



HISTORY

OF

COLUMBIA COUNTY,

NEW YORK.

WITH

Illustrations and Biographical Sketches

OF

SOME OF ITS PROMINENT MEN AND PIONEERS.

PHILADELPHIA:

EVERTS & ENSIGN.

—1878.—

partment Oct. 18, 1837, and was succeeded by Joshua Waterman.

THE FIRE OF 1838.

One of the most destructive fires which ever visited Hudson was that which in the year 1838 swept the ground which is now Franklin Square.* It commenced about five o'clock P.M. on Tuesday, the 7th of August, and was supposed to have been occasioned by a spark from the smoke-stack of the steambot "Congress," which had stopped to take in tow a barge lying in the dock. It was first communicated to the store-house of Samuel Plumb, and being assisted by a strong northwest wind, spread with great rapidity until nearly seventy dwelling-houses, besides stores and other buildings, were destroyed, and about one hundred families were thrown shelterless into the streets. "The whole square bounded by Water, Front, Fleet, and Ferry streets was laid in ruins; also the square surrounded by Ferry, Front, and Still streets and South bay, all the buildings between Cross street and the bay, the lumber-yards of R. Reed and William Hudson, and the whole square bounded by Front, Second, Partition, and Cross streets, excepting three houses." The loss was estimated at \$150,000, on which was an insurance not exceeding \$50,000.

In the newspapers of that time it was mentioned that the firemen exerted themselves to the utmost to check the ravages of the fire, and the gallant service which they performed on that day was spoken of in terms of highest commendation.

THE CONFLAGRATION OF 1844.

The fire of 1838 was fully equaled in destruction of property by the conflagration which occurred June 28, 1844. This was also discovered about five o'clock P.M., and was said to have been communicated by sparks from the steambot "Fairfield," then lying at the wharf. There were destroyed two lumber-yards, an oil-factory, a warehouse filled with wool, the old still-house, containing a very large quantity of hay on storage, about thirty other buildings on Franklin, Ferry, and Water streets, three wharves, and a vessel laden with flour. The loss was estimated at \$175,000, on which was an insurance of \$65,000.

The first five engines of Hudson—Nos. 1 to 5, inclusive—have been mentioned. Then came No. 6, which was located at the print-works, which were then included in the city limits. Engine No. 7 was purchased soon after 1830, and was of the New York pattern, built by Smith, of New York. A new No. 3 was built by Henry Waterman, and was the first "piano" engine in Hudson. It is still in existence, and those who admired it in its youthful days be-

* Franklin Square was immediately laid out on the ground made vacant by the fire. On the 11th of August the council resolved,

"That in their opinion the public interest of the city requires that a public square be laid out and opened in said city, including all the land within the following bounds, to wit: beginning at the south-westerly corner of Fleet and Front streets, and running from thence southerly along the westerly line of Front and Ferry streets; from thence westerly along the northerly line of Ferry street to the north-easterly corner of Ferry and Water streets; from thence northerly along the easterly line of Water street to the southeasterly corner of Water and Fleet streets; and from thence easterly along the southerly line of Fleet street to the place of beginning."

lieve it to be yet able to compete successfully with the best hand-engines of the present time. No. 8 (the highest number reached in the Hudson department) was a large engine of seven-inch cylinders. This and a new No. 1 of the same class were the last hand-engines purchased.

The first (and last) steam fire-engines of Hudson were purchased in April and August, 1863. These were the "J. W. Hoysradt" and the "H. W. Rogers." The former was numbered 8, and took the company of hand-engine No. 8, with Charles C. Champlin as its first captain; the "Rogers" took the number and company of 2, with Charles A. Dingman as captain. The company of No. 7 was disbanded, leaving in service hand-engines Nos. 1 and 3, with a truck company and a hose company.

The new water-works, with their unlimited supply of water always available under great pressure, have revolutionized the fire department; for now, with no equipment but the necessary length of hose, the firemen can at any time turn upon the fire as heavy and powerful a stream as could be thrown by the most efficient steamer. As a result, there are now only hose and truck companies, and the engines remain unused in their houses.

