

**MINUTES OF THE CROTON
AQUEDUCT BOARD OF THE
CITY OF NEW YORK: JULY
18, 1849 TO APRIL 9, 1870**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649649464

Minutes of the Croton Aqueduct Board of the City of New York: July 18, 1849 to April 9, 1870 by
Various

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Cover @ 2017

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**MINUTES OF THE CROTON
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MINUTES
OF THE
CROTON AQUEDUCT BOARD
OF THE
CITY OF NEW YORK

JULY 18, 1849,

TO

APRIL 9, 1870.

DEPARTMENT OF WATER SUPPLY,
GAS AND ELECTRICITY.

July 1, 1903

NEW YORK:
MAIL AND EXPRESS COMPANY,
203 BROADWAY.
1903.

TD 225
N5A513

Department of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT.

By chapter 256 of the Laws of 1834 and amendatory acts the Legislature provided for a Board of five Water Commissioners for The City of New York, to be appointed by the Governor, with the consent of the Senate. It was made the duty of these Commissioners to devise a plan for the furnishing to the City of a supply of pure and wholesome water, which plan, after ratification by the Common Council and by the electors of the City, was to be consummated by the Commissioners under the powers given them for the purpose. Under this Act, the old Croton Aqueduct was planned and constructed, and the Croton water was introduced into New York over High Bridge.

In 1841, by chapter 306 of the Laws of that year, the construction of the aqueduct and distributing system below the "Murray's Hill" distributing reservoir was devolved upon the "Mayor, Aldermen and Commonalty of The City of New York," who undertook to carry out the contracts already made by the Water Commissioners for the work in question. By chapter 231 of the Laws of 1843, a "water district" was created, within which all property was subject to "water tax." The "Croton Aqueduct Board" was created by the amended Charter of 1849 (Laws of 1849, chapter 187). It consisted of a President, Engineer and Assistant Commissioner, who, unlike the heads of other departments, were not elected by the people, but were nominated by the Mayor and appointed by him with the consent of the Common Council. The Board was given jurisdiction of the water supply and distribution, of sewers and drainage, and of the collection of the water revenues. Its powers and duties were extended by charter 383 of the Laws of 1849 (passed April 11, 1849) to include the preservation of the water supply and, with the consent of the Common Council, the increasing of the same and the constructing of new sewers. The Bureaus of the Water Register and Water Purveyor were placed under the Board, a scale of regular rents and extra charges to be fixed by the Common Council was provided for, penalties for non-payment of charges were prescribed, and the Board was given the power to make and enforce rules. In a word, this was the first Water Department constituting a part of the City's administrative system.

The minutes following give the transactions of the "Croton Aqueduct Board," from its organization in 1849 until it was succeeded in 1870 under the revised Charter of that year by the "Department of Public Works." In them will be found references to public works long since destroyed, such as the reservoir near Thirteenth street (minutes of February 6, 1850). The dates are given of the planning for and completion of the new Central Park Reservoir, the introduction of water into which on August 19, 1862, was made the occasion of a public ceremony. These minutes have already proved of value to the present Department of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity, by showing the reason and authentic origin of practices which are still followed. It is a matter of regret that the press of departmental business has prevented the preparation of an index, but it is hoped that much of interest to students of the City's history will nevertheless be found.

The Department of Public Works, under the Charter of 1870, remained in control of the water supply and distribution until succeeded on January 1, 1898, under the Charter of 1897 by the Department of Water Supply. The present Department of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity was created by the Charter of 1901, and the Commissioner thereof took office January 1, 1902.

DEPARTMENT OF WATER SUPPLY, GAS AND ELECTRICITY.

New York, July 1, 1903.

CROTON AQUEDUCT BOARD.

Minutes of Meetings of the Croton Aqueduct Board from July 18, 1849, to April 9, 1870.

July 18, 1849.

At a meeting of the Board held at 11 o'clock a. m.

All the members present.

Nicholas Dean, President, in the chair.

Theodore R. De Forest was appointed Secretary.

The President stated that his object for convening the Board was for the organization of the Commission according to the provisions of the State law and the ordinances of the Common Council.

The following resolutions were adopted without dissent:

Resolved, That this Board report to the Board of Aldermen at their meeting this evening a statement of the back rents due at this office, with the quantity of water in the reservoir, etc., as required by a resolution of said Board of Aldermen on Monday evening, the 16th instant.

