

Harry Snover Relives History of Metamora's Famous Inn  
White Horse's Past Includes Period as Stagecoach Stop  
The Flint Journal, Flint, MI  
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by David V. Graham, Journal Staff Writer



METAMORA – Harry “Jake” Snover, 81, is a link with the decades when Metamora’s storied, 119-year-old White Horse Inn was a stagecoach stop.

Snover remembers when the inn’s barn, which still stands, was “full of horses.” There are horses to be seen in the rolling countryside today, but these are a different breed—the expensive mounts of fox-hunters who ride to hounds.

Red-coated hunters, giving the area a dash of the picturesque, sometimes stop at the White Horse for refreshments. In the fox-and-hounds set, the district is renowned. It was the subject of an article in the New Yorker magazine in 1940.

THE STAGECOACH period ended around 1910. By that time, daily runs were being made only to Hadley, eight miles to the west, and Thornville, four miles to the east.

Snover, a farmer who retired in 1935 and looks far younger than his years, has vivid memories of the coaches that lumbered along the dusty roads through the hills. One memory is painful.

“Once when I was 14 or 15 I tried to catch a ride with the stage as it was passing by on its way to town,” he said. “I leaped up and grabbed for the hand-hold along the top and I’ll be damned it I didn’t miss it.

“Well, the back right wheel ran over my leg and I also bashed my head against the side of the coach and it left this scar you see here on my forehead.”

Snover spent many nights at the White Horse, then called the Heard House, when he was too tired to go home. The charge was “only 50 cents.”

He remembers the first time he ate at the White Horse, when he was a boy:



“My father took me out for lunch during noon hour at school and bought me a piece of apple pie,” he said. “I could show you within six feet where we sat.”

Over the decades, the ownership of the White Horse has passed thorough more than a dozen hands. The old-timers still talk about some of the proprietors.

THE LATE Gilbert Olds bought the Inn about 1917 for \$2,200 and kept it until 1922 or 1923. He is remembered for going around in the summer without shoes. Olds had two children, Audrey and LaVerne. Audrey is now Mrs. Guy Russell of Metamora, and LaVerne lives in Plymouth.



Mrs. Russell, who was married in the White Horse, has several pieces of furniture once used in the inn. One of LaVerne’s boyhood chums was Ross Lewis, who became a political cartoonist for the Milwaukee Journal. LaVerne has several originals of Lewis sketches of Metamora scenes on the walls of his home. Lewis, who won a Pulitzer prize in 1934, died last month.

Frank Peters, who owned the inn during most of the Prohibition Era, made the White Horse a financial success by promoting breakfast specials. It was he who changed the name from Heard House.

After a goat jumped though one of his large picture windows, Peters reportedly said, “Well, it needed remodeling anyway.” He replaced all of the pictures windows with small windows and made some minor additions.

The present bar was installed as World War II was ending. The barroom was enlarged by eliminating smaller rooms and expanding the inn southward a few feet over the wooden sidewalk. The old walk remains as part of the barroom floor.

LaVERNE OLDS has a story about “bugging” a room at the inn when he was living there just after the first World War, when he was 19.

“I was interested in radios, as I still am, because I was the telegraph operator for the railroad that ran through town. Well, I bought this button microphone, just a small thing, for a dollar.

“Then I drilled a hole in the center of a picture that used to hang in the drawing room that was located where the barroom is now. And then I put that microphone in the hole and ran some wire up to my room on the second floor where I listened.

“You see, the drawing room was used by the young men of the town when they came in and entertained the hired girls. Nothing indecent or anything, but for a pretty unsophisticated lad I sure did learn a lot.”

Olds describes the daily life of the Metamora of that period: “The big event of the day was 6:10 every evening when the passenger train would whistle the depot. Ten minutes earlier you could shoot a cannonball down the street and not hit anyone, but after that whistle sounded, the town would just come out of the woodwork.

“Well, everyone would go to the depot and watch them unload about 250 milk cans, and also see who got off the train and who got on. Then they would follow the mail up to the Post Office and sit around waiting for their mail.

