

South Queen Street As I Knew It

By THEODORE DILLER

South Queen Street, Lancaster, begins in Center Square and runs directly south to the City line; and beyond this point the road is continued southward, although not in a direct line, through Willow Street, Quarryville and Buck to the Maryland line and beyond. It is one of four highways originating in Center Square and leads through a part of the town and county which is different from that traversed by North Queen or East and West King Streets. I am giving some impressions now as I recall this street as a boy, between 1875 and 1880.

The entrance from Center Square is flanked by a newspaper building on either side—the *Intelligencer* and the *New Era*—Democratic and Republican. These excellent papers each owed allegiance to its own party in an unwavering manner. Each journal was made up of four pages—enough then and, perhaps now, if we only knew it. The editor of the *New Era*, J. M. W. Geist, was a man of great ability, a sound, clear-thinking editorial writer. A. J. Steinman of the *Intelligencer*, was also an able editor. A little farther along the street one passes the home of J. Yeates Conyngham, grandson of Jasper Yeates, who lived in a dignified, old-fashioned home. His figure and personality greatly attracted me as a boy. He was now growing old and bent, and his eyesight was bad. Carrying in his hand a lantern, for the street lights were poor, he made his way Sunday evenings to St. John's Episcopal Church, where I often saw him. One or two houses below, farther south (w), Dr. Henry Carpenter's home and his old-fashioned shop were reached. His striking personality impressed boy and man alike. The Fountain Inn, next to Dr. Carpenter, was a notable tavern of high standing. In the middle of the square, on the east side, stood a very commodious house, built by a noted lawyer, John Montgomery; afterwards occupied by Mrs. Blackwood's school, and later by my uncle, Isaac Diller. There was a large room of striking character in this house, circular in form, with the windows and doors curved to conform to its shape. To me, the Muhlenberg Pharmacy in the first square (e) was very impressive. The whole place had an air of mystery and dignity. It was equipped with old-fashioned drawers, bottles and jars. Moreover, it was conducted in a dignified way, and there was not the slightest suggestion of what we see everywhere in drug stores today: soda fountains, candies and department store atmosphere, cheapness and vulgarity. Indeed, I might add that in 1880 general business was conducted in Lancaster in a high-grade way, by merchants who were high-grade men.

On the same side of the street farther south (e) was the office and home of Dr. Carpenter's most distinguished patient, Thaddeus Stevens. I remem-

Note: "e" signifies the east, and "w" signifies the west side of the street.

ber this house very well indeed, although I was too young to recall the occupant. At or near the corner of South Queen and Vine Streets were three taverns and a little candy or notion shop (w), which must have been built many, many years ago; on the southwest corner was the Rote undertaking establishment. I was awed by the appearance of Mr. Rote, who was tall and somber, and seemed to me in his person to proclaim his calling.

In the middle of the square (w) lived an irascible attorney, who made trouble for himself and everybody else, including the Republican party and the Presbyterian church. But I feel confident he had more good points than many of us, who have created less commotion in the world. His next-door neighbor was Wm. P. Brinton, who was just the opposite in temperament, conduct and aim in life. Mr. Brinton retired from active business at comparatively early age. I saw and talked to him many, many times; and he always seemed to me a very learned, kindly, dignified man, not controversial or antagonistic in any way; nor was he averse to entering into conversation at any time. His two sons, Ed and Billie, were two of my warm friends, and their sister, Henrietta, who is now Mrs. Deming, of Salem, Ohio, was a good friend of my sister.

My earliest recollection of life is in the house in the middle of the second square of South Queen Street, number 126, in which I spent my childhood and boyhood. Next door to us, in my early days, was the Children's Home (w); and afterwards the place was occupied by an Order of Roman Catholic Sisters, who conducted a school. I recall in my early boyhood days hearing, through the walls of the house, the faint echoes of *Adeste Fidelis*, early on Christmas morning. Next to our house, to the north, was another school, conducted by John Wagner and his wife. Mr. Wagner had been a Reformed minister, who had abandoned his faith to enter the Roman Catholic Church. He was a tall, dignified, severe, irascible man—to me at least. Immediately opposite our house was an impressive building,—formerly the site of the Quaker Meeting house—the Odd Fellows' Hall. Bill (Wm. O.) Frailey, whose father was custodian of this building, was one of my staunchest friends; with him I often explored the place, viewing with wonder and amazement the paraphernalia of the Odd Fellows' ritual; and I wondered and wondered at the number and size of the spittoons, which I found in these rooms. A few doors north of us, in an old-fashioned house, lived the Harberger family, and afterwards Prof. Carl Matz.

