

The Sewage of Santa Rosa

1867— 1926

By

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This historical sketch of the early years of the city's sewage handling was extracted primarily from the council minutes and city ordinances (minutes of the Board of Trustees prior to 1876). Until the city changed to a city manager form of government in 1923 and established the Board of Public Utilities in the following year, council was directly involved in authorizing all sewage related actions and approving expenditures. While many key details of historical interest were "placed on file" or were referred to committee or the street commissioner "with power to act" and not recorded, overall the minutes accurately record essentially all of the significant events of the city's sewage history in the transition years from a new municipality in 1867 with fewer than 1,000 people to a prosperous farming center in 1926 with a population of around 11,000. (1)

1867 - 1890

The initial ordinances adopted by the newly forming city in March of 1867 included a nuisance misdemeanor (with a fine of \$5 to \$50 or not more than 25 days imprisonment) prohibiting any privy, cesspool or drainage to collect on the premises “in such a manner as to be offensive to the senses or prejudicial to the health and comfort” of the city’s inhabitants. (2)

In May of 1875, the Board of Trustees approved a more specific ordinance to protect the city’s streets, alleyways, and sidewalks from water flowing from any cesspool, sink or water closet, or from the deposition of any offal, garbage or refuse “offensive to the senses or prejudicial to the health” (a misdemeanor with fine or imprisonment similar to the 1867 ordinance).

Evidently, many properties adjacent to the creeks in the city ran sewer outfalls directly into the creek, but prior to installing the municipal sewer system, only two sewers can be identified to be under the streets. In October 1879, council granted a private party’s request to run a sewer line down B Street from north of Fourth. In 1884 the county was granted permission to run a sewer line down any street from the new Court House in the Plaza to Santa Rosa Creek. (The route of the county sewer to the creek was not recorded, but the sewer was built with the county supplying the materials and convict labor, and with the city furnishing lunches.) In addition, an unknown number of private sewers were undoubtedly connected to drainages, but they cannot be specifically identified since underground drainages themselves are usually described as “sewers” in the early records. (3)

A council committee was appointed to investigate the matter of sewerage the city shortly before the election of April 1878. The newly elected council formed a committee on public works and appointed the city’s Board of Health. In February of 1883, a council committee was appointed to survey and ascertain the cost of installing a sewer on Fifth Street. However, there are no records in the minutes of any conclusions of these early sewer related actions.

In October of 1884, the council elected in the preceding April (Mayor Rutledge) appointed another committee to investigate the feasibility of laying a sewer on Fifth Street. The minutes of November 11, 1884 record that it was the sense of the council to locate a sewer on Third, Fourth or Fifth streets. Council noted that a sewer on Fourth would accommodate more people and ordered that a survey and specifications be prepared for a sewer on Fourth, but a month later a motion carried to lay the first sewer on Fifth Street. A year later, after: (1) two failed motions to rescind the Fifth Street sewer decision; (2) ordering and receiving a report from a sanitary engineer; (3) creating a new office of city engineer and filling the position (Preston Davis); and (4) receiving two resignations from the sewer committee and a subsequent withdrawal of one of the resignations, council finally approved advertising for bids to install a sewer on Fourth Street (with the mayor changing his earlier position and breaking the tie vote). The minutes provide no indication of why such a seemingly simple decision took so long and was so difficult.

The city's first sewer was completed on Fourth Street in March of 1886 and ran from its outfall into Santa Rosa Creek (at about a point of a projection of Fifth west through the SF&NP Railroad yard and behind the cannery warehouse) to the School House east of E Street. Properties along Fourth Street were required to connect to the new sewer at the owners expense (and pay a \$1.50 connection fee and make connections in conformance with a new plumbing Ordinance #73). The Board of Supervisors signed a \$200 contract with the city to connect the Court House to the new sewer. Apparently, some properties did not voluntarily connect to the sewer and the council elected in April 1886 (Mayor Overton) authorized the city attorney to bring suit against all parties refusing to connect. (4)

Two years after the completion of the Fourth Street sewer, sewers were installed on Third to beyond D and on Fifth to King (contract price \$4,281). The western ends of these sewers were connected to the Fourth Street sewer outfall into Santa Rosa Creek. The minutes of the meeting in which council authorized payment to the contractor for completing the Third and Fifth Street sewers (March 6, 1888) also record receiving the suit of J. E. (Edward?) Hall — the city's first sewage disposal lawsuit. Three weeks later, council appointed a committee to investigate the purchase of a sewer farm. (5)

In the spring of 1888 when Hall and others were demanding damages (\$15,500), city funds were exhausted. Plans to extend the Fourth Street sewer to McDonald and other possible extensions were put on hold. The Santa Rosa Bank allowed an overdraft of \$5,000 to pay salaries and cover the already authorized bills, and all unnecessary activities ceased (from street work to burying dogs). Chain gangs were ordered to do any necessary street work, the skylights on the new City Hall were sold, and council even considered selling half of the South Hall of City Hall. The city's dire financial condition appears to have continued until the property tax revenue was received at the end of the year.

In late 1888, council authorized advertising for plans for disposing of the city's sewage. While there is no record of such plans, they were probably reflected in the mayor's (Byington) report to the council in early 1889. The mayor emphasized the gravity and urgency to solve the sewage disposal matter — either by purchasing land west of the city “where the debris can be deposited and utilized for the present” or by providing for future growth by a permanent system “to tidewater.” At the same meeting, the council sewer committee reporting finding “a parcel of land for a sewer dump” west of the city and were soon authorized to secure a 30-day option to purchase the property from W. S. M. (Winfield) Wright — an 11.72 acre parcel on the north bank of Santa Rosa Creek about 2,000 feet west of what is now Stony Point Road — the city's initial sewer farm. (6)

After completion of the outfall main to the sewer farm (10-in. pipe, 7883 ft. long) and constructing the facilities at the sewer farm, the city's sewage was directed to the sewer farm in May 1890.

The actual facilities built at the initial sewer farm and its operation were not recorded. The minutes record the adoption of plans for “vats, tanks, and piping”, the completion of “tanks and flume,” and that a contract was arranged with a caretaker. Apparently, the facilities were a minimal maintenance, passive system of settling tank(s) with flumes (ditches ?) to distribute the effluent over the farm. The sewer farm was deliberately located on the bank of Santa Rosa Creek to allow periodic flooding to clean out the facilities. At least initially, the farm was operated to ensure there were no direct discharges of sewage into the creek during the summer.

The approximately 1.3 miles of city sewers had cost about \$6000. Disposal costs were more than twice the sewer costs (excluding the legal fees and final settlement costs of the *Hall et al.* suit, caretaker cost of \$40 per month and the unrecorded costs of the sewer farm facilities). Legal fees alone for the outfall main to the sewer farm (right-of-way condemnation, etc.) were more than 20% of the outfall main costs (\$5954). The 1890 population of the city was less than 6,000 and the property tax contribution to the general fund would have been no more than about \$20,000. Regaining financial solvency and sewerage and sewage disposal costs were accomplished without raising taxes (taxes actually dropped \$0.10 per \$100 of assessed value in 1891: \$0.65 general plus \$0.05 for the free library in 1891 versus \$0.77 and \$0.03 respectively, in 1890). Despite taxpayer petitions and council’s intentions to extend the sewers, only plans were made to extend the sewers and locate a sewer main to serve the northern part of the city during the remainder of 1890.

The first complaint on the condition of Santa Rosa Creek — “from appearance, Santa Rosa Creek was being used for sewer purposes,” was recorded in early September of 1891. The cause of the stench was attributed to “the canneries dumping their offal” into the creek.

From the city’s point of view, eliminating the direct pollution of Santa Rosa Creek with raw sewage by relocating the sewage disposal a little over a mile west of town, responded to the *Hall et al.* suit, solved the undoubtedly frequent offensive neighborhood odor conditions near the old outfall, and the very unpleasant odor greeting passengers disembarking from the SF&NP trains. Essentially the sewage treatment gains were relatively minor and the disposal problems were simply moved to a sparsely populated, rural agricultural area west of the city. At the time, an unofficial north and south public road was adjacent to the initial sewer farm and ran from Sebastopol Road to the main roads to the West County (located about where Brittain Lane is today). Activities and problems such as offensive odors from the sewer farm would have been common knowledge as well as very apparent to the farm’s neighbors.

