

# Onondaga's Centennial.

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GLEANINGS OF A CENTURY.

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EDITED BY  
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VOLUME I.

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worth was the first incumbent of the office and was succeeded by William A. Cook and he by — Hickok. Between his administration and 1860, Sylvester House, J. C. Cuddeback and Henry Y. Thompson filled the position; in 1860 L. L. Alexander was elected and served one term of four years, to be succeeded by George Stevens. In 1868 Henry Gifford was elected, and was succeeded by Patrick Corbett, who served until 1872. His successor was L. L. Alexander, who served to 1877, when Thomas Mulholland was elected and by repeated elections with enormous majorities he was kept in the office until his death November 27, 1894. The present justice (1895) is Nathaniel M. White.

The present police force consists of the chief, captain of the night watch, four detectives, a sergeant, an officeman, three roundsmen, a doorman, and sixty-two patrolmen.

Following are the various Boards of Police Commissioners: 1869—Peter Burns, George P. Hier, Garrett Doyle, George A. Ostrander. 1871—Charles P. Clark, George P. Hier, Garrett Doyle, George A. Ostrander. 1873—Charles P. Clark, F. W. Deesz, Garrett Doyle, William Baumgras. 1875—William Baumgras, F. W. Deesz, Daniel Gere, Robert McCarthy. 1876—William Baumgras, F. W. Deesz (resigned), Orrin Welch (appointed), Daniel Gere, Robert McCarthy. 1877—Robert McCarthy, Orrin Welch, Daniel Gere, Jacob Knapp. 1878—Robert McCarthy, John Moore (vice Orrin Welch, deceased), Daniel Gere, Jacob Knapp. 1879—Daniel Gere, Charles R. Wright, Jacob Knapp, John Moore. 1881—Daniel Gere, Charles R. Wright, Jacob Knapp, Thomas Murphy. 1881 (appointed in August)—John R. Whitlock, John D. Gray, Charles Schlosser, Edward D. Lewis. May, 1882—J. D. Ackerman, William B. Kirk, jr., Rhody Mara, Thurston W. Brewster. March, 1883—William B. Kirk, jr., Thurston W. Brewster, J. D. Ackerman, Rhody Mara. October, 1884—J. D. Ackerman, Bruce S. Aldrich, T. D. Brewster, Rhody Mara. March, 1885—T. W. Brewster, Bruce S. Aldrich, Daniel O'Brien, Nicholas Latterner. April, 1885—Nicholas Latterner, David K. McCarthy, Bruce S. Aldrich, Daniel O'Brien. January, 1886—Nicholas Latterner, James H. Doolittle, Bruce S. Aldrich, Daniel O'Brien. February, 1887—Darwin L. Pickard, William B. Kirk, jr., Charles Schlosser, Patrick Slattery. Mr. Pickard resigned in February and the other members were removed. The new board appointed was as follows: Dwight H. Bruce, John W. Yale, Edward D. Lewis, Anton V. Altman. 1888—Same as above. April 3, D. H. Bruce resigned, and on May 9 George E. Dana was appointed to fill vacancy. June, 1888—John W. Yale resigned and Philip S. Ryder was appointed to fill vacancy, leaving the board as follows: Edward D. Lewis, Anton V. Altman, Philip S. Ryder, George E. Dana. March, 1889—Same as above. March, 1891—Henry Lyon, George E. Dana, Edward D. Lewis, Charles Listman. 1892—George E. Dana, Charles Listman, Henry Lyon, Edward D. Lewis. 1893–5—Charles M. Warner, Charles Listman, Henry Lyon, S. A. De Gan.

*Syracuse City Water Works.*—The first public measure having for its object a water supply for Syracuse was the passage of an act of the Legis-

lature on March 27, 1821, entitled, "An Act to Supply the Village of Syracuse with Wholesome Water." This act granted to the people of the village the right to use water from any springs on adjacent lands belonging to the State, and provided for the election of three trustees, at an election to be held at the house of Sterling Cossitt, "innkeeper in said village," on the first Monday in May, 1821, who should have power to transact all business relating to a water supply. It does not appear on the records that anything was accomplished under this act.

