

[Van Dusen, Ambrose L.]

A. L. VAN DUSEN  
LONG AND USEFUL LIFE CLOSED  
A Review of His Life and Public Services

[We republish the following, with correction of dates, etc., erroneously printed last week. It is well worthy a reperusal, since it so admirably presents the lesson of the life that is ended.—ED.]

DIED.—At his residence in the town of Phelps, N.Y., November 7th, 1878, Ambrose L. Van Dusen, aged 68 years.

The death of Mr. Van Dusen was not wholly unexpected. It had been feared for some time that his sickness would prove fatal, and though friends and physicians did all that was possible for his recovery, their efforts proved unavailing.

The life and character of Mr. Van Dusen, no less than his public services and his prominence in the community, make his death worthy of more than a merely casual notice. To his many friends and acquaintances some facts of his history will doubtless prove of interest.

Mr. Van Dusen was born in the town of Phelps, October 1, 1810. His parents were natives of Hillsdale, Columbia county, and moved to Ontario county in the winter of 1800. He was one of a large family of children, and at the time of his father's death was about 17 years old. Thus bereft of a father's care and help, at an early age he was obliged to face the duties of life, and begin the cultivation of those traits of character that won for him in after life the regard of all who knew him.

At the age of eighteen he entered the employment of Wm. Hildreth, of Phelps, where he displayed great fidelity in the discharge of his duties, and made his services almost indispensable. After three years he was employed by Thomas Embry, of Victor, N.Y., who was then engaged in the mercantile business, and who subsequently took Mr. Van Dusen into partnership with him.

It was while living in Victor that Mr. Van Dusen married, in 1834, Miss Susan Richardson, daughter of Jeremiah Richardson, who now survives him. In the spring of the same year he returned to Phelps, where he purchased 100 acres of the homestead farm. The land was in an almost primitive condition, and he at once devoted himself to the work of developing and improving it. In this, as in other fields of labor, he worked with great industry, and was rewarded with success. On this farm he lived to the day of his death.

His faithfulness, integrity, and conscientiousness marked him as a suitable person for public office, and his fellow citizens repeatedly called him to hold positions of trust and responsibility. He was supervisor of his town one term. He served for many years and county superintendent of the poor.

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In 1872-3 he represented the first assembly district of Ontario county in the Legislature. He was also at the time of his death Post Master at Gypsum. Mr. Van Dusen also held many individual trusts. At one time there were deeded in trust to him two farms, which he managed for the benefit of unfortunate neighbors with commendable faithfulness. It is not known that he was ever charged with neglect of duty to those who trusted and depended on him.

Mr. Van Dusen delighted to do good. The abundance with which he was blessed was not used for self alone. It was also made the means of blessing others. But his charity and help were extended in a quiet, unostentatious way, and many of his generous deeds will never be publicly known. There are many who will rise up and bless his name for his benefactions to them. Mr. Van Dusen's family relations were of the most happy nature. His home life was free, frank and simple, and genuinely hospitable. His mother, who died in September of 1877, at the advanced age of 97, received from him the most dutiful attention. Although very positive in his religious views, he made a generous bequest to the church to which his mother belonged, and one of his last requests was that his remains might be buried by the side of hers.

Mr. Van Dusen had no children of his own, but leaves an adopted daughter, Mrs. Cyrus Ball, of Abilene, Kansas. A number of brothers and sisters and other relatives survive him and mourn his loss. The expressions of grief at the announcement of his death and at his funeral made apparent the esteem in which he was held by the entire community. He was an earnest Universalist, and was a member of the Universalist Church at Clifton Springs, which he served as a deacon for many years. His religious faith was a deep-seated conviction with him, and was adorned by his faithful Christian life. As an intimate friend of his has said, his religion was that of true Liberalism, and was animated by the principles contained in the Sermon on the Mount. The Universalist church at Clifton Springs, the Harsen Ministerial relief fund of the Universalist church [denomination], the Baptist church at Gypsum, the Gypsum cemetery association, receive[d] bequests from him. The funeral of Mr. Van Dusen took place in the Universalist church at Clifton Springs, on Monday, and was largely attended.

C.

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Transcribed on 28 Dec 2010 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY