

FORMER MAYOR BLANKENBURG'S CAREER FROM POOR BOY TO RULER OF GREAT CITY

Blankenburg Americanism Keep a cool head! Keep your powder dry! Stand by the President!

FORMER MAYOR'S CAREER

Joseph Blankenburg was the first reform Mayor Philadelphia has had since the Bullitt charter went into effect in the early eighties. He was elected Mayor in November, 1911, over George H. Barre for a term of four years. He has been described by the press as "the Old War Horse of Reform" and this phrase described his early public activities better than any other combination of words in the English language.

At the outset of his administration he was hampered by an Imperial Council, controlled by the organization dominated by McKelch and the Vazari. His recommendations to improve the taxation system were ignored by Council, but the aggressive advocate of good government was able, despite the organization's opposition, to eliminate the police tax from the city's budget and the setting of contracts upon an honest basis, a system employed successfully by the organization to retain them in control.

Two of the greatest public improvements undertaken by Mayor Blankenburg were the improvement of the Philadelphia water supply and the abolition of the grade crossings and the building of municipal pier in connection with the city's water project to cost \$20,000,000, of which the city will pay \$6,000,000 and the balance will be covered by bonds.

Grade Crossings in the City This alone would insure the Blankenburg administration a permanent place among the administrations that have done good things for Philadelphia. The grade crossings in Philadelphia are to be abolished under the plan, which will be carried out by the city and made an open gateway for all steam railroads entering the city. It will include the grade crossings in the extreme southeastern section of the city away from the residential districts, and the Belt Line is to be extended along the river front, where, for a mile and a half, above Greenwich Point, municipal grade is to be constructed on the Delaware River.

The second monument to this administration is the enactment of the Legislature of acts enabling the city to build subways and elevated railroads for transit purposes. The Department of City Transit, a department created by the Blankenburg administration, when the scheme is carried to its completion, the city will build a subway in Broad street and run elevated tracks in Center and Frankford, thus giving Philadelphia the very best rapid transit facilities in the world. The department is thoroughly organized under Mayor Blankenburg and the business of the city placed on the most efficient and economical basis that of a well-organized private corporation.

High Ideals in Practice As Mayor, Blankenburg entered the office as the most valiant foe of evil politics, he carried into office the high ideal which required that he should wage war for so many years. He refused to tolerate men from office to create places for those who had no right to them. From the first won the enmity of politicians demanding the "spoils of victory."

Certain men who had followed him in the memorable fight against George H. Barre and before deserted him when he became Mayor and became most corrupt and petty critics.

There are not many men who will carry on a thirty-year war almost alone against great political odds for an ideal, and Blankenburg was admitted even by his most vigorous political opponents.

But Blankenburg had been identified with reform movements for more than thirty years. He was the sole force of those hundred thousand people who, in the days of McKelch and Barre, were suffering from under what is called the "spoils of victory." He was the man who had seen the need of the "Great Beyond" and it does mean that those who are still with us, who are not in disgust or under a feeling of hopelessness for the cause, or that some of them may have reached a state of heart and returned to the old party.

Never Entered in Course The thirty years to Mr. Blankenburg, however, made him more persistent than ever to see his ideal of a clean, economical, competent government for city and state realized. He was sanguine that his first entered into active work for his ideal in public life Mr. Blankenburg was fortunate in witnessing an awakening that a generation ago was unimagined. This was about the time in the Mayor's chair.

Mr. Blankenburg was born in the town of Hillenburg, in the principality of Lippe-Detmold, near Hannover, Germany, on February 16, 1854. His father, Dr. Louis Blankenburg, was the pastor of the chief church (German Reformed) in the town. He had a beautiful farm, and there the great reformer of Philadelphia, with his seven brothers, was educated. His studies, however, were planned with a view of having him enter the ministry, but these plans, which were not his, never were carried out.

Emigrates to America His tutor had emigrated to the United States. The great Civil War had made him a rather more intimately than had been the case the size and character of the New World. His tutor settled in New York, and his letters showed that he had excited the lively interest of his former pupil. In 1866, at the close of the great struggle that ended in saving the country, young Blankenburg, then a youth of twenty-two, bade farewell to the old town in Germany and came to the United States. He visited his old tutor, who brought him to Philadelphia and introduced him to a mercantile house.

Knowing what kind of a citizen he has been during the last thirty years, those who know him can readily imagine what kind of a youth he was and to relate how he rose in his business until he became a proprietor of large business of his own is likely to lack novelty. It is sufficient to say that in 1876 he established the manufacturing and importing business which he personally carried on successfully until two years ago, when he retired from active business.

