



**Transcribed article from the Beach Haven Times.**

Philadelphians who could afford to go to the seashore in the 1820s had to spend a full day crossing the New Jersey forests and plains in a stagecoach that cost them as much as \$2.50 one way.

If this was their first trip, they were always agreeably surprised when, at dusk, the stage finally rattled into Tuckerton.

"Clamtown" as it had been called in colonial times and up until 1790 had grown up. Straight, tree-lined streets, handsome houses, a mill pond and two well-lit, nicely appointed hotels to accommodate the tide of vacationers heading to and from the surf in bathing season, made it an exciting and even a sophisticated place to be passing through in those years. The town hummed with activity and belonged to the Quakers whose characteristic broad-brimmed white beaver hats were everywhere to be seen. Tuckerton was still the hub of commerce in that region.

Seven miles from town, out across Little Egg Harbor Bay at what is now Holgate at the southern tip of Long Beach Island, was a newly refurbished boarding hotel called the Philadelphia Company House. The Company House was formerly owned by Captain Joseph Horner. The Company House was formerly Horner's own place, and so well known was he that the whole end of the Island was called "Horner's Beach". In 1821 he had sold out to a group of Philadelphia "gentlemen", his former guest, and he wound up staying on as manager.

The group's investment capital expanded the hotel into one of the best-known watering places on the New Jersey coast, rivaled only by the larger Mansion of Health, 10 miles up the beach at the Great Swamp. Both hotels had opened for business in the same year, 1822.

The vacationers, after a night in Tuckerton and a hearty breakfast, went down to the Green Street wharf, where they boarded Captain Horner's sloop big enough to hold 20 people. If the tide was against them, two men with a long rope towed the boat from a foot path out the winding salt creek to the flat, grassy meadows along the edge of the bay. Here they set sail, talking to stay in the channels around the low islands, heading ever eastward toward the tall, old ships' mast in the distance. At its base they could not see the dark silhouette of the Philadelphia Company House. In front of it dozens of row boats bumped at the spidery pilings of a long dock and several sailboats swung at their moorings.

The Company House, with its barn-like roof, unplanned, had one feature essential to all seaside boarding houses then – a wide wraparound, cover porch or piazza, lined with rocking chairs and strung with hammocks. The long building, outlying shed and summer kitchen stood all alone on the edge of the meadows exactly three miles south of the center of what is now Beach Haven. Cattle and horses roamed at will in the treeless, sand

hills. With the additions to Horner's old place they could now accommodate 100 people at the rate of \$4 per week. Most guests who stayed two weeks or more were dubbed "oldtimers".

Newcomers were greeted at the dock by these well-tanned oldtimers, who looking for familiar faces among the passengers would jibe, "Did you bring any sand? We got everything over here but sand." Civility and good humor were the order of the day as was informality of dress. City folk tried to look like farmers in flannel and calico. Perfect strangers, in the manner of shipboard life, fast friends in one afternoon of fishing or one long game of cards. New arrivals were immediately dragged into the well-stocked bar for a mid-morning social drink to get acquainted.

At the beach, women would sit under parasols and umbrellas, or they would gather shells. On windy days they sat in the swales or valleys between the several ridges of dunes and share the extraordinary meals of fresh fowl, apple dumplings and tarts always with plenty of eels, clams and oysters. Fresh produce was in abundance. It was brought over from the mainland almost every day by hawkers who sold the guests ears of corn, quarts of fresh blueberries and bushels of apples.

Every evening after dinner the trestle tables in the dining room were cleared out and there was dancing to fiddle music under a big wooden chandelier festooned with holly and bayberry. Candles burned brightly in reflectors of bone white clamshell. At the end of a full day of activity all the guests agreed that salt air really does make people sleepy.

This lower end of Long Beach Island owed its popularity in the 19<sup>th</sup> century not only to its closeness to Tuckerton but also to the unusual abilities of three men who dominated the area for 60 years. They were jovial, entertaining and practical. There were natural born innkeepers.

First, of course, was Joseph Horner who had learned his trade as manager of the old Tucker place on nearby Tucker's Island. It was he who first built the boarding hotel on the south end of Long Beach that within a few years became the celebrated Philadelphia Company House. He and the members of his family managed it successfully until 1847, when it was purchased by Lloyd Jones of Tuckerton who greatly added to it. One of Jones' favorite guests, Thomas Bond of New York City, became the hotel's next owner in 1851. It was he who changed its name formally to the Long Beach House and made it into the most famous hostelry on the New Jersey coast on the 1850s, 60s and 70s.

The original Philadelphia Company House remained as one wing of Bond's Long Beach House until 1909, when the whole rambling complex, abandoned and ruined, was torn down. The lumber was rafted across the bay to West Creek where it was cleaned up and resold. Some of it found its way back home and is now part of several vintage houses around the island.

In the roughly 70 years that Jones and Bond were in charge, it was the custom of every departing boatload of guests to receive a jug of whiskey and a rousing three cheers from the dock. The cheers would be repeated by them at intervals as they sailed away, passing the jug around. Out past Goosebar and Barrel Island when the spires of Tuckerton first appeared in the distance, faintly over the wind there would come one more "hip hip hooray!". Guests went home with fond memories and returned year after year.