

## WATER-WORKS.

THE NATIONAL WATER-WORKS COMPANY.—Kansas City has a system of water-supply unsurpassed by that of any other city in the country. In 1873, by an act of the Legislature of Missouri, the city was authorized to construct water-works or to grant the privilege to any corporation, and by this act authority was given to construct reservoirs and establish pumping-stations at and to take water from the most available points either in Missouri or Kansas. Acting upon this, by a contract entered into in October, 1873, the city granted to the National Water-Works Company of New York the right to construct and operate water-works in said city, and this right was granted for a period of twenty years, with a provision for a renewal of the contract, on the same terms, for another period of twenty years, unless the city during the last year of the franchise should elect to purchase the plant at a price to be fixed by arbitrators, to be appointed by the Circuit Court of the county. Upon the making of the contract, work was at once commenced, and in 1874 the works were in practical operation. The machinery and the material used were of the very best quality, and under the direction of the most skilled engineers the work was thoroughly done at every point. The pumping-station then used was near the State line, and the water was taken from the Kaw River, about one-fourth of a mile distant in the State of Kansas. There were then twelve miles of pipe and less than three hundred hydrants. Such was the beginning of this magnificent system. In no other place in the country have greater difficulties been met in the construction and operation of works than in Kansas City. The extent of territory covered is very great, and the surface is a succession of hills and hollows. Some of the points to be reached are very high, and much of the pipe has been laid along streets composed of new-made earth. The city has grown with wonderful rapidity. In 1873 the population was not to exceed 35,000, and now it is 150,000 or more. At that time the territory embraced within the city limits was less than four square miles, while now it is more than twenty. When the company first began supplying water, there were only twelve miles of pipe. Now there are about one hundred and forty miles. Then there were less than three hundred hydrants, now there are over seven-hundred; the pumping capacity then was four million gallons daily, now it is about thirty-seven million; the reservoir capacity then was about twenty million gallons, now the reservoirs have a combined capacity of about ninety million gallons. Packing-houses and manufactories spread along up the Kaw River, and in a few years this source of water-supply was abandoned and a large and magnificently equipped pumping-station was located at the mouth of the Kaw River, and the reservoirs were built up the Missouri River at Quindaro, and the water taken from that point far above any possible contamination. This change was made after conferring fully with the consumers, and at an expense of more than one million dollars. The water when first received into the reservoir is apparently muddy, but this is mostly sand and settles very rapidly, and, moreover, this sand acts as a disinfectant, and it is generally recognized that when filtered the water of the Missouri River is as pure and healthy as any in the world. The fire protection afforded is by direct pressure, and it has always been the judgment of the fire department of the city that as a means for extinguishing fires it is far preferable to the use of steamers, and their opinion as to this was fully confirmed by the almost unanimous opinion of the National Association of Firemen, which met in Kansas City in 1889, and the members fully inspected the workings of the system. The National Water-Works Company has its head office in New York, but the business is principally directed from the office in Kansas City. The receipts and expenditures are very large, but the entire earnings after paying the interest on the bonded debt have been used in making extensions as needed to accommodate the people. In fact, it has been the policy of the company to render as efficient service as money and skill could afford. There have been times of some friction between the company and the city, but that has practically ceased. All fair-minded persons concede that the water system of Kansas City has kept pace with the other enterprises of this wonderful young metropolis. From the beginning Major B. F. Jones has been the superintendent. He is a native of Georgia, and has all the characteristics of the well-bred Southerner, and with this the business capacity and activity of the Yankee. He has managed the business of the company with consummate skill, and personally he is a great favorite with the people. It may be said, then, that few cities anywhere have better water accommodations than Kansas City, or a better supply of pure, wholesome water, all of which is furnished by the National Water-Works Company.

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Kansas City: Its Resources and Their Development, a Souvenir of The Kansas City Times p 9  
Printed by Patterson and White and designed by Inter-State Publishing Co. of Kansas City, 1890  
Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri  
ref url: <http://www.kchistory.org/u?19th,416>