



NORTH GREENBUSH NOTES

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THE ALBANY TO SAND LAKE PLANK ROAD

Today this thoroughfare is called NY Rt. 43 or Washington Avenue. However over the years it has gone by several different names. I don't know the Indian name, but early Dutch settlers referred to the road coming from the Hudson River as "Jan Ooms Pat" or Uncle John's path. By the time the English took over the Colony, the name became the Landing Road (because of people and goods coming across the river from Albany). In the late 1700's this was a major pathway through what was to become Rensselaer County all the way into Massachusetts and became known as the Eastern Parkway.

In 1849 the name Plank Road was added. Actual wooden planks were used. A former town historian found one near the Van Alen house which is now Hartgen Archeological Associates, Washington Avenue, Defreestville.

Because of the I-90 Exit 8 interchange, Washington Avenue now dead ends at the old Bloomingrove Drive and the Plank Road resumes as present day Route 43. As you head east, on the north side is the new Van Rensselaer Plaza on

whose lands David M. Defreest built a hotel in the late 17th century which finally burned down in 1945. The incline up Route 43 was called "Hogle Hill" named after a prominent 19th century family. Further east on the south side of the road where Dell's garage sits, was an old 19th century tavern nicknamed "the Slaughter House" where many "affrays" are said to have taken place.

Across from the Robert C. Parker school there was a toll gate. Although the fare was only a few cents, folks who wanted to avoid it could get off the Plank Road and take what was called a "Shunpike" which would take them east and north along Mammoth Springs Road or south to Best Road and rejoin the Plank Road.

Plank roads were expensive to maintain and with the advent of paved roads they and the toll gates faded into history.

Just before you leave North Greenbush for Sand Lake, notice the Weatherwax House and its historical marker.