

Old Oak Cliff Pumping Station Stilled After Many Years' Service

BY BARRY BISHOP.

Things were mighty quiet in the vicinity of Lancaster Avenue and Zang Boulevard Thursday—quieter, in fact, than they have been since the days of the famous 1908 flood that isolated Oak Cliff from Dallas.

Back in those days the high water temporarily stilled the waterworks pumping station that was established in early days of the colony on the west bank of the Trinity that later grew into a separate municipality and became a part of Dallas forty years ago.

Thursday, however, the stillness was made as Chief Engineer J. B. Winder of the Dallas waterworks department pulled switches that stopped the pumps, now no longer needed to force water into mains throughout the area.

Pumps in the Lancaster Street station had never stopped before since the city acquired the proper-

ty from the Oak Cliff waterworks in 1906, except for the 1908 flood.

Pumps Not Needed.

But when the waterworks completed installation of a large main feeding directly into the western section of Oak Cliff from the Bachman plant a few days ago, Waterworks Supt. Homer Hunter said he thought the area would have enough pressure without the Lancaster pumps.

His theory was correct and now the department will save considerable money each year by closing the Lancaster Street station, and every section of Oak Cliff will have a more adequate supply of water than heretofore.

When the Oak Cliff waterworks was purchased in 1906, Winder recalled Thursday, there were only wooden buildings there. The system included a brick surface stor-

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was drilled to the Paluxy sand to meet growing needs, and in 1911 the spring supply was abandoned because that source was becoming polluted, Winder recalled. Another well was drilled to the Trinity sand in 1913, and the two wells had a capacity of 2,000,000 gallons daily.

As Oak Cliff grew other wells were drilled. Two of them, one near the Lancaster station and another at Plowman and Dealey, had enough pressure to force water to the Lancaster station where the supply was pumped out into the mains. In 1925 and 1926, however, underground pressure began to fail and pumps had to be put on those two wells to bring water to the Lancaster station.

A new twenty-four-inch main was laid from Dallas in 1933 to replace an earlier eight-inch line installed to supplement the well supply that was not keeping up with the rapidly growing section, Winder said.

Two years ago, however, all the wells in the Lancaster station area were closed down as the supply went lower underground and some of the pumps that failed could not be replaced due to the war.

Only One Well in Service.

Today, Oak Cliff has only one well in service, at Vermont and Fernwood. This was the last well drilled and the pump there already has been located more than 500 feet underground to reach the rapidly lowering supply. All other wells are shut down.

Storage reservoirs in Northeast Dallas and western Oak Cliff were located on exactly the same level several years ago in anticipation of the time when the Bachman filtration plant would supply needs of both areas, officials said.

Now water pressure in Dallas and Oak Cliff is the same. Considerable water will continue to go across the Trinity in the main alongside the Houston Street viaduct but it will not have to be repumped at the Lancaster station. And the new supply directly from the Bachman plant into western Oak Cliff completes the program of supplying the big area without the necessity of any repumping.

Winder inspected the old plant Thursday. In one spot is the old steam pump originally used by the Oak Cliff waterworks, additional steam-operated equipment installed by the city and the more modern electrically driven pumps.

He turned it over to the watchman as both commented how uncanny the stillness was.

Cliff

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age reservoir fed by springs, and a small Woodbine sand well that had to be used only occasionally to supply the 200,000 gallons a day used in Oak Cliff.

Winder supervised construction of the present brick building in 1913 and handled much of the work himself with day labor, especially the building of the concrete smokestack for the boilers.

In 1907 another eight-inch well