Each of the four corners of South Queen and German [now Farnum] Streets are indelibly impressed on my memory. On the northwest was a brushmaking establishment; and Adam J. Rotharmel, son of the proprietor, was one of my early companions. Just across German street (w) was the handsome house of Gideon W. Arnold, who managed one of the cotton mills, located a square west of his home. Sheldon S. Spencer was manager of another of these factories, which greatly contributed to the prosperity of Lancaster. Mr. Arnold, like Mr. Spencer, came from New England, and was

quick and alert, both in his talk and his gait. Mr. Arnold had four children, Ada, Walter, Frank and Ira. All were well known to me, and I had many boyhood associations with them. Of this family group, only Ira survives. Immediately opposite the Arnold home was the Geiger home (e), and here again there were three brothers and a sister; the latter became the wife of P. T. Watt. The great attraction of the place to my mind was a donkey, which they persuaded me to ride, despite the fact tricks were played on the animal, which often resulted in landing me on the ground.

The fourth corner was occupied by a baker shop (e); and here I was sent at intervals to buy two cents' worth of "satz," which was the common name in those days for yeast, and which was indeed as effective in its bacterial strength as the more refined Fleishman's yeast of today. A few doors above (e) the corner of German Street lived a quaint little German, Philip F. Blessing, who pow-wowed, and thus healed and prevented disease. I have never forgotten one occasion on which I saw him enact his ritual. Next to the Geiger family was the Methodist Church (e), which was held in a good deal of awe by residents; for it was the scene of very marked emotional upheavals, which the boys also beheld in awe, if not in reverence. Farther along the square was the stately Bower's home (w), which to us boys seemed "grand." Then a square farther south was the Miller home (w), where lived the father with three "boys" of adult age, all unmarried. These "boys" never worked at anything so far as I could learn; but they were all skillful in one way or another; playing the fiddle, playing billiards, and etching colored Easter eggs. These eggs were famous far and near, and were elaborate productions and greatly prized.

A little farther along, one came to the Shiffler Hose House, the Memorial Presbyterian Church (w), and the Woodward Hill Cemetery (e), and then a little farther on South Queen Street ended rather abruptly at the top of the hill which descended to Conestoga Creek. Beyond the creek are many new houses; but they do not concern us here. The houses in the lower end were all more or less primitive, often one and a-half stories high, and all seemed to have been built many, many years ago. I am confident some of them were built before the beginning of the nineteenth century; and a few of them, might have been built before the Revolutionary War. Indeed, there were few new houses on South Queen Street.

I came into the world after the night watchman, who called the hours, had disappeared from the scene; but I have heard so much of him that I seem to be able, in imagination, to see him. However, I recall in my early days that gas lights were just succeeding the coal oil lamps, and I myself had a snobbish feeling because we had gas light in our house, while coal oil lamps still prevailed in houses of our neighbors.

In my early days, the milkman drove to our door and rang a loud brass bell, and someone in the house came out to receive the milk which the milkman ladled out of a large can by means of a dipper. When the right quantity

was given with the dipper, the remainder of the milk was thrown back into the large can. It was paid for on the spot. Once the milkman grumbled because he was asked to deliver the milk inside the house. He said he should not be asked to do the work of a maid. In 1880, the iceman did not deposit the ice in the refrigerator, but threw it in the alley or at the side of the house, where it was recovered by someone, and taken into the house before it was too far melted. I remember the fashion of hoop skirts, the bustle and trains; also I recall sleigh rides and buggy rides. To be tucked into a sleigh with a party of laughing boys and girls was certainly a joy.

Active, lively sports prevailed among the boys of South Queen Street—shinny, piggy, fox-and-hounds, baseball; and in the winter, coasting, especially on German Street; also skating and snowballing. The cobbler shop of Dad McCully, in the middle of the second square, was a rendezvous for the boys of South Queen Street. Dad was a veteran of the Civil War, and he told endless stories of dangers, bravery and heroism—the creditable part he, himself, bore was not concealed from us. While Dad mended shoes with great vigor sometimes, he never let business interfere with a game of euchre or the recitation of an adventure.

South Queen Street, as a whole, was very intriguing to me as a boy. In the first place it led to Conestoga Creek, directly and by a side route through Strawberry Alley. I learned to skate and swim in this creek, and also to manipulate a small boat. One great event in my life was swimming across the Conestoga Creek at "Sandbar." Often times in the winter the creek was frozen, and skating was safe; then great numbers of people engaged in this wholesome sport. On a winter day, it was interesting to sit at a window and watch the skaters go by in either direction. Frequently expert skating was witnessed. I recall Charley Howell who was renowned for his skill. My old friend, Ross Eshleman, did many fancy, graceful stunts.

