

THE CITY OF  
**LOUISVILLE**

AND A GLIMPSE OF  
**KENTUCKY.**

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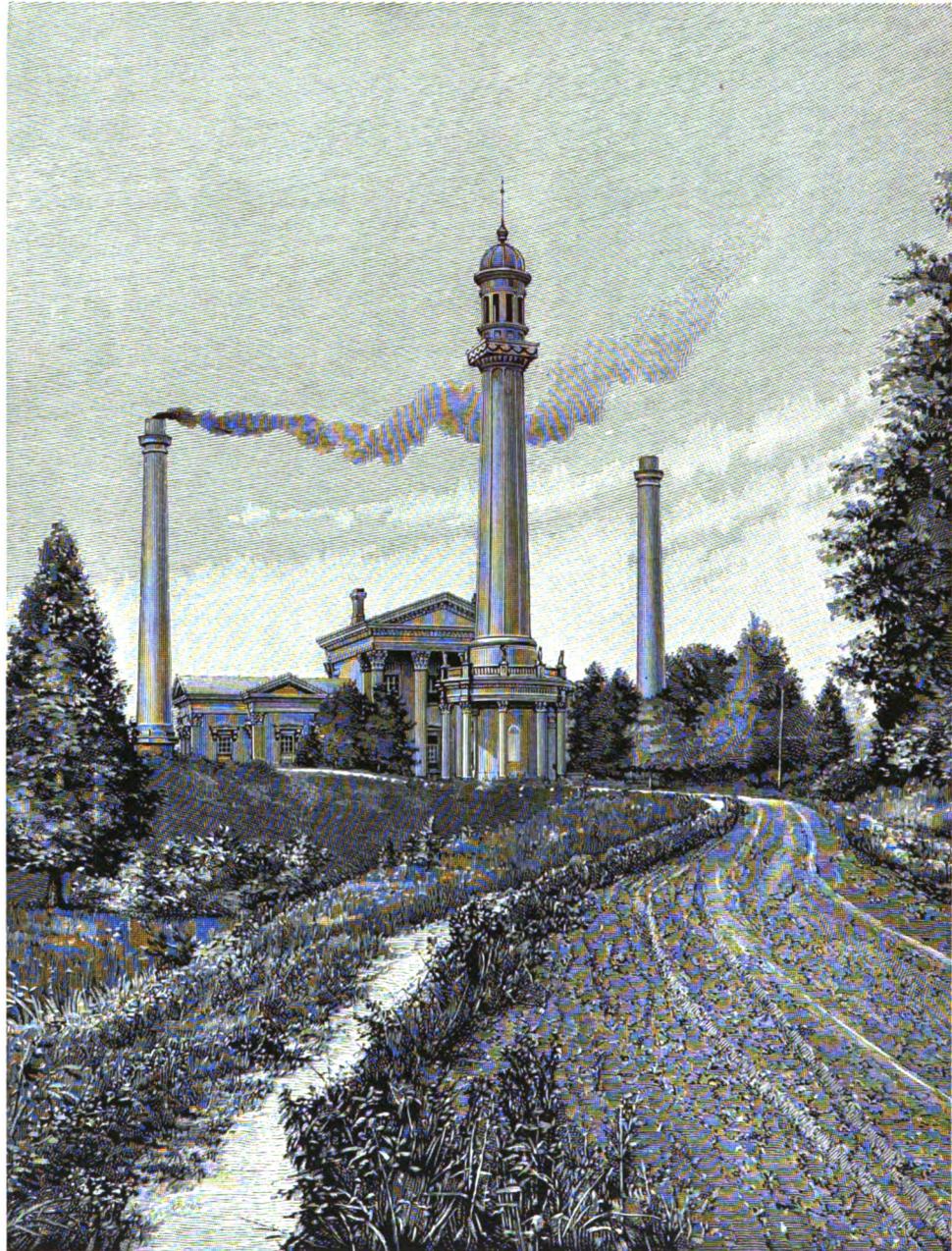
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COMMITTEE ON INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL IMPROVEMENT  
OF THE LOUISVILLE BOARD OF TRADE,  
1887.

