

A Look Back in Time - 1893 Annual Report Inaugural Address

The City Clerk's Department houses many old records such as Annual Reports. Since the city just ended fiscal year 2016/2017 and completed its Annual Report I thought I would share a look back in time to the "Mayor's Address from the Twenty-Sixth Annual Report of the City of Saco for the Fiscal Year Ending January 31, 1893".

CITY OF SACO.

IN BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN, }
March 20, 1893. }

ORDERED, That the Committee on Printing be authorized and directed to cause to be printed in pamphlet form five hundred copies of the Annual Reports, including the address of the Mayor.

Read and passed. Sent down for concurrence.

Attest: WINFIELD S. HASTY, City Clerk.

IN COMMON COUNCIL, }
March 20, 1893, }

Read and passed in concurrence.

Attest: ARCHIBALD F. HOUSTON, Clerk.

A true copy.

Attest: WINFIELD S. HASTY, City Clerk.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

— OF —

Hon. James O. Bradbury,

MAYOR,

TO THE CITY COUNCIL OF SACO,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE TWO BRANCHES

IN CONVENTION MARCH 21, 1893.

MAYOR'S ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN OF THE CITY COUNCIL IN JOINT CONVENTION
ASSEMBLED:

Our fellow citizens have confided to us the management of their municipal affairs for the year ensuing and that duty has been undertaken by a public invocation to that omniscient and omnipotent power that hath traced the destinies of nations and of individuals.

At the inception of this government, it is desirable to attract your attention to the present condition of the city, in order that you may commence your official trust with a clearer insight of public matters. The election of subordinate officers that immediately devolves upon you is important, for such officials are the active agents in executing the ordinances and orders formulated by the concurrent action of the council and in expending such appropriations as you may deem it proper to make and to cause the tax payers to honor. It is earnestly requested that you severally assist by voice and vote in providing the most frugal and painstaking government possible, compatible with the reasonable requirements of the various departments.

As servants, it is expected that greater care be exercised in public than might be demanded in private affairs.

The proper occasions in which to render a favorable commencement of such a prudent course is the time of the introduction of orders for improvements that are not actually necessary.

February 1st, 1892, the indebtedness of the city was \$144,786.42. Its estimated assets were \$26,745.88.

February 1st, 1893, its indebtedness was:

City Bonds due in 1894,	- -	\$10,000 00
City Bonds due in 1899,	- -	5,000 00
City Bonds due in 1900,	- -	20,000 00
City Bonds due in 1901,	- -	16,000 00
City Bonds due in 1907,	- -	25,000 00
City Bonds due in 1909,	- -	15,000 00
City Bonds due in 1917,	- -	30,000 00
City Notes due,	- - -	9,650 00
Accrued interest of Bonds,	- -	1,003 33
Accrued interest of Notes,	- -	188 98
Due schools,	- - -	2,594 38
Due State of Maine,	- - -	7,284 05
Due County of York,	- - -	2,135 62
Total	- - - - -	\$143,856 36

The actual reduction made in the indebtedness of the city during the fiscal year was \$930 06.

February 1, 1893, the estimated assets were:

Due from non-resident tax,	- -	\$ 106 50
Due from Jos. L. Milliken, collector of taxes for 1885,	- - - -	791 84
Due from Jos. L. Milliken, collector of taxes for 1886,	- - - -	877 61
Due from Wm. O. Freeman, collector of taxes for 1889,	- - - -	77 68
Due from Wm. O. Freeman, collector of taxes for 1890,	- - - -	315 54
Due from Wm. O. Freeman, collector of taxes for 1891,	- - - -	1,074 21
Due from Jos. H. Means, collector of taxes for 1892,	- - - -	20,382 70
Due from sewer assessments,	- -	1,519 75
Cash on hand Feb. 1st, 1893,	- - -	4,107 69
Total,	- - - - -	29,253 52

The only way in which a debt can be reduced is to pay it in whole or part. For several years, the error of regarding so called assets as tangible resources and by virtue thereof shrinking the debt on paper only, by their full amount as reported, has been commented upon in as many inaugural addresses.

