

"PERSONALITIES" AT HANOVER JCT., PA

EARLY 1920'S

BY ROGER E. SHAFFER

As a kid growing up while living in a railroad station, many experiences were mine to gather, while other kids may not have had the same opportunity. Within the village of 18 families. it is clear to see that each family knew every other family. This, in part, enables me to recall many incidents that apply to certain residents of the area. The railroad station, and the general merchandise store owned by **W. S. Henry & Son**, were the centers of attraction in the small village of Hanover Junction.



W.S. Henry & Son General Merchandise

Especially during the winter months, farmers who brought their milk to the station early in the morning for shipment to Baltimore, would tie their horse to posts provided for this purpose. They would go into the store for a bit of gossip and secure some information about happenings in the area. During their visit, they made use of a utensil provided to get rid of excess saliva while munching on a product from the "Red Man" or "Beech-Nut" tobacco company. During the summer months, this practice did not exist because the farmer was intent on returning home to pursue his farm work.

Four families of the village were railroad employee families. Three families were employed in the local cigar factory, owned and operated by **H. I. Gladfelter**, usually referred to by local residents as simply "H.I.". There was one retired family, and others were factory workers in York, PA.

[Hanover Junction Station](#)

One of the familiar sounds heard at the Telegraph Operator's desk was the rat-a-tat and tinka-tink of the telegraph key and its sounder. This was the same sound heard in cities and hamlets across the country – the recording of dots and dashes of Samuel Morse's telegraph invention. The railroads were the largest users of the telegraph system to relay messages necessary for railroad operation. At Hanover Jct., the telegraph block office was assigned the letter "U", to distinguish it from all other telegraph offices along the division. All messages to and from Hanover Jct. bore the letter "U".

The day trick (8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.) telegraph operator was **Howard O. Gladfelter**. His official telegraph identification was H.O.G., but everyone always called him "HEBB". Don't know how he got that name, but there it was.

He lived in the last house at the south end of the village, which made him walk the furthest of the other R. R. employees, as the station was at the north end. The walk took no more than 5-6 minutes.

The middle trick (4:00 p.m. to midnight) operator was **Edward C. Henry**. E.C.H. was his telegraphic identification, and he was "Dad" to my two favorite playmates. One of Ed's favorite expressions, which he used often, was, "Fine as frog hair." Don't know how he knew the comparison was correct. His walk to work was probably 2-3 minutes, for he lived just a short distance from the office.

Night trick operator (12:00 midnight to 8:00 a.m.) was **Chauncey E. Henry**, or C.E.H. of Seven Valleys, or Smyser, in railroad language. He walked the cinder path along the railroad for the distance of approximately 1¼ miles. Never saw him very often, as this was sleep time for me.

The fourth man in the office crew was my Dad, **Wilferd J. Shaffer**. He served as station agent for both the Pennsylvania R.R. and the Western Maryland Rwy. Our family lived right in the station house. Dad, therefore, didn't have to walk very far to work. His duties involved passenger-related services along with freight and express shipments to and from the station, which was identified as 8288 by the Pennsylvania Railroad.



Hanover Junction Station

Other Residents of Hanover Junction

William S. Henry, the operator of the general store, was the first person in the village to own an automobile and had one of the first two telephones in the village, one of which he had installed in the store. His store was a thriving business, as it was convenient shopping for the people of the immediate area. The U. S. Post Office was housed in the store, with William's son, Leonard, as Postmaster. The store was identified as "W. S. Henry & Son General Merchandise".

Then there was ground-hog hunting "**Jake**" **Emig**. Jake would sit on the waiting room porch at the station, with an eye on the adjacent field and hill, and watch for ground hogs. As often as I heard him say "There goes one!", I never could see one single ground hog. I used to enjoy sitting there with Jake while he did what all tobacco chewing people did – spit, and he would tell of some of his experiences while on the hunt. Next thing I knew, Jake got up, went to his house and soon reappeared with a gun and off he went down the cinder path along the railroad. Don't know how long he was gone, but after a while there comes Jake with gun in one hand and a dead ground hog in the other. Don't know if that was the one he saw, or another, but it doesn't matter.



H.I. Gladfelter Cigar Manufacturer

I can recall very vividly the cigar shop owner, "**H. I.**", being known by the neighbors as very "tight", or maybe frugal would be the word to better describe him. A friend told me one time, after I attained an older period in life, that H.I. told him that "he enjoyed making money, and he hoped that the recipients of his wealth would enjoy spending it as much." In addition to his cigar manufacturing business, he was directly involved with a

York bank, as well as the local bank in Seven Valleys. At one time, his business employed 32 people from the village and surrounding country area.

