

# Railroad and Bridge Builders of Lancaster

By M. LUTHER HEISEY

*"They Buildded Better Than They Knew"*

Transportation, ever a prime problem of the human race, received a mighty impetus in the second and third decades of the nineteenth century. It was then steam was introduced as a motive power, and rails were first used as a roadway.<sup>1</sup> Almost coincidently with this new enterprise there came a wave of immigration of pure Irish stock, fitted by nature with great physical strength and endurance and a spirit of adventure and pioneering. From which were drawn many of the workers and supervisors for the new railroad construction. That Lancaster Irish, with a sprinkling of German, took a major part in the development of this new means of transportation will be shown by the story that follows.

There was not complete rejoicing at the introduction of steam transportation. Besides prophecies of dire calamities, teamsters, driving their Conestoga wagons, saw here a rival that would ultimately crowd them "off

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<sup>1</sup> Sandstone blocks, twelve inches square [and larger], were placed in the ground, and cast-iron chairs were fastened on their tops with iron spikes driven into holes drilled into the stone. These stone blocks were placed about two feet apart. Wrought iron T rails rested in the iron chairs, which had a groove into which the rail fitted. Iron wedges were driven between the rail and the sides of the chair, to keep the former in place. Trackmen were constantly passing along the line driving these wedges, which were loosened by the jolting of the cars.—Ellis and Evans' History of Lancaster County, p. 319. Last spring (1940), we saw two hundred of these sandstone blocks pulled out by a tractor from the original roadbed of the old Columbia and Philadelphia Railroad, on the farm of Daniel F. King, south of the Old Philadelphia Pike and directly west of Bird-in-Hand and the present roadbed. Two years ago, we saw other sandstone blocks in the original roadbed near the Brackbill farm, southeast of Leaman Place.

Specimens of these sandstone blocks, cast-iron chairs and iron wedges, as well as the tulip type of railing as laid down by Enos Ellmaker in 1832, on the old Columbia and Philadelphia Railroad, are on display along the driveway at the Landis Valley Museum.

the road." The exchange of words of the teamsters with the Irish and Scotch-Irish, who could "clothe themselves with curses as with a garment," was none too refined. We print some verses from the "Wagoner's Curse on the Railroad," to show the plaint of the teamsters.

The ships, they'll come in with Irishmen by loads,  
With their picks and their shovels, to work on the railroads.  
When they get on the railroad, it's then they are fixed,  
They'll fight like the devil with their cudgels and their sticks.

The American with safety can scarcely ever pass,  
For they'll black both his eyes for one word of his "sass."  
If it was not for the torment, I'd as leave be in hell,  
As upon the railroad, or upon the canal.

Now all ye jolly wagoners who have good wives,  
Go home to your farms and there spend your lives;  
When your corn is all cribbed and your small grain is sowed,  
You'll have nothing to do but curse the railroad.<sup>2</sup>

Now to go on with the story of the builders, Irish and non-Irish, of Lancaster city and county, showing what and where they built.

Among the very pioneers of railroad building was the capable local civil engineer and surveyor, JOSHUA SCOTT, who planned the State Road through and west of Lancaster in 1833. Many early Lancaster County maps and surveys were drawn by him, one being presented with the compliments of the author to Lafayette, on his visit here in 1825.

THOMAS BAUMGARDNER was born in York, Pa., of German parentage, December 20, 1816. Besides his interest in railroad work, his business activities were wide and varied. He was a director of the Philadelphia and Sunbury, and the Reading and Columbia railroads. He obtained a charter from the State Legislature, and built the Enterprise Railroad in 1868, which in a short time he sold to the Reading Company. In 1869, he built the Junction and Breakwater Line in Delaware.

WILLIAM H. BROWN was born in Little Britain Township on February 29, 1836, son of Levi K. Brown, and grandson of Jeremiah Brown, who represented Lancaster County in Congress from 1840 to 1844 (see Vol. 34, p. 55).

At the age of twenty-five years, "Billy" Brown, as he was called then, engaged in his first work on railroads—trial surveys on the Lancaster, Oxford and Southern Road, in the neighborhood of his home.

He was selected by Colonel Thomas A. Scott as engineer of the United States military railroads in Northern Virginia, with headquarters at Alexandria. In October, 1861, he was transferred to the Pittsburgh Division, Pennsylvania Railroad, where he remained until March 17, 1865, when he was appointed engineer of the Oil Creek Railroad. In July, 1865, he

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<sup>2</sup> The poem in full appears in "The Conestoga Six-Horse Bell Teams of Eastern Pennsylvania," by John Omwake, 1930, p. 122.

accepted the position of principal assistant engineer and in September, 1865, was appointed engineer of the Philadelphia and Erie Railroad. He assisted in the completion of the Pan Handle Road. In June 1, 1881, he was appointed chief engineer of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and so continued until his retirement on February 28, 1906, having reached the age of seventy years. While serving in this latter position he *practically rebuilt the Pennsylvania Line* from Pittsburgh to Philadelphia.

*The Rockville bridge*, spanning the Susquehanna River above Harrisburg, was planned and built by Mr. Brown in 1900-1902. It is the largest stone arch bridge in the world, being 3,830 feet in length, with 48 arches, 52 feet in width, and is a four-track structure. His assistant in the bridge construction, George Nauman, was also a Lancastrian.

ENOS ELLMAKER (1800-1885), born in Earl Township, Lancaster County, *laid the first tulip or edge railing* on the new Columbia and Philadelphia Railroad in 1832 from Philadelphia to Paoli. Concerning this he wrote: "When the first shipload of railing came across from England, Major [John] Wilson, head engineer, made inquiry of Mr. Provost where he could find a man competent to start or commence the laying of the rails. Mr. Provost recommended me. Major Wilson then gave me plots and plans of the Liverpool and Manchester Railroad to examine for a fortnight. After studying the plans, I made tools. Then I took five men with me and we laid rails five days, and succeeded to a demonstration of railroad building."<sup>3</sup> After this work, Mr. Ellmaker took a contract for sixteen turnouts.

In 1836 he migrated to Iowa Territory. In 1853 he moved to Oregon, and there he died in 1885, in his eighty-fifth year.

