

HISTORY
OF THE
CITY OF BUFFALO
AND
ERIE COUNTY,

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF
SOME OF ITS PROMINENT MEN AND PIONEERS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

EDITED BY
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SYRACUSE, N. Y.:
D. MASON & CO., PUBLISHERS,
1884.

1855; Charles L. Dayton, 1856 and 1857; H. D. Garvin, 1858 and '59; C. C. Wyckoff, 1860; J. Whitaker, 1861; Sanford Eastman, 1862 to 1866, inclusive; C. C. F. Gay, 1867; G. C. Mackay, 1868.

THE CITY WATER WORKS.

The first water works company in Buffalo was called the Buffalo and Black Rock Jubilee Water Works Company. It was organized sometime in 1826 and incorporated in 1827, with a capital stock of \$20,000. In 1832 this company had laid nearly sixteen miles of wooden water pipes. The water was drawn from the Jubilee Springs, situated near Delaware avenue, about one hundred rods north of Ferry street. No engine or machinery of any kind was ever used, the source of supply being on ground more elevated than any of the localities supplied with water. The pipes were originally laid through the northern portion of the city and to Black Rock by way of the Eleventh ward, but in 1845 a line was laid directly from the springs to what is known as the Parrish tract. The first line of pipes supplying the southern portion of the city were laid directly down Main street.

The officers for this company for the year 1832, (the first records now available,) were as follows: Peter B. Porter, president; Donald Fraser, S. C. Brewster, Peter B. Porter, directors; Absalom Bull, secretary and treasurer; Donald Fraser, superintendent.

The present commissioners are: A. A. Justin, Milton R. Hubbard and Joseph Ailinger. Mr. Justin and Mr. Job Gorton have both been commissioners for twelve years, but in June 1882, Mr. Gorton declined re-appointment and Mr. Justin, who had previously retired, was called to fill his place.

There are now from twelve to fifteen miles of pipes laid by this company.

The Buffalo City Water Works Company was not organized until the Jubilee Company had been in existence twenty-two years. The act incorporating the former was passed March 15, 1849, the incorporators being George Coit, Walter Joy, William A. Bird, Orlando Allen, Horatio Shumway, George R. Babcock, Isaac Sherman, Cyrenius C. Bristol, Oliver G. Steele, Thomas M. Foote, William Bucknell, Jr., Henry W. Rogers, William Coffin and Aaron D. Patchen.

The capital stock of the company was fixed at \$200,000, with power to increase it to \$500,000. The city of Buffalo was empowered to assume control of the works at discretion, any time within twenty years from the date of the charter.

The first meeting for organization was held at the Mayor's office on the 7th of February, 1850. On the 11th of March, 1850, the Common Council, under power granted by the Legislature, adopted a resolution, by the terms of which the city was to become a subscriber to the capital

stock of the company to the amount of \$100,000. The Mayor, however, questioned the prudence of the measure, though he admitted that the then recent disaster caused by the burning of the American Hotel and other buildings, admonished the city of the necessity for a more adequate provision against such losses in the future. After repeated discussions the Common Council, in accordance with the adverse report of a special committee, adopted another resolution in the early part of June, 1850, refusing to subscribe to the capital stock of the company on the ground that the company did not purpose to lay a sufficient quantity of pipes on the east side of Main street to meet the just demands of the citizens and tax-payers and, further, that the city could not raise the \$100,000 without issuing bonds encumbering all of the real estate possessed by it. The citizens, moreover, were slow to subscribe to the stock, and it looked for a time as if sufficient funds to enable the company to build the works could not be raised.

At this juncture Joseph Battin, of Newark, N. J., and Charles B. Dungan, of Philadelphia, capitalists and contractors, subscribed an amount sufficient to secure the construction of the works, with the tacit understanding, however, that the contract for such construction should be awarded them.

On May 1, 1850, a committee of three, viz.: George Coit, James McKay and William A. Bird was appointed by the Board of Directors to receive propositions for the construction of the works and negotiate for the purchase of land.

The plans and propositions of Battin, Dungan & Co., were submitted to William J. McAlpine, the distinguished engineer, for his approval or rejection. After a thorough investigation of the subject, he handed in a report to the council on the 29th of May, 1850.

It appears that there was at that time a prevailing belief that the source of supply should be located in the bay southwest of the city. Mr. McAlpine opposed this plan on the ground that the works would be exposed to danger from the storms of the lakes, the expense of protecting the pipes would be largely increased and the length of the pump main to the reservoir would be greatly increased as the reservoir would have to be located on the high ground in the northern part of the city. The engineer favored the other proposed location for the works, in the Niagara river just below Black Rock. To obviate the only objection to this place (that the supply pipes would have to cross the Black Rock harbor and the Erie canal) he suggested the plan of laying the pipes below the beds of those channels.

For the location of the proposed reservoir the following points had been named:—on Delaware street near the then north line of the city; on Michigan street, on the same line, and on Prospect Hill. The latter site was finally recommended by the engineer.

