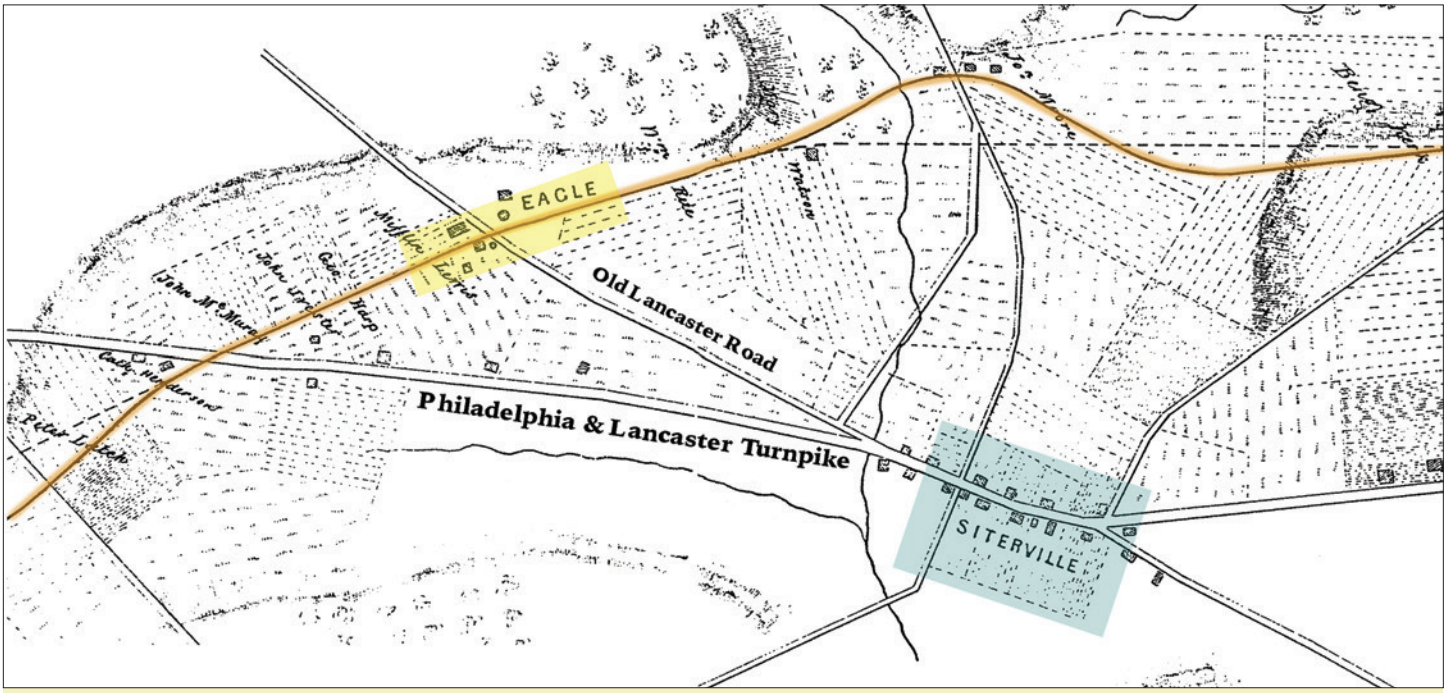
The Station at Eagle

Mike Bertram and Roger D. Thorne

Alternative Names for the Early Railroad System in Pennsylvania

Although the railroad section of Pennsylvania's Main Line of Public Works had officially been designated "The Philadelphia & Columbia Division of the Pennsylvania Railroad," for the road's first ten years, it was generally referred to as the Columbia & Philadelphia or, more commonly, the Columbia Railroad, or simply "the Columbia." However, from 1842 until the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania sold all of its railroad assets in 1857 to the entity incorporated as the Pennsylvania Railroad, the line had been commonly referred to the Philadelphia & Columbia Railroad. While all of these alternative designations may be found in this article, the abbreviation P&C is consistently used for brevity.



The first known depiction of the Eagle Hotel in eastern Chester County showing its proximity in 1851 to the Old Lancaster Road, the Philadelphia & Lancaster Turnpike, and the small village of Siterville in Radnor Township, Delaware County. The Philadelphia & Columbia Railroad trackage is highlighted in orange. This small, meticulous segment of a much larger compilation comes from a body of work entitled "Map Of The Philadelphia and Columbia Railway with Proposed Improvements" created in 1851 by civil engineer Edward F. Gay and artist M.C. Dunnier. Gay was recognized as one of America's foremost civil engineers, and worked closely with other transportation planners such as Major John Wilson and Moncure Robinson in establishing transportation corridors over the East in the early decades of the 19th century. *Map courtesy of Ted Xaras.*

The Beginning: Spread Eagle and Siterville

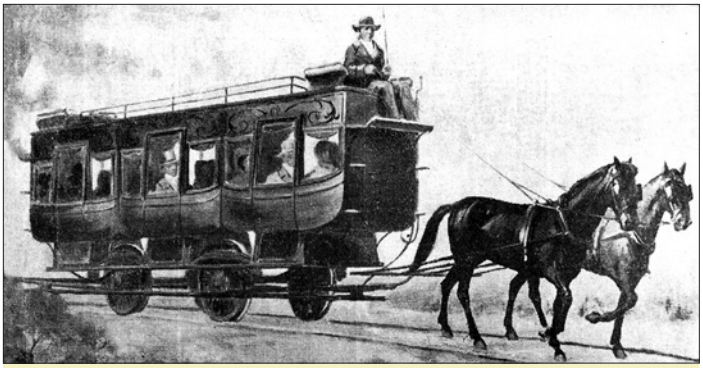
In the early Colonial period the (Old) Lancaster Road had become the commercial umbilical cord connecting Philadelphia with Lancaster County. Though the distance was only some 70 miles, the plodding pace of travel naturally encouraged the creation of many inns and taverns to serve the needs of both travelers and livestock. As the years progressed, and traffic mushroomed, the condition of the Road became indescribably bad, and even impassible for parts of the year. In the mid-1790s a far improved Philadelphia and Lancaster Turnpike[1] was opened, and the first regular stage line using the new road began service in May of 1797.

