



SOLEBURY TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

EARLY TAVERNS OF BUCKS COUNTY

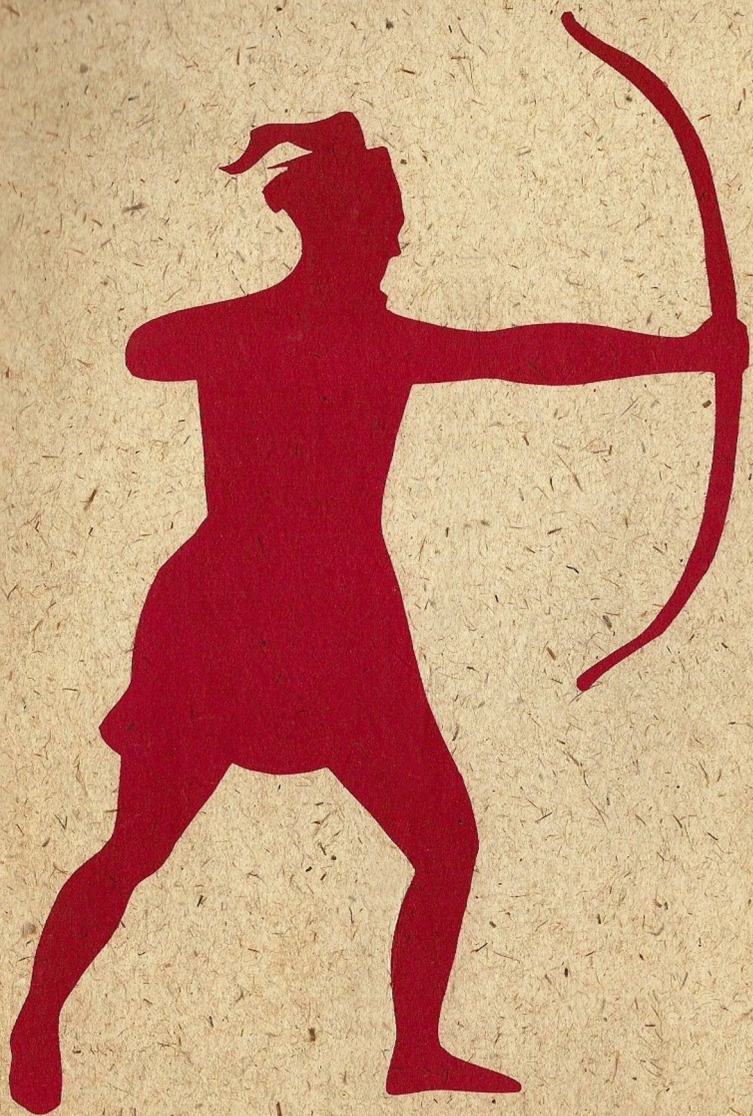
by

WILLIS RIVINUS

Part 2

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WILLIS M. RIVINUS



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By

WILLIS M. RIVINUS

Illustrations by
CHARLES S. RENFRO

Map by
EDITH C. SMITH

New Hope, Pennsylvania

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The Durham Road

Extending up the center of Bucks County, the Durham Road was an important economic artery for two reasons. First, it served the farmers in the lush midlands. After 1746 it carried iron to the city from the unique deposit of ore and limestone at Durham. This source, along with the Pine Barrens of New Jersey, supplied much of the iron used to make rifles and shot during the Revolution. The same iron later found its way into the ornamental cast details on the houses of Philadelphia and New Orleans.

The road was laid out from Bristol to Newtown in 1693. In 1703 it was extended to Buckingham. In 1726 it was lengthened to Plumstead. It reached the furnace in 1745 and connected with Easton ten years later. In the eighteenth century this route probably saw more traffic than the routes to New York, which at the time must have seemed very distant indeed. Along the Durham Road, note tavern names that relate to the farmer, such as The Harrow and The Plough.

ANCHOR TAVERN

The Anchor Tavern is one of the oldest in the county, having been built in 1724 at the intersection of two main county roads. The Durham Road led north-south, while the Richboro and Pineville Turnpike Road came in nearly at a right angle. The Anchor, as it has always been known, was first kept by Joseph Hampton, a prominent Quaker and member of the Provincial Assembly from Bucks County.



