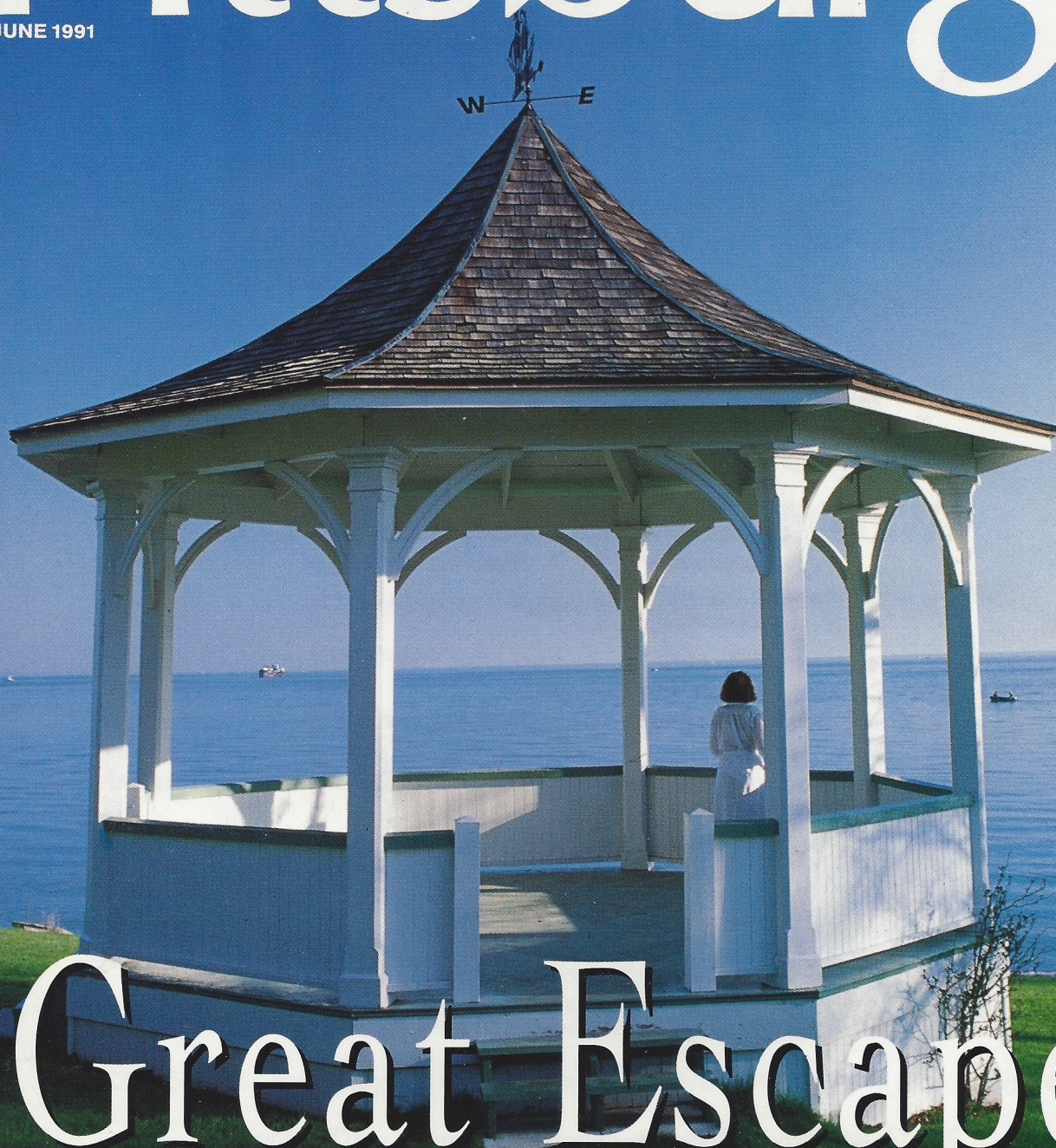


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## Great Escapes

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*Nine Weekend Getaways For Your Summer Pleasure*

