

John A. Spargo Biography

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JOHN A. SPARGO. master mechanic of the great Homestake Mining Company, was born in Polk county, Tennessee on the 12th of October, 1853, and is a son of James and Mary (May) Spargo, both of whom were born in England. James Spargo, Sr., grandfather of the subject. was likewise a native of England, and there passed the closing years of his life, though he had spent a number of years as a resident of Cuba. In 1842 the father of the subject came to America to accept the position of mechanical engineer for a copper-mining company in eastern Tennessee, bringing machinery with him to complete the equipment of the plant. He remained in the employ of one concern for the period of thirty years and is now living retired, in company with his devoted wife, in Polk county, Tennessee, having attained the venerable age of eighty years. During the Civil war the mines with which he was connected were confiscated and worked by the Confederate government, and he continued in the same position until the original owners again assumed control.

John A. Spargo, the eldest of the three children, all of whom are living, secured his early educational training in private schools and thereafter continued his studies in the Henry Clay School, in Lexington, Kentucky, after which he took up the study and practical work of mechanical engineering under the able direction of his honored father. Later he served an apprenticeship of four years in the Corliss Engine Works, at Hamilton, Ohio, thereafter remaining there employed until 1873, when he was offered and accepted a position with the Silver Islet Mining Company on the north shore of Lake Superior, where he remained until 1878, when he came to the Black Hills. In November of that year he entered the employ of the Homestake Mining Company, working for a time as machinist and being promoted from time to time to positions of greater trust, until, in 1882, he was finally advanced to his present important office of master mechanic. Since that time he has had the supervision of all machinery in the mines and stamp mills and shops of the company, as well as of all construction work. When he entered the service of the company the mill was equipped with eighty stamps, and this has been increased to nine hundred making it one of the largest and most complete stamp mills in the Union, while in the shops are made practically all machines and tools demanded in connection with the great industry. Mr. Spargo is interested in promising mining properties and is known as an able engineer and executive. In politics he renders allegiance to the Republican party, and fraternally is affiliated with the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, the Knights of Pythias and the Ancient Order of United Workmen.

On the 1st of April, 1885, was solemnized the marriage of Mr. Spargo to Miss Ida Martin, who was born and reared in Wisconsin. She was summoned into eternal rest on the 10th of August, 1896, and is held in

loving memory by all who came within the sphere of her gracious influence. She is survived by three children, Marion Clyde, Ellen May and Roger D.