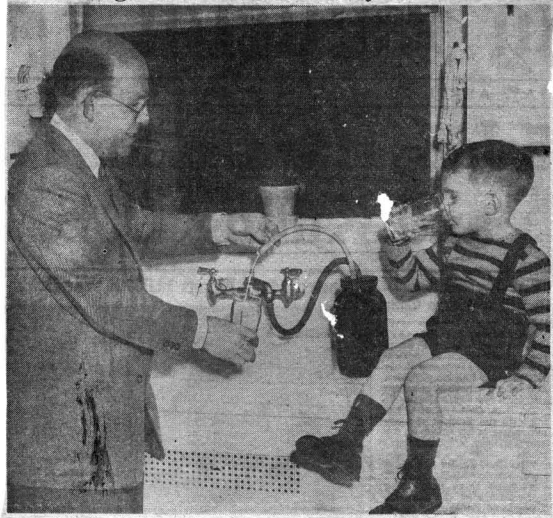


## Making 'Nectar' Out of Schuylkill Water



Albert W. Spitz, of 1343 Stevens st., assuring his son, Bobby, it's all right to drink ill-tasting Schuylkill water bottoms up when using his gadget that makes a drink palatable

### 'Spring Water' from the Schuylkill —and it's not Done with Mirrors

By MORLEY CASSIDY  
(Of The Bulletin Staff)

Find a way to take the taste out of Schuylkill water, Albert W. Spitz is discovering, and the world will beat a path to your doorway, carrying jugs. At least your relatives will.

Spitz, who lives at 1343 Stevens st., is a mild-mannered man who consults to a hotel slowly, and for years he drank his daily quota of Philadelphia tap water with mutters and resignation. But being a chemical engineer, he had an idea that something could be done about it right in his own kitchen. And after considerable puttering around, he proved that he was right.

He emerged with a gadget which gives him, for all practical purposes, a mountain spring in his own sink.

The gadget consists of a two-quart jar containing filters and a mass of granular particles, and with two rubber tubes. One tube carries plain tap water into the jar, the other delivers the finished product—a stream of crystal-clear, tasteless water.

Since that first experimental model, Spitz has tried out other types and given them to friends for testing. Most of them report that friends are bringing jugs from miles around. Spitz himself supplies a long list of relatives.

The gadget, Spitz says, is strictly a taste-and-odor-remover. It has no effect on the water's chemical composition, and Ben D. Roberts, 4021 Bleigh ave.

nothing to do with purification, because Philadelphia water is pure as it comes from the tap. And that taste isn't chlorine, either.

"What you taste," says Spitz, "is a compound of chlorinated phenols and other organic compounds. And sometimes, of course, there may be a little colloidal iron. But none of it's harmful—just distasteful."

Water purifying has long been a specialty with Spitz, as he was formerly a chemical engineer with a company manufacturing filtration equipment to treat water used in distilleries.

His gadget, he says, embodies no new discoveries in the field. The granules which clear the water are a commercial product, chosen because they are more effective than charcoal, and more compact. The novel part of the unit lies in the arrangement which makes it small enough for household use.

Spitz estimates that one filling should treat about 400 gallons of drinking water—enough for the average family's needs for a year. In the Spitz family, five minutes is required each morning to produce the day's quota.

Spitz and a friend, Richard S. Kastner, of 6501 N. 11th st., are making plans to manufacture the unit, but Spitz hopes that he, personally, will soon be able to discontinue using his own model. He is now working in New York, and hopes to be drinking New York water permanently as soon as he can find a place to live over there.

# Don't Toss Away Our Chance for Better Water

[EDITORIAL]

Council members, at their caucus yesterday, did the right thing in withholding from the May primary ballot the water supply proposal submitted by the Water Commission.

But it is not enough to postpone action on the on-sided proposition sponsored by the Commission. That should be rejected entirely as virtually guaranteeing to deprive Philadelphia of better drinking water for years to come.

What is needed is a definite declaration, backed up by energetic and practical measures, of this city's intention to obtain pure drinking water in place of the vile-smelling, tasteless stuff piped from the Delaware docks that our people have been forced to swallow for years.

From time to time in the past plans aiming at establishment of new supply sources outside the city have been proposed, only to be talked to death or otherwise killed off. We are in danger today of having the same thing happen again. We are at the cross-roads on Philadelphia's supply—make it a mistake about that.

Either we retain our present unsatisfactory system or drive ahead for a new one that will give us the better water a modern, progressive city should have.

What is the City Water Commission's answer to the problem? A plan leaving it to the voters to choose between a supply of "safe and palatable" water from the present sources at cost of \$63,000,000, and a supply of "safe and palatable" water obtained from an upland source at cost of \$285,000,000.

What kind of alternative is that? If we can get the same quality water for \$63,000,000, why in the name of common sense would anyone favor spending \$285,000,000?

Allow that kind of a choice to go on the ballot and we can kiss good-bye to outside water for Philadelphia.

It is not possible that water of the same quality, both safe and palatable to the same degree, can be obtained from the Delaware and Schuylkill intakes and from uncontaminated streams.

The Commission had apparently assumed that when the two rivers are completely cleaned up and made free of sewage and other discharges, the water piped from them will be safe and palatable. But it does not state, because it cannot, just when that will be.

