

The Old Parry Sound Pumphouse

A Part of Our Local Heritage



Description of Lesson

Through this lesson, students will consider the Parry Sound Pumphouse as a piece of our local heritage. They will explore the key players in its development, and how it worked.

Connect with the Georgian Bay Biosphere

www.gbbr.ca
(705) 774-0978
education@gbbr.ca

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Georgian Bay Biosphere: Lesson in a Backpack Program



GEORGIAN BAY
BIOSPHERE
MNIDOO GAMII
Spirit of the Water

At a Glance

Grade Level: 8

Learning Environment:
Indoor Classroom

Prep Time: 20 minutes
Familiarize yourself with the material and read the article "The Old Pumphouse" in the Sideroads magazine.

Length of Lesson: 1 hour and 10 minutes

Key Vocabulary: Pumphouse, Heritage, Water Treatment

Staffing: 1 educator

Materials:
1. 1 script per 2 or 3 students
2. old pictures from the Dave Thomas collection
3. "The Old Parry Sound Pumphouse" Prezi file, on a USB or disk

Kit available from the NNDSB Resource Centre

Groupings: Whole class, and Small groups of 2 or 3

Teaching/Learning Strategies:
Discussion, Role-play activity.

Lesson Outline

TIME	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	MATERIALS
15 minutes	Introduction	Indoor Classroom	
15 minutes	Slideshow	Indoor Classroom	Slideshow on USB Computer Projector
20 minutes	Scripts	Indoor Classroom	Scripts
20 minutes	Slideshow	Indoor Classroom	Slideshow on USB Computer Projector

Curriculum Expectations Grade 8 History Curriculum

Canada, 1890-1914: A Changing Society

Specific Expectations

B1.1 Analyze key similarities and differences in the experiences of various groups and communities, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities, in present-day Canada and the same groups/communities in Canada between 1890 and 1914

B1.3 analyze some of the challenges facing various non-Indigenous individual, groups, and/or communities in Canada between 1890 and 1914

B1.4 Analyze actions taken by various groups and/or individuals in Canada between 1890 and 1914 to improve their lives.

B3.4 identify key social and economic changes that occurred in and/or affected Canada during this period

Background

The first pumphouse in Parry Sound was built in 1892 and still sits on the shoreline today, beside the new water treatment plant. In fact, it is the last piece of shoreline heritage left in Parry Sound; all other historic buildings have been burnt or bulldozed over the years.

