



**This PDF is part of the
Philadelphia Water Department Historical Collection
Accession 2004.071.0001
Frederic Graff Jr. Scrapbook, 1854-1857**

**It was downloaded from
www.phillyh2o.org**



THE STEAM FIRE ENGINE.—The steam fire engine, invented by Mr. Shawk, of Cincinnati, was tried yesterday in the Moyamensing prison. If any other proof were required, after the exhibition of Latta's steam engine, or indeed if any evidence were necessary, knowing, as the world does, the power of steam, that it may be used more efficiently, steadily and economically than manual labor, that proof was presented in the action of this fire engine. It played a continuous stream of water, by actual measurement, 176 feet from the nozzle of the branch pipe, the branch pipe being on the end of a section of hose, 62 feet from the engine. It is not, however, in the distance that the engine threw the water, in which its merit consists. Sixty or seventy feet would probably suffice to reach the top of the highest of our five and six story buildings. But it is in the enormous quantity of water which is thrown continually from the pipe, deluging a building to such a degree, that fire would stand no chance of burning. All this it does without any expenditure of strength or any abating of work, through physical exhaustion.

In the usual operations of business, whatever will produce equal results with less labor and expense, is considered an improvement, and sensible business men are ready to adopt it immediately. In fact, the principal invention of the country is to save labor, and instead of the discerning portion of the public opposing improvements which lessen a man's toil, inventors are very liberally rewarded by them for such improvements. There is no satisfaction in severe toil, and if mankind can accomplish as great a good with little or no labor, that is so much their gain. This is the advantage we see in the steam fire engine. In the hands of the firemen, it will be the most efficient agent which can be used to extinguish fire and save hard work. It is reliable under all circumstances, efficient under all, causes no exposure to personal danger, and, relieving the great body of active firemen from the necessity of working the engine, leaves them at liberty to be useful in saving the movable property exposed to danger. A striking instance of the confidence which the ability of the steam engine has created in the public mind is presented by a Cincinnati paper. A fire occurred last week in a printing office adjoining a concert room, in which latter there were seated one thousand persons. On the alarm of fire they never started. On the contrary, the concert went on, without noise or interruption, to the end. A year ago, this would have been impossible. A fire so near would have dispersed the whole audience. The building and its contents would have been destroyed, and probably the adjacent ones either consumed or seriously injured. As it was, however, in less than half an hour from the time the alarm was first given, the flames were entirely subdued. The heat was sufficient to melt the types on the imposing stone. So complete was the confidence of the engineers in charge of the department, that hardly anything was allowed to be removed from the lower stories, and much loss and destruction was thus saved.

We notice that some of the most prominent and intelligent gentlemen connected with the fire department regarded, with deep interest, the operations of Mr. Shawk's engine, and, from the expressions of opinion, the general impression among them was, that the steam fire engine would be a powerful and useful aid to the fire department of this city.

A SUPPLEMENT to an Ordinance approved October 3d, 1854, entitled "An Ordinance organizing the Department for supplying the City with Water."

Section 1. The Select and Common Councils of the city of Philadelphia do ordain, That all Water Rents shall be payable to the Register of Water Rents, at his office, annually, in advance, on the second Monday in January, and upon all water rents unpaid upon the first day of April in any year, there shall be charged the sum of five per centum, and upon all rents unpaid on the first day of July in any year, there shall be charged an additional sum of ten per centum. And if any such rent, with the said additional charges, shall remain unpaid on the first day of September, in any year, the said Register shall notify the Chief Engineer of the water works of the name of such delinquent, who shall cause the ferrules of all such delinquent water tenants to be detached from the pipe of a conduit, and suit be instituted for the recovery of such rent; and after such ferrules shall have been detached, the water shall not again be supplied or furnished to the said premises, except upon payment of all arrears of water rent, and the sum of two dollars for expenses incurred, and a printed notice containing the first section hereof, shall be left upon the premises.

Section 2. The said Register shall cause notice to be inserted in two or more of the daily newspapers of the city, and published in posted handbills, of the time and place when and where the water rents are payable, and the penalties for delay in, and for the non payment thereof.

Section 3. The water tenants of the city shall be charged for the water for the year 1855, at the rate of five cents respectively charged for water for the year 1854; but all permits issued for the year 1855, shall be charged at the rates of the corporation of the Mayor, Aldermen and citizens of Philadelphia, for the year 1854.

Section 4. That the tenth section of the ordinance to which this is a supplement, be and the same is hereby repealed.

Enacted into an Ordinance at the City of Philadelphia, the 26th day of December, A. D. 1854.

JOHN H. DIEHL,
President of Common Council.
JOHN P. VERREE,
President of Select Council.

Attest—EDMUND WILCOX,
Clerk of the Select Council.

Approved the 23th day of December Anno Domini one thousand eight hundred and fifty-four.
R. T. CONRAD, Mayor.

