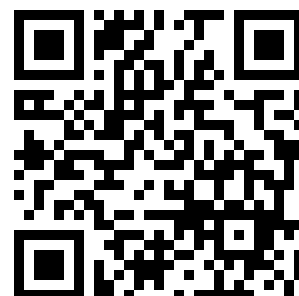

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BOOK OF BIOGRAPHIES

THIS VOLUME CONTAINS

Biographical Sketches

OF

LEADING CITIZENS

OF

RUTLAND COUNTY,

VERMONT.

"Biography is the only true history."—Emerson.

BIOGRAPHICAL PUBLISHING COMPANY,

GEORGE RICHMOND, Pres.; S. HARMER NEFF, Sec'y.; C. R. ARNOLD, Treas.

BUFFALO, N. Y., CHICAGO, ILL.

1899.

VERMONT
1899

PREFACE

HAVING brought to a successful termination our labors in Rutland County in compiling and editing the sketches herein contained, we desire, in presenting this Book of Biographies to our patrons, to make a few remarks, necessarily brief, in regard to the value and importance of local works of this nature. We agree with Ralph Waldo Emerson that "Biography is the only true History," and also are of the opinion that a collection of the biographies of the leading men of a nation would give a more interesting, as well as authentic, history of their country than any other that could be written. The value of such a production as this cannot be too highly estimated. With each succeeding year the haze of Obscurity removes more and more from our view the fast disappearing landmarks of the past, Oblivion sprinkles her dust of forgetfulness on men and their deeds, effectually concealing them from the public eye, and because of the many living objects which claim our attention, few of those who have been removed from the busy world linger long in our memory. Even the glorious achievements of the present age may not insure it from being lost in the glare of greater things to come, and so it is manifestly a duty to posterity for the men of the present time to preserve a record of their lives and a story of their progress from low and humble beginnings to great and noble deeds, in order that future generations may read the account of their successful struggles, and profit by their example. A local history affords the best means of preserving ancestral history, and it also becomes, immediately upon its publication, a ready book of reference for those who have occasion to seek biographical data of the leading and early settled families. Names, dates and events are not easily remembered by the average man, so it behooves the generations now living, who wish to live in the memory of their decendants, to write their own records, making them full and broad in scope, and minute in detail, and insure their preservation by having them put in printed form. We firmly believe that in these collated personal memoirs will be found as true and as faithful a record of Rutland County as may be obtained anywhere, for the very sufficient reason that its growth and development are identified with that of the

men who have made her what she is to-day—the representative, leading men, whose personal sketches it has been a pleasure to us to write and give a place in this volume. From the time when the hand of civilized man had not yet violated the virgin soil with desecrating plough, nor with the ever-ready frontiersman's ax felled the noble, almost limitless, forests, to the present period of activity in all branches of industry, we may read in the histories of the county's leading men, and of their ancestors, the steady growth and development which has been going on here for a century and a half, and bids fair to continue for centuries to come. A hundred years from now, whatever records of the present time are then extant, having withstood the ravages of time and the ceaseless war of the elements, will be viewed with an absorbing interest, equaling, if not surpassing, that which is taken today in the history of the early settlements of America.

It has been our purpose in the preparation of this work to pass over no phase or portion of it slightly, but to give attention to the smallest points, and thus invest it with an air of accuracy, to be obtained in no other way. The result has amply justified the care that has been taken, for it is our honest belief that no more reliable production, under the circumstances, could have been compiled.

One feature of this work, to which we have given special prominence, and which we are sure will prove of extraordinary interest, is the collection of portraits of the representative and leading citizens, which appear throughout the volume. We have tried to represent the different spheres of industrial and professional activity as well as we might. To those who have been so uniformly obliging and have kindly interested themselves in the success of this work, volunteering information and data, which have been very helpful to us in preparing this Book of Biographies of Rutland County, we desire to express our grateful and profound acknowledgment of their valued services.

CHICAGO, ILL., December, 1899.

THE PUBLISHERS.

————— NOTE —————

ALL the Biographical sketches published in this volume were submitted to their respective subjects, or to the subscribers, from whom the facts were primarily obtained, for their approval or correction before going to press; and a reasonable time was allowed in each case for the return of the type-written copies. Most of them were returned to us within the time allotted, or before the work was printed, after being corrected or revised; and these may therefore be regarded as reasonably accurate.

A few, however, were not returned to us; and, as we have no means of knowing whether they contain errors or not, we cannot vouch for their accuracy. In justice to our readers, and to render this work more valuable for reference purposes, we have indicated these uncorrected sketches by a small asterisk (*), placed immediately after the name of the subject. They will all be found on the last pages of the book.

BIOGRAPHICAL PUBLISHING CO.

BOOK OF BIOGRAPHIES
RUTLAND COUNTY,
VERMONT.



JOHN ABNER MEAD.

Book of Biographies

RUTLAND COUNTY

JOHN ABNER MEAD, whose portrait is shown on the opposite page, enjoys a state-wide reputation as a result of his connection with the many enterprises and flourishing industries of Rutland, together with the official positions he has so faithfully filled. He was for many years a practitioner of medicine, but relinquished that profession because of the pressing needs of his business interests. He is now president of the Howe Scale Company, manufacturers of a scale recognized as the standard the world over, and it is much to his credit that this company is the flourishing enterprise that it is.

