

50 HYDRO PLANTS SERVE CITY WITH ELECTRIC POWER



STEFAN PIEK

Representative in Syracuse of the Niagara Hudson Power Corporation, of which the Syracuse Lighting Company is a subsidiary, Stefaan Piek is executive vice president of the Syracuse concern and vice president of the Niagara Hudson.



This is one of the busiest spots in the new central office building of the Syracuse Lighting Company at Erie blvd. and Franklin st. It is the customers' service switchboard, with a battery of operators who receive every call from customers, and through an efficient arrangement, complete every call to prevent any delay. Every call receives a written report and is sent to the required department by pneumatic tubes.



JOHN M. COSTELLO

John M. Costello is executive vice president and general manager of the Syracuse Lighting Co. in direct charge of operations of all departments.



A. DEAN DUDLEY

Chief executive of the vast company which supplies Syracuse industry with most of its power and Syracuse homes with its light and heat is A. Dean Dudley, president.

LIGHTING COMPANY EFFICIENCY AIDED BY TRAINED WORKERS

(This is the thirteenth of a series of articles which will appear weekly in the Saturday edition of The Syracuse Journal, to permit Syracusans to become familiar with the inside story of the great industrial and commercial enterprises which have played important parts in the development of the city.)

By RICHARD E. WELCH

Short of an earthquake or citywide conflagration, it would be difficult to imagine a greater disaster than if Syracuse's gas and electric supplies were suddenly cut off.

The city has come to depend on these services to such an extent that a sudden stoppage, which happily today is almost impossible regardless of conditions, would cripple industry, darken the streets and office buildings and send householders scurrying for primitive means to cook their meals and light their homes.

Such a catastrophe is almost impossible because of the elaborate system which has been built up by the Syracuse Lighting Company to guard against any interruption of gas and electric service and because of the splendid "esprit de corps" of the trained workers who are on guard day and night to see that the wants of the company's customers are fulfilled.

It is the unwritten law of the legion of men and women who labor to bring Syracusans this service that there must be no interruption. Just as the captain of many a ship has gone down with his vessel in a vain effort to save her, many a life has been sacrificed gloriously to keep the gas mains filled and the electric current streaming through the wires.

Gas was used as a public utility long before commercial uses were developed for electricity. Syracuse, which was incorporated as a city in 1847, was only two years old when the Gas Lighting Company was formed, in February, 1849.

It was a \$100,000 corporation, and was formed "to build and maintain a gas plant and to lay all the necessary pipe lines". This company was granted a franchise and agreed to lay four miles of pipe the first year and to sell gas at a rate of \$2.50 per thousand cubic feet.

The Common Council gave this company a contract for street lighting the same year. The streets to be illuminated by gas lamps included: Salina st., from Jefferson to the Oswego Canal; Genesee st., from Onondaga Creek to Fayette Park; Water st., from Mulberry st. to Franklin st.; Warren st.; Montgomery st., from James st. to Fayette st.; James st., from Salina st. to Lock st.

The first gas plant was erected in Mechanic st. on the site of the present central offices of the Syracuse Lighting Company. At first, street lighting was the biggest item, but gradually gas came into use for home and commercial consumption. In the early days gas stoves were luxuries, but as the cost of gas was reduced they steadily replaced the coal range. Today it is doubtful if enough coal ranges could be secured to care for even a small portion of the city's families.

Nothing but coal gas was manufactured in the early days, and the plant shut down on Sunday from 9 a. m. to 7 p. m., the city being supplied during these hours from the storage tanks.

The gas company was a thriving concern, well established as a public utility, when first experiments with electric lighting started to attract attention. The first electric arc light was considered a toy until Pierce, Butler & Pierce, in 1882,

set up a plant to manufacture electricity, and as a public demonstration installed 21 lights in various downtown stores.

Rosenbloom's store had five; Barney, West & Smith, six; Ingall's shoe store, two; Famous Clothing Company, six; the Wieting opera house, one, and George G. Campbell's restaurant, one. Although the first light had been shown in Syracuse in 1878 by Professor Anthony of Cornell, they were still novelties.

Soon other companies were formed to supply current for lights and it was proposed to use 148 arc lights to "turn night into day" in the city. Many feared electric current, and one alderman proposed that every pole be inclosed by a fence 10 feet high to protect pedestrians.

First street lighting by electricity came in 1884, when between 50 and 60 arc lights were installed. At that time the Thompson-Houston Company controlled the Syracuse production, and this company erected a generating plant in Fulton st.

The first incandescent lamps were introduced in Syracuse in 1884. They were called "cook stoves" because of the large resistance boxes on top of each lamp.