Following is a list of the chief officers of the fire department, and of the organizations now composing it:

Chief Engineer.—Peter Loeffler.

Assistant Engineers.—Mason I. Crocker, George C. Miller.

Edmonds Hose, No. 1.—Lewis H. George, captain.

Rogers Hose, No. 2.—Henry L. Miller, captain.

Washington Hose, No. 3.—Michael Welch, captain.

Phoenix Hose, No. 5.—Crawford Blake, captain.

Hudson Hose, No. 6.—Robert V. Noble, captain.

Hoysradt Hose, No. 8.—R. Remington, Jr., captain.

Hook and Ladder, No. 3.—Charles S. Rogers, captain.

WATER-SUPPLY.

THE HUDSON AQUEDUCT.

The project to supply Hudson with pure water, from sources outside the bounds of the compact settlement, was formed just prior to the city's incorporation by a number of citizens who associated themselves together for the purpose. Each subscription of twenty-five dollars entitled the subscriber to one share in the proprietorship, and to the right to lead the water into his house† for the supply of the family or families living therein. Non-subscribers were supplied by payment of a reasonable annual tax.

The first meeting of the subscribers for organization was held March 9, 1785, and the first managers or trustees elected were Thomas Jenkins, Daniel Lawrence, Daniel Gano, Samuel Mansfield, Stephen Paddock, and Ezra Reed; William Mayhew, clerk.

The plan was to bring the water to the city through wooden pipes,—logs, bored lengthwise,—and the work was commenced immediately. The supply was first taken from the "Ten Broeck spring," on the farm of John Ten Broeck. By what tenure the association then held this spring does not appear, as no record of purchase is found until Aug.

† When a house was sold it was usual to sell the proprietorship, or water-right, with it.

29, 1791, when John Ten Broeck conveyed by deed to Stephen Paddock, Elishu Banker, and Samuel Mansfield, inspectors of the aqueducts of the city of Hudson, a piece or parcel of land containing sixty-six and three-quarters perches, with the springs and water thereon, for supplying with water the inhabitants of the city of Hudson.

The work upon the aqueduct appears to have progressed rapidly, and on the 13th of June, 1785, we find the construction committee notifying subscribers to pay in immediately to Stephen Paddock, treasurer, four dollars on each share, "as a number of contracts must be discharged." On the 18th of January, 1786, the aqueduct was announced as completed, and the people of Hudson were for the first time supplied with water of good quality. The total cost of the work, conveying the water a distance of two miles from the source to the city plat, was \$2850.

In March, 1790, the Legislature passed "An act for the better regulating and protecting the Aqueducts in the City of Hudson." That act regulated the election of officers, and provided for the establishment of by-laws, which it gave the common council the power to enforce by the imposition of proper penalties for infraction; thus in some measure relieving the association from its previous condition of powerlessness for the protection of its own rights and interests.

For the first seven years the only source of supply to the aqueduct was the Ten Broeck spring; but it was found that this did not at all times furnish a sufficient quantity of water. On the 30th of August, 1791, in view of a scarcity of supply, the council

"Resolved, that John Kemper be appointed to take the pump-brake and upper box from the public pump, and, at the hour of six in the morning, at twelve at noon, and at five in the evening of each day, go with, or deliver it to the hands of some careful persons to be carried to the pump, that each of the citizens applying for water may have an equal proportion; and that said brake and box shall not be delivered at any other times of the day until a constant supply of water shall be found in the pump."

The town-pump referred to was situated near the old market, and was supplied with water by the aqueduct.

On the 19th of July, 1793, Caspar Huyek and John V. H. Huyek conveyed by deed to Stephen Paddock, Cotton Gelston, and Russell Kellogg, trustees, "for the use of the inhabitants of the city of Hudson, under direction of the proprietors of the Aqueduct," a piece of land with springs thereon, called and known as Huyek's springs, situated "southwesterly of the house of Samuel Nichols, now in possession of Luther Dunning." This spring, now known as the "Hudson Fountain," is located on the Claverack road, and is the same of which the Labadists, Dankers and Slyuter, wrote in 1680, "Large clear fountains flow out of these cliffs or hills; the first real fountains, and the only ones, we have met in this country." Connection was made with this spring during the year 1793, and from that day to this it has sent its clear, sparkling tribute to the thirsty city.