The contract for building the works was subsequently awarded to Battin, Dungan & Co., at \$375,000, with the proviso that they conform to the modifications suggested by Mr. McAlpine in reference to the use of low-pressure and condensing engine. Lots 29 and 30 were at once bought for the location of the pump house, and lot 145 (Prospect Hill) for the reservoir.

Ground was broken for the shaft and tunnel on the 29th of July, 1850; for the reservoir August 12th, and for the pump house, boiler house, etc., September 12th. The work of excavating the shaft and tunnel was relet by the contractors, to Jones & Osborn, of Rochester. The reservoir embankments were erected by Hiram Pierce & Alanson Webster, of Buffalo.

On the 17th of September, 1850, the Common Council granted the Water Works Company permission to lay pipes in the following named streets:—Niagara street, from the reservoir to Main street; Michigan street, from Exchange to Genesee; Swan street, from Main to Pine; Mohawk street, from Niagara to Main; Delaware street, from Niagara to Park Place; Genesee street, from Main to Spruce; Terrace and Exchange street, from Pearl to Michigan; Pearl street, from the Terrace to Tupper; Washington street, from Exchange to Genesee; South Division, from Main to Pine; North Division, from Michigan to Chestnut; East Seneca, from Main to Kinney's alley; Clinton street, from Washington to Union; Eagle street, from Michigan to Union; Carroll street, from Washington to Michigan; West Seneca street, from Main to the Terrace; Franklin street from Tupper to West Swan; Ellicott street, from Eagle to West Seneca; Oak street, from North Division to South Division. The pipes were to be laid under the direction of the Street Committee of the city and all the work on Main street was to be completed by October 15, 1850. The work on Main street was begun at the canal bridge, running thence northerly, on the 30th of September, 1850.

A tariff of rates was adopted November 29, 1850. The reservoirs were completed November 19, 1851. The last pipe on Niagara street connecting the reservoirs with the distributing mains, was laid December 3, 1851. The river connection with the tunnel (connecting the pumps with the river) was finished December 18, 1851; and on December 19th the works were pronounced about completed and steam was raised. On January 2, 1852, the reservoir stops were opened and water let on the city at 11 o'clock A. M. On January 5th, 1852, Mr. A. R. Ketcham was appointed superintendent of the works. On May 1, 1854, there were 1,036 consumers taking water from the company.

In February, 1860, the office was again removed to near the corner of Erie and Pearl streets, in Rogers and Browns Block. On January 1, 1864, the total length of pipe laid was 32 miles and 2,471 feet, there being 2,498 consumers. At present there are two systems in use

by the company, the high service for the elevated portions of the city, and low service for the remainder.

Following are the officers of the Water Company for the years 1850, (the first) 1852 and 1853:—Henry W. Rogers, president; George Coit, vice-president; Oliver G. Steele, secretary; Henry L. Lansing, treasurer; Aaron A. Patchin, C. C. Bristol, James Smith, inspectors; A. R. Ketcham, superintendent.

Following are the changes that were made in the officers of the company from the year 1853 to the present time:—

1854—Same officers as above, except A. R. Ketcham was made secretary and superintendent.

1855—Albert H. Tracy, made president.

1856—A. R. Ketcham, secretary and treasurer.

1857—Office removed to Kremlin Hall.

1860—Henry W. Rogers, president.

1863—Oliver G. Steele, vice-president.

1866—Henry W. Rogers, president and treasurer; A. R. Ketcham, secretary and superintendent.

1869—William F. Rogers, C. J. Wells, James Ryan, water commissioners. Office No. 20 West Swan street.

1870—Alexander Brush, commissioner, *vice* William F. Rogers.

1871—George R. Yaw, *vice* Alexander Brush.

1873—George R. Potter, *vice* Mr. Yaw.

1874—C. J. Wells, George B. Gates and James Ryan, commissioners; George Hosley, superintendent, and Louis H. Knapp, engineer.

1875—George B. Gates, George Truscott and Edwin Hurlburt, commissioners. Office, 96 Pearl street.

1877—George Baltz, commissioner, *vice* Edwin Hurlburt. Office room 1, City and County Hall.

1880—A. R. Ketcham, superintendent, *vice* Mr. Hosley.

1881—James N. Scatcherd, Louis P. Reichert, James Ryan, commissioners.

Mr. Ketcham, superintendent until March 1st, 1882, when Louis H. Knapp was appointed.

THE BUFFALO POSTAL SERVICE.

The first postoffice through which passed the insignificant mails for the few inhabitants who had settled upon or near the site of Buffalo, in 1804, was called "Buffalo Creek." Erastus Granger, who was one of the foremost of the very early settlers, came here supported to some extent by the influence and power of the President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, which influence Mr. Granger had earned by labor in the political arena; he was accordingly made the first postmaster at "Buffalo Creek," and afterwards "Collector of Customs." That was, undoubtedly, the first time that political influence affected the little settlement. Mr. Granger's appointment was made on the 30th of September, 1804. The nearest postoffices to Buffalo Creek, were Batavia on the east, Erie on the west, and Niagara on the north.