

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM PHOTO/SITE PLAN SHEET

Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission
Bureau of Historic Preservation
Box 1026, Harrisburg, PA 17108-1026

Survey Code/Tax Parcel/Other No.: 118 / 66 00 06535 00 5 Block-Unit #015-016 County: Montgomery

Municipality: Whitpain Township Address: 601 Skippack Pike

Historic Name/Other Name: _____

SITE PLAN

PHOTO INFORMATION



Number	Description of View	Direction of Camera
1	Façade	
2	Façade (left)	
3	Rear	
4		
5		
6		
Photographer Name: Robert Wise		Date: 1999
Negative Location: Robert Wise Consulting, Station Square 1, Suite 104, 37 N. Valley Road, Paoli PA 19301		

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM - DATA SHEET

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Bureau for Historic Preservation

89B

IDENTIFICATION AND LOCATION

Survey Code: 118 Tax Parcel/Other No.: 66 00 06535 00 5 Block Unit #015-016

County: 1. Montgomery 091 2.

Municipality: 1. Whitpain Township 2.

Address: 601 Skippack Pike Historic Name: Blue Bell Inn

Other Name:

Owner Name/Address: John H. Lamprecht Blue Bell Inn Blue Bell PA 19422

Owner Category: ☒ Private ☐ Public-local ☐ Public-state ☐ Public-federal

Resource Category: ☒ Building ☐ District ☐ Site ☐ Structure ☐ Object

Number/Approximate Number of Resources Covered by This Form: 1

USGS Quad: 1. Lansdale 2.

UTM A. C.

References: B. D.

HISTORIC AND CURRENT FUNCTIONS

Historic Function Category: Subcategory: Code:

A. Inn 1770 7,111 SF Land 15.94 Acre Restaurant

B.

C.

D.

Particular Type: A.

B.

C.

D.

Current Function Category: Subcategory: Code:

A. Commercial Restaurant

B.

C.

D.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: A. Federal

B. C.

D. Other:

Exterior Materials: Foundation Roof

Walls stucco Walls

Other Other

Structural System: 1. 2.

Width 5 Depth Stories/Height 2.5

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Year Built: ca. 1770 Additions/Alterations Dates: ca. ca.
Basis for Dating: x Documentary Physical
Explain: Tax records

Cultural/Ethnic Affiliation: 1. 2. Associated Individuals: 1. 2.
Associated Events: 1. 2. Architects/Engineers: 1. 2.
Builders: 1. 2.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

PREVIOUS SURVEY, DETERMINATIONS

EVALUATION (Survey Director/Consultants Only)

Individual NR Potential: Yes x No Context(s):
Contributes to Potential District Yes No District Name/Status:

Classification: Although heavily altered, the Township considers this building a landmark conveying a sense of history, and thus is Class I.

THREATS

Threats: x 1. None 2. Public Development 3. Private Development 4. Neglect 5. Other

Explain:

SURVEYOR INFORMATION

Surveyor Name/Title: Robert Wise Date: 6/16/2000
Project Name: Whitpain Township Historic Resource Survey
Organization: Robert Wise Consulting/Whitpain Township Telephone: (610) 722-5818
Street and No.: Station Square 1, Suite 104, 37 North Valley Road
City, State: Paoli, Pa Zip Code: 19301
Additional Survey Documentation: n/a
Associated Survey Codes: n/a

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL RESOURCE SURVEY FORM
NARRATIVE SHEET 89C

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission
Bureau for Historic Preservation

Survey Code: 118 Tax Parcel/Other No.: 66 00 06535 00 5 Block-Unit #015-016
County: Montgomery 091 Municipality: Whitpain Township
Address: 601 Skippack Pike
Historic/Other Name: Blue Bell Inn

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

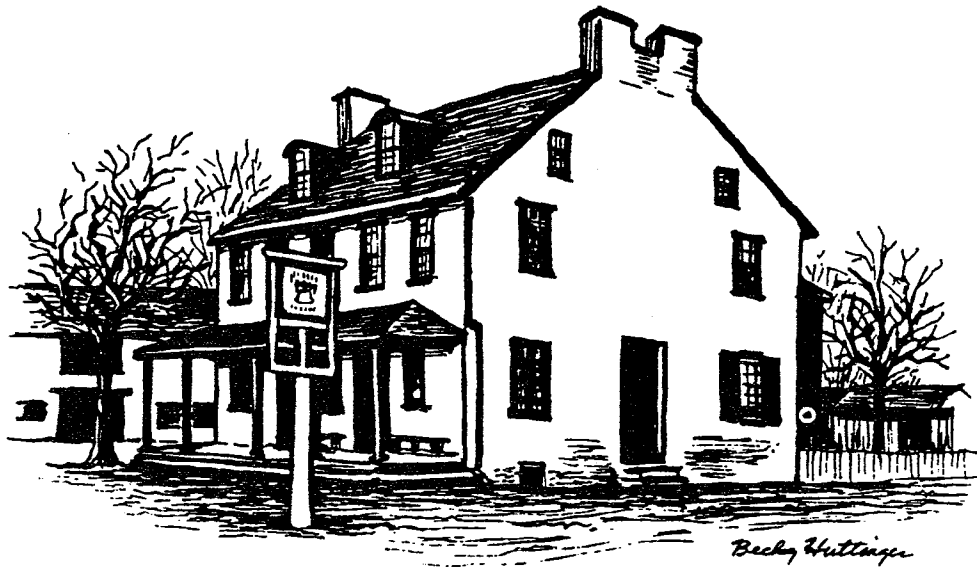
The Blue Bell Inn, c. 1770, consists of a core, a rear addition, and several other additions to accommodate the restaurant operations. The restaurant additions are mainly stucco clad, one and two story units in a variety of vernacular designs.

The core is a 2.5 story, five bay, Federal style building. The roof is an asphalt shingled, end-gabled design with. There are twin, stucco, flush chimneys on each end of the building. An additional chimney is located on the northern end. The western side or front of the building also has three dormers. A smaller gabled dormer is flanked by larger pediment dormers. The walls of the building are stucco. The first floor exterior on the main section has been covered by an enclosed, hip-roofed porch. The core is approximately 40'x 30'.

The older addition, which creates an ell-shape, is two stories in height with a shallow gabled roof. Its main feature is a pent roof running along the eastern side.

Note: One major addition is a front end gabled, 1.5 story, stucco over stone building on the northern of the complex. It may have been a carriage house or barn.

Classification: Although heavily altered, the Township considers this building a landmark conveying a sense of history, and thus is Class I.



Early Sketch of Blue Bell Inn

“Blue Bell Inn”

By Herman J. Prischmann
Photography by George S. Peck
Artwork by Becky Huttinger

John Johnson and Agnes, his wife, sold their property at Skippack Pike and Blue Bell Road to John Phipps who retained ownership for over fifty years. Johnathan Phipps and Squire Phipps, who were executors of the estate of John Phipps, sold the messuage and over three acres of land to Joseph Pritchard, on April 1, 1797, for £316.

In 1777, Military Maps noted the location of the inn called “White Horse” when General Washington located his headquarters at “Dawesfield” on Lewis Lane. Some 10,000 troops were in the area of Whitpain Township.

General George Washington reputedly stayed in the second floor front room of the Inn, formerly known as room number six. This room displayed military equipment of the times and was a tourist attraction until 1928 when the second floor was remodeled and the room became part of a small banquet hall and the display was sold. The story goes that he had fun with the maids employed at the Inn.

A story credited to Townsend Ward has been put to rhyme and is related in a newspaper article dated 1920:

"George Washington, once a day,
At old Blue Bell Inn chanced to stay,
And as he stood not very far,
From the kitchen door, just left ajar,
He overheard a young maid say,
That if, for once, she had her way,
She'd ask on earth no greater bliss,
Than to give him one good, sweet kiss.
That door, flung open with a punch,
Revealed of girls a giggling bunch.
'Which of you girls,' he jauntily asked,
'Has just her dearest wish unmasked?'
But in response the bashful graces,
Did nothing more than hide their faces,
'Is that so?' said George, 'Oh, very well,
Though none the damsel's name will tell,
So fair a chance I shall not miss,
For each of you I'm going to kiss.'
Whereon, of course, he kept his word,
And, strange to say, no maid demurred."