This city is itself only beginning a \$42,000,000 job to divert its sewage from the Delaware. No one can tell when the thousands of communities and industries along the Schuylkill and Delaware, many of them not even in Pennsylvania, will stop fouling our water supply.

The Commission's report would make an upland water source appear prohibitively costly. It mentions a \$285,000,000 estimate—without breaking down the figures or stating the source to which it applies. It says such an undertaking would require a 100 percent increase in city receipts, but it does not mention the fact that if con-

tributors were to pay twice what they now pay for water in Philadelphia the amount would usually be only \$16 a year—not an exorbitant price, surely, for decent water.

Additional light on the financial and other features of possible upland sources is badly needed before the people can intelligently pass judgment on them.

This is not to be construed as an indorsement of the Pocomo supply plan supported by the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company, the Walpack Bend plan, or any other that has been mentioned.

But The Inquirer believes that to rush headlong into permanent captivity to the kind of water we are now compelled to drink—even if it may be scrubbed up a bit in the dim future—would be a terrific mistake.

Don't just keep the Commission's half-baked proposal off the primary ballot. Call for expert re-examination of all possible upland supplies. Don't give up until Philadelphia has water that doesn't have to be dosed with chlorine to make it harmless—but water that is pure, sparkling, fit to drink.

## Horsham Raises \$7500 To Fight Reservoir Plan

Residents of Horsham township, Montgomery county, started building a defense fund against a key feature of the plan to provide Philadelphia with a new water system.

That is the proposal to construct a dam and reservoir at Warrington to store water brought by viaduct from the upper reaches of the Delaware River. The project would inundate about a third of Horsham and a five-mile-square area in adjoining Bucks county.

More than 300 Horsham residents who attended a protest meeting in the Prospectville school also were told the project would mean: Razing of 1000 farms and homes in Warrington, Horsham, Lower Gwynedd and Montgomery townships; the inundation of property valued at more than \$3,000,000; the destruction of many Colonial structures, including the home of Sir William Keith, Pennsylvania's first Governor; relocation of three or perhaps four major highways; and loss to Horsham township of \$15,000 a year in real estate taxes.

Decide to Fight. By unanimous vote, those who attended met to fight the project, and pledges totaling \$7500 to engage legal counsel were signed. The women and men who attended the meeting ranged from owners of large estates in the area, to small farm operators.

They set up a committee headed by Fred Fowles, president of the township school board, to get the fight underway. First appeal was made to the State Water Resources Board, which under a leg. relative act of 1943 has the right to condemn suburban or rural property needed for big city water supply.

Among several speakers who condemned the project was Rep. Henry J. Probert, a Montgomery county Republican member of the Legislature.

George Letterman, assessor for Warrington township, which is in Bucks county, said petitions also are being circulated there, and that a mass protest meeting is planned for the near future.

Residents of the area got their first idea of what the project would mean by a word-of-mouth campaign, that flew from farm to farm and estate to estate. Then petitions against the project were circulated, together with photostatic copies of a map showing just how big a chunk of the area would be inundated.

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## Water Interest

COUNCILMEN, perplexed by seeming citizen indifference to the water question, as evidenced by slim attendance at the first public hearing, may discover that interest will intensify as the alternatives become clearer.

Philadelphians would all like better water, but nobody can stir up a march on City Hall on that issue. Debate will probably begin when the public is told clearly what improvements in the water are attainable and at what prices, for all Philadelphians know also that better water cannot be had except at substantially higher cost.

So, such things as a perfect raw water is available for feeding into the distribution system. If it were, the current discussion of the possible need to renew the city mains suggests that even a perfect source of raw water would not remove all the city's dissatisfaction.

As the raw water approaches perfection, the costs tend to skyrocket, and, as with everything else, the public will be faced in the end with a decision how far in the direction of unattainable perfection its taste and pocketbook justify it in going.

For deciding that question intelligently the public needs to be told something it has not yet been told—the Water Commission engineers—how much better the water from present sources can be made.

## SPONSOR DEFENDS LEHIGH WATER Proposal for Supply is Sound, Product Pure

Use of the upper Lehigh River tributaries as a new source for Philadelphia's water supply, described by the Mayor's Water Commission as inadequate and excessively costly, was defended today by its sponsor, the Lehigh Coal & Navigation Co.

Robert V. White, president of the Lehigh company, said that the project will stand up successfully under every engineering study from the points of view of cost, adequacy of supply, and purity of the water.

"Because we are supremely confident of the outcome we are awaiting eagerly the official investigation by City Council," White said. "We are sure our proposal is sound and will be found eventually to be the cheapest and best water source available to Philadelphia."

The Water Commission is scheduled to appear before City Council in caucus tomorrow to outline its recently completed survey and to answer any questions that councilmen may want further clarified. The report, made public today, is scheduled for a year of research, estimated that the minimum cost for rehabilitation of the present system would be \$62,568,000.

In summing up the Lehigh plan, the report said it would not yield a sufficient quantity of water, that the water is unfit for use with soft filtration, and that the cost would greatly exceed the \$142,122,000 fixed by the Lehigh Company.