JOHN J. FITZPATRICK (b. in Lancaster, October 10, 1840, d. December 14, 1889), son of Hugh Fitzpatrick, both contractors, assisted Richard McGrann on work on the North Pennsylvania Railroad and on the Chestnut Street bridge in Philadelphia. He completed a contract for the Boundbrook Road, and worked with Bernard J. McGrann on the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Line, and with John and Edward McGovern on the South Penn Railroad near Somerset. He worked on the Shenandoah Valley Railroad, and laid an extra track for the Pennsylvania Line at Highspire.

GEORGE F. GOLL was born in Germany, May 21, 1832. When a young man, he came to this country, and in 1875 with John Keller engaged in railroad contracting and bridge building, devoting most of his time and skill to the latter work. Among the staunch and enduring structures built by him were the "*Big Bridge*" over the *Conestoga River*, several about Johnstown, the Cumberland Valley Railroad bridge over the Susquehanna at Harrisburg, another for the same company over the Potomac, and three on the Pittsburgh Division at Summer Hill, one over the Juniata River at Tyrone, and several in New York State. Mr. Goll died Sunday, February 15, 1891, and the contracting work was

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<sup>3</sup> For further information concerning the Ellmakers, see the *Pennsylvania German* magazine, Vol. 10, p. 345.

carried on by his sons, John A., William H. and George F., under the firm name of John Goll & Co. They did extensive remodeling to the stations at Harrisburg and Philadelphia, on the Pennsylvania Line, and completed several bridges on the Cumberland Valley Road.

JOHN H. HOOK, of German descent, son of John and Catherine Klaus Hook, was born in Lancaster, April 5, 1858. Leaving school when thirteen years of age, he started at the bottom round as water boy in 1871, and kept climbing until 1898 when he retired as a successful railroad contractor. From 1884 to 1889 he was master stonemason for the Frederick Division of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company; in October, 1889, he associated with J. Frank Keller. For the Pennsylvania Line, he constructed a bridge over the Juniata River near Altoona, Pa., containing 10,700 cubic yards of masonry, and costing \$107,000; a bridge over Stone Creek at Huntingdon, Pa., containing 4,000 cubic yards of masonry, and one over Shaver's Creek at Petersburg, Huntingdon County, Pa., containing 3,500 yards of masonry.

JOHN FREDERICK HOUSTON, of Scotch-Irish ancestry, son of William F. and Amy McCorkle Houston, was born in Columbia, and there spent most of his days. His biographer said, "he was one of the brightest young men of our country," and was graduated from Amherst College with high honor. Qualified as a civil engineer, he was engaged in the construction of the Baltimore and Susquehanna Railroad, running from Wrightsville to York, which was completed in 1839; the Gettysburg Line; and State works of Pennsylvania in progress between 1834 and 1839. Later he studied law, practicing in the counties of Lancaster and York. But the promise of an active and brilliant career was frustrated by an attack of paralysis when he was but thirty-five years of age.

The Wrightsville, York and Gettysburg Railroad, noted above, came into possession of the Pennsylvania Railroad on June 21, 1870.

JOHN KELLER was born near Elizabethtown, September 19, 1828, of German parentage. From early youth he was employed in railroad work. In 1868 he engaged in contracting and quarrying, and several years later in bridge building and general railroad contracting. In 1875 he constructed the Lancaster and Quarryville Railroad; later he built thirteen miles of the Schuylkill Valley Road; the Harrisburg and Gettysburg Line; one hundred and eleven miles of the New York, Philadelphia and Norfolk; the Pennsylvania and Northwestern from Irvona to a point four miles beyond Punxsutawney; a branch of the Harrisburg and Potomac; the Cambria and Clearfield; thirteen miles of track between Glenlock and Trenton; and the western part of the Philadelphia and Fort Washington Railroad.

He was among the first to project the idea of the Conewago and Cornwall Railroad, of which he made the first survey, and also of the road between Lancaster and New Holland. On the New York, Philadelphia and Norfolk Road in 1884, he constructed seventy miles in eleven months. A stretch of seven miles was completed in one week, and a day after the work was finished a locomotive passed over it in seven minutes. Mr. Keller was then employing fourteen hundred men.

At the time of the construction of the buildings for the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876, he had the contract to lay all tracks into the buildings. In Kansas he helped to construct the Fort Scott and Topeka line, of which he became president, and which was later sold to Jay Gould. Keiler also worked for Mr. Gould on one hundred and twelve miles of road from Memphis, Tennessee, to Bald Knob, Arkansas.

The name of Keller was given to a railroad station and post office in Accomac County, Virginia, in honor of the contractor, who was then working on the New York, Philadelphia and Norfolk Road. The post office was established in a general store, December 15, 1884, with William S. Murphy the first postmaster.

J. FRANKLIN KELLER (b. February 8, 1858, d. March 23, 1935), was associated with his father, John Keller, in the contracting business, later working with John H. Hook.

HUGH KEOGH was born in Western Pennsylvania, at Port Perry, in February, 1847. He became associated with Bernard J. McGrann in construction work on the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad, later building the Maderia Road, and constructing two hundred miles of track in Brazil. Near Bandywine, Delaware, he built two miles of track for the Baltimore and Ohio System, and then worked in Somerset County for the Southern Pennsylvania Railroad (South Penn Road). This company later abandoned the entire work, and its roadbed and tunnels now serve as the route of the "dream" or super-highway running across Pennsylvania from Middlesex to Irwin, a distance of one hundred and sixty miles. He also built a stretch of track from Delano to Hazleton for the Lehigh Valley Road, and was at one time manager of the construction department of the Shenandoah Valley Line.

Two miles of heavy work on the old "Tape-worm" Railroad, one of Thaddeus Stevens' projects, between Gettysburg and Hagerstown, was constructed by him, and also a portion of the railroad which was destroyed by the Johnstown flood in 1889. Following this, he built the fourth track for the Pennsylvania Railroad from Wilmore to Portage; a portion of track running through the Allegheny Mountains at Horseshoe Curve; ten miles of the Norfolk and Western Railroad; and a track from Fernwood to Newtown Square.

