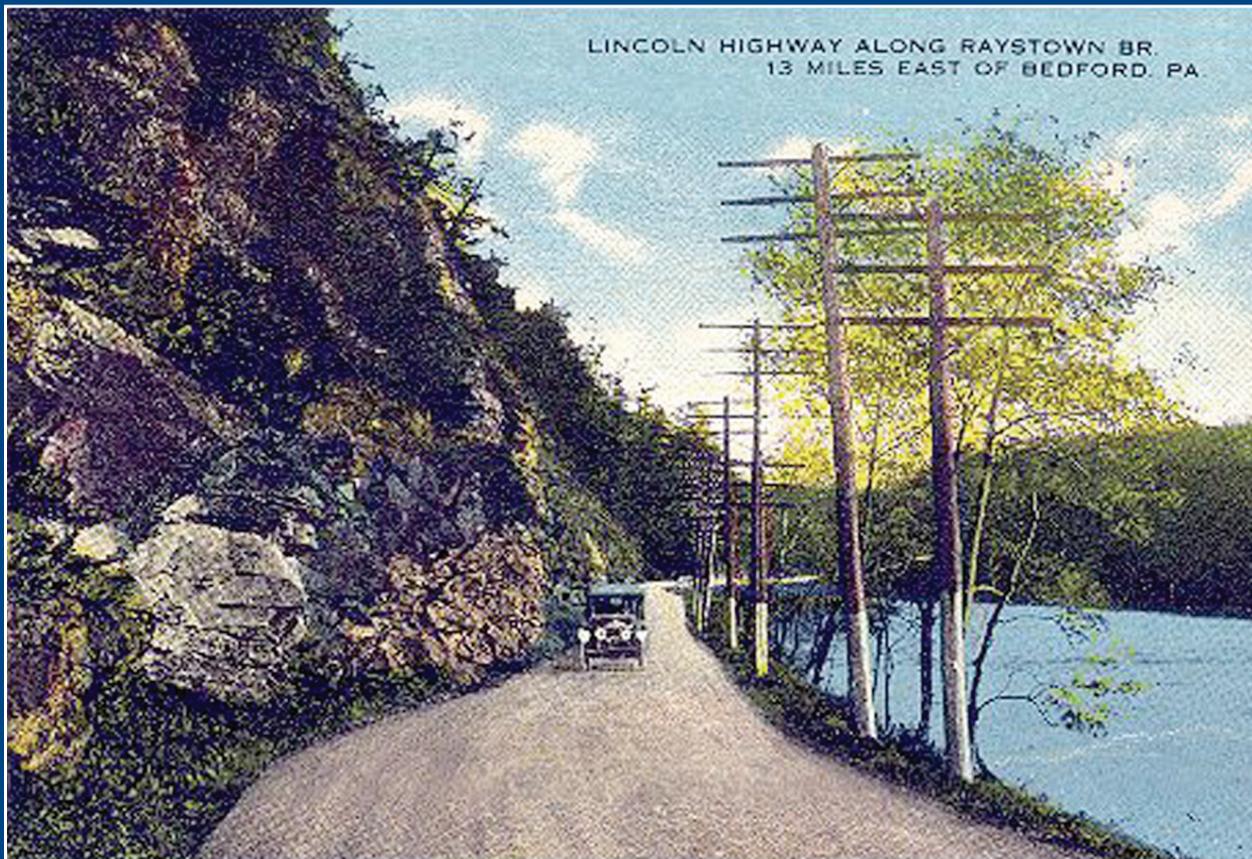




# ON THE ROAD

Highways and History  
in Bedford County

Pennsylvania Department  
of Transportation



Scott D. Heberling and William M. Hunter





## **ON THE ROAD**

### **Highways and History in Bedford County**

Scott D. Heberling and William M. Hunter  
Heberling Associates, Inc.

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission  
for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

2006

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
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## Contents

|                                                    |    |
|----------------------------------------------------|----|
| An Unexpected Discovery .....                      | 1  |
| Bedford County: Vital Transportation Corridor..... | 3  |
| Early Trails.....                                  | 5  |
| Outposts of Empire.....                            | 6  |
| Roads to the West .....                            | 15 |
| The First Turnpike Era .....                       | 18 |
| Lincoln Highway .....                              | 25 |
| The Second Turnpike Era.....                       | 28 |
| Sources of Information .....                       | 32 |

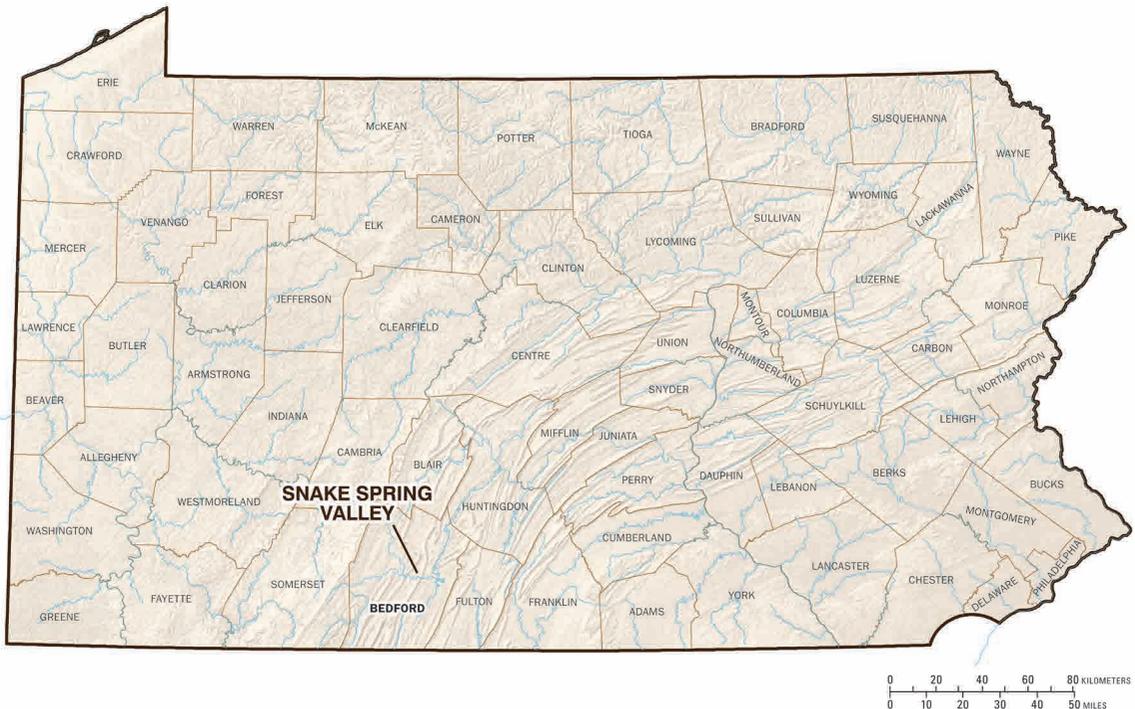


## FORBES ROAD

To capture Fort Duquesne, General Forbes marched an army, in 1758, from his main base at Carlisle to the Forks of the Ohio. He followed, as closely as he could with army wagons, the Raystown Indian and Traders Path, widened by axemen under Colonel Henry Bouquet.