At the extreme eastern edge of Tredyffrin Township, Chester County, the eastbound Philadelphia and Lancaster Turnpike was intersected by the Old Lancaster Road, where they then together carried the combined traffic into western Radnor Township, Delaware County through a loose, almost one-mile-long, settlement called Spread Eagle. Later, as the small village grew around the crossroads of the Lancaster Pike and Valley (now Old Eagle School) Road, this community became formally known as Siterville, after the area's most prominent resident.

The heart of that community was the "Spread Eagle Inn," first licensed in 1764. The Inn stood on the north side of Lancaster Avenue in west Radnor Township where a cluster of specialty shops, today called "Eagle Village Shops," is found. The Siter family built a handsome, three-and-a-half story tavern in 1798, and the inn soon gained a stellar reputation for service and amenities, considered with "The Paoli" among the finest inns along the entire Turnpike.

Returning to the convergence of the Turnpike and the old "State Road" west of Siterville in eastern Tredyffrin Township, we will now guide northwest on the Old Lancaster Road as we begin our examination of the soon-to-be-built Eagle Hotel.

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A horse team draws one of the first passenger coaches on the single track up towards Paoli and Green Tree on the Columbia & Philadelphia Railroad, c. 1832. *Courtesy of the Free Library of Philadelphia.*

The Introduction of the Philadelphia & Columbia Railway

Four miles east from "The Paoli," the wildly circuitous right-of-way of the Philadelphia & Columbia (P&C) Railroad approached its intersection with the Old Lancaster Road, where the road and the railroad converged on a grade-level crossing. Rail bed and track construction had begun early in 1829, and the first horse-drawn cars of the Columbia passed over the new, single-track railroad on October 18, 1832. By April 1834, the 82-mile-long P&C Railroad was now running double-tracked operations between the Schuylkill and Susquehanna Rivers, and six months later, the first two Baldwin steam locomotives purchased by the Canal Commission were in daily use and able to reliably run from Philadelphia to Columbia in about eight hours.

On November 11, 1834, an advertisement appeared in the Downingtown *American Spectator* offering five lots for sale, totaling some ten acres of land fronting the new double-track railroad in eastern Tredyffrin Township.

"*Building Lots On The Pennsylvania Railroad, For Sale*"

"The Subscriber will offer at Public Sale, on Thursday the 13th of November inst. (1834) at one o'clock p.m. and on the premises; the following excellent building lots on the Pennsylvania railroad, handsomely situated between the old Lancaster road and Philadelphia and Lancaster turnpike and between the 16 and 17 mile boards, on said rail-road, in Tredyffrin township, Chester County." [2]

The five adjoining lots were described as standing on both sides of the Columbia right-of-way, with the Turnpike to the south beyond the tracks, and the old Lancaster Road on the north. The lots were devoid of any structures except Lot No. 4, whereon is described "*a comfortable log house, with an excellent cellar under the same, a barn and stabling.*" [3] The details of the ad made clear that this land was being presented as a commercial opportunity ideal for use in conjunction with the revolutionary new rail highway. Phrases such as *"the lots are well situated for lumber or coal yards or mechanics,"* and *"there has been a well sunk for a water station for the steam engine"* only heightened the import of this opportunity.

The Eagle Hotel

Early in 1835, a 42-year-old local merchant named Mifflin Lewis purchased all five of the advertised building lots from seller Jeremiah Joynt. Sometime later that year, Lewis built a large, four-story stone "house" sandwiched between the old Lancaster Road and the Columbia railroad tracks, for use as a hostelry which he named the Eagle Hotel (or the Eagle). In his License Petition to the Chester County Quarter Session dated December 29, 1835, Lewis describes his new stone house as having "*… four rooms on each floor (except in the basement story, where there are two rooms), having a doubled storied piazza [veranda] in the front, and is, in connection with its stabling and other out-buildings, in every respect fitted for a commodious inn, from [sic] which purpose it was built.*"

Lewis's license submission to serve alcohol, and "entertain the travellers" within the premises of his hotel, provides significant insight as to the advantages that Lewis intended to seize in applying for this critical permission. Consider these "sales points" used by Lewis for consideration by the Court:

"… the point at which the said house is situate[d] is, already, a depot for goods brought there for transportation on the railway, … in contemplation of the speedy increase of such deposits, your petitioner [Lewis] has now in progress of construction, a warehouse for the reception of goods." [Some three decades later, from the only photograph we have of the "Eagle Station," it appears that Lewis's small, trackside warehouse continued to stand on his land immediately south of the eastbound railroad track.]

