

## William James Chalmers

William J. Chalmers was born July 10, 1852 in Chicago, the son of Thomas and Janet Tesler Chalmers Scottish-born immigrants who arrived in Chicago in 1843. Thomas Chalmers was engaged in the manufacturing of mining machinery. At the time of William's birth his father was superintendent of The Eagle Works Manufacturing Company. Educated in the Chicago public school system, William attended the Scammon School on Madison Street between Union and Harvard streets. He attended the old Chicago high school on West Monroe Street between Des Plaines and Halsted streets. At 14 years of age he became an apprentice in the machinist trade. He would remain at the shop for four years learning the details of machinist engineering.

After a yearlong trip to Europe, Mr. Chalmers returned in 1872 to assist in the formation of Fraser and Chalmers & Co. Mr. Chalmers was a director of the Worlds Columbia Exposition. During the Washburne administration Mr. Chalmers served on the Chicago Board of education, and was appointed by Mayor Washburne to the commission that made the elevation of Illinois Central railroad possible. His other civic activities included serving on the board of directors of the Commercial National Bank, 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.

William Chalmers married Joan Pinkerton, only daughter of Allen Pinkerton, founder of the Pinkerton Detective Agency, and Joan Carfrae Pinkerton, on October 21, 1878 at the Third Presbyterian Church.

William Chalmers was described as a dashing and handsome young man. Joan Pinkerton Chalmers was a striking brunette. Both loved the arts and music. The Chalmers had two children Joan and Thomas. William Chalmers inherited and grew his father's company Fraser & Chalmers, was President of the Commercial Club of Chicago, and Director of the Field Museum of Natural History. The Chalmers name is associated with the orange tractors that bore the Allis-Chalmers name. The merger of Fraser & Chalmers and Allis Engine Works resulted in the Allis-Chalmers Company producers of farm equipment and mining machinery.

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