



Owing to delay in preparing the base, the dedication of the new fountain presented by the National Humane alliance, to be placed at Broadway and Fourth street, has been postponed until some day next week. It had been proposed to have it tonight.

Council Bluffs postpones dedication - 1907-07-20

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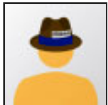
Sun, Nov 17, 2019

Council Bluffs Alderman Chagrined

Chagrined at the action of the Council Bluffs city council in rejecting what was claimed to be an exorbitant bill for \$55 for setting in place a street fountain recently donated to Council Bluffs by the national humane alliance, Alderman R. B. Wallace paid the bill himself.

Council Bluffs alderman pays the bill 1907-10-30

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Sun, Nov 17, 2019

The bill of J. E. Hollenbeck for hauling from the depot and setting up the fountain presented by the National Humane Alliance, amounting to \$55, was allowed after more or less discussion.

Council Bluffs allows bill - 1907-10-16

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Sun, Nov 17, 2019

Haymarket's historic horse trough was once more about function, not decoration

Dr. Richard Warner The Historical and Preservation Society of Pottawattamie County Mar 10, 2019

1 of 4



Feeling that a well-equipped city should have a provision for watering horses, General Dodge worked with the National Humane Alliance to acquire a granite horse trough which was placed on West Broadway at Fourth Street in 1907.

Courtesy the The Historical and Preservation Society of Pottawattamie County

MORE INFORMATION



Gasoline stations line Broadway today. When horses were the source of motive power on that thoroughfare, it made good sense to provide a place for them to fill up. Though the horse trough erected at Fourth Street and West Broadway did have its aesthetic features, its intent was very much function, not decoration.

The fountain wasn't unique. The National Humane Alliance, created in 1897 by philanthropist and animal welfare advocate Hermon Lee Ensign, sought to see that every sizable city had one. The alliance provided the fountain free of charge as long as a city provided an appropriate site, water supply, and maintenance.

More than 100 cities took advantage of the offer; Grenville Dodge worked with the Alliance to make sure Council Bluffs was one of the early recipients. The fountain weighed 10,000 pounds and was produced by the Bodwell Granite Company, the same firm that supplied the stone blocks for the Brooklyn Bridge. The Maine granite was polished and trimmed with bronze; brass lion's heads spouted water to fill a large basin for horses; a lower area provided water for weary dogs and cats. Humans were not overlooked; thirsty folks could refresh as well, courtesy of cups hanging from the lion's heads.

The fountain was dedicated Oct. 9, 1907, in a grand ceremony with General Grenville Dodge presiding along with Parks Commissioner Andrew Graham; Mayor Donald Macrae formally accepted the fountain on behalf of the city and pledged to maintain it. All wasn't totally smooth; the bill of \$55 dollars submitted for moving the fountain from the CB&Q freight house and installing it was initially rejected by the city council as being excessive, but it was eventually paid.

The fountain was popular. A newspaper reporter noted delivery and transfer wagons now took the south side of Broadway as they approached the fountain; at almost any hour of the day it would be typical to see four or more horses "with noses thirstily shoved into the cool basin." Wagon drivers were particularly impressed that the watering bowl was high enough so horses could drink without being unchecked; the driver needn't even alight from his seat. Birds likewise enjoyed the new addition to Broadway.

As horse traffic declined on Broadway, the trough was moved to the Haymarket area where Pearl and South Main Street come together. At the time, there was a very large stable just to the west of that intersection and the fountain remained popular.

Times changed, and by 1952 the watering bowl hadn't seen a horse in years. As the intersection became increasingly busy with motor vehicle traffic, the city decided to have it removed. This was no small task: The 6,000-pound center watering bowl proved too much for the city sewer department's front end loader. The project ended up requiring 10 city employees, five vehicles, and closing the streets for half a day. The trough went into storage in a former horse stall of one of the Frontier Fair buildings at Dodge Park in hopes the parks department would take over the relic and put it to use in the park to water fair animals. That plan didn't come to fruition, nor did an offer from a radio station in Shenandoah to purchase it. When the fair buildings were taken down to make way for the new downtown bridge and associated interstate access ramps, the fountain was put into storage at Fairmount Park.

In 1970, the Parks Department decided to re-erect the watering trough at Pearl and South Main Street as a reminder of the city's frontier past. The placement was accomplished, but didn't last long. Despite the fountain's greater than 6-foot height it wasn't universally visible to motorists and was damaged by a car shortly after returning to the intersection. Repairs were made, but it was struck by a motorist again a few months later. Now considered more of a hazard than a tribute to the city's past, the trough was removed and placed back into storage once again, this time at the city's Forestry Division's headquarters at 19th Street and Second Avenue.

In 1973, the park board suggested the horse trough might be visible yet out of harm's way on the lawn of the "Squirrel Cage" jail. That idea didn't materialize, but in the mid 1970s, the Haymarket area became the focus of restoration. The city council formally designated the South Main Street area Haymarket Square in July 1975.

As a part of this area's redevelopment the horse trough was taken out of storage and returned a third time to the Pearl and South Main Street intersection — this time protected by steel posts. The traffic island was redone with landscaping and plantings. As part of Iowa West Foundation's public art project, sculptures depicting rabbit heads were added to the flowerbed a few years ago.

— The Historical and Preservation Society of Pottawattamie County can be reached at information@TheHistoricalSociety.org.

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