## An Unexpected Discovery

In 1986 Barry and Sally Haver purchased property along US Route 30 in the Snake Spring Valley of Bedford County, not far from the Raystown Branch of the Juniata River. The Havers wondered about a slight depression that crossed their front yard. Sensing that it might be the remnant of a long-abandoned road, they began to research the history of their land, digging deep into both the soil and the historical documents. Using a metal detector and shovel, the Havers soon discovered horseshoes, lengths of chain, and other old metal objects discarded by generations of travelers. As they learned more, they realized that these rusty artifacts were linked to a history of tragedy and accomplishment involving characters as diverse as the young George Washington, the British General John Forbes, Swiss mercenary Colonel Henry Bouquet, and railroad tycoon William Vanderbilt. Their stories are written in the barely-visible depressions, abandoned road traces, and modern highways crowded along the river.



Location of the Snake Spring Valley



The exposed surface of the historic road on the Haver property

The Havers excavated a trench across their yard, revealing a crude pavement of stone slabs and cobbles, confirming that the depression was indeed an old road. Wagon wheel ruts were clearly visible on the exposed roadbed. The road seemed very old. But how old... and what road was it?

It turned out that the stone piking was associated with at least two of the many historic roads that passed through the Snake Spring Valley: the Pennsylvania Road (1788) and General John Forbes' earlier military road (1758). But that wasn't all. The Havers found that the earlier and later roads that passed through the same corridor—the Raystown Path, Burd's Road, the Chambersburg and Bedford Turnpike, the Lincoln Highway, US 30, and the Pennsylvania Turnpike—all had their own, equally important stories to tell. The unexpected discovery by the Havers, as well as recent historical and archaeological studies undertaken by the Federal Highway Administration and Pennsylvania Department of Transportation in connection with improvements to US 30, provides an opportunity to share some of these stories.

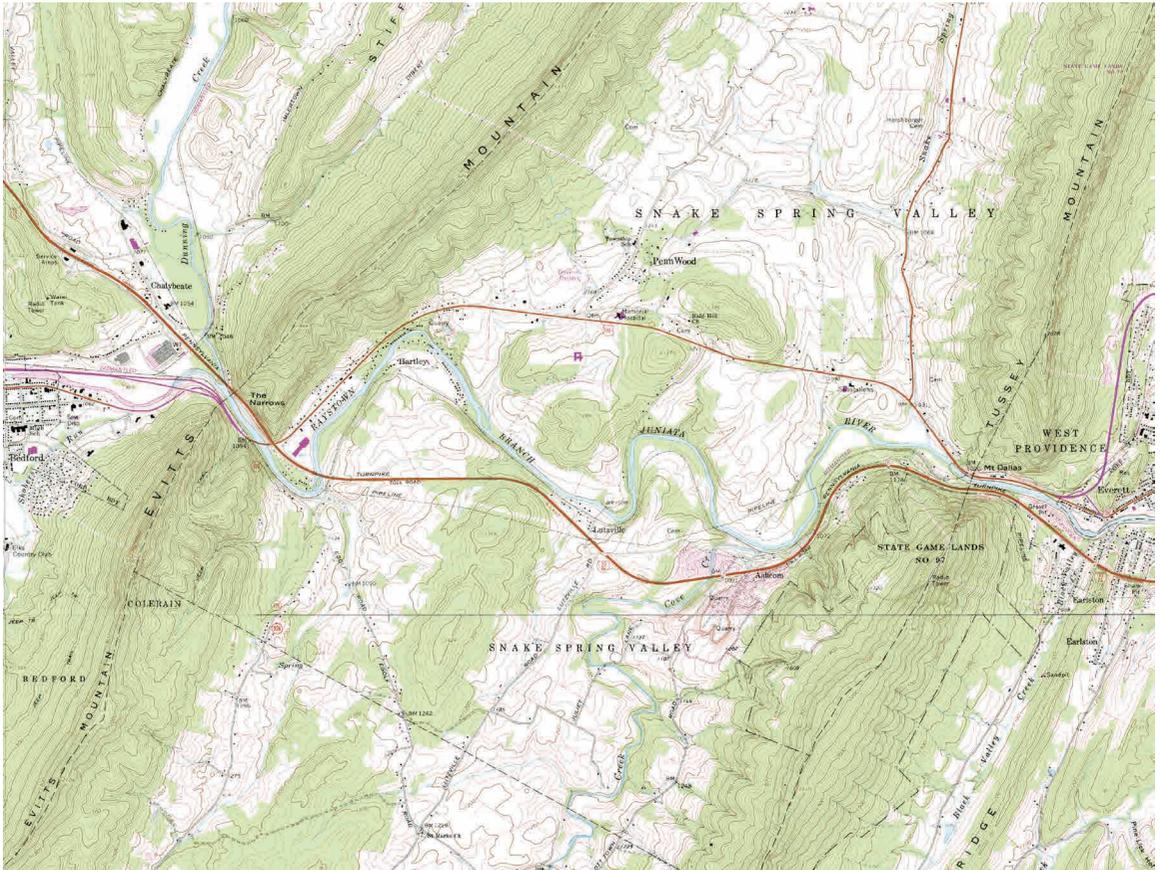
## Bedford County: Vital Transportation Corridor

It may seem odd that rural Bedford County—a corner of Pennsylvania renowned for its natural beauty, but considered by many to be somewhat “off the beaten track”—has played such an important role in events that have shaped the history of our commonwealth and nation. For over 9,000 years, people have called this rugged region home. Millions more have passed through on their journey to someplace else.

For millennia a succession of east-west transportation routes have crossed central Bedford County. In one area in particular—the Snake Spring Valley, between Bedford and Everett—all of these routes are clustered tightly together, with each road built on the remains of those that came before. Each was the result of steady improvements in technology and a desire for increased mobility, speed, and convenience that combined to render earlier systems obsolete. Although many of the early trails and roads have been obliterated, traces still survive in the landscape, if we—like the Havers—look closely.



Old road remnants are common throughout Bedford County and the rest of Pennsylvania. This is an abandoned section of the Lincoln Highway in Snake Spring Township near the Bedford Narrows, 2006.



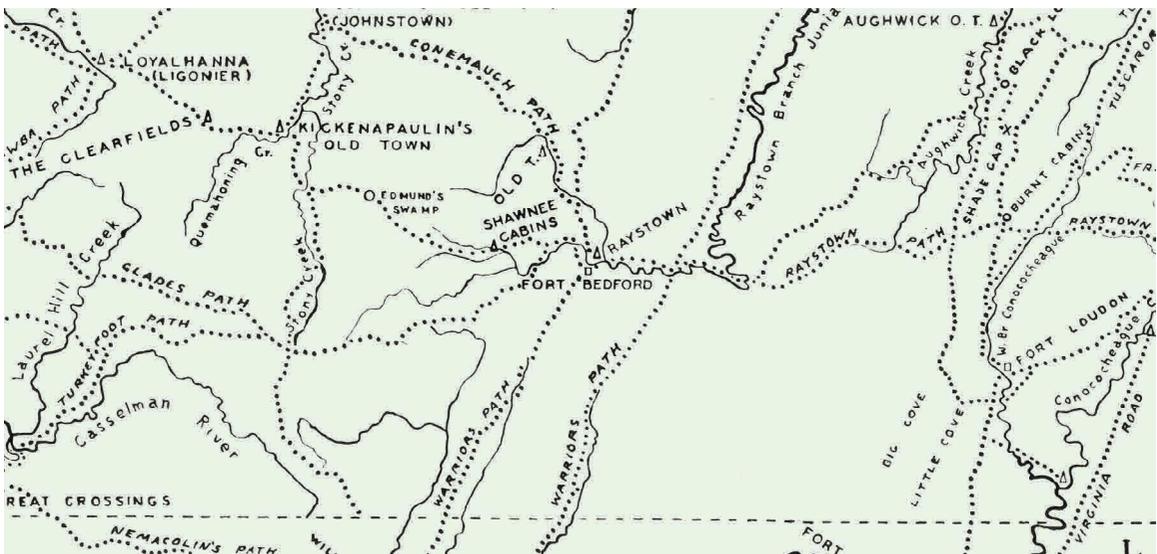
For 9,000 years, all east-west travel has been channeled through the gaps in Evitts and Tussey mountains (Source: USGS).

Why were so many of America's most famous roads constructed along essentially the same route through the middle of Bedford County? Topographic maps reveal the answer. The county is located in a region known as the Ridge and Valley physiographic province, which extends for 1,200 miles from New England to Alabama. It features a series of long, narrow, parallel ridges running in a general northeast-southwest direction. Some of the ridges, such as Tussey Mountain, can be traced over hundreds of miles, interrupted only by occasional wind or water gaps. Smaller streams flow parallel to the ridges, while the major streams flow at right angles to them. This distinctive drainage pattern originated when the Juniata River and other major streams maintained their original courses as the mountains formed, eroding water gaps through them, while the smaller streams date to a later period.

Since the ridges were a formidable barrier to travelers moving through the region, most early trails and roads followed the major streams. Water gaps thus have had great importance in shaping regional transportation systems, from the earliest trails to modern superhighways. In central Bedford County all east-west movement is channeled through a pair of water gaps which the Raystown Branch of the Juniata River has cut through Evitts and Tussey mountains. For this reason all of the principal east-west transportation routes, past and present, closely follow the Raystown Branch, passing through the steep gaps near Bedford and Everett. Despite major changes in environment and culture over 9,000 years, the problems imposed by the landscape have remained constant from the earliest Native American settlement to the present.

## Early Trails

For generations, the mountain barrier separated the rapidly developing eastern Pennsylvania counties from the Ohio Valley. Political and commercial interests, particularly those dependent on regular transport and communications, sought to overcome the Allegheny Mountain barrier from the time of first European contact with the native inhabitants. European traders journeyed into western Pennsylvania as early as 1715. Often working as scouts for land companies or trading interests, they accessed the area via a network of native trails. The natives, having neither draft animals nor wheeled vehicles, chose to follow stream terraces and valley floors. Their trails constantly shifted to adapt to



A well-developed network of native trails facilitated the movement of early traders and settlers through the region (Source: Wallace 1952).

specific conditions, avoiding slides and blow downs, seeking a route that was the driest, most level, and most direct at any given time. The earliest trails connected important geographic features such as springs, fords, glades, ridges and gaps. In Bedford County the Raystown Path (part of a trail system extending from Harrisburg to the Forks of the Ohio) negotiated seasonal flood bottoms and steep hillsides on its course through the Snake Spring Valley, using both banks of the river. West of the gap in Evitts Mountain, the trail proceeded on to John Wray's (Ray's) trading post at "Ray's Town", on or near the present site of Bedford.

## Outposts of Empire

European geographic understanding of the interior was informed by travel on the trail network. Descriptions and maps charting the resource base and development potential of western Pennsylvania were transmitted to investors, speculators, the military, and eventually, to the foreign ministries of the two main colonial powers, France and England. The competing colonial claims on western Pennsylvania proved to be a dominant factor in the selection and development of transportation corridors into the interior.

The competition was economic as well as ideological, aimed at controlling the region's rich resource base. Colonial policy reflected often-competing private concerns, of which none were more influential than the Ohio Company. Chartered by the British Crown, the Ohio Company combined the geographic knowledge of natives and traders with field surveys and military experience when making land claims and other investment decisions. Transportation was always at the core of their analysis.

The Ohio Company was one of many private interests with a stake in the development of the transportation network and suppression of the native and French resistance in western Pennsylvania. By 1752 its agents had mapped a trade route from Wills Creek (Cumberland, Maryland) to the Forks of the Ohio (Pittsburgh). The company cut the first road into the interior along this route to serve the lucrative trade with the western tribes. Promotion of the Ohio Company route hindered the development of the less traveled Raystown Path until 1758, when military necessity trumped economic expediency.

The Ohio Company's activities aroused their French competitors, who moved to defend their colonial claim to the headwaters of the Ohio Valley by constructing a series of forts. In 1753 a small force under the command of Lt. Col. George Washington challenged the French with an ultimatum, which was rejected out of hand. Attempting to reinforce the Ohio Company's outpost at the Forks of



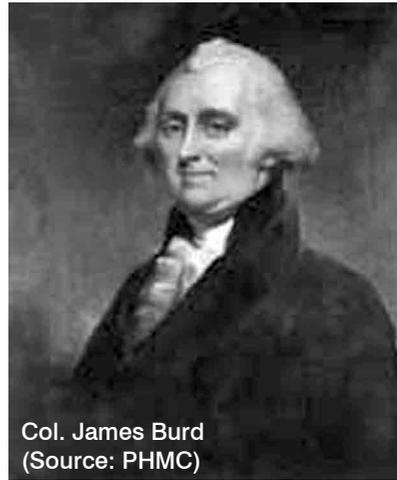
By this time the route to the west was known as the “Raystown Road,” suggesting heavier use, if not improvement, of the old trader’s path. Most accounts agree that by 1755 Ray’s Town was a functioning trade center, with a public tavern, several cabins and a market clearing (Schell 1907:23-24). It was also the ideal forward position for a military response to the French and Indian advances, located as it was within the web of well-traveled trade routes (Evans 1755; Waterman, Watkins and Co. 1884:172). Because of its strategic location Ray’s Town immediately became a factor in the military decisions made by the British commercial and political establishment.

Stung by Washington’s defeat, the British responded with a three-pronged campaign hinging on a drive to Fort Duquesne and the upper Ohio Valley, led by Major General Edward Braddock. In February 1755 Braddock assembled a force of British regular soldiers and colonial militia, and began the logistical preparations for his campaign, despite finding only lukewarm support in Virginia and outright hostility in Pennsylvania. Braddock ordered the construction of a “Road of Communication” from Philadelphia to the Ohio Country, even though his main force would move toward Fort Duquesne from Cumberland, using the Ohio Company’s southern trade route. The task of constructing the support road across Pennsylvania fell to John St. Clair, Braddock’s deputy quartermaster.

St. Clair was reluctant to provide an advantage to the Pennsylvania interests at the expense of his friends in the Ohio Company, but he recognized the military necessity of a support road from the “breadbasket” of the colonies to the interior. The Pennsylvania Assembly eventually agreed to assist Braddock by surveying a road to the west, since this obviously was in the colony’s best interest. However, it was reluctant to supply troops for what was, after all, a bid by Virginia’s Ohio Company to acquire control of the western trade (Colonial Records 1755; Jennings 1988:150).

A commission was appointed to survey the road west “with one eye on trade and the other on their Virginia rivals” (Nixon 1934:239). At the end of March 1755, the commissioners (George Croghan, William Buchanan, John Armstrong, James Burd and Adam Hoops) led a small company west from Carlisle to blaze what became known as Burd’s Road (Volwiler 1926:92). They left the heavily traveled “Great Virginia Road” south of Shippensburg and followed the Raystown Path west (Briggs 1998:399; Williams 1975:13). They intended the road to follow the well-established trade route through Aliquippa’s Gap and the trade centers of Tussey’s Tavern, Pendergrass’s Tavern, “Rea’s Town,” and “Shawonese Cabbins,” passing near if not through Croghan’s newly surveyed plat. The road would then climb the Allegheny Front and connect with Braddock’s Road at the Turkeyfoot, the confluence of the three forks of the Youghiogheny River, in what is now Fayette County (Waddell and Bomberger 1996:18-19).

The party was able to survey the route from Carlisle to the Youghiogheny in only fourteen days, testament to the relatively good condition of the path and the mobility of trade parties with packhorses. They found a decent road as far as the crest of the Allegheny Mountain. In writing to the Pennsylvania authorities, Armstrong revealed the role that provincial competition played in the route selection: “[We] studied to keep the (road) as near the Heart of our own Province as was consistent with the Situation of the Country and the Place intended to go to, and ‘tis probable we found the best Road that the Allegheny and other Mountains can admit of” (Armstrong to Peters, Colonial Records 1755).



Col. James Burd  
(Source: PHMC)

On April 29, 1755 Burd received orders to begin constructing the support road. Work commenced on May 6, nearly three months behind schedule. The task was made somewhat easier by the organic engineering of the existing route. As the native trails had evolved over generations, much of the preliminary engineering had already been accomplished. Still, it was a difficult task for Burd's undermanned force, and they fell even further behind schedule. To expedite the work, the required width was reduced from 30 to 20 feet, allowing for a minimum of 10 feet in the challenging mountain sections (Nixon 1934:241). By mid-summer, the exhausted road-cutters reached the foot of the Alleghenies.

Meanwhile, to the south, Braddock's main column had succeeded in improving the Ohio Company's route to Braddock's specifications as far as Little Meadows in western Maryland. Behind schedule, Braddock divided his force and led a weary light column toward Fort Duquesne. On July 9, 1755 Braddock's army suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the French and Indians, and the survivors straggled back to Fort Cumberland.

Burd's pioneers finally reached the crest of the Allegheny Ridge eight days after the battle. When he learned of the decisive French victory Burd retreated to Cumberland, leaving behind a good wagon road through 65 miles of wilderness country (Nixon 1934:244-245). With a crew of only 200 men, Burd had built his road to the crest of the Alleghenies in just over two-month's time. In spite of his failure to complete the road in time to directly support Braddock, his success in building the road at all thrust him into a leading role in devising a defense of the Pennsylvania frontier against the inevitable French and Indian advance.

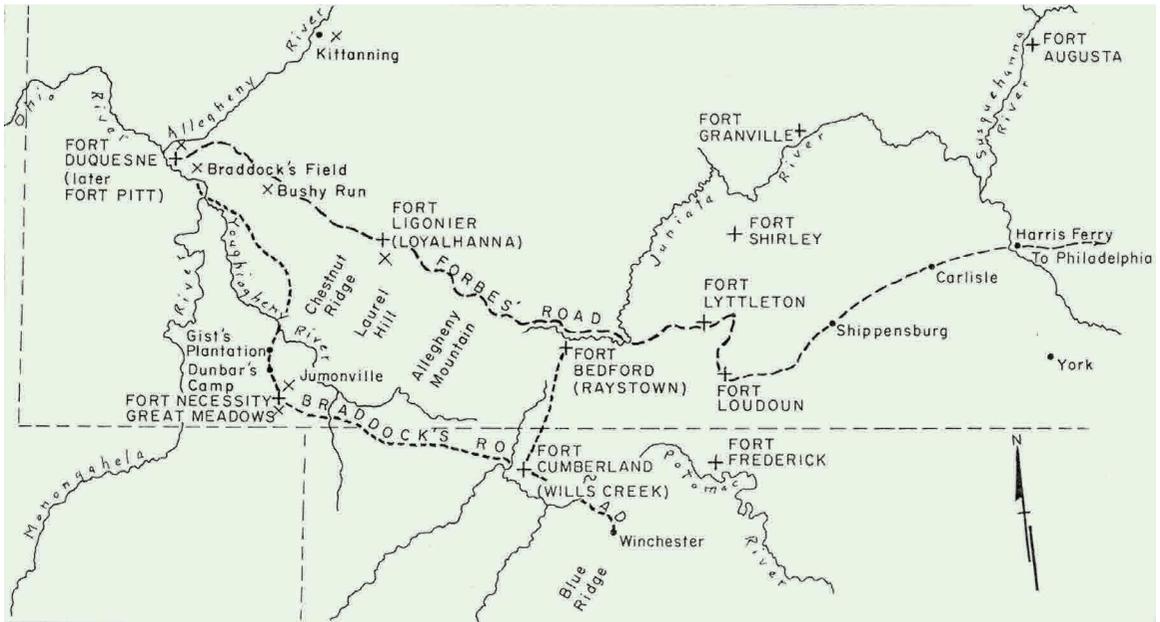


The advance of Braddock's army toward Fort Duquesne. Inset: General Edward Braddock (Source: PHMC).

The retreat of the British army into Virginia left the Pennsylvania frontier dangerously exposed (Waddell and Bomberger 1996:15). Native war parties attacked settlements along the frontier. Braddock's defeat and the sporadic warfare that followed halted the development of any new roads west for the next three years. The brutality of three years of intermittent conflict fortified the resolve of British authorities to expel France from the Ohio Country. The success of a provincial force under Colonel John Armstrong at the Battle of Kittanning in 1756 marked a turning point. The next spring Armstrong led 300 troops down Burd's Road to Ray's Town, where he established an encampment and monitored French and Indian movement. On his return, Armstrong argued that the province should construct a fort at Ray's Town. Interestingly, Armstrong's account shows that as early as 1757 Burd's Road was also known as the "Pennsylvania Road" to differentiate it from Braddock's Virginia-backed trade route (Hunter 1960:418).

When William Pitt became the British Prime Minister, one of his first moves was to overhaul the military and political establishment in the colonies, appointing Brigadier General John Forbes to command forces in the southern theater of North America. Forbes' selection of Swiss mercenary Henry Bouquet as executive officer and commander of the Royal American troops soon proved to be an outstanding selection.

