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April 29, 2021

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By Charles R. Nichols

One of the very necessary businesses in early Philmont was a livery stable for the care and rental of horses and related equipment in the era before mechanized travel.

In 1872, Charles Whiteman bought a building at the corner of Martindale Street and Lumber Street (Summit Street and Elm Street) and started a livery business.



The Village of Philmont continued to grow in population and by 1886 a larger location was needed to support the growing need for transportation. So a property on lower Summit Street was purchased, and the barn converted to the commercial use. The first photo shows the barn.

Wagons kept on the first floor, stable in the basement, and haymow on the top floor. This arrangement, by the way was not uncommon in other properties where horses were kept for owners use.

The livery business continued to grow with the railroad bringing in people in need of transportation to tend to their business, as well as local requirements.

The facility on Summit Street was large enough to keep horses owned by others also. The local undertaker kept his team there.



Stolen from Whiteman's Livery

Philmont, N. Y., April 15th, 1904.
A JET BLACK HORSE.

HORSE clipped, about 14 years old, 15-3 hands high, weight about 900, very tall over withers, high headed, heavy tail, and has habit of nodding head and ears when traveling.

WAGON, high wheeled, hard rubber tires, red running gear, black body.

HARNESS, surrey saddle, imitation rubber trimmings.

MAN about 50 to 55 years of age, weight about 120 pounds, gray moustache.

REWARD. Any one giving information leading to detection of same will be suitably rewarded. Notify C. E. Whiteman, Philmont, N. Y., or Chief Lane, Hudson, N. Y.

Whiteman supplied a 'Stage' to travel between the Harlem station in Philmont and the Boston & Albany station in Mellenville. His advertisements at the time stated his stage met all trains. His business also included carrying the mail from train to post office.

To fill the need for horses, some were purchased in New York City, brought up to Hudson on the night boat and driven to Philmont.

One special horse was a black horse named Major, who learned several tricks including come on whistle, opening his stall door, and returning to his stall when unhitched. The second photo shows Major.

In 1904 Major was stolen, along with a high wheel wagon and harness. A postcard was used to spread the reward notice for any information about the horse, wagon, and the 50 - 55 year old man with a gray moustache believed to be the thief.

I found no record of the return of the horse, or arrest of the thief. The copy of the post card is shown in the third photo, and the high wheel wagon in the fourth.


With the appearance of the automobile, the livery business gradually became obsolete. Charles Whiteman didn't change and adopt the new machine, but his family and decedents did by first offering automobiles for hire, eventually moving to a more populated area and dealing in cars.

The last photo shows Mr. Whiteman on the right, and Earl Decker, who was a chauffer and



could drive either horse or auto, on the left. The car is noted as a Krit, and the photo pre World War One.



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