

## MAHANOY CITY CHRONICLES



**MRS. JULIA SEICK**  
One of Spruce Street's Fine Old Ladies.



**M. J. RYAN**  
Prominent Lawyer and active at all times in Borough, County and State affairs. Ardent friend of W. Spruce Streeters.



**A. TOMALONIS**  
First Ward Councilman and Representative Businessman of the West End.



**JOHN WISZGARDA**  
Chairman Street Committee of Borough Council.



**HERBERT C. NOAKES**  
President of Town Council, Active Businessman and energetic Citizen of Mahanoy City.



**JOSEPH GABUZDA**  
First Ward Councilman and Active Citizen.



**JOHN J. MORAN**  
Borough Solicitor and active Citizen of Schuylkill County, well known member of Bar.



**MRS. GEO. BECKER**  
Life Long Resident of Spruce Street.



**MRS. MARY NORTHEY**  
One of the Grand Old Ladies of West Spruce Street.



**DAD AND MRS. BYRON**  
Real Live Wires Down Spruce Street Way.



**JOSEPH DULSKY**  
Old and Respected Resident of Spruce Street.



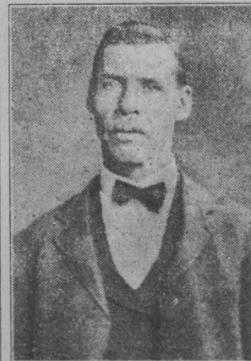
**JAMES P. FOLEY**  
"Picks" as everyone knows him was one of the many satisfied residents.



**MRS. SARAH GALLAGHER**  
A Life Long Resident of West Spruce Street.



**ANDREW STREMBA**  
Chairman of Meeting and Enthusiastic Resident of West Spruce Street.



**CHARLES RECKLITIS**  
Substantial Resident of West Spruce Street.



**HARRY KRIENER**  
One of the Boosters of One Night Old Home Week.

# Faces familiar on West Spruce

By **BILLO'BRIEN**  
Herald writer

WHICH BOROUGH council was the best ever to serve in Mahanoy City?

You'd get some dandy arguments on that one, but in 1926 there was no question in the minds of West Spruce street residents that the council in office at that time was the all-time No. 1 body of local lawmakers. The neighborhood even threw a big street party to honor the councilmen.

The reason for the celebration was the paving of West Spruce street, which marked the end of the mud and dust era prevailing there for 63 years of borough existence.

The paving was part of a series of public works improvements undertaken in the mid-1920s under a public bond issue proposed by the borough fathers and approved by the electorate.

The Record-American on August 25, 1926, reported on the celebration:

"SPRUCE STREET has come out of the mud which clung to its skirts, spattered its porches and left its mark upon every visitor who ever wandered down its paths. Evidence that the Spruce streeters are out of the mud to stay was offered last evening by a mighty throng who assembled to join the festivities attending the emergence of a good street from a bad condition.

"The celebration centered in the 300 and 400 blocks and was led by Andrew Stremba, progressive merchant and energetic citizen. The Eagles Band was present, the crowd was present, and there was plenty for everybody to eat, drink and make merry for several happy hours of joyous demonstration.

"Prominent figures in the borough's public life joined the Spruce streeters in their festivities, mingling with the happy crowd in carnival mood and receiving tremendous ovation from the taxpayers.

"The band, with John Unsinn directing, arrived at eight o'clock and was escorted at the front by Andrew Stremba, John Burns and Charles Savage. After a parade along the celebrating section, the musicians took positions on an improvised band stand opposite the Kriner home, there to delight the

merrymaking hundreds with sweet and snappy music all evening.

"Chairman Stremba, speaking from the porch of his home which was the center of activity, welcomed all to Spruce street. He introduced Herbert C. Noakes, president of borough council, who acted as chairman for the speechmaking. Mr. Noakes told the crowd:

"IT GIVES ME great pleasure to occupy so prominent a position in your minds and on this porch when you, as residents of Mahanoy City, see fit to honor me and members of the council as your guests.

"This celebration by you Spruce streeters is concrete evidence of your appreciation of the work that borough council has done for this portion of the town to help beautify your homes which are so near and dear to you.

"You have long been patient people. You have loaned every effort to the advancement of other portions of the town and now, by long and eager waiting, you too, are enjoying the same comforts of this well-regulated borough.

"As president of the council, I am perhaps more proud than you. We have worked hard, diligently and with one object in view — to fulfill our promises to take you out of the mud, so to speak. We believe we have given you as good a street as there is in Pennsylvania, well built, substantial and fully guaranteed.

"The present councilmanic body also has installed the numerous sewers for proper drainage here in your First Ward, and we have installed boulevard lights. You have entrusted your tax money to us and in all cases we have guarded your interests to the fullest measure.

"We feel we have given to Mahanoy City the best administration since it has been incorporated as a borough."

THE BOROUGH SOLICITOR, Attorney John Moran, reminded the Spruce street audience that "the council which took office in 1924 had the foresight to see that Mahanoy City was sinking into a state of decrepitude and had the courage to take steps for restoration of the town to a position of modern and complete facilities, and the voters expressed confidence in the council

by approving the bond issue which made the improvements possible."

