

[Colby, Mark Morse]

PASSING AWAY OF MARK M. COLBY

Was in Business Here Many Years

CONDUCTED MACHINE SHOP

Built Engines and Elevators and Was an Expert Machinist—

Retired from Business in 1891—Sketch of Career of Self-made Man.

In the death of Mark Morse Colby, which occurred at his home, 87 LaFayette street, at 7:45 o'clock yesterday morning, this city loses one of its oldest and best known business men. For the past five weeks Mr. Colby had been suffering with asthma. A week ago Saturday he suffered a stroke of paralysis, affecting his right side, and had been in a semi-conscious condition since.

Mark Morse Colby was the son of the late Ezekiah and Mary Morse Colby. He was born in Francistown [Francestown], New Hampshire, October 7, 1825. When he was ten years of age his mother died, and he went to Hookset, near Manchester, where he was employed in cotton and worsted spinning in the Delaine Works, this being the first delaine ever made in this country. And a short time after his entering this mill he was promoted foreman of his room. He then removed to Lowell and followed the same trade, holding the same position in the Booth Incorporation Mill, where he was employed for a number of years. He severed his connection there and later he worked in a delaine mill at Killingly, Conn. In 1840 he came to Utica and went to work for Philo Curtis, father of Philo S. Curtis, in his machine shop on Pine street, where he worked for about ten years as a machinist. Then he went to work for the Howe Sewing Machine Company in Utica as repairer and adjuster of sewing machines, being thus employed four or five years. Next he went to work in the steam engine works of Wood & Hurlburt, afterward Wood & Mann, on LaFayette street. He took as partner Walter Schrier and they built engines for the Wood & Mann Company on contract. They continued in this business about ten years, until the company failed. Then with Mr. Schrier, in 1875, he started a machine shop at the corner of Jay and First streets and continued in this business sixteen years. They did a machinists' jobbing business, built elevators and made general repairs. [On] November 1, 1891, Mr. Colby sold out to the firm of Schrier & Smith. From 1857 to 1862 Mr. Colby was a member of the Utica City Guards, of which Martin Neejer was captain. He was sergeant in the company and treasurer during its entire existence. While living in Connecticut he became a member of the Masonic order. He was in the habit of exhibiting his workmanship at the old Mechanics' Fairs and was a life member of the Utica Mechanics' Association.

[Colby, Mark Morse]

In politics he was a Republican. Since 1873 he had lived at 87 LaFayette street. Mr. Colby was a self-made man and one who had amassed some property by hard work. When he was 11 years old he went to work for \$1.25 a month. He was soon able to earn \$1.75 a day, and with this he determined to educate himself. Meeting a fellow workman who was similarly situated, one agreed to work for both while the other attended school three months, and then he who had been at school took his turn at working while the other took his turn at school. They went to Pembroke Liberal Institute in New Hampshire, and each was able to attend for three or four terms and thus get a good education. Since coming to Utica, Mr. Colby had been in the habit of going to the North Woods each year with what was known as the "Uncle Bill Gilmore party." In it were William K. Gilmore, William Rees, Smith Oatley, Mr. Logan and others of Utica, and some out-of-town people. They generally camped at the Old Forge in Fulton Chain, or on the Beaver river. Mr. Colby went on the first train over the Adirondack & St. Lawrence railroad to visit his old camping ground in the Fulton Chain.

Mr. Colby was a member of the [Universalist] Church of the Reconciliation since 1863. He was one of its trustees and also president of the board, and since 1887 had been clerk of the church organization. At a meeting held last January he was elected honorary trustee for life. He was very active and efficient in promoting the interests of the church. In 1865, at Worcester, Mass., he married Elizabeth C. Batchelder, who died in 1869, leaving no children. On her death Mr. Colby had erected in the New Forest Cemetery an appropriate monument, from a design of himself. It represents a life-size figure leading a youth to the cross, and shows in sculptured granite the leading idea in Mr. Colby's life and character. [On] June 15, 1891 he married Mrs. Josephine Plophel of this city, who survives. He leaves also one brother, Francis G. Colby of Winthrop, Mass. Mr. Colby had a high regard for all the obligations of life and discharged his duties faithfully and fearlessly. He was deeply devoted to his home and church.

*Herald-Dispatch*, Utica NY, Mon. 29 Jun 1903

Transcribed on 11 Mar 2009 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY