

Roads in the Town of Russia
from 1792 to Present time

ROADS TOWN OF RUSSIA

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ROADS

In 2001 the Town of Russia is about forty miles long, north to south, and about sixteen miles wide. The whole aspect of the Town of Russia was quite different when it was first settled from what the Town is today, due to changes in the Town's boundaries during the 1800's. Traveling in Herkimer County 200 years ago was a hazardous adventure. Permanent settlement of the upper Mohawk Valley rapidly followed the close of the Revolutionary War.

But in the early 1800's the Town of Russia was an impenetrable forest of spruce, fir, larch, and pine. The general character of the land was uninviting; early settlers were courageous, optimistic, tireless toilers. The few roads that did exist were narrow, blazed trails only slightly wider than the original trails through the forest which had initially been footpaths for animals and then Indians. The roads of 1800 were filled with deep holes and ruts; the slightest rainfall made them impassable. The earliest modes of travel were walking, riding on horseback, or ox teams. The natural contour of the land aided the first settlers in opening roads through the wilderness.

Settlement of the Town had begun slowly in 1792, but as more and more people came to populate the wilderness, the state legislature acknowledged the need for serviceable roads. Until then the ox teams of the pioneers had made their marks deep in muddy trails even though most of the settlers came from the east and traveled the high ground to avoid the long, muddy march up the valley. In 1803 the legislature approved a lottery to raise funds to construct several roads. These roads were very primitive compared to today's roads because road construction in the early 1800's consisted of clearing a path through the woods and perhaps filling in a few low spots. Most of these roads ran over high ground, and even when communities developed along the river, the roads connecting them avoided areas close to the river as much as possible because floods washed them away during the spring and fall. If running close to any body of water, they were often muddy throughout the year.

By the end of 1808 twenty-one roads in the Town had been surveyed. By 1810 there was a total of twenty-six roads. The construction of roads was crucial to the development of the Town. Prior to 1806 the entire area was virtually wilderness. There were only a few settlers and their homes were scattered.

The best known of the first roads was State/Military Road that was built across the hills, originally called the State Road when it was surveyed in 1806 and then opened to travel in 1808. After leaving Albany to Johnstown, it followed a course through the Town of Oppenheim to Dolgeville and then turned northwesterly through the settlements of Salisbury, Salisbury Corners, Norway, Cold Brook, Russia, Boon's Bridge on the West Canada Creek near Prospect, and then northward to Remsen and Boonville, and eventually to Sackett's Harbor. It is the oldest road in the Town, running from southeast to northeast across the Town.

During the War of 1812 this road was used to supply the fort at Oswego on Lake Ontario. Troops were marched over it and chains were carried north to close the St. Lawrence River to the British. In the early 1900's the section in Herkimer County was named Military Road.

The State Road made Cold Brook important. As a way station on the road, taverns were needed to house drovers who moved cattle, sheep, and geese. Stables and holding pens for spare teams were necessary. Blacksmith shops and harness repair was also needed. The first taverns, hotels, and shops developed on what is now Norway Street. Taverns were located on both sides of the road. The creation of this road through Cold Brook took the village from seclusion to exposure to the outside world. Because of its location on the State Road it was a thriving business center and enjoyed all the prosperity that the road brought. This road was the major pathway over which the great flow of people traveled to their new homes. It became a path of opportunity for local people with all sorts of services catering to travelers being established along it, as were new houses and communities. Farmhouses remain today which resemble the early one and a half story saltboxes of early Massachusetts and Long Island from which a large number of early settlers came.

Its effect on the country through which it passed can be compared to that of the modern interstate highway system. Jeremiah Smith was the first mail carrier. His mail route, by horseback, was along the State Road from Johnstown through Norway and Russia to Trenton. Even after the War of 1812 the road was still crucial to the growth and prosperity of the Town. It was used to transport cheese and other dairy products from the farms to market. In reality it was the "Thruway" for early settlers and linked them with the North Country and the Mohawk Valley. The completion of the Erie Canal in 1825 was the beginning of the decline in travel on the State Road. The old State/Military Road has given way to modern highways but its role in the development of the North Country should never be forgotten.