## ❧ The Louisville Water Company. ❧

**A** PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY to a city upon the modern plan of a high pressure service, of sufficient magnitude to convey the water to all parts thereof, commanding every cubic inch of space in its streets, alleys, and buildings of all kinds, held in readiness for instantaneous flow in lightest spray such as can be called into play and be controlled by the strength of a child, or in sweeping streams whose volumes require the united strength of many stalwart men to direct and apply in their agency of fire extinguishment or power development, maintained in perpetual readiness, whether by day or night, independent of seasons and their mutations, *perennial* in the fullest sense, constitutes an achievement in modern application of common sense, money, and science for the welfare of the people, than which there is nothing grander or greater. Rome, with her many aqueducts and gorgeous baths, appears, when compared to such a modern system, like a dromedary on the desert, to a modern race horse on an American track.

Such being the province and requirements of a public water supply, it is not to be wondered at that the water supply system of the city of Louisville has been the subject of constant and deep interest on the part of the public, as well as much study and unwearied effort on the part of the Water Company, by whom the department has been hitherto and is now managed. So much are the people impressed with the great beauty, utility, importance, and magnitude of this branch of the municipal service, that the works, comprising reservoirs,



PUMPING STATION, LOUISVILLE WATER WORKS.

pumping station, and machinery, are visited by larger numbers and with greater frequency than any institution or place in or about the city, thereby attesting a public admiration, appreciation, and approval which pronounce the system a great success. It furnishes the people with an indispensable requisite for sustaining health and life in their domestic and household relations as also for public sanitary, municipal, and manufacturing purposes, and all at rates of cost which are infinitely lower than any similarly valuable service, whether rendered by corporate or individual enterprise. The cost to

## — Incorporated in 1854. —

supply a cottage of two rooms is less than a penny a day, while to the manufacturer and other large consumer for business purposes, it is delivered at rates of less than four cents per ton, and the city for her municipal wants, including the immense quantities needed for fire extinguishment, gets it absolutely free of cost.

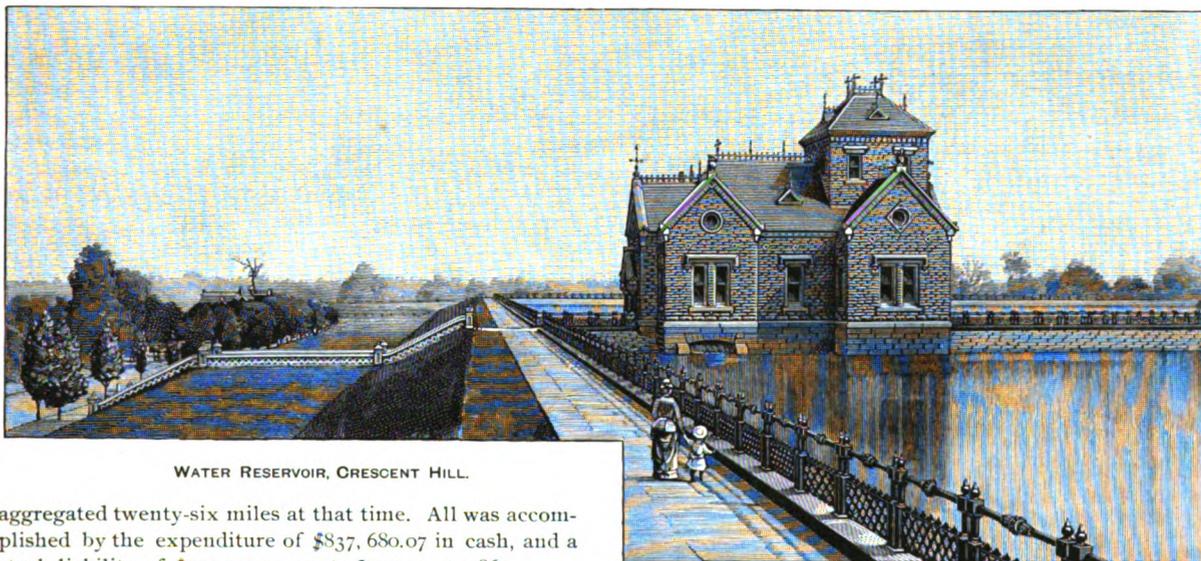
The first decisive steps toward establishing a public water supply for Louisville were taken in the fall of 1856, by a committee from the then recently elected Board of Directors in the Louisville Water Company, who visited the principal works then in operation in the cities of the Middle and Eastern States, as a means of adopting measures and plans that would bring together for the erection of the contemplated works the best judgment and ripest experience that the numerous important works in the country then exhibited.

