

TOMAS N. EARNSHAW
(1867-1954)

Naval Engineer, Industrialist and Former Manila Mayor

Tomas Earnshaw was a multi-faceted man who dedicated his life fully to public service. He was an engineer, industrialist, administrator and government official. He was born on November 5, 1867 in Cavite, Cavite to Daniel Earnshaw and Gavina Noguera. His father was an English engineer hired by the Spanish authorities in 1864 to construct a naval ship in Cavite.

He took his *segunda enseñanza* at the Ateneo Municipal. Then he worked in his father's shop up to the age of 20. There he acquired the basic skills and knowledge in mechanical engineering. He worked as a *maquinista* in several ships, and later took and passed the first and second level examination for machinists which today would correspond to a naval engineering test.

In 1895, he was appointed *maquinista* at the Manila Waterworks. After four years, he was named *perito mecanico reconecedor* (expert mechanical inspector) of vessels berthed at the Port Area in Manila. Then, after passing rigid examination, he was designated inspector of ships' hulls and boilers.

In 1899, he began serving as chief engineer of the Boyle and Earnshaw Shops. Ten years later, he became an incorporator of Manuel Earnshaw & Co., Ltd., which was founded with a capitalization of P1,600,000. He was also voted its first vice-president and, later, its treasurer.

In 1912, Earnshaw Shipways and Engineering Co. was organized with him as the first vice-president and director. Its controlling stocks were later bought by the Honolulu Iron Works. After the transaction, the company came to be known as Earnshaw Deck and Honolulu Iron Works. Its capitalization was increased to P18,000,000. To a large extent, this joint venture helped the sugar industry of the country.

President Manuel L. Quezon appointed Tomas Earnshaw as a member of the Philippine independence mission to the United States in 1919. On November 3, 1927, he was appointed mayor of the city of Manila, with Miguel Romualdez as vice mayor. He served as mayor up to 1933.

Some visible signs of progress marked his incumbency as Manila mayor. Dewey Boulevard, now Roxas Boulevard, was constructed along with the Metropolitan Theater, Barrio Obrero, Harrison Park, and the Emilio Jacinto Elementary School. The number of city streets for public use increased.

In 1913, Earnshaw joined the Philippine Masonry. He was affiliated with the Sinukuan Lodge 272 of the Gran Oriente Espanol. Gradually, he moved up the Masonic ladder until he finally reached Grade 32 on April 2, 191. He was appointed member of three-man commission which studied the fashion of the Gran Oriente under the United States of America and Gran Oriente Español, which became Gran Logia de las Islas Filipinas.

As an industrialist and businessman, Earnshaw held the following positions in various private entities: vice-president and director, El Hogar Filipino; director, Bank of the Philippine Islands; director, Manila Rail Road Co.; vice-president, director and acting president, Manila Hotel Co.; director, Bago Medellin Mining Co.; vice-president and director, Independence Fund;

committee chairman, Sociedad de Tiro Blanco Club; honorary president, Council of Hygiene; one-time member, Carnival Association; honorary vice-president, Manila Polo Club; and member, Club Nacionalista, club Filipino, Club Carambola, Casino Español, Columbian Association, and Wack-Wack Golf Club.

Earnshaw was married to Carmen Fernandez Diaz, by whom he had a daughter named Carmen (married to Antonio Vasquez). Ten years after the death of his first wife in 1895, he married Mary Ellson and fathered two sons: Luis and Manuel. He died on March 11, 1954.

On November 5, 1973, the National Historical Institute installed a marker in his honor at the Sta. Ana elementary School.

References:

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