

FRANK M. GUNBY

1882 - 1973

Colonel Frank M. Gunby, a Past President of the Boston Society of Civil Engineers, and one of the incorporators of Chas. T. Main, Inc., Engineers, died April 10, 1973, at the age of 90.

Born in Charleston, South Carolina, June 27, 1882, Colonel Gunby received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Electrical Engineering and an honorary degree of Doctor of Industries from Clemson College. He was a member of the honorary engineering fraternity, Tau Beta Pi.

After three years with the Eagle & Phoenix Mills, Columbus, Georgia, Colonel Gunby came to Boston to join Charles T. Main in 1905. In these early years of his career the Textile Industry was flourishing in New England. Many new mills were erected during this time, most being operated by water power or steam engines using rope or belt drives. Public utilities were in their infancy with electric power produced primarily for lighting and street railways. The general use of electricity in industry was challenged by many, and the economics of a changeover were difficult to establish. Colonel Gunby became a pioneer in this field and was one of the first advocates of individual overdrives in the Textile Industry.

During World War I, Mr. Gunby earned the rank of Colonel while in charge of engineering for the construction division of the Army and retained the title for the rest of his career. In the depression years, Colonel Gunby was active in organizing and operating the Emergency Planning and Research Bureau which helped obtain employment for engineers and architects in private industry and on public work programs.

In 1942, the United States Department of War initiated a crash program for large scale production of a new super-explosive, "RDX". Chas. T. Main, Inc. was selected as Architect-Engineers for the project to be constructed at Kingsport, Tennessee. Colonel Gunby was in charge of the project, later known as the Holston Ordnance Works, where he directed a staff of over 600 men. Ultimately, over two hundred and forty permanent buildings, sixty miles of road, and thirty miles of railroad with two major railroad bridges across the Holston River were constructed. At the peak of this high-priority assignment, over sixteen thousand construction men were employed on the program.

In 1958 in referring to Chas. T. Main, Inc., he stated, "We have no rules that start with don't." Colonel Gunby carried this philosophy into his personal life and gave wholeheartedly to those organizations in which he believed. He was an active member of the Boston Society of Civil Engineers, and from 1923 to 1924 served as President. Subsequently, he continued to participate in discussions and to give talks before the Society. In 1948 he was made a life member and in 1950 was given honorary membership.

He was a life member of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, American Society of Civil Engineers, American Society of Mechanical Engineers,

(past Vice President), a member of the American Institute of Consulting Engineers, and the Massachusetts Society of Professional Engineers.

He was active in the Veteran Association of The First Corps of Cadets and served for a time as Vice President. After his retirement, he served his community as a member of the Board of Directors of the Winchester Hospital; was Chairman of the Hospital Building Committee during its last expansion; was on the finance committee of the Town of Winchester and served as Chairman of the Building Committee of the First Congregational Church of Winchester.

To all he undertook he brought tireless energy, patience and a great understanding of people.

Colonel Gunby's wife, Ruth Marceaux Gunby died on November 26, 1965. He is survived by a son, Frank M. Gunby, Jr., of Winchester, Massachusetts and a daughter, Mrs. Rollie G. DeMeritt of Dickenson, Texas, and six grandchildren.