

[Sargent, James]

ILL ONLY FEW HOURS, JAMES SARGENT DIES

For Many Years One of Rochester's Most Prominent Business Men—
Inventor of Time Lock and Other Successful Devices

James Sargent, for more than fifty years a resident of Rochester and one of its prominent business men, died last night at his house, No. 98 East avenue. His death, which was unexpected, followed a hemorrhage. In the morning he was to all appearances in good health. The funeral, which will be private, will be held tomorrow.

Mr. Sargent was born in Chester, Vt., in 1824. He spent the early years of his life in the village, later removing to New Hampshire, where in 1847 he married Miss Angelina Morse Foster. He and Mrs. Sargent came to Rochester in 1864. Mrs. Sargent died a short time ago, after a wedded life of more than three score years.

Mr. Sargent was referred to in other cities as "the Rochester Edison." He was regarded as one of the most distinguished inventors of his time. Shortly after entering into partnership with Halbert S. Greenleaf he perfected his time lock, a device which has defied the skill of all safe burglars. The application for the patent on that time lock was made in June, 1873. It is essentially the lock that is now in use. The first Sargent time lock was made on May 2, 1874, when one was attached to a safe in the First National Bank of Morrison, Ill., where it is still in use. Mr. Sargent's experiments with lock-picking, with which he startled the Treasury Department of the United States government and a world of bankers, financiers and safe makers, would make an interesting book.

Another of his valuable patents was that of a smoke consumer, which, it is said, pays for itself by the reduction in the amount of coal used. It has been adopted by the government and many large manufacturing plants. There is also his glass enameled steel tank, which makes it possible to manufacture beer under the vacuum process, from start to finish, within twenty days, whereas the old process in wooden tanks requires at least three months.

The Sargent automatic railway signal warning the approaching train of danger is also widely known and generally used. These are only a few of the products of his brain.

Mr. Sargent was president of the Sargent & Greenleaf Company, manufacturer of locks and keys, in Court street. He had also been president of the Association of Summerland Island, Thousand Islands; Waterloo Gold Mining Company, Railway Signal Company, and the Pfaulder Fermentation Company.

With the passing of Mr. Sargent the First Universalist Church loses one of its strongest supporters. He was a prime mover in all the work undertaken by this church, his culminating act of generosity coming a few years ago when the expense of several improvements in the church necessitating an outlay of nearly \$60,000 was all borne by the Sargent family.

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It was Mr. Sargent's custom to entertain his friends each year, on his birthday. Last year he gave a party at the Hotel Seneca. At that time in his little talk after dinner he declared himself in favor of woman suffrage, saying:

"No man should have a wife if she cannot be made equal to him in all things. They say women are not equal in efficiency and intelligence. If women had had their rights as men have had, instead of being kept in ignorance, they would be better able to fill positions and hold office on the same plane as men."

Mr. Sargent was a traveler. Nearly all his winters were spent in the South or the Far West, where he escaped the rigorous Northern climate. He was interested in all that pertained to the civic upbuilding of Rochester. He combated the smoke nuisance, and one of his last acts was to take into the courts his fights against cluttering up the main streets with lunch wagons. He obtained a decision of the court of last resort which compelled the lunch carts to get off the streets.

Mr. Sargent was a member of Valley Lodge, F. and A. M., and of the Royal Arch Masons and the Shrine. He leaves one daughter, Mrs. John W. Force, and one grandson, Midshipman Sargent Force, of the United States Naval Academy, at Annapolis.

Democrat and Chronicle, Rochester NY, Thu. 13 Jan 1910

Transcribed on 27 Nov 2007 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY

[Sargent, James]

James Sargent, a resident of this city for over half a century and recognized as one of its most progressive businessmen, died last night at his home, 98 East avenue, after an illness of but a few hours following a hemorrhage. The funeral will take place tomorrow morning. The body will be taken to Buffalo for cremation after which the ashes will be interred in the family lot at Mt. Hope.

He leaves a daughter, Mrs. John W. [Josephine] Force, and one grandson, Midshipman Sargent Force of Annapolis Academy. Mr. Sargent was a member of First Universalist Church and also a member of Valley Lodge, F. & A.M.

Mr. Sargent was born in Chester, Vt., December 5, 1824. Later he removed to New Hampshire, where in 1847 he married Miss Angelina Morse Foster, who died only three years ago. In 1864 Mr. and Mrs. Sargent moved to Rochester where both resided until the time of their deaths. It was in this city that Mr. Sargent perfected numerous inventions which in many places have given him the name the "Rochester Edison."

In 1873 he invented the time lock which has been in use ever since, defying the attack of the most skilled burglars. He also brought into existence an automatic railway signal and a smoke consumer which pays for itself by reducing the amount of coal. His inquiring mind saw an improvement possible in brewing and the result was a glass enameled steel tank which reduced to a minimum the time necessary for producing beer.

For many years it was the custom of Mr. and Mrs. Sargent to spend the winter in the south. The following is an extract from an Augusta, Ga., paper of January 22, 1905:

"James Sargent of Rochester, N.Y., who has been stopping with us for some time, is known as the Rochester Edison. He is one of the most distinguished inventors of the Age. The invention which made his name well-spoken, was that of the well-known time-lock. This device has defied the skill of all safe-burglars, and has saved millions for rightful owners. The invention places Mr. Sargent's name in history as one of the greatest benefactors of the period in which he lives.

"A recital of the dramatic incidents and experiments connected with his lock-picking accomplishments, with which he startled the treasury department officials of the United States government and a world of bankers, financiers, and safemakers, would form a fascinating book.

"Another of his valuable inventions is a glass enameled steel tank, which makes it possible to manufacture beer under the vacuum process, from start to finish, within twenty days. In wooden tanks by the old process it requires three months' time to age it.

"Then there is the 'Sargent automatic railway signal,' warning the approaching train of danger. Also his patent 'automatic smoke consumer,' which soon pays for itself by reducing the amount of coal heretofore used. It has been adopted by the government and many other large manufacturing plants giving general satisfaction.

The above are only a few of the many successful inventions wrought by this persistent man of genius and apparently inexhaustible energy.

[Sargent, James]

“Mr. Sargent is president of the Sargent, Greenleaf and Company’s lock factory, and the Association of Summerland Island, Thousand Islands, St. Lawrence [County]. He has been president of the Pfaulder Fermentation Company, the Waterloo Gold Mining Company, and the Railway Signal Company.

“Mr. Sargent is a Vermonter by birth, and has now passed the limit of four score years. He has crossed the ‘hot sands,’ is vigorous and cheerful, and always ready for golf and other games of interest.

“Mr. and Mrs. Sargent have celebrated their fifty-seventh anniversary, have traveled extensively in this country, and have found no place more beautiful and delightful than Hampton Terrace, Ga.”

Mr. Sargent was about his affairs as usual on Tuesday. In the evening he complained of not feeling well. Yesterday morning, however, he seemed to be in his usual health. Later in the day he suffered a hemorrhage and died a short time later.

Union and Advertiser, Rochester NY, Thu. 13 Jan 1912

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