

CONTROLLING OF PAXTON CREEK ONE OF GREATEST ACHIEVEMENTS IN GREAT MUNICIPAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM OF LAST FIFTEEN YEARS

FORWARD! TO BIGGER AND BETTER THINGS

[Continued From First Page.] of sending a thrill of pride through every beholder. It might have been labelled "views of a model city" and the film ought to be preserved for municipal advertising purposes.

Governor Promises Assistance Governor Brumbaugh was present to speak of "The City and the State" and, as he always does, he dropped right into the spirit of the occasion and gladdened the hearts of all who heard him by saying that it is his earnest ambition to make the new extension of Capitol park "the most beautiful and attractive spot in all Pennsylvania."

Governor Brumbaugh praised Harrisburg for what it has done and said that it reflected credit upon the whole State, inasmuch as what Harrisburg has been endeavoring to do is directly in line with what the State at large must soon do. The Governor spoke of city improvements and city planning with authority for he was eight years ago named by the mayor of Philadelphia as chairman of what amounted to a city planning commission for that city.

"The one great problem of the future," he said, "will be the protection and conservation of our people during their leisure hours." The Governor said that the State has been busy with the regulation of working conditions and that the tendency is distinctly toward a shorter working day, but he declared that the immediate future will find the State also legislating for the protection of its people during their leisure. People do not get into mischief during their working hours, he said, but when they are at leisure, and it is the duty of government to make it easier for them to do right than to do wrong. The creation of public playgrounds, parks and social centers, he continued, are the answers to this and insofar as Harrisburg has taken a stand for development along this line it has placed itself in the front rank of progressive municipalities and in accord with the most advanced thought of those who have the betterment of the people at heart.

The Governor also referred to the housing problem and predicted that the State will go a long way toward home improvement during the next few years. "We must make it so," he said, "that every mother who brings a child into the world will be assured of good air, sunshine and a sanitary home."

Capitol Park The Governor said he rejoiced with the people of Harrisburg in their accomplishments and pledged himself to do what he could for Harrisburg in the way of development so long as he is a resident of the city.

"It is my earnest ambition" he continued, "to make the Capitol park extension the most attractive and beautiful spot in Pennsylvania and I feel sure it is the sentiment of the Board of Public Grounds and Buildings, including Superintendent Rambold, to do that thing. The Governor paid a high tribute to all who had been instrumental in the purchase of the properties in the extension zone and said the State would co-operate in the co-operation of the people of Harrisburg in its improvement. The park must be made to fit into and harmonize with the park system of Harrisburg," he said.

Ex-Senator John E. Fox presided and introduced the speakers. In presenting each he referred to his part in the great scheme of Harrisburg's development program of fifteen years.

Great Audience Sees Harrisburg A La Movie at Evening Reception

More than a thousand of Harrisburg's representative men and women many of them have heard and seen a part in the history of Harrisburg's great civic development in the last fifteen years—comfortably filled Chestnut Street Auditorium last evening when the Chamber of Commerce extended a reception to its thousand or more guests of the afternoon auto ride.

The meeting didn't get under way until after 8 o'clock, due to the late arrival of Governor Brumbaugh. But the folks were glad, evidently, that they had waited for the program. The talks were epoch-making in the history of Harrisburg's improvement campaign.

Besides Governor Brumbaugh there were five speakers in the program, but J. V. W. Reynolds, vice-president of the Pennsylvania Steel Company, was unable to attend. He wrote a letter, however, that gave to Harrisburg some mighty valuable suggestions for its future development. A. Carson Stamm, chairman of the committee, read the letter. Other speakers were Spencer C. Gilbert, E. J. Stackpole, Vance C. McCormick and J. Horace McFarland.

Spencer C. Gilbert Tells of the Days of City's Content

How Harrisburg managed to drift contentedly along before the new era of improvement spirit roused its citizens to the importance of better water, better streets, better sewage and a better and more beautiful Harrisburg was told by Spencer C. Gilbert, one of the members of the first Board of Public Works, which helped expend the thousands of dollars for the improvements of Pennsylvania's capital city. Mr. Gilbert said, in part: "The year 1900 found us contented. We had from early life adopted the popular copybook text, 'Contentment is more to be desired than great riches.' If that be true, we certainly did not strive for wealth. We were contented, and I regret to say—dirty. "If we desired to journey to the classic canal or a little farther to the still more classic Paxton creek, and from its banks watched the sewage from over one-third of this city 'sing merrily on its way to the sea' by means of its open sewers, we were entirely contented. Then retracing our steps to the Susquehanna river, the most glorious heritage given by Nature

HARRISBURG ALSO HAD ITS STORY OF THE "BIG DITCH"; HERE'S THE STORY

WHERE FLOODS ARE CONTROLLED IN DAYS OF OLD LESS THAN FIFTEEN YEARS AGO BUILDING THE GUTTER AS YOU CROSS PAXTANG CREEK TODAY HERE! GONDOLIER

What was once a slimy, sluggish, vile-smelling stream of little water and much sewage, is now "Paxton Creek Improvement." It illustrates Harrisburg's own story of its "Big Ditch." For the entire three miles of its length the city has reclaimed the creek, removed all the sewer outlets, connected them to the great creek interceptor, and concreted the bed of the stream into a splendid open gut-ter. Through it the water flows mildly and swiftly. By this scheme of treatment the city was able to regulate the amount of water which flows through the stream bed. In order to do this it built the flood control at Wildwood lake. Now not only is the waterway turned into a perfectly sanitary little creek but its awful rhapsodies during freshet time in the lowlands are ancient history; they're "under control."