1891 — 1902

Sewering continued with a specified budget in early 1891 after the property tax revenue was received. To save money, contractors were not used and the sewer system was expanded under

the direct management of the council sewer committee. The committee purchased the pipe and materials, hired the labor (up to 40 men at times), and provided for construction supervision. Sewers were soon installed on Second Street and the Third and Fourth street sewers were extended to Pierce. (For example, the Second Street sewer, Railroad to Pierce, 5752 feet at a cost of about \$0.40 per foot.) Numerous other sewer lines followed and the right-of-way for the College Avenue/Eighth Street main was established to permit extension of the sewer system to the northern part of the city. Land was purchased in the late summer of 1891 to expand the sewer farm to the west and resulted in about a 50% increase in the size of the farm. The College Avenue/Eighth Street main was installed to King in early 1892. (1)

The mayor's (Woodward) inaugural address after the election of April 1892, noted that the city now had 21 miles of "paved streets", 42 miles of "splendid sidewalks", and nearly 10 miles of "excellent sewers." In April of 1894, the mayor (Woodward) stated that \$6,500 had been spent on sewers in the last two years and proposed that since the city's death rate (11/1000) was less than the state average (16/1000), the sewer system should continue to be extended throughout the city. (2)

After several years of the sewer committee usually "having no report to make" or reporting that the affairs at the sewer farm "were fine," in July of 1894 the committee warned the council that unless the affairs at the farm were immediately corrected, trouble and subsequent lawsuits would be brought against the city. Apparently, the new tenant (no longer referred to as caretaker) was not performing his contracted duties and had allowed effluent to flow into Santa Rosa Creek. The street commissioner made improvements to stop the creek discharges, but a few weeks later men were sent to abate the sewage overflow into the adjacent hop field of Harry Hall and Harvey Brittain (presumably by restoring discharges to the creek). Hall and Brittain promptly claimed damages, but their claims were disallowed and they each filed lawsuits against the city. Almost a year after the August 1894 overflow incident, three other parties each claimed \$5,000 damages from the sewage disposal system (Allen Wright, an adjacent downstream neighbor of the sewer farm, and J. L. Peterson and Mrs. M. A. Peterson who owned ranches west of what is now Fulton Road). (3)

Within weeks after the overflow, the farm was again reported to be in "good condition," but apparently operations were changed to allow excess effluent not absorbed on the farm to be regularly discharged into Santa Rosa Creek. In March of 1895, the sewer committee reported that they had ordered the outlet to be moved lower down the creek "among the bushes" and suggested that the volume of sewage could be reduced by eliminating the discharges of water motors to the sewers. An order to drain water motors directly into Santa Rosa Creek and disconnect them from the sewers was approved a year later. Until the disposal situation was improved, sewer work within the city was restricted to a few minor extensions and to installing flush tanks.

Immediately after council was requested to remain after adjournment for "consultation on sewer

matters” in February of 1896, the owners of three neighboring ranches of the sewer farm (Allen Wright, Hall and Brittain, and A. J. Peterson) offered to sell their land for a greatly expanded sewer farm. A month later, a special council committee presented a “long and exhaustive report on sewage disposal options” for the city with a supplementary report on “hygienic features” and the affairs at the sewer farm were “discussed at length.” The discussion included a consultant’s offer to build and operate a disposal plant for 10 years (first year costs for building and operating the plant were \$4,000 and operating the plant for the next nine years was at \$2,500 per year). After intensive review of the consultant’s plans and proposal, council decided to save money by building and operating a municipal plant similar to the consultant’s plans. (The consultant’s plans involved the separation of the solids or offal from the fluid using a combination of mechanical filtration and chemical precipitation, and the use of the solids generated for fertilization or incineration.) The consultant was offered to operate the municipal plant for \$1,500 per year, but apparently, and not surprisingly, he declined the offer. The city proceeded at once to build the sewer plant, but heavy rains delayed its completion until mid-May of 1896.

After the election of April 1896, the outgoing mayor (Woodward) referred to those trying to destroy the new municipal water system and noted that the city had transformed from a village in 1876 to a “metropolis of 7,500 people today.” The incoming mayor (Jesse) clearly supported the city’s new water system and noted “the excellence of our sewer system compared with other cities of equal population in the state.” He also noted that the recently adopted “method of disposal should free the city from much of the expense of litigation” and supported extending the sewer system as rapidly as possible to all incorporated areas of the city.

The minutes refer to the new plant as a “sewer plant” and as a “purifying plant” (undoubtedly a glorification even at the time). The minutes also record that there was some controversy with the sewer farm — considered to be “a proper dumping ground by some and opposed by others.”

The facilities at the sewer farm apparently included a wire mesh screen, a wooden settling tank, filter beds, and ditches to collect the filtered effluent for distribution on the farm. Excess effluent not absorbed by the farm was discharged into Santa Rosa Creek. In addition to routine operation and maintenance, other contracted tasks for the operator included digging pits for the screened debris and making filter beds. The filter beds soon plugged, but their construction details were not recorded in the minutes other than that they had subsurface drain tiles. The sludge was stored in wooden tanks but the record of its disposal is not clear. In 1898, some of the sludge was reportedly being used for fertilizer by one of the parties who was suing the city. By the turn of the century, the sludge was disposed of in large pits dug on the farm. Chemicals were not used to precipitate the solids although lime was routinely used for odor control. The only known machinery at the farm were pumps (windmill driven and later, gasoline driven). When the pumps broke down, the wet sludge was moved in buckets. (4)

The completion of the sewer “plant” led initially to only a minor increase in inflows (a laundry

was granted permission to connect to the sewer and there were only a few very limited expansions of the sewer system). In June of 1896, there was insufficient money in the general fund to pay overdue bills and until the property tax revenue was received six months later, the city again functioned on money borrowed from the Santa Rosa Bank (at 8%).

The total property tax rate for the fiscal year 1896 jumped 37% over the 1895 rate (1896 total \$1.30 per \$100 versus \$0.95 in 1895). Even with this major tax increase, the city was broke again less than a year later, but this time the city borrowed equally from the four banks in Santa Rosa (\$1,333.33 from each). While again functioning on borrowed money, modest sewer extensions began once more and continued in the following few years. (5)

The low-tech. sewer “plant” continued operation without major modification through to the fall of 1900 when unacceptable odor conditions demanded improvements. At this time, the superintendent of the sewer farm explained the problem to council in what is undoubtedly a classic understatement, “the odor of the farm was rather loud and complaints were frequent.”

The excessive odor problems of the farm were “in great measure done away with” by digging a pit (16 ft. x 14 ft. x 7 ft. 8 in.) with a wooden lid for storing the sludge. When the first pit filled about six months later, a much larger pit was dug (200 ft. x 20 ft. x 8 ft.). The outfall main to the sewer farm was stated to have reached its capacity in the fall of 1901 and no more sewers could be constructed until the size of the outfall main was increased. In December of 1901, the “cause of all the trouble” was attributed to the diversion of storm water and water from water motors into the sewers. The minutes in the following winter describe “the trouble” as being the overflowing of many manholes in the city during storms. Also about this time, numerous residents south of Santa Rosa Creek petitioned council for sewers, but the south city area could not be served by the existing outfall main to the sewer farm.

After his return from the League of California Municipalities convention in Los Angeles, the sewer committee chairman (John Keegan) reported to council in January 1902 that Santa Rosa’s sewage disposal system was “second to none that he had seen or heard of” and that the U.S. authorities for the Veterans Home in Santa Monica had built a septic tank. Soon thereafter, the sewer farm suffered major flood damage. Repairs apparently incorporated temporary improvements, including a wooden septic tank, since in May of 1902 it was reported that the “old” tank would “soon give trouble” and it was recommended that a new update septic tank with three or four filter beds (\$1,000 to \$1,500) would “put the farm in permanent and first class condition.” Council authorized the recommended improvements to the sewer farm and at the same time, authorized borrowing money again from the Santa Rosa Bank (\$5,000 at 7%). (The size of the city’s first two septic tanks was not recorded in the minutes. The second tank was apparently much larger than the first and was described as “the largest and most extensive septic tank in the world.”)

Since the early 1890s, the council minutes record numerous complaints about the deplorable conditions of Santa Rosa Creek, especially in the fall when the flushing rains came late. Accusations that the city's sewage discharges were the cause were denied and cannery and tannery wastes were identified as the major reason for the offensive odors. In 1902, council ordered the city attorney to ensure that all private sewer discharges or depositing of offal into the creek was discontinued and directed the street commissioner to notify all of the industrial dischargers in the city to cease dumping into Santa Rosa Creek. Soon thereafter, the Gas Works petitioned council to connect to the sewer in the summer since the fish commissioner had complained that their discharges were killing all of the fish. (6)

After the right-of-way to connect the College Avenue/Eighth Street main directly to the outfall main to the sewer farm was acquired from J. E. (Edward) Hall (and others), the council ordered that all roof drains were to be disconnected from the sewers and contracts were let for minor expansions of the sewer collection system. The focus at the sewer farm for the remainder of 1902 was for appearance — lumber to cover the ditches, new fencing, cutting weeds, and painting the tanks, etc. The sewer committee chairman remarked to council that when the College Avenue/Eighth Street main is connected directly to the outfall main to the sewer farm, “we can all go down to the farm and have a picnic.” He also recommended that a special election be held to approve \$70,000 of sewer improvement bonds.

The building of septic tanks in 1902 had greatly “solved” the excessive sludge accumulation problem by the anaerobic digestion of the solids. Operationally, the septic tanks were a significant improvement over the old settling tank/filter bed system. However, many new problems would have soon become apparent. A septic tank system would continue to be part of Santa Rosa's sewage disposal method for the next 50 years.

1903 — 1926

Despite many petitions to expand the sewer collection system, until the bond funds became available in the late winter of 1905, very limited funds were allocated to the sewer system. Projects in 1903 were restricted to a few very short sewer extensions, repair of leaks, repair of flood damage at the sewer farm, and connecting the College Avenue/Eighth Street main to the original outfall main to the sewer farm.

While it was recognized that major bond funding would be needed to expand the sewers to the entire city and provide for growth, there were numerous other municipal priorities at the time. The newly elected mayor (Bower) in the spring of 1903 supported a large diversified municipal bond issue “to make the city more attractive to home seekers now turning their steps to Northern California,” but he also described the city streets as being “pools of mud in winter and dust heaps in summer.” He advocated using only hard surface paving in the future to end the constant street maintenance work which had no permanent results (about \$8,000 was being spent annually on

street work at this time). While he supported extending the sewers to the unconnected parts of the city, he commented that the new sewers would be useless unless the public water supply for flushing them was increased. In the mayor's opinion, only \$5,000 in bond funds were needed for the sewer system to increase the flushing water supply.