Another important road in the 1820's was the highway that followed the general path of Route 28 on the east side of West Canada Creek in the lower valley. This road veered away from the creek in a number of areas. The section between Newport and Poland followed Graves Road over high ground for a couple of miles and then returned to the creek. Another section east of Comstock Bridge ran west from Gravesville and then back towards the river up Partridge Hill Road, crossing at Trenton Falls. Partridge Hill Road still runs near or along the creek for a mile or two, traveling through farmland for another mile before it reaches Dover Road.

Another road ran on the other side of West Canada Creek across the hills from Newport to North Gage and on to Trenton. Mail was carried over this road by stagecoach. Due to the slowness of travel there was a need for stagecoach stops/inns along the route. Another reason for overnight accommodations/taverns was the large number of cattle, sheep, and turkeys that had to be driven to Albany and other cities for sale. All produce was also taken to market by team.

As mentioned in John M. Schermerhorn's diaries of the late 1890's it was a daylong journey from North Gage to Utica, now a ten to fifteen minute drive, to carry eggs, vegetables, eels, and

meat to sell in the city. Money received was used to buy cloth and other provisions not grown or made on the farm.

It wasn't until 1930 when the Utica-Poland Road was constructed that traveling became easier for local residents. It was still not a trip to be taken daily by most people. In the 1937 diary of Poland resident, Rose Sexton, she describes running errands and shopping in Utica once or twice a week. It was still an excursion that took half a day in good, dry weather. Journeying to Utica was a social event with several people riding in one vehicle and stopping at a friend's or a relative's for dinner or supper. In the winter shopping trips were less frequent and no one went anywhere without chains for their tires.

Another prominent early road was the thirty-mile long Steuben Road from Herkimer to Remsen. In 1786 Baron VonSteuben, the noted Revolutionary War hero, received 16,000 acres for his contributions to the War. He had 800 acres of this, which is now mostly named Steuben, set aside for him.

With the acquisition of the large tract it became necessary for Steuben to construct a trail over which pioneer settlers could travel to reach it. It was the forerunner of today's highways and linked the original Indian trails in the Mohawk Valley with the virgin forests and fertile lands to the north. The forests were dense and any natural routes along streams led to dead ends making the valuable tract almost inaccessible.

Steuben decided to build a road from Herkimer, starting with the Mohawk Turnpike. For the most part he kept to the highlands to avoid streams that would necessitate the building of bridges. He was a practical man who by constructing his road over hilltops only needed two or three small bridges along the entire route. They were simple enough that if one washed out, a farmer could replace the bridge in about one hour.

As a result, the original course was a winding one, circling hills and following a line of least resistance from the weather and elements. Since then, through modern highway engineering, the route has been straightened, thus accounting for the abandonment of some of the original road.

Almost all roads in the early 1800's were constructed away from the creek. Many of these original roads have been eliminated entirely or are minor, secondary roads. Old homes and large trees identify some of the oldest roads in the valley, if road widening hasn't eliminated them.

In the early 1800's there were sections of roads that ran along the west side of the creek parallel to the high banks between Cameron Hill Road and Route 8. Every effort was made to avoid building bridges: they were expensive to build and maintain and too often washed away. In the 1820's there were no bridges across the West Canada in the Poland area.

When farms and communities developed and prospered along the creek and funds became available to build and maintain bridges, new roads were constructed and some old ones

abandoned. Other roads in the valley were abandoned as farms and farmland failed, and communities such as those along the State Road, diminished in importance and influence.

Building, and maintaining a road before the days of modern technology was hard and slow work. By the mid-1800's plank roads were the most popular form of road construction. Various plank roads ran from Little Falls to Gravesville.

Just south of South Trenton a connecting plank road went through North Gage, crossing the creek on Cameron Bridge to Gravesville and on to the State Road and Russia. There were tollgates at each end, and in most of the villages.

Hemlock, pine, or oak was used because they were abundant. Dirt roads were muddy ruts much of the year and dry ruts the rest. Some areas were impassable except during the winter when horse and sleigh could travel the snow-covered roads.

