

HISTORY OF MUSCATINE COUNTY IOWA

FROM THE EARLIEST SETTLEMENTS
TO THE PRESENT TIME

IRVING B. ^{ardine}RICHMAN

SUPERVISING EDITOR

VOLUME I

ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

1911

THE S. J. CLARKE PUBLISHING CO.
CHICAGO

CHC

pality has no jail, prisoners are turned over to the county jail, where they are kept safely at the expense of the city.

FIRE DEPARTMENT.

Muscatine, although a city of importance and up-to-date in almost everything that one looks for in a modern municipality, is woefully in need of a place for its legislation halls, apartments for its officials and a place to incarcerate the evildoer within her gates. Neither has the city a fire department, as the term is now applied, but there is in existence, and has been for many years, volunteer fire companies, that have done valiant service in the interest of the property owner, and their reputation throughout the state for skill and efficiency has long been established, trophies now at tournaments being substantial attestations to the truth of the latter statement. The united fire, or hose companies are, however, given the dignity and title of a fire department. Through the efforts of Gustav Schmidt in 1874, supported by the sympathy of Richard Musser, then mayor, the movement became a substantial one when about forty citizens signified their willingness to become firemen.

On the 7th day of January, 1875, a meeting of citizens was held and Gustav Schmidt was chosen president of the company then formed. David Meyer became secretary, Moritz Saal first engineer and Barney Schmidt second engineer. The organization chose the name of the Champion Chemical Fire Company and used a chemical fire extinguisher with indifferent results until 1877, when the water works enabled the "boys" to place dependence on a hose cart and hook and ladder wagon. The Champion Chemical Fire Company changed its name to the Champion Hose, Hook and Ladder Company No. 1.

Rescue Hose Company No. 2 was organized April 27, 1876, largely through the efforts of Galbraith Bitzer, still a member. The first officers were: Galbraith Bitzer, captain; A. B. Hampton, first lieutenant; Joseph Morrison, second lieutenant; C. G. Whipple, secretary; J. A. Pickler, treasurer.

Excelsior Hose Company No. 3 was organized in June, 1876, through the influence and activity of Phil J. Murphy. The first officials were: Fireman, F. Moran; first assistant, P. Ryan; second assistant, D. Burke; secretary, J. H. Cosgrove; treasurer, F. P. Anson.

Relief Hook and Ladder Company was organized April 2, 1877, with a membership of twenty-eight. Its first officers were as follows: Fireman, Lyman Banks; assistant fireman, W. S. Halstead; recording secretary, A. N. Garlock; financial secretary, W. C. Kegel; treasurer, J. E. Coe.

Early in 1877 the fire department was considered fully organized, there being a company for each ward, and Joseph Morrison became the first chief, serving until 1881, when H. F. Bodman was chosen as his successor. The present chief (1911) is C. Hagerman, his assistants being Otto Elfers and Frank Curry.

WATER WORKS.

While Muscatine was settled in 1836 and incorporated in 1853, it was not until 1875 that a water works system was installed. On the 9th of November

of the year last mentioned, the first steps were taken toward the building of a water system in this city. On that date several of the most prominent citizens held a meeting and organized the Muscatine Water Works Company. All the stock was subscribed and Alexander Jackson was made president of the corporation; Richard Musser, vice president; H. W. Moore, treasurer; and J. Carskaddan, secretary. The contract for the construction of the works was ordered for \$31,138 and the buildings were erected. In the following year the reservoir was constructed at a cost of \$8,000, the pressure of the latter being from 60 to 90 pounds, varying with the location of the hydrants. Under the charter of the corporation the tenure of its franchise was twenty-five years. In that time eleven miles of mains were laid and one hundred and twenty-five fire hydrants erected. At the foot of Chestnut street a brick pump house was built, wherein were installed two double acting Cope and Maxwell pumps, the water drawn from the Mississippi river, being pumped through an intake direct to the reservoir. This water at certain times of the year was very unpalatable, so much so that it gave rise to a great deal of dissatisfaction on the part of the consumer. This led to a demand for the adoption of a new system. The franchise having reached its termination, the city in 1900 purchased the old works for \$100,000. A board of trustees was formed, consisting of W. H. Roach, chairman, T. R. Fitzgerald and Samuel Cone. The services of William Molis, who had for many years been superintendent, were retained, he being an engineer of unusual ability, business integrity and honesty. At once a movement was made in the direction of adopting a better system of securing pure water and the first thing that the trustees had to consider in that direction was the erection of a new station and devising means for that purpose. Various plans were advocated but the most popular was that of the establishment of a station south of town. This resulted in the building of a station on Muscatine Island. It was thought that \$60,000 in addition to the income of the old works would be sufficient to complete the new plant and consequently bonds were issued for that amount. Three and a half acres were purchased of W. H. Hoopes & Son for the site of the new pumping station and in the latter part of 1906 the plant was completed. The pump house is 45x85 feet, with a coal house 30x40 feet. The smoke stack is 30 feet high and is said to be the most perfect stack in the state. The pump machinery consists of one Holly horizontal compound high duty pumping engine, capable of delivering 3,000,000 gallons of water every twenty-four hours. There is also a Worthington horizontal triple expansion pumping engine, which can supply 3,000,000 gallons of water every twenty-four hours.

The water supply consists of fourteen driven wells in sand and gravel. They are located on either side of a twenty inch pipe line which runs from the pump house south some 1,500 feet through the lots of T. B. Holcomb. These wells are about 100 to 110 feet apart and consist of six inch pipe with a strainer at the bottom, and are at an average depth of forty-eight feet.

THE FIRST POSTMASTER.

It was not until three years after Bloomington was laid out that a postmaster was appointed—a Mr. Stowell, who left these parts before the arrival of his