



William Andrews Clark (1839-1925)

1991 Inductee from Mining's Past

William A. Clark, born in Pennsylvania to farming parents, began his adult career as a teacher before taking up the study of law. In 1863, the lure of mining took him to Montana, and before he was 30, he was a successful businessman in diverse areas. His interest in mining led him to return east to study mining and assaying, after which he returned to Montana to apply his knowledge.

Clark recognized the long-term potential of Butte district, and as the gold placers played out he bought up much of the ground that became "the richest hill on earth." His acumen in this field made him a millionaire. He built Butte's first smelter and electric light system and expanded his holdings in publishing, banking, and other enterprises. Clark was similarly interested in properties in Arizona and, beginning in 1888, he developed the United Verde Mine in Jerome.

Clark was one of America's "Copper Kings" and, although characterized as a man "not of tender conscience," he was a true visionary. He built a closely held financial empire based on mining that not only rivaled any of his contemporaries, but withstood the financial panics of the day. Clark's influence in Arizona continues to be felt through his namesake, the Town of Clarkdale.