The condition of the sewer farm in early 1904 was described "as good as can be expected," but by August the farm was deemed to be entirely too small to absorb the daily sewage. A month earlier, council had unanimously responded to a report that dead dogs were being dumped into the septic tanks at the farm by declaring the action deplorable, being on the verge of criminal, and ordering that the practice be investigated and that it should cease immediately. The original outfall main to the sewer farm beyond its connection with the College Avenue/Eighth Street main was now described as being grossly undersized and sprung many leaks during storms. This section of the original outfall main was replaced in early 1905 with a 20-inch cement pipe — twice as large as the original outfall main. (1)

After several years of discussion of numerous bond issue proposals varying in total amount and allocations and a new mayor (Overton), a \$200,000 bond issue was overwhelmingly approved by the voters in March 1905 (yes vote, about 90% of the approximately 1,000 voters). The bond issue provided for: (a) sewer system improvements and sewer farm land acquisition, \$72,500; (b) water supply improvements, \$72,500; (c) purchase of a fire engine, equipment and apparatus, \$5,000; and (d) public street improvements, \$50,000. (2)

Anticipating bond funding, in January 1905 council authorized that a letter be sent to the Cameron Septic Tank Company in Chicago requesting specifications and costs for a septic tank for 10,000 people (the city's population at the time was at most about 9,000). The company's response was that the information would cost money (10% of the septic tank costs) and there was also an additional question of patent license fees. In the same month, despite a protest petition signed by 25 property owners in the vicinity of the sewer farm, council authorized a down payment on the 100-acre Hall and Brittain property for a greatly expanded sewer farm to the north — the former R. B. Runyon ranch (down payment, \$1,000; balance authorized in June 1905, \$3,900). Doubting the Cameron company's patent claims, council accepted local plans for a septic tank system. (Both John Keegan and the superintendent of the sewer farm had clear ideas on the design of an appropriate septic tank system. It was not until November of 1915 that council offered to settle a patent infringement claim of the Cameron company by paying for a license and back fees (3% of the total initial plant costs per annum plus 3% per annum for the remaining unexpired term of the patent. The patent infringement claim was probably settled by the time the city joined the National Septic Protection League about a year later in 1916.) (3)

By the end of 1905, the city had built by contract a new wooden septic tank which was reported to be "working good and getting better all the time" (\$996.75) and purchased the materials and hired the labor to lay nearly seven miles of sewers (pipe, \$6,481; labor, \$9640; miscellaneous,

\$1,240; total \$17,361 or about \$0.45 per foot). The sewage improvement work was recognized in a letter from the state Board of Health commending the city's Board of Health and the council on the "excellent sanitary conditions of the city and the sewer farm."

The 1905 municipal bond issue of \$200,000 followed the approval of a \$165,000 water bond vote in May 1893 to build a city water system (yes vote 74%, but the bonds were not sold until December 1894). After the 1905 bond issue was sold, the property tax rate jumped 20% over the 1904 rate (1905 total \$1.50; general \$0.95; library \$0.07; municipal bonds, \$0.48 versus 1904 total \$1.25; general \$0.98; library \$0.07; and water bonds, \$0.20). The main items in a tentative general fund budget of \$51,403 for the 1905 fiscal year were for street work (34%) and the City Water Works (18%). In 1905, laborers at the sewer farm were described in the minutes as "Japs and chinese," the city engineer was enjoying his \$2.00 raise to \$10.00 per day, and automobiles in the city were required to have mufflers, their maximum speed was set at eight miles per hour, and they were required to slow down at intersections and when rounding corners (Ordinance #210).

The April 18, 1906 earthquake devastated the city (especially the downtown core), but caused only relatively moderate damage to the sewer system. The city's health officer initially estimated that about 1/3 of the sewers were broken and council ordered that the sewers be repaired and that the obstruction at the Sanitarium on Humbolt Street be removed as soon as possible. By June 12, all of the sewer mains in the city were reported to be in good condition; 385 side connections broken by the earthquake had been repaired; sewer main extensions had been laid (350 ft. of 6-in. pipe); the septic tank had been repaired (\$213.40 plus lumber costs); the sewer farm had been cleaned up; and levies had been built on the farms eastern and western property lines. Sewer extensions continued through to 1916 when the entire city was reported to be served by sewer mains and continued sporadically thereafter to accommodate growth. Major sewer projects during this period included: (1) extending the College Avenue main westward directly to the sewer farm in February of 1910; (2) installing an outfall main to the sewer farm to serve the area of the city south of Santa Rosa Creek in the early spring of 1914 (2.7 miles of 8 to 14-inch pipe, with a fall of 46 feet at a cost of \$3,424.90 for the pipe plus labor); and (3) purchasing a sewer cleaning machine in 1915 (\$987.00). The cleaning machine was reported to produce "first class results" and while it required installing new manholes periodically, it was quickly concluded that the machine would pay for itself. (The new sewer cleaner was credited in early 1916 for "eliminating the trouble every winter with the Second and Fifth street sewers.")

About three years after the 1905 septic tank had been installed, most of the "old" sewer farm was reconstructed into five in-line ponds to remove as much as possible "the slime and coarse matter before turning same on a gravel bar" in Santa Rosa Creek. The ponds not only provided for freer passage of the effluent into the creek gravel, at least initially, the seepage was pronounced and opened up a new way of disposing of the sewage. Soon after the election of a new mayor in April of 1912 (Mercier), the newly appointed sewer committee reported that the farm was all right, but that the "sewage problem is in deplorable condition." The septic tanks

were described as being overburdened, in foul condition, and inadequate to handle the volume of sewage. Council's response was to not accept the committee's recommendation to build a new septic tank and ordered that two deeper evaporating/seepage ponds be constructed to reach gravel. When finished, the new ponds were described as "the best the city ever had." Apparently, the response was inadequate since a few months later a sewer farm neighbor (Mr. Hall) complained that the sewage was overflowing onto his property. The disposal system was investigated, but a new septic tank was not built at this time. (For example, city officials visited "Lake Port" to examine its septic tank which had been in use since 1904 and also visited Healdsburg to investigate the city's sewage system.) The ponds were again deepened in the following year, but this time authorization was given to use explosives to "loosen up the pond bottoms" to increase the seepage.

In 1909 and again in the spring of 1912, the farmer at the sewer farm planted a small plot of corn.

In early 1913, council instructed the farmer to plant a much larger field of corn and irrigate it with septic tank effluent, and an effluent pipeline (described also in the minutes as a "flume") was built to a farm across Santa Rosa Creek "to alleviate the congested state of the ponds this summer." (The farmer on the south side of the creek, Temple Smith, used excess septic tank effluent to irrigate his farm and appears to have been the city's first private wastewater irrigator. The irrigated corn and the second fall cropping of alfalfa described in the minutes of 1914, 1917, and 1918 clearly establishes that the city's septic tank effluent was regularly used for crop irrigation on the sewer farm between 1913 to 1923, inclusively.)

In April of 1914, Mayor Mercier's farewell address stated that previous councils had not provided adequately for growth. Except for the outfall mains to the sewer farm and the Fourth Street sewer main which was now 10 inches in diameter, most of the sewer mains in the city were only 6 inches in diameter and were generally too small. (The mayor also stated that the municipal water supply and reservoir were also grossly inadequate, the change to 100 candle power incandescent street lamps had made Santa Rosa "one of the best lighted cities for its size in the U.S.," and expressed great pride in the fact that the new City Hall had been built out of revenues rather than with bonds where the interest was larger than the principal.) A month earlier, council had instructed the street commissioner to confer with the owner of a laundry about constructing a cesspool since every time the laundry discharged its wastewater, the Second Street sewer overflowed. In July, the new council approved cleaning the septic tank after it was reported to be "completely out of order," and the effluent was described as being "too strong for the alfalfa."

By 1914, the need for a better solution to the city's sewage disposal situation was again very apparent and a seepage pond was built directly in a gravel bed in Santa Rosa Creek. In October of the same year, a local doctor (S. S. Bogle, the county health officer) presented a proposal to council for a county sewer system which would follow down the Russian River and have branches to other communities in the county. The doctor reported that the state health officer was pleased with the proposal and that, if installed, Sonoma County would have the best sewers

of any county in the state.

A year later, the old “Keegan” septic tanks (the tanks built prior to 1905) were cleaned, their weirs replaced, and the tanks were extended 50 feet. Permission was granted to the state Board of Health to inspect the sewer farm to verify the statements that were made in a report. About this time, farmers in the vicinity of the sewer farm had cleaned the tanks for the fertilizer obtained. In December 1915, the state Board of Health requested that the city file permit applications to maintain and operate its sewer and its municipal water systems (as apparently required by the state Public Health Act of 1907). Six months later, the city submitted applications to the state board to operate its municipal water and sewage disposal systems. The sewage disposal system in the permit application was based on the discharge of the seepage pond excesses into Santa Rosa Creek. With limited finances at the time, council’s first priority was to obtain a state permit to operate the municipal water system as soon as possible. The city received a temporary state permit to operate its water system about a year later.

