

100 Years of Mount Wolf History  
Volume I 1835-1935 Author unknown

One hundred years ago (1835) there stood one frame dwelling house near the spot now occupied by the office of the Superior Paper Products Company. This dwelling was occupied by a man named Gorge Bonge, who as a cobble by trade. He was also the post-master for this section of Country east of Manchester Borough. The mail at this early date was brought by stage coach over the Baltimore and Harrisburg Turnpike and discharged at Manchester and then conveyed to the office then known as Mount Pleasant Post Office. Andrew Jackson was President of the United States at this time. Mr. Bonge was an ardent support of the Jackson Administration, which accounts for his being Postmaster.

One fourth mile east of this post office was a large frame dwelling house on a one hundred and fifty acre farm, later known as the Henry Hoff farm. This farm then embraced about all the ground that is occupied by our present Borough of Mount Wolf. Much of it was then being heavy timbered woodland, and was known throughout this section of country during the forties for its enthusiastic Camp Meetings, which were held in these woods by the United Brethren and Evangelical Congregations.

In those early days, even as now, great interest was manifested during Presidential campaigns. The older folks delighted to tell of the exciting times they had in 1840 during the "Hard Cider" or "Tippecanoe" and "Tyler Too" campaign, when men from far and near come to Manchester and cast their ballots for William Henry Harrison for President.

The year 1846 brings us to the time when James Knox Polk was President of the United States, and the war with Mexico. Tradition has it that our Mr. Bonge gave his oldest son to enlist in the army to go with General Taylor to Mexico. After that war was over, he located in a southern state and during the Civil War met one of his brothers face to face at Appomattox.

The next topic of interest that strikes our community is the discovery of Gold in Butter's Mill Dam in California in the year 1849, when Zachary Taylor was President of the United States. That proved to be of minor importance when the news came that the Northern Central Railroad Company had decided to extend its line from Baltimore to York through to Harrisburg and surveyors came on the field to survey the line, soon to be followed by the superintendents, the bosses and the Irish laborers with their picks and shovels and horses and carts to grade and build this new Railroad. In those early days, the Irishman built the railroads instead of the Dago. A railroad is generally considered an asset to any community because of its facilities for transportation and other advantages. So when the surveyors came on the scene a very determined effort was put forth by citizens of Manchester to have the line through their town, but the route along the Manhattan Creek from the Summit to the river was preferred to bring it to the level of the river which they intended to follow to Harrisburg. Few people realize that ten bridges had to be built across Manhattan Creek for this railroad in a distance of one and one half miles. The building of this railroad was the birth of this present town of Mount Wolf, which has grown in eight years from two homes to two hundred and fifty homes, with six real live industries [to give progress to this Borough]. The first locomotive with its racked noise and smoke went down through this Manhattan Valley in the summer of 1850.

In a few days you will receive a second installment of the history of our interesting little city. If you know any old history of Mt. Wolf, write it up and instructions will follow where to send it.

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The Spring of 1852 found this locality blest with a new Railroad running North and South though the Manhattan Valley. The new locomotives sent out over the hills with their shrill whistles a call something like this, "Industry come this way". The first man to respond to the call was a Mr. Adam Wolf, who lived in the quiet little river town of New Holland, who conducted a Tannery and a General Store there. Mr. Wolf then had three sons who were grown up ready for business. He came to this place and secured a parcel of ground from Mr. Harry Hoff, who was the father of the Henry Hoff spoken of in Volume I.

It was in this same year that Mr. Wolf erected a log dwelling house near where the office of the Mount Wolf Furniture Company now stands. Also the original warehouse on the East side for a store and grain warehouse, which has since been remodeled and enlarged. It is now occupied by George A Wolf's sons, who are great grandsons of the Mr. Adam Wolf. He had a keen eye for business, for he established a line for Wolf's to continue indefinitely.

Mr. Wolf's three sons were named as follows: Edwin, George H. and William W. After some deliberations, he decided to have George and William to take charge of the new place. They were not in operation long until George H. Wolf was appointed agent for the Railroad Company and also name Postmaster to succeed Mr. Bonge. At this time, some Railroad Officials named the new station Mount Wolf, which soon became the name of the Post Office of Mount Wolf, York County, Pennsylvania. In 1856, Gorge H. Wolf built his palatial residence on the corner of what is now Center and Railroad [Front] Streets. It is still occupied by Mrs. George H. Wolf and her son, Earle L. Wolf. The business of the new firm took an upward trend from the very beginning and forged ahead through the first severe panic of 1857. Then came the strenuous four cornered political campaign of Lincoln, Bell, Breckenridge and Douglass in 1860, landing Mr. Lincoln in the White House. This was followed by a four years Civil War, known as the Worlds' Darkest Tragedy. Still later in June 1863, the Wolfs saw their store stripped of all valuables, shoes, clothing and eatables by a Company of General Early's Confederate soldiers.

