

Charles Augustus Templeton

1871 - 1955

"I have always felt that the world owed me nothing except what I could acquire through my own efforts. I believe that all of us get out of politics, business, religion, just about what we put in."

- Charles Templeton

Charles Templeton, who rose from humble beginnings to become head of one of Waterbury's leading mercantile establishments and Governor of the State of Connecticut, was born in Sharon, Connecticut on March 3, 1871.

Beginning at age 8, he worked as an errand boy and at age 13 he was an apprentice machinist. He started his business career in Waterbury in 1888 as a bookkeeper in a hardware store and two years later with William Hotchkiss he purchased the business which became Hotchkiss and Templeton. In 1905, he left that business and purchased the hardware store that would bear his name until the early 1970s.

Templeton's political career began in Waterbury when he was elected to the Board of Aldermen and later became its president in 1918. He was elected State Senator from 1919 to 1921 and in 1920, he was a delegate to the Republican National Convention. Templeton was chosen Lieutenant Governor in 1921 and Governor in 1923, becoming the second Waterburian to hold that office. George Lilley was the first in 1909.

Templeton's independent thinking led to strife even in his own party and since he only wanted to serve one term he said, "I can speak out fearlessly. I count myself very fortunate to have escaped entanglements and tags. I am nobody's man, but my own." During his term he broke up the "Diploma Mill" in which two fake colleges had been issuing diplomas to physicians through correspondence courses. He always felt his interest in politics was incidental, just a part of his desire to do something for his city, state or country.

Waterbury was the beneficiary of his ceaseless energy and civic pride. He spent long hours being involved in numerous philanthropic endeavors that led to the betterment of the city. He organized many fund drives for churches, most notably a campaign that raised \$300,000 for St. Margaret's School. Their athletic field was fittingly named in honor of this man who loved sports. He excelled in baseball and football while also being an accomplished runner who



set a State YMCA record for the 100-yard dash in 1892. In the 1920s he was one of the backers of Eastern League baseball and in 1924 became the president of the Waterbury entry. He took pride in being the oldest active member of the YMCA.

Templeton was the first president of the Rotary Club and a Master of the Masons. He was also a director of the Waterbury National Bank, the Waterbury Trust Co. and president of the Waterbury Business Men's Association.

It was said that he would rather have a store in Waterbury than a niche in Westminster Abbey. Charles Templeton, who died on August 15, 1955, believed "success in life is gained largely by doing the day's work, little or big, as it comes along, promptly and efficiently."