A HISTORY

OF

CATASAUQUA

IN

LEHIGH COUNTY

PENNSYLVANIA

BY

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1914
The Searle & Dressler Co., Inc.
Allentown, Pa.

On the 22nd day of December, 1903, the Borough Council passed an ordinance granting permission to the Hanover Central Electric Railway Company to lay and operate a double track trolley system, south on Howertown Avenue to Walnut, thence east on Walnut to American, south on American Street to Kurtz's Lane and east on Kurtz's Lane, now Wood Street, to the Borough limits. The Hanover Electric was supposed to run via Schoenersville to Bethlehem—but there was no "Juice."

WATER.

The first water works consisted of a well sunk by the Crane Company opposite the furnaces on Front Street, and a "Municipal pump," whence the whole community drew water. The pump was made of a log-bored stock, octagonal in shape, and about fourteen inches in diameter, and a leather valve suction bucket, worked by an iron rod and a long iron handle balanced with a knob on the end.

Around the old pump many an impromptu colloquy occurred by the chance meeting of friends and foes, men and maidens, the bearers of life's burdens and the carefree lovers of youth.

The Lehigh Crane Iron Company more than fulfilled the conditions laid down in the proffers of the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company and thus the water rights from the Hokendauqua to the Allentown dams were ceded to the former.

In those days the crystal purity of the Lehigh River was not contaminated by sewer systems of various descriptions and, therefore, a pump was attached to the water wheel that drove the hot-blast for the furnaces, in order to draw water from the river for the town's use.

David Thomas directed his son Samuel, who was then a student at Nazareth Hall, to stop off at Bethlehem and take measurements of the pump used there in order that he might have a model and some data to go by in the erection of Catasauqua's first water works. The gentleman who generously supplied Mr. Thomas with desired data was Richard W. Leibert, who still resides in Bethlehem.

The work of construction was begun before the charter grant was completed. A four-inch main was laid from the pump to Wood Street, to Second, up Second

to Church, and up Church Street to a point above Limestone Street, where a basin or reservoir was built. Water seeping through the walls of the basin softened the underlying strata of limestone and caused a number of caverns which were dangerous. A large wooden tank was built beside the basin to serve its purpose.

During 1854, a four-inch main was laid on Front Street to Bridge. During 1856, a three-inch main was attached at Front and Bridge Streets, and continued up Bridge and Second Streets to the new residence of David Thomas, located at Second and Pine Streets. The main on Front Street was extended to "Puddler's Row," above Chapel Street.

During 1872, the Company expended over $25,000 on extensive improvements. On some streets larger, and on others, new mains were laid.

A new pumping station, twenty-three by twenty-five feet in dimensions, was built below furnace No. 6. It was equipped with a steam pump in addition to the old water power system. Its capacity was 185,000 gallons per day. To equalize the pressure on the mains and water pipes, a large stand pipe was erected in front of the pumping station.

Toward the close of the nineteenth century, the Clear Springs Water Company was chartered and secured water rights on both sides of the river from Cementon to Allentown. The Crane Company, through its receiver, returned the water rights in its name to the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company, who, in turn, ceded the rights of the Catasauqua Water Works to the Clear Springs Water Company.

Under date of August 28, 1903, an agreement was entered into by the Clear Springs Water Company and the Borough of Catasauqua, that the former supply the town according to the following schedule of net rates:

One family, first spigot	$ 6.00
Bath tub	$ 3.00
Wash stand, first	$ 3.00
Closet, first	$ 3.00
Pave wash, each	$ 1.50

Stationary wash tub, first	$ 1.50
Steam or water heater	$ 1.50
Hotel	$50.00 to $100.00
Hydrants on streets	$ 12.00
Beer pumps	$ 15.00
Fountains	$ 7.50

A discount of twenty-five per cent. was allowed on all bills that were paid within twenty days from the first day of the month on which they were issued. The above contract terminated December 31, 1907.

Although the Clear Springs Water Company did all they could to furnish water desired by the consumer, there was constant complaint against the condition of the water furnished; and when the rates to consumers were announced in January, 1908, many discontinued the use of the water.

The Fire and Water Committee was directed to inquire into conditions and ascertain the approximate cost of a municipal water plant.

