



**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](http://www.phillyh2o.org)**



# CITY BULLETIN.

**"THE RIGHT MEN IN THE RIGHT PLACE."**—The changes that have been effected in some of the departments of the city service, since the political revolution of May, have caused some queer things to occur. These occurrences are, perhaps, unavoidable incidents of the substitution of green hands, for those who had much experience in the positions they occupied.—We have heard a laughable case in point, that took place last week at the Spring Garden Water Works. Councils had elected out all the old engineers, &c., and the works were in the hands of novices. Now, as all our readers are aware, the Spring Garden Works employ steam for forcing water into the reservoirs, and powerful engines are used for this purpose. On the day referred to the machinery was put in motion and one of the new hands, after a time, essayed to stop a Cornish engine that was in use. But Johnny Raw failed most ingloriously, the engine only went the faster, and all hands were called to assist in stopping the stubborn machine. But all in vain, the engine kept on as if there was no stop in it, and people began to get scared. The new hands ran around and around, like the monkey is said to have done after setting the beer barrel a-going, but the engine kept going with might and main. Finally the fun became rather serious, all hands gave the building a wide berth for fear of a blow-up, and it was not until midnight that Mr. Ogden, the new Chief Engineer of the Department, was hunted up, and he stopped the machine that had given so much trouble and caused so much uneasiness.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 8, 1856.

## DOINGS OF CITY COUNCILS.

City Councils met yesterday afternoon, and transacted the following business:—

### SELECT BRANCH.

Select Council was called to order at twenty minutes past three o'clock by the President, Mr. Wharton.

The journal was read.  
Mr. Williams presented a communication from the Chief Engineer of the Water Department, relative to the condition of the Kensington Water Works. The basins were found to be clogged with foul matter, consisting of fish offal and other organic impurities, accumulated to the depth of several feet. They had been cleared and the Engineer was of opinion that the water was now as pure as any other used in the city. It had been found necessary to make certain repairs, which, together with the cleansing of the basins, cost about five hundred dollars. The Engineer also refers to the condition of Fairmount dam, near the eastern stone pier. He was of opinion that there was no immediate danger to be apprehended, but thought some precautionary measures should be adopted, and recommends that the dam be sheathed up to its proper level, that the ice-breaker be repaired, and that the dam at its eastern end be "ripprapped." The expense of this work will be about \$5000.  
The communication was referred to the Committee on Water Works.

A communication was presented for the abatement of a nuisance at Ninth and Locust streets, on the city lot; one from the Board of Health, informing Councils of the vacancy in the Board occasioned by the resignation of James Thomas, the member from the Twenty-first Ward. Referred.

The Chief Engineer of the Watering Department sent in the following nominations:—

Register—Wm. V. McKean. General Clerk—Joshua M. Raybold. Purveyors—1st District, Charles M. J.D. Smith. 2d. Geo. W. B. Felton. 3d. Joseph Hineker. 4th. George Escher. Inspectors—William Schofield, E. W. Powers, Edward M. Bready and Samuel L. Leech. Messenger—Samuel L. Snyder. Engineer of Schuylkill Works—Isaac S. Cassin, in place of John Macathon, transferred to Delaware Works, vice William Ellis, resigned. Engineer of Delaware Works—Robert Sherrard, vice J. A. Dowd, resigned. Referred to the members of the Watering Committee from Select Council.

The Chief Commissioner of Highways sent in the nominations of Wm. Smith, P. McClakey, and Daniel McCarty.

For the Daily Pennsylvanian.

### Natural Know-Nothingism.

For three days the residents in Second street between Brown and Coates, eleventh ward, have had their hydrant water stopped off. A factory within that square had to stop work in consequence, the market people had to obtain their supply by taxing the liberality of residents a square distant. And why, Messrs. Editors, do you suppose we have had to do without the aqua for all this time?

It was because there existed a leak in the main about a quarter of a mile distant which our defacto know-nothing purveyor set about to repair, by stopping off the water three "stops" further off from the leak than was necessary, and after the leak was repaired, they left it without turning on the water again, leaving us, as above stated, without water for three days after the repairs were completed.

Instances similar to the above have been quite numerous since the inauguration of our present Know-Nothing administration. One more instance will suffice to show the utter incompetency of our purveyor. During the severest cold weather, last winter, a main bursted at the corner of Old York Road and Willow street. The purveyor was applied to, who, with a gang of workmen, repaired to the spot, and commenced digging up the street in numerous places, in order to find the stop; but, Messrs. Editors, you will hardly believe me, when I inform you, that after four days hard work, they gave it up in despair! The water in the meantime issuing out of the leak, and freezing as fast as it touched the surface, creating a mountain of ice, and finally running into the cellars of citizens, &c.

In this emergency a council of war was held, at which it was reluctantly decided to apply to the former purveyor, (who had been superseded at the time of the consolidation of the districts, on account of his politics,) who in the dusk of evening, went and placed his foot upon the spot, and after the removal of a few shovels full of earth, the right stop was reached, and in less than fifteen minutes after the commencement of operations, the water was stopped off, to the great relief of the citizens in the neighborhood.

STEREOSCOPE.

Chief Engineer of Water Works.  
Mr. Miller moved that they proceed to first elect the Chief Commissioner of Highways.  
Mr. Leech moved to amend to first elect the Chief Engineer of the Water Works. Agreed to.  
Judge Findlay moved to postpone for the present the election of a Chief Engineer of the Watering Department. Mr. Kline thought the motion was not in order.  
The Chair decided otherwise.  
The motion to postpone was not agreed to by the following vote, viz:—

YEAS—Messrs. Cuyler, McCay, Roberts, Welsh, Wharton, President.—5.

NAYS—Messrs. Ashton, Beldeman, Cornman, Frailley, Gamble, Hugner, Higgins, Milles, Kline, Marseis, McWhorter, Mott, Perkins, Taylor, Verree, Wainwright, Williams.—17.

### COMMON COUNCIL.

YEAS—Messrs. Baird, Abraham Baker, Bevan, Bolfer, Bradford, Bremer, Bromley, Benj. H. Brown, Burnell, Butler, Catherwood, Crease, Elliott, Findlay, Ford, Geiss, Hassinger, Henry, Horrocks, Lex, Miller, Northrop, Potter, Porter, Sorver, Stevenson, Vanhorn, Patterson, President.—29.

NAYS—Messrs. Alexander, A. J. Baker, Booth, Boria, Boyle, M. C. Brown, Brownholtz, J. F. Deal, William Deal, Dutton, Pitter, Harper, Hubbard, Iseninger, Jackson, Kelly, Kershaw, King, Leech, Lindsay, Martin, Mascher, Mecutchen, Melloy, Mickle, Monaghan, Murphy, McClary, McLakin, McManus, McNeal, O'Neill, Owen, Packer, Rechtenwald, Reed, Ridgway, Robb, C. B. Roberts, T. J. Roberts, Scofield, Slocum, Snyder, Vogdes, Winship, Wright.—44.

The ballot for Chief Engineer of the Watering Department resulted as follows:

FOR CHIEF ENGINEER OF THE WATERING DEPARTMENT.  
Samuel Ogden.....60  
Frederick Graeff.....37  
Frederick Erdman.....1

The announcement of the result was loudly applauded by the assemblage in the gallery, but it was promptly checked by the gavel of the President.

FOR CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF HIGHWAYS.  
John McCarthy.....75  
Thomas Birch.....12  
George Meyers.....1  
John McCarthy was declared elected.

Mr. M. C. Brown moved that they proceed to elect a Commissioner of City Property, which was agreed to.

FOR COMMISSIONER OF CITY PROPERTY.  
Eugene Aberd.....71  
George J. Hamilton.....12  
Mr. E. Aherm was declared elected.

FOR COMMISSIONERS OF HIGHWAYS.  
Thomas McCullough.....68  
Emmanuel Street.....65  
George Meyers.....9  
Charles McGowan.....4  
Frederick Emhart.....9  
Thomas McCullough and Emmanuel Street were declared elected.

The members of Select Council returned to their Chamber, and Common Council adjourned.

### LOCAL AFFAIRS.

**The Cornish Engine.**—The Cornish engines, spoken of in the Ledger yesterday, in a letter from Norristown, are not generally known in this country, being used principally in sections of the country where mining operations are going on, or for pumping at large water works. The Spring Garden water works have an engine of this kind in operation, and, that our readers may understand more fully its workings and advantages over the crank engine, we give the following statement, made by Mr. John West, of the Novelty Works, Norristown, who was the first to have an engine of this kind built in this country. When in motion, sufficient steam is introduced at the top of the cylinder to force the piston down; the equalizing valve then opening allows the steam to pass from the top of the cylinder through the equalizing pipe, to the bottom of the cylinder; this being out a small space when compared with the whole content of the stroke of steam, reduces it but little. The piston then ascends at the required speed (this is regulated by ballast) and before it reaches the top of the stroke, the equalizing valve closes, preventing any further escape of steam from the top of the cylinder, the piston compressing the remaining steam until the engine is brought to a stand. This is intended to overcome momentum, and to prevent the piston from touching the cylinder head, serving as an elastic cushion between the two. But it also is an item in the economy of the engine, for this compressed steam filling the parts and space between the piston and cylinder head, generally ranged from 1 to 3 lbs per square inch above the pressure of the expanded steam—reduced as above—in the descent of the piston and the operation of equalizing so much less steam for the next stroke.

