



**A Journey to**  
**SOUTH BETHLEHEM**  
*Pennsylvania*



**Descendants of Counties Cavan · Meath · Louth, Ireland**



# Dedication

*For Uncle Dan*

## ***Photos on the Cover***

*(Top left)* Blue flax flowers—the Cavan and Meath emigrants were growers of flax and produced quality linen before they arrived in the U.S. The rolling hills of Ireland *(top)* are similar to the the hilly terrain of Fountain Hill near South Bethlehem *(bottom)*. Molten steel glows red at the Bethlehem Steel plant *(bottom left)*.

©2020 Kenneth F. Raniere, Maps and Design

Photos courtesy of South Bethlehem Historical Society Archives and other sources identified.

Printed by Working Dog Press, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

**A Journey to**  
**SOUTH BETHLEHEM**  
*Pennsylvania*

**Descendants of Counties**  
**Cavan · Meath · Louth**  
**Ireland**



by Rosemary Buffington

## The Journey Begins

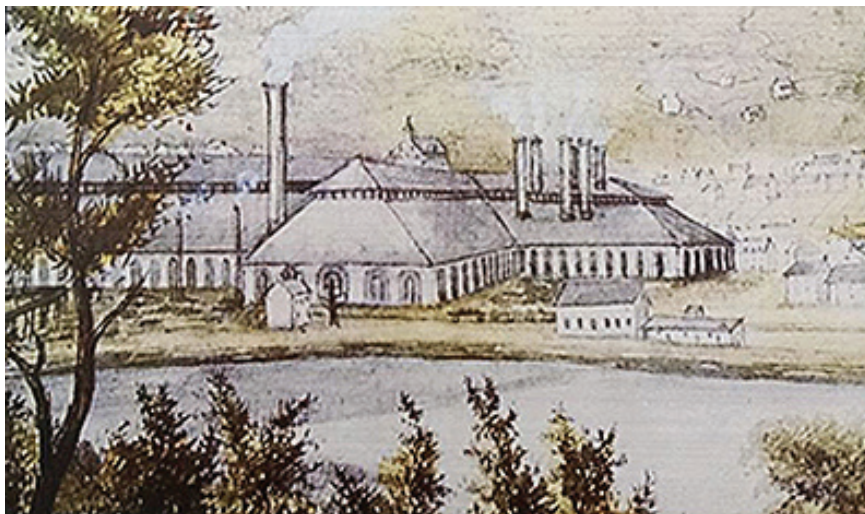


Many South Bethlehem residents can trace their family origin back to Cavan, Meath and Louth Counties in Ireland. Irish immigrants played key roles in colonial Pennsylvania and America since the dawn of independence from Great Britain.

## The Arrival

At Christmas time in 1741, the Moravians, a Germanic sect seeking religious freedom, established a church-village on the north side of the Lehigh River in the Lehigh Valley of Pennsylvania, and named it Bethlehem. The area was blessed with coal, iron, and zinc deposits, and in time, canals, railroads, and the beginnings of industry emerged.

The first known Scots/Irish in the area was the group known as the Craig Settlement, settling in Catasauqua in the mid-1700s. There were skirmishes with the native Indians, notably the shooting of William Tatamy, the son of Chief Tunda Tatamy—a Lenape who was engaged in peace talks in Easton (*See map, page 9*). By 1800, Irish workers with experience mining in the British Isles were finding their way to the



Bethlehem Iron Works, 1874. Painting by Rufus Grider.

Moravian Archives

Anthracite coal region (*See map, page 8*) from which the coal could be transported via canal along the Lehigh and Delaware Rivers to markets in Philadelphia. This mining area was made infamous in the mid-1800s with labor disputes fueled by the secret society the Molly Maguires. (*See map, page 8*)

The Irish Potato Famine of the 1840s brought thousands of immigrants to the Lehigh Valley, finding work in the mines, canals, and iron mills (*See map, page 9*). Families lived in squalor, and disease was rampant. By the 1850s, investors and industrialists were organizing

the enterprises that would make them fabulously wealthy and world famous. The boom was on.

The Bethlehem Iron Company began the production of steel rails, a huge improvement over iron, in 1863. With every ensuing year, South Bethlehem's working-class population swelled. Affluent investors and company executives on nearby Fountain Hill lived in sharp contrast to the laborers who lived in ethnic enclaves near the mill. A polytechnic college named Lehigh University was founded in 1865, ultimately educating sons of both bosses and laborers.