Already in control of the two major native trails through the region, the military sought to eliminate the threat to their center through construction of a fort on the supply road at Ray's Town. However, the British command still had to wrestle with the competing interests of private and provincial factions in selecting the best route for the army to move against Fort Duquesne. George Washington and other Virginians represented the interests of the Ohio Company by lobbying strenuously for the



Forbes' and Braddock's Roads (Source: PHMC, adapted from O'Meara 1979)

recondition and reuse of Braddock's Road, and against any improvement to the "Rays Town road" (Stevens et al. 1951:299). Clearly, there was much at stake in choosing a route. Everyone knew that the military road would likely become an important route for settlement after the war, bringing a fortune to speculators—like those in the Ohio Company—who had acquired vast expanses of western lands (Jennings 1988:379). Washington was able to convince St. Clair, but when St. Clair suggested to Henry Bouquet that he lead his troops to "Reas Town" and then turn south to Fort Cumberland, his obvious intervention on behalf of the Virginia interests was not lost on either Forbes or Bouquet.

Eventually Bouquet and Armstrong convinced Forbes that the route west from Ray's Town was better suited to meet immediate military needs. The advantages of the Pennsylvania route included a more direct line of march, fewer and less difficult river crossings, and better forage, which allowed the construction of strong fortifications along the line. Undeterred, Washington suggested that the Ohio Company's road was preferred by traders and Indians, and he argued that "a [more barren] road is no where to be found than from Rays Town . . . , which is likewise to be considered with the badness [of the Road]." Putting military considerations foremost, Forbes overruled Washington and committed to advance on the line of the "Raestown Road" (Stevens et al. 1951).

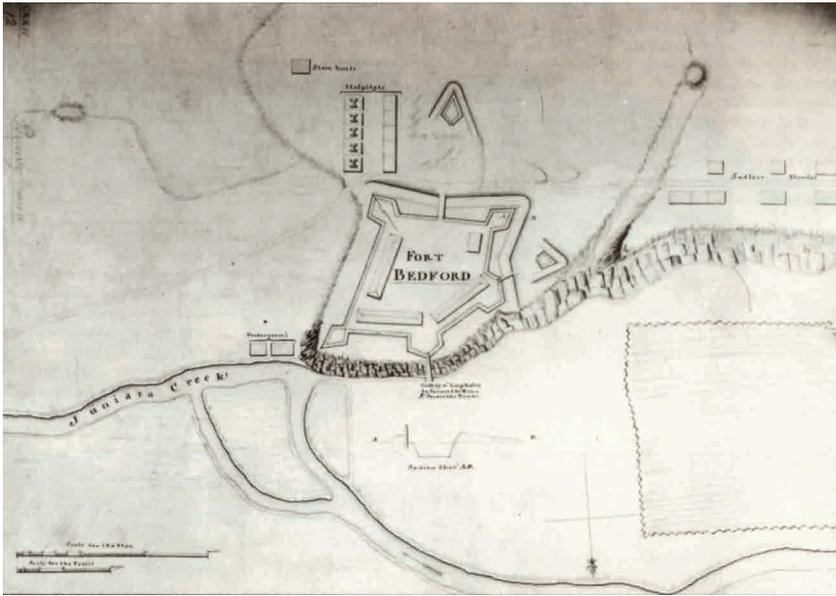


Col. Henry Bouquet (Source: PHMC)

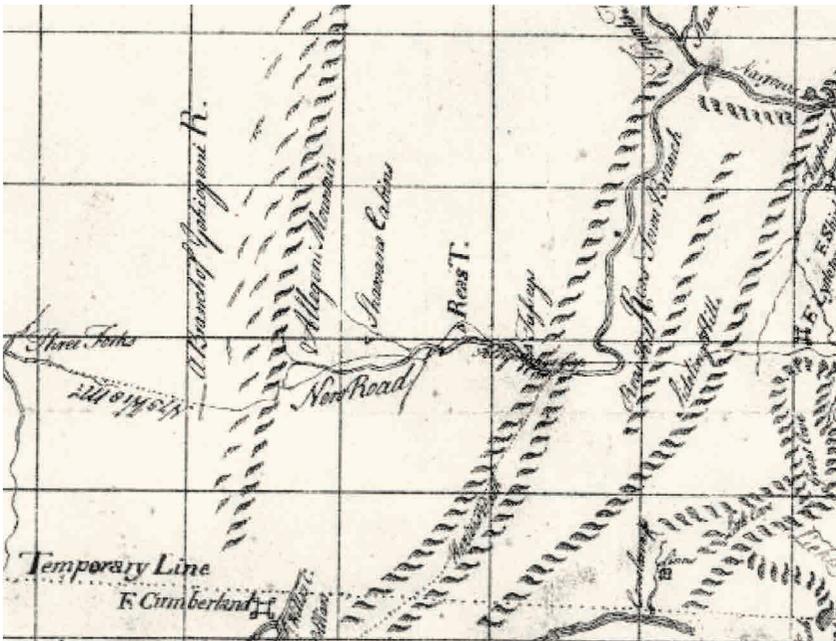
On July 31, 1758 Bouquet ordered the extension of the war road west from Ray's Town, and the die was cast (Waddell and Bomberger 1996:36). With the decision to advance along that route, and to fortify points at Ray's Town, Loyal Hanna Creek and, eventually, the Forks of the Ohio, the responsibility of constructing a war road again fell to James Burd. By then a colonel in the provincial army, Burd had developed into a military engineer during the organization of frontier defenses and construction of the provincial forts following Braddock's defeat. He now had an opportunity to adjust his earlier route in light of his experience, and made the most of it by completely reconstructing large sections such as the difficult stretch from Fort Loudon to Fort Littleton (Williams 1975:38). This time he had at his disposal over 1,400 troops with ample supplies (Nixon 1941:48).

Bouquet's army gathered at Ray's Town where an improved stockade was under construction. Like most military forces on the frontier, it was a combination of regular army and militia, with large numbers of support personnel and camp followers that required a well-engineered supply line. By the fall of 1758 the new road extended to a supply depot at the crest of the Allegheny Ridge and on to a depot and forward camp at Loyal Hanna. The army slowly assembled as the road progressed to the west, with supply points becoming fortified and the road becoming ever better defined.

With the rapid completion of the military road to Loyal Hanna and General Forbes delayed at Carlisle, Bouquet chose to act by sending General James Grant and a large reconnaissance force toward Fort Duquesne. Grant was ambushed and routed with heavy loss. Despite the victory the French commander at Fort Duquesne found his own position to be indefensible. On November 24 the French burned Fort Duquesne and retreated downriver, leaving the Forks of the Ohio to the British. With Fort Duquesne secured, Forbes renamed the point as Pittsburgh, Loyal Hanna as Fort Ligonier and Ray's Town as Fort Bedford. The fall of Fort Niagara on July 1759 ended French dominance of the Great Lakes and Ohio country. This was followed by the siege of Quebec and the final defeat of the French military power in North America.



