

Newark, Jan. 1st, 1882

For the benefit of the children, these reminiscences are prepared.

This date completes 50 years since we were married. In the following April, we commenced housekeeping under our own roof. Mr. Townsend Dusenberry and Pa each, building a house, under the two roofs, three young couples commenced housekeeping, and, through fifty years have lived to see many changes, and all have celebrated a golden wedding, within the period of six months. Seldom, if ever, has such a coincidence occurred.

Before the first year of our married life had closed, my mother (who had not been in good health for sometime), died. In one week from that date, Eliza Day, our oldest child, was born. After which event, Mother Smith was with us, much of her time, and well and faithfully did she supply the place of my own mother, till God called her to her rest. Then occurred the marriage of my oldest sister at home to Herman G. Johnson. After one year, Pa sold the house, and built again in Commerce St. in which house, our oldest son, Frederick Hoffman, Jr., was born. My brother Albert and William Day of Elizabeth added to our increasing family. Both of them have passed away, leaving families. After two years, we made another change, moving to the opposite side of Commerce St., where our third child was born, named David Beach, after my father, but, who died at the age of one year and nine months. Soon after his death, we moved to Broad St., where Pa took the position of Secretary of the New Jersey Insurance company, which he filled for fifteen years. While living in that dismal house, many changes took place, most of them of a sad character. Eliza and Fred were both seized with scarlet fever, the day after we moved Eliza was brought to death's door, and while our neighbors could hear her moans, not one of them ventured to offer any assistance, on account of the malignity of the disease. The next event was the birth of our Joanna Downing, soon followed by the death of my eldest sister Joanna Downing. Her four children became our especial charge, more particularly after the death of their father, John L. Downing, which occurred in four years after. Then the birth of Charlotte Frances, named by her Grandma Smith, for herself, and Aunt Fanny, a foster mother of Pa's. She was a lovely, bright child, who died in convulsions of a few hours duration, at the age of two years, and four months. The birth of the first William Lewis, named by his Grandma Smith was the next event of importance, who died at the age of two years, after suffering in convulsions for five days. Then, the death of Mother Smith who has left a rare example of patience and devotion in the service of her children and grandchildren. "Her memory is gragrant beyond the grave". The next addition to the family was the advent of the present William Lewis. The deaths of my oldest brother, Elias, and my youngest sister, Mary A. Baldwin, wook place within two months of each other. Mary's oldest child, Mary Augusta (now Mrs. Dominick) was another of our foster children being near the age of our Josie they were much attached to each other. Then the birth of our daughter, Mary Baldwin, who was one year old, when we moved to Cedar St., where she was dangerously ill from the effects of scarlet fever, when she was about three years old. About this time Pa undertook a business in Indiana, which called him from his family, (with a few days visits from him, occasionally) for the long period of ten years. As his health failed at this time he took a short trip to Europe. This was a dark page in the record, for, with the care of the family, the anxiety concerning Pa, seemed almost unendurable. Then the death of my brother in law, Herman G. Johnson.

Then, the birth of Florence Augusta, our youngest child, numbering nine, four of whom are safely sheltered. Fred's marriage to Anna G. Thayer was the next event, followed by the birth of the first grandchild, Josie Downing. A dark cloud fell on us then, in the death of our Josie, aged twenty years. Then we made a home for one who was soon to have been her husband. The untimely death of Annie left Josie motherless. Fred and his motherless child were a part of our family for five years. In that period we moved to Clinton St., where Eliza was married to George E. Jones, Will went to Europe, Fred was married to Josie D. Headley, and Frederick Hoffman the third, was the second grandchild. Previous to his birth, the parents and the eldest daughter went to Europe. William Headley was the third grandchild. Our removal to our present home on Mt. Prospect Ave. was in 1873. About this time, my brother in law, Edward A. Baldwin died. Mary was married to Elias F. Morrow, Preston Knox was born, Sarah Johnson, my last remaining sister, died, Florence was married to Henry W. Poinier, and George E. Jones, died. Harry LeBrun was born, my brother Albert died, numbering two marriages, three births and five deaths in eight years. Fred's wife has just returned from a trip to Europe, of about seven months. I have not referred in this catalogue of changes to my experience as a house-keeper. After the birth of our second child, we hired a little maid ("Caroline Howard"). Until within a year or two, I have been very fortunate in retaining "help" for a long period. One of the class was a girl from Easton, who was married from our house, in the German Church, and went right to housekeeping in an humble way, whose husband by his industry became a capitalist in the community. Two others remained twelve years, one of them very comfortably married, the other ~~one~~ has her second husband. And now, in reviewing the record, one item is noticeable, our married life has been remarkable from the fact, that in fifty years, we have never lived alone, but have always had more or less of the families of others with us. The four orphan children of my eldest sister were second to our own for many years. The first marriage of the group was celebrated under our roof. Many sad inroads have been made by death, and, while I miss the dear little ones, in the circle, "one bright particular star" has, to our view, "set too soon". But, if to live in hearts we leave behind, is not to die she will not have lived in vain, and, now, after twenty years her life shines, a beautiful example of Christian unselfishness, and devotion to her profession.

We have reason to thank God that none of our children have disgraced us by their misconduct. We have given the best years of our lives cheerfully to our children, and only ask now, for forbearance toward us. It cannot be much longer, according to the laws of nature, that we shall require it. In closing the review, we leave with you all, a father's and mother's blessing.

Pa and Ma.

On the 21st of February 1884, another branch of the parent tree was cut down, Mary B. in the 31st year of her age, leaving a husband and little boy of six years old.