South Bethlehem's Irish immigrants figured prominently in the US Civil War, volunteering, hoping that the United States would then help Ireland in its struggles with England. While the men toiled and fought,



Bethlehem Iron Company, 1886. Watercolor by Joseph Pennell.

Library of Congress

women and children desired work, and cigar and silk factories were brought in.

In 1904, Charles M. Schwab purchased and renamed the Bethlehem Iron Company the Bethlehem Steel Corporation. Under his leadership, the borough prospered through government contracts awarded to Bethlehem Steel for the production of ordnance. After two World Wars, Bethlehem became a leader in rolled I-beams, structural steel for bridges and skyscrapers.

The combination of vision and capital, mixed with the blood and sweat of immigrants, many from Ireland around Cavan and Meath, helped build the early Bethlehem Iron Works, and later,



Courtesy of Malone Family

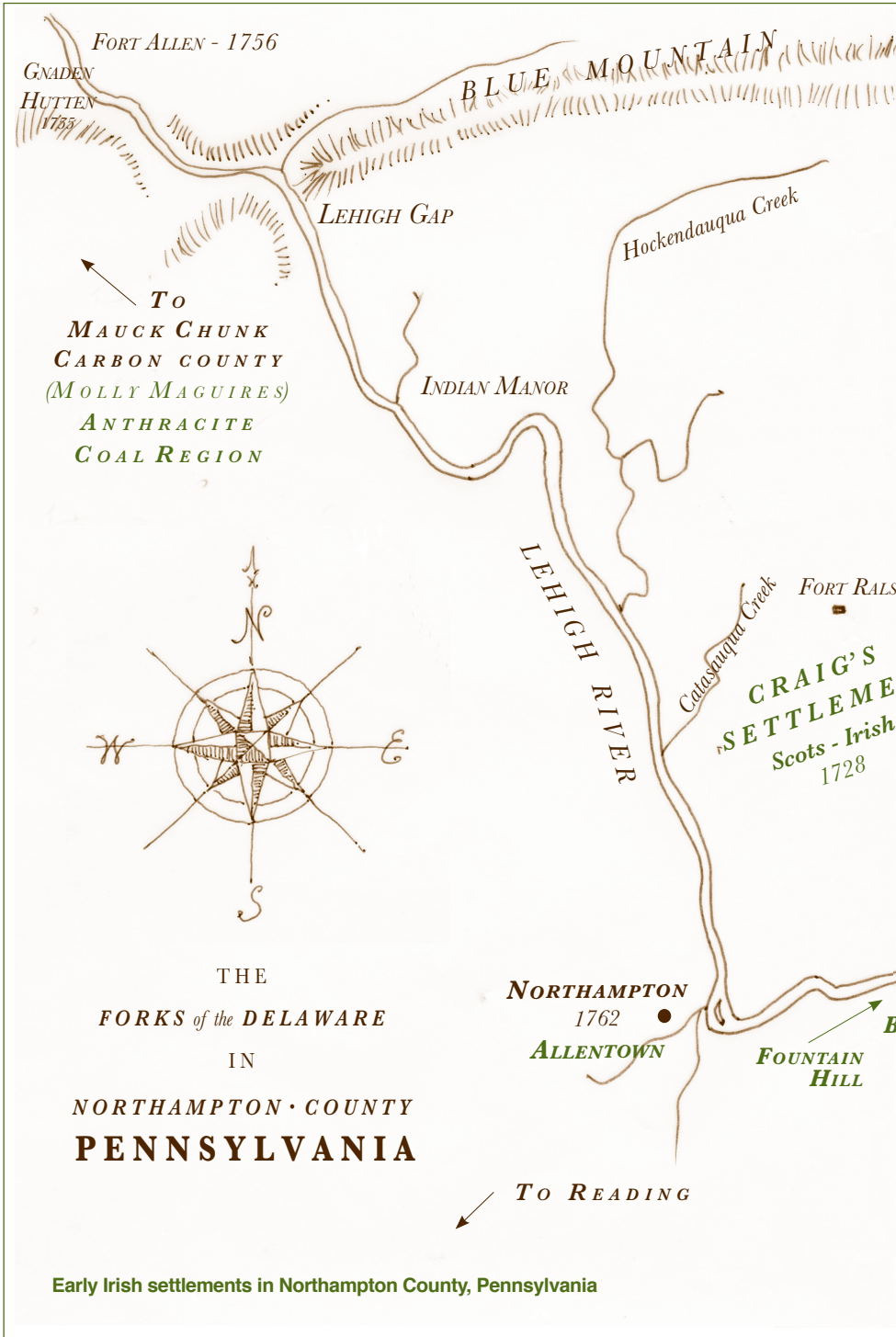
The Malone family in South Bethlehem in the early twentieth century.

the Bethlehem Steel Company — the world's largest in the 20th Century. Bethlehem cherishes its legacy reflected in a community that has made religious, educational and industrial contributions to the world.

