

Biography of JOHN LOGAN

Campbell

(1940)

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Autobiography

of

John Logan Campbell

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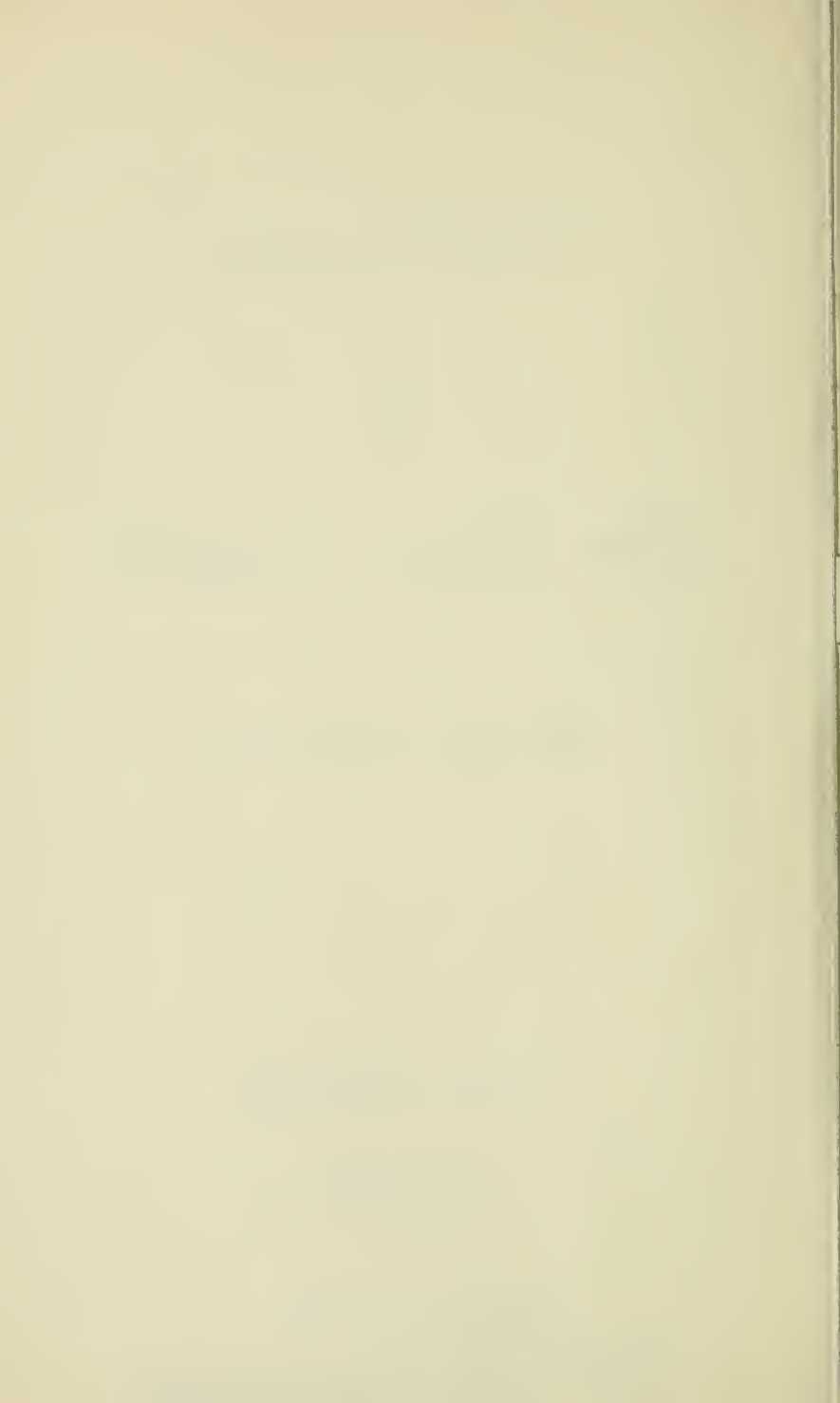
Autobiography
of
John Logan Campbell.

With his compliments.

Oakland, California.

1940.

