

PAST AND PRESENT
OF
Allamakee County
IOWA

A Record of Settlement, Organization, Progress and
Achievement

By
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ILLUSTRATED

VOLUME I

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special election July 2d, he was elected mayor until March, 1878; John M. Hancock, 1878-80 (Mr. Hancock resigned March 24th, and S. H. Kinne appointed pro tem, until April 26th); Robert Hufschmidt, 1880-83; Theo. Nachtwey, 1883-89; W. H. Burford, 1889-92 (Burford was suspended March 28, 1892, and removed from office May 23d following); G. H. Markley elected to fill vacancy, and reelected, 1892-99; Robert Hufschmidt, 1899-03; A. M. Fellows, 1903-07; J. J. Dunlevy, 1907-09; Anton J. McCafferty, 1909 (Mayor McCafferty died September 2, 1909, and J. J. Dunlevy elected to fill the vacancy September 4, '09); J. J. Dunlevy, 1909-13; J. P. Conway, 1913, present incumbent.

Clerk: W. H. Burford, 1867-9; J. G. Orr, 1869-71; C. Otto Rose, 1871-76; G. A. Rockwell, 1876-80; Jas. T. Metcalf, 1880-81; John J. Dunlevy, 1882-85; and N. A. Nelson, 1885 to this time, 1913.

The official roster at this writing, April 1, 1913, is as follows: Mayor, J. P. Conway; clerk, N. A. Nelson (and clerk waterworks); treasurer, C. M. Kerndt; solicitor, J. W. Dempsey; assessor, H. C. Short; marshal, W. H. Guider (and street commissioner); night police, —————; weighmaster, P. Gilroy; superintendent of waterworks, C. F. Riek; health physician, C. C. Lytle (and health officer); councilmen, at large, Ole L. Moe and J. C. Brophy; first ward, Martin Kohlsted; second ward, Frank Dolphin; third ward, Henry J. Rettinger.

The city is lighted by electricity from the plant of the Upper Iowa Power Company, which also does the pumping for the city water system and supplies power for other purposes.

The telephone service is furnished by the Standard Telephone Company, through a well equipped exchange with one hundred and thirty-four 'phones.

THE WATER SUPPLY

The question of a water supply had long been one of vital interest to the citizens of Lansing, and the need was more deeply impressed upon them by the disastrous fires of 1877. The only way of obtaining water at fires had formerly been by a bucket line to the river.

In the spring of 1877 steps were taken to meet the demand. A stock company was organized and duly incorporated as the Lansing Artesian Well Company of Lansing. The Swan brothers, of Boscobel, Wisconsin, were employed to do the drilling, and operations were begun early in the spring by drilling a well on Main street, at the intersection of North Third.

Subsequently attempts were made to sink wells at the west end of Main street, and on Front street at the foot of Main. The west end well was a complete failure, owing to the alleged fact that the drillers struck granite before reaching any considerable amount of water. The well was abandoned, and soon afterward closed up by means of wooden plugs. The Front street well developed a fine flow of water, but was also abandoned for years because the company were unable to prevent underground leakage. This well has since been connected with the Third street well which was in all respects a perfect success. Its depth is 778 feet. At the time of its completion it was estimated to discharge 372 gallons per minute. The water is at all seasons of uniform temperature, agreeable to the taste, and considered to possess superior medicinal properties. It is supplied to citizens, and the city for fire purposes, and affords a most

abundant supply of pure and cool water for all purposes, having sufficient head to force itself into the second story of buildings in the principal portion of town. During the summer drinking fountains are maintained by the city on Main street, where this excellent water can be obtained by all, as "free as the air we breathe."

Beyond question the artesian well has proved itself to be one of the most important enterprises ever attempted by the citizens of Lansing. Its usefulness cannot be overestimated. These gratifying results were largely due to the individual efforts of Capt. Samuel W. Hemenway, who first suggested the drilling of an artesian well; who demonstrated by means of his superior skill and knowledge of such subjects, the certainty of success, and who, when success had been attained, and the people were rejoicing in the splendid result, lost his life while superintending the completion of the magnificent public work his ability, energy, and perseverance had produced. So intimately is his memory interwoven with the history of this public work, that it seems impossible to leave the subject without a brief review of his life and the painful circumstances attending his tragic death.