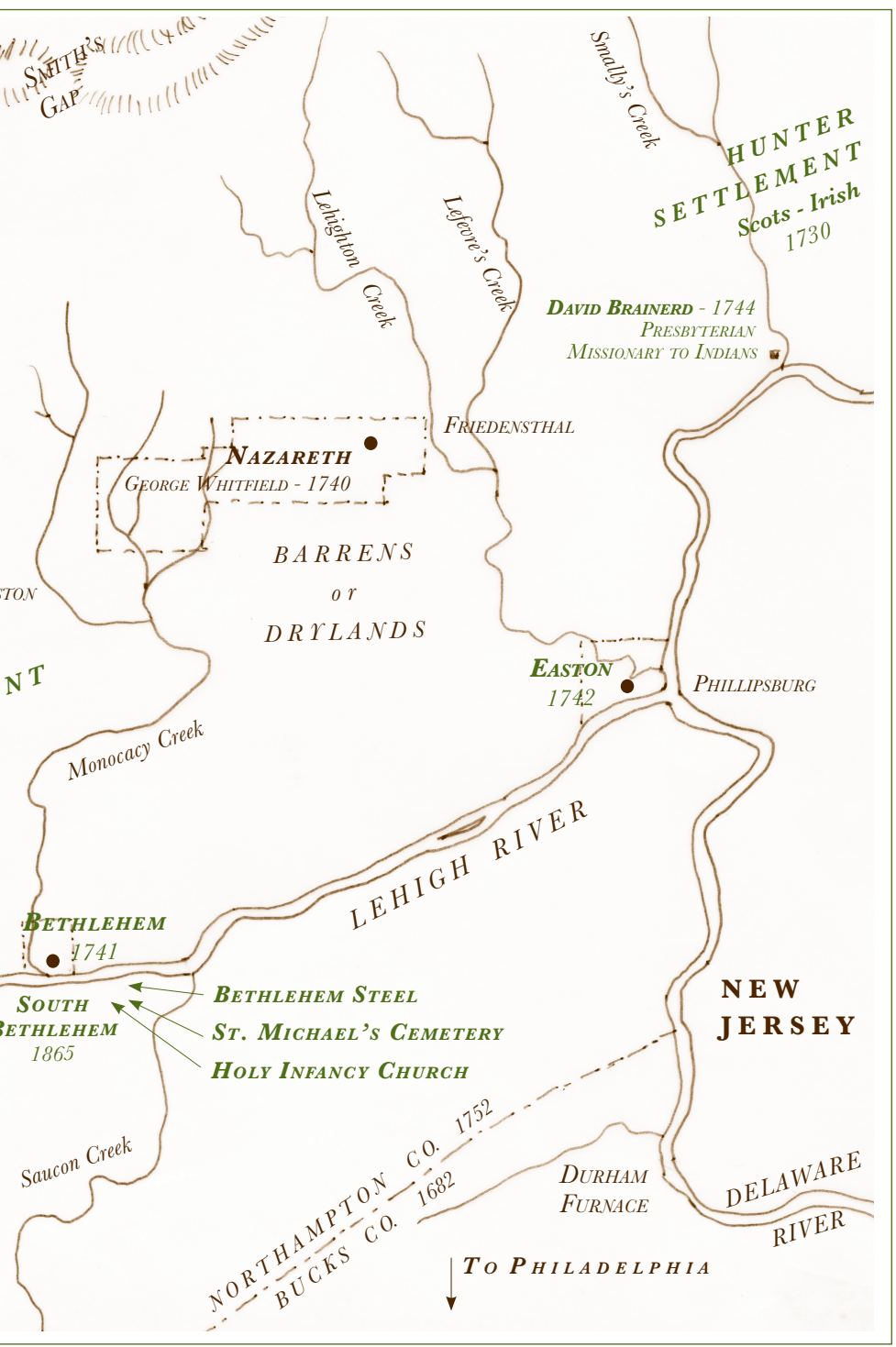


SBHS Archives

From Union Station (*foreground*) looking east along the Lehigh River to the furnaces of Bethlehem Steel mill, South Bethlehem. c. 1900.

