



# County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors

## **SUPERVISOR REUBEN F. MCCLELLAN**

Term: 1917 - 1930  
District: Fourth  
Date of Birth: 1859  
Death: May 3, 1930

Reuben F. McClellan served as county supervisor for almost four terms. He was elected in November 1916, and assumed office on Jan. 8, 1917. He was re-elected in 1920, 1924 and 1928. On May 3, 1930 McClellan died while in office, and was replaced by John R. Quinn.

McClellan was born in Brownville, Maine, in 1859. When he was 8, the family moved to Minnesota. Tragedy struck a year later when his father died, leaving his mother and several children to carry on alone. To earn money for the family, McClellan worked on a farm in the summer and at lumber camps in the winter.

Though his schooling was limited, he kept up his studies and eventually became a county surveyor. In 1878, at age 19, he was appointed state surveyor for Minnesota. Though it appeared he had a bright future ahead of him, when news of the gold strikes in California and Alaska reached him, McClellan abandoned his career as a surveyor and headed West.

His knowledge as a surveyor helped him amass a fortune in the gold mines of Northern California. He returned to Minnesota and acquired extensive holdings in timber lands. The lure of gold, however, remained with him and he came back West.

In 1898 McClellan went to Alaska to explore the vast frontiers. While passing through the Copper River Valley, McClellan accidentally discovered what has been designated as the world's greatest copper mine, the Great Bonanza at Kinnecott.

The discovery led him to invest in the construction of the Copper River Northwestern Railroad, which was built specifically to haul the copper ore out of the mines. McClellan sold his interests in the mines a few years later for \$41 million.

In 1904 McClellan moved to Los Angeles with millions of dollars and no place to store it, so he decided to establish a bank. He founded the State Bank of Sawtelle and a few years later the Bank of Palms. Later he established the Bank of Westgate and the Citizens' State Bank of Santa Monica.

In 1916 McClellan's political influence led to his election to the Board of Supervisors. McClellan loved the outdoors, and during his four terms in office, he championed the preservation of open space and parklands for the citizens of the County. He also advocated the acquisition of the beaches as public property.

McClellan's credits included membership in the Masons, Knights of Pythias, Los Angeles Athletic

Club and Union League Club.

McClellan died on May 3, 1930. He was 71.

Source: The Los Angeles County Manual; Los Angeles Times, May 4, 1930; History of Santa Monica Bay Cities.