

MUNICIPAL REFERENCE LIBRARY

300 CITY HALL

CITY OFFICIALS

Pierce, William Henry

NAME Pierce, William Henry

PUBLIC OFFICES HELD

(DATE)

CITY:

City Council	1898-1903
City Planning Commission	1920-1925
President	1920-1922

COUNTY:

STATE

FEDERAL:

CIVIC ACTIVITIES:

Chamber of Commerce
One of the organizers and president of the Traffic Association
Member and trustee of First Unitarian Church.
Active in civic betterment groups

BUSINESS OR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Schoolteacher
Livery stable business
General merchandise business
Mortician
Agriculturalist
City official

PORTRAIT:

ATTACHED OR ENCLOSED IN ENVELOPE: none

PORTRAITS APPEARING ELSEWHERE (DATES)

Spalding's History of Los Angeles City & County,
vol 1, p 412

Who's Who in Los Angeles County, 1932-33 p 60
1928-29 p 90

ANECDOTES AND PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS:

Since the establishment of Pierce Brothers Mortuary they have served more than 18,000 families, which is considerably more than the total population of Los Angeles at the time William Henry Pierce arrived here in 1885.

Mr. Pierce has three farms of two hundred acres in the San Joaquin valley and Riverside county. His hobby is raising grain and cotton, and cultivating vineyards.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

BOOKS:

Who's Who in Los Angeles County, 1928-29, p 90
1932-33, p 60

Spalding's History of Los Angeles City & County,
vol 111, p 412

NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS:

Los Angeles Times

PERSONAL INTERVIEW:

INTERVIEWED BY: Luella Sawyer

DATE OF INTERVIEW November 14, 1934

Rewritten by: Clare Wallace

August 16, 1934

The Los Angeles Public Library
Local History Collection
Biography

NAME Pierce, William Henry

Occupation Mortician

Address 720 West Washington Street

Birth (Date and Place) December 28, 1859, Delaware County
New York

FATHER James Washington Pierce

Birth (Date and Place) 1822, Dutchess County, N.Y.

If Deceased, When December 30, 1904

MOTHER Francis C. Clark

Birth (Date and Place) 1832, Delaware County, N.Y.

If Deceased, When _____

IF MARRIED, TO WHOM Mary Jane Newton

Birth of Same (Date and Place) August, 1867, Saybrook, Conn.

If Deceased, When _____

When Married April 15, 1886

CHILDREN (Married Names of Daughters)

Dr. Sterling N.

Gertrude, Mrs. Hyalmar Johnson

Helen Mary, Mrs. Harry Hum

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.)

Mr. Pierce's parents were pioneer farmers
in Delaware County, New York.

EDUCATION (Schools, Colleges, Degrees, Etc.)

Public schools of Delaware County, N.Y.; graduated
from Walton Academy, Walton, N.Y.

CLUBS, LEARNED SOCIETIES, ETC.

Masons; Oddfellow; Woodmen of the World; Elk;
California Country Club; City Club; Commercial
Club

RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION Protestant

POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS Republican

RESIDENCE IN CALIFORNIA SINCE 1880

SKETCH

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

~~Born December 28, 1859, in Delaware County, New York, William Henry Pierce received his early education in the public schools of the county, later graduating from Walton Academy, Walton, New York.~~

~~At nineteen years of age he taught district school for one year before coming to Sacramento, California, in 1880, where he joined his brother in the grocery business. The following year he spent with another brother in Sierra Madre and then moved to the Mother Lode gold country and operated a general store for a year at Mokolume Hill, Calaveras county.~~

~~Removing to Los Angeles in 1885 Mr. Pierce engaged in the livery stable business with his two brothers, and later engaged in raising grain and hay out on the Mission Road near the city limits.~~

~~In 1898 Mr. Pierce was elected to the City Council from the 1st ward, which is now the Lincoln Heights district. Reelected to a second term he served until 1903. During his two terms the Council, while working on problems of the city's water supply, took over the water rights from private control and interests.~~

~~In 1902 Mr. Pierce and his brothers entered the mortuary business under the corporate firm name of Pierce Brothers & Company.~~

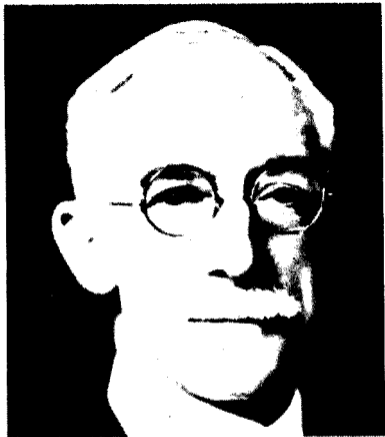
~~Mr. Pierce served as president of the City Planning Commission from 1920-1922. This Commission was composed of fifty-one members and was an out-growth of the City Planning Association formed primarily to prepare a program of civic improvements to create employment for returned soldiers of the World War. Mr. Pierce continued to serve on the regular City Planning Commission, as a Commissioner, until 1925.~~

~~continued~~

After resigning from public office he retired, also from political life to devote his energies to his undertaking establishments.

At present Mr. Pierce is president of Pierce Brothers Mortuary, and makes his home in Los Angeles.

HOBBIES: Golf
Farming and viticulture



W. H. PIERCE

Pioneer civic leader. Member City Council 1899-1902. Organized first planning commission. A founder of Pierce Bros. Funeral Directors.

