

Retracing of
Famous Old Turnpike

Between

Chambersburg and Pittsburgh

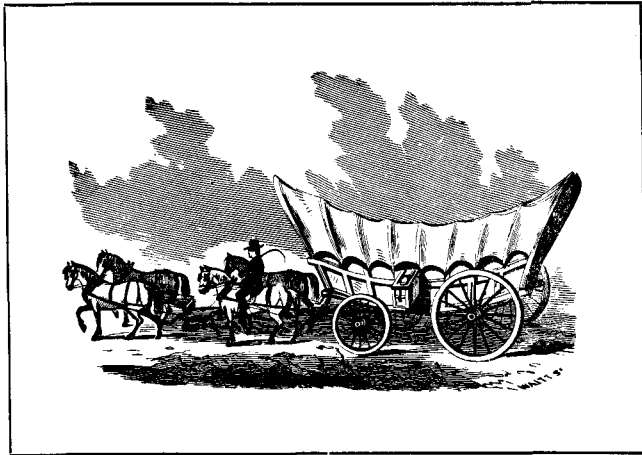
By

David Eby

A Wagoner 1849-1853

**Old Taverns, Names of Landlords, and
Reminiscences of Sixty Years Ago.**

Afoot, August 18-26 1908



Conestoga Wagon—Six instead of four horses were attached to wagon on turnpike. Above is a farm team.

The Famous Old Pike

By DAVID EBY

Wagoner 1849-1853

IN 1832 my father moved from Greenwood, East of Fayetteville, to the Stoufferstown Tavern, which was on the site of the pretty dwelling now occupied by William Shields.

At my age at that time, which was eight or nine years, I have a distinct recollection of the German emigrants going West over the turnpike from Baltimore to Pittsburgh. The mode of transportation was by the Conestoga wagon, in which were the bed clothing and cooking utensils of the emigrants, as well as the women and children of the party, while the men and boys walked. At night the women slept in the wagon, while the men were given sleeping quarters in the barn. The cooking was done by the wayside, the men through the day gathering the supplies along the route.

These emigrations were made during the summer in order to avoid the cold blasts of winter. John Miller, who was one of the well-known wagoners of the day, and owned several fine six-horse teams, was a favorite with the emigrants, in this class of transportation. Upon meeting other teamsters on the road, as he wagoned along with his precious freight and oddly dressed escort afoot, sallies of wit were exchanged by Mr. Miller and the jolly wagoners, all in the best of humor, and by no one more enjoyed than "Uncle" John. About the taverns, when the wagoners gave an account, as was their custom, of them-

selves and the whereabouts of others on the road, a hearty laugh would follow the final announcement: "And-O, Yes! John Miller is coming from Baltimore with another load of Dutch, for Pittsburgh."

In those days the turnpike was lined with teams, and all taverns had a good trade. There would often be twenty or thirty teams over night at a single stand. During my late visit to Ohio I got into conversation with a man of my age, whose father and mother moved out in 1839 in a Conestoga wagon to near Tiffin, Ohio, where they settled and prospered. As one of the old pioneers he became one of the best citizens of the community, in which also he attained wealth and influence. This is only one of hundreds of similar instances.

In 1840 my father, Jacob Eby, bought the farm of 120 acres in Hamilton township, where County Commissioner David Tritle now lives, and opened a tavern. His main intention was to enrich the soil, which was very poor. For this purpose manure was gathered and hauled from town, the use of which, together with lime, made the farm highly productive. He entertained travelers and wagoners.

In 1849 my father put me on the road to wagon, at which I continued at intervals until the Pennsylvania railroad was completed in 1853, and for five years more, at "piece" wagoning to intermediate points between Chambersburg and Bedford. My first trip was to Pittsburg with two other wagoners. Looking back to the four years thus employed I consider them as the palmy days of my life. For fifteen years I have had a longing desire to go over the ground again, and make note of some of the changes wrought on the famous old turnpike during the past sixty years. In my memory are embalmed the location of every tavern stand or Inn, the name of almost every landlord, and in my mind's eye the hundreds of breakers, and each particular culvert and bridge; certainly, every tough hill and mountain "pull".

I concluded that, in order to relocate the old tavern stands, and secure such other information as would help to make a narrative of the days of wagoning, the trip would as well be made by walking over the turnpike from Chambersburg to Pittsburg. The undertaking at my age, being on the shady side of 77, was something of a proposition, but I was in good health and had confidence that I would be equal to the long journey once more to be retraced. My idea was to take it leisurely, at the rate of 15 or 20 miles a day. How nearly I came up to the calcu-

lation is shown by my diary. I started from Chambersburg on Tuesday morning, August 18, 1908, and resting on Sunday, 23d, arrived in Pittsburgh, Wednesday, August 26, at 12 o'clock, noon. Not counting Sunday I was just seven and a-half days on the tramp from Chambersburg to Pittsburgh, a distance of 150 miles. The number of miles each walking day was:

Chambersburg to McConnellsburg,.....	21 miles
McConnellsburg to Juniata Crossings,.....	20 miles
Juniata Crossings to Schellsburg,.....	21 miles
Schellsburg to Stoystown,.....	18 miles
Stoystown to Ligonier,.....	20 miles
Ligonier to Greensburg,.....	20 miles
Greensburg to Turtle Creek,.....	18 miles
Turtle Creek to Pittsburgh,.....	12 miles
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Total	150 miles
Average, per day,.....	20 miles

Starting at the Public Square, I will give the names of Proprietors of hotels and tavern stands between Chambersburg and Pittsburgh, 1849-'53, and some of the industries that had an existence along the turnpike sixty years ago.

Chambersburg: Franklin hotel and stage office, site of Central Presbyterian church, corner of Public Square. On opposite corner, John Noel, hotel, Daniel Trostle, hotel, at bridge, West Market street, —Hollyhocker, hotel, corner Market and Franklin streets. John Gordon, tavern, West Point.

Between Chambersburg and St. Thomas (formerly Campbellstown): Stephen Fairchild, tavern, on hill, nearly opposite present toll gate. Samuel Keen, tavern, now Professor King's home. Next, tavern by Jacob Eby; next Josiah Allen, then William Bratten, and John W. Coble, (now home of ex-Sheriff McFerren), near by being wagonmaker and blacksmith shops. Conestoga wagons and threshing machines were also manufactured there. Across the ravine, a short distance west, was the Heberling factory, where tumbling shafts and threshing machines were manufactured.

St. Thomas: Four taverns by John Treher, south side of street; Benjamin Kahn, north side, John Bowermaster, corner of square, and Samuel Brindle, north side.

Between St. Thomas and Loudon: C. T. Campbell, distillery and mill at Campbell's Run. Charles Gillan,

tavern; John Shafer, White House, Mt. Parnell; George Ashway and D. Shearer, taverns.

The taverns at Loudon were kept by James Mullan and John Treher, (formerly at St. Thomas). Loudon was a busy center with her wagon, whip and other factories, blacksmith shops, etc.

The first tavern after leaving Loudon was kept by John McGuire, at the foot of the mountain; then Daniel Miller, near foot of Cove Mountain, John Slates, top of mountain (skeleton of building only remains of what was a notable stand). West side of mountain, at foot before reaching McConnellsburg, was a tavern kept by Widow McGee.

There were five taverns in McConnellsburg, with these proprietors: D. Shaffer, (stage office), Kendalls, John Cook, Mark Dixon, George Shaffer.

The taverns between McConnellsburg and Bloody Run (now Everett), were Bruce Cleggett at Scrub Ridge; Jacob Houser (no house there now); R. Blair, at Patterson Run; Frank Burnell, at Licking Creek; George Metzler, John Cook, Harrisonville; Valentine Colvin, Fairview; William Alexander (Mann's hotel). Austin's old tannery, all gone. William Reamer, tavern and stage office, foot of Sidling Hill; next, tavern at Ladies Turn, Andrew Fisher; H. Enslow, top of Sidling Hill. Next Ray's Hill, stage office, Forks of Three Mountain Roads, James Sprout, tavern; A. Bossart, tavern, top of Ray's Hill. (No toll gate from here to Pittsburg, now). Next, Mrs. Snell, then Nickum hotel, Henry McCall; David Black, —Householder. Now the Narrows, next Juniata river, long covered bridge, 185 feet span. Then tavern by McGraw, known as such since 1795, no license. The rest of the taverns to Bloody Run were kept by Jacob Weaverling, William Sparks, and J. Morgan.

Note: Along and beyond Juniata river to Everett is good turnpike, a fine stretch of country, and good farms. Was especially interested in an old cemetery. Many names on tombstones were familiar to me.

In Bloody Run (now Everett) the old taverns were kept respectively by Jacob Everett, John A. Gump, and C. Steckman.

