

MAHANAY CITY CHRONICLES
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PEOPLE OF THE EARLY COMMUNITY

Charles C. Hagenbuch was the man who kept the pioneer residents of Mahanoy City supplied with medicines, pain pills, tonics, salves, liniments and everything else in the drug store line.

He was the town's first pharmacist.

Mr. Hagenbuch brought two decades of pharmaceutical experience with him when he arrived here two years before the borough came into existence.

Unlike most early settlers who came to the Mahanoy Valley from points to the south, Charles Hagenbuch came from the north. He was born in Light Street, Columbia County, on April 27, 1835.

At the age of 14, he took a job in a Bloomsburg drug store owned by Joseph Taggart, which he eventually came to manage. He remained there for 22 years before deciding to strike out on his own. He chose the newly developing coal town of Mahanoy City to put down his roots, and it became his home for the remainder of his life. He died here in 1893.

The name of Charles C. Hagenbuch is also etched in the history of Mahanoy City as the borough's second postmaster, a post he held from 1865 to 1869 (the post office here was established in 1859 and Jonathan Lindenmuth served as the first postmaster until he retired to Locust Valley in 1865).

Mrs. Hagenbuch also served as a director of the First National Bank. (Note by

transcriber: writer may have meant Mr. Hagenbuch, not Mrs.).

After he had settled down to business in his new community, Mr. Hagenbuch took a trip back to Bloomsburg for the purpose of proposing to Miss Anna D. Ramsay. She became his bride on May 8, 1862, and accompanied him to Mahanoy City to being housekeeping at 101 W Centre St.

There were six Hagenbuch children: James and Bertram, both of whom attended medical schools in Philadelphia; Nellie; Horace, who followed his father's footsteps and entered the drug business in Mahanoy City; George and Mary, who died in their youth.

ANDREW COMERY is a name not found in Mahanoy City today, but the town would not have been the same without him.

He's an example of the success that lay waiting for an industrious young man who knew how to take advantage of opportunities.

Andrew Comery arrived in the Mahanoy Valley as a stranger with few possessions to his name. He left a wealth man, the subject of an amazing story of success.

Comery was 24 years old with Civil War service behind him when he arrived in Mahanoy City in 1869. One of nine children, he was born in Cumberland County where his father, Andrew, was engaged in farming and had served as a first lieutenant in the Pennsylvania State Militia. The patriarch of the clan, John Comery, had come to America from Germany and settled in the Pennsylvania Dutch belt, becoming a farmer in Lancaster County.

Young Andrew was 16 years old when the Civil War broke out and he joined the Pennsylvania Volunteer Cavalry. During the next three years in uniform he fought in the battles of Chickamauga, Bentonville, Averysboro, Franklin and Murfreesboro, was slightly wounded on two occasions and was a prisoner of war for two days after his capture at Cripple Creek.

At the conclusion of the war, he returned to Cumberland County and spent the next four years farming in the summer and teaching in the winter. In 1869 he set his sights on the new town mushrooming in the eastern nook of Mahanoy Valley.

After arriving in Mahanoy City, Andrew found a job as a clerk in a flour and feed

store, where he spent the next two years observing the town growing by leaps and bounds. With new buildings rising daily, he saw the opportunity in real estate and used his savings to acquire land for building purposes. He also established an insurance business and prospered during the 1870s and 1880s.

In view of his military experience, he was called upon to take an active role in the Silliman's Guards, a Mahanoy City military unit found in 1875 to cope with the disorder accompanying the coal labor troubles. When the unit was officially recognized by the Commonwealth and designated as Company E, 8th Regiment, Pennsylvania National Guards, the role of commander was bestowed upon Andrew Comery.

His devotion to law and order earned him several terms as a justice of the peace, and in 1888 was elected sheriff of Schuylkill County, serving one term.

As a leader of local development enterprises, he was instrumental in organizing the Mahanoy City Heat, Light and Power Company in 1887 and as the company secretary and superintendent.

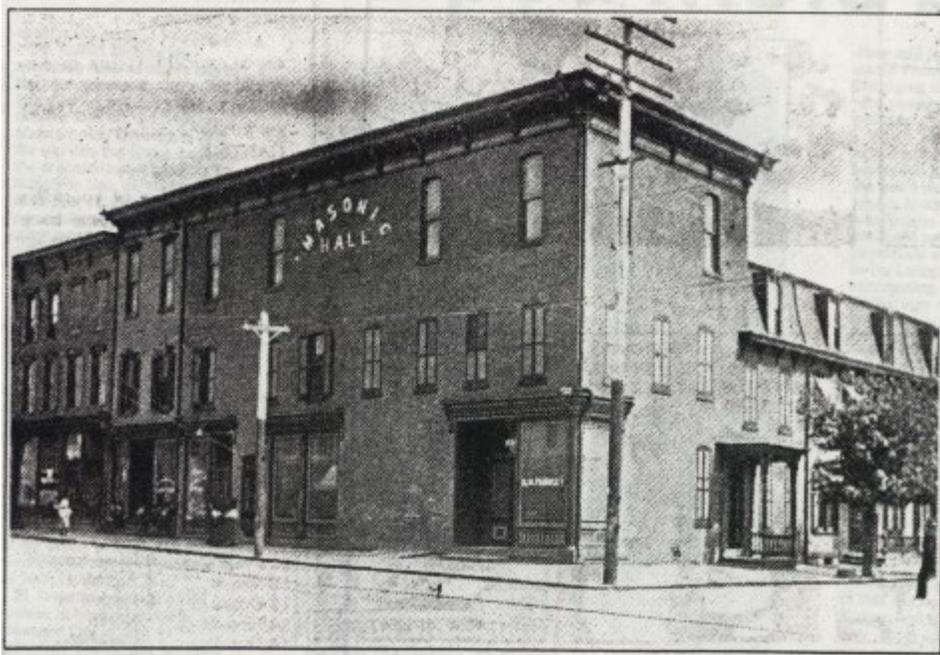
He also served as superintendent of the Mahanoy City Gas Company (founded in 1874) and was a director of the Schuylkill Real Estate, Title, Insurance and Trust Company of Pottsville.

In January 1889 he joined several other local businessmen in the founding of the Union National Bank and served as its first president. The bank set up temporary quarters at 26 W Pine St while constructing a brownstone building at 36-38 W Centre St., the site which today is occupied by the senior citizens nutrition center.

His family life was woven around his wife, the former Sarah Latham, and their six children: Ella, Edwin, Phoebe, Ethel, William and Harold.

For all his illustrious presence in the Mahanoy City of long ago, the memory of Andrew Comery has been lost in the cobwebs of time.

This biographic sketch of him is gleaned from the 1893 volume published by Samuel T. Wiley and from various other historical sources. What happened to him and his family after 1893 is not known. There are no Comerys listed in the Schuylkill County telephone book.



**FROM
THE**

PAST - Many organizations have come and gone in the 125-year history of Mahanoy City. One of the oldest local fraternal groups still active in town is freemasonry. Years ago, the various local masonic organizations had their own hall at Catawissa and Centre streets. The building stills stands (occupied by Troyanoski Appliance firm) although the condition is somewhat less attractive than it was when the photo was published in 1913.