BERNARD E. MALONE, son of the late Major James and Alice McGrann Malone, was born in County Cavan, Ireland, in 1844, and died July 8, 1915. In early manhood he embarked in the contracting business. He built the Jersey City and Pine Creek Railroad, and a part of the Norfolk and Western Line, from Roanoke to Salem in Virginia.

RICHARD A. MALONE was born in County Cavan, Ireland, March 5, 1834, and came with his parents to America in 1845. The next year they removed to Lancaster where the father, James, engaged in the business of contracting and building. Richard, associated with David McNeely Stauffer, constructed the Dorchester, Massachusetts, bay tunnel, a great feat of engineering skill. He built many bridges, tunnels and miles of railroad, some for the Vanderbilt lines. A son, Charles, engaged in business with his father; another son, Richard J.

became a railroad contractor in Philadelphia; another, John E., is a prominent Lancaster lawyer and former postmaster. Died March 2, 1909.

PATRICK McEVoy (1805-1870), following the Irish tradition, got his start in life by working on the railroad. As a contractor, he worked on the Pennsylvania Central Railroad, the New York and Erie, on the Susquehanna Tidewater Canal, and in New Jersey. When traveling on the Pennsylvania Railroad about Kittanning Point and enjoying the scenic beauty at *the Horseshoe Curve*, every true Lancastrian will remind his fellow-travelers that it was a local man—Patrick McEvoy—who built this road, which was considered a marvelous piece of engineering skill in its day. His last contract was with the Philadelphia and Erie Railroad, for constructing Bennett's Branch, eighteen miles in length, at Driftwood. It was on this branch that Mr. McEvoy's nephew, James Timothy Dunn, succeeded him as superintendent; the latter having gained experience on railroads in New Jersey with another uncle, Patrick Maher. Another member of the latter family, Daniel Maher, brother of Patrick, assisted Patrick McEvoy and James Purcell in building the Indiana Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1854-55.

Mr. McEvoy was one of the founders of the Buchanan-McEvoy-Reynolds Relief Fund for the needy of Lancaster City.

#### LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

We record the following letters of recommendation to show the high esteem in which Patrick McEvoy was held in his community.

Lancaster, Penna.  
April 11/57

My dear Sir

I take the liberty, and I do so with much pleasure, knowing your character for politeness and attention to your friends, of making known to you, P. McEvoy, Esq., of Lancaster County, who will present this letter to you.

Mr. McEvoy intends, possibly, to bid on the Gov't work to be allotted by you at Washington City; and it affords me great satisfaction to say of him that he is a gentleman of merit, an honest and most efficient contractor of great experience, who has carried out very heavy contracts on public works in different sections of the country, with satisfaction to all parties interested. He is a man of property; his word is as good as his bond, and I hesitate not one moment in pronouncing and endorsing him a man in every respect worthy of your confidence.

Mr. McEvoy is the immediate neighbor of our new President, and not only with Mr. Buchanan, but with all classes of his fellow-citizens, stands deservedly high for his upright character, for integrity and honor. No man of my acquaintance is more worthy of it; and as such I recommend him to your kind attention and favorable consideration.

Should Mr. McEvoy be so fortunate as to meet with success as a bidder, you will have a contractor who will render complete satisfaction.

I am, by dear Sir,  
As Ever, Very decidedly Yr. Friend & m't Ob't St.  
[signed] SAML. HUMES PORTER. <sup>4</sup>

To  
Capt. M. C. Meigs,  
U. S. Engr. Corps,  
Washington City,  
D. C.

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Office of the  
Greenwich Improvement and Rail Road Company,  
No. 28 Merchants Exchange,  
Philad'a., April 14, 1857.

Capt. M. C. Meigs,  
Dr. Sir

Allow me to introduce P. McEvoy, Esq., of Lancaster, Pa., a near neighbor and friend of President Buchanan, a contractor of 20 years experience, a gentleman of large means and sterling integrity. I am perfectly sincere in saying that I have never known a more reliable man, a more efficient energetic contractor or one in whose performance of engagements more confidence can be placed. Mr. McEvoy will not take work at less than remunerative prices but what he does undertake will be complied with to the letter.

Yours very truly,  
[signed] H. HAUPT. <sup>5</sup>

P. S. I forgot to state that Mr. M. has done more work on the Penna. R. R. and heavier work than any other contractor, so that I speak from personal knowledge. His mason work has been particularly well executed. —H. H.

COLONEL EDWARD MCGOVERN, of Irish descent, was born in Lebanon, Pa., November 11, 1834, and was educated at Holy Cross and Georgetown colleges, receiving the degree of A. M. from the latter. After service in the Civil War, he went to Mexico where he worked as civil engineer for the Vera Cruz Railroad Company for three years. Returning to New Orleans, he secured employment for two years on the Louisville Short Line Railroad; later he worked for the Pittsburgh and Connellsville Railroad, superintending the construction of two large tunnels. Coming closer to home, we find him employed as a contractor on the Columbia and Port Deposit Railroad. After working a short

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<sup>4</sup> Samuel Humes Porter, well known Lancaster lawyer who was admitted to the bar in 1840, was the son of George B. Porter, Esq., and the grandson of General Andrew Porter and Samuel Humes.

<sup>5</sup> Herman Haupt was of a family of famous civil engineers, and was the great-uncle of the popular local Lutheran preacher, the late Rev. C. Elvin Haupt, D. D. (See National Cyclopaedia, Vol. 10, p. 224).

The above letters are in possession of Miss Elizabeth J. D. Lant, a relative by marriage of the late Patrick McEvoy. She also has an interesting collection of photographs of the construction work on Bennett's Branch.

time in New Jersey, he went to Colorado in 1880, finding employment with the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad Company. Here he achieved the feat of tunneling the Cascade Mountains. When he again returned to his Lancaster home, he engaged in farming and fruit growing.

Died September 19, 1897.

JOHN R. MCGOVERN, was born in County Cavan, Ireland, in 1816, and died September 25, 1882, at his home at the extreme end of North Duke Street, where now the Pennsylvania Railroad depot is located. He was another immigrant who rose by his own efforts to a successful career as a contractor. He, with Andrew Reilly, constructed a portion of the New York and Lake Erie Railroad for Richard McGrann. He superintended the construction of the *tunnel at Columbia*, and with Bernard J. McGrann and John Reilly contracted for and completed a part of the Pennsylvania Central Railroad from Altoona to Pittsburgh. With Hugh Barr, of Philadelphia, he built a section of the Lebanon Valley Road, a contract taking three years for completion. He also had a part in the construction of the East Penn Railroad from Allentown to Reading.

