

## **Pioneers of Mahanoy City by Augusta D. Thomas (Mrs. T.L.)**

Wesley Hammer had a store (where the Kresge store is now located ). During the labor troubles and strikes of the '70's he went out of business and moved to Pottsville.

David Phillips had a book, stationary, newspaper store (where the Woolworth store is now). He was postmaster and president of the Citizens' Bank (which) was located at the corner of Center and Locust Street. (Where the American Banking Trust Co. is now located). This bank building was a one-story stone building. The bank failed during the panic of 1873.

George Jackson, Sr. had a store (where the Kline Building now is) on West Center St. He owned the Jackson's Colliery at the village which now bears his name, Jackson's.

Charles Hill owned the Hill's Colliery and lived at the extreme end of South Main Street (the house is now owned by Louis Reilly, Miss Spencer, Mrs. Gabbert) -- to the south was a large lawn, now four houses. The Bedfords ,coal operators ,lived there a short time after Charles Hill. The Hill family returned to Pottsville when Charles Hill died.

Eli Washburn was a contractor and builder. He built the Co-operative Building, then called the Raegan Building. This building stood many hears at the corner of Main and Center Streets (where the Union National Bank now stands) until 1910 (?). It was used for stores, offices, club rooms and lodge hall. Lichtenberger's candy store, Bill Morgan's plumbing establishment, William Davis' tobacco store, later Abe King's; Quinn's Meat Market, and Gabarino's peanut stand were located on the first floor for many years. In the '60's John Bowman had a photograph gallery here on the top floor. The Young Men's Republican Club had their quarters on the second floor of this building for thirty years. The top floor was the meeting place of Severn Post No. 110 Grand Army of the Republic.

Alfred Lawton was the proprietor of Lawton's Colliery on Pleasant Hill. His brother, Joseph Lawton, was inside foreman at East Mahanoy Colliery.

Edward S. Silliman Sr., and Alexander Fister were cousins. They came from Pottsville. Alexander Fister had knowledge of coal mining having been a foreman in a mine at Cumbola. He settled at what is now Stony Point and became inside foreman at Silliman's Colliery (now known as North Mahanoy Colliery). Later he had a shoe store while his wife had a millinery store in the 200 block on West Center Street (where Cook's Barber Shop now is). Later he moved to where the Kresge Store now stands and conducted a shoe store and millinery establishment. Edward S. Silliman started the Mahanoy City Water Company and the Mahanoy City Gas Company. He also started the First National Bank being its first president. It was in 1864 that all these companies were formed. He lived at 46 North Main Street.

Charles C. Hagenbuch and his brother, Abner Hagenbuch, came from Bloomsburg in the '60's. Charles had a drug store (where Joseph O'Conner's store now stands). Here was the post office. Hagenbuch being the second postmaster. Later he purchased the building opposite and conducted a drug store there until 1893. His sons, James and Bertram were also druggists. James became a medical doctor and conducted the drug store until his death in 1926. Bert is a druggist in Philadelphia.

George Stitzer came to Mahanoy City from Berks County and had a shoe store and cobbler's shop (where Litsch's Drug Store now stands).

Thomas Foster, who later became the owner of the Scranton Correspondence School, was in the shoe business in the first square on East Center Street.

Godfrey Lowrey, a native of Lehigh County was in the shoe business on East Center Street, in the '70's. His place of business was where the Post Office now stands. His son, George Lowrey, was employed in the First National Bank.

John H. Kutz came from Berks County and worked in the feed store of the Barlow Brothers on East Railroad Street (where the Evangelical parsonage is now). Later he went into business with his brother-in-law Frank B. Wagner (where the Central Pharmacy now is). The partnership was dissolved and both members of the firm conducted stores of their own.

Gottfreid Reidinger came to Mahanoy City in 1863. He was a blacksmith and worked for Peter Bowman at the Bowman's Colliery. He also had a blacksmith's shop and sharpened tools for the men who worked at the building of the East Mahanoy Tunnel. His home was at 405-407 East Pine Street. *Note: Gottfried Reidinger most probably began working with the tunnel crew in 1859 and lived in the vicinity of Buck Mountain. PTC*

Phillip Conrad, a coal operator, lived at 32-34 West Mahanoy Avenue. The family lived in town until the end of the '70's.

Charles Cowley, Sr. was a coal operator and lived in Mahanoy City until his death.

Elias Whetstone came to Mahanoy City in 1866 from lower Schuylkill County. The family lived here until 1880 when they moved to Colorado. His daughters, Hannah, and Amanda, taught in our public schools. Hannah, Mrs. E.P. Phelps, is the only child of Elias Whetstone who is now living. Her residence is in the city of Denver.