He was also a progressive farmer, having been the first to plant an orchard of grafted apple trees in the county.

The sign of The Anchor was a not-uncommon tavern sign in England dating from the sixteenth century. It is said that William Penn came ashore for the first time in the autumn of 1682 at the foot of Dock Creek below Society Hill in Philadelphia near the Blue Anchor, a tavern kept by a master mariner. The anchor had obvious associations for seafaring men. It also figures prominently in the coat of arms of St. Peter, an association dear to religious men of that day.

PINEVILLE HOTEL

Since 1742 this old inn on the Durham Road has been the focus of the community. Ledger books of a century ago record that public sales of land, livestock and equipment were conducted from the front porch.

GENERAL GREENE INN

Buckingham has long had a unique position at the junction of the Old York Road, the Durham Road and the Doylestown Road. Henry Jamison was granted the first license for a "public house of entertainment" in 1752 by the county court. His widow married John Bogart, by whose name the place was known for many years. Subsequent owners who gave their names to the inn were named Vanhorn and Wilkinson, a sportsman who raised prize Arabian horses in the adjoining pastures.

The Bucks County Committee of Safety met here in the summer of 1775 to organize armed opposition to British rule—this in a county primarily populated by peace-loving Quakers. One of their first acts was to take a collection to help the Committee of the Town of Boston. A receipt for over £75 was forwarded by John Adams. Thereafter, Bogart's Tavern was a regular meeting place for patriots through 1775 and 1776.

General Nathaniel Greene, who commanded the left wing of Washington's forces at the Battle of Trenton, took up quarters here during the winter of 1776. From this tavern came General Greene's famous order for "sixteen Durham boats and flats down to McKonkeys Ferry," on December 10th of that year. These were the boats in which Washington made his famous crossing of the Delaware.

At one point Edward Hicks, the primitive painter from Newtown, was commissioned to paint an elaborate sign portraying William Penn

making a treaty with the Indians. For some time thereafter the inn was called "The Sign of Penn's Treaty." Later the place was known as "The Sign of George Washington," indicating that the sign again changed. Much of the early atmosphere is retained around the big kitchen fireplace surrounded with antiques and historic mementoes.

BROAD AXE INN

The Broad Axe Inn was located near Buckingham, about two miles east of Doylestown. Little is known of its origin before 1811 or its career, though the building is still standing. It doubtless started with great hopes only to find the public highway rerouted away from its door.

SIGN OF THE PLOUGH

The Sign of the Plough, now the Gardenville Hotel, was probably built around 1732 on the Durham Road at Gardenville. The first petition for a license dates from 1760. The old tavern-house was burned to the ground in 1871 and a new one was built in its place.

Like the Harrow to the north, it served the farmers bringing stock to Philadelphia.

WHITE BEAR

An early inn above Ottsville, it must have reminded the English colonists of the celebrated tavern at the foot of London Bridge. The first real white bear in Britain is said to have been a gift from the King of Norway to Henry III in 1252. The red stone structure overlooking the town was a tenantless ruin for many years and has now disappeared completely.

Another White Bear, now Ye Olde Spread Eagle Tavern, was built in Richboro about 1793. This was the mate of the Black Bear just down the street. The old name was changed when new management came from an inn in Bethayres and brought their name with them.

PIPERS TAVERN

This celebrated inn was operated from 1778 until 1823 by Colonel George Piper who led a troupe of local militia during the Revolutionary War. The old building, near the junction of the Durham and Philadelphia-Easton Roads, was apparently quite a landmark with stately columns in front, until it was totally replaced by the current Pipersville Inn in 1884. Among the country's early leaders who stopped here

were Benjamin Franklin, Robert Morris, General Anthony Wayne, Joseph Bonaparte, and Stephen Girard. It is believed that Lafayette also stopped here enroute to a hospital in Bethlehem to recover from wounds received at the Battle of Brandywine. During the yellow fever epidemic of 1798, Mayor Wharton of Philadelphia stayed here with his family. When Joseph Bonaparte stayed here for two weeks, the ex-king brought along his own cook and table silver.