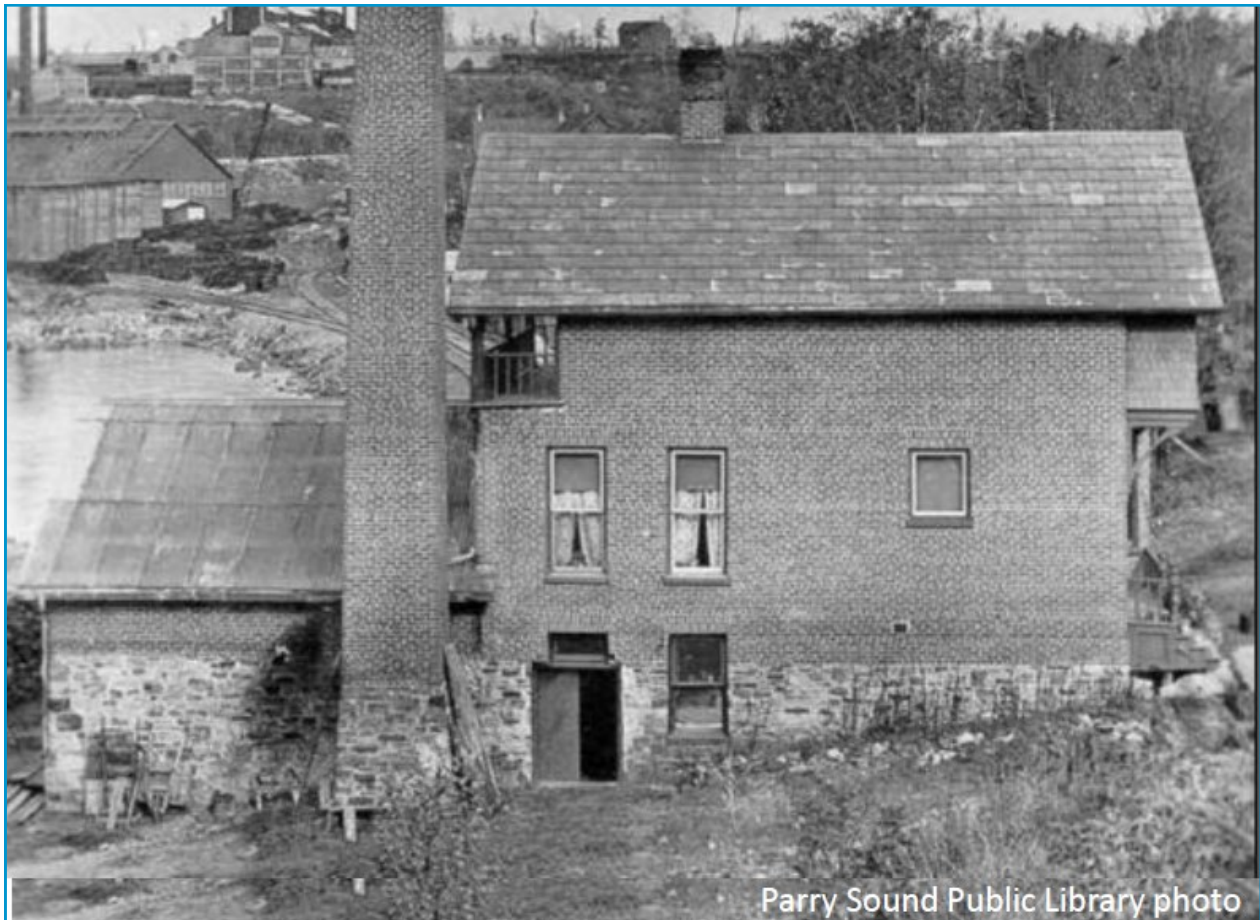
When it was constructed, the pumphouse was state of the art, and it was key to the development of our town. It allowed for efficient fire protection and for provision of clean, potable water.

In 1892, 145 babies of every thousand died in infancy. After clean water was introduced, infant mortality dropped 80%.

The pumphouse stands as a monument to the wisdom and foresight of earlier Mayors and Councilors, to the renowned engineer John Galt who designed it, to Alex Logan, who built it, and to the employees who worked there.

The pumphouse has been awarded as a “Canadian Water Landmark”, and has been given a “Heritage Designation” from the province of Ontario.

It is now owned (and lived in!) by a couple who appreciates the cultural significance of the building.



Teaching and Learning

Part A. Introduction

Brainstorm and debate, as a class, what students think could be considered some great municipal achievements when Parry Sound was becoming a town.

Ask Students: *What were some major concerns for communities in those days?*

How did they ensure a growing, productive, and prosperous community? (Examples: farmable land, electricity, medical clinic, fire department, train station, police station).

It has been stated that sanitary water supplies are critical to civilized life.

Have any of you imagined what Parry Sound would have looked like before we had a way to pump clean water to homes?

How would people take baths?

Put out fires?

Go to the washroom? (A bucket from the backyard well provided water to drink, to wash, to cook. In winter, a heavier bucket was dropped to shatter the ice. Often the well was not far from the outhouse. The cistern, used if the well went dry in the summer, caught rainwater from the roof, along with residue from roosting chickens and wild birds perched on the peak. There was constant danger of waterborne disease.)

Part B. Slideshow

Start the Prezi titled “The Story of the Old Parry Sound Pumphouse”.

Part C. Script

Once you reach the appropriate slide, divide the class into 2 groups and have each student assigned to a character in the script provided (if there are more students than characters, some may have to partner up). Give them enough time to read through the script aloud. When they are done, they can look to the presentation for questions to discuss as a group.

Part D. Slideshow

Complete the Prezi for the class.

Let the class know that you will be taking a field trip to the old pumphouse and the new water treatment plant. This is a part of the “Parry Sound Water Treatment Plant” Lesson Plan, but you may visit these sites without completing both plans.

“The Waterworks Woes”: A Part of Our Parry Sound Heritage Script Activity

Although the dialogue shown below may not be accurate, the dates, names and events described are based on fact.