During December of 1856 and January, February, and March, 1857, surveys were made, sites for pumping station and reservoir selected, plans of the various branches of the works with estimates of cost were made; all of which were duly adopted, and contracts let for making pipe, building pumping station, reservoir, and pumping engines. Ground was broken upon the reservoir site in a primeval beech forest in March, 1857, and upon the construction of the pumping station on the banks of the Ohio river in the following September, and quite a large quantity of pipe was made during this season.

Owing to the financial panic of this year, however, very little was done in the way of actual construction; the failure of the Ohio Life and Trust Company of Cincinnati having precipitated a financial disturbance, which greatly embarrassed all kinds of business enterprises for this and the greater part of the following season.

In March, 1858, work was resumed and pushed energetically until October, 1860, when the works were so far completed as to enable the water to be turned into the city distributing pipes. In the succeeding year the works were fully completed.

The result of this undertaking was a pumping station and machinery which have served the city for twenty-seven years, a reservoir which sufficed for nineteen years, and a beginning of a system of supply and distributing pipes, which



WATER RESERVOIR, CRESCENT HILL.

aggregated twenty-six miles at that time. All was accomplished by the expenditure of \$837,680.07 in cash, and a stock liability of \$775,100.00, up to January 1, 1862.

In 1874, surveys were commenced for a new reservoir of larger capacity and greater elevation above the level of the city. A site was selected, plans made and adopted, and the work contracted for in the fall of 1876, all for a reservoir of 100,000,000 gallons capacity, with its top water level 179 feet above low water in the river, being thirty-three feet higher than that in the reservoir completed in 1860. In April, 1877, active work was commenced upon the construction of this reservoir and continuously and energetically prosecuted until December 15, 1879, when it was nearly completed, water first pumped into it, and the city thenceforward supplied with water therefrom. The patronage of the company is represented by a system of main and distributing pipes of over 134 miles in extent, and varying in size from three to forty-eight inches in diameter, by 10,600 service attachments, from one-half to eight inches in diameter; and an annual gross revenue of \$250,000 from water rents.

The present most urgent requirements from the company are the building of a new pumping station, pumping engine, and the laying of main and distributing pipes to meet the rapidly growing wants of the city. Work is now in progress upon these additions, which will be completed as speedily as practicable. The pumping station and machinery will be on a scale of about double the capacity of that completed in 1860.

The history of the works, from their inception, and extending through their construction and practical operation, covers a period of about thirty-one years, and their construction cost, repairs, and operating expenses combined will aggregate, by December 31, 1887, the sum of \$5,000,000, with a bond indebtedness of \$900,000, and a stock liability of \$1,275,100.

The directors and principal officers by whom the works are at present managed are as follows, viz: Charles R. Long, President; John W. Story, T. L. Burnett, W. W. Smith, Charles R. Long, J. C. Gilbert, L. S. Reed, Directors; W. P. McDowell, Treasurer; J. B. Collins, Secretary; Charles Hermany, Chief Engineer and Superintendent.