

MAHANOY CITY CHRONICLES/Researched by Lorraine Stanton

Barlows have long family history

By BILL O'BRIEN
Herald writer

GEORGE Wilbur Barlow, the man in charge of the history book for this year's Mahanoy City Quasiquicentennial celebration, has quite a family history of his own to look back upon.

The Barlow presence dates from the earliest times in Schuylkill County, and at one time the family owned the land on which the borough of New Philadelphia now stands.

Back in 1824, Nathan Barlow, a native of Limerick Township, Montgomery County, pioneered his way northward along the Schuylkill River into Schuylkill County and settled in the Schuylkill Valley where his paternal greatgrandfather owned a wilderness tract in partnership with a man named Evans. They had acquired the land long before there was a Schuylkill County. (Schuylkill was established on March 1, 1811).

Nathan settled on the estate and played a leading role in its four decades of development from a wilderness tract to a thriving mining town which was incorporated as New Philadelphia Borough in 1868.

By 1831, only two houses marked the site, one of them occupied by Barlow who, throughout his 42 years there, was the No. 1 citizen.

During his early years in the valley, Nathan taught school in

Lewistown Valley, located on the south side of Sharp Mountain. He frequently walked the 10-mile distance to the schoolhouse.

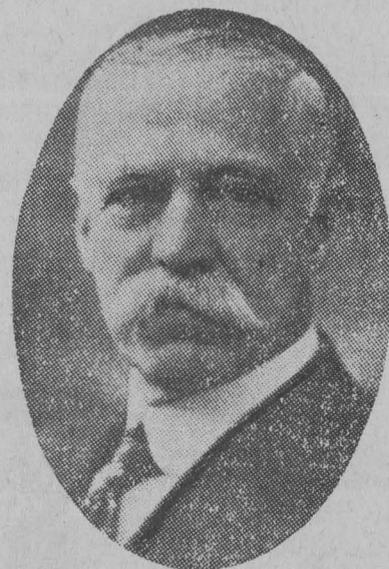
He also operated a saw mill/lumber business from 1824-29, then opened a store and a small coal mine. It was in his store on Tucker's Hill that the Primitive Methodist Church was organized and held early services.

He was the law in Schuylkill Valley for 23 years, serving as a justice of the peace from 1843 until 1866 when old age began to catch up to him and he moved to Mahanoy City to live with his son, Ephraim. He died in Mahanoy on Feb. 28, 1870, aged 70 years, and was buried in Pottsville.

THE BARLOW ancestry in America dated from colonial times when Nathan's paternal greatgrandfather came over from England.

Nathan was born Montgomery County in January 1795 and was married there on June 1, 1817, to Ann Brooks. She died less than a year later, May 1, 1818, at the age of 25 years, upon giving birth to her first child, John, who survived into adulthood.

Six years later, March 10, 1824, Nathan married Esther Kulp and they had the following children: William, born 1825; Phoebe, 1827; Nathan, 1829; Hiram, 1831; Daniel, 1835; Ephraim, 1837; Alfred, 1841; Malinda, 1843; Esther, 1846; Harriet, 1848; George W., 1851.

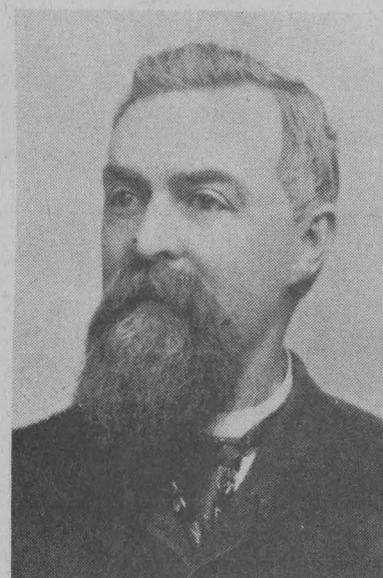


George W. Barlow

Two of the sons, Ephraim and Daniel, were among the pioneer settlers in Mahanoy City.

EPHRAIM WAS born in New Philadelphia on August 17, 1837. In 1854 he went to Dayton, Ohio, to spend two years learning the wheelwright trade. He returned to Schuylkill and worked briefly as a wheelwright in Port Carbon.

In 1857 he went to California to join his brother, Daniel, who had followed the gold rush there in 1855. The brothers prospered as partners in mining and timbering enterprises.



Ephraim Barlow

With the capital he had accrued from his five years in California, Ephraim returned East in 1862 and settled in Mahanoy City, a town just beginning to emerge from the wilderness. He opened a mercantile business at 17 E. Centre St. and in 1863, the year the town became a borough, he married Joanna Beddall.

Ephraim ran his mercantile store until 1876, at which time he turned his attention to the lumber trade which contributed much to the building of the town during its expanding decades. In the meantime, he bought interests in

West Virginia and Kentucky soft coal and coke ventures which proved to be quite successful.

Between all these business ventures, he found time to serve his community as a member of borough council for several terms, and as president of the board of health from the time of its establishment in 1894 and two decades thereafter.

He was also an elder and council member of Saint John's English Lutheran Church and senior deacon of the Free and Accepted Masons Lodge 357.

Ephraim and Joanna Barlow had three children. The first two, Wallace and Thomas died in infancy in 1864 and 1866. The third, George Washington Barlow, grew up to become one of Mahanoy City's prominent citizens.

GEORGE Washington Barlow was born in Mahanoy City on Dec. 3, 1866, and grew up to succeed his father in the direction of the family business interests.

After graduation from Mahanoy City High School, he attended the Pierce Business College in Philadelphia which prepared him to assume directorship of the local lumber business and the Virginia-Kentucky softcoal and coke enterprises. He also became a director of the Union National Bank.

George and his first wife, Ida Beddall, had a son, Ephraim, who died at age 17. After the death of his first wife, he married Anna

Skeath and they had five children: Ida, Catherine, Esther, Marie and George Wilbur.

DANIEL BARLOW came back from California in 1864 and joined his brother Ephraim in Mahanoy City. He died here on August 12, 1883, aged 48 years.

Daniel was born in New Philadelphia in 1835 and, like his father, taught school there before going to California in 1855.

In Mahanoy City he conducted a flour and feed business until 1873, at which time he joined his brother, Ephraim, in the lumber business, serving as superintendent and treasurer until his death.

His first marriage to Jane Uren produced two children, Phoebe and Nathan. His second wife was Mary Robertson of New Philadelphia. They were married in 1869 and had four children: Daniel, William Rosetta and Hiram.

CONSIDERING the proud family tree from which today's George Wilbur Barlow has descended, it isn't surprising that he should have an exceptionally keen interest in the history of Mahanoy City.

When you get your copy of the quasiquicentennial book (now off the press and available to be picked up by those who placed orders), you'll see an unexcelled example of George Wilbur Barlow's devotion to the 125-year-old town he calls home.