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LANDMARKS

OF

ALBANY COUNTY

NEW YORK.

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the business was continued by the Grays. In 1853 Marshall & Traver, two practical workmen from the Boardman & Gray factory, began making pianos, and two years later were succeeded by Marshall & Wendell. In 1882 the firm, under the title of the Marshall & Wendell Manufacturing Co., was incorporated, with Henry Russell, president; J. V. Marshall, superintendent; Harvey Wendell, manager and treasurer, and John Loughren, secretary. This business is still in existence, the present officers of the company being Jacob H. Ten Eyck, president; Thomas S. Willes, vice president; Edward M. McKinney, manager and treasurer, and James L. Carpenter, secretary.

William McCammon was an early manufacturer of pianos in Albany and his instruments acquired considerable reputation. Upon his death in 1881 the business was continued by his son, Edward McCammon, who finally removed it to Oneonta a few years since.

While there are very many other branches of industry profitably pursued in this city, this brief glance at some of the more prominent of the past and present ones will suffice to show that as a manufacturing center Albany is not far behind other cities of its size.

WATER SUPPLY.

The first notice in the city records of a proposed water supply, other than wells, occurs under date of 1794. An advertisement was then published asking for proposals for supplying the city with water through an aqueduct from a spring "at the Five-Mile House on the road to Albany." No further notice of this matter appears in the records. Two years later the Legislature passed an act to enable the corporation to establish a water supply, but this, too, failed of accomplishment. In 1797 Benjamin Prescott received from Stephen Van Rensselaer a grant of the Maezlandt Kill, and he laid a line of wooden log conduits from the fountain head. For some unexplained reason the grant must have reverted to Van Rensselaer, who, a few years later, transferred all the rights on that stream to the water company. The Albany Water Works Company was incorporated in 1802 with a capital of \$40,000. The first trustees were Stephen Lush, Philip Van Rensselaer, and John Tayler. The work of laying iron and wooden pipes through the principal streets was immediately commenced, and the Maezlandt Kill continued to be the source of supply until 1837, when that stream failed to meet the demands made upon it and the

Middle Brook was drawn upon. Within a few years both streams proved inadequate, and in 1845 a part of the Patroon's Creek was purchased by the company. Meanwhile in 1844 the capital of the company was increased to \$80,000, and in the same year the Albany Hydrant Company was incorporated, with John Townsend, John K. Paige, Bradford R. Wood, James D. Wasson, Barnum Whipple, Rufus W. Peckham, and Peter Gansevoort, trustees. This company caused extensive investigation and surveys to be made for the purpose of providing a better water supply, but nothing further was done.

A long-existing sentiment among progressive citizens that it would be wise for the city to own its own water works culminated in the submission of a bill to the Legislature by the corporation, which became a law April 9, 1850. This law empowered the council to appoint a board of five water commissioners, whose most important duty at that time was to make the necessary investigations and report upon the most feasible plan for establishing adequate water works for the city at a cost not exceeding \$600,000. The first water commission comprised James Stevenson, Erastus Corning, John Townsend, John Tayler and Robert E. Temple. The commission entered at once upon their task and had examinations made of the Hudson River, Patroon's Creek, the Normans Kill and the lakes on the Helderbergs. Plans were finally devised and reported which met the approval of the council. On August 23, 1850, all the sources of water supply owned by the old company were purchased for \$150,000, and most of the wooden pipes were superseded by iron, but the old method of obtaining water by gravitation was continued some years, the supply being the Maetzland Kill, with a further source which was adopted in 1851. This was provided by building a dam about six miles west of the city where three streams united to form the Patroon's Creek, thus creating a body of water since called Rensselaer Lake, covering full forty acres of land and holding about 200,000,000 gallons. From this lake an egg shaped brick conduit four feet high and nearly four miles long, was built to Bleecker reservoir, with a capacity of 30,000,000 gallons. In the same year two other reservoirs were built a little east of West Albany, which took the names of Upper and Lower Tivoli Lakes, the upper one being for storage and the lower for distribution. These received their supply from water entering the creek east of Rensselaer Lake. From the lower lake a 24-inch main was laid to the intersection of North Pearl and Van Woert streets, where the water entered the distributing mains.