Such were the handicaps in those early days. In 1863, William W. Wolf withdrew from the firm of Adam Wolf & Sons to become Sheriff of York County. He died while in office. Mr. George H. Wolf then became sole proprietor of the business. Other men at this time who were launching out and helping to develop the new town were Harry Hoff, Henry Hoff, Samuel Hoff, Peter Diehl, Charles Diehl and Harry Drayer. It was about 1866 when Mr. Hoff started to erect a brick yard on his farm. Bricks were made here for houses now owned as follows: C. H. Kohr, Sam Etter, Emma Ness, Eli Hoff and J. J. Rodes. The year 1865 was a reconstruction period. The new town was not left behind, as from that day on, each year has witnessed new additions to our residential list and to our various industries of which something will be said later. The public schools were well taken care of from the beginning by efficient Boards of Directors until they have reached their present high attainments.

The first baseball team was started in 1889 with A. H. Ness as captain and J. J. Rodes as Secretary and Treasurer. The first game played was with the New Cumberland Giants on July 4<sup>th</sup> of the same year in Henry Hoff's field on the present site of the grade school building. We sent the team home on the seven o'clock train very jubilant, as they presented us with a goose egg.

The next installment will be about Churches, Schools and Industries. It will follow in a few days. Have you got any information that would add to this record of Mt. Wolf?

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Many centuries ago a man about 33 years of age said "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." Most of the makers of Mt. Wolf were men of faith. Until 1870, they were obliged to wend their way to Manchester for worship. In that year, those men saw that it was time for a church in Mt. Wolf and Harry Hoff said "I will donate two lots on which to erect a church". A board of Trustees was organized as follows: Harry Hoff, John Spahr, J. C. Kinkel and George Westhafer. The building committee was Rev. W. H. Craumer, J. G. Kunkel and Jon Spahr. This United Brethren Church was dedicated in 1871. It was remolded in 1892 and enlarged in 1907. In 1925, the building was sold to New Cumberland U. B. congregation and removed to make room for the present brick church on the corner of Main and Center Streets. The present pastor is Roy Ziegler and the church is free of debt.

In 1915, a group of citizens organized St. Joh's Lutheran Church and erected a fine brick building on the corner of Center and Third Streets. Among the leaders were C. W. Whisler, Charles Hough, C. T. Kindsports and others. The present pastor is Rev. John Hassler. This church is also free of debt. These two churches furnish ample opportunity for worship.

The first place of business in Mt. Wolf was the general store operated by Adam Wolf & Sons in 1852. The fourth generation took charge in 1914 under the firm name of George A. Wolf & Sons. In 1866, Harry Hoff started a brick yard. This was followed by two cigar factories and a cigar box factory. The real business boom came in 1899 when the Mt. Wolf Furniture Company was started. The leaders in this movement were John H. Wogan, Henry Wolf, J. G. Kunkel, George A. Wolf, William D. Linebaugh, Alfred Snyder and I. Park Wogan. The Mt. Wolf Manufacturing Company was also organized in 1899 by Henry Wolf, John Kibbler, Harry Hummelbaugh and George A. Wolf. This company manufactured shirts and gave employment to about sixty women. In 1904, The Pennsylvania Wire Cloth was organized by C. L. Hoff, George A. Wolf, W. E. Ottemiller, C. E. Anderson, Henry Wolf and M. G. King. In 1913, a consolidation of three wire cloth plants took place and the new name was The American Wire Fabrics Corporation. This has been the leading industry in our town, giving the most employment for many years. The Keystone Table Company was organized in 1916 and among those who took active part were A. H. Diehl, C. J. Eisenhower and others. At present W. O. Knaub is Manager of both the Keystone Table Co. and the Mt. Wolf Furniture Co. The success of these two plants is largely due to his untiring efforts. Other places of business and employment are Bernstein's Sewing Factory, Klinedinst Brothers Shirt Factory, Strayer Brothers Garage, Bruce Brothers Garage and Frank Brothers Repair Shop, three grocery stores operated by B. F. Crumbling, Seitz Brothers and Ness Grocery Store, two barber shops operated by Charles Waltemyer and Paul Shank, one plumbing shop operated by B. O. Poff & Son. Charles A. Waltemyer operates a printer. Edward Houston operates a broom factory. Our shoemaker shops are owned and operated by Lloyd Shank and Robert Dietz. Miss Minnie Berger operates a beauty shop. Thomas E. Whay operators a green grocery and fruit store. A. H. Diehl & Sons operate a large furniture store and undertaking establishment. In 1932, the Superior Paper Products Company built a new factory giving employment to approximately twenty persons. Dietz A. Smith designed and built this plant. This firm manufactures corrugated containers. The main office is in Pittsburgh. The local manager is Robert Warren.

