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300 CITY HALL

CITY OFFICIALS

Spence, Edward Falles

NAME Spence, Edward Falles (deceased Sept. 19, 1892)

PUBLIC OFFICES HELD (DATE)

CITY:

City Council Dec. 11, 1880 - Dec. 10, 1881
Mayor Dec. 9, 1884 - Dec. 14, 1886

COUNTY:

STATE

California Legislature 1860

FEDERAL:

CIVIC ACTIVITIES:

Pioneer civic builder and developer

BUSINESS OR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Farm hand
Mining
Bank organizer and president
Realtor
State legislator
City and state official
Philanthropist
Drug business

PORTRAIT:

ATTACHED OR ENCLOSED IN ENVELOPE: none

PORTRAITS APPEARING ELSEWHERE (DATES)

Portrait Index

ANECDOTES AND PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS:

1

2

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

1917

SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

BOOKS:

See other page

NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS:

PERSONAL INTERVIEW: none

INTERVIEWED BY:

DATE OF INTERVIEW

Written by: Clare Wallace
July 20, 1938

The Los Angeles Public Library
Local History Collection
Biography

NAME Spence, Edward Talles (deceased Sept. 19,
1892)

Occupation Banker

Address

Birth (Date and Place) December 22, 1832, Enniskillen,
Ireland

FATHER Gabriel Spence

Birth (Date and Place)

If Deceased, When

MOTHER

Birth (Date and Place)

If Deceased, When

IF MARRIED, TO WHOM Anna Maria Spence (maiden
surname)

Birth of Same (Date and Place) February 27, 1850, Five Mile
Town, County Tyrone, Ireland

If Deceased, When January 24, 1937, Monrovia, Cal.

When Married About 1869, California

CHILDREN (Married Names of Daughters)

William Glenn

George Edward

Albert Harry (deceased)

Kathleen (deceased)

TITLES OF BOOKS, ARTICLES, MUSIC, OR OTHER CREATIVE WORK

(In the case of printed matter, please give date and publisher; of periodical publications also name of magazine and date.)

REVIEWS, CRITICISMS, AND OTHER BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES

(Please note printed matter concerning yourself or your work. We would appreciate any such material you may send, clippings, reviews, portrait.)

Spalding, History and Reminiscences of Los Angeles City and County, vol 1

Wilson, History of Los Angeles County

Hewmark, Sixty Years in Southern California

Illustrated History of Los Angeles County, p 628

Bell, On the Old West Coast

Graves, My Seventy Years in California

Workman, City That Grew

McGroarty, Los Angeles From the Mountains to the Sea, vol 1

Los Angeles Probate and Vital Statistics Records

SKETCH

(Please make this as full as possible, giving business affiliations, positions of honor or trust with dates if possible.)

Edward Falles Spence was born December 22, 1832 in the North of Ireland. He was educated by private tutors. His practical knowledge of business affairs was gained by assisting his father who had large farming tracts and herds of cattle, and in addition, was a local official in that part of Ireland,

At twenty years of age Mr. Spence emigrated to America. After working on a farm near Philadelphia for a few months he shipped for California via the Nicaragua route, and arrived in San Francisco in December of 1852.

He did not come to Los Angeles or Southern California for about twenty years. The intervening time he passed in Northern California and Nevada. In the latter place he engaged in mining and wherever he lived he participated in public affairs.

In San Jose, California, where Mr. Spence controlled an extensive drug business he became largely interested in the San Jose Savings Bank. Upon going to San Diego in 1872 he continued in banking to the exclusion of other businesses, and became one of the organizers of the Commercial Bank of San Diego.

When J. E. Hollenbeck and associates organized the Commercial Bank of Los Angeles in 1875 Mr. Spence was chosen its cashier. This bank was reorganized in 1880 as the Commercial State Bank, the forerunner of the First National Bank of Los Angeles, of which Mr. Spence became president in 1881.

During these active years of Mr. Spence's life he served concurrently as president of three banks, vice-president and stockholder, and director of many others. He also engaged in other financial and real estate enterprises. He was a heavy holder of realty in the Whittier and Monrovia districts, though he remained preeminently a banker.

A public spirited man he was prominent in current public life. He was Republican and liberal, and contributed generous sums of cash and real property toward public beneficence.

continued

**Final Rites Held
For Anna M. Spence,
Ex-Mayor's Widow**

W. F. Spence June 26/37
Funeral services for Mrs. Anna M. Spence, 86, widow of E. F. Spence, former mayor of Los Angeles, were conducted today at her home, 118 South Primrose avenue. Services were to be performed by Canon E. B. Smith.

Her husband was mayor of Los Angeles in 1885-86, as well as one of the founders of Monrovia and of the University of Southern California.

She is survived by two sons, W. Glenn Spence and George E. Spence, both of Monrovia.

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LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

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With Mrs. Spence he was a leader in society at that time. He was one of the projectors of the first Protestant institution of higher learning in Southern California, then called Methodist College. Mr. Spence remained a director on its board for a number of years. His vision and money went into other public improvements, such as building the first horse car across the river, and, in 1886, promoting and financing the first electric line in Los Angeles.

As a city official Mr. Spence was said to be both efficient and popular. While on the City Council he served as its president, and as mayor (1884-1886) he inaugurated a number of financial systems still in use. It was he who organized the fire and police departments, putting all employees under salary.

In his last year as mayor the last zanja or open water ditch was abolished. This was the year in which the Santa Fe and Southern Pacific Railroads climaxed their long contest for supremacy by opening a rate war. Round trips from points west of Missouri to Southern California could be made by rail for as low as fifteen dollars. The result of this private railroad war was the great boom of 1887-88, during which thousands of permanent settlers arrived daily in the city.

In the last years of his life Mr. Spence's activities were curtailed due to ill health. He died September 19, 1892, in Monrovia.