

A
HISTORY
of
COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

1828 — 1928

By
NANCY TELFAIR

Published by
THE HISTORICAL PUBLISHING CO.
Columbus, Georgia

CHAPTER XVII

The Water Works Becomes A City Property



THE story of how the water works in Columbus came to be a municipal property dates back into the early history of the city, and involves many discussions and legal procedures before the final settlement which occurred more than seventeen years ago.

At first there were cisterns in the streets and pumps were used to raise the water to the desired levels.

The numerous accounts of the fires occurring in Columbus before the 'fifties and the inefficiency of the system to provide a sufficient pressure for use of the fire engines showed how poor that type of water supply was.

Later, the Leonard or Garrard spring, east of the city, was equipped with a series of wooden pipes, and water was conducted to the homes of various residents who thought well enough of the supply to pay for it. Col. Seaborn Jones owned the spring at the time it was considered as a source of supply for the city and he proposed to sell it to Columbus. His proposition was not accepted, however.

At a still later date, another system was tried which proved to be entirely inefficient. This system connected certain springs on the Alabama hills with the Columbus establishment, and for some years the old reservoir supplied what water the public could obtain.

During the first ten years of the twentieth century, the water works proposition was a very sore point with local government. The city had permitted a private concern to have charge of furnishing water, and in 1903, the supply was so poor, in both quality and volume, that a bond issue was floated by the city to provide a municipally owned system.

This procedure provoked the Water Works Company to file an injunction suit in the United States court, to prevent the city from building its own system, and for several years, the case was on the calendar.

A review of the proceedings which resulted in a final victory for the city has been made as follows:

The Columbus Water Works Company was a corporation, chartered for the purpose of furnishing water to the City of Columbus. It obtained its supply of water from a creek in Lee County, Alabama, some distance beyond what is known as Ingersoll's Hill, and it owned certain water pipe lines and hydrants constituting a water system throughout the City of Columbus. The company proceeded to issue bonds, and the Mercantile Trust and Deposit Company, of Baltimore, was made the Trustee for the bondholders.

The company entered into a contract with the City of Columbus to supply the city with pure and wholesome water for a period of thirty years but for many months prior to July 30, 1903, the company breached its contract by failing to supply the water, that is, failing to furnish pure and wholesome water; and the City of Columbus held an election for the purpose of issuing bonds to build its own water works system, which election was practically unanimously carried in favor of bonds.

On July 30, 1903, the Trustee filed a suit in the United States Court, seeking to enjoin the City of Columbus from building its own water works system. The case was referred to the Master in Chancery, Honorable Henry R. Goetchius, and after hearing much evidence he made his report, finding that the water works company had breached its contract but that in order to do equity to the bondholders of the water works company the city should be required to purchase the usable parts of the water works system then owned by the company before the city should be permitted to build its own water works system. The city filed exceptions to this report, and Judge W. T. Newman sustained the Master in these findings. The city carried the case to the Supreme Court of the United States. Judge J. H. Martin, Honorable T. T. Miller and Honorable William A. Wimberly, being counsel for the city, and Honorable L. F. Garrard, of Columbus, Honorable Joseph Packard, of Baltimore, Maryland, and Messrs. Hall and Wimberly, of Macon, Georgia, being the council for the Mercantile Trust and Deposit Company, of Baltimore, Trustee, and Columbus Water Works Company and W. S. Greene, as Receiver thereof. While the litigation was in progress, Receiver W. S. Greene operated the water works plant under the direction of the court.

The case was argued in the Supreme Court of the United States on November 7, 8, 1910, and decided December 12, 1910, just a little over a month after it was argued. The decision of the court was unanimous, and the opinion of the court was written by Mister Justice Horace H. Lurton.

The court decided that the company had breached its contract and that the City of Columbus had a right to have the contract rescinded because the company had not furnished an adequate supply of wholesome water; and the court further held that the bondholders had no right and that the water works company had no right, to require the city to purchase the usable part of the water works system, and that the city could not be enjoined; and the court reversed the decree of Judge Newman and demanded the case with directions to dismiss the bill and grant the release as prayed in the cross bill. The relief prayed in the cross bill was that the court decree that the contract be rescinded.

