

HISTORY
OF
FULTON COUNTY

EMBRACING

EARLY DISCOVERIES; THE ADVANCE OF CIVILIZATION; THE LABORS
AND TRIUMPHS OF SIR WILLIAM JOHNSON; THE INCEP-
TION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE GLOVE INDUS-
TRY; WITH TOWN AND LOCAL RECORDS;
ALSO MILITARY ACHIEVEMENTS OF
FULTON COUNTY PATRIOTS.

REVISED AND EDITED

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Experience is by industry achieved,
And perfected by the swift course of time.

—SHAKESPEARE.

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1892.

from the creek rises gradually toward the east, and its natural features have been tastefully improved by the landscape gardener's art.

The first burial in the cemetery was that of Peter McKie, its first vice-president, and was made November 28, 1849. The several presidents of the association and the dates of their election to that office have been as follows: Elijah W. Prindle, October 4, 1849; Marcellus Gilbert, December 1, 1855; Daniel Edwards, October 7, 1857; E. W. Prindle, October 1, 1861; Burnett H. Dewey, September 16, 1875; James Younglove, February 2, 1886. The present officers are: President, James Younglove; vice-president, Martin Kennedy; treasurer, William S. McKie; secretary, Charles O. Gross; trustees, James Younglove, Martin Kennedy, William S. McKie, Charles O. Gross, William S. Northrup, John W. Cline, and James P. Argersinger.

Johnstown Historical Society.—Probably no village in New York state affords a more promising field for historical research than Johnstown. The ground upon which the village is built and the surrounding territory for a score of miles or more is rich in historic lore and was the scene of memorable events long before other more populous communities of the present day had an existence. The organization of a historical society in Johnstown is therefore to be commended, and the names of those connected with the effort are a guaranty that nothing will be left undone that can bring to light those early and important events, many of which have fallen into comparative obscurity through the lapse of time and the frailty of human memory. The Historical Society was organized May 30, 1892, a day on which the whole country is called once a year to honor the memory of the heroes who fought and died for the cause of union and liberty. The officers of the society are as follows: President, Horace E. Smith; vice-presidents, James I. Younglove, Capt. Edgar S. Dudley, and S. Elmore Burton; treasurer, Donald Fraser; corresponding secretary, Fred L. Carroll; recording secretary, Philip Keck; librarian, Rev. John N. Marvin; trustees, A. S. Van Voast, Rev. Peter Felts, Andrew J. Nellis, John G. Ferres, Fenton I. Gidley, John T. Selmsler, and William A. Livingston. Temporary rooms have been engaged and fitted up on the third floor of the Ricketts building.

The Johnstown Water Works.—The introduction of a system of pure and wholesome water into Johnstown. was brought about, as has been

the case in many other instances, by the occurrence of a number of disastrous fires, against which the village had no adequate means of protection. The destruction wrought by these conflagrations induced the board of trustees, early in the summer of 1877, to make some provision against a recurrence of the evil. To this end public meetings were held, at which the citizens freely expressed their views on the subject of water supply, and it soon became apparent that a large majority of those who favored an expenditure to obtain water for fire purposes, also favored the introduction of pure water for sanitary and domestic uses.

Pursuant to that conclusion a board of water commissioners was organized on July 6, 1877, under the provisions of the law of 1875, commonly known as "The Water Act." This board was composed of the following men: James L. Northrup, Levi Stephenson, James F. Mason, Jonah Hess, and Jacob P. Miller. Mr. Northrup was made president of the board; Mr. Mason, secretary; Mr. Miller, treasurer; and James H. Pike appointed superintendent. Preliminary surveys and estimate of the cost of the water works were made, upon the plan of a gravity system, having Cold brook, a stream about four miles distant from the village, and having an elevation above it of four hundred feet, for its source of supply. It was estimated that an expenditure of \$61,000 would be necessary, which amount was \$400 in excess of that authorized by the water act to be raised for the purpose. The board, however, believing that the work could be let within the amount available, decided to ask for the authority to bond the village according to the provisions of the act. That authority was finally conferred by a vote of the citizens and tax payers of the village, taken at a meeting held for the purpose on the 18th day of October, 1877.

