



Marker #32

In the attic of George Severson's "Wayside Inn" numerous legal papers and documents were found many years after the inn master had died. These papers and documents sketched a portrait of innkeeper Severson and the community about him.

George Severson was the great-grandson of Jurrian Severson, one of the first three permanent settlers in Altamont. The innkeeper inherited the inn from his father, who had paid rent to patroon Stephen Van Rensselaer.

In the mid 19th Century, as the anti-rent war eventually broke the hold of the patroonships, Steven Van Rensselaer's heirs allowed George Stevenson to buy his land and inn. The Severson family then legally owned the farm.

The Wayside Inn was built when the Revolutionary War ended. A ledger found yields a picture of George Severson's life and the community. The papers tell of "drovers" who came up from Schoharie with their lunches in cheese boxes. They washed their lunch down with George Severson's cider or bitters while their hogs and sheep herded in the yard outside. The stage line used the old tavern as a relay point, and the famous Indian fighter Tim Murphy was a frequent guest at the inn. Inventory lists of goods at the inn included candle molds, foot warmers, wash stands, beaver hats and ladies' bonnets, spinning wheels and looms.

As many things are wont to do in the path of progress, when the new Plank Road took the place of the old Schoharie Road, cutting off stage coaches and travellers from going past the Innkeeper's door, the Wayside Inn closed. Ironically, several years later, a railroad was constructed alongside the old Wayside Inn but it did not reopen, even though the relatively new Plank Road was abandoned.

The aged ledgers show that George Severson was an innkeeper, a merchant, a churchman, a postmaster and a town tax assessor. The blue and gold marker at the corner of Altamont Boulevard and Helderberg Avenue, the site of George Severson's Wayside Inn, was damaged by modern-day motor equipment. When replaced, it will again remind passers-by that George Severson and his hostelry are an integral part of this community's history.