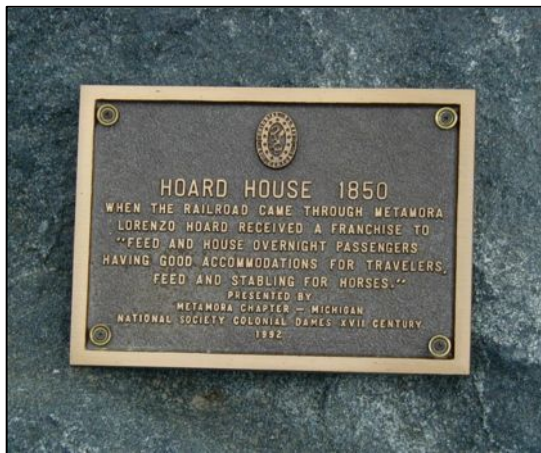
“After the mail, everyone would either sit on the steps or go down to the inn and sit in the captain’s chairs on the porch and talk until bedtime.

“At 6 in the morning the south-bound train would come and whistle and wake everyone up. Better than an alarm clock.”

**THE HISTORY** of the White Horse includes the names of some of the earliest pioneers of southern Lapeer County.

Daniel Ammerman built the inn in 1850. After several changes of ownership, it passed in the Hoard family, first represented in this area by Lorenzo Hoard. He passed through Metamora in 1837 when Flint was little more than a few log cabins and Indians were as numerous as settlers.

Hoard returned in the early 1840s and on Oct. 15, 1846, bought 40 acres. The same year, Isaac Hoard, a retired sea captain believed to have been his uncle, brought some land from Able Webster.



Later, when Lorenzo Hoard bought the inn, he renamed it the Hoard House. He added the east wing to the north-south structure. He served no liquor, and the inn remained dry until 1906, when the family ownership ended.

By 1858 Hoard was paying almost \$50 a year in taxes on the inn.

He was appointed postmaster of the village on Aug. 2, 1861, and served until 1877.

James Banker, grandfather of Mrs. Hoard, lived in the area. Banker, who had fought in the Revolutionary War, had to go to Pontiac once a month to pick up his \$100 pension. He was 105 when he died.

In the early days, the stagecoaches went to Pontiac as well as Hadley and Thornville. Thornville was on the Flint River and its mill made it a center of commerce larger than Metamora. Now it is all gone except for a church and a few homes.

ABOUT 1872 the Michigan Central Railroad built its line through Metamora and Hoard received a franchise to feed and house overnight passengers. By 1874, Metamora had 271 residents.

Hoard House was listed in the 18/6 Atlas of Lapeer County as having “good accommodations for travelers. Feed and stabling for horses.”

The Michigan State Gazeteer and Business Directory of 1887-88 had this rundown on Metamora”

“Metamora was originally settled in 1836, a village on the Bay City division of the Michigan Central Railroad, 52 miles north of Detroit, in the township of Metamora, Lapeer County.

It has two churches, Methodist and Congregational, a graded school, a grain elevator, a stave mill and several good stores.

“It is a prominent trading and shipping point for the surrounding country. Stage to Hadley, eight miles west; fare 60 cents; and Thornville daily. Daily mail.

ONE OF Hoard’s daughters, Louisa, was born in Penn Yan, N. Y., but was reared in Metamora. Her husband, James Perkins, son of Harry F. Perkins, was postmaster from 1841 to 1843.

They managed Hoard House after the death of Lorenzo Hoard in 1888. Their daughter, Bessie, and her husband, William Thompson, sold it in 1906 to William Detter and Samuel Miller.

The partnership of Miller-Dexter put liquor in. But temperance was gaining popularity and it wasn’t long before the townspeople voted under the Local Option Law of 1889 to make the town dry.

Today the White Horse is owned by a Detroit firm that has remodeled the interior and plans still more work. The weight of its years is lightly borne, and it is keeping up with the times under the management of Mrs. Betty Bailiff.

Where travelers once waited for the stagecoach, there now are jazz sessions, every Sunday.



## Miss Lucy's Tea Room

In the eighteenth century home, tea drinking was an occasion of great ceremony. Tealeaves were kept in a locked caddy, for which there was only ever one key. Once or twice a week, the lady of the house would unlock the caddy to serve tea to impress important guests. The fine porcelain in which the tea was served was an opportunity for a refined woman to not only emphasize the family's wealth, but added to her sense of ceremony. A lady who loved her tea was Lucy Carpenter Hoard, the lady of the Hoard House, now known as the Historic White Horse Inn.

The Historic White Horse Inn was purchased by Lorenzo Hoard in 1850. It functioned as an Inn and restaurant, charging 50 cents for overnight guests. It was also said to be a stop on the Underground Railroad, a network of smuggling routes that helped slaves make their way from the South to friendlier places in the north.

Miss Lucy's Tea Room is named in honor of the "Lady of the Inn" – Lucy Carpenter Hoard.