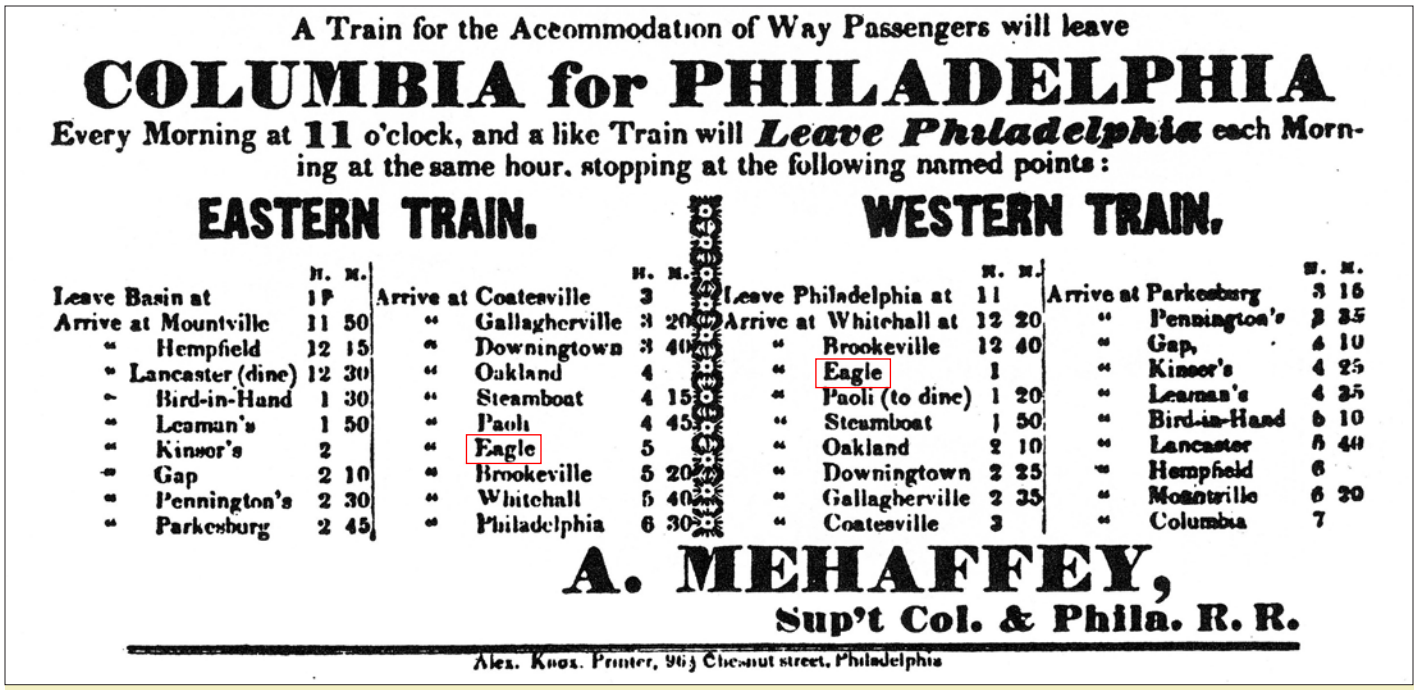
"…the State has established a watering station near the said house and also erected two wood houses for the supply of the locomotive engines with fuel, thus making the said point a general stopping place of the trains of cars travelling on the said railroad, and causing it to be a place of very general reception of persons desirous of taking passage in the cars."

"… your petitioner further represents that an arrangement has been made to carry the … mail from Philadelphia … on the said railroad after the first of January next [1836] which must, doubtless cause a corresponding transfer of the Post Office from the Philadelphia and Lancaster turnpike road to the said Railway, so that the Post Office now located at the Buck [Tavern in Haverford] will, probably, be removed to Whitehall [the future Bryn Mawr] while that at the Spread Eagle will be changed to the house of your petitioner." [In fact, in 1844, three years after the Spread Eagle Inn was sold, the Spread Eagle post office was officially relocated to the Eagle, and Lewis would serve as its postmaster] [4]

One week later, on January 5, 1836, a Superintendent for the Columbia Railroad, one Joseph Mather, added his endorsement on behalf of the Railroad supporting Lewis's petition, as follows:

"We … of the Commonwealth on the Columbia & Philadelphia Railway, hereby certify that the stopping place known as the Spread Eagle Water Station, is required for the advantageous use of the Railway, at which a Hotel has lately been erected by Mifflin Lewis esquire, thereby forming a

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A Train for the Accommodation of Way Passengers will leave

COLUMBIA for PHILADELPHIA

Every Morning at 11 o'clock, and a like Train will *Leave Philadelphia* each Morning at the same hour, stopping at the following named points:

EASTERN TRAIN.

	H.	M.
Leave Basin at	10	
Arrive at Mountville	11	50
" Hempfield	12	15
" Lancaster (dine)	12	30
" Bird-in-Hand	1	30
" Leaman's	1	50
" Kinsor's	2	
" Gap	2	10
" Pennington's	2	30
" Parkesburg	2	45

	H.	M.
Arrive at Coatesville	3	
" Gallagherville	3	20
" Downingtown	3	40
" Oakland	4	
" Steamboat	4	15
" Paoli	4	45
" Eagle	5	
" Brookeville	5	20
" Whitehall	5	40
" Philadelphia	6	30

WESTERN TRAIN.

	H.	M.
Leave Philadelphia at	11	
Arrive at Whitehall at	12	20
" Brookeville	12	40
" Eagle	1	
" Paoli (to dine)	1	20
" Steamboat	1	50
" Oakland	2	10
" Downingtown	2	25
" Gallagherville	2	35
" Coatesville	3	

	H.	M.
Arrive at Parkesburg	3	15
" Pennington's	3	35
" Gap,	4	10
" Kinsor's	4	25
" Leaman's	4	35
" Bird-in-Hand	5	10
" Lancaster	5	40
" Hempfield	6	
" Mountville	6	20
" Columbia	7	

A. MEHAFFEY,

Sup't Col. & Phila. R. R.

Alex. Knox, Printer, 96½ Chesnut street, Philadelphia

On April 1, 1837 the Eagle was added to the Columbia & Philadelphia's schedule as a passenger stop. *Courtesy of the Lower Merion Historical Society.*

convenient point for the reception of Passengers, we therefore respectfully recommend the said Hotel to be licensed for the accommodation of Passengers on the Railway and the Public in general." [5]

With the Columbia Railroad's important endorsement, Lewis obtained the additional signatures of no less than 57 community leaders, neighbors and business associates, including Joshua Evans Jr. and his brother Randall Evans, the two rival innkeepers in Paoli.[6] Lewis's license petition to the Court was successful, and in 1836 he opened his Eagle Hotel for service, with himself as both owner and innkeeper.

The Eagle Hotel was to serve the Columbia Railroad for some two decades as an important, and authorized, passenger stop. But it must be remembered that while the Canal Commission operated its rail service as part of Pennsylvania's Main Line of Public Works, the Commission itself neither owned nor directly operated any stations on the P&C. Rather, all passenger stopping places along the Columbia right-of-way were privately-owned hostelries or taverns which, as a complementary function, also served as railroad stations. Inn keepers had seen their Turnpike business decline rapidly since the advent of the railroad, and the owner of an inn was usually more than agreeable for such an arrangement to work with the railroad. Beginning in 1837, and continuing into the 1850s, the Eagle was the only scheduled stopping place on the railway between the Paoli eastward to "Brookeville" (a hotel created by Hugh Jones Brooke,[7] later to be referred to as "Morgan's Corner," and by 1874 as the Radnor station on King of Prussia Road).