He worked with Major William M. Wiley on a contract for the Northern Road in Dauphin County, and built that part of the Reading and Columbia Road from Reading to Silver Spring, and with Michael Reilly built that portion of the road from Lancaster to Manheim, and also the Sunbury and Lewistown Railroad, extending from Lewistown to Selinsgrove, a distance of forty-four miles. In 1876, he worked on the Union Central in Schuylkill County.

THOMAS MCGOVERN, of McGovernville, and later of 612 North Duke Street, Lancaster, was a contractor who built many miles of railroad in this state. He died January 5, 1882, in his seventy-seventh year. Two daughters married contractors; Catherine J. to John R. McGovern, Anna M. to Michael Reilly.

Irish grit, with Irish will and energy, came to the shores of America in 1819 with RICHARD MCGRANN, who, then almost penniless, made his dreams of American opportunity come true, and by a life of industry and cleverness gained fame and fortune. He was one of the first Irishman to be attracted to railroad work, starting on the pioneer State Railroad between Columbia and Philadelphia; then doing work on the Lehigh, Raritan, Union and Welland canals; portions of the Erie Railroad and the main line of the Pennsylvania Railroad; and, with other contractors, nearly the whole of the North Pennsylvania Railroad. He died October 14, 1867, while constructing the Lehigh and Susquehanna Railroad, with the bridge crossing the Delaware and Lehigh rivers at Easton, Pa.

At the time of his death the *Philadelphia Press* said: "Richard McGrann was well known in Pennsylvania as one of the most enterprising and courageous contractors in the state. The elegant bridge which spans the Schuylkill at the end of Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, is a lasting and most creditable monument of his labor; the Pennsylvania and Northern Central railroads, as well as many other lines, testify to his success."



Mr. McGrann settled in Manheim Township in 1835, and three years later built his splendid mansion on the estate which became known as "Grand View." Modern city and suburban homes now cover the land once known as McGrann's Park and Grand View Farm. Where stood the old mansion—until its demolition in 1939—with its spacious lawn and beautiful trees and marble statuary, now stands an immense apartment house, retaining nothing of the old except the name alone—"Grand View" Apartments.

BERNARD J. McGRANN, son of the above, was born at Grand View on June 24, 1837. He followed in his father's footsteps in many enterprises, especially as farmer, banker and railroad contractor. In 1870 he built the Catawissa extension from Milton to Williamsport, and later graded a part of the Boundbrook Road from Jenkintown to Yardley, including the bridge at the latter place spanning the Delaware River. His crowning achievement was the construction of the Pittsburgh and Erie Railroad from Pittsburgh to Youngstown, Ohio, a distance of some seventy miles, which was completed according to contract in one year. The bridge he built over the Ohio River at Beaver, Pa., had a height of 95 feet above the water to admit of proper navigation, and had a channel span of 446 feet, with long approaches of iron frame work.

When the Lancaster County Fair Association failed, Mr. McGrann took over their property, and conducted successful fairs, and upon the half mile track adjoining were held exciting horse races.

Contrary to the impression held by the writer, McGrann post office, established in 1906, in Armstrong County, was not named for Bernard J. McGrann, but for Philip R. McGrann, the postmaster, no relative of Bernard.

RICHARD J. McGRANN, a cousin of Bernard J. McGrann, was born in New York City in 1837, and died at his Prince Street home in Lancaster, September 2, 1907. He, with several partners, completed the Downingtown and Waynesburg (Honeybrook) Railroad, the New Castle and Beaver Valley Road, the heaviest work on the line through the Wyoming Valley, which first brought a railroad into Wilkes-Barre, and did some work between White Haven and Mauch Chunk, and assisted in the building of the Chestnut Street bridge in Philadelphia. He also built many miles of road in mountainous sections for the Reading System, forty miles in the Shenandoah Valley, a section of the Norfolk and Western with many large bridges, and a part of the Louisville and Nashville Line. He built twenty-five miles of road in Clinch Valley, Virginia, a connection between the Lynchburg and Durham Line and the Norfolk and Western, and the Cripple Creek and Pocohontas extension; his last work was a section of seven miles on the Speedwell extension.

The eighteen-mile stretch of track of the Hanover and York Railroad was laid in 1873 by REHILL AND McTAGUE, contractors, the latter of Columbia, Pa. This firm also worked on sections 12 and 13 of the Bennett's Branch extension of the Allegheny Valley Railroad.

PETER S. McTAGUE, with a son, Harry P. (d. January, 1910,) did contracting work in Western Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Peter McTague died March 8, 1910, aged eighty-five years.

Among the young civil engineers in the early days of railroad building was SAMUEL W. MIFFLIN, of the famous family in Columbia, Pa. He was employed by the larger railroad companies in Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey and the New England states. "He located a considerable mileage of the difficult mountain division of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and was regarded as one of the greatest locating civil engineers of the country; his minor work covered a large area of our own country," writes Samuel Wright.

WILLIAM PATTON was born in County Tyrone, Ireland, in 1817. In that year his father brought the family to America, first settling in Chester County, and in 1850 removing to Columbia, Pa. After engaging in various mercantile pursuits, he turned his attention to contracting. He built the round-house at Columbia for the State Railroad. He constructed the greater portion of the Huntingdon and Broad Top Railroad, including the famous Stonerstown bridge which spanned the Raystown branch of the Juniata River near Saxton. This bridge was two thousand feet in length, built of wood and masonry, and was a remarkable piece of work in its time. In 1865 Mr. Patton finished his career as a railroad builder, and turned to other enterprises. He held many important positions in the civic and church life of his home town, Columbia.

