

Three involved in the newspaper

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Herald writer

THE NEW BOROUGH was one month shy of its second birthday when the first newspaper made its debut on Nov. 11, 1865, under the title of *The Mahanoy City Gazette*.

The boy who performed the run-around chores in that new print shop at 14½ S. Main St. was Edward F. Lathan, who came up from Pottsville to take his place in history as Mahanoy City's first printer's devil.

Fifty-six years later, in July, 1921, Edward Lathan was living in Washington, D.C., and came back for a visit to the town of his youth. A brief account of that visit was carried in the community's last surviving newspaper, *The Record-American*.

Mr. Lathan spent 30 years in the local printing trade, during which he saw the *Gazette* pass through a succession of three ownerships and change its name to *The Mahanoy Tribune* in 1879.

In 1886 Edward Lathan pulled up stakes in Mahanoy and moved to Washington where he had received an appointment to work in the federal government printing office. The job was procured for him through an old Pottsville acquaintance, John Farquhar, then mayor of Buffalo, N.Y.

However, politics soon reared its ugly head and after just one year in the job, Lathan found himself bumped out of employment by someone with more political pull. (No civil service protection in those days.)

So he packed up and headed for Buffalo where his friend the mayor found him a printing job at which he worked until 1899. By that time, congress had enacted a civil service act and Lathan took the test. He was approved for the job and went back to Washington, remaining there until a retirement law forced him to hang up his printer's visor on August 20, 1920.

With lots of time on his hands in 1921, he decided to come back to the town he knew in its frontier days and renew

acquaintances with friends still here, among them H. J. Heiser and Thomas E. Tregellas.

RECALLING HIS experience as the town's pioneer printer's apprentice, Mr. Lathan said the *The Gazette* used a Washington hand press and published 500 copies weekly. However, until the paper got on its feet and built up a list of paid subscribers, he performed his duties without salary.

His comments about the town as he found it in 1921 were recorded in *The Record-American*:

"Many changes have taken place in Mahanoy City since my boyhood days. In fact, it's almost a like a new spot. There are a few of the old residences I can recall. Many of the people have gone to the great beyond but a few of the old ones remain.

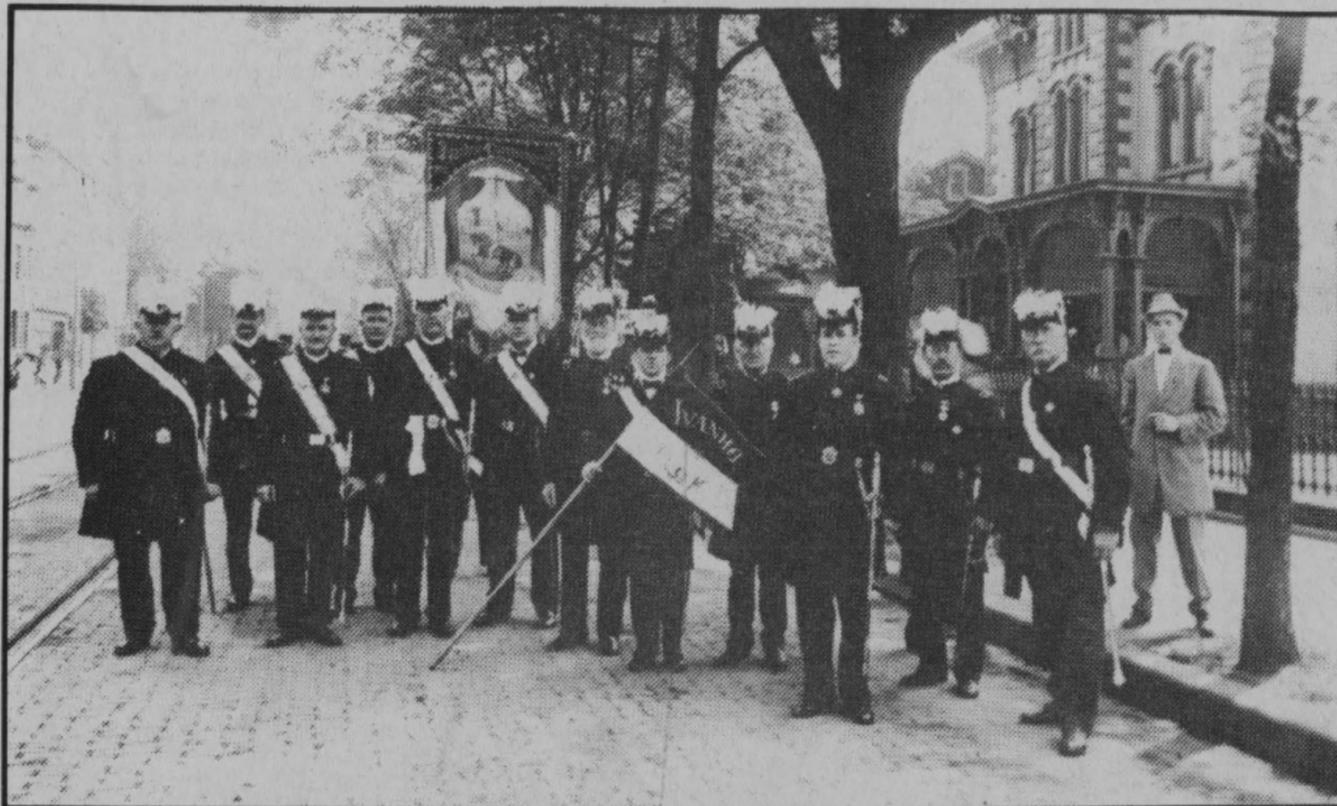
"The town shows good progress and a good business spirit and my days in your midst are being fully enjoyed."