BY LYDIA STROHL

# Ah, summer.

A time for making memories. Car trips, sightseeing, ice cream. The smell of leaked gasoline on hot asphalt. And from Pittsburgh, a multitude of destinations within a five-hour radius, perfect for a getaway weekend. It just depends what you're in the mood for: a sparkling fishing stream, or a country inn. A bike ride down a cobblestone street, or a long afternoon in a cool marble art gallery. A sail on the Chesapeake, or waterskiing on Lake Erie. A play, an opera or a symphony; or a bonfire, a frisbee and a bottle of wine. Hot dogs or crabcakes. A lesson in 18th-century politics.

Can't make up your mind? You're in luck. There are enough summer weekends to do all of these things. Ahead, a weekend tripper's guide to summer, 1991.

## Affordable Island Hopping

"Look, an eagle's nest," said the Piper Warrior's young pilot. We were soaring above the trees, going further into the blue. With the angle of the sun, our destinations, South Bass and Kelley's Island, were like white saucers gleaming on a black marble table, clearly visible past the long spit of land leading to Cedar Point.

Yep. Sandusky, Ohio.

A former industrial town, Sandusky is slowly re-gentrifying itself. Best known as the home of Cedar Point, the area offers a lot more than just the strip of fast food havens, bowling arcades and summer motels that line the road to the giant amusement complex. Downtown Sandusky's old post office is a museum that preserves and restores carousel horses, its Victorian homes are bed & breakfasts, restaurants and galleries, like the Livingstone Taylor Gallery, cleverly restored by one of Cedar Point's artists, John Taylor. The islands of Lake Erie are just three miles off the coast, but accessible only by ferry, plane, or private boat.

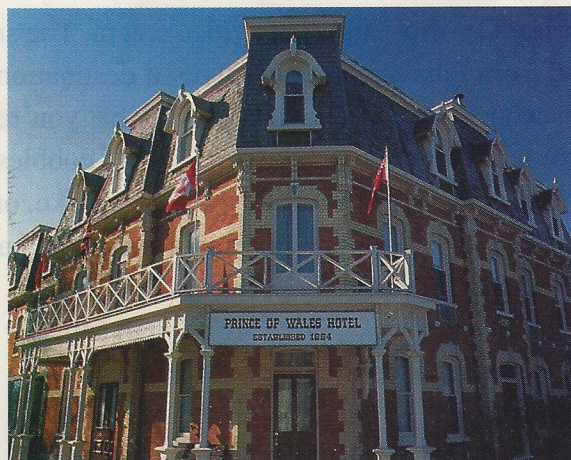
Once off the ferry on South Bass Island, visitors can rent golf carts and bicycles to access Put-in-Bay at the opposite end of the island. Or visit Middle Bass Island, for a tour of the century-old Lonz winery. Though South Bass Island has pockets of peaceful state parks and back roads, Put-in-Bay has a party atmosphere on summer weekends, with private and excursion boats jamming the docks and revellers hopping from boat to boat to shore bars and restaurants between rounds of water skiing, windsurfing, and sailing.

Kelley's Island is a 10-minute plane ride away, but another world. With 800 acres of state park, a few bed and breakfast inns, a gift shop, and a couple of restaurants, visitors to the island camp, fish, swim, hike, and bike for entertainment. "It is what it is," says Gary Finger, owner of The Village Pump, a favorite with locals for Brandy Alexanders and perch sandwiches, "small." Ken Neuffer, owner/builder of the modern Fly Inn B&B at the airstrip, laughs when he recalls a woman and her two daughters who eagerly set off to explore downtown. "They came back and left," says Neuffer, "saying, 'but there's no mall here.'"

Once back on the mainland, however, there are malls, marinas, museums; and for accommodations, there are campgrounds, cottages, inns, hotels, and B&Bs.

