

Columbus Water Works Collection (MC 241)

Organizational Note

The following historical information is from the [Columbus Water Works website](#):

Water is crucial to the development of any community, and Columbus residents found various sources of water in the area long before the city's official inception in 1828. The city's first official source was Leonard Spring (also known as Garrard Spring) then some three miles outside of Columbus. In 1839, a series of hollowed out pine logs carried water into the city, and faucets were installed at several intersections. People would come with pitchers, buckets, and whatever else would hold water, paying 5 cents a vessel for the privilege. In 1989, a marker identifying the location of the spring and impoundment was placed by CWW on Country Club Road.

At the turn of the 20th century, citizens of Columbus were unhappy with their private water supply due to both quality and reliability issues. It was also failing to meet the growth needs of the city. City leaders approached the Georgia General Assembly which passed a bill in 1903 that created the Columbus Board of Water Commissioners to manage a system owned by the City of Columbus. The Board settled on the Chattahoochee River as Columbus' water source, constructed a water treatment plant and installed distribution mains.

The original water treatment plant was constructed in 1915, with further additions and modifications added throughout the years. Portions of the original facility still remain, including the Number Two sedimentation basin and the Number Two clearwell. Facility upgrades and modifications from original construction occurred in 1941, 1944, 1957, 1961, 1965, 1972, 1977, 1986, 1988, 1989, 1991, and 1995.

In 1956, the Board of Water Commissioners also assumed responsibility for the sanitary sewer system. Columbus' wastewater treatment plant, built in 1964, was among the first in the state of Georgia. When constructed, it treated approximately 80 percent of the city's sewage, while a second smaller treatment plant handled the rest. The South Columbus Water Resources Facility currently receives all of the wastewater flow from the entire community and operates as a modern secondary treatment facility.

In 1992, Columbus became one of the first cities in the country to have a Riverkeeper group, an organization committed to river protection. CWW helped found the group and has been involved with it ever since. The Columbus Riverkeeper monitors an 80-mile stretch of the Chattahoochee River from West Point Lake to Fort Gaines, and works to educate the community on protecting the river.

Also in the early '90s, CWW launched a Master Plan for water and sewer services focusing on combined sewer overflow (CSO) issues. CSOs can occur during wet weather events such as heavy rainfall when storm water (the runoff from parking lots and rooftops) mixes with wastewater in the combined piping system. This additional volume of flow can exceed the capacity of the system, resulting in the discharge of partially treated or untreated wastewater into a body of water. The Master Plan consolidated 16 CSOs into two treatment facilities and allowed for the development of the City's signature park, Riverwalk.

In 2003, local and state leaders gathered for the groundbreaking of an innovative process CWW developed for creating Class A biosolids called CBFT3 (Columbus Biosolids Flow-Through Thermophilic Treatment). The biosolids are a beneficial by-product of the wastewater treatment process that can be used to enrich soil. CWW received a U.S. patent for this process, and then donated it to the Water Environment Research Foundation (WERF) in 2005 to benefit the entire industry.

After years of negotiating, CWW acquired the Fort Benning water and wastewater systems in 2004. Under the 50-year contract, CWW is working on upgrading the military base's systems and linking them to the existing Columbus water treatment and wastewater treatment plants.

CWW also continues to text-ig in regional water issues, working with other communities and collaborating with other states to ensure a viable water supply for the entire area.

Scope and Content

This collection consists of financial and administrative records of the company. 1905-1959 23 oversized items (6 l.f.)

Permission to Publish

Permission to publish material from the Columbus Water Works Collection must be obtained from the Columbus State University Archives at Columbus State University. Use of the following credit line for publication or exhibit is required: Columbus Water Works Collection(MC 241) Columbus State University Archives Columbus, Georgia

Provenance

These materials were donated to the CSU Archives by Dr. Philip T. Schley.

Oversized Items List

1. Cancelled Checks Ledger, 1924-1925
2. Cancelled Checks Ledger, 1933-1934
3. Cancelled Checks Ledger, 1934-1935
4. Cancelled Checks Ledger, 1937
5. Cancelled Checks Ledger, 1942
6. Cash Journal, July 1935-June 1939
7. Cash Journal, September 1947-June 1948
8. Cash Journal, December 1952-January 1955
9. Consumer's Ledger, 1917
10. Consumer's Ledger, 1918
11. Consumer's Ledger, 1921
12. Consumer's Ledger, 1924
13. Consumer's Ledger, 1931
14. Consumer's Ledger, 1934
15. Expenses Ledger, January 1931-March 1932
16. Expenses Ledger, August 1948-December 1950
17. Balance Journal, December 1954-December 1959
18. Employees Payroll Ledger, Undated
19. New Service Ledger, February 1924-February 1926
20. Payroll Journals, 1951-1953
21. Pip Work Ledger, 1925-1951
22. Refunds Due Customers, September 1940-June 1941
23. Service Record Book, June 1905-March 1924