

Stratford's History

The Village of White Horse and Stratford's Quaker Store by Carole Dadino, Stratford Historian

An ancient Elk path, trodden down by Native Americans, followed a line from the Atlantic coast to Camden. Early 1700, the poorly maintained road called White Horse Rd. (Later, White Horse Pike) was barely able to accommodate horse and carriage transportation. To meet the needs of a growing population of farmers and traders, a village sprung up on Old Egg Harbor Road (Berlin Rd.), consisting of a Wheelwright, Blacksmith, General Store, nine houses, and an Inn named "White Horse Inn". The quaint village was soon called "White Horse", after the Inn.



Driving down the Pike, 1910

As the area grew, newer general stores opened and the White Horse General Store was demolished. Records mention the lumber was used to build an addition to the White Horse Hotel. No date for the demolition is recorded. An 1845, map shows a newer building was built on the 1743 store's foundation and it remains there today, restored and continuing to be maintained by the Stratford Historical Preservation Commission.

The White Horse General Store was owned by Elizabeth Bates, who also owned the White Horse Inn. When the store was rebuilt about 1845, the owner was listed as Joseph Wolohan. Over the 254 years the store was in operation, it served the community in many ways. From 1910 until 1925, George Cathrall and his wife, Mary, operated "George's Place", a take-out oyster house and ice cream parlor. Mary Cathrall remembered her mother, Mary Parker Marley, born in 1861, sharing a memory of shopping at the general store known as "Scroggey's Little Red Store". The only history of the store before Scroggey's, are the land owners.

In 1937, Mrs. Elizabeth Strippoli operated the building as a general store. To compete with the super grocery stores opening up in the area, Mrs. Strippoli joined a grocery wholesale company, "Quaker Store" which required her to place their sign on the store. It remained "Mrs. Strippoli's" for years, finally becoming known as "The Quaker Store".

In the 1980s Mrs. Strappoli closed the store and moved to the upstairs until her death in 1997. As plans to have

the building demolished were underway, the Stratford Historic Preservation Commission, with the support of town leaders, is founded and with a \$98,000 grant from the Camden County Open Space Preservation, plus an additional \$30,000+ from fund raisers and donations, efforts for the reconstruction continued. In 2000, an additional grant was approved for the preservation and reconstruction of the building. At the time, Exxon had a Gas Station east of the store and their sign was replaced with a sign reading, "Historic Stratford".

SHPC president, Walt Baxter kept meticulous records of the reconstruction progress. When Mrs. Strappoli updated the old refrigeration system that used blocks of ice, it was moved to an enclosed porch. The commission planned to move it back inside but unfortunately, the "Ice Box" was 110-1/2" high and the room height was now 106-1/2" high. The solution? Lower the floor move the box in and rebuild a new, raised floor, around it.



Reconstructed main grocery room

As reconstruction continued, bids were sent out for each phase and many plans had to be modified to meet available grant money. SHPC minutes report that reconstruction bids for one project ran between \$100,000 and \$200,000. With the help of grants, fund raisers and donations, the building (below) was restored and is being maintained without using taxpayer money.



As the oldest building in Historic Stratford, the Quaker Store remains a welcome site to those traveling East on the White Horse Pike to the Jersey shore, just as it has, for the past 280+ years.