The process of obtaining a state permit to operate the sewage disposal system, however, took over 10 years. Apparently it took so long, because in part, the state Board of Health not only required major improvements in the sewage disposal system, but considered the city’s sewage as only one of the numerous major pollution problems of Santa Rosa Creek. The city’s own sanitary inspector described the condition of the creek in the spring of 1916 as being “worse than a septic tank” and commented that nothing could be done about it until there was better handling of the city’s industrial discharges. The city received specific restrictions on operating its sewer disposal system from the state board in February 1917 and soon thereafter, a USDA irrigation engineer presented to council a proposal to install a 10-acre, septic tank effluent irrigation demonstration project to be operated in cooperation with the state Board of Health. The proposal was to install subsurface drains (\$2,100) with hydrants and other irrigation system components (\$3,800). According to the USDA engineer, there were 40 to 50 sewer farms in the state at the time which had used sewage effluent to irrigate crops, but very few had been successful (essentially, because there were no guidelines available and to be successful, absolute control of irrigation was needed to ensure that the irrigation was regular and determined by the water requirements of the crop and not simply determined to meet disposal needs). Council responded to the proposal by promising to consider installing _ of the demonstration project as soon as possible. In the following year, council did not act on a local meat company’s request to lease the sewer farm and operate the disposal facilities, reaffirming council policy to maintain direct control of the city’s sewage disposal as a municipal activity. (Earlier councils had also responded negatively to a number of similar private party proposals to operate the sewer farm. The meat company’s lease offer excluded any liability to adjacent properties given the “natural offensive character” of the sewer farm.)

In October of 1919 when the main focus at the sewer farm was clearly the raising of hogs, council received another letter from the state Board of Health and a lengthy report on the sewer farm

with recommended corrective actions. The new letter stated that the board had received numerous complaints of odors and mosquitoes at the sewer farm, that there had been “much unnecessary negligence and lack of interest,” and declared that the city was obligated to undergo considerable outlay at once to remedy sewer farm operations. Council’s response was: (1) to order that all future septic tank cleaning sludge be disposed of on the sewer farm; (2) to no longer allow disinterested parties (such as vicinity farmers) to handle the sludge; (3) to approve installing 1/4 of the improved irrigation system described in the USDA irrigation demonstration project and re-establish proper drainage on the entire farm; and (4) to approve plans to build by the city a new, much larger septic tank as soon as possible (about \$8,000 for a tank with concrete walls, 400 ft. long x 15 ft. wide x 5 ft. high, and about \$16,000 for the complete system). The estimated 1,200 yards of septic tank sludge in the 1905 tank was sold for fertilizer (\$300). The men cleaning the septic tanks in 1919 were paid \$1 per day, required to walk to work and buy their own boots. (The lowest paid regular city workers at the time, street sweepers and meter readers, were paid \$4.50 per day. Two years earlier, council had awarded a single mother working in the local shirt factory \$1.50 per day — her regular earnings, to stay home and care for her sick children.) (4)

The minutes for late 1919 record the purchases of lumber for cribbing, concrete, reinforcing steel, and numerous bills for labor for the new concrete septic tank. However, quite surprisingly, the minutes do not record the completion of the tank or any comments on its operation. The approved plans called for a party wall for a future tandem tank, but this large concrete tank — a very major addition to the disposal system, is not mentioned in the discussions and solutions of the disposal problems in the coming years.

Council approved a Chamber of Commerce request to allow a new cannery on College Avenue to connect to the sewer system in December 1919 (this cannery, a second California Packing Corporation cannery, was also referred to in the minutes as a pickle factory and as a jam factory). Subsequently, council was assured that the discharges of brine when pickles were being manufactured at the new cannery would not affect the bacterial action in the septic tanks. Within six months, a new 10-inch sewer main connected to the Cleveland Avenue main was installed on College Avenue to the new cannery. (The chamber’s request also included canceling taxes on the new cannery for the first five years as many other cities had done, but was denied.) Soon thereafter, the small California Prune and Apricot Association cannery (with about 1,000 gallons per day of discharges) also applied to connect to the sewer system, but no council action was required since an appropriate ordinance (#315) already provided for connecting parties outside of the city to the sewers. (5)

By the late summer of 1920, the city had purchased the materials and lengthened one of the old wooden septic tanks 40 feet (“to the betterment of the city’s sewage disposal” — the 1905 tank?) Shortly thereafter, the mayor (Rutherford) reported that mosquitoes were in the vicinity of the farm suggesting that the handling of the septic tank effluent, despite the improvements implemented in the previous two years, was still inadequate.

In the spring of 1921, the city once again had insufficient funds to pay its bills and all but absolutely necessary expenditures were curtailed. (The lack of money was the most frequently stated reason for council's decision to discontinue the position of the first woman on the city's police force.) The city functioned for the remainder of 1921 by cashing its Liberty Bonds and on money borrowed from a local bank. City utility work in 1922 focused on major improvements to its municipal water system.

In December of 1922, council received a petition signed by numerous residents in the vicinity of the municipal farm (sewer farm) protesting the manner of disposal of the sewage from the municipal farm. A month later, council received another letter from the state Board of Health which described ways in which the sewage disposal conditions could be improved. While the council recognized that some changes were necessary, current adverse weather conditions made work impossible and the letter was filed for reference until after the appointment of a city manager. The city was soon requested to send representatives to a meeting of the state Board of Health in Sacramento in February 1923, when the state board was to take up the disposal of sewage at the municipal farm. In the same month, the minutes record that Mr. Peterson's claim for \$12,000 in damages sustained from operation of the municipal farm was disallowed. (About two years later, the minutes note that Elmer Peterson's damage claim, now \$10,000, was in the county superior court and the city attorney was directed to employ special council to assist him in defending the city.) (6)

At a yearly salary of \$4,000 per year, the city's first city manager (Abner Hitchcock) was appointed on March 8, 1923 and he immediately played a leadership role in dealing with the city's sewage disposal problems. One of his first tasks appears to have been to remind the council that there was simply not enough money to approve all of the proposed municipal improvement projects, especially since \$10,000 would be required to cover the already let street intersection improvements. (Building a new A Street bridge was one of the additional top priorities at the time.) Sewer extension costs were changed from sewer fund activities to assessments against the property owners served by the new sewer. The city engineer estimated that two significantly larger septic tanks (400 ft. long) would cost at least about \$33,000, but two tanks similar to those now in use would cost about \$10,000 less. Temporary relief of the disposal situation was achieved by building a wooden flume to the northern end of the municipal farm. Any excess effluent not absorbed on the farm was allowed to seep back and flow into Santa Rosa Creek.

In April 1923, council received a letter from the director of the state Board of Health on "the necessity of taking immediate steps towards the sewage disposal situation at the municipal farm". The minutes record that the mayor (Pressley) and the council spent "considerable time on reviewing the situation brought out" by the director's letter. In November of the same year, council received a copy of a recently adopted resolution of the state Board of Health. The state

board's resolution identified the major sources of pollution in Santa Rosa Creek (Gas Works, cannery, sewage, and sporadic tannery discharges from two tanneries) and ordered that the pollution of the creek cease on or before January 1, 1925. (7) (8)

A month after receiving the state board's order and touring the operating sewage treatment plants at Yountville (trickling filter) and Lodi (activated sludge), council accepted a consultant's recommendation to build an activated sludge plant. The voters overwhelmingly approved the sale of \$165,000 in bonds to build an activated sludge plant in a special election in February 1924 (yes vote, about 83% of the 1,191 people voting). (Essentially, the proposed activated sludge plant used an early 1920's version of the process currently used for secondary treatment at the Laguna Wastewater Reclamation Plant. With its high degree of purification and small amount of local nuisance odors, the proposed technically enhanced process had been growing in popularity in the previous decade. The results and experience of the Lodi and Milwaukee plants, especially, served as the basis for the consultant's recommendation and his design and specifications for the proposed plant.) (9)

The sewage plant bonds were sold two days before a new council was elected in April 1924. (Three of the elected councilmen were new and one of the new councilmen was elected mayor {Dunbar} by the council.) About a month after the election and after 14 months in the job, the city's first city manager resigned. (The city attorney had resigned and had been replaced a few weeks earlier.) On the same day in May 1924, council also appointed the city's second city manager (J. E. Williams) and organized the city's Board of Public Utilities (F. C. Steiner, G. R. Cadan and Williams) as provided for in the city's charter. The minutes record that the new council, city officials, and several citizens expressed doubts about the efficiency and operating costs of an activated sludge plant. Disposal solutions such as "sewering to the sea" or saving a great deal of money by simply improving the existing septic tank/pond system were discussed. The new city manager soon thereafter informed council that plans were underway to build two new wooden septic tanks at the municipal farm to increase the capacity of the disposal system and the council then decided to meet the state Board of Health's deadline of July 1 by submitting the consultant's activated sludge plans to the state board. (Initially, City Manager Williams reported that one tank {20 ft. x 200 ft.} would be built, but soon after reported that two tanks, of unrecorded dimensions, were to be built. At this point, the sequence of events becomes confusing since the application letter to the state board for a permit for an activated sludge plant is dated February 16, 1925 — about seven months after the council decision to apply for a state permit for a sludge plant and many months after the decision was made to build two new septic tanks.) (10)

