



Haverford Township Historical Society



EARLY INNS AND TAVERNS IN HAVERFORD TOWNSHIP

By Richard D. Kerr

[The following is mostly based on excerpts from Henry Graham Ashmead's 1884 History of Delaware County Pennsylvania, pages 575-577, with additional notes added. The list is in chronological order, as well as it is known. These establishments are comparatively well-documented, because licenses had to be sought annually from the county court (Chester, then later Delaware), and these records remained in existence for Ashmead to study and summarize.]

Old Frog Tavern (about 1731)

"Licensed Houses.- The first application for license in Haverford that appears of record is that of Griffith Evans, who, at February court, 1731, desired to be permitted to keep a house of entertainment because, as he alleged, he was "an ancient man, his Wife well stricken in years & subject to lameness." This license must have been successful, for Dr. Smith informs us that "he [Evans] kept the well-established stand known as the 'Old Trog' [Frog -RK] in that day." It was located, the same authority states, a short distance above Cooperstown. We, however, have not found his name in the clerk's list of approved licenses."

[The "Old Frog," a small house nestled at the bottom of a hill, still stands on the east side of present-day Darby Road, across from the Quadrangle property. It still serves as a residence. -RK]

Buck Tavern (1732-1838)

"On Feb. 29, 1732, Samuel Rees presented his application, signed by Daniel Humphrey and twelve other persons, representing that Samuel had been "ailing for some years, and at times unable to help himself, and since March last altogether ailing in the limbs; sometimes forced to keep his bed for weeks; his crops of corn failing for several years, having a large family," etc. His house they represent "being on the great road from Conestoga, &c., to Philadelphia, & convenient for a public house." Despite his many ills and misfortunes the court refused to accede to his wishes and denied him license. In no wise contented with the decision of the justice, he appeared again, May 30, 1732, when he received a favorable response for the remainder of the license year. On Aug. 29th of the same year he presented his petition again, and it also was met with the favorable consideration of the bench. On the clerk's list of the successful petitioners at the August court, 1734, his name appears, and annually thereafter until Aug. 26, 1740, when Littice Rees, the widow of "Samuel, of Haverford," prays the court that the license may be continued to her, inasmuch as she had "a parcell of small children to support." The court yielded assent to her prayer, and again in 1741 extended the like favor to the widow and her fatherless children. On Aug. 30, 1734 [1744? -RK], William Bell made application to the court, and in his petition sets forth that "Lettis Rees's Lysance being now expired," he desires to renew it, but he does not state whether it was at the old location or not. In 1748, Patrick Miller purchased the house formerly occupied by William Bell, and procured the license until 1752, when, he having died, his widow, Anne, carried on the business until 1757. In 1759, John Gregory had the license, and so on annually until 1761, when Llewellyn Barry obtained it, and in 1766, William Lewis became the landlord, to be followed in the next year, 1767, by Joseph Miller, who continued the business until 1772, when he died. In 1773 his widow,

Mary, obtained license, and so on from year to year until 1789, from the Chester County court. After the creation of Delaware County she continued to receive the favorable consideration until 1796, when Jonathan Miller, probably her son, succeeded to the business. From his petition, in 1802, we learn that his tavern was known as the Buck.¹ In 1836 he gave place to Edward Siter, and the latter remained there two years, after which date the old inn ceased to be a public-house.

¹“The tavern termed the "sign of the Buck" stood on the old Lancaster road (not the turnpike), in the northeast corner of Haverford; . . .”

[The Buck Tavern was designated as a U. S. post office effective April 1, 1817 until June 24, 1836, with Jonathan Miller being its first postmaster. –RK]

A letter from Joshua Humphreys to the War Department, dated October 4, 1797, noted that any mail for him should be delivered to Buck Tavern on Turnpike road, proprietor named Mr. Miller.

[wardepartmentpapers.org/searchresults.php?searchClass=fulltextSearch&fulltextQuery=Haverford, accessed 12/10/2015.]

[The Buck Tavern building, which later served as apartments, was torn down in 1964, making room for a Hot Shoppes restaurant, followed by an Al E. Gator’s restaurant. That in turn was replaced by the present Wilkie Lexus automobile dealership building. A Daughters of the American Revolution plaque, once fastened to the old Buck Tavern building to commemorate General George Washington’s documented overnight stay there on September 14-15, 1777, was preserved and is mounted on a small pedestal in front of the Wilkie Lexus showroom today. –RK]

(name unknown) (1734-1735)

“To show that the justices took the condition of the applicant into account in dispensing the judicial crumbs, on the clerk’s list of successful petitions in the year 1734 appears, instead of the party’s name, this entry: “A widow in Haverford – Beer & Syder,” and a like statement in the following year, 1735, when it disappears from the list.”

