

Obituary of E. W. Akhurst of Coaticook

*Obituary from the Bible of Wright Sleeper. Dated Saturday, July 20, 1912 Posted by:
Jacqueline Sleeper Russell June 28, 2004*

Respected and Honored Citizen Laid to Rest: Was prominent Mason and Odd Fellow, in the council for many years.

Coaticook, July 23 - (Special) - A fond husband and parent, an honored and upright man, respected by all was laid away in Mt. Forest Cemetery on Monday, in the person of Mr. Edward William Akhurst. He had not been well for a considerable length of time, and the end was not unexpected. He died on Saturday.

Mr. Akhurst was born at Eltham, England on Dec. 1st 1845. He came to Coaticook on April 29th, 1869, and has resided here ever since. It was not his intention when he left the home land to settle in Coaticook. His objective point was Boston. However, on the way he met the late Jonathan Taplin, on Coaticook's first citizens, who persuaded him to get off the train with him at this town. He entered into the employ of the Coaticook Mills Co., then composed of the late Wright Sleeper and N. C. Baldwin. Eventually, upon Mr. Baldwin retiring from the firm, Mr. Akhurst became a partner and the firm became known and is still known as SLEEPER AND AKHURST. Upon the death of Mr. Sleeper, he acquired the whole business and then took into partnership his son, Mr. E. A. Akhurst. Few men have been honored by their fellow citizens to the extent that he was. He had been in Coaticook only five years, when he was elected as a councillor of the town. He remained in the council for thirty years, and during this long period of time was always elected by acclamation. At three different times he occupied the mayor's chair.

Mr. Akhurst was a prominent Odd Fellow and Mason. He had filled all the chairs in local Odd Fellowship and the Encampment branch of Odd Fellowship and the Blue Lodge of the Masonic Order. At one time he was Grand Treasurer of the Grand Lodge of Odd Fellows, and at the time of his decease was district deputy grand patriarch in the encampment of Sherbrooke District.

In religion Mr. Akhurst was a Methodist and had occupied a place upon the official board of the Coaticook Church. In politics he was always Conservative, at one time contesting the seat in the local legislature for the county of Stanstead. He leaves one brother and four sisters in England. One brother in Colorado, and one brother, Mr. Robert Akhurst, in Coaticook.

In 1871, he married Florence Sleeper, daughter of his partner, Mr. Wright Sleeper. She survives him as do four children, viz.: Mr. E. A. Akhurst, of Coaticook; Gertrude E. (Mrs. B. S. Irwin, Ottawa), Edith F. (Mrs. A. J. Cromwell, Coaticook), and Myrta W. (Mrs. H. J. McElroy, Coaticook).

No man in this section was more honored and respected than was the deceased. Of pleasing manner, kind of heart, enterprising in spirit and upright in character, he will leave a void in the home and the community which it will be difficult to fill.

The funeral service at the late residence was in charge of Rev. A. H. Visser, Methodist minister, the manager being Mr. P. L. Baldwin and the undertaker, Mr. J. H. Knapp. prayer being ended, a solo was sweetly rendered by Mrs. W. E. Stanley. The bearers were six men in the employ of the firm, vis., Messrs. C. E. Christie, M. T. Barnes, John Chelsy, F. LeFebvre, Adny Chesley and George Huff. A large number of Odd Fellows and Masons were present, the former being in regalia, and all marching to the grave, where the Odd Fellows' burial service took place. The floral offerings were beautiful almost beyond description and were silent tokens of the respect and esteem in which the deceased was held. Among the fraternal organizations which sent flowers were Ashlar Lodge of Masons, Coaticook; Rebecca Lodge of Odd Fellows, Coaticook; King Edward Encampment of Odd Fellows, and the Sherbrooke Encampment of Odd Fellows; the Eastern Star, of Coaticook; Victoria Lodge of Odd Fellows, Coaticook, Odd Fellows. A memorial service in honor and in remembrance of the deceased will be held in the Methodist Church here next Sunday Morning.