The two new septic tanks were reported to be "in good working order" in December of 1924 and the council minutes record that the chairman of the utilities board (Steiner) had made satisfactory arrangements to connect the main California Packing Corporation cannery to the sewer system. Three months later, the city engineer was directed to connect the cannery's sewer to the city

sewer system. (In October 1924, one of the newly elected councilmen died and the two hold-over council members, one of whom had been the preceding mayor {Kinley}, resigned. Mayor Dunbar appointed a former mayor {Overton} to fill the first vacancy and the first appointed public members of the Board of Public Utilities were appointed to fill the other two council seats. Steiner and Cadan also continued to serve on the utilities board through to 1931. Former Mayor Kinley was reported to be “out of town on a fishing trip” when Cadan was appointed to replace him.) The minutes of the Board of Public Utilities indicate that a wooden chlorination tank with a dry gas chlorinator was installed on the pond discharges into Santa Rosa Creek in early 1925. After a long and obviously difficult process to improve the sewage disposal system and eliminate almost all of the direct discharges of cannery waste from the city into Santa Rosa Creek (evidently, all but a small pickle factory which also canned tomatoes), the state Board of Health granted Santa Rosa a one year, temporary permit to operate a septic tank, aeration and settling pond sewage disposal system in May 1925. (Apparently, chlorination was now required of all pond effluent discharged into Santa Rosa Creek.) Council then concluded that there was now good reason to believe that expenditure of the already sold \$165,000 bond issue to build an activated sludge plant would not be necessary. (The consultant was paid \$3008.67 for his contract to prepare the plans and specifications for the proposed activated sludge plant.) (11) (12)

City Manager Williams resigned immediately after the general election of April 1926. (In a crowded field of 10 candidates, the two councilmen who had resigned in October 1924 ran in the election, but received only about 1/3 of the votes of the three re-elected incumbents.) Mayor Dunbar resigned as mayor and councilman after the election to become the city’s third city manager. In July of 1926, council approved a resolution to apply to the state Board of Health for a regular permit to operate the city’s existing disposal plant (“a septic tank system augmented with aerating sluices and aerating settling ponds, and a chlorinating gas process”) and authorized City Manager Dunbar to proceed with the permit application, including acquiring any necessary data or making any necessary investigations. Although not recorded in the minutes of the council or the utilities board, undated and unreferenced research notes apparently prepared for the city’s centennial (March 17, 1968) indicate that the city received its regular state permit to operate its disposal system in October 1926. The research notes also suggest that a permit condition was to exclude all effluent discharges into Santa Rosa Creek if possible, and if not possible, the permit required the sterilization by chlorination of all discharges into the creek.

The new A Street bridge was accepted from the contractor as complete in early January of 1925. Throughout the 1920s, annual and incremental “asphaltic concrete” paving of all city streets was the primary municipal activity. Curb and gutter costs were assessed to the adjacent property owners and protests against specific street improvements were frequent. After a public hearing, the council invariably overruled any protest and proceeded with a contract for the street improvement work. In 1925, council lowered the city manager’s salary to \$3,000 per year (with his concurrence) and raised the recently hired city engineer’s salary from \$175 to \$200 per

month. (The position of street commissioner was discontinued in June 1922 and his duties were absorbed into the position of city engineer.) In 1925, council also approved ordinances defining the duties of the Playground and Recreation Commission, prohibiting airplanes from flying over the city under 1,000 feet or doing acrobatics or operating over any crowd, and prohibiting the keeping of cows within the city. In 1925, council also approved purchasing a siren for the motorcycle speed cop and was considering creating a Planning Commission to develop zoning regulations for the city. On April 13 of the following year (1926) council adjourned “out of respect to that greatly beloved citizen of Santa Rosa, the late Luther Burbank.”

The total property taxes during the period, 1903 to 1926, ranged from a high of \$1.55 per \$100 of assessed value to around \$1.35 in the early 1920s. In the fiscal year 1922-23 there were three sinking water bond funds (#1, #2, and 1922), a sewer bond fund, and a street and bridge bond fund. Serial bonds were used to pay for street improvements with unpaid assessments. Between 1914 and 1924 all bills were recorded in the minutes and debited from specific fund accounts and the monthly approval of bill paying was often followed by a transfer of funds between the various accounts. A monthly, and occasionally a yearly, financial statement of all of the city accounts was also often recorded in the minutes. After 1925, the monthly bills were not recorded in the minutes and council simply approved all of the bills that had been authorized by the city manager and the department heads. The city’s population in 1926 was about 11,000. (Reflecting the considerable growth of the city in the early 1920s, the population determination in the consultant’s 1925 report on the selection of an activated sludge plant used census data, sewage inflows, and voting and telephone records, to estimate that the city’s actual population in the mid-1920s was about 13,000.) (13) (14)

The sewage disposal system of septic tanks and aeration/settling ponds with chlorination of all pond discharges to Santa Rosa Creek was periodically expanded to accommodate growth until the, at the time, state-of-the-art million dollar West College Wastewater Treatment Plant (trickling filter) became operational in July 1952. In the mid-1970s, the city would again use crop irrigation to dispose of effluent in the summer. Responding to new regulations imposed by the Regional Water Quality Control Board prohibiting summer discharges of treated sewage into the Russian River, the city built the West College irrigation system westward along Santa Rosa Creek and the subregional (with Cotati, the South Park Sanitation District, Rohnert Park, and Sebastopol), Laguna Effluent Disposal System (LEDS) northward from an enlarged Laguna Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Notes

1867 to 1890

1. As a source to historical information, the council minutes focus on the actions taken by the councils and rarely record the discussions (occasionally record only that a “lively discussion followed), often appear to record only the issues decided on, very rarely record personal opinions and emotions, and are very parsimonious in recording any

issue of major importance or with legal or political implications. For example, the minutes of the emergency meetings of the council the day after the earthquake of April 18, 1906 record the granting of military authority and the approval of many other emergency measures without even mentioning the word, "earthquake." A telegram reading "EARTHQUAKE — Santa Rosa in ruins and burning. Many injured and probably many killed" is pasted in the book of minutes following the minutes of the second emergency meeting. The word, "earthquake," is not used in the minutes as the cause of the calamity until May 2, 1906.

2. Other prohibited nuisances in the 1867 ordinance (Chapter II, Ordinances of the Board of Trustees — Offensive trades, Occupations and Nuisances) include: frightening horses or annoying any person; allowing any animal (except dogs) to run at large or to be driven on the sidewalks; to utter within the hearing of two or more persons, any bawdy, lewd or obscene words, epithets or expressions having a tendency to create a breach of the peace; or to keep or visit a "house of ill-fame."

In the early years, the city's marshal was paid by the duties he performed (\$1.00 per arrest; \$0.25 per entry in the arrest log including the entry of nuisance violations; 2% of fees collected; \$2.00 for attending court; etc.). Perhaps the diligence of the marshal's office explains why only four sewage related nuisance issues were brought to the attention of the council before 1890.

The city's Assessor's Roll in 1867 was about \$182,000 and the tax rate was set at 1%. The rate was lowered in the following year to 0.5% and continued at this low rate through to 1886. In addition to the property taxes, in 1868 all resident males twenty one and over were required to pay an annual "de capita" tax of \$4, but could pay this tax by doing street work at \$2 per day. Subsequently through to 1913 when the poll tax was withdrawn, this tax was lowered to \$2 per year and called a "street tax," but there was no *in lieu* street work option. In 1884, the city's Assessor's Roll had risen to \$2,139,306.15. By 1919, the Assessor's Roll had risen to over 6 Million dollars.

3. Direct sewer outfalls from properties adjacent to the city creeks were ordered discontinued in March 1902 — essentially an enforcement of the Public Health Ordinance (#115, Chapter V, Sec. 3) adopted in 1890.

In May of 1872, the council ordered the drainage of city streets by "sewers" or culverts. Ordinance # 17 approved in July of 1877, required that an adequately sized "sewer" or culvert be installed with any fill of the slough running through the city (an old Santa Rosa Creek channel). In June of 1875, the council granted a request to cut a "sewer" across Second Street and in July of 1883, the council ordered the street commissioner to repair a "sewer" running from a property on Fourth Street to the ditch on the flat below Fourth "and put the same in healthy conditions." Later in 1883, following a nuisance abatement order for a washhouse on Hinton Avenue, Yik Lee petitioned the council to use the "sewer" on Fourth, and the street commissioner was ordered to fix a "sewer" across Main Street from First Street to the creek. In September of 1884, the street commissioner was authorized to purchase lumber to replank the iron and E Street bridges and to repair the "sewers" on Wilson and on Ninth Streets. Undoubtedly many sewers emptied into drainages before the first dedicated sewer was installed in 1886. As late as February 1909, the council authorized a "sewer" (most certainly a drainage) for the new Post Office to connect to the storm drain on Fourth Street and authorized a storm "sewer" on E Street into Matanzas Creek..

4. Final specifications for the Fourth Street sewer were "placed on file" and not recorded in the minutes. They were probably similar to earlier plans which called for a 10-in. main through the Railroad Depot to the outfall into Santa Rosa Creek, then an 8-in. pipe east to Mendocino, and then a 6-in. pipe east to E Street with a fall of 5 feet between E and the creek (about 4,000 ft.). The specifications for the Third and Fifth Street sewers were for 6 and 8-in. pipe. The minutes of August 2, 1886 record the defeat of a motion to pay the Fifth Street sewer contractor an additional \$0.05 per foot and record the paying of a small bill (\$31) to the same contractor. These two entries perhaps reflect a settlement of the seesaw decisions to install the first sewer on Fourth or Fifth. Water tanks for periodically flushing the sewers were installed at the eastern ends of the sewer lines. Nine months after completion of the Fourth Street sewer, the city received its first bill for flushing the sewer from the Santa Rosa Water Works Company. The initial water bills were rejected until an agreeable water rate was established. Water demands and costs for flushing the sewers would soon become one of the major reasons used by the city to build its own municipal water system about a decade later.

In November 1887, the council ordered the Santa Rosa Gas Light Company to place electric street lights on the

corners in the center of town providing the total cost of the 20 new lights did not exceed \$102 per month.

