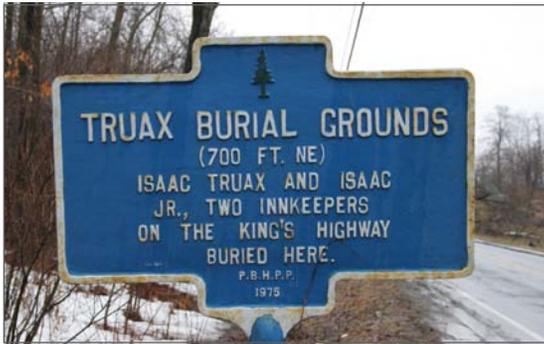


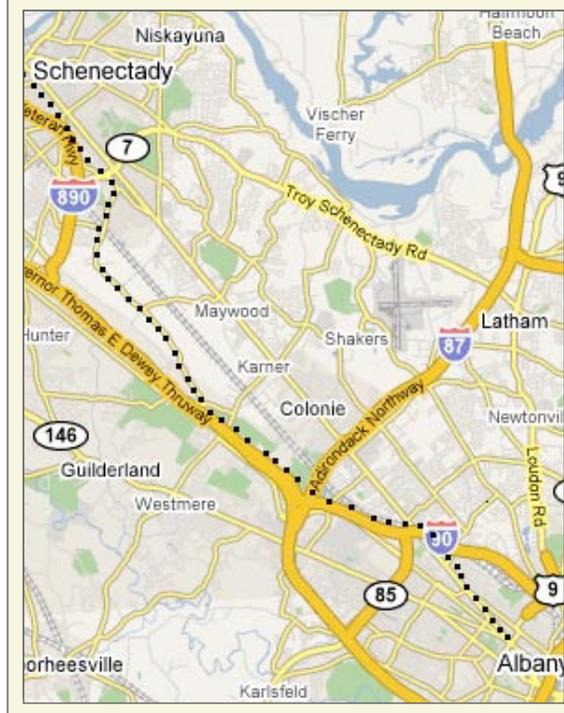
In 1710, Palatine German refugees began clearing a road to the west starting from the King's Highway at the Verreberg (far hill) to the Schoharie Valley. This allowed the expansion of settlers into the beautiful Schoharie Valley and many of those family names still exist today.



Isaac Truax and his son Isaac Jr. are buried along the King's Highway not far from where the senior Truax ran a tavern to refresh weary travelers. The tavern site and burial grounds are only part of the long history of this early road and the Pine Bush ecosystem in which it traverses. Preservationists have fought for years to preserve these historic sites and this unique area, the home of so many endangered plants and animals.



Original King's Highway section in Guilderland.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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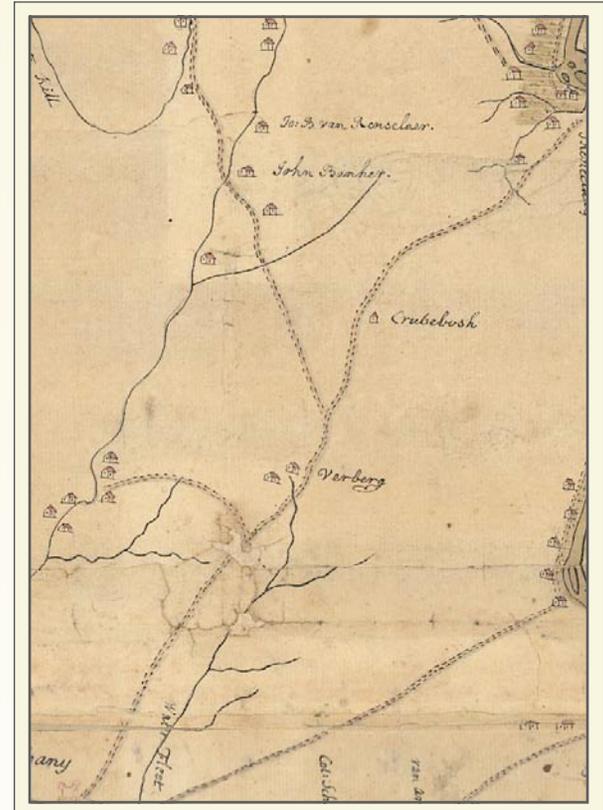
KATHY ROONEY, COUNTY SUPERVISOR



POSSIBLE IN PART WITH A GRANT
FROM THE WILLIAM G. BROUGHTON CHARITABLE

THE KING'S HIGHWAY

Schenectady's First Road



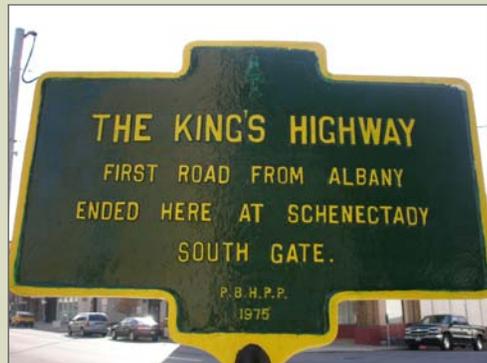
TRAVEL GUIDE

Around 1663, the Dutch settlers from Albany County widened a Native American trail into a wagon road. Called the Schenectady Path, or Albany Road, it connected the frontier village of Albany and Schenectady and later became known as the King's Highway. It was the major trade, transportation, and military route between the Hudson and Mohawk Valleys until around 1800.