Apparently Colonel Piper's wife was as well respected as was her husband. During the Revolution she dug up her entire inheritance, some £325 in gold buried in the cellar of the inn, to pay for shoes and clothing for the men in his command. One day after the war, while the Colonel was away in Newtown, two associates of the Doane outlaws walked in while she was ironing. Her aim with the iron was good enough to break the arm of one while she drove the other off at the point of her husband's sword.

George Piper was succeeded in 1823 by Jacob Keichline, his son-in-law. For the next thirty-six years, he and his wife both took an active interest in politics and inn-keeping. Though the seat of the county government was in Newtown, the old inn served as a gathering place for the up-country folk.

THE HARROW

This inn, established 1785, took its name from a very popular sign throughout England. It was located on the Durham Road in Nockamixon Township where it was a regular stop for farmers enroute to the city with cattle and grain.

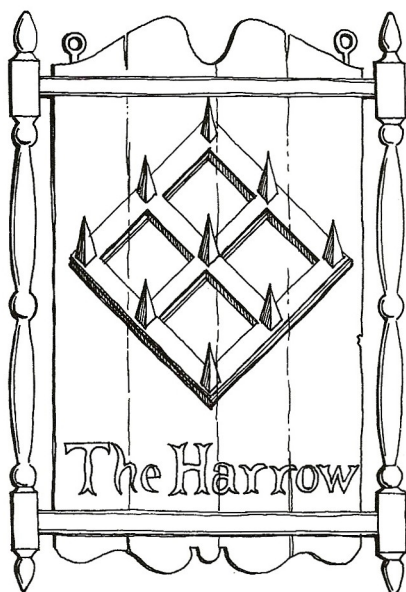
THREE TUNS

This inn name dates from as early as the building of Pompeii where a tavern sign of this design has been found in the excavation of that Roman city. The Three Tuns, a tun being another name for wine cask, was located at Gallows Hill on Durham Road at the northern end of the county. Part of the building is of log construction now covered by stone and mortar. The main building dates from about 1790. After 1830, the inn was renamed Stony Point, referring to the land here in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains.

In front of this old inn, which now operates as a grocery store, there is a monument to commemorate the fact that Edward Marshall passed near here on the infamous Walking Purchase of 1737, by which the Lenni-Lenape Indians were forced to give up their good hunting lands in this region.

FERNDALE HOTEL

The stage-coach stop just south of Kintnersville on the Durham Road was known to oldtimers in the neighborhood as "Rum Corner." This euphemism points up the fact that during Colonial days, whiskey was an expensive drink, made in small quantities up in the Poconos. Rum, meanwhile, was the people's drink, having been imported in large quantities by English sailing ships which made their first port in the West Indies. Following the prevailing westerly winds, the schooners used to sail from London to the Bahamas where they traded manufactured goods for rum before heading up the Atlantic coast to Philadelphia.



Old York Road

The Old York Road splits from the Easton Road (U.S. 611) at Willow Grove. Taking a more easterly turn, the road extends through Hatboro, crosses the Durham Road at Buckingham and drops down to the earliest river crossing at Reading's ferry, four miles above New Hope. A later resurvey of the route took it to a ferry at the latter point. Though established in 1711 by jury, the common technique of those times to obtain maximum public support at minimum cost, the road seems to have been maintained in indifferent condition until 1740.

The route on the New Jersey side of the Delaware River led through Hopewell, Princeton, New Brunswick, and Perth Amboy enroute to New York. In the 1760's the stage line began regular service to these areas, though it soon moved to crossings further down the river. The route was also important as connecting a number of Quaker Meetings. Travelling ministers were a common sight.

In later years sections of the road were designated as turnpikes with the right of local maintainers to collect tolls. In the 1830's the turnpike company bond was a very popular, if not always rewarding, investment.