Besides the skating processions up and down South Queen Street, there was the procession on market days when the farmers came to town to sell their produce. These were lively days for the taverns at the corner of Vine Street, and for the Fountain Inn. Then there were the processions down South Queen Street that never returned. Those were the processions following the dead to Woodward Hill Cemetery. Also there were political parades which took place in October, shortly before the presidential elections. These were truly marvelous, when men and boys, equipped with cap and cape of oil cloth, carried torches. These processions were thrilling to participants and on-lookers alike. So there were all sorts of processions; but there was one which was different from all those mentioned. I refer to the pulling of the fire engine and hose cart. These processions naturally formed at irregular intervals and were impromptu. The loud fire alarm bell summoned the Shiffer Hose Company members to the hose house. The engine and hose cart were drawn by a rope, and members of the fire company and non-members joined in grabbing the rope, and helped to pull the engine and hose cart along.

There was a great ingathering of people from all directions on two days of the year, April 1st and Whitmonday. April 1st was general settlement day. Many financial accounts ran for a whole year to April 1st, when they were paid. The store-keepers naturally made these days as attractive as possible. In one store I recall, free beer was to be had all day long. On Whitmonday also, great crowds were attracted for sports and merrymaking. For years, the Whitmonday horse races were famous. On these gala days, the streets and hotels were crowded, and carriages and wagons lined both sides of the main streets.

The boys of South Queen Street with whom I associated were lively, animated and resourceful. There were the three Arnold boys, Bill Frailey, Bill Buckius, Harry Leibley, Billie and Eddie Brinton, George and Ellis Suydam, Milton Falck and Sam Diller. Bill Frailey was the leader. He organized the Night Hawks, based on a novel he had read. The initiation to this Order was rather elaborate and painful. The Night Hawks ran about the streets, upsetting lime boxes, brick piles and engaging in other mischievous capers. At Hallowe'en, the Night Hawks were exceptionally active. They placed turnips and pumpkins before doors; and if a dead animal, like a cat or chicken, could be found, it was tied to a door. Tick-tocks were an ingenious device fastened to a window which could be made to tap by means of a string held in the hands of a boy some distance away. Once we greatly terrified Mrs. Wagner who could not get at us, because we had tied her door shut. The Night Hawks also engaged in digging a cave on the banks of the Conestoga Creek, in conformity with rules laid down in another novel which impressed Bill Frailey. Also, the Night Hawks fought rival gangs from time to time. The Fourth of July was another great day, and Bill Buckius, who was a near neighbor then, and is now a close neighbor in Pittsburgh, would join me in rising early to celebrate the Fourth by firing crackers and cannon. In the evening Bill and I, with four or five others, built a large bonfire in the street. For these fires, boxes were required, and I was called on to procure them from my father's hardware store. I also obtained tar barrels, excelsior and loose boards.

A little money went a long way, and country produce, flour, milk, poultry, etc., were much cheaper than they are now. For instance, a fat duck could be purchased for 50 cents. Servants received as little as \$2 or \$3 a week. On one occasion, Charlie Diller and I abducted from our back yard a pair of chickens, which I sold in the market for 75 cents. The discovery of my guilt constituted a tragedy in my early life.

Many of the people on South Queen Street kept horses, cows and chickens in the back yards, which were ample and ran back to Soap Fat Alley, which separated South Queen Street from South Prince Street. There was a quasi-rural atmosphere in South Queen Street. Indeed, in my boyhood days I witnessed butchering of hogs in some of the backyards. These yards also supported attractive and productive orchards. There was no hand-to-mouth liv-

ing in South Queen Street. In many cellars were provisions to last all winter; for instance, a barrel of flour, a quarter of beef, etc.

In 1875, the street corners were lighted by kerosene lamps, and the lamp-lighter on his rounds was a picturesque figure. Another custom which has long since disappeared, is the closing at bedtime of the shutters with which each house was equipped. Incidentally, this was sometimes a signal for long-staying suitors to depart. Door bells were mechanically operated. One pulled a knob which tinkled a bell. There were no electric bells. Busy-body mirrors were tilted at the side of windows, so that persons coming up or going down the street could be seen before they passed the house. There was little or no plumbing in the 70's, even in excellently equipped houses; but by 1880, some houses were modernized in this respect.