Between Bloody Run and Bedford these were the old-time tavern stands: Horseshoe Bend, I. Tates, then Hartley Hoke. Next Willow Springs hotel, by William Chenewith, no hotel; (now the inviting home of Mr. and Mrs. William Clark). Next, over bridge to Indian

Springs; then Mt. Dallas Iron Works and mountain, after which a two arch, 36 feet culvert; then comes the 150 feet large (now iron) bridge; used to be called Bedford bridge.

The Bedford hotels or taverns were kept by C. Williams, Daniel Crouse, John Hafer, Samuel Davis, and Valentine Steckman.

Proceeding from Bedford, in addition to old taverns recalled, many objects of interest are included in my notes. The first old taverns in my wagoning days after leaving Bedford, were kept respectively by S. Lawhead, J. Spears, Weisgarber, Stookeys, Todds, John Sill (Forks of Glade pike). The next taverns after leaving the branch of B. & O. R. R. crossing, were those of P. Kinsey, D. Bodder and P. Mowrey; Schellsburg tavern, C. Colvin; next J. Frazure, M. Robertson—(fine farms, good buildings, including Lingstown; 75 feet covered bridge);—next, there were taverns kept by James Burns and George Bowser; Still House Hill, very steep, a hard pull in days of wagoning, many teams stuck on that hill when the roads were bad. Next foot of Allegheny mountain; hotel, shot factory, High stone building and short turn, hard pull; hotel, P. Statler, Braddock Fort on old road to right on top of Allegheny mountain; hotel on Ball Hill, T. Blair. Next, tavern, Claud Lewis, and next, popular stage office in charge of Andrew Statler. All the stages changed horses here. Buckstown, taverns, Jacob Sarver and Joseph Sarver; next, City, John Wilt, George Ringler, George Clark. Next, Stoystown, John Hite, John Brinley, John Raney, David Dibert, John Snyder, (22 foot bridge), David Penrod, Joseph Horner, Fred Neff. Jenner Cross Roads, Large distillery. Next, taverns, William Lowry, Joseph Flemming. B. & O. R. R. Branch crosses pike. Bridge (now iron), 60 feet. Taverns, George Parker, Henry Picking, William Boyd. Westmoreland coal mine; charcoal pits; bridge, 60 feet. Jenner Cross Roads, Taverns, John Reed, Joseph Sparks, Joseph Naugle. Another 60 foot bridge. Next, taverns, R. Caldwell, John Brubaker, (both down); Philip Miller, Mack Glessner, B. Rippy, Joseph Nicewonger, William Johnston, Ben Parker. Now we come to big flat, smooth rocks, on Laurel Hill, solid as cement. No. 1, 66 feet wide and long. No. 2, 90 feet, the same. Here was trouble in the days of wagoning, horses slipping and falling; steep grade; many horses injured by falling on those rocks. Taverns, Tom Knox, John Hall, John Knox,

Ligonier Valley. Laughlinstown. Bridge over Finn Run, 41 feet. Pennsylvania R. R. crosses pike. Distillery and brewery. Bridge, 44 feet. Blue stone pike; (left hand road leads to Somerset, 10 miles). Laurel Hanna river iron Bridge, 198 feet. John Miller's team broke through this bridge in 1847; killed two horses and injured two. (Railroad crossing to Latrobe, 7 miles.) Plank bridge, 66 feet. Catholic convent; fine large building nice blue stone pike. Youngstown, Geo. Hull. Hotels, Fred Cepter, Bob West, George Jelly, Fred Bollinger, Joseph Hull, Ralph Hunter, George Gregor. Kingston, a new town since 1853. Samuel Blythe. Pike, river, R. R. run side by side, two miles; on left of pike, Huckleberry Hill. Tavern, George Shabondy; 3 miles to Latrobe, from where we hauled freight to Pittsburg; the last through freight, 1853. Taverns, Charles Rickert, Isaac Brady, Dan Kessler. Beatty Station on P. R. R., 3 miles off. Can hear puff and whistle of locomotives. Frozen iron Hill; hard pull. (Bridge, 120 feet, over P. R. R.)

I next arrive at Greensburg, now a prosperous city. The old taverns were kept by Henry Kentling, Mac Singer, John Null, who had the stage office; H. Hoffman, and Michael Shener. Sixty years ago Westmoreland county was held in special esteem by Franklin county wagoners of Whig persuasion, because it was the native county of William Freame Johnston, who in the fall of 1848 was elected Governor, serving until 1852; to our drivers doubly so, because the Governor's mother was a Franklin dame, Miss Elizabeth Freame, born in this county in 1781. "Protection" was the big argument by the Whigs, and if the Loco-focos didn't like it they were sometimes "invited out" to settle the question.