In 1886 the Syracuse Electric Light and Power Company was organized to take over the Thompson-Houston Company, as well as the Parker Electric Company. All current was generated by steam, and the crews worked in 12-hour shifts.

It is interesting to note that then A. P. Seymour was superintendent of the lighting company, and he spent his spare time experimenting with insulators. In those days only wooden insulators were used, and there were plenty of shorts in wet weather. Mr. Seymour developed porcelain insulators, and later formed the Pass & Seymour Company to manufacture them.

Electricity cut deep into the territory of gas for lighting purposes and in 1895 the gas company was reorganized to become the Syracuse Gas Company. Then, in 1900 both the gas and electric companies were merged to become the Syracuse Lighting Company.

Developments came fast after the merger. By 1901 a start was made in placing the wires in subways, at which time the Underground Wire and Cable Company was taken over.

Ceylon H. Lewis was president of the company then,

with John J. Cummins as vice president and treasurer and Louis L. Waters as secretary. Directors included Horace White, John Dunfee, Charles Andrews, Hendrick S. Holden and Albert K. Hiscock.

Many campaigns were started in these years for municipal ownership of the utilities, but they never got beyond the talking stage.

First use of Niagara Falls power was in 1907, when the Solvay substation was placed in service. Then power sites were developed on the Salmon and Oswego rivers and other points in the Adirondack region, supplementing the steam plant, and then taking its place entirely.

Today the city's electric power comes from more than 60 hydro plants located in the central division of the Niagara Hudson territory, as well as from Niagara Falls. There are large steam plants at Buffalo, Utica and Amsterdam which could be cut in for emergency.

It was a far cry from the early day of electrical development to modern street lighting. One Syracusan proposed, after seeing the first arc light, that one of the contraptions be installed atop the Liberty pole, then in Clinton square, to "light the entire city".

Early contracts for street lighting contained a clause that it would not be necessary to light the arcs on nights when the calendar showed the moon would be out. That system worked fairly well except when "moonlight" nights happened to be stormy or cloudy. Then hardy pedestrians who ventured forth were forced to equip themselves with lanterns.

Another interesting incident of the early days was when the first gas ranges were exhibited here. Housewives were fearful of the danger of the new contraptions, and to assure them the stoves were safe, ranges were installed on wagons for demonstration. These ranges were connected up on street corners and housewives were invited to use them.

Syracuse was a pioneer of ornamental street lighting and when the city installed 734 posts with five-light clusters in the business area in 1910 it gained the city nationwide publicity. Visitors came for miles to see the Syracuse "white way".

The cluster type street light has been replaced since by a more efficient type pole with two lights in the downtown

area, and many residential sections are lighted by one-light ornamental lights.

Syracuse was scene of many experiments in electrical development. Many new systems were tried out here, and the first compound wound dynamo in the world, made by Thomas Edison, was installed in Amos' flour mill, where it did service for many years.

Today the Syracuse Lighting Company is a subsidiary of the Niagara Hudson Power Corporation and draws on the vast resources of this corporation for its electric current.

During the growth and expansion of the company its offices and departments were scattered throughout the city, which hindered operating efficiency. In 1931 plans were announced for a central plant and construction was started at Erie blvd. and Franklin st.

This plant is a model of its kind. In addition to all offices, it includes a lighting institute, a home service department, where last year 3,000 women weekly received cooking instruction, as well as showrooms for appliances.

At the same time the company decided to bring natural gas to Syracuse from the Wayne fields of Southern New York. A pipe line was built from the fields 105 miles to the new gas plant in Hiawatha blvd. There natural gas is mixed with artificial gas to give a standard of 875 British thermal units, against the former heating value of 537 B.T.U.

It is interesting that in the gas department is the tallest structure in the city, a 6,000,000 cubic feet waterless type gas holder, 297 feet high and 188 feet in diameter.

Through necessity of adjusting all appliances, the switch-over to natural gas was a gigantic task, but it was accomplished within three months.

The mixed gas manufactured in the Syracuse plant is distributed over a wide area, one set of machines pumping it as far as Oswego.

The present officers of the Syracuse Lighting Company include: James DeLong, chairman of the board of directors; A. Dean Dudley, president; Stefaan Piek, executive vice president; John M. Costello, vice president and general manager; G. H. Garrison, vice president; Charles E. Norris, vice president; Ernest Johnston, secretary; Morris Tracy, treasurer; A. E. Rowley, Paul B. Murphy, F. A. Rogers and H. Griskill, assistant treasurers.