The Historic White Inn is located:  
One East High Street  
Metamora, MI 48455  
(810) 678-2150  
Websites:  
[www.historicwhitehorseinn.com](http://www.historicwhitehorseinn.com)  
[www.misslucystearoom.com](http://www.misslucystearoom.com)

<http://www.ajlambert.com>



In 1992 the Metamora Michigan Chapter of the Colonial Dames of the XVII Century commissioned a historic marker to be placed in front of the White Horse Inn when in 1850 it was called The Hoard House owned by Lorenzo Hoard.

**HOARD HOUSE 1850:** When the railroad came through Metamora Lorenzo Hoard received a franchise to "feed and house overnight passengers having good accommodation for travelers, feed and stabling for horses." Presented by Metamora Chapter – Michigan, National Society Colonial Dames XVII Century, 1992.

**On the 13<sup>th</sup> day of December 1986 the Metamora Chapter was started by Organizing President Laura Cheger-Barnard.**

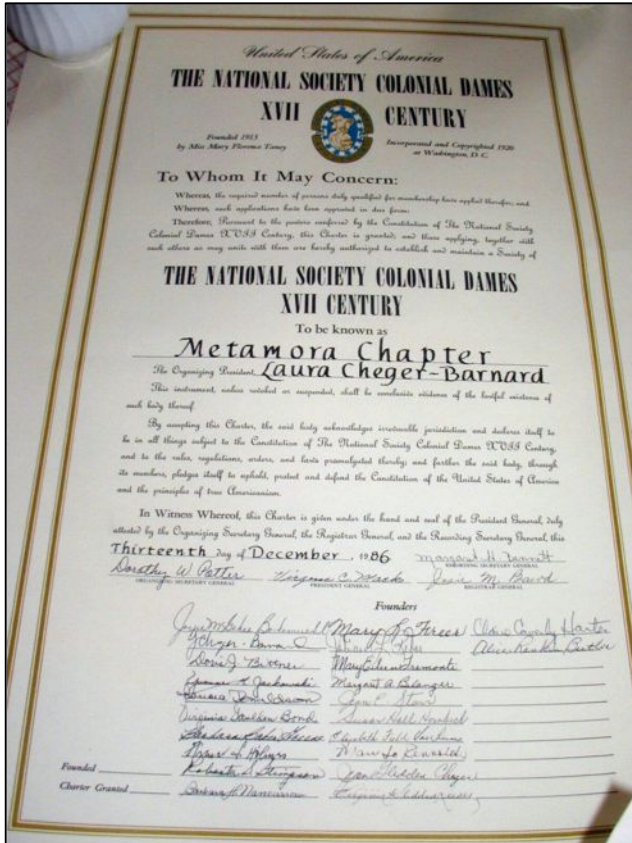
Sitting on the rock housing the Colonial Dames of the XVII marker is Audrey J. (Denny) Lambert present member since July 2005 through ancestors Edward Jones & his wife Mary (Field) Jones: National Number # 35530.

Picture taken: May 2006.



L to R: Colonial Dames of the XVII – Metamora Michigan Chapter, Audrey J. (Denny) Lambert & Catherine Pouls. Picture taken 2007.

(Metamora Chapter, The National Society Colonial Dames XVII Century)



**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: THE NATIONAL SOCIETY COLONIAL DAMES XVII CENTURY,**  
Founded 1915 by Miss Mary Florence Taney,  
Incorporated and Copyrighted 1920 at  
Washington D. C.

To Whom It May Concern:

Whereas, the required number of person duly qualified for membership have applied therefore and

Whereas, such applications have been approved in due form;

Therefore, Pursuant to the powers conferred by the Constitution of The National Society Colonial Dames XVII Century, this Charter is granted; and those applying, together with such others as may unite with them are hereby authorized to establish and maintain a Society of The National Society Colonial Dames XVII Century **To be known as Metamora Chapter.**

The Organizing President Laura Cheger-Barnard.

This instrument, unless revoked or suspended, shall be conclusive evidence of the lawful existence of such body thereof.

By accepting this Charter, the said body acknowledges irrevocable jurisdiction and declares itself to be in all things subject to the Constitution of The National Society Colonial Dames XVII Century, and to the rules, regulations, orders, and laws promulgated thereby; and further the said body, through its members, pledges itself to uphold, protect and defend he Constitution of the United States of America and the principles of true Americanism.