JL Campbell
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This autobiography begins today, November 30, 1940. I was born November 30, 1863. About 105 years ago, my paternal and maternal grandparents emigrated with their families in covered wagons from the Chester District of South Carolina to Perry County, Illinois. About 95 years ago, my parents, Hugh and Jane Campbell, pre-empted 280 acres of virgin timber land three miles west of Pinckneyville in said county and made them into a typical American farm while they were rearing their children. When I think of my parents and all they accomplished by self-reliant work, my hat, in reverence and humility, is off to the pioneer parents of America. My twin brother, Grant, and I were the youngest of nine children. After I was sixteen, I was much away from home at school or teaching school until, in 1888, I went to the frontier of the United States on the Rio Grande, beyond which lies Mexico. And thereon hangs a tale. Now Mrs. Campbell and I, retired, have our home in the Golden West near the Golden Gate. The following recital is little more than an outline limited to not more than can be read in 30 minutes, necessarily excluding much of detail and incident in a life approaching four score years.

Our father died when Grant and I were nearly eight years old, leaving mother to carry on with the help of the children. When we were 10, we began helping with the plowing, the sowing and the reaping. One of us would hold the plow and the other would drive the plow horses, each of us taking turns

10553 J. Rufus Newcomb

with the plow and the driving. When we were 14, we felt quite grown up, and each began to do the work of a farm hand. In those days, there would have been insurrection on the farm had work thereon been prohibited before the age of 18. The work of children should be wisely tempered to age and capacity. The work we did gave us strength and self-reliance. In 1871, when eight years old, I earned my first money on the railroad as water boy for a contractor who was grading the roadbed of a railroad across my father's farm. In 1931, 60 years later, I received my last wage for active service when I retired as Chief Engineer of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad. Thus, I began and ended, "Working on the Railroad."

About 110 years ago on an oak-crowned hill subsequently marking the northwestern limit of our farm, a Presbyterian church building was erected and called Hopewell. That House of God still stands and the Word is still proclaimed there. There, the children are consecrated in the rite of infant baptism. It seems that the record of the christenings during the first three decades was lost. Grant and I were the infants whose names now occupy the first two places on the existing baptismal roll. Nevertheless, I fear that he and I may have exhibited at sundry times some of the original sin which Calvinistic dogma avers to be inherent even in infants because of the apple incident in the Garden of Eden. When our daughter, Marian, was a little girl, she detected evi-

dence of the soundness of the dogma by observation of her two, and younger, brothers. She reproved them, averring that her daddy had been a good little boy. Later, one of her aunts recited some stories of the near-infancy of daddy which shocked her greatly. After mature deliberation, she confided in her mother, saying, "Well, mamma, I guess there never are any good little boys." But I cherish a hope that, in maturity, my brothers and I gave countenance to the proverb which says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." All of us became Ruling Elders of the Church. For more than 50 years, my oldest brother was Clerk of the Session at Hopewell.

At the age of 12, I had read all of the Bible once, and many of its stories many times. Then I found on an upper shelf of one of the closets of our house a number of leather bound volumes of lectures by one of the noted theologians of the Calvinistic interpretation of the Bible story of man's creation, his loss of immortality, and God's plan for his redemption. The clarity and force of premise and reasoning in those lectures held my attention, and I followed the great theologian through the profundities of Foreordination, Predestination, Calling, and Election, or Damnation, to the heights of Heaven or the depths of Hell. In the lectures, the hinges of Hell are never cold; and there is never an effort to lower the temperature of the Abyss. Always there have been questions in my mind about statements of

the Scriptures and theological interpretations thereof. It seems to me that, in scriptural foundation, logic, candor and courage, the Calvinistic Confession of Faith is second to none. But it is no purpose or desire of mine to incite theological controversy. Job, the patient hero of the Old Testament, was confused and oppressed by many insoluble questions within his own mind or pressed upon him by his three critics and monitors. But he was able to rise above them and say, "For I know that my Redeemer liveth." I have cited my boyhood excursion into the mysteries of the relations between God and man to say that those lectures were literature of high order from which my youthful intellect and soul derived something of strength and courage.

My earliest recollection is of the time when I sat down into a small brass bucket, full of water, on the kitchen floor. I was still wearing dresses; and often through the years I have seen a wet dress drying before the fire. One morning when I had grown up to pants, I stepped off the front porch and found the depth of the snow which had fallen during the night equal to the length of my leg. One day Grant and I were out with our father. On the way back, there was a rail fence. Father lifted us over, and he climbed over carefully, explaining that he was no longer young and weighed 200 pounds. Back at the house, Grant's explanation to his mother was that father was careful about the fence because he was 200 years old. There are memories of many things

and incidents. The scenes of my childhood could have been the inspiration of the "Old Oaken Bucket." We had the well and, "The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket, the moss-covered bucket which hangs in the well." A memorable occasion was my first day at the school house standing one-quarter mile south of our house, where, in 1870, I began as pupil to learn the Three Rs and the American game of fair play; and where, in 1885, I ended as teacher. Half a century later, I returned and met again at an Home Coming on the old school ground, girls and boys whom I had not seen for 50 years. This Home Coming is now an annual event at Van Brunt School, the school of my childhood.

