

THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
CAMDEN COUNTY,  
NEW JERSEY.

BY GEO. R. PROWELL,

*Member Historical Society of Pennsylvania.*

General History

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ILLUSTRATED.

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PHILADELPHIA:  
L. J. RICHARDS & CO.  
1886.

*Building Inspectors* are appointed by ordinance of City Council for such term as the ordinance may specify,—

1871. William W. Mines.	1880. James S. Woodward.
1872. Thomas B. Atkinson.	1883. John E. Smith.
1874. Christopher J. Mines.	1886. William H. Cole.

*City Marshals* acted as chiefs of police under the charter of 1851, and were elected annually by the people,—

1851. John W. Potts.	1861-62. Timothy Middleton.
1852. James H. Lowery.	1863. Samuel Conrow.
1853. Peter S. Elliott.	1864-66. John W. Campbell.
1854-56. Henry Belsterling.	1867-69. J. Kelly Brown.
1857-58. John Y. Hoagland.	1870. Claudius W. Bradshaw.
1859-60. Edmund Shaw.	

*The Chief of Police* is appointed by the mayor, and holds office during the pleasure of that officer under the charter of 1871,—

1871. Daniel W. Curless.	1880. Josiah Matlack.
1874. William H. Hemming.	1880. Harry H. Franks.
1877. Charles F. Daubman.	

*Surveyors of Highways.*—This office was established in 1871, and the incumbents have been Leonard Repsher, Jonathan Kirkbride, Alonzo B. Johnson, Benjamin F. Sweeten, William H. Shearman, Richard C. Thompson.

*Engineers of Water-Works.*—Jacob H. Yocum. Wm. F. Moody, William Calhoun, Robert Dunham. In 1877 the office of engineer was abolished and that of superintendent substituted. These have been superintendents,—William D. Middleton, Harry Stetson, William W. Mines.

THE WATER DEPARTMENT.—The Camden Water Works Company was chartered April 2, 1845. The names of the incorporators were Isaac Cole, Benj. W. Cooper, Charles Kaighn, Henry Allen, Wm. Folwell, Nathan Davis, Benj. T. Davis, John W. Mickle, who were authorized and empowered "to introduce into and supply the city of Camden with pure water under such terms and conditions as the City Council shall ordain and establish." The original capital stock of the company was fifty thousand dollars, divided into shares of one hundred dollars each, of which Isaac Cole, Henry Allen, Wm. Folwell and Nathan Davis each took one hundred shares, Wm. N. Jeffries eighty, Chas. Kaighn ten, and James Elwell and Jasper Harding each five shares.

On June 2d the company was organized by electing Isaac Cole, Henry Allen, Wm. Folwell, Nathan Davis and Wm. N. Jeffries directors, who selected Isaac Cole to serve as president, Henry Allen treasurer and Wm. Folwell secretary. A lot of ground, thirty by ninety feet, at the foot of Cooper Street, on the site of the Esterbrook Steel Pen

Works, was purchased of Wm. D. Cooper for four hundred dollars, and Isaac Cole, Nathan Davis, Henry Allen and Wm. Folwell were appointed to procure a draft and plan of the intended building, which, when completed, was thirty by forty-eight feet in dimensions.

With the increase in the growth of the city, and the erection of a large number of factories within its limits, the amount of water furnished by the company was found insufficient. To provide for a better arrangement, a supplement to the original charter was passed on the 9th of February, 1854. Hence the company secured an eligible location at Pavonia, near the city, as under the original charter it could not hold real estate in Camden. The capital stock under the supplement to the charter was authorized to be increased to a sum not exceeding one hundred thousand dollars.

At a meeting held on the 24th of April, 1854, three hundred and sixty-five shares were subscribed as follows: Henry Allen, two hundred and sixty-one shares; Richard Fetters, twenty shares; Nathan Davis, eleven shares; Jesse Smith, Benj. Hammell, Joel Bodine and Joseph Fifield, each ten shares; Charles S. Garrett, nine shares; James Elwell and Wm. P. Tatem each six shares; James McCloskey and Isaiah Bryan, each five shares; and Ralph Lee, two shares.

In 1854 the water works were completed and put into operation at Pavonia, on the Delaware River front. They are now owned and controlled by the city authorities. The engine-house is two stories high with mansard roof, built substantially of brown stone and thirty by forty feet in dimensions. The engine-house is fitted up with two pumps, one being a Blake pump of five million five hundred thousand gallons capacity daily; the other, a Cornish bull pump, capable of pumping two million five hundred thousand gallons of water daily. The boiler-house is supplied with four return tubular boilers eighteen feet long and fifty-six inches in diameter, making two complete sets, each set being capable of running either engine, and when all are fired up and both engines running, has a capacity of nine million gallons of water daily. The water works wharf is eighty feet wide and extends seven hundred and fifty feet into the river from the meadow banks. The supply-pipe is thirty inches in diameter, leading to the forebay under the pumps and in the basement of the engine-house. Before entering the forebay the water passes through three screens and filters, and from the bay is pumped by the engines and forced into the stand-pipe upon the engine-house, which is made of boiler iron, is five feet in diameter and

one hundred and twenty feet high. When forced above the level of the reservoir the water flows by a discharge pipe, thirty inches in diameter, into the basin.