On the afternoon of Thursday, May 3, 1877, the Third street well being then an assured success, Captain Hemenway entered a deep cut on Main street to personally superintend the joining of sections of the main water pipe to be employed in supplying water from the new well. While thus engaged the embankment on the north side gave way, and the unfortunate man was literally buried alive. Assistance was instantly at hand, but some little time was required to remove the large quantity of earth and rocks that had fallen upon him. When rescued from his perilous position it was found that one limb was broken in several places, and that he had probably sustained severe internal injuries. The gravest apprehension proved too true, and, notwithstanding the best medical skill and kindest attention of friends and neighbors were bestowed upon him, with a community's united prayers for his recovery, he died on the following Sunday, May 6, 1877.

His funeral, which occurred on Tuesday, May 8th, was attended by the municipal authorities, all the civic societies in the city, delegates from neighboring Masonic organizations, and the largest concourse of people ever assembled in Lansing to perform the last sad rites for one of its citizens.

Mr. Hemenway was born on the 19th of February, 1839, at Potsdam, St. Lawrence county, New York. His earlier years were spent in that vicinity. In 1855 he became a resident of Lansing, and was foreman in the agricultural implement factory of his brother, H. H. Hemenway, until the year 1862, when he entered the service of his country, as a member of Company B, Twenty-seventh Regiment Iowa Volunteer Infantry. He was commissioned captain by Governor Kirkwood, October 3, 1862. For faithful service he was promoted to the office of major, and was mustered out at Clinton, August 8, 1865, having served three years without the loss of a single day by leave of absence. Mr. Hemenway was a republican in politics. As chairman of the republican county central committee in the campaign of 1876, he achieved a remarkable victory and had he lived would have received deserved recognition at the hands of his political associates. At the time of his death he was mayor of the city, superintendent of the well company, a leading member of the Masonic organizations of the city, and in all respects the most active, enterprising and useful citizen of Lansing.

The present system of waterworks in connection with these wells was constructed in 1903, and with the extensions to this date, 1913, cost about \$25,000. The supply is obtained from two artesian wells about eight hundred feet deep, and pumped to a reservoir on the bluff 240 feet above the level of the railroad track. There are two and a half miles of water mains, of eight, six, four and two inch capacity. There are about one hundred and fifty takers, 105 of which are supplied from the reservoir (all metred), and the balance from the artesian wells direct. Pumping is now done by electric power; but there is also one steam pump of 500 gallons capacity in reserve, in case of fires, or other emergency.

There are water bonds outstanding as follows:

Four and one-half per cent bonds due July 1, 1923.....\$7,500.00

Six per cent bonds due at option of city..... 4,900.00

Total bonded indebtedness (March, 31, 1913).....\$12,400.00

FIRE DEPARTMENT

A meeting was held at the office of Mayor Burford February 25, 1871, for the purpose of organizing a fire company. Mayor Burford presided, and S. P. Darling acted as secretary. Proper committees were appointed and the meeting adjourned to March 2d. This meeting and several others immediately following resulted in the organization, April 1, 1871, of "Hope Fire Company No. 1," with the following officers: R. V. Shurley, foreman; P. H. Pierson, first assistant; S. W. Hemenway, second assistant; W. H. Burford, secretary; Herman Schierholz, treasurer; W. J. Bort, first pipeman; and Phil Dignan, second pipeman.

December 3, 1873, the company was reorganized under the present name of "Rescue Fire Company No. 1," and the following officers elected: Foreman, Capt. E. B. Bascom; first assistant, Jacob Schaach; second assistant, John Corell; secretary, T. C. Medary; treasurer, J. B. Thorp; steward, J. G. Orr.

In July, 1874, John Corell was elected foreman, retaining the position one year, when Jacob Schaach was chosen, and so continued until July, 1881, when John Dunlevy succeeded him.

In 1872 the city purchased a Rumsey & Co.'s hand fire engine, and to this was added hose carts and hook and ladder wagon. With this inadequate outfit the company fought fires until 1885 after the Concert Hall fire, when a large hand pump was added. In 1895 the hand pump or "man killer" was disposed of, and a steam fire engine purchased. Other necessary apparatus has been furnished by the city from time to time, and today we have a well-equipped fire department.

In 1891 the company purchased a fire bell which was placed in the City Hall tower. After the City Hall was burned down the bell was sold for old metal. The most important fires were as follows:

Bockfinger & Boeckemeier wagon shop, and most of the block, February 3, 1871.

Farmer's home, February 27, 1877.

Germania House barn, Congregational church and most of the block, March 6, 1877.

Hemenway & Barclay sawmill, September 3, 1881.