My pupil years at Van Brunt were followed by one year at Ewing College, Franklin County, Illinois, and one year at the National Normal University, Lebanon, Ohio. Then three years of teaching, first at Van Brunt, second in Central Illinois, and finally at the Baird School six miles southeast of Van Brunt. And the teaching engagement at Baird's is the beginning of the story of going to the Rio Grande mentioned in the opening paragraph hereof, wherein romance led to many things in new fields.

In July of 1887, being at home from my second year of teaching, I decided to return and teach again in Central Illinois. I rode into Pinckneyville to arrange accordingly. On the public square I met Mr.

Pringle Anderson, a fellow teacher, and told him of my decision. He informed me that the Baird School was open for a teacher and suggested that I see Mr. Matthew Rule of the school board about it. Mr. Rule had been a hero of my childhood because he was Marshal of the Perry County Fair, wore a big, red sash, rode a fine horse and told everybody how it was. Subsequently, he was President of the Fair many years. I also knew his wife, Mary Jane Rule, the most famous cook of the countryside. She cooked the wedding dinner of one of my brothers. But I had never met or knowingly seen the young lady whom I shall presently present. Being willing to help Mr. Rule find a good teacher, and acting on Anderson's suggestion, I instantly bestrode my horse ("In all the wide border, his steed was the best"), and rode, not like Lochinvar, "Out of the West," but out of the North into the Baird School District and up a long lane to a large farm house. Stopping at the gate and seeing no one, I yelled "hello." (There were no auto horns then.) Presently, while I remained in the saddle, a young lady with curly hair under a sunbonnet came out and down to the gate, neither she nor I, at the moment, being aware of the long trail of destiny into which she was walking. I have the honor to present Elizabeth Loretta Rule.

At the gate, I stated my mission. Elizabeth said her father was helping a neighbor with the wheat threshing and promised to present my application to him. Within the week, I had word that I could teach

at Bairds. I sent to Elizabeth's mother a message saying I was coming to board with her. And come I did. And what boarding it was! Food and cooking in quantity and quality second to none, laundry, feather bed, horses to ride, a buggy to drive in sunshine and a sleigh in snow. And before they got me off the place, Elizabeth, the jewel of the household, was mine. All that for ten dollars per month. Moreover, when I tendered the first ten dollars for the first month, Elizabeth's mother said, "Never mind, you can pay when the school year ends." At the end, she found that I owed her five dollars less than ten dollars per month. It seems that I had been away a number of times seeing my mother.

School opened in October. Until Christmas, Elizabeth was one of my pupils. On Christmas Eve, I had a momentous interview with her parents, explaining that Elizabeth had said yes on the preceding Thanksgiving Eve. (I was a fast worker.) They gave us their blessing, suggesting that it would be proper to consider Elizabeth's school days closed. Accordingly I gave honorable release from school to my most dutiful and best loved scholar. On the following May 10 (her birthday) of 1888, we were married in her home in traditional rural setting and ceremony, with the Infare at my mother's house the next day. From that day to this one, 52 years later, Elizabeth has been a good sport, maintaining that, had she forseen all that would happen, the road ahead would not have stopped her walk to the gate.

A year before we met, Elizabeth had spent a year with her cousin, Mrs. Emerson, a young matron living in El Paso, Texas, on the Rio Grande, the old Mexican city, Paso del Norte, Mexico (now Juarez), being across the river from El Paso. Until the coming of the railroad to it in 1880-1881, El Paso, youthful, compared to Paso del Norte, but founded in 1827, was a village more Mexican than American. El Paso means The Pass, the Spaniards from the South calling it Paso del Norte, or The Pass of the North; and the Rio Grande, The Grand River, they called Rio Bravo del Norte, The Brave River of the North. This pass at which El Paso is located and through which the river flows, was, in 1880, the focal point upon which the southern transcontinental railway routes converged. Under the impact of the railways, El Paso blew wide open as one of the last of the roaring frontier towns of the Wild West where not a few of the bad men of the West died with their boots on, as was right and proper for them, some of them after Elizabeth and I made El Paso our home. In the subsequent half-century, El Paso grew into law and order, every municipal convenience, and a population of more than 100,000.