5. J. E. (Edward) Hall (with others) owned a hop farm on the north side of Santa Rosa Creek, south of Redwood Road (West College), west of Hewitt Street and west almost to what is now Stony Point Road. The property is identified on the 1897 Reynolds and Proctor map as the 17-acre, Mrs. O. M. (Olive Matilda) Hall parcel. The easement through the property for the first sewer outfall main to the sewer farm (Book 120 of Deeds, page 206 dated May 31, 1889) was granted with the specific conditions that the city would “forever refrain from emptying any sewer into Santa Rosa Creek” above the sewer farm and that facilities at the farm were to be constructed to impound the sewage. J. E. Hall (and others) granted the city at least four other sewer main easements through their property prior to 1909. For example, Book 203 of Deeds, page 126, dated August 11, 1902, appears to be the easement to connect the College Avenue/Eighth Street sewer main to the original outfall main to the sewer farm (\$250 for 1,476 feet of right-of-way).

The minutes may provide key names of parties suing the city, dates, and perhaps the courts involved, but rarely provide sufficiently complete information to accurately identify specific suits or their eventual outcomes. For example, the first sewage suit in March 1888 is identified in the minutes as the “J. E. Hall” suit, the “Hall” suit, and as the “Hall et al.” suit. Apparently, the first suit was withdrawn by July 1888 and was replaced by another suit by the same parties demanding \$15,500, but “the others” were not identified in the minutes. There is no record in the minutes of the settlement of the J. E. Hall suit except perhaps the special conditions in the 1889 easement for the outfall main through the J. E. Hall (with others) property to the sewer farm.

6. There is no evidence in the minutes or in the deed (Book 118 of Deeds, page 311, dated February 24, 1889) that condemnation proceedings were used to acquire the approximately 12-acre Winfield Wright property. The unexpectedly high price for frequently flooded river bank land (\$2344 or \$200/acre) suggests a buyer demand sale which may well have occurred under threat of condemnation. The parcel is still owned by the city and its boundaries are drawn in the eastern portion of the to-the-center-of-the-creek area shown on the current Assessors Parcel Map for APN 010-032-30 — the 118.94 acre former West College Treatment Plant site off Stony Point Road. A 20-foot wide access road right-of-way from what is now West College Avenue to the sewer farm was purchased from Alexander Skaggs in February 1890.

1891 — 1902

1. The first expansion of the initial sewer farm was purchased from Emsley Fine (Book 133 of Deeds, page 82, dated September 1, 1891) — a 5.14 acre parcel adjacent to and downstream of the farm. The parcel is still owned by the city and its boundaries are drawn in the western portion of the to-the-center-of-the-creek area shown on the current Assessors Parcel Map for APN 010-032-30 — the former West College Treatment Plant site. The expanded sewer farm was now 16.86 acres with nearly 3,000 ft. of frontage along the north bank of Santa Rosa Creek.

2. At the time, “paving” included graveled roads which were being gradually resurfaced with crushed rock. Truly hard surfaced roads such as basalt blocks or bituminous rock had been used only at a few locations by the early 1890s. Mayor Woodward’s figures appear to be somewhat inflated. The minutes for February 23, 1897 record that there were only 18.5 miles of graded streets in the city. Although the lengths of all the sewer lines installed were not recorded, a total of seven or eight miles at most, appears to be a more realistic estimate than the mayor’s boast of nearly 10 miles. Early councils were cognizant of the sewer activities of other comparable sized towns in the state. For example, in early 1883 following a visit to Santa Cruz, the mayor reported that the sewers in Santa Cruz gravitated to a nearby lagoon partially separated from the ocean. From 1898 onward, city officials usually attended the annual conventions of the League of California Municipalities. Santa Rosa hosted the league’s convention in the fall of 1917 — reported to be the first league convention to have lost money.

3. The separate suits of Harry L. Hall and Harvey Brittain were both settled in June 1896 with Hall receiving \$3397.50 (including interest and costs, \$1500 in June, \$900 in November, and \$997.50 in December) with both parties agreeing to relinquish all claims and judgements against the city. (The \$39 increase over the court ordered settlement plus interest in March of the same year — \$3358.50, appears to be additional interest resulting from the payment being spread over six months.) At the time of the sewer farm overflow, H. L. Hall and H. Brittain (with

others) owned a hop farm adjacent to the north side of the sewer farm. The court ordered the city to pay jury fees and court reporter costs (\$50 per day) for the *Wright vs. the City* suit, but the final outcome of the Wright suit was not recorded in the minutes. Other than recording the initial damage claim, there is no further mention in the minutes of the J. L. Peterson claim. Mayor Jesse's farewell address in April, 1898 states that five or six sewer suits had been "disposed of." Mrs. M. A. Peterson apparently won her case in a county court and the city appealed the decision to the state Supreme Court in July 1896. A month earlier, the council ordered that the transcripts of the two doctors used in the Mrs. Peterson case to be transcribed for use in the Miller suit indicating that there was probably another sewage related lawsuit at this time. However, there is no further mention of the probable Miller case in the minutes. The date or final outcome of Mrs. Peterson's case in the state Supreme Court was not recorded in the minutes. The consultant's 1925 report summarizing the selection of an activated sludge plant states that "a long outstanding court order" which "demanded a solution to the problem" was not enforced after the city promised to take immediate action to alleviate "the disturbing conditions" of Santa Rosa Creek. According to the consultant, the proposed activated sludge plant would address the outstanding court order to abate the sewage pollution problem of the creek.

4. The city's first sewer farm operator (M. H. Damon) was initially paid \$40 per month and since he was given permission to add rooms to the house at the farm, he may have also received housing. His contract required him to operate the farm and furnish all labor, tools, and horse and cart. His contracted duties also included preparing filter beds, cutting weeds, digging pits, and clearing brush and trees along the farm reach of Santa Rosa Creek. He was appointed superintendent of the sewer farm and city sanitary inspector in 1903. His additional duties then included supervising sewer construction, inspecting water closets, industrial facilities and creeks, and ensuring that all storm water and other fresh water sources such as from water motors were disconnected from the sewers. He resigned from his positions about three months after the 1906 earthquake.

5. The 37 percent jump in the 1896 property taxes followed a 36 percent increase two years earlier when \$0.25 per \$100 of assessed value was added to the tax rate to retire the water bonds issued to build the municipal water system. The 1896 taxes were: general, \$0.98; free library, \$0.02; and water bonds, \$0.30 versus 0.69, 0.06, and 0.20 respectively, in 1895. A total property tax rate of about \$1.25 per \$100 continued until 1904 when property taxes jumped another 20 percent to pay down the \$200,000 municipal bond issue. A breakdown of a seven-month target budget of about \$16,000 beginning in October 1897 lists salaries \$7665 (48%) and street department (lighting, sprinkling streets, etc.) \$3357 (21%) as the major expenses. Significant expenses were litigation (in addition to the city attorney, mostly municipal water system suits at this time) \$1200 (8%) and water works \$1050 (6%). Other items each for less than 5% included: bills (\$800); fire alarm boxes (\$450); and election expenses (\$500). Miscellaneous items included: feeding and shoeing the fire department horses (\$100); assistance to indigents (\$100); and stationary for the city clerk's office (\$25).

6. Directing the street commissioner to notify all of the industrial dischargers in the city to cease discharging their waste into Santa Rosa Creek, appears, not surprisingly, to have been ineffective. There is no evidence in the minutes through to 1928, that the Gas Works connected to the sewer system. Cannery wastes were said to be the cause of the stench in Santa Rosa Creek in September of 1891. By the turn of the century, uncontrolled industrial sources of pollution from the city into the creek could have included at least tannery, cannery, Gas Works, brewery, woollen mill, and perhaps glue factory discharges. DeTurks distillery had probably connected to the College Avenue/Eighth Street sewer main when the main was constructed through the distillery property in 1892. Most laundries probably also discharged directly to the creek since by the turn of the century, the council had authorized only one laundry to connect to the sewer. (Public Health Ordinance #115, approved in 1890, had required laundries to contain their wastewater in sealed tanks and dispose of their wastewater outside of the city, but it is doubtful that this requirement was enforced or in effect by 1900.)

Apparently, garbage was also frequently dumped into Santa Rosa Creek. Prior to constructing a garbage incinerator at the rock crusher site and ordering the marshal to arrest anyone dumping garbage elsewhere, four garbage dumps were reported to be in the creek before 1900 (March 1895, June 1896, March 1897, and February, 1899). Initially, abatement was primarily by erecting signs prohibiting the dumping of offal and refuse into the creek. The rock crusher was located on land purchased from L. Brittain in the early spring of 1899 and appears to have been located near the Rural Cemetery on Franklin Avenue. By 1909 the garbage incinerator at the rock crusher site was apparently no longer operating and a garbage incinerator was built at the sewer farm. When no longer needed for

municipal purposes, the rock crusher site was sold back to Mr. Brittain in the fall of 1917.

1903 — 1926

1. The primary suspect for the dead dogs being disposed of in the septic tanks would have been the recently appointed special police officer — dog tax collector. He was paid \$1 per day and 25% of the dog tax fees collected (\$2 per year per dog) plus \$1 for each unlicensed dog captured, killed, cremated or buried; \$1 for impounding a horse, mule, cow or ox; and \$0.50 for impounding a colt, calf, sheep, goat or hog. (In 1904, it cost \$2 to get animals out of the city's pound.)

2. An August 1904 example of the numerous municipal bond issue proposals was a \$225,000 bond issue for:

Sewer and sewer farm	\$100,000
Municipal water system	\$ 60,000
Bridges	\$ 20,000
Fire engine	\$ 5,000
Repair Fire Hall Bldg.	\$ 2,000
Water meters	\$ 15,000
Park	\$ 20,000

Soon after the 1905, \$200,000 municipal bond issue was approved by the council, the city's treasurer (Mobley) declared that he would not take the 1% of the bond amount that he was entitled to receive and would handle the bond money at no cost to the city.

