

The Los Angeles Public Library
Local History Collection
Biography

NAME JOHN C. HOLLAND

Occupation Member of Los Angeles City Council

Address 271 Lamont Drive, Los Angeles 42, California

Birth (Date and Place) July 6, 1893, at Bartlett, Williamson County,
Texas

FATHER William Philip Holland

Birth (Date and Place) October 1860, at Fluvanna County, Virginia

If Deceased, When December 1937

MOTHER Betty Connell Holland

Birth (Date and Place) in 1867, at Liberty Hill, Texas

If Deceased, When November 1917.

IF MARRIED, TO WHOM Alice Colby Wells

Birth of Same (Date and Place) Redlands, California

If Deceased, When

When Married June 30, 1919.

CHILDREN (Married Names of Daughters)

Mary Elizabeth Holland Neeb

Helen Louise Holland Osterberg

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FEB 3 1966

1003 CITY HALL
LOS ANGELES, CALIF. 90012

September 15, 1961

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF COUNCILMAN JOHN C. HOLLAND

The record for the most seniority in the 15-member Los Angeles City Council belongs to Councilman John C. Holland of the 14th District, who has served longer than any Council member in the City's history--more than 18 consecutive years.

Moreover, it is to his credit that he has never had to face an opponent in a runoff election, because he always managed to emerge victorious in every primary election in which he was entered. That held true the first time that he sought office in April, 1943, and the same story was repeated at the primary elections of 1945, 1947, 1949, 1951, 1953, 1955, ~~and~~ 1959, and 1963. Until the mid-50's, when the Charter was changed, Los Angeles Council members were elected for only two-year terms. They now serve four years, with Council seats in the even-number districts to be filled by the voters in the alternating two-year periods. The 14th District which Mr. Holland represents includes Highland Park, where he makes his home; Eagle Rock, Atwater, a portion of the Griffith Park Los Feliz areas and some smaller contiguous sections.

Only two years after he received his pre-legal Bachelor of Arts degree at Stanford University in 1917, Mr. Holland decided to forego a career in law and he opened an electric appliance business in Highland Park. He continuously operated it until December, 1951.

Before enrolling at Stanford, Mr. Holland, who was born in Bartlett (Williamson County) Texas, attended the University of Texas for one year. He was graduated from high school at Roswell, New Mexico

Councilman Holland became deeply interested in local politics at a time when municipal government in Los Angeles was under a cloud--in the late 30's. In 1938, a reform movement was launched to unseat the late Frank Shaw as Mayor. Mr. Holland took part in this civic campaign and also in the accompanying drive to elect Superior Court Judge Fletcher Bowron, the reform candidate, as the new Mayor. This drive proved successful and it brought about a thorough house-cleaning in City Hall. Mayor Bowron was to stay in office for 15 years.

It was in 1942 that he called Mr. Holland to his office one day and asked him to serve as a member of the Fire Commission. Mr. Holland agreed to take the appointment, resigning the next spring when he decided to throw his hat into the ring for the City Council. It was the first time that he had run for public office and he was elected in the primaries.

During his second term, which began July 1, 1945, Mr. Holland was appointed Chairman of the important Finance Committee, a post he held for eight years, or until a new Council President was chosen. He guided the affairs of this important Committee along a rocky course in the post-war period when funds were desperately needed for

public improvements, and when the unprecedented growth of the city began to gather its momentum. The Police Administration Building, the Health Building and others were put up while he headed the Finance Committee, which has the responsibility of looking after the City's fiscal welfare. Mr. Holland originated many other public improvements in his own District, such as the reconstruction of Colorado Boulevard, such contributing thoroughfares as Cypress Avenue and Eagle Rock Boulevard.

Probably nothing more significant has been done by Mr. Holland as a Council member in his 18-plus years than when he found himself brought sharply into focus in the public spotlight as a leader in the fight against conveying city-owned land in Chavez Ravine to the Los Angeles Dodgers for a stadium site. His continuing opposition to this transfer of some 300 acres of land stamped him in the public's mind as a public official who had the courage to stick to his own ideals and wage a fight for a principle.