During the year she was in El Paso, Elizabeth was captivated by the sunshine and the romance of the great Southwest. When, before our marriage, we were considering our future, she suggested that we go to El Paso and court or dare Dame Fortune there. I called her hand. At the time of our marriage, Mr.

Emerson was in St. Louis buying merchandise for his business in El Paso, Mrs. Emerson was visiting home folks at Pinckneyville, both were returning to El Paso, he in May, and she in October. Twelve days after the wedding, I left for El Paso with Emerson, Elizabeth coming in October with Mrs. Emerson.

After arrival in El Paso in a land where opportunity abounded, things began to happen. I found myself working with the County Surveyor. In due time I was appointed Deputy County Surveyor. A ten thousand dollar bond was required. Fortunately, I had acquired some substantial friends, and the matter was readily arranged. In due time and over my protest, I was elected County Surveyor, but declined the office because I had been appointed and then elected City Engineer of El Paso. I was re-elected; but before the end of my second term, the political boss of El Paso and I came to a parting of the way, resulting in my exit at the next election; an event over which Elizabeth cried a little. Eventually, we realized that we had been kicked upstairs, and that the loss of a political job may not be a bad thing. I became a director and Chief Engineer of the Rio Grande Dam and Irrigation Company, organized for development of irrigation of the Rio Grande Valley in El Paso territory. That is another story. Also, leaving the city service led me into railway engineering, construction and operation. That is an additional story.

Thus an accidental meeting with my friend Anderson, and his casual suggestion, led me to Elizabeth at the gate; and her story of the Southwest led us to El Paso. And El Paso led to many things. After the more than 50 years wherein Elizabeth and I have walked together, I can, in leisure and the light of retrospect, trace a chain wherein certain links, seemingly insignificant as they were forged, are now discernible as turning points or opening doors on the road of destiny. This reminds one of what Robert Burns said about well-laid plans of mice and men. Out of it all, it is not difficult to acquire humility.

El Paso was our home for 37 years, 1888-1925, except four years, 1901-1904, in St. Louis, where we resided while I was engaged in construction of the St. Louis, Kansas City and Colorado Railroad (now a Rock Island line) from St. Louis to Kansas City. In 1925 I went to the Southern Pacific Company with office in San Francisco and home in Oakland, resulting from purchase by Southern Pacific of the El Paso and Southwestern Railway System of which I was Chief Engineer.

Our children, Marian, 51, Logan, 48, and Doyle, 45, were born in El Paso. We have difficulty in adjusting ourselves to such maturity of our offspring. We think of them as children. But the arithmetic which Elizabeth learned from me at Bairds says that our babies are no longer babies. They are married

and have houses and children. Marian's home is in Baton Rouge. She has developed much talent in the Art of Etching, the old plantations of Louisiana and the French Quarter of New Orleans being excellent fields for such work. Logan is with the Sun Oil Company with office in Philadelphia. Doyle is with the Southern Pacific Company with headquarters in San Francisco. Each of the boys has a country home near his city. When they were ready for college, they knew the West. We decided that they should likewise know the East. Accordingly, we selected the Pennsylvania Military College at Chester, Pennsylvania, only 30 minutes from the Liberty Bell. Both boys graduated in Civil Engineering and began work with the Pennsylvania Railroad. When World War I engulfed us, they enlisted in the Artillery, went through Camp Dix, trained recruits at Camp Jackson, qualified as Battery Commanders in the Fort Sill School of Fire, and were under orders for Overseas when the Armistice was signed. Doyle returned to the Pennsylvania Railroad, coming later to the Southern Pacific. Logan turned from Engineering to Oil. Elizabeth and I make grateful acknowledgment to our God for the generosity of Time in dealing so gently with us and our children, whereby the entire family has come to such maturity.

A tribute to Elizabeth will be timely here. While our children were growing from babyhood to High School, I was, necessarily, away much of the time. I did not see our second son until after he had been

disturbing the peace for three weeks. Elizabeth's job was to keep the home fire burning and rear and train the children. She accomplished this superlative assignment superbly. Also she was active in church and community. During the war she was Captain of the Canteen Unit of the Red Cross at El Paso, which rendered individual health and social service to 154,894 soldier boys of local training camps or in troop trains passing through. King Solomon described her and my mother when he said: "Strength and honor are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come. She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all."