3. Purchase of the 100-acre Harry L. and Annie Hall, and Harvey and Mary J. Brittain property (Book 220 of Deeds, page 272, dated May 23, 1905) completed the city's acquisition of the former West College Wastewater Treatment Plant site (APN 010-032-30). About three acres of the property was on the other side of Santa Rosa Creek at this time and was referred to as the south side sewer farm. This "widow" was not used for sewage disposal purposes and was usually rented to one of the adjacent farmers.

Between 1912 and 1924, all land at the sewer farm not used for sewage disposal was farmed and any income generated was deposited in the city treasury. The former Hall house was usually rented. In 1906, the farm was leased to the Santa Rosa Teal Club for "shooting privileges (\$25 per year) and leased again as an exclusive "hunting ground" for a local group for the 1908 hunting season (\$30). "No Hunting" signs were posted on the farm after the 1908 hunting season and again in 1919 after a pasturing cow was shot in the fall of 1916 and another cow was shot in the fall of 1917. City hired crews farmed the hop yard in the first year only. The hop kilns, barn, and yard were rented for a portion of the baled crop in the 1906 and 1907 seasons, and the hops, poles, and wires were removed from the portion of the hop yard not rented. After the 1907 harvest and selling the crop for only 10.5 cents per pound, the remaining hop roots, poles, and wires were removed and the former hop yard area was seeded. The hop elevator, kiln and furnace were sold in 1911 and the hop barn was torn down in 1917 to make room for a new hog pen. Grapes from the small vineyard were recorded as being harvested for the first three years only (2.5 tons in 1906 sold for \$12 per ton). In 1913, the old vineyard was pulled out and replaced with grain. Corn (beginning in 1912), pasture, hay (including alfalfa hay {beginning in 1914}, grass hay, and oat hay for the fire department horses), and hogs (introduced in 1917) were the regular sources of farm income. Occasional other revenue was from the sale of the septic tank sludge for fertilizer and wood (mostly willow wood from Santa Rosa Creek clearing, but six oaks were cut down in 1921). The farm consistently lost money until the fiscal year 1917-18 when for the first time revenues exceeded expenses (profit in 1917-18, \$1,274.85).

Initially, the operator of the sewer farm was described in the minutes as "superintendent," but was soon simply referred to as the "farmer." In 1919, the farmer was paid \$100 per month and provided with a house and three acres which included a small orchard. He was allowed to keep two cows, a horse, four hogs, and four dozen chickens. He was required to maintain the sewer farm, plant and harvest the hay, and raise the city's hogs, etc. Any extra labor required to clean the ponds or septic tanks was hired by the city. The "old" house (there appears to have been a number of small houses on the farm) was rented for \$8 per month and the tenant was limited to a maximum of two dozen chickens.

4. The hog “industry” on the sewer farm grew quickly after its introduction in 1917. By the fall of 1921, nearly 100 hogs were being raised on the farm. Disease appears to have contributed to the rapid demise of hog raising at the sewer farm. The minutes in June 1922 record that no hogs had been lost since they had all been vaccinated, but no hogs were subsequently reported to be on the farm. The minutes in May 1924 record that the pasture at the farm would not open until after the quarantine was lifted.

The raising of hogs appears to have been very popular at the time. Despite considerable community support for hog raising and “after considerable discussion and deliberation,” the council passed an ordinance prohibiting the keeping of hogs within the city in May of 1918. The assistant city and state district health officers supported the ban. Hog raising promoted flies and there was at the time, a national campaign to save 100,000 babies — “where there are flies, there is sure to be sick babies.”

5. Ordinance #315, approved June 15, 1915, required parties outside of the city wishing to connect to the sewer system to pay for the sewer extension and to pay an annual fee of \$6.00. The Prune and Apricot Association cannery was reported to be located at the north end of Wright Road, but its exact location and probable point of its discharges was not identified. The Association cannery does not appear to have connected to the sewer system since the consultant’s 1925 report on the disposal system summarizing the selection of an activated sludge plant did not include this cannery’s discharges in its sewage characterization study of the city’s sewage. The jam/pickle factory on the corner of College and Cleveland was also not included in the consultant’s report, suggesting that this relatively new factory which connected to the city’s sewer system in the spring of 1920, may not have been still operating by 1925. The consultant’s report did, however, assume that the discharges from the small Haeglin pickle factory (near Lincoln and Morgan Streets), which also canned tomatoes, would be included in the sewage. There is no indication in the minutes though 1930 that the Haeglin factory connected to the sewer.

In December of 1920, the council changed the name of the sewer farm to “municipal farm.” In 1909, an incinerator (“crematory” in the minutes) for the city’s garbage was built at the farm and at least initially, the residue was used to fill the abandoned septic tanks. The garbage dump use of the farm continued at least through 1926 when the council denied the application of the Rose City Garbage Company to continue to dump garbage at the municipal farm. Fees collected for the use of the incinerator or for garbage dumping do not appear to have been credited to the farm account. In 1918, a small cottage on the farm was remodeled and a new room was added to make an isolation “hospital.” In 1920, the isolation cottage was rented to the county (\$5 per week plus wood costs at \$8 per cord). After purchase of an American La France fire engine, the last two fire department horses were retired to pasture at the farm in December 1920 and the dog pound was moved to the farm a year later. The old police ambulance was stored in a barn at the farm in the fall of 1922. The new upscale name for the farm does not seem to have lasted very long, since by 1926 the farm was again usually referred to as the “sewer farm.”

6. In February 1918, Mayor Mailer reported on the major accomplishments of his administration — the lowering the property tax rate 4.5 cents per \$100 of assessed value for each of the past two years (to a total of \$1.30 per \$100 in 1918), and he stated that his administration had focused on rebuilding the streets (as a city project saving “big money”) and making improvements to the municipal water system. A tentative, \$82,000 ten-month budget from January through October 1917, included only \$3,000 for the sewer fund (about 4%); \$23,000 for the street fund (29%); and \$4,000 for the water fund (5%). Of the total disbursements for the fiscal year 1918-19, \$93,171.96 (at least about 85% from property taxes), disbursements from the sewer fund totaled only 2%. Other disbursements were: pumping and lighting, 17%; general fund, 25%; water fund, 5%; salary fund, 23%; street fund, 25%; park fund, 0.4%; and building fund, 2.6%.

Considering that the recent sewer fund disbursements were mostly for sewer extensions, etc. within the city and that the sewer farm was clearly now being managed for profit (including the farmer’s salary — at most, a few thousand dollars per year), the 1919 allegation by the state board of “unnecessary negligence and lack of interest” in the operation of the sewer farm appears to have been well founded.

The most likely basis for the citizen complaints about the operation of the municipal farm and the subsequent damage claim of Elmer Peterson was from the release of excess septic tank effluent from the ponds into Santa Rosa Creek during the summer, low-flow season. The complaints and the damage claim follow a season in which only

about 20 acres of corn was reported to have been grown on the sewer farm. By 1923 inflows would have been approaching a million gallons per day and without storage, the 20 acres of irrigated corn would have been grossly inadequate to prevent the ponds from overflowing into the creek. There is no indication in the minutes that any effluent irrigated crops (for example, corn or a second cropping of hay such as alfalfa) were grown after the 1923 season. In fact, except for the spring cutting of hay, there is no evidence of farming activity on the municipal farm after the 1923 season. The consultant's February 1925 application letter to the state Board of Health for a permit to construct and operate an activated sludge plant, described the current conditions of the sewer farm as being "flooded" and conducive to bad odors and mosquito breeding. According to the consultant, the proposed new plant would allow most of the farm to be leased to partially offset the operation and maintenance costs of the new plant.

7. The state Board of Health Resolution dated November 3, 1923 is recorded in the minutes of November 20, 1923.

Whereas, Santa Rosa Creek at points above Santa Rosa is a clear and attractive stream, and

Whereas, at and below Santa Rosa, for years past, the creek has been exceedingly polluted and offensive, the following sources of pollution being recognized: the Gas Works of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company at Santa Rosa, the California Packing Corporation Cannery at Santa Rosa, the city sewage of Santa Rosa; also sporadically, the sewage from the tannery of the Levin Tanning Company at Santa Rosa and the tannery of the Santa Rosa-Vallejo Tanning Company at Santa Rosa, and

Whereas, the pollution of Santa Rosa Creek by the foregoing does and for some time past has constituted a serious public nuisance and menace to health and is in violation of the Public Health Act of the State of California, therefore,

The resolution is incomplete in the minutes although a summary is recorded:

"and further provided that the pollution of Santa Rosa Creek be ordered to cease on or before January 1st, 1925."

