

## MAHANOEY CITY CHRONICLES

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### MINE BOSSES FILLED LARGE BOOTS....

Thousands of men labored at the many collieries around Mahanoy City in the days when coal was king. Most of the miners were unrecognized faces in the throngs who came and went as the whistles blew to signal the changing of shifts. But all the men knew the mine bosses, on whose shoulders rested the responsibility for maintaining the flow of coal upon which the men depended for their wages, the communities depended for fuel and the local economies depended for subsistence. Here are two of the men who filled those important boots at the collieries that helped make Mahanoy City a boom town in days gone by:

WILLIAM BROUGHALL was one of the best known mine bosses in the Mahanoy Valley around the turn of the century.

An immigrant from England a decade before Mahanoy City was launched on its way to boroughhood, he rose from the ranks of laborer to become superintendent of five major collieries in the Mahanoy-Shenandoah area.

Broughall was 17 years old in 1855 when he left his home in Staffordshire, England and sailed for America, first making his way to the bituminous region of western Pennsylvania-Ohio.

A year later, he came east to the hard coal fields and worked at collieries around Minersville and Saint Clair before enlisting in the Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry for a year.

After leaving the military, he located in Mahanoy City and worked in the newly developing mines. He became active in local fraternal circles, including Free and Accepted Masons Lodge 357 and Royal Arch Masons Chapter 252.

Mr. Broughall's knowledge of mining brought him contracts to sink slopes for three coal operators in the southern Schuylkill area. One was for Gideon Bast at Tuscarora, a second for the Schuylkill Navigation Company and the other for J. J. Dovey in the same general area.

The contracts took more than two years to finish, after which he came back to Mahanoy City and eventually settled in Ellangowen where the Philadelphia and Reading Coal and Iron Company was sinking a shaft at its newly acquired colliery. Broughall moved into a company home there and took a job bossing at the new shaft in 1873, a time when the Molly Maguire troubles were reaching a peak, but despite the fact that the colliery employed well over 1,000 men, there were no reports of serious trouble involving Mr. Broughall's such as occurred with bosses at other collieries in the region.

During the 15 years that he ran the Ellangowen Colliery, it became the prize operation and biggest producer of all the P&RC&I collieries.

The work he did there earned him a big promotion in 1888 when the company made him superintendent of the district which included the Ellangowen, Knickerbocker, Turkey Run and West Shenandoah collieries plus the Yatesville jighthouse.

Mr. Broughall was married Dec 9, 1863 to the former Gwennie Templen. They had two children, Thomas and Elizabeth.

THOMAS HARLOR, for many years inside foreman at North Mahanoy Colliery, spent his life working in the anthracite industry.

Mahanoy City was four months shy of being chartered as a borough when Tom Harlor first saw the light of day at Thomaston Patch in Heckschersville Valley.

His parents, Joseph and Sarah (Miles) Harlor, came here from England. The mother died in Mahanoy City at age 52 and the father in Hazleton at age 76.

When they arrived from England, the parents had one child, Emily. Ten other children were born in America: Mary, Charles, James, Thomas, Harriet, Elisabeth, Joseph, Lydia, William and Eleanor. Another daughter died in infancy.

When Tom was a young boy, the family lived in Raven Run, and he attended school there as well as in Centralia.

At age seven, he secured a job as a breaker boy picking slate at Shenandoah City Colliery. Two years later he advanced to a job inside the mines. After eight years of mining experience, he teamed up with his father working cross-shift as miners at the same job.

In 1894, Tom moved to Mahanoy City to a position as a fire boss, a job which he held for 17 years at various operations including Glendon Colliery, just north of Mahanoy City; Primrose Colliery, west of Minersville; Tunnel Ridge and Boston Run collieries, west of Mahanoy City.

After returning to contract mining for one year, he became an assistant fire boss at North Mahanoy Colliery, then assistance inside boss at Tunnel Ridge, and finally inside foreman at North Mahanoy.

Two was married to the former Sarah Palmer, daughter of William Palmer of Mahanoy City. They had three children: Ethyl, Mae, and Roy, all now deceased.

Ethyl and Mae never married, but Roy had two children: Paul, who died last August, and Mrs. Betty Shiffert who lives in Mahanoy City.

Paul had two children: Bruce, who resides in Mahanoy City and works for Draper & Yost; Mark, who resides in Danville and is a speech pathologist at Geisinger Medical Center.

Bruce has two children, Dennis and Bryan, as does Mark, Evan and Katie.



**MOREA COLLIERY** - Although it was located atop Broad Mountain about three miles southwest of Mahanoy City, the Morea Colliery played a significant role in the history of the borough. Pictured above in 1913 when it was a bustling operation, the colliery employed most of the men and many of the boys who lived in nearby Morea and Brooklin patches, whose families did their shopping and went to church in Mahanoy City. The colliery work force also included many men who made their homes in Mahanoy City. Today, a skeleton of the breaker is all that remains of the colliery which closed in the late 1950s.