

LYNCHBURG
and ITS PEOPLE



BY
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and flax. They proceeded at once to erect a mill on Blackwater creek, near the site of the present union depot. The building was soon completed and the machinery put in place. Michael Connell was employed to manage it, and as soon as he could get things in order he began the manufacture of cotton goods. The mill ran for some years, but, not being a success, was abandoned.

The facilities for traveling were private conveyances and stage lines, one of the most notable being that operated between Lynchburg and Washington by William Smith, "Extra Billy." Notwithstanding the slow method of traveling, Lynchburg had a large number of visitors. In February the Virginia conference of the Methodist Episcopal church met here. Bishops Roberts and McKendree were present, and the following May the conference of the Associated Methodist church also met here. Even as early as this, the place had made a reputation for hospitality.

One of the most important events in the history of the town took place in July of this year. Mention has already been made of the committee appointed in 1822 to devise means for bringing water into the town. They do not seem to have made any report; at any rate, a new committee was appointed November 25, 1825, consisting of D. G. Murrell, Rev. John Early, Ammon Hancock, and John Thurman, president of the council. This committee, like the first, seemed unable to solve the great problem, so another was appointed, with John Victor as chairman. He worked faithfully to make a

plan for furnishing the town with water, and to this man Lynchburg is indebted for the excellent water works it has had so long. At his own expense first, he brought a civil engineer, Albert Stein, here from Pennsylvania to make the estimates and draw a plan for the proposed works. The plan was recommended to the council February 5, 1827. It was to dam Little river, put a forcing pump at the foot of Seventh street, and build a reservoir on Clay street with a capacity of six hundred thousand gallons of water. The pump was to throw into the reservoir three or four thousand gallons of water in twenty-four hours. The water was to be conducted from the reservoir through Second and Third streets in iron pipes, and through Fourth street in wooden pipes. To do this it would be necessary for the town to borrow forty thousand dollars.

The proposition was a bold one, and was not heartily received. Some laughed at the idea of a town the size of Lynchburg attempting to build a plant like the one proposed, others said it was impracticable to raise water to such a height, two hundred and fifty feet, and, besides, it was too much money to spend. For months it was the general topic of conversation, and nearly every paper had columns discussing the question. On June 29, the ordinance was passed. John Thurman was president of the council, and D. Rodes, clerk. John Victor, David G. Murrell, E. Fletcher, John Thurman, Albon McDaniel, Samuel Claytor, F. Sydnor and John G. Meem were appointed a committee to

borrow fifty thousand dollars. The money was borrowed from John D. Murrell and preparations were made to begin the work at once. "Black's lot," corner of Clay and Seventh streets, which was used as a circus ground and a place for sending up balloons, was bought for the reservoir from Rev. John Early for two thousand dollars, and the land for the pump-house and canal from William L. Cabell for one thousand, seven hundred and fifty dollars.

The work was begun, and Saturday, August 23, 1828, was appointed as the time for laying the corner-stone of the pump-house. The event was one of importance and was to be celebrated with much display. At nine o'clock in the morning a long procession formed in front of the Presbyterian church and marched up Main to Seventh street, and down Seventh to the river. The order was: The military, the reverend clergy, the engineer, the common council preceded by the watering committee, Judge William Daniel of the General Court, Chancellor Taylor of the Chancery Court, Mayor MeDaniel, recorder and aldermen, Masonic fraternity and citizens on foot. The marshals were Major J. B. Risque, Colonel M. Langhorne, Captains R. R. Phelps, Samuel J. Wiatt and H. M. Gilliam.

When the place was reached, the Lynchburg Artillery and the Rifles formed a square, within which were the Masons and public officers. The ceremonies, which were impressive, began with prayer by Rev. W. S. Reid, then followed music, then another prayer by Rev. F. G. Smith, and the Masons proceeded to lay the corner-

stone. On the stone was a large copper plate upon which was this inscription :

“THIS STONE,

The foundation of a work executed by order of Common Council
of Lynchburg for supplying the town with water,

was laid under the direction of

John Victor, Jno. Thurman, John Early, David G. Murrell
and Sam'l Claytor

by the

Rt. Worshipful Harrison S. White, D. D. G. Master, and the
Worshipful Maurice H. Garland, Master of Marshall Lodge,

No. 39, of Free and Accepted Masons,

On 23rd Aug., A. L. 5828, A. D. 1828,

In presence of the Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen and Common
Councilmen of said town, members of said Lodge, the
Artillery and Rifle Co.'s commanded by Capts.

