The 500 Block of North Street, 1871-1875

Christopher Potts
AMSTD 534/Spring 2002
Penn State Harrisburg

The following information was obtained by using Boyd's Directory for the years 1871-1872 and 1874-1875.[1] The Eighth Ward had a male population of 1,398 males and 1,518 females for a total population of 2,916 individuals who lived in this section of Harrisburg. Within the boundaries of Harrisburg, there were forty-one bakers and confectioners, fifty-seven boot and shoemakers and retail establishments, twelve carpenters, thirty-nine clothiers and tailors, forty-five dry goods and fancy goods stores, fourteen furniture stores, one hundred and eighteen grocers, fifty-nine hotels and public houses, forty-three lawyers, fourteen newspapers, thirty-seven physicians, sixty-nine saloons and twenty-seven tobacconists. There were not any operating schools, churches, or banks along the 500 block of North Street in 1871 through 1875.

Serving on city council for the Eighth Ward was Levi Weaver, who served on the Streets Committee in 1871. In the Boyd's Directory of 1874-1875, Levi Weaver was still serving on city council. Weaver is an example of the Horatio Alger ethic of hard work as he achieved a level of accomplishment by serving on city council. He serves as an illustration of the community official who never becomes rich or famous yet serves the city and his community for their betterment.

Also serving on the city council was Charles M^c^Carthy, who served on the Bridges Committee and Contingent Expenses Committee. Charles M^c^Carthy lived at 706 Cowden Street, where he also operated a grocery. By the 1874-1875 directory, Mr. M^c^Carthy is absent from the directory as a city councilman and is not recorded as living in or operating a grocery in the city of Harrisburg. Daniel Herr replaced Mr. M^c^Carthy on city council and was a clerk at 314 Market

[1] This paper was edited by Stephanie Patterson Gilbert, webmaster of Harrisburg's Old Eighth Ward, found at <http://www.old8thward.com>.

Street and owned a house at 263 Briggs Street. Serving as the tax collector for the Eighth Ward in 1871-1872 was Thomas Updegrove, whose residence is unknown. In the directory for 1874-1875, John Young was the tax collector, replacing Mr. Updegrove. Mr. Young resided at 508 Walnut Street in the Eighth Ward.

One of the problems encountered while doing this research was the inconsistency of the recorders and the publishers of the *Boyd's Directory*, who did not always provide a house number for the residences on the 500 block of North Street. This was prevalent in the directory of 1871-72 but was partially corrected in the 1874-75 directory. The research on the 500 block of North Street bounded by Cowden and East Streets was hampered by the inconsistent use of house numbers. Many residences were given a location as to the side streets bordering North Street.

One item that was consistently illustrated throughout the directories was that this area was filled with working families. In some cases, widows were forced to take on jobs or needed to open their houses to boarders in order to provide themselves an income. In addition, there was a fair amount of movement of the residents from the North Street area to other areas of the city, including moving to another section of the Eighth Ward. In addition, many of the residents in 1871 moved out of the city to other parts of Central Pennsylvania.

Nineteenth century Harrisburg was a rapidly growing city with a large amount of movement throughout the city. Some of the residents of the 500 block of North Street were small entrepreneurs who lived and worked at the same address. This significant number of small business owners is remarkable for an era that is usually associated with monopolistic industrial operations. However, small family-owned businesses still handled such tasks as shoemaking and broom-making within the Eighth Ward.

First Resident: John Anderson lived in a house on East near North Street and was employed as a blacksmith according to the 1871-72 directory. In the 1874-75 directory, he is listed as John O. Anderson who resided at 506 State Street as a boarder.

Second Resident: John W. Boyce was a carpenter who resided in a house at North Street near Cowden. This is the only directory in which Mr. Boyce is found.

Third Resident: George W. Brown was a machinist who boarded at North Street near Cowden in 1871-72. By 1874-75, Mr. Brown resided in his own house on Thirteenth Street above Magnolia.

Fourth Resident: Joseph Brown, in the 1871-72 directory, is listed as a laborer who lived in a house on North Street near Cowden Street. Two Joseph Browns are listed in the 1875-76 directory. The first Joseph Brown is listed as residing at a house in Myrtle Alley near Forester. The second Joseph Brown resides in an alley around Short near Cranberry.
Fifth Resident: Nelson Brown II was listed in the 1871-72 as a laborer who boarded in a house on Cowden Street near North Street. He is not listed in the 1874-75 directory.

Sixth Resident: Emma Buch is listed in the 1871-72 directory as the widow of William Buch, and she boarded at a residence on North Street on the corner of Cowden Street. In the 1874-75 directory, she is listed at boarding at 600 North Street.

Seventh Resident: Annie Carroll is listed in the 1871-72 directory as the widow of James Carroll, and she resides on North Street near East Street. In the 1874-75 directory, she is listed as Honora Carroll at the same location.

Eighth Resident: Also living at the same address as Annie Carroll in the 1871-72 directory is John Carroll, most likely her son. His occupation is listed as "laborer." In the 1874-75 directory, John Carroll's address is given as 510 North Street. Therefore, it appears that Annie and her son, John, lived at 510 North Street in the 1871-72 directory as well.

Ninth Resident: Lewis A. Clemens resided in a house on North Street near Cowden Street, and his occupation is listed as "laborer," according to the 1871-72 directory. In the 1874-75 directory, Mr. Clemens had a new occupation as a shoemaker with a business on State Street and the corner of Fourth Street. He apparently moved from North Street and had a house on Cowden near Herr Street.