One of my earliest boyhood recollections was the burial of Hon. O. J. Dickey, who had been a congressman. The long procession, which seemed to me endless, indicated to my mind that a very great man was being buried. Some who passed our house back and forth were my elders, and I did not know them so well as the boys. But I will mention Hon. W. A. Morton, universally called "Billie." He was tall, dignified and kindly. Mr. Morton will be remembered as one of the proprietors of the *Intelligencer*. Many times he passed our house, saluting as he did so. He will be recalled by the older members of this Society as a mayor of the city. He was an enthusiastic Mason, an ardent Democrat, and a devoted member of St. James's Church, where he attended with great regularity. Often he brought with him to church one or two young men, and was the means of persuading several to enter the church. Mr. Morton frequently said there were three requirements to be fulfilled if a man would enter the Kingdom of Heaven: (a) Be a Mason, (b) a Democrat, (c) and a member of the Episcopal church. Mr. Morton himself conformed to these requirements. There was another figure who passed our door entirely opposite in every way, for he decried the Masons and was a critic and not a supporter of Christianity, and a staunch Republican. Nevertheless, he was an interesting, kindly man.

I mention another figure who passed our house on his way to his home, two or three squares below us. This man afterwards attained world-wide fame in business, finance and philanthropy. I refer to Milton S. Hershey. Day by day he walked by the house, quietly saluting those he met, and created no impression of his potential greatness among the inhabitants of South Queen Street. A picturesque figure on South Queen Street was that of Thaddeus Smith, a barber, the son of Thaddeus Stevens' housekeeper. He was a mulatto, and conducted himself with an astonishing degree of dignity. He was often called upon to shave sick men in their homes, and also to perform this office for the dead.

To summarize: It may be said South Queen Street was an important, colorful and picturesque residential avenue; it was also, although in a lesser degree, one of the city's most important commercial thoroughfares. Shops,

stores and offices, churches and schools, the Shiffler Fire Company and Woodward Hill Cemetery gave color and atmosphere to South Queen Street, which was all its own. It differed from the other three great highways originating in Center Square. On South Queen Street, we find at one time or another a group of men of local, national or international fame. I recall four physicians: Dr. Henry Carpenter; his son-in-law, Dr. Robert Bolenius; Dr. M. L. Herr, under whom I studied medicine, and Dr. S. H. Metzger; the irascible lawyer, who, whatever else he was, was not a cipher; J. D. Pyott, W. W. Griest, Milton S. Hershey, certainly a national figure, and Thaddeus Stevens, who cut a figure in history which makes him a national, indeed an international figure.

To conclude, there are those, I am sure, who consider South Queen Street and the southern section of the city the least important of the four city sections. But all who have listened carefully to this paper will perceive that of the four great arteries of Lancaster, arising in Center Square, the greatest of these is South Queen Street.

Ye Old Time Inns of South Queen Street

By (MRS. D. B.) BERTHA COCHRAN LANDIS

Among the old time taverns of South Queen Street were "Martin Bartgis' Public House" immediately south of the Conestoga Bank building, where Majors Andre and Despard stayed for a short time before being transferred to the house of Caleb Cope on North Lime Street; the "Fountain Inn" and "The Unicorn" opened by Adam Messenkop in 1796. These three were on the west side of the first block, while in the second block was located the present "Swan" on the southeast corner of Vine Street. This tavern was built by Dr. Clarkson Freeman in 1824. It was opened as a tavern by Archibald D. Warren as the "Lancaster City" or "Lancaster County Hotel," succeeded by Leonard Eichholtz, Jr., Joseph Hubley and his widow, Rosina Hubley. Dr. Freeman was quite fond of the drama, and had his house so arranged that he could present theatricals. Edwin Forrest was among those who adorned his stage. The hotel yard, which is still there, was at one time crowded with Conestoga wagons and private carriages of the guests who came to witness the theatricals given by Dr. Freeman.

Almost directly opposite, second door from Vine Street, on the west side, we find the "Lamb" flourishing as a tavern in 1823 which continued up to 1888, when it was demolished to make way for the Southern Market House. During the proprietorship of Hugh Fitzpatrick, who was also a contractor of some note, having worked on the construction of the famous "Horse Shoe Bend," this tavern was a popular meeting place for such notables as Thaddeus

Stevens, Father Bernard Keenan of St. Mary's Church, and others, where they often engaged in a friendly game of cards, seated at a long table, lighted only by candles at each end.