The following statement of the disposition of over due taxes with Feb. 1, 1892, as a starting point, will demonstrate the usual end of such assets.

The unpaid taxes of 1883 were reported to be \$11.83. That entire sum has been abated and not a dollar realized therefrom.

Unpaid taxes of 1885 were reported to be \$973.66; of that tax the sum of \$181.82 has been abated or more than eighteen per cent., and the balance, \$791.84 comes to us as an asset. No part of that tax has been converted into cash and it is assumed it only lingers to be reduced yearly through abatements till it will finally cease to exist as an asset on the face of the papers. Unpaid taxes of 1886 were reported to be \$1093.15. The abatements on the same are \$215.54, or more than nineteen per cent., and \$877.61 comes over to this year with which to do business on, if collected, the uncollected amount not having been reduced and having been of no value to the city.

Unpaid taxes of 1889 were reported

to be, - - - - -	\$278 45	
Interest, - - - - -	8 23	
	<u> </u>	\$286 68
Amount paid treasurer last year, -	\$140 00	
Abatements made, - - - - -	69 00	
Amount outstanding, - - - - -	77 68	
	<u> </u>	\$286 68

About twenty-four per cent. of the tax having disappeared in abatements.

Unpaid taxes of 1890 were reported

to be, - - - - -	\$1,705 77	
Interest, - - - - -	66 57	
	<u> </u>	\$1,772 34

Amount paid treasurer last year, -	\$1,083 00	
Abatements made, - - - - -	373 80	
Amount outstanding, - - - - -	315 54	
	<u> </u>	\$1,772 34

More than twenty-one per cent. of that reported tax having been abated.

Unpaid taxes of 1891 were reported

to be, - - - - -	\$12,336 34	
Interest, - - - - -	308 67	
	<u> </u>	\$12,645 01

Amount paid treasurer last year, -	\$10,155 00	
Abatements made, - - - - -	1,246 80	
Non-resident tax returned, - - -	169 00	
Amount outstanding, - - - - -	1,074 21	
	<u> </u>	\$12,645 01

The abatements having been more than ten per cent.

In this way, year by year, the means provided for the payment of debts vanish and tax payers wonder why the debts are not satisfied or reduced.

The foregoing is not the experience of one year but of each year. The assessors of 1892 were as faithful as those of any year and exercised their power to grant abatements when they deemed the same advisable. In this way the city loses a respectable per cent. of its assessments each year. Of the bonded debt \$10,000 00 will be due in 1894. The advisability of appropriating \$5,000.00 this year and a like amount in 1894 for the express purpose of paying those bonds upon maturity, is suggested for your consideration so far as you have power to act for the present. Debts must be paid at some time and the matter should be met in the same spirit as in private affairs. \$5,983.45 represents the amount of interest paid by the city last year. The only way by which to escape such heavy interest charges is to adopt a policy of regular partial payments of our indebtedness.

The taxes assessed for 1892 were as follows:

State Tax, - - - - -	\$11,389 42	
County Tax, - - - - -	4,271 25	
City expenses, - - - - -	65,150 00	
Overlayings, - - - - -	2,472 03	
		\$83,282 70
Total, - - - - -		\$83,282 70
Amount collected and paid treasurer	\$62,900 00	
Balance outstanding Jan. 31, 1893	20,382 70	
		\$83,282 70

No discount was made in taxes and the claim of interest enforced.

One year ago it was suggested that the commissioners of roads and streets should make a written report of the manner in which our money has been expended by them and the results obtained. Although the sum of \$8,903.41 has been applied to the payment of work upon our roads, there is no report made relative to the same. The hope is expressed that you will require a system of reports from this department of the government.

