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# By IRMA FLOOD

History of the "White Horse Tavern" is a long one -- well worth taking three weeks to write on -- because the inn is typical of the old taverns. In a book called, "Philadelphia" by Horace Mather Lippitt and Thornton Oakley, there is a chapter on the importance of these places of "accommodations for man and beast." Mr. Lippincott mentions "Men frequented the taverns to get their neighbours and discuss the news and business of the day, while enjoying a quiet pipe. The large influx of immigrants and the continued stream of strangers in the early years caused the setting up of a number of taverns in Philadelphia." And, we might add -- the case of Philadelphia, William Hey, of Chester County, in the book is said to have, in 1765, petitioned for a license to use his house as a 'conveniently infested with travellers' call for and demand necessities, and that he has been at charges in supplying them with bedding and their horses with provender without any profits."

And so, after the tide of the Revolution had receded from the Chester Valley, the recuperation of the residents was necessarily slow -- but by thrift and industry, the damages were reduced to the buildings, fences replaced, and cattle once again called the meadows their own. Travel on the Lancaster line increased until it became the great highway to the West -- the old inn, White Horse, and its share of patronage.

Kerline is then supposed to have recovered from his losses. After peace was assured, a successful attempt was made to run a stage coach on the road between Philadelphia and Lancaster, but this was done only with repeated failures.

The Lancaster line was established in April, 1785, by Erick Doersh and William Weaver, who stated that their "Stage Wagon" would set out on Monday and Friday morning, from the King of the Court Tavern, in Market street; Third; and from the Black Horse Tavern, Queen street, Lancaster, every Tuesday and Friday mornings. We have seen this before but will recall those who might not have it -- "Each passenger was to pay fourteen pounds of baggage. The fare was twenty shillings -- one half to be paid on leaving the name in the book."

For some reason the proprietors of the stage did not get along, in other words, no "eye-to-eye" bit. The latter part of the next year, in 1786, the following card was displayed in the barroom of the inn, which from the start was a main stopping place of the "Stage Wagon." For the next sentences we again quote from Julius F. Sachse's book, "Wayside Inns on Lancaster Turnpike."

"Stage Coach -- The partnership of Weaver and Doersh, late proprietors of the stage from Lancaster to Philadelphia, is this day dissolved by mutual consent. The stage coach, with the mail, in future will be carried only by the subscribers who have provided themselves with a sufficient and easy coach upon a much better and easier construction than any hitherto used, together with a set of excellent and strong horses and a well experienced and careful driver, and will pay the strictest attention in the receiving and delivering of subscribers, articles, letters and packets. The stage coach with the mail will set out from the House of the subscriber, Adam Weaver, at the sign of the Black Horse in Lancaster, every Monday morning precisely at 6 o'clock, and arrive at Philadelphia every Tuesday at the House of John Stein, in Market street, at the sign of the Black Bear. And will start for Lancaster from the sign of the Black Bear, every Thursday at 6 o'clock precisely, and arrive at the House of Adam Weaver every Friday."

"The proprietors flatter themselves by their former conduct and unwearied attention, to those who were pleased to favor them with their custom that they will afford general satisfaction as the entertainment at the House in Lancaster is well known, and

particularly the attention paid to travelers, in Philadelphia at Mr. Stein's, will render the entertainment agreeable, and worthy the notice of gentlemen and ladies traveling in the stage, by the public's most humble servants, Weaver & Pelieger -- December 23, 1786."

But this, it seems like the other similar enterprise, was soon abandoned. The reasons were -- bad conditions of the road and the uncertainty of arriving at the place of destination at the advertised time. A clergyman who, in 1786, attempted the journey thus describes his experiences on reaching the White Horse, "The horses could only walk most of the way, the stage wagon was in (mud?) frequently to the axletree, and I had no sooner recovered from a terrible plunge on one side than there came another in the opposite direction, and confounded all my efforts to preserve a steady

and it took the four horses, with the empty wagon, seven hours to go the twenty-three miles."

Compare with today -- with no traffic jams, the same 23 miles take approximately one-half to three-quarters of an hour! But then, it has felt sometimes like seven hours, driving the same amount of miles from Strafford, to over the bridge, on the way to the shore -- on a hot summer's day!

The tavern was kind of an "agricultural exchange," with the men driving bargains. Farmers for miles around would be in the barroom and on the porch talking to drovers, teamsters and other men from the country. If the day and road were fair, a number could be seen playing what was called "Long Bullets," a favorite pastime of the era. The game consisted in seeing who could roll an iron cannon ball, relic of the Revolution, the greatest distance along the road. The game was similar to today's bowling. The point of "Long Bullets" was that the one who rolled the shortest ball had to gather them up and bring all the balls to the base. Or something.