WARMINSTER HOTEL

Since 1730 this hostelry has been a popular stopping point along the Old York Road. During the mid-nineteenth century it was made

even more popular by the sulky track located just down the road. There were formerly huge stalls next to the hotel where drovers would secure their cattle at night before heading for the Philadelphia markets the next morning.

The tavernkeeper at one point, when it was better known locally as Dilworth's Tavern, was Thomas Beans who had a half-mile track laid out on his property for horse races several times a year. When this was closed by court order, he raced along the public road. The races drew a large crowd of men and boys and "were very demoralizing in their influence," according to a contemporary report.

SIGN OF THE HEART

An appropriate name was applied to the inn at the junction of Old York Road and Bristol Road in Hartsville. General Washington encamped with 18,000 men near here in 1777. The tavern was run for many years, at the close of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries, by William Hart. It was he who had a human heart painted on the sign out front and caused the community to be renamed from the simple Cross Roads on early maps. Edward Hicks, of Newtown, painted the sign which hung in front of the inn during the mid-nineteenth century.

JAMISON HOTEL

At the intersection of Old York Road and Almshouse Road in Warwick Township, this old inn burned to the ground in 1924.

BRIDGE VALLEY TAVERN

The old stone tavern, a building erected in three sections, is still to be seen along Old York Road. The bar here regularly served travellers crossing the Neshaminy Creek and those bringing grain to be made into flour at Ryan's Mill.

GREEN TREE

The village of Furlong in Buckingham Township at the crossing of Old York Road and the Newtown Road has at various times taken its name from the tavern sign. Originally known as Baretown in 1804, the name changed in due course to Barville. It is said that a sign was commissioned for the Green Tree but the result was a bush, a tavern sign of very great antiquity. From this the village became known as Bushington until 1834 when the Post Office Department ordained the



current name. On the gable of the building is a stone marked:

I R R
1855
RURAL RETREAT

When the county seat was moved from Newtown to Doylestown in 1813, Septimus Evans gave up his trade as a clockmaker and converted his house on the northeast corner of Broad and Main Streets into a tavern which he called the Green Tree. He promptly hung a sign with that symbol in front of his place. Many owners held sway behind the bar but apparently without success, for the building reverted to a residence in 1854.

SPRING VALLEY HOTEL

The memories of the local sages are beginning to dim with regard to the name of the tavern and hotel that once stood by the edge of the high road between Doylestown and Buckingham. Yet there is no question that an inn existed here in Colonial days. Of the two mills, the blacksmith shop, the cooperage, the general store and the brewery that then were active, most are readily identifiable. Two major buildings, with second story porches, face on the roadway. One, on the south side of the road, was a tavern certainly; maybe both were at various times.

THE BUSH

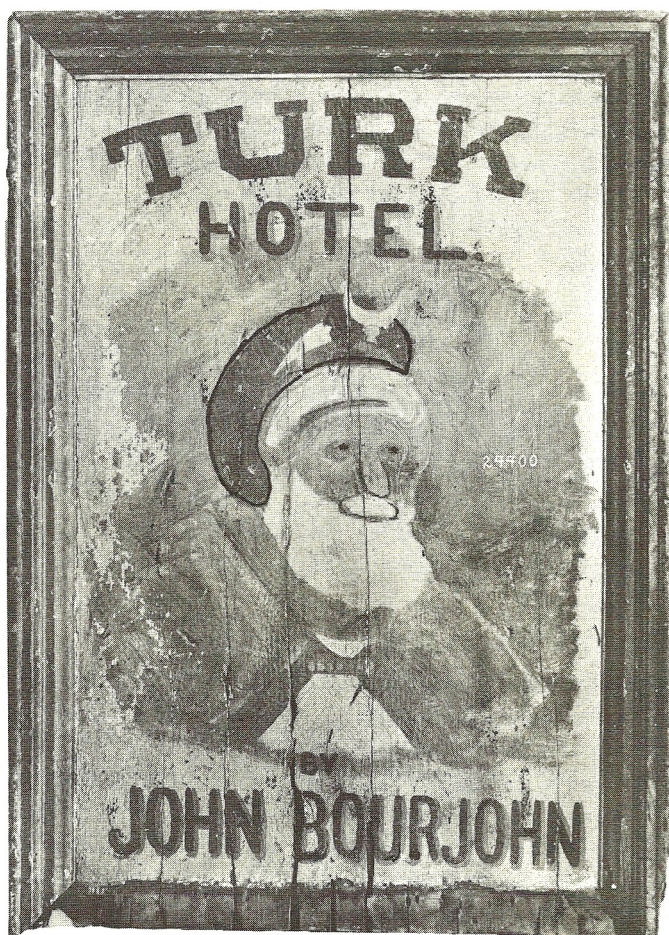
This ancient name was applied to a tavern in Buckingham at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It had a brief life so that little more than the memory of its existence remains.