Most of the early investors who had approached the state to pass legislation to permit the construction of privately owned toll roads built wooden roads.

The inexpensive, because there was plenty of wood, low-maintenance roads would connect outlying communities to the Erie Canal and to railroads. The initial cost of construction was \$1,500 per mile and would require minimal maintenance for eight years. Tolls would pay for construction and maintenance and provide from 25% to 40% profit to investors, all without one cent of taxpayer money.

These wooden roads were fast and safe for horse and wagon. A trip that took five days on a dirt road took only twelve hours on a plank road. There were no ruts and mud to take their toll on horses and wagons. Horses could pull twice as much load on a plank road as they could on a crushed stone road. In addition to transporting goods from village to village, cities, canals, and railroads residents could use these roads to seek medical attention, attend church and social and political gatherings.

Even back in the 1850's the media added to the clamor touting the benefits of plank roads. From 1847 to 1854 New York State chartered 340 plank road companies that built over 3,000 miles of road.

Construction was simple. After the right-of-way was obtained, cleared, filled, or cut, and bridges built; eight foot long, four inch thick wooden planks, held in place by their own weight, were laid across sills that were four to five feet apart. Along side the single lane plank road was a wide dirt or gravel shoulder that allowed a vehicle to leave the road when it met another vehicle. Ditches were dug on each side of the road for drainage.

For a time plank roads proved their worth. Property values went up. Farms and villages prospered from improved transportation. Attendance increased at churches and social events.

Though stockholders never saw the projected 40% return, profits from toll collection provided a moderate 10% return to investors the first few years.

Initially plank roads were expected to wear thin requiring replacement in five years with a total plank and sill replacement in eight to ten years. Instead the wood rotted in three to four years, causing injury to horses and damage to wagons.

By 1852 the cost of planks and labor for collecting tolls and road repair were much higher than expected resulting in the failure of many plank road companies. In 1853 there was a 25% increase in tolls, but it didn't help. Legislation in 1854 allowed all companies to abandon or to turnpike all or part of their roads. By 1865 plank roads were abandoned or connected to earth and gravel roads. Some investors who got out early sold their \$800 shares for \$25.

One of the longest lasting plank roads in the northeast was the Deerfield to Remsen Road from 1848 to 1877. One section of that road, south of Remsen, is named Plank Road.

The practice of laying logs crosswise in swampy sections of road to create a sort of floating bridge was also in use for many years in the mid 1800's. In some areas the logs were covered with earth and gravel; these "corduroy" roads became quite common.

Macadam roads were few because of the cost of crushing rock and spreading it by hand. Most counties and towns couldn't afford building these roads and there were no state funds available due to heavy investment in canal construction.

Most of the early roads were simply called by the name of a family that lived on that road. Town roads were not officially named and signs erected until about 1960 when a grant from the state provided funds. Prior to then many roads had several names that sometimes proved confusing to firemen, snowplow drivers, or newcomers.

The northern end of Russia Road is still called Farber Road and Dorn's Corners by many because of the Farber Homestead and the Dorn farm, both located there years ago.

Gauss Road was named for the Gauss home that had been on the end of the road even though it had been called Dupont Road for years by the highway department.

Riggerman Road was named after the Riggerman Homestead but was also known as the Jim Wall Road.

Swezey Hill, located about two and a half miles northeast of Poland, was one of the first settled places in the northern part of Herkimer County. Deacon Daniel Swezey, who was a native of Swezey Town, Brook Haven, Long Island came to Herkimer County in the spring of 1796. He paid \$2.50 per acre for 200 acres in the Town of Norway, now the Town of Russia. He and his oldest son erected a log house, roofed it with elm bark, enclosed the gable ends and made the floor of split timber.

It took him two weeks to bring his family from Long Island on a sailing vessel to Albany. They remained there several days, preparing for the hardest part of their journey. With a cart and a yoke of oxen they started for their new home, with Mr. Swezey and his older sons walking.