With only thirty miles more to make I now trudge along on the old turnpike to Pittsburgh. Reaching Fountain Hill, the old taverns were kept by Isaac Baker, Julius Singer, Adamsburg 300 foot bridge over Carnegie R. R. John Hillegas, straw pump hotel, and tavern stands kept by William Gress, William Irvin. Jacksonville: Josiah Spangler, Buck McKinstry. Stewardsville: John Aikens, Benjamin Carpenter, Sr., Samuel Black, Benjamin Carpenter, Jr. Wilkesburg: William Daley, (R. R. Crossing), Turtle Creek. Joseph Allhouse, M. Holbaugh, John Beitler, East Liberty: William Johnston, William McCall, Mansion Hotel, Pittsburg, William McMasters, the end of our up and down hill journey, trials and tribulations.

In giving the list of taverns, to describe their location

and surroundings, would have occupied too much space and time. I therefore confined my inquiries on the way to ascertaining the names of such tavern keepers as my memory failed to recall. And just here was the difficulty, as few are living on the pike who were living when I wagoned. But I got the names in such instances from descendants. Of course some names may be improperly spelled.

From Chambersburg to Pittsburg in 1853, on an average there was a tavern for each mile, and as the distance between the two places was 150 miles, the total number of taverns was 150. From Chambersburg to top of Scrub Ridge—23 miles—I counted 742 breakers, or 32 breakers to the mile, which would total 4,800 between Chambersburg and Pittsburg. Think of the number of jolts the Crilly automobile party had to endure that Monday morning, for 3½ hours, between Bedford and Chambersburg.

When one thinks, after passing over the pike since 1853, of the troops who traversed the same road afoot on their way to Mexico, 1846-48, to participate in the Mexican war, while their baggage was hauled on the Conestoga wagons from Chambersburg to Pittsburg, there are not many now living to witness the remarkable changes that have taken place in transportation. Even in my time the changes have been amazing.

Although the turnpike between Chambersburg and Pittsburgh was not completed until 1820, the first stage coach carried the mail over a rough and narrow mountain road as early as 1804, when the Postmaster General made contracts for the establishment of a line of stages for the more safe conveyance of the mail from Philadelphia via Chambersburg to Pittsburgh. This arrangement continued until the next progressive step was taken through the completion of the C. V. R. R. to Chambersburg in 1837. The old turnpike from here to Pittsburgh continued the main line between the two cities, Concord and Troy coaches conveying the passengers and U. S. mail from Chambersburg to Pittsburgh. This was the advertisement that appeared in a local paper March 18, 1838:

"To Travelers—Citizens new R. R. Line—Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, via Chambersburg.

"Passengers are conveyed in the new, beautiful and commodious cars, from Philadelphia to Chambersburg, hence, without delay or interruption, to Pittsburg by the new swiftsure line of stages. The WHOLE ROUTE is performed and passed over in 48 hours. The proprietors

of these lines assure the public that nothing has been spared to render them superior, and the situation of the passengers comfortable and pleasant.

"Apply for seats at No. 89 Chestnut street; Sander-son's, N. Fourth street; Broad street, Philadelphia."

Here we have the changes of more than a century in methods of travel in which Chambersburg stands out conspicuously as the central point of what is proposed to be included in Governor Stuart's scheme of a State Highway.

Most of the old tavern stands, not as such, but as dwellings, are to be seen, but the "breakers" alone remain as reminders of what the old pike and old days were. The old signs are down, the wagon yards are enclosed, and the bar-rooms where the wagoners congregated over night are converted to a better use.

The wagoners were a noisy, jolly set who loved the frolic and a dance. To the music of a violin, the performer suited its action to whatever was called for, "The Virginia Reel," the "French Reel," "Four Square," "Jim Crow" or "Hoe Down," being the popular rage. The fun was fast and jolly, especially when they imbibed too much of "Mononghela" at 3 cents a drink.

The days of staging on the old turnpike were for the fathers one of its brightest eras. I doubt not it is the stories they had to tell of their travels in the Concord and Troy coaches of the period, that has popularized the famous old route with their descendants, the automobile tourists of to-day.

