



SOLEBURY TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

EARLY TAVERNS OF BUCKS COUNTY

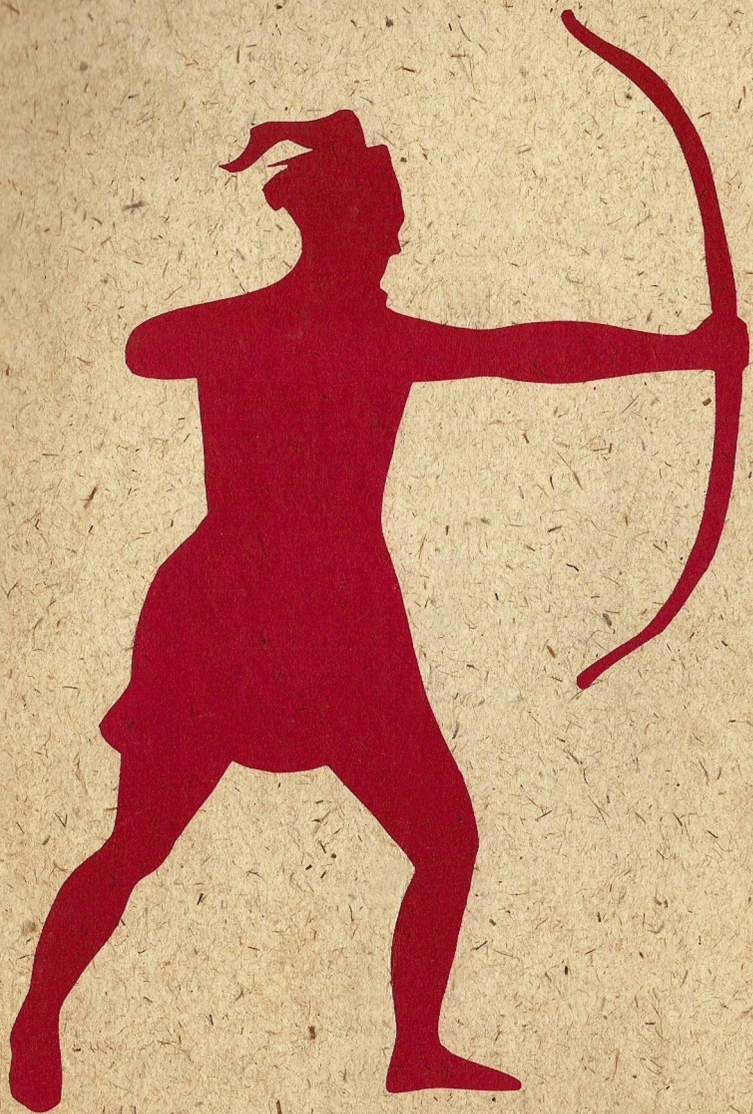
by

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Part 4

April 13, 2015

Early Taverns of Bucks County



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New Hope, Pennsylvania

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IN addition to the inns that are still in operation, proudly tracing their lineage to the earliest days of our country, and others which are now fond memories, there are still more of which little save their existence and location are known. Many of these were farmhouses located near a road junction at which the weary traveller stopped to beg food at night or shelter from the storm. The life-cycle of such places was usually limited to the lifetime of one occupant.

That we know about these lesser inns at all is the result of meticulous mapmaking by Mr. A. W. Kennedy in 1831. He charted the county at the height of the stagecoach era, at the opening of the Delaware Canal, and just before the railroad train or trolley car arrived. Here are a few of the spots he found, the names used being those of perhaps the inn-keeper, perhaps the postmaster, perhaps one of the larger landholders in the area as they then appeared.

NEWBOLD'S—Bristol Turnpike at the junction of the road from Emilie in the village of Edgely, north of Bristol.

HULMEVILLE—On the road from Red Lion to Morrisville where it crosses the Neshaminy Creek.

TYBURN—Bristol Turnpike southwest of Morrisville.

KIRKBRIDESVILLE—Just south of Morrisville on the River Road on the site of a ferry to Bordentown, New Jersey. This land is now occupied by the U. S. Steel Fairless Works.

