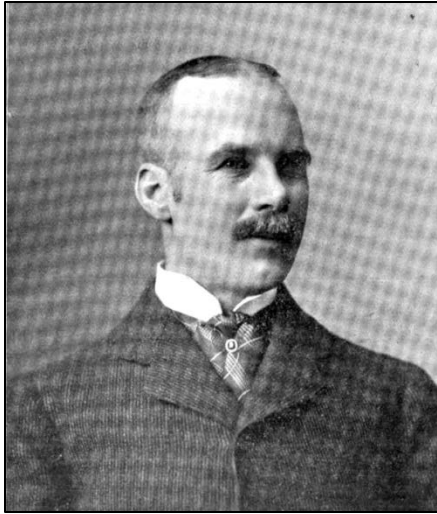


William and Joan Pinkerton Chalmers



William James Chalmers, son of Scottish-born immigrants Thomas Stuart Chalmers and Janet Telfer Chalmers was born at 112 West Monroe Street, Chicago on July 10, 1852.

Thomas was engaged in the manufacture of mining machinery, first as superintendent at Eagles Works Manufacturing Company and later formed his own mining equipment company. William was educated in the Chicago public school system, attending the Scammon School on Madison Street between Union and Harvard streets. He then attended the old Chicago high school on West Monroe Street between Des Plaines and Halsted Streets. Upon completion of his high school studies at age 14, he became an apprentice in the machinist trade at Eagles Works Manufacturing

Company. He would remain at the shop for four years learning the specifics of machinist engineering.

After a year-long trip to Europe, William returned to Chicago in 1872. Upon his return he assisted his father in the formation of Fraser and Chalmers & Company.

Joan Pinkerton born July 22, 1855, was the only surviving daughter of Alan Pinkerton founder of the Pinkerton National Detective Agency and his wife Joan Carfrae Pinkerton. Born and raised in Chicago, Joan was well education and described as a strikingly beautiful brunette who was extremely popular and independent.

Joan was introduced to William Chalmers, a dashing and handsome young man, at a party in 1876 by Joan's classmate Lizzie Chalmers. Joan and William had much in common; both were children of Scottish immigrants, they shared a love of music, and a commitment to civic and social organizations. William became a regular guest at the Pinkerton home at 357 West Monroe Street. Mrs. Pinkerton encouraged the budding romance while Mr. Pinkerton opposed the relationship believing William would never accomplish much.

Despite Mr. Pinkerton's objections, the young couple married on October 21, 1878 at the Third Presbyterian Church located at the intersection of Ashland and Ogden Avenues. Dr. A. E. Kittridge officiated at the ceremony. Five hundred invitations were sent out but some 3,000 people arrived at the church. The Chicago Tribune reported "the galleries, the seats, and the floor—every available space was taken. A large number stood up on the seats;



much to the disgust of the church trustees. Outside [the church] the streets were jammed with horses and carriages for blocks around. There was never such a wedding in Chicago.”

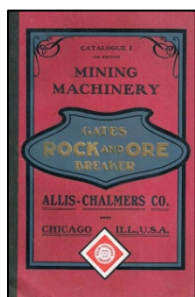
The Chalmers were well known for their philanthropy. William was a director of the Worlds Columbian Exposition. During the Washburne administration he served on the Chicago Board of Education, and the commission that made the elevation of the Illinois Central railroad possible. His other civic activities included serving on the board of directors of the Commercial National Bank; and memberships in the Chicago Union League; Chicago Athletic Club; Lake Geneva Country Club; Engineers Club of New York; and the Saddle and Cycle Club of Chicago.

Joan was President of the West End Woman’s Club; member of the Saddle and Cycle; the Fortnightly; and the Woman’s Athletic Club, and taught a Sunday school class at the Third Presbyterian Church.