In Witness Whereof, this Charter is given under the hand and seal of the President General, duly attested by the Organizing Secretary General, the Registrar General, and the Recording Secretary General, this **Thirteenth day of December, 1986.**

- Margaret H. Bennett: Recording Secretary General
- Dorothy W. Potter: Organizing Secretary General
- Virgene C. Mack: President General
- Josie M. Baird: Registrar General

**Membership Eligibility**

Any woman of good moral character, eighteen years of age or over, is eligible for membership, provided she has been invited by the Society and is the lineal descendant of an ancestor who lived and served prior to 1701 in one of the Original Colonies in the geographical area of the present United States of America. Membership is in the National Society but members join through Chapters. Admission into the Society is by invitation and the endorsement by two members, to whom the applicant is known personally, and approval of lineage papers by the President General, Registrar General and Treasurer General. Documentary proof of an ancestor's service prior to 1701 is required. There are 18 categories of eligible service as detailed in the list below, including both male and female ancestors. No person may enter the Society under known false lineage records.

### **Service Categories**

Documentary proof of an ancestor's service and residence prior to 1701 in one of the following is required:

1. Historic Founder of Jamestown or Historic Founder of any of the original colonies
2. Member of the London, Plymouth or Virginia Companies who came to the colonies to live.
3. Colonial Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Deputy Governor, or Colonial Officer.
4. Member of the House of Burgesses.
5. Member or Delegate to the Council of the Assembly.
6. Deputy or Representative to the General Court.
7. All civil and church officials and services.
8. Founder or Trustee of any college or school.
9. Minister of the Gospel or Commissary of the Bishops of London.
10. Member of the Council of Safety of 1689.
11. Signer of the Mayflower Compact.
12. Member of the House of Delegates.
13. All Professions, Trades and Crafts.
14. All Military and Naval services of the colonies.
15. Any who furnished funds or supplies.
16. Member of Provincial Congress.
17. Landowner, Freeman or Planter.
18. Headright, Transportee.

### **Object of the National Society:**

- To aid in the preservation of the records and of the historic sites of our country;
- To foster interest in historical colonial research;
- To aid in the education of the youth of our country;
- To commemorate the noble and heroic deeds of our ancestors, the founders of our great Republic;
- To maintain zealously those high principles of virtue, courage and patriotism which led to the independence of the Colonies and the foundation and establishment of the United States of America;
- To maintain a Library of Heraldry and preserve the lineage and Coats of Arms of our Armorial ancestors;
- To develop a library specializing in seventeenth century American colonial data.

\*See Loftis/Denny website at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>

## WHITE HORSE INN CLOSES – 14 November 2012

After 12 years of operating our business at the 162 year old Historic White Horse Inn, we are faced with a difficult decision. Sadly, we are unable to continue operating and must make the heart wrenching decision to close our business as of Wednesday, November 14, 2012. The White Horse is in need of immediate major repairs to insure the safety of our staff and guests. We learned today that a decision has been made that in spite of the safety issues the repairs will not be made. Good sense must prevail. We have decided to close.

Our staff and guests are our greatest loss. Our staff has been our business foundation and the key to our continued growth and success. Our loyal and supportive guests will be dearly missed. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts. We will truly miss you all.

Gratefully,  
Tim Wilkins

### CELEBRATING 160 YEAR HISTORY

1850 - 2010

Michigan's Oldest Restaurant

The White Horse Inn was established in 1850 by Lorenzo Hoard (1816-1888) is the **oldest restaurant in Michigan** that still does business the way it was intended. Located in Metamora, which was then described as "a beautiful little town in the spring and summer, being blessed with an abundance of large, shady maple trees." Lorenzo purchased the existing village store, once a stagecoach stop. The stagecoach period ended around 1910.

### 160 YEAR OLD HISTORY

When the White Horse Inn opened in 1850

Thirteen years earlier, in 1837, Michigan became the 26th state,  
1850 Levi Strauss made his first blue jeans and the paper bag was invented,  
11 years later in 1861, the American Civil War began and Lincoln was elected President,  
26 years later in 1876, the telephone and refrigerator were invented,  
29 years later in 1879, the light bulb was invented,  
60 years later, in 1910 gas was 10 cents a gallon and the Metamora Village speed limit was 8 miles per hour.

In 1850, Lorenzo Hoard (1816-1888) purchased the Historic White Horse Inn which was an existing general store. He named it the Hoard House and began operating as a boarding house charging 50 cents for overnight guests, restaurant, general store and stagecoach stop. (The stagecoach period ended around 1910.)

