

OBITUARY

DANIEL AXFORD

The family of Axford, through its English stock, is ancient and honorable. That branch, that stuck its root in the new world, acquired extensive lands near Oxford Furnace; the title deeds of which, written on parchment, are dated far back in the eighteenth century. Daniel was born in that part of Oxford where the busiest hum of industry is heard, and where the rattle of machinery is loudest. He first saw light July 19, 1794, and closed his busy career February 24th, at the age of eighty-four and a half years.

His educational advantages were such as his neighborhood afforded, and were doubtless very limited. The development of his character depended more on its native strength, than upon the efforts of teachers. With a foundation of unswerving integrity, his force of character led him naturally to the front; so that we find him all ways a conspicuous figure in the region where he lived; and exerting a controlling influence in its affairs. All the years of his life except for a few pasted in this city, were spent near the place of his birth. He drove a plow with success; married, and reared a family in honor and independence.

He was a factor in all the affairs of his neighborhood and town. In 1832 he became Justice of the Peace by appointment of the Legislature, fulfilling his duties for six years. He was also prominent in county matters, serving in the board of Freeholders, and in that of the county house. Of the Belvidere Bank he was a life long stockholder and director. In 1836 he was elected to the office of Sheriff, and was reelected the two succeeding years. He discharged the duties pertaining to this position with distinguished success, and retired from its incumbency with a record of faithfulness and probity. About a dozen years since, he left the farm and the neighborhood where he exercised such a controlling influence, and settled in this place, to pass the remainder of his days. He was by nature most hardy and robust, not only in his physical life, but in his mental and moral characteristics. His pervading influence was strength. What he undertook he prosecuted with vigor. He bubbled over with joys of existence. His laugh, in the heyday of life, was like the sound of the trumpet. It proclaimed a heart unoppressed by care, and fitted for the joys of social life.

It is greatly to his honor, that in all his public life, beset by so many temptations, he preserved the simple, abstemious habit of the farm. That a life of such singular honesty and purity should have been so exclusively devoted to the thoughts and affairs of the world is greatly to be deplored. All his successes were those that pertained to the present life. He failed to recognize the author of all his prosperity and honor. He seldom entered the house of God, and loved not to think upon the after life; consequently he wielded no religious influence. During his later years, he was observant of the house of God; a faithful attendant upon its ministry; and in private professed a reliance on Jesus as a ground of salvation; yet he gave no public recognition of God's claim to his service; and so he failed in the usefulness to God and His church. Had his acceptance of Christ as an all atoning savior been open and explicit; had he given the force of his character, and the enthusiasm of his nature to God and his work, he would have been a power for good in the land; and, would have gone to his grave adorned, not only with highest graces of the moralist; but, with the crowning virtues of a servant of God, who after a life of conflict in his service, goes from labor to reward.