



Morris Inn — A Hostelry for two centuries

Morris Inn Has Long History

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Star Correspondent

MORRIS — If the traveller will slow down as he approaches the bluster lights in Morris, and look to the right and left, he will observe two stone buildings at diagonal corners.

Both are old, indeed of an approximate age, yet each bears the stamp of a different type of architecture. The roof of the stone hotel, now Morris Inn, bears a resemblance to a French chateau, while the bank on the southeast corner is definitely English of the late 18th or early 19th century.

Nothing in area history hints at a reason for this, so one must tentatively assume that the influences that shaped the architecture were those that influenced the founding of the village of Louisville, in the township of Basher, and changed to Morris in 1849.

Those influences were a blending of French and English in the early settlement — Le Roy De Chamont, Louis De Villiers, Pascal Franchet — obviously French, Benjamin Lutz, Jonathan Moore, General Jacob Morris — English, without question.

The original hotel was erected in 1796 by Burgis Bradley, a frame building. It stood upon its original site until 1833 when it was moved back to form the kitchen for the present stone building. The bank was erected a year or so later. Its guiding force was Angel Moore, son of Jonathan Moore, an original settler.

There seems to be a conflicting statement as to when the hotel and bank as stone structures were erected — the hotel 1844, the bank 1868. However, our source of information for the date of erection is the History of Otsego County published in 1878,

and it names 1833 for the erection of the stone inn.

Most of the innkeepers of the present Morris Inn seem to have been lost in obscurity. Their influence must have been fleeting and contemporary. However, one William Gardner operated it for some 40 odd years in the closing half of the century. He ran it as the Gardner House, and he must have been a bit of a shrewd.

Legend has it that he succeeded in putting his rival The Kenyon House, across the street out of business in 1894 through enterprise, or shrewdness, or whatever one wishes to call it.

It seems that through the very efficient efforts of a stableman named Bogart, the stage and carriage trade were directed to the Gardner House leaving the Kenyon House to wither on the vine. What private arrangements Mr. Gardner may have made with said Bogart are lost in the mists of kindly time.

However, to indicate that Mr. Gardner had a strong distrust for his fellow man and a great trust in himself, he sold the hotel to his son-in-law with a very strong string tied to it, so that when he retrieved it a year or so later the string held real well.

Mr. Gardner faded from the picture permanently in 1908 when he sold it to a Mr. Leonard. From then on the Morris Inn suffered the vicissitudes of war and prohibition, during which one may murmur discreetly, from the back of one's hand, so to speak, that it operated in a limited, or dim fashion.

Through the forties and fifties, the Morris Inn went through a period of Renaissance under the sparkling, merry, and painstaking care of Jerry Bahr and his wife, who sold it to its present owner.

Mr. Bahr introduced many im-

provements in the present structure including its present circular upstairs bar. Mr. Bahr's present residence, a brick structure, self designed, sits on a tapered hill behind the hotel, although Mr. Bahr is far from retired.

So, from the pick backs of the early settlers through the sound of crackling whips and coach horns, to the sliding grace of 200 horsepower, in periods of war, growths and setbacks the Morris Inn has provided rest, comfort, and entertainment to the passing traveller.

Highway Pay Scale Established

COOPERSTOWN—A schedule of compensation for employees of the Highway Department who are paid at an hourly rate Wednesday was adopted by Otsego County Board of Supervisors.

Effective July 1, 1963, employees not paid on a salary basis will be compensated according to the following schedule:

Working Foreman (Maintenance), \$2.30; Working Foreman (Construction), \$2.35; Working Foreman (Patrolman) \$1.85; Foreman (Garage), \$2.30; Motor Equipment Operators (Trucks), \$1.85; Mechanics, \$2.25; Road Maintainers, \$1.85; Road Maintainers (Seasonal) \$1.55.



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