It was custom in Roman times to hang a bush in front of shops where wine was sold. Early medieval manuscripts show travellers approaching buildings where something resembling a broom of twigs was suspended over the entrance. This was the familiar bush which carried on the ancient tradition.

BUTTONWOOD INN

This old tavern in Lahaska on U.S. 202 has lost much of its character as a result of various remodelings. Little is known of its origin or history.





The Easton Road

A route to Easton, where the Lehigh River flows into the Delaware, was important from early Indian days. Here the clans of the Lenni-Lenape met the Shawnees from the Poconos and the Algonquins from upstate New York. It was by the Treaty of Easton in 1758 that the Lenape finally gave up all rights to eastern Pennsylvania and began their trek to the far west. Easton lay at a convenient break in the Appalachian Mountains which was used by many a white settler heading to the Ohio Valley from New York.

The Easton Road begins at Willow Grove and heads across the county at a diagonal through Doylestown, Pipersville, where it joins the Durham Road, and Durham. The first section of the road to Horscham was cleared in 1723. A side route to the ferry landing at Point Pleasant was developed in 1738. The main road was linked to Easton about fifteen years later.

From the time of the Civil War to the popularity of the automobile after World War I, the electric trolley was the popular means of transportation along this route. At their height trolleys connected most communities all over the county.

FROG HOLLOW HOTEL

This was one of the old inns of the county, located in southwestern Warrington Township along the Little Neshaminy Creek. It served to

dry and warm travellers after they had forded the stream. It is now known as the Neshaminy Hotel along U. S. 611.

WARRINGTON INN

Since 1792 the Warrington Inn has occupied a strategic location on the road to Easton where it crosses the Bristol Road. Wagons of produce enroute to the Dock Street markets in Philadelphia, stage coaches bound for Doylestown, Easton and Allentown, all drew up in its yard at night. Though the vehicles have changed the patronage of travellers and local residents continues in modern times.

THE TURK

The head of a Turk or Saracen was a popular tavern sign dating from the time of the Crusades. This particular tavern was located in Edison, a mile or two south of Doylestown, on U.S. 611. The inn was demolished nearly fifty years ago, but its last sign was saved and now hangs in the Bucks County Historical Society Museum in Doylestown.

WHEAT SHEAF INN

The Wheat Sheaf Inn was located at the junction of Almshouse Road and the old Philadelphia and Easton Stage Road. It was established as an inn about 1792 by Christian Fretz, for whose family the valley was named. Directly opposite the County Home, the building now houses Porter and Yeager, furniture and antique dealers.

CROSS KEYS

Cross Keys, the arms of the Papal See and the insignia of St. Peter and his successors, dates from the early Middle Ages. This insignia appeared frequently in all parts of England, prior to the Reformation. The Cross Keys in Bucks County is located just north of Doylestown at the intersection of U.S. 611 and the Newtown-Quakertown Road, and has been operating almost continually since 1743.

While the current sign features just the crossed keys, on its predecessor, dating from 1896, the keys were flanked on one side by a star, on the other by a moon. In the upper triangle were the square and compass with an eye in the center; in the lower triangle the grotesque figure of a sheep and a pennant symbolizing the Lamb of God. Beneath the whole were the words "Drovers Inn," indicating that this was a regular stop for farmers from up country.

Another Cross Keys Hotel was located at 220 Radcliffe Street in





Bristol before 1831. The building had formerly been the home of Thomas G. Kennedy, early sheriff of Bucks County. Later the structure was remodeled into the handsome offices of the Fidelity Philadelphia Trust Company.

