

Nahum Brown was the first deaf mute known in his family and the first one in this town No cause was ever assigned for his misfortune He came here when a small lad previous to his father's coming and resided in the family of his uncle Capt Joseph Gibson Up to this time and for some time after he had never worn shoes I have chopped wood at the door his bare feet standing on a warm plank He was married at the age of twenty seven Rev Mr Rice who married him at the loss how to make him understand the ceremony when Mr Eastman the bride's father said him That those present could hear enough without regard to Mr Brown Mr Rice performed the ceremony which was then explained by signs to Mr Brown I never learned to read or to write except his own name which was done by imitation He was a regular observer of the Sabbath and attended church constantly upon that day His idea of heaven was that of a holy city where good men and women visited each other on wings His wife proved an excellent helpmate and assisted him in his business and his intimate friends aided him in his trades He was a good farmer and a superior teamster He was a great lover of fun and of good jokes One evening late in the autumn he went to Samuel Clark's and engaged him to assist him the next day asking him to take his blasting tools with him Mr Clark did so when Mr Brown took him into his potato field Taking a drill he pointed it at a hill of potatoes saying They are so large my oxen cannot pull them out and wanted them blasted out. Mr Clark soon saw the joke that had been played upon him. Mr Brown having disposed of his farm to Jacob Rice he purchased the one upon which his son Thomas now resides in the west part of the town. Here he lived the remainder of his days and managed his estate in an excellent manner. Being possessed of a vigorous constitution he was ever industrious and prided himself upon the amount of labor he was able to perform. He was a highly respected citizen and enjoyed the company of his neighbors and fellow townsmen at whose homes he was ever a favorite. For several years previous to his death he was troubled with a pain in one side of his head and after a while one eye became blind. Soon afterwards a similar pain seized the other side of his head affecting the vision of the other eye and he became sightless and helpless. For the last year before his death he required the constant care of two persons and suffered intensely. He understood perfectly every movement of his devoted wife and of his son Thomas and often made signs to them as to his complaints. Just before his death he made signs for them to come near him. Upon doing so his wife touched him when he smiled so pleased was he that she who had shared his joys and his sorrows and with whom he had passed so many pleasant years and who had watched so faithfully by his bedside during his long isolation as it were from the world was near him and with her hands upon him he passed peacefully fully away his friends confidently hope and believe to that holier and better place where the deaf ear shall be unstopped and the tongue of the dumb will sing.

---History of Town of Henniker, p. 333-334
[contributed by Sue Fetzer]