SCENE 1:

Narrator: It is December of 1890, and the town of Parry Sound has been incorporated now for 3 years. The theme of the most recent town council meeting is the need for a sanitary water system, and for fire protection. It has been 48 years since a British report found that clean water, sewers, and adequate housing were essential to prevent the spread of infectious disease. In Canada, however, not a lot has been done yet to increase public health.

Alex Logan: I am here today on behalf of the Parry Sound fire brigade to talk about our lack of tools for fire protection. I am asking you to buy us 1000 feet of hose, since the supply on hand is not good enough and as a result, a house has burned down unnecessarily.

Councilor John Galna: As we know, our town is in dire need of a proper waterworks system. Efficient fire protection is still something we can only dream about, and it needs to become a reality. We can try to prevent fires, but not much can be done to stop fires once they've started. We simply are lacking the money to do it.

Councilor John McClelland: Two years ago we accepted the offer from the Watrous Engine Works Company to supply a steam fire engine that could throw water only 7 minutes after the coal was ignited in the firebox. We should have ignored Fitzgerald's complaints and gone ahead with that purchase.

Councilor William Fitzgerald: That purchase would have been outlandish. With interest, wear and tear of the hose, and wages for a caretaker, the steam fire engine would have cost the town \$700 per year, a cost we cannot afford. It was lucky for the town that we cancelled the purchase.

Stipendiary Magistrate McCurry (acted as the town Judge): Tell that to the Robinsons, who lost their three young children to a fire last year when their home on Wakefield Street went up in flames, and we had no way to put it out. The \$25 compensation that council gave to the parents will never heal their grief.

Councilor Fitzgerald: Of course I agree that that was a horrific event. It was only weeks after that event that I proposed the purchase of a used fire engine from the town of Waterloo and the construction of a fire hall, but ratepayers in the town rejected the bylaw to finance it.

Alex Logan: Let's not beat around the bush. The fact is that William Beatty and 64 others signed a petition in favour of RENTING the Watrous steam engine, which is exactly what we did. Since then, we have formed a permanent volunteer fire brigade and we practice our firefighting skills regularly. The brigade simply needs more funds.

Mayor Walton: Alex, in July we spent \$50 to erect platforms on both sides of Seguin Street for the operation of this steam pump. Council paid for coal boxes to be put at convenient locations. But now we have overspent our budget and cannot afford to give you firefighters any more money.

SCENE 2

Narrator: It is one year later (December 1891). John Galna has been appointed the new mayor. Alex Logan is now part of the town council. Waterborne diseases such as dysentery (“dis-en-tree”) and diarrhea are a leading cause of death in North America. Others, such as cholera (“call-er-a”) and typhoid (“tye-foyd”) fever are a consistent threat.

Councilor John Moffat: The fire protection system that is in use is still not good enough and it is my intention to introduce a bylaw to erect a waterworks so the town can have water mains and hydrants.

Councillor Logan: In April we approved the purchase of a hook and ladder fire truck for \$250. I think it is time to raise money for a true waterworks system. (Narrator- SHOW PICTURE: Parry Sound’s First Fire Truck).

Mayor Galna: I am still determined to change our current fire prevention and sanitary water situation. Although we are a thriving community, no passerby would confuse Parry Sound with Toronto. We have no sanitary sewers, but rather outhouses and night soil buckets. We have no running water, and every family relies on wells. This needs to change for our community to last.

Councilor Walton: There is no doubt that advances in water treatment and distribution help to eliminate water-borne diseases such as cholera (“call-er-a”) and typhoid (“tie-foyd”). The link between unsafe water and poor health has been known for centuries, and disease outbreaks are common among Canadian communities. We need a waterworks system.

Narrator: BYLAW 81 is passed to raise \$28, 300 for a waterworks system.

In the new year, Council hires John Armstrong, a Toronto consulting and contracting engineer, to build a waterworks system designed by John Galt. Galt subcontracted the building of a brick water tower on Belvedere to Alex Logan and Mr. McAllister (SHOW PICTURE: Looking up Waubeek Street to the Water Tower), and the masonry and woodwork on the pumphouse (SHOW PICTURE: The Southern Façade of the Pumphouse). Pipes were laid to Gibson Street and along Church and James Streets (SHOW 3 PICTURES: Pipes Being Laid). By the end of 1892 it is built and in operation.