In addition to providing hospitality, Lewis also became quite entrepreneurial in other pursuits. He invested in woodlots along the railroad where his cutters would fell trees for use as firewood or cross ties for the railroad, and also for posts, rails and cordwood for sale to local residents.[8]

There are but few surviving documents which closely describe the Eagle until May 27, 1851, when an article in the *Village Record* of West Chester reported that "*On Monday forenoon, the 19th, about ten o'clock, the roof and upper stories of the [Eagle Hotel] of Mifflin Lewis on the Railroad, in Tredyffrin ... were destroyed by fire.*" The column continued: "*Fire originated on the roof and by great exertion of the citizens attracted to the place, was prevented from spreading further than the second story. The roof and wood work of the upper story were completely burnt out … The fire is supposed to have been caused by a spark from a locomotive.*" Fortunately the losses at the *Eagle* were covered by insurance, and Lewis "*… at once commenced repairing the damage to his house and has raised the building one story higher, and will now cover the hotel with a metal roof, rendering it more secure.*"

After its reconstruction from the fire, the Eagle became a fashionable and popular summer resort similar in function to the old Paoli Inn. The five-story Eagle Hotel, measuring 38' x 38,' now had a large, multiple-flue chimney at each end of the structure. In addition, a ten-foot wide, two-story columned veranda extended across the south face of the structure facing the railroad tracks, with a view towards the Philadelphia-Lancaster Turnpike some 500 feet farther south. Each floor contained four large square rooms, with fireplaces. Mifflin Lewis continued to successfully operate his Eagle Hotel until his death in 1857 at age 64. Mifflin's widow, Eliza Castner Lewis, kept the hotel functioning through 1861. A Thomas D. Serrill was then retained to serve as innkeeper until 1866, the last year the Eagle was licensed to serve alcohol. Regrettably, the popularity of the Eagle Hotel, and even the glamour presented after the restoration, had by now become increasingly tarnished, and the Eagle was closed as a hostelry in 1873.[9] By 1885, in the record of a case heard in the Chester County Court of Common Pleas, *Rush vs. Pennsylvania Railroad*, the former Eagle Hotel

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was by that time referred to simply as a "Boarding House."[10] The building would further deteriorate into an inexpensive rooming establishment serving as a temporary abode for waves of German, Irish, and Italian immigrants. It was said that four families lived on each floor, one in each of the square rooms, with additional families living in the basement.[11]

The November 5, 1870 issue of the West Chester *Jeffersonian* newspaper, reported a tragic incident:

Railroad Accident -- Sad Death

"On Friday last week [October 28th 1870] Henry Fritz, respected lumber merchant at Reeseville, this county, was killed at the Eagle Railroad Station. He took hold of a horse at the station, and attempted to hold the frightened animal while the [PRR] train passed, but was thrown and fell and was struck on the head by a passing car."

In this selfless act of heroism, Good Samaritan Henry Fritz, founder of Fritz Lumber and Coal—located in what would become Berwyn—was grievously injured and died two days later. He left his widow Mary, and their two young sons.

The Eagle Station

This leads to the mystery of the subsequent Eagle railroad station, a free-standing building located just several feet east from the former hotel. No frontal photographs of the station have survived, and we are left with only one side-view image with the structure largely obscured by vegetation (see next section below). We have no precise, documented evidence as to when the station was constructed, by whom, nor when it was razed. So let's start with what we know.

As said earlier, the Philadelphia & Columbia Railroad did not construct passenger stations, but instead relied on individual hostelries along the right of way to serve the crucial functions of stopping places and resupply points. That policy remained in force until the Main Line of Public Works was sold *in toto* to the Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) in 1857. And the PRR in turn did not began creating their own station houses along the Main Line from Philadelphia to Harrisburg until the opening phase of the "four track superhighway" beginning in the mid-1870s.

We have only a few original documents and correspondence describing the Eagle Station. Legendary Upper Main Line historian C. Herbert Fry described the structure as a two-story brick building located just east of the Eagle Hotel. The first floor of the station consisted of a passenger waiting room heated by a coal stove, and a baggage room. Fry described an uncovered bridge which connected the station with the hotel at the second floor, and states that in 1875, the Spread Eagle post office was relocated from the former Eagle Hotel next door into the station. He further states that at that time, the then-current railroad agent at the Eagle station, Miss Annie M. Bloomer, also became the local postmistress. It is probable that some portion of the station's second floor was used as a residence for the station agent.[12]

The document which has proved most helpful in discerning exactly where the Eagle Station stood is a meticulously detailed scale-drawing of Eagle, c. 1885. This single drawing served to illustrate the venue for the legal case of *Rush vs. Pennsylvania Railroad* as heard in the Chester County Court of Common Pleas in 1885. The case was initiated by a daughter of Mifflin Lewis, Mrs. Hannah Maria (Lewis) Rush, who represented the estate of her father. The Lewis estate controlled the adjacent property of the former hotel on both sides of the original two-track right of way from the days of the Philadelphia & Columbia. In 1876–7, when the PRR wished to substantially expand its right of way to the south through the Lewis family's property, the railroad offered its standard compensation for its acquisition. Unlike many of her neighbors, however, Mrs. Rush rejected the PRR's reparation offer, and instead sought remedy from the court by requesting a jury trial to decide a more favorable compensation amount from the railroad. This drawing was prepared by the Pennsylvania Railroad to assist in its defense, and the document is today found in the Chester County Archives.