Peter Bowman came to Mahanoy City in April 1862. He with his brothers, Jonas and David, operated the Bowmans' Colliery near Park Place. He had been a successful coal operator in Tamaqua from 1849. He sank the second mine slope in Schuylkill County at Dunkirk. His residence was where the Post Office now stands. *Note: At the time of this writing the Post Office was located at 131 East Centre Street.* PTC The lawn was where the Elks Building now is. All of Peter Bowman's children are dead. Mrs. Dillman passed away in 1934.

Jonas lived where Schertzinger Jewelry store now is. Later Jonas' daughters conducted a millinery store in this place. Some of the daughters live in California, Florida, Delaware and his three sons are in Philadelphia.

David Bowman lived at the corner of Main and Mahanoy Streets. His son, David A. Bowman, lives in Philadelphia while his daughter, Mrs. Swalm, lives in Wheeling, W. Va.

Charles Bensinger came from McKeansburg to Mahanoy City. He had a tailoring establishment at 120-122 West Center Street until about 1895. His children moved to distant cities of Philadelphia, Harrisburg, and Dubois. He was a very good man in church and community work. Every year he visited the schools to see how the youths of the town were progressing.

Solomon Faust was one of the first carpenters of Mahanoy City. He built the company houses on Spruce Street. He built several of the schoolhouses.

David Hutchinson a machinist, James Morrison a boiler maker, David Littell a mechanic, Edward Humpheries a machinist and Frank Keiser a hotel keeper, were also early pioneers. Peter Harmon had a boiler works at the western end of Center Street, where St. Mary's Slovak Church now stands.

Joel Miller was a butcher, who worked for John Knapp. He lived in the 600 square on the south side of Center Street.

Thomas Fitzgerald and his brother, Michael, were railroad contractors. They lived on North Main Street, next door to John Quinn's home.

George Gunthner (George Ginthner) was a blacksmith and lived at the northwest corner of Pine and First Streets (the site is opposite the Citizens' Fire House). He built the Steiff property at the corner of Main and Mahanoy Streets. His wheelwright shop was on Pine Street. Solomon Kleckner, the first wheelwright in Mahanoy City, worked for George Ginthner. His son, George Ginthner, Jr., lives at Center and Fourth Streets at the present time.

J.O. Robinson had a store at 33 East Center Street (site of Tregellas Shoe Store) and later had a store on West Center Street next to the Mansion House. Robinson's Colliery was named for him as manager. He was a brother-in-law of the owner who lived in New York City and never lived in our borough.

Thomas S. Westcott lived at 9 East Pine Street. He was a civil and mining engineer. He served as clerk for several fraternal organizations. He was a vestryman in Faith Episcopal Church.

Schone Horsker (John Hersker) was a locksmith and lived in the 600 square on East Mahanoy Street. He also repaired shoes. Later he moved to 29 East Center Street where he had a saloon. He built the Hersker Opera House (Family Theatre) in 1895. He had a confectionary store after he went out of the hotel business and also had a hardware store at 101 East Center Street. John

Hersker had four sons and six daughters: William, John, Harry, Louis, Mrs. Mary Klinger, Mrs. Minnie Seivert, Mrs. Christina Knoblauch, Mrs. Annie Loyd, Emily and Matilda.

Jacob Frank lived at 433-435 East Mahanoy Street where he had a four-story hotel. The top floor was used for a lodge room in the early days. For many years the Masonic and Odd Fellows Lodge met here. Later, Jacob Frank owned the Frank Hotel at the corner of Center and First Streets. His children were Frederick, Jacob, Jr., Carrie, and Mollie.

Jacob Deem was a wheelwright at the corner of Mahanoy and Second Streets (site of the P.O.S. of A. buildings). He erected two houses at 203, 205 East Mahanoy Street living at the latter. Some years afterward he moved to 518 East Mahanoy Street. His brother, William, worked with him at the wheelwright shop. Later, Jacob Deem moved to Locust Valley where he died. He had a daughter, Annie, and a son, George. Annie married and died a few years ago in Locust Valley. George is still living on the farm.

Conrad Gurs (Conrad Guers) was also one of the early pioneers of our town. He lived on West Spruce Street. From there he moved to his farm in Locust Valley. He conducted a dairy route through Mahany City for many years until his death. He had several sons and daughters.

Frederick Rommel had a saloon at 112-114 East Center Street. Later, he bought a farm at Hosensock (Park Crest) where he died a few years ago. He had several sons and daughters. Two orphan nieces also lived with his family.

M.L. Johnson was a plasterer and stone mason. He lived on the west side of North Main Street beyond the P.& R. R. Bridge. Later, he became a sewing machine agent and resided in the 200 square on the south side of East Center Street.