SIGN OF THE GOLDEN FLEECE

In Danboro, where the old Ferry Road intersects U.S. 611 (Dyers Road), an early settler named Daniel "Dan" Thomas gave his name to the town that once was a stop on the Easton stage coach line. At first known as the Danville Inn, the name was changed some time after 1800 to the Sign of the Golden Fleece. The name changed once more to the Golden Lamb Hotel about 1837.

The sportsman landlord, Joseph Kaisinger, placed the following poetical advertisement in the Doylestown Democrat on December 3, 1833:

As Reynard with his red back and black legs is determined not to stay in the cellar much longer, he takes the following method to let people know when he will start from the hereinafter mentioned place, now in the tenure of Joseph Kaisinger.

Ye sportsmen all attend, I pray,
To these few lines I write,
While I to you appoint the day
To leave you out of sight.

I'm taken from my native place,
Which I with tears remember;
And I expect to give the chase
On the seventh of December.

Fair play, then is all I ask,
And that you'll surely show—
Then I shall have an easy task
To reach Mount Pokono.

I wish that you may all attend
On the appointed day,
That's any wish to see a friend
Before he goes away.

My starting place, I'd have you know,
And to remember well,—
It's from the town of Danboro',
The Golden Fleece Hotel.

So on that day, if I've a chance,
I intend to let you know
That I on homewards will advance,
For I can "jump Jim Crow."

Ain't I the Cunning Fox?

GRIER'S TAVERN

This is one of the few inns which was known during almost all of its life, from before the Revolution, by the name of its early proprietor. Two other names were associated briefly with it—Rodrock's and Hart's. Only in recent years was it renamed the Plumsteadville Inn, for the village north of Doylestown, where it is located. A fire in the last couple of years substantially damaged the building which still shows unmistakable architectural clues to its early origin.

DOUBLE INN TAVERN

With the arrival of the first Irish immigrants in the early eighteenth century to the center of Bucks County, it is only appropriate that they should build a tavern. Actually, local history relates that a log cabin on the old Newtown-Quakertown Road was in operation at the time of the Revolution. According to one local tradition, the first inn was run by two brothers who had a falling-out. From then on they ran the Double Inn. Whether this resulted in members of the community taking sides in defense of their favorite bartender in traditional Irish fashion seems probable, but is not recorded in the history books. The modern taproom is known as the Dublin Bar.

HAGERSVILLE HOTEL

From 1795 through the early part of the nineteenth century this inn served travellers along the route from Dublin north to Pleasant Valley and Easton. In more recent time it has been converted into an apartment building.

THE ELEPHANT

This inn sign still remains in the museum of the Bucks County Historical Society. The town of the same name is located on the Ridge Road in Bedminster Township. The oval sign bears the date of 1848 which is thought to be either the date of painting or the date of re-licensing as the building seems much older.

The elephant is the central figure on the arms of the English Cutler's Guild dating from 1569. He is usually portrayed with a small castle



riding on his back. Even earlier, in the ruins of Pompeii was found a little inn which had a sign showing the belly of the elephant being encircled by a serpent while a dwarf runs to his aid.

SORREL HORSE

The Sorrel Horse in Nockamixon, one of the most noted inns in the upper end of the county, was established by Captain Nicholas Burk in 1809. The sign before the door was emblazoned with a white horse in full military trappings. The captain regularly led the annual spring and fall training sessions for the uniformed militia. These involved games and horse races drawing a large crowd of spectators.

When the property was put up for sale after Captain Burk's death in 1830, it was advertised as: "A highly valuable stand on the stage road from Easton to Philadelphia, at the intersection of the Easton and Durham Roads, eight miles from Doylestown, the same from Easton and Bethlehem, and three from the Delaware canals. A daily line of stages change and the passengers dine here and the post office is in the building. There is a new barn, three sheds for stabling, a well, two never-failing springs, apple orchard with excellent meadow and woodland."

