

## OBITUARY

### GEORGE W. JOHNSON PASSES AWAY.

The announcement at noon yesterday of the death of George W. Johnson, one of the oldest and best known citizens of this Town, came with startling force to the citizens of this community, to a large majority of whom even the fact of his sickness was unknown. He was taken sick last Saturday but his condition did not become alarming until Tuesday. His trouble was inflammation of the bowels of traumatic origin. He will be buried from his late residence at 3 p. m. on Monday.

Deceased was the second son of Jesse Johnson, who settled in Hackettstown In 1812, when but a little over 20 years of age. He and the late Peter Mucklow were apprentice boys to a hat manufacturer named Hulmes at Elizabethport, and when Mucklow was out of his time Johnson had six months still to serve. Hulmes, knowing the intimacy of the two boys and in order that they might not be separated, generously gave Johnson the balance of his time and together the two boys came to Hackettstown and began the hatting business together. After a partnership of a few years Johnson purchased his partner's interest and for some years after continued the business in the two-story frame house adjoining the Presbyterian Church, now owned by Mrs. Jackson. Afterwards he leased for two years the old Warren Hotel, and in the old hotel building William Johnson was born, the only brother of George W Johnson, and the lives of the two brothers were so closely interwoven, the story of one cannot be told without the other. In 1818 the old Johnson house, which was some years ago remodeled and enlarged and now occupied by W. L. Johnson, was built and on November 25, 1819, in that house George W. Johnson was born. 1825 Jesse Johnson died leaving the two sons, William L, aged 8, and George W., aged 6. When the boys grew up William was apprenticed to Isaac Blanchard at the harness makers trade, and George went to Newark to clerk for a mercantile house. Afterwards William went to Newark to finish his trade, and it was a singular coincidence that when the panic of 1837 came on, the respective firms with which the two brothers were employed were among the first to succumb and both were thrown out of employment. William came back to Hackettstown and opened a harness shop, and George in a short time joined him to help in the shop until something better should turn up. In this way a business connection began which remained unbroken for nearly forty years. In 1838, or a year after their return, they built the present store building on the foundation their father hid laid up years before for the same purpose, and ten years later a general mercantile business was added to the harness business. The young men had pluck, ambition, unlimited confidence in the Town and in themselves. From small beginnings their business grew until for years it probably exceeded in volume that of any other business establishment in the county, before or since. The history of the success and depression of the business house of W. L. & G. W. Johnson, up until the crash of 1875-6 came and wiped them out of business existence, was a history of the growth and prosperity of Hackettstown. Johnson Brothers were always in the lead in every public improvement and enterprise and their faith in themselves and the Town was always shown by their deeds. There is hardly a public improvement or benefit which we are enjoying today that in some way we are not either directly or indirectly indebted to their push and energy. The bank was established here largely through their push and energy (in connection with the late Doctor Rea), as was also the water works, the Cemetery Association, and their generous donation of land and money was no inconsiderable factor in having the Seminary located here. If the public and their own faith in all the enterprises they set on foot has not been realized, the censure of those who suffered has, as years rolled on, become largely tempered with the knowledge that they themselves were the largest sufferers.

George W. Johnson, whose death the community today mourns, has played a very conspicuous part in the history of the Town which he grew up with and which grew up around him. There has scarcely been an enterprise that promised the financial, moral, educational or religious advancement of the community that his name has not been prominently associated. He united with the Presbyterian Church in 1833, when but 14 years of age, and up to the time of his the time of his financial reverses was one of the most prominent laymen in that denomination in the Presbytery of Newton. For a great many years he was a Ruling Elder in the church here. He was one of the prime movers in the establishment of the Hackettstown Band, and was one of the members of the first Board of Directors. In the local government he held many positions of responsibility and honor and for three years he was the chief magistrate.

A year ago last winter while leading his horse from the blacksmith shop, the ground being slippery, a sudden jerking of the horse threw him with considerable force to the ground on his stomach. He got home with some difficulty, suffering great pain. Inflammation set in and for a time his life was despaired of. A week ago last Sunday he was compelled to remain In the house from a slight attack of his old trouble. On Monday he was out again and later in the week when his physician called he was surprised to learn that he had driven to New Hampton. On Saturday last he assisted his servant to carry a mattress upstairs when a wrench, produced by the falling of the burden, brought back with all its old force his trouble of two years ago and which resulted In his death yesterday.

The Hackettstown Gazette:

NAME: Johnson, George Ware

DATE OF DEATH: October 24, 1889