



Square Tavern

THE HISTORY OF NEWTOWN SQUARE

Crossroads Of History By Doug Humes



At this crossroads, William Penn planned his first inland town west of his capital city of Philadelphia.

At this crossroads, Frances Elliott built an inn that became the center of activity for this early farm community.

At this crossroads, a young boy with artistic talent began to sketch, and was taught by local Indians how to use items found in nature to make colors with which to paint. The boy, son of the tavern keeper, went on to become court painter to King George III, a painter of international renown with his



1765 West by Pratt

work sought by every great museum in the world. He is remembered in the art world as Benjamin West, father of American Painting.

At this crossroads, during the American Revolution, the war was brought home on a daily basis. The British soldiers occupied Philadelphia. They needed food and feed for their animals.

The abundant Pennsylvania countryside could provide it, but the American forces sought to cut off any supplies from passing from the Tory farmers in Chester County along the main road leading east to the city, the Goshen Road. General Anthony Wayne had been born and raised in the area, a mile or two up the road at Waynesborough, and knew the roads and the people. As a result, troops and an American spy were stationed at the Lewis Farm down the Goshen Road from the local inn and tavern, to keep watch on the traffic headed east, report back to General Washington at Valley Forge, and stop any supplies intended for the British in Philadelphia. The British in turn would send out raiding parties, to take from local farmers what they would not sell, including their horses, their crops, and in the more abusive cases, their household goods. The ebb and flow of American and British troops continued throughout that fall, each passing by the local crossroads tavern that furnished liquid refreshment to both sides.

At this crossroads, a local highwayman, Captain Fitz, taking advantage of the lawlessness in an occupied country, frequented the tavern where he and his confederate plotted attacks on travelers through the countryside. They reportedly hid their stolen goods at a local cave near Castle Rock.

Today, while you are idling at the red light at the intersection of Goshen Road and Rt. 252, you are sitting at a 21st century suburban traffic light, but with a little imagination, you can see these ghosts of local history swirling all around you at the Square Tavern, a true crossroad of American history.

Doug Humes is a board member of the Newtown Square Historical Society. For more stories on local history, and membership information, please visit our website at www.historicnewtownsquare.org.