

[Wood, Caleb Joseph]

Passed Away From Earth

CALEB J. WOOD DIES THIS MORNING AT HIS RESIDENCE IN PERINTON

The Career of a Man who Has Taught Dancing for Nearly
Half a Century In This City and in Western New York—
One of Rochester's Best Known and Most Highly Respected Citizens

Caleb Joseph Wood died early this morning at his residence in the town of Perinton, about one and one-half miles south of the village of Fairport. The deceased had been for several years a great sufferer from a disease in the mouth, which baffled the skill of physicians and which was thought by some to be of the same nature as that of General Grant. Within the past few months, however, the disease assumed a different and to physicians an unexpected form, which was pronounced by Dr. Moore Sr. to be a soft cancer. For several years it had been with great difficulty that Mr. Wood was able to eat any soft food whatever, and for months he had taken but little food in a liquid form. It was therefore with a weak body, but with a strong and determined will, that he began the fight with that dreadful disease, cancer. In his more vigorous days he had struggled with and overcome what many men would have surrendered to, and so it was that he thought he could withstand the ravages of this disease. It was not until near his last days that he became convinced that he had overestimated his strength. At last he gave up hope, and with a true Christian resignation he waited for death to bring a welcome end to his sufferings which medical skill had failed to relieve.

Mr. Wood was born in this city September 30, 1819 and was therefore nearly 68 years old. He was the oldest son of Col. Joseph Wood, whose family consisted on nine children, six boys and three girls, of whom four are now alive—Mrs. Benjamin M. Baker, William O. C. Wood and Hiram Wood, of this city, and Mrs. C. W. Dannals of San Francisco, Cal. Col. Wood was a prominent contractor in this city in its earliest days. Among the many buildings which he erected were many old land-marks, such as the old Eagle Tavern, the old National Hotel, the old Clinton House, the old Arcade and the Smith Arcade. He was the junior member of Cady and Wood, who performed the contract for enlarging the Erie canal from the Aqueduct to Ford street. At one time Col. Wood gave lessons in dancing in this city. Young Caleb learned the brick-laying trade. Under his father he worked as foreman on Smith's Arcade and other buildings, and was one of the foremen on the enlargement of the Erie canal. Though Caleb took a just pride in his trade and prosecuted it with success, yet it was not exactly in the line of his tastes. Therefore about the time he reached his majority he began to give

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lessons in dancing. The art came to him naturally, and from the first he was successful. He was never a man who was satisfied with a superficial knowledge of his chosen life-work. He therefore made dancing a thorough study. He went to New York city and for three years took instruction from the most proficient instructors in the art of dancing in the metropolis, among them being Mr. Wahle, from whom he received a most flattering certificate for aptitude and proficiency. Thus most thoroughly equipped for his profession, he returned to this city and organized his schools in dancing which have continued for the remarkably long period of nearly half a century. Old residents here will well recollect the successful schools he conducted in the Eagle Tavern, the old National Hotel, the Blossom Hotel and other places in the city. He also conducted large schools in Mt. Morris, Brockport, Holley, Sandy Creek, Albion, Avon, Geneseo and Lockport. In the last named place he taught dancing for twenty-six consecutive years. It may be interesting to those unfamiliar with the difficulties and inconveniences of transportation before railroads became so numerous to know that, as a means of conveyance to the neighboring villages, he had built a large wagon, in which he carried his piano and musicians from one school to another.

On the New York Central road between this city and Fairport, Mr. Wood in 1875 met with an accident which it was feared would at the time prove fatal. He however recovered, but the broken hip and broken wrist which he sustained prevented him from carrying on his business so extensively as formerly throughout Western New York. Since then he has devoted most of his time and energies to his schools in this city which have, of recent years, been conducted on Mumford street. For the past two seasons he has also had schools in Brockport, Fairport and Syracuse. Though crippled and much broken down by the ravages of time and disease, he was reluctant, notwithstanding the advice of physicians and the solicitations of his friends and relatives, to give up his life-work. He had pursued it so diligently and faithfully that his schools were the delight of his old age. The bright faces of the young ladies and gentlemen and the little ones placed under his instruction enchanted him, and the rhythmic evolutions of his pupils on the floor of his academy held him to his post, spell-bound at times, when without such inspiration he would have been writhing under the pains of his disease. It was such scenes that gave him strength to attend his last entertainment at Washington rink, last April.

There are few, if any, teachers in dancing now living who have given instruction to a larger number of pupils than Mr. Wood. Last years was his forty-seventh season His long service can best be appreciated when it is remembered that he has taught the children and the grandchildren, and

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even the great-grandchildren, of his former pupils. That he was recognized as a teacher of high standing among the profession is attested by the fact that two years ago he was made an honorary member of the National Association of the Teachers of Dancing. He was not an imitator in his profession, but an originator. Had he taken the time to formulate for the study of others the results of his long study, he could have added not a little to the art of dancing. Teachers always recognized his ability and often availed themselves of his knowledge and instruction. He was ever ready to give to others the points of his experience. In his schools he was strict in enforcing the proprieties of the ball-room, and it was for this reason that parents were always willing to entrust their children to his care. None but gentlemen and ladies were welcomed to his academy. But while he was strict and exacting, he was a great favorite with his pupils, young and old. The many testimonials and valuable presents which he has received throughout his entire career show the high esteem in which he was held by the thousands who have received instruction from him.

In 1864 Mr. Wood married Lovilla A. Vanderhoof, a daughter of Remsen Vanderhoof. Mrs. Wood survives her husband. Their two children are Mrs. Fred W. Smith of this city and Hiram R. Wood, who is living at home with his parents. The summer months he passed on his farm in Perinton, in which he took a worthy pride. His home was all that a kind and affectionate husband and father could make it.

The funeral will be held from the family residence at 1 o'clock Sunday afternoon and from the Universalist Church in this city at 4 o'clock.

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