

SHE FELL ASLEEP - 1898

Mrs. Timothy C. Haskill in
Her 107th year. Story
of Her Life - Many
Changes.

When once our heavenly-guided soul shall climb,
Then all this earthly grossness quit,
Attired with stars we shall forever sit
Triumphing o'er Death, and Chance, and thee,
O Time!



Submissive to an enduring though all devouring time, Mrs. Timothy C. Haskill, in the 107th year of her age, has passed away. Her departure was as a peaceful sleep, which wafted her soul from earth "unto a high estate beside the Kingdom of Heaven." Death came about two o'clock this morning, as the aged lady slumbered at her quiet residence on Charles Street. Her only daughter, Mrs. Doney, who has for many years devoted a watchful and self-sacrificing care over her mother, was present, and Mrs. Thos. Garnet, Mrs. Chas. Throop, Mrs. Jas. Austin, and Miss Johnston.

Almost to the time of her sleeping, Mrs. Haskill enjoyed a possession of senses remarkable for her years, and conversed intelligibly wit those at her bedside. The neighbours loved her, for she was very interesting with all her experiences of long past years when the country was still in embryo.

Below we give the story of Mrs. Haskill's life as told by herself seven years ago. Friday evening, January 1st, 1892, an interesting event took place at the quiet little cottage on Charles Street. Many callers came to offer their congratulations to Mrs. Haskill upon her 100th birthday. At 4:30 p.m. a party began to congregate at Mr. Throop's store, supplied with material for a surprise festival. On the arrival of the party at Mrs. Haskill's house and after the introductions, salutations and hand shaking, a neatly engrossed address was read by Mr. Alf. Skitch and a purse and contents presented the centenarian. In reply Mrs. Haskill thanked everyone for their kindness and repeated verses welcoming the New Year. She had a phenomenal memory and her delight was the recitation of

hymns and fanciful verses. Mr. E. A. Powers further responded on behalf of Mrs. Haskill. After short speeches by the late Mr. Jos. Harris, Messrs. T.R. McNeillie, Cyrus T. Throop, J.T. George, Jed Haskill and Jos. Hooper, Mrs. Haskill gave the following story of her life, which was committed to paper by Mr. Hooper:

"My maiden name was Electa Newcombe Johnson. I was born in Dorset, Vermont, U.S., Jan. 1st, 1792. Dorset was divided into three parts - east, west and south - there is a stream of water running through the place, on which my father had a saw and gristmill. I well recollect a circumstance which occurred when I was in my fifth year. A young lad came over to our mill with a grist and while waiting for it to be ground, went out on the pond on some boards and drowned. His name was Stephen Moss. Pember Warner, an old resident of this section, who married Parmelia Soper, lived at Dorset near by us, and when children, we played together. (Parmelia Soper was the first white girl born in this township). I lived 49 years on our farm (two miles from here) and 40 years in this town. We came to "Smith's Creek," now called Port Hope, in March 1803, being then between eleven and twelve years of age. I well remember the year 1800; we lived near Johnsburg, N.Y.; was then in my ninth year. We had a dance at our house, at which an old veteran of the 1776 War of Independence played the fife for the dance. One of the party fired his pistol up the chimney, bringing down the soot. We came by sleighs, touching at Wolfe Island, thence to Kingston and Belleville, where we spent one winter; thence to Port Hope. There were five families living here at that time - Mr. Heywood's, Mr. Ward's, sr., Mr. Peter Smith's, Mr. Myndert Harris' and our family. At a party given on Christmas Eve, we numbered *seven*, all the then available white inhabitants of this place. There was one house up on the hill and Indian wigwams lined the banks. There was then in this neighbourhood wolves, bears, deer and fish in great abundance. Have seen Indian war dances, and by compulsion have danced with the squaws in their dances, to a chant somewhat like this - cui, ouing, cuway, &c., &c., (imitating the weird dance music of the aborigines of that time). The Indians sold us clothes of deerskin, which we made over for our own use. The first meetinghouse I went to was St. Mark's, over sixty years ago; Bishop Stewart was the preacher. That which is now Augusta Street was the first road through the village. My father was eighty-seven years old when he died. We went onto our farm in 1819 (near Mr. Moore Fanning's farm). My children were two sons and one daughter; one son died recently at Mariposa; Harvey, my only living son, is in Michigan, U.S., and is seventy-one years of age; my daughter, widow of the late John Doney, lives with me, and is sixty-seven years of age. My husband, Timothy C. Haskill, died Nov. 24th, 1867, aged eighty years; he was four years my senior and was the best of husbands. I helped him to clear the farm, cutting down trees, rolling the logs into heaps and gathering brush to help burn them. We had a very primitive shanty to live in at first. Have cooked as many as eighty pies in one day, to have them all cleared by visitors before night. Our house was open to all travellers, and we had constant callers. A man who had been a soldier took sick with us; we nursed and cared for him for six years, and buried him all at our own expense. I nursed Mrs. John Tucker Williams when she was a baby; she was born in 1807, and was the mother of Col. Arthur Williams. I was then seventeen years of age. After Mrs. Williams' death, I was presented with a pincushion made from her dress as a memento."