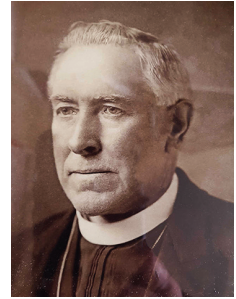






## The Strength of Faith

Irish Catholics in South Bethlehem were led first by priests who traveled twice a month from nearby Easton and Allentown along the Lehigh River. But by the early 1860s, construction was underway for the new Holy Infancy Church, led by Cavan's Rev. Michael McEnroe. Father McEnroe's brother, Rev. Philip McEnroe, succeeded him as pastor in 1877. The church grew quickly, adding a school and convent. By the 1900s, immigrants of other ethnicities were establishing their own churches, literally on every block of South Bethlehem.



Rev. Philip McEnroe

It is no understatement that these priests shepherded their flock through the toughest of times, and functioned as negotiators with the management of the Steel Company and the town leaders, including the Moravians who had founded Bethlehem over a century earlier.

Members of the McEnroe family are prominently buried in the Old Knocktemple Cemetery in Cavan, with the brothers having provided funds for their memorials. Attending to the Irish immigrants' spiritual, emotional, and sometimes physical needs, Holy Infancy Church is today still a parish of immigrants



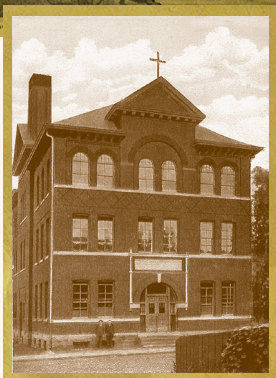
Rev. Michael and Rev. Philip McEnroe provided the headstone for their father, Philip McEnroe, Sr. at Old Knocktemple Cemetery in Cavan, Ireland.

Philip McEnroe died in 1864 at age 78, a widower after his wife Catherine died in 1843 at age 40. They were the parents of eight children.





SBHS Archives



In 1864, the Church of the Holy Infancy was the first Catholic church built by the Irish congregation in South Bethlehem. In 1886, a larger church, 67 by 147 ft., was dedicated on the same lot at E. Fourth and Taylor Sts. Philadelphia architect Durang designed the church in the Gothic style with a 196-foot spire.

In 1894, South Bethlehem architect, A.W. Leh designed Holy Infancy parochial school on a lot across from the church.



SBHS Archives

Above the white marble altar of Holy Infancy Church, the mural at the upper right depicts the Nativity scene. The church also has a white marble altar rail and carved white marble side altars.





SBHS Archives

Interior of Holy Infancy Church.



The Coronation of Our Lady



The Monstrance



SBHS Archives

Mourners gather in an alley behind the church.

## Journey's End

Dressed in black, mourners surround the open coffin of a deceased family member in public, before the funeral march up the hill to St. Michael's Cemetery. Thousands of immigrants, who lived and worked in South Bethlehem, worshipped at Holy Infancy Church and nearby ethnic Catholic churches, were interred at St. Michael's. Photographs of this type were sent to family members overseas to mourn the deceased.

### MRS. MARCELLA McGOVERN

(Successor to late Thomas F. McGovern)

#### UNDERTAKING AND EMBALMING

306-308 EAST THIRD STREET, SOUTH BETHLEHEM, PA.

Nineteen Years  
of Success

SATISFACTION  
GUARANTEED



COMPLETE  
FUNERAL  
OUTFITS  
FURNISHED

Automobiles & Cabs  
for all Purposes—  
Christenings, Social  
Functions, Weddings  
and Funerals.

On a hill overlooking the now-defunct steel works stands Old St. Michael's Cemetery, where the Irish Catholic immigrants were the earliest to be interred, with and without markers or known burial locations. Most died of disease, squalor, and horrible industrial accidents, their lives marginally better than the ones they left in the Great Famine.

Buried near Father Philip McEnroe in St. Michael's is William Baugh, a Cavan immigrant who made good in Philadelphia, and bequeathed his significant assets to the priest. These funds eventually helped families in both Bethlehem and Cavan.



