

TRAVEL AND TROUBLES

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You can talk all you like about liberty and religious freedom, but when it comes right down to it, Western Pennsylvania was settled because of one simple, driving force—money. First there were the French traders, then Virginia's Ohio Land Company came looking to expand its operations. Now there was money to be made serving travelers headed for the Mississippi Valley.

With the Appalachian Mountains blocking travel from back east, the most feasible route to the western territory was still either by river or on the turnpike, both of which took you through Western Pennsylvania. Plenty of people were using a shortcut from the Monongahela River, traveling Squirrel Hill Road or Salt Lick Road on their way to Pittsburgh or nearby Hazelwood where they could buy boats and provisions to take them to their chosen area of the western frontier. Travelers often complained that they were being taken advantage of, overcharged or just plain cheated. But it was no use to argue: if you wanted to travel west, this was the only game in town.

Killymoon wasn't the only one capitalizing on the travelers passing over Squirrel Hill Road. There was another inn farther on along the ridge, and yet another coming down the hill. Along the road between the two, a blacksmith shoed horses and mended wagon wheels.

Nearly everyone complained about the streets in the Ohio River territory—they were narrow and lopsided and crossed each other at odd angles—but at least the means of travel improved. Conestoga wagons could replace a whole team of packhorses with just a few horses, a wagon and a driver. With a system of relays to get new horses and drivers, two tons of goods could travel from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh in only six days. Wagons from Baltimore and Philadelphia covered the 350 miles to the Point over the Allegheny mountains in record time.

There was an inn at the corner of Gladstone and Alma streets, and another at the corner of Kearcher Street and Greenfield Avenue. The second is still standing.

