

HISTORY  
OF  
GREENE COUNTY  
OHIO

ITS PEOPLE, INDUSTRIES AND INSTITUTIONS

---

HON. M. A. BROADSTONE

Editor-in-Chief

---

VOLUME I

---

ILLUSTRATED

---

1918

B. F. BOWEN & COMPANY, Inc.

Indianapolis, Indiana

7

papers liked to call it, was Samuel Newton, the second subscriber being John Little. The business grew so rapidly that Captain Whiteman took in Little as a silent partner and in 1882 organized the Buckeye Telephone Company. Captain Whiteman first operated under the name of the Xenia Telephone Exchange and under this name entered into a contract on June 6, 1881, for the installation of the first telephone in the court house.

The Buckeye Telephone Company was a consolidation of the Xenia plant of Captain Whiteman and the Middleton plant of C. H. Bundy. This company secured a contract with the county commissioners for the installation of three telephone "boxes" in the court house on December 4, 1882. The next step in the history of the telephone business in Xenia was made in 1885, when the Buckeye Company was merged into a new company known as the Miami Telephone Company. This new company secured a franchise from the city of Xenia on February 13, 1885, and continued in business under this name until it was absorbed by the Central Union Telephone Company, of Chicago, in 1905. Upon the reorganization in 1885, John Little became president and Captain Whiteman became local manager, a position he retained for several years.

#### OTHER TELEPHONE COMPANIES OF XENIA.

The Miami Telephone Company had the local field to itself until 1898, when the Xenia Telephone Company came into existence. The city records show that this company secured a franchise from the city on December 3, 1898. The Ohio Telephone and Telegraph Company entered the local field with a franchise dated March 29, 1901, being closely followed by the Citizens Telephone Company. The latter company was granted a franchise by the city council on May 30, 1902. The Central Union Telephone Company of Chicago (usually referred to as the Bell system) came into the city following a franchise granted on April 26, 1905. This new company absorbed the old Miami Telephone Company.

#### WATERWORKS.

The beginning of the present system of water supply for Xenia may be said to be definitely marked by a contract which the city entered into with John P. Martin on July 16, 1886. Martin was a pump manufacturer, and his famous "Red Jacket" iron pump of the '80s was widely known throughout the country. He came here from Cincinnati. Martin spent the summer of 1886 in prospecting for water, but he had no money to go ahead with his plan, and the spring of 1887 found him ready to turn his contract, or franchise, over to Goodhue & Birnie, of Springfield, Massachusetts. This company immediately began preparation to install a waterworks plant and the spring and summer of 1887 saw the work in active progress under the direction of George F. Cooper, who

came to the city from Springfield, Massachusetts, to superintend its construction.

The company chose a location for the plant about a mile and a half north of Xenia, near Oldtown run, where a large number of springs flowed into the run. Tests made showed that the water was clear, cold and pure, and apparently of sufficient volume to furnish an ample supply. A dam was constructed which made a reservoir for the impounding of the water from the springs. A pumping station was erected and at the same time a reservoir, locally known as a standpipe, was erected at the extreme east end of Market street. This standpipe, 115 feet in height and 20 feet in diameter, has a capacity of 275,000 gallons. When the plant was installed in 1887 it was the only one in the state of Ohio which had a pipe of less than six inches, a four-inch pipe such as used in Xenia, being considered by experts at that time as inadequate for fire protection. The plant put into operation in 1887 proved sufficient for all the needs of the city up to 1895, but the severe drought of that year convinced the company that an additional supply of water would have to be provided. Several places were considered before it was finally decided to install a second pumping station on the Cincinnati pike, adjoining the city on the south. Here the second plant was erected in 1895, the water being derived from eighteen wells. Thus the city, with two separate plants, located on two sides of the city, is peculiarly well situated with regard to its water supply. The company also owns a couple of acres of land near the Oldtown mill which may be used at some future time for water supply.

The company in 1918 has twenty-three lines of pipe within the limits of the city, their lines reaching to all parts of the city. There are 203 fire hydrants, 500 feet apart, thus insuring the city ample fire protection, no fire ever having overtaxed the available supply of water. The water mains show a pressure varying from 60 to 100 pounds, according to location. The average amount of water pumped every twenty-four hours is 850,000 gallons, or 102 gallons daily for each person living in the city. There are 2,110 water consumers, while 81 per cent. of the stores use the water of the company. Until within the past few years meters have been used only where large quantities of water are consumed, but the policy of the company now is to install meters throughout the city as fast as possible, and there are now 475 meters in use. The city has installed five public watering troughs, while the Barber family gave to the city the mountain which stands on East Main street, opposite the court house.

The connection of John P. Martin and the firm of Goodhue & Birnie with the local plant has already been mentioned. The latter firm owned the plant about fifteen years and then disposed of it to the firm of Jones & Phillips, of Scranton, Pennsylvania. This company in turn sold the plant in 1904 to

Frank M. Green, of Washington, D. C., who was acting for the Shamokin interests. In the fore part of 1907 the control of the company passed into the hands of local people, several of whom had been stockholders in the company for several years. Practically all of the stock of the company is now owned by local investors, fifty-seven of the sixty-one stockholders residing in Xenia.

The present company was granted a perpetual franchise by the city on February 15, 1907, and the rates then established were in use until February 15, 1917, when a new schedule of rates was established by the company. These rates were fixed according to the estimate of the value of the property of the company, the engineering firm of Chester & Fleming, of Pittsburgh, fixing the value of the plant at \$338,770. At the present time the rates as fixed in 1917 are being reviewed by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio, and their report is expected some time in 1918. The city pays the water company \$32 per year for each of the 203 fire hydrants now installed, or a total of \$6,496 a year. According to the schedule adopted in February, 1917, the city is to pay \$40 for each additional hydrant which may be installed in the future. This is a fixed rate.

The officers of the Xenia Water Company in 1918 are the following: George Little, president; C. E. Arbogust, vice-president; George F. Cooper, secretary, treasurer and general manager. The directors include the three officers and M. L. Wolf and C. L. Jobe. Mr. Cooper has been the general manager of the local plant since it was installed in 1887, and is now entering into the thirty-first year of his service with the company. It is probable that few public-service corporations in the state have had one man in charge for such a long period of years. The offices of the company are located on East Market street.

#### FIRE DEPARTMENT.

The history of Xenia's fire department falls into five periods: First, the period when the town had none at all; second, the period when there was only a bucket brigade, this lasting until 1837 or 1838; third, the period of the famous hand-pump days, when the water was all pumped by hand power; fourth, the period of the "steamers," engines which threw water as it had never before been thrown in the town; and fifth, the period since the installation of the present system of waterworks in 1887.

There is little known of the fire department prior to 1887. Just fifty years before that time—1837—the Legislature passed an act allowing the town of Xenia to borrow five thousand dollars to purchase fire-fighting apparatus and build an engine house. This house stood on the northwest corner of the public square, the town having a lease of a strip eighty feet wide across the north side of the square. This was removed in the '50s and the fire house was then located on Greene street, and there it remained for many years. Subsequently