



An American Tour: 23



Collegeville's Perkiomen Bridge Hotel

One of the oldest hosteries in the country in continuous use and the sole surviving example of the early taverns and inns, the inn, built in 1689, used to be a stop on the Philadelphia-to-Reading carriage line, and actually predates the founding of the local community. First settled by the British in 1701, Collegeville began as two villages along the Philadelphia-Reading Pike known as "Perkiomen Bridge" and "Freeland." Even though the first to settle these villages were the English, it was the German settlers that were responsible for the strong cultural and social fabric of the community. In 1870, the village of Perkiomen Bridge was renamed Collegeville, a name that had been given to the rail station in 1868. Eventually, the two villages decided to consolidate and in 1896 became known as the Borough of Collegeville. The first mill on the Perkiomen Creek was constructed by Edward Lane in 1708 and was located near the Collegeville Dam. Although some business development followed, the area did not prosper until the opening of the Perkiomen Bridge in 1799. By that time, the hotel had been vibrant for 100 years, and it would remain so for many more. In 1899, the proprietor was cited for unruly crowds engaged in "shouting, whooping, pounding of drums, using profane language and drunkenness." The Perkiomen Bridge Hotel was, in fact, enlarged and remodeled from Edward Lane's house built in 1689. [<http://willdo.philadelphiaweekly.com/archives/2007/03/preservationist.html>]



"But in modern times, it has failed in incarnations including sports bar and high-end restaurant. The Philly-to-Reading line has fallen into disuse in recent years and SEPTA is even thinking of eliminating it its upcoming budget cuts. And so the Perkiomen Bridge Hotel has been a sports bar, an upscale restaurant and an abandoned hotel in recent years. Its location is problematic - great if you're arriving by stagecoach, lousy if you're coming by car. The historic Perkiomen Bridge Hotel is up for sale, and since even the seller says it's probably just best to tear it down and use it for the land, history buffs are worried about the fate of the 300+ year old hotel. Now, with "For Sale" signs tacked to its exterior, history buffs fear the Collegeville inn may soon meet its end. [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_kmtpi/is_200703/ai_n18748309]

The inn is a National Register listed site covering 1.37 acres. It's currently for sale for \$1.25