In seeing the children and the old home places occasionally, we have much driving about the country. On the highways from ocean to ocean and back to the starting point involves some work and risks. We are somewhat fed up on liquidating such distances that way. However, we find the car a great convenience when we get to places where we sojourn a bit. After much highway travel, we are impressed as never before by the extraordinary safety and comfort of America's modern railway trains. In the interest of balanced perspective, we suggest that automobile fans ride the rails occasionally.

My civil engineering activities covering 50 years include being: Deputy Surveyor, El Paso County, Texas, 1888-1890. City Engineer, El Paso, Texas, 1890-1894. Resident Engineer, Rio Grande Northern Railroad, 1894-1895. Chief Engineer, Rio Grande Dam and Irrigation Company, 1894-1898. Chief Engineer, Rio Grande Irrigation and Land Company, Limited, 1895-1898. Locating Engineer, Rio Grande Sierra Madre and Pacific Railway, 1895-1896. Chief Engineer, El Paso and Northeastern Railway, 1897-1898. Locating Engineer, Santa Fe Railway, 1899-1900. Engineer in Charge, Construction, Arizona and New Mexico Railway, 1900-1901. Chief Engineer, Construction, St. Louis, Kansas City and Colorado Railroad, 1901-1904. Chief Engineer, El Paso and Southwestern Railway System, 1905-1925. Assistant to Chief Engineer, Southern Pacific Company, 1925-1928. Chief Engineer, Northwestern Pacific Railroad, 1928-1931. Member, American Society of Civil Engineers, 1901. Member, American Railway Engineering Association, 1906. Honorary Degree, M. C. E., Pennsylvania Military College, 1916. President, American Railway Engineering Association, 1922-1923. Life Member, American Railway Engineering Association, 1934. Life Member, American Society of Civil Engineers, 1937. Honorary Member, American Railway Engineering Association, 1938.

Related incidental events similar to those leading to El Paso are likewise discernible in the activities captioned in the preceding paragraph. Being

deputy surveyor associated me with people influential in municipal affairs when the city needed a new city engineer. Being city engineer resulted in invitation to come into the irrigation companies. Being chief engineer of the companies contacted the chief engineer of the Santa Fe Railway and brought about relations which made me chief engineer of construction of the St. Louis, Kansas City and Colorado Railroad. In various channels, a sequence of events is traceable, an illustration being the related doings of W. A. Hawkins, H. J. Simmons and myself, recounted later. Advancement is largely a result of being, in place and time, ready and adequate for opportunity.

Land surveying on the Rio Grande frontier a half-century ago was an interesting occupation consisting largely of retracement of original surveys made necessary by imperfections or indefiniteness in original work or records, disappearance of original corners and their identification marks, and rising land values incident to growing development of the frontier following advent of the railroads. Out of this situation, a multitude of conflicts of land lines and controversies arose, adjudication of which in the vicinity of El Paso alone required a quarter-century of litigation. All this was not surprising in view of the oldness of the original surveys, especially the almost ancient Spanish land grants, the lands having little value when first granted and surveyed. At that time, there was, no doubt, no realization that, in a

then distant future, clear identification of the surveys would be of great importance. Some of the older records show that, in some cases, the surveyor's chain was a rope. The original land grants and surveys being of Spanish origin, the surveys were measured and recorded in units of the Spanish league or vara, the linear value of the league being 2.63 miles; and 36 varas being equal to 100 feet.

My work in re-establishment of boundary lines did not finally cease in termination of my contact with the surveys described above. From El Paso northward to the Thirty-second Parallel of Latitude, the Rio Grande is the boundary between Texas and New Mexico; and, from the river eastward, the parallel is also a boundary between the States. The position of the river was determined in 1852 by the International Boundary Commission of the United States and Mexico following the Mexican War. The position of the parallel was determined in 1859 by the Boundary Commission of the United States and Texas. About 1912, New Mexico brought suit against Texas on allegations requiring proof of said positions of river and parallel as established by said commissions. The controversy arose because, subsequent to 1852, the river changed its position several times. About 1914, I was called into the case to re-establish on the ground the aforesaid positions of river and parallel. This I did to the satisfaction of the Supreme Court of the United States by reproducing on the ground from original records the sur-

veys of said commissions, consisting of extensive systems of triangulation. This job was one of the most interesting of special assignments.

While City Engineer of El Paso I directed the engineering work of that growing city, laying out new additions, establishing street grades, building and paving streets and sidewalks, extending the sewer system, planning a new water supply, building a river front levee, etc. Subsequently through the years wherein our home was there, I enjoyed the privilege of having a part in the life and welfare of the community.

