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awards at $1,035,000. The condemnation commissioners were Messrs. Charles J. McDermott, William J. Duane and George A. Steves.

MANHATTAN COMPANY RESERVOIR DEMOLISHED

Reminiscences of New York's Early Water Supply

In the month of July, 1914, an interesting but obscure landmark of old New York was obliterated when the historic old round tower and water-tank of the Manhattan Company on the northwestern corner of Reade and Center Streets was demolished. As this structure was enclosed in a three-story building, it was not visible from the street and its existence was known only to antiquarians and a few others. When the surrounding building and the tank were pulled down in 1914, to make room for a new building, the old reservoir was exposed to view and excited the liveliest public interest. All sorts of strange tales were circulated about it. One story alleged that it had been a fort in the war of the Revolution and another that it had been an ancient prison, neither of which legends was true. It was, however, connected in an interesting way with the history of New York at the end of the 18th century, and its passing is deserving of notice. (See plates 5 and 6.)

The tank was one of the reservoirs of the Manhattan Company, which was incorporated in 1799 for the purpose of "supplying the City of New York with pure and wholesome water." For nearly a century and a half after the settlement of New Amsterdam in 1626, the inhabitants of New Amsterdam and New York depended upon wells, pumps, and the natural streams and ponds for their drinking water. Mr. Edward Wegmann and Mr. J. B. Goldsborough of New York, in a paper entitled "The Construction of the New Croton Dam", read before the convention of the American Society of Engineering Contractors at St. Louis, Mo., September 26–28, 1910, say that the first public well was that sunk in front of Fort Amsterdam at Bowling Green in 1658, probably in response to the resolution of the Burgomasters of July 11, 1658, to the following effect: "The Burgomasters resolved to communicate with the General relative to having a

public well made in the Heere Straat" (Broadway). Although we are unable to find the original record of that resolution, it is not on its face improbable. The Common Council records prior to and immediately after the Revolution abound with references to pumps and wells, the construction and care of which were an important public concern. The most famous of these was the Tea Water Pump which stood on the north side of Park Row between Baxter and Mulberry Streets. The water from this source was considered particularly desirable for making tea, and was conveyed in portable vessels and carts to various parts of the City and sold. The street in front of the pump became so blocked at times by wagons and carts that in 1797 the Common Council ordered that the spout of the pump be raised and lengthened so that pedestrians could pass under it.

The Hon. James P. Davenport, Assistant Special Deputy Register, gives us the following interesting information concerning the precise location of the Tea Water Pump. The property described in deeds as the "Tea Water Pump" was a parcel 75 feet by 120 feet on the north side of Chatham Street (Park Row), beginning 28 feet east of Baxter Street. A deed containing a reference to it as the "Tea Water Pump", is dated June 1, 1795, (liber 170 of deeds, page 7,) and there is another of the same description in liber 169, page 334. The description there is: "Which said three lots, pieces or parcels of ground are known by the name or description of the 'Tea Water Pump' or the Estate of Gerardus Hardenbrook, Sr., deceased." The same description or a similar one is found in later deeds, among which are those to be found in liber 55, page 395; liber 65, page 102; liber 66, page 454, and liber 68, page 225. The property was afterwards sold in parts. Gerardus Hardenbrook left a will dated 1755 and recorded in liber 33 of wills, page 533. About 1796 William C. Thompson, a grandson, acquired the majority interest and is undoubtedly the Mr. Thompson referred to in Valentine's Manual for 1856, page 438. Abraham Shoemaker referred to on the same page in Valentine's Manual afterwards acquired at least the central part of the 75 foot tract from Thompson and others. Valentine's authority for designating the property as No. 126 Chatham Street (the old name for Park Row) does not appear. No. 126 Chatham

Street as shown in deeds of the middle of the nineteenth century would be east of Mulberry Street. If there was a numbering of the street that would bring No. 126 near Baxter Street, it has not been found. The site of the pump, however, is well established by the deeds referred to.

The earliest definite proposal for the distribution of water through pipes was made to the Common Council on April 22, 1774, when "the Proposal of Christopher Colles to Erect a Reservoir and to Convey Water thro' the Several Streets of this City was preferred to this Board & Read; and thereupon ordered that the same be filed and that the Consideration thereof be deferred to Some future Time". (Common Council Minutes.) On August 25, 1774, the Common Council "tried the Water of the New Well sunk in the Ground of Augustus and Frederick Van Cortlandt, and judging the same to be of a very good Quality, agreed in their former Resolution of carrying the Proposal of Christopher Colles into Execution and also of Issuing Notes to the Value of £2500."

The site of Colles' reservoir was on the east side of Broadway between Worth and White Streets, on an elevation just west of the Fresh Water or Collect Pond. (Map in pamphlet of Messrs. Wegmann and Goldsborough.)