Tenth Resident: Patrick Ellet is found in the 1871-72 directory as being employed as a laborer and living in a house on North Street near East Street. According to the 1874-75 directory, his last name was spelled "Elliott," and he was still a laborer. However, his house number was 522 North Street.

Eleventh Resident: George W. Fry, who is listed in the 1871-72 directory as a laborer, resided in a house on North Street near Cowden Street. In the 1874-75 directory, all the information on Mr. Fry is the same, but his house address is 511 North Street.
Twelfth Resident: Charles Gumpert is found in the 1871-72 directory as having an occupation of "moulder," and he boarded at North Street and the corner of Cowden. In the 1874-75 directory, he has changed his occupation to "brakeman," presumably for a railroad. However, he moved to a residence at 6 Bailey Street.

Thirteenth Resident: John W. Hilton is in the 1871-72 directory as a laborer boarding at North corner of Cowden. In the 1874-75 directory, he was still a laborer but resided at 104 Filbert Street. He may have had a brother who also lived with him in 1871-72.

Fourteenth Resident: Richard Hilton is in the 1871-72 directory working as a laborer and living in a house at North on the corner of Cowden. He is absent from the 1874-75 directory.

Fifteenth Resident: John H. Liken is a grocer living and working at the East Street corner of North in the 1871-72 directory. In the 1874-75 directory, Mr. Liken was a baker with a home at Reily Street near James.

Sixteenth, Seventeenth and Eighteenth Residents: The McAdams Family lived at 532 North Street in 1871-72. Michael McAdams, who was a laborer, owned the house. James and Thomas appear to be his brothers who were boarding at 532 North Street. James and Thomas were employed as machinists. In the 1874-75 directory, Michael is still living at 532 North. James is absent from the directory; however, Thomas had moved to the West Alley corner of North Street.

Nineteenth and Twentieth Residents: George B. Miller was a shoemaker residing at North near Cowden in the 1871-72 directory. In the 1874-75 directory, George Miller was still a shoemaker, but he had moved to the William Street corner of Colder Street. This was both his residence and his business address. Mr. Miller apparently had a son who boarded with him with the name of George H. Miller. George was also a shoemaker, according to the 1871-72 directory. He moved with his father to William Street in 1874-75.

Twenty-first Resident: According to the 1871-72 directory, Rachel Miller had a house at North Street near Cowden. In the 1874-75 directory, she is listed as boarding at 516 North Street. She is not listed as having an occupation in either of the directories.

Twenty-second Resident: William Miller is listed in the 1871-72 directory as a laborer who boarded at North Street near Cowden. In the 1874-75 directory, Mr. Miller had a new occupation as an engineer and had a house at 516 North Street. Since the status of Rachael and William Miller are reversed in the directories, it can be assumed that Rachel may have been William's mother, and she had moved into his house at 516 North by 1874-75.

Twenty-third Resident: Henry Morgan is found in the 1871-72 directory working as an engineer and living on North Street near Cowden. In the 1874-75 directory, Mr. Morgan is absent as he had apparently moved out of Harrisburg.

Twenty-fourth Resident: Annie M. Ruby resided at 512 North Street, according to the 1871-72 directory. In the 1874-74 directory, Annie was listed as the widow of William H. Ruby and had moved to a house at 259 North Street.

Twenty-fifth Resident: George W. Schweitzer is in the 1871-72 directory as a "moulder," boarding at a house on North near Cowden. In the 1874-75 directory, Mr. Schweitzer is not found as living in Harrisburg.

Twenty-sixth Resident: John R. Smith was a laborer, according to the 1871-72 directory, and he resided at a house on North near Cowden Street. By the 1874-75 directory, John Smith moved to a house on Second near Hamilton Street, and his employment was listed as "mason."

Twenty-seventh Resident: James P. Springer was a flagman living at 538 North Street in both the 1871-72 and 1874-75 directories.

Twenty-eighth Resident: Samuel Wallower lived in a house on North near Cowden Street in the 1871-72 directory. His occupation is noted as a laborer. By 1874-75, the directory listed him as living at 1116 Cowden Street and as being employed as "lather."

Twenty-ninth Resident: In the 1871-72 and 1874-75 directories, Charles D. Walters was a clockmaker living at 515 North Street.

Thirtieth Resident: Henry H. Waterhous was employed in the 1871-72 directory as a broom maker and resided at North near Cowden. He had moved outside of Harrisburg by 1874-75.

Thirty-first Resident: William E. Watkins was a shoemaker, boarding at North near Cowden Street, in the 1871-72 directory. Mr. Watkins was absent from the 1874-75 directory.

Thirty-second Resident: Levi Weaver was a transfer agent for the Pennsylvania Railroad freight office. He resided on North Street and the corner of Cowden, according to the 1871-72 directory. In 1874-75, Mr. Weaver was still employed by the Pennsylvania Railroad and lived at 600 North Street. Mr. Weaver was an Eighth Ward city council member throughout the period studied.

Thirty-third Resident: Samuel C. Weistling was a printer, living on North near Cowden, in the 1871-72 directory. In the 1871-72 directory, his name is spelled "Wiestling." He was employed as a printer for *The Telegraph*, and lived at 437 North Street in the 1874-75 directory.

Thirty-fourth and Thirty-fifth Residents: Living at North and the corner of Cowden was the mother Mary Welker, the widow of Charles, and her daughter Mary E. Welker in the 1871-71 directory. Mary boarded at the same address and worked as a tailoress. In 1874-75 Mary Welker, widow of Charles, still lived on North Street. The daughter Mary lived at 521 North and worked as a weaver.