

## MAHANOY CITY CHRONICLES/Researched by Lorraine Stanton

# Borough is 124 years old today!

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Herald writer

**OKAY, ALL YOU** citizens of Mahanoy City, let's join the chorus:

Happy birthday to you,  
Happy birthday to you,  
Happy birthday, Mahanoy City,  
Happy birthday to you.

**THAT'S RIGHT,** it's Mahanoy City's birthday — 124 years old today.

It was on Wednesday, Dec. 16, 1863, that the courts of Schuylkill County granted a charter to the town which was beginning to mushroom in the wilderness in eastern nook of the Mahanoy Valley.

That Christmas of 1863 must have been a very special one for those pioneers — the first Yuletide in the newly formed borough which they were building for themselves and generations to come.

The planning that went into the new town was by no means haphazard. As early as the mid-1850s, the landholding companies who held rights to the real estate envisioned a community some day occupying the site. The two key landholders were Patterson & Kear who owned the eastern portion of the tract, and Dundee, Biddle & Troutman who owned the western portion.

Things began moving rapidly in 1859 when construction of the Mahanoy Tunnel commenced. Dwellings and business places already had begun to appear on the site, and completion of the tunnel, bringing easy rail access to the coal-rich valley, would pave the way for a boom. In order to be ready when that time arrived, the landholders in 1859 engaged surveyor to map out a town with an orderly system of streets where the influx of settlers could purchase lots to erect homes.

With the tunnel completed and coal moving to market to meet the war demand, the moving fathers decided it was time to

bring orderly government to the community. Thus it was that a group of 70 men, one woman and two businesses banded together and took the legal steps to carve a borough out of what was then Mahanoy Township. Their names appear on the petition presented to the courts requesting legal status for a new borough.

The petition first had to be cleared by a county grand jury which had the responsibility for verifying the surveyors' data and other information in the petition.

The grand jury gave its stamp of approval on Sept. 16, 1863, and forwarded the petition to the courts. The courts granted approval for the charter on Dec. 16, and thus Mahanoy City was born.

**THE WORDING** of the petition was as follows:

"To the Honorable Court of Quarter Sessions of Schuylkill County: The petition of the undersigned inhabitants of the town of Mahanoy City in said county of Schuylkill respectfully represent that the said town contains a collection of houses collorated after a regular plan in regard to streets and alleys, and that the petitioners reside within the limits thereof as hereafter set forth and described, and that the same contains not more than two hundred freeholders, that they are desirous that said town should be incorporated by the style and title of the Borough of Mahanoy City according to the following boundaries:

"Commencing at a post in the line between the lands of Kear and Patterson and the Delaware Land Company, thence south eighty degrees west sixty-three hundred ninety feet to a post, thence north ten degrees west twenty-one hundred fifty feet to a post, thence north eighty degrees east sixty-four hundred ninety feet to a post in line between land of Kear and Patterson and the Delaware Land Company, thence along said line south seven degrees



**DEVELOPMENT UNDERWAY** — This 1863 view of Mahanoy City shows that development was well underway by the time the borough received its charter that year. The scene is the first block of East Centre Street, south side. In the lower right corner may be seen part of the Mahanoy House, a hotel at 10 E. Centre St. (later site of the former Noonan Brothers store, now owned by Herman

and fifty-three minutes east twenty-one hundred sixty feet to the place of beginning, a plot or draft whereof accompanies this petition.

"The petitioners further represent that they are a majority of the freeholders residing within said limits. They therefore pray the court to cause this, their application, to be laid before the grand jury of said county and if a majority of said grand jury, after a full investigation, shall certify to the court that the provisions of the acts of assembly in such

case made and provided have been complied with and that it is expedient to grant the prayer of the petitioners, that the court will confirm said judgment and that upon compliance with the several conditions required in said act of assembly, the said town of Mahanoy City may thenceforth be deemed as an incorporated borough by the style and title aforesaid entitled to all the rights and privileges provided in said act of assembly, and they will ever pray."

**MANY OF THE** signers became prominent figures in early decades of the borough, as

Yudacufsky who is reportedly planning a future business development there). The Mahanoy House was owned by Emmanuel Boyer, the town's first permanent resident, having been built for him in the 1850s by Jacob Faust, another early settler. It was in the Mahanoy House that the town's first male child was born on Feb. 15, 1858, he being William H. Boyer, son of Mr. and Mrs. Emmanuel Boyer.

well as in Mahanoy Township and the Mahanoy Valley. Some are perpetuated in the names of mine patches, some of which are still around. Some of them founded collieries, utilities, banks and other business places needed to help the community grow and thrive.

The list:

P. J. Barry, John Frick, George F. Wiggan, Wiggan & Triebels, Charles M. Hill Jr., Seth Kaley, Edward Boyer, Rufus Vastine, C. Bartholomew, G. F. Brendle, Charles Smith, Harrison Derrick, Peter Ot-

terbach, David Steward, Matt Donohoe, William Nagle, Charles Egloff, Emmanuel Boyer, John Schuth, Edward S. Silliman, Alfred Lawton, William Kraus, E. F. Smith & Co., Valentine Benner, Nathan Fehr, John Tobias, Edward Britt, Philip Young, Jacob Rudloff, Blasius Dreyer, Frederick Rommel Franklin Davis. M. L. Johnson, John Miller, Benjamin Walborn, William Henry Heidenreich, G. R. Goodman, David Bowman, Charles Kaier, Charles C. Hagenbuch, Henry Litsch, D. A. Crawshaw, Mathias Wallerius, Michael Flanigan, Matthias Herries, Joseph Hughes, William Schweitzer, John Eichman, Henry Pirman, R. B. Swayze, Samuel Rinehart, William Reagan, Henry Leitenberger, Carl Scheurman, Ferdnend Metz, Edward D. Cronin, Julia A. Lebo, Frank Wenrich, Joel Miller, Thomas Fitzgerald, George Gunthner, M. O. Robinson, Thomas G. Westcott, Schone Horskner (John Hersker), Jacob Frank, Jacob Deem, Conrad Guores (Guers), Tobias Schroeder, J. Lindenmuth, Evan J. Griffiths, Jonas Bowman, Henry Sharp and William Monroe.

Future editions of Mahanoy City Chronicles will elaborate on the roles played by some of these pioneers.

**MEANWHILE,** at 6 o'clock next Sunday evening, Dec. 20, Mahanoy City folks will gather round their community tree to sing carols.

This will be one of the town's quasicentennial events, and as the voices ring out to herald the meaning of the season, the townsfolk might take a few moments to remember the precious gift they received from a group of pioneers on that Yuletide of long ago — the gift of a new borough built on a solid foundation of labor, prayer and love which has enabled the town to endure for lo these 124 years.

And, God willing, may Mahanoy City endure for many more Christmases to come.