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N. Y. Local Hist. Vol. 15

HISTORY
OF
PLATTSBURGH,
N. Y.,

FROM ITS FIRST SETTLEMENT TO JAN. 1, 1876.

Peter S. Palmer.



PLATTSBURGH, N. Y.
1877.

other fire broke out in the same building, burning out the entire inside of the building.

On Thursday afternoon, August 22, 1871, at half-past one o'clock, a fire caught in Baker Brothers' lumber yard, on Jay Street, destroying the entire stock of lumber and the lumber sheds. The Gas Works, Frank Palmer's barn, and also five small dwelling-houses, between old and new Bridge Streets, east of Fouquet's barn. Loss about \$20,000, principally in lumber. Insurance \$15,450.

About 1 o'clock Friday morning, Aug. 25, 1871, an attempt was made to fire Morrill's Billiard Room, on Bridge Street, next east of Hornick's furniture store. It was fortunately discovered before any damage had been done. If successful, probably a number of buildings would have been consumed.

On the evening of Friday, Nov. 10, 1871, the Academy was destroyed by fire. The fire is supposed to have been the work of an incendiary.

On the 15th October, 1872, the saw mill on the north side of the river, at the upper dam was burned. The covered bridge was also burned at this time, and was replaced the next year by an iron bridge.

On the 15th of April, 1818, an act was passed, granting to John Mallory and his assignees, "the sole and exclusive right" to furnish the inhabitants of the village of Plattsburgh with water, "by means of conduits or aqueducts." The legislature were careful that Mr. Mallory should never, under this grant to furnish water, go into liquidation as a banker, for the last section of the act expressly provided, "that nothing in this act contained,

shall be so construed as to grant any banking powers or privileges whatsoever." Under this act, water was furnished to the inhabitants residing on the west side of the river, in limited and uncertain quantities until the fall of the year 1871.

On the 31st of January, 1868, a public meeting of the citizens of the village was held at the Court House, to take into consideration the subject of supplying the village with pure and wholesome water. At this meeting, a committee was appointed to draft a law, to be submitted to an adjourned meeting of the citizens. This committee reported at the appointed time, and the terms of an act to be submitted to the Legislature was adopted. The act was passed by the Legislature on the 17th of April, 1868. [Laws 1868, p. 502.]

By this act, the trustees of the village were authorized to appoint a Board of Commissioners, consisting of three persons, whose duty it was made to prepare a plan, to be submitted to the taxable electors of the village, who were to express, by vote, their assent or refusal to the prosecution of the work. If a majority of the electors, voting, should be in favor of the plan submitted, the trustees were authorized to ratify such conditional contracts as the commissioners may have made for the purchase of land and the purchase of the old water works, and to raise upon the bonds of the village, a sum necessary to complete the works according to the plan adopted, but not to exceed five thousand dollars over the estimated cost as reported by the commissioners. The act vested in the commissioners the sole and exclusive control of

the construction of the works, and they were to hold office until the works were so far completed as to be in operation, when the control and management were to be transferred to a superintendent, to be appointed by the Board of Trustees.

On the 15th of June, 1868, James H. Totman, Silas W. Gregory, and Benjamin M. Beckwith, were appointed Water Commissioners. They reported a plan, on the 11th day of August, which was adopted by a vote of the electors of the village, and the commissioners were directed to enter into contracts for the construction of the works.

