

Solomon Vonnieda was a Reverend in the United Brethren Church; ordained in 1848 at the East Pennsylvania Conference; 1854 transferred to Dayton, Ohio when the church appointed him the Publishing agent of the "Religious Telescope" publication.

Solomon was my 3<sup>rd</sup> Great Grandfather; his daughter Elizabeth Vonnieda, my 2<sup>nd</sup> Great Grandmother, married John T. Hardesty, parents of Harry Hardesty, my Great Grandfather.

What follows is an 1856 article from the *Religious Telescope* Newspaper, written by Solomon Vonnieda while on a trip back East.

It's interesting, and almost amusing, to read what he has to say about New York City a hundred and fifty years ago...what *would* he say about it today!!

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**Religious Telescope, Dayton, Ohio  
Wednesday, October 1, 1856**

**Letters From Our Publisher**

My last was mailed at Adamstown, Lancaster County, Pa. With this town I have been acquainted from early childhood; when it was an old village, noted for nothing else than its situation between two hills of some eminence, and the fairs, and frolicks, which were regularly held therein. For the last twenty years, however, a visible improvement has taken place; which I am induced to believe was in a great degree caused by a revival of Religion, which induced a number of its inhabitants to change their course of life. Since that time, new and elegant buildings have been erected, and it has greatly increased in size and is now an incorporated borough. The principal productions of the town are felt, or wool hats. There are five manufactories now in operation, which produce on an average near 150 dozen per week, giving employment to a large number of hands. To the credit of Adamstown it can be said that there is hardly an able-bodied person in the place, who is not engaged in some useful and profitable occupation.

There are temporal as well as eternal benefits connected with the true service of God; and I have seen other old villages in these parts which might receive a similar benefit, would the residents forsake the ways of sin and folly, and pray God for new hearts.

Last Saturday, I came to Reading, Pa, where Bro. Peffly had appointed a quarterly meeting for the Sabbath. Here I spent my first year as an itinerant some nine years ago; endeavoring to comfort and feed a little flock of Christ's sheep. Since my removal to the West, a very fine and spacious new Church has been erected, which is generally well filled on the Sabbath with hearers of the word. There is now a large society here; to all appearance a good spiritual condition, under pastoral care of Bro. Jos. Young. By request I preached three several times during the meeting; had a glorious time during feet-washing; when – I have often observed—God generally pours his blessings down. In the afternoon I addressed the Sabbath-school, and, could not otherwise but refer to the time when a few of us made the first effort to collect a school here. The school is in a flourishing condition, numbering about 160 regular scholars. They take 200 copies of the Children's Friend, and I promised them to care for them in getting illustrations to make their paper more attractive; to which I have attended to-day.

On Monday morning I bid adieu to my friends in Reading, and came to the City of brotherly love, as its name denotes. Philadelphia is a large and beautiful City, full of bustle and business; and as I am penning these remarks in my room in the Hotel, there is a constant roaring and rumbling of all

kinds of vehicles on the narrow street below, slightly relieved by the notes of an organ grinder before the house. I took quarters at the Bald Eagle Hotel, where a number of merchants are now stopping, besides a good quantity of Clerks, &c., who are regular boarders. Liquor is kept in the bar; yet to the credit of all concerned, I acknowledge that, after having been here now nearly two days and being frequently in the Bar-room, I could not say that I have seen any one drink liquor; those who are here seem not to relish such stuff.

I am now almost totally amongst strangers and feel as if I would dispatch my business with all possible haste, and hie towards home.

After writing the above at Philadelphia on the evening of the 16<sup>th</sup> inst. I left the following morning for New York, via. the New Jersey and Philadelphia Rail-road. Crossing the broad Delaware on the Ferry-boat we took the cars at Camden, and come along the shores of the Delaware to Trenton, the Capital of the State; thence via. Jersey City to New York. New Jersey is certainly the land for watermelons and sweet-potatoes; immense quantities of which are produced here besides a great amount of other vegetables. Its situation between two large Cities gives it an advantage in this respect, in finding a ready market for all that can be grown upon its soil, which, however, is of rather a poor character in many places.

I am now in the great City of New York; where I have spent the past two days and a half in "running to and fro," attending to some business. It will hardly be necessary to make an attempt to describe this vast City, as I have only seen a small portion thereof, and I find that in some respects I have missed my mark, as objects do not appear as large as I had anticipated. The more I see and hear of the vanity and bustle of this world, the more I feel a longing for such a place of rest as God promises to his people. I have paid hasty visits to several places in this City, and have seen sufficient to convince me that the extremes found to exist everywhere amongst mankind exist here in their greatest extent. Here wealth and splendor roll onwards in magnificence; while poverty and degradation are sunk to their lowest depth. The many dens of sin and iniquity which here abound will always give abundant work for those who worship in the many majestic temples.

I have seen some beautiful and neat portions of this city, where it would be pleasant to dwell; but I have also seen some sections where it would be a hell on earth to be compelled to live; and I am of the opinion that I have not seen the worst portions by a good deal.

The masses of people and number of vehicles constantly in motion on Broadway exceeds my anticipation. Fancy to yourself the day of the great Republican convention in Dayton, with the masses moving on the sidewalks, and imagine Main st., chuck full of all sorts of vehicles moving up and down; and you may form a faint idea of the scene presented by Broadway, during a great portion of the day. I had the curiosity one day to count for five minutes, the vehicles passing a point at which I stood and found them just 107 in number. Every body moving along here seems to be in a hurry, as if for dear life, and I followed the custom, as a matter of course, and have now dispatched my business as far as practicable, and shall leave here to-morrow morning for Niagara Falls, where I intend to spend the Sabbath as well as I can, and then by divine permission bring my next letter myself.

S. Vonnieda

New York City, Sept. 19<sup>th</sup>, '56'