The roads at that time were bad and in the spring almost impassable making the Swezey's progress slow and tedious, only eight to ten miles a day. Swezey soon purchased an additional 200 acres. In a few years he built a barn which was the first frame building in that neighborhood. He also started a nursery with seeds from various fruits that he brought with him. Many of the early orchards grew from trees obtained from Swezey. An orchard was very important to the early residents, helping them to be self-sufficient. Most of these orchards no longer exist because of disease and land development.

A few years after Deacon Swezey began clearing the land, five more families from Long Island followed him-Amos and Silas Beebe, William Truman, Samuel Newberry, and James King. All of these names may be found in the Bromley/Swezey Cemetery on Rose Valley Road.

Swezey Hill Road went through what is now the Karen and Douglas Thierry property on Rose Valley Road. It came out on Route 28 at the southern end of Poland near what is now the driveway for Rommel's sandpit.

Emma Jenkins sold the Town Line Road to the Town in 1907 for \$25 for the sole purpose of creating and maintaining a public highway. It was later officially named Rose Valley Road.

Buck Hill was named after William Buck who came in 1827 and stayed the first night at the tavern of Stephen Smith, which stood at the top of what is now Buck Hill on State/Military Road. Buck later purchased the farm at the top of the hill, now owned by Bob and Maria Eisenhauer, and the farm at the foot of the hill, now owned by Scott and Lori Burritt. He was also one of the founders of the Poland Bank. For many years Plumb Road was not the dead end it is today but a thoroughfare to Buck Hill, connecting it to the State Road.

Brayton Road is named after the Brayton family who came from Connecticut to Fairfield about 1800 before settling permanently at Luther's Corners which was eventually named Brayton Corners. The Brayton's also helped found Poland Bank.

The original Schermerhorn Hill Road, which ran parallel to the present Route 28, avoiding the creek, was part of the present Schrider Road. Jacob H. Schermerhorn and his son Reyer settled along the West Canada Creek where West Canada Campsites and Blue Anchor are now, including Sunny Island. Reyer built the first frame house, now owned by August Polczynski, in 1812. Jacob H's son Cornelius and grandsons built the cheese factory, now abandoned across from Polczynski's, and homes on North Gage Road.

Woodin Corners, located on Grant Road, was named after Isaac Woodin who was the first settler in Grant in 1816.

Hemstreet Road was named after the Hemstreet family. A prominent member was Dr. Richard Hemstreet, who moved to Ohio in 1819, coming from Montgomery County, at the age of fourteen, with his family. After graduating from Fairfield Academy in 1839 and practicing his profession in Ohio for two years, he then moved to Cold Brook and Poland where he had an extensive practice until his death in 1865.

Gravesville Road and the hamlet of Gravesville were named after William Graves who came in 1800 from Vermont and bought a tannery from Major Geer who had started it in 1795.

In Poland, Mill Street got its name from the mills located along Cold Brook Stream near the mouth of the West Canada Creek. Case Street is named after Wheeler Case who made folding bootjacks, stepladders, wheelbarrows, and axe handles at his home on that street. Millington Ave. was named after Dr. Charles Millington who practiced medicine in Poland from 1860 to 1872. He also was one of the founders of Poland Bank. Sprague Street is named for Daniel Sprague and his sons Arnold and Charles who owned the Sprague Wagon Factory in the late 1800's, a busy business of wagon making and repairing wagons. Railroad Street was thus named because that was where the railroad was located.

Many roads in the Town have disappeared, been abandoned, or become dead ends or seasonal roads over the years because farms failed, mills on tributary streams closed down, and the railroad ceased operation.

To mention a few: roads from Grant and Ohio crossed the creek on Northwood Bridge, at Northwood, until Hinckley Reservoir was flooded in 1915. Also under water are Bousfield Road and part of Twin Rock Road. Today, the remaining section of Twin Rock Road, opposite Fairchild Road on Route 365, is blocked and posted at the lake end.

Sand Hill road was just north of the Dan Davis Road, on what is now property owned by Marion Newman. Swamp Road, which is now a snowmobile trail, was next to Sand Hill Road, both off of Hall Road. Nearby was Dygert Road, which intersected with Swamp Road at Dygert's Corners.