*Erie County Visitor's Bureau (1-800) 255-ERIE.*

*The Prince of Wales Hotel, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario*



G R E A T  
E S C A P E S

*The Corkscrew at Cedar Point in Sandusky, Ohio*



*Below: Cedar Point's Soak City Waterpark*



## An International Affair

Over the bridge and up the parkway from Buffalo, New York, Niagara-On-The-Lake, Ontario, seems centuries more refined: neat square lawns, hotels with cozy pub lounges on the ground floor. The little village where the Niagara River meets Lake Ontario was settled by fur traders in the 1600s, burned to the ground by American troops in the War of 1812 and rebuilt just after the war. On King Street, buildings that used to be butcher

## Two Capital Towns

### ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND

and barber shops are boutiques and restaurants.

A few of these buildings house theaters, for Niagara-on-the-Lake is home to the Shaw Festival, which rotates nine plays by George Bernard Shaw and his contemporaries between three theaters during a seven-month season. Clever scheduling and remarkable versatility in set and character by the company's cast and crew allow theater aficionados to see as many as four plays in one weekend. This year's season runs from April 19 to November 10.

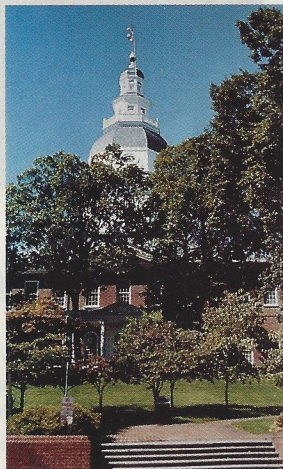
The quality and richness of the Shaw Festival should not be missed, but visitors will be drawn into the past and present of the Niagara Peninsula. A visit to Fort George shows how the soldiers lived and recounts the story of the War of 1812. The Niagara Parkway, linking Niagara-on-the-Lake with Niagara Falls, is an awesome drive along the natural border of the two countries. Because of its position between the river, the lake and a natural barrier locals call the escarpment, the Niagara Peninsula is tempered from heat and cold and is thus an agricultural jackpot; farmstands and vineyards line the roads. There are six wineries in Niagara-on-the-Lake, including the internationally recognized Hillebrandt Estates, where visitors can learn old European winemaker's secrets and taste the extraordinary result of combining tradition with the region's bounty of varietal grapes.

If a visit to Niagara Falls cannot be avoided, do so on the less tacky Canadian side. The falls are a wonder, but more overwhelming are the crowds that turn out each summer to gape at them. Time is better spent wandering through the countryside above the falls, stopping at the multitude of antique shops and galleries, for tea at an old inn, for a glimpse of a beautiful country home.

*Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, Tourist Information (416) 468-4263.*



"Sometimes as I walk through the town, I feel like I am the only one dressed right," says Kathy Mosko, a resident history buff and guide. Her long, dark wool cape and hat resembling an upside down pin cushion are from the first golden age of Annapolis, Maryland, in the late 1700s.



*The State House in Annapolis, Maryland*

"Oh, it was the place to be in colonial America," says Mosko. Though briefly the home of the Continental Congress, "then the action moved to Baltimore, and the city went to sleep—the historic homes and buildings were untouched." More popular areas, like Boston and Baltimore, were updated with the times, but not being chic saved colonial Annapolis.

Annapolis became a company town for the U.S. Naval Academy, whose impressive campus is training ground for 4,500 midshipmen and a primary attraction in town. Mosko shows

off the Navy Chapel, and the crypt of John Paul Jones, tells the stories and traditions deeply rooted here. But when the Naval Academy wanted to raze three residential blocks to expand, a local group raised hell.

"Then 30 years ago, people began to discover the buildings and to restore them. There are more historical buildings here than any other colonial town," Mosko says. Since then the group, Historic Annapolis, Inc., has fought to save more than 470 buildings in the historic district, declared a historic landmark in 1965.