This was the system of water supply up to 1875, and included iron mains all through the city east of Bleecker reservoir.

Before the year last named, however, the demand upon the water supply was so great, owing to growth of the city, that several water famines occurred, and it was evident that something must be done for relief. The Hudson River was now brought forward and discussed as a proper source of supply, and thorough analyses and investigations were made to determine its purity. O. F. Chandler, Ph. D., made an analysis of the water in 1872 and said: "I have no hesitation in recommending it as a suitable and proper source of supply." This decision he supported in 1885, when asked by the water commissioners if anything had taken place since his first analysis to lead him to change his first opinion. The plans of the water commissioners for the adoption of the river as a source of supply were carried out in 1875, the water being taken from beyond the pier, carried into a well chamber six feet in diameter and eighty feet deep through a copper wire screen of one hundred meshes to the inch, and thence through a culvert below low water mark. From this well chamber was extended a tunnel five feet in diameter and nearly nine hundred feet long under the basin to the pumping works, corner of Montgomery and Quackenbush streets, where engines were established which operated pumps to force the supply into Bleecker reservoir. While this plan gave an abundant supply to the district east of Bleecker reservoir, there were more elevated parts of the city that received no benefit from the new arrangement. To improve the conditions another reservoir was built in 1878 on Prospect Hill with a capacity of 7,000,000 gallons, and into this water is pumped from the Bleecker reservoir. The use of water from the Hudson River continued to cause discussion for a number of years, many intelligent persons insisting that it could not possibly be wholesome. On November 17, 1884, the Common Council passed a resolution requesting from the water commissioners a detailed statement of their information concerning the possible sources of water supply for the city, and of their reasons for adopting the plan of pumping water from the Hudson. The board reported February 2, 1885, as follows:

This Board has no prejudice in favor of the river water, or against any other source of supply, and if it can be shown that a better source of supply exists, it will gladly take all practicable measures within its power to secure it.

The report adds that judging by experience and by the numerous

tests made, the river is the only practicable and attainable source of supply.

The water subject continued to be agitated and before long an additional supply was needed to meet the increasing demand of the city. In accordance with a law of 1885, a special water commission was appointed consisting of Samuel Hand, president; Albert Vander Veer, secretary; Archibald McClure and Owen Golden, "to make inquiry as to the available sources of supply of pure and wholesome water for the city," and if the present supply was decided to be the best available, what method could be adopted for purifying it. On November 30, 1885, this commission recommended to the council 1st, That the supply then obtained from Patroon's Creek and Sand Creek by the Tivoli Lake be gathered and transmitted to the Tivoli main, the cost of which would not exceed \$230,000. 2d, "That a contract be made for a new supply of 10,000,000 gallons daily, to be delivered at Quackenbush street pumping station, from the flats between the Troy road and the Hudson River north of the city, at or about in the locality of the well from which the water has been tested, to be furnished by the patent improved gang well system of William B. Andrews & Bro.," the cost of this improvement not to exceed \$450,000.

The commission further recommended in the event of the council not approving of this plan, an alternative as follows: A new intake at a point in the Hudson River about 2,500 feet above the present intake, a new main from the pumping station to Bleecker reservoir, and additional pumps, with extensive facilities for aeration and filtration, and the abandonment of Tivoli Lake, the estimated expense of all this being \$750,000.