Cooper Road, going from Cold Brook to Norway, has also been abandoned. Others abandoned over the years, some as late as 1989, are Lakeshore Road near Hinckley Lake, Marcy Road from the Grant Road to the Lanning Road, Gulf Hill Road, Cameron Hill Bridge Road, and Lowman Aid Road.

Bromley Road is a seasonal dirt road that goes from the Rose Valley Dump to Military Road. Some dead end roads are Fire Road that intersects with Hinckley Road, Shawangunk Road that was a thoroughfare to the Town of Ohio, and MacArthur Road near Trail's End Campsites, Jim Rose Road and Lite Road both off Wheelertown Road, and Gorham Road off of Rose Valley Road.

Others have changed their names: in 1988 Barnhart Road Extension became Cooley Road; in 1991 a short section of Fisher Road was renamed Sunset Lodge Road.

Highway Superintendents or Commissioners who were elected officials developed most of these local roads. They were responsible for determining work warrants or fees for maintenance of the roads within the Town. Landowners were assigned a certain number of days a year to work on nearby roads. Roadwork consisted of filling holes, rolling with a horse drawn roller, and brush removal. Every man had to furnish one spade, hoe, axe, crowbar, pickaxe, or other tool, as directed by the overseer. A fine could be levied against those who did not comply. Those unable to work on the roads were charged a tax.

With the introduction of the auto in the 1900's drivers encountered the problems of getting around on the dirt roads, which teamsters and horsemen had been struggling with since the beginning of travel throughout the area. The automobile changed all of American life, but nowhere more completely than in the Adirondacks. It led to the building of roads; to making inaccessible places accessible. Every government agency came under heavy public pressure for highway improvement.

By 1901, so many people owned automobiles that the Automobile Club of Utica was formed; only one of nine such clubs in the United States. In 1902, representatives from Utica and the other eight clubs formed the American Automobile Association.

James Ringwood was named county engineer in 1905. Among his duties were the encouragement and direction of the Town Road Commissioners towards the goal of meeting the public demand for better accessibility to rural areas, and also for decent highways generally. In his report to the county's supervisor at the end of his first year Ringwood presented a graphic account of road building and maintenance practices of the time.

In 1905 there were 1,380 miles of roads in Herkimer County; 719 miles in the "money system" Towns and 661 in the "labor system" Towns. "Money system" Towns paid road contractors to keep up the roads out of Town funds; "labor system" Towns depended on local residents to do the work rather than pay taxes; costs were calculated on the basis of hours worked.

Highway laws required that the roads be put in the best possible condition before June 1st because the time to work the roads is early in the spring before they have become dry.

Each Commissioner had between 50 to 75 miles under his supervision. A great deal of trouble was experienced in most Towns about having the brush and weeds cut in the highway.

The State's "Good Roads" legislation included a series of laws and appropriations, passed from 1907 to 1920, which were aimed at improving and standardizing the state roads. A majority of the work was completed by 1927.

Roads were widened, straightened, and resurfaced, resulting in the modern highway system of state roads, county roads, and town roads. Town roads carry names and do not have to comply with width standards, as do main thoroughfares.

In 1914, the county Board of Supervisors established the Herkimer County road system; 140 miles of road within the county were mapped and taken over from the existing town systems.

A familiar slogan of the time was "Get the farmer out of the mud," as part of the effort to establish passable farm to market roads. Over the years the original 140 miles of county roads have grown to over 580 miles.

Technological advances further improved Herkimer County roads. Better paving materials such as bitumens made it possible to build year-round roads at acceptable cost.

With almost five million automobiles active by 1917, Congress had to launch a Federal Highway Program and the stage was set for the motor age. Once Henry Ford devised an assembly line system for the production of his Model T Ford the price of a new auto tumbled to less than \$400 within three years. This brought purchase within the means of a far wider bracket of the population that set up a strident clamor nationwide for decent roads on which to drive.

When a road or railroad had to run close to the river the side of the hill had to be dug out, leaving a steep cut or bank on the hillside. These steep banks resulted in mud and rock slides. Concrete walls and rocks covered with wire mesh have deterred nature. A local example is a stretch of Partridge Hill Road on the high bank at Blue Barn Bend. Beecher Road passes through one of the tunnels that had been built under an elevated section of the railroad track in the early 1900's.