Webbing out from the 212-year-old state capitol building are cobbled streets with restored buildings, some private residences, some public showcases, plus the usual boutiques, inns, and restaurants. Perhaps most incredible is the home of William Paca, a governor of Maryland and signer of the Declaration of Independence: For years enclosed in the main building of Carvel Hall, a hotel, it was saved from demolition in 1965 and so authentically restored even the joints were X-rayed for original nail holes. The garden behind it was unearthed from under a concrete parking lot, and recreated from pictures and archaeological digs.

For years called Crabtown because of its then best-known product, Annapolis is now first and foremost a leisure economy. In its second golden age, working watermen have been zoned out of downtown, and wealthy professionals from Baltimore and D.C. live in historic Downtown. On summer weekends, pleasure boats crowd downtown docks and tourists pack the streets. Annapolis is fascinating, the lessons it can teach us about America then, and now, innumerable.

*Annapolis and Anne Arundel County Conference and Visitors Bureau (301) 268-TOUR.*

### WASHINGTON, D.C.

To most, Washington D.C. means great granite government buildings, the long mall graced with monuments to inspiring presidents, a wobbly realization that "gee, I'm proud to be American." To others, it's the museums of the Smithsonian Institution (Richard Wurman, author of in-depth tourbook *Washington DC Access*, writes that if all the Smithsonian treasures were lined up, it would take 2 1/2 years of 24-hour touring to look at each for 1 second, and by then the Institute would have collected 2.5 million more.) The Institute's 14 museums can only exhibit one percent of the collection at a time.

There's more. For a lesson in art history, the Corcoran Gallery collection shows evolution from the flat, gilded religious paintings of the 14th century to 16th-century

It must be inspiration from the air of the Susquehanna. A mile wide here, lined with mighty oaks, the river is host to a steamboat, logging demonstrations, and private boaters in the summer months. Travel down Route 15, along the River, with time to stop at antique shops, flea markets and other area towns like Lewisburg and Mifflinburg. This is where the slogan "Pennsylvania, the heart of it all" originated.

800-358-9900.

## In Our Own Backyards

It is peaceful driving into Antietam Battlefield National Park, the craggy and impossibly beautiful fields divided by shallow woodlands, and dotted with antique farmhouses. It is here that the bloodiest battle of the Civil War claimed more than 23,000 lives.

"All around lay the confederate dead...as I looked down on the poor pinched faces...all enmity died out. There was no 'secession' in those rigid forms nor in those fixed eyes staring blankly at the sky. Clearly it was not 'their war.'" So says a letter of Pvt. David L. Thompson, mounted in a powerful exhibit in the Visitor's Center. On the self-guided auto tour that follows, one imagines the rolling fields littered with bodies still; though peaceful, the force of the park's message gives it a deadly air. Throughout the park, markers tell stories of bravery, of three shooters who held an entire unit over Antietam Creek, of the teetotalling general who promised "yes, by God, whiskey" to his troops if they took the bridge. Suddenly history is real; these were people who drank and loved and feared, just like us.

The nearby Gettysburg battlefield is made impressive by the more than 1,000 gray granite statues spread over the fields, sculptures of crouched soldiers with ready arms and markers detailing infantry

movements. In the museum there is a relic collection started by a fourteen-year-old boy from a farm within the battle lines, who gathered souvenirs as he helped clear the dead from the battlefield. Letters home detail the infinite days of soldiers suffering from confusion, malnutrition and betrayal.

Further South, the town of Harper's Ferry, West Virginia, built around a Federal Armory, was the site of abolitionist John Brown's capture. Restored buildings throughout the little village at the intersection of the Potomac and the Shenandoah rivers show life then: The Master Armorer's Home details arms production; in another a wall marred by an occupying soldier's graffiti shows effects of war; in yet another is a history of the college established here for blacks.

West Virginia's eastern panhandle is a beautiful surprise: a hodge-podge of small, lovely towns connected by wild country roads rolling through farmland run from crumbling farmhouses, front porches filled with rockers and big



*The National Military Park at Gettysburg*

wheels, rusted cars in the side yard. Charles Town, established by George Washington's brother Charles, is a real town lined with house after beautiful house, where one might still meet a Washington.