Joseph Pritchard, who was listed as "storekeeper," remained here for forty years when he sold, on April 5, 1837, to Jesse Fitzgerald for \$2,500. There were a number of transfers of the property over the next forty years. Jesse Fitzgerald sold to Benjamin Hill for \$6,000. It was then sold to William Michener, on April 5, 1847, for \$9,600 and he sold, in 1857, to John Whitcomb, who was owner for almost twenty years, when he sold to William Hood for \$6,700 on March 29, 1876. Eight days later, on April 6, 1876, William Hood sold to Daniel Erb for \$7,000 and he remained here twenty-seven years when he sold to Abram J. Unruh for \$11,500. In 1909, Frank J. Kraemer bought the property for \$10,000 with Abram Unruh holding a \$6,000 mortgage. A sheriff's sale, in 1913, brought the property back to Abram Unruh; and when he sold to Arthur A. Fretz, on September 5, 1913, two acres had been sold and the property now had a little more than one acre of ground. On August 16, 1917, Arthur A. Fretz sold to John C. Hinkle and in 1920 the Inn was purchased by Herman R. Prischmann and was subsequently transferred to his wife, Rose M. Prischmann, in 1928, and remained under that ownership until 1945 when it was sold to Karl Friedel and John Lamprecht. In 1960, John Lamprecht bought the Friedel interest and a family corporation was formed. John Lamprecht's son, John, is actively engaged in the operation of the Inn at present.

Extensive remodeling of the Inn took place in the sixties. The Skippack Pike entrance was closed in and attached to the garage and became the present bar-room. This room, in 1918, housed eight riding horses which could be hired for a ride over the surrounding countryside.



The "Blue Bell Inn" — 1977



Aerial View of Blue Bell Inn Intersection.

During the period between 1918 and 1945, some guests of the Inn were: Senator Vare, who always arrived on horseback with his entourage; former Governor Fisher of Pennsylvania; Charles S. Johnson, prominent Montgomery County Republican leader and first Secretary of Revenue of Pennsylvania. Other prominent guests were: William H. Wanamaker and Charles Strawbridge. Some "film greats" of the period were dinner guests at the Inn, such as: Walter Houston, Billie Burke, Joan Fontaine, Joan Blondell and Raymond Massey. Other political figures also rendezvoused at the Inn and became known as the "Blue Bell Inn Gang" who named the Governors of Pennsylvania. They were: Senator James H. Duff; Harvey Taylor, of Harrisburg fame; former Governor Fine and Fred Peters, former Montgomery County Commissioner. Many fox chases originated at the Inn during this period and set out across the country toward Gwynedd.

It is interesting to note that when the Pigeontown Post Office opened in 1840 it adopted the name of Blue Bell because it was directly across the Plymouth Road from the Inn, which, by that time, had a sign of a bell painted blue thereon.

The Blue Bell Horse Company, for the detection of thieves and recovery of stolen horses, was first organized on November 23, 1841, with fifty-four members. Officers were: President, George F. Shaeff, Vice-President, Linford S. Preston; Secretary, Joseph Phipps Conard; Treasurer, David DeHaven; Committee of Accounts; Jacob Hoover, Benjamin P. Werstner and George G. McNeil. Annual meetings were held at Blue Bell Inn which had a special meeting room located on the North Court.

Other Organizations in Blue Bell during the 1800's were: Pigeontown Militia Company; Blue Bell Livestock Insurance Company, organized September 15, 1855; The Blue Bell Benevolent Society, organized April 15, 1867 with President, Jacob Hoover; Vice-President, George Shoemaker; Secretary, George G. Rossiter; Treasurer, William H. Slingluff; Trustees: Samuel D. Shearer, Linford S. Preston, Henry Fasset Conard. All these groups met at the "Blue Bell Inn."