JOHN REILLY, of the firm of Reilly and McGrann, was associated with Richard McGrann in many important contracts. They built the Chestnut Street bridge over the Schuylkill in Philadelphia, the Lehigh and Susquehanna Line and the North Pennsylvania Road. Mr. Reilly also built the Lachine Canal near Montreal, Canada, and the Easton and Amboy Railroad. His eldest son, JOHN B., became a railroad and bridge builder, and resided in New York City. Another son, T. WALLACE, went into the same business about 1880, doing work for the Lackawanna Road in New York State and building bridges for the Pennsylvania Line at Glenloch, Middletown and other points; he also erected bridges at Providence and Woonsocket, Rhode Island, besides some sewerage and street grading work in New York City. The Reillys were further joined to the railroad business when another son, Richard M., married Mary Barry, whose grandfather, Michael Barry, was one of the pioneers in the business in this part of the state.

JOHN M. BARRY, son of Michael, was a sub-contractor under Bernard J. McGrann in the building of the notable Allegheny Valley Road, and under contract with his brother-in-law, John J. Fitzpatrick, helped to build the Southern Pennsylvania Road. He died at his home on East Orange Street, Sunday, May 9, 1886.

MICHAEL REILLY was born in County Meath, Ireland, January 30, 1833, the son of John and Mary Smith Reilly. Coming to America when ten years of age, he soon found work on the railroads, and by the time he was nineteen years of age he was a competent contractor. He associated with John Keller and others, and for a period of over forty years did efficient building and contracting, retiring in 1892.

Mr. Reilly built many of the trolley lines in Lancaster. His railroad work included the Reading and Columbia, the East Pennsylvania Road between

Allentown and Reading, and many other lines, besides tunnels, bridges and grading of all kinds. Reilly and Keller built the Quarryville Line, which was leased to the Reading Company, and later sold to the Pennsylvania Road (1915).

In 1851, Mr. Reilly was married to Anna, daughter of Thomas and Mary Duffy McGovern, natives of County Cavan, Ireland. This Thomas McGovern also was a builder of railroads and canals. Mrs. Reilly was first married to John McManus, and their second child, Thomas, was a railroad contractor, and resided in Lancaster.

JACOB B. ROHRER was born at Middletown, Pa., August 31, 1857, son of the late Major Jeremiah and Mary Redsecker Rohrer. He was educated in the Lancaster public schools, and was graduated as a civil engineer from the Polytechnic College of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia.

In 1881 he was engineer of construction for the Colebrook Valley Railroad from Conewago to Cornwall and in 1883 built the Schuylkill Valley Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad below Reading, Pa. Later he was chief engineer of the Piedmont and Cumberland Railroad in West Virginia. He built railroads in Michigan, the West Virginia Central and Pittsburgh Railroad in West Virginia, and was in charge of building forty miles of the Norfolk and Western Railroad in Virginia and ninety miles of road in West Virginia and Kentucky. He also constructed buildings in South America, the drainage canal in Chicago, an electric street car line in Honolulu, Hawaiian Islands, and buildings in New York City and San Francisco.

Mr. Rohrer died in New York City, on Friday, February 7, 1936, and funeral services were held at the family residence, 336 North Duke Street, on the following Monday.

A brother, Grant, was also a railroad contractor.

In the Leacock Presbyterian churchyard stands a gravestone with this inscription: NATHANIEL W. SAMPLE/ Born Paradise/August 14, 1843/ died Philadelphia/October 27, 1927/First Lieutenant 15th/Pennsylvania Cavalry/1862-1865/ Pioneer in Western/ Railroading/ 1871-1900.

While Mr. Sample was not a railroad contractor, he did work allied to it, and we think that his story is interesting enough to be added here. From the columns of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* we learned that Nathaniel W. Sample was apprenticed to the machinist's trade in the Baldwin Locomotive Works at Philadelphia in 1848, and interrupted his work to enlist in the Union forces of the Civil War. At the termination of the war, he returned to the Baldwin shops, remaining there until 1871, when he went to Denver with three locomotives from the shops, to be set up in the shops of the Denver and Rio Grande. He intended to return to Philadelphia upon completion of this work, but a change of plans caused him to remain. He was given the position of first foreman in the Denver and Rio Grande shops, and in 1877 was appointed master mechanic and superintendent of machinery for the company. This position he held until 1891, when he became general superintendent of the road. In 1900 he returned to the Baldwin shops, remaining there until his death in 1927.

He was associated with the Denver and Rio Grande Western, Rio Grande Southern and the Silverton Railroads, all of Colorado.

SAMUEL COCHRAN SLAYMAKER, son of Henry Fleming Slaymaker, was born in Salisbury Township, April 22, 1828. He was educated in the public schools and the Bellevue Academy. Taking up the profession of engineering, he had for his preceptor, the eminent engineer and author, John C. Trautwine. At the age of twenty-four he assisted in surveying a railroad from the Atlantic to the Pacific, across the Isthmus of Panama, through dense jungles and dangerous swamps.<sup>6</sup> He was chief engineer of the Philadelphia and Reading, the New Jersey West Line, and the Lancaster and Downingtown Railroads; directed surveys and construction of the Lancaster, Oxford and Southern (narrow gauge) Railroad, and the Lancaster and Columbia Electric Road; made preliminary surveys for the Lancaster and Quarryville steam road, and the Lancaster and Lititz Electric Line; he was also engineer of the Philadelphia, Newtown and New York Railroad, and in the corps which surveyed the Columbia and Port Deposit, the Wilmington and Northern, the Lebanon Valley and the Perkiomen Railroads.

Governor James Pollock appointed him to his staff, with the commission of colonel. His name is found among the charter members of the Lancaster County Historical Society.

CHARLES FONDERSMITH STAUFFER was born on a farm near Florin, Mount Joy Township, on October 8, 1869, the son of John Forney and Clara S. Fonder-smith Stauffer. He attended the public schools of Lancaster, the Episcopal Parish School, and Yeates Institute. In the spring of 1889 he became associated with his father in contracting, and a short time later engaged in business for himself, with offices in Penn Square, Philadelphia.

He was extensively employed in railroad work, grading and bridge construction of various kinds in many localities. He was employed at times by the following railroads: Reading; Pennsylvania; Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore; Chambersburg and Gettysburg; and the New York, New Haven and Hartford. Besides contracting, he also did notable work in landscaping, especially that about the old church at St. David's. He constructed the lake and did the landscape work in Long Park, near Lancaster.