There are two excerpts which may be taken from the opinion, that may be of general interest, and the first is: "Indeed, the attitude of the city and its people towards the water company, as shown by the record, seems to have been forbearing and generous"; and the second is: "The complaint had, beyond serious doubt, failed to make a case entitling it

to relief. But the court in substance said to the city that unless the city would agree to mitigate the injury and loss which must come to the creditors of the defaulting company by buying so much of the company's plant as the court should think adapted to use in the plant to be constructed by the city, that a decree should go for the complaint, unless it had failed to make a case entitling it to the enforcement of the contract between the company and the city. Manifestly the maxim can not vest in the Chancellor the power which has been exercised."

The final decree in the case was entered in the Federal Court in the City of Columbus on February 4, 1911, and, therefore, the case was pending in the courts for more than eight years. The costs in the case amounted to more than five thousand dollars, and the final decree showed that the last item of cost paid was \$2,418.75.

While the amount involved was large the question of both law and fact were exceedingly few and simple. There was no question of fact because it was practically conceded that the company had breached the contract by failing to supply an abundant supply of pure and wholesome water, and the technical legal question involved would seem to be just about as plain as the question of fact involved, and, therefore, the Supreme Court of the United States acted with as much dispatch in disposing of the case as the lower court was dilatory.

After the bill was dismissed by the final decree the City of Columbus, through its water commission, constructed one of the most beautiful and efficient water works plants to be found anywhere, the plant being, with its reservoir, located about two miles north of the City of Columbus on a high elevation, on the River Road, near the site of the old Clapp's Factory. The water is pumped from the Chattahoochee River into the reservoirs, where it is filtered, and the city obtains its supply of the filtered water in great abundance and purity, by gravity, for domestic purposes, fire protection, and sanitation.

Those interested in the famous litigation are referred to the case of City of Columbus vs. Mercantile Trust and Deposit Company, of Baltimore, Trustee, and Columbus Water Works Company and W. S. Greene, as Receiver thereof, 218 U. S. 645 (54 Law Edition 1193).

Mayor Lucius H. Chappell was at the head of the affairs of the city at the time, having refused election several terms and taken the office only at the request of certain citizens who wanted to have the matter of the water works concluded.

Since the city took charge of the system, Columbus has had an abundance of pure water at one of the lowest rates in the country.

Some months ago, A. J. Smalshaf, assistant superintendent and chemist of the Columbus Water Works Company, made an address before one of the local civic clubs and reviewed the system since that time.

Extracts from his address follow:

"There are several reasons for this unvarying plenitude of good water. First of all the source of supply, the Chattahoochee, is a stream relatively free of pollution although continually laden with the clay washed from Georgia's red hills. Other cities in our state derive their supplies from streams of nearly as good character as the Chattahoochee and in this respect are indeed fortunate for Georgia waters are markedly free from lime and magnesium salts which constitute hardness or soap-consuming power. Nearly everyone is familiar with the difficulty of using soap with hard water. Hard waters waste soap, cause boilers to scale, interfere with bleaching and dyeing of fabrics and with other operations. The very soft local water constitutes a great advantage to our mills where soft water must be had even if at a greater price, and in many hard water states the price is high while in Columbus no softening is required in our mills at all. Power company and mills officials recognize this advantage which they have over the mills where added costs are caused by hard water.

"The source, then, of our water supply is very desirable, with less dissolved matter present than in any other river in the country, barring one, a relatively unimportant stream in Maine. At this point should we not remember the debt of gratitude we owe those who—some thirteen years ago—held out against considerable opposition for the Chattahoochee as a source supply. That their judgment was admirable was strikingly known during the memorable drought of September 1925, when no other of the streams within a very great distance of Columbus carried enough water to supply the city or even a very small city. How often have we seen instances of cities laboring under the handicap of an insufficient or undesirable water supply with consequent bankruptcy to many of the business houses of the city and a steadily shrinking population. How often have we seen instance of cities voting themselves into huge indebtedness to overcome the handicap of a poor or failing water supply. In other ways the judgment of those who chose the Chattahoochee was admirable for no other stream within a reasonable distance of the city contains a water with such desirable qualities for household, boiler and textile use.