PENNSVILLE—Southwest of The Anchor along the Richboro-Pineville Turnpike.

JAMES—In New Britain, west of Doylestown on the road from Chalfont to Dublin. Also on the road from Chalfont to Sellersville in Hilltown Township.

DYERSTOWN—Just above Doylestown on the old road to Durham, now quietly away from U.S. 611. The inn probably faced Dyer's flour mill, which has now become the Water Wheel Inn.

BROWNSBURG—On the River Road between Washington Crossing and New Hope, a hotel flourished after 1810.

HINKLETOWN—On the Durham Road between Gardenville and Pipersville. A hotel was established some time before 1793.

BAKER'S—A community on the Philadelphia-Bethlehem Road north of Dublin.

FRANTZ'S—On the road from Dublin to Ottsville in Bedminster Township.

WILSON'S—In Tinicum Township north of Point Pleasant.

BARNTZ'S—In Tinicum Township north of Point Pleasant.

RED HILL—In Tinicum Township, another name for Ottsville. The oldest inn was located on the hill above the town.

FRENCHTOWN—Opposite the bridge to Frenchtown, New Jersey, in Tinicum Township.

BUCKSVILLE—On the Durham Road in Nockamixon Township.

SMITHS—In Richland Township on the road to Bethlehem.

OPP'S—In Springfield Township near the northern border of the county on the Philadelphia-Bethlehem Road.

BURSONVILLE—Just west of Buckwampum Mountain in Springfield Township. Isaac Burson, an English Quaker from Abington, built a hotel here.

ERWINNA—Inn located at ferry crossing to Frenchtown, New Jersey.

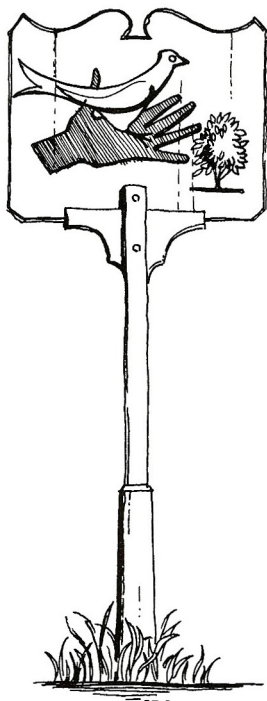
LONG'S—In the village of Durham.

KINTNER'S—Near where the road to Easton meets the River Road, at Kintnersville.



The vehicle, the American stage-coach, which is of like construction throughout the country, is calculated to hold twelve persons, who sit on benches placed across with their faces toward the horses. The front seat holds three, one of whom is the driver. As there are no doors at the sides, the passengers get in over the front wheels. The first get seats behind the rest, the most esteemed seat because you can rest your shaken frame against the back part of the wagon. Women are generally indulged with it; and it is laughable to see them crawling to this seat. If they have to be late they have to straddle over the men seated further in front.

—Mr. Jansen from *The Stranger in America* describing the coach between Philadelphia and New York, 1793 to 1806.



HOTELS AND INNS OF A LATER AGE

RIEGELSVILLE HOTEL—Riegelsville, at the bridge.

CARVERSVILLE HOTEL—A handsome Victorian building.

JACOB OBERACHER'S HOTEL—River Road above Point Pleasant.

SPRINGTOWN HOTEL—Thought to be pre-Revolutionary.

LANGHORNE HOTEL—Center of Langhorne.

BUSH HOUSE HOTEL—Built opposite the Pennsylvania Railroad Station in Quakertown.

GLOBE HOTEL—Near railroad station in Quakertown.

EAGLE HOTEL—Near railroad station in Quakertown.

AMERICAN HOUSE—Built in the railroad boom in Perkasio.

UNION HOTEL—Opposite the railroad station in Perkasio, an imposing structure from an expansionist era.

BELLEVUE HOTEL—Pennel.

NEWPORTVILLE HOTEL—The stone stable is one of the few remaining examples of this type of old building.

