

1931

Plaque placed
on bridge

Stoy's Landing

STOY'S LANDING

The unveiling of this beautiful plaque, placed here to mark the site of Philip Stoy's landing, not only focusts our attention on the passing of an important local shipping and commercial center, and ~~the~~ a medium of transportation, but on the passing of an epoch in our national life as well.

It is most difficult for us assembled here in the presence of the constant passing, to and fro, of the automobile, our present mode of transportation, to realize that when Francis Collins - one of the earliest settlers of neighborhood - ~~in 1682~~ shortly after he had become master of Mountwell, in 1682 under his proprietary rights took up and surveyed "one certain tract containing 117 acres lying upon Coopers Creek ... which he took up for a landing;" to realize that this was an unbroken forest and ^{that} the only avenues of travel were the narrow, meandering Indian trails and the winding streams

These later being the only means ^{the pioneer settlers had} of bringing the bulkier items of household ^{goods} and utensils, farm implements - crude as the were - ~~and~~ equipment for trade and supplies. This condition may be thus epitomized "their waterways were their highways;" which was not only the condition then, but continued to be for many decades to come.

Thomas Sharp's map of 1700 highlights this truth in showing that the homes of all the pioneer settlers of the old Newton colony and at Cooper's Ferry stood immediately adjacent to the Delaware River or on the banks of its tributaries - the Newton and Cooper creeks.

to serve the community. "on the 24th, (of July 1703) between nine and ten at night, Esther Spicer, widow, as she was undressing in bed, in her own house, was struck dead, with two of her servants, with thunder, three more in the same room escaping. They were buried the next first day, 30 boats, and above 400 people, attending the corpses by water." - Penn-Logan Correspondence, James Logan writing to Wm. Penn, 29th. 7mo., 1703. This according

to Judge Clement's account must have been a very colorful affair. The bodies of the dead were loaded on barges rowed by slaves or servants, followed by relatives and neighbors in their boats and Indians in their canoes and by torchlight, as this was a night funeral. The procession started at Spicer's landing on Cooper's creek - about where Federal Street, Camden, now crosses that stream * it moved out to and down the Delaware River to the mouth of Newton Creek and up that stream to the old Newton burial ground, where the bodies were buried.

This was not an isolated instance. We have the account of ~~an~~ ^{the} earlier funeral of William Cooper the original settler at Cooper's Ferry (now Camden), who after he had disposed of his holdings there to his sons, ~~or~~ either by sale or gift, took up another tract on the opposite ^{side} of the creek from here, in the vicinity of what is now Locust Wood cemetery and had his landing where the buildings of the CCC camp ^{now} stand. He died at his new home about 1700. His remains were brought to his landing, placed aboard a barge and the funeral procession followed the same route as indicated in connection with Esther Spicer's funeral.

The site of Philip Stoy's landing now identified and marked, by the plaque just unveiled, stands as a symbol of a departed era. It was one of the several landings established on Cooper's creek in this immediate neighborhood. Contemporaneous with Francis Collins' taking up his 117 acres on which to set up his landing, his neighbor John Willis, immediately below him on Cooper's creek, took up and surveyed about 500 acres on which he built his home and in all probability established the landing which was later to be well known as Cole's Landing.

This survey of John Willis was the first tract to be purchased by John Haddon. This was in 1698 and it was to the house already built by Willis, ~~that~~ with its landing already established, that youthful Elizabeth Haddon~~s~~ came in 1701 and which she called Haddonfield. Through a chain of transfers,

by purchase and inheritance from his aunt, and mother by adoption, Elizabeth Haddon (Estaugh), Ebenezer Hopkins became owner of both the Collins' and Willis original tracts and the two landings. In 1799 the Collins' landing became the Stoy Landing and the Willis landing became Cole's landing.

The owners of these landings became important figures in the community, and Philip Stoy was no exception. When he came here, from Daulphin County in Pennsylvania where he had previously settled, with his four stalwart sons - all expert axemen, - they attacked the primeaval forest of great white oak and hewed out a livelihood and a substantial fortune without bothering to inquire as to ~~how~~ who would guaranty their future security. All they asked was an opportunity to earn their own living by their own endeavor. Yes! even by the sweat of their brow. How different today. ~~In this case~~ Under our current philosophy of life, with ^{emphasis only on our rights, and little} ~~only rights and no responsibilities as~~ or no recognition of our responsibilities as its center concept, we are indeed living in another era. One that indeed would seem quite foreign to ~~these~~ our forebear.

Tax on
flats on
Cordage
Mills

To these landings they brought great oak logs to be rafted ~~down them~~ down the creek and across the Delaware to the shipyards there to go into the hull of some sailing vessel. Some idea of the size of oak that grew here may be gotten from this instance: In 1816 a hurricane passed through the timber standing on ^{the} land, later owned by Joseph C. Stoy, one of Philip Stoy's sons. One of the trees uprooted was a large white oak just the proper shape for a ship's keel and seventy-four feet long. This was hewed in the woods and drawn to Cooper's creek by seventeen horses and floated down the creek and across to Philadelphia and used as the keel of the United States sloop-of-war "seventy-Four" from which circumstance the vessel got its name.

I might continue to regale you with incidents from the past. But suffice it to say in concluding; that it has been a happy privilege, as the representative of the Camden County Historical Society, to have participated in the unveiling ceremonies of this plaque placed here to perpetuate the memory of our pioneer settlers to whom we are indebted more than many of us care to admit