In 1916 roads were still rough with deep ditches so public transportation was preferable to many people. From the early 1920's the Model T and bus services exploiting the Federal Highways Program began to draw more and more people.

William Patterson actually started the first bus service in the county in 1912, between Herkimer and Cold Brook. In 1921 his nephew Merrill George took over the business and continued it until 1953 when a steady drop in patronage since World War II made it unprofitable to continue operations. At its busiest, from 1921 to 1929, three round trips daily, leaving Herkimer, were provided with six buses operating. The buses also delivered the mail to all four village post offices from and to Herkimer for several years. When it closed, after its slowest year ever, there was only one run.

The first half of the twentieth century saw many changes in transportation in Herkimer County. Residents made it clear that they wanted more and better roads.

The Town was petitioned in 1916 for a good road from the Remsen Town line on the Hinckley highway to Northwood and from there to the Ohio Town line.

In 1926 and 1929 Town of Russia taxpayers petitioned the Town that the road beginning at Roben's Corners and leading past Dorn's Corners to the Ohio Town line was important enough to be improved because it was a critical connecting link for the county system of roads in the Town and as a United States mail route.

In 1927 the Town was petitioned to build an improved road leading from Smith's Corners on the Cold Brook Road to Woodin's Corners and Grant. The petition stated that this route was the most logical and practical for this road and was the only direct route to Cold Brook, Poland, and the valley towns for the residents of Grant and the northern section of the Town.

In the 1920's fieldstones and hedgerow stones were used for a road base. Big ones were blasted into smaller chunks; then hammered into size for the sub-base.

Shale or sand was used, not gravel. Everything was loaded by hand, hauled by horse and wagon, then spread by hand.

In the 1920's and 1930's the state was financing the construction of cement highways that would never wear out. Tar was used which made the roads last 20 years. Later, road oil came into use because it didn't stick to cars like tar, though it only lasted about four years. These roads are now covered with asphalt and crushed stone macadam. Route 12 from Utica to Remsen is an example.

One feature of the road system that developed even more recently than paved roads themselves is the availability of roads during the winter. Snowplowing was limited to the main roads and a very few secondary roads where the cost was more readily justifiable because of denser traffic. Snowplowing was not done very far out in the country.

In the early 1920's, Bertram J. Rasbach of Middleville built one of the first snowplows, a wooden, one horse sidewalk plow. It was so successful that he built a large V-shaped plow, set on bobs and pulled by a team of eight horses. This plow was used to open the roads from Cold Brook to Herkimer.

In the 1920's and 1930's most residents were satisfied if their road was opened once a day. Snow removal costs tripled from 1929 to 1965 from \$1,500 to \$10,975.

In 1929 the Town owned one plow and had two highway workers. The Town purchased its first motorized snowplow in January 1930. In 1965 the Town operated three heavy-duty wing plows, two sanders, and one grader with a crew of seven. They were operating on a 24-hour schedule during storms. In 2000 salaries for five seasonal and four full-time workers, sand, salt, and field expenses totaled \$113,281.

In 1936 a storm marooned one of the Town's two plows. Working around the clock, the plow became stuck in a drift on the Cold Brook-Grant Road. The crew left it with the motor running while they got supper at Roben's farm, now owned by Brad Davis. Returning they found the truck nearly covered by snow, the radiator frozen, and the motor stalled. Not until the following day was it thawed out and hauled away.

In March of 1947 main roads were closed more than ten hours because of snow. Secondary roads were shut off for several days. It took five days to shovel out Gray with shovel gangs who dug through fifteen-foot drifts. Farmers had trouble finding ways to store accumulated milk. Some used toboggans to transport their milk to main roads. The Town of Russia had two plows to keep 45 miles of rural routes open. Volunteers helped with shovels.

Even into the 1950's snowplowing equipment was very basic. Sanding after plowing was not always practiced. When it was used the sand truck had no spreader so the men had to throw the sand off with a shovel. Today residents expect all roads to be plowed and sanded so they can drive to work.

