

HISTORY  
— OF THE —  
MUNICIPALITIES  
— OF —  
HUDSON COUNTY  
NEW JERSEY  
1630—1923

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appointed by the mayor alone. The Water Department was under the control of the water commissioners, which board was composed of five members elected for a term of five years. The chairman of the council was a member of this board. The water mains and appurtenances were managed as the property of the city, but the water was supplied by the Hackensack Water Company, under a contract of twenty-five years, which expired in 1922. Under this contract, house and other rates were provided for, to which was added five per cent. to pay the current expenses of the water board. All city improvements were done under the control of the mayor and council upon a petition of a majority of abutting land owners. These were carried out upon plans prepared by one of the city surveyors. The payments for such improvements were made by the issue of improvement certificates, which were finally redeemed out of the assessments collected from the property assessed. The assessments were proportioned by the Board of Assessment Commissioners, composed of three members appointed by the mayor and council, who held office three years. All assessments so made had to be confirmed by the mayor and council. The mayor and council had entire control over the finances of the city.

The Board of Police Commissioners, chief of police, and recorder had charge of the public peace and good order of the city, and it was their office to see that the laws and ordinances were properly observed and all penalties for transgressions thereof duly enforced. All of these officers except the chief of police were elected directly by the people. The Fire Department, under the township of West Hoboken, was controlled by a board of trustees, but after the incorporation of the city, the department went under the direct control of the council. The chiefs of police have been Charles A. Donovan (1866-1902), Patrick Hayes (1902-23), and Edward J. McFeeley, the present chief. There was no engineering department, but several city surveyors were appointed by the mayor and council for life, from which number selection was made by the mayor and council when such service was required. The institution of the commission form of government modified this general arrangement, though the broad features of the old plan of administration was necessarily retained.

The Board of Water Commissioners and Water Registrars had control of the water supply of the city. They were elected by the people and the commissioners served without salary. The chairman of the council was a member of the board. Hoboken was supplied with water from the Jersey City system prior to 1882. The first mains were laid in Hoboken in 1857. All the mains became the property of the city. The rates charged Hoboken by Jersey City for water thus supplied was ten per cent. higher than the rate charged to the consumers in Jersey City. In 1882 a contract was made with the Hackensack Water Company, which henceforth supplied the city. Hoboken is not unlike many of our western cities in the respect that it is situated upon a practically flat area, and as its water supply is drawn direct from different reservoirs, the elevations of which are one hundred and eighty and one hundred and ninety-four feet above tide, it means with mains of such diameters as would best insure low velocities and low friction losses that there should be no material variation in the water pressure throughout the entire city. The mains which connect with the reservoirs and which enter the city through Willow avenue and Park avenue, consist of a twelve-inch, a sixteen-inch, and a twenty-four inch, the combined capacity of which to the north line of the city is more than twelve million gallons per day. The combined capacity of the reservoirs located in Weehawken is 85,000,000 gallons. The water supply to the city is

still further guarded by the fact that three separate lines of mains, a twenty-inch, a twenty-four-inch, and a thirty-six-inch, connect directly the water company's main pumping station at New Milford with their reservoirs at Weehawken, and, as the mains are laid over different routes, it is quite unlikely that anything would happen that would simultaneously affect the three mains, or cause them all to be temporarily out of commission at the same time. The supply is drawn from the Hackensack river at New Milford, the daily flowage of which has for many years exceeded one hundred million gallons. The Hackensack river rises in the high grounds west of Haverstraw, flows south through an unpopulated country, and its volume is constantly being added to by numerous natural springs and brooks. Rockland lake is an important feeder and the Pascack brook is the principal tributary of the main river. On the Pascack brook the Hackensack Water Company completed an empounding reservoir, with a capacity of 835,000,000 gallons, the object being to store a sufficient supply to provide for a long period of dry weather. This reservoir is one and a half miles long, practically one-half mile wide; water at the dam, which is some 1,500 feet in length, is thirty feet deep. The watershed of the Hackensack river covers a drainage area of 114 square miles, all of which continued under regular and systematic inspection for pollution of any and all classes. In cases of pollution, where it was found impossible to secure abatements by the company, or through the local health boards, such cases were referred to the State Board of Health, the practice being to notify immediately the offending parties, fixing a limited time in which the pollution should be permanently abated to their satisfaction, any recalcitrancy being followed by a necessary participation in legal proceedings. The water furnished to the city began at an early date to be carefully filtered, rendering the quality practically pure and colorless, so that the citizens of Hoboken have from an early date been able to claim that for quality, abundance and potentiality of service their water supply was second to none in the State.

The Hackensack Water Company was formed a year before it began to supply Hoboken and it immediately began to supply the towns of Union, West Hoboken, Weehawken, North Bergen, Hackensack and adjoining places, as well as Hoboken, through more than fifty miles of pipe-mains. The principal works of the company were situated at New Milford, on the Hackensack river, about five miles above Hackensack, Jersey City drawing its supply from the Passaic river, near Belleville. The company when it began to supply this cluster of towns had a reservoir of three million gallons' capacity at Cherry Hill, two miles above Hackensack; another in Weehawken, about two miles north of Hoboken. At the latter point their high-service works were located, consisting of a brick tower one hundred and fifty feet high, supporting at the top an iron tank containing one hundred and fifty thousand gallons of water. This tower, as well as the whole works, were supplied with a complete outfit of the latest and most improved pumping apparatus made by Henry R. Worthington. The average daily draft of Hoboken shortly after the company began its supply was three million five hundred thousand gallons, West Hoboken and the town of Union together one hundred and twenty-five thousand gallons, Hackensack seventy-five thousand gallons, and of all other consumers two hundred and twenty-five thousand gallons. Needless to say, these figures grew in a short time to figures very much larger. The president of the company in the beginning was R. C. Bacot; the treasurer, W. W. Shippen.

The Hoboken Gas Company was organized in 1863, having its works on Willow street, between thirteenth and Fourteenth streets. From the date of