

MAHANOY CITY CHRONICLES/Researched by Lorraine Stanton

Carters helped to launch borough

By BILL O'BRIEN
Herald writer

THE CARTER BROTHERS, Frank and William, are two more examples of pioneers who played major roles in the founding of Mahanoy City, only to have their names fade into the mists of history.

The brothers arrived in Mahanoy City in 1859 when the site consisted of a handful of newly constructed buildings in the midst of a thickly forested wilderness. As civil engineers, they were involved in laying out town's building lots, were instrumental in developing the community and the coal industry upon which it thrived.

Were it not for the fascinating information preserved in treasured old books such as "The Samuel T. Wiley Biographical and Portrait Cyclopaedia of Schuylkill County" (published in 1893), Mahanoy City residents of today would never realize the important contributions made by men such as the Carter brothers who laid the solid foundation that made it possible for the town to be on the map 125 years later to celebrate its quasiquintennial.

THE CARTERS were of strict Quaker stock whose paternal ancestors came to America about the same time as William Penn (1682).

Their grandfather, William Carter, was born near Philadelphia in the 1700s and conducted a farm in that area. One of his sons, William, was the father of the Mahanoy City pioneers. He was born on the family farm in 1805 and was 21 years old when he decided to try his luck in the new anthracite region town of Pottsville (founded in 1816 by John Pott).

The year was 1826 when William Carter set out walking

the 90 mile trek along the towpath of the Schuylkill Canal which had opened between Pottsville and Philadelphia in 1824. He arrived to find Pottsville abustle with activity. New immigrants were arriving daily on the canal boats, by stage coach over the Centre Turnpike, by horseback and by foot. The canal was busy shipping out coal and bringing in goods.

William established himself as a blacksmith and later began manufacturing screens and other fixtures used in the mining industry. He died in Pottsville in 1889 at age 84, being survived by his widow, the former Anna Wagoner, and their two sons, Frank and William. (Two other children died in infancy.)

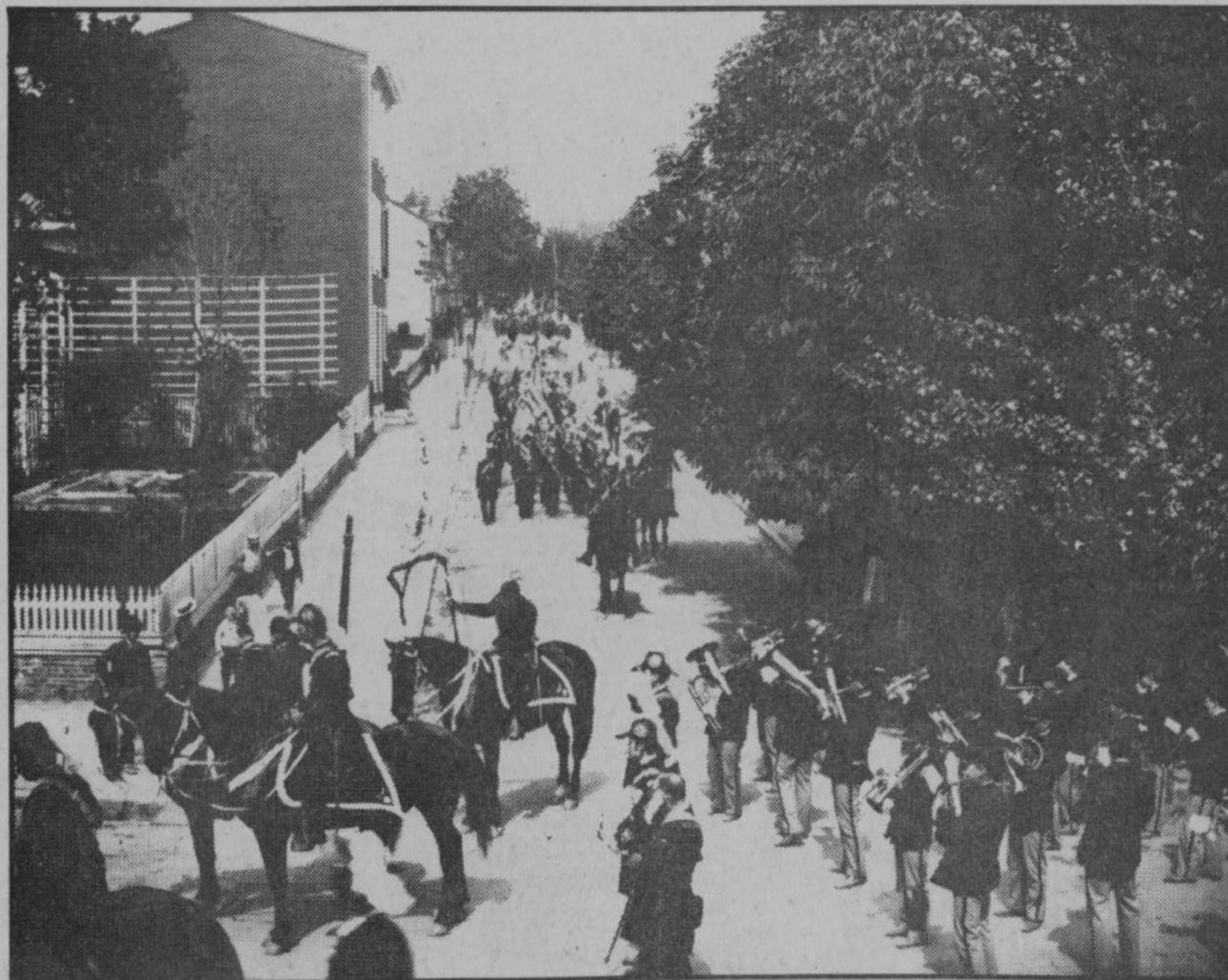
FRANK WAS BORN in Pottsville on Dec. 1, 1834, and William on Oct. 17, 1837.