DAVID McNEELY STAUFFER was born in Mount Joy, March 24, 1845, the son of Jacob and Mary Ann McNeely Stauffer. He was educated in the Lancaster public schools, and being awarded a scholarship by the Lancaster City School Board, he entered Franklin and Marshall College. After completing his sophomore year, in the midst of the Civil War, he entered the naval service, and distinguished himself under Admiral David Dixon Porter and other commanders, and made a record which gave him distinction and a Congressional medal.

After his service in the navy, he became a civil engineer, and made surveys in the construction of the Boundbrook Railroad under Bernard J. and

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<sup>6</sup> For a more detailed account of this venture, see the *Sunday News* of July 14, 1940.

Richard J. McGrann, and served in the engineer corps which directed the construction of the Columbia and Port Deposit Railroad. He directed the work of construction of the South Street bridge over the Schuylkill in Philadelphia. In 1868 he was appointed assistant engineer for the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad.

He became the editor of *Engineering News*, and through his ability and artistic skill the paper became most successful in its field. His talents were recognized in 1891 by the Hon. Warner Miller, Senator from New York, who invited him on an inspection trip for a proposed isthmian canal, either at Panama or Nicaragua.

The bookplates of the local historical society and of Franklin and Marshall College are the work of this skilled and artistic engineer and draftsman.

He died at Yonkers, N. Y., on February 5, 1913.

(See Vol. 38, opp. p. 1.)

JOHN F. STAUFFER was born in Penn Township, Lancaster County, August 6, 1845, the son of Benjamin M. and Sophia Forney Stauffer, and was of Swiss ancestry. He received his education in the township schools and the John Beck Academy at Lititz. In 1872 Mr. Stauffer came to Lancaster and engaged in the contracting business. He built a double track from Middletown to Steelton for the Pennsylvania Railroad; a double track from Swarthmore to Media for the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Line; a road for the Caledonia Mining Company between Mount Alto Junction and the mountain's point, a distance of ten miles, making some fills of forty-three feet in depth. He also built five miles of road between Easton and St. Michael's, Maryland, for the Baltimore and Eastern Shore Railroad Company.

Mr. Stauffer built the second street railway in Lancaster, the line running from Duke Street to the terminus for a distance of one and one-third miles; this was completed in twenty days. On April 1, 1894, Mr. Stauffer was elected Street Commissioner of Lancaster City.

JAMES STEWART was born in Powl's Valley, near Harrisburg, February 2, 1826, son of John Stewart, of Irish origin. His railroad work started in 1866 with the manufacture of ties in Mexico for the Vera Cruz and Mexican Railroad. In 1869 he took contracts for the stone work on Bennett's Branch of the Philadelphia and Erie Railroad, and on the bridge across the Susquehanna River at Nanticoke and one at Wilkes-Barre. In 1881 he took contracts on the Shenandoah Valley Road for fifteen miles, from Jordan's Furnace to the Natural Bridge, in Virginia; he graded the site of the car shops at Roanoke, Virginia, and worked on the Northwestern and the Baltimore and Ohio Roads.

At the time of his death, November 28, 1886, Mr. Stewart had a contract to build a double track into Washington, D. C., for the Baltimore and Ohio Line, and also a construction job of forty miles of road between Monroe and Madison, Wisconsin.

Mr. Stewart was married in Lancaster, in 1854, to Charlotte, the daughter of John McGovern, of McGovernville, this county; Mr. McGovern also was a railroad contractor.

COL. SAMUEL WRIGHT, in 1854, following a topographical map laid out by the eminent surveyor and civil engineer, Joshua Scott, planned a proposed coal-carrying railroad from the canal basin at Columbia to tidewater on the Delaware River. Lack of financial backing caused the collapse of this enterprise, but the professional judgment and skill shown in the choice of the proposed route by the young civil engineer, guided by the work of Scott, is fully acknowledged when we are apprized of the fact that the present low-grade line of the Pennsylvania Railroad follows, almost mile for mile, the survey of Samuel Wright.

Colonel Wright was the son of John L. and Annie Evans Wright, and was a direct descendant of one of the founders of Columbia. He was a noted editor, historian and soldier. He died at Columbia, March 7, 1916, aged eighty-seven years.

CHARLES EDGAR ZORTMAN was born in Littlestown, Adams County, March 2, 1871, the son of Jacob and Ellen E. Haines Zortman. The family moved to Lancaster in 1885, and two years later Charles completed his studies at the Lancaster High School; he then entered Princeton College, and was graduated in 1891 as a civil engineer. He immediately entered the Assistant Engineer's office of the Delaware Division of the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad Company at Clayton, Delaware. In December, 1892, he entered the construction department of the Pennsylvania Railroad, with offices at Mifflin, Pa. In September, 1893, he returned to Lancaster, and on the following February, he was elected by City Councils to the position of city engineer, succeeding the late Col. Samuel C. Slaymaker.

### INCIDENTAL ITEMS

Not a builder of railroads, but listed among the successful promoters should be placed the name of Simon Cameron. His interest in the Harrisburg, Portsmouth, Mount Joy and Lancaster Railroad earned for him the presidency of that road; he aided in the building of the Lebanon Valley Line, the Cumberland Valley Road, and the Northern Central, from Harrisburg to Sunbury; the Tide Water Canal and other public improvements.

Kersey Coates, a teacher in the Lancaster High School sometime prior to 1850, moved to Missouri, and in course of time became president of the Missouri River, Fort Scott and Gulf Railroad.

Hugh M. North was solicitor for many years of the Pennsylvania, the Philadelphia and Reading, and other railroad companies. Other solicitors of the Pennsylvania Line were W. U. Hensel, John A. Nauman and S. R. Zimmerman; the latter marrying Mary Malone, daughter of Bernard E. Malone, the contractor. David F. Magee was solicitor for the narrow gauge Lancaster, Oxford and Southern Road.

The new Pennsylvania Railroad depot on the "cut-off" was placed in service, April 27, 1929.