The Chalmers supported many others causes including the Illinois Saint Andrew Society and the Scottish Home. Mrs. Chalmers was especially interested in helping disabled children, her sister Isabel was a disabled child who died in 1863. The Home for Destitute and Crippled Children was a favored charity of Mrs. Chalmers she wanted the children to have a place to go in the country once they were able to leave the home to continue their recovery. The Country Home for Crippled Children was founded in 1911. Mrs. Chalmers was instrumental in raising the necessary funds to purchase 68 acres of land at Prince Crossing, a station 32 miles from Chicago for the home.

A year after their marriage, the Chalmers first child was born, and she like others in the family, was named Joan. The Chalmers second child, a son, was born in 1881 and named Thomas Stuart Pinkerton Chalmers after his paternal grandfather.

In the mid-1880’s, the Chalmers built a new home at 315 S. Ashland Avenue. It contained 15 rooms with a ballroom on the third floor. Across the street lived Carter H. Harrison, the much loved Mayor of Chicago. Harrison was assassinated in his home on October 28, 1893. The first persons on the scene were the Chalmers. They had heard the gunshots and ran to give assistance and comfort to the dying Mayor. The man who shot Harrison, Eugene Patrick Prendergast, was tried twice for the murder and found guilty both times.



In 1900 Edwin Reynolds, superintendent of E. P. Allis & Company met with William Chalmers, president of Fraser and Chalmers at a hotel in Chicago. During the meeting the businessmen discussed merging their two companies. On May 8, 1901 Fraser and Chalmers, E.P. Allis & Company, Gates Iron Works, and Dickson Manufacturing Company merged and incorporated as Allis-Chalmers Company manufacturer of industrial mining machinery. Today most people who recognize the name Allis-Chalmers associate it with the orange farm tractor.



The Chalmers daughter, Joan attended the Sieboth-Kennedy School as did many girls from wealthy Chicago families. It was said the graduates of the Sieboth-Kennedy School “married young and married well.” On December 4, 1902, at the age of 23, Joan Chalmers married Norman Williams, Jr. The wedding took place at the Third Presbyterian Church. Joan and Norman Williams had two children; a daughter also named Joan and a son named

Norman.

Just seven months after the U.S. entered into World War I, Thomas was in the second graduating class of officers at Fort Sheridan. On November 23, 1917, 2,218 men graduated as second lieutenants. Before leaving for overseas, Thomas was promoted to Captain and in France received his final promotion to Major.

After the war Thomas returned to Chicago where he continued his life as one of Chicago’s most eligible bachelors and along with his father, and brother-in-law Norman Williams, began a new company called Chalmers and Williams. They manufactured mining machinery and operated a supply house. Thomas served as president of the company.



Tragedy struck the Chalmers family early in 1923. Thomas died on March 26, 1923 at the age of 34. The cause of death was listed as chronic Hepatitis, the secondary cause was anemia. He died at his residence, 220 E. Walton Place, and was buried in Graceland Cemetery in Chicago. Thomas left an estate of approximately \$250,000 to be divided into three equal parts. One gift was for the Country Home for Convalescent Children at Prince Crossing, Illinois and one each for his niece and nephew, Joan and Norman Williams.

Norman and Joan Williams spent two years traveling and living in Europe. They spent the fall of 1922 in Woodstock, Vermont before traveling to Chicago for Christmas. Joan Williams became ill and was eventually taken to St. Luke’s hospital where she was reported critically ill “of a malady which puzzles our physicians.” She died, April 3, 1923, eight days after her brother’s death. According to the death certificate, she died as a result of a staph infection. Joan Chalmers Williams was buried in Woodstock, Vermont. (The causes of death of Joan and Thomas were said to be not related.)

William Chalmers, retired chairman of the Allis-Chalmers Company of Milwaukee, died on December 10, 1938 at his home on Lake Shore Drive in Chicago. Joan Pinkerton Chalmers died on January 25, 1940. William and Joan were buried with their son in Graceland Cemetery.

Two grandchildren survived: Mrs. F. Hamilton Merrill of New York and Norman Williams, Jr. of Woodstock, VT.

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