a link which connected us with the active men of this community of nearly half a century ago. His memory will be cherished as a public spirited and worthy citizen who, during his long and useful career, contributed much for the best of this city and its institutions.

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