SCENE 3:

Narrator: Another year later (January 1893). Purvis is elected as a new mayor.

Councilor Galna: I am fed up. The pipes hadn’t even been laid until this past October, even though the contract said that they must be laid on or before Sept 7. The job is still not yet finished.

Parry Sound Waterworks Engineer, John Campbell: I have had to thaw 18 frozen hydrants during the last cold snap, then cover them with barrels packed with manure to prevent them from freezing again. The water mains are freezing because they aren't buried deep enough.

Councilor Logan: Armstrong has not paid me the \$650 he owes me for the water tower and pumphouse. He wrote a letter telling me to get my money from the town.

John Campbell: And I have not been paid my salary as waterworks engineer that I was to get last December.

Mayor Purvis: We did not hire you, Campbell, Armstrong did...no?

Councilor Galna: I think it was the town that hired him.

Councilor Walton: No, it was Armstrong!

Councilor Moffat: No, it was the town!

Mayor Purvis: We will pay you, Campbell, but we will charge your salary to Armstrong's account. Considering Armstrong has not finished the job, nor done a good one, can we agree to not pay Armstrong any more money until he has completed the project?

All members of council: Aye!

Narrator: Soon after a letter comes from a law firm in Toronto threatening the town with a lawsuit if they don't pay Armstrong. Council gets lawyer (Britton Bath Osler) to defend them against Armstrong's suit. Osler was one of the prosecutors in the trial of Louis Riel in 1885.

SCENE 4:

Narrator: September 1893.

Mayor Purvis: Okay men, what is our plan of action? We took a step forward when we hired Bell Telephone Company to install four inch bells into the homes of each firefighter, as a fire alarm system. All of our other steps, seemingly, have been in the wrong direction. We've had the waterworks system inspected, which shows that our water pipes on the east side of the Seguin are losing pressure, indicating that they must have a leak.

Councilor McClelland: The civil engineer has told us that the average depth of soil covering the pipes is only 4 feet, 4 inches deep, and needs to be another 15 inches. To dig up the pipes and lay them at the proper depth will cost three times what it did to have them installed originally.

Councilor Walton: A diver has also discovered that the pipe crossing the river is unsupported, and there are numerous bad leaks where rivets have been torn out.

Councilor Fitzgerald: A consulting engineer, W.J. Jennings has discovered that the quantity of pipes laid by Armstrong is 1,500 to 2,000 feet less than called for in the plans and estimates.

Councilor Moffat: And what of the fire hall and hose tower that you had proposed be built, Mayor Purvis?

Mayor Purvis: We have had a fire hall built, and a hose tower installed. But, the heat for the building has been overlooked.

Narrator: *Later that year, council spent \$10 on a chimney and \$15 for a stove in order to complete the construction of the fire hall. (SHOW PICTURE: Fire Hall). By December, the North Star, and citizens of Parry Sound, felt that the whole waterworks issue had been overlooked. The legal costs related to the waterworks project were over \$1000, while the town had spent less than \$500 on road repair during the year. Parry Sound citizens were alarmed at the taxes, and of the entire council members only one (Jacob Josiah Jolliffe) would be voted in to council the following year. Walton was elected mayor by a margin of 24 votes, and former mayor Purvis would die 5 years later without ever again being involved in municipal politics.*

In 1894, Walton wrote to the law firm and offered directions for settling the law suit, feeling things had gone on long enough. In the end, Armstrong was to be paid \$4000 by the town, and the town was to pay their own legal costs.

If he were asked to describe the waterworks in Parry Sound at this time, Mayor Walton's explanation might have sounded something like this:

Mayor Walton: Costs and difficulties aside, Parry Sound has finally embraced the water/health connection and we have established a clean water system for our town. The 1900 Annual Report of the Provincial Board of Health for Ontario has stated that "there has been a remarkable decrease in the diseases with which we are familiar, thanks in large part to improvements in water and sanitation and public infrastructure". We are proud of our state-of-the-art water system and will grow as a community because of it.

READ THE PARAGRAPHS BELOW TO YOURSELF, AND THEN TRY TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESENTATION.