Animals of all sorts were favorites for inn designations. So it was that the tavern at Revere on U.S. 611 near Kintnersville was known for many years until the speed of life made it less appropriate to have a stopping point here. The old tavern no longer stands, having burned to the ground some years ago.



Second Street Pike

This road is an extension of Second Street in Philadelphia. In various sections it is known as Huntington Pike, as it runs through the valley by that name, and Old Windybush Road as it dips down to meet the River Road below New Hope. In Bucks County the road runs through Feasterville, Richboro and Wrightstown.

Second Street Pike was designed as a shortcut between Philadelphia and the ferry to New York at New Hope in the days of the stage-coach. The better-known Old York Road curves a little more to the northwest and passes through a number of communities along the way.

The tavern signs along the road reflect typically American themes, rather than subjects from English heraldry. The Buck, Bear and Eagle were game to be found in considerable numbers in this region when the taverns were built. Bears regularly clothed and fed the Indian. Deer are still seen in herds as big as thirty during the winter snows. Meanwhile the Eagle, a favorite political symbol of the early Republic, has moved his domain only slightly to the north in search of food.

BUCK HOTEL

The Buck Hotel was a famous coach stop, built in 1735, where the Richboro Pike, the Buck Road and the Bridgeton Road unite to form the Somerton Pike. The hotel has long advertised the slogan "Don't Pass The Buck." It was named for the head of the animal that graced its sign board.



In the days when the county seat was in Newtown, the lovers of rum, fun and frolic made their headquarters at the Black Bear in Richboro. "The Buck was an outpost of the Bear, where the rollicking crowd would go when they found a change of base necessary," according to Davis' "History of Bucks County."

In 1922 the Buck was purchased by Ettore Schiavoni of the famous acrobatic team that had toured the country for years with Ringling Brothers Circus. He and his son-in-law, John Gonzales, have turned the inn from a country place specializing in beer and sandwiches to one of the county's finest inns, serving well over 100,000 customers a year.

TRAPPE TAVERN

Next to the Red Lion, the oldest tavern in Bensalem Township and one of the oldest in the county, the Trappe Tavern was located on Street Road above where the old King's Highway (U.S. 13) crossed it on its way to the Falls at Trenton. This tavern was demolished for the construction of the Pennsylvania Turnpike some years ago.

BLUE BELL

Little is known of this tavern which was torn down many years ago, except the name and its location where the Bristol Road joins the Buck Road near Churchville. The representation of the bell was a common one in England, having been memorialized by no less than Chaucer in his Canterbury Tales of the thirteenth century.

BLACK BEAR

The Black Bear swung for many generations in front of the public house in Richboro at the junction of Bristol Road and the Second Street Pike out of Philadelphia. The first inn building was a log cabin. After a number of fires the old building was torn down some years ago.

One owner, Bernard Vanhorne, lost his license in 1748 because, "he had no regard to the laws, encouraged drunkenness, gambling, fighting, etc., on week-days and Sunday," and "does frequently abuse and beat his wife in an extraordinary manner."

The Black Bear and the White Bear were located a block apart in Richboro, a few miles west of the county seat in Newtown. The "Bears" were popular headquarters for county politicians where many a slate was made up and smashed within their walls.

EAGLE

The popular American symbol of the eagle must once have hung in

front of an inn at the crossing of the roads connecting Pineville to Washington Crossing and Newtown to Brownsburg. The village was known on early maps by the name of its tavern, but later was changed to Woodhill in Upper Makefield Township. In its day it served as the local polling place. Though we think of the eagle exclusively in terms of our country, it is interesting to note that a pub named the Spread Eagle opened in London in 1669.

Another Eagle Tavern was the mainstay of Trumbauersville, having started prior to 1818 when that village contained no more than a dozen houses. It has since been renamed the Colonial Inn.

Yet another Eagle Hotel is located in Richlandtown in the north-central portion of the county. The hotel probably dates from the second quarter of the nineteenth century when this section was settled.

Still another Eagle Hotel was built in Chalfont in 1779 along the road from Doylestown to Montgomeryville. The structure was rebuilt in 1903, when it probably acquired the name Chalfont Hotel.