The Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County, Pa., was founded in 1964 as a non-profit educational corporation, registered with the State of Pennsylvania, for the sole purpose of preserving local buildings and sites with historical value. To determine these sites and buildings a continuing survey has been taken. This has pointed the way to several important structures whose survival was threatened and they have become the major projects of the organization.

In order to give a complete history of the historic White Horse tavern it will be necessary to go back to the year 1701, when a group of Swedes, upon the invitation of William Penn and under the leadership of Rev. Andrew Rudman, went out of Philadelphia where they had settled in 1643 and took up 10,000 acres in what is now Amity Township, Berks County, Pa. The oldest settlement within the bounds of Berks County.

Mouns Jones (Jonasson, Jonas, Jones) amongst others remained to settle on 900 acres and built his log house, later, in 1716 on the same site, he built his stone house and carved a date stone with his initials and the initial of his wife Ingabor, also the date 1716, which remains in the building. This is the oldest surviving house in the county and was restored by the Trust between the years 1965-1970.

In 1785 his grandson built a story and a half stone house 30 feet to the east of the Mouns Jones House, this later became the home of the custodian of the covered bridge, built 1832, which spanned the Schuylkill River at this point. This house reste by the Trust in 1971.

Justa Justasson another of the Swedes took up the adjoining 1000 acres to Mouns Jones. These were long narrow strips of land and each owner wanting access to the Schuylkill River for transportation to Phila and also retaining fishing rights.

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Story written for Berks Redevelopment
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Housing & Urban Dev.
&
Advisory Council on
Historic Preservation
Washington D.C.

The Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County, Pa., was founded in 1964 and registered with the State of Pennsylvania as a non-profit educational corporation, for the sole purpose of preserving local buildings and sites with historical value. To determine these sites and buildings a continuing survey has been taken. This has pointed the way to several important structures whose survival was threatened and they have become the major projects of the organization.

In order to give a complete history of the Historic White Horse tavern it will be necessary to go back to the year 1701 when 15 Swedes under the leadership of Rev. Andrew Rudman, went out of Philadelphia to the northwest along the Schuylkill River and took up 10,500 acres in what is now Amity Township, Berks County, Pa., the oldest settlement within the bounds of the county.

Mouns Jones (Jonasson, Jonas, Jones) remained to settle on 900 acresand built his log house, later in 1716 on the same site he built his stone house and carved a date stone with the initials of he and his wife and the date which still remains in the building. This is the oldest surviving house in Berks County, and restored by the Trust. Later in 1785 his grandson built a small story and a half stone house about 30 feet to the east of the Mouns Jones house, this later became the home of the custodian of the covered bridge which crossed the Schuylkill River at this point. This also restored by the Trust.

Justa Juatasson was a neighbor of Mouns Jones who settled on the adjoining 1000 acres, these were long narrow strips of land, each owner wanting access to the river for transportation and fishing. Their boundary trees are still known as the Swedes Lines. These Swedes named their village on the river Morlatten.

Justa Justasson gave 500 acres of his land to his son, also named Justa, in 1752 he sold 200 acres to Marcus Huling, then Marcus sold 120 acres to Balzar Creesman, in 1757 , Balzar Creesman sold 120 acres to Thomas Cookson, Innkeeper of Phila. who it is said opened an inn here at that time. In 1762 Thomas Cookson sold 120 acres with buildings to George Douglass Sr. Innholder, he built the present tavern and hired tavernkeepers. George Douglass built his mansion close by, they are both georgian buildings and built in 1765-67. All these buildings in the historic village of Morlatten, on the Old Philadelphia Road. The village is present day Douglass-ville, Pa.

Upon the death of George Douglass, Sr., his son George Jr. inherited the mansion and tavern stand, at George Jr's death in 1830 he devised the White Horse tavern stand to his daughter Elizabeth Buckley whose descendants owned it until 1944 when it was sold to Earl Schurr, after a few more owners a " For Sale " sign in 1971, was seen on the building, the rumor was that some one was interested in building garages on this site. The Historic Trust called an emergency meeting, at which time it was agreed to buy the building, since it was in the historic village and close to other buildings owned by the Trust. The George Douglass mansion being the last important building in the village, is privately owned.

