

OUR TOWN REMEMBERED

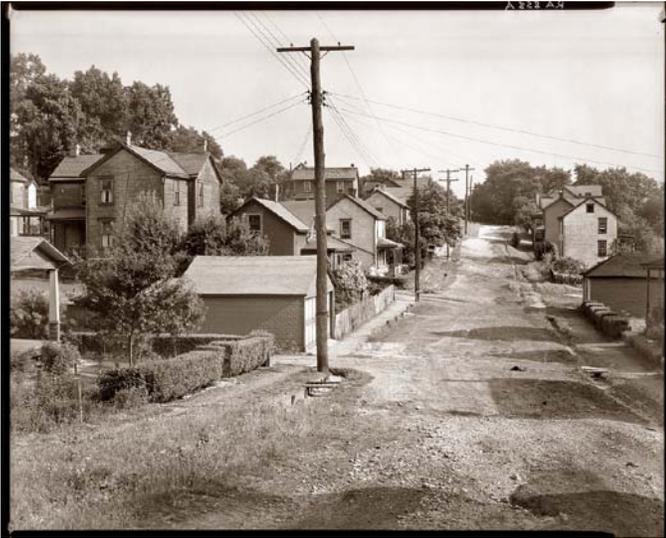


Photo Caption: Back in 1935 the government began a program called the Farm Security Administration. The idea was to put artists back to work. Famed photographer Walker Evans passed through Pennsylvania with his cameras capturing images that are now a part of our history. When he reached Mount Pleasant he took a number of photographs including this image which he calls Back Street. Is this Back Street? Some think it is High Street. What do you think?

Walking Around

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*for the Mount Pleasant Area Historical Society
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What's in a name? Everything! Especially if it is the name of a street. It is easy to figure out names like High Street or Ridge Street. Same thing with Quarry: there must have been some type of quarry along or at the end of its route. Front and Low streets are clear but this is the first time I have heard of a Back Street.

Naming streets after prominent persons is classic. We have a few of those in town. One is Geary Street. It was named after an amazing man, John White Geary. Not only was he mayor of San Francisco, California, but went on to be the governor of both Kansas and Pennsylvania.

Ditto for Shupe Street. The Shupe brothers, Daniel and Isaac, built and operated the feed mill on Main Street. They lived next door in one of the finest houses in the town. It's now the home of Brown's Candy.

Mount Pleasant is full of a surprising number of streets that bespeak of its history. Church Street has, guess what, a church.

College Avenue once held the Mount Pleasant Institute. It was at the end of the avenue where the hospital is located. One can also guess that Diamond Street leads through the diamond, now more a circle, where the Doughboy stands.

Being new in town and having written a book called the *National Road in Pennsylvania*, I was shocked to find Braddock Street and Braddock Road Avenue within the grid of Mount Pleasant streets. I thought I knew the route that General Braddock and his army took through southwestern Pennsylvania on their way to the Monongahela River and their destiny. Well, not only did that army pass here, they camped nearby and paused at Union Springs to have a drink, on a road we call Spring Street.

Another street with an interesting name is Morewood Street. That street echoes the coal heritage of Mount Pleasant. Along its route was to be found the coal patch of H. C. Frick Coke Company's Morewood Works. Back in 1891 a great confrontation occurred between police and striking coal miners looking for better working conditions. Not much remains of the coal patch at Morewood, legend says a single workman's house. What does remain is the Superintendent's home all nicely restored and looking grand. As the street leaves town and becomes Route 981 the state has erected one of its famous markers commemorating the events of 1891.

Bridgeport Street is like Morewood. It leads to the coal mine and patch belonging to the Mullen Mine.

Almost every street in town has a name with a meaning. Sometimes there is a surprise. For example, Three Mile Hill is officially named Three Mile Hill. I always thought it was the local nickname. Wrong!

Here is another mystery: Mellingtown Road. Well, thanks to Jim Lozier I know where the road is, but where is Mellingtown? I couldn't find it. Jim couldn't find one of his relatives either. In his family genealogy there was a notation, "Gone to

Texas.” Well, the family thought that was that since it appeared these ancestors moved half a continent away. It never dawned on anyone that they simply moved a few streets to a section of Mt Pleasant called Texas. Where is Texas? While traveling east on Main Street, Texas is the section just before the railroad tracks. But why call it Texas? Sure would like to know how that section of town got its name? Do you know?

Help me ferret out the history of Mount Pleasant. Do you know any other interesting street names? Will you share them with me? Do you have old photos of the streets? Drop by the Historical Society and have a talk. Better yet come to a meeting and let everyone know what you know. Hope you have pictures to share with us. Would love to see these streets back in the day.

A FEW OTHER IMAGES BY WALKER EVANS AROUND OUR AREA



The Doughboy at the Diamond



Hecla truck



Hecla company store.