

# The Rising Sun Inn

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The Rising Sun Inn, 1827 The home/office building at 3835 Northern Pike which still stands today as one of the oldest structures in Monroeville, began life in the early 1800s as a stagecoach roadhouse &ndash; the Rising Sun Inn. Its story begins in the late 1700s when Pennsylvania state authorities were actively encouraging the construction of east-west roads to bind the state together. In the 1790s a group of Philadelphia businessmen formed a company to operate a toll road from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh to be known as the Northern Turnpike. The road would be chosen by the first stage line between Pittsburgh and Philadelphia when it began operations in 1805. The trip cost 20 dollars and took six or seven days; a six-seat coach with a team of four horses was mostly used; every 50 miles or so the passengers changed coaches. Since horses had to be changed more frequently, every 10 miles or so, Monroeville, because of its location on the Northern Pike some 12 miles east of Pittsburgh, was ideally situated for a relay station. Abraham Taylor, one of the investors of the company which operated the new road, recognizing that travelers waiting for the teams of horses to be changed would welcome the opportunity for refreshments. In 1827, he bought 10 acres of land and built an inn and a barn across from the stables near the tollgate. As the coach climbed the grade eastward toward the inn, the driver would sound a horn, alerting the inn-keeper that meals would be required. Upon leaving the inn and heading east in the early morning stages were often driving directly into a blazing sun, and the drivers began calling the place the &ldquo;Rising Sun Inn&rdquo; -- a name that stuck. With its steady stagecoach trade, the inn flourished for many years, but in 1852 the Pennsylvania Railroad completed an all-rail route from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh; the stage coach was on its way to becoming a thing of the past, and the inn&rsquo;s days were numbered. In that same year, Abraham Taylor passed away and his widow Jan Collins Taylor turned the inn into a residence for herself and her daughter, Sara Jane. They began truck farming on the surrounding acres. And it was this business that introduced them, to George Washington Warner, a Pittsburgh produce merchant who made frequent trips to the countryside in search of fresh vegetables. He married Sara Jane Taylor in 1869 and set up housekeeping in the old inn. The couple were to have three children. The house was to remain in the Warner family for several generations, and it became known locally as the &ldquo;Warner farmhouse.&rdquo; When his wife passed away George lived alone in the old farmhouse for many years, before marrying again, this time to Nancy King McElroy. The couple had six children including W. Horace (&ldquo;Hook&rdquo;) Warner whose nickname referred to a childhood preference for sledding over schooling. In 1936, &ldquo;Hook&rdquo; Warner went into the excavation business and would in time become a prominent developer, promoter and the founder of the Monroeville Chamber of Commerce. In 1964 &ldquo;Hook&rdquo; Warner was named Monroeville&rsquo;s &ldquo;Man of the Year.&rdquo; Across the road to the south of the inn was the stable, later a lot for heavy excavating equipment, beside which stood a garage for the family&rsquo;s auto repair business. To the southwest of the house stood Monroeville School, where today (in 2011) stands One Monroeville Center. It was actually the second school to bear this name and was built on the Warner property. Directly across the road stood the Warner&rsquo;s Flower Shop. The Flower Shop was run by Mrs. Leonora (Beatty) Warner Reese. The last of the Warner family to reside in the farmhouse, she lived there until 1976 when the house and property were put up for sale. In time the house would be converted to an office for the use of Dr. D. A. MacDonald, a function it still serves today ( in 2011) in its historic location along Northern Pike. Although extensively remodeled, it remains one of the oldest structures in Monroeville.