

W. A. ROBERTS

W. A. Roberts was born and reared in northern Indiana, coming from an early pioneer family who settled there in 1842. His family was one of the best known, his father being an extensive farmer and stock raiser.

Here the subject of this article was given a common school education, afterward entering the State Normal school at Terre Haute. His early training was in farming and stock raising, engaging in buying and shipping stock to the Chicago market on his own account at the early age of 23.

In those early days there was corruption in politics as now and Mr. Roberts entered the political arena as a candidate for county clerk at the age of 25 in an attempt to break up the court house ring, thus early enter-



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ing the fight for clean government. This fight he is still waging.

Mr. Roberts about this time married Hattie May Beckner, a leading Methodist clergyman's daughter. They moved to Chicago, and in 1904 came west to California where Mr. Roberts immediately engaged in the real estate business and was one of Los Angeles' strongest boosters, handling a number of large subdivisions.

Mr. Roberts turned his attention to politics when the Harper administration disgraced the fair name of the city, engaging in the fight to recall him, which was successful.

Then a fight was started to kick the Southern Pacific machine out of politics in this county and state by a group of a dozen well-known men and Mr. Roberts was one of those which restored to the people this state representative government. In 1913 this district honored him by a seat in the legislature which he filled with great credit to himself and his constituency. His name has been linked with every forward movement for the betterment of Los Angeles. His name was on the campaign committee for California dry in 1914. As a member of the legislature he helped to defeat a movement to place saloons close to universities and colleges.

He was the prime mover in forcing a redraft of the state automobile tax law, giving to the county half of the tax on her automobiles which turned into the county treasury in three years over \$800,000 to keep up the county boulevards.

He was author of the minimum wage bill for the working girl which has guaranteed them a living wage.

He was the author of a bill which prevents the destruction of food products and food articles which are fit for human consumption. Before this became a law carloads of fish and vegetables such as potatoes and onions were dumped in the bay at San Francisco and other points in order to control the market. By a careful study of Mr. Robert's record you will see in his legislative acts a desire to correct things which were evil and harmful to the people.

When Mr. Roberts returned home from the legislature in 1913, or soon thereafter, there had occurred a vacancy in the council of this city by the death of the late Charles McKenzie. There were fifteen prominent men who applied for the appointment at the hands of the remaining eight councilmen and Mr. Roberts was the choice of that body for this honored position. How well he has filled this position is evidenced by his re-election last June.

Let us see what he has done for his district in the council. First of all this district will receive the first municipal lights; second, it has just opened one of the finest playgrounds in the city; third, he has caused to be constructed in the Arroyo Seco \$60,000 worth of retaining walls for the protection of the homes of the people in this district; fourth, he has caused ornamental light posts to be placed in Sycamore grove and we will soon have a splendidly lit park, and has fought for a concrete runway to be constructed under the Santa Fe tracks at Sycamore grove connecting it with the Southwest museum.

He is caring for our unpaved streets in a way they were never cared for before. He has carefully gone over the districts and placed proper lights in them. Hermon was almost in total darkness, as well as portions of York valley, when Mr. Roberts became a member of the City Council.

Mr. Roberts, being a humanitarian in principle saw a wrong being practiced in arresting poor men out of employment and throwing them into jail on a vagrancy charge, which charge covers a multitude of sins, there to remain until let out. Hundreds of them were innocent of any wrong doing. He had created the office of City Public Defender to protect these innocent men.

Being convinced, that our street work costs too much he had a municipal asphalt plant purchased, costing the city \$8,000, which was checked up by the city engineer's office at the end of the first year and it had saved the tax payers \$29,242.

There is great need of a permanent bridge over the Arroyo Seco at the Ostrich farm where our citizens have in wet winter months been compelled to walk across the wagon bridge and pay the same usual fare to the city for their trouble. Mr. Roberts has had a complaint filed with the State Railroad Commission, requesting a new bridge in the place of the dangerous structure which stands there now.

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