

Suburban & WAYNETIMES 8.25.1966.

Now a quick return to Chester County and the White Horse Tavern. By the by, our boundless thanks to Mrs. Henry Hobart Brown, 2nd, of Overhill road, Wayne, for the "loan" of her edition of "The Wayside Inns on the Lancaster Roadside," by Julius F. Sachse. Without it we would have been "lost." Copying from the Memorial Library of Radnor Township's book would have been a chore. We have saved many hours by having it at our torn typing fingers! And that reminds us -- we haven't visited Julius Sachse's grandson yet -- oh boy! Hours, oh hours, where art thou? Or something. (1)

We ended last week's column with the advantage of a water supply to the tavern in case of

an Indian attack. An old account of the Inn describes the table inside as being made of split slabs, supported by round legs set in auger holes. The stools were three-legged and made in the same manner. Wooden pins, stuck in the walls at the back held up the clapboards which served for shelves for the table furniture. These articles sound interesting, for they were pewter dishes, plates, spoons, wooden bowls, trenchers and noggins; if the noggins ran short, then gourds or hard shell squashes made up the deficiency. (2)

The bill of fare consisted of, for breakfast, coffee, hog and hominy -- while potpie was the main standby for dinner. Supper was tea and coffee with mush and milk. During the fall and winter, however, there was no lack of venison and game, the neighboring Valley hills furnishing an abundance of those luxuries. In the summer, the truckpatch supplied greens, which were beet tops, corn, pumpkins, beans and potatoes. And the menu was considered quite monotonous.

Pegs around the walls held the great coats and hats of the guests who were too dainty to place their clothing on the sanded floor, as was done by the majority of travelers. In the tap room, most of the liquor was dispensed from stone jugs, pewter mugs being used exclusively for drinking purposes. The liquor was always measured out to the patron. When more was wanted a second drink was charged. In 1741, the price of a drink of rum was three pence.

About this time there were still many Indians in the vicinity, especially towards Pequea and the Brandywine. As the settlers increased in numbers, more trouble arose between the Indians and the newcomers. The game, which was the sustenance of the aborigines

numerous complaints. One claim was filed as late as October 3, 1727, when sundry Indians killed a cow belonging to Richard Thomas who lived near the Inn-- and those who write about the history of Chester County have, almost to a man (or woman), used this example. So, who are we to change the order of things -- let alone authenticated history?

In the same year, the Indians complained to the council of the encroachments of the whites, and of obstructions in the Brandywine. The Sheriff was directed to "throw the same down." The Indians continued in the valley until about 1755, when the French and Indian War broke out. (3)

There is no record dealing with the hostelry during the war -- and it is not until the commencement of the Indian troubles that the tavern comes into the public eye again. A John Neely is said to have been the inn's keeper prior to 1753. From an entry in Rodger Hunt's account book dated, June 10, 1759, we find: "To expenses at the White Horse, John Neely's, 3s, 6d. It's also mentioned in several documents (military) of that time, of the distance "given thereon from the Court House at Philadelphia, is 26 miles, 1 quarter, 18 perches."

Presumably, Neely kept the house until 1762, when a Thomas Lemans, or maybe it was "Lemons" (no one seems to know) was at the White Horse. His name does not appear again -- and his successor for the next year was probably Owen Ashton.

Then, a John Kerlin appears on the records as host. Little, it seems, is known of him until the year of 1774. At this time, he, together with Anthony Wayne, Francis Johnson, "Sketchly" (that's a name?) Morton and other citizens of the county were elected as a committee at Chester, on December 20th, to "carry into ex-

ecution the association of the late Continental Congress, and to be, and continue from this time until one month after, the rising of the next Continental Congress, etc." From the above, it may be gleaned that Kerlin was an influential member of the community, as well as a patriot. (4)

Scarcely three years later, the ruthless invader, with his Hessian hirelings, overran with heavy tread our peaceful and fertile valley, in his attempt to capture the city. Kerlin, in common with his patriotically inclined neighbors, suffered severe loss during the short occupation of the terrain by the British. Everything that was of use, or could be carried away, was taken -- while the re-

The original claim for this loss, filed by John Kerlin, is now in the possession of the Pennsylvania Historical Society, viz: "An amount of the Damages John Kerlin received by the army under the Command of General How (i.e. note spelling) in his march from Brandywine to Philadelphia, September 18, 1777. "Among the losses mentioned are: "To table linen -- towels, etc. -- 10 pounds, Wairing apparel both men and women -- 10 pounds; To Chainy bowls, plates and tea ware, etc. -- 35 pounds; To Earthen ware and bottles -- 3 pounds, and the total amount summed up to 199 pounds." The "pounds," of course mean the English version of dollars but

our typewriter doesn't have that symbol. (6)

The account was affirmed to, before, a Benjamin Bartholomew, on November 1782. From the fact that this claim does not mention any liquors having been seized or destroyed, it is probable that John Kerlin's stock was removed to a place of safety before the British army reached the valley.

It was on the high ground, or plateau south of the White Horse Tavern, where General Washington determined on September 16, 1777, to risk another battle with the British, with the view of saving the city of Philadelphia. It is said that the selection of the ground was Washington's own choice. There was considerable skirmishing between the advance forces of the two armies and a sanguinary battle would no doubt have resulted but for a sudden

thunderstorm of great violence, which stopped its progress.

It is felt by historians that had the fates permitted this battle to continue, it is probable that it could have been a decisive action of most serious consequence. When three months later, the American army went into winter quarters at Valley Forge, almost within sight of our hamlet, the point was of great importance to Washington. The inn was selected as the first stopping place, and as a relay station for the express riders between headquarters and Lancaster -- where Congress was then holding its sessions. One of the most trusted of these messengers was the son of Captain Patrick Anderson, of the Line, and whose peaceful home was but a few miles northeast of the old Inn. 8.25.1966

TO BE CONTINUED