

THE HISTORY OF THE MONTICELLO WATER WORKS (1895 TO PRESENT DAY)

Early History

Early in 1895, the Board of Trustees for the Town of Monticello was discussing the advisability of street paving in special areas. A committee of T. E. Hanway, Lincoln Fraser, and Web P. Bushnell was appointed to visit other towns to obtain information regarding the street paving. The committee returned with the information that

several things should precede street paving in the improvement of a town and the water works was one of the most important. The subject was soon a common topic of discussion and interest grew rapidly.

On Tuesday evening, March 19, 1895, a petition containing 111 signatures was presented to the Board requesting an election and a proposal was accepted from the Engineers W. S. Shields and Web P. Bushnell to make a new town survey including grades and plans for sewage and water works for a cost of \$700.00.

At the next Board meeting on April 2, an order was made submitting the question to a

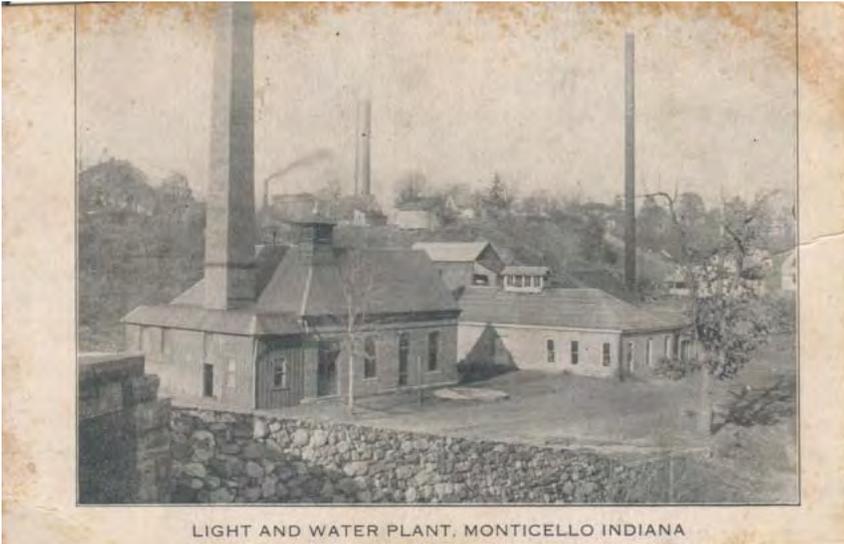
vote at a regular spring election May 6th. The result of the election was 300-112 in favor of the water works.

On July 4th, the Board advertised for bids on the plans submitted by Engineer Shields and on the 26th of July the contract was awarded to Messrs. Mansfield and Allen of Indianapolis at \$28,000.00. On August 20th the contract ordinance was adopted and Col. C. A. Winn was employed as superintendent of the water works.

Work began almost immediately on the pumping station and the foundation for the standpipe. Street pipe laying began September 23rd and was completed in December.

The plant was pronounced by water works experts as a model of excellence in every respect. The pumping station, located at the foot of the bluff just south of the Washington Street bridge, consists of a brick building with slate roof, 45' front with a 72' stack. The structure housed the boilers and duplex engines to make a pumping capacity of 750,000 gallons each per day.

(right) The Open Well at the Water Works around 1900.



The water supply was obtained from a well just east of the building, 20' deep and 12' in diameter. The water was "unexcelled anywhere for domestic purposes being clear, sparkling, and chemically pure."

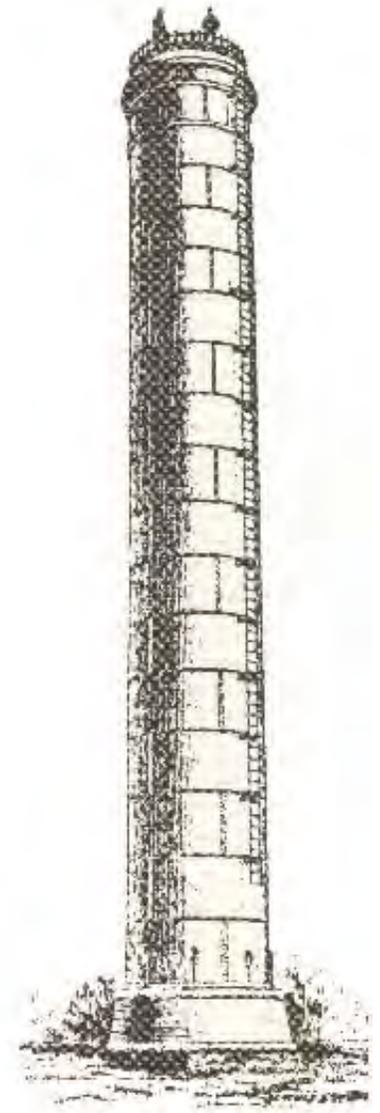
An open well, with a wooden lid located at the foot of Washington Street bridge, was the source of Monticello's water supply at the turn of the century. It was steam operated and customers paid on the basis of bath tubs, lavatories, sinks and other special water uses they had.