WYCOMBE INN—Wycombe, near the railroad station.

CARTWHEEL INN—U.S. 202, west of New Hope, building erected in 1796.

OTTSVILLE INN—Built in town in 1871.

CENTRAL HOTEL—Point Pleasant, now known as Jack's Bar.

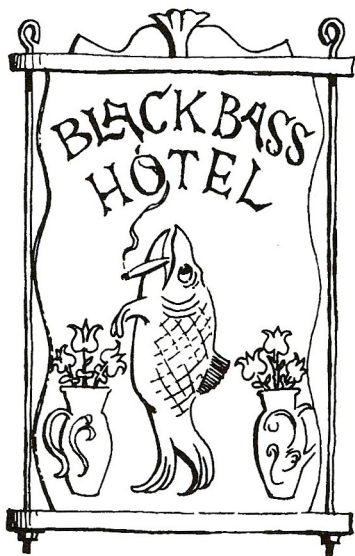
UHLER'S HOTEL—Established in Uhlerstown, then Mexico, about 1852.

RAILROAD HOTEL—Opposite the terminal in Doylestown.

KRAM'S HOTEL—Doylestown.

We observed several curious tavern signs in Philadelphia and on the roadside, among others Noah's Ark; a variety of Apostles; Bunyan's Pilgrim; a cock on a lion's back, crowing, with Liberty issuing from his beak; naval engagements in which the British are in a desperate situation; the most common signs are eagles, heads of public characters, Indian Kings, etc.

—An Englishman named Palmer writing home in 1818.



Appendix

INNS AND TAVERNS OF COLONIAL PHILADELPHIA

With the city of Philadelphia as the port of arrival, major commercial center of the colony, sometime capital of the country and largest center of population along the Atlantic Coast, it is natural that the city would have had many taverns. Here follow some of the better known:

YELLOW COTTAGE—Front Street.

THE CITY TAVERN—West side of Second Street between Chestnut and Walnut, built by public subscription in 1773, was a social and political center during the Revolution and the subsequent Continental Congress. Washington, Franklin, Jefferson, Lafayette, and John Adams were regular visitors. Declared the finest tavern in the colonies.

SPREAD EAGLE—Ninth and Market Streets.

CONESTOGA WAGON—South side of Market Street between Fourth and Fifth Streets, dating from 1742, catered to military and western men.

LONDON COFFEE HOUSE—Southwest corner of Front and High (Market) Streets overlooking the markets, was the source of coffee, wine and spirituous liquors. It served also as a commercial exchange and regular meeting place. The building which was built by popular subscription before 1755 ceased to be popular after the Revolution but was not razed until 1883. As if by correspondence, London, England in the early days had its Pensilvania Coffee House near the Royal Exchanges.

OELLER'S HOTEL—Chestnut Street above Sixth, it was the social center of the city from 1790 until 1799 when it burned. It had a ball-room an unheard of sixty foot square.

CROSS KEYS INN—Southwest corner of Fourth and Chestnut Streets. Another at the northeast corner of Third and Chestnut Streets run by Israel Israel. Known in 1700 as Sober's Inn and 1785-1808 as Moon and Seven Stars.

BLACK BEAR—Fifth and Market Streets, founded 1787.

FEDERAL CONVENTION OF 1787 INN—178 South Street, near Fifth. The inn sign showed handsome portraits of the signers of the Declaration of Independence and bore this legend:

"These thirty-eight men together have agreed
That better times to us shall very soon succeed."

THE MAN LOADED WITH MISCHIEF—Carrying his wife on his back, from an old ale-house on Oxford Street in London, on an alley between Dock and Spruce Streets.

FRANKLIN'S HOMLY INN—Fifth and Walnut Streets, founded 1794.

FRANKLIN HEAD—Second Street. Before it hung a sign bearing this legend:

"Come view your patriot father! and your friend,
And toast to Freedom and to slavery's end."

THE CROSS CUT SAW—Second Street.

THE HAND SAW—Second Street near Black Horse Alley.

MOUNT VERNON HOUSE—South Second Street.

