

# Character Sketches of Old Pioneers.

William Wallace Chisholm, the subject of this sketch,—one of Utah's mining pioneers,—came of a family of miners; has followed mining all his life, practically; and, although not now actively engaged in mining pursuits, is still largely interested in this fascinating industry, as his mining possessions are to found in a number of the camps of this intermountain region. As a matter of fact, having made his "fortune" in mining, Mr. Chisholm has "retired," and is now enjoying the fruits of a long and successful career in the mining camps of Utah; two of which, at least, owe much to Mr. Chisholm and his associates, for it was his father that gave to the world the great Emma mine at Alta, in Little Cottonwood district; and the wonderful Centennial-Eu-



W. W. CHISHOLM.

reka, at Eureka, Tintic district, owes its origin to W. W. Chisholm and the few that were associated with him in this enterprise.

William Wallace Chisholm was born June 26, 1842, at Hazel Green, Wisconsin, near which are the lead mines which, for many years, gave employment to the Chisholm family. His early boyhood days were but a repetition of the history of nearly all children. School in the winter, and the pleasures of the mines, the hills and the farm in the summer, formed the quiet childhood life to which he can now look back to with pleasurable remembrances. In the year 1857 his family moved to Winona, Minnesota, and the next year, at the age of sixteen, he entered the office of the Winona Democrat, where he learned the printer's trade,—the "art preservative." For about five years he remained at the "case," when,

in 1863, he moved to Elgin, Illinois, completing two terms at the Elgin Academy.

In 1864, accompanied by his father, Robert B. Chisholm, so well remembered and so highly esteemed by the old-timers of Utah, Mr. Chisholm, then having attained his majority, left Illinois for the mining camps of Montana. At Omaha, Mr. Chisholm, Sr., left for Virginia City by stage, while his son, associated with several Wisconsin boys, made the dangerous and tiresome overland trip with ox teams. Although the journey was safely made, the arrival of Mr. Chisholm at Virginia City was attended by disappointment, as contrary to expectations, his father was not there to greet him, word having been given out that young Chisholm and his companions had been killed by Indians while making their overland trip. Robert Chisholm, then in Salt Lake, hearing by accident of his son's arrival at Virginia City, at once notified him of his whereabouts, the result being that the young traveler arrived in Utah's metropolis in the middle of November, 1864, since which time he has been prominently identified with the interests and history of both city and state.

The first mining experience of W. W. Chisholm in Utah was associated with the old camp of Bingham, where his father had located several claims. Here he worked for a couple of years, returning to Illinois in the fall of 1865 for the purpose of taking a course at Eastman's Business College at Chicago, after which he worked, as compositor, on the Chicago Post, until the spring of 1869, when he returned to Utah, the day of his departure for the west, May 10th, marking an important event in the history of this intermountain country, as it was on this day that the last spike was driven in the completion of the Union Pacific railroad, thereby completing the last link connecting the Atlantic and Pacific by an "all rail" route across the continent.

During his absence from Utah Mr. Chisholm's father had been doing some prospecting in Little Cottonwood canyon, and, associated with the late Col. J. F. Woodman, had located what is now known as the famous Emma mine at Alta. Mr. Chisholm, Sr., being in the east at this time, the son joined Mr. Woodman in the development and operation of the Emma mine, and he remained at Alta until the year 1871, when a half interest in the Emma was sold to Park & Baxter, of New York, for \$750,000. But, before this sale was consummated, the mine had produced something in excess of \$1,000,000; and, afterwards, the Chisholms realized about a million more from their remaining interest in the property before it became the subject and foundation of a

scandal that caused a commotion in business and commercial circles in the United States and in Europe, and which nearly led to international complications, mention of which, in this connection, is not germane to the subject matter of our text.

At this stage of his career W. W. Chisholm stood high in the estimation of his fellows and associates as an experienced, careful, successful and reliable mining operator, but it was believed by some that his judgment was faulty when, in the year 1876, in company with J. F. Woodman, he located the Centennial-Eureka claim in Tintic district, near the crest of the mountain range dividing Eureka from Mammoth, and adjoining the even then noted Eureka-Hill mine. Still, nothing daunted by adverse opinions, assessment work was annually performed on the Centennial-Eureka and adjoining claims, comprising the Centennial-Eureka group, acquired either by location or purchase, and in the year 1885 the Centennial-Eureka Mining company was organized with a capitalization of 30,000 shares of \$1 each,—a modest capitalization characteristic of the modesty of the men backing the enterprise. One assessment of \$1 a share was levied by the company, but this was the only one and the last, for, before more funds were needed, the mine had been placed upon a producing and paying basis. In the year 1889 the first dividend of \$1 a share was paid by the company, to be followed by regular monthly dividends of \$1 or \$2 a share until August, 1899, when, having disbursed "velvet" money among its few shareholders to the amount of \$2,130,000, the mine was sold to A. F. Holden for the handsome sum of \$2,100,000, being only \$30,000 less than the amount the mine had already paid out in dividend disbursements.

Since the sale of the Centennial-Eureka Mr. Chisholm has not been engaged in active mining operations, although he still has extensive mining holdings and valuable interests throughout the state and the west, and is a silent partner in quite a number of commercial and business pursuits.

While Mr. Chisholm has made many friends because of his successes in mining operations, he has made many more because of his winning ways, charming personality and nobility of character. He is as modest as a child and of a retiring disposition. And more, he is possessed of such sterling qualities of heart and mind that anything within the gift of our people were his would he but take it. He is generous to a fault, and the poor both know and love him, and his charities are many. He is a keen sportsman, and is never happier than when out in the wilds with rod, gun or boat. These, with books by the best authors, are his hobbies; his delights. His home on Brigham street is filled with all that comfort and luxury could ask for, and, beloved by friend, respected and admired by our citizens, his life is typical of what one might expect of a gentleman, of a retired pioneer, who has been eminently successful in his mining ventures.