

[Mann, Abram S.]

Long Life Was One of Activity

A. S. Mann One of Rochester's Early Merchants

FOR MORE THAN FORTY YEARS

Was First to Introduce Electric Light in Rochester as an Indoor Illuminant—

Was City Auditor for Term of Eight Years

Abram S. Mann¹, whose death occurred early yesterday morning, was for more than forty years prominently identified with the business life of Rochester. Born in Mount Bethel, Pa., February 12, 1827, he came to Monroe county with his family in boyhood and received the education then available in the district school at Rush. In 1845 he entered business in Rochester as a clerk, and in 1850 moved to Lafayette, Ind., where he engaged in business.

Returning to Rochester five years later, Mr. Mann entered the employ of the dry goods firm of Wilder & Gorton, then composed of Charles Wilder, Samuel Wilder and Francis F. Gorton; and in 1855, after his marriage to Frances Hoyt, at Brighton, he, with Zeb T. Case, was taken into the firm, and the co-partnership became known as Wilder, Case & Co., Mr. Gorton retiring. Later other changes were made, and the firm became Case & Mann. In 1870, when Mr. Case retired, the business was conducted by A. S. Mann & Company, until it was discontinued in 1891. Mr. Mann was then appointed to the newly created office of city auditor, by Mayor Richard Curran, and served through the administrations of Mayor Curran, Mayor Aldridge and Mayor Warner, eight years, when the office was abolished.

Public-Spirited Citizen

Mr. Mann's name during his business career stood for all that was best. His keen sense of justice and fairness were exemplified many times, and he was esteemed a public-spirited citizen. His store was the finest in Rochester. It was a familiar saying that if an article was purchased at Mann's, it was just what the salespeople represented it to be.

Mr. Mann was a pleasant, approachable man, and men liked to have business transactions with him. He was progressive, too, and it was recalled yesterday by a retired business man that Mr. Mann's store was the first to use electric light. On the installation of the new system of lighting, which many Rochesterians had seen only for the illumination of streets, Mr. Mann opened his store, now occupied by Scrantom, Wetmore & Company, at night, and invited citizens generally to view the new method of lighting. The people responded in droves and saw for the first time a display of goods under the powerful rays of electric light. There was much comment, and there were many conservative citizens who said that electric light would

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never be successful for store illumination, as it was so strong and brilliant that it would affect the delicate coloring of the materials exposed.

Service in War Time

While Mr. Mann did not go to the front in the Civil war, he was greatly interested in the success of Union arms and was active in getting supplies through to the army. When the great "sanitary bazaar," which many old residents will recall, was held, General Grant, on request, sent an autograph portrait of himself and a lock of his hair. These were sold to the highest bidder. Mr. Mann valiantly outbid all others and until the time of his death preserved these souvenirs of the soldier president.

Mr. Mann's home was for many years at No. 62 Clinton avenue south. The house has since been altered and a business front added to it.

The surviving children are one daughter and four sons; Mary Bates Mann of New York, Elbert B. Mann of Buffalo, Frederick H. Mann of Fresno, Cal., Walter H. Mann of Des Moines, Ia., and Abram J. Mann of this city, at whose home, No. 8 Wellesley street, Mr. Mann's death occurred. Funeral services will be held at this residence at 3 o'clock this afternoon.

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Transcribed on 8 Feb 2005 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY

¹ He was a member of the First Universalist Society of Rochester.