Walker Evans. SBHS Archives

St. Michael's Cemetery was the subject of renowned photographer Walker Evans, who shot many views of the cemetery during the Great Depression in the 1930s. In his photographs, tombstones lie in stark contrast to the Bethlehem Steel plant, where so many immigrants came to live and work in South Bethlehem. For many, their journey ended here at St. Michael's.



The newspaper clipping gives an account of Patrick Malone's accident that took his life. Similar accidents commonly illustrated the dangers of life in South Bethlehem.

## CRUSHED TO A PULP

The Terrible End of Patrick Malone, a Resident of South Bethlehem.

CRUSHED BY WHEELS OF A FREIGHT CAR

His Remains Were Pulled Out Piece by Piece From Under the Tender of a Locomotive--Left a Large Family.

Patrick Malone, 65 years old, an old time resident of South Bethlehem, was cut to pieces on the Lehigh Valley tracks at the cross-over switches, about 200 yards west of the union depot, South Bethlehem, at 8:10 o'clock Wednesday evening. The body was terribly mangled. The right side of the head was crushed to a jelly, the right arm and both legs were severed, and the abdomen was cut open, the entrails crawling the tracks. Every bone was broken and the little of the body that remained whole was as limber as cloth and could be almost tied in a knot. The unfortunate man was tall and heavy, weighing about 150 pounds.

There was only one witness of the gruesome accident. He was G. T. Price, of South Bethlehem, a brakeman. Lehigh Valley engine No. 44, the south side shifter, which has figured in several accidents, was pushing a Philadelphia & Reading freight car up to the switches to transfer it to the Philadelphia & Reading track. At the same time Lehigh Valley engine No. 314 was drawing an east bound coal train past the station. Brakeman Price stood on the freight car that engine No. 44 was pushing. By the light from the switches he noticed a man between the tracks who appeared to have either jumped off or was about to board the coal train. The man passed out of the light and the next moment Price felt the wheels of the freight car crushing over something and knew that the man was being cut to death under him. Engine 44 was going slow at the time and was soon stopped on Price's signal.

The remains were pulled out piece by piece from under the tender of the locomotive. Undertaker Neidler took them in charge. Yesterday morning Samuel Malone, of Chestnut Hill, South Bethlehem, identified the body as that of his father. Mr. Malone left home Wednesday at 5 p. m. He did not return for supper. Another son, Stewart, saw his father at 6:30. A few minutes before 8 o'clock the unfortunate man procured a bottle of medicine at McBride's pharmacy. The deceased worked at his trade of stone mason for the Bethlehem Iron Company on Monday, but did not work since, as he did not feel well. The members of his family are at a loss to understand what induced him to go on the tracks so far above the depot.

Malone called at the house of a friend early Wednesday evening and stated that he was going to Allentown to see a young woman friend of one of his sons. The supposition is that he was on his way to this city when he met his death. Coroner Kelm impaneled a Jury, consisting of E. H. Seifert, foreman; Samuel Morgan, W. B. Smith, Peter Benner, Harry Heater and Joseph Marsteller. They heard the testimony of the crew of the train and rendered a verdict of accidental death, exonerating the company from all blame. The dead man was an old soldier and a pensioner. He had lived many years in South Bethlehem. He is survived by a wife and seven grown children, four sons and three daughters. The arrangements for the funeral have not yet been made.

**IRISH DESCENDANTS IN  
NORTHAMPTON COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

*A list of family names in the Borough of South Bethlehem  
that have been traced to Counties Cavan, Meath, and Louth in Ireland*

**Baugh · Bird · Brady · Briody · Burns · Connell · Coyle  
'Farley · Farrell (y) · Fielding · Fox · Gaffney · Gannon  
Gartland · Gaughran · Hannigan · Kiernan · Leahy · Lowry  
Malone · Masterson · McEnroe · McNerney · McGovern  
McShane · Meally · Monaghan · O'Brien · Pogue  
Reilly, Riley · Rowe · Sharkey · Skelly · Sheridan  
Smith · Tighe · Woods**

*A list of family names in South Easton  
that have been traced to Counties Cavan, Meath, and Louth in Ireland*

**Biglin · Casey · Cogan · Coleman · Day · Flynn  
Gaughran · Grouney · Lee · Mulvaney · O'Hay  
O'Rourke · Sheeran · Simon(d)s**

**Descendants of Counties Cavan · Meath · Louth, Ireland**