Gettysburg (717) 334-1124; Antietam, (301) 432-5124; Harper's Ferry, (800) 225-5982.

G R E A T  
E S C A P E S



*A scene from the Ohio Light Opera's 1990 production, The Land of Smiles*

## Singing for Their Summer

A captured French murder suspect is rescued at sea by his friends, clears his name and wins the heart of the aristocrat's daughter. A womanizing Italian duke conspires with his barber to woo the wife of a visiting senator, but must pay off an unemployed macaroni cook to thicken the plot. A Viennese lieutenant, unhappily married to the princess of Flausenthurm, falls into a fated affair with the conductor of a ladies' orchestra. No, we're not suggesting that you spend a summer weekend watching reruns of *Geraldo*. These intricate plots, the stuff of midsummer's nights' dreams, are classical operettas performed by the Ohio Light Opera during their annual summer festival. Now in its 13th season, the Wooster, Ohio-based summer company continues as the only professional operetta company in the United States.

Directed by veteran tenor and Kent State music professor James Stuart, the group has won critical acclaim for past performances, including praise from *Pittsburgh Press* music critic Donald Rosenberg.

Wooster itself is a small college town, sleepy in the summer, surrounded by corn fields and cows. The campus, which

*Continued on page 35*

## GREAT ESCAPES

hosts the Ohio Light Opera, also boasts a lovely old inn. The local Historical Society maintains a museum of Wayne County's past.

But the opera's really the thing. This year, the program will include *Patience and Iolanthe*, by Gilbert and Sullivan, Johann Strauss' *A Night in Venice*, and Jacques Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld*. The season also will bring the company's premiere of Sigmund Romberg's *The New Moon*, and the American premieres of Emmanuel Chabrier's *L'Etoile*, and *A Waltz Dream* by Oscar Straus. The season runs nine weeks, from June 12-August 11, 1991.

For a schedule and ticket information, call (216) 263-2345.

## The Road To Nowhere

Take Route 30 out through the familiar territory of Ligonier and Laughlintown, over the windy summit of Laurel Mountain and down the other side, past miles of nothing, past the old Noah's Ark. From here the vista stretches towards Maryland, in the valley a small blue lake.

Continuing down the mountain, the road suddenly hits a town. A neat little town, well-kept old homes and antique shops close to the road, behind them nothing but acres of land. This is Schellsburg, and Shawnee State Park.

The park is home of the blue lake, where several vested men sit on upturned buckets. "Just getting a line wet to cool my fishing fever," says one, who says the lake is stocked with bass, muskie, northern pike, walleye, and carp. There is a boat launch nearby; summer visitors can also swim, hike, and camp in the 4,000-acre park.

The stretch of Route 30 around Schellsburg has log cabins and huge stone roadhouses, now private residences. For a look inside one, stop at the Jean Bonnet Tavern, a public house since 1760 and now on the National Register of Historic Places. The tavern and the dining room have rustic stone walls and huge fireplaces; there are rooms upstairs for lodging.

The next town is Bedford, which has a historic district of more than 100 structures. An education in how life was lived 200 years ago, Old Bedford Village

