

Cambridge City Indiana

1836 - 2011



175th Anniversary

Commemorative Book

2011

In Case You Missed It

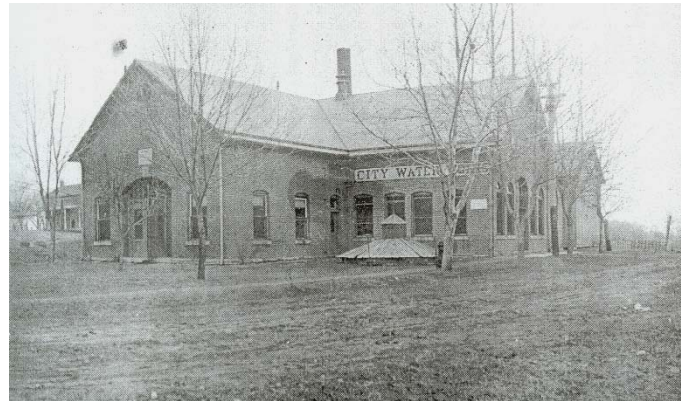
P. H. Cohen paciascc@aol.com is (was?) selling this book for \$10. She was at Soozie's and the Reunion Breakfast with the 600 she had printed and they were going like hotcakes. Patty has given me permission to reproduce a few portions of the book for your enjoyment. Believe me; I am not going to reproduce the whole book. I will probably pick out a couple more pieces and quit. If you would like a copy (if there are any left), please contact Patty.

WATERWORKS

A waterworks for Cambridge City was approved by a popular vote of 114 to 49 on July 24, 1894. A committee composed of M. L. Young, J. A. Spence and W. F. Medsker visited plants in Knightstown, Greenfield, Franklin, Brookville, Edinburg, New Castle, and Anderson and made a recommendation that a direct pressure system be used. Vorhees and Witmer of Buffalo, N. Y., prepared plans and specifications. Bids for \$25,000 bonds were received and the plant and system were constructed and put into operation in 1895.



Construction of the City Water Works



City Water Works



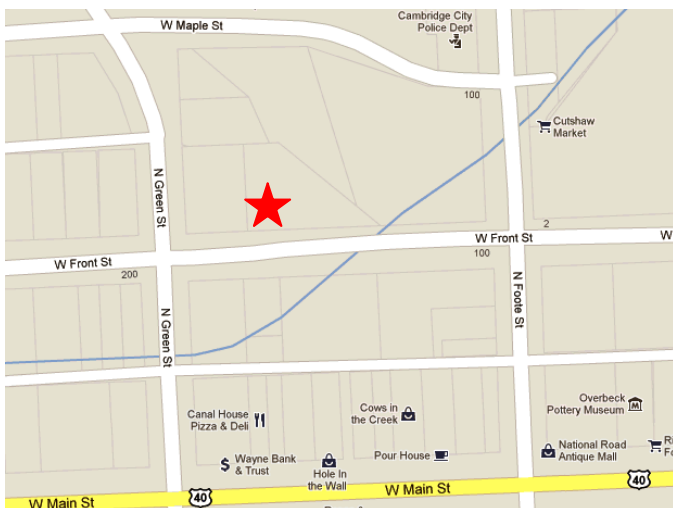
This is the same City Water Works building

ELECTRIC COMPANY

In August of 1890, the newly formed Cambridge City Electric Light Company purchased the residence and poultry house of Emil Ebert on the north side of West Front Street (between Foote and Green Streets, [see map](#)) and began work on their electric plant. On September 11, 1890, the Tribune announced, "A test of the electric light plant will probably be made today."

Keep your hands off the electric light wire. Death lurks there." Gradually, street lights were placed around town. In 1892, the Tribune reported, "The town council has arranged for electric light through the whole night. Just the thing to do. Thanks, gentlemen." Local residents were quite pleased to have the electric lights in their area of town. A rare complaint appeared in the Tribune in December, 1892: "The electric light service is very satisfactory, with one exception. The light should be turned on one hour earlier, especially on cloudy days."

I remember the downtown street lights being changed from incandescent lighting to mercury vapor around 1958 give or take a few years. I went downtown with my folks to see the old ones turned off and the new ones turned on. It seems that we did things such as going down to watch the increase in traffic flow after the Indianapolis 500 Mile Race.



Approximate location of the electric plant



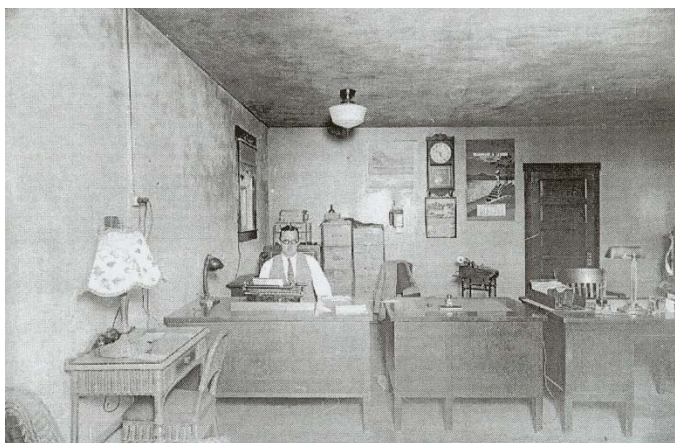
Cambridge City's first electric plant

The demand for power soon overwhelmed the plant and a newer and more modern plant was needed. The town purchased lots just east of the river bridge from the Conklin family, owners of the home to the east of the plant. The groundbreaking was announced on September 28, 1911: "Ground has been broken for the new electric light plant on the lots south of Main Street at the east end of the river bridge. George Brendlinger is supervising the construction of the concrete foundation. The building is to be of brick 90' X 45' and 20' ceiling, with coal bin addition, and provided with a side track for unloading coal. The combined capacity of the plant is to be 300 horse power, with two large and one small electric units, which increases the capacity of the present plant three times."



Cambridge City's 1911 Light Plant

At some point in time the waterworks and light plants switched functions - the waterworks plant (on North Foote Street) became the light plant, and the light plant (on East Main Street) became the Municipal Waterworks building. For a time, the Foote Street facility was the property of the adjacent Imperial Mills. In 1934 the building was remodeled for a new town hall, completed without any additional taxes as a CW A project. The building was also utilized as the fire hall, for storage of the town's fire engine and hoses. The Tribune noted the jail in the northwest corner of the building was a jail where Dillinger would not dare to try to get out."



City Clerk Cliff Jacobs inside the Town Hall

In 1948, a 5 room apartment was constructed in the waterworks building (on East Main Street) to serve as a residence for the Waterworks Superintendent. The remainder of the building was to be used for garbage, street trucks, and waterworks trucks.

As of 2011, the East Main Street facility is used as a garage for City trucks and equipment, and as the center of operations for the water utility. The North Foote Street building still functions as the City Building

and Police Department, although fire equipment is no longer stored at the City Building. A new fire station was constructed in 1961 - 62.

The new millennium brought major improvements to the US 40 corridor, with monies from a Transportation Enhancement Grant providing new street lights, sidewalks, curbs, new railings along the creek, and new street trees. The street lights were installed in the fall of 2007 and spring of 2008.