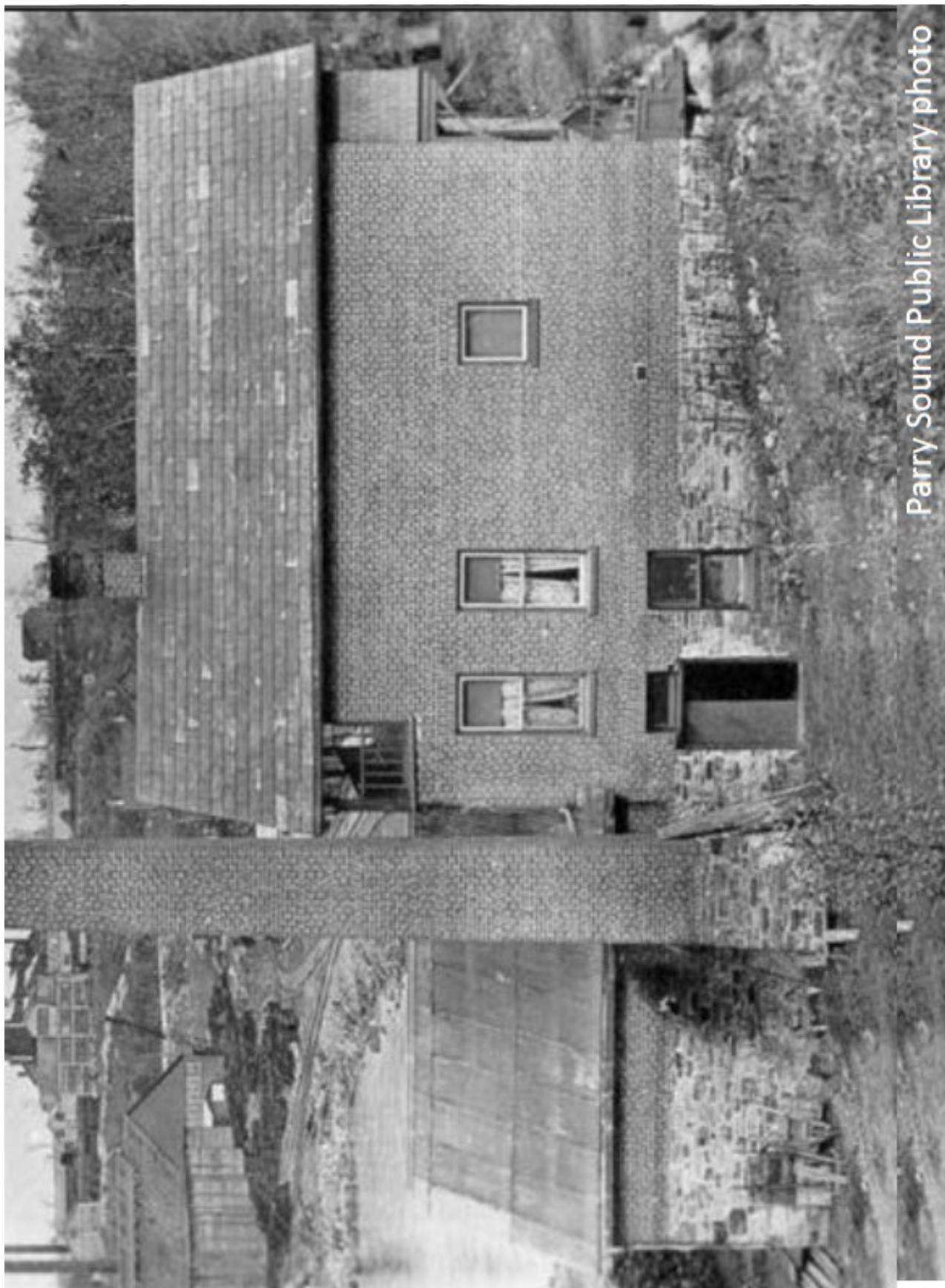
By 1908, Jersey City, New Jersey, became the first municipality in the U.S. to use chlorination to disinfect its water supply. By 1916, Parry Sound became one of the first in Canada (along with Peterborough) to do the same. By 1923, the typhoid rate had dropped by 90%, and by WWII, typhoid, cholera, and dysentery were nearly nonexistent.

