

## "New Windsor's Visionary Citizens"

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By Jay A. Graybeal

Today we tend to take municipal improvements, such as electric street lights, city water and fire protection, for granted. A century ago, however, the consideration of such amenities were often controversial subjects among local residents of Carroll's communities. Such was the case in New Windsor as reported in the Christmas Day 1897 issue of the Westminster Democratic Advocate newspaper:

### "ENTERPRISE IN NEW WINDSOR

By Private Enterprise A Number of Citizens Light Their Houses by Electricity and Supply Themselves With Pure Water

New Windsor is a beautiful little town on the Western Maryland Railroad, seven miles west of Westminster. It has long been a favorite summer resort, is the seat of New Windsor College, has a national bank, stores, &c., and some progressive citizens. Among these are Mr. Louis H. Dielman, Nathan H. Baile and Dr. John A. Buffington. These gentlemen conceived the idea of securing for themselves and families good pure water, and had a well drilled, lined with steel, to shut out surface water. They struck such a heavy flow that they determined to offer it for public use. They proposed to the town authorities that if they would lay the mains, water would be furnished free for protection against fire, and operate their engine whenever it might be required in the event of fire. The proposition was not accepted and they then went along with their original plans, and so far have laid about 1100 feet of 2-inch mains. A tank, with 5000 gallons capacity, forty feet high has been put up, and the elevation is sufficient to protect about 90 percent, of the property in the town. Had official assistance been given the tank would have been put thirty feet higher, so as to protect all the property. The enterprising gentlemen have put four water plugs at convenient points for use in the event of fire.

These gentlemen have also put up a small electric light plant, which they expect to enlarge in the spring. They met with opposition in erecting poles, so they have run wires only where none were necessary. At present the lights are in the store of George C. Anders, the First National Bank, L. H. Dielman's drug store, and the residences of Nathan H. Baile, and Dr. John A. Buffington. A 32-candle power light has been placed on the street to show the people how the town could be easily and well lighted.

The general contract is in the hands of J. S. Connelly, of Philadelphia, the electrical work being done by John E. Graybill, of York, and the wiring by W. L. Wilhelm, of the same place. The steel tower was erected and the machinery placed by H. K. Johnston, of Hagerstown.

Improvements in rural communities move slowly. All are always opposed, and a sharp contest usually prevail before success is attained. Gas was bitterly opposed in Westminster, and every other enterprise has met with some opposition and but meager support. After once being established many people wonder why they opposed them. This will be the situation in New Windsor, and the Advocate congratulates the town that it has such progressive citizens as Messrs. Dielman, Baile and Buffington. Let them persevere, and in time New Windsor will have pure water, smooth highways, an efficient fire department and well lighted streets. And the people, too, will give due credit to the promoters of these improvements.

The Advocate's editor was correct when he predicted that the efforts of Messrs. Dielman, Baile and Buffington would someday be appreciated. Gas lighting in Westminster, however, would not last long and electricity supplanted the earlier utility company in the first decade of the new century.

Photo caption: Dielman's Inn was among the first New Windsor structures to have electric light. Its owner, Louis H. Dielman was one of three men who privately financed an electric power plant in 1897. Historical Society of Carroll County post card collection.