

## MAHANOY CITY CHRONICLES

# Saule kept Lithuanians informed

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Herald writer

IT WAS 100 years ago this year that the "Sun" began to provide illumination for the Lithuanian community of Mahanoy City.

Saule (Sun) published its first edition as a Lithuanian language newspaper on July 27, 1888. At its peak, the paper number 9,000 subscribers in the United States and abroad.

A number of competing Lithuanian periodicals from other areas had circulation in the region at various times during Saule's history, but none were as successful and long-lasting as Saule.

For 71 years, the Lithuanian "Sun" served readers throughout the anthracite region as well as in many other states and even across the ocean. Wherever people were interested in the latest Lithuanian doings, they looked to Saule to shed light on the news.

Although the newspaper stopped publishing in 1959, the job printing end of the business is still in operation 100 years later, occupying the the large wooden structure which for years has been the Saule Building at the northeast corner of A and South streets.

Throughout its century of operation, the business has been run by succeeding generations of the Boczkowski family. The current job shop operator, Ed-

ward, is a grandson of the founder.

A GLIMPSE of Saule's history is found in the paper's 50th anniversary edition of July 27, 1938, which carried the headline:

"1888 Saules 50 Metu Auksninis Jubilejinis Numeris 1838"

The paper was founded by Dominick T. Boczkowski, whose goal was to educate and enlighten his countrymen. Most of the immigrants belonged to the laboring class, and Dominick wanted to make them good, freedom-loving citizens, a credit to their native land as well as to the United States.

In 1886 he was living at Plymouth, Pa., editing the publication "Vienybe Lietuvinku," which later moved to Brooklyn, N.Y., and published as a daily.

During his tenure at Plymouth, which had a large community of Lithuanian immigrants, Dominick took note of what the people needed and what they liked most, and he decided that he would one day have his own newspaper to serve these needs.

Two years later, with very little money but stout determination, he launched Saule as a weekly in Mahanoy City. One of the first news stories Editor Boczkowski reported was the creation on Sept. 30, 1888, of a new Lithuanian Roman Catholic Parish, known as Saint Joseph's. Today, both are celebrating a century of serving Lithuanian Americans.

Saule's first quarters were in a little basement at the corner of B and Pine streets. It was there that Dominick put together his stories and pages. Saule had no printing press, so it farmed out the printing to one of the other local English language papers.

It took several years of working day and night, with the help of his three young sons, to build a circulation level necessary for a successful operation.

In 1896, the shop moved to larger quarters on West Spruce street, then to South street.

IN 1902, the advent of the violent six-month mine strike resulted in a decision of Editor Boczkowski to expand his newspaper into a twice-weekly publication.

The strike created a great deal of news to be reported to the thousands of Lithuanian immigrants who worked in the coal industry. Rather than cram all the news into one weekly edition, Mr. Boczkowski decided to print semi-weekly.

Lithuanian miners were so numerous that the United Mine Workers allowed them to form their own local union. Other UMWA locals were limited to workers at specific collieries — men who worked at the Mahanoy City Colliery belonged to the Mahanoy City Local; those at North Mahanoy Colliery were members of the North Mahanoy Local, and so forth.

However, in the case of the Lithuanian local, the membership



**Dominick T. Boczkowski**  
Founded Saule in 1888

was on a nationality basis regardless of which colliery the men worked at. The basis reason for this was good communication. Many of the immigrants hadn't yet developed a command of English, and in order to convey union messages to them with clarity, the UMWA used Lithuanian-speaking leaders to address the immigrant miners at their local union meetings.

SAULE PLAYED played an important role in keeping readers

informed of strike developments, which were the sensational news of the day. Reports were published on activities of the National Guard troops sent here to keep peace. There were news reports to be disseminated about the coal companies trying to operate collieries by importing groups of workers recruited outside the region. There were stories about arrests resulting from disturbances between pickets and coal company police at various collieries. There incidents of sabotage at mining operations; of strikers stopping trolley cars and beating up passengers suspected of sneaking to work at out-of-town collieries. There were regular dispatches to report the progress of negotiations between the mine operators and the UMWA led by Johnny Mitchell.

All these events, reported fully, factually and fearlessly on the pages of Saule, helped the paper grow in popularity.

THE FOUNDER, Dominick Boczkowski, died Feb. 25, 1909. Despite a long illness, he remained at his desk almost to the end. His wife succumbed Jan. 13, 1915.

After the father's death, the paper's operation was continued by three sons who learned the business by working from childhood alongside their father. Frank W. S. assume the post of editor; William D. became publisher; Victor L., co-publisher.

Frank also served 10 years as an interpreter for the county

courts, and for many years was the deputy coroner for Mahanoy City and vicinity.

He was married to the former Cecilia Baranovski, a native of Shamokin, and they had three children: Francis became a district supervisor for Bell Telephone in Indianapolis; Florian was a well-known Mahanoy City electrical contractor with a shop at Catawissa and Pine streets; and Adeline became the wife of Scranton mining engineer A. J. Baraukas.

William served a term on borough bouncil and as a member of the borough board of health. He was married to the former Sue Drabnis and they had four children: Roman and Eleanor are now living in New York state; Frances is in Florida; Tillie, a retired teacher in Ridley Park, is deceased.

Victor was married to the former Rose Tomaszewski of New Boston. They had two sons, both still living in Mahanoy City. Leon is a retired carpenter and Edward keeps the Saule job printing operation going.

WHEN THE last edition of Saule rolled off the press on June 26, 1959, the chapter closed on an important slice of history, not only for Mahanoy City but for the Lithuanian community of the entire anthracite region.

In the pages of Saule were recorded scenes from the passing parade of Baltic immigrants who played a significant role in the development of a town, a region and a nation.