

PHILOMONT GENERAL

Semi-Quincentennial Social Media Series

Part I of III – Early History – Nation's Founding Through Mid-19th Century

(July 2nd 2026 via Facebook & Instagram)

For years, we have invested less in social media, and more in the relationships formed and sustained across a worn counter, over a cup of coffee, or while catching up with a neighbor. These relationships remain the heart of everything we do. But as our nation approaches a significant milestone - the 250th anniversary of its founding - we feel compelled to share the story of Philomont General with a wider audience. It is, in many ways, a story which follows the arc of American history.

The ribbon of road stretching northwesterly from the western edge of Aldie to the village of Bluemont was, centuries ago, a footpath of the Sioux, Algonkian, Powhatan, Iroquois, Susquehannock, and Piscataway peoples. Early European settlers followed the same path through colonial Virginia. While surveying for Lord Fairfax in 1748, a sixteen-year-old George Washington noted traveling the route in his personal diary. At that moment, the colonies were still a generation away from independence — and the road that would one day carry the commerce of a new Republic was little more than a worn path through western Virginia wilderness. In 1785, with the ink barely dry on the Treaty of Paris and the Articles of Confederation straining under the weight of a young and restless nation, the Virginia General Assembly authorized a network of toll roads branching westward from Alexandria - among the first with recorded operation in American history. It was an act of quiet confidence – a fledgling Republic investing in its own future, betting that the road west was worth building. Snickersville Turnpike was an integral part of that network, officially chartered as the Snicker's Gap Turnpike Company in 1810. By then, the Constitution had been ratified, the Bill of Rights enshrined, and presidents Washington, Adams, and Jefferson had served and established a uniquely American tradition of peaceful transfer of power. The nation was finding its footing - and so was Loudoun County.

The name Philomont (meaning 'beloved mount') first appears in official records in March of 1825 - through the establishment of a Post Office, with a member of the Gregg family serving as first Postmaster. The Republic was now nearly fifty years old. James Monroe had concluded his presidency the same month, and John Quincy Adams was settling into the White House. The era of the Founding Fathers was giving way to something new - and in the quiet foothills of the Blue Ridge, so was Philomont. In 1827, as the Snicker's Gap Turnpike Company worked earnestly toward the completion of what is now known as Hibb's Bridge - and the straightening of the road section north of the Beaverdam Creek crossing - several property owners moved swiftly to establish businesses along the new section of road.

Among them was Joseph Pritchard Megeath, aged 27, who partnered with the Gregg family to establish a mercantile store at what would become the crossroads we know today as the intersection of Snickersville Turnpike (VA734) and Philomont Road (VA630).

The Megeath family was no stranger to Virginia, and Loudoun County. The family's patriarch (McGeach) had immigrated from Ireland to the Virginia Colony in 1747, the year before Washington first travelled the origins of Snickersville Turnpike. He arrived in a Colony, but his great-grandson would build a business in a Republic. By 1829, Joseph Pritchard Megeath had assumed both the retail merchant license (in his name) and the role of Philomont's Postmaster. He would also go on to serve for many years as Treasurer of the Snicker's Gap Turnpike Company. In doing so, he was not merely operating as a merchant - he was participating in the infrastructure of a growing nation, and connecting a community to the broader commerce and communication of the early American Republic.

By 1834, surveyor and mapmaker Yardley Taylor documented the presence of six dwelling houses, one common school, and seven mercantile businesses at this crossroads. A community had taken root.

The story of this business, and the community it serves, continues. This is the first of a three-part series marking the 250th Anniversary of the United States of America - and the story of Philomont General; a community general store which has traversed local and national history for 200 years. We encourage you to follow along.

Philomont, Virginia | #PhilomontGeneral | #Philomont | #LoudounCounty |
#SnickersvilleTpke | #America250