They inspected various plants, and invited engineers of experience to view the location selected for wells by a geologist sent by the State Board of Health.

A citizens' meeting was called in the Town Hall, Thursday, July 23, 1908, when it was proposed to ask the tax payers to agree to a loan of $80,000, to sink wells and proceed with the erection of a municipal plant. The Council resolved unanimously to submit the matter to the tax-payers at the November election. There were 776 votes in favor of a municipal plant, and 74 opposed to it.

Two wells, ten inches in diameter, were sunk two hundred and forty feet into the earth at Walnut and St. John Streets, and were secured with a steel casement almost to their full depth. Both wells were tested by air lifts for seven successive days and nights and proved to contain an inexhaustible supply. The State Board certified to the absolute purity of the water.

Drill-engineers were set to their task in March, 1910, and by October the pumps were in operation. The men who deserve credit for this successful enterprise are: Dr. C. J. Keim, Burgess, and his councilmen, Henry W. Stolz, Alfred J. Leh, Martin Graver, Thomas Jones, William McCandless, and Oscar Shugar.

PUMPING STATION.

THE PUMPING STATION.

The pumping station is a one-story, fire-proof, brick building, large enough to double the capacity of its present equipment whenever needed. There are two 125 horse power high pressure tubular boilers, two one million gallon pumps, and two air compressors in operation.

The dimensions of the reservoir and aerator are seventy-two feet in diameter by fourteen feet, six inches in depth, and afford a capacity of 364,000 gallons. It is constructed of steel and concrete, and bears a roof of cement tiling, and screened ventilators ,assuring protection against all impurities.

The Water Tower (stand-pipe) is located on Catasauqua's highest elevation, a spot near Sixth Street and half a block north of Walnut Street. It is of steel construction, fifteen feet in diameter and eighty feet high, with a capacity of 125,000 gallons.

The system of water mains consists of pipes, ranging from sixteen to six inches in diameter and totals an extension of seven miles. This system is divided into sixty-three districts, any and all of which may be closed off at will. Thus only the people of the square in which repairs are made need be inconvenienced for the time being. There are 790 taps from mains to houses and 75 hydrants.

Thirty-five Matthews-type hydrants with six-inch base connections, two two and one-half inch nozzles for hose, and one four-inch nozzle for steamer have been located at prominent street corners.

The average quantity of water pumped per week is 3,500,000 gallons, and

the average consumption of coal is twenty tons weekly. The total receipts average $8,500 per annum.

DRINKING FOUNTAINS.

Public spirited citizens attended a meeting in the fall of 1912 for the purpose of considering ways and means for the erection of drinking fountains for man and beast throughout the town. A committee charged with the matter was appointed: Captain Joseph Matchette, Chairman, Edmund Randall, H. H. Riegel, M. D., William Weisley and Chester Frantz. The solicitors appointed by the committee were: John Moat, George T. Boyer, Frank C. Beck, Alvin A. Houser, George O. Houser, Reuben Weaver, and Cooper Weaver.

Four fountains (for man and beast), one for each Ward, and an extra one, on Front Street, were purchased for $380.00 from the J. L. Mott Iron Works, New York, through the kind offices of Charles E. Frederick.

The well known plumbing firm of Beck and Frey connected up the fountains at a cost of $120.00. Mrs. Kate Fuller generously paid for the fountain in the Fourth Ward.

FIRE PROTECTION.

At the suggestion of David Thomas, a meeting of the villagers was called, November 4, 1845, for the purpose of organizing a fire company. Thirty-seven men were in attendance.

Owen Rice	John Lees	David Thomas
John Kane	Noah Phillips	William J. Aull
Edward Clark	Cochrane McLaughlin	John McIntyre
Henry E. Kildare	Charles Dempsey	John Hunter
Isaac Miller	William Neligh	James Hunter
Thomas Dempsey	William Pollock	Alex. McCurdy
Alexander Miller	Jacob Smith	James Dempsey
Robert Campbell	Morgan Emanuel	Mark Dempsey
Richard Davis	Neil McKeever	Patrick Dempsey
George Jenkins	Thomas Miller	James McAllister
Arthur McQuade	Wm. McClelland	John Clark
	John Thomas	
William Boyle	Samuel Thomas	William Davis