In 1929 the passage of the Gas Tax Law enabled the county to use such tax for the improvement of county roads. Construction of the Poland to Newport Road began in 1936. The greatest engineering problem was just north of Newport, where West Side Saloon and C & D's Market are now. A deep ravine had to be spanned to eliminate two bad curves. A 192-foot

culvert of concrete five foot square was necessary, using 150 yards of concrete. It utilized 10,000 pounds of steel; to place it 600 yards of excavation was necessary. The total length of the system to carry water through the gorge under the road measured 192 feet. Fifteen thousand cubic feet of dirt and gravel, which amounted to 4,000 loads, were used. Twenty-five smaller pipe culverts of concrete were also placed.

Thirty-five men were needed just for this part of the job. When the new highway, Route 28, was completed it gave Herkimer, which was the county shopping center, a solid concrete link with Poland. The new strip was much straighter and more level than the old road, much of which had been dirt.

Six miles of Route 8, were re-constructed in 1936, extending it to the part of the Cold Brook to Noblesboro Road, which had been completed in 1927. Motorists going to Piseco and Speculator have always heavily traveled this route.

Five miles of Route 8 from Poland to Cold Brook was re-constructed in 1939 and finished October 1940 by 100 workers. Arlene Folts remembers when her home, now owned by Dominick DeLucia, was moved across the road because of the re-construction. The Folts' never had to move out of their home while it was being relocated which took two weeks. She reported it was sometimes scary when trucks went under part of the house even though it was blocked up high enough.

This improvement to Route 8 resulted in a two-strip concrete road in the Villages of Cold Brook and Poland and adjacent sections of the highway.

Shortly after, Route 28 was constructed wider from Poland to Barneveld as a water bound macadam road. This construction eliminated many curves, making travel both quicker and safer but then in 1949 it was slightly relocated to alleviate dangerous conditions and for the improvement of alignment. In 1978, it was again relocated; this time by 2,300 feet because of the replacement of the Comstock Bridge.

In 1962 a new road between Route 12 and Hinckley was proposed because the present road was considered too dangerous.

In 1969 four and a half miles of new road between Cold Brook and Ohio eliminated a sharp curve. More than 8,000 truck loads of sand and dirt was removed from a hill on Route 8, two miles north of Cold Brook. Two more curves and a bridge further north were also eliminated. From 1994 to 1996 Route 8 was re-constructed from Poland's north line through Cold Brook and ending at the Norway/Russia Towns line. It included the replacement of three bridges, the rehabilitation of four culverts, and new sidewalks for Cold Brook that finally connected the two villages, which improved pedestrian safety.

In 1996 the southern approach of Route 8 to the Route 8/28 intersection from the south was altered dramatically to improve safety at the intersection when a higher, longer, crescent-shaped, steel multi-beam and concrete bridge replaced the steel thru-truss Schermerhorn

bridge that had been built in 1929. The road was also relocated to improve driving conditions on Schermerhorn Hill.

All of the above mentioned roads have seen considerable re-construction and upgrading through the years.

This booklet was not written to be a definitive study of roads but a brief synopsis of the roads in our area and their importance to the growth and development of the Town of Russia.