After the engine has been brought to a stand, the piston being again at the upper end of the stroke, the exhaust valve opens, and the engine rests an instant, the first jet of the exhaust forcing all the water, air and vapor from the condenser, then the injection valve opens, and the fresh stream of cold water effects instantaneously a more perfect vacuum than could otherwise be obtained; then the steam valve opens for the next stroke. The escape of the exhaust steam, the injection of water for condensation, and the admission of fresh steam in the Cornish engine, are each separately under the control of the engineer. It is also claimed for these engines that the friction attending its working is so little that in calculations nothing is allowed for it, and in an engine of 75 horse power not more than a pint and a half of oil is used per week of 168 hours, the piston getting tallow.

It is also said to be economical over crank engines, because the steam is used expansively with more effect, being introduced at a high pressure into the cylinder, the piston commences descending rapidly and acquiring a momentum which carries it (the steam valve having been closed) beyond the point where the reduced steam ceases to be effective; the engine will then turn her stroke, and the piston will ascend some considerable distance without the intervention of valves. The engine raises a weight, and it is the descent of this weight that forces or raises the water, thus permitting great rapidity of motion of piston when steam is applied.

ordinary flow and occasional flushing, they will never need any other cleansing, or for indefinite periods of time any repair or renewal." Mr. Simpson urges on the public the abandonment for ever of built sewers, be they square, round, or egg-shaped, and ever so closely fitted and jointed, and to substitute close pipes or tubes in their stead. These earthenware sewers may be made of any size and strength, with spigot and faucet joints, and united when necessary, by Roman cement or patent unions. The return of reflux odors, one of the greatest objections to house drains is prevented in three ways:—first, the water pan and the sigmoid curve under the water closet and sink; next, another sigmoid curve, if the descent will make it safe, where the pipe joins the main street drain; and thirdly, a delicately hung flap valve of galvanized iron at the extreme end of the tube, where it discharges into the main drain. This valve will always be shut, except when opened by a flow from the house.

The suggestions of the Scotch writer now quoted are not directly applicable to the system, or, we ought rather to say, the want of system, in our towns, of disposing of the contents of water closets and cesspools. The first are as yet comparatively few in number, and are more frequently constructed over the latter, many of which often diffuse their effluvia around, to the annoyance of the sense of smell, if not to the positive detriment of health. The fluid and gaseous emanations from their sides become every day with the increased density of population in our large cities, a more serious nuisance by their finding entrance into cellars and underground apartments, and affecting the purity of the water of cisterns in those places, besides endangering the stability of the houses themselves. The cesspools become so many sieves, as the more fluid part soaks through the sub-soil; and, as has happened in foreign cities, the ground must become saturated with liquid filth in consequence. We earnestly wish that the stringent recommendation of Mr. Simpson could be universally enforced. It is, that each house should be compelled, within a specified time, to establish a water-closet, and to make perfect its own private sewer. In the projected introduction of drains into houses, the fact must be constantly borne in mind that houses without drains at all are in a more favorable sanitary condition than those which are badly drained. It has been said in a Report of the Surveyors on House Draining, to the Metropolitan Commission of Sewers, in reference to the want of constructive skill on the part of builders: Whatever constructive skill a builder may have exhibited in a house appears to forsake him when he comes to consider those arrangements most needful for health. All that has been aimed at, for the most part, has been to provide a hole of some sort, through which the refuse may get out somewhere. The parties and persons who have these matters in their charge in our American cities must take care not to incur this censure.

### (For the Public Ledger.)

**Water Permits.**—The object of this communication is to bring to the notice of the public a matter which can scarcely be generally known, as it surely would not be tolerated. It amounts to an outrage.

A few days ago I called at the Office of the Water Department of the City for the purpose of obtaining a permit for water. Our lot extends from Willow to Hamilton street, fronting one hundred feet on each street; the building is about the centre of the lot; there is water in Hamilton street, but none in Willow. We have paid for the pipes in Hamilton street, but now, although there are no pipes in Willow street, we cannot obtain a permit without we pay seventy-five cents per foot for our Willow street front. The excuse—I will not call it a reason or argument, for there is neither in it—that we may at some future time improve our Willow street front, and then we would have water for those improvements from Hamilton street. This might be the case, but then have we not a perfectly legitimate right to it from Hamilton street, since we have paid for it, until the pipes are laid in Willow street? When they are laid there, or when we do improve there, we will pay for them, but not before. If there is an ordinance for this, it seems to me to be in violation of both justice and common law, and it certainly is in violation of common sense. We have paid one hundred dollars for water, which we cannot have until we pay a further sum of seventy-five dollars—for a thing which has never been done, and probably never will be. If the city is afraid of improvements on Willow street, it had better lay the pipes there, and then the property-holders will not object to paying for them. The two streets are but two hundred feet apart, and there are many streets in the city which furnish water for a much greater distance back than that; still if the pipes were laid, we would make no objection; but we certainly consider it outrageous to require us to pay for them when there is hardly any probability of their being laid at all—and when we have paid the full charge for the other street. Can we not compel the city to furnish us water from Hamilton street?

Philadelphia, April 23d, 1856. B. M. M.