The Centennial Exposition of 1876 appears to have been responsible for the awakening of the philanthropic instinct in Mr. Blankenburg. As it was in a large measure the cause of the reform movement in this country, at least in the brief biography of the civic character of about this time that he is supposed to have come to the front in the field which since has given to the world a name all over the country, and now is recognized under the name of sociology.

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BLANKENBURGS ON FIFTIETH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY



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ACHIEVEMENTS OF BLANKENBURG ADMINISTRATION

Established a regular budget system for all departments. Established a system of applications for receiving and awarding bids, which made collusion between officials and contractors impossible, and secured city full value for every dollar expended.

Forced increase in interest payment by banks on city deposits. Secured power to award contracts before selling bonds necessary to their carrying out, thus saving large interest charges.

Made important progress with parkway work. Development begun of Southern Boulevard, League Island Park, Northeast Boulevard, Cobb's Creek Park, Paved Chestnut and South street with wood blocks.

Eliminated grade-crossings in South Philadelphia and Northeast Philadelphia, by agreements now becoming effective. Widened Delaware avenue.

Completed Dock street pier, Southwark piers. Commenced building Moyeramending piers. New sedimentation basin, Torresdale, planned.

New water-pipe system laid in West Philadelphia and South Philadelphia. Pipes for subway in center of city relocated. Subway work begun.

New housing code and reform in treatment of congested districts effected. Reorganized Municipal Hospital for Contagious Diseases and general care of indigent.

Bulletheaded Schuylkill River. Extended Cobble Creek Park and various other open spaces.

City of Philadelphia as the Legislature was an act of organizing for the occasion.

Fought Quay at Harrisburg The Blankenburg League, organized by Mayor Blankenburg, and part of a five-story building in another part of Harrisburg. A Wholesale League was organized in the streets of the capital, and the work of defeating the boss of Pennsylvania was begun.

During the last days of the night Mr. Blankenburg, after the night, but the organization finally settled the matter in a caucus, of which no notice appeared to have been given. It was a caucus, and the result of the caucus was that the Blankenburg League was organized.

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irreparable mismanagement of the people who were to give assistance to the taxpayers' money, the floating of permanent loans to pay current expenses, the creation of needless offices to pay unwholly political debts and other extravagances have convinced me that the only way to insure real and enduring benefit from this money is to appropriate it myself for specific public purposes, and thus to prevent its disappearing into the maelstrom of profligacy that will surely ensue or later be resented by the people."

So he turned over the money to the Board of City Trustees, specifying that the income should be equally divided between the pension funds of the police, firemen and school teachers.

There was nothing remarkable in this action to those who knew Mr. Blankenburg. Away back in the days of the Harrison-Cleveland campaign he made a stipulation that if he accepted the invitation to speak in Iowa he should be allowed to pay his own expenses. Later, when there was a serious famine in Russia and the "Children's Permanent Relief Committee" of which he had been a member from its inception during the yellow fever epidemic in the South in the eighties, Mr. Blankenburg volunteered to go to Russia and personally superintend the distribution of the relief money. He was in Russia in two large steamships, and the expense of the journey, which was considerable, he bore himself. He would not permit a dollar that was given for the relief of sufferers being appropriated for his expense.

Helped Loan Shark Victims Another time, or during the panic of 1893-94, it came to Mr. Blankenburg's attention that money loan sharks were fattening on the necessities of the poor who were out of work. He opened an office in one of the large office buildings

and undertook alone to assist the poor people who were thus being oppressed. It is said that he was in this manner able to give assistance to 2500 persons, and to about drive from their nefarious business the loan sharks. While his fortune, as measured in these days of millions, is not a large one, Mr. Blankenburg, when he retired two years ago from the business he founded and turned it over to a corporation known as the R. Blankenburg Company, was a wealthy man, and just what he has given for reform in this city and State probably never will be known. But considering his means, it is believed by those who know him that he has given for reform in this city and State probably never will be known. But considering his means, it is believed by those who know him that he has given for reform in this city and State probably never will be known.

City Forester Pond Enlists Raymond Pond, who has held the position of city forester for several years, has been granted a leave of absence and has enlisted in the army. He will leave for Camp Meade, Md. tomorrow. Seventy-five employees of the Bureau of City Property tendered Mr. Pond a dinner last night.

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