

Genealogical Article by J. Harlan Buzby
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"Quinton Tavern Account Ledger"

Genealogically speaking....

Quinton Tavern Account Ledger

Manuscript #290 in the collection is a wonderful account ledger of an inn and tavern at Quinton's Bridge, Upper Alloways Creek Township, Salem County, New Jersey between the years 1801 and 1807. Even though about forty pages have been removed from the document over the years, there are still over two hundred account names contained within the leaves that remain, making this an important primary resource for researchers during this time period which is void of Federal Population Census records in New Jersey.

One puzzle has been to determine which tavern this ledger is attached to at Quinton's Bridge. Charles S. Boyer in his *Old Inns and Taverns in West Jersey* states that Quinton's Bridge "was the site of several early taverns," however, he goes on only to identify one such establishment "on the east side of the main street of the village south of the Alloway Road." Thomas Cushing & Charles Sheppard in their discussion of the Quinton Bridge taverns in their *History of the Counties of Gloucester, Salem and Cumberland, New Jersey* describe two establishments, one on the east side of the main street and the other on the west side with both of the above articles naming tavern license owners. The fact that the tavern license owner was not necessarily the building's property owner adds to the dilemma.

In the Salem County Court's, "Minutes of the Court of the 1800 March Sessions & Term," one Hosea Snethen obtained a tavern license in Upper Alloways Creek, "where Garrison now dwelleth." Then again in 1801, Snethen was given a license "to keep a public house in the Township of Upper Alloways Creek for five pounds, five shillings." Hosea Snethen's signature as a proprietor is quite evident in this early manuscript. Other former tavern license holders who appear in the court records and in the manuscript are Cornelius Dehart and Martin Hitchner. The Salem County Clerk's Office also contains many uncataloged petitions recommending individuals to be approved for tavern licenses. Several of these involve Quinton Bridge licenses from this time period with original signatures whose names also appear in this account ledger.

Combining these names with the information available, it *appears* that the tavern establishment involved with this manuscript can be attributed to the one located on the east side of the main road which would make it the inn, tavern, hotel and subsequent store at Quinton's Bridge which can be seen in the accompanying photograph. This building was razed on November 18, 1957. Before its demolition, two fireplace mantels were purchased and removed. They survive today at our Society's headquarters, one of which is pictured here after its installation. Today the site of the old tavern and hotel would be approximately Nos. 10 & 12 Main Street, Quinton, NJ.

This tavern was issued its last license under the proprietorship of Daniel Keen in May 1875 and he sold the property to Sylvanus C. Sheppard in 1878. Cushing and Sheppard mention that in 1883 this tavern was kept as a Temperance Hotel. The booklet *Quinton Township Centennial 1873-1973* gives a short historical description of this hotel. "An old hotel stood along side of the present market. Besides being a popular place for dancing, the hotel was also a popular place where crowds gathered to see horse races. The track was a $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile track and extended from the hotel and took in all the land now known as East Avenue and as far as the property of the late Andrew Sparks. In its later years, the hotel was used as a poolroom, barber shop, and pork store."

During the time period of this ledger, tavern rates were established every year by each county at the General Quarter Session held in March. This practice resulted from an act of the New Jersey Assembly passed at Trenton on February 24, 1797. This law reads in part, "And be it enacted, that it shall be the duty of the said courts, and they are hereby respectively empowered and directed, at every of their spring sessions hereafter, to ascertain the rates and prices of the several liquors, meat and entertainment for man; and also fix the several sums for the provender, stabling and pasture for horses, to be taken by every licensed innholder and tavernkeeper within their respective counties; and every such innholder and tavernkeeper shall obtain from the clerk of the court, and in ten days after such session, fix or set up to open view, in the most public room in his or her inn and tavern, a fair copy of the rates and prices of the articles and things so ascertained by the said court..." Such a tavern rate sheet is pictured here that was posted in Salem County inns and taverns in 1808.

Entries in the account ledger contain interesting references suggesting the tavern was a frequent gathering place for many reasons beside enjoying gills, mugs, jorams, pints, punch, and egg or other slings, lodging, dinner and breakfast. These entries include such phrases as: to dinner in the club, expenses at revue dinner, expenses at battalion, and to cash at election. A recipe for an "egg sling" remains to be located!

There are also many descriptive methods itemized throughout the ledger of how the tavern patrons settled their accumulated debit accounts. The barter system was in full use. Besides an account's being paid off "by cash in full," other entry examples show debts settled by one pair of shoes, a stove, one bushel of potatoes, candlestick, flax tub, oats, lettering a sign, $1\frac{1}{2}$ cords of wood, one ton of hay, $5\frac{1}{2}$ lb. candles, one barrel of cider, weaving and work. The monetary system used in this ledger changed over from the British to the American system around March of 1803.

In the back of the ledger there is a poem, penned between earlier entries, which was most likely written at the time of the Mexican War (1846-1848). There is no author mentioned and it could have been copied into the ledger from a published source. However, the spelling and punctuation suggest some originality. Regardless, it remains a poignant anti-war commentary. The poem follows.

Son

Father, I've seen the volunteers
Dressed out in pink & blue
And I should like to hear you tell
What they intend to do.

Father

These are our country's soldiers boy
And they intend to go
To fight our countrys [*sic*] battles
Away in mexico [*sic*].

Son

The country's battles: What are they
And what is fighting for
I thought that folks were shot & killed
When ere they go to war.

Father

Just so my son these volunteers
For gloy [*sic*] & renown
Will shoot & kill the mexicans [*sic*]
And burn their cities down.

Son

What have they done those mexicans [*sic*]
I should be glad to know
I think I never heard before
Of treating people so.

Father

Done! There [*sic*] a weak and palty [*sic*] race
And all the papers say
They owe our country certain sums
Which they refuse to pay.

Son

Well! Petre Jones is oweing [*sic*] me
A six pence for a nife [*sic*]
Ill [*sic*] go some night and burn him out
And take the fellows life.

Father

What! Take his life! What do you mean
That would be verry [*sic*] wrong
You would be tried for murder boy
And on the gallows hund [*sic*].

Son

Then why not hang the volunteers
Is it more wicked then
To shoot and kill a single boy
Than kill a thousand men.

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