(name unknown) (1738-)

Fox Chase (by 1770-)

Eagle and Compass (also called just Compass) (by 1795-1832)

“Thomas Ashbridge, of Goshen, Feb. 28, 1737/8 [“Old Style” calendar notation for February 1738 -RK], in his petition stated that he had “taken a place in Haverford, which has been a place of publick entertainment for a considerable time.” Possibly that of the widow mentioned above. He was refused, but at May court, 1738, He again tried to obtain a favorable hearing, and succeeded so far as being allowed to sell "Beer & Cyder." Ashbridge, however, seemed not to be content with the bench's bounty, for at the August court following he appeared again, asking full license, which the judges accorded him. In March (26), 1743, Matthew Beard, of Haverford, presented his petition, that he "hath lately Rented or Leased a Plantation or Tenement adjoining to the Great Road from Goshen to Philadelphia, in which Tenement there hath been for several years past a House of Entertainment.” He was granted leave to sell “bear and Syder,” but at the August court he received full license, and it was continued until 1746, after which his name does not appear of record.

“In 1748, William Rusk, a renter, asked license for a public-house, stating that a tavern had been kept there; doubtless Beard's old place. In 1761, Philip Foreman was successful in his application, and in 1762, Adam Boyle received the court's favor. In 1764, Evan Watkins had license granted him, and in 1767, Peter Pechin was permitted to keep an inn. In his petition for 1770 the name Fox Chase appears

for the first time. Pechin was succeeded, in 1771, by John Richards, and the latter, in 1774, by Aaron Coates, and he in turn, in 1778, gave place to David Quinn. David Lyons, in 1782, obtained license, and continued to secure him from the court until the new county of Delaware was created, and after that period until 1791, when Zacharias Loud had license for that and a part of the following year (1792). He was followed, in 1793, by Frederick Bittle, and in 1795, William Bittle became the landlord of the inn, which he called the Eagle and Compass. In 1809 his petition speaks of the house as the Compass. In 1813, Bittle having removed to a new house he had built, Martin Wise took it, and kept it until the old building was destroyed. However, in 1813, David Lyons states in his petition that he has "lately built a commodious house in the aforesaid township, situated at the intersection of the road leading from the borough of Chester to Germantown, and from Darby to Newtown Square and through the township of Radnor, formerly known as a place of entertainment by the name of Fox Chase." He desired license for the same. The court granted it, and continued annually to allow it until 1832, when it also ceased to be a tavern.

[A map published in 1808 and based on research from 1801 to 1807, called "A Plan of the City of Philadelphia and Environs Surveyed by John Hills," shows a Compass Tavern in the acute west corner of the intersection of the West Chester Road and present-day Manoa Road.]

[The John Melish / John Whiteside 1818 map of Delaware County shows the "Old Fox Chase Tavern" on the southeast corner of present-day Eagle Road and Darby Road. This building no longer exists. So it may be that Ashmead combined information about two taverns, the Old Fox Chase on "the Goshen Road" (present-day Haverford, Eagle and Darby roads, heading west and north) and the Compass at present-day West Chester Pike and Manoa Road.]

(names unknown) (1769 and 1778)

"In 1769, John Waytin, and in 1778, Abraham Hughes, petitioned for license in Haverford, but we have not learned the location of the places which they requested might be made more valuable by the approving shake of the judicial heads."

U. S. Arms Tavern (name on 1818 map)

Spread Eagle (1813-at least 1875)

Eagle Hotel (called this by 1870, lasted to at least 1908)

"William Bittle, whose removal from the old Fox Chase we have just related, in 1813 made application for license. His petition sets forth that "Having built and removed to the commodious building on the road leading from Norristown to Chester, where the West Chester road crosses said road," he wishes the court's permission to keep a hotel there. His application was rejected, but at the January court, 1814, it was approved, and the Spread Eagle Tavern on the West Chester road was established. In 1827, William Bittle was succeeded by Robert Dunn, and he being dead, in 1829, the license was issued to his widow, Susannah Dunn. The following year Lewis Bennett was landlord, and in 1831 William Bittle once more was "mine host" of the Eagle. In 1832 the latter gave place to J. S. Atkinson, and he in turn, in 1834, was followed by John Williams. In 1836, David Quinn had license, and in 1838, Andrew Steel, to be followed, in 1841 by William Bittle. In 1850, James P. Afflick, having purchased the property, made application to continue an inn at that place, the Eagle not having been licensed in 1848 or 1849. It was met with a remonstrance signed by William B. Lindsay, Adam C. Eckfeldt, James Smith, Vincent D. Litzenberg, Thomas L. Cochrane, Charles H. LaMar, and forty-five other persons, setting forth that "the subscribers, citizens, and legal voters of the township of Haverford . . . report that your memorialists have learned with deep regret that applications will be made to your Honorable Court . . . by James D. Afflick and William Y. Stackhouse for 'Tavern licenses,' or, in other words, for the privilege of vending intoxicating drinks under the sanction of law in our township, and inasmuch as we believe it to be our