The contract for building the work was awarded to Messrs. Donaldson & Geer, for \$50,518, being the price settled upon after making changes in the specifications. Bonds were issued upon the credit of the village, to the amount of \$60,500, bearing interest at the rate of six per cent. per annum, payable annually on the first day of July, running twenty, twenty-five and thirty years—interest and principal payable at the Metropolitan National Bank, in the city of New York. These bonds were placed in the city of Boston, at a premium of one-half per cent. or

an aggregate premium of \$302.50. The bonds were held by the commissioners and delivered in installments, as the proceeds were needed, giving them the additional amount in accrued interest of \$496.61, or an aggregate from \$60,500 in bonds of \$61,299.11.

The work was begun in March, 1878, and was completed and conditionally accepted on the 5th of October, of the same year. The principal source of supply was taken from Cold brook, which flows from nearly the center of a series of timbered sand hills, which serve as a storage reservoir for the annual rain falls, and through which the water is filtered to the stream, trickling in at its sides with remarkable uniformity throughout the year, and in limpid, crystal purity. The water during the heat of midsummer maintains a temperature of fifty-two degrees Fahrenheit, and never falls below forty degrees in the coldest winter weather.

A timber dam was thrown across Cold brook about 1500 feet below the point where the stream first appears in the ravine. An eight inch iron conduit was constructed from this dam 3,600 feet to the brow of the Cliff's hill, where it was reduced to a six inch pipe running 700 feet down the hill to a distributing reservoir, under a head of 151 feet. The latter reservoir was constructed by throwing a dam or embankment across the base of an oval or egg-shaped ravine, giving a storage capacity of 12,000,000 gallons. At the upper end of this distributing reservoir the Warren brook supply of upwards of 350,000 gallons daily, was connected by a twelve inch cast iron conduit, running from the Warren brook, 515 feet on a level to the reservoir.

A gate-house of corrugated iron was built directly above an inlet chamber of masonry, resting upon a timber foundation, and was supplied with screen, valves, and stand pipe. Through this inlet the water from the distributing reservoir passes into the main conduit of ten inch cast iron piping which runs from the tower 19,377.5 feet to and through the village. When constructed the water was distributed in the village through 6,809.8 feet of eight inch pipe; 12,816.2 feet of six inch pipe, and 4,554.7 feet of four inch pipe. Since that time the street mains have been extended many thousand feet, a description of which will be given later on.

The elevation of Cold brook at the dam, is 433 feet above the

lowest point of distribution in the village. The flow line of the distributing reservoir is 151 feet below Cold brook at the dam.

The first application for water was dated October 7, 1878. Up to and including December 31, the mains had been tapped and water introduced upon seventy-eight applications. No charge was made for the use of water until January 1, 1879, when, with the view of making the annual collections from water rents close concurrently with the fiscal year, the first water rent was made to cover the period of four months, ending with the 30th of April, 1879. From this collection, being for one-third of a year, the amount received was \$229.12; making the annual average receipt from the first seventy-eight applications, a fraction over \$11.50 each. The actual cost of the works up to April 30, 1879, was \$59,806.11, and the total disbursements up to that date, outside of the cost of the work was \$7,620.88 making the aggregate disbursement from the treasury, \$68,426.99. Owing to the fact that the village did not purchase the land surrounding the Cold brook, at the time of constructing the reservoir, they placed themselves liable to action for damages from the parties owning the lands adjoining the stream. Such an action was brought against the village during the year 1881, by James H. Coughnet, who petitioned for an injunction restraining the village from the diversion or further use of the water of Cold brook. After full investigation and consideration by the water commissioners it was decided to make an effort to adjust the damages due the several persons interested, but in consequence of the exorbitant demands of these parties, no satisfactory agreement could be reached. The water commissioners thereupon petitioned the court for a commission to appraise the damage the village should pay for such diversion and use of the water of Cold brook and also for the value of the land adjoining. This was believed to be the wisest action that could be taken to protect the interests of the village. The court appointed a commission, which organized in December, 1880, and after making an examination of the premises and hearing the evidence from the parties interested, made, in April, 1881, the award of damages, which was duly approved by the court. The total amount of this damage to land and water was placed at \$5,084 69, which was paid with interest by the village in 1882.