In my mind the automobile drivers are not regarded with the same distinction as were the stage drivers whose lordly swing and handling of the ribbons, on the box made them—at least in their own estimation—the aristocrats of the times. In the bar-room they were the center of an admiring crowd, who were always ready when "asked up" with a condescending—"Yes, with a little sugar, please."

But I must conclude, for reminiscences of the old days of wagoning crowd upon me thick and fast in more than these pages and many more would accommodate. The scenes and incidents my pedestrian trip revived recollections that I shall never forget while I live. But they are all past and gone. The shrill whistle of the locomotive with its long trains East and West tell the story of the retirement of wagoners, stage drivers and tavern keepers. "Your memory lingers now like a fading tradition. Ye have passed away like a dissolving view. A silent tear to your shades."

A word more. I had weather of an agreeable temperature for the journey. With the thermometer ranging about summer temperature during the day, and the cool nights the mountain breezes afforded, I made the trip in good health.

As the home newspapers had announced my departure over the famous old turnpike, and the object of the trip, the people along the route kept a lookout for me, and I was everywhere received and treated with kindness. In the barber shops I was talked about. They "wondered when the old man would come along." This was in my hearing at Everett and Ligonier and when I took the chair, through the queries every barber understands how to make, they concluded I was the individual. For the time being I was treated with the distinction I suppose that would be accorded the so-called "fellow from Missouri."

At Greensburg a reporter also got on my trail, who telegraphed the Pittsburg papers, and when I arrived in that city the Gazette Times bounced me for an interview and my picture. "Wait until I make myself presentable, I pleaded. "No, sir," said he, I want to take you just as you are, see." I saw and surrendered, and here is the interview:

From the Pittsburg Gazette-Times, August 27, 1908.

To walk from Chambersburg to Pittsburgh, 150 miles, at the age of 77 years, is the feat accomplished by David Eby, one of the three surviving Conestoga wagoners on the Chambersburg and Pittsburgh route before the advent of the Pennsylvania railroad.

Mr. Eby left Chambersburg a week ago last Monday, and arrived in this city yesterday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock. On his trip he lived on eggs and vegetables, eating no meat. He had been planning a walking trip over the old roads on which he drove wagons in 1849 for the past ten years. Mr. Eby, though almost 78 years old, his birthday being on December 1, is hale and hearty, and only uses glasses to read with.

Mr. Eby has long contemplated this trip and has been encouraged by M. A. Foltz, a member of the Franklin Historical society. On his trip the old wagoner took note of the familiar spots where once stood the hotels of the early 50s. He said at that time there were 179 hotels between Pittsburg and Chambersburg, including the hotels in both places. He says it is wonderful to walk along the old familiar highways and see the remarkable progress

made in this country. He also relates the class distinction maintained between the wagoners and the drivers of stage coaches.

Mr. Eby says that with one exception he always voted the Republican national ticket and cast his first vote for President Fremont. The one time that he voted the Democratic ticket was in 1900, when he cast his ballot for William J. Bryan.

"Are you going to vote for Bryan this fall?" was asked the pioneer.

"No, sir," he replied. "It would lose four years of prosperity to this nation to have a Democratic president wrangling with a Republican senate and a Republican house."

Mr. Eby started to wagon from Chambersburg to Pittsburgh at the age of 18, and after the Pennsylvania railroad built its line to Chambersburg in 1853, he continued at "piece loading" as he expresses it in the language of the wagoner. "Piece loading", Mr. Eby says, were the trips from the ends of the railroad lines to towns not reached by the trains. A through trip would be to Pittsburgh, but "piece loading" would be trips from Chambersburg to McConnellsburg, Everett and Bedford.

When Mr. Eby retired from wagoning at the age of 28 he first tried farming but later bought a sawmill property and was in that business for many years. For five years he was superintendent of the Siloam water works, which supplies Chambersburg. He retired in 1904 and now lives with his son, Amos Eby, of Chambersburg.

The only other wagoners of the Chambersburg-Pittsburgh route living are John Etter, aged 86, of Scotland, Franklin county, who once drove with Mr. Eby, and Jacob Syock, aged 82, of Chambersburg.

Mr. Eby was the wagoner who hauled the ammunition and arms for John Brown's party to Williamsport, where it was further shipped to Harper's Ferry. He said he did not know what he was hauling at the time, but learned later after the trouble at Harper's Ferry.

Mr. Eby will leave here today for Toledo, O., by train, where he will visit his daughter, Mrs. J. J. Pollard.