

Watson Marshall Nesbit

Watson Marshall Nesbit was born 26 July 1842 in Northumberland, England.¹ He was the second of seven children of William Nesbit and Margaret Marshall. In 1843, the family sailed from Newcastle, England, to Philadelphia, on the bark *Freya*.² They settled near Pottsville, Pennsylvania, where Watson received his education.³ On the 1850 census, they were living in Norwegian, Schuylkill, Pennsylvania.⁴ The family moved to La Fayette County, Wisconsin, and then to LaSalle County, Illinois, where the father engaged in farming. Father and mother died within eleven months of each other, about 1855. Watson's youngest brother was adopted and raised by an aunt and uncle; Watson stayed on the family farm in La Salle County, Illinois, for three more years, then came west.⁵

In the fall of 1858, he went to Cass County, Missouri, and then to Kansas City the next year. He left on a freight train belonging to Bailey, Bartlett, Dun & Company, consisting of ten wagons and twelve men. They traveled to Colorado City and Denver, Colorado. Watson then returned to Kansas City on foot, being paid off there. From this time on, he was continuously on the plains until the Union Pacific Railroad was built across the country. He was in charge of a freight train and making trips from all shipping points on the Missouri River to Salt Lake City and Denver for nine years. He made a dozen trips across the great American plains.⁶

He married Ann Ritchie (or Eubanks) about 1870 in Wyoming Territory; they had three children. He was a laborer on a cattle ranch with his wife in Bear River City, Uinta, Wyoming Territory, in 1870.⁷ They moved to Payson, Utah, Utah Territory, by 1871. There he was one of the pioneers of Tintic and was called the "father of Tintic mining enterprises".⁸ About the same time, he was the manager of the Bingham mine in Salt Lake County, Utah Territory.⁹ After five years, he bought a home in Salt Lake City, taking charge of the South Star and Titus mines in the Little Cottonwood district. He was next in charge of the Yosemite Mine Number One for a year and a half.¹⁰

In 1878, Watson and his family moved to Silver Reef, Washington, Utah Territory. He was connected to the mining operations there for ten years.¹¹ On the 1880 census, he was an assayer, living with his wife and three children in Silver Reef.¹² He was an incorporator, director, and vice president of the Ventura Mining and Reduction Company in Silver Reef. He was licensed and held exclusive right to use the Russell process for leaching.¹³ This process permits a coarser crushing of the ore and less chloridizing roasting (less salt and sometimes no salt need be used). It extracted two to ten times as

¹ England and Wales Birth Registration Index, 1837-2008; England Births and Christenings, 1538-1975.

² US Index to Passenger Arrivals, Atlantic and Gulf Ports, 1820-1874; Philadelphia, Passenger and Immigration Lists, 1800-1850.

³ Portrait, Genealogical and Biographical Record of the State of Utah: Containing Biographies of Many Well-known Citizens of the Past and Present, pp. 400-401.

⁴ United States Census, 1850.

⁵ Portrait, Genealogical and Biographical Record of the State of Utah: Containing Biographies of Many Well-known Citizens of the Past and Present, pp. 400-401.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid; United States Census, 1870.

⁸ *Salt Lake Herald*, 13 April 1900, p. 6; 11 October 1899, p. 6.

⁹ *Salt Lake Tribune*, 28 June 1899, p. 6.

¹⁰ Portrait, Genealogical and Biographical Record of the State of Utah: Containing Biographies of Many Well-known Citizens of the Past and Present, pp. 400-401.

¹¹ Ore Deposits of Utah, 1920, Issues 111-112, p. 591.

¹² United States Census, 1880.

