

MAHANAY CITY CHRONICLES  
September 9, 1988

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## **DORSEYS FIRST PLAYED FOR DOMSON**

**(The following biographical sketch of the late Charles A. Domson has been provided by is son, Charles L., the Mahanoy City real estate broker.)**

CHARLES A. DOMSON, born March 28, 1888, in Mahanoy City, son of Wendel and Rose Domson, was an outstanding pianist of his era. His orchestra, known as the Frisco Six, was well-known in southeastern Pennsylvania as well as in Schuylkill and neighboring counties.

Professor Domson also served as pianist in the Kaier Grand Opera House orchestra from 1904 to 1909 and as conductor from 1909 until October 1913 when the theatre building was destroyed by fire.

Mr. Domson's entry into the entertainment world of music came with the orchestra of Tommy Dorsey Sr. of Shenandoah and Lansford. A few years later, in reciprocation, he took on Jimmy and Tommy Dorsey Jr. in his orchestra at the request of Thomas Sr. The brothers, later to achieve nationwide fame in the musical world, made their debut in Gorman's (Maher's) Hall in Shenandoah as members of Mr. Domson's orchestra. They advanced from here to Paul Whitman's orchestra in New York City.

DURING THE life of the opera house Mr. Domson conducted New York vaudeville shows and plays on a weekly basis. These stage attractions drew an audience from a 100-mile radius. The best refineries of dress were worn by all patrons attending these performances.

The fire that destroyed the building put an end to a period of entertainment unparalleled before and since that time in this region. It left the people here with sad but pleasant memories of the opulence, glamour and glitter that was the Kaier Grand Opera House, a favorite topic of conversation for years to come.

A FEW WEEKS prior to his fifteenth birthday, on March 6, 1903, Mr. Domson, then a student at the McCann School of Business, was hired as a bookkeeper at the Charles D. Kaier Brewing Company. His employment there lasted 56 years to the day and he passed away, March 6, 1959.

"Chas. A.", whose nickname was familiar to everybody, worked his way up from office clerk to office manager and director to president on Feb. 10, 1943, the eve of his 40th anniversary with the Kaier company.

In 1937 Mr. Domson, with a note of strong optimism, persuaded the board to invest \$1,000,000 to build a new brewery and a new bottling house. Upon completion of these projects, the work force expanded to 145 people and sales increased proportionately. This was very favorable to the company as well as stimulating to the local economy.

BY KEEPING abreast of the latest brewing methods Mr. Domson made Kaier's one of the most modern and efficient breweries in Pennsylvania, but he retained the original Kaier formula, never abandoning the recipe through a succession of brewmasters during his regime.

The product, ever popular with the public, received the "Star of Excellence" award at the international competition in Brussels Belgium, in August 1960. This was the most gratifying achievement of which management and employees were very proud, a tribute to Charles D. Kaier, founder of the company, and a source of extensive advertising and recognition for the brewery and the community.

Normal channels of advertising were used by Kaier's consistently, by newspaper and radio. Extensive billboard advertising proved very effective in reaching the public also. And Mr. Domson added a most unique method by leasing a team of ponies to tow a Kaier's wagon in parades and stadium events.

Kaier sponsorship of the annual Saint Francis Orphanage picnic at Swank's Gove (Brandonville) for a number of years in the 1940s, which was a "Christmas in July" affair for the kids, was another unusual type of advertising.

BESIDES maintaining excellent relations with Mame Kaier and her surviving husband Lloyd W. Fahler, owners of the company, and with John B. Lieberman II, vice president (who advanced to president when Mr. Domson passed away), Chas. A. also commanded the high esteem of the office force and of the union employees in the plant. The annual company picnic was anticipated, enjoyed and appreciated by management and union personnel alike.

On March 6, 1953, the fiftieth anniversary of Mr. Domson's employment with Kaier's the management of the company held a party in honor of the occasion. It was held on the second and third floors of the Elks Club (at that time the first floor was occupied by the Elks Movie Theatre). The union was given a paid holiday for that day and the public at large was invited to the party. Food, drink and entertainment expense was borne by the Kaier Company.

IN ADDITION to his associations at the brewery Mr. Domson was active in many civic projects and charities. Working on committees when called upon, he was always most generous in the financial support of the activity.

Active in many fraternal organizations, on April 10, 1945, after 35 years of continued active membership in Mahanoy City Lodge 695 Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, he was presented with an honorary life membership.

On April 24, 1954, he received the "Man of the Year" award from the local American Legion Post 74.

He was an active member of the Fraternal Order of Eagles for 47 years and of the Travelers Protective Association for 38 years.

He was a member of the Loyal Orde of Moose, Lions Club, Pocono Beagle Club, United Social Club and the Ivy Leaf Association of Reading and the American Federation of Musicians Local 170.

ON MARCH 26, 1913, Mr Domson and Alice J. Riordan also an office employee of the Kaier company, were married in Saint Canicus Church.

They were the parents of two children: Charles, living with his family at the old homestead at 129 E. Centre St., and Mrs. Alicia Whalen, deceased. Four grandchildren also survive.



**Charles A. Domson**  
Musician/brewery executive

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