Then there was "Mr. Al," as the village residents called him, another railroad employee with the name of **Albert Gladfelter**, track repair gang foreman. His wife, Mary, was known as "Moll". How she ever got that name has always been a mystery to me. But to me, "Mr. Al" was something different. Whenever the track gang was working in the station area, I made sure I was on hand as well, for I knew that Foreman Mr. Al would have an errand for me to perform — to run over to the store to purchase a pack of Red Man chewing tobacco. He knew exactly how much the price would be, but an extra penny for my efforts was always included. It was that penny that kept me available when the track repair gang was near the station, for it meant I could go over to the store and make a purchase of my choice from the candy case. This glass-enclosed candy case always had plenty of selections from which to choose a penny's worth of sweets.

And I will admit that I was rather envious of **Spencer Emig**, as often I would see him sitting on the bench of the store's porch eating Planter's salted peanuts and drinking soda. He was quite some older than us other kids, and was employed, so he could purchase and enjoy these goodies he found in the store.

We kids were all dressed very much alike. Bib-overalls and canvas sneakers were the usual summer dress. Dad always wore his regulation railroad uniform when on duty. It seemed that on Sunday the village residents wore clothing somewhat better-looking than that worn on week days. Those who attended Sunday church services always changed from their "Sunday" clothes to others after returning home from services.

One of the Gladfelter family members that is still clear in my mind was **William "Willie" Gladfelter**. His occupation was clerk on the U. S. Mail Railway Post Office service, working out of Baltimore. Since his mother and sister lived in Hanover Jct., Willie would come to the Junction by train, mow the grass for his mother and perform other small jobs which a man was required to do. Willie was a small-statured man. Since he lived in Baltimore, it was necessary for him to complete his assigned chores, and do so in time to meet his train back home. One thing I remember about him was when he mowed the grass, no power mower of course, the pace he had while pushing the lawn mower was almost a running speed. Since their house was just across the railroad from the station house, I could see him doing the speedy operation. Little did I think that sometime later, I would be mowing the same plot of grass for Dad. When the station was closed and moving was necessary, he bought the Gladfelter property, and after renovations to the house, we moved in. And who do you suppose was chief grass mower? Yes, me.

Although the language most commonly spoken was English, I would guess that at least half of the residents were able to speak and understand Pennsylvania German. However, it was not in common usage.

The most southerly house in the village was occupied by **Mr. & Mrs. Charles Myers**, and their children, **Fred** and **Elda**. **Charlie** always raised some chickens, and with their egg production, he would ship a crate of eggs to Baltimore about once a week. He would use his wheelbarrow for transporting them to the railroad station. Rather than travel the road, it was much more convenient, and a shorter distance, to push the wheelbarrow using a pathway from his house that paralleled the railroad tracks, running directly to the station platform.

Just a short distance before reaching the station platform, there was a telegraph pole with a guy-wire attached, with the path going between the guy-wire and the pole. However, the distance between the wire and the pole was insufficient for Charlie's wheelbarrow with eggs to pass between them. So, he would stop, remove the eggs from the wheelbarrow, set them on the ground, move the barrow at an angle through the restricted zone, reload the eggs, and proceed to the station with his cargo.

Why didn't he just go around this restricted passage?

Answer: The pole was against a fence and the guy-wire was on the edge of a steep bank along the railroad, making it impossible for Charlie to pass in any other manner than the one he used.

Another personality at Hanover Junction was **George M. Mathias**. (George Mathias was preceded as Station Agent at Hanover Jct. by **John Henzie**, Agent.) My Dad, **W.J. Shaffer**, took over as Station Agent after George Mathias. Dad's appointment as Station Agent for the Pennsylvania and the Western Maryland Railroads provided the opportunity for me to live, as a kid, in the "Old-Station-House," as it was commonly referred to in the community. As I mentioned earlier, this provided opportunities to observe and learn many railroad-related activities, memories which remain with me to this day.

I did not know Mr. Mathias during the time they lived at Hanover Jct., reason being, my age under five at that time. However, in later years, I was able to know him much more intimately, and found him to be someone for whom I had a great admiration.

His transfer as Station Agent at Hanover Jct. was to the Station at Mt. Washington, Md. Here, his family lived in the Station building, similar to conditions at Hanover Jct. Mt. Washington station was 6 miles north of Baltimore, between Melvale and Bare Hills.