The reservoir is built upon the highest ground in Pavonia, which is forty-seven feet higher than the level of the city of Camden, and is three hundred and forty-four feet long by one hundred and eighty feet wide and twenty-one feet deep, with sloping sides at an angle of one to one and a half degrees, and when filled, contains eight million gallons of water. In 1885 the greatest amount of water pumped in one day was four millions eight hundred and seven thousand one hundred and forty gallons; in 1886, five millions one hundred and fifty-seven thousand and forty-eight gallons. Before these works were purchased by the city the pumping and distributing mains were twelve inches in diameter, but now have a diameter of thirty inches. Forty-six and one-half miles of water-pipe are now in position within the city limits, and three hundred and twenty-two fire-plugs for the use of the Fire Department are located at the most desirable points in the city. The collections of the Water Department for rents and permits for the year 1885 amounted to seventy-eight thousand six hundred and fifty-nine dollars.

#### FIRE COMPANIES AND FIREMEN.

Until 1810 wells, pumps and buckets were the only appliances Camden had for the extinguishment of fires. On March 15th of that year the Perseverance Fire Company was organized. Thirty years later the Fairmount, afterwards named the Niagara, and, later still, the Weccacoe, was formed. In case of fire, the water used to extinguish it was obtained from wells by means of buckets filled with it and passed from hand to hand. When the engine was reached and its well received the water, the bucket was returned for a fresh supply. Meanwhile a number of strong men grasped the lever-arms and worked them up and down, thus forcing the water upon the flames. To fight a fire was the work of the entire community a half-century ago. An alarm was followed by a general turn-out of the people—old and young, of both sexes—each secured a bucket, and, when the scene of action was reached, long lines of people were formed between the engine and the nearest well. The empty buckets were moved toward the wells along one line and the full ones towards the engine on another.

A fully-equipped fire company possessed an engine and a cart to carry buckets, and householders were expected to keep a supply of buckets on

hand. Wells and pumps were equally essential, hence the City Council encouraged the digging of wells and the placing of pumps in public places by paying part of the cost. In 1834 Joseph Kaighn was paid sixteen dollars as part cost of placing a pump in a well he had dug on Kaighn Avenue, and George Genge's bill for a pump on Market Street was also paid, while Abraham Browning was allowed part cost of enlarging a well near Front Street and Market. Richard Fetters, Richard W. Howell and Auley McAlla presented a bill of fifty dollars at a Council meeting, held August 27, 1830, for a fire-engine purchased of the Fairmount Company, of Philadelphia. It was but five feet high, and eight men could barely get hold of the levers. In 1835 this engine was repaired, and its name changed from Fairmount to Niagara. In 1848 it was bought by the Weccacoe, and in 1851 came into possession of the reorganized Fairmount Company. It was eventually, after long usage, stored away until 1864, when Robert S. Bender purchased it for twenty dollars, and sold it in Woodbury for fifty dollars. It was accidentally burned soon afterward.

In 1834 the city was divided into three fire districts, Cooper Street and Line Street being the dividing lines. There was virtually no Fire Department, however, for several years later. In 1848, after the erection of water-works, a better fire system was put into effect. The Council appointed a committee on fire apparatus, who exercised supervision over the companies, which, by the year 1851, had increased in number to six. In 1864 the Independence procured the first steam fire-engine; the Weccacoe, the Shiffler and the Weccacoe Hose Company also soon after purchased steam-engines. More prompt, daring and efficient firemen than those of Camden were hard to find, but each company was independent of the others, and misdirection often caused loss of property, to remedy which the City Council, 1866, reorganized the system, and, by an ordinance, provided for the selection, subject to its approval, of a chief marshal, by the companies. James W. Ayers, of the Weccacoe Engine Company, was elected and served two years, when, in 1868, he was succeeded by Wesley P. Murray, of the Weccacoe Hose. Both were popular men and good organizers, but the volunteer system, with its rivalry and frequent insubordination, was supplanted in 1869 by the Paid Fire Department under an ordinance passed September 2, 1869, which provided for the appointment, annually, of five fire commissioners, one fire marshal, and two assistant fire marshals. The commissioners were empowered to appoint the firemen, and the