1758 Plan of Fort Bedford



1758 map showing Ray's Town and the Forbes Road (Source: Brown 1959)

Forbes' Road from Carlisle to Fort Duquesne was 217 miles long, consisting of climbs and descents that were the equivalent of overcoming a single 8,000-foot high obstacle (Briggs 1998:397). Since the road connected eastern Pennsylvania with the Ohio Country and was a vital link in the military supply chain along the line of forts, the Forbes Road immediately became the principal route to the west. It became colloquially known as the "Great Road to the West," or, less dramatically, the "western road" (Anderson 1959:397). The road saw heavy use in the trafficking of military supplies and trade items, evidenced by a list of rates and prices for a wide variety of trade goods sold at Rays Town in 1758, including West Indian rum, English cheese, chocolate and Madeira wine (Espenshade et al. 1999: 31; Stevens et al. 1951: 353). Fort Bedford was a key link in the British military and trade system, supplying materials and equipment to British military and commercial interests from Fort Pitt to Detroit (Waddell and Bomberger 1996:54).

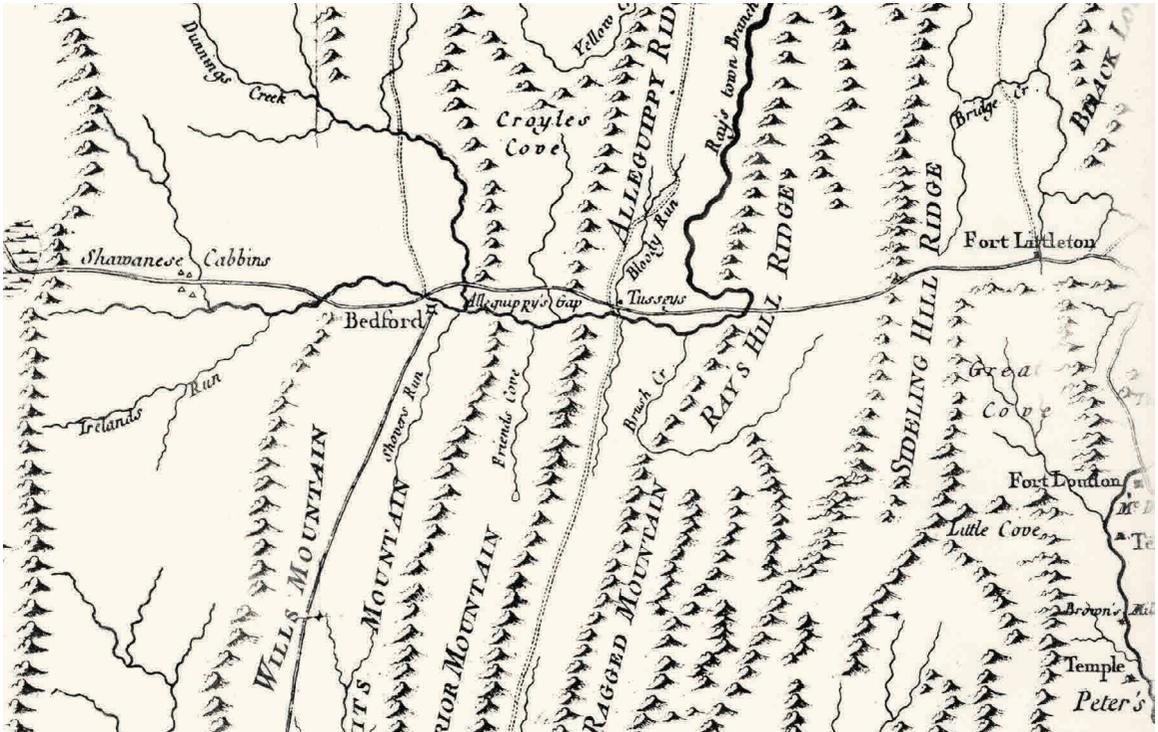
On February 10, 1763 the Treaty of Paris ended the Seven Years War in North America. That fall the Crown issued a proclamation prohibiting settlement west of the Allegheny Ridge, though Pennsylvania encouraged settlement along the Forbes Road corridor through the distribution of "Campaign Lands." During Pontiac's rebellion of 1763, all frontier forts except Bedford and Ligonier were destroyed, including the small stockades along the Forbes Road. The insurgency prompted Bouquet again to lead a small force along the Forbes Road in relief of Fort Pitt. The small column passed by Fort Bedford in the last days of July 1763, much to the relief of the small garrison and terrified settlers within. On August 5 and 6 Bouquet's force engaged and defeated a large native force at Bushy Run, killing key leaders and forcing native bands back to the Ohio Country.

The following year Bouquet again traveled west on the Forbes Road, this time at the head of a 1,500-man column on a campaign into the heart of the native confederacy. The army was able to travel from Carlisle to Fort Pitt in only 40 days, suggesting that the road had been improved dramatically in the six years since Forbes' five-month crawl to the west (Briggs 1998:399). Bouquet's engineers made additional improvements, building bridges and rerouting some sections to accommodate his 1,200-horse supply train and livestock herd. They did not hesitate to shift the alignment if it suited the needs of the campaign, in several cases moving the road to the slopes, avoiding the bottoms crossed by Burd's Road. By October 1764 Bouquet had crushed the insurgency, allowing settlement and trade to proceed (Williams 1975:7). The first land claims along the Western Road were entered the next year and surveyors laid out the town of Bedford in 1766. The native traces, military roads, and packhorse trails evolved into locally maintained roads of variable quality.

## Roads to the West

For the next three decades the modified Forbes Road—now known as the “Western Road”—was the main route of travel and transport over the mountains. The condition of the road deteriorated with use, becoming a packhorse trail once again. Over time the original route of the Forbes Road faded from the landscape.

In 1771 the county of Bedford was organized, with Bedford designated the county seat. The county, then encompassing a much larger land area than it does today, benefited from the continued evolution of the Western Road. Improved from Bedford to the headwaters of the Ohio in 1773, the Western Road was the principal route into the interior of Pennsylvania and the Ohio Valley, carrying troops and supplies throughout the revolutionary period. It was so heavily traveled that it was the object of the first state government subsidized road construction project in Pennsylvania. The growth of the early economy depended on reducing costs through the construction of improved, cheaper and more rapid transportation to western Pennsylvania.



The Forbes/Western Road in 1776 (Source: Scull 1776)

In September 1785 the legislature appointed a commission to lay out a road from the western part of Cumberland County to Pittsburgh, following the general course of the old Forbes Road (Buck 1939:232). By November the road had been laid out and its construction authorized. Bedford County authorities analyzed the route and funding plan, and realized that construction of the 60-foot-wide road envisioned by the Assembly was impossible. The road, if built with the allotted funds, could only “be cleared and made good and sufficient, to be 12 feet wide on the sides of the hills or among rocks, and not less than 20 feet wide on the ground, and room to be made for not less than three wagons to draw off to one side in the narrow places at a convenient distance for others to pass by, and the waters to run next to the hill sides” (Bedford County Council, quoted in Waterman, Watkins and Co. 1884:173).