The commissioners estimated the probable cost of the work at \$94,965.56, as follows :

Scribner pond and water right,	\$2,500 00
Bulkhead at dam, with stop gate,	200 00
Pipe from pond to reservoir,	16,000 00
Reservoir and site,	6,500 00
44,732 feet cement pipe,	40,633 31
64,529 feet trenching and backfilling,	16,132 25
40 hydrants, freight and setting,	2,200 00
Stop gates,	1,400 00
Freight on pipe,	2,000 00
Purchase of old water works,	6,400 00
Engineering,	1,000 00

\$94,965 56

As the work progressed, it was found that many items of expense had been omitted in the estimate, and that some of the estimates were below the necessary cost of

the work required. It was also deemed advisable to change the details of the plan in several particulars. A double reservoir was built on the Hammond hill, instead of a single one, as at first contemplated. The size of some of the mains were increased, and mains laid in streets, not at first intended to be supplied. Distributing pipe had also to be laid from the mains to the line of lots, and a well house and waste drain constructed at the reservoir, for which no estimate had been made. The number of hydrants was increased from 40 to 60, in order to afford more complete fire protection throughout the village.

These changes and additions were made by the Commissioners, after consulting with the Board of Trustees, and were considered necessary in order to carrying out the original intention of the citizens to provide for the whole village an abundant and unfailing supply of water for domestic use and for protection from fires. To meet the increased expense, the Trustees were authorized to issue additional bonds to the amount of \$80,000. [Chapter 326, laws of 1870, and chapter 60, laws of 1871.]

The mains having been completed, the office of Water Commissioner was abolished, on the 27th day of December, 1870, and Silas W. Gregory was appointed Superintendent of Water Works.

In the construction of the works there was laid 62,404 lineal feet of cement pipe, and 11,702 lineal feet of tile pipe—in all fourteen miles and one hundred and eighty-six feet. Of the cement pipe,

5,344	feet	is	2	inches	in	diameter.
23,096	"	4	"	"	"	"
5,453	"	6	"	"	"	"
12,822	"	8	"	"	"	"
5,574	"	10	"	"	"	"
10,115	"	12	"	"	"	"

Forty-nine stop gates of different sizes, and 60 fire hydrants have been set. The cost of the iron pipe, socket joint, used for conducting the water across the river was \$1,440.07 and there has been expended in conducting the water from the mains to the lots of consumers, the sum of \$11,118.70.

The bonds issued to defray the expense of construction, are payable as follows :

July 1, 1878,	\$7,850
" 1879,	18,550
" 1881,	22,950
" 1883,	13,000
" 1884,	15,000
" 1885,	4,000
" 1888,	30,000
Jan'y 1, 1889,	37,150
July 1, 1890,	4,000
" 1891,	27,500

The number of consumers in 1872 was about 675. 200 buildings pay a fire protection. The revenue for the year 1871, was \$11,290.95, as follows: First quarter, \$2,632.38; second quarter, \$2,843.89; third quarter, \$2,938.09; fourth quarter, \$2,876.64.

Although the cost of the water works has been heavy, our citizens will never have any real cause to complain

of the outlay. It will be returned by a decreased expense of insurance, the additional protection from fires, and the great convenience and comfort to be derived from an abundant supply of water at all times for domestic use.

The two distributing Reservoirs are located at Hammond's, about two and one-half miles west from the Court House, and 214 feet above the surface of Margaret Street. The north Reservoir is 156 feet by 160 feet at the top, and 104 feet by 108 feet at the bottom, and is 13 feet deep. Its capacity, when filled to a point two feet from the top, is 1,391,130 standard gallons. The south Reservoir is 160 feet by 162 feet at the top, and 108 feet by 110 feet at the bottom, and is also 13 feet deep. With 11 feet of water it holds 1,487,906 gallons. When filled to the top the united capacity of both is 3,596,000 gallons. The outside embankments have a slope of 2 to 1 both inside and outside, and are 13 feet wide at the top.

The supply of water must for years be equal to all the wants of the inhabitants of the village. With three millions of gallons of water held in deposit at Hammond's, and ready to be poured out at any part of the village under a pressure of ninety-five pounds to the square inch, the Fire King will not again hold a saturnalia in our streets, as he did in 1849 and 1867.

CHURCHES.

Presbyterian.—On the 10th day of November, 1792, a public meeting was held at the Block House, for the purpose of "choosing trustees to take in charge the temporalities of the congregation of the town, and to form a