

Ludlow, Jacob Lott ^[1]

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by Charles H. Mcarver, Jr., 1991

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Jacob Lott Ludlow, engineer, was born in Spring Lake, N.J., the son of Samuel and Nancy Johnson Ludlow. He completed his education at Lafayette College ^[2] in Easton, Pa., where he received a degree in civil engineering in 1885 and an honorary master of science degree in 1890.

Soon after graduation Ludlow moved to Winston, N.C., and began his pioneering work in municipal engineering and public health. In 1888 he installed the first municipal sewerage system in North Carolina at Raleigh. Subsequently, he served as a construction engineer on water and sewerage projects in numerous southern cities. Between 1890 and 1920 he was a member and consulting engineer of the North Carolina State Board of Health, and many of the state's laws dealing with water treatment and protection resulted from his recommendations.

From 1908 to 1916 Ludlow was a colonel and chief of engineers in the North Carolina National Guard ^[3], and on the eve of World War I ^[4] he became chairman of a board of engineers appointed to survey potential facilities for manufacturing munitions in North Carolina. During the war, he directed the construction of the cantonments at Camp Greene in Charlotte and served as supervising sanitary engineer for the thirty shipyards of the U.S. Shipping Board for the South Atlantic and Gulf States. In 1924 and 1925 Ludlow was a member of the Engineering Board of Review of the Sanitary District of Chicago, an organization that wrestled with the controversies existing between Chicago and other communities and states over the use of water in the Great Lakes.

Jacob Ludlow's "abundant faith in civic patriotism" was reflected in the time and energy he dedicated to the growth, development, and betterment of Winston-Salem ^[5]. As its first city engineer, he led the movement to establish its first comprehensive sewerage system. His advocacy of paved streets induced the city to initiate an impressive program of street improvement. As president of the local board of trade from 1910 to 1918, he became a leading proponent for the consolidation of Winston and Salem into one municipality and under his guidance the city revised its charter to obtain more efficient government, improved housing, and expanded educational, park, and recreational facilities. In 1912 he became the first president of the Winston-Salem branch of the National Citizens' League for the Promotion of Sound Banking, and in the following year he ran unsuccessfully in the Democratic ^[6] primary for mayor.

In the meantime Ludlow was active in the Anti-Tuberculosis Committee of One-Hundred, which worked diligently and effectively to improve the public health conditions in Winston-Salem and its suburbs. He also was a member of the Red Cross ^[7] Seal Campaign Committee. An active Mason and Shriner, he belonged to such civic and social organizations as the Rotary, Twin-City, and Cosmos clubs. After 1920 Ludlow devoted less time to public affairs and gave more attention to the management of Ludlow Engineers, Incorporated.

As a nationally prominent engineer, Ludlow belonged to a wide variety of professional and quasi-public organizations. He was a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers ^[8] and the American Institute of Consulting Engineers ^[9]. He was also chairman of the Sanitary Engineering Section of the American Public Health Association, director of the American Association for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis, president of the North Carolina Section of the American Water Works Association, a national councillor of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, and the first lay member of the North Carolina State Medical Society ^[10].

Ludlow married Myra Margarette Hunt in Easton, Pa., on 5 Jan. 1887. They had three daughters: Annie, Louise, and Margarette. He died in Winston-Salem. Funeral services were held in the Presbyterian church ^[11] and he was interred in the family plot in Salem Cemetery. His life was a testimonial to the concept of community service, which he considered a "sacred public duty."

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Additional Resources:

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