Note: At the beginning of the 1900's, some other significant health developments emerged. For example, immunization against smallpox and diphtheria had begun in Ontario schools. About the same time, cities such as Toronto and Montréal began to pasteurize milk.



c. David Thomas Collection

1919: Looking up Waubeek Street to the brick water tower on Belvedere Hill.



Parry Sound Public Library photo

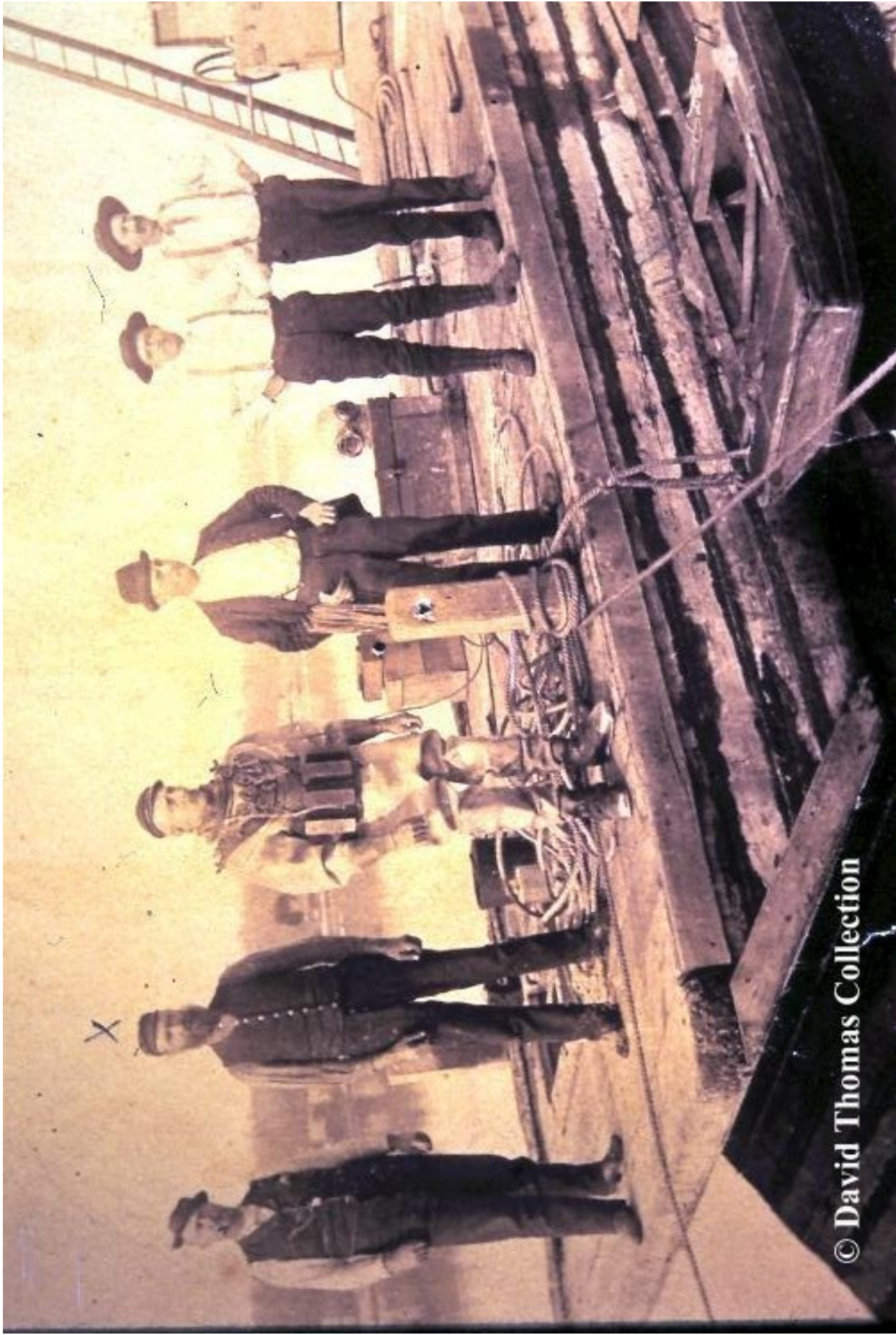
1919: the southern façade of the pumphouse.