A N ORDINANCE

The West Philadelphia Water-Works.—In the report of the proceedings of City Councils, published in your paper of Friday morning, a partial extract is made from the report of Mr. Graff, on the Twenty-fourth Ward Water-works, which is rather calculated to reflect upon us as the engineers. We would therefore ask you to add the following extract from the same report:

Copy from report of Fred. Graff, on the Twenty-fourth Ward Water-works, made to Councils Nov. 2, 1854.—It is but due to the engineers and contractors who designed and are erecting the work to say, that the stand-pipe system is not the one originally proposed by them, (as will be seen from the printed report of the joint Special Committee now before you,) but was adopted as an expedient only. Very respectfully,

BIRKINBINE & TROTTER,
Engineers and Contractors.

LEMON HILL AND SEDGELY PARK.—The citizens of Philadelphia are under great obligations to Mr. Frederick Graff, for his very neat "Plan of Lemon Hill and Sedgely Park, Fairmount, and adjoining property." The improvements of which these exceedingly picturesque and delightful localities are susceptible, we may call more particular attention to hereafter.

Extract from "Notes on America,—by a British Traveller."

On walking through the streets of Philadelphia to the hotel the city appeared too formal. The streets are built at right angles, those parallel to the river being called by numbers, first, second, and so on; and those intersecting them, by the names of various trees as Chestnut-street, &c.—There are some squares, one of which, Washington, is a fashionable promenade in the evening; and here again the Ladies excited my admiration. Some of the trees here have beautiful flowers, as large as our horse chestnuts, but more elegant. No person, not even children, walk off the gravelled walks upon the grass; and this forbearance, so unusual with us, I found general in the States. In fact, respectable society is very orderly, and the lower orders appeared to be less addicted to blackguardism. In general the trees by the causeways, which are paved with brick, are of recent planting. The streets are wretchedly paved; at the crossings they are actually dangerous. On a little acquaintance I began to like the town; it has a quiet respectable appearance, quite sober as compared with New York, and is one that I should prefer to reside in.

"I spent a day in driving round the neighbourhood of the city, very much to my satisfaction; there is an unusual number of public buildings in proportion to the magnitude of the city, and it brought to my mind similar appendages to the town of Bedford.

The first, the most beautiful and most useful public works, are the water works at Fairmount. Here the river Schuylkill, about 900 feet wide, has been dammed across and led into a mill race 90 feet wide, where, by a simple process, it raises its own water into reservoirs 102 feet high, being 56 feet above the highest land in the city. The expense of doing this, the works being finished, is only four dollars a-day for raising 1,250,000 gallons of water; thus administering to the health, comfort, and luxury of the city at a most insignificant rate. Whilst there are so many fine situations for taking advantage of water power, steam engines are not required; it is calculated the same quantity of water could not be raised by steam under 206 dollars per day.

The race admits 6 feet breadth, and six feet deep of water, or 408 square feet of water. There are three wheels, one of 15 feet, and two of 16 feet diameter, each raising about a million and a half gallons in 24 hours. One of the reservoirs contains three millions of gallons, another four millions, and at the time of my visit other reservoirs were forming. The quantity of iron pipe used is 35,205 feet. I have understood in England that the projector and planner was an Englishman, and that the pipes were also sent from England; however this may be, the only part acknowledged as English is a small proportion of the iron pipes. I met with Mr. Graff, the Inspector, and was much pleased with his urbanity and explanations upon such points as I questioned him on. He was particularly earnest in his inquiries about the Thames Tunnel; this curiosity about, and interest in its success, is usual every where abroad, and it is greatly to be lamented that there has not been sufficient public spirit to carry it through.—Now that it is completely stopped, and that the original subscribers must have made up their minds to a total loss, it seems strange that no new company has started up to purchase the concern at some very low rate, and finish it, as the half of the distance is got through. The practicability is ascertained, and so great a part of the expense already paid for, that it might appear to offer a fair object for speculation.

The buildings and works at Fair mount are excellently executed, and in good taste. I had some fears that a trumpery Frenchified style was usurping the place of a simpler and better one; but on this head Mr. Graff satisfied me. It is intended to apply the income arising from these works to the general expense of the city; indeed it is thought that it will be fully equal to liquidate all the old city rates.

