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CITY OFFICIALS

NAME Conwell, James Simpson

PUBLIC OFFICES HELD

(DATE)

CITY:

Member City Council...1913-1917

COUNTY:

STATE:

FEDERAL:

CIVIC ACTIVITIES:

Opposed billboards for public highways
Interested in efficiency movements
Manager Annual Automobile Show

BUSINESS OR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Town clerk
Life saving crew work
Public service
Merchandising
Manufacturing
All phases of automotive industry

PORTRAIT:

ATTACHED OR ENCLOSED IN ENVELOPE: none

PORTRAITS APPEARING ELSEWHERE (DATES)

L. A. Times, Part 1, page 11, December 16, 1917

ANECDOTES AND PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS:

An automobile pioneer, James Simpson Conwell built the first Waverly Electric car back in 1899.

Mr. Conwell early in life believed the automobile to be the transportation of the future. He was actively connected with all phases of the automotive industry, through manufacture, display, sale, and financing.

A man of distinguished appearance and gracious manners, and possessing a reputation for sane actions on all questions, he was the sole member of the 1915 Council to be reelected. As manager of the Automobile Show he was instrumental in making it a great annual success.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

BOOKS:

NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS:

Obituaries local papers, December 15, 1917

PERSONAL INTERVIEW: none

INTERVIEWED BY:

DATE OF INTERVIEW:

Luella Sawyer, Dec.5, 1934/Wallace

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The Los Angeles Public Library Local History Collection

Biography

NAME Conwell, James Simpson

Occupation Business man. (deceased Dec. 15, 1917
Blythe, California)

Address

Birth (Date and Place) July 4, 1859, Winona, Minnesota

FATHER Reverend F. A. Conwell

Birth (Date and Place)

If Deceased, When

MOTHER

Birth (Date and Place)

If Deceased, When

IF MARRIED, TO WHOM Mae Hopkinson

Birth of Same (Date and Place)

If Deceased, When

When Married 1891

CHILDREN (Married Names of Daughters)

Larooka Conwell

Delsey Conwell

ANCESTORS OF DISTINCTION OR LOCAL INTEREST

(Please include names of local interest as "forty-niners," or any one connected with the affairs or development of the state or city, as officials, professional men, merchants, etc.)

Father, Rev. F. A. Conwell, was Chaplain of
the First Volunteer Infantry Regiment in the
Civil War.

EDUCATION (Schools, Colleges, Degrees, Etc.)

Public schools of Evanston and Lakeview, Ill.

B. S. from Northwestern University, 1882

CLUBS, LEARNED SOCIETIES, ETC. Phi Kappa Sigma;
Society of Automobile
Engineers of America; Automobile Club; Gamut Club;
Annandale Country Club of Los Angeles.

RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION

Methodist

POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS

RESIDENCE IN CALIFORNIA SINCE

1882

SKETCH

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

Born July 4, 1859, in Winona, Minnesota, James Simpson Conwell received his early education in Lakeview and Evanston, Ill., where he served as town clerk and member of the Life Saving Crew, a noted organization of that time. In 1882 he was graduated with his B. S. from Northwestern University.

Coming to Los Angeles that same year, he became a partner in Evans & Conwell, men's furnishings. From 1889-1894 he was in San Francisco, with Folmer, Clogg, & Company, umbrella makers, where early in 1900 Mayor Phelan of San Francisco, made him a member of the Charter Committee of One Hundred.

In Indiana, Mr. Conwell manufactured bicycles from 1897-1900. Returning to California he acted as secretary, 1907-1913, to United Motors Company, and the Automobile Funding Company of America. During this same time he was head of the Motor Dealers Association, 1911-1912.

He became a member of the Los Angeles City Council in 1913, in which he served on the Efficiency and Supply committees. During the third term, while serving as president of the Council, he died in office Dec. 15, 1917.