

MAHANAOY CITY CHRONICLES/Researched by Lorraine Stanton

Prominent names in town history

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Herald writer

WADLINGER was a prominent name in Mahanoy City a century ago, but mention the name today and you'll raise no signs of recognition among the local population.

One of the Wadlinger boys, George J., grew up to become a judge of Schuylkill County Courts, but his fame was fleeting, for he died five months after taking office.

Originating in Bavaria, the family arrived in America in 1854 when Francis Wadlinger, father of the future judge, settled in Minersville and found work in the mines.

In 1865, Francis moved his wife (Anna Schaub) and five sons to Mahanoy City and opened a mercantile business in the Knapp Building at 4 E. Centre St. The family prospered in Mahanoy where four of the five boys opened their own businesses. Frank, John and Michael had butchers shops on East Centre, East Pine and East Market streets, respectively, while George operated a mercantile store. The other son, Jacob, worked in the father's store.

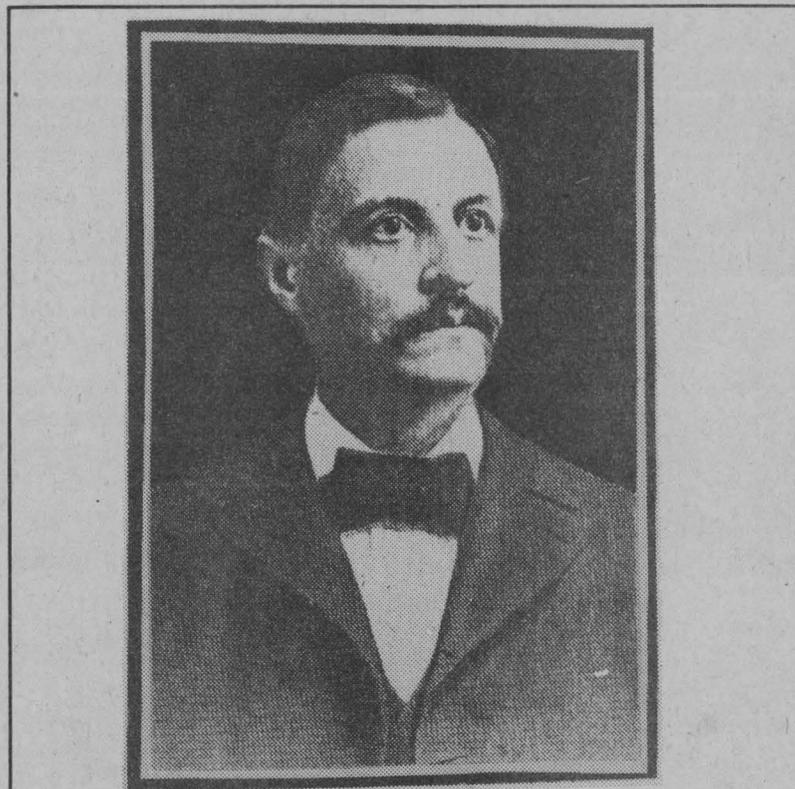
With the family grown, the father turned to the Minersville

area to join his brother, John, in running the F. Wadlinger & Co. mining operations which included the Phoenix Park Colliery, the Diamond Colliery near Forestville and the Anchor Colliery near Heckscherville. It was while performing his duties as superintendent of the latter operation that Francis suffered an injury that resulted in his death in 1879. He was 43 years old.

AS A BOY, George J. Wadlinger helped his father at the mercantile store in Mahanoy City. In 1873 he went to the Pittsburgh area to attend Saint Vincent College and earned a degree in accounting. He returned to Mahanoy City to open his own store and delved briefly into newspaper work but gave up those enterprises to begin the study of law.

In 1879 he went to Pottsville to become an apprentice in the office of Attorney Charles Brumm, leading to his admittance to the county bar on March 4, 1881.

He distinguished himself as a legal mind and sought a judicial seat in 1891 but was unsuccessful. In 1899 he tried again and was elected, taking office on Jan. 1, 1900. However, his tenure was destined to be brief — perhaps the briefest in county court an-



George Wadlinger
Ill-fated judge

nals. Afflicted by a heart ailment, he disregarded the advice of his physician and presided over proceedings during the January

and March terms of court. In early April his condition began to deteriorate rapidly and he never returned to his bench duties. He

died on May 10 at his 514 Mahantongo St. residence. Like his father, he was only 43.

JUDGE WADLINGER had the distinction of being the first secretary of the Schuylkill County Bar Association, serving from the founding of the association in 1887 until his death in 1900. He also served on the committee which administered examinations to candidates seeking admission to the bar.

Although he left Mahanoy City in 1879, he maintained an interest in the town and was one of the original stockholders who organized the Union National Bank in January 1889.

He was married in 1882 to a Luzerne County girl, Margaret D. Jones. Their offspring included: Charles, who became a doctor in Port Carbon; George (twin of Charles), who became a dentist in Pottsville; and Francis, who became a lawyer in Philadelphia.

Today, this once-prominent name cannot be found in residential directories of the Schuylkill County communities to which it contributed a mining company, a judge, a physician and a dentist.

LEWIS MATHIAS added a flavor of British aristocracy to Mahanoy melting pot when he arrived here to make his home in the newly chartered frontier town.

His was a nephew of Sir Henry Mathias, an English aristocrat, but a rift among relatives resulted in Lewis deciding to leave his native land and strike out for America where no lord, kin or otherwise, could lord it over him.

Lewis and his wife, Mary Isitt, arrived in Mahanoy City in April 1864, four months after the borough had received its charter. Lewis died here a year later, April 16, 1865, age 60 years. Mary lived in widowhood until her own death on July 7, 1891, age 81 years.

Their son, John, came with them from England. He was 22 years old when he first saw the little wilderness settlement called Mahanoy City, where he would become a leading citizen who served four years as president of borough council and one year as president of the school board, completing six-year terms on each body.

John earned his living as an agent for a school textbook publishing company and was prosperous enough to become one of the founding stockholders of the Union National Bank.

Three months after arriving in town, he was married to Ann Davis of Minersville. Two of their four children survived to adulthood: Mary and Lewis.