The section east of Bedford, originally cut by Burd in 1755, was the first to be reconstructed. Contractors reached Bedford in 1788, building the section across the Haver property that year. The entire 297 mile-long road from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, now known as the “Pennsylvania Road”, was opened in 1791 (Buck 1939:233, 240). Between 1795 and 1800 contractors built bridges “in a very substantial manner, of stone, oak and iron” over the Raystown Branch and Dunning Creek (Schell 1907:43; Waterman, Watkins and Co. 1884:174). As before, in the Snake Spring Valley the improved road ran north of the Raystown Branch, while an alternative bridle trail followed the south bank of the river.

The Pennsylvania Road carried passenger traffic but was most important as a trade route. Teamster-driven wagon trains made regular passage through the area, often delivering local surplus bulk commodities such as butter and flour to market. Brokers arranged contracts with shippers, developing trade relationships that were often transatlantic in scale. Roadside taverns were established, serving as the first commercial enterprises in an emerging trade network. As with any service, taverns and inns specialized to meet the needs of their customers, whether they were migrants, traders, teamsters, or merchants. In the Snake Spring Valley the Defibaugh Tavern was an important establishment that provided forage, water and pasture for draft animals and support services for the teamsters (Espenshade et al. 1999:39).

The market economy penetrated the vast resources of the west and channeled materials and commodities back to the eastern part of the state by way of the Pennsylvania Road. The “great highway” through Pennsylvania was intentionally created to compete with the Baltimore-oriented Braddock’s Road, anticipating the competition between the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad in the next century. Even in its infancy the state had an active interest in the promotion of private development through the construction of publicly-funded transportation routes.



Roadside taverns were busy places due to heavy traffic on the main roads  
(Source: Maryland Historical Society).

The utility of a well-designed and maintained road became clear in 1794 when General Henry Lee led a federal army along its route, this time not to challenge a foreign power, but to crush the Whiskey Rebellion, nurtured by the merchants and distillers trading along the old Forbes Road corridor (Waterman, Watkins and Co. 1884:174). In the Snake Spring Valley, local tavern owners actively supported the insurrection (Clouse 1994).

As the western frontier receded with the expansion of the market into the old Northwest, the character of the road changed: “rough as it was, the Pennsylvania Road was a real improvement over its former condition, and until 1800 carried almost the entire traffic for Pittsburgh” (Swetnam 1968:13). But as time went on the route became just one of several alternate routes to the west. This was in contrast to the National Road, a federally-funded interstate highway constructed to the south, along the route of the former Braddock’s Road. As early as 1806 the Pennsylvania Road was being promoted not as a highway to the west, but rather, as an intrastate route—“the best means of communication between the eastern and western portions of the state” (Waterman, Watkins and Co. 1884:19).

The topography and heavy traffic placed demands for maintenance that far exceeded the capacity of local authorities, even with generous state subsidy. Travelers suggested that the state and county authorities had shirked routine maintenance and bridge construction, allowing what had been considered a “good” road in 1809 to become an “awful” road by 1818 (Faris 1927:207; Walker 1975:135).

Public desire to shorten travel time made the Pennsylvania Road obsolete. Reducing the cost of transportation was critical for eastern investors; the expansion of the market and prices for materials and goods were adversely affected by the poor condition of the road (Harvey 1985:603). The cost of again rebuilding the degraded Pennsylvania Road was beyond the capacity of either the county or the state authorities. As a result, private interests reluctantly organized to address the costly problem of transportation.

## **The First Turnpike Era**

The period between 1800 and 1830 was the “turnpike era” in the United States. Turnpikes were roads built by a private company that issued stock but which were chartered by a state government; users paid tolls to help pay construction and maintenance costs and to provide a return on stockholders’ investments. These roads followed already-established routes, and in most cases connected larger towns. The best turnpikes were constructed with a solid stone foundation covered with rolled, packed gravel, while others were no more than graded and packed dirt. Turnpike builders attempted to smooth out curves and reduce the steepest grades by cutting and filling (Taylor 1968:15-17). By 1832 Pennsylvania had 2,400 miles of turnpikes, more than any other state (Thomas 1994:36).

In 1814 the legislature commissioned five turnpike companies to rebuild the Pennsylvania Road between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. The sections were short enough to be manageable, such as from Chambersburg to Bedford. The Chambersburg and Bedford Turnpike was a far better road than the old Pennsylvania Road: specifications called for the roadway to be 22 feet wide, with a one-foot thick, hard-packed surface of crushed stone. Drainage was better and the surface was smoother and more durable than the crude stone and dirt surface of the earlier road (Butko 1996:xxv).

The primary purpose of the road was to reduce transport time between east and west in order to facilitate trade. To this end the existing road was straightened, widened, or rerouted to better suit the needs of the commercial and passenger convoys that depended on reduced travel time. In the Snake Spring Valley this meant the abandonment of the section of the Pennsylvania Road that passed



Chambersburg and Bedford Turnpike stock certificate

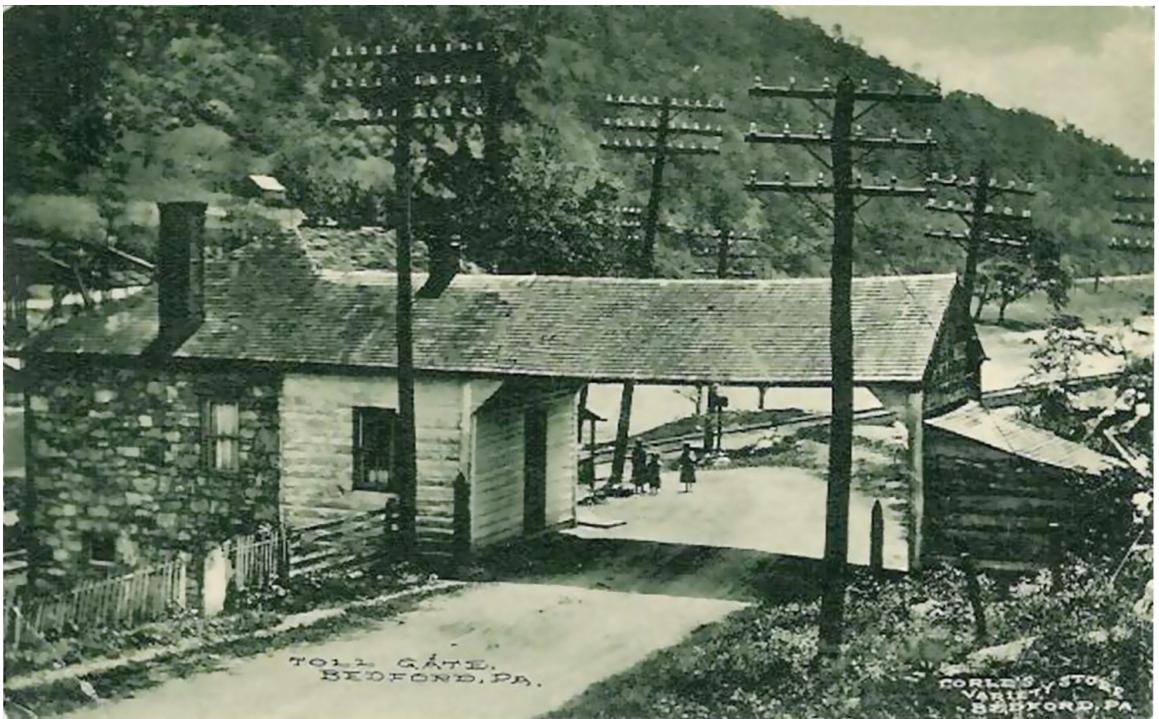


Building a turnpike in the early 1800s (Source: FHWA)

through the Haver property in favor of a site uphill to the north. Like the earlier Raystown Path and Forbes Road, the bypassed sections of the Pennsylvania Road began to fade from the landscape.