8. In the spring of 1900 after much debate, the council responded to a petition to build a new tannery by approving Ordinance #179 which prohibited locating any new tannery in most of the city. (In the south, between Davis Street and the eastern boundary.) Five years later the council appointed a committee to investigate a petition from over 25 citizens to take action to abate the nuisance caused by the wastewater of the new upper Second Street tannery. In January 1909, the council received another citizen petition about the tannery. The new petition requested that the council declare the Levin company tannery (at Second and F Streets) to be a public nuisance and enforce the provisions of Ordinance #179 (copies of the petition were also sent to the county district attorney and the state attorney general). The petition stated that the Levin tannery was operating within the area of the city prohibited by Ordinance #179 and was regularly discharging "refuse matter including poisonous chemicals" directly into Santa Rosa Creek. In the following months, the council waited for the Chamber of Commerce "to adjust same," noted that the Levin tannery was operating about the same as any other tannery, and also noted that the Levin tannery was the largest industry in the city. The council also noted that a tannery in Stockton was operating in a residential area, but was "kept as clean as could be." The council then instructed the police chief to notify the Levin Tanning Company that they must have the tannery cleaned up to the satisfaction of the council within 60 days and to notify all other industrial facilities operating within the city to stop dumping anything "offensive or injurious" into Santa Rosa Creek. About six months after the council received the citizen petition, the petitioners' attorney offered to sue the Levin company at no cost to the city and requested that the council take immediate action on their petition. The city attorney then advised the council that Ordinance #179 and the petition were valid and that the council had two options — to require a \$50,000 bond from the suing petitioners to protect the city, or to proceed alone with a city suit against the Levin company. The council's decision was to unanimously repeal Ordinance #179 and to prepare a new ordinance regulating tanneries operating within the city. (In 1909 there appears to have been two other tanneries operating in the city — the small Reuthershan tannery and the Santa Rosa-Vallejo tannery.) The new tannery ordinance (#260) was approved in August of 1909 and made it unlawful (a misdemeanor) to operate a tannery "in such a manner as to be offensive to the senses or prejudicial to the health or comfort," to deposit any unwashed hair in the city, or to discharge any waste into Santa Rosa Creek. (The creek discharge prohibitions do not appear to

have ever been enforced.) Ordinance #367 approved in April 1922, superseded all earlier ordinances and prohibited any commercial or industrial facilities (public laundry, tannery, glue factory, cannery, winery, brewery, and livery feed or stable) to operate within the city unless established prior to February 3, 1905, without the written consent of 2/3 of the resident heads of families living within 300 feet of the proposed facility and the consent of the council.

The council granted a request from the new Santa Rosa-Vallejo tannery on Railroad Street to connect to the sewer in December 1917, but there is no indication in the minutes through 1930 that the Levin Company tannery ever connected to the sewer system (although both tanneries were assumed to be connected to the sewers in the consultant's 1925 sewer characterization study and rationale for an activated sludge plant). Assuming that the major sources of pollution from the city into Santa Rosa Creek identified in the state Board of Health resolution of 1923 are correct, the new Santa Rosa-Vallejo tannery either did not follow through with its permission to connect to the sewer, or that the connection did not include the tannery's industrial discharges. The Reuthershan tannery and likely numerous other small industrial dischargers were not mentioned in the state resolution.

9. The consultant's 1925 report summarizing the selection of an activated sludge process, assumed that the industrial discharges of a small pickle cannery (identified in the report as the Haeglin Pickle Works), two tanneries, and one large cannery would be included in the city's sewage. Responding to a long outstanding court order and eliminating many years of odor complaints of the people living in the vicinity of the municipal farm and along Santa Rosa Creek, would require the complete oxidation of all the organic matter in the sewage. Particularly problematic to this goal were the seasonal cannery discharges, which would be at the peak of the canning season about 100,000 gallons per day of sewage of at least 10 times the "strength" of the domestic inflows. Achieving complete oxidation of the peach "fuzz" and tomato waste was highly deterministic in the selection of the best treatment system. While more expensive to build (\$250,000) but cheaper to operate, a trickling filter plant was rejected as being unable to reliably handle the cannery load. Only an activated sludge plant (\$165,000) could be expected to completely oxidize the organic load with minimal odor problems. The design for the proposed treatment plant was essentially an expansion of the recently operational plant at Lodi. The Lodi treatment plant had just been built to solve that communities pollution problems which were said to be similar to the problems of Santa Rosa. At the time, Lodi while much smaller, had a proportional mix of cannery waste and domestic sewage very similar to that of Santa Rosa. (An activated sludge process uses vigorous aeration to breakdown the sludge rather than the much slower process of anaerobic digestion in a septic tank.)

The California Packing Corporation Cannery at the time was processing per season 5,200 tons of large waste producers (peaches, 200 tons; tomatoes, 5,000 tons) and 5,100 tons of small waste producers (pears, 1,600 tons; peas, 600 tons; cherries, 900 tons; and berries, 2,000 tons). Relative to the maximum inflows per day produced by the Packing Corporation cannery, the discharges from the pickle cannery and the two tanneries were not considered to be significant in selecting the best treatment process. (The consultant's report did not discuss the chemical differences between the industrial discharges.)

10. The initial Board of Public Utilities was comprised of two members appointed by the mayor and an administrative member — the city manager. In its first meeting, the board resolved to assume control of the city's water system and any other utility provided for in the city's charter, and also resolved to hire an assistant secretary (at \$125 per month) to assist in the preparation of the water bills, their collection, and in the disbursement of money derived from the municipal water system.

The initial board of utilities met regularly through to March 1925, but only four times thereafter until October 1931. Apparently, the board did not meet again until it was revived in August 1947. The revived board also included the city engineer and appears to have functioned much more in keeping with the ordinance creating the board (#394, approved in August 1923).

11. The chlorinator approved by the utilities board in December 1924, was purchased from the California Filter Company of San Francisco (\$775) and installed by the company in a chlorination tank built by the city. The chlorinator was a dry gas type which was being used at the time by Stockton, Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, Reedly, and Santa Monica. Probably all of the improvements in the sewage disposal system made in the early 1920s were necessary to meet the permitting requirements of the state Board of Health. Unfortunately, the specific details of

most of the improvements were not recorded. The minutes of the Board of Public Utilities only note that the improvements were discussed at length and that they were to be presented to the council, but the council minutes only record that the utilities board's reports and the communications from the state board, were read and placed on file.

12. The final disposition of all of the 1924 sewer bond money (\$165,000) was not established with certainty. Interest from the bond fund was transferred to the general fund in the fall of 1926 (\$10,781.57) and again in the spring of 1928 (\$11,300.00). In January 1927, the city attorney advised the council that under the provisions of the city's existing charter it was impossible to use any of the bond money except for the purposes voted on. In a special election in March 1927, voters approved amending the charter (511 yes votes of the 765 total votes cast) to allow the bond money, with voter approval, to be diverted to other city purposes. After receiving a petition from 126 local businessmen in the following month, the council passed a resolution declaring the sale of the 1924 sewer bonds to be impractical and unwise and called for another special election to approve using \$30,000 of the bond money to purchase a swimming tank (pool) on the east side of King Street between Fifth and College. However, the special election in May 1927 failed by 54 votes to get the necessary 2/3 majority to approve the purchase of the swimming pool property (452 yes votes out of the 759 total votes cast). The city had leased the swimming pool in the fall of 1926. In January 1928, after the failure of the purchase vote but with considerable community support, the city paid off in a lump sum, an entire 27 year lease — essentially purchasing the pool property for a few thousand dollars more than the original price. In the general election of April 1928 (2646 people voting), the voters overwhelmingly approved (over 2,000 yes to about 250 no) propositions to allow \$105,000 of the sewer bond money to be diverted to three special city funds (a bridge fund, \$75,000; a fire equipment fund, \$20,000; and a sewer and water fund, \$10,000). Some of the unaccounted for \$60,000 was probably spent on the sewage disposal improvements required for the state permit, but the accounting data were not located. (In July 1922, the council approved supplying free city water to a public swimming pool on A Street in the rear of the Post Office.)

13. Five instances of accidental sewer breaks permitting raw sewage to run into Santa Rosa Creek were recorded in the minutes during the period, 1903 to 1926. In June 1906 soon after the earthquake, the minutes state that the repair of the pilings and pipe of the Sixth Street sewer crossing the creek had cost \$200.65. In March 1914, a storm washed out a section of the Sonoma Avenue sewer and in April 1921, the sewer main crossing the creek near Hudspeth Street broke. In June 1922, the south side outfall main crossing the creek sprung many leaks at the joints and in February 1923, the outfall main to the municipal farm developed major leaks. The repair of the last incident was reported to be the cause of the overloading of the septic tanks and the overflowing of the ponds "creating an annoyance to the farmer in the vicinity" of the sewer farm.

14. Despite that a municipal incinerator had been built in 1900 and that offenders dumping garbage elsewhere could be arrested, there are numerous reports in the minutes of garbage dumps along Santa Rosa Creek during the period 1903 to 1926. Apparently the garbage incinerator at the rock crusher site was no longer operating by 1909. Early in 1909, a local businessman, perhaps out of frustration for having no reasonable alternative, burned his waste paper in the center of First Street. Later in 1909 a garbage incinerator was built at the sewer farm. A report in 1915 describes the offensive odor of slaughter house waste being dumped on the banks of the creek outside of the city. Signs prohibiting the dumping of garbage were placed along the most problematic reach of the creek (from Main to D) in 1918. Apparently the signs were not very effective since two years later, the council noted that, contrary to state law, the creek banks were unsightly because of garbage. But the council decided not to clean the unsightly banks and let the expected high water distribute the rubbish. In June 1922, the minutes record again "that much rubbish was being dumped on the creek banks." The city manager reported in the spring of 1924, that he was cleaning up as rapidly as possible, the fire hazard presented by the numerous garbage dumps along the creek, but a few months later another rubbish dump and fire hazard was reported to be near the bridge on E Street. (By the early 1920s, the Rose City Garbage Company served the city with regular garbage service, but the company's initial franchise date was not established. In September 1922, there was a dispute of the garbage men hauling garbage to the municipal farm and four years later, the garbage company lost its approval to continue dumping garbage at the farm.