Frank was educated in the Pottsville Academy, a private school, and became an apprentice of Samuel Lewis, a civil/mining engineer and surveyor.

After leaving the Lewis firm, Frank joined the Pottsville engineering corps of the most prominent man in the field, Peter W. Sheaffer, whose Sheaffer Estate landholdings were known to succeeding generations of Schuylkill Countians well into the 20th century.

In 1859, Frank Carter received the appointment that would bring him to Mahanoy City that same year. He was named agent in full charge of the Philadelphia and Mahanoy Coal Company interests, which included many acres of coal land in the Mahanoy Valley. In this position he supervised the laying out of the land plot for Mahanoy City Borough.

When this company's holdings were sold to the giant Philadelphia and Reading Coal and Iron Company in 1871, Frank stayed on as the land agent for that company.



KNIGHTS OF YORE — Long forgotten in Mahanoy City is the organization known as the Knights of the Golden Eagle. For many years during the 1800s, members of Eureka Castle No. 86 K.G.E. were familiar figures in local parades,

His pioneer presence in Mahanoy City was evident in other activities. He was one of six civic-minded citizens who pooled their resources to give the new borough its first newspaper, The Mahanoy City Gazette, which published its first edition on Nov. 11, 1865. He was one of the earliest members of the local masonic organization (F&AM Lodge 357)

and of the town's first church, the First Presbyterian.

During the 1870s, Mr. Carter moved back to Pottsville where he continued to serve as the coal company agent. In 1877 he joined W. R. Cole in purchasing the the Miners Journal, the county's oldest daily paper. In 1889, Mr. Carter became sole owner of the paper.

attired in handsome formal uniforms and led by mounted color guard. The photo above from the Schuylkill County Historical Society archives lists the date as 1882 but the site of the parade is not known.

His home in Pottsville was located on the hillside at 402 S. Second St. He was married twice and had four children. His first wife was Hannah Osler and their children were George, Helen and Jessie. His second wife was Louis Pershing, daughter of County President Judge Cyrus Pershing, and they had a son, Donald, who was born at Pottsville in 1887.

WILLIAM CARTER, the other half of the brother team, spent his boyhood in Pottsville learning the printing trade, but it didn't appeal to him. Shortly after completing his apprenticeship he left the print shop and took a position in a grocery store. After a year in that business he affiliated with his brother, Frank, in the civil engineering field and joined him in moving to Mahanoy City in 1859.

In 1862 he received an appointment as agent for Kear and Patton, one of the large land owners on the site of Mahanoy City.

In 1864 he became agent for the Delano Land Company, owner of large coal land holdings in the areas surrounding the borough. He also became agent for the Lehigh Valley Coal Company's holdings in Schuylkill, Columbia and Northumberland counties.

He brought much prestige to Mahanoy City by maintaining his office here to transact all business for these companies. At the same time he served as the local agent for the Aetna & Hartford Insurance Company.

William Carter's name is etched in borough history as the town's first notary public.

His homestead was at 44 S. Main St., where he resided with his wife, the former Mary Morrison of Pottsville, to whom he was married on July 5, 1862. They had two daughters: Fannie, who was the wife of Dr. Thomas Lewis of Mahanoy City, and Mary, who was still residing at home in 1890.

SO ADD THE NAMES of the two Quaker brothers named Carter to the list of personalities who had the faith and courage to stand in the forefront among the pioneers who helped launch Mahanoy City Borough on its 125-year trek through history.