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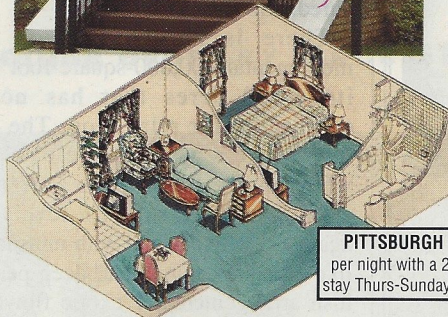
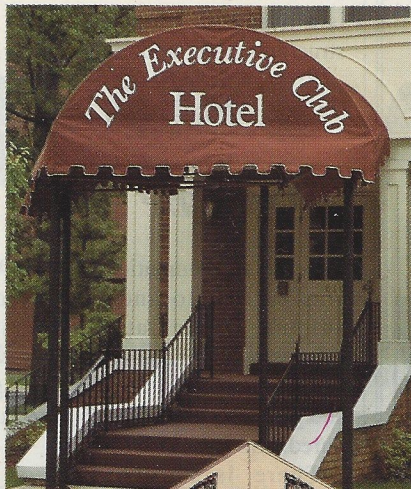
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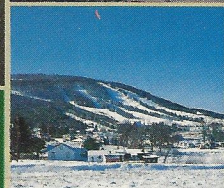
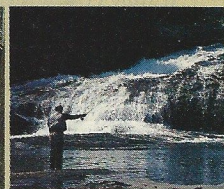
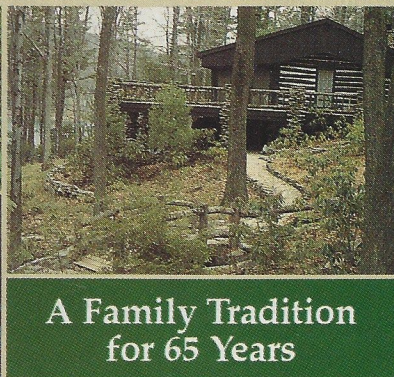
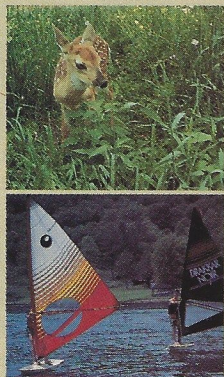
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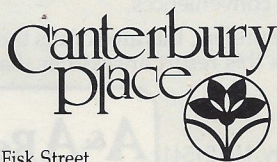
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## GREAT ESCAPES

is a living museum with more than 40 structures from around the county.

*Bedford-Schellsburg Tourist Promotion Agency (814) 623-1771.*

### Take the Cure

In 1778, rheumatic Amanda Anderson was carried to and immersed in the sulphur springs at what is now The Greenbrier in West Virginia. It was a last resort to cure her, and the story goes that she jumped out shrieking "I'm cured, I'm cured." So a resort was born.

There is hardly an inch of the monumental 900,000-square-foot hotel or its 6,500 acres that has not been engineered for relaxation. The elegant lobbies are a vast expanse of black and white marble tiled floors, accented with classic antiques set with lovely florals against walls splashed with unusual colors like carnelian, turquoise, deep peach, and lush arrangements of exotic flowers. The 650 guest rooms and 69 guest cottages are also each uniquely decorated by the Dorothy Draper Company. The cottages, some original to the early-1800s resort, pristinely line deep green lawns, plantation-style.

The 6,500-acre grounds offer tennis, a croquet lawn, stocked fishing streams, golf, paddle tennis, trap and skeet shooting, mineral baths, horseback riding, indoor and outdoor pools, a variety of hiking trails, gardens, and shady nooks to sit in. The chefs create gourmet cuisine, best with the hand-picked Napa Valley Greenbrier wines.

Built in 1912, this hotel is on the former location of the Old White, a getaway for prominent society of Washington and Baltimore, a destination of the C&O railway. "Taking the waters" was a cure for everything from fallen arches to nerves. An old menu shows the baths offered a zander or an irrigation for one dollar, a four-cell schnee for two dollars. Though you can't get a perennial douche for just 25 cents anymore, the spa is still a part of a visit here. A relaxing massage, herbal wrap and scotch spray is a choice way to end a day of activity and loosen up for a night of eating, dancing, and billiards, or a movie and early bed. The quiet, peace, and luxury of today's Greenbrier provide the same antidote to civilization.

*The Greenbrier (800) 624-6070.* □



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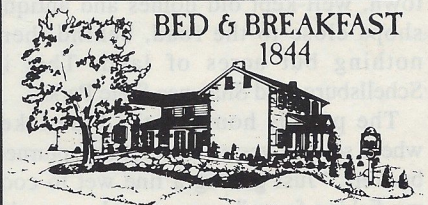
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