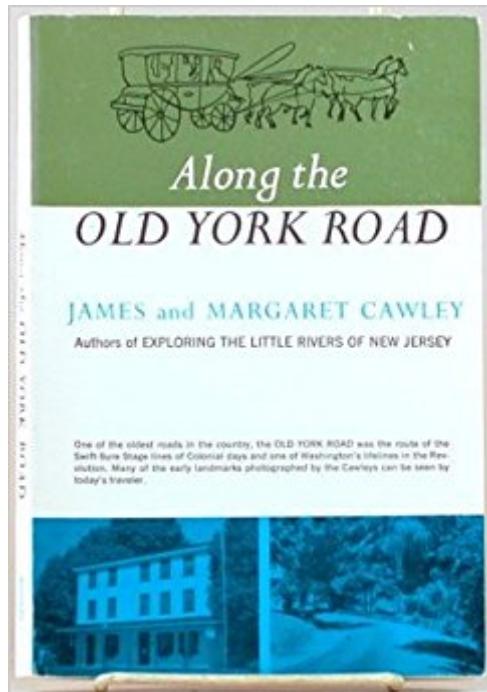


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# Along The Old York Road



## **Synopsis**

One of the oldest roads in the country, the Old York Road was the route of the Swift-Sure Stage lines of Colonial days and one of Washington's lifelines in the Revolution. Many of the early landmarks photographed by the Cawleys can be seen by today's traveler.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

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Vert nice depiction of our NJ local history.

During the second half of the eighteenth century, the fastest and most traveled route from Philadelphia to New York was the Old York Road. (In 1795, a bridge was completed across the Raritan River at New Brunswick that shifted traffic southeastward off the York Road to the King's Highway, traversing Rahway, New Brunswick, Princeton, and Trenton in New Jersey.) The road is still with us and can be traced easily on modern maps (many of the more detailed topo maps plot the Old York Road quite carefully and with clear identification). Following Rt. 263 from where it begins as a fork off of Rt. 611 within the northern limits of Philadelphia, it goes through Warminster and Furlong to Lahaska, where it turns east onto 202 to New Hope. Crossing the river (by ferry back then), it continues along Rt. 179 through Mt. Airy to Ringoes and Larison's Corner, where the old road becomes Rt. 514. After Reaville the road juts left to Three Bridges, Centerville (not on

maps any more, but located at the intersection of Old York Road and Pleasant Run Road on the Hunterdon/Somerset County line), and Raritan (via Rt. 567), where it becomes Rt. 28. It follows this road through Bound Brook, Plainfield, and Westfield all the way to Elizabeth(town).The book is in three sections: a general history of the road during colonial times, the road during the Revolutionary War (the Battles of Trenton and Princeton, numerous other skirmishes, and the evacuation of Valley Forge by Washington's army all have connections to Old York Road), and the road "today" (1965). Many photographs of sites along the road are included, and anyone traveling the road now (2006) should recognize many of the photos. The book is informative and interesting, and traces the history of an important transportation route of long ago.

Old York Road is one of the first roads connecting New York and Philadelphia. It was begun in 1725, completed in 1764, and it still exists. The route goes north from Philadelphia through Jenkintown, Willow Grove, and Buckingham crossing the Delaware River at Wells Ferry (New Hope). There it meets the NJ section through Lambertville, Ringoes, Raritan, Bound Brook, Scotch Plains, and Elizabeth to Elizabethtown Point.Cawley and Cawley provide a crisp history of the subject including old photos of inns, churches, and other preserved artifacts along the entire length of the road. A second chapter covers the Old York Road during the Revolutionary War. It was an important route across New Jersey even then. A final chapter describes what remains of the various artifacts today.Included are other details of transportation history. As settlers cleared their lands they gradually moved beyond subsistence farming to surpluses. These products usually went to market by water. Inland areas found water routes inaccessible. There was a clamor for internal improvements, such as roads to the interior. Roads also brought stage coaches, travelers, communications, and commerce. Later stage coaches were replaced by railroads, and still later by electric interurbans. Cawley gives us a view of various aspects including the use of Conestoga wagons to carry freight, the realities of stage coaches (early ones were little more than a bumpy ride on a plain wooden bench mounted on a farm wagon), the inns (they were known as taverns in NJ), rafting lumber down the Delaware, and other roads in the area.The book is nicely done. Those interested in Pennsylvania or New Jersey history will find it fascinating. References. No Index.

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