

## MAHANOY CITY CHRONICLES/Special edition

# Old days in the South End

By BILL O'BRIEN  
Herald writer

AS YOU SIT back in your easy chair contemplating 125 years of history in your home town, do you sometimes wonder what long-gone names and faces once occupied the old dwelling you now call home?

Information about most such old families are lost in the mists of time, but sometimes there pops up an old newspaper clipping which provides priceless memorabilia about such things.

Thus it was that a 62-year-old news item came to the attention of the Mahanoy City Chronicles to stir memories of the old days on South Main street. The writer is unknown. He signed himself only as "A Former Main Streeter." But the information he provides is rich in history.

Join us now as we journey back to 1926 with the oldtimer who shared his "Recollections of A South Ender":

**SOUTH MAIN** street in the eighties! How many of the boys remember it?

The Rhoads Lumber Yard stood up against the mountain in the middle of the block. The last house on the east side was owned by Jacob Rhoads and rented to Milton Bowman, a former chief burgess, who had a son, Lynn Bowman. Beyond the house was a field covered with grass and clover where the bees from Jacob Rhoads' hives gathered honey on hot summer days. In the latter eighties this field became four houses now numbering 117-23.

Next to the Bowman house to the north lived Jacob Rhoads, carpenter and contactor, his wife and daughters and young sons. This house was later purchased by David J. Cleary. Joseph Ferguson lived here and later it became two houses which are now occupied by George Spencer and Lewis Reilly.

The next house was occupied by Lawyer Ramsey for a short time, and then by a Mr. Paul. A creek flowing under this house was fed by a mountain stream on Brewery Hill. This house was afterward purchased by Fred Stoeckle.

The next house was built and owned by William Reagan. He was the pioneer lumber man who had his yard at Catawissa and Railroad streets and helped build the old Cooperative Building at Main and Centre. Dr. A. P. Bissel lived here at one time but in the eighties it was occupied by Thoms Moore. We all remember Tom's daughter Kate, a singer of ability. He also had four sons. This house has been remodeled and is now occupied by John Smith.

**ACROSS SPRUCE** street on the corner lived Phineas Garber, the pioneer blacksmith, who built the large house there. When his family moved to Philadelphia the



**MEMORY LANE** — This was South Main street in 1912. At right, on the corner of Spruce Lane, is the home built in the 1860s by pioneer blacksmith Phineas Garber. It was occupied for 40 years by

John A. Kline until he sold it in 1987. The Presbyterian Church steeple rises above the trees at right and visible just beyond it amid the leaves is the steeple of old Christ Lutheran Church. In the northern distance

is the Mahanoy City Colliery culm bank. Today's chronicle recalls some of the pioneers who lived in this neighborhood a century ago.

property was purchased by George Seligman and later by Harrison Ball.

The next house was owned and built by the Swayze family but later William Richardson lived in it. Still later Clark Swayze and Edward S. Sillman Jr. were the occupants. In 1896 Harrison Ball purchased it and tore it down. A beautiful lawn is to be seen there now.

Two small houses came next and were occupied by Charles Hand and Mrs. Rowbottom. These also were purchased by Mr. Ball and made into pretty homes. Superintendent Hiram Dodd lived there and at an earlier period Leon Lewis. Superintendent Harry Oday lived there in later years and it is now occupied by Joseph Lyons.

No. 93 South Main was the home of Mr. Ball's father in the latter part of the nineties and later his son lived there. Prior to that, Samuel Phillips occupied the house. George Mayer lives there now.

Next comes the Presbyterian Church which was served by Rev. A. M. Woods for 30 years. He was a good old man, loved and respected by all, irrespective of creed.

Across South street Dr. A. P. Bissel lived, but earlier it was occupied by David Bowman, the

photographer. Later it was the home of George Spencer and is now owned by Miss Seligman.

In the next house lived the Welsh Baptist preacher, Rev. Thomas. There was also a millinery store there at one time. John I. Mathias lived there for many years and it is now the home of his daughter, Mrs. Horacye Hermany, and Superintendent Oday. The Christ Lutheran Church comes next, at the corner of Mahanoy.