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Pipes being laid in 1892

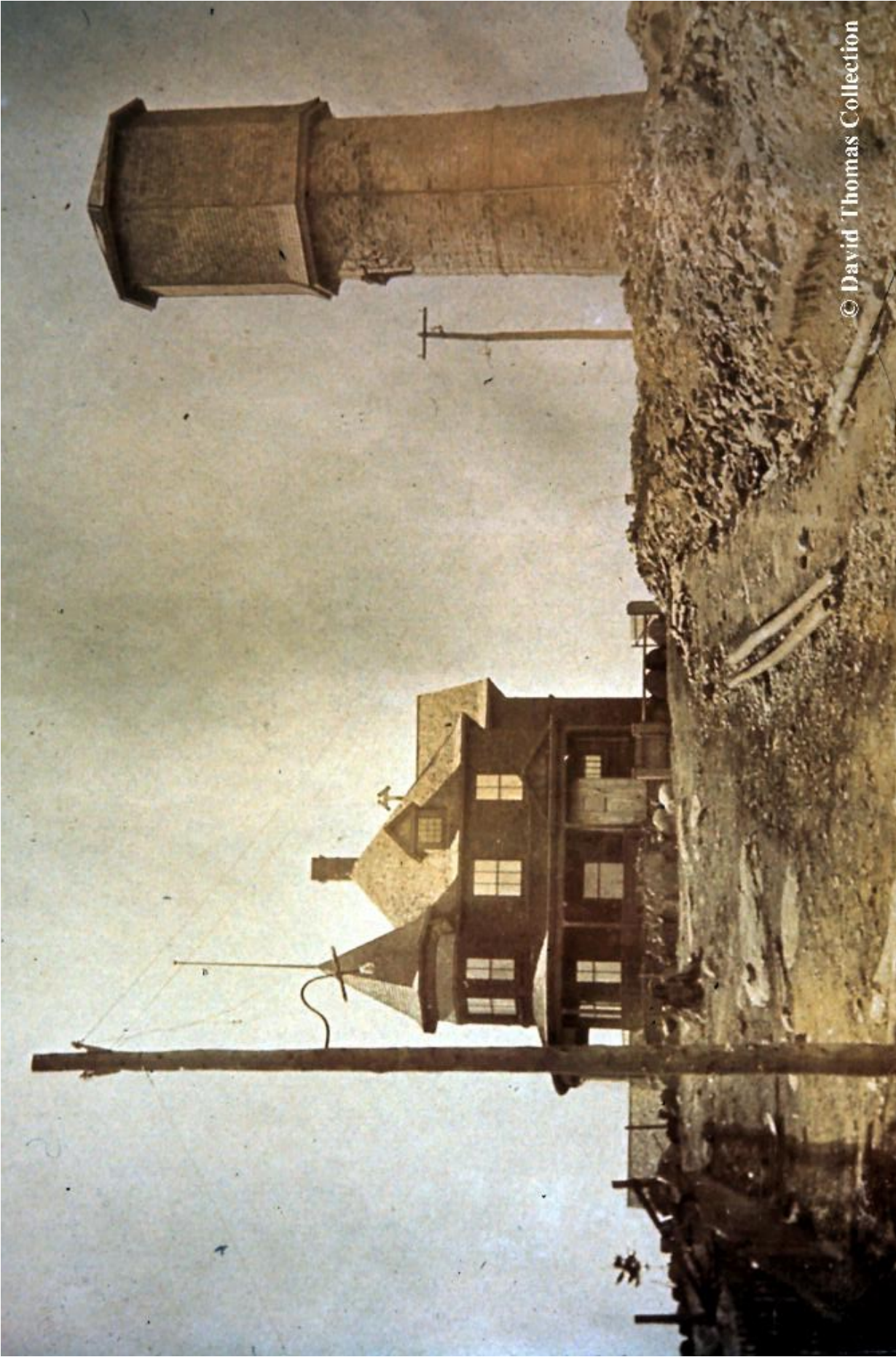


Beginning to lay the pipes in 1891.



Laying the pipes in 1892. Check out the suit that the diver is wearing!
Could it be Mr. John Campbell?

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The first water tower on Belvedere Hill. Designed by John Galt and built by Logan and McAllister. Next door is the Moore house.