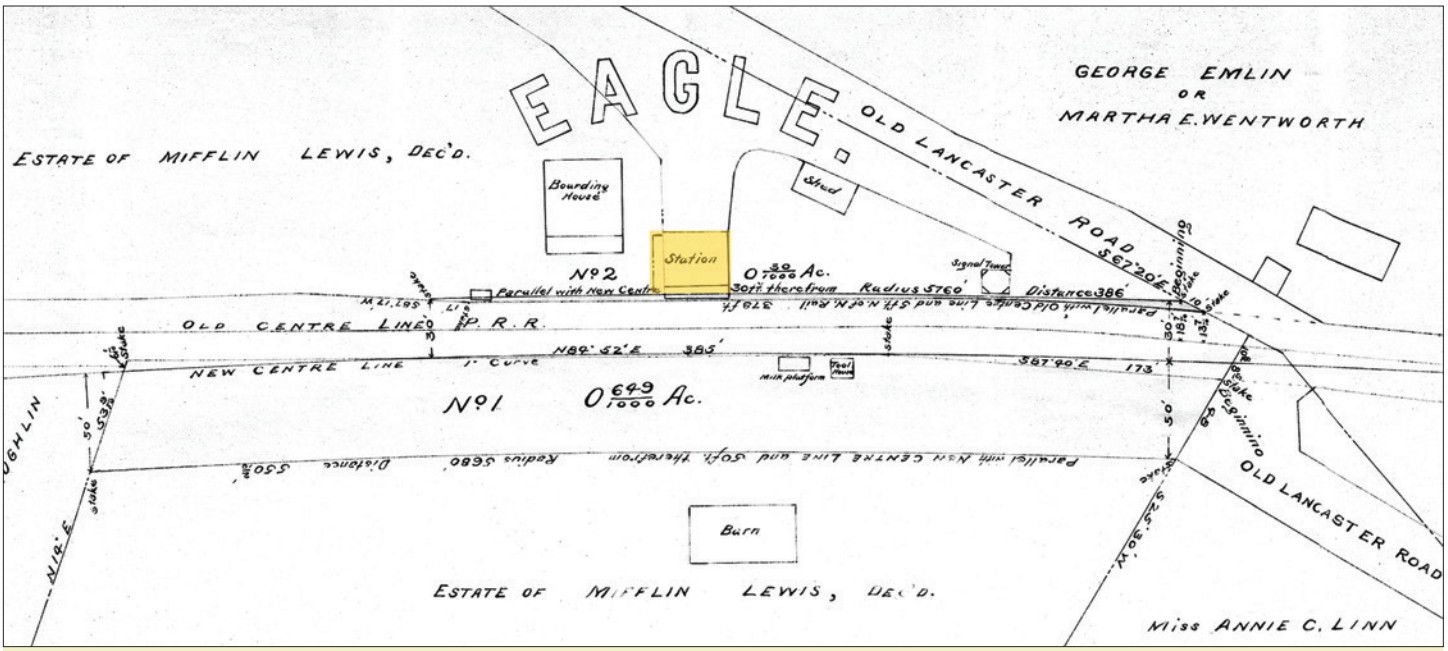
The precision of this print (below) has made it a "*Rosetta Stone*" for Main Line railroad historians. It is the only known document to illustrate the precise position of the station *vis a vis* the former Eagle Hotel, as well as offering exact dimensions and distances of the buildings, rail track centers, and roads upon which precise calculations can be made. It shows the station (highlighted in yellow) measuring 38' wide and 28' deep, with an additional eight-foot platform immediately adjacent to the track. The station had been constructed some 15' east of the hotel, thus making the reported second-story bridge between the structures quite possible. It is also apparent from this drawing that the former Eagle Hotel, by now referred to as "Boarding House," stood some 20' north from the PRR right-of-way whereas the station was built at trackside.

We have no precise record of when the passenger station at Eagle was built. But based upon the historical placement of the trackage of both the Philadelphia & Columbia and the PRR[13], we do know that the position of today's No. 4 track (northernmost of the four tracks) is at virtually the same position passing the former *Eagle* as was the original P&C northernmost track. That means that the position of that No. 4 track and the adjacent station as drawn in 1885 would have remained constant for decades earlier.

Further, exhaustive deed research of the Lewis property from the 1830s to the end of the 19th century, including the location of the station just east of the hotel, shows the property to have remained in possession of the Lewis Estate throughout. If the Pennsylvania Railroad had intended to build its own station at Eagle, it would have been obliged to purchase the land upon which its station was to be built from the Lewis Estate. Yet no such title transfer for that property is evidenced by the deeds.

Thus, the authors believe that Mifflin Lewis himself built the station at Eagle soon after the Eagle Hotel fire in 1851 for much the same reason that John D. Evans built the Paoli Hotel adjacent to the original Paoli Inn in 1846. With the establishment of the P&C west from Philadelphia, wealthy residents of the city increasingly sought to relocate their family for parts or all of the summer to the less stifling environs of the country … while

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1885 Eagle drawing from "Rush vs. Pennsylvania Railroad" proceedings. *Courtesy of Chester County Archives.*

still giving reliable access to business demands in the city. By the 1840s the original Paoli Inn, in addition to its ever increasing railroad passenger-related business, was itself becoming a popular summer resort and boarding house. Proprietor John D. Evans was soon well aware that the frenetic needs of his growing and demanding rail passenger customers were generally incompatible with the slower ambiance preferred by his summer resort clientele. So, in 1846 Evans broke ground for a nearby stand-alone building which he called the Paoli Hotel, standing just east of the old inn and facing the Columbia railroad tracks. The Hotel, paid for by Evans, acted as the passenger comfort station and thus minimized the hustle and bustle for his lucrative boarding trade.

Mifflin Lewis was personally acquainted with John D. Evans, and assuredly watched as Evans creatively served the needs of both his rail clientele and his increasingly growing–and lucrative–hospitality patrons. The authors conclude that soon after the 1851 fire, Lewis built the adjacent station at trackside while modernizing his hotel to cater to the special needs of his summer patrons.