The neighbourhood of the works and views on the Schuylkill are beautiful. I one day took a trip up the river in a small steamboat, a crazy, dangerous looking vessel, built on a peculiar plan, without timbers, and her paddles behind, with boards over them to prevent a swell, they dip into the water quite straight. She was intended for the canal.—Both sides of the river are beautiful, very much in English style, something like the river near Matlock, and adorned with gentlemen's seats in excellent taste. The first house is a Mr. Pratt's, where is a superb garden, the finest in the United States; it may be almost considered as national. It is said that Joseph Bonaparte offered 90,000 dollars for the place. The river, as far as I went, was beautiful, and rendered picturesque by the remains of factories in ruins, the damming of the water having destroyed the falls by which they were worked; and a stone bridge also in ruins having been swept away by spring freshet. The Water Company purchased the water right for 150,000 and no surface water is allowed to run into the river for several miles. The laws respecting cleanliness and purity of the water are very severe. It would be well if some similar regulations were adopted with regard to the Thames. Mr. Graff had read with interest the Report on the Water of the Metropolis. Good sites for building might still be purchased on the river side, at from 40 to 140 dollars per acre. I went as far as Manawith, formerly an Indian village, but now a town of factories, some of them very extensive.

For the Daily Pennsylvania Hereditary Offices.

"None die—and few resign."

Messrs. Editors:—It may not be deemed singular that I am one of those old fashioned republicans, who regard a rotation in office as indicative of a disposition to preserve the purity and freedom of our institutions from the reprehensible custom which characterises the tenure of office among monarchical forms of government. The illustrious Washington himself, was foremost in the expressions of his sentiments of disapprobation of a hereditary tenure of place, which it is well known leads too often to abuse and corruption, and is frequently subversive of those dear bought principles for which our venerated forefathers so nobly contended during that momentous period—which laid the foundation of our "virtue, liberty and independence." In fact there should be no such thing among us, as an hereditary office; and consequently, in the needed reform which our new City government have promised, it is earnestly to be desired that particular care will be exercised in the selection of faithful and efficient officers to conduct the several heads of the Department organized by the City Councils, who shall be in every respect free from this charge. In making this allusion, no reference is intended to those who hold tenure for the first time under the present City government, although in the hasty organization of several of the Departments, several individuals managed by their adroit political manoeuvres not only to retain place, but in some instances succeeded in promoting themselves to other and more lucrative positions, from which it is time they were ousted, and individuals chosen instead, who are in every respect equal in point of capacity, and much better entitled to the positions which these place-men fill. This doctrine will hold good among Whigs, Democrats, and Know-Nothings. It is idle to suppose for an instant, that the whole generation of an individual shall retain office, simply because some fancied merits characterised the deceased progenitor, and for which he was amply remunerated—that could have been done by others equally as well as himself, had the opportunity presented itself.

These preliminary events induces us to point out a few office holders, for whom personally we entertain a kind regard, but who appear to cling with a desperate pertinacity to the several situations which they now hold by ancient usages, particularly as their retention would be much more honored in the breach than in the observance. The recent wordy message of the Mayor has already deprecated the number of the Departments, several of which he states, could be merged into one—and in pursuance of his suggestions I hope that the present Councils will carry out the reform therein indicated, which so far as the sincerity of the Honorable official is concerned, means little or nothing. To begin then—Our City Commissioner has held office, until he has actually grown grey in the service of the Municipal government. The change so far as he is concerned, is too plainly indicated to require any comment. He retires, beyond doubt, upon his well earned laurels. That however, of the Superintendent of the Water Works is deserving of especial notice. The Graeff family have held this post from time immemorial. It is strongly hinted that the "Know-Nothings" intend to bring the present Superintendent for his commendable obstinacy last year, in which he refused to bow down to their mandates. He, it is alleged, openly despises the "Order," and consequently will not receive their support at the forthcoming election. Never mind, he will receive the suffrages of those who entertain the same views as himself of this secret proscription association. This is well enough, so far as it goes; but I cannot assent to the propriety of his retention, particularly as it conflicts with my opposition to hereditary office. Let there be other applicants, (both honest and capable,) and from the number select a new Superintendent, who shall abide his day, and the rotation here inculcated. The salaries of this Department from the Chief, to the lowest subordinate, are entirely too high, and should be razed down to a fair compensation. The late Councils raised the Superintendent's and Register's salaries five hundred dollars in one night! This was a fearful jump—but as their doom (the Councils) was fixed, they acted like desperate men, not only upon this, but other occasions. GEO. R. M'ANON is another of the same class, and has grown both insolent and presumptuous.

The Commissioner of Highways (Mr. Birch,) has been fed at the municipal crib for many years, and it is time he was permitted to retire to his *otium cum dignitate*. There are strong indications that this will be accomplished, as he has rendered himself exceedingly obnoxious. In a word, it is earnestly desired that there should be a change among these "old fogies"—and a thorough reform instituted. Retrenchment should be the order of the day, and no life offices instituted by our people. I will, with your permission, refer to this matter again and more in detail. ANGUS.

We agree with our correspondent ANGUS in every suggestion made, except so far as it relates to Mr. GRAEFF. This gentleman is peculiarly fitted for the post he fills, and we doubt much whether his place could be filled with another person, without great detriment to the city. Mr. GRAEFF is a scientific gentleman, educated to the business which he now superintends, and as a plentiful and pure supply of water is among our first of wants, nothing should be done by Councils to put it in jeopardy.