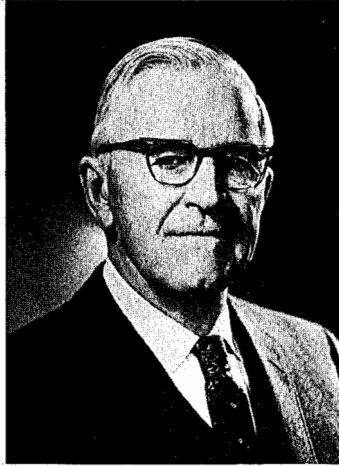


Dr. Thomas Ringgold Camp
1895-1971



My acquaintanceship with Tom Camp, referred to for years by younger engineers and students as Professor Camp, was through the Boston Society of Civil Engineers. We joined at about the same time, Tom becoming active in the Sanitary Section while the writer directed his efforts toward the Designers Section. This friendship grew by repeated meetings on committees and boards as well as Society papers in which Tom took an active part. By 1944, when he decided to enter full-time consulting practice, I was employed as principal engineer with Samuel M. Ellsworth, a consulting sanitary engineer. Upon Mr. Ellsworth's death, Tom immediately acquired the Ellsworth business and its principal engineer. I am relating these events to show young engineers the importance of becoming acquainted with contemporary engineers through Society affiliations. One never knows when such a friendship will unexpectedly lead to an opportunity, such as mine, of becoming a partner with a man like Tom Camp.

Tom Camp was a native of Texas, having been born in San Antonio, and he received his B.S. Degree from Texas A&M College in 1916. His college yearbook referred to how creditably he handled the duties of Captain of "one of the best companies on the campus". The editor also appraised Tom remarkably well at that early date, for not only did he comment on his "distinguished" grades, but also his "unusually high sense of honor, and a man who will always be square regardless of the circumstances". With this background it was only natural that he devoted two years to his country, serving with the heavy artillery in France, 1917-1919.

Following World War I, seemingly by chance, he drifted toward sanitary engineering with several firms in Texas where he designed pumping stations, filtration works, and sewerage systems. Evidently he became aware of his

interest in the sanitary field and the need for further educational training, because he next became a graduate student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, receiving his Master's Degree in 1925. The partnership of Spoon, Lewis & Camp, which was formed in Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1925, specialized in the fields of waterworks and sewerage.

In 1929 he was called back to MIT as an instructor, moving rapidly to become head of the Department of Sanitary Engineering. He was a prodigious worker and, while handling his teaching schedule, proceeded to become self-taught in fields such as sanitary chemistry, bacteriology, advanced mathematics, and hydraulics, as well as treatment processes for both water and wastewater. Being of an inquiring mind and fruitful imagination, he and many of his graduate students embarked upon new fields of research, many of which had not been touched before. His personal study and research during this period became the basis for the production of many papers, resulting in his attaining a national reputation at a relatively young age. He was well-qualified through his constant searching for the truth by research, as well as by his constant efforts to expand his personal knowledge so that he could provide students with the highest calibre of training. Many of his graduate and undergraduate students assumed prominent positions in the fields of teaching or engineering practice.

He was frequently requested by this Society to present papers, as well as to serve as an officer and on a variety of committees. Of approximately one hundred papers and discussions which appeared in journals and periodicals, some of the earliest presentations appeared in our Journal. Copies of these papers were requested for many years by readers throughout the world and a substantial number were recognized by awards, as mentioned later.

The reputation which he established while teaching at MIT resulted in so many demands for his services as a consultant that, in 1944, he decided to devote full time to consulting practice. It was then that he acquired the business of Samuel M. Ellsworth, and together with the writer continued the business under Mr. Camp's name until the partnership of Camp, Dresser & McKee was formed in 1947. His practice was exclusively in sanitary engineering from the beginning. He had the courage and fortitude to base his reports and designs on the basis of the most up-to-date engineering principles including the results of some of his own research and development, rather than following only the long established basis of conventional design. From a modest beginning with two persons, Mr. Camp lived to see the staff of his firm grow to over 360 in Boston with clients in many locations throughout the world, and additional employees of about one hundred nationals in foreign offices.

His papers and articles are too numerous to enumerate but they appeared in practically all of the journals and periodicals relating to his field of activity. In addition, he authored a book entitled "Water and Its Impurities" as well as the Sections devoted to "Water Supplies, Water Distribution, and Water Treatment" in Davis' Handbook of Applied Hydraulics. In 1970, he was presented an

Honorary Doctor of Science Degree from Clarkson College. This award was based upon his 15 years of service as a teacher, as well as his professional activities for an additional period of 27 years. Many other awards were received by Dr. Camp including the following from the Boston Society of Civil Engineers: Hydraulics Section Award; Sanitary Section Award; Desmond FitzGerald Medal; Clemens Herschel Award; and he was selected to give a John R. Freeman Memorial Lecture, January 1969. He was a member of the John R. Freeman Fund Committee for a period of years.

Other honors included Honorary Membership in the Boston Society of Civil Engineers; American Society of Civil Engineers; New England Water Works Association; and Water Pollution Control Federation. His awards and medals from other Societies included the New England Award of the Engineering Societies of New England; the Dexter Brackett Memorial Medal on two occasions from the New England Water Works Association; and the Fuller Award of the American Water Works Association. The following awards were received from the American Society of Civil Engineers: the Society's Karl Emil Hilgard Hydraulic Prize; the J.C. Stevens Hydraulic Prize; the J. James R. Croes Medal; the Rudolph Hering Medal; and the Edmund Friedman Professional Recognition Award.

The BSCE honored Dr. Camp by establishing the Thomas R. Camp Fund in January 1971, the income from which is to be used annually for one or more lectures on "outstanding recent developments in the field of sanitary engineering." The Water Pollution Control Federation also established the Thomas R. Camp Medal in 1964, to be awarded annually to a Federation member who best exemplifies "the unique application of basic research or fundamental principles."

The Society activities of Dr. Camp resulted in his having served as a president of the Boston Society of Civil Engineers, the New England Water Works Association, the New England Water Pollution Control Association, and as one of the founders and the first chairman of the American Sanitary Engineering Intersociety Board.

Tom Camp was a loving and devoted husband and father. He saw his children obtain one or more college degrees and his oldest daughter receive her Doctorate. Following the death of his wife, Margaret Camp, in 1970, Dr. Camp, who had already retired in 1965, was happiest in the office continuing to carry on his research and development studies, on the basis of which he wrote several of his latest papers. It was during this period when he was alone that the partners and staff of his firm also became "his family" and drew even closer to him because his own children were all at a distance.

Thomas R. Camp, whose death occurred on November 15, 1971, was a man with an unusually keen mind together with an equally good memory, and through his self-training and teaching experience had assimilated an amazing amount of scientific knowledge. The writer, over a period of the last 45 years,

had occasion to know rather intimately many of the outstanding engineers in the Boston area. No one else had the ability to draw upon such a vast store of knowledge in such a wide variety of fields and apply it without hesitation, though it may have involved civil engineering, chemistry, mathematics, physics, and other branches of scientific and engineering knowledge. It was this breadth of his background which permitted him to conceive of and carry out the many activities of his professional career. He was not reluctant to share this knowledge with others.

The life of Dr. Thomas R. Camp, with his high ethical standards, his personal integrity, combined with willingness to work hard and bring his professional attainments to the summit which they achieved, will always remain an example and challenge to younger engineers.

(MEMOIR by Herman G. Dresser)