

WOLFE'S HISTORY  
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P. B. WOLFE, Editor-in-Chief

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## THE CLINTON WATER WORKS.

Before the consolidation of Lyons with Clinton each had a system of water works, but of recent years all is supplied by the Clinton Water Company, a corporation whose chief stockholders are of Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, but whose interests have come to be identical with the regular citizen capitalist, as their property is not of the movable class, and what is for their interests are also for the home moneyed man.

To get at the first water system here, it should be stated that the Clinton Water Works Company was granted a franchise March 26, 1874, to run twenty years. It was purely home capital that started the enterprise, for under the existing law the city was unable to bond a sufficient sum to construct the works required to protect the city from the ravages of the flames, as at that time, more than now, this was a great lumbering center, and the experience of Oshkosh and other lumber cities frightened Clinton. Hence the capital was secured for a stock company. The first directors were: I. B. Howe, Chancy Lamb, W. J. Young, W. F. Coan, Oliver Messer, J. T. Pierson and E. S. Bailey. I. W. Howe was elected president; Oliver Messer, vice-president; E. H. Thayer, secretary; J. C. Weston, treasurer. A portion of the pipes had to be put through solid rock, five or six feet deep, which added to the expense. The supply of water was from the Mississippi river, one hundred and sixty-seven feet from shore low water mark and lifted by powerful pumps to the filter basins and on up to the reservoir at the top of a tower through a two-inch pipe. The tower is one hundred and twenty feet high and stands at the pumping plant near the foot of Fourth avenue, the present site of the works. The same plant and buildings are still in use, though with much improved machinery, of course. The system of these works was the combined features of a Holly and pumping station, the most practical for all cities' use. The first water plant cost its owners one hundred and ten thousand dollars. The old house-well system of securing drinking water soon went out of use, as the physicians made it plain to the people that the water from these works was far more healthful than the surface wells throughout the little city.

A year later, 1875, Lyons saw the need of such water works and a company was formed there (not caring to unite at first with the Clinton company and construct a central union plant). The leading citizens of Lyons all took stock in the company and a system of combined direct pressure and reservoirs was adopted, the reservoir being placed on the high bluff at the north end of Seventh street. These works cost forty thousand dollars.

As the years passed by, both cities enjoyed the luxury of a separate system of water works, but in March, 1889, the present company, at Clinton, purchased the old Clinton works and greatly improved them and added largely to their capacity. It was not long before the same corporation of Eastern men purchased the Lyons works, also, and since then the two places (now the one Greater Clinton) have been supplied with the best of water by the one plant at Clinton. Many years since the Mississippi river water was discarded and, instead, four deep artesian wells have been the chief source of water supply. In case of extra demand, low wells, etc., the river water, after having gone through the filtering process, has been used as an emergency. At this date the capacity of the water works is ten million gallons each twenty-four hours. In addition to the deep wells already in use, one is now being sunk two thousand feet, which, if it proves successful, will give the city an excellent supply of pure water. The water pipes beneath the streets of Clinton today measure forty miles in length; there are three hundred and fifty hydrants, and the number of water consumers is about three thousand. W. D. Cockburn, the present manager, came to Clinton in 1903 and is the right man to manage so great a plant. Recent tests have proven that this water is first class for all domestic use, being strictly sanitary.

#### THE GAS WORKS.

In 1869 Clinton first had the advantage of coal gas for illuminating purposes. It was then that the Gas Light and Coke Company was organized, with a capital of sixty thousand dollars. It at once laid its mains throughout the principal streets. In 1878 there were seven miles of gas main in the city. The men most closely identified with this enterprise were: W. J. Young, president; J. C. Weston, secretary and treasurer; O. Messer, superintendent; I. B. Howe, C. H. Toll, C. Lamb, E. S. Bailey, F. P. Wilcox, J. Van Deventer, directors.

With the expansion of the city the improvements in the gas plant have kept fully abreast with the city's growth. At this date it has over fifty-one miles of gas mains within the city. It is constantly making changes for the better service of its patrons. Among these improvements is the artesian well just being made at their works.

The officers of this company are: G. E. Lamb, president; Thomas Crawford, manager; C. B. Mills, treasurer, and F. W. Ellis, secretary.