The commissioners have been prompt and used their best efforts to provide good roads. In districts one, two, three and seven, general repairs have been made. In five, the general character of the roads has been well preserved and a good gravel side walk built for a long distance. In eight, a needed addition to the gravel pit, and a right of way to the same have been obtained, general repairs made and a heavy job done in a partial rebuilding of the bridge over Goose Fair brook. In six, a large amount of road has been rebuilt and left in good condition. In four, sewers have been constructed as follows: Green street, 664 feet brick, 12 inches by 15 inches; Storer street 665 feet, 465 being brick, 12 by 15 inches, 200 feet of eight inch glazed pipe; Main street, 1,675 feet of eighteen inch glazed pipe; Buxton road at the Marr place, 100 feet of twenty inch glazed pipe; Pleasant street, 100 feet of eight inch glazed pipe.

A pipe eighteen inches in diameter has been placed nearly

in the bed of Woodbury Brook from Water street to Storer street, a distance of 700 feet, and well covered with dirt, and it is the hope of all concerned that that part of the brook will figure no longer in the reports of the city as it has for many previous years. The total length of sewers constructed was 3,804 feet.

The curbstones placed were as follows: Beach street, 1,560 feet; Pleasant street, 118 feet; Dyer street, 360 feet; Elm street, 436 feet; Water street, 230 feet—the total being 2,704 feet. Gravel has been used on Green, Pleasant, Elm, Common, James, Henry streets, Wakefield avenue and Counting Room Hill, a gravel walk made on Franklin street. Stuart street has been made and opened. The gravel pit at the farm drained and a hundred feet of eight inch pipe laid.

The supervisor of schools gives us a very full report upon the condition of our educational system. But few changes have been made in teachers and their work has been satisfactory. The schools of Saco are good and provide an ample education for all who gather for that purpose. During the last three years Saco has appropriated \$3,900 for the purchase of books. The supervisor reports that a larger sum than usual (\$400) must be appropriated the present year. The plan of penny savings has been continued and meets with favor from those having the matter in charge. Columbus day was celebrated in City hall and at the different school houses, reflecting much credit on supervisor, teachers and students. You will find many suggestions in the report of the supervisor worthy of your careful consideration and study.

The city marshal reports the number of arrests for the fiscal year of 1892 as 116. Of these, 57 were for intoxication, 18 for violation of the tramp act. Law and order have been well preserved. It is thought that the public require Main street from the Counting Room hill to the Biddeford line to be under more constant police charge.

The city physician informs us that but little sickness has

prevailed among the poor of the city. One hundred and twenty-three visits have been made.

The overseers of the poor have expended the sum of \$4,223.35.

Poor away from the farm have received \$1,205.58. The city farm has had \$3,017.77. The number of families helped away from the farm was 29; deaths away from the farm, 4; largest number at the farm, 21; present number at the farm, 14; deaths at farm, 2.

A new water supply for the farm has been provided and considerable improvement made in the comforts of the house. Mr. and Mrs. Miliken, as well as the overseers, deserve credit for faithfulness in charge of this department.

Pepperell park has been kept as a lawn and is a beautiful and attractive plot of land. Two new streets have been built, seven hundred feet of new walks and four hundred feet of new fence have been constructed. The commissioners have transplanted thirty-two trees and added seven beds of perennial shrubbery.

Arbor day was remembered by citizens and schools in the gifts of seventeen trees. Eastman park has presented a very agreeable presence without any appropriation from the city.

The fire department has been called out fifteen times.

The "Saco" has been thoroughly repaired and a quantity of new hose purchased, the engine building and stable improved. We have now two engines capable of doing efficient work. It is very gratifying to note the promptness with which the department responds to the alarm of fire.

The Board of Health have investigated the complaints made to its members and abated many nuisances. The filling of Woodbury brook with a large drain pipe met with the approval of the Board. Your attention is called to the sanitary condition of that part of Saco near the outlet of the James street sewer. The Board says "it should be corrected before serious results arise from it."