But the death in 1857 of Eagle Hotel founder and visionary Mifflin Lewis began the inexorable decline in the "Eagle enterprise." Despite the efforts of his widow Eliza, and of Mr. Serrill, the Eagle Hotel lost its imperative liquor license in 1866, and by 1873 the once-famous hostelry had been relegated to a common boarding house. The Spread Eagle post office continued to operate within the former hotel for another two years, but in December 1875 the post office was moved to the station next door, and PRR telegrapher Annie M. Bloomer[14] was named postmistress.[15]



Annie M. Bloomer, Eagle station agent and postmistress from 1875 to 1884. *Courtesy of TEHS Archives.*

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In June 1876, the PRR's Board of Director's authorized the realignment of the Main Line between Morgan's Corner (Radnor) and Malvern. Realignments and grading for the much-wider right of way through Eagle were completed by the beginning of 1878. Five years later, in 1883, a third track was extended west from Wayne to the "SZ" signal tower located some 50 yards east of the Eagle station—another installment towards the completion in 1893 of a four-track right of way from Philadelphia to Paoli.

The Matter of the Eagle Station Photograph by William T. Purviance

Photographer William T. Purviance was born in Pennsylvania circa 1830, and took up the art and science of photography in the 1850s. He established his first studio in Pittsburgh in 1859–60, which he maintained until 1869. Around 1867, Purviance was hired as an official photographer of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and soon established his primary residence in Philadelphia. Until about 1881, Mr. Purviance took hundreds of official photographs of and for the PRR, (including many stereoscopic photographs[16]), the majority of these along the right-of-way in the central and western parts of Pennsylvania.

During Purviance's prolific career with the PRR, he seems to have taken surprisingly few photographs along the nearby Philadelphia Main Line. Among them are the then recently constructed Bryn Mawr passenger station built in 1869, and the much older passenger station at Eagle in Tredyffrin Township. But while the Bryn Mawr image is clear and easily understandable, his image at Eagle has frustrated historians for decades. Using a more resolved version of the original stereograph, let us carefully examine the details depicted in this enigmatic photograph.

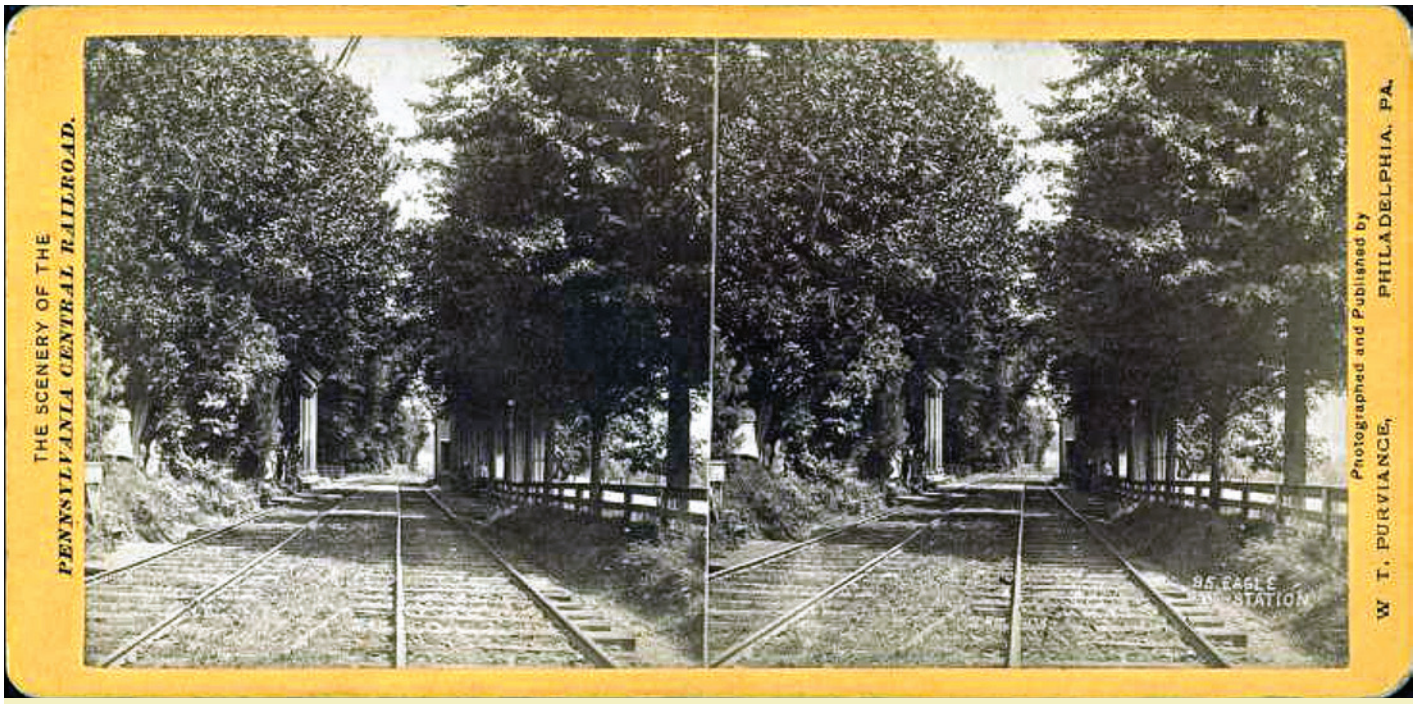
The photographer has set his tripod directly between the double-tracks facing east. Heavy vegetation closely hugs,



The "R" signal tower in Radnor, shown c. 1880, was identical to the pre-fabricated "SZ" tower in Eagle and its twin beside the Valley Road bridge in Paoli. *Courtesy of the Radnor Historical Society.*

and even overhangs, either side of the tracks, and the scene suggests a bucolic, little-used spur line rather than the PRR's gritty rail highway across Pennsylvania. Less than 100 yards ahead is the diagonal at-grade crossing of Old Lancaster Road.