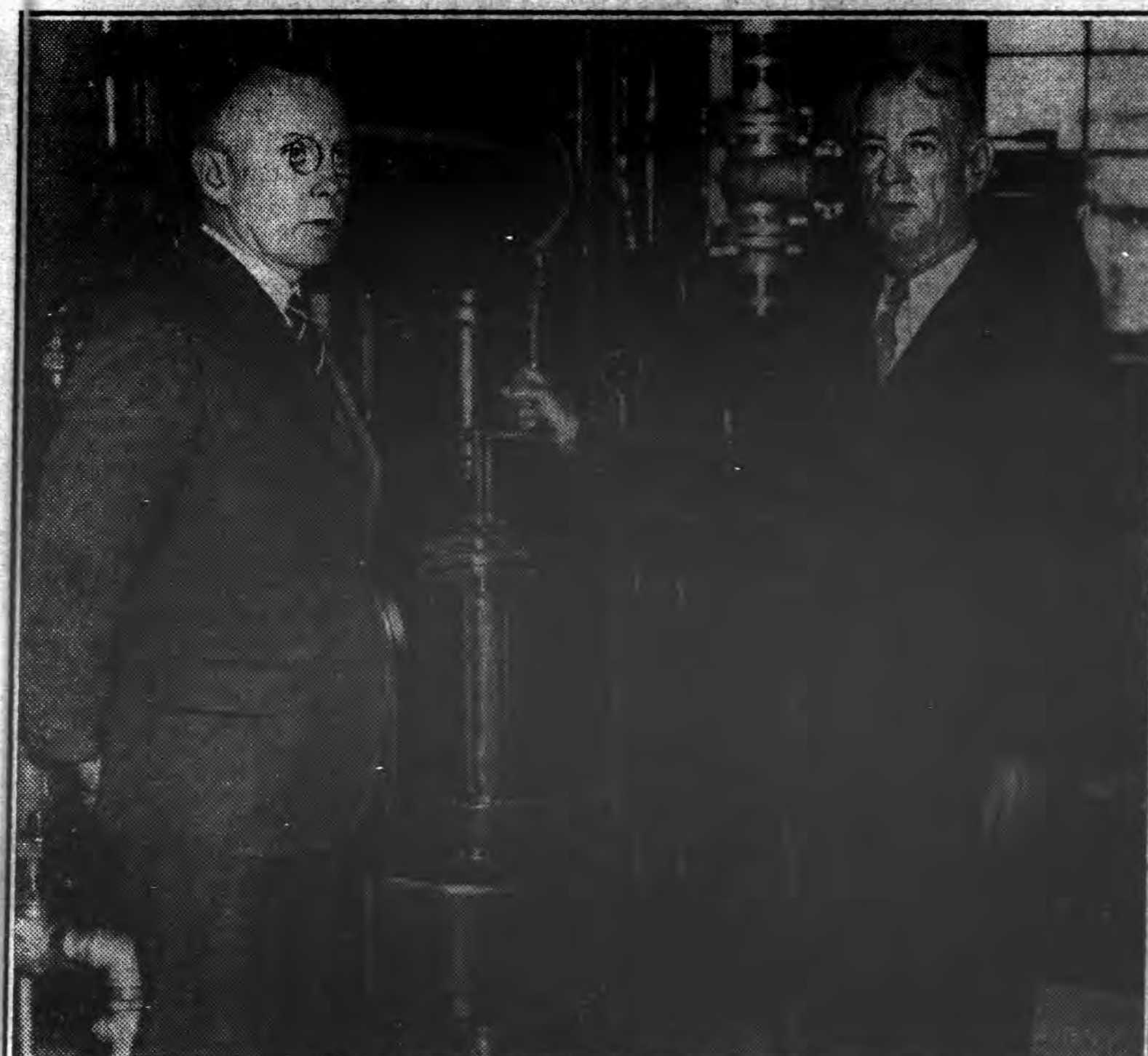
FOUR VETERAN EMPLOYEES ARE PROUD OF RECORD OF 34 TO 45 YEARS' SERVICE



MICHAEL J. O'CONNOR

CHARLES S. SINGER

Two veterans of the electric department of the Syracuse Lighting Company are Michael J. O'Connor and Charles S. Singer. Mr. O'Connor has been with the company for 36 years and is street lighting inspector. Mr. Singer has 35 years to his credit, and is foreman of the street lighting department.



W. A. RICH

JOHN STACK

The gas division of the lighting company also has its veterans. Among them is W. A. Rich, superintendent of the plant in Hiawatha blvd., who has been with the company for 45 years. John Stack, who is general utility man at the gas plant and who is capable of handling nearly any job, is a veteran of 34 years.