

# Wm. Mulholland, Aqueduct Builder, Dies After Long Illness

## Spent 50 Years in City Water Service Rose from Ditch Tender to Highest Post

One of the most dynamic and forceful figures in the development of the city of Los Angeles, and indirectly of Southern California, passed with the death of William Mulholland at his home, 226 South St. Andrews Place, July 22. He had been critically ill since last December, when he suffered a stroke, his vitality which prolonged life amazing even his physicians. He would have celebrated his 80th birthday had he lived to next September 11.

William Mulholland's life story was not less romantic than that of the city of Los Angeles, in the destiny of which he played so important a part in his long and active public career. Born in Belfast, Ireland, he was educated in the public schools and later attended Christian Brothers' College in Dublin. While in his teens he shipped before he mast out of Liverpool, England, and after visiting many of the world's ports, landed in America in 1872.

After six years on the docks and steamers of the Great Lakes, and the sidewheelers that plied the Colorado, and prospecting for gold in Arizona, he came to California. In 1877 he decided to cast his lot in Los Angeles, then a town of 10,000 population. He obtained employment as zanjero, or ditch tender, with the City Water Company, which served Los Angeles with water. Having ambition to become an engineer, he spent his spare time studying mathematics, civil engineering and hydraulics.

Promoted from one position to another, Mulholland became superintendent of the City Water Company in 1888. When the city took over the water works in 1902 he became the chief engineer. He understood perhaps better than anyone else the value of water to this semi-arid region and the necessity of providing an adequate supply to assure the continued growth and development of the city. Realizing that the Los Angeles River, then the only immediate source of supply, could not meet the city's future needs, he began a persistent search for new sources of supply. As the builder of the Owens River Aqueduct, for which project the city voted a total of \$24,500,000 bonds, he won world renown. This work, started in 1908 and finished in 1913, brought a supply of water, then estimated to be sufficient to meet the city's needs for 50 years, from the High Sierra mountains, a record achievement in those days.

Assured of adequate water supply, the city grew by leaps and bounds. In 1923 he again took up the search for more water and a new dream, the bringing of 1500 second feet from the Colorado River, more than 250 miles distant, was resolved in the Colorado River Aqueduct, now being constructed by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, organized for the purpose by Los Angeles jointly with 12 other Southern California cities. The preliminary surveys and plans for this project were made under Mul-

holland's direction and were handed over to the District when its organization was effected and money was provided to continue the work.

In December, 1928, after 50 years' continuous service, Mulholland tendered his resignation as chief engineer and general manager of the Los Angeles Water Bureau, which was accepted with the proviso that he continue to serve the city in an advisory capacity.

He was a member of the American Society

of Civil Engineers, the Pacific Association of Consulting Engineers, American Water Works Association and other organizations. He received an honorary degree, Doctor of Law, from University of California in 1914.

Two sons and three daughters survive, Perry and Thomas Mulholland of Los Angeles; Miss Rose Mulholland of Los Angeles, with whom he made his home; Mrs. Ronald Mack of San Francisco, and Mrs. Ruth Wood of New York.

Preceding the funeral services held at the Little Church of the Flowers, Forest Lawn Memorial Park, Wednesday at 2:30 p.m. the body lay in state in the rotunda of the city hall. The Rev. Franklin Gibson officiated at the services. The active pallbearers were all men who had been closely associated with Mr. Mulholland: Fred J. Fischer, L. M. Anderson, Thomas Brooks, George D. Pessell, E. F. Scattergood, H. A. Van Norman, W. W. Hurlbut, George Read, J. E. Phillips, T. M. Erwin and D. A. Lane.