Health prevails generally in the city and it is believed that

most stringent rules should be adopted and put into execution to prevent sickness so far as possible coming among us.

The opinion is expressed that before the warm days of early summer are with us, the officials of the city should require all front and rear yards, cellars and outbuildings to be thoroughly cleared and cleansed and have all debris gathered by the citizens and at stated times removed by our teams. Precaution in the spring, persistently followed through the year, will bring a harvest of health and may save us from trouble of a serious nature.

The city missionary has attended to his duties and submits a report of the results of his labors. He adds these words of advice: "It may be well to reiterate the importance of exciting wisdom, good judgment and skill in the administration of aid to the needy, that it be not given in such a way as to encourage idleness, improvidence and prodigality, but so as to promote industry, temperance, economy and thrift, the want of which is largely the secret of indigence."

The city is in no litigation in the courts. "The school house case," R. L. K. Grant et als vs. Enoch Lowell et als, that was pending on the equity side of the court has been dismissed without prejudice and without costs to either party.

The York Manufacturing company appealed to the county commissioners, asking for a reduction of the valuation placed upon its taxable property by our assessors. The company and city have each been represented by counsel of ability and learning, protracted hearings have followed, experts and other witnesses have been examined and the adjourned hearing is to occur on March 23. This matter has attracted general interest among our people. It is expected that the commissioners after so long a deliberation, will arrive at a perfectly legal and proper conclusion of the cause and that the entire affair may meet the approval and support of our citizens. It is the wish of the government that the York company pay their just and proportional part of the taxes as must every citizen and corporation. Nothing more is to be asked. Nothing less expected.

The duty devolving upon assessors is a serious one and tax payers are ever jealous of their individual burdens of taxation.

The report of the treasurer gives a full account of the funds held in trust for various purposes.

The city should commence to place grade hubs at the corner of streets; the task of such hubs will in time be greatly felt.

The city paid, prior to Jan. 31st, 1893, \$5,687.60 for lighting streets the past year. It is a heavy expense. Much complaint was made as to the failure of lighting and the unsatisfactory light often furnished. There is no doubt but Saco can be provided with better lighting facilities and at a much lower price when its present contract expires. The council is requested to investigate the cost of operating electric lighting plants during the year, and to leave some expression of its views on the subject with the government to follow us. It is found that the average cost per light per year of arcs operated by twenty-nine private companies is \$106.01, while the average cost per light per year of arcs operated by twenty-three cities is \$53.04.

Frequent complaint has been made of the impure condition of the water used by the city and its citizens. The Board of Health in conjunction with the council should personally inspect the water works, and if any fault exists report it and cause a remedy to be used. The water rates are high and unyielding and call for the best possible service. The health of our citizens demands the same.

Some action on your part will be necessary to cause the travelling public to be protected at the crossing of the Eastern division of the B. & M. R. R. Co.

The subordinate officers of last year cooperated with the chief executive faithfully in performing the duties entrusted to them with care and prudence.

There is no doubt but that you will appropriate only such sums of money as will be strictly necessary in conducting the affairs of the departments. Manage public affairs as a prudent man does his own and success will be the fruition of

your labors. You enter your official relations today. Be true to the confidence bestowed upon you, and ever bear in mind that you are to legislate for no party, no sect, no faction, but for the people at large. Each citizen has a claim on you for care and protection of his property and rights.

The reports of the various departments are on file and will be printed and you are requested to examine the same with care.

A serious obstacle in the way of the transaction of business has been the failure of the common council to obtain a quorum at a large number of our meetings. The members of that board of the city government will place the Board of Mayor and Aldermen and the city at large under a debt of deep gratitude and obligation if during this year, they can be found in their seats at the meetings of the government.

The wish is made that each official give his best thought and effort to render the administration of this year prudent, reasonable and acceptable.

JAMES O. BRADBURY.

Saco, March 20th, A. D., 1893.