While I was with the City of El Paso, friends of mine there organized the Rio Grande Dam and Irrigation Company for development of irrigation of the Rio Grande Valley tributary to El Paso and invited me to come in as a director and chief engineer. I began the surveys in 1893. When the plans were complete in 1894, they covered the valley from Elephant Butte, 112 miles above, to Fort Quitman, 90 miles below El Paso, the proposed irrigation works consisting of a storage dam at Elephant Butte, diversion dams at Hot Springs, Caballo, Fort Selden, and El Paso, with irrigation canals from the diversion dams. Money for the enterprise could not be found in the United States. The plans and the engineering report were taken to London, and the financing was done there through the Rio Grande Irrigation and

Land Company, Limited, organized for that purpose, the English Company sending Col. Engeldue of the Royal Engineers, retired, and an authority on irrigation in India, to El Paso to examine and report on the enterprise. The American company's plans were approved without change. I was recalled from Mexico where I was engaged on railway location and began in 1896 as Chief Engineer of the English company the construction of the Fort Selden unit of the irrigation enterprise. In 1897, the construction was enjoined by the United States on an affidavit that the proposed irrigation works would impair the navigable capacity of the Rio Grande.

For ten years the suit ran the gamut of the courts, going three times to the Supreme Court of the United States which finally voided the rights of the American company in 1907 on the ground that it had failed to complete its irrigation works within the five years allowed by its charter, notwithstanding the obvious fact that no sane investment would proceed under a threat so ominous. No opinion on obstruction of navigation was delivered. Meanwhile, in 1904, the Reclamation Service of the United States had taken possession of the enterprise and proceeded to construction of a storage dam and diversion dams substantially on the dam sites of the Company without waiting for a court verdict on obstruction of navigation. There is remarkable similarity between the plans of the Company and those of the Reclamation Service, the one substantial difference being

that, at Elephant Butte, said Service constructed initially a storage dam providing at once ultimate storage. The Rio Grande Dam and Irrigation Company was a pioneer offering the Rio Grande Valley tributary to El Paso a modern plan for irrigation. I still retain much satisfaction in my connection with it and the contacts made therein.

In the paragraph following the foregoing statement of my Engineering activities covering 50 years, related doings of W. A. Hawkins, H. J. Simmons and myself were mentioned. Hawkins and I were associated in the operations of the irrigation companies just described, he as attorney, and I as engineer, beginning in 1894. This led to our association in the same relations in the construction of the El Paso and Northeastern Railway, beginning in 1897. Simmons and I were associated in the conversion of the Arizona and New Mexico Railway from a narrow gage to a standard gage railroad, he as superintendent and I as engineer, beginning in 1900. While with Simmons, in 1901, and resulting from my work on the Santa Fe Railway in 1899-1900, said work itself being the result of my contact with the Santa Fe in the aforesaid irrigation operations, I received and finally accepted repeated invitation to come to St. Louis for construction of the St. Louis, Kansas City and Colorado Railroad. During the years 1901-1904, wherein I was engaged on the last-named construction, the El Paso and Northeastern Railway named above and which I had constructed from El

Paso, Texas, to Alamogordo, New Mexico, in 1897-1898, was extended to a coal field and coal mines at Dawson, New Mexico, by the owners of the coal field and mines and the railway. During this railway extension to Dawson, the Phelps Dodge Company built the El Paso and Southwestern Railroad from their copper mines and smelters in Arizona to El Paso, and became the principal consumer of coal and coke from Dawson, the fuel being hauled over said railroads from Dawson to said mines and smelters, Simmons having become General Manager of the El Paso and Southwestern..

Meanwhile, I had, in the summer of 1904, finished construction of the St. Louis, Kansas City and Colorado Railroad. A wire came from Simmons asking if I could meet him in Chicago. There, he told me that Phelps Dodge had decided to have a fuel supply of their own, and asked me to return to El Paso and locate the necessary railway line to a coal field which they proposed to acquire in the north-western corner of New Mexico. Within 30 days I had the survey under way and completed in seven months. And a very good line it was on maximum curvature of 3 degrees and maximum grade of 0.7 percent, notwithstanding a crossing of the Continental Divide.