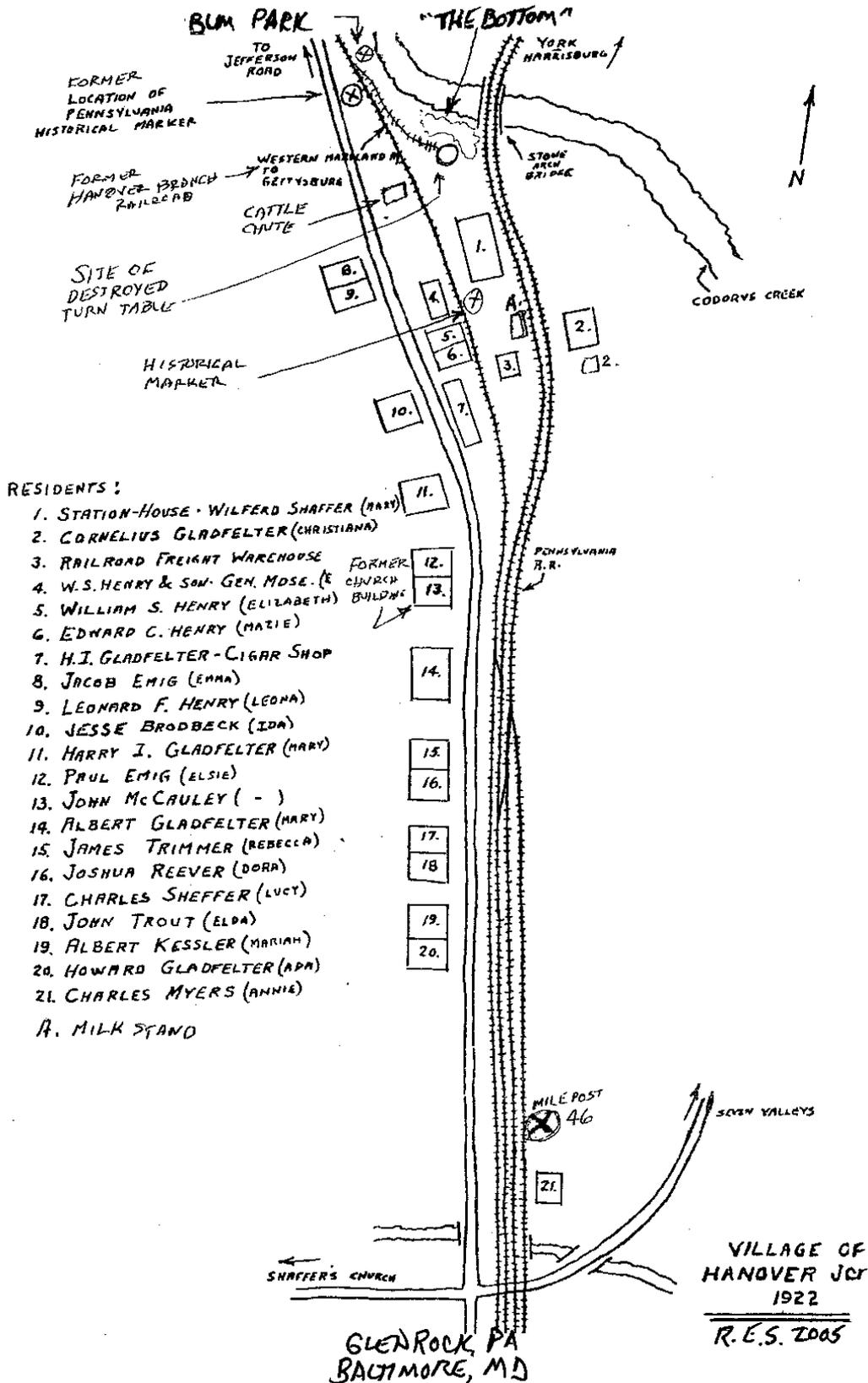
My parents would make frequent visits to the Mathias family, and of course, it was always by rail, as you would suppose. Their oldest son was named **Roger**. I used to enjoy visiting them and seeing Roger. Although he was quite some older than I, I liked him, and at the same time, he was the only person that I knew having the same name as I.

Names of some of those belonging to a generation ahead of us younger kids in the early 20's, as I recall, include **Howard Kopp**, **Guy Brodbeck**, **Stewart Trimmer**, **Fred Myers**, **Harry Kessler**, and **Leonard Henry**.

I recall an incident involving **Howard Kopp**, the owner of a "Moon" auto. (The car has nothing to do with this story.) We kids were playing ball this particular evening when "Koppie" arrived in his Moon on the scene. Wearing a stiff straw hat, he positioned himself in the catcher's position with the idea in mind of catching the next pitched ball with his hat. His aim for catching the ball was right on, but on went the ball, taking with it for a short distance, the top of the hat. No more catching the ball with a straw hat. You can bet on it!

There are two other young people that I must include at this point. **Elda Myers (Yost)** and **Katie Trimmer (Snyder)(Warner)** were very important to me. When the time came for me to go to school, I couldn't see why I had to leave my mother just for the sake of going to school. Elda and Katie came to my rescue and took good care of me in those unpleasant First-Year days at Diehl's school.

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Map of the homes in Hanover Junction in 1922