THE DROVER—Third and Callowhill Streets.

THE PENNSYLVANIA ARMS—Third Street between Vine and Callowhill.

SEVEN STARS—Arch Street. Another in 1785 at Fourth and Chestnut Streets. Later another at Fourth and Race. Yet another at the corner of Frankford Avenue and Oxford Streets. Still another in Chestnut Hill.

STATE HOUSE INN—Sixth and Chestnut Streets, known after 1693 as Clarke's Inn, later as the State House in 1745 and as Sign of the Coach and Horses 1760, the Half Moon in 1783 until torn down in 1796. The yard before the inn was not green with grass but white with oyster and clam shells.

INDIAN KING TAVERN—South Side of Market between Second and Third Streets. In operation between 1729 and 1778. During its final year the Indian King fell into the hands of Tory sympathizers who renamed it The British Tavern. It was torn down in 1830.



- CROOKED BILLET INN**—On the wharf above Chestnut Street. The sign consisted of several twisted pieces of wood interlocked, was an early stop for Ben Franklin. Founded 1700.
- PEWTER PLATTER INN**—Front Street above Market Street, founded 1700. Its sign was a large pewter platter.
- THREE CROWNS**—Second and Walnut Streets, adjoining the City Tavern.
- ST. GEORGE AND DRAGON**—Southwest corner of Second and Arch Streets. Starting point for the stage to Baltimore about 1760.
- DEERBORN WAGON**—Hotel and stage office about 1830 at Fourth and Race Streets.
- WHITE SWAN HOTEL**—Race Street above Third, in operation by 1785. Stage office to Reading in 1825.
- HARRY EPPLE'S INN**—Race Street below Third after 1780.
- ROTTERDAM TAVERN**—Third Street north of Arch. Active 1795-1817.
- PHILADELPHIA HOTEL**—Second Street north of Arch about 1830.
- MERCHANT'S HOTEL**—Fourth Street between Market and Arch after 1837.
- PLOUGH TAVERN**—Third Street between Market and Arch. Stage office in 1830.
- CITY HOTEL**—Built in 1870 on Third Street below Arch.
- DECATUR INN**—Jayne Street below Seventh, founded about 1813.
- WASHINGTON TAVERN**—Founded 1790 on Sixth Street below Market. Name changed to Falstaff Inn in 1819. Another located after 1840 at Second and Locust Streets.
- U. S. HOTEL**—Chestnut Street above Fourth, in operation 1828-56.
- JUDD'S HOTEL**—Northeast corner of Fourth and Chestnut Streets, about 1800.
- FRANCIS UNION HOTEL**—Fourth Street near Market, after 1802.
- BOAR'S HEAD AND BLUE BELL INN**—Elbow Lane and White Horse Alley about 1785. Probably the result of a merger of two independent taverns.
- DIBLEY'S TAVERN**—Corner Chestnut Street and White Horse Alley, founded 1782.
- BULL'S HEAD TAVERN**—Strawberry Alley near Market Street. The sign is said to have been painted by no less than Benjamin West.

SIGN OF THE DEATH OF THE FOX—Strawberry Alley between Market and Chestnut Streets.

ROYAL STANDARD INN—Market Street above Second.

SIGN OF THE POPE'S HEAD—Second Street below Market after 1782.

SIGN OF THE BIBLE—South side of Market Street near Front.

SIGN OF THE SUGAR LOAF—Water Street near Market, next to the fish markets.

WIDOW ROBERT'S COFFEE HOUSE—Front Street above Chestnut.

KOUHI KHAN INN—Northwest corner of Front and Chestnut Streets, about 1750. Also known as the Turk's Head.

NATIONAL HOTEL—Chestnut Street below Fourth, after 1830.

UNION HOUSE—In operation 1832 at Liberty Street and Sober's Alley. Name changed in 1840 to Our House Inn. The sign copied a popular engraving of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

WHALEBONE HOUSE—Chestnut Street at Hudson's Alley about 1731. Later known as Hen and Chickens about 1790.