The act incorporating the village, passed April 13, 1825, vested all the rights, property and powers of the trustees of the water works in the village corporation, and the hypothetical water works remained under control of the village trustees until 1829. On the 23d of April of this year an act was passed by the Legislature authorizing the trustees of the village to convey to Oliver Teall all their water rights and powers for the term of twenty years, and Mr. Teall was invested with all the rights and powers granted in the original act of 1821. This act also prescribed the rates which Mr. Teall should charge for water, viz. : a private family, not exceeding \$5 per year; a boarding house \$10, and a hotel \$10. In case Mr. Teall failed to exercise the rights and powers granted him within one year from the date of the act, they were to revert to the village, which proved to be the case, and they were then re-conveyed to him for a period of thirty-five years by an act passed April 22, 1834. Nothing further was accomplished until March 29, 1842, when an amendment to former acts was passed, permitting Mr. Teal to charge \$10 per year for supplying water to a private family, \$20 to a boarding house and \$40 to a hotel. Under this amendment Mr. Teall began the construction of his water works. The first wooden pipes were laid in 1842 or early in 1843, and brought water from springs situated at the foot of the hill above Lodi street, on blocks 404 and 504. Subsequently Ira Seymour and Aaron Burt became associated with Mr. Teall in the water works, under the firm name of Teall, Seymour & Burt, which continued until 1849.

On the 15th of April, 1849, soon after the incorporation of the city, a special act of the Legislature incorporated the Syracuse City Water Works Company. The incorporators were Oliver Teall, Ira Seymour, John Wilkinson, Hamilton White and Robert Furman. This act was amended April 8, 1851, requiring the company to supply water to the city on specified terms. Various amendments to the incorporating act were passed down to 1877, relating to an increase of capital, to pro-

protecting the interests and works of the company, etc. In 1849 the company constructed aqueducts from springs in the valley of Furnace Brook, in the town of Onondaga, to carry water to a large stone well, seventeen feet deep and lined with masonry; this well was on lot No. 89, Onondaga. From the well a main aqueduct was laid towards the head of the Cinder road (West Onondaga street), terminating on high ground. The length of this aqueduct was about a mile; it was built of masonry and was two feet square on the inside. At the northern termination was an open reservoir holding 3,000,000 gallons, from which the water was conducted down the hillside through brick aqueducts to a point where a log aqueduct of nine inches bore began, which conveyed the water through Onondaga street to Fayette park, and thence to the railroad in Lock street, where it connected with the wooden aqueducts previously laid.

In 1853 extensive improvements were made in the works of the company. The first iron pipe was laid, consisting of 852 rods, and a reservoir of 1,500,000 gallons capacity was constructed. The large reservoir on Onondaga Hill was built in 1862-65, and in 1865 an additional distributing reservoir was constructed on lot 89, town of Onondaga. At a later date an additional supply was taken from Onondaga Creek by pumping to a reservoir. These facilities gave the city a reasonable supply of water until recent years, but its quality was not always good.

The time finally came when the growing city imperatively demanded a more bountiful and purer water supply. The old company had insisted from time to time on an increase of compensation from the city, and in 1884 entered into a three years' contract at \$26,000 per annum, the rate that prevailed almost to the present time. Since that time agitation and discussion of the "water question" has not ceased. At a meeting of the Council March 9, 1885, F. B. Merrill, representing the Central City Water Works Company, made a statement of the company's plans and their advantages, and asked for a franchise. At the next meeting this company and the old one were represented, and if the rosy assurances of either of the representatives could have been fulfilled, Syracuse would long ago have had an excellent supply of pure water. At the Council meeting of March 23, the Central City Company was voted a franchise for twenty years on a quite liberal basis, provided water was supplied from a source that was acceptable to the people of the city. Now the strife between the two companies became more

active than before. The Central City Company announced its intention of beginning work in April, but in the next month the old company obtained an injunction restraining the city from taking further action in that direction. In the fall another element came into the field and the contest became a triangular one. On the 14th of November a citizens' meeting was held at which several speakers condemned both the old and the new companies and strongly advocated city ownership of water works. A committee of thirty-two was appointed to investigate the subject of city ownership; and at a second meeting, November 17, a committee of five was appointed to draw a bill covering the proposed project, and another committee of three was appointed to receive subscriptions for preliminary investigation; \$750 was subscribed at the meeting. The large committee was subsequently raised to one hundred members and they visited Cardiff in company with Howard Soule, the experienced engineer, and were pleased with the prospect of there securing an excellent supply. Although the local press teemed with communications on the subject from scores of citizens, the Committee of One Hundred closed its career with its preliminary work of investigation and obtaining information from many other cities. In the meantime the old company were active and assured the Common Council that if they could be assured a definite contract for a stipulated period, they would immediately make a heavy investment and bring a new and perfect supply from the Tully lakes or elsewhere. The source of supply proposed by the Central City Company was Oneida Lake, which was not at all satisfactory to the people. In January, 1886, the old company announced to the Council that they were willing to perform all that was promised by the new one, except as to making their source of supply Oneida Lake, and would establish a scale of rates as low as those of any city of the same population as Syracuse. On the 15th of January a citizens' committee reported in favor of municipal ownership of water works. In the same month 104 prominent citizens sent a communication to the Council approving of the grant to the Central City Company, and in response to a petition a public meeting was called by the mayor on January 23, to consider the subject. A bill had already been drawn providing for a special election to vote upon the question of bonding the city in the sum of \$1,500,000 to build its own works. The sentiment of the public meeting was against such action, and a committee was appointed to visit the governor in opposition thereto, but the bill became a law on the 17th of March. It conferred power

