

HISTORY  
OF



CONCORD

NEW HAMPSHIRE

FROM THE ORIGINAL GRANT IN SEVENTEEN  
HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIVE TO THE  
OPENING OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

PREPARED UNDER THE  
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a sewerage precinct established in 1873, with the same boundaries as those of the gas precinct. The introduction of Long pond water greatly stimulated sewer construction ; and the former was decidedly promoted by the latter. By 1880 the precinct had been nearly permeated by the system's invisible contributors to the convenience and health of the people.

The question of providing a proper Water supply for the compactly occupied portion of Concord waited long for a satisfactory answer. Wells were early, and to some extent late, the means of supply. In 1829, the springs at the base of Sand Hill were thought of as sources of supply, and William and Joseph Low, Jacob B. Moore, Stephen Brown, and others were incorporated as the "Concord Aqueduct Association," with a capital of two thousand dollars, and empowered to take water from them, and deliver it to customers at such price as they deemed expedient. What, if anything, this association accomplished is not known ; but not a great while later, Amariah Pierce was supplying customers through an aqueduct of white-pine logs, twelve feet in length and six or eight inches in diameter, bored with a pod-auger. In 1849, Nathan Call obtained for himself and others a charter for the "Torrent Aqueduct Association," with a capital of twenty thousand dollars, and did business under it successfully. The conduct of the enterprise then came into the hands of James R. Hill, who finally sold his interest to Nathaniel White. After the death of Henry M. Robinson, who had begun to supply water from the locality afterwards to be known as White park, and from other sources, Mr. White purchased the rights of the heirs therein ; and made strong efforts in the Fifties and Sixties towards meeting the increasing demand for water. Down to the year 1859,—it may here be remarked,—the municipal fire department depended upon reservoirs only for its water supply,—too often scanty and uncertain ; but, that year, the city organized and incorporated, as a portion of its fire department, the Concord Railroad and Hose Company, No. 1, for the purpose of operating the hydrants and hose connected with the Merrimack river, and belonging to the railroad corporation as a part of the means which it had independently provided, at an expense of ten thousand dollars, for its own protection against fire.

On the 16th of December, 1859, a committee, previously appointed by the city council, and consisting of Joseph B. Walker, John Abbott, and Benjamin Grover, to inquire as to the feasibility and cost of abundantly supplying the compact part of the city with water, for fire and other purposes, reported that the population was then supplied in part from wells, and in part by aqueduct companies,

the two principal of which were the Torrent Aqueduct Association, and that of Nathaniel White; that these furnished with water some six hundred families and the hotels, besides supplying large amounts to public buildings, stores, shops, stables, and the Old Cemetery; and that there were several others of more limited capacities, each supplying from one or two to forty families. As to the fountain of supply, the committee gave the preference to Long pond; and estimated the cost of the introduction and distribution of the water therefrom, at one hundred seventy-two thousand four hundred seventy-five dollars and thirty-five cents. The cost of execution seemed to the committee the most serious objection to the immediate accomplishment of the project. Eleven years later, on the 30th of July, 1870, in the administration of Mayor Jones, the city council, realizing that the supply of water furnished in the compact part of the city was insufficient in quantity, and much of it so impure as to be wholly unfit for use, appointed a committee of seventeen consisting of Lyman D. Stevens, David A. Warde, Benjamin S. Warren, Jesse P. Bancroft, Abraham G. Jones, Asa McFarland, James S. Norris, Josiah Minot, Nathaniel White, Daniel Holden, James N. Lauder, Edward A. Abbott, John Kimball, John M. Hill, Benjamin A. Kimball, Moses Humphrey, and Benning W. Sanborn, to report the most proper course to be taken to secure the early introduction of an adequate supply of pure, fresh water from Long pond. The citizens of Concord were becoming thoroughly convinced that the safety, health, prosperity, and growth of the city absolutely demanded a greater and better supply of water than it then had, as they expressed themselves in resolution, at a full meeting in Eagle hall, on the evening of October 1, 1870. On the 29th of the same month, the committee of seventeen reported in favor of Long pond as the source of supply; by reason of the remarkable purity and softness of its water; its sufficiency to afford a constant and abundant supply; its elevation great enough to force the water over all the buildings, except a small number on the highest points, and into most of those; and the comparative ease with which the water could be conducted by aqueduct over the three and a half miles from the outlet of the pond to the state house.

