

Reflections on Continental Lane and Route 546 by Dave Blackwell

As far as the road is concerned, the present leg of Rt. 546 was opened in 1766, ten years before Washington's crossing of the Delaware, and lay exactly as it does now, even the bend at the bottom. It terminated at the River Road (Bear Tavern Road, Rt. 579) and did not continue on toward Pennington at that time. The road was the boundary between Garret Johnson (north side, the park) and a different owner on the South side, which I can document. I haven't seen any primary source evidence that there was another road that may have gone from the river eastward through the Park, since dubbed "Continental Lane". Some people even propose that an older road was south of 546, the 1766 road. Either position would have been in the middle of private property, and highly unlikely. Nevertheless, the fiction of a lost road that went through the park may have affected the plan for the park.

The next road north and parallel to 546 was Church Road from the River Road (Bear Tavern) west to its intersection with Fidler's Creek Road, then down Fidler's Creek Road to Joseph Titus' gate, and no further, not to the river. Because there was no continuous road along the river, the lanes from River Road (Bear Tavern) toward the river were shared farm lanes rather than roads to the river. Probably the 1766 road was the formalization of a lane from the ferry, which existed as early as 1728. Any other position of a road in the vicinity of the park could have only been a lane from the Ferry as is 546. Therefore, the 1766 road would be the public road up the hill after that date, and maintained by the local farmers as assigned each year by Hopewell Township government. So that would be Washington's route.

Even after 1834, the advent of the canal, and the growth of Titusville, the way out of Titusville was up the first leg of Church Road, then north on Cedar Lane to Fidler's Creek Road, then out.

If there is physical evidence for the position of "Continental Lane", I think such a lane would post date the completion of that leg of Rt. 29 from Titusville to Washington's Crossing in the 1820's.

By

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