The "big event" of daily life during that period was when the passenger train's whistle (in 1870's) would blow. Once the villagers heard that 6:10pm whistle the town would seem to "come alive". Everyone would go to the train depot to see who would board and also come off the train, watch them unload milk cans and they would follow the mail up to the Post Office and sit around visiting and waiting for their mail to be distributed. After the mail, they would go down to the White Horse Inn, sit in the captain's chairs and talk until bedtime.

The White Horse was also a stop for the Underground Railroad, a network of smuggling routes that helped slaves make their way from the south to friendlier places in the north.

The History of the White Horse includes the names of some of the earliest pioneers. Daniel Ammerman built the Inn in 1850. After several changes of ownership, it passed to the Hoard family. By 1858 Hoard was paying \$50 a year in taxes on the Inn.



About 1872, the Michigan Central Railroad built its line through Metamora and Hoard received a franchise to feed and house overnight passengers. By 1874, Metamora had 271 residents.

The Hoard House was listed in the 1876 Atlas of Lapeer County as having "good accommodations for travelers. Feed and stabling for horses."

Lorenzo Hoard died in 1888. Family managed the Hoard House until it was sold in 1906 to William Detter and Samuel Miller. This partnership presented the sale of liquor to their customers.

The late Gilbert Olds bought the inn about 1917 for \$2,200 and kept it until 1922 or 1923. He was remembered by the villagers for going around without wearing shoes. Frank Peters, owned the inn during most of the Prohibition Era. He made the White Horse a financial success by promoting breakfast specials. It was Mr. Peters who changed the name from the Hoard House to the White Horse after he saw a restaurant in Detroit with the same name.

The second floor of the White Horse is home to a traditional tearoom and parlor, opened in 2005 and named Miss Lucy's Tearoom and Parlor named in honor of the wife of White Horse founder Lorenzo Hoard - Lucy Carpenter Hoard. Tearoom website [www.misslucystearoom.com](http://www.misslucystearoom.com)

### **Menu Historical Facts for current menu items**

In 1850, recycled bread ends created a homemade Bread Pudding dessert that families treated themselves to after dinner. It is still served today and is its most popular dessert item.

In 1850, the year the White Horse was founded as the Hoard House, the great British fish and chip trade grew out of existing small businesses which sold fish and chips separately in the streets and alleys of London and some of Britain's industrial towns. The Historic White Horse Inn's Famous Fish and Chip "all you care to eat" dinners are still served at the White Horse today – it is offered to dinner guests' everyday and all day.

In 1862, James Vernor, a Detroit pharmacist, had concocted a new drink - Vernors. It was a mix of 19 ingredients, including ginger, vanilla and natural flavorings. It is still served at the White Horse today

It is not known exactly when milkshakes were introduced at soda fountains, but they were popular by the mid-1880s. The Historic White

Horse Inn serves delicious cinnamon, chocolate or vanilla milk shakes made with Ray's Ice Cream, Royal Oak, Michigan.

Little is known with certainty about the ice cream sundae's birth: it originated in the late 1880s or early 1890s; one of the first published sundae recipes appeared in *Modern Guide for Soda Dispensers* in 1897; and sundaes were very popular by 1900. Many accounts of the sundae's invention have been published, but there is no definitive evidence about it. The best-known explanation for the sundae is that it was created to circumvent Blue Laws banning the sale of ice cream sodas on Sunday. Beginning in the colonial era, Blue Laws were promulgated to prohibit certain activities on the Sabbath.....The Historic White Horse Inn serves a Michigan Sundae served with many Michigan products. Three heaping scoops of Ray's (Royal Oak) cinnamon or vanilla (or both) ice cream, Sander's Hot Fudge (Detroit), whipped cream, candies caramelized walnuts (made at the White Horse Inn-Metamora) and a strawberries (Michigan when in season).

In 1886, like many people who change history, John Pemberton, an Atlanta pharmacist, was inspired by simple curiosity. One afternoon, he stirred up a fragrant, caramel-colored liquid and, when it was done, he carried it a few doors down to Jacobs' Pharmacy. Here, the mixture was combined with carbonated water and sampled by customers who all agreed -- this new drink was something special. So Jacobs' Pharmacy put it on sale for five cents a glass. Pemberton's bookkeeper, Frank Robinson, named the mixture Coca-Cola®. The Historic White Horse Inn still serves Coca-Cola products.

American dictionaries date the first print instance of the term "cobbler" in 1859. The Historic White Horse Inn serves an Apple/Cranberry Cobbler as a dessert item in the fall and winter—using Michigan apples whenever available.

