

HOWARD MOORE TURNER
1885-1975



Howard M. Turner held a respected place among professional engineers in New England for over 45 years. His death, on May 5, 1975, further depleted the very limited number of engineers typical of those who, with self-reliance, courage and confidence, operated as consultants in the years preceding World War II. During this period engineering offices were smaller, publications were more limited, education was largely fundamentals, and offices lacked a staff to turn to for help. Howard Turner was one of those self-sufficient individuals who began his career during this period.

Mr. Turner attended Harvard University, receiving an A.B. in 1906 and an S.B.C.E. in 1907. For the past 11 years he was class agent. His early experience as an engineer was with Turner Construction Company of New York (1907-1910), followed by resident engineering and later as hydraulic engineer for the Turners Falls Power & Electric Company (1910-1917) while constructing its hydroelectric plant on the Connecticut River in Massachusetts. During World War I he served in the Engineers' Officers Training Corps. Following the war he was a partner in the firm of Turner, Mills-paugh & Safford for four years, subsequent to which he practiced as an individual consultant until his retirement. His greatest capabilities were in the fields of hydraulics, water power, flood control and valuation of public utilities. For 32 years (1920—1952), he taught a course at Harvard University in water power engineering.

He was extremely generous with the time which he devoted to professional societies, especially considering the fact that he never had more than a moderate staff working for him. He was president of the Northeastern Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers in 1953, and of

the Engineering Societies of New England in 1956. He was a member of the American Institute of Consulting Engineers and the New England Water Works Association. However, his greatest interest was the Boston Society of Civil Engineers, of which he became president in 1943 and Honorary Member in February 1952. He received several B.S.C.E. prize awards, including the Clemens Herschel Award in 1945, and the Desmond Fitzgerald Medal in 1963.

Mr. Turner's major contribution to the B.S.C.E. was in serving on committees concerned with those phases of engineering for which he was admirably qualified. He was, for example, a member of the Flood Committee when it was first established in 1927, and later, chairman when this committee prepared most valuable reports on several of the major floods experienced in New England. He served very ably on the John R. Freeman Fund Committee for many years, and was chairman for 20 years, from 1944-1964, taking great interest in the wise use of awards made from the fund to deserving and capable young men.

Mr. Turner's contributions, which appeared in the B.S.C.E. *Journal* as published papers and discussions, exceeded ten. On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the society in 1948, a special issue of the B.S.C.E. *Journal* was prepared, containing four papers on the major divisions of civil engineering. At that time, Mr. Turner delivered a most appropriate paper entitled, "100 Years of Hydraulics".

Community affairs always interested Howard, and for several years, while living in Cambridge, he served on both the Board of Water Commissioners and the Planning Board. He was active in the New England Historical Society and served on a special committee when the society moved to its present location. Being keenly interested in the cultural life in metropolitan Boston, he continually lent his support and encouragement to all cultural activities. As a diversion, he demonstrated the breadth of his interests and abilities by becoming an accomplished water colorist.

It was my privilege to have become well acquainted with Howard Turner in 1932, when we shared joint offices with Samuel M. Ellsworth, by whom I was then employed. Following Mr. Ellsworth's death, the business was acquired by Thomas R. Camp, and our relationship continued. Howard was first and foremost a gentleman, with all of the elements of courtesy and refinement associated therewith. He possessed a keen and alert mind, together with plenty of enthusiasm and drive. His professional ideals were of the highest, and his whole career has been an example to all of those who came within the realm of his influence. He shared a happy married life with his wife, Helen Choate (Eustis), and, because they shared common interests, did considerable traveling and enjoyed civic and social activities as well. Three daughters and a son, all married, together with several grandchildren, made them a happy and complete family.

(*Memoir by Herman G. Dresser*)