The Monticello Standpipe

The standpipe was built by the Chicago Iron and Bridge Company and described as a "perfect specimen of workmanship." It stands on the highest piece of ground in town, which is on the west side of Bluff Street about a half a block south of the Panhandle Railroad. It is 14' in diameter and 110' high above the foundation which consists of a bed of boulders and concrete 5' deep and 24' in diameter. The capacity of the standpipe is 126,667 gallons and its total weight when filled with water is about 811 tons.

In the entire system there are over four miles of street mains, ranging from four to ten inches in size, and connected with them are 45 hydrants and 23 gate valves. This 1895 structure is believed to be one of the three oldest standpipes in the State of Indiana.

The Water Department was modernized in the late 1950's replacing equipment that had served for over half a century. Added at that time was one 10" well and one 12" well, each more than 85' deep. It is estimated that the two wells could supply 3,000,000 gallons of water per week. Additionally, 28,464' of new mains were laid and thirty new 6" fire hydrants installed. The 1959 records show approximately 1,300 meters and 135 hydrants.



The Standpipe



In 1981, the department added two 500,000 gallon towers to the system that included the original standpipe erected in 1895 and the 500,000 gallon tower built in 1958 located at Fourth and Foster Streets. With the completion of the two new towers located at Sixth and Gordon Road and West Shafer Drive, the original Bluff Street standpipe was retired in 1982.

(left) Grand Opening of the Monticello Water Works in 1959.

The New Water Works

Construction for the new water plant was started on March 1, 2001. The new facility was placed into operation on April 24, 2002. The new plant includes a 3,000 gpm induced draft aerator; three (3) new 150 horsepower high service pumps, each with a maximum pumping capacity of 2,000 gpm; three (3) new 10 foot diameter X 40 foot long horizontal pressure filters designed to handle a peak loading of 3,000 gpm and utilize a simultaneous air/water backwash system; new chlorination, fluoridation, and polyphosphate feed equipment were also installed as a part of this project. The project also included a new V-12 Caterpillar 798 horsepower standby power generator that can operate the entire facility in the event of a power outage.

The City currently utilizes three (3) groundwater production wells. Well #2 is a 12 inch well which has a capacity of 900 gpm; Well #3 is a 16 inch well which has a capacity of 1,500 gpm; and Well #4 is a 16 inch well which has a capacity of 1500 gpm. The City's new water plant also utilizes the latest state-of-the-art computer control and monitoring system in day-to-day operations. This system not only provides the operators with computer access from the facility's main office, but also allows them to remotely monitor the system parameters at each of the three (3) elevated storage tanks.



Inside view of the your Water Works

The Water Department occupies over 7.75 acres of land providing sites for the water towers, the wells, and the water plant. The main water plant, located on Bluewater Drive, consists of 2 houses, a service building, a maintenance shop, a filter and control building and housing for a backwash tank and settling basin. Today, the departments fixed assets are approximately \$8,000,000.00

Today, the department serves 2,491 customers. The system also includes 351 hydrants, 71,380' of 4" water mains; 93,450' of 6" mains; 2,700' of 8" mains; 6,120' of 10' mains; 31,250' of 12" mains and 4,550' of 16" mains. This makes a total of over 39 ½ miles of main lines serving the city.

The Water Department is required to send monthly coliform bacteria and fluoride samples to the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM). In house tests are made daily for chlorine, fluoride, phosphates, PH and iron to verify that the water quality is within the guidelines of IDEM and the Clean Water Act. VOC's and IOC's are also tested on a regular basis.

The new facility, in conjunction with the existing production wells, should satisfy the City's water needs for many years to come.