Mr. Mead comes of a distinguished line of ancestors both on the paternal and maternal sides, and is of English descent. In Westminster Abbey, there is a monument erected to the memory of one of his ancestors, Richard Mead, M. D., who was physician to George II. and Queen Anne. At a later period,

Colonel Richard K. Mead was aide-de-camp to General Washington from 1777 to 1783, and was with the commander-in-chief in all his principal battles, and personally superintended the execution of the English spy, Major Andre. The Right Reverend William Mead, Bishop of Virginia, was of the same family, and another, Richard W. Mead, who was born in Chester county, Pennsylvania, in June, 1778, is said to have been the first importer of Merino sheep to this country.

Our subject's great-grandfather was Colonel James Mead, who was the first white man to settle in Rutland or the Otter Creek Valley. He was a native of New York, having been born at Horseneck, August 25, 1730, and was descended from one who came to this country in 1642. Colonel James Mead purchased 7,000 acres of land, at six cents per acre, along Otter Creek and near the falls at Center Rutland. He moved to that locality from Manchester, Vermont, taking with him

his wife, eleven children and a son-in-law. He was the first moderator, and the first selectman in the town, and the first representative from Rutland to the first Vermont Legislature. He had the honor of being the father of the first white child born in Rutland. He was united in marriage with Mercy Holmes of Horseneck, N. Y., and among their children was Abner, who married Amelia Roots, a daughter of Rev. Benajah Roots, who was one of the early prominent figures in Rutland, being the first settled pastor of the Congregational church, which was organized in 1773. In the preface of his first sermon which was subsequently printed, he said he then knew of but one settled Congregational minister in the whole region of country between Massachusetts and Canada and the Hudson and Connecticut rivers. It was at his home that Rev. William Emerson of Concord, Mass., grandfather of Ralph Waldo Emerson, and army chaplain under General Gates in the Continental army, breathed his last. The Concord author had a letter written to the church by Rev. Mr. Roots, conveying the intelligence of this death. Rev. Mr. Roots was a graduate of Princeton College, and died in 1787. Roswell R. Mead, the father of our subject, was a successful merchant in West Rutland up to the time of his decease in 1875. His faithful companion and helpmeet in life was Lydia A. Gorham, by whom he had one child, John A., our subject.

John A. Mead was born in Fair Haven, Vermont, April 20, 1841, and received his intellectual training in the common schools of

West Rutland; at Franklin Academy, Malone, N. Y.; and at Middlebury College, from which he was graduated in 1864. He then entered upon study for the medical profession and in 1868 received a degree from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of New York City. He was house physician in the Kings County Hospital for two years, after which he actively engaged in practice at Rutland, Vermont, until 1888. During this time he also served as surgeon-general of the state on the staff of Governor Proctor, as medical superintendent of the House of Correction, and as pension examiner for eight years. He was surgeon-general of the Vermont State Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic in 1890. In 1888, Dr. Mead was offered a "Chair" in the Medical Department of the University of Vermont, but declined it as he wished to retire from his profession and devote his time to his business interests, as he was one of the largest real estate owners in the city of Rutland. The Mead Building, owned by him, is one of the largest business blocks in the state. He has been director and cashier of the old National Bank of Rutland; treasurer of the Rutland Railroad; director and treasurer of the Addison Railroad; director of the Clement National Bank; vice-president and later president of the State Trust Company; director, vice-president and later president of the Merchants' National Bank; president of the New England Fire Insurance Company, of the P. E. Chase Manufacturing Company, and of the John A. Mead Manufacturing Company; president of

the Rutland Board of Trade; and a trustee of Middlebury College. In 1888, he re-organized the Howe Scale Company and is now president of that corporation. In 1892, he was elected by the Republican party to the State Senate, and took an active part in the workings of that body, serving as chairman of a number of important committees. One of the beneficial results of his term in that capacity was the securing of a city charter for Rutland, and he was elected its first mayor.

Dr. Mead served in the Civil War, enlisting in Company K, Twelfth Regiment, Vermont Volunteers, and after the Gettysburg campaign returned to his college and was graduated in 1864. He was a member of the staffs of General Alger and General Veazey, when they were commanders-in-chief of the Grand Army of the Republic. He is a member of Roberts Post, G. A. R. He was appointed by Governor Levi K. Fuller as one of the commissioners from the state of Vermont to the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, in 1893; and he was also appointed by Governor U. A. Woodbury, in 1895, as commissioner from the state of Vermont to the Mexican National Exposition of Industries and Fine Arts. In religious attachments, our subject is a member of the First Congregational church of Rutland, and for many years has been chairman of its executive committee. He is vice-president of the Congregational Club of Western Vermont. October 30, 1872, Dr. Mead was joined in hymeneal bonds with Mary M. Sherman, a daughter of William N. Sherman, a prominent citizen of Greenwich,

R. I., and they are the happy parents of one child, Mary Sherman.

FRAYETTE and COLLINS POTTER. The gentlemen whose names head this sketch are venerable and respected citizens of Pawlet, Rutland county, Vermont. They are brothers and are both highly gifted, one a successful attorney-at-law and a celebrated linguist,—the other, one of the most skillful millwrights in America, having followed this chosen calling for a period of sixty-six years. These brothers have never fallen victims to Cupid's darts, and have thus escaped many of life's vexations and worries. Although they are content in single-blessedness, they are not backward in social relations with the good people of their communities, but are kind, charitable neighbors and good citizens, and will be sadly missed in their accustomed places, when called to the world beyond. These brothers are sons of Samuel Potter, grandsons of Captain William Potter, and great-grandsons of Commodore William Potter.

Commodore Potter was born in 1725, and died October 12, 1773. He reared six sons and three daughters. Captain William Potter was born in New London, Conn., October 20, 1749, and died in 1825. He was a mariner until he attained the age of forty years, when he settled on his farm in the town of Pawlet, Vermont. He was captain of a "deep sea merchantman," and, during the Revolutionary