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The Mt. Wolf Realty Co. was formed in 1914 by the following: C. S. Rohrbaugh, C. L. Hoff, George A. Wolf, C. J. Eisenhower, Albert Hoff, Charles B. Wolf and M. W. Wager. Fourth and Fifth Streets were opened up and graded and fourteen houses were erected. A. H. Diehl erected even more houses about this time to accommodate the demand for homes for employees in our factories. Among the families who moved to Mt. Wolf at this time were H. K. Seitz, George Warner, Wm. Bloss, C. H. Hannigan, and Edward Bloss.

Our town needed a bank and under the leadership of J. G. Kinkel, A. H. Diehl, Daniel B. Hartman, and others a bank was started. On December 21, 1921 the bank was robbed. The officers met and decided that any customer, who through the pilfering of his safety deposit box, had a loss and would make affidavit to the correct amount, would be reimbursed for the full amount. This amounted to thousands of dollars. However, on Feb. 2, 1925, the final payment in full for the total loss to the customers of the bank was made. The present officers are W. O. Knaub President, D. J. Klinedinst Vic. Pres., Charles H. Krebs Cashier, Ira Warner Asst. Cashier, Directors: M. G. King, George H. Wolf, Henry Hoff, A. H. Diehl and John King.

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August 25, 1910 Mt. Wolf was incorporated as a Borough. The first Chief Burges was George A. Wolf. The Town Council consisted of J. G. Kunkel President, I. Park Mogan, Wm. D. Linebaugh, Levi Melhorn, Wm. Kauffman, J. J. Rodes and Charles T. Kinports. The Secretary was J. Allen Melhorn and the Treasurer was Daniel Diehl.

The first School House was built in Mt. Wolf in 1850. This building is still standing and is used today as a residence. In 1876 a one-room brick building was erected near the center of town. In 1884, a one-room second story was added to the school building. In 1909, the building was declared unsafe and was torn down. In its place a two-room one-story building was erected. The town, being incorporated into a Borough in 1910, elected five new School Directors, as follows: Henry Wolf, A. H. Ness, E. A. Greiman, C. J. Eisenhower and D. Y. Herbst. The demand for improved school facilities resulted in a new two-story brick school building in 1914 of four rooms at the corner of Third and Maple Streets. The next step forward came in 1930 when our schools were again congested and we erected the modern Junior High School Building at Sixth and Maple Streets. Mr. Dietz A. Smith designed and built this new building the same year. The building consists of four class rooms. A manual training department and a domestic science department are included. The gymnasium is sixty feet square and twenty-two feet high. Adequate shower and dressing rooms are installed. The necessary equipment for physical development of our young people is supplied.

The Department of Education at Harrisburg directs prospective High School builders to come see what they consider the finest of its kind and size in the State of Pennsylvania. This is certainly a fine endorsement. This new building cost \$60,000.00. The School Board raised \$22,000.00. The citizens, through a Building Committee, assumed the remainder or \$38,000.00 of debt, so that our young people might have good educational facilities as well as fine physical training under competent leaders. Since this building was completed, we have turned out three classes who spent the full three year course in the new building. If you will take time to ask these boys or girls what they think about this institution, I am sure you will receive a hearty endorsement. The original debt of \$38,000.00 is today reduced to \$ 13,500.00 through the hearty support of our citizens. The Treasurer of the School Board each year since 1930 has donated his entire salary towards reducing the debt on this building and keeping up the interest on the unpaid portion. Many other similar things are being done to clear up this debt. When it is all paid, the entire building and grounds do NOT belong to the Committee, who assumed the responsibility for the debt, but instead it all BELONGS TO THE PROPERTY OWNERS OF MT. WOLF, PA.

The Park Association is another group of public spirited citizens who have worked hard to give our boys and girls a place for summer activates. The entire cost of the Park, with its bandstand and restaurant, play equipment, athletic field or ball diamond with the fine grandstand is over \$10,000.00. The debt remaining on this Association is only \$800.00.

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During the past ten days, you have received some of the history of Mt. Wolf and the work has only started. If you will help make this history more complete, the committee will appreciate your assistance. The debt of \$13,500.00 on the School and \$800.00 on the Park should be cleared up. At this Thanksgiving Season of 1935, we appeal to you to give us of your knowledge about the early days of Mt. Wolf so that a complete history may be compiled but most of all, to contribute something towards paying off the remaining portion of our debt. Make checks payable to Charles H. Krebs, Treasure or send to Margaret E. Greiman, Secretary. If more desirable, deposit funds or history of Mt. Wolf with any of the following citizens:

C. Ray Gibbe	American Wire Fabrics Corporation
W. C. Knaub	Mt. Wolf Furniture Co. or Keystone Table Co.
Robert Warren	Superior Paper Products Co.
Earle L. Wolf	George W Wolf & Sons
Gordon Seitz	Seitz Brothers Store
B. F. Crumbing	Crumbing's Store
Prof. Harvey Swartz	Mt. Wolf Junior High School

York's slogan in its community chest drive is "BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR". We in Mt. Wolf can be "Good Neighbors", too, at this Thanksgiving Season of the year.