

“Our County and Its People”

A History of
HAMPDEN COUNTY
Massachusetts

Editor

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OUR COUNTY AND ITS PEOPLE

John D. Hardy, 1876-78; Benjamin F. Mullin, 1879; E. P. Ford, 1880; B. F. Bigelow, 1881-84; John T. Lynch, 1885-1902.

*Fire Commissioners.*¹—Richard Shea, Jeremiah J. Callanan, John Hildreth, Charles L. Newcomb, Val. Moquin, Roger P. Donoghue, John J. Sheridan, 1891-92; John J. Sullivan, vice Sheridan, 1893; Charles L. Newcomb, James J. Curran, Val. Moquin, appointed 1894; Charles L. Newcomb, Val. Moquin, Dennis J. Landers, 1895-96; Charles L. Newcomb, Dennis J. Landers, 1897; Charles L. Newcomb, M. J. Laporte, 1898-99; Charles L. Newcomb, Daniel Proulx, Frank L. Buck, 1900; Charles L. Newcomb, Daniel Proulx, Dennis J. Landers, 1901-1902.

CITY WATER WORKS

As a part of its gigantic scheme of development and public improvement during the three years immediately preceding the year 1850, the Hadley Falls company constructed a reservoir on the elevated land about seventy-five rods from the river and from that point laid main and distributing pipes through the business and residence portions of the "New City," which the company, through its enterprise, had brought into active existence. Water was pumped from the river into the reservoir and was carried thence throughout the little village by gravity pressure.

This was the only system of water supply for Holyoke from October 18, 1849, when the reservoir was first filled, until 1872, when the growth of the town necessitated the establishment of a larger and better plant. On March 7, 1872, the legislature passed "An act to supply the town of Holyoke with pure water," which act was accepted by the inhabitants March 21, 1872. The act authorized the town to establish its own water works and to regulate its use for fire, steam, domestic and other purposes, with authority to take and hold the entire waters of Ashley's and Wright's ponds. For the purpose of constructing the works the town was authorized to issue bonds to the amount of \$250,000.

The act also created the board of water commissioners, to comprise the town treasurer, *ex-officio*, and six persons to be

¹At first seven commissioners were appointed, but as the board was found to be unwieldy the number was reduced to three.

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elected by the inhabitants. This act, however, was amended by the city charter, and it was then provided that the board should comprise three persons to be elected by the city council. In conformity with the provisions of this act the board of water commissioners has been continued to the present time.

In 1884 a supplemental act authorized the commissioners to increase the water supply by taking the waters of Whiting Street brook; and in 1896 the legislature authorized the board to utilize for the same purpose the waters of Tucker and Manhan brooks in the town of Southampton.

The work of construction on the original plant was begun in 1872 and was finished in 1873, but the work of extension of the system has been carried forward year after year to the present time. One of the annual reports of the board of commissioners, in referring to the supply system, says: "Source of supply—two contiguous natural lakes, three and one-half miles from the city, two mountain streams and storage reservoir, and the southwest branch of Manhan river; intake reservoir at Southampton."

The net cost of the water supply system to date aggregates nearly \$1,250,000. The city's bonded indebtedness on account of the works is \$300,000. The works produce an annual income of about \$85,000, and the surplus over the expense of maintenance is chiefly used for extension purposes. The total length of distribution pipes is over eighty-one miles; number of public hydrants in use, 524; estimated average daily consumption of water, 4,750,000 gallons.

The personnel of the board of water commissioners from 1872 is as follows:

Water Commissioners.—William B. C. Pearsons, March 21, 1872-February 2, 1874; John Delaney, March 21, 1872-February 2, 1874; John E. Chase, March 21, 1872-resigned March, 1873; Dennis Higgins, March 21, 1872-February 2, 1874; Joel Russell, March 21, 1872-February 2, 1874; Joseph P. Buckland, March 21, 1872-February 2, 1874; L. P. Bosworth, March 18, 1873-February 2, 1874; C. W. Ranlet, *ex-officio*, town treasurer. (The foregoing were elected by the town). Joseph P. Buckland, Den-

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nis Higgins, February 2, 1874-January 2, 1876; James G. Smith, February 2, 1874-died July 10, 1878; J. A. Sullivan, February 25, 1876-January 6, 1891; James F. Allyn, February 5, 1877-January 4, 1886; C. H. Heywood, July 16, 1878-January 11, 1880; Timothy Merrick, January 11, 1881-January 4, 1887; Maurice Lynch, January 4, 1886-January 5, 1892; James E. Delaney, January 4, 1887-January 7, 1887; Moses Newton, January 18, 1887-January 2, 1893; James J. Curran, January 6, 1891-February 4, 1896; Martin P. Conway, January 5, 1892-January 3, 1898; Charles D. Colson, January 2, 1893-February 1, 1900; John J. Sullivan, January 27, 1896-now in office; Thomas F. Greaney, January 3, 1898-1901; Joseph A. Skinner, February 1, 1900-now in office; Maurice Lynch, 1901; Arthur M. French, January, 1901-now in office. Water commissioners, 1902, John J. Sullivan, chairman; Joseph A. Skinner, treasurer; Arthur M. French, secretary.

Superintendents.—Moses Stevens, 1874-1881; John D. Hardy, 1881-now in office.

Registrars.—E. M. Bolton, 1874-76; E. P. Clark, 1876-93; J. C. Sullivan, 1893-1900; Albert E. Pickup, 1900-now in office.

THE PARK DEPARTMENT

The founders of Holyoke, nearly all of whom were of New England birth, proved true to the early custom of their region when they laid out and established a comfortable park tract near the central part of their town more than half a century ago.

That which now is known as Hampden park is the result of this early thoughtfulness on the part of our immediate ancestors, although many of those who were instrumental in building up the town were chiefly interested in the advantages hoped to be derived from the operations of the water power company. At a later date the Holyoke Water Power company generously donated a tract of land for use as a public park, and at intervals in subsequent years still other park tracts have been acquired by the city by purchase and also through the gift of public spirited citizens. In this manner Holyoke has become possessed of six park tracts, none of them