The "Indian King" stood at the corner of South Queen and German (Farnum) Streets, on the west side where the Methodist Church is now located. License was given in 1799 for this tavern to Robert Wilson, and it was very popular in the early days of the Republic, when Lancaster was the Capital of Pennsylvania. According to some records this hotel stood on the third lot from German Street. It was directly back of this building that the famous Ricket's Circus was held in the Summer of 1797 in a building put up especially for it and styled the "Amphitheatre." Here the most wonderful feats of horsemanship were exhibited. Riding lessons were also given during the summer. "The Indian King" was the meeting place for Lodge No. 43 F. & A. M. for a time; the new Masonic Lodge rooms being the temporary court house. There were a number of other taverns on South Queen Street, of which I have not the space to write, before we reach Graeff's Landing Hotel, which together with Reigart's Landing completes the journey down South Queen Street.

The "Fountain Inn" was almost as popular as Col. Matthias Slough's "White Swan," and was conducted by a no less famous family—the Reigarts. The old sign is now in the possession of the Lancaster County Historical Society. Christopher Reigart opened this hostelry on one of three lots bought by his father, Ulrich Reigart, on South Queen Street, west side, in 1758, and kept it through the Revolution and until his death in 1783. His widow, Susannah, who later married Thomas Edwards, conducted it until her death in 1805. Here the Courts, both local and supreme, held several sessions. This was also a famous place for holding social affairs and theatrical performances. On the death of Mrs. Edwards, the Inn became the property of her son, Henry Reigart, who operated the hotel and continued there his trade of coppersmith. Henry Reigart was one of the organizers of the Lancaster Bank, March 21, 1814. About 1796 it was announced that a stage would leave the Fountain Inn every Monday at 5 A. M., and run by way of Strasburg and West Chester to Philadelphia, arriving the next day at 1 P. M. Returning, it would leave Philadelphia every Thursday morning at 6 o'clock, and arrive in Lancaster the next day, Friday. Fare, \$3.00. This line was known as the West Chester, Strasburg and Lancaster Stage.

Ulrich Reigart had two sons, Adam and Christopher. Adam purchased the "Grape" at about the same time Christopher opened the "Fountain Inn." Adam Reigart was Lieutenant Colonel of a regiment under Colonel James Ross, and served in the Revolution on the staff of Adjutant General Edward Hand. The Reigarts served on many committees and in public offices, several of the family being in the legislature, and they were prominent in all social and political affairs. There are many descendants of this family in this vicinity.

We now come to Graeff's Landing, where a large two-story stone house was built by George Graeff, on the north side of the Conestoga River in 1784. It was rebuilt by Frederick Engle in 1890, when the name was changed to Engleside. Jacob Graeff, Revolutionary soldier, lived on South Queen Street, just below the "Fountain Inn" and "The Unicorn." He was appointed collector of revenue, January 1, 1795, with his office on South Queen Street. He and Adam Reigart were commissioned Justices of the Peace, May 17, 1811. Their names appear on many committees, however, prior to this time. Among the names of members participating in the first banquet held by the Union Fire Company in 1791 are Adam Reigart, Jacob Graeff, John Graeff, George Graeff, Adam Reigart, Jr., and Matthias Slough, showing that these three families were most prominent and closely associated in the early days on South Queen Street. Adam Reigart, Matthias Slough and Jacob Graeff also served on the committee to superintend the lottery for paving Lancaster streets in 1797. George Graeff was Captain of the 4th Company of the 1st Battalion, of the Flying Camp, in 1776. He was elected president of the Farmers' Bank, November 21, 1814. He married Eva Graff. Messrs. Walter and Chas. F. Hager, Esq., were descendants.

The children of George Graeff were Michael, John (a hatter), Dr. Charles, Juliana, Sarah, and Anna Maria. Miss Anna Maria Graeff was a woman of uncommon ability, but never married. She moved to Philadelphia, where she lived with a married sister, Mrs. Juliana Moore. A beautiful portrait of her was painted by the famous artist, Jacob Eichholtz, as a reward for introducing him to pretty Catharine Trissler, granddaughter of Adam Reigart, Sr., at a ball. She became his second wife. The portrait is now in the possession of the Hager family.

Historians have never stressed the fact that our most noted foreign guest, Lafayette, took his departure from our City down South Queen Street, passing all of these famous inns on his way to Baltimore, passing through Willow Street, the Buck and Chestnut Level. General Lafayette left Lancaster Friday morning, July 29, 1825, in an elegant traveling carriage, drawn by four gray horses, and was accompanied by the Lancaster Committee, General George B. Porter and Adam Reigart, Esq., and escorted by six marshals, well-mounted and uniformly apparelled. He was also escorted by three companies of Lancaster volunteers, commanded by Major Frederick Hambright and the City Horse, in command of Captain J. F. Voight.