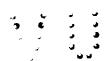


A HISTORY
OF THE
Old Town
OF
STRATFORD
AND THE CITY OF
BRIDGEPORT
CONNECTICUT.



BY
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AUTHOR OF THE HISTORIES OF WOLCOTT, TORRINGTON, NEW MILFORD,
DERBY AND INDIANS OF THE HOUSATONIC VALLEY.

PART II.

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1886.

ber of the National Council of Administration of the Grand Army, and in 1880 was a delegate to the National Encampment of the Grand Army. He is also a trustee of the Mechanics and Farmers Savings Bank, of Bridgeport. In 1885 he was elected for the twenty-first consecutive time, Secretary of the Society of the 14th Connecticut Regiment, and through his faithful and earnest labors in this office the society has a full set of the reports of the annual meetings to the present time.

Mr. Knowlton married December 17, 1866, Miss Jennie E. Fairchild, of Newtown, Conn., and they have had two children, both of whom are deceased. He traces his ancestors back, in a regular line, to Thomas Knowlton, who came to Ipswich, Mass., in 1632 or 3.

*The Hydraulic Company.*¹⁰—The effort to supply water by pipes to the people of Bridgeport was made by the Rev. Elijah Waterman about the year 1818. Certain springs of pure water near the corner of Golden Hill and Hewit streets were cleared and deepened, and the water conducted through the principal streets in wooden pipes, or, rather, bored logs. The enterprise was continued at first by Lewis C. Segee, who succeeded Mr. Waterman about the year 1823, and afterwards, in May, 1833, by Jesse Sterling, Stephen Hawley, Seth B. Jones, Ziba Northrop, Nicholas Northrop, Edwin Porter, and George Kippen, as a chartered company—the first grant made for a water company by the Connecticut Legislature—under the name of the Bridgeport Golden Hill Aqueduct Company, with a capital of \$10,000, the water being obtained from the springs already mentioned.

In 1853 the need of a more extensive supply of water, particularly for fire purposes, being felt, the Common Council granted to Nathan Green—agent of the Pequonnock Mills, in North Bridgeport—and to his assigns the exclusive privilege of laying down water pipes in the public streets, on condition that they should furnish the city and the inhabitants with a full supply of pure water for domestic, mechanical, and all ordinary uses, both public and private. Upon this

¹⁰ See Municipal Register for 1873.

the Bridgeport Water Company was incorporated to Mr. Greene and others for this purpose in the year 1853, with a capital of \$160,000, and during the following year a distributing reservoir in North Bridgeport was constructed and pipes laid through the principal streets of the city, the source of supply being the water of the Pequonnock river, which was pumped into the reservoir.

The enterprise did not prove remunerative to the stockholders, and, bonds to the amount of ninety thousand dollars having been issued, the company eventually fell into the hands of the bondholders by foreclosure, and in June, 1857, a charter was granted to a new corporation composed of the bondholders. By this charter, William S. Knowlton, N. Greene, J. H. Washburn, Joseph Richardson, and others became, under the name of the Bridgeport Hydraulic Company, the successors of the Bridgeport Water Company, and the possessors of all its rights and franchises. Serious complaint having been made for a long time both as to the want of a sufficient supply and as to the quality of the water furnished, an act was passed by the General Assembly, July 2, 1873, authorizing the city to buy the works of the Bridgeport Hydraulic Company, or to build new works if a purchase could not be effected upon terms satisfactory to the city. This act was duly ratified by the city, but at a city meeting called for the purpose, August 13, 1873, resolutions to purchase the hydraulic company's works for the sum of three hundred thousand dollars were lost by twenty-seven majority, the whole number of votes cast being six hundred and seventy-six. A new proposition made by the company to a committee of the Common Council, to sell the works, franchises, etc., for the sum of two hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars was rejected, November 3, 1873, by a larger majority than the former one, namely, two hundred and twenty-three out of a vote of seventeen hundred and forty-three. Eventually, Joseph Richardson, up to this time the president and leading stockholder, sold his stock to the Hon. Amos S. Treat, and a new policy was inaugurated. The sources of supply have been greatly enlarged, old and worn-out pipe has been replaced in many sections with new pipe of good

quality, and mains have been laid in localities not before reached. Since August 25, 1875, the date of Mr. Treat's purchase, the sum of one hundred and thirty-five thousand dollars has been expended in laying mains, and thirty thousand dollars in building new reservoirs. The total amount of mains now in use is forty-five miles, and the elevation of the distributing reservoirs above tide-water is one hundred and ten feet. The company now depends for water chiefly upon natural flow, resort to the pump being had only in dry seasons.

The present sources of supply are: Trumbull reservoir, 60 acres; Island Brook reservoir, 62 acres; Bunnell's Pond reservoir, 50 acres; Bunnell's Upper Pond, 45 acres; Ox-stream reservoir, 15 acres; Horse Tavern reservoir, 5 acres; Distributing reservoir, 3 acres; total 240 acres.

The officers of the company are: President, P. T. Barnum; Secretary, C. H. Thorp; Treasurer, Amos S. Treat; Superintendent, George Richardson; Auditor, Samuel Wilmot; Directors, P. T. Barnum, Amos S. Treat, N. Wheeler, T. B. DeForest, J. Richardson, Samuel Wilmot, William H. Perry, Samuel W. Baldwin.

The Bridgeport Light-house.—The late Capt. Abraham McNeil established a light at the entrance of Bridgeport Harbor about the year 1844, which was at first a lantern upon the end of a buoy, afterwards a whale-boat decked over and carrying a light, and then a group of five piles with a lantern upon the centre one. In 1851, upon the petition of Capt. John Brooks, a small light-house was erected here by the government, the predecessor of the present one which was built in 1871. It is located about one and a half miles from the city, and consists of a tower and dwelling painted white, with slate-colored Mansard roof and black lantern. The house stands upon iron piles. In entering the harbor vessels must pass to the eastward and not nearer than two hundred feet. The light is a fixed, red one, fifty-three feet above the sea-level, and the fog-signal is a cast-steel bell struck by machinery every fifteen seconds. S. Adolphus McNeil is light-house keeper.