bounden duty to do what we may to prevent a consummation so much to be dreaded, we would therefore ask leave most earnestly but respectfully to remonstrate against the granting of the privilege asked for, because we believe the sale and use of strong drink to be fraught with the most fatal consequences to the best interests of mankind, present and future, and because a very large majority of our citizens are and have been for years opposed to the granting of any license in the township of Haverford. Inasmuch, therefore, as no one is expected to be benefitted in the granting of the applications referred to but the persons above named (and even their ultimate advantage in such a calling is extremely doubtful), whilst many might be exposed to the deepest suffering in consequences of this multiplication of the places and sources of temptation. We appeal to you, therefore, in the name of suffering humanity, not to give sanction of your official character to the extension of an evil so deeply to be deplored." Afflick, hearing of this remonstrance, in order to offset its influence, had a supplemental petition from "Drivers, Marketmen, Travellers, and others, alleging that 'no stand on the great road leading from Philadelphia to West Chester is better situated or more required for the entertainment of the public than the above-described house,'" which was signed by forth-eight persons. The court gave Afflick license, but in order that the scales of justice should be properly adjusted, refused approval of the Black Bear Tavern this year, which made the balance even, as Stackhouse's inn had received license in 1849. In 1859, William Johnson was the landlord, to give place, in 1861, to Benjamin Kirk, who, in 1865, was followed by John M. Afflick. William Thompson, in 1867, kept the Spread Eagle; Washington Bishop from 1869 until local option did away with license, and after the repeal of that law Roland J. Pugh, in 1875, received approval of the court, a privilege which was transferred to Nelson Pugh the same year. In 1876, Leedom Kirk was the landlord, and continued there until 1879, when James A. Serveson followed him, to give place to Joseph De Negre in 1881. The latter has since died, but the house is still kept open by his widow and children. At the present time [1884 -RK] it is the only licensed house in the township."

"William Bittle operated the Haverford post office at this location from 1841 until it moved to the Black Bear Tavern in 1847." ("Haverford Township - Images of America Series" by the Haverford Township Historical Society, published in 2003 by Arcadia Publishing in 2003.)

[The Melish / Whiteside 1818 map of Delaware County shows a W. Bittle U. S. Arms Tavern" at this site, the northeast corner of present-day Eagle Road and West Chester Pike. The Eagle Hotel fronted on West Chester Pike. The building no longer exists. -RK]

[Note: The Melish / Whiteside 1818 map of Delaware County also shows another "Spread Eagle Tavern," in Radnor Township on the northwest corner of present-day Lancaster Pike and Conestoga Road/Eagle Road. This is the Spread Eagle Tavern that served as one of the earliest post offices in Delaware County, as listed in a box in the upper right corner of Melish's map.]

[Keith Lockhart's delawarecountyhistory.com website, accessed 4/14/2019: An 1870 directory lists David Crumley with "Eagle Hotel." An 1872 directory lists D. Cromley with "Hotel." An 1897 and a 1902 directory lists "Charles A. Berttenmiller - Wines and liquors." The 1902 directory also lists "Eagle Hotel." The site also contains this article from the Chester Times, October 27, 1905:

"THE EAGLE HOTEL PROPERTY SOLD -

Transfer of the Property in Haverford Township to Louis Bergdoll Recorded

According to a deed placed of record yesterday, Charles A. Beittenmiller of Manoa, proprietor of the Eagle Hotel, in Haverford Township, has sold a tract of ground to Louis Bergdoll of Philadelphia. The property consist of something over 24 acres of land. The price paid was \$20,400. Mr. Beittenmiller was in Media yesterday, but said nothing to his friends about giving up the hotel business. He has filed his

application for a license for the coming year, which would indicate that he does not intend to go out of business.”]

**Black Bear (1827-1870)
(also called Stackhouse Tavern)**

“In 1827, Henry Konkle received license for a house he owned eight miles from Philadelphia and fifteen from West Chester, about half a mile nearer the latter place than the Spread Eagle, which inn he called the Black Bear. The next year Joseph Hassan was the landlord, and continued as such until 1830, when Susannah Dunn, who had the year previous kept the Eagle, took the tavern, and remained there until 1832, when Riley Brown became “mine host” of the Black Bear Hotel. William Y. Stackhouse had license for 1837, continuing to receive the court’s approval until 1848, when no license was granted in Haverford, and the next year was successful, while the Spread Eagle was refused. In 1850, however, the Black Bear was rejected, while the Eagle that year was in high feather because of the approving judicial nod. In 1851, Stackhouse again appears among the successful applicants, and continued annually to secure the judge’s consent until 1870, when he being dead, for that year Mary Ann Stackhouse, his widow, was licensed in his stead; but, after that date last given, the Black Bear Hotel ceased to be a public house of entertainment.”

“The Stackhouse Tavern, built in 1820 and owned by William Stackhouse, is located between Lawrence and Eagle Roads on West Chester Pike. The tavern is believed to have been part of the Underground Railroad. In the 1860s, James Erskine renamed it the Black Bear Inn. The Haverford post office was located here from 1847 until the early 1900s.” (“Haverford Township - Images of America Series” by the Haverford Township Historical Society, published in 2003 by Arcadia Publishing in 2003.)

“On West Chester turnpike was an office known as Haverford, and William Y. Stackhouse was a newly-appointed postmaster since Feb. 8. He held this appointment for 20 years. Years later, the name of the office was changed to Manoa.” (Column by Allan Cleaves Dodge, a Delaware County postal historian, in the “Chester (PA) Times” of February 8, 1950, page 5.)

[This building still exists on the north side of West Chester Pike, with street number 1717. –RK]

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