

Blue Bell Inn - Part I

George Washington slept here

BY CAROL KALOS, PRESIDENT, WISSAHICKON VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Blue Bell Country Club residents know the Blue Bell Inn, but few realize that the Blue Bell Post Office is named after the Inn! A landmark with a fine reputation, it has been serving guests since 1743 and has been called the Blue Bell Inn since 1796.

The building at the corner of Skippack Pike and Penllyn Blue Bell Pike started as the White House, and its most famous visitor was General George Washington. (John Adams was the first president to reside at Washington D.C.'s White House with his wife, Abigail, who hung wet laundry in the unfinished East Room.)

According to *Whitpain... Crossroads in Time* (1977), in the fall of 1777, Washington brought 10,000 troops to camp in our neighborhood. Along with his officers, he lived on Lewis Lane at Dawesfield, today still a private residence. Occasionally, he stayed at the Inn, then called the White Horse Inn. His bedroom was at the front on the second floor, room 6. It became a tourist attraction, a museum showing military items, sadly sold in the 1920s.

Over the years, the Inn has been visited by well-known entertainers and political figures, and it has been the meeting location for numerous clubs and organizations, including, in the 1800s, the Pigeontown Militia Company. The most unusual of the groups created at the Inn dates from 1841: The Blue Bell Horse Company for the Detection of Thieves and Recovery of Stolen Horses.

Author Carol Kalos is president of the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society. Its headquarters and museum are at the 1895 School on Skippack Pike, the location for its monthly speakers' series. The WVHS also owns the 1856 Franklinville School on Morris Road. Both buildings are open to the public by appointment and for Open House events. For questions, please email to info@WVValleyHS.org.

