

PORTRAITS AND SKETCHES.

OLDEST BUSINESS FIRM.

With Sketch of the Proprietor, G. Lyman Chapman.

The oldest business firm of Chesaning is the general store of which G. L. Chapman is now sole proprietor. A sketch and portrait of one who has been in business in our village for 46 years, or nearly half a century, cannot but prove of deep interest to ARGUS readers.

George Lyman Chapman, eldest son of George W. and Abigail J. Chapman, was born at Lynn, Mass., July 29, 1837. At the age of five years his father moved with his family to Michigan, arriving in Chesaning on the evening of October 27, 1842. It has already been told at pioneer gatherings and in the ARGUS how Lyman, then a small "kid," spent his first night sleeping in the bed of Mrs. Judge Smith's table, it being turned upside down for that purpose.

After a residence of about five years in the wilderness, the family returned to the East in August, 1847. After a brief sojourn at Belchertown, Mass., moved to West Claremont, N. H.,



G. Lyman Chapman

where his father was employed on the railroad, running a steam shovel for about three years. Then went to Wells River, Vermont. A year or more later his father was contractor on the New Jersey Central R. R., the family residing at Bray's Hill and Bloomsbury. At the former place Lyman had his first experience in railroading. In the fall of 1852 Mr. Chapman's father, with Balch, Zimmerman & Co., had an extensive steam shovel contract on the Great Western R. R., of Canada, the family residing at Thorold on the Welland canal. We next find the subject of this sketch living with his father's family at Jersey Shore, Lycoming county, Pa.

In the spring of 1859 the family returned to Chesaning. Lyman came overland with horse, buggy and dog. The horse was the black pony so long, and familiarly known through this section for years.

After a few years spent on the farm summers and teaching the village school winters, Mr. Chapman found employment on the Marietta & Cincinnati R. R., where his father in partnership with Dodge, Balch and others had a large contract for improvement on the railroad. Mr. Chapman was variously employed as foreman, conductor on construction train, running one of the steam shovels, etc.

January 10, 1866, he married Miss Serena C. Vincent, of Washington county, Ohio, and soon after came to Chesaning, and in April, 1866, in company with his brother-in-law, G. W. Hipple, opened a general store on block 9, nearly opposite the hotel. About two years later they moved to the Masonic building, corner Front and Broad streets, where the business was continued under the firm name of Chapman & Co., James L. Helms being the junior member. January 1st, 1874, the stock of merchandise was sold to Gould Bros., and Mr. Chapman enjoyed a rest for about three months.

In April he purchased a one-half interest in the general store of Bentley & Chapman, Mr. Bentley retiring and he thus becoming a partner of his brother William. The business was continued as Chapman Bros. for about seven years. During the time the stock of merchandise was moved across the street to the Masonic building now owned by Mr. Chapman.

In the spring of 1882 William sold out to E. C. Waldron, and the firm became Chapman & Waldron.

In March, 1889, Mr. Chapman purchased Mr. Waldron's interest, since which time he has conducted the business alone. By whatever name, this store has been considered reliable and upright in all its dealings, and counts among its customers some who have traded there almost from the first. As a business man Mr. Chapman's honesty and integrity is unquestionable, and he counts his friends by scores. In fact he is one of the widest and best known men in the vicinity, and a man whose judgment has always been sought and relied upon. Though of a quiet and unassuming nature, devoted to home and family, his influence has been widespread and of a high and ennobling character. He is a wide reader, as are all the members of his family, and the Chapman library is perhaps the most extensive in the village. This library is owned individually by different members of the family, and taken collectively covers a large field of literature, including the classics, history, and the works of old and modern writers, on a diversity of subjects, first-class novels and historical stories.

The pleasant and commodious home on Front street was built in 1872 and remodeled in 1884. Previous to this time Mr. and Mrs. Chapman resided in a small house, built on the same lot

by Mr. Samuel Church. Three children came to this home, May, Florence and L. Earl, the latter a bright boy, who passed away at the age of 15 years.

Mr. Chapman has been a member of the Masonic order for many years, holding the degree of M. M., and has held various offices in the lodge since its inception. He has also been the recipient of different offices of trust, bestowed upon him by his fellow-townsmen, and for seven years was township treasurer and for two years village treasurer. But probably the best service he gave his village and townspeople was that as member of the school board, which office he held for eighteen years, most of that time being president. His judgment here, as elsewhere, was usually of the best, as the excellence of the public school during that time is proof sufficient.

In politics Mr. Chapman has always been a republican, and one of the most loyal supporters that party ever had. In religion he is a liberalist, at one time being a member of the Universalist church, and instrumental in securing Universalist preaching here for a time.

As our pioneer business man may he long continue to succeed and prosper in all his undertakings, and remain an honor to our village.