# RAILROADS IN LANCASTER COUNTY

## LINES ESTABLISHED

The Columbia and Philadelphia Road was opened in 1834. On Monday, March 31, of that year, three passenger coaches, drawn by horses, arrived at Columbia from Lancaster; the following April 2, a locomotive, drawing a train of three passenger cars, made its first trip on this part of the road. On April 16, 1834, Governor Wolf and other distinguished persons made a trip of inspection; an over-night stop was made at Lancaster, and Philadelphia was reached on the 17th at 4:30 P. M. The locomotive, "Black Hawk," was not an entire success. The first authorized locomotive, the "Lancaster," began its career on June 28, 1834, followed a few months later by the "Columbia." After the second track was completed, October 1, 1834, a formal opening of the road was held on the following Tuesday, October 7, the "Lancaster" engine drawing the new cars. The first load of freight ever hauled in the United States passed over this line.

The Harrisburg, Portsmouth, Mount Joy and Lancaster Railroad, commenced in 1834, was completed in 1838.

The Strasburg Railroad, running from the main line at Leaman Place, a distance of four miles, partially constructed in 1835, was not completed, due to lack of capital, until 1852.

The Reading and Columbia Branch was opened in January, 1862. (See *Lancaster Express and Herald*, January 5, 1862.) This line, from the Junction, near Manheim, to Lancaster, was finished in 1866.

The Marietta Branch of the Reading Road was begun in 1881, and completed in 1882. It extended to a point northeast of Silver Spring, where it joined the Reading and Columbia Branch. It was originally called the Eastern Division of the Hanover Junction and Susquehanna Railroad.

The Quarryville and Lancaster Branch of the Reading and Columbia Railroad, projected first as a narrow gauge road, was built to standard gauge, and leased to the Reading Company. The first spike in the road was driven by the company president, Major R. W. Shenk, in Water Street, between Walnut and Lemon Streets, in Lancaster, on July 24, 1874, and the last spike was driven at Quarryville by George W. Hensel, on March 17, 1875. The formal opening of the road took place on May 11, 1875. Keller and Reilly were the contractors. At one time this company maintained a depot and express office in the Stevens House, at West King and Water Streets. The Pennsylvania Railroad absorbed this line of 15.21 miles on April 30, 1915.

The Lancaster, Oxford and Southern Railway, sometimes called the Peach Bottom Railroad, began operating on a regular schedule, in July, 1875. It was the first narrow gauge road in Pennsylvania, and extended from Oxford, in Chester County, through Fairmount to Peach Bottom on the Susquehanna;

in September, 1890, an extension of eight miles was built from Fairmount to Quarryville.<sup>7</sup>

The Columbia and Port Deposit Railroad was built in 1876.

The "cut-off" north of Lancaster was completed by the contractors, Keller and Reilly, in 1883. It followed the original survey as proposed in 1834, from the "Big Bridge" near Hardwick to Dillerville.

The Lancaster, Lebanon and Pine Grove Railroad was an extension of the Reading Road from Manheim to Lebanon, and was completed in 1886. This line carried popular summer excursions to the famous Penryn Park picnic grounds.

The Cornwall and Lebanon Road, 26.44 miles in length, completed about 1886, followed part of the distance the Conewago Creek and extended from Conewago Station to Lebanon, passing Mount Gretna, a noted summer colony and former camping grounds for the Pennsylvania National Guards.

The Downingtown and Lancaster Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad, extending through New Holland and Honeybrook, was formally opened on Labor Day, 1890.

The "low grade" line of the Pennsylvania Railroad, built to divert freight traffic from the main line, runs in this county from Rowenna, through Safe Harbor and Quarryville, to Christiana. It was completed and placed in service in August, 1906, and known officially as the Atglen and Susquehanna Branch.

#### LINES PROPOSED BUT NEVER COMPLETED

At a meeting held in Morgantown in 1828, it was proposed to build a railroad from Lancaster through the Conestoga Valley, between the headwaters of French Creek and the Brandywine, to the line dividing Chester and Montgomery Counties, and thence by the nearest and best route to Philadelphia. Committee selected: Robert Jenkins, John Wallace and Roland Diller, of Lancaster County; Clement Brooke, Evan Evans and Reese Evans, of Berks County; and David Potts, Alexander Laverty and Samuel Shaeffer, of Chester County; David Potts, chairman; Edward Davies and James Everhart, secretaries.—From the *New Holland Anti-Masonic Herald*, June 26, 1828.

Bill before the Legislature giving the Reading and Columbia Railroad the right to build a road from Lancaster to Safe Harbor; also from Lititz to Lancaster.—From the *Lancaster Intelligencer*, March 1, 1865.

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<sup>7</sup> See Vol. 27, p. 75, for a full account of this railroad. The writer had the pleasure of attending the celebration at Fulton House on September 21, 1909, when a tablet in honor of Robert Fulton was unveiled, and traveled from Quarryville to Fulton House by this narrow gauge road. Every available piece of rolling stock was impressed into service that day, and some of the passengers rode on the flat freight cars, which were converted for the occasion into passenger carriers, by placing two rows of benches, back to back, upon the car, and stretching an awning overhead. This was the biggest business day in the history of the railroad.



Proposed Reading Railroad into Lancaster, passing through the property of the Lancaster Comb Factory, on James Street, west of Market with a depot on the site of the Keystone Hotel, North Queen Street,  $\frac{1}{2}$  block north of the Pennsy depot.—From the *Lancaster Intelligencer*, August 9, 1865.

Delaware River and Lancaster Railroad, from Point Pleasant to Dublin, County Line, Limerick Square and New Holland to Lancaster. Charles Tyson, chairman; John K. Myers, vice-president; Samuel K. Cassel and Dr. W. L. Diffenderfer, the secretaries.—From the *Lancaster Daily Express*, January 11, 1868.

Proposed railroad connecting with the Reading Road near Ephrata, thence by way of New Holland and Compassville to Pomeroy, connecting there with the Pennsylvania Railroad and the road to Delaware City. This line is only twenty-five miles long, and will complete very important connections. As the road from the Pine Grove coal fields, now nearly completed, connects with the Reading and Columbia Road, the building of the road from Ephrata to Pomeroy will make a continuous line from Pine Grove to Delaware City.—From the *Lancaster Weekly Express*, Saturday, December 4, 1869.