"Now that we have given the Chattahoochee such a glowing tribute for quality we must hasten to explain that the job of handling it is not so easy a thing after all. Indeed a continuous, unvarying control of the rather complex purification plant is very essential. Only a brief attempt will be made to describe this process with the hope that we may so arouse your interest that visits at the plant will show you what efforts are being made to insure the purity of your supply. In short, water is pumped from the Chattahoochee about four miles above Twelfth street by centrifugal pumps, motor driven, to a reservoir of 45,000,000 gallons storage capacity on the River Road. The pumps, of which there are three with a total capacity of 16,000,000 gallons a day, are highly efficient, particularly one purchased

recently in which the most modern devices are incorporated and the manufacturer of which was required to meet a very exacting specification for efficiency which was corroborated by a test before our witness who was professor of mechanical engineering at Princeton University.

"After storage in the large reservoir, which is intended only for emergencies such as machinery breakdown, the water is carried to a mixing basin and agitated with a small quantity of aluminum sulphate or alum; here the action between the alum and the lime or other alkaline substance naturally present in the water produces a precipitate or, it is known to the operator, a 'floc,' which will not dissolve but falls to the bottom of a basin especially arranged for this purpose known as the coagulation basin. This floc for various chemical or electrostatic reasons which will not be explained at present, settles to the bottom of the basin enmeshing and carrying down the major part of the mud with it. You might consider this floc as being gelatinous, which it really is, and the mud as adhering to the floc and falling with it. Now remember that the floc was formed by action between the alum and the lime, that is the alum has been removed as such, so that even if it were objectionable, which it is not, there is none present after the next process which is filtration. Here a 30" layer of pure white silica sand, especially chosen for the work, removes the last traces of mud and floc.

"On the way to the filtered water reservoir, which is connected to the distributing system, a very small quantity of chlorine gas is added, so little, that in the words of Professor Hulett of Princeton University, it would be necessary to drink 2 1-2 million gallons of the water to get a medicinal dose which, in actuality, is the size of the filtered water reservoir itself. Yet the chlorine gets in its work completely so that the city water is free from any objectionable bacteria whatever and due to carefully adjusted treatment is clear and free from any objectionable chemical. Finally, if we may be permitted and will be forgiven for what may seem lack of modesty, the Columbus plant has been described as the best operated plant in the State in a letter from the Chief Engineer of the State Board of Health. We pass this statement on to you because of your vital interest in your water supply, the most necessary public utility which we have.

"The brief description of the purification plant just given you does not in any measure adequately describe its many details which were designed by a firm of skilled water filtration engineers. The filtration plant is a structure which has demonstrated its efficiency over a period of years due of course to excellence in its original design and its good quality of construction by a highly skilled organization of filter builders. Over the country the record of filtration plants does not show that all of them have been operating as successfully as the Columbus plant, many of them requiring revamping or reconstruction after a period of ten years or less. A well designed plant deserves care and a good quality of operation; to insure the latter result a laboratory, completely equipped for the chemical,

bacteriological and microscopical examination of water is mainly to insure water good for boiler and textile use and to insure efficiency and economy in the operation of the filter plant, the bacteriological equipment to insure a quality of water always fit for drinking, the microscopical equipment mainly to insure a water free of vegetable or odor. As to the latter the water of the Chattahoochee in common with many of the rivers of the country during the spring and summer seasons frequently harbors a growth of vegetable organization, microscopic in size, harmless to health, but capable of causing a taste or odor when present in sufficient number.

"The water supplied to Columbus is also used as drinking water on trains engaged in interstate traffic and consequently comes under the jurisdiction of the United States Public Health Service which has established a very stringent standard for bacterial quality of water. Of recent years this standard has been made very exacting but the Columbus water does not fail to pass it with a margin to spare. Daily bacteriological tests are made in the plant laboratory while monthly samples are shipped to the State Board of Health from whom a recent letter was received with the following pertinent statement: 'We wish to congratulate you upon the quality of your water supply to date this year. Out of ten sets of samples sent in to date there has been no contamination in any sample.'

"A close laboratory check has resulted in other advantages not the least of which is indicated by a comparison between two months, one of September, 1915, and the other of September, 1925, showing a reduction of chemical consumption amounting to \$600 for that particular month, while other similar periods show like savings. The mere installation of a purification plant does not guarantee safe water. Even if perfect in design and construction, unless efficiently operated and controlled, a safe effluent need not be expected. Fortunately there are responsibilities in conserving the public health by a safe water supply and in Columbus, such a community, represented by the Board of Water Commissioners, is found. Economy of operation, consistent with maintaining a high standard of purity for the effluent of the plant, must be carefully and continuously studied. The safety of the supply however must always be kept in mind, for 'eternal vigilance is the price of pure water.'