Colles went ahead with his work and appears to have carried out his contract, for, after the War for Independence, he petitioned to the Common Council (October 27, 1784) "Pray'g Payment of the ballance of an acct. agt. the Corporation on a Contract for erecting a Reservoir &c for leading Water into the City," and on December 8 he was allowed £12.

Colles' petition of October 27, 1784, declared:

"That your memorialist did accordingly proceed in the erection of the work & erected a Reservoir capable of containing twenty thousand hogsheads of water; dug, walled, cover'd & completely finished a well of thirty feet diameter at the inside, from which he pumped by means of a steam engine which he also erected, Two hundred gallons of water, fifty-two feet high perpendicular per minute, into the said reservoir."

The total cost was £3,600.

On account of the disorganized state of affairs during the war, the water-works were abandoned and the City returned to the old system of pumps and wells. In 1798, however, the City suffered from a severe epidemic of yellow fever which was atributed to the inferior water supply, and it was at this juncture that the more effective plan of the Manhattan Company was formed. From a little booklet entitled " Bank of the Manhattan Company: Origin, History, Progress," issued by that bank, we learn many interesting details of this project. Upon the assembling of the Legislature in 1799, Aaron Burr and several other men applied for a charter for the purpose of " supplying the City of New York with pure and wholesome water ", and on April 2, 1799, the bill was passed, incorporating the Manhattan Company. The capital of the corporation was $2,000,000 — a great sum for those days — and as the cost of the proposed water system could not accurately be foreseen, there was a clause in the charter permitting the company to employ its surplus capital in financial transactions not inconsistent with the constitutions and laws of the State of New York and the United States.

It has been a common tradition that the banking privilege contained in this charter, apparently as a subordinate feature, was really the main object of the projectors, and was thus introduced covertly to avoid the opposition which Burr was certain to encounter from Alexander Hamilton and the Federal party. Hamilton had organized the first banking organization in New York when in 1784 he formed the Bank of New York which was chartered in 1792. For fifteen years, Hamilton's bank and the Branch Bank of the United States were the only banks doing business in the City and State of New York. This monopoly was of value to the political party which was then in control and with which Hamilton was allied, and consequently Burr's effort to obtain a charter, which was quickly perceived to contain a clause which permitted banking, was earnestly opposed. The opposition was unsuccessful, however, and the Manhattan Company secured its charter.

Whether the tradition before mentioned as to the leading motive of Burr and associates was well founded or not, the fact remains that the Company did go ahead with the water-works

undertaking, built reservoirs, and laid an extensive system of distributing pipes in the then small city. These pipes were hollow logs, many of which have been dug up in recent years in the streets south of Chambers Street. The first meeting of the Directors was held at the house of Edward Barden, inn-keeper,* on April 11, 1799, when there were present Aaron Burr, John Broome, who was long an Alderman, John B. Church, who fought a duel with Burr on September 2, 1799, John B. Coles, Richard Harrison, who was Recorder of the City, William Laight Brockholst Livingston, Daniel Ludlow, Samuel Osgood, Pascal N. Smith, John Stevens and John Watts. The only absentee was William Edgar. Mr. Ludlow was elected President.

At the meeting of April 11, 1799, a resolution was adopted declaring that the principal object of the corporation was to obtain a supply of pure and wholesome water for the City and a committee was appointed to report means for obtaining such a supply. So rapidly did the plans mature that on May 6 following the water committee was empowered " to contract for as many pine logs as they may think necessary for pipes and also for boring the same."

Meanwhile, if the water supply was the chief object of the company, the banking privilege was not neglected, and on April 17, 1799, a committee was appointed " to consider the most proper means of employing the capital of the Company ". On June 3 the committee reported in favor of opening an office of discount and deposit and a house was bought on the site of the present No. 40 Wall Street (then having a different number) in which, on September 1, 1799, the bank of the Company began business. This venerable corporation is still doing business at No. 40 Wall Street under the style of the Bank of the Manhattan Company.

In prosecuting the water-works business, the company sank a number of wells, built tanks and reservoirs, and extended its distributing system generally throughout the City below Chambers Street. In 1836 the system was extended northward along Broadway as far as Bleecker Street, when the company had about 25 miles of mains and supplied about 2,000 houses. The company

* The Merchants Coffee House.

continued to operate its system until about the time the Croton system came into use in 1842.

One conspicuous landmark of the old water works was the Chambers Street reservoir with sloping walls, similar in style to the Croton reservoir which formerly stood on the site of the present Public Library on the west side of Fifth Avenue between 40th and 42d Streets. It stood on the north side of Chambers Street between Broadway and Park Row. Its facade was unrelieved except by an entablature which was supported by four Doric columns and upon which was a figure of " Oceanus, one of the sea-gods, sitting in a reclining posture on a rising ground pouring water from an urn which forms a river and terminates in a lake." This was the physical embodiment of the device of the corporation seal of the company adopted May 8, 1799.