LIVINGSTONE V. RAUSCH was one of the later publishers of the newspaper that gave Edward Lathan his first employment. He bought into publication in 1886, the year that Lathan left.

A native of the southwestern section of Schuylkill County (Rausch Creek in the area still bears the family name), Rausch was an experienced printer when he assumed ownership of the newspaper (then known as the *Mahanoy Tribune*) in partnership with Jediah B. Irish, who was running a wholesale coal supply business in the Lebanon area.

They ran the *Mahanoy Tribune* under the firm name of Rausch & Irish. In 1888, they were joined by Guy C. Irish, a brother of Jediah and a brother-in-law of Rausch (Rausch and Guy Irish were married to daughters of Major John B. Schoener, a member of the state legislature in the 1870s and first captain of Mahanoy City's military company, the Silliman Guards, formed in 1875).

It was through Rausch's courtship of and marriage to Carrie Schoener (on June 27, 1880) that he came to settled



KNIGHTS OF YORE — From the misty past comes this photo of Mahanoy City's proud masonic group, the Knights Templar. The picture is from the Schuylkill County Historical Society archives and is believed to have been taken during a parade in Pottsville, but the date is not known, nor are the identities of the sir knights. Many of the town's pioneers being

here. He couple resided at 412 E. Mahanoy St. and raised two children, Lily and Will.

Livingstone was a solid citizen, joining the Methodist Church and Sabbath School, the three local masonic organizations (Free and Accepted Masons, Royal Arch Masons, and Knights Templar), as well as the Odd Fellows, POSofA and Royal Arcanum lodges.

During the early 1890s, the Irish brothers sold their interest in the paper and Mr. Rausch became the sold owner. He continued to operate the *Mahanoy Tribune* until 1916 when it merged with the *Daily American* and became the *American Tribune*.

THE RAUSCH family roots in America were planted in 1780 when Livingstone's

greatgreatgrandfather, John Rausch, migrated from Germany and settled in Berks County (then part of Chester County). It was there that Livingstone's greatgrandfather, Samuel Rausch, and grandfather, John Rausch, were born and raised.

Grandfather John became a partner in a contracting company which built railroads in eastern Pennsylvania and Kentucky. He came to Schuylkill County in 1829 and settled in a section of Tremont Township which became known as Rausch Station. After serving a term as sheriff of Schuylkill, he went to Philadelphia and opened a coal supply business. He died there in 1869.

Valentine Rausch (father of Livingstone) was one of nine

featured in these *Mahanoy Chronicles* were members of the local Knights Templar (Ivanhoe Commandery No. 31), but information about the organization is difficult to find. The *Chronicles* staff has made several contacts among the Mahanoy City oldtimers still active in the Ivanhoe Commandery, but none of them could shed any light on the group's history.

children. He was born at Rausch Station in 1831 and spent most of his life there, working as a civil engineer and serving as bookkeeper for his father's contracting and other business. In 1862, Valentine enlisted in the Union Army and became a wagon master in charge of provision trains. He lost his life by drowning in the Potomac River on June 10, 1864.

Livingstone was born at the Rausch Station homestead on Feb. 3, 1858, one of four children of Valentine and Mary (Long) Rausch. He was eight years old when his father died. His first jobs was clerking for two years, after which he took up the printing trade that was to bring him to Mahanoy City in 1886.

GUY C. IRISH (his name was Irish but his ancestry was German) was born at Carlisle

on Sept. 2, 1855, and spent most of the next 33 years in the Baltimore-Philadelphia area before coming to Mahanoy in 1888. He became acquainted with Mahanoy City through his employment with the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad, and his courtship of Sadie M. Schoener, who became his bride in 1886. They had two daughters, Helen and Mary.

During the early 1890s, Irish sold his share of the newspaper to Rausch and devoted his attention to the operation of a stationery store which he had opened in 1889. He became active in the Methodist Church and was elected a trustee.

The Irish name was prominent years earlier in Carbon County where Guy's grandfather (also named Guy) was the civil engineer engaged by Judge Asa Packer to supervise construction of the Lehigh Valley Railroad.

GRANDFATHER GUY had a brother, Jediah, who was also a civil engineer and supervised construction of many of the first railroad bridges over the Susquehanna River.

Grandfather Guy sired two children, Theodore (father of Guy C.) and Elizabeth who married Samuel Auman and lived in Pottsville.

Theodore was born in Audenreid on June 14, 1830. After the Civil War he went to Georgia and engaged in gold mining for several years before returning north. He became a train dispatcher for U. S. military railroad traffic, based at Alexandria, Virginia, and later transferred to the Carlisle military depot where Guy C. was born.

Theodore was married to the former Mary Sheaffer and had four sons, one of whom was Guy. The others were Frank, a Philadelphia-based passenger agent for the Chicago and Northwestern Railway; Ned, superintendent of the Cornwall and Lebanon Railway; and Jediah, who operated a wholesale coal business in the Lebanon area and in 1886 joined Livingstone Rausch in partnership as publishers of the *Mahanoy Tribune*.