To the left of the tracks one can see stately, white columns supporting a roofline, suggesting a covered platform separating the two-storied station from the trackside. It was reported that after the fire in 1851, Lewis created a ten-foot-wide, two-storied columned veranda which extended across the south face of the Eagle Hotel facing the tracks. Some historians have mistakenly presumed that this image shows the hotel's columned porch, failing to remember that the Eagle Hotel did not lie trackside but stood some twenty feet north of the railbed. The authors believe, circumstantially, that in building his station near the time of the hotel's restoration, Lewis chose to copy the



Photograph of Eagle Station, taken by W. T. Pruviance, c. 1867-73. *Courtesy of Stereoscopicviews.com.*

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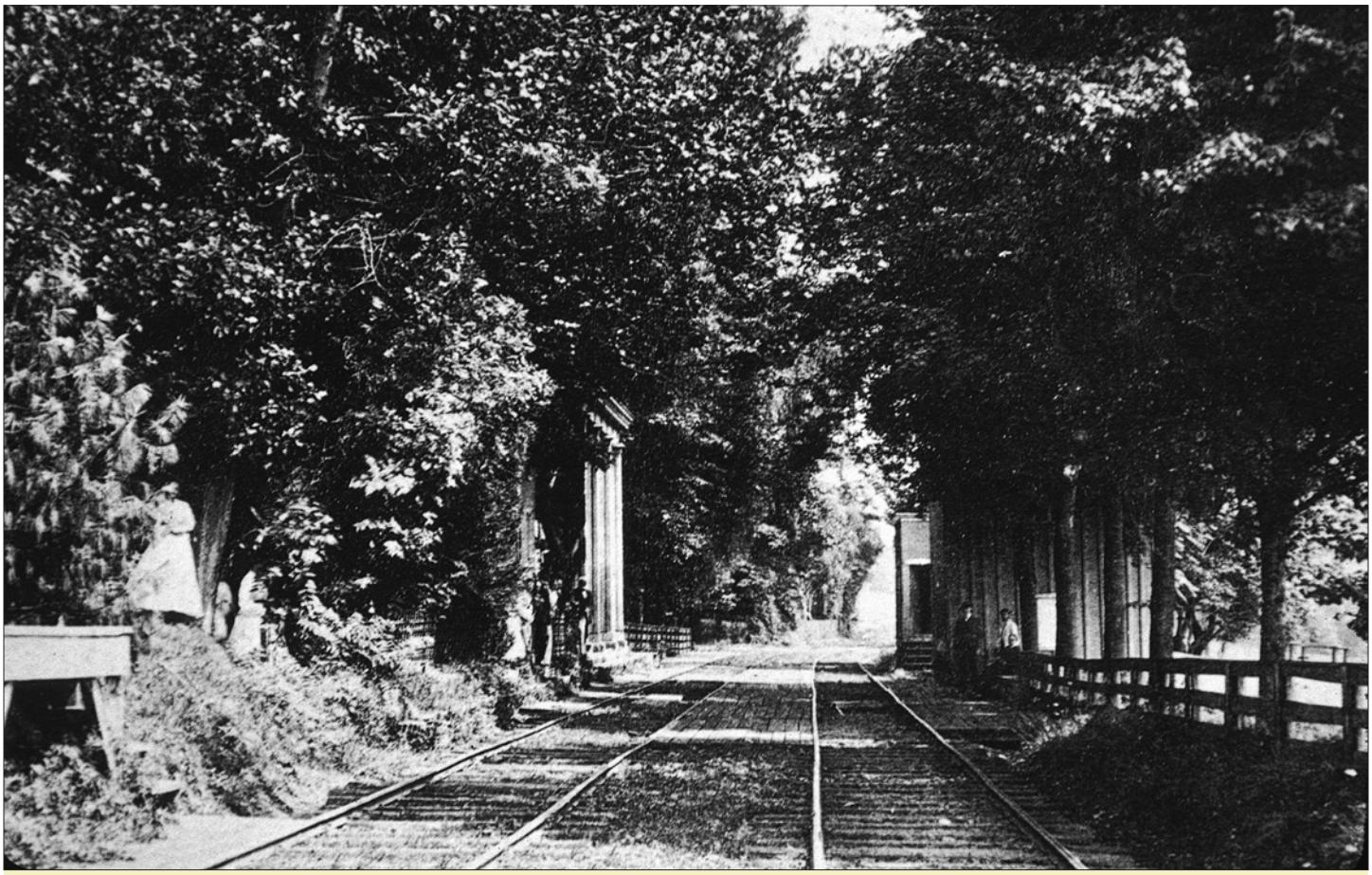
colonnaded, south-facing façade used on his hotel for a similar appearance on his new station.

A group of 7–8 guests or passengers stand gathered on or near the station's platform. A collection of rough ground-level wooden boards connect the two inside rails, and an eight-foot, ground-level wooden platform on the southside of the line seems to accommodate eastbound passengers. A three-railed fence leads along the south trackside to a bench on the eastbound platform upon which a woman sits, with two men standing behind her. Immediately east of this bench is the first of two trackside structures. The first, perhaps fifteen feet wide, uses a board and batten frame construction style, and may have served in part as an eastbound passenger shelter for use in inclement weather. A wide crosswalk is clearly seen, allowing travelers unencumbered passage from the station's veranda to the eastbound shelter. Just beyond that crosswalk stands a second building of indeterminate material, with four steps leading up to a doorway. It seems probable that this structure served as a baggage storage warehouse or small freight station.

Regrettably, Pruviance's image of Eagle is undated, and the authors have sought evidence to date the photograph. At least two clues present themselves.

On the left side of the Eagle stereoscopic image is the citation *The Scenery of the Pennsylvania Central Railroad*. On January 22, 1846 "An Act to incorporate the Pennsylvania Central Railroad Company" was introduced in the (Pennsylvania) House (of Representatives) by William W. Haley, a representative from Philadelphia. After two and a half months of discussion, argument, and parliamentary tactics, the House passed the Pennsylvania Railroad bill on March 19th and sent it to the Senate, which passed it on March 26th. The Act Incorporating The Pennsylvania Railroad Company, commonly referred to as its Charter, was signed by the Governor of the State on April 13, 1846 … and thus the Pennsylvania Railroad was born. [17]