BEE HIVE TAVERN—Sixth Street between Pine and Spruce about 1800. The motto on the sign read:

“Here in this hive we're all alive,
Good liquor makes us funny.
If you are dry, step in and try
The flavor of our honey.”

LEBANON TAVERN—Corner of Tenth and South Streets. The sign was of Neptune in his chariot surrounded by Tritons.

THREE JOLLY SAILORS—Water Street.

THE FOUR ALLS—Sixth Street below Catherine. Had a large and elaborate sign showing these worthies in full length:

King—I govern All
General—I fight for All
Minister—I pray for All
Laborer—And I pay for All.

THREE TUN INN—About 1700 on Chestnut below Second Street.

GLOVE INN—Eighteenth century coffee house on Front Street above Walnut.

JOSEPH HEAD'S HOUSE—Built as the elegant residence of William Bingham, it became an inn between 1807 and 1823 near Spruce and South Third Streets.

SIGN OF THE GATE—Northwest corner of Second and Delancey Streets, about 1813.

UPTON'S HOTEL—Front Street on Dock Creek in operation after 1821.

WASHINGTON CROSSING THE DELAWARE—Beech Street. The sign was copied from Sully's rendition of that scene.

TUN TAVERN—On the waterfront known before the Revolution as Peg Mullen's Beefsteak House where the United States Navy and Marine Corps were organized in 1775.

INDIAN QUEEN—Southeast corner of Fourth and Market. Active 1752 through 1838. At various times this building had served as the home of Sir Richard Penn, headquarters for General Howe, and residence of Robert Morris, President Washington and President Adams. It was here that Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence.

THE RAINBOW—Race Street, meeting place of the City Troop of Light Dragoons.

BUNCH OF GRAPES—East side of Third Street between Market and Arch Streets, the starting point for the stage coach service for New York by way of Old York Road and Coryell's Ferry (New Hope).

RISING SUN INN—Third Street, on land deeded by the Lenape Chief Tammany. Another tavern by the same name on Old York and the Germantown Road was built in 1726, burned by Lord Howe in 1777, and rebuilt on orders of the new nation.

BLUE ANCHOR—Near the site along Dock Creek at Front Street, where William Penn is said to have first set foot on shore. It later was a gathering place for river pilots and shallop men under the sign of the Boatswain and Call.

OLD BARLEY SHEAF TAVERN—Second Street near Race, long kept by Marmaduke Watson, a popular old Bucks County farmer from Buckingham.

PENNY-POT HOUSE—One of the public landings at the foot of Vine Street where beer sold for a penny a pot, or pint. Later called The Jolly Tar.

PURPLE AND BLUE TAVERN—A favorite resort of the military until a new proprietor changed the name to the Quiet Woman, portraying a headless woman on his sign.

SORREL HORSE TAVERN—North Second Street below Arch, established 1793.

BLACK BEAR TAVERN—Between Vine and Callowhill Street. Also an Inn on Market Street below Fifth, in operation 1787.

PENNSYLVANIA FARMER'S INN—Third and Callowhill Streets.

BLACK HORSE—Second Street south of Market. Also on Market Street at Fourth, in operation 1767.

EAGLE INN—Girard Avenue and Second Street.

MANSION HOUSE—Southeast corner of Market at Eleventh Street.

THE WILLIAM PENN—Market at Thirty-eighth Street.

BLUE BELL INN—Woodland Avenue at Seventy-fourth Street.

SIGN OF THE JOLLY POST—On Bristol Pike in Frankford.

GEORGE VOGEL'S SECOND STREET HOUSE—Between Market and Arch Streets, a regular stop for coaches of the Swift Sure Line to New York. This inn was founded in 1780 as The King's Arms.

WESTERN HOTEL—Market Street, after 1849.

MENDENHALL FERRY TAVERN—On Schuylkill River two miles below the Falls. Famous for catfish dinners served with waffles.

RALEIGH INN—Third Street. It had a sign showing a servant throwing water over the nobleman at the sight of smoke issuing from his mouth.