¹³ *Salt Lake Herald*, 22 April 1887, p. 8.

much as ordinary solutions and was much less expensive.¹⁴ He owned a leaching plant and patented an ore extractor with W B Kennedy in 1884. He was superintendent of the Barbee and Walker mines for two years. His wife died in 1887 in Silver Reef.¹⁵

He returned to Eureka in 1899, where he worked as the foreman and vice superintendent of the Mammoth mine in Juab County, Utah Territory. He accepted the position of superintendent in 1891; he served in this capacity multiple times over the next decade.¹⁶ In 1893, he went to Placerville, Idaho, and was placed in charge as superintendent of the mines operated by the Gold Hill Mining company (for five months¹⁷). His son Watson Jr soon arrived and worked for the same company, which owned a Tilton & McFarland safe. A few weeks later, the safe was reportedly robbed of a gold bar worth \$500, watches, finger rings, and specimens of gold quartz.¹⁸

Two months later, Watson and his son were returning to Utah and were arrested and search by the Boise sheriff and deputy. They found a silver certificate on Sr and \$290 in US gold coins and an English gold sovereign on Jr. Jr had the items suspended by a string around his neck. Both father and son were indicted and tried for larceny; Sr was acquitted and Jr was convicted and served two years in the state penitentiary. The case went to the supreme court, who found that the witness was previously employed by the company and had left five days before Jr arrived. The case was overturned and Jr was discharged in time to spend the holidays with his family.¹⁹

Watson married Ida Apolonia Meyers in 1896 in Mammoth, Juab, Utah.²⁰ They had three children and a home on Church Street in Eureka.²¹ Watson was appointed as a delegate from Juab County for the state mining congress and as a jury commissioner.²² In 1898, he was called to fill the unexpired term of Mayor Buckbee as superintendent of the Centennial-Eureka mill. "Watson is one of our most enterprising merchants and a leader in mining matters and will do credit to the office and protect the interests of our citizens without favor or partiality." He was chair of the committee to celebrate Independence Day in 1899, with at least \$100,000 budget and liberal prize purses for the sports. There was also a horse race with a side bet of \$1000 between the owners.²³

He then went to Mercur, Tooele, Utah, where he put in the first cyanide mill in the state.²⁴ Watson was managing director of the Bullion-Beck Tunnel and known as a mining expert. He lived with his wife and daughter in Eureka on the 1900 census.²⁵ He was the president of the North Gemini Gold Mining company in Eureka until 1902, when they moved to Cripple Creek and Ohio City in Colorado,

¹⁴ The Russell Process in its Practical Application and Economic Results, by Ellsworth Daggett, 1888, p. 133.

¹⁵ Portrait, Genealogical and Biographical Record of the State of Utah: Containing Biographies of Many Well-known Citizens of the Past and Present, pp. 400-401; [google.ch/patents/US300479](https://www.google.com/patents/US300479).

¹⁶ *Salt Lake Herald*, 1 October 1891, p. 5; 29 December 1894, p. 3; 14 January 1901, p. 6; *Salt Lake Tribune*, 31 October 1891, p. 5; 10 October 1899, p. 6; Portrait, Genealogical and Biographical Record of the State of Utah: Containing Biographies of Many Well-known Citizens of the Past and Present, pp. 400-401.

¹⁷ Portrait, Genealogical and Biographical Record of the State of Utah: Containing Biographies of Many Well-known Citizens of the Past and Present, pp. 400-401.

¹⁸ Reports of Cases Argued and Determined in the Supreme Court of the State of Idaho, Vol 4, 1903, pp. 550-557.

¹⁹ *Ibid*; *Salt Lake Tribune*, 20 December 1895, p. 8.

²⁰ Utah County Marriages, 1887-1940; Utah Marriages, 1887-1935; *Salt Lake Tribune*, 3 January 1897, p. 10.

²¹ *Salt Lake Herald*, 10 September 1899, p. 14.

²² *Salt Lake Herald*, 4 May 1898, p. 6; 23 November 1898, p. 6; *Idaho Statesman*, 9 July 1901, p. 8.

²³ *Salt Lake Tribune*, 25 June 1899, pp. 3, 7.

²⁴ Portrait, Genealogical and Biographical Record of the State of Utah: Containing Biographies of Many Well-known Citizens of the Past and Present, pp. 400-401.