The committee found that nothing hindered the immediate beginning of the work but the failure to make any satisfactory arrangement with the owners of the mills at West Concord, whereby might be secured the right to divert, for the purpose of the aqueduct, a part of the water hitherto used exclusively by the mills. Hence, active operations had to await state legislation. The committee accordingly reported the recommendation that measures be taken on

behalf of the city to obtain the necessary legislation, and that in the meantime plans and details be prepared ready for the work when the proper time came for commencing it. The recommendation was referred to Josiah Minot, Benjamin A. Kimball, John M. Hill, and David A. Warde, who, on the 10th of August, 1871, reported that the necessary legislative action had been procured. They also submitted an ordinance placing the management of the city water-works in a board of commissioners, to consist of six citizens and the mayor *ex officio*. After strenuous opposition and long discussion in both branches of the city council, the ordinance passed on the 30th of December, 1871. The mayor and aldermen, in January, 1872, appointed as the first board of water commissioners, John M. Hill, Benjamin A. Kimball, Josiah Minot, David A. Warde, Benjamin S. Warren, and Edward L. Knowlton; Mayor Jones serving *ex officio* till March, and thenceforward Mayor Kimball. James A. Weston, who engineered the sewerage system, was appointed chief engineer, and Charles C. Lund, assistant. The dispute with the owners of the water-power having been settled by referees in the unexpectedly large award of sixty thousand dollars, the city obtained the right to draw three hundred sixty-five million gallons yearly from the pond. The city purchased the stock of the Torrent Aqueduct association and the water rights of Nathaniel White for twenty thousand dollars; and paid for other water rights and for land damages, the sum of twenty-one thousand three hundred thirty-four dollars. The American Gas and Water Pipe company, of New Jersey, contracted to construct the main line from Long pond to the northerly end of Main street, and all the distribution pipes therefrom through the main portion of the city, and to set gates, hydrants, and other appendages, for the sum of one hundred forty-three thousand eight hundred eighty-two dollars. Within eight months after the contractors commenced work, water was, on the 14th of January, 1873, admitted into the pipes from the pond. By the last day of that year, twenty miles of piping had been laid and were in use. Under the act of June 30, 1871, authorizing the establishment of water-works, a water precinct was established having the same boundaries and containing the same territory as the gas precinct. On the 1st of January, 1875, the board of water commissioners thought it proper that the construction account should be closed at the amount of three hundred fifty thousand dollars, and that the indebtedness for the works, which had not already been provided for by the issue of bonds, should be likewise funded. And thus it was that the quiet waters of Lake Penacook began to be utilized in multiform benefits to the city.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Analysis of Long Pond Water, in note at close of chapter.



Board of Trade Building.

By October of the year 1873—the year of the first abundant inflow of “pure sweet water”—the subscription of members of the Board of Trade, recently organized, had erected on the eligible corner of Main and School streets a stately business edifice, handsome without and pleasant within, with its convenient illuminated clock in sightly tower, and its mellow bell of steel,—the latter, the generous individual gift of George A. Pillsbury. Though that building was long to outlive the organization under whose auspices it was erected and whose name it bore, yet, in any just appreciation, it should stand as a monument of an honorable attempt “to promote the prosperity of Concord.”<sup>1</sup>

Attention to the subjects of Public Health and the prevention of disease was specially awakened in connection with the introduction of sewerage and the new water supply. Concord, however, from the beginning of its city government had had its health officers. About the year 1866, Dr. Granville P. Conn began to advocate sanitary improvement, and so far gained the ear of the city council that an ordinance was passed providing for a house-to-house inspection,—the first in the state, if not in the United States,—this measure having been the more readily adopted in view of the ravages of cholera in Europe. Hygienic considerations were thenceforward, year after year, impressed upon the people in annual reports of city physicians and health officers—especially in the Seventies—until the city came to be laudably progressive in the matter of sanitation, and more and more ready to adopt scientific means and methods for warding off disease and death.

The historic glance may now be turned from topics especially pertaining to the material progress and physical well-being of the city to others of importance, but having less direct reference thereto. The beginning and early growth of the City Library have been recorded in a previous chapter. The city appropriation of three hundred dollars for this institution was continued for four years, or until 1867, when, the burden of war being somewhat lightened, it became five hundred. This continued till 1876, when, in accordance with a suggestion of the trustees, the library was removed to the board of trade building, after having had its home in the city hall building for nineteen years. In its new rooms, its six thousand seven hundred volumes found a more convenient situation. The city appropriation was doubled to one thousand dollars, and the library was kept open every afternoon

<sup>1</sup> See Board of Trade Festival, in note at close of chapter.