**BACK TO** the south end, at the corner stood the old Saint Paul's Reformed Church with Rev. H. A. Keyser the pastor for many years. The church was always crowded to the doors and the singing was marvelous — "Oh Tannenbaum, Oh Tannenbaum..."

Next house was owned by Charles C. Hagneuch in the early days and later it was the residence of Dr. Phaon Hermany. Still later Ned Irish owned it and had a family of all little girls. David E. Focht subsequently lived there and it is now occupied by Dr. James Hagenbuch.

The next house, at the corner of Spruce street, was owned by Ephraim Barlow and now belongs to his son, George W.

Crossing Spruce street we come

to the house where Landis Shipman lived with a family of nice girls. When he moved to Shamokin David Focht moved in for a short time, then Alex May bought the property and it remains in the May family.

Next house was owned by John Holland Sr., a mine foreman. Harry Heiser lived here for a short time, then John Parker, editor of the Tri-Weekly Record became the owner. His lovely wife was the pride and life of the neighborhood for many years. Remember their son Jim? The house later was purchased by Charles W. Smith. Charles Pollard lived there a short time as did also George Spencer. It is now owned by David D. Evans whose daughter, Dr. Harriet Evans, practiced medicine in the neighborhood for several years.

The next house is where Eli S. Reinhold, school superintendent and later banker executive, lived. It was purchased by Michael O'Connor and later by Charles Adam.

The property next, 92-90, was built and owned by Eli Whetstone. It was purchased by William Evans and rented to various individuals. Eugene Kuder lived there at one time and John Dolphin purchased it in the later nineties.

it into lots and built two two houses for himself at the corner of South street, occupying one for himself and renting the next to Lawyer William Ramsey. The corner house afterward was owned by John W. Phillips, David L. Van Horn and John Haley. The next house was bought by Dr. A. P. Seligman about 1896 and is now owned by James H. Kirchner.

Thomas Hess, the P&R land agent, purchased the next lot and built a house which is now owned by David B. Davies. The remainder of the lots and the old Thompson house were bought by Lawyer T. H. B. Lyons who later became a judge. There he and his wife entertained many friends in social and literary manner for many years. Later the big house was sold to Michael O'Connor who erected a smaller one at 72 South Main and sold the next lot to Square Dochney. Michael O'Connor's widow lived in the corner house for some years. It is now owned by their son and occupied by James Haughney.

**WHERE ARE** those boys of the eighties? The Pattersons are in West Virginia. Milton Reinhold is dead. Lynn Bowman is in Ohio. Amos Whetstone is in Washington State. We lost track of Tommy Roach, Jimmy Focht, Tom and Will Moore, Nibs Ramsey and Jim Parker.

Who can forget the night Willie Moore got lost? The bell was gotten and how we kids enjoyed going around town shouting "Child lost!" Finally Will stepped from behind a tree box saying, "Ah, go on. I ain't lost."

Who can forget Mrs. Salmon who lived at the top of the hill facing South main street? On the warm summer evenings before dark she would walk on that high elevation to get the cool evening breeze. We used to call her "the evening star."

There was a pole swing on the hill south of Main street and what fun we had there. Oh, how the honeysuckle bloomed and how often we took bunches home to mother.

In 1893 street, steps were erected for walking up the hill to the Humane's grove and picnic ground.

There was a brook which flowed down the mountain and went under the Stoeckle house before joining the creek further down. How we enjoyed wading in the cool water.

At the top of that hill there was a railroad on which cars were drawn by mules conveying coal from Baldwin's breaker on South Liden street to a chute at South Fourth street near the old Methodist Church.

I can't forget to mention Mulligan's Spout.

Oh, boy! Oh, joy! on this same old hill where the laurel bloomed profusely in those olden, golden days.

**CROSSING** South street we come to Dr. Louis Thompson's large lot extending to Mahanoy street. The large house stood a little back from the street and about 12 feet from the corner. It was surrounded by beautiful trees and shrubbery. The house and grounds were somewhat overgrown with vines. It was a dandy place to for kids to play hide and whoop (it sounded more like hidey whoop) which today the call hide and seek.

The doctor and his wife were getting too advanced in years to care for so large a place so he sold