Meeting was held at Washington Walker's woods, in Little Britain Township, to make plans for the building of a railroad from Oxford Borough to Hanover Junction, crossing the Susquehanna at or above Peach Bottom.—From the *Daily Evening Express*, August 5, 1870.

Meeting was held at Farmersville to discuss the advisability of building a railroad, starting at Springville, Chester County, connecting there with the Wilmington and Birdsboro Railroad, and running to Manheim, there to connect with the Pine Grove Railroad.—From the *Daily Evening Express*, September 16, 1870.

In 1890, plans again were made for building the proposed Delaware River and Lancaster Railroad, running from Phoenixville through French Creek Falls and Churchtown, and connecting with the Reading Road near Manheim.

A proposed Reading and Chesapeake Railway and Coal Company was formed in 1889, with Lieut. Col. Samuel L. Fowler the president. He was a soldier in the Mexican War, and took sides with the Confederates in the Civil War. He was born in New York City, August 14, 1817, and died in Lancaster, May 15, 1889.

Further efforts on the above road, under the title of the Reading, Lancaster and Baltimore Railroad, with a capitalization of \$2,800,000, were made in 1892. It was a seventy-mile line from Reading, through Mohnton, Adamstown, New Holland, Strasburg, Quarryville, to Deepwater, Maryland, at the head of the Chesapeake Bay. Actual work was started near Mohnton, April 2, 1892; seven miles of roadbed were completed, but no ties or rails were ever laid. The work ceased in December, 1892.

The final abortive attempt at railroad building in Lancaster County was a proposed line from a point west of Akron, connecting there with the Reading

Road, passing Brownstown on the west, and following a course east of the Conestoga River to the main line of the Pennsylvania Road. The primary purpose of this road was the hauling of cement, which was considered of a superior grade, from the land of Isaac and Christian Wenger. A Mr. Williams was the contractor, and Marshall Young chief engineer. Grading was begun in March, 1909, and rails laid from Millway south to the Milton Wenger farm, but on December 17, 1910, work was discontinued and never resumed. This road was facetiously referred to as the "B. and O." (Brownstown and Oregon) of Lancaster County.

#### SOURCE MATERIAL

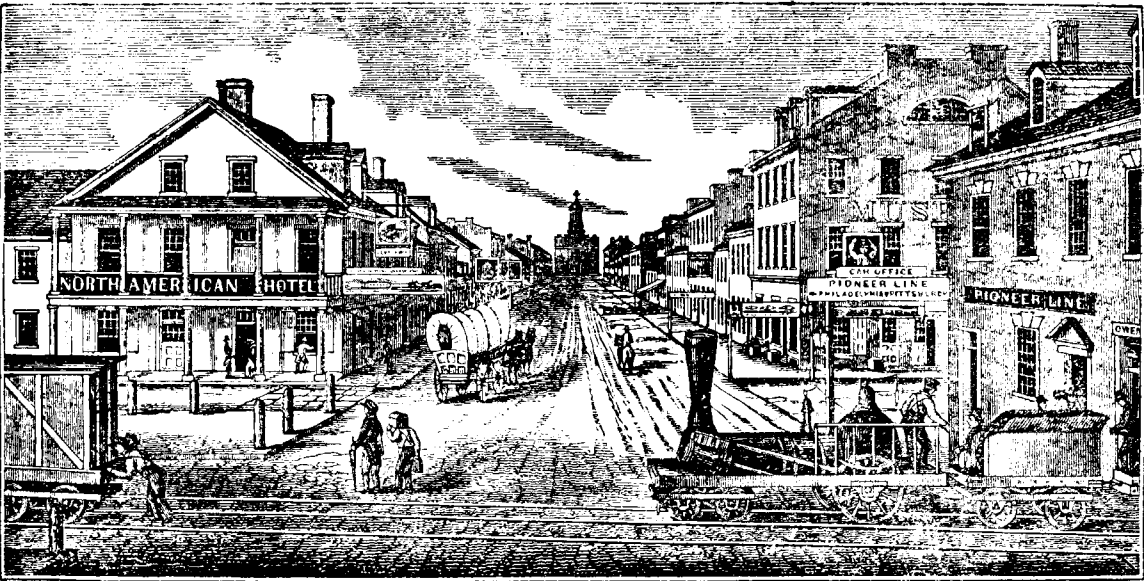
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A Biographical History of Lancaster County, by Alex. Harris; Elias Barr and Co., publishers, 1872.

Ellis and Evans' History of Lancaster County, 1883.

Portrait and Biographical Record of Lancaster County, Chapman Publishing Co., Chicago, 1894.

Biographical Annals of Lancaster County, J. H. Beers and Co., 1903.



THE RAILROAD IN LANCASTER IN 1840.  
Queen Street, Looking South from Chestnut Street.

## ADDITIONAL RAILROAD NOTES

JAMES MALONE, railroad contractor, died in Marietta, this county, on December 19, 1889, aged eighty-one years.

SAMUEL R. SLAYMAKER, son of Samuel Cochran Slaymaker, was born in Donegal Township on March 14, 1867, and died in Lancaster, November 28, 1940. For a number of years he was civil engineer for the Pennsylvania and other railroads, and at one time chief engineer of the local Pennsylvania Traction Company. He, working with George F. Goll, constructed the "big bridge" over the Conestoga River near the water works, in 1887.

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The following items were contributed by Mr. Leon R. Franks. They were received too late for insertion under the proper heading.

The Reading, Marietta and Hanover Railroad Company started work to complete the road from Marietta Junction to Chickies, a distance of 6.16 miles, in June, 1882. The road was opened to traffic April 1, 1883. Grading had been done previously on seventeen miles of the line by the Hanover Junction and Susquehanna Railroad, which was incorporated March 9, 1882; this grading was begun January 13, 1873, but not completed. The road was abandoned April 27, 1930, and the corporation dissolved December 22, 1930.

The Enterprise Railroad (built by Thomas Baumgardner), was incorporated October 27, 1865, construction was begun in 1866, and it was opened to traffic August 3, 1868, between Locust Gap Junction and Shamokin. This line was consolidated, concurrently with several other lines on March 28, 1871, with the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad, which line operated it from its completion. The Philadelphia and Reading Railroad Company was merged with the Reading Company October 1, 1923.