



A Tavern keeper and a Patriot

Last month we saw Jacob Johns' property go into a sheriff's sale due to insolvency. His property was bought by Isaac Allen in 1765.

Isaac Allen was born into a Quaker family in London Grove Township, our NGT neighbors, around the year 1715. I have also found a date of 1727. The proof date of his will is April 24, 1784. This indicates that he died shortly before this at the age of 57. His parents were James and Mary Allen. In October of 1748 he married Lydia Smith. Lydia had previously been married to Thomas Jackson, Jr., whose father was another prominent NGT settler, had died in 1746. Isaac and Lydia were parents to seven children, four sons and three daughters.

Lydia died in 1775 and Isaac Allen married Margaret Woodside (date unknown). Isaac and Margaret had two daughters. Isaac and his family were members of the New Garden Quaker Meeting and there are numerous records reflecting his participation in the meeting.

When Isaac arrived in NGT I do not know but the New Garden Quaker Wedding Books indicate he signed for marriages beginning in 1748, the year of his marriage to Lydia. I also do not know from where Isaac accumulated his money but in 1765 he not only bought the parcel which includes Harrogate totaling 151 acres but also 307 acres adjoining the Harrogate property from Joseph Freed. When Allen sold 205 of these acres (includes Harrogate) to David Hoopes (this owner's story next month) the deed indicated a tannery. This suggests that Allen established this tan-yard which was located in the marshy low area south of the farm. The area of this tan-yard is now 850 Southwood Road, the location of the lovely stone house across from Harrogate. The small stream that runs through the property is named Tannery Run. More about this house and the tannery business in next month's installment.

None of the deeds researched so far have indicated a house on Harrogate property. I therefore am assuming that Isaac lived in the house that used to be on the corner of Lime-stone and Southwood Roads, now the site of Edgecraft. In a previous newsletter, I wrote of that house. The house was built around 1735 by Joseph Freed. In the ensuing years, it evolved into a larger home. The renovation done in the 1830s is the appearance in this photo shown here taken in

2002 a few days before its demolition.

From tax records, Isaac's primary source of income was the tavern he established in 1764. He is recorded in the 1760

tax list and in 1768, the tax records recorded his taxables to be 150 acres, a tavern, a dwelling, 2 horses, 6 sheep, 2 cows. In 1769, Allen paid taxes on the tavern, 150 acres, 5 horses, 5 cows, 8 sheep, and one servant. In 1771, his taxables had shrunk to the tavern, 5 horses, 2 cows and no sheep or servants. In 1789 he had acquired sheep and another servant. All tax roles after 1764 list him as a tavern owner. As with all of us his fortunes rose and fell! Or he found a tax shelter.



Petitions to the court requesting a license was filed by the proprietor of a tavern to obtain a license and contains the name and signature of petitioner, date of petition, township or borough of petitioner and establishment. The petition may also include the signatures of various residents of the area urging the court to grant a recommendation for a license due to the necessity of a tavern or eating house for the area, as well as attesting to the good character of the petitioner. Licenses would have to be applied for each year.

According to Isaac's petition, he asked Benjamin Franklin for permission to build an inn or public house in New Garden Township. The petition said there was no other for twenty miles in either direction along the road. The original structure was a small cabin built of dove-tailed logs, said to have been of Swedish construction, and dating from the early 1700s. Two wings were added to the building later and the whole was plastered over, disguising the little cabin inside. The East wing bore a date stone marked 1773. Little else is known of its construction or of early events there.

Excepting a few years, Allen ran the tavern, known as Allen's Tavern until 1784, the year of his death.

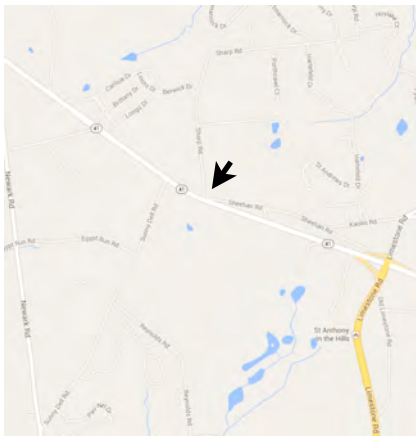
Most inns served the strong liquor "needs" of the community notwithstanding the usual reason was a desire

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to provide accommodations for travelers. Quite frankly, travel was infrequent in the 1700s.

Quakers became aware of the hazards of drinking hard liquor and discouraged its sale and the construction of taverns. Somehow Isaac and his tavern survived for many years. Constables' returns for 1783 and 1784 reported Isaac Allen as a "Retelor of Spiritous liquers by the small measure." The inn changed hands many times over the years along with its name. Jacob Taylor bought the property in 1823 and changed the name to "New Garden Inn." The sign bearing this name hangs at the Chester County Historical Society museum. It is round, painted black with a yellow star in the center and with yellow lettering around the edge.

So where was the Allen Tavern? Well I am about to tell you.



Its location was today's northeast corner of Sharp and Sheehan Roads (Sheehan Road was the original path of the old Newport-Gap Turnpike).

The Revolutionary War was difficult for the Quakers as are all wars. The Quakers were pacifists but some did participate in the War. Some

Quaker Meetings but hardly all, trying to decide whether to discipline members who took up arms or supported the troops in other ways, decided to leave the decision up to the individual member. Before coming to America, the Society of Friends had believed in the admissibility of fighting for a righteous cause. This belief was slowly abandoned and the non-violence position solidified once they arrived in Pennsylvania.

The New Garden Meeting was not one of the ones to take a kindly eye to participation in the War. In the records of New Garden Monthly Meeting there are numerous accounts of Quakers disowned for paying taxes for the war effort, for training with the military, for enlisting, for assisting soldiers with his horse and team, etc. Some were reinstated. Next month you will read of one of our owners who was in trouble with the Monthly Meeting for war participation.

I found no references to Isaac Allen. We do know that on 27 July 1778, Isaac took the Oath of Allegiance. During the Revolutionary War, the Pennsylvania General Assembly passed an act, dated 13 June 1777, that all men over 18 years must sign the Oath or Affirmation of Allegiance, renouncing the authority of King George III. Quakers were



The New Garden Inn in 1965

forbidden to take oaths but I do not find any record that Isaac was sanctioned for this.

The War impacted Isaac at any rate. In September 1777, two divisions of the British army marched from Iron Hill near Newark into New Garden entering where present Southwood Road meets Limestone Road. One division camped near Hockessin Meeting House and the other settled themselves at Kennett Square and in New Garden (along present day Route 41 near Kaolin). The next day the divisions moved on to the Battle of the Brandywine in Chadds Ford.

The encampment was near Allen's Tavern and they probably demanded food and drink. Other residents near by suffered losses too. It was recorded that in this one short night, New Garden residents had damages amounting to 951 pounds, 2 shillings, and 8 pence. Isaac Allen claimed property taken and destroyed amounting to 170 pounds. 951 pounds today would ROUGHLY be \$248,020 and Allen's claim today would be (again roughly) \$44,336.

The tavern was said to have been used for several days by the Americans as a hospital during the Battle of the Brandywine.

Isaac Allen died in 1784. In August 1783 he described himself as "weak of body but of sound and disposing Mind and Memory." His will spelled out his requests and bequests. Among other things, he gave his "loving wife Margaret any one of my cows that she may choose and also any one of my horses or mares that she may choose." Let it be said, Margaret, received much more than this in his rather lengthy will. Since he sold his farm and Harrogate land in 1769, he was living elsewhere. From what little I can detect from the will's description, he seems to be living off of present day Route 41. Perhaps near Allen's Tavern.

Next month: The tanner