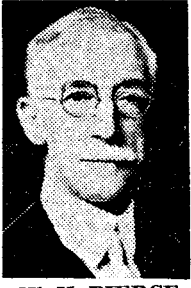
2/24/37

W. H. Pierce, Mortuary Founder, Dies

Short Illness, Grief Over Son's Death, Contribute in Demise

W. H. Pierce, 80, president of Pierce Bros. Mortuary and prominent leader in early Los Angeles political circles, died today at Chase Sanitarium.

Ill for little more than a week, Mr. Pierce's death was believed hastened by grief over the loss of his son, Dr. Sterling Pierce, former chief of staff of the California Lutheran Hospital, who was



W. H. PIERCE

killed three months ago in a traffic accident in San Diego.

A native of New York, Mr. Pierce came to California in 1880 and settled in Sacramento. In 1884 he came to Los Angeles and operated a furniture store and livery stable on the Old Plaza.

Active politically, Mr. Pierce was an organizer of the City Planning Commission and served as its president for two terms, an organizer and president for one term of the City Traffic Commission and founder of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce. He served on the City Council from 1898 to 1902.

The mortuary was founded in 1902 by Mr. Pierce and his brother, the late Fred Pierce, and is now the second largest mortuary in the United States.

A director of the old Commercial and Union League Clubs, Mr. Pierce was a Mason, Oddfellow, Elk and an official of the First Unitarian Church.

Surviving are his widow, Mrs. Mary Newton Pierce, 2118 S. Hobart Blvd.; two daughters, Mrs. Helen Hum and Mrs. Gertrude Johnson; two brothers, Dr. C. W. and Herbert Pierce; a sister, Mrs. Catherine Wheat.

Funeral rites for Mr. Pierce will be conducted Monday at 10 a.m. in the First Unitarian Church. The body will be taken to Hemet for burial in a grave beside that of his son.

DEATH TAKES W. H. PIERCE, CIVIC LEADER

LA Examiner
4/25/39

President of Nation's Second
Largest Funeral Firm Dies
Unexpectedly at Sanitarium

Death yesterday summoned William H. Pierce, 79, Los Angeles pioneer, civic leader and president of Pierce Brothers, the nation's second largest funeral direction firm.

Mr. Pierce died unexpectedly at the Chase Sanitarium of a heart ailment. Close friends attributed his ailment to grief over the death of his son, Dr. Sterling Pierce, noted obstetri-



WILLIAM H. PIERCE
Grief Over Son's Death May
Have Hastened End

FUNERAL MONDAY

Funeral services will be held Monday at 10 a. m. at the First Unitarian Church, and interment will be made on Mr. Pierce's Hemet ranch.

Born in Delaware County, New York, Mr. Pierce came to Los Angeles in 1880. In 1884 he opened a furniture store on the Plaza, and later conducted a livery business.

In 1902, with his brother, Fred E. Pierce, he established the firm of Pierce Brothers.

He was a member of the City Council from 1898 to 1902. He was an organizer and served a term as president of the City Planning Commission. He also helped to organize the City Traffic Commission, of which he was once president, and he was a charter member of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce.

WIDOW SURVIVES

Mr. Pierce is survived by his widow, Mrs. Mary Pierce of 2118 South Hobart boulevard; two daughters, Mrs. Helen Hum and Mrs. Gertrude Johnson; two brothers, Dr. C. W. Pierce and Herbert Pierce, and a sister, Mrs. Catherine Wheat.

He was a Mason, an Odd Fellow, an Elk and had been a director of the old Commercial and Union League Clubs.

cian, who was killed in an automobile accident three months ago.

Lynn
W. H. Pierce
FEB 25 1939
Taken by Death

**Mortuary President
Will Be Buried
at Hemet Monday**

Relatives and friends of William H. Pierce, 79, pioneer resident of Los Angeles, will pay their last respects to him at 10 o'clock Monday morning at funeral services in the First Unitarian Church, 2936 W. Eighth St.

Interment will be in Hemet, his body to be placed beside that of his son, the late Dr. Sterling



William H. Pierce

Pierce, nationally known obstetrician who was killed in an automobile accident near San Diego recently.

Mr. Pierce died in a Los Angeles sanitarium yesterday. Physicians said that his death was

hastened by the death of his son.

Mr. Pierce was president of Pierce Brothers Mortuary, and for many years was a civic leader in Los Angeles. He was born in Delaware County, New York, Dec. 28, 1859. He was graduated from Walton Academy of Walton, N.Y., and came to California in 1880.

In 1884 he organized a furniture company operating in the old Plaza district. In 1902 he formed the Pierce Brothers Mortuary Co.

SERVED IN COUNCIL

From 1898 until 1902 Mr. Pierce served two terms on the Los Angeles City Council.

During his 55 years of civic service in Los Angeles, Mr. Pierce played a leading part in the reform of city, county and State government. He helped to organize the first City Planning Commission and served two terms as its president.

Mr. Pierce also organized the first City Traffic Commission and served one term as its president. Before the Chamber of Commerce was ever known he organized the Business Men's Association, which later became the Chamber of Commerce.

BELONGED TO LODGES

Mr. Pierce was a member of the Masonic, Elks, Odd Fellows and Woodmen of the World lodges. For many years he was a director of the old Commercial and Union League clubs.

Up until the time of his death Mr. Pierce made his home at 2118 S. Hobart Blvd. He leaves his widow, Mrs. Mary Newton Pierce; two daughters, Mrs. Helen Hum and Mrs. Gertrude Johnson; two brothers, Dr. C. W. Pierce, member of the Board of Education, and Herbert Pierce, and a sister, Mrs. Catherine Wheat, all of Los Angeles.

ENCE LIBRARY

HALL

CALIFORNIA

GELES PUBLIC LIBRARY