McDERMOTT'S TAVERN—Thirteenth Street near Locust, had this sign copied from one in London:

"I William McDermott lives here,
I sells good porter, ale, and beer,
I've made my sign a little wider
To let you know I sell good cider."

INNS CITED BUT NOT SITED IN OLD CITY RECORDS

THE WOUNDED TAR

THE TRUMPET

THE TOP GALLANT

THE WANDERER

THE QUEEN OF HUNGARY

TWO SLOOPS

THE BIRD AND SNOW (also mentioned as The Brig and Snow)

THE MORTAR AND DOVE

ADMIRAL WARREN

THE RATTLESNAKE



BLUE LION

QUEEN'S HEAD

KING OF PRUSSIA

ADAM AND EVE'S GARDEN

THE DOLPHIN

GOLDEN LION—Sign showed the British lion rampant on his hind legs. After the Revolution it was affectionately known as The Yellow Cat.

SWANN'S MENAGE

RUBICAM'S

CONTINENTAL HOTEL

GEORGE EVAN'S TAVERN—Scene of a banquet in honor of George Washington on January 1, 1782.

STRUGGLING MAN—The sign showed the head and shoulders of a naked man breaking out of a terrestrial globe, like a chick breaking out of a shell. The legend read, "Help me through this World."

EARLY INNS OF THE NEARBY COUNTRY

THREE TUNS—Whitemarsh.

WHEEL PUMP INN—Bethlehem Pike at Gordon's Lane in Flourtown.

THE MERMAID TAVERN—Chestnut Hill.

VALLEY GREEN INN—Chestnut Hill along Wissahickon Creek.

ANCHOR TAVERN—Flourtown.

FARMERS & DROVERS—Barren Hill.

THE SHIP—Chestnut Hill.

ROEBUCK INN—Germantown.

WIGWAM TAVERN—Germantown.

BUCK HOTEL—Germantown.

HORNET'S NEST—Known also as Widow Mackinnett's, Saddlers Arms, and The Green Tree, this inn in Germantown was first run by Daniel Pastorius after 1748.

INDIAN QUEEN—Germantown.

FOXCHASE TAVERN—Germantown.

WOODMAN TAVERN—Germantown Road. The sign was of a woodman and his axe.

WISSAHICKON HALL—Built 1849 in what is now Fairmount Park.



LOG CABIN—Wissahickon Drive near Roxborough. The owner used to keep two bears tied to an old coach for the entertainment of his guests.

THE TROOPER—Norristown.

FOX CHASE INN—Torresdale.

FARMERS & MECHANICS—Skippack Pike, Ambler.

SQUARE & COMPASS—Abington, run by Mary Moore in 1787.

LADY WASHINGTON—Bethayres.

ROBIN HOOD—Frankford.

RISDON'S TAVERN—Torresdale, favorite of Philadelphia sportsmen and summer visitors.

HETMAN'S TAVERN—Whitemarsh.

SPREAD EAGLE TAVERN—Lancaster Road west of Philadelphia.

RISING SUN TAVERN—Germantown Avenue at Old York Road.

GOLD SWAN TAVERN—Germantown Avenue at Mt. Airy.

GENERAL WAYNE HOTEL 1866—5058 Germantown Avenue.

CRESS HOTEL—8501 Germantown Avenue, dating from the 1700's. Later called the Eagle Hotel in 1820, now Robertson's Florists.

SIGN OF THE SWAN 1740—8433 Germantown Avenue, known in 1780 as The Bonny Jockey and the Stag Inn after 1840.

RED LION—Willow Grove, "the best hostelry between Rising Sun and Coryell's Ferry."

BARLEY SHEAF—Jenkintown, run by Widow Jenkins and opened about 1759, not far from the Abington Friends Meeting.

SIGN OF THE WAGON—Willow Grove, then known as Round Meadow, the tavern was built in 1732. In 1768 when the place was offered for sale, the advertisement mentioned accommodations for one hundred horses, an ample indication of the state of business at that time.

SORREL HORSE—Willow Grove.

