

Jacob H. Leedom

1825-1895

Son of John Leedom and Catherine E. _____

Husband of Harriet Lewis

From: *The Daily Union History of Atlantic City and County by John F. Hall*

Jacob H. Leedom was born in Delaware County, Pennsylvania, in the year 1825, and died October 13, 1895. He enjoyed the distinction of having been a passenger on the first train that ever made a through trip from Philadelphia to Atlantic City. That was in 1854, and the men who composed the crew of the train which carried brick and lumber, worked that eventful night by the light of their lanterns in order to lay the rails across the draw of the bridge, that is so familiar to the people of this city. True, trains had made trips from the neighboring metropolis to points near Absecon and the meadows prior to the night upon which Mr. Leedom made his memorable journey, but this fact did not detract from the interest attached to the incident in which the subject of this sketch figured. In his seventh year his father died, and his mother sometime afterward married a second time and removed to Baltimore, where the boy followed. He was then in his tenth year, and until he attained his majority he remained at home, devoting himself to school and the trade tailoring, which he was soon master of. He was in his twenty-first year when his stepfather died, and he then lost no time in removing his mother and the children to Philadelphia, where he carried on the tailoring business for himself. Early in the summer of 1854 his attention was attracted to Atlantic City, and seeing exceptional inducements here, he established bath houses on the beach and returned each summer until 1878, when he moved to this city in company with Mrs. Leedom, whom he had happily married some years before. In 1885 he and Mrs. Leedom moved to the present handsome hotel, widely known as the Leedom, 163-165 Ocean avenue, near the Beach.

He was an ardent Republican during the active years of his life, and during his residence here was Recorder of the city, and also acted as Mayor during part of one summer. He was a member of the Board of Health, almost since the day it was organized, and was acting treasurer of that body at the time of his death. He was a profoundly religious man and was largely instrumental in the establishment of the First Baptist Church here. When he and Mrs. Leedom came to this city, they felt very much the absence of a place of worship of their denomination, and never rested until they saw the realization of their desires, the first meeting of the purpose being held in February, 1880, and a permanent organization July following with a membership of seventeen. He was elected Deacon, Treasurer and President of the Board of Trustees, and labored zealously for the best interests of the sect. Four years before his death, which occurred rather unexpectedly, he resigned the treasurer-ship, feeling that he was unable to perform its duties with that faithfulness to detail for which he was ever noted, in all his relations to civil and religious life. However, he lived to see the church grow from a membership of seventeen to almost three hundred. It was one of the pleasant features of his life to revert to the time when the congregation of the First Baptist Church worshipped in a room on the second floor of the building then

Biographical Sketch – Jacob H. Leedom

known as Mehler's Hall on Atlantic avenue. During the last ten years of his life he was a Prohibitionist and labored conscientiously for the success of the cold water party. He will also be recalled as a very religious, charitable and generally esteemed citizen of Atlantic City. His remains rest in Mount Moriah Cemetery and his widow conducts the hotel which has so long borne the honored name of Leedom.