First Road Connects Albany to Schenectady



The King's Highway began a few feet south of the present City Hall on Pine Street in downtown Albany. Both Albany and Schenectady were stockaded villages during this time.



The King's Highway ended at the south gate in Schenectady at what is now the intersection of Ferry and State Streets. State street from Ferry to Albany Street (and beyond to King's Road) is the original route that still exists today in Schenectady County.

KING'S HIGHWAY MARKERS

In 1975, Albany City Archeologist Don Rittner erected more than 20 historic markers along the original route of the King's Highway. Each of the markers contain historical facts about the route.

Connect online to www.themesb.com/kingshighway.html to view all markers!

Although neglected in most histories, this three hundred year old highway was the major trade, transportation, and military route between the Hudson and Mohawk valleys until 1800 and played a major role in shaping the settlement of New York State.

Native Americans carried furs down the Mohawk Valley over a series of trails through the sandy Pine Barrens (called the Pine Bush locally) to Albany. Enterprising traders with thoughts of purchasing pelts at a minimum would wait for fur carrying Indians on these trails, buy the furs, and then resell them for a higher profit. Regulations were passed to prohibit trading outside the city gates to stop this unfair practice, but the wood runners continued and were often cited for their activities on the old path to Schenectady.

About 1663, two years after the founding of Schenectady, the "Mohagg Path" was widened from an earlier Native trail into a wagon road. Albanians called it the Schenectady Path; Schenectadians called it the Albany Road. It later was simply called the King's Highway after the English conquest of the region during the later part of the 17th century.

The winding 16-mile route crossed the Pine Bush, an unusual inland Pine Barrens environment, characterized by a gently rolling topography with sand dunes and a forest of pitch pine and scrub oak. From the Pine Bush, and along the old road, nearby inhabitants obtained timber for building, firewood for warmth, and wood for stockades. The desert like appearance of the area impressed many travelers and depressed others on their long journey between the valleys.

In 1680, Dankers and Sluyter, two missionaries traveling to Schenectady, recorded that they "rode over a fine, sandy, cart road, through a woods of nothing but beautiful evergreen, or fir trees, but a light and barren soil." Timothy Dwight, president of Yale, passing through the region in 1798 expressed the opposite view. Dwight remarked that he "passed over a hard pine plane and presented nothing agreeable. The plain is uninhabited, the soil lean, and the road indifferent."

As trade and travel increased, several families left the protected custody of the stockaded villages and settled along the King's highway. Few and far between, these pioneers such as Isaac Truax and his son operated their farms as taverns, refreshing weary travelers with food, drink, and lodging. Many interesting legends and tales surround the taverns and at one time there were taverns along the route every three to four miles. Truax was reported to be a Tory and threatened with arrest. The Seven-mile house at the Verreberg was a British outpost during the French and Indian Wars, only to become a caretaker's house for the nearby Six Mile Waterworks in the 19th century.

Between 1690 and 1760, passengers traveling the old road were escorted by a patrol of Albany militiamen, after reports of ambushes and scalping. The road served as a military route since the intersection of the Hudson River with the Mohawk was blocked for boat entry by the impressive Cohoes Falls near Waterford. The King's Highway also became the point of western expansion with roads splitting off to the west. The Palatine Germans began cutting a route to the Schoharie County near the Six Mile House in 1710. The villages and towns of Guilderland, Guilderland Center, Altamont, Knox, Gallupville, and Schoharie grew up along the western route. The Albany Glass Works, one of the first post revolutionary war industries was built along the Palatine route in 1783 and scores of settlers traveled over the State Road, another spur off the King's Highway, constructed in 1792 near the tavern of Isaac Truax Jr.

The Kings highway did not loose its significance until the early 1800s when the Great Western and Albany Schenectady turnpikes were created making it easier to move goods and people between the valleys. The construction of the Erie Canal, and Mohawk and Hudson Railroad, which ran close to the Kings Highway in sections, further nullified the importance of this road.

Today, the State Thruway, constructed in 1953, runs along the exact route for 6000 feet through the Pine Bush, and the current configuration of Albany Street in Guilderland from Old State Road into downtown Schenectady is the paved portion of this ancient highway. A mile long section in original dirt condition still exists in the Pine Bush preserve.