

[Schoeffel, Sarah Cawthra]

City's Oldest Resident Dies at Age of 101

Mrs. S. C. Schoeffel Served at Front in Civil War

Funeral services will be conducted at 3 p.m. today for Mrs. Sarah Cawthra Schoeffel, Rochester centenarian whose death yesterday ended a colorful career that was highlighted by balloon trips over Confederate lines with Abraham Lincoln.

Her life span covered 101 years, 6 months and 26 days. She died in her home, 346 Glenwood Ave., where the rites will be conducted today by the Rev. C. Clare Blauvelt of the First Universalist Church. Burial will be in Mt. Hope Cemetery.

Rochester was a village when she was born in Yerdon, Eng., May 1, 1836 and as her career closed she was believed to be the oldest resident of this city of [334,000?]. Of English Welch parentage, she saw a life of adventure that wrote her name and her family's in the records of city and nation.

When she crossed to Canada at the age of 6 with her family the trip took eight weeks. Her father, experienced in the woolen business, had preceded the family to Canada with blankets for the Indians. The family traveled from New York by the Erie Canal and by sailboat to Toronto, where they joined him.

After two years in Toronto her father built a woolen mill in Erie, Canada, but finally decided to return to England. Illness halted him at Rochester and on his recovery he saw the possibilities in the growing village. He built a mill, later destroyed by fire, and then a second, wrecked by flood. He died at 47.

When Sarah was 14 she obtained a job without consulting her family and soon became the leading saleswoman in the firm. At 17 she was sent to take charge of a branch at Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, and a year later to Cleveland for a similar purpose.

After the death of her brother, who accompanied her, she returned to Rochester to engage in business again. In 1860, at the age of 24, she married Francis A. Schoeffel, then connected with the American Locomotive Works.

He responded to Lincoln's first call at the outbreak of the Civil War and was wounded at Bull Run. His wife went immediately to the front and after many adventures joined her husband to find that he was recovered and had returned to duty. While with the regiment she occupied herself by nursing the wounded.

With her friend, Abraham Lincoln, she made balloon trips to observe Confederate maneuvers over Fredericksburg.

When she returned to Rochester she was entrusted with \$30,000 to pay off disbanded soldiers in this city.

[Schoeffel, Sarah Cawthra]

When St. Mary's Hospital was founded to fill an emergency need for caring for Civil War soldiers, Mrs. Schoeffel raised \$17,000 toward its establishment and volunteered as a nurse.

Her wholesale millinery business, established on her return from the battlefield, was wiped out by flood in 1865. Her charitable activities never were limited by sectarian lines, although she was born a Quaker and had affiliated herself with the Universalist Church.

Surviving are three sons, George B. Schoeffel and Lt. Col. Francis H. Schoeffel of Rochester and Col. John B. Schoeffel of Fredonia; two daughters, Mrs. Fred A. [Blanche S.] Frost and Mrs. James [Margaret Elizabeth] Crowley of Rochester; nine grandchildren and [18?] great-grandchildren.

The bearers at the funeral today will be George B. Schoeffel, Frank H. Schoeffel, Fred A. Frost, Donald Frost, James Crowley and Harry Moody.

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Transcribed on 25 Nov 2007 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY