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Aug. 1974

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A SHORT, EARLY HISTORY OF KENTON

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most fascinating & enjoyable
William Benson.

This is just a quick run-down of some facts to the history of Kenton. If further time was available a more thorough and analytical study could be made.

As far as I know, this is the deepest study yet devoted to this town's early history and as such, many old facts have been altered. This was done to fit my interpretation of new facts found, hereto never before printed. This was not done to proselytize former interpretations but to have the new facts mesh with the old. The work can, and I will hope, go deeper than what I have done but as said, this study is the most investigated thus far.

My sources were various Wills; Land Surveys; Birth, Marriage and Death Records; Tombstone Readings; Road Dockets; Tavern Licenses & Grants; and Bible sources - all from the Delaware Archives. Other sources used were: History of Delaware by J. Thomas Scharf (1888), Atlas of the Delaware State by D.G. Beers (1868), Biographical and Geneological History of the State of Delaware by J.M. Runk (1899), and Delaware Archives, Military (1911).

For the history of the town of Kenton and of Kenton Hundred (created out of Duck Creek and Little Creek Hundreds in 1869) must begin in Philadelphia. It was there in 1683 that William Penn, Proprietor of Pennsylvania and the Lower Counties, issued a warrant to the Surveyor-General to survey and reserve 10,000 acres for his family. This tract of land, in which Kenton lies, was called the Manor of Frieth.

In this area many tracts of land were already sold and soon, like other properties of his, William Penn would further divide his land. William Ellinsworth bought and created a 1025 acre tract known as "Duncaster" along the southwest branch of Duck Creek.

"Hillyards Exchange" was created by John Hillyard in 1682. It was 426 acres southeast of Kenton and near other harmoniously named tracts like "Wapping","Baliff Hill", "Williams Range", "Oxford", and "Cambridge", to name a few.

In 1714 Benjamin Shurmer, agent of the Bristol Naval Store Co-Partnership Co., patented 3,000 acres of land for the company. The land was desired for the raising of hemp to make rigging for ships. While he visited the area, he must have liked what he saw because during the next twenty-six years Shurmer bought bits and peices of land until he obtained at least 2300 acres.

With the development that time gives, trails and roads were hewn through the wilderness of hardwood oak and hickory. Since roads were in near primitive conditions even up to the early days of the Republic, it was only natural for many taverns, inns, etc., to appear as way stations in the middle of

the black forests. But these taverns only prospered when there was a lack of the much cheaper waterways.

Even with the abundance of rivers in the Chesapeake and Delaware area the road leading from the Eastern Shore of Maryland to Smyrna Landing showed surprising prosperity. This isn't too hard to understand when, beside considering internal traffic, time could be saved by trafficking goods across the Delmarva Peninsula instead of by sailing vessel around Cape Charles. That is, if the goods were destined for points between Baltimore and Philadelphia. This is where the importance of Kenton sets in.

However the earliest mention of a tavern in this area was not along present State Rt. 300. In 1761 Thomas Craig applied for a "lyconse for Keeping a Publick House, at his Dweling House, upon the Road Leading from Dover to Lowistown" (Kenton) where he would keep a good "Houfe of Intertainment and Lotts Lickqurs." This was probably near Seven Hickories, so named because seven large hickory trees grew there. Seven Hickories was also along the road to Leipsic.

Ofcourse the more important route leading from Maryland to Smyrna Landing was developed earlier and had its tavern. It took a document of the next year "To the Worshipfull Justices of the Court of Quarter Sefsions now Setting in Dover" to prove its existence. In 1762 John Rees wrote a petition to "Humbly Sheweth" that he wished for a recommendation for a license "to keep a Tavern in the same place where he has keept this several years." Whether it laid within the bounds of "Lowistown" is hard to determine.

After paying the sixteen dollars fee he was able to serve drinks at rates set by the Novenber term of the Legislature. Some of the costs at the inn ran as follows:

qt of Madiera wine . . . . . 3.6 shillings
Gill of West India Rum . . . . . 5 "

qt. of Port or Vidonia Wine . . . . . 4 "
qt of Molafses Beer . . . . . 1 pence
Milk Punch w/ half pint Rum . . . . . 8 "
Eating for Hott Meal . . . . . 1 shil.
" " Cold " . . . . . 1 "
Stabliage for Good Clover hay for one night . 1 "
Qt of Indian Corn Beer . . . . . 1½ pence
" of Cyder Royal . . . . . 6 "

Presumably because of the drinking facilities between Maryland and Smyrna Landing or Leipsic, the area soon earned the title of Grogtown.

Ofcourse the public also needed spiritual drink. Three-quarters of a mile northeast of the oldest town in the hundred is located the oldest church. Old Duck Creek or Bryn Zion Church was established by families from Welsh Tract in 1733. These families made their settlement in Duck Creek but in 1747 William Griffen conveyed to James Hyatt, William Rees, Jeremiah Rees, James Howell, David Enos and Enoch David, trustees of the Baptist Society, one-half acre of land for a church, on condition "that it now doe and shall hereafter meet to embrace and adhere freely to all the principals and articles that are complied in a certain confession of Faith that was agreed upon and adopted by the Baptist Association that met in Philadelphia, September 25, 1742." But the church was built elsewhere in 1771.

When there were approximately thirty members a petition was made requesting a separate church to be formed. It was granted November 24, 1781. The first members were Daniel David, Rachel David, Lydia Jones, Samuel Griffin, Mary Griffin, Martha Griffin, Rachel Griffin, Mary Griffin Jr., Elizabeth Griffin, Lydia Griffin, Lewis Williams, Ruth Williams, Rhoda Wallis, Elanor Spruance, Elizabeth Roe, Caesar Roe, Martha Meredith, Deborah Dickinson, Hugh Duborow, Martha Durborow, Mary Anderson, Rebecca McVay, Rhuhamah Parkerson, Martha Owens,

Mary Thompson, Elizabeth Greedy, Moleston Curry, James Darkling, Andrew Lockhart and Mary Lynch.

Ten years after the petition was granted, church membership reached forty-seven. Upon its going to decay, the 30' X 25' church was rebuilt of brick the same year it was erected, on a lot donated by John and Philemon Dickinson. In the surrounding grave yard is the family lot of the Spruances amongst whom is buried Presley Spruance (Nov. 28, 1837) father of U.S. Senator Presley Spruance Jr. (1785 - 1863).

The first ordained minister was the Rev. Griffith Jones. He was born October 8, 1696 in Alltfawr, in the parish of Llanon and the county of Carmarthen. In 1749 he came from England and settled at Duck Creek, preaching until his death in December, 1757. Until the church was built by the Independents, which was named Mount Zion, services were usually held in the houses of Evan Hughes, and James Hyatt.

Next came the Rev. David Davis in 1766. Born in 1695, he came from England in 1722 but then soon returned. Rev. Davis came back to America in 1737 and eventually settled in New Britain. He preached until his death, October 3, 1768. Rev. Eliphaz Dazey succeeded him to the pulpit from July 23, 1784 to October 25, 1787 with the Revs. Dr. James Jones, John Patten, and Gideon Ferrel as co-pastors.

Dr. James Jones had a particularly interesting history. Dr. Jones was born on the Welsh Tract, April 6, 1756, of a family that emigrated from Wales to Newark, Delaware in 1710. Eventually many of the Jones moved down to Duck Creek and Kenton. Educated at Newark Academy, he was licensed to preach November 2, 1782 after serving in the Revolutionary War.

On December 27, 1776 he entered the service along with his brothers Enoch and Daniel in Captain Thomas Watson's 1st Comp. of Militia, 2nd Battalion under command of Colonel Thomas Couch.

But records show that he was soon up north in Trenton. On February 24, 1777 he took the Oath of Allegiance from Caesar Rodney who was in the city at that time.

Probably about this time he joined the 4th Pennsylvania Regiment as a surgeon's mate. Under Lt. Col. William Butler, Acting Brigade Commander for Gen. "Mad" Anthony Wayne, he spent his time at Valley Forge caring for the sick. It is also known that he conveyed some messages for General George Washington.

In February of 1780, Jones was made Surgeon of the 4th Pennsylvania. He continued in this position til his retirement January 17, 1781. When he left the army he furthered his spiritual vows by being licensed to preach November 2, 1782 and thence to Grogtown he returned. But there was still use for his medical experience because records for the Auditor of Accounts show that he was paid 20~~L~~ "for medicines and attendance on William Maddon a Militia Soldier wounded by Cheney Clod." The Battles of Cheney Clow's Fort are important to the history of Kenton and Delaware and shall be dealt with further on.

Jones continued to treat physical and spiritual ailments until his death April 29, 1830 at the age of seventy-four. His Will indicates a man of fine education and pride. His wife Mary having died in 1818, Dr. Jones' son, three daughters and grandchildren were his heirs.

Some of the things he left to his son, James Jr., were two beds, a horse, one saddle and bridle of his own choice, a small looking glass, a claw-foot walnut dining table and one-third of all table linen.

His favorite daughter Esther got a carriage, horse, silver plate, and "my black woman named Letisha to serve until she is twenty five years of age after which she is to be free." Her sister Mary and she were to split the "book of Divinity", beds, bedding and table linen.

The interesting notes in the Will were in regard to his Pennsylvania property in Beaver and Eric Counties, formerly of Westmoreland County. They were given to him by a grateful Pennsylvania "in consideration of services rendered by me as a Surgeon in the Army of the United States during the Revolutionary War, was granted to me by the said State bearing date the twenty ninth day of June in the year of our Lord one thousand Seven hundred and eighty seven by a patent under the seal of the said State of Pennsylvania, signed by Benjamin Franklin Esquire President of the Supreme Executive Council of the said State."

The 300 acres in Beaver County were to go to James Jr. while the Eric County land was to be sold to pay off debts and the remaining amount to be split amongst his heirs. "All my plantations, tract or parcel of land on which I now reside, situate in Duck Creek Hundred" (before Kenton Hundred was created) were destined for his children Mary Walker and Esther Layton, and for his grandchildren Rebecca Naudain, and Thomas Jefferson and Mary Creighton Wilds.

A final disposition so often done by others was "I will, order and direct my negro man named Edward shall be free at my death."

* * *

With the British occupation of Philadelphia (1777-78) under General William Howe and Sir Henry Clinton, pro-British actions became more pronounced; bolder. The Battle of Cheney

Clow's Fort was a product of this British sympathy.

Cheney Clow came to this country during the first half of the 18th century with his parents. From England, they settled in Queen Anne's County, Maryland. When he was twenty-four years old, Cheney Clow joined the Maryland troops for the French and Indiand War. Acquaintances of his from the area also joined but in the Delaware Militia. They were Capt. David Clark, Lt. John Rees, Capt. Charles Hillyard, Lt. James Stout, and Ensigns John Cahoon Esq., Thomas Tilton and John Clark.

When he returned, Clow built his house 200 yards east of the Delaware - Maryland border in Kent County. Clow's Tory sympathies came to the fore when his home was chosen as a focal point for local Tories. He was described as a British captain before the war and held that rank when the Revolution began. With the increased harassment from Tory marauders, Lt. Col. Charles Pope, Delaware Militia, was ordered to Grogtown.

On April 14, 1778 Pope wrote Govenor Caesar Rodney that "It is with a Certainty I can inform you that the report of the Tories having a fort built is a truth for this Day myself with a party of about forty was within gun shot of their works - on our appearance upwards of one hundred sallied out, several shot was Exchanged - After taking full view of their works and finding it proff against our smallNumber Forced the party to retreat, We killed one of their party. Mr. Derough of Cross Roads (Smyrna) was shot through the thigh.

"as there is no provisions in the place have Ordered twenty four men to do Duty of the Night & the Rest to look out for Quarters with orders to attend tomorrow morning - pray Send us what Cartridges you can spare - likewise - Whiskey and provisions - without which I cannot Carry the fort, I have Wrote

General Smallwood on the Subject & Request his sending a light field peice."

Hopefully, Grogtown took care of Pope's whiskey needs. As for ammunition, it was possibly under his orders that the lead roof at Aspendale was melted down for musket balls. Aspendale was built by Charles Numbers in 1771 on part of the Duncaster tract. Not far off was "brick hole" where the clay was dug to make the bricks. This Middle Georgian house with Flemish-bond work has two courses of moulded brick caps capping the water table. Its great room measured 28' X 19' and was the largest room yet built in Delaware for its time. Another interesting facet to this house is that the original paint still remains on its exterior. A shingled roof now appears where the lead roof once was.

Charles Pope wrote to Rodney two days later that he was still short of supplies but it was now basically a nutritional one. Rodney only sent "fifty wt. of meet & one bbl. of bread for upperds of one hundred men." He also wrote "- if you mean to have the Militia kept to gether pray Send us a Supply amediately otherwise it will be out of my power to keep them longer than this night." He needed supplies quickly for he wished to engage Clow that night. In fact, he ordered Militia from Chester, Md. to meet him one mile and half from "Colonel" Clow's "fortress." It seems that Cheney Clow was rising in importance. Two days later when Caesar Rodney wrote Thomas McKean about the battle he was called "Genl. China Clow." Clow's fortress was, at the most, probably a small stockade. But during these trying times Clow was a real and definite threat.

In the letter to McKean, Rodney states that Pope was ordered out against "Genl. China Clow and his army of Refugees" and soon routed Clow after Clow had marched out and repulsed

the Maryland Militia coming to Pope's aid. The fort was burnt and "about a thousand weight of Bacon and two barrels of flower" was taken. This helped increase Pope's already depleted food stores.

More detail about the engagement was given when Rodney wrote Henry Laurens, President of the Continental Congress, April 24, 1778:

> "On Tuesday the fourteenth Instant I Got information that About one hundred and fifty Insurgents under the Command of one China Clow were Armed and Assembled on the Western side of this County near the borders of Maryland. I, as soon as possible Collected and Sent About one hundred and forty of the Militia of this County, under the Command of Lt. Co'l Pope of the Delawares, against them - The Insurgents had built a Fort which the Militia Surrounded on the Thursday night following but Mr. Clow and his Gang, hearing of their approach, fled - The Militia burnt the Fort and secured all the Stolen Effects in and about it and Returned - I then fitted out a number of Horse-men, Since when many of them have been taken and others Surrendered to the number in all, of about fifty, about twenty of whom being single men, are sent off with a recruiting party of the Delaware Regiment to enlist or do Worse - so that with what the Maryland Militia have done, this infernal set are, I believe, broke up, and I hope to hear in a few days that the Villain Clow is Taken."

The added P.S. shows the urgency of the times: "They increased verry fast and I believe, if they had not been opposed very suddenly and with Spirit they would have become formidable in a Little time." This Tory uprising hastened the passage of the Test Act by the General Assembly in May, 1778.

However Clow was not taken at this time. Having failed to take the oath of allegiance under the Act of 1778, he was arrested for treason in 1782. On a November night a Sheriff's posse was sent to arrest him at his house where he returned.

When the order to surrender was shouted a fussilade answered them from the darkened house. The rapidity of the shots from the house indicated several defenders while the posse fired back. When they knocked down the door Clow's co-horts escaped leaving Clow and his wounded wife behind.

One Joseph Moore of the posse was killed and it was at this engagement that Dr. James Jones attended to the wounded Militiaman.

Halfway back to town Clow, dressed in his British uniform, and the posse were met by a company of Militia who demanded custody of the prisoner in order to hang him. The refused and managed to get him to jail . He was brought to trial December 10, 1782 on the charge of "not having the fear of God before his eyes but being moved and seduced by the instigations of the Devil, as a false rebel and traitor to the said State (Delaware) intending the Government thereof to seduce and reduce the same to the domination of the King of Great Britian."

Clow convinced the jury that he was an enemy officer and as such should be treated as a prisoner of war. He was acquited. But in 1783 his enemies pressed further charges. The Anglophobes demanded Clow's conviction on the count of the murder of Joseph Moore.

Though the evidence was flimsy about Clow shooting Moore in the darkness of the night, nevertheless he was found guilty of murder. He was sentenced to be hanged but it was not until 1788 that the date of execution was set - at Clow's own request.

For six years while he remained in jail his wife pleaded for his life but the bitterness of the Whigs prevailed and he was hanged. Caesar Rodney declared that he never before wished to be Govenor until now so that he might save Clow. After the

execution a "great revulsion of feeling" was felt in the county over the way this brave man was treated.

* * *

With the war over Grogtown could now grow. At this point we come to the founding of the town and its founder. During the 1790's the name of Grogtown was used interchangeably with Lewis Cross Roads named after Phillip Lewis. Notice also that in 1761 Thomas Craig used the name Lowistown in his petition for a tavern. At other points in its history, Lewis' Bridge was used. It was named after Lewis who owned all the surrounding land in 1791, extending as far as Seven Hickories, and who laid out the lanes in 1796. He owned a part interest in the Kenton Hotel, a former landmark and, along with a relative of his, Mark Lewis, owned the local tavern.

Phillip Lewis was the only child of Phillip and Mary Lewis of Little Creek Hundred. His father died when he was nine years old and his mother was to hold his inheritance until he reached the age of twenty-one. To Phillip went two-thirds of the estate while his mother was to recieve one-third. She was also left with the charge of teaching their son "Reading, writing and Cyphering Both Vulgar and Desamil arithmatick and to be well versed in the mathematicks to Read and understand Latten Well." A Continentally oriented education it was.

By February 24,1779, Mary remarried to Risdon Bishop one month after she became a widow. Bishop petitioned the Orphans Court in Dover to be charged with the estate. It was approved by Thomas Rodney and the legacy came to 3,282£.

1791 was a momentuous year for Phillip Lewis. While waiting for his impending inheritance, Lewis married Dorcas Armitage January 1, 1791. She was eighteen years old and the second of three daughters to John Armitage and Frances Cooch who in turn was the daughter of Thomas Cooch Sr. from hence Cooch's Bridge derives its name.

The marriage was performed by Dr. Thomas Evans and the witnesses were her brother-in-law Robert Middleton, Joshua Clayton - then "president and commander-in-chief of the Delaware State" and James Snow. Lewis proved his worth by his having 500L "good and lawful Money of America" to be married.

By March, Phillip was of age and the property was distributed to him. Risdon Bishop petitioned the state to let Phillip recieve his legacy - or what was left of it. Bishop had sold all of his slaves, spent his wife's legacy and spent another one-third, or one-half of Lewis' inheritance, in other expenses.

But with less than one-third of the original Will, Phillip began to buy land. On May 2, 1791 he bought 360 acres from James Hynson and sixty more from Thomas Murphy. November 8th saw him obtaining an additional 159 acres from William Dickinson. With these purchases, Lewis began his career as a country gentleman.

In 1794 Lewis served as a State Representative of his area. Four years later, Dorcas presented him with his first son, Albert Gallatin Lewis. He admired the Democratic-Republican Party of Jefferson's greatly, for his first son and his second Thomas Jefferson Lewis reflect his respect for these two great leaders. In fact he so hated the Federalist Party, that there are repeated warnings against anyone with such affiliations in his Last Will and Testament.

With land, respect and wealth Lewis should have had a happy life, but he had marital problems. According to different sources, he remarried to Frances Evans, widow of the minister who nine years before performed Lewis' first marriage. They were married December 19, 1800. They had two boys, Franklin and Phocion.

As for his first wife, Dorcas remarried her brother-in-law Robert Middleton, who served as a witness to the first marriage. He was a widower of her sister Mary. For added interest, when he died Dorcas married Samuel Black who was an executor of Middleton's Last Will and Testament.

With a change in wives came a change in homes. Lewis moved to New Ark and lived there the rest of his life. Though he moved from Kenton, he kept his lands and continued to take an interest in the development of Lewis Cross Roads. After his death in 1804, it was his money that built the delayed Kenton Hotel. His loans continued to help Mark Lewis and other townspeople.

Phillip Lewis was an enlightened country gentleman in the truest sense of the word. In his Will he left his son Albert silver and plate inscribed with his mother's initials and all of his "library w/ the Desks and Bookcases Containing the Same, as well as any Microscope, Case of Instruments, Maps and Files of Newspapers, Silver Buttons ... and Gold Brouch."

Though it would be after his death, the spirit humanity and liberty had him write: "It is my will and desire that all the Blacks I may die pofsefsed of, should be free at the age of Twenty Eight Years," but he added, "except those who may be run away, they are to be sold if caught for the term of seven years." Considering that most masters would sell their runaway slave permanently shows that Lewis made at least a small attempt understanding their plight.

But even his good heart and intelligent mind gave sway to his political convictions and emotions. He added the stipulation in his Will that "Provided always, that none of my said Relations who are Aristocrats or Monarchists and who vote

for and support what is called the Federal Party shall ever be admitted to enjoy or pofsefs any part of my said real Estate under this my will." When appointing Guardians of his children he made sure of "avoiding however the Appointment of any Person as Guardian who is in any way connected with or Related to my said Children, who is of immoral Character, a Federalist or an Aristocrat."

Like his father before him, Lewis paid attention to his children's education. He wished them "taught none of the dead languages, but to be Masters of the English and French Languages, to understand the Mathematicks, Geography, natural history, natural and Moral Philosophy, and to (recieve) antient history, the English and American histories at school instead of learning the dead Languages." Evidentally Phillip hated his own rearing with "Latten."

In relation to Kenton, Lewis gave the land from "Dover to the village of Grog-town or Lewis's X Roads" to Albert and Phocion when they were twenty-one. To Jefferson and Franklin would go at the age of twenty-one "all my Brick House Farm in Kent County, including all my Land in Forest of Little Creek hundred South and West of the Road leading from Dover to Grog-town ..."

In 1825 the surviving sons Albert, Jefferson and Phocion divided the property amongst themselves. As of 1888 Jefferson Lewis was still alive and kept his inheritance. The rest of the property was subsequently sold.

Though Phillip Lewis and his family faded away from the limelight, the town of Kenton clearly developed. Roads were built and maintained, and commerce increased. The Kent County Road Docket Book, 1793-1820, show many entries of the area. "The Road from Lewis' Bridge to the Maryland Road leading from Duck Creek Landing to the Head of Chester ..." "The Road from

the Stone Line through the land of Edward Tilghman Esq. over Jordans Branch to grog town, a new Road." "...from Lewis's Crofs Roads to Duck Creek crofs Roads." Then there were various names mentioned to maintain these roads: Phillip Lewis, James Scotten, Aquilla Attix, Mark Lewis, Nehemiah Cloak, Nathaniel Wilds, Jefse Ford or George Harris.

Activity in commerce increased. There was Aquilla Attix's blacksmith shop, a tannery, Simon Kollock's Mill on Little Duck Creek, Malcolm's Mill and then there was a Hotel and a Tavern.

The tavern was run by Mark Lewis. Whether it was the same one once used by John Rees is hard to determine. The tavern was maintained without incident for sometime until 1796. The problem was very clearly stated in a remonstrance against the tavern.

> "To the honourable the Judges of the speeial court in and for Kent County, now in sefsion at Dover. The petition of the undersigned citizens of said county, respectfully Represents That in consequence of a tavern having been kept at Kenton for the sale of Spirituous liquors, much injury has resulted to the morals of the community. The village of Kenton is not situated on a stage road and there is but little demands for accomodation there by public travellers, the keeper of such a tavern therefore has but little to rely upon except the profits from the sale of intoxicating liquor to persons of the neighborhood; such tavern therefore must become a mere tippling spot where the youth of the neighborhood are too often induced to go, and afsociate with the idle, the vicious, and the profane; Especially on the sabbath is the tavern frequented, and that time which ought to be devoted to moral improvement is spent in forming vicious habits. As the public good evidently does not require a tavern in Kenton, Your Petitioners can see no good reason why any one man for his individual profit should be permitted to injure a whole neighborhood. Your petitioners therefore for these and many more reasons which might be mentioned most respectfully solicit your honours not to reccommend a license for a tavern in Kenton."

Some ot the signatories were William Clark, James Clark, John Green, James Roe, Wm. W. Wilson, and William R. Cahoon. At the top of the list appeared James Jones. The petition was granted and John Clark, constable of Lewis Cross Roads, ordered the inn closed when its license expired.

Three years later on "A list of Persons Recomended for Tavern License in Kent County" appeared the name of Mark Lewis. Lewis denied the non-existence of a stage line by writing that " ...a public House has been kept at Lewis' Crofs Roads for a number of years until within about two years past, which was of considerable advantage to travellers pafsing and repafsing from this State, the State of Maryland, and that a public House is very much wanting at said place." Confident of renewal he also stated in his petition that he was prepared with "the necefsaries ... for the ensuing year." Lewis continued his tavern until he died the next year, 1800. In 1803 the inn was taken over by Aquilla Attix, the blacksmith and then William Arthur in 1811.

1806 was a historic year for this town. During this year by an Act of Legislature, the name of the village officially became Kenton. As if a rallying cry, the town now grew in stature.

At the end of the town towards Downs Chapel was built the Kenton M.E. Church in 1818. The 24' X 60' frame building was donated and erected by Isaac Buckingham, Rev. John Durborough (first preacher of the church) and James Scotten at whose home earlier services were held. It was abandoned in 1877 and a new church was built the next year.

Agriculture of peaches, wheat, corn, vegetables, grain, etc., were the earliest production and remains to be the main products of the area.

There are many mills in the area that served the populance. There was the Cloak Mill begun in 1790 by Simon Kollock and bought by Ebenezar Cloak in 1824. It was on Little Druck Creek one and a half miles from Seven Hickories. Below it was Malcolm 's Mill which was condemned in 1806. In 1847 Samuel Keefner rebuilt it as a carding mill and was then connected with a grist mill and saw mill.

Other industries were J.B. Messick's phosphate factory (1884), and different brick mills owned by John Graham, John Poor, James Williams and Nathaniel Wilds. The latter two had theirs located two miles west of Kenton at Underwood Corners.

Canneries were operated by John Graham and J.M. Arthur in 1882. From 1862-72 William B. Bowman operated a distllery next to the present Post Office which came along in 1860.

Besides Aspendale, which was built on the Quaker Plan of William Penn, are other interesting homes. Down the Chesswold-Kenton Road is the Somerville House. The two story and attic, five bay Georgian brick house was built 1800. It was the former home of Cancellor Ridgely before he moved to Eden Hill.

The Prettyman-Cooper House is located on the northeast corner of the main intersection of Kenton. The two story and attic brick house was built in 1775. It has excellent woodwork and panelling. According to legend a General Taylor once lived here and was so fond of his horse that when it died, he put its skull under the floor boards of the bedroom. When the house was being insulated, the present owner, Mr. Carl Prettyman, found it but replaced the skull where it was originally buried.

If this "General" Taylor was William Taylor from the Revolutionary War, then he was in actuality a private under Colonel

David Hall's Regiment. He "Inlisted" February 20th 1777 but the June Payroll listed him as dead. However, the July Payroll shows that he came back and was recieving his pay. The entry in August then shows next to his name: "Desearted Aug. 31st." However on May 18,1781 he re-enlisted but then two days later the record shows he deserted the same day he rejoined!

Like William Taylor, Kenton has had its ups and its downs, its patriotism and opposing opinions. Its career has proven spotty and hard to trace - but it has always proven interesting.

Acc. 1/75