Many famous people stopped at the tavern to eat and bate their horses, amongst them the father of our country, George Washington, during the fever epidemic in Philadelphia, road up the phila. Road and took refreshments at the tavern, he also stopped on his way to Carlisle to quell the Whiskey Rebellion, The Duke of Rouchfoucalt de Liancourt a french refugee, stopped at tha Wgite Horse Tavern and said " the inn-keeper was a frenchmen who speeks poor french, poor English but probably good german." he also said " he pays 88.00 a year to the owner who lives nearby." This was the year 1795. Joseph Bonaparte visited the inn and the Rev. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg had a very thirsty driver who always stopped here. It was a mustering place for the conti levis during the Revelution, The society for the prevention of horsedthievery met h elections were held here as was autions etc.

In the year, as closely as can be determined, the tavern was made into a three family dwelling. In 1972 along came the great flood " Agnes " and inundated all the Trust's properties in the village including the tavern, the tenants lost all their belongings and had to flee when the water reached 14 ft. up the tavern walls.

The building remained vacant as it does today and a cleanup job and restoration started. The trust has a membership of just over 200 but people who believed in what we were doing came to our aid and with the proceeds from our country fair and a Christmas Tea along with lectures and slides we have been ableto complete some restoration work on the building.

Porches were removed which hid the original stone water table and the outline of a pediment over the one entrance. White wash was scrubbed from the walls, all window frames were checked and found to be original but in need of repair, all window sash had to be custom made 12 over 12 and 9 over 9, all exterior doors had to be replaced, one entrance with 2 door frames had to be brought down to one and dressed stone filled in to match the facade of the building, old glass put into the window sash. Brick chimneys of old material were replaced with inconpicuous copper flashing, wood shingle roof replacing the corrugated tin one has been put on the building, pent roof, porches and hoods replaced following existing profiles, an artesian well was dug to the west of the building, water pump installed and the building is sewer connected, electric service was in the tavern, all electric wires and switches were concealed, there is forced warm air heating with oilwith grills put at inconpicuous places.

Interior demolition of all later walls, doors and trim, accomplished according to restoration plans.

Four fireplaces were rebuilt on their original foundations, one a walk-in and 3 smaller ones, first floor taproom and dining room has been completed as was the stairway to the second floor following existing profiles, all old hardware used where possible.

INTERIOR WORK TO BE COMPLETED -- for which we applied to HUD for funds.

FIRST FLOOR - Old kitchen will need random width pine flooring, finished with a dull finish and non-slip wax, repair window frames where needed, remove over 6 coats of paint and try to match the original color as closely as possible.

SECOND FLOOR - Entirely gutted, wood trim should be installed in the 18th. century manner as a stop for the plaster, all work will match original examples in place. Doors will be 6 panels with profiles matching original soffits at windows on the second floor. There will be a stair hall and a closed stair to the attic. (The adjoining George Douglass house retains a majority of its interior woodwork and will be used as a check since the builder owner was in each case the same man.

ADDITIONS - An 1850 summer kitchen will be replaced to the rear where public toilet facilities and a small kitchen can be housed.

Exterior - The entire building to be pointed matching the original in type and color and rotted window sills repaired. The entire building to be painted (woodork only) in a color not yet agreed upon.

This is the third building restored by the Trust in Morlatten Village. Saint Gabriel's Episcopal Church, located in the same village have restored their 1801 chapel with box pews and wine glass pulpit. The stone work in this building is very unique having been laid in the herringbone fashion. ALL BUILDINGS IN MORLATTEN VILLAGE ARE ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES.

ADDIONAL PROPERTIES UNDER THE CARE OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION TRUST OF BERKS CO. PA.

John DeTurk House, Oley, Pa. Where the third Moravian conference was held also Indians baptized. Built in 1767, restored by the Trust and we maintain a 100 year lease.

Dr. David Hottrnstein House, deeded to the Trust, with the Doctor retaining life tena
A room from this house in the Winterthur Museum. Built 1785,Beautiful interior woodw

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The Keim Homestead, R.D. 2, Oley, Pa. Transfer pending.