Extensions of street mains have been made from year to year, as follows, the dates given indicating the end of each fiscal year: 1883, seven hundred and thirty feet; 1884, on Cady street, from Glebe to Fon Claire; on Glebe street, from Montgomery to Prospect; on Hoosic street, from Montgomery to Fon Claire and on Market, from Washington to Fulton; 1885, six thousand seven hundred and twenty-nine feet; 1886, three thousand four hundred and seventy-seven feet; 1887, two thousand five hundred and thirty feet; 1888, three thousand five hundred and twenty feet; 1889, three thousand four hundred and fifty feet; 1890, seven thousand five hundred and twenty-one feet; 1891, six thousand seven hundred and thirty-seven feet; 1892, one thousand six hundred and fifty feet.

In August, 1883, the village employed S. E. Babcock, a hydraulic engineer, to make surveys and examinations of the old conduit and dam at Cold brook, which resulted in the discovery that a large quantity of water was leaking around and under the dam and running down the old channel of the stream, instead of flowing through the cast iron conduit line to the distributing reservoir. To remedy this defect Mr. Babcock proposed the building of a new stone dam a short below the timber one, and replacing the iron conduit with twelve inch vitrified salt glazed pipe capable of discharging over 1,000,000 gallons per diem, and laid to grades all below a hydraulic grade line. He also submitted an engineer's estimate of the cost of the work, the amount being \$7,067. This was accepted by the water commissioners, September 7, 1883, and Mr. Babcock at once organized a force and began the work within five days after entering into the contract, completing the entire undertaking on the first day of November, 1883. The new conduit, by actual measurement, was found to discharge 550,000 gallons per diem, at a very dry time, soon after its completion, and when the waters of Cold brook were not above their low water stage. Thus the village of Johnstown, at an expenditure of a little more than seven thousand dollars, doubled its water supply and saved from going to waste nearly 225,000 gallons of pure water per day.

The successive presidents of the board of water commissioners since its organization have been as follows: James L. Northrup, 1877-78; John G. Ferres, 1879-80; George A. Streeter, 1881-82; Jonah Hess,

1883-85; Daniel W. Campbell, 1886-88; John M. Dougall, 1889; Oliver Getman, 1890-92.

James H. Pike was the first superintendent of the works and held the position two years, being succeeded by G. D. Henry, who also remained in the position two years. The present superintendent, J. J. Buchanan, assumed the duties of that office in 1884.

The present board of water commissioners consists of Oliver Getman, Archibald McMartin, C. M. Rowell and Marvin Bronk. Mr. Bronk is secretary and Mr. Rowell treasurer.

The Johnstown, Gloversville and Kingsboro Horse Railroad Company was organized in the fall of 1873, and numbered among its early directors the following named persons: Daniel B. Judson, H. L. Burr, Jonathan Wooster, Ira Lee, C. G. Alvord, Richard Fancher, C. E. Argersinger, J. McLaren, Isaac V. Place, F. M. Young, John V. King, N. H. Decker, William Argersinger, James Younglove, D. C. Livingston, J. J. Hanson, A. D. Simmons, and others. A number of these handed in their resignation shortly after the company was organized, among them H. L. Burr, who had served as vice-president, and who was succeeded in that office by Jonathan Wooster. Daniel B. Judson was elected president, and J. McLaren, secretary and treasurer. A line of horse railroad had been constructed from Gloversville to Kingsboro, and proved an unsuccessful enterprise, and subsequently an attempt was made by the Johnstown, Gloversville, and Kingsboro Company to purchase the track and equipment of the former road, but without success. The tracks between Fulton street and Kingsboro, were afterwards abandoned or removed, as the road did but little business. That portion of the road extending north on Main street from Pine to Fulton, however, was leased by the J., G. and K. company, whose road from Johnstown to Gloversville was completed in the latter part of 1874. On April 1, 1875, the road was leased to N. H. Decker, of Johnstown, for a term of five years. This lease was canceled March 13, 1878, and the road was again delivered into the hands of the company. July 1, 1878, the lease was renewed for five years, with the privilege of five years more. This contract continued until November 5, 1885, when the road was again restored to the company, by Mrs. M. E. Decker, into whose possession it had come upon the death of her husband, N. H. Decker. On Decem-