

Caroline Ludlow, Early Pioneer

When someone in Monroe mentions the Ludlow name, most people think of Arabut Ludlow or one of his sons. Behind every successful man is a woman; Caroline Ludlow was one of those women. She lived here from the time she arrived as a new bride at the age of 22 until her death. Her obituary stated that she “was one of the remarkable women of Green County, and but few were her equal. She became a resident of this county in pioneer days and through her thrift, judgment and encouragement she aided greatly in the achievement of Mr. Ludlow’s success.”

Caroline C. Sanderson was born on May 29, 1824 in Cambridge, Massachusetts. As a child, her playground was the campus of Harvard University. Her father brought her west to live near Rockford in 1839. She taught school in the surrounding countryside for several years before she and Arabut were married at the home of Esquire Randall near Durand on March 3, 1846. They immediately came to Monroe where they lived for the rest of their lives.

It is unknown where the couple lived at the time they moved here, but their son Edwin’s obituary stated that he was born in a “structure” that stood on the northeast corner of what is now 10th Street and 18th Avenue on July 9, 1850. By 1857 they were living in what is now known as the Idle Hour Mansion on the northeast corner of Mansion Drive and 14th Avenue. The Monroe Sentinel stated on July 14, 1880 that Arabut had “just completed extensive improvements in his fine farm dwelling.”

Because the Ludlows had the means, they were able to travel quite often as was documented in the newspapers. Caroline had started for the East in October 1871 and got as far as Chicago when the Great Chicago Fire took place. She wasn’t able to find her trunk for a few days. J. W. Stewart, at whose home she was staying, made a “diligent search among the vast accumulation of goods and boxes in confused piles at the depot.” She was then able to board the train to continue her trip. Two years later in November the family arrived home from “a trip through the Territories and California.”

Even though the family had a beautiful home, they “took up rooms” downtown at the Ludlow Hotel in November 1886 “for the balance of the winter.” The editor added, “A very sensible move we should say, though a novel innovation for the older people. Several others who can afford it are talking of doing the same thing.”

A week after the Ludlow’s golden wedding anniversary, it was announced that they would be “obliged to forego any formal celebration of the 50th anniversary of their wedded life” due to Arabut’s illness. A week later the newspaper stated that he “is very much improved the past few days, and is likely to get out of doors with the return of warm weather.” A similar notice was printed another week later.

It must have been extremely difficult for Caroline to watch her husband suffer. It was reported on April 1 of the same year that Arabut had stopped taking nourishment and was failing rapidly. The doctor said that he could recover what he had lost in the previous few days, but Arabut, who was 77 years old, passed away on April 5 “after weeks of agonizing pain and consequent weariness.” Hopefully, Caroline was consoled by the fact that 100 old citizens attended the funeral. Many were also early settlers who remembered him with the kindest feelings “for some friendly act in a crisis of their affairs.”



Caroline Sanderson Ludlow (1824 - 1913) was one of the pioneer women of Green County. She settled in Monroe with her husband, Arabut, before Wisconsin became a state where they raised a family of three sons and two daughters to adulthood. In addition there were also two children who died young.

Caroline and her daughter, Addie, left on November 30 of that year “for their winter home in Florida.” The 1900 census shows Edwin as the head of household at the farm with his 76-year-old mother also living there. Also living with them were a male farmhand and two female servants. The following year it was reported that Caroline’s stomach trouble was “exciting considerable alarm in her family.” After having been confined to her bed for a few weeks, it was reported on May 7 that she was improving quickly.

Caroline, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Willis Ludlow and their son, left for Denver on November 21, 1901 to spend the winter with her daughters. Willis and family planned to spend a month there. Unfortunately, Caroline became quite ill and returned home with Edwin in early March. Caroline, at the age of 79, was reported to have been confined in bed in a “discouraging” condition for three weeks in June 1903.

By September 18, 1909, Caroline was “quite ill at her home as a result of a severe cold, and there is fear that something more serious might develop. Her condition showed improvement today, but she remains very weak. She is 86 years old and weighs 66 pounds and apprehension is felt because of her frailty.”

Almost three years later in July, the family had its first reunion in 15 years. Her three sons, Henry, Willis, and Edwin, all of Monroe, and her two daughters from Denver, Addie Bingham and Nellie Flower, were present. Six of her eight grandchildren also attended. Helen Bingham, Ludlow Flower, and Harriet Ludlow were the only three named. “The reunion was not prearranged, simply a very fortunate happening, which accounts for the absence of the remaining grandchildren.” Mrs. Ludlow greatly enjoyed the occasion, which included an afternoon at the home of Henry Ludlow with his wife, Lida, and his daughter, Mae Luchsinger, as hostesses. Caroline had given birth to two more children, one who died at 27 months in 1862.

Caroline passed away about eight months later at the family home at the age of 88. “She had been in feeble health for the past two years and a gradual decline had been noticeable during the past few months.” The funeral was held from the home with burial beside her husband in Greenwood Cemetery.