THE RECORD-AMERICAN was caught up in the the spirit of the moment and reached back into history to provide some priceless insights into earlier times on West Spruce street, as the paper reported:

Lower Spruce street, from Catawissa to D, is a community of itself, closely knit as no other part of town is in like degree, by common interests, true neighborliness, firm and long rootings in the soil on which the homes are built.

Its history is as old as the town, for Spruce street was settled as early and much faster than any other street. When other sections were swamps and brush, Spruce street, being on higher ground, had clearings and homes. It has more older residents than any other section. Families came to stay and they seem to find there an air which brings them back even when they stray to other path or field. There is more than mere word to the saying 'Once a Spruce streeter, always.' They are a clannish lot.

Spruce street has the oldest woman in town, past the ripe old age of 103; it has a house more than 80 years old; it has the beloved Father Brennan of New York whose visits to the street are gala occasions; it has Irvin Correll who left to become a prominent attorney in Oklahoma; it was once the street that harbored that band of sturdy Irish from Kilkenny who rose to much prominence in the affairs of the borough and are still among the leading families.

MRS. GEORGE Becker of 508 has lived continuously on the street for 56 years, occupying the house built by her father, the late John Wingert, blacksmith of the earliest days, who bought the lot from the Hunninger family. She recalls the muddy days when some holes in the street were so deep that a full grown collie dog could stand in a pool and not be visible.

Across the street at 507 is Mrs. Mary Northey, 75 years old and a resident of that address for 45 years. She recalls when women used to carry stove ashes to the street to fill the holes and worked with shovel and rake to level the ruts. Once she could

look from her back door and see clear across town to the railroad without any buildings to obstruct the view. Living with her is a son, John, and nearby by are sons Richad at 515 and Harry at 513.

On the corner in the same block is Mrs. Julia Sieck who came to the street on Oct 10, 1875. She is the widow of a former councilman who for two terms tried to bring improved conditions to the street. She remembers that the holes on Spruce street were bad, but says those on Main street were twice as deep. She recalls, too, the dirt sidewalks which were firmly packed by foot traffic and kept clean by the brooms of housewives. About 30 years ago flagstone sidewalks came into use and the families who had them felt a little stuck up.

UP THE STREET a bit are the Copleys. The grandfather, Peter Copley, settled in the first house ever built on the street, 400-402, which he bought from the original settler. His daughter, Jane Fitzpatrick, lives in the corner house, and his son, John, deceased, lived at 402 which is now occupied by John's sons and daughters.

At 606 lives Thomas "Dad" Byron who has been on the street 60 years. His father, Michael Byron, came here from Washington to help sink the Tunnel Ridge slope. He built a log house for his family at 614 and felled several large trees to use as props to brace the walls against the winter winds.

Now living at 614 is Mrs. Margaret Byron. She has been there 48 years and remembers the swamp that covered the lower ground sloping down to the north of Spruce street. Her recollections include the first streets in the section as being narrow paths or log roads used for moving the timber when the trees of the Mahanoy forest were cut down to make way for the advance of civilization.

At 636 is the home of George Lever who located there 61 years ago. He says his last trip of any distance was to Philadelphia for the centennial in '76. He tells of having made several visits to Shenandoah, Pottville and Tamaqua, but says Ashland, Girardville and Hazleton are unknown territory to him. He also visited East Mahanoy Junction as lad of 18 and swam across the dam there.

JAMES P. FOLEY has lived for many

years at 401. His parents, Michael and Margaret, came to the street in 1871, residing first at 503 which was next door to John Foley, another old resident. In 1903 Jim, after his marriage, located at 401.

One of the oldest business establishments on Spruce street is the grocery store of Frank Mitchell at 333. He moved there in 1895.

The Westwood family at 421 has been there since Daniel Westwood bought the lot from the late Elisha Filer. Now living there are Daniel's daughters, Hattie Stitzer and Rose Westwood.

Harry Kriner has occupied 410 since 1901 when he acquired the former Brickley homestead. He remembers coming to the aid of teamsters and hucksters countless times to help them out of the mud.

Mrs. Bridget Burns lives at 413 where she and her late husband, Jeremiah, settled in 1894.

At 516 resided Charles Recklitis and his wife, Eva Yockabonis, who are among the early Lithuanian settlers on the street, having lived there since 1885. At the rear of their home is a house that predates the memory of the oldest resident of the neighborhood, making it more than 80 years old, which would date it around 1846.

The very first Lithuanian settler who can be recalled by the oldtimers was Joseph Dulsky who moved his family here from Shenandoah. All are now deceased. A few years later, a cousin also named Joseph Dulsky moved here from Shenandoah and still lives at 613. His son, Joseph, formerly served on borough council.

AT 621 lives Mrs. Sarah Gallagher who settled there in 1891.

The McBreen family at 602, the John Green family at 605 and the Simon Brown family at 623 all have lived there since about the turn of the century.

Living with Mrs. Eve Augustities is Mrs. Eve White, age 103 years and a resident of the street 1886.

This reminiscing does not take into account the many other old families who live in the Stony Point section at the western extremity of Spruce street, nor those residing in the blocks east of Catawissa street.