TOWN OF RUSSIA ROADS

Ash Road

Barnhart Road

Beecher Road

Black Creek Road

Brady Beach road

Bromley Road

Cady Road

Church Road

Cooley Road

Dan Davis Road

Dow Road

Elm Flats Road

Gauss Road

Gorman (Gorham) Road

Hall Road

Hemstreet Road

Hinckley Road

Hotel Road

Hughes Road

Jim Rose Road

Jim Wall Road / Riggerman Road

Lane Road

Lanning Road

Lite Road

MacArthur Road

Marcy Road

Military Road

Mill Road

Norris Road

Pardee Road

Partridge Hill Road

Plumb Road

Reeds Mill Road

Roberts Road

Schafer Road

Short Road

Silverstone Estates

Simpson Road

Smith Road

Spall Road

Stormy Hill Road

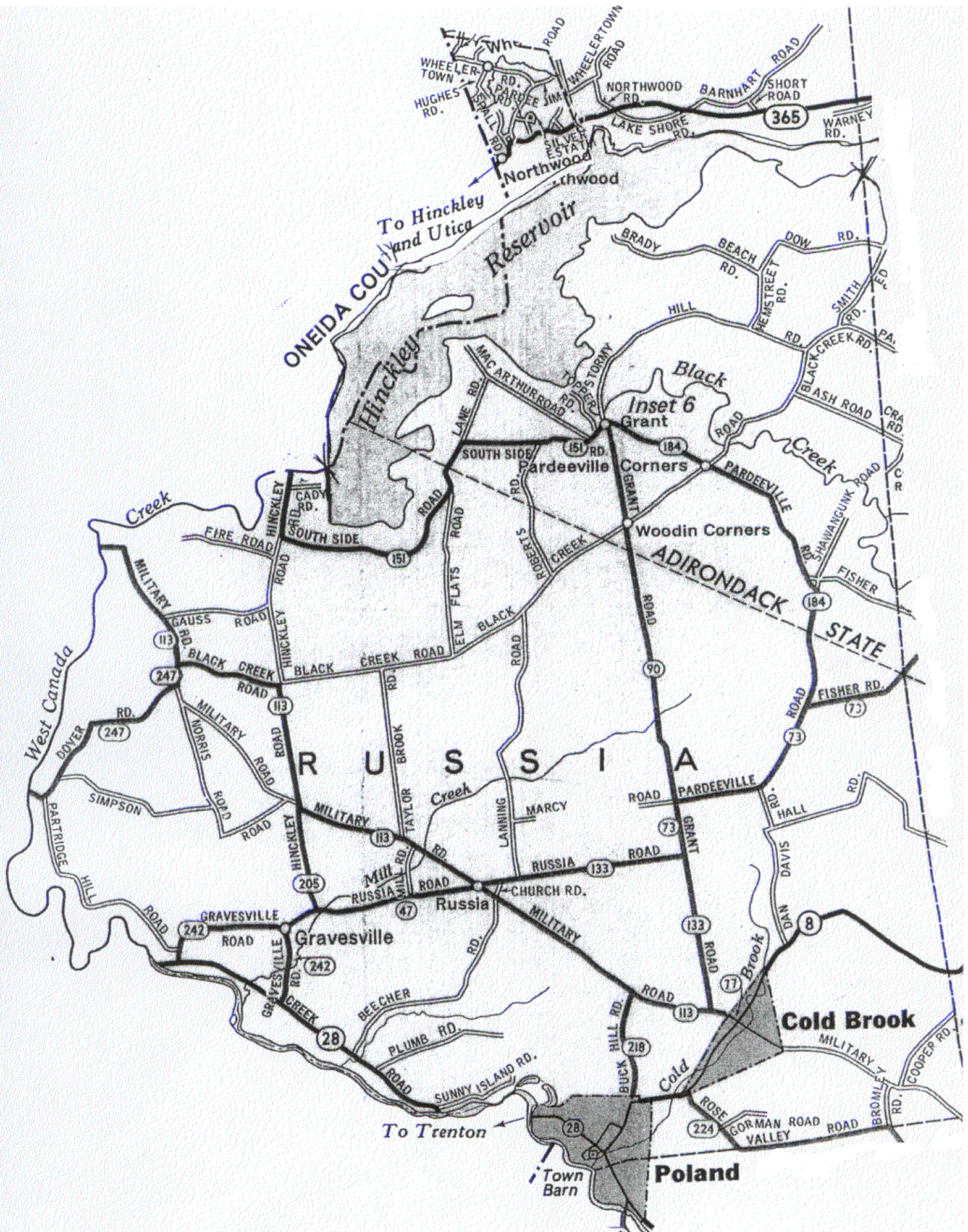
Sunset Lodge Road

Taylor Brook Road

Topper Road

Warney Road

Wheelertown Road



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In addition to the books mentioned the following individuals shared their knowledge of bridges and the area:

Bravo, Louis Town of Russia Councilman

Keesler, M. Paul Author

Longstaff, Joseph Town of Russia Highway Superintendent

Schultz, William former Town of Russia Highway Superintendent

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