John Miller lived on the south side of the 300 square on East Center Street (about 308-310 East Center St.). His son, John Miller, Jr., married Mary Weber, daughter of John Weber, a beer agent. Their daughter was Mrs. Charles Metzinger. John Miller, Sr. the signer of this petition, married the oldest daughter of Peter Forester.

Franklin Davis was in the freighting business and lived in the 200 square on East Center Street. He had a fine team of horses to carry on this business. His children Robert, Emma and Agnes were born in Mahanoy City. He left here for Sterling, Illinois in 1870 and two more children were born: Curtis and Hattie. In 1878 he left for Oronoque, Kansas, staying here until 1880 when he migrated to Salt Lake City and died there in 1902. His wife survived him until 1921. When they lived in Mahanoy City they were Methodists but they joined the church of the Latter Day Saints in the state of Utah.

Benjamin Walborn was in the saloon business at 11-17 East Center Street. One night ruffians cleaned him out of eatables and drink. He immediately closed the business and moved to 436-

438 East Center Street, where he lived until his death. He owned considerable property in town and was one of the first four school directors. He had four daughters.

William Henry Hedenreich lived at the eastern part of the town in the 600 square on East Center Street. He also had a farm near the tunnel where he subsequently lived. He returned to Mahanoy City about 1897 residing here until his death several years ago. He owned many properties in this borough and was one of the first four school directors. His children were William, George, Edward, Mary, Louise, Annie, and Katie.

George R. Goodman had a dry goods and grocery store at 32-34 East Center Street. In 1890 he went into the wholesale fruit and poultry business at 136-138 West Pine Street. He died about 1927. He had five children: Grant, Oliver, James, George and Emily.

Tobias Schroeder lived in the 600 square of East Mahanoy Street. He was a blacksmith. Later he left Mahanoy City and became a farmer in a neighboring county.

Johnathan Lindenmuth was the first postmaster of Mahanoy City. He lived on the east side of North Main Street below where the Kaier Hotel now stands. Later he moved to Barnesville.

Evan J. Griffiths, a contractor and builder, lived on North Main Street. He built the three houses which lie between the Penn Garage offices and Phillip-Jones Corporation building. He was a member of the Welsh Baptist Church. He had three sons and a daughter: Ryce, John and William. His grandson, Evan J. Griffiths, was a member of the Pennsylvania State Legislature from this district in the '90's.

Jonas Bowman was one of the Bowman brothers who came from Carbon County to operate the Bowman Colliery. He lived at 125 East Center Street (the site of Schertzinger's Jewelry Store). Later his daughters conducted a millinery store here. He had thirteen children: John, Frank, Lewis, Howard, Ellen, Alice, Emma, Jennie, Lizzie, Sallie, Laura and Lillie.

Henry Sharp was proprietor of the Merchants' Hotel, later known as the Pennsylvania Hotel, on the north side of 200 square on West Center Street. Henry Sharp married Mrs. Kuder, mother of Dr. Eugene Kuder. After Mr. Sharp's death she married John Wadlinger of Minersville, PA. Henry Sharp prior to his second marriage lived in the Haas property at the southwest corner of Catawissa and Spruce Streets. He had a son, Anthony Sharp, who was a tinsmith.

William Monroe was a railroader but prior to his taking up that occupation he was a carpenter and built many houses in town. He was the carpenter who built the Klitsch property at the corner of Center and Fourth Streets. He owned this place and had a saloon here. Later it was bought by Mr. Klitsch and William Monroe moved to 24 East Center Street and opened up a grocery store. Later he moved to Illinois and took up farming. The grasshoppers were his ruination when they ate up his farm produce.

Of the seventy-two signers of the petition for a charter for Mahanoy City, there are only twenty of them whose families are still connected with the life and activity of the borough seventy-five years after its incorporation. The families who are here now and whose ancestors signed the petition are:

Frick, Donohoe, Boyer, Silliman, Dreyer, David Bowman, Kaier, Hagenbuch, Litsch, Flanagan, Eichman, Scheurman, Metz, Cronin, Gunthner, Hersker, Frank, Heidenreich, Rudloff and Goodman.

The names of some of the other families prominent in Mahanoy City in the later '60's and '70's.