Resolved, That this Board visit the Third avenue in order to give directions in relation to the line of pipe now being laid in said avenue and the disposition of the surplus earth, and that when this Board adjourns it shall do so to meet for that purpose to-morrow, Thursday, at 3 o'clock p. m.

Resolved, That the subject of the nomination of a Water Purveyor be laid on the table for future consideration, and that the applicants for said nomination be requested to present their recommendations and testimonials.

Mr. Edward H. Tracy was requested by the Board to continue in their service in the same capacity as under the late State Commissioners, and a verbal appointment to that effect was tendered to him in person, to which Mr. Tracy assented.

Adjourned.

THEO. R. DE FOREST, Secretary.

CROTON AQUEDUCT BOARD.

July 19, 1849.

The Board met pursuant to adjournment, and after visiting the Third avenue and examining the progress of the work, adjourned to meet 20th instant at 12 m.

Adjourned.

THEO. R. DE FOREST, Secretary.

CROTON AQUEDUCT BOARD.

Jul- 20, 1849.

At a meeting of the Board held this day at 12 m., each member being present, it was, after due discussion, unanimously

Resolved, That the name of John P. Flender be presented by this Board to the Board of Aldermen at their next meeting for their approval and confirmation for the office of Water Purveyor.

Resolved, That leave of absence from his official duties be granted to Mr. Craven for such time as his health may require.

CROTON AQUEDUCT BOARD.

July 21, 1849.

The President and Assistant Commissioner visited the pipe yard to view the condition and quantity of stock on hand, etc.

CROTON AQUEDUCT BOARD.

August 2, 1849.

At a meeting of the Board held this day at 11 o'clock a. m., the President and Secretary being present, it was

Resolved, That, whereas Bernard See, having been approved of by the Assistant Engineer in charge of the work, that said See be and he is hereby appointed Superintendent of the Aqueduct at the Tarrytown Station, and that he receive the usual salary and privilege attached to that office.

Adjourned.

THEO. R. DE FOREST, Secretary.

CROTON AQUEDUCT BOARD.

August 6, 1849.

At a meeting of the Board, the President and Secretary being present, it was Resolved, That Alexander F. Dodge be and he is hereby appointed to the office of First Clerk in the Bureau of the Water Purveyor at a salary of one thousand dollars per annum.

Adjourned.

THEO. R. DE FOREST, Secretary.

CROTON AQUEDUCT BOARD.

August 24, 1849.

At a meeting of the Board, all the members being present, it was unanimously Resolved, That the Water Purveyor has the permission and consent of this Board to employ a Messenger for the Bureau of Water Pipes and Sewers.

Adjourned.

THEO. R. DE FOREST, Secretary.

CROTON AQUEDUCT BOARD.

September 19, 1849.

The annual exterior examination of the line of the Aqueduct was made on this and the succeeding day by the Common Council, on which occasion they were accompanied by the members of this Board.

CROTON AQUEDUCT BOARD.

October 6, 1849.

At a meeting of the Board held this day it was unanimously Resolved, That, in consequence of continual neglect of his official duties, that George G. Rich, Accountant in this Department, be discharged from its service. The consent of his Honor the Mayor having been obtained thereto, under the provisions of the Charter, the said George G. Rich was accordingly dismissed.

CROTON AQUEDUCT BOARD.

October 30, 1849.

The Board this day settled the claim of Whiting Raymond for piece of land taken for aqueduct purposes for the sum of ninety dollars, and received therefor a deed of the same.

CROTON AQUEDUCT BOARD.

November 10, 1849.

The Board this day received notice in person from Mr. Richard F. Carman of a claim held by him against the City for damages in the construction and grading of a certain portion of the City line of the Aqueduct, the further consideration of which was laid on the table to afford the proper time for examination, etc.

CROTON AQUEDUCT BOARD.

November 14, 1849.

The semi-annual examination of the Aqueduct was commenced by the Engineers and President, accompanied by their aids, and continued until the same was completed.

CROTON AQUEDUCT BOARD.

November 22, 1849.

The Board was convened this day at the call of the President, who stated the necessity of hereafter meeting regularly and subdividing properly the labour necessarily devolving on the members of the Board. He therefore proposed, and the propositions received unanimous assent:

First—That regular meetings of the Board should be held regularly every Wednesday morning.

Second—That the questions daily arising on the location and construction of sewers and matters incidental thereto be specially intrusted to the Engineer.

Third—That the general supervision of matters in relation to the collection of water rents in the office of the Register be intrusted to the Assistant Commissioner, and