CROOKED BILLET INN—Hatboro, first home of John Dawson who came from England in 1750 to pursue the hatter's trade and hence gave name to the town. In this building the British overcame General Lacey's Colonial detachment in 1778. The term Crooked Billet in Medieval Times referred variously to a log, the Bishop's crozier, a shepherd's staff, a yoke such as oxen might wear, or a weapon. All have been pictured on inn signs.



COUNTY LINE TAVERN—Philadelphia, on Old York Road, this inn was built for the convenience of farmers who drove their produce to market every Tuesday and Thursday.

WASHINGTON HOUSE—Holmesburg was a fashionable stopping place for the first change of horses and a second breakfast on the stage from Philadelphia to New York.

LAMBERTVILLE HOUSE—Lambertville, New Jersey, was built as a stage house in 1812-14 by United States Senator John Lambert.

SUN INN—Bethlehem, opened 1760. Visited during the Revolution and shortly thereafter by Washington, John Hancock, most of the signers of the Declaration of Independence.

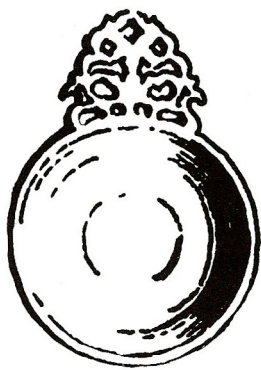
EAGLE HOTEL—Bethlehem.

THE ROSE—Nazareth.

AMERICAN FLIP

Keep grated Ginger and Nutmeg with a fine dried Lemon Peel rubbed together in a Mortar. To make a quart of Flip: Put the Ale on the Fire to warm, and beat up three or four Eggs with four ounces of moist Sugar, a teaspoonful of grated Nutmeg or Ginger, and a Quartern of good old Rum or Brandy. When the Ale is near to boil, put it into one pitcher, and the Rum and Eggs, etc., into another: turn it from one Pitcher to another till it is as smooth as cream. To heat plunge in the red hot Loggerhead or Poker. This quantity is styled One Yard of Flannel.

—an old recipe



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*Who'er has traveled life's dull round,
Where'er his stages may have been,
May sigh to think he still has found
The warmest welcome at an inn.*

—William Shenstone



ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Researching a topic such as old taverns can be fun. At one point the whole project acquired the subtitle "One Beer at a Hundred Bars." It is, therefore, to the bartenders and owners of many of the establishments mentioned that I owe a debt of gratitude for facts, and a few of the fictions, included in this booklet.

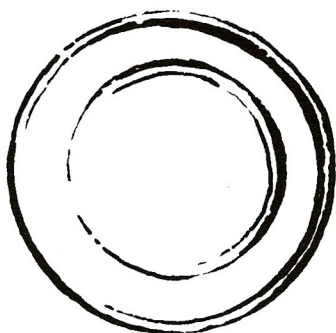
I am also indebted to Mr. Robert W. Pierson and the Bucks County Park Foundation for their generous assistance in the preparation of the map, which was drawn by Edith Smith. Their enthusiasm and encouragement not only advanced this study, but daily enrich the lives of residents and visitors by preserving the natural and historic beauties of Bucks County.

Mr. Ray E. K. Clayton of London, through his kin at Whitbread's Breweries, supplied a number of books on old English tavern signs and customs. His associates at I.S.I.S. sent volumes on the modern English inn. In Bucks County, I had help with sources and photographs particularly from Mrs. Paul Niemeyer of the Bucks County Historical Society Library, Mr. Herbert Ward of the Black Bass Hotel, Col. John Richardson, and Mr. William F. Taylor, who lives in the old Hard Times Tavern by the Cutaloosa Creek. Mr. Maurice M. Ely kindly supplied the cover rendering of the Indian at the Logan Inn from the Anderson Collection of early slides and photographs.

To one and all, I toast your health!

W. M. R.

New Hope, 1965



EARLY TAVERNS

along the
Highroads and Turnpikes
of

BUCKS COUNTY

PENNSYLVANIA

based upon A. W. Kennedy's map

1831