Councilman Holland isn't the type, however, who goes around with a chip on his shoulder. One year when he was up for reelection, he was strongly opposed by a group of Fire and Police Department employees. And he beat their candidate to a frazzle. Yet, he held no hard feelings against those city employees. As a matter of fact, he is now Chairman of the Council's Police, Fire and Civil Defense Committee, and as such he steers through to the Council floor legislation having to do with the Fire Department and the Police Department. And, take it from him:

"I earnestly believe that Los Angeles not only has an outstanding Police Department and Fire Department, I believe that they are the best to be found in any city in the world. They carefully screen candidates for appointments to jobs in the two Departments, they keep them under strict supervision, and at the same time they do everything possible to encourage them to climb the promotional ladder that has at the top better jobs, carrying higher salaries. All of which, in my opinion, brings forth much greater efficiency, loyalty and, better public service. Our Police and Fire Departments are the best 'investment' that the city can make on behalf of public safety and welfare."

Not long after he received his diploma at Stanford, Mr. Holland married his college sweetheart, Alice Wells, whose grandparents came to California in 1887 from Vermont, settling in Redlands, California. Her father Karl C. Wells was one of the Founders of Redlands University. While an undergraduate student at Stanford, the Councilman was active in debating and athletics, and he "made" the varsity wrestling team. Between graduation time and 1919, when he opened his store in Highland Park, the Councilman was in the Army in World War One. He gets together on occasion with some of his buddies of that conflict when he attends meetings of the American Legion Post No. 206, of which he is a life member. He is also a member of the Masonic Lodge, the Elks Lodge and several service clubs in the Highland Park section.

The Hollands have two married daughters, Mary Elizabeth Neeb and Helen Louise Osterberg, and three grandsons.

Ironically, this man who fought so intensely against turning over to the Dodgers Chavez Ravine property, happens to be a dyed-in-the-wool baseball fan. He and Mrs. Holland take in the games quite often. There are indications that he may find himself in the spotlight again, once the machinery is set in motion again to provide a new, larger zoo for Los Angeles. Councilman Holland opposed granting a contract to a private organization to operate the zoo, for which bond funds voted in 1957 are available, and the matter currently is hanging fire in an appellate court. Meantime, he manages to keep very busy looking after the welfare of his constituents.

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Biographical Sketch of John C. Holland
Member of Los Angeles City Council

Born at Bartlett, Williamson County, Texas; attended High School at Roswell, New Mexico; one year at the University of Texas, three years at Stanford University, graduating in 1917 from the latter college with a Bachelor of Arts degree (Pre-legal).

In 1919 he established an electric appliance business in the Highland Park section of Los Angeles, which he continuously operated until December, 1951.

He is a member of the American Legion, Post No. 206; Masonic Lodge; Elks; and service clubs in the Highland Park section.

In 1942 Mayor Bowron appointed him to the Los Angeles Fire Commission where he served until he was elected to the City Council of Los Angeles from the 14th District at the Primary Election of April 1943. He was again elected as a Member of the City Council at the Primary Elections in 1945, 1947, 1949, 1951, 1953, 1955, and again in 1959, and 1963.

During his second term in office, Holland was appointed Chairman of the important Finance Committee, a post he held for eight years. He has been a member of the Public Works; the State, County and Federal Affairs; and the Governmental Efficiency Committees.

Currently, Holland is Chairman of the Police, Fire and Civil Defense Committee, and a member of the Finance and the Building and Safety Committees.

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John C. Holland

14th District

SEP 29 1951 *E. Spuehls*



Elected to the City Council from the 14th District in the 1943 primary election, Councilman John C. Holland has been reelected in every primary from then until 1955, and again in 1959.

Holland approached politics as a member of the Fire Commission appointed by Mayor Fletcher Bowron in 1942.

During his second term as Councilman, he was appointed chairman of the important Finance Committee, a post he held for eight years.

Currently, he is chairman of the Police, Fire, and Civil Defense Committee, and member of the Finance, and Building and Safety committees.

Born in Bartlett, Texas, Holland attended Stanford University, graduating in 1917 with a B.A. in pre-law.

In 1919 he established an electrical appliance business in Highland Park, which he continued to operate until 1951.

The Councilman is a member of the American Legion, Post 206; Masonic Lodge; Elks, and service clubs in Highland Park.