The last landmark of the Manhattan Company's water-works to disappear was the reservoir or tank which was first referred to in this article and which stood on the northwestern corner of Reade and Center Streets. It was erected over one of the earliest wells of the company, but the company is unable to give us the date of erection. On account of the popular interest in it and its unusual construction, we give herewith a detailed description of it. (See plates 5 and 6.)

This reservoir was circular in form, and measured 41 feet in diameter. It consisted of a massive stone foundation rising 23 feet above the original ground level, and was surmounted by a circular tank, 41 feet in diameter and 15 feet high, the sides and bottom of which were composed of iron plates bolted together. Later the reservoir was enclosed in a building consisting of three stories and cellar which was owned by the company. We will describe the reservoir with reference to the stories of this building.

The stone foundation of the reservoir consisted mainly of a circular central column of a solid masonry 10 feet in diameter, and a circular outer wall 4 feet thick. The inner space 11½ feet wide between the central pier and the outer wall was divided into eight symmetrical segments by radial partition walls, 3 feet thick, perforated next to the central pier by arched passage ways 4 feet 6 inches wide and about 17 feet high. On the ground level (in the cellar of the surrounding building) the outer wall

of the foundation of the reservoir was penetrated by four arched doorways, about 3½ feet wide and 6 feet high, equidistant, and located adjacent to the alternate radial partitions.

The lowest 10 feet of the foundation was in the cellar of the surrounding building, the first floor at the modern street level being 10 feet above the old cellar ground level. The next 10 feet of the foundation was included in the first story of the surrounding building. At the first floor level was one doorway 3½ feet wide, 6 feet high, with flat lintel, apparently not contemplated in the original plan. The wooden flooring had been extended into the interior of the foundation and was used, as was the space below, for storage purposes. Each of the other seven sections of the circular wall above this floor level was pierced by a circular opening about 2 feet in diameter and lined with brick. These circular openings were about 5 feet above the floor or 15 feet from the ground. The archways in the interior partition walls were 7 feet above the floor or 17 feet from the ground.

Above these archways there was about 6 feet of solid masonry from center to circumference. Upon this was a thin layer of sand, to equalize the superincumbent weight, and upon the sand were laid the bottom plates of the resevoir.

The upper 3 feet of the foundation and the lower 7 feet of the iron tank appeared in the second story of the surrounding building.

The upper 8 feet of the tank appeared in the third story, there being just room enough between the top of the tank and the roof timbers of the building to permit a person to look into the tank.

The bottom of the tank consisted of flat rhomboidal segments of iron plates, bolted together at their flanges. (See figure (a), plate 6.) The circular side consisted of three tiers of rectangular iron plates, 5 feet high, 2 feet 4 inches wide, slightly curved, and similarly bolted together by their raised flanges. At the flanges the plates were 3 inches thick. The design of each plate was divided into 2 panels. In the illustration, plate 5, two rectangles, one above the other, represent one iron plate. A projecting hook in the center of each plate indicated that each tier of plates was reinforced by a circular band of iron.

When the tank was taken down in July, 1914, the black sediment on the bottom of the reservoir — the accumulation of dust which had slowly settled in the tank notwithstanding it was surrounded and covered by the building,— was about 1 foot thick.

Connected with the tank were certain inflow and outflow pipes of no particular interest. Water was originally pumped into the reservoir by means of a steam engine.

Among the traditions which grew up around the old reservoir was one to the effect that the Manhattan Company was obliged to pump water into the tank every day in order to keep alive its charter. As the reservoir is now gone and the company continues to do business, the tradition appears to be effectually set at rest.

As the water supply system of the Manhattan Company, the best in its day, became inadequate for the growing City and was superseded in 1842 by the Croton system, so the latter in turn has become insufficient and is about to be reinforced by the great Catskill Aqueduct. The latter, which is now nearing completion, was described in our last Report at pages 183–186. On March 6, 1915, Water Commissioner Charles N. Chadwick stated at a meeting of the Graduates Club in New York City that "by January 1, 1916, residents of Manhattan, Queens, and Richmond will be drinking water from the aqueduct."

SAINT JOHN'S CHAPEL, NEW YORK

Maintenance for Two Years at Least Secured

Old Saint John's Chapel in Varick Street, New York, for the preservation of which many civic societies and individuals have been striving for the past few years, still stands with the promise of at least a year or two more of existence. This chapel of the Trinity Protestant Episcopal Church stands on the east side of Varick Street between Beach and Laight Streets. The whole plot of land, known as Nos. 34 to 50 Varick Street, both inclusive, has a frontage of 239½ feet in Varick Street and before the widening of the street had a depth of 175 feet, running back to St. John's Lane. Until recently, the mission house occupied the 28.5 feet frontage of No. 34 at the southwestern corner, extending back 75 to 80 feet, and the hospital occupied the 28.8 frontage of