J. E. Norvell and Jos. W. Pegram, and
numerous citizens.

Albon McDaniel, Mayor,

Jno. Thurman, Pres. Council,

Albert Stein, Eng.”

The exercises were closed with a speech from John Victor. He told of the different efforts to supply the town with water, and then explained the present movement, describing the dam, canal, pump, and all other parts of the work. He said the pump-house was to be fifty-four by thirty-two feet, the water-wheel of wood and iron, with shaft and socket ; the pump-barrel nine inches in diameter, and the capacity was to be two hundred and fifty thousand gallons in twenty-four hours. The ascending main was to be seven inches, the main from the reservoir eight inches, and the pipes in the streets and alleys three or four inches. The crowd

listened attentively and applauded when the speech was over, but there was still much misgiving in the hearts of a large number of people.

The work went steadily forward. Many came to look on, and the opponents said it was doomed to failure—nothing could come of it. They were bitter in their denunciation of the men who had involved the town in debt, when no good could be realized.

At length the work was completed, and Saturday, July 18, 1829, was appointed the day for the trial of the machinery. The whole town was in a high state of excitement. Some friends went to John Victor and Rev. John Early and advised them to leave town on that day, for there was a plan on foot to hang them if the project failed. They replied, "The water will run if the principles of science are true, and if not we are not afraid of the hanging." Saturday evening a large crowd gathered at the reservoir, and the pump was started. Great was the suspense as they waited in almost breathless stillness to see if the water would run. George Thurman, a small boy, was let down into the pipe to see if the water was coming. He said he could hear only a roaring. Again he was let down and drawn up. This time he reported, dust and a current of air. The friends of the movement looked sad; they thought some error had been made in the construction and the people would be disappointed. The third time the boy was let down, but before he had gotten far he cried: "Here she is; draw me up quick." He was quickly drawn up, and before he had gotten

well out of the way the water bulged out. A long and loud shout went up from the crowd, and John Victor, John Early and the rest of the watering committee were the heroes of the hour, and it is said that many of the citizens got drunk drinking the health of each other with James river water. At the height of the excitement some one called out, "Get a barrel of whisky," and, before the officials were aware of it, a barrel was brought, and was not poured out as a libation, but was drunk by some in the crowd. From that day to this the town has been abundantly supplied with water, and the city should acknowledge her debt of gratitude to the men whose labor and genius devised and completed this valuable public work.

The water-works excitement had scarcely subsided before another as great and more romantic was started. A family named Barnes had moved to town from New York, and had opened a store on the southeastern corner of Main and Sixth streets, in a two-story frame house, with its gable end fronting Main street.

They put on a great deal of style, and frequently the whole family would pose in front of the store as a kind of advertisement. All of them appeared rosy and well-fed except one girl, who was occasionally seen in public, and who seemed to be a servant. Mrs. Barnes complained of the town, and often expressed her disgust for the negroes. Her white servant, she said, could do more work in a day than a negro could in a week, and one would have thought that she did, for the poor girl looked as if she were overworked and under-

fed. The neighbors began to make remarks about the girl's looks, and to take some interest in her, when she suddenly disappeared. One day when Mrs. Labby, who lived across the street, was looking out of her window she saw a sight that horrified her. Ann Hindershot, the poor child, was tied to a bed-post in the garret of the Barnes house, with her hands clasped in the attitude of prayer, while Mrs. Barnes was beating her with a stick. When she had finished beating her she threw over her a shovel of hot embers. The girl uttered a feeble cry and fainted. Mrs. Labby hastened to the factory to tell her husband, and he immediately procured a warrant for Barnes and his wife. Captain Labby and the officer proceeded at once to the house, and were refused admission. They insisted upon going in and went to the attic, where they found the child in a fainting condition, half-starved and burned, and beaten until she was almost insensible. Christopher Anthony was sent for, and several physicians. The physicians treated the child, and she was taken to a Mr. Jones,' opposite Major J. B. Risque's, afterwards to Lindsey Shoemaker's.

The news of the affair spread through town like wildfire, and threats of tar and feathers, and lynching, were freely indulged in. Hundreds came to see the child and hear her tale of sorrow. She told how she had been put into a box, shut up in the baker, hung up by her thumbs, and in many other ways cruelly treated. Barnes was arrested and put in jail, lest he be summarily dealt with. He claimed that the child had been bound