²⁵ United States Census, 1900; *Salt Lake Tribune*, 24 January 1899, p. 6; 6 February 1899, p. 6; 22 July 1899, p. 6.

then on to Pocatello, Idaho, where he was employed to run reports on the Monte Christo mines.²⁶ They returned to Eureka in 1907; he was listed as a mining expert, living with his wife and three children in Eureka, in 1910.²⁷ He and Edward Pike patented a smelter furnace in 1911.²⁸

Watson died of bronchopneumonia on 13 March 1913 in Eureka, Juab, Utah, and was buried in the Eureka Cemetery. ²⁹ He was “one of the most careful and conscientious men in this State, being very-particular to protect the men under him from any possible accident or injury, and while he always exacted a full day's work, never believed in asking a man to work over-time without pay, and is today one of the most popular men to be found among all classes in the mining camps”. He enjoyed the confidence and esteem of his fellowmen and made an enviable reputation for honesty and integrity. ³⁰

Ida homesteaded near American Falls, Idaho, in 1915, and was living in Pocatello, Bannock, Idaho, in 1930 and 1940. She died in 1961 in Pocatello and was buried in the Mountain View Cemetery.³¹



(Image from *BillionGraves.com*)

²⁶ *Salt Lake Herald*, 16 March 1902, p. 7; 8 February 1903, p 10; *Idaho State Journal*, 26 April 1961, p. 2; *Intermountain Catholic*, 6 December 1902, p. 8.

²⁷ *Idaho State Journal*, 26 April 1961, p. 2; United States Census, 1910.

²⁸ Official gazette of the United States Patent Office, 1912, Volume 178, pp. 1056-7.

²⁹ Utah Death Certificates, 1904-1964; Utah Death Registers, 1847-1966; Utah Death and Military Death Certificates, 1904-1961.

³⁰ Portrait, Genealogical and Biographical Record of the State of Utah: Containing Biographies of Many Well-known Citizens of the Past and Present, pp. 400-401.

³¹ *Idaho State Journal*, 26 April 1961, p. 2; United States Census, 1930, 1940.

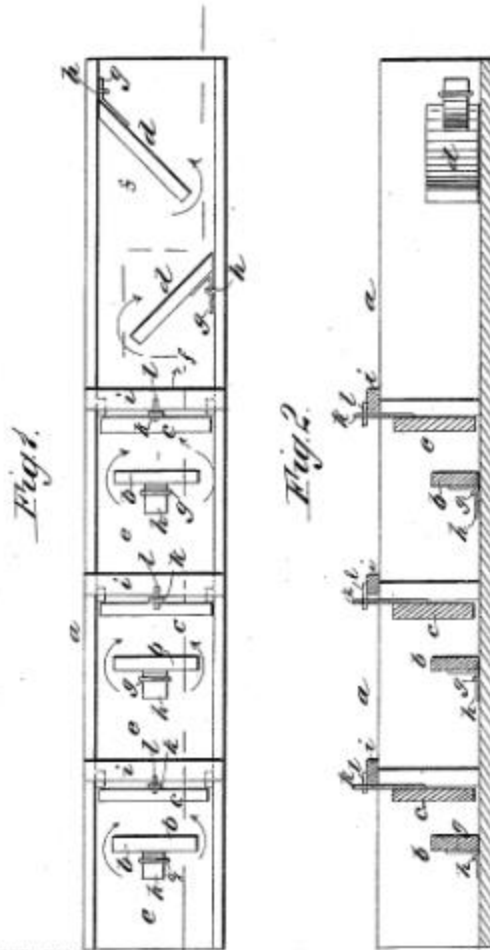
(No Model.)

W. B. KENNEDY & W. M. NESBIT.

ORE CONCENTRATOR.

No. 300,479.

Patented June 17, 1884.



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Ore concentrator patent (image from google.ch/patents/US300479)