The White Horse was also a favorite stopping place for bands of Indians, who at that time, 1790-1800, would make frequent visits to the capital city. The Indians brought down skins and furs and bartered for lead, stockings, pipes, etc. On arriving at the inn, they would always ask for rum and sugar, of which they were very fond. If refused, they would offer to shoot pennies for it. This was done by fixing a copper cent on a stick and then set up from 30 to 50 yards from the dusky marksman, who would shoot at it with his bow and arrow. If the Indian hit the cent, which he usually did, the coin belonged to him. If not, he then tried it over again -- and this afforded much amusement to strangers and children, beside slaking the Indian's thirst. When stopping over night, they would sleep in the barn or, if cold, on the kitchen floor.

The White Horse was also, at this period, a favorite stopping place with the German farmers on their way to and from the city with their loads of grain or provisions. Economy with these people was the order of the day. Money was sparingly spent and traveling expenses were reduced to a minimum. Most of these farmers carried their own food, even their necessary whiskey was brought from home. In the winter they formed a curious scene at night, as they lay stretched out on the floor in a wide circle around the barroom stove, with feet towards the fire.

Continued on next page

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Each man was on his own straw sack and covered with his coat or quilt, sleeping the sleep of the weary. And he was on the road before the first streak of dawn, to boot!

Here is an interesting anecdote: In connection with the Ger-

man farmers, it was curious fact that the innkeeper could always tell how the markets were by the crack of their whips as they approached the tavern. If good -- their whips would crack incessantly; if not -- the whip was in the socket. Modern man hasn't changed the theory much -- haven't you ever noticed how jaunty he drives his car when the market (stock) is good -- and how lethargic he is going around corners the day A T & T is low?

Seriously, though, with the advent of the year 1787, there came a new landlord at the White Horse -- namely, Arthur Rice, who, it seems, deserves more than a passing notice. Rice had been a volunteer scout during the Revolution, and was one of Washington's most trusted scouts. It is said that during the encampment of Valley Forge, Rice, who was a man of powerful physique, on at least one occasion captured single-handed, two British or Hessian soldiers. He brought them together with their arms and accoutrements, within the American lines. For this act of bravery and daring he was complimented by the Commander-in-Chief. He afterwards rendered valuable services to the army, notably at the battle of Monmouth, for all of which he would never receive a penny of pay or reward. He was also a Past Master of the Masonic Fraternity, which met in the Valley during the encampment.

Washington so valued the services of Rice, that while President, he would invariably send invitations for festive occasions, and levee, to the humble innkeeper at the "Sign of the White Horse."

The house now became a regular meeting place for the ex-soldiers who resided in the Chester Valley. Also for those who had formerly been members of some of the Military Lodges in the Revolution Army, or of the historic Lodge No. 8, which met at Valley Forge. These meetings soon resulted in an application to the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania for a warrant to hold a lodge in the Chester Valley. This petition was granted and it was in the second-story of the eastern end of the old inn, on the sixth day of December 1790, that the altar of Free Masonry was

inn and now lives on Old Eagle School road, Strafford, knows these facts about the "altar of Free Masonry and Lodge 50 constituted in 1790?" For Mrs. Horn is a member of Eastern Star and her father, we understand, was an active Mason.

The furniture of the Lodge room consisted of plain hickory chairs and settees. The Master's chair, we read, is still in the possession of a descendant of Arthur Rice. Two engravings, or charts, hung against the wall and these were preserved for many years, says Mr. Sachse. Up to 1886 they had not been found, though -- so right now it's a guess where they are -- and we hope the Historical Society of Pennsylvania has them in safe keeping!

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The White Horse, Kensington.

We ran out of pictures of the "White Horse Tavern," before words about it -- so have resorted to an old sketch of "The White Horse," a tavern located in Kensington, England, in the 1700's. Taken from an 1872 book called "Clubs and Club Life in London," by John Timbs. This later inn, which stood on the corner of Lord Holland's lane, is where Addison, the Essayist, would enjoy his favorite dish of a fillet of veal, his bottle, and perhaps a friend. The White Horse was taken down many, many years ago -- but the tradition says that the tavern was frequented by Addison -- and Faulkner mentioned it in his "History," in 1820. SUB & WAYNE TIMES 9.1.1966