It does not seem that the supply was regarded as sufficient, even after the addition of the Huyek spring; for on the 30th of June, 1798, Daniel Clark, Thomas Power, and Alexander Coffin, "trustees of the Aqueducts in the city of Hudson," purchased from Captain John Hathaway,

for four hundred and twenty-five dollars, "a lot of about two acres of land, near Peter Hardiek's house, and along the Claverack road* to the northeast corner of the Friends' Burying-Ground, and along Cotton Gelston's land, with stone house, barn, and other buildings, and the well thereon;" their object being to sink wells upon the land, believing (for some reason which is not now apparent) that they would by that means secure an ample supply of water. The project, however, failed of success, and afterwards the "Power spring" was added to the aqueduct's sources of supply.

In 1816, March 22, "An act to incorporate the Hudson Aqueduct Company" passed the Legislature, granting a perpetual charter, and naming as directors Robert Jenkins, William Johnson, Judah Paddock, Ebenezer Comstock, and Gayer Gardner. In December, 1835, the company petitioned the Legislature for an increase of capital, for the purpose of furnishing the aqueduct with iron pipes. This met with considerable opposition, being thought unnecessary, for the reason that now wooden pipes had been laid not long before. This caused a long and vexatious delay; but the measure was finally carried, and the iron pipes were laid in 1841.

It is believed that there exists no purer water than that of the Hudson Aqueduct Company, and that to its purity is attributable the remarkable exemption which the city has enjoyed from fevers, cholera, and epidemics of all descriptions. And although the recently-constructed city water-works furnish more than an abundance, not only for fire and manufacturing purposes, but for every other possible requirement, yet the supplies from the Ten Broeck, the Huyek, and the Power's springs should be highly prized, and never abandoned.

The present (1878) directors of the company are Benjamin F. Deuell, president and general superintendent; Theodore Miller, Jacob Macy, Henry J. Baringer; Cornelius H. Evans, clerk and treasurer.

THE HUDSON WATER-WORKS.

From the settlement of Hudson until the establishment of the present system the water-supply was scarcely equal to the demand upon it for domestic purposes, and was wholly insufficient as a means of protection against fire. These facts were of course well understood, but the introduction of an ample water-supply was looked upon as a project too gigantic to be undertaken by a city of Hudson's population and resources.† It was not, therefore, until October, 1871, during the great Chicago fire, that the

* This tract of land was sold by the association, and, after changing hands several times, was purchased by the turnpike company, who cut their road through it, and the remainder was afterwards sold to the Episcopal church.

† Immediately after each of the great fires in Hudson (but particularly after those of 1838 and 1844) the subject of furnishing the city with a more copious supply of water was earnestly agitated, but in these cases the plans advanced for accomplishing this object usually took the form of propositions to construct a large reservoir or reservoirs upon the public square, or at the intersection of Worth avenue; but even this was never accomplished, and a proposal to build water-works of one-fourth part the magnitude of those now in successful operation would have been thought visionary and absurd.

question was seriously agitated. It was then thoroughly discussed through the newspapers and at public meetings, and the result of these discussions was the passage of a law, in the spring of 1872, authorizing the construction of water-works, and appropriating therefor one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars. The commission appointed under that law caused surveys and estimates to be made, and it was demonstrated to be impracticable to erect such works as the interests of the city required within the appropriation. Therefore, in the spring of 1873, a new law was enacted, authorizing the expenditure of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, and a commission was appointed in June of that year charged with the duty of furnishing the city with an ample supply of pure and wholesome water. A difference of opinion existed as to the advantages offered respectively by the Hudson river and by Lake Charlotte as proper sources of supply, and that question was determined by a vote of tax-payers in favor of the river. Considerable time was necessarily consumed in making surveys and in maturing plans, and the work of construction was not begun until March, 1874, but was then pushed forward with such energy that the water was let into the system on the 1st of November following; and by the 1st of January, 1875, one hundred and one taps were supplying water to the citizens, and many cisterns were filled from fire-hydrants.