### **WHITE HORSE INN BOUGHT BY LOCAL RESTAURATEURS**

Extensive work necessary before re-opening in spring of 2014

BY KRYSTAL JOHNS 810-452-2601 • kjohns@mihomepaper.com

**METAMORA** — If the White Horse is going to be saved, it is going to need immediate and extensive attention, but a local couple has the passion to give it a go.

Husband-and-wife restaurateurs Victor Dzenowagis and Linda Egeland have signed a purchase agreement for the building, which closed without notice back in November. According to employees, the owners were in discussion with contractors about repairs to the 163-year-old building. It was decided, according to the closure notice, that those repairs would not be made. The East High Street property was also in mortgage foreclosure and the taxes hadn't been paid. The closure ended the eatery's purported run as Michigan's oldest continually serving restaurant.



The only things eating at the White Horse these days are the rodents, and there is no denying that an enormous amount of work needs to be poured into the place to make it a viable establishment again. The kitchen floor is rotting away to the extent that an ice cooler has partially fallen through. Down in the basement, a six-by-six chunk of wood balanced on its end on top of a boulder is what is holding that section of the floor up. Upstairs, the floors slope so badly, it makes one's knees buckle to walk into the room. The foundation is crumbling away so badly that it has been stuffed with spray foam and steel wool to keep rats from entering. The ceiling upstairs is rotted through in places, and the food in the outdoor cooler in the back of the building was never cleaned out when the place closed.

Indoors, particularly in the bar area, it looks as if they simply closed the doors after a night of business and left it to the ghosts. Glasses wait stacked on the bar, illuminated by the sunlight streaking in through the wavy old windows. Speaking of ghosts, that of Lorenzo Hoard might be a bit unhappy to learn that someone took his riding boots, which always rested at the top of the stairs. Or, perhaps old Lorenzo put on his boots and simply headed elsewhere once the establishment closed.

Husband-and-wife restaurateurs Victor Dzenowagis and Linda Egeland (left) have signed a purchase agreement for the building, which closed without notice back in November. Photos by Krystal Johns. Dzenowagis and Egeland are now faced with the decaying hulk of a historic building they wish to save.

"We're in the process of figuring out what needs to be done to the building. We've had builders and architects in the building for almost three weeks now," Egeland said. "It's been really badly neglected and it's going to take an awful lot of work and even more money to turn it into a vibrant, successful restaurant that can stand the test of time for the next 100 years."

But if all goes as they hope, Dzenowagis and Egeland will be able to take possession of the White Horse name — it's tied up in liens right now — get historical grants and other assistance, and bring the restaurant back. Their vision is a clean, pleasant place to meet, eat and drink that embraces the historical and equestrian charm it always has. With 25 years in the restaurant business and five successful eateries in the metro Detroit area, they have plenty of experience.

“We’re confident that we’re going to be able to pull it together and keep it the White Horse and give it a facelift and keep it the same place everyone has loved over the years,” Egeland said.

Dzenowagis and Egeland have lived about three miles from the White Horse for 22 years, and ate there frequently. They love the community and are looking forward to bringing the restaurant back. Both also feel a sense of urgency about the project.

The County Press this week was given access to the White Horse Inn building, now owned by Metamora-area residents Victor Dzenowagis and Linda Egeland, who intend to begin an extensive renovation to the aged building before reopening it next spring-summer. Photos by Krystal Johns “Once a place like this is gone, it’s gone,” said Dzenowagis. “It’s our plan to not have that happen.”

“They were sitting in these rooms talking about the Civil War,” Egeland added.

The couple is estimating it is going to take a year and at least a million dollars to make the building structurally sound, up to code, handicap accessible and to replace and refurbish everything. Dzenowagis likened it to peeling back the layers of an onion, because they’re not entirely sure what they will find as they begin the process.

“We’re kind of doing this on blind faith that everything will coalesce and come together,” he said.

One interesting part of the process will be that Bill Kubota of KDN Videoworks will be creating a documentary of the restoration, which is to be aired on PBS.

As the couple has been at the White Horse a lot, they are finding the community is as excited as they are about the restaurant reopening. One such person is John Griswold, who is a trustee on the village council and owner of the Village Saltbox across from the White Horse.

“Even a year is going to hurt all the businesses here,” he said. “It always hurts when a business in a community leaves.”

The White Horse, he said, has been going downhill for probably about 40 years, though he said he still enjoyed going there for a bite to eat.

“We all want it to open up,” he said.