In their report to the council for 1886 the water commissioners again recommended the purchase of another and more powerful engine. At that time the consumption of water was exceeding the capacity of the pumps by more than twenty-five per cent. Although Tivoli Lake had been in one sense condemned, it was indispensable during 1886, as it was furnishing about one-fourth of the city supply. The report of the board for 1887 called for increased pumping capacity. On the 6th of January of this year Robert L. Banks, president of the Board of Water Commissioners, sent a communication to the water committee of the council, stating that the commissioners recommended such action by the council in its recommendations to the Legislature as would result in mutual action with the commissioners. That even if the driven well

project authorized by the law of 1885 should be successful, an unnecessary provision in the law of 1884 restrained the commissioners from taking any progressive steps, after an engine had been contracted for and land purchased for the completion of the plant. The commissioners' report for 1887 states that the engines already contracted for were completed and installed, but that the city was under fearful risks of water famine and destructive fire—a condition caused largely by the unnecessary provisions of the law before alluded to. The two new engines of 5,000,000 capacity, contracted for under the previous law, were finished in 1888.

On March 16, 1891, a special water commission consisting of Dr. Albert Vander Veer, Hiram E. Sickels, Owen Golden and John G. Myers, reported the driven well project a failure, and that in anticipation of this contingency they had made investigation as to the possibility of adopting some other source of supply at reasonable cost. They reported that the feeling against the use of river water for drinking purposes had not abated. One portion of the city, the eastern, where the supply was from the new reservoir, was comparatively free from typhoid and other diseases, which were then so prevalent as to amount to an epidemic in that part of the city south of Pearl street, which drew its supply from the river. This commission made careful examination of two sources of supply which alone seemed available; one, the streams and small lakes in Rensselaer county, east of the Hudson, and the other the Normanskill and its tributaries. On account of the great cost of adopting the first named source, the Normanskill was strongly recommended for adoption. The commission submitted an estimate of the cost of using this source, and further stated that the quality of the water compared favorably with that then being taken from the new reservoirs.

On December 28, 1891, the same commission submitted a report on the Normanskill, giving its flow, degree of purity, and suggesting methods for using it, adding, that by measurements and examinations made, "we are the more firmly convinced that the Normanskill will furnish a city supply amply sufficient and of good quality, and that a resort to it is the best, the most practical, if not the only practical, solution of the problem, how to give the city of Albany a better supply of water. Various expert opinions were secured as to the excellence of this water late in that year and early in 1892; but on January 16, 1892, the water committee of the council reported to that body that the project recom-

mended by the special commission ought not to receive their sanction, and therefore reported adversely upon the project.

The Board of Water Commissioners appointed in May, 1892, reported to the council December 5, 1892, that one promising source of water supply had been overlooked, which was Kinderhook Creek, which has its source in a number of streams rising in the mountainous district along the boundary of Massachusetts and New York. The commissioners submitted plans for the adoption of this source and estimates indicating that it could be made available for the sum of \$1,600,000. The water was examined by experts and pronounced superior. On December 18, 1893, Frederic P. Stearns, consulting engineer of Boston, reported to Hon. Elnathan Sweet, president of the water commissioners, that the Kinderhook Creek water was of excellent quality for all purposes, and that a supply from it would cost about \$72,000 less annually than a supply from the Hudson, if properly filtered.

Two of the pumps, before alluded to, and ordered from Milwaukee are at the present time in use, and all other plans for a better water supply were abandoned up to the present year, 1897, when there is a bill before the legislature authorizing the city to expend \$500,000 for an elaborate filtration system for the present supply. In 1896 a new building for the water works on Montgomery street was erected. William H. Weaver is now president of the board and George I. Bailey, superintendent.

FIRE DEPARTMENT.

Something has already been written of the fact that Albany made some effort towards protection from fire as early as 1694, through a body called Brant-masters, who used brantleere (fire ladders) and hooks. In December, 1706, the city had a primitive fire department, whose members were called "fyre-masters." In that year the records show that William Hogan, Anthony Coster, William Jacobse, Joh^s Claese, Jan Evertse, and Jacobus Schuyler were appointed to that position for one year; they were to examine chimneys, and "where they find chimneys extraordinary foule, to fine ye owner in ye summe of three shillings." These fyre-masters were continued many years, and in 1726 certain fines were imposed upon any person refusing to serve in that office. At a council meeting, November 24, 1730, it was ordered that "hooks and ladders be made with all speed and kept within convenient places within the city for avoiding the peril of fire."