These works were completed within the time estimated to be required and within the appropriation; which can be said of few public works of equal extent and importance. The commissioners under whose supervision and control the works were constructed were Messrs. F. F. Folger, Edwin C. Terry, Lemuel Holmes, William H. Gifford, Hiram Macy, and Thomas S. Gray.

The water is taken from nearly opposite Ferry street, at a point where the depth of the river is 35 feet. The inlet is at a depth of about 8½ feet below ordinary high water-line.

The reservoirs consist of a filtering-basin of 13½ feet depth, and having an area of 15,981 feet at the crest of the slope wall, and a clear-water storage reservoir, separated from the other by an embankment 14 feet in thickness. This basin has a depth of 20 feet, an area at the crest line of 32,696 feet, and a storage capacity of 3,200,000 gallons. The first-mentioned basin is also available for storage as well as for filtering purposes. An eighteen-inch main, capable of delivering 13,000,000 gallons in twenty-four hours, passes from the filter, and afterwards branches into two twelve-inch mains for the supply of the city.

These reservoirs are located on Prospect hill, east of the city, and, by reason of their great elevation (about 300 feet above the river), give sufficient head to carry the water to every part of the city, and furnish unequalled advantages to the system in controlling and extinguishing fires.

The pumping building and engine-house is a fine structure, fifty-eight feet ten inches by sixty-five feet seven inches, and fifty-two feet in height to the ridge, with pressed-brick faces and marble trimmings. Its location is on Water street, west of Franklin square, and between the Hudson River railroad and the river. Its cost was about

\$15,000. The pumping-engines and boilers were built by the Clapp & Jones Manufacturing Company, of Hudson, at a cost of \$40,000. All the straight pipes were furnished on contract by the Warren foundry, and most of the specials were cast by Messrs. Gifford Brothers, of Hudson. The length of pipe now laid in the system is about thirteen miles.

From the completion of the works until the present time they have been in constant and entirely successful operation, furnishing to the city thoroughly filtered water in ample supply for all purposes.

The gentlemen comprising the present board of water commissioners are Messrs. Frederick F. Folger, Lemuel Holmes, Edwin C. Terry, Ezra Waterbury, William J. Miller, Henry J. Baringer.

PROMENADE HILL.

This is a public ground, much frequented for the purpose which its name indicates, by the people of Hudson, who have always held it in high and deserved estimation as a place of popular resort.

It is a grassed and graded spot of about one and a half acres, upon the summit of the high promontory which rises from the river-bank, opposite the foot of Warren street, and is the western end of the ridge on which the city is built.

It has been in use as a public walk or promenade nearly or quite as long as Hudson has been a city. On the 9th of March, 1795, the proprietors resolved by vote "that the certain piece of land known by the name of the Parade, or Mall, in front of Main street, and on the bank fronting the river, be granted to the common council forever, as a public walk or Mall, and for no other purpose whatever;" by which it is made sure that it had been in use as a promenade ground for a considerable time before 1795, long enough to have acquired the name mentioned in the resolution above quoted.

After the hill was donated to the city (but we have been unable to ascertain how long after that time) there was built upon it a house of octagonal shape, two stories high, the upper one being used as a lookout or observatory, and the lower one as a refreshment-room, which latter was never a desirable addition to the "attractions" of the place. Upon the erection of this structure the "Mall" received the name of "Round-House Hill," and continued to be so known until about 1835, when the ground was improved by the erection of a fence, the laying out and grading of walks, and the removal of the "round-house;" after which the name, being inappropriate as well as inelegant, was dropped, and, after some discussion and the suggestion of several high-sounding names (among which was "Paradise Hill"), that of "Parade Hill" was adopted, and continued in use for many years, but has now been generally discarded for the more appropriate one by which the hill is known at the present time.

During the past summer (1878) the ground has been improved and placed in the best condition. The walks have been re-graded and graveled, the grass-plats newly sodded, and a large number of comfortable seats placed in the proper positions. Along the entire river-front and