"The growth of the water works is almost invariably the best indicator of the growth of the city itself. In 1897 the consumption of the city averaged 1,000,000 gallons daily, in 1917—2,300,000 gallons daily and in 1927 the average daily use of water exceeded 5 million gallons. There are now over 6900 services of which 465 were added in 1926. There are 70 miles of 4" to 25" cast iron pipe in the distribution system. The steady and rather remarkable growth of the city has required additions to your water works so that today the filter capacity is 8 million gallons daily as compared with 4 in 1917. New pumps and basins have been added and a plan for improvements adopted which will, it is believed, keep the plant somewhat ahead of the requirements due to the growth of the city.

"An improvement of much importance of recent years has been the construction of a second 24" supply main from the plant to the city ending at Twenty-seventh street and Hamilton, assuring the continuity of the supply should the old supply main be broken. The second main was built at a cost of \$75,000.

"The inclusion of the Wynnton district within the city limits made it necessary that fire protection be available to these new city tax-payers on the day of the induction of this district into the city, which it was, after the construction of approximately 8 miles of trunk and distribution mains at a cost of about \$70,000 with no increase of revenue accruing to the waterworks but with a reduction in fire insurance rates to these new citizens which would not otherwise have occurred. To properly care for the growth of the city a comprehensive plan for extension has been adopted and the approval of the Underwriters' engineers received. The maintenance of the distribution system is a major problem, requiring sometimes the repair of a fire hydrant broken by a speeding car at any hour of the night, often necessitating long stretches of work on pipe replacement for the service must be continued with as little interruption as possible.

"Of importance to all of you is the financial condition of the city-owned system and the rates charged for water. The city is in ownership of a system of a present value of somewhat over a million and a quarter of dollars upon which a bonded debt still exists of about \$285,000. A number of new structures and much pipe has been added to the original system which was purchased and built for \$525,000, all of the additions having been made from income.

"In marked contrast with many other city-owned systems the Columbus Water Works shows a record of economy which has made it possible to expand without resort to bond issue up to this time. To illustrate the value of this situation an example might be given: the city manager of a small town in Wisconsin reports that over 60 years ago an original issue of \$30,000 in bonds for water works construction was made, the town never being in condition to establish a sinking fund the bonds were never paid off, but were refunded at the end of each 30 year period. The town today has begun to pay off some of the debt but the interest costs to this time have been over \$90,000 while the improvement which was obtained for the original \$30,000 has long since depreciated and become obsolete.

When the Columbus system was company-owned, a rental of \$25 each was annually charged the city upon approximately 250 fire hydrants while schools and other public usage was charged for by meter. Today the system includes 500 hydrants while school use, sprinkling and flushing now constitute a very large use of water from the plant which is supplied free. To illustrate the assertion that economy is practiced in the local plant it should be stated that five men handle the pumping and purification of well over 5,000,000 gallons per day. In another plant in Georgia with which the writer is familiar seven men do the work of delivering one

million gallons per day. Identical conditions are true in the business and distribution end of the system.

"The rates in Columbus are very low having been established in 1914 and never been raised, one of the few things which have not increased in cost since that time. Materials and labor used by the water works have in common with other things about doubled in cost. Recently there has been received a schedule of the rates of Texas cities which have higher rates than has Columbus. The lowest is that of Waco, 24 cents per thousand gallons as compared with 15 cents locally. Although water is as free to all of us as the air requiring only the going and the getting of it, yet to make it available in the home requires cost of transportation and of treatment which the consumer should pay in proportion to the amount used. The water works has found that if it makes the consumer pay at the rate of three cents per ton for the water delivered in the home the business can be carried on successfully and this is the low rate which you pay at 15 cents per thousand gallons.

"To make as fair a charge as possible a meter is installed at an added cost of at least \$15 to the water works, and the allowance of water within the minimum payment of \$3 per quarter is so large that the ordinary family of five has no difficulty in staying within that minimum. Many cities collect the cost of the meter and service thereto from the taker. When plumbing leaks are allowed to occur even if apparently small the continuous stream soon causes an excess bill, or running the water to prevent freezing may add to the bill but this should be considered a just cost as an attempt to avoid a plumber's bill. Meters are standardized, they are alike, none of them runs too fast, but they may let pass water for which the water works receives no revenue.