CHAIRMEN IN CHARGE OF TODAY'S BIG DOINGS

J. RAYMOND HOFFERT Chairman of Water Carnival Committee. DAVID H. ELLINGER Chairman of Red Men's Pageant Committee. HARRY A. BOYER Chairman on School Parade Chairman. Mr. McCormick Tells of His Dream of Future For City of Harrisburg

HARRISBURG TOO CAN TELL STORY OF "BIG DITCH"

Paxton Creek's Improvement Another Wonder Tale in Civic Achievement

IN THE DAYS OF OLD Remarkable Reclamation Feat of City in Controlling Floods and Nuisance

Harrisburg, too, has its story of the "Big Ditch." It is the story of Paxton creek. Just Uncle Sam solved a very momentous problem at Panama, just so did the city of Harrisburg via the Board of Public Works, solve an equally momentous problem for the people of the city in providing that long stretch of sluggish stream. Harrisburg to-day is "celebrating" the remarkable strides it has made in fifteen odd years of public improvements; the big job it planned, completed and paid for in the splendid program of improvement, none represents a greater achievement insofar as any means, Paxton creek was an eyesore in more ways than one.

The Mosquito Paradise Up until a few years ago Paxton creek ran through the valley in the central section of the city—except in time of drought; then it usually collected in stagnant pools and housed, fed and watered mosquitoes. After heavy rain partially cleared the pools and allowed the stream to roll along. For years sewage from a goodly half of the city was emptied into the open water ways and the fact is the length of the creek was not sufficient to properly carry it off. Back yards and dumping points along the valley didn't encourage health and sanitation by any means. Paxton creek was an eyesore in more ways than one. Not only from the aesthetic viewpoint was the creek obnoxious; its use as an open sewer, practically ruined the health of the immediate neighborhood through which it flowed to say of the community at large. On several occasions more or less serious epidemics of one kind or another were attributed to the unsanitary little stream.

The Floods But it had another drawback. Ordinarily in time of drought, the creek could hardly be coaxed to move; on other occasions, during freshets or after especially heavy rains, it could not be restrained. The tales of the rampages of Paxton creek in the lowlands of Sibletown, and of the lower end of the city have much space in the book of the god of things as they were. A sudden rise in the Susquehanna always meant the backing of the creek; if this happened immediately after a heavy rain storm, the accumulated rush of waters from the tiny feed streams brought about a situation that was little less than deplorable. That the severe floods occurred in the poorer communities made the conditions doubly pitiable.

The Solution Then in 1910 Harrisburg voted among other things to float a loan item of some \$100,000 to provide for the "improvement of Paxton creek." Several years before, earlier in the Harrisburg improvement campaign, enough funds had been borrowed to construct a great interceptor sewer through the city and into the Susquehanna. To this was connected all the sewer outlets that once emptied into the open bed. Once cleared of the sewage the improvement of the creek itself could be undertaken. That was the next item. But this is skipping ahead a little too fast, too, perhaps. Harrisburg first of all had provided a way to control the floods of Paxton creek.

The Flood Control In Wildwood park, the lake was constructed; within it was the dam, a great well built wall. At the far end of the Lake an overflow was provided for and by means of the weir, and the overflow only just so much—and no more—water as could be conveniently carried away. The water went into the river and in the creek bed could pass from the dam. Thus were floods controlled and forever stricken from the history of unpleasant things along the creek. But to get back to the improvement of the creek itself. For more than three miles the creek winds through the heart of the city. Harrisburg didn't take long to figure out its solution. It decided that the stream could simply carry the storm or surface drainage in much the same way that the gutter carries off its surface or storm drainage over the street. And that's just what the improvement of Paxton creek is—a great twelve to thirty foot-wide concrete gutter.

Sides of the creek are sodded in places; in other sections just the wide-open, concreted trench satisfactorily solves the problem of the mud, the grass, the mosquito breeding places, the frog haunts, the slimy odors; gone even are the rickety little bridges that once crossed the stream here and there. Concrete viaducts have replaced them.

Of all the jobs which Harrisburg has so successfully worked out Paxton creek, perhaps, has fared less happily of the gods and the contractors. Opperman Begins His Job Begun three years ago when the contract was let to Karl T. Opperman it was only recently completed. Even yet there is a section to be replaced. This is just north of State street where the great water mains that extend between the Reservoir and the pumping station, are being lowered beneath the concrete invert of the big drain. Opperman's bid on the job was \$96,300; the actual bill has totaled way beyond that. And at that time, Opperman never finished the work. Beginning at Maclay street he started his excavations southward. He never got beyond Maclay street. So his bondsman, the Maryland Casualty company took up the work and that firm sublet the job to another contracting firm, the West Construction company of Baltimore. The contractor was figuratively and literally "made the dirt fly." Occasional slides of tons of earth into new excavations, high water, bad weather—they all figured in making what contractors began to consider the city's "jonah job." But the West company pushed ahead—at a financial loss. While the report was never verified, councilmen declared that the contractor himself had pointed out that the firm lost something like \$26,000.

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