

“Inaugural Address

January 1, 1923

Mayor Chester P. Pearson

Fellow citizens, Members of the City Government;

One hundred and thirty-seven years ago, the Town of Gardner was incorporated. From that time up to the present, the population has increased from a mere handful to approximately 17,000 souls. The part which the town has played, during that period, in national and state affairs is well known to you all and is a record of which we may feel justly proud. Were I to attempt to enumerate to you, step by step, the different periods, I would find it necessary to take much more time than this occasion warrants. However, I believe that I am justified in calling to your attention the results which have been obtained by our predecessors in government and the advancement of the community as a whole.

Under town form of government, the Town of Gardner has progressed to such an extent as to justify us in claiming that it is one of the model towns of the Commonwealth. Its progress has produced a workable town government second to none. The different town departments have functioned in a well ordered and efficient manner so that our town government has been able to proceed year in and year out with efficiency and with results satisfactory to all. Turning a leaf in the story of Gardner's 137 years of history and briefly scanning the page it is quickly evidenced that we have not forgotten, in the midst of our labors, the finer and nobler thought of community life and spirit.

Those who find comfort and pleasure in reading may easily and readily satisfy that desire in our libraries where books of all description and on any subject are readily obtainable.

Through the kind and noble generosity of those who loved Gardner, we are fortunate in having in our midst two of the finest equipped hospitals in the Commonwealth. They shall ever stand as a striking example of true Christian spirit.

In the Greenwood Memorial, we have one of the finest monuments to Gardner's advancement that any city or town, many times the size of Gardner, can boast of.

Our parks and playgrounds have, through the generosity of our citizens, been developed to a point where the outdoor life of the children of this community is

amply provided for. Parks and playgrounds ought to be enlarged and encouraged to properly care for the health and happiness of the youth of the community.

Nor am I forgetful of the institutions of Gardner made possible by the generous spirit of the citizenship at large.

Our educational system offers the opportunity, to all who so desire, to obtain a thorough and complete elementary and high school training. Our schools and their equipment are a source of pride and satisfaction. Too much credit cannot be given to the untiring and unceasing efforts on the part of those whose duty it was to see to it that the youth of our community were given the opportunity of mental training and advancement.

The time has come, however, when the present over-crowded condition of our high school brings forcibly to our attention the necessity, in the near future, of either an addition to the present high school or a new building. This is necessitated by the fact that the present building is accommodated therein.

There is also a pressing necessity of a gymnasium and proper athletic facilities to effectively care for the health of these children. Both of these questions will be given immediate and careful consideration.

The installation of the concrete road construction from South Gardner to West Gardner has been a public improvement of invaluable worth. The continuance of that system throughout the principal streets of the town ought to receive a careful consideration. A definite systematic plan of street improvement ought to be adopted. This plan should call for a certain amount of street construction covering a period of years which in the end will end to bring our streets up from the standard of our new road from South Gardner to West Gardner, with the cost of such construction spread out over a period of years so that the burden of such cost will be more easily borne.

The motorization of the fire department, coupled with its efficient personnel, is further evidence of progress and the desire of the town to keep abreast of the times.

The recent installation of the police signal system has added materially to an already efficient government department.

It is my earnest desire to aid in every possible way toward the erection of the new city hall on the spot chosen by the citizens of Gardner. This memorial building ought to be realized as soon as possible and I pledge my efforts to that end.

As a manufacturing and mercantile center, Gardner has taken its place among the towns of the Commonwealth. This is more properly evidenced by the proud boast of all of us that Gardner is the largest chair town in the world. But the Town of Gardner has not confined itself to the manufacturing of chairs alone. It has branched out to such an extent as to include therein the manufacture of numerous things. Necessary to the life of different communities. As a mercantile center, there has been established therein large and prosperous stores sufficient to care for the needs of the community.

Gardner is a fast growing city. New industries are constantly locating here. A glance backward, at Gardner's steady growth, for a short period of 15 years necessitates the inevitable conclusion that the next fifteen years will see even greater growth and greater changes. To meet this situation our city government must be keenly alive to the undoubted needs of the city. These needs can be met only by a willingness and desire on the part of the executive and legislative branches to cooperate and do all in their power to make this growth a natural and healthy one. As the first mayor of our new city, it is my desire, with the help and co-operation of the city council, to serve you in this manner.

I mention these things to you in order to call to your mind more particularly a few of the many features of Gardner's advancement. These references are sufficient to recall this fact to your mind.

Today we are gathered here for the purpose of writing a new page in Gardner's history. Yesterday it was the Town of Gardner. Today, by the wish and will of you people, it is the City of Gardner.

On occasions of this kind, it is customary to set forth, in concrete fashion, some definite working plan for the ensuing year. It is impossible to do that this morning. The transition from town form of government to city form of government is momentous; it is impossible to look into the future with any degree of certainty and for that reason it is impossible to establish any definite programs of procedure.

The necessity for better roads, more sidewalks, extension of sewer and water systems and the many necessary general improvements will be given immediate and careful consideration. The necessity of a new City Hall, of a new street from Pleasant to Nichols Street and various other improvements, that necessitate large expenditures, will be taken up with deliberation and careful consideration. The proposed new street from Nichols Street to Pleasant Street is much needed to cope with the business expansion in the center of the city. This

street can be laid out at the present time at a reasonable cost and will have a strong tendency to relieve congestion in West Gardner and will encourage building and new business enterprises in that immediate vicinity.

We have a difficult task ahead of us and a responsibility which must be met.

With the assistance of the City Council, whose hearty cooperation I look for, I shall endeavor to give to the City of Gardner for the next two years, as good and efficient an administration as is humanly possible.

In closing, let us resolve to lend our energies to make the City of Gardner a leader in the Commonwealth. Its advancement can be accomplished by holding true to high ideals, by keeping mutual faith and by a spirit of honest and intelligent citizenship."