"In general, of the money expended on a complete water works system only about 25 per cent of the total is applied to works above the ground and visible. While it is of prime importance that the hidden portions be properly designed and constructed it is logical to maintain that the small portion which can be seen should not only be as well constructed and properly planned, but should, in addition, present an attractive appearance. Many cities are spending great sums in tearing down the ugliness, condemning property and reclaiming land for improved streets, parks, playgrounds, etc. The water board has realized the important place of the water works buildings and grounds in this scheme.

"In conclusion, may we repeat that we owe a considerable debt to those who originally worked for a city-owned water works and placed it where it now is, to those who designed it so well and set a standard of quality in their design which it has been ever the aim of the operators to equal in operating performance and finally to those men who assumed responsibility for the design and construction of the plant and who today guide its operation and its growth, namely the Board of Water Commissioners."

During Mr. Chappell's term as mayor in 1912 and while the water works proposition was being discussed there occurred the largest fire in the history of the city, and the only one which got out of control of the local fire department.

The fire occurred during the day of April 25, 1912, and consumed forty-two houses, besides doing other damage in the way of scattering sparks and burning debris which ignited other buildings several blocks away from the main conflagration, and destroyed several thousand dollars worth of personal property.

The fire began about noon in the kitchen of the home of J. R. Page, 1112 Fifth avenue, and the alarm was immediately turned in by the householders.

Chief Ike Pearce was out of the city at the time and his assistant, A. J. Land, answered the call. Chemicals were at first used, but a wind began to scatter sparks and neighboring houses caught fire.

For three hours the flames made headway with house after house, and Mayor Chappell telegraphed to nearby cities for aid. Equipment from Opelika, Americus, and Macon departments was started on special trains for Columbus, but before any could reach the city, the local companies had gotten control and they were returned. The special train from Macon was derailed en route to Columbus.

This fire caused a total loss of more than \$300,000. Of this amount some \$200,000 was given as the loss of real property while that of personal property was listed between \$50,000 and \$100,000. Only about \$137,000 of insurance was carried. During the progress of the conflagration the wind changed and blew toward the portion already consumed, and thus a much larger damage was averted.

Five of the firemen were injured in fighting the flames, but no loss of life was sustained. This was considered particularly fortunate as the fire covered such a large area, and several invalids lived in the houses which were among those burned.

The water supply was very low at the time and many of the houses had shingle roofs. Some of those destroyed included some of the oldest and most attractive in the city.

The area covered by the flames was the east side of Fifth avenue between Eleventh and Twelfth streets and the entire block bounded by Fourth and Fifth avenues and Twelfth and Thirteenth streets, with two more houses in addition. Besides the homes in that locality, others caught fire in other sections of the city from the burning fragments of wood and sparks carried in the wind.

This conflagration was said to be wider in area and more costly than the Columbus Iron Works fire and twice as big as the Fifth avenue fire of October 30, 1895, the latter of which originated within twenty-five feet of the fire of 1912.

Besides the distress caused by the actual burning of the fire, there was

much fear and panic throughout the whole city, and in addition to the loss sustained by destruction by the flames, there was a great deal of theft.

The Columbus Guards were called out to aid in preventing the pilfering of the possessions which were brought out of the burning homes and piled in places several blocks away. The church square, occupied by the First Baptist and St. Luke Methodist churches, was covered with the belongings of those who had to save whatever they could remove, and it was said that many articles of household furniture disappeared while the owners were trying to remove other things from the advancing flames.

One lady had succeeded in having her piano placed in the church yard and had returned to her home to attempt to save whatever else she could. When she came back later to see about her possessions she discovered a dray drawn up near the curb and another woman whom she had never seen, directing the drayman to remove her piano. She remonstrated and threatened to call the authorities, when the other woman decided to give up the piano, and ordering the draymen to leave the instrument where it was, she left in high dudgeon.

This was said to be only one of many more similar instances, that harassed the home owners, already distressed by the loss of most of their belongings.

Following the fire there was a great deal of distress, and aid was offered by many other localities. Real estate firms in the city gave houses rent free for several months to many of those who had lost their homes.

Rebuilding began very soon after the fire and shortly afterward, there was no trace of the burned remnants left by the flames. Many of those whose homes were destroyed moved out to the rapidly developing Wynnton section and built new homes.

Two of the immediate results of the fire were the increase of the water supply so as to furnish better pressure and the enactment of a city ordinance to prohibit the using of any but fireproof material for roofing purposes.

