

[Rushton, J. Henry]

J. Henry Rushton

Last Tuesday afternoon, J. Henry Rushton of this village died at his home of Bright's disease. The funeral was held Thursday afternoon at the house, Rev. G. M. Gerrish [Universalist] officiating. The bearers were three of Mr. Rushton's brothers, Geo. M, Judd W., and Edward L., and three brothers-in-law, E. V. Dowling, of Fine and Sidney and Felix Pflaum, of Pittsburg, Pa. The interment was at Fairview.

Mr. Rushton was born near Edwards Oct. 9, 1843, his parents being Peter Rushton and Martha Glines. The latter died in 1852, and the former in 1905. Besides the brothers mentioned above, one other, Fred, resides at Spearfish, South Dakota. Two sisters, Mrs. E. V. Dowling, of Fine, and Mrs. Frank Allen, of Harrisville, survive.

His early years were spent in Edwards, West Potsdam, Hopkinton, and Fine. His early education was obtained in the district schools, the late Cornelius Carter being one of his teachers. He also taught several winters. While living so near the Big Woods at a time when game was so plentiful, he learned wood craft and wood lore which he never forgot.

During some of his trips in the neighborhood of Cranberry Lake, he made the acquaintance of Mr. J. B. Ellsworth and Mr. M. D. Packard. Through their suggestions he found employment with the former when he came to Canton, 1869. At the end of this employment he decided on a trip "to the woods." The first necessity was a suitable boat. The ones he might find were log dug-outs, heavy and cranky at best. He thought he could do better, so [he] started one for himself. Before it was completed Mr. Packard wanted it. Another was started, but sold before the builder had an opportunity of trying it. After a year of this trying he commenced to build small boats and canoes, as a regular occupation. His first shop was in the old engine house on Water street. This he occupied until 1881 when the present factory was completed. From such a beginning has been evolved the best known, if not the largest, small boat factory in the world. The one aim has been to build the best. He is known wherever small boats and canoes are used. His goods have been used in many of the European countries, besides South Africa and the newer possessions of the United States. To those who have never visited this section of the state, the word "Canton" means "Rushton."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Ruston, whose first vote was cast for Abraham Lincoln, has always been a staunch believer in and supporter of Republican principles. He has served the village as trustee and as a member of the Board of Water Commissioners. In this capacity he had largely to do with the installation of the present water system. He remained a member of the latter board until 1900 at which time the authority of this board was vested in the board of

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trustees, and he resigned. He was the kind of citizen that is good for a town to have. He had his peculiarities, but so has every man. He held strong convictions and was an occasional contributor to the town's papers, always writing upon subjects of interest and over his own signature. Strong, sturdy, outspoken, clear headed, fearless, deeply interested in what he considered was for the best interest of the most people, a man who had hewed out his own fortunes independent, [?] a lover of home and home life, grudging no man his good fortune, rejoicing with all, unostentatious and retiring, he made his presence felt.

He was married in 1883 to Miss Leah Pflaum, of Port Jervis, N.Y., who survives him, with two sons, Henry, a graduate of St. Lawrence University, and Sidney, who is taking a course in the School of Technology at Potsdam. His health began to fail two or three years ago, and for two years he has been placing more and more responsibility upon his eldest son, who for the last year or so has been managing the large business, which is understood will be continued in the future as in the past.

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<sup>1</sup> There is a detailed account of the Rushton canoes in the Canton newspaper *St. Lawrence Plaindealer* of Tuesday, September 3, 1935, titled "History of Rushton Canoes Is Told."