

Historic Guide Posts

BY SAMUEL HARDEN STILLE

4. The Old Bonnell Tavern



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lovers of liberty.

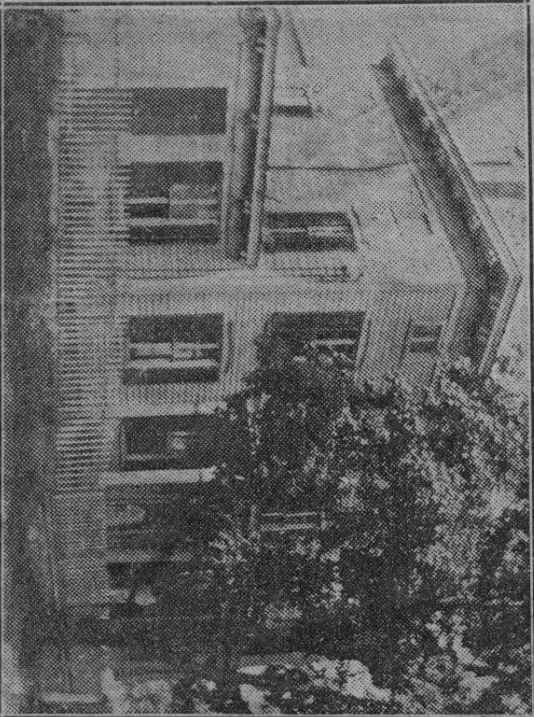
A long time before this historic ride travelers had been stopping at the Bonnell Tavern located just outside of Clinton. Here many yarns were spun of the struggles and the adventures of that early period. There was a bar where apple and corn whiskey was sold to thirsty wayfarers. The old room is still standing and the bar has been moved down to the cellar and is in perfect condition. A little way from the old inn is the stable where the stage horses were fed and cared for. The Inn was a relay for the old stages that ran between Easton and Amboy. The Inn began its service as an inn for the stages in May, 1767.

The door knobs and locks are all ancient having been made by hand and fashioned in colonial design.

The Tavern Lot as it was originally called was purchased by Abraham Bonnell for his son Abraham Jr.

The Bonnell ancestors were Huguenots and were driven out of France into England where they settled at Cheshire. Here they won fame and success that brought them recognition. The American ancestor was William who came to

"The British are coming! The British are coming!" shouted Paul Revere as he rode madly down the dirt roads of New England. The call reached up and down the colonies. It aroused the spirit of patriotism in the hearts of all true



A tavern long before the days of the Revolution. After the battle of Lexington the first New Jersey Minute Men were organized and drilled here, organized and trained by Col. Abraham Bonnell Jr. The inn was purchased in 1767 by Abraham Bonnell Sr. for his son. It has been in the Bonnell family from that day to the present. For years it was used as a relay station for the Easton and Amboy stages. Located on the outskirts of Clinton on the Plutonium Road.

New Haven, Conn. in April, 1638. He was a farmer and tanner by trade. He was buried at St. Michael's, Barbados, Aug. 5, 1678. His son, Nathaniel, was born in New Haven, 1644. He became a member

of the Connecticut general assembly. From Connecticut he moved to Elizabethtown, N. J., in 1735. His son Isaac was born 1665 and died 1712. His son Abraham was born in Elizabethtown, N. J., 1700 and it was

he who purchased the old Tavern Lot for his son Abraham Jr., he himself being the owner of an inn in Elizabethtown. It was in 1767 that his son Abraham Jr. received the tavern as a gift from his father.

Minute Men Organized

It was at this famed tavern the first minute men of New Jersey were called together and were organized and drilled. It was the center of great patriotism and ac-

tivity before, during and after the war with England.

Thanks to such centers. We owe our independence to the timely action of men who heard and answered the call of Revere, who was also a Huguenot. There was not a home in the colonies that did not hear the call—and mighty few who did not rally to arms and support the cause of the "Divine Rights of Man."

Again the Huguenot spirit comes to the front to espouse a human cause. Their fire, loyalty and devotion to human rights has earned for them the admiration of all who love our country and all for which our ensign stands. The Huguenots were always at the front in times of emergency during the struggle for independence.

Abraham Bonnell served under the direct command of George Washington and after the battle of Monmouth was personally praised by General Washington for his bravery in battle.

From the office of the adjutant general we have a statement that he served as Lieutenant Colonel in Colonel Beaver's second regiment, Hunterdon County Militia, 1776; Colonel Thompson's regiment (2,000 men were detached under ordinance of July 18, 1776, for service in the Flying Camp; regiment consisted of two companies from Somerset County, two companies from Sussex County and four companies from Hunterdon County) they were in service till early October of that year. He also served in Beaver's second regiment from Jan. 31 to March 3, 1777 and at Millstone, stationed at Alexandria, Hunterdon County, in May 1777. On May 6, 1777 he was commissioned as lieutenant colonel and served in this capacity till 1780.

Historic Reputation

The Bonnell Tavern has earned its historic reputation. It is of interest from the point of a value-l station during the Revolution and as an inn for travelers for over 100 years. It is still in the possession of the Bonnell's. The grandson of Abraham is the present owner.

This is one spot the Daughters of the American Revolution should mark well in order to preserve its

historic value to our children's children. It must not be overlooked.

Erect a bronze tablet here and mark it well for around this Tavern Lot men gathered and trained to go out and fight for the privileges and the liberties we enjoy today.

A hundred yards or so from the Inn there is still standing an old mile post—a marker on the stage coach road. Its figures are still readable. It now is a mile post on the road of the centuries.

The march of civilization has changed the trail and men go down another road today, but if you are interested in historic old landmarks be certain that this summer's outings take you up to Clinton and spend an hour or so ruminating through the past. It will be an hour well spent and perhaps renew your memories of a past that shaped our destiny.

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