Since that time there have been no very large blazes, and none have gotten beyond the control of the local department. In 1917, when Atlanta experienced a large fire, the Columbus Fire Department was prepared to render assistance there if needed.

In 1912 Columbus was the center of attraction for a group of prominent industrial and railroad officials. On May 30th, upon the occasion of the annual dinner of the Board of Trade, President W. W. Finley, of the Southern Railway, of Washington, D. C., and Edward H. Edmonds, editor of the *Manufacturers' Record*, of Baltimore, Maryland, were guests of the city and made addresses which brought forth a great deal of comment on the part of those interested in the progress of the industries in the South. Some two hundred guests were present at the banquet.

The next day the local press carried glowing accounts of the addresses, a part of which follows:

"In a review of the advantages and the needs of the South, President Finley of the Southern Railway in a speech, which was permeated with optimism, made some timely suggestions and splendid recommendations for betterment in the South, at the Board of Trade banquet last night, which are sure to bring about awakening among our people.

"President Finley truly said that Georgia and this section, meaning the Southeastern States, has made rapid progress during the past few years. 'It is the duty of all of us who are interested in this section', he said, 'to get together and co-operate with energy and enthusiasm for the broadest possible development. Primarily, we should aim to bring greater prosperity for those already living in our section by interesting them in the adoption of the most advanced methods of farming, by encouraging the establishment of industries, and by aiding in finding markets for Southeastern products.

"'Secondly, we should all work together to make the resources and opportunities of our section better known throughout the world, to attract to each locality the character of immigration that may be desired, and by encouraging the investment of outside capital.'

"There is food for thought in the above.

"The speaker continuing, strongly urged the development of the manufacturing possibilities of Columbus, of Georgia and the South along lines calculated to supply the ultimate consumer of the South with goods of Southern manufacture. He asserted that an effort should be made to attract to the South immigration of a character that would build up the country, and develop its resources, and he recommended immediate action, to take advantages of the opportunities to be opened to the South by the Panama Canal.

"These are suggestions which would mean a new and more progressive South, if acted upon."

Also:

"A representative gathering of Columbus business men last night, while seated around a banquet board, were treated to a discourse by a man who has untiringly and fruitfully labored for the Southland. We refer to Editor Richard H. Edmonds, of the Manufacturers' Record, who has championed every cause on which the commercial South hopes to build until she is fully recognized as the leading commercial section of the great nation, of which she is a part.

"Supplied with statistics that caused his hearers to marvel, and with an eloquence that may be looked upon as the result of inspiration, the noted editor told a pretty story of the land that has, by a marvelous endowment from nature surpassed all similar areas in the world for agricultural and manufacturing advantages.

“As one surveys the field of Southern resources and Southern activities, he sees a country of matchless advantages beginning, at last, to come into its own. “The Coming South” is the country predestined by nature to be the center of more wide-spread agricultural prosperity and of greater industrial development than any other region known to mankind.’

“That the business men of Columbus will profit by the visit and address of Editor Edmonds is unquestioned. With an eloquence that appealed facts and figures that do not lie, and an experience that equips him to idolize his native soil, the speaker came as a messenger to teach a native Southerner things not heretofore known about his own section, and such a lesson can not fail to produce good results.

“Probably one of the greatest drawbacks to the South today lies in the fact that we do not know our own country as it really is. We do not study statistics well enough. We do not go far enough out of our way to find out the things that we should know. So, we must look to such able men as Mr. Edmonds to enlighten us if we are to know more about our splendid soil.

“His message last night brought good cheer, for the speaker is recognized as a man of facts, not guess work; a man of forethought, not surface knowledge; a man who studies the South, not a mere reader of her history; a man who does not believe in demagogism, but who has built up an influence by his ceaseless efforts to be a worthy son of the Southland. His hearers took him literally, knowing well that ‘The Coming South’ is not a mythical imagination, but just what he claimed for it—a country of indefinite potentialities.”

During these years, just before the World War, Columbus’ oldest military company was called upon for their last duties as a military organization. They were ordered to the Mexican border in 1916.

The Columbus Guards spent several months on the border and when they were no longer needed there they returned home. Shortly afterward the United States entered the World War. After remaining in Columbus a few months this company was ordered to Camp Wheeler in Macon from which point this command soon left for service abroad.