As I came out of the hotel onto Michigan Avenue after the meeting and agreement with Simmons,

I ran into Hawkins whom I had not seen for four years. Glad to see each other, we went around to the Hamilton Club and talked of old times, what we were doing and proposed doing. I noticed that he was quite interested as I told him of the meeting with Simmons and its objective. I did not see him again until the following spring in El Paso where he told me that, immediately after our meeting in Chicago, he went to New York and explained to his clients, the owners of the El Paso and Northeastern Railway and the coal mines at Dawson how they were about to lose a vital customer, the result being that, while I was in the Rocky Mountain country locating the proposed railroad in the winter of 1904-1905, negotiations were opened whereby the Phelps Dodge Company bought said railway and mines, thereby making unnecessary acquisition of the proposed new fuel supply and railroad. The El Paso and Southwestern Railroad and the El Paso and Northeastern Railway were immediately consolidated in 1905 into the El Paso and Southwestern Railway System, wherein Simmons was Vice-President and General Manager, Hawkins was General Council, and I was Chief Engineer.

From 1905 until it became a part of the Pacific Lines of Southern Pacific Company in 1925, the El Paso and Southwestern became, in physical fitness, second to no other road. Its main line was the middle link of a through route from Chicago to Los Angeles composed of the Rock Island, the El Paso

and Southwestern and the Southern Pacific. When the El Paso and Southwestern received trains late, it delivered them on time at the other end. It consistently maintained one of the lowest operating ratios. Its Operating Staff, adequate without superfluity, was distinguished for close and harmonious co-operation, constituting one of the happiest of railway families. That was the railroad, of which, in 1897-1898, I built the first unit from El Paso, Texas, to Alamogordo, New Mexico, and, in 1912-1914, the last unit, from Fairbank to Tucson, Arizona.

The acquisition of El Paso and Southwestern by Southern Pacific was the outcome of El Paso and Southwestern ambitions to go on to the Pacific Coast from Tucson, evidenced by certain sundry overt acts of El Paso and Southwestern, such as extension surveys, acquisition of real estate for terminals in Los Angeles, etc. Southern Pacific had a different idea about the matter in the form of an offer to buy the El Paso and Southwestern at a price which was sufficient to liquidate the ambitions to go on to the Coast. That was the sensible economic solution rather than a paralleling of Southern Pacific all the way to Los Angeles. The result transferred my citizenship from Texas to California, my services to Southern Pacific, and eventually made me Chief Engineer of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad, a Southern Pacific subsidiary, in 1928, from which position I retired from active service in 1931.

The Northwestern Pacific Railroad, extending about 300 miles northward from San Francisco Bay through the Redwood Empire, is in an interesting and delightful region. To feel as well as to see the redwood trees, one should go alone into the heart of a forest of them and, in the perfect stillness and peace therein, stand in the presence of majestic giants, older than the story of the Star of Bethlehem, whose foliage, beginning high above the ground, shuts out the direct rays of the sun and admits soft diffused light beneath, the grandeur of nature's handiwork producing a sensation of being in the very Temple of God.

Some of my activities were in Mexico, during which I was in Mexico City more than once. The city lies in a great bowl-shaped valley surrounded by towering mountains on the interior plateau of Mexico at a general elevation of about 8000 feet above sea level, the mountains reaching up to much higher elevations, all within the tropical zone, one result being an exceedingly equable and salubrious climate. That country is something to see and enjoy.

In 1896 I located the Rio Grande Sierra Madre and Pacific Railroad of Mexico from Juarez across the river from El Paso to Colonia Dublan in northern Mexico; and in 1899, made surveys for extension of the road into the plateau area of the Sierra Madre Mountains of Mexico, a beautiful and inter-

esting region. From the El Paso and Southwestern railroad at Douglas, Arizona, Phelps Dodge Company had a railroad running south into Mexico to copper mine and smelter properties and operations of the Company. I made surveys for extension of this road to the Gulf of California, in connection with which I had occasion to be in Mexico City.

