

JAMES B. LEAMAN.

For a number of years past James B. Leaman has been identified with the business interests of San José, California, and is numbered among the leading and substantial residents of the city. He was born in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, on the 10th of February, 1829, but later was taken by his parents to Ohio, where his father was a merchant and mill owner, and in its public schools and the academy at Dayton he received his educational training. Leaving the schoolroom at the age of sixteen years, he entered the employ of Crawford & Company, shoe-last manufacturers of Dayton, where he remained until his twentieth year. In August, 1849, Mr. Leaman left that city for California, via the Isthmus of Panama, on the S. S. Panama, David Bailey, commander, and he arrived in San Francisco in October, 1849.



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He first took up his abode at Park's Bar, but in 1853 removed from there to Marysville, where for the following two years he was engaged in the hotel business, and on the expiration of that period, in 1855, was elected to the office of constable of Marysville, continuing therein for one year. In 1856 he was elected by the council as a police officer, in which he remained until 1867, and from 1867 until 1868 he served as the city assessor. In the meantime, in 1862, he had been appointed chief engineer of the fire department, and discharged the duties of that office until 1868.

In that year he returned to Dayton, Ohio, to again visit the scenes of his boyhood and youth, and on his return to San Francisco in the following fall was appointed night inspector in the custom house, where he remained until 1878, in that year resigning to organize the Madera Vineyard Company, purchasing and planting six hundred and forty acres of land, also built a winery and two store houses, forty by eighty feet, and made many other improvements. In 1882, however, Mr. Leaman sold his interest to his partners and returned to San Francisco, and two years later, in 1884, came to San José, where he was engaged in agricultural pursuits until 1890. In that year he embarked in the laundry business in the suburbs of the city, at 429-431 West Santa Clara street, which proved the foundation of his present extensive business. The firm was incorporated on the 26th of December, 1894, with a capital of twenty-five thousand dollars, and the following officers were elected: J. B. Leaman, president; Mrs. Leaman, vice president; and George Leaman, secretary. In September, 1894, the laundry was destroyed by fire, proving a total loss to the owners, but upon its site now stands the present large establishment, containing the most up-to-date and modern machinery, and this company was the first to use oil as fuel in San José. He thoroughly understands the laundry business in every detail, and this is one of the leading institutions in the city.

In 1856 was celebrated the marriage of Mr. Leaman and Miss Pamela Humphrey, she being a daughter of Jacob Humphrey, a lumber merchant of New York. Three children were born of this union: Minnie, who died at the age of ten years; Robert H., the director of the laundry; and Grace, now Mrs. Jeff and a resident of Stockton, California. For his second wife Mr. Leaman chose Mary B. Harmon, of Los Angeles, this state, and two children have blessed their union: Lelia May and James B., Jr. Mr. Leaman is a member of Morse Lodge No. 257, I. O. O. F., of San Francisco, and is a past president of the Santa Clara County Pioneers of California. In political matters he is a stalwart supporter of Republican principles.

(Source: *A History of the New California, its resources and people* vol. 1, edited by Leigh H. Irvine. New York: Lewis Publishing, 1905 pp. 920-21)