After Mahanoy City received its charter, many new families settled in the town. Their descendents are now our leading citizens. Among the names we find the families of the following: NOrthey, King, Trickey, Henry Thomas, William Thomas, David Reynolds, Richard Phillips, William Harris, Thomas R. Jones, William Miles, William Jenkins, John F. and Charles Schoener, Frank B. and Charles B. and Alfred B. Wagner, Elias and Gideon Whetstone, Ephraim, Daniel, William and Albert Barlow, David Jeffreys, George Wren, Ralph Lee, Sr., William L. Yoder, Eli S. Reinhold, Stephen Taggart, Sr., John Kutz, John Moyer, Simon Moyer, David Phillips, Oliver Betchel, David Jeffreys, David B. Kline, David B. Schaffer, Daniel Scheipe, Harry Femier, Charles Datesman, Godfrey Laurey, Solomon Seligman, Frank, Jerome and George Wenrich, Charles Luburg, Charles Snyder, Sr., Daniel and Solomon Hoppes, Gottfreid Reidinger, Benjamin Scheirer, Edwin and Isaac Severn, Edmund and Charles Schertzinger, Michael Allebach, Henry Jackson, Thomas Lewis, Thomas H.B. Lyon, William L. Balentine, George, William, Esher and Hamilton Troutman, James Haughney, James Dunn, Adam Brown, Dr. Thomas N. Patterson, William Palmer, John Goyne, Sr., Abram Brown, John Adam, Oliver C. Lewis, Patrick J. Campion, Valentine Bastian, E.P. Lear, William Schoener, William Heiser, Peter Post, Peter Ecker, John Kemery, William Ramsey, John Holland, William Oliver, Ebenezer Morris, James, Charles, William P. and Robert Ramsey, Thomas Gittens, Layton Baldwin, Charles Seltzer, William and James Wynn, Daniel O'Keefe, D.J. Cleary, Edward Dwyer, William and James Wynn, Charle F. King, Alex May, David E. Focht, Matthew McAtee, Edward, Burd, Frank and Guy Irish, John Bedford, Peter, David and Edward Gorman, John Shipman, Landis Porter, A.P. Bissell, Elias Weber, John Horan, Samuel Seifert, Sr., D.L. Moll, Christian Dieter, Nicholas Huber, Charles Haldeman, William Hornsby, John Snyder, Phaon Hermany, George Brendle, Louis Thompson, Cornelius Reing, Sr., John Parker, Thomas and Michael Moore, Frederick Pfleuger, John Mayer, John Both, John Feichtner, Henry Schreirer, George Stitzer, Lewis Grimm, Peter Perry, Pheneas Gerber, Henry Berger, David Smith, Herman Wolfe, Conrad Dresch, Sr., Eutase Stone, Thomas Entwistle, John Hardy, Miles

Roach, Lewis and John I. Mathias, Adam Mengle, William and Frank Carter, Matthew, William, Robert and Isaac Richardson, Patrick Dillon, Michael Groody, Sr., Harry Stichter, Godfrey Wade, O.C. Tiffany, Henry and Adan Gabbert, Jacob and John Kline, John Reese, Charles Haldeman, Daniel D. Dillman, Harry Williams, William Wolverton, Horace Darling, Phillip Bradbury John Cleary, Sr., H.K., Adam and Isaac Smith and many others.

The first Jewish families to come to our town were those of Roheimer, Raubichek and Levison. Jacob Meyer came in 1865 and in 1867 his brother-in-law Simon Trier came. These two entered into partnership in the clothing business and tailoring. Mr. Levison died of smallpox in 1868. In the '70's the families of Jacob Weinberg and Abraham Rice came and continued in the clothing business until the latter part of the '80's. The only pioneer Jewish family still living in Mahanoy City is the Trier family.

### **Hesse Stadt.**

A goodly number of families from various provinces in Germany and France settled in the part of the town in what is now above Ninth Street on Pine and Mahanoy Streets. This settlement was made in 1864. The names of the heads of the families were William Honicker, Adam Weil, Joseph Schaud, Carl Dennis, Martin Wetterau, Herman Keilman, Adam Stelling, Carl Bonner, William Bernsteil and a man named Barrio. These men wished to give this settlement a name so three were selected as a committee to give the name to this locality. The three men were: Adam Weil, a Frenchman; Joseph Schaud a Hessian; and Carl Desch or Dennis, a Bavarian. They pulled pegs and Joseph Schaud won. Being a Hessian the little settlement was called by him "Hesse Stadt". This name was afterwards called by the English speaking population of the town "Hessestett". This settlement gradually became a part of the town.

The different nationalities that came to Mahanoy City settled in certain sections of the town. Here they built their church and homes. The Germans settled on East Pine and Mahanoy Streets; the Irish went west of Catawissa Street on Pine, Mahanoy and Center Streets; the English settled on West Spruce Street; the Welsh Congregationalists located on East Center Street, while the Welsh Baptists went to West Spruce Street; the Pennsylvania German and other settlers remained in the center of the town. When the Lithuanians, Poles, Slavs, Greeks and Russians came in, they located in the First Ward where they built their churches.