"To record all Mrs. Haskill's experience (so intensely interesting) would occupy considerable space. Her hearing is good and memory clear; the vision very much impaired, but not entirely gone. We were shown a number of her old relics of bygone days, among them the yearly almanacs, dating back to 1818; a quilt and needle seventy-one years old; a spread made of flax grown and spun by herself; the old grandfather's clock brought from England; and other rarities very numerous. She still does considerable knitting of the very best order; is a good conversationalist, and has implicit faith and trust in God, who has so wonderfully lengthened out her days, with a belief that she will inherit the rest His loving hands have prepared for His saints."

Mrs. Haskill, in answer to questions asked, stated as follows: "I never experienced much trouble in my life; sunshine and sorrow were all the same to me; I never worried myself over reverses, nor rejoiced exuberantly over successes. My partner was strictly temperate in all his habits and was one of the best of husbands. I worked hard all my life and am still working, doing all I can at knitting,

etc. Was always of a contented mind, thoroughly realizing that "Godliness with contentment is a great gain."

The years of Mrs. Haskill's life have seen many changes in the world. We have her statement from which we can draw conclusions as to the conditions of Canada. Four sovereigns have occupied the throne of England; George III., George IV., William IV., and lastly Victoria. The first Parliament of Upper Canada met at Newark in 1792, and responsible government has shed its beneficent influence over the provinces. The War of 1812, the rebellion in Lower Canada and the "Patriots" war of 1837-1838, Red River Rebellion of 1869, the Northwest Rebellion of 1885, came with their trials upon a young people. Railways and steamship lines; electric telegraph and telephone have been introduced and advances in science and literature have marked the growth of civilization, until to day Canada holds no mean place in the world. Port Hope has shared also in time with the onward march of ages and what had once been but the pathless forest, with wild beasts and dusky aborigines as its only apparent recommendations, is now the "Prettiest Town in Canada."

More Interesting Facts

The following contribution, written in May 1st, 1898, for the press, by Mr. Joseph Hooper, deals more largely with the American family history of Port Hope's deceased centenarian, Mrs. Timothy C. Haskill, and will be interesting. Some concern is manifested in her life by the inhabitants of Dorset, Vermont, where she was born:

"The subject of this sketch, Mrs. Timothy C. Haskill, a resident of Port Hope, Ont., was born in Dorset, Vermont, U.S., on January 1st, 1792 - is now in the 107th year of her age, and (with the exception of sight, which has of late become impaired) has full possession of her faculties, with a marvellous memory of events of the past. Her maiden name was Electa Newcombe Johnson, a daughter of Timothy Johnson, who fought under Washington in the War for Independence. Timothy Johnson was born in Vermont in 1750, and died at Port Hope, Ont., September 25th, 1840, in the 90th year of his age. He was buried in the quiet little Presbyterian kirkyard of that town. A humble slab of grey marble marks the last resting-place of this Revolutionary hero. He received a yearly pension in recognition of his services from the United States government up to the time of his death. His daughter, Mrs. Timothy C. Haskill, relates many interesting incidents of her father's experience. The last pension he drew was in June 1840, when she accompanied him to Buffalo for that purpose. She has a very vivid and clear recollection of a party given at the home of her parents, to celebrate the close of the last century. A dance was given and the music furnished by an old Revolutionary Army fifer, - one of the guests firing a pistol up the old log chimney, brought down a cloud of dust and soot on himself, producing quite a ludicrous spectacle. Mrs. Haskill's mother's maiden name was Chloe Bennett, who died at 92 years of age. Mrs. Haskill's grandfather was born in England, her father in Vermont. To relate the many interesting incidents given from a prolific and retentive memory would fill many pages. It was with pleasurable surprise that the writer listened to lengthy renditions of poetry relative to the exciting historic incidents of Revolutionary times in the United States, given with clearness, precision and dictum, - marvellous for a person in the 107th year of her age. She is thoroughly conversant with the Scriptures and the hymnology of the Methodist church, of which she has been a life long consistent member."

Port Hope, May 1, 1898

Since writing the above Mrs. Haskill has passed to her rest. Shortly before her death, which came in quiet sleep, she repeated Charles Wesley's beautiful hymn:

"Jesus, lover of my soul,

Let me to thy bosom fly,

While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is nigh.
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life is past;
Safe into the haven guide,
O receive my soul at last."

The funeral took place Monday afternoon. The Rev. A.T. Green, an old friend, conducted service at the house and cemetery. The following gentlemen acted as pall bearers, - Sanford Haskill, E. Haskill, Edwin Johnston, Cyrus Throop, Andrew Throop, and Thos. Garnett. The floral decorations were numerous and elegant.