



Mount Washington Tavern



The Mount Washington Tavern was one of the many taverns located along the National Road, the first highway built by the Federal government. The tavern, constructed in the 1830s, was in operation during the heyday of the National Road. James and Rebecca Sampey and their family owned and operated this imposing brick and stone building. The Mount Washington Tavern catered to stagecoach clientele and was serviced by the Good Intent Stagecoach Line. This tavern owes its name to George Washington, who, as a young man, fought a battle nearby. He returned 15 years later to initiate the purchase of the land which he owned until his death in 1799.

Barroom

Tired, sore, and stiff, travelers would enter the tavern for an evening of good food, drink, warmth, and conversation. A few tables and many chairs would have filled the barroom and made for a very congenial environment for gentlemen.

Ladies did not frequent the barroom. Their reputations would have been tarnished if they had entered this setting.

The barroom, like modern bars or taverns, was a

busy and noisy place. Men could swap tales of their traveling the National Road between sips of rye whiskey and puffs on a clay pipe or a stogie cigar. They also chewed and spit, and indulged in games of cards or checkers.

Taverns were required to have a license and there were four considerations for licensing: financial status of the innkeeper; location; facilities for the public; and the ability of the innkeeper to discharge his duties.

Parlor

Across the hall is the parlor. Ladies, children, and gentlemen could rest in this pleasant atmosphere.

Here, travelers and local citizens could gather and relax while enjoying a cup of tea or coffee. They

would find out about other travelers, where those folks were going, or talk about important issues or events occurring in other parts of the country.

The parlor may have been the fanciest room in the tavern.

The only original piece of furniture from the Sampey family is one small chair in this room. All the other furniture is from the time period, but not from this tavern.



Dining Room

The dining room might have been the busiest room of the tavern.

Meals were served family-style with the traveler seated at a long table surrounded by chairs or benches.

One morning, 72 people were served breakfast. Guest were allowed to eat as much as they liked, but were often hurried as other coaches would be arriving with hungry travelers waiting for a hot and hearty meal. The price of a meal was about 25 cents in the mid 1800s.



Kitchen

The Mount Washington Tavern was noted for its good food and cleanliness. Food was prepared over the open hearth until the cast iron cook stove came along.

Experience was the best teacher when learning how to cook from the hearth, but was hard work and time consuming. Heavy iron pots were required for the high temperatures of an open fire. The pots with

three legs were called “spiders” and each one could have a fire beneath it. The trammel hook on the crane would be adjusted to various heights above the fire to regulate the cooking speed.

An evening meal might include chicken, pork, wild game, fresh trout, corn, and wheat bread with freshly-churned butter.

Bedrooms

Spending the night in a tavern would not be one of the highlights of the trip. Beds were shared with strangers and it was possible to have two or three bed mates during the night. Travelers would arise at all hours to get an early start on the road and another tired wayfarer could crawl in that vacant place in the bed.

Now, the Mount Washington Tavern's bedrooms are on display. Furnishings for these rooms would have been limited to mostly beds, two or three per room, a few chairs, and a wash stand.

Upstairs and Downstairs

Today, the attic is used for storage. It is uncertain if it was used for anything other than storage during the stagecoach period. It is known that some taverns provided overflow sleeping accommodations in the attic. This did not provide much privacy for there would have been bed after bed, dormitory style, in one large room

Presently, the basement is also used for storage. When the Mount Washington Tavern was operating, there was a working kitchen in the basement. It was a large kitchen with adjoining fruit and vegetable cellars.

Decline

Prosperity along the National Road came to an end with the coming of the railroad. In 1855, the executors of the James Sampey estate sold the Mount Washington Tavern to Godfrey Fazenbaker.

The new owner’s family lived in the tavern building for over 75 years and occasionally had a paying guest spend the night.