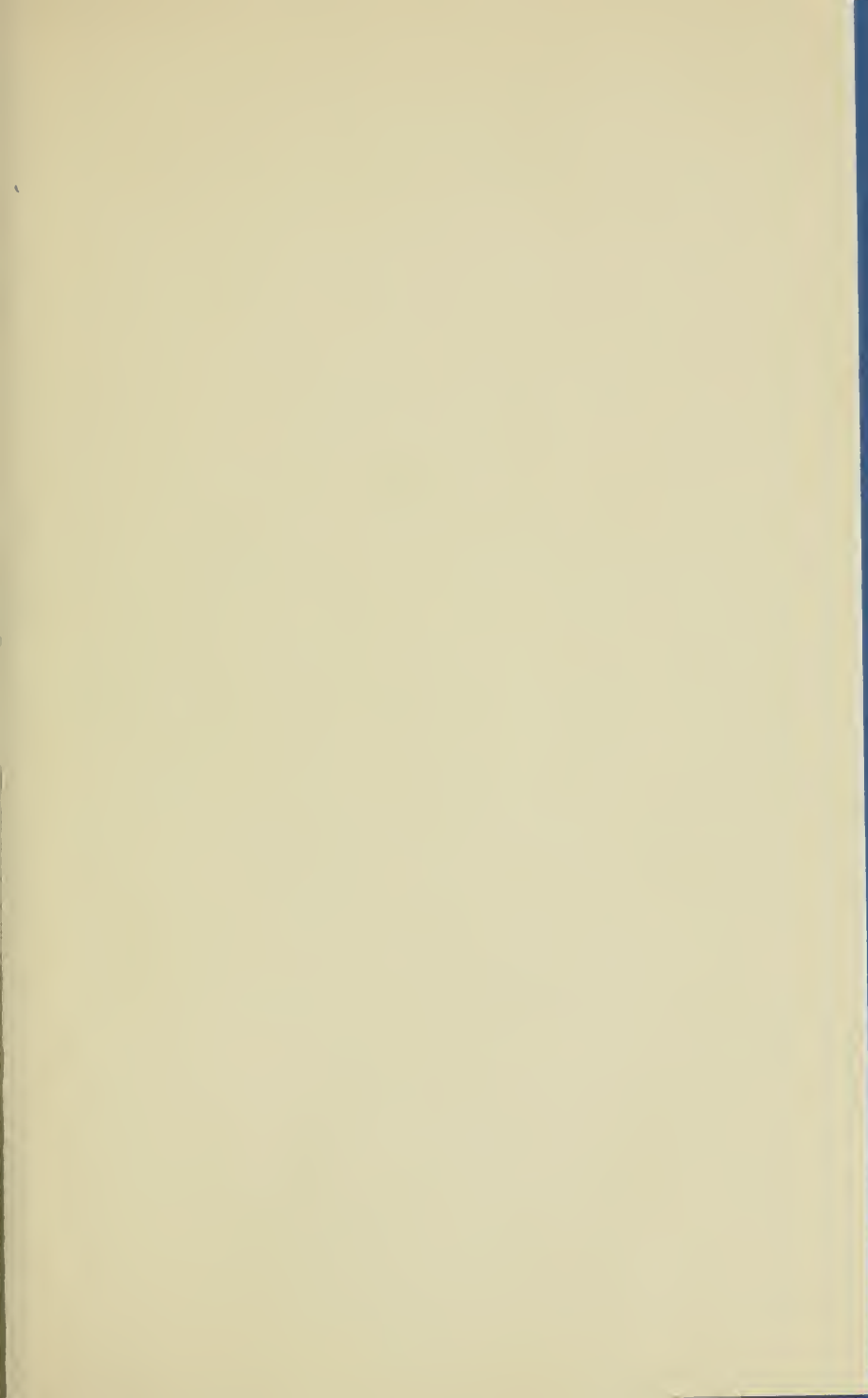
While in and about Mexico City on business or pleasure before the Madera revolution in 1911, there was opportunity to observe the surface appearance of the social and political situation and the people by which Diaz had surrounded himself. It seemed to me that therein there were a lot of able men who had had opportunity for training and qualification in government and should be able and ready and would carry on the Government without revolution when Diaz relinquished the reins. But the subsequent revolutions seem to indicate that the hope was not well founded.

To the American Railway Engineering Association, I am irretrievably debtor, having received from it values greater than those I could give to it, notwithstanding I did not, in the first quarter-century of membership therein, miss an annual convention or board meeting during the eleven years wherein I served on the Board of Direction. The Association conferred upon me every honor within its gift. Above all, it provided wide privilege and opportunity for

priceless contact and friendship in a large company of fine men. Therein, one finds a high order of value, satisfaction and happiness.

I have enjoyed having a part in the affairs and human relations, secular and religious, of the people wherein are inestimable profit and pleasure in understanding, appreciation and participation in the progress of human welfare. I have found things immutably right, things immutably wrong, and things not having immutability of rightness or wrongness. What is right? What is wrong? And when and why? In candid retrospection, I doubt not that everyone is convinced that he or she has not been right all of the time. But you may hope that you have been right most of the time. And now, facing the sunset of this life and the sunrise of Immortality beyond, Elizabeth and I are content and unafraid.



















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AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF JOHN LOGAN CAMPBELL WIT



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