

## William Rotch (1869)

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William Rotch was born at New Bedford Mass., on July 22, 1844, the eldest son of William J and Emily (Morgan) Rotch. On both sides of his family he came from distinguished ancestry. His great great-grand father Joseph Rotch already a successful shipowner came to New-Bedford from Nantucket, Mass, in 1765. Joseph Rotch and his sons, William and Francis found New Bedford a farming town doing a little whaling off the coast and by their energy, they established the industry that made the town the great whaling center of the world. Francis Rotch built and owned the *Darlmouth*, the best known of the three ship of the Boston "Tea party". William Rotch owned from 1783 to 1828 the ship, *Bedford*, which first displayed the American flag in foreign waters in 1783. After the revolution, he established the whale fishery in France, but returned to the United States following the French Revolution. With the decline of the whaling industry the Rotch's father William J Rotch turned their energies to cotton manufacturing. At various times, Mr Rotch's father William J. Rotch, was President and, director, of most older New Bedford cotton mills. On his mother's side Mr Rotch was a grandson of Charles W. Morgan, one of the great whaling merchants of New Bedford, whose vessel, the *Charles W. Morgan*, has been preserved as a memorial to the whaling industry.

William Rotch was educated at the Friends Academy of New Bedford, and was graduated from Harvard University in 1865 with the degree of bachelor of Arts. He then entered the Ecole Centrale des Arts et Manufactures, in Paris, France, from which he was graduated in 1869, ninth in a class of 225 with the degree of "Ingenieur civil".

Mr Rotch began his professional career in 1871 as Assistant engineer of the Fall River Mass. water works, then in course of construction, and served as chief engineer from 1874 to 1880, when the works were completed. From 1880 to 1882, he was consulting engineer and purchasing agent of the Mexican Central Railway Company, the Sonora Railway Company, the Atlantic and Pacific railroad Company and the California Southern Railroad Company, the lines of the last two now forming the western portion of the main line of the Santa Fe System. From 1884 to 1891, he was consulting engineer of the Cleveland Canton, and Southern Railroad Company, the Lakeside and Marblehead Railroad Company, the New Bedford and Fall River Railroad Company, and other railroad companies in Ohio and Massachusetts.

In 1881, Governor Long of Massachusetts appointed Mr Rotch as engineer and member of the Commission which finally established the boundary line between Massachusetts and Rhode Island that had been in dispute for more than 250 years. He served on this commission until 1883.

In 1894 and 1895 he was a member of the Re-Organisation Committee of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fé railway, and from 1895 to 1900, he served as a Director of that road. He was also a Director of the Mexican Central railway Company from 1880 to 1900, and had charge of the first train which ran from Boston to the City of Mexico, in April, 1884. From 1886 to 1894, Mr Rotch was President of the Tremont Electric Lighting Company and the Consolidated Electric Manufacturing Company, and a Director of its successor, the Walker Company, which Company installed the complete electric plant in the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York, N. Y., then the finest electric lighting plant in America.

Mr. Rotch was an official in many Massachusetts corporations. From 1913 to 1922, he was President of the Federal Wharf and Storage Company; from 1918 to 1922, Vice-President of the State Wharf and Storage Company; and from 1918 to 1922, President of the Fibre

Manufacturing Company. He was also .President of the Railroad Wharf and Storage Company, the Denbigh Mining Corporation, the Terrible Dunderberg Mining and Powder Company; Vice., President of the Bonanza Development Company; Treasurer of the Broadway Storage Company; Trustee and Treasurer of the Nonquitt Real Estate Trust; Managing Director of the Rotch Travelling Scholarship for Architects; and a Director of the Infants Hospital and the Adams Nervine Hospital. In 1870, ho was elected the first President of the Union for Good Works in New Bedford.

Mr. Rotch was President of the Alliance Française of Boston and Cambridge, Mass.; Governor of the Massachusetts Society of colonial Wars; an Honorary Member of the Boston Society of Architects, a member of the Association des Anciens Elèves de l'Ecole Centrale of Paris, the Bostonian Society, the Somerset and Harvard Clubs of Boston, and the Wamsutta Club of New Bédford. He was also a member of the Arlington Street (Unitarian) Church of Boston.

He was married in 1873 to Mary Rotch Eliot, who survives him, together with three children, Edith Eliot, Charles Morgan, and Clara, the wife of Dr. Channing Frothingham.

Mr. Rotch had both his office and residence in Boston for many years, In spite of his eighty-one years, ho had been in excellent health and had attended the Harvard-Yale Baseball Game in June, 1925, at which he was the oldest graduate present. Taken ill at his summer home at Nonquitt, Mass, he was taken to the hospital et New Bedford on June 25, where following an operation his condition was thought to be improving until ho suffered a heart attack which caused his death. Possesed of a wonderfully genial personality, Hr. Rotch leaves a host of friends.

Mr. Rotch was connected with the American Society of Civil Engineers for fifty-two years, having been elected a Member on March 5,1873.