

# Civic Projects of the Shelbina City Council

**The Municipal Light and Water System.** Prior to 1891, the people of Shelbina were enjoying the "good old days" of coal oil lamps, muddy streets, board sidewalks, the horse and buggy, petticoats, cotton stockings, and the innumerable other distinguishing features of an era that was beginning to fade and pass away.

On July 1, 1891 the city council, then composed of J. S. Preston, mayor, and aldermen David Morgan, E. P. Weaver, Thos. E. Hawkins and R. E. Miles, cautiously ventured into this new age of electric lights, television, world wars, atomic bombs, communism and high taxes. On that date the council decided to build the first municipal electric light plant.

Upon the approval of a bond issue of \$5,000, a contract was entered into with Wright & Adams of Quincy, Ill., for a "first class" steam plant to cost \$1,650. This agreement was dated July 22, 1891, and on the same date a contract was let to Grimes Bros. for the construction of all electric lines to cost \$1,100. J. W. McGill was paid \$418 to build the first small brick building, and E. B. Hillman of Peoria, Ill., supplied the dynamo and miscellaneous equipment for \$1,950. This plant was located on Mill street near the old mill pond which provided the water, just east of Center street. The balance due Wright & Adams was paid on Oct. 29, 1891, and Art Connelly was employed as the first superintendent at a salary of \$60 a month. On May 1, 1892 the new plant reported gross earnings of \$578.42.

After seven years the city outgrew the first small building, and on Sept. 15, 1898 the council, composed of J. J. Bragg, mayor, and aldermen, W. S. Bryan, C. B. Ford, W. B. Bailey and T. F. Hughes, ordered a new plant constructed on the south side of Mill street, just opposite the old plant, which continued in use as a warehouse. The cost of the new project was again \$5,000, with Ed Weaver and Wm. Bethards in charge of operations.

On June 17, 1911 the council authorized the construction of a complete new electric plant and a waterworks and sewer system at a total cost of \$84,000, of which \$10,000 was voted separately for sewers. The mayor was James F. Allgaier, and the aldermen, J. R. Lyell, W. L. Shouse, C. B. Ford and George B. Bedwell. The vote on the waterworks bonds was 425 for and 68 against, and vote on the sewer bonds about the same. Funds were not sufficient to build a cast iron pipe line to the river and a wooden pipe line was substituted of necessity. This line was famous for leakage and for the creation of mud holes along the main road to Salt River, until a new line was laid in 1925.

On August 12, 1925 a special election was called for the purpose of voting \$35,000 in bonds to construct a new cast iron pipe line, the vote being 390 for and 5 against. The bid for construction was let on Oct. 20, 1925 to the Pittsburg, Des Moines Steel Co., and was completed in the early spring of 1926 at a cost of about \$30,000, the remaining \$5,000 of the bond issue being transferred to the sinking fund.

In 1946 on Nov. 26 another special election was held to vote \$90,000 for the construction of a sanitary sewage disposal plant, and approved by a vote of 370 to 74. The mayor was Pollard A. Adams, and the aldermen were E. E. Key, Carl Miles, Lloyd Harrison and R. G. Clapper. These bonds proved to be insufficient for the purpose and an additional bond issue was voted Nov. 1, 1949 for \$47,000 by a vote of 298 to 38, J. R. Schulz and Guymon Hatcher having replaced Key and Harrison as aldermen. A modern sewer system was then constructed with Orville Payne in charge.

On Sept. 4, 1956 a new city council, composed of Herbert Gilbert, mayor, and Tom Jackson, Delbert Dixon, Jack Denning and Maynard Kline as aldermen, submitted to the voters two



Shelbina high school's first girls' basketball team, 1908. Top—Martha Maupin, Bess Lasley, Blanche Ransdell; lower row, Fay Stanard and Mildred Owen. Not present was Nelle Combs.

bond issues providing for the rebuilding of the waterworks system and for the rebuilding of electric lines. The waterworks bonds were for \$215,000 and the linework bonds for \$25,000. Both issues were approved by the voters at a special election and work is now in progress.

**The Highways Come to Town:** The first state highway to reach the business section of Shelbina was State Highway No. 8, (now No. 15). By an ordinance dated Feb. 19, 1925, the city council guaranteed the right-of-way through the city for both No. 8 and U. S. Highway No. 36. The mayor was Frank Dimmitt, and the aldermen were Ed Gillispie, Wm. K. Lasley, J. C. Jewett and John W. Vandiver. The city purchased several small pieces of property and deeded them to the highway department to assure the direct passage of No. 36 through the city. The highway department preferred to pass through the town on Beech street, but would not build a pavement over the old wooden pipe lines then located there, and accordingly decided on its present route through Maple street. The construction of Highway 15 through town contributed to the cement pavement on Center street.

On Aug. 2, 1927 the city council appropriated \$367.50 for a part payment of right-of-way, and the final payment on right-of-way for Highway No. 36 was made March 6, 1928. On Aug. 6, 1929 the city agreed to pay for the gravel shoulder through the city and the contract for that purpose was let on Nov. 5, 1929. The first stop-and-go signal was authorized at the intersection of the two highways Oct. 7, 1930. The passage of two highways through Shelbina has become increasingly important as railway service has diminished.

**The Cement Pavements:** The pavement of Center street with 6-inch re-enforced cement was authorized by the city council Aug. 20, 1924, and the contract for that purpose was let to Cameron, Joyce & Co. Feb. 19, 1925 at \$2.39 per square yard, not including curbs or excavation. The council was composed of Frank Dimmitt, mayor, and aldermen Ed Gillispie, Wm. K. Lasley, John W. Vandiver and J. C. Jewett.