upon the city to build its own water works, and named as commissioners, Henry L. Duguid, William Kirkpatrick, George Barnes, Riley V. Miller, William Kearney, and Charles Schlosser. On the 6th of July City Attorney Jenney reported to the Council that the Central City Company would have grounds for an action against the city, if a water supply was provided in any other manner but by that company. The sentiment against bonding the city increased in strength. A public meeting was held on April 25, where many leading citizens spoke against the measure. The special election was held April 27, and resulted in a majority of 4,076 against bonding.

While these matters were progressing William A. Sweet brought forward his plan for utilizing Salmon River as a source of water supply—a plan which he persistently advocated until it finally became hopeless of success. One of the results of Mr. Sweet's enthusiasm and persistence was the appointment of a committee of the Common Council consisting of Joseph W. Young and Charles Listman, who reported that Salmon River was the best available source of supply and that the adoption of an ordinance granting a franchise to the Sweet Salmon River Company was the only practical solution of the whole problem. This ordinance was then submitted to the city attorney, who advised its rejection, as there were then two bills before the Legislature, and complications and litigation would follow. The old company continued to make propositions to the Council, offering to supply the city as good water on as economical terms as proposed by any other company. They also inaugurated well-drilling on a large scale in Onondaga Valley, promising a bounteous supply from that source, supporting their promises with the fact that other cities were then obtaining ample water from such wells. The plans of the old company on this line found many advocates among conservative people.

The water question was permitted to rest in comparative inactivity until the election of Mayor William B. Kirk, in 1888, and to his progressive action and liberal support of the project Syracuse is largely indebted for its present magnificent water works. Litigation had been begun to determine if the city had the legal right, as against the rights of the old company, to build and own the works, the end of which was in favor of the city. On the 5th of March, 1888 the old company submitted to the Council a proposition binding the company to give the city an adequate supply from their wells in the valley, the principal guarantee asked being a ten year contract at a stipulated price. At the

same time the Council expressed its approval of submitting the question of bonding to the people and requested the Legislature to pass the Salmon River water bill. During the entire winter the culmination of all preceding proceedings on the water subject was reached in the passage of a law giving the mayor power to appoint a Board of Water Commissioners, consisting of three men from each of the dominant political parties, to make an exhaustive investigation of the whole subject. The board appointed were E. B. Judson, Alexander H. Davis, James B. Brooks, William H. Warner, Peter B. McLennan, and William K. Niver. These commissioners organized in June, and subsequently made an elaborate report in favor of the city building and owning the water works and the adoption of Skaneateles Lake as a source of supply. Thereupon began a long and intensely active campaign to secure this end, the details of which need not be followed here. At the special election to vote on the subject the majority in favor of the project was 10,395. The city was authorized to raise \$3,000,000 on its bonds for the work. This was increased \$500,000 in 1895. A commission was appointed to appraise the value of the property of the old company, preparatory to its passing to possession of the city, consisting of William Kernan, of Utica; George W. Dunn, of Binghamton; and C. J. Ryan, of New York.

The details of the construction of the works as they now exist need not be followed, as they are well known to the public. The city has now a water supply unlimited in quantity and superior in quality.

#### PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS AND INDUSTRIES OF SYRACUSE.

It cannot be truthfully stated that the inhabitants of what is now Syracuse gave very early effort towards the organization of churches and the early building of houses of worship; but it should not be inferred on that account that the people in Salina and Syracuse and Geddes were less God-loving or more lax in morality than those of other similar communities. There were other and more commendable reasons for the fact, the most important being the existence on the Hill in 1803, in the Valley in 1809, and in Liverpool at an early day of churches with which many of the families of Salina and a still larger proportion of the pioneers of Syracuse had affiliated; many of the inhabitants of these two latter villages had removed from the older ones named and had become members or supporters and attendants of the churches there