



Deerpark Diary

March 2005

Vol. 2

No. 1

Town of Deerpark Historian, P. O. Box 621, Huguenot, New York 12746 (845-856-2702)

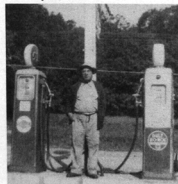
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Scenes of the "Old Mine Road"

Early Indians. Ox carts. Horse wagons. Canal Boats. Trains. Automobiles. Eighteen wheelers. What do these have in common?

They all traveled along the same transportation route. Today we travel on US 209. This route has had several different names during its history. It was called the Huguenot Road and the Kingston Road. Its first US designation was US 6 and then US 6N. US 209 was officially approved on November 11, 1926 and announced to the public on January 2, 1927.



Resnick Gas Station, Godeffroy, N.Y.

Prior to all these, however, this route was known as the "Old Mine Road", the first one hundred mile long roadway built in America.



A Short History of the Old Mine Road

The name originated in its use as a road to transport copper from the Pahaquarry Mines in New Jersey to the Hudson River. The possibility of discovering minerals was first mentioned in 1641 in the "Journal of New Netherland". "In the Interior are pretty high mountains, exhibiting generally strong indications of minerals."

In 1645 the West India Company looked into the possibility of mining minerals in the area. The specimens their agents received from the local Indians did not contain any, however the company "deems it advisable to order the continuation of the search for minerals" Nothing further is mentioned until 1657 when Vice Director Alrichs wrote that "On this road or way is a good rich iron mine."

In 1659, the directors in Holland wrote to Peter Stuyvesant "We have lately been shown a small piece of mineral, which is said to have come from New Netherland, and which we found to be good and pure copper...that a copper mine was said to be in the Nevesinks" These mines were near the area known as the Delaware Water Gap in New Jersey.

Although there had been some thought of shipping the minerals on the Delaware, it was determined to use the northward route to Esopus (Kingston). The exact date when this road was built is unknown. In a June 1787 interview, Nicholas Dupuis, Esq. repeated what he had heard from older people, "That in some former age there came a company of miners from Holland; supposed, from the great labor expended in making that road, about one hundred miles long, that they were very rich or great people, in working the two mines-one on the Delaware River...the other near half way from the Delaware and Esopus." [Spanish Mine near Ellenville?]



Wagons

In the 1690s, the families of Jacob Cuddeback, Peter E. Gumaer, David Jamison, Anthony Swartwout, Bernardus Swartwout, Thomas Swartwout and John Tyse traveled down the Old Mine Road and settled on the Peenpack flats (Godeffroy). They were Huguenots seeking religious freedom.



Carts

The nearest settlement to Peenpack was twenty-five to thirty miles toward Kingston. The early families had to travel northward along the Old Mine Road for supplies. Even though they were self-sufficient farmers providing for their daily needs, they traded their surplus wheat for cloth, tools and food stuffs which they did not produce. As time passed, other families traveled this same route to settle in the valley. Until 1743 there was no church here. Families had to travel on the Old Mine Road to Kingston in order to solemnize baptisms and marriages.

Horseback Riders

Charters of the provinces were vague. The New Jersey charter read that the west bounds "along said river (Delaware) to the Northward-most branch (Cochecton) of the said Bay or River, which is in latitude 41 deg. 40 min. and crosseth over there in a straight line to latitude 41 deg. on Hudson's River". The "Northwardmost branch" was in dispute.

The original settlers were "New Yorkers". New Jersey parceled the same land out among the "Jerseymen". Beginning in the early 1700s, there was a major dispute between the two colonies. Periodically, the Jerseymen came on horseback over the Old Mine Road to raid the valley. They attacked the homesteads, chased "New Yorkers" from their homes and one Sunday they even kidnapped Major Westbrook from the Maghackemeck Church. It wasn't until 1767 that the boundaries were settled.



Maghackemeck Church

Canal Boats

The D & H Canal paralleled the route of the Old Mine Road from Carpenter's

Point (Port Jervis) to Esopus (Kingston). The section in Deerpark was unique since the flow of the water in the canal was against the loaded boats. This made it necessary to build four timber guard locks in Huguenot. At that time Huguenot had a greater population and influence than Carpenter's Point (Port Jervis). There were stores, a large boat yard, and other support businesses and services.



Railroads

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, a rail road line followed a similar route as the Old Mine Road and the Canal. The Monticello and Port Jervis Railroad started up on January 23, 1871. This was a twenty-four mile "shortline" owned jointly by Deerpark, Thompson and Forestburgh. The towns, by a state law, were allowed to bond themselves up to \$200,000.00 each and to use the money to buy railroad stock. Investors purchased a fraction of the stocks issued for the towns. The rest of the money was raised by mortgage bonds and the sale of common stock.

From the beginning the new railroad struggled. The 1873 recession led to

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financial problems and caused a further downward spiral ending with the company entering into bankruptcy. It was reorganized as the Port Jervis and Monticello Railroad in 1875. It took the taxpayers of Deerpark until the turn of the century to pay off the money owed from their investment in the railroad business.

On July 31 and August 1, 1881 the entire line was converted to standard gauge. It is believed that over 200 men completed the job within a twenty-four hour period. The P. J. & M. helped the Hotel Huguenot and other resorts to become popular. Instead of taking three days to travel up the Hudson River and then by canal boat from Eddyville, the same trip took only a few hours.

In 1884 the P. J. & M. also went bankrupt. It was reorganized in 1886 as the Port Jervis, Monticello and New York Railroad. A second branch from Valley Junction to Summitville was built between October 1888 and April 1889.

In 1899, A. E. Godeffroy bought the P. J. & M. & N. Y. and ran it until 1905 as the Port Jervis, Monticello and Summitville when it became part of the O. & W. As highway traffic increased after World War II, trains carried fewer passengers. Passenger trains ran only from Memorial Day to Labor Day and were totally

discontinued after 1953. In 1957, the company went into receivership and the O & W ceased entirely at midnight, March 29, 1957.



Adolph Godeffroy

Railroad Trivia

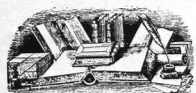
P. J. M. & S. Railroad Stations in Deerpark: Westbrookville, Port Orange, Paradise, Cuddebackville, Rose Point, Valley Junction, Godeffroy, Huguenot, Mountain Spring.



Engine #38 used on gravel trains from Huguenot

Book List

The Old Mine Road by C. G. Hine
From Coalfields to the Hudson by Larry Lowenthal
Minisink Valley Express by Gerald M. Best



Canal Human Interest Stories

There was animosity between the "canawlers" and the "landlubbers". However, in 1877, a Huguenot family helped a canawler in dire straits. A boating family, whose home was in Barryville, "was totally destitute of money, victuals and horse feed, and amid all these trials the wife gave birth to a child." Another boatman would not let this poor family's boat pass his so they had to wait at the Mineral Springs Lock for a week. A man from Huguenot fed the destitute family until they were able to move on toward their home.



Deerpark Historian's Wish List to Improve the Town's Archives

20th Century Photos to copy Subjects
The Huguenot Airport
Local Summer Camps
Local Resorts & Boarding Houses
Dairy & Chicken Farms

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