What is the relationship of this term *Pennsylvania Central Railroad* to the far more familiar designation Pennsylvania Railroad Company? A recent book by scholar Albert J. Churella provides an interesting elucidation: "In the earliest years of the railroad's construction and operation, the names 'Pennsylvania' and 'Pennsylvania Central' were used more or less interchangeably. Many years later, however, the Pennsylvania Railroad developed its own … legend regarding the origin of the longer version. During the early 1860s, … a western passenger agent based in Chicago decided that the rival New York Central should not be allowed to mislead travelers into believing that it was the only centrally located northern railroad. Accordingly, on his own initiative, Holmes renamed his employer the Pennsylvania Central Railroad and began issuing annual passes, seat checks, and promotional materials bearing that nomenclature. His initiative soon led to the "quite general use, in popular speech and writing, of the term Pennsylvania 'Central' Railroad, which was never at any time the correct corporate name of the Pennsylvania Railroad." Churella cites the period of this unofficial resurgence of the alternative name as "the early 1860s." [18]



Higher-resolution version of the photograph of Eagle Station, taken by W. T. Pruviance, c. 1867–73. *Courtesy of Ted Xaras.*

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There is another clue which might more closely identify the time period of the Purviance image of Eagle, that relating to the apparel worn by the woman standing slightly obscured near the left side of the image. Receiving much needed assistance on the changing silhouette of women's skirts through the 1860s, the consensus seems to support the assurance that this woman, if fashionably dressed in keeping with then-current styles, was photographed about 1868. [19]

Two final dating considerations. Photographer Purviance was not hired as an official photographer of the Pennsylvania Railroad until around 1867. And soon after June 1876, construction through Eagle on the extensive widening effort on the south side of the twin tracks began. We may never know the exact date of this photograph, but the bucolic, almost sleepy, appearance of Eagle station, so inconsistent with the substantial increase in traffic on the two-track right of way immediately prior to the realignment in the mid-1870s, leads the authors to conclude that Purviance captured the image soon after joining the PRR in the late, post-Civil War 1860s.

Two Eagles?

During the year 1884, things at the eastern end of Tredyffrin got very confusing.

In an apparent decision favoring both gentrification and improvement of station spacing west of Wayne, the Pennsylvania Railroad set about to swap one Eagle for another. In 1882 the PRR had purchased one and a half acres of land adjacent to its right-of-way at the intersection with Eagle School Road in Tredyffrin Township. On August 9, 1884 the *Daily Local News* (West Chester) reported: "*The old Wayne station was, on last Tuesday, successfully moved by rail from Wayne to Eagle, where it will, after painting and general fixing up, serve as a new passenger station.*" But these words may perplex the reader. Rather than the Eagle station which had sat aside Old Lancaster Road for over thirty years, this reporter was referring to a second "Eagle" 2,000 feet east at the PRR's intersection with Eagle Road (the present Old Eagle School Road)—the present site of the later-named Strafford station. Imagine the confusion to passengers and the community at large. There seems to be a dearth of official announcement, but Lewis's historic Eagle station on Old Lancaster Road was closed as a passenger station as soon as the relocated Wayne station—the "new" Eagle—was put into service on Eagle Road. And even more confusingly, it was this new station that was referred to in schedules as Eagle between 1884 and 1887. The Spread Eagle post office was relocated in 1884 from the old Eagle Station to the "old Pugh store" at the northwest corner of the Lancaster Turnpike and Old Eagle School Road, there to reside temporarily for the next three years.

Not until 1887 was the name of the "new" station on Eagle Road formally changed from Eagle to Strafford. On February 7, 1887 the *Daily Local News* announced: "*By order of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, the name of Eagle Station was dropped on Tuesday last, and the new one, Strafford, was adopted, and it will hereafter be known by that name. The Government has also changed the name of the post office from Spread Eagle to Strafford.*" [20] The Spread Eagle post office was formally discontinued on July 22, 1887 when it was moved to the new Pennsylvania Railroad station, and both the post office and the station renamed Strafford. [21]

The authors have found no documents revealing the details of the final years and razing of the old Eagle passenger station. The 1908 *Atlas Main Line Pennsylvania R.R. from Overbrook to Paoli*, published by A.H. Mueller, clearly show the existing outline of the old Eagle station on the property then owned by Harry N. Childs. But in the similar Mueller Atlas from 1913, the footprint of that historic structure has disappeared forever. [22]

The Crossing of the Railroad by Old Lancaster Road at Eagle

The Old Lancaster Road had passed from Tredyffrin Township, Chester County into Delaware County for almost a century when the railway survey teams first laid their path for the Columbia Railroad in 1828-30. When the first single-track operation connecting Philadelphia with Green Tree (0.6 miles west of Paoli) opened in September 1832, the Old Lancaster Road intersected the track via a diagonal, at-grade crossing. Within two years, in October 1834, the Philadelphia & Columbia Railroad was running double-tracked operations for the entire 82-mile long distance between the Schuylkill and Susquehanna rivers. Rail traffic in those early years was light, however, with many carriages still horse-drawn at slow speeds, and personal danger in crossing the tracks was insignificant. But in November 1834, the railway introduced its first two steam locomotives for daily use from one end of the line to the other … a precursor to the future of rail. In the succeeding decades, rail traffic intensified greatly, with great increases in both speed and noise. To safely negotiate any at-grade crossing with a horse-drawn wagon or carriage—especially over the greater length of a diagonal crossing—increasingly demanded of the driver nerves of steel and sometimes just good luck. [23]

In 1855 William White built an imposing Greek Revival mansion upon his 95-acre estate located in Tredyffrin Township immediately north of the Philadelphia & Columbia railroad tracks, and east of the Old Lancaster Road. But White only lived there for two years before he lost his property in 1857 through a sheriff's sale to financier George Emlen. But sometime during the following 2–3 years, Mr. Emlen died, and upon his death the estate passed by inheritance to his sister, Martha Wentworth. Soon after Mrs. Wentworth received her inheritance, she purchased an additional 33 acres in 1860 to enlarge her estate. Martha's husband, John Langdon Wentworth, named the estate "Strafford" soon after 1860 in respect to his illustrious English relations, the three Earls of Strafford. From the post-Civil War years into the 1880s, railroad traffic grew tremendously, and neighbors and others were increasingly forced to take long detours to safely cross the railroad rather than jeopardize their lives by crossing on the Old Lancaster Road at grade-level. From a letter by Mr. Wentworth, "*the old state road became more like a lane than the parent road it was before.*"

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