

# Alonzo Cass Bulks Big in L. A. Lore

By CHOLLY ANGELENO

I LOVE to reminisce about the good old days in Los Angeles.

When it was a sleepy little town, long before smog . . . when the skies were blue . . . when automobiles were few . . . when Vermont was way, way out! . . . when social registerites from the East converged on Pasadena during the winter months. . . .

All this brings to mind the late Alonzo Beecher Cass, one of Los Angeles' most influential pioneer business men, industrialist and civic leader.

Mr. Cass brought his bride, Emily F. Tufts, to Los Angeles from Oklahoma in 1888. What the population was at that time I do not know, but it grew from 11,183 in 1880 to 50,395 in 1890. So even then the influx was beginning.

With two of his brothers he formed the Cass Brothers Stove Company, which a few years later became the Crandall and Cass Company, then the Cass and Smurr Stove Company and finally the Cass, Smurr, Damerel Company.

## Helper of Causes

Soon after his arrival here Mr. Cass became active in all phases of civic enterprise, was president of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, president of the YMCA, the first president of the Municipal League and a trustee of the State Normal School. State Normal was on the hill next to old Los Angeles High School, which later became the Southern Branch of the University of California, now UCLA.

Mr. Cass was one of the founders and biggest stockholders in the Central Bank, which was renamed the Central National Bank and later the Security National Bank. It was absorbed by the Security Trust and Savings Bank, now the Security-First National Bank of Los Angeles.

In 1906 he became president of the Home Telephone and Telegraph Company of Los Angeles and four years later president of the Bay Cities Home Telephone Company of San Francisco. Old timers will recall that in those days there were two phone companies—the Home and the Sunset.

The Home brought out t

first dial telephones and, finally, when the two merged into the Southern California Telephone Company (now the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company) Mr. Cass was made its president which office he held until his death.

## Large Family

Mr. and Mrs. Cass were the parents of eight sons and one daughter and their home at 438 West 33rd street was the scene of much social activity. In order the children are Frank an insurance man living in Alhambra; Phil, a former judge in the Hawaiian Islands and now residing in Oregon; Louis, a partner of Cass & Johansing; Dr. Donald, a practising physician and surgeon in Hollywood; Quincy, a Los Angeles investment broker; Harold, retired rancher living at Emerald Bay, Laguna Beach; Emily, now Mrs. Ralph Sanson living in Long Beach; and Dr. Alonzo Jr., a Los Angeles pediatric physician.

Mrs. Cass, long prominent in Los Angeles social and civic affairs, died in 1907. Two years later Mr. Cass married her sister, Mrs. Martha Tufts Muir and adopted her three children, John, William and Robert, all business men in the metropolitan area. A daughter, Marcia, now Mrs. Richard Stewart of Balboa, was born to Mr. and Mrs. Cass, completing a family of 13.

## Happy Hours

The Casses moved from Los Angeles to South Pasadena around 1911 and it was here that I came into the picture. We were neighbors of the Casses, along with the Sansons (Mrs. Cass and Mrs. T. A. Sanson were sisters) and we youngsters spent many happy hours at the Cass mansion.

On occasion we would be invited to stay for dinner and well do I remember that Mr. Cass, presiding at the

On occasion we would be invited to stay for dinner and well do I remember that Mr. Cass, presiding at the head of a table surrounded by his own children and half a dozen or more neighbors, would no sooner finish carving the roast than "seconds" were in order. Mr. Cass, a very smart man, always ate first!

The Casses had a tennis court and morning, noon and night there were tournaments throughout the year. Always one of the children would be graduating from school and naturally Mr. and Mrs. Cass invited the entire graduation class over for punch and dancing following the commencement exercises.

## Joy to Listen

One thing that will always linger in my memory were the countless Sunday afternoons that Mrs. Cass, affectionately called Aunt Mame, would read to her flock. She would sit under a tree in the garden and read aloud to a score or more youngsters such fascinating novels as Tom Sawyer, Treasure Island, David Copperfield, ad infinitum.

Mr. Cass died in 1924 and all the pallbearers were his sons. Mrs. Cass died in 1946.

The Cass family has figured prominently in Los Angeles history since 1888 and the grandchildren and great grandchildren are following the same illustrious path.

Personally, I owe a great deal to the late Alonzo Beecher Cass. He recommended me to the publisher of this newspaper, the late Max F. Ihmsen, way back in 1917.