The Chambersburg and Bedford Turnpike carried heavy commercial and passenger traffic, spurring a range of related development. In addition to the wagons that hauled agricultural produce, manufactured goods, and other commodities, there were regularly-scheduled stagecoaches carrying both mail and passengers, and drovers bringing large herds of hogs, cattle, and sheep to eastern markets (Waterman, Watkins and Co. 1884:175). As early as 1804 passengers could secure coach transport from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, and daily service had been established by 1828 (Schell 1907:56).

Inns and taverns were located every one or two miles to serve the crowds of humans and animals. Innkeepers often served as brokers, negotiating lucrative contracts with freight and coach lines. Taverns specialized in catering to specific classes of travelers. The “stage stand” was the most fashionable, and relatively luxurious, type of roadside inn, which specialized in serving stagecoach



Turnpike toll gate at Bedford (Source: PHMC)

passengers. Far below the stage stand in comfort was the “wagon stand”, which catered mainly to teamsters. Many wagon stands were simply converted houses, with nothing to distinguish them from a typical farmhouse other than an easily-removed bar, a large wagon yard, and a watering trough in front of the building. Food, drink, and companionship all tended to be of poor quality. “Drovers’ stands” had large outdoor pens where the animals were housed and fed, and the accommodations for the drovers were not much better. Even more humble was the simple “tap-house”, which was devoted mainly to the sale of liquor, but which often provided overnight accommodations under very poor conditions (Fletcher 1950:474).

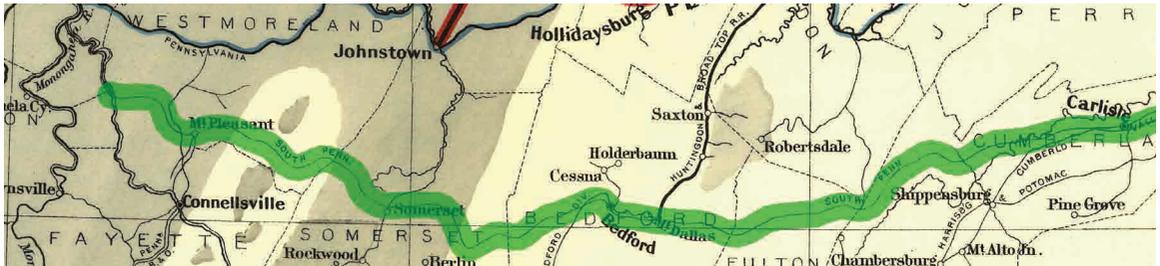
Local entrepreneurs and freight carriers were active in the Chambersburg and Bedford Turnpike Company, influencing the routing of the road and the location of tollgates. The company controlled its road by placing tollgates at the gaps at each end of the Snake Spring Valley. The toll requirement for short trips to Bedford was a burden for many valley residents, who constructed an alternative roadway (known as the “Shunpike”) along the ridge and mountainside several hundred feet above the tollgate. Even so the tollgates in the area were not abandoned until 1902.

After 1840 road construction and maintenance in Pennsylvania lagged over the next sixty years, as public and private transportation improvements focused on the construction of canals and railroads. Significant investment in highway construction would not occur again until the beginning of the automobile age (Thomas 1994:37). Because Bedford County never had any canals, and no railroads until a late date, it continued to rely on its road network to meet its transportation needs. In the 1830s the state studied a variety of transportation improvements in central Bedford County, including a railroad along the Raystown Branch, the improvement of the Raystown Branch for river navigation and the construction of a new macadam or block road from Laughlintown to Chambersburg by way of Bedford, but none of these improvements were implemented.

During the Civil War era railroads finally came to Bedford County. In 1863 the Huntingdon and Broad Top Railroad was extended south from Hopewell to a point just west of Everett, and a decade later, the Bedford and Bridgeport Railroad was constructed along the Raystown Branch through the Snake Spring Valley to Bedford, where it turned south to join the Baltimore and Ohio system at Hyndman (Waterman, Watkins and Co. 1884:181). The routing of the railroad through Aliquippa’s Gap and the Narrows continued the long evolution of transportation through the Snake Spring area but it reoriented spatial relationships to the north and the south rather than east or west.



Snake Spring Valley corridor in 1877 (Source: Beers and Co. 1877)



Route of the South Penn Railroad (Source: Wikipedia)

As in other parts of Pennsylvania the coming of the railroad was bad news for businesses that depended on the turnpikes. Passenger traffic declined dramatically with the development of faster alternative modes. But commercial traffic on the turnpike continued on a smaller scale into the late railroad era, refocused on providing access to railroad hubs and trade centers. Even in the late 1870s the road corridor remained a steady source of business. For example, the tavern and service complex established by the Defibaugh family had grown into the hamlet of Willow Grove, expanding on the small industries of lime burning, leatherwork, and smithing.

Perhaps the most important railroad in the region was one that was never built. In 1880, weary of high fees and eager to break the Pennsylvania Railroad's economic and political power, William H. Vanderbilt formed an association of capitalists, including Andrew Carnegie and Frank Gowen, to build a new railroad across the Allegheny Mountains and capture a share of the trunk traffic then dominated by the Pennsylvania Railroad system. Buoyed by the success of the New York Central system, Vanderbilt quietly organized the South Pennsylvania Railroad Company to break the Pennsylvania Railroad monopoly. Confronting the ancient problem of building a road through the Alleghenies, company surveyors and engineers chose the traditional corridor west from Harrisburg through Bedford, once again taking advantage of the gaps in the ridges. The South Penn followed the old route through Aliquippa's Gap, then shadowed its competitor, the Bedford Division of the Pennsylvania Railroad, to Bedford (Shank 1973).



William H. Vanderbilt  
(Source: Wikipedia)

Vanderbilt's project moved quickly. By 1883 the company had acquired the rights to build its line through Bedford County, planning to use numerous tunnels and bridges to overcome natural barriers. In late 1883 engineers and thousands of workers began grading and blasting for the construction of several of the massive tunnels. Work continued for two years, until financier J. P. Morgan called a congress of the major railroads to broker a truce in the war of competition. With 60% of the line complete, the project was abandoned, but what had been accomplished laid the groundwork for future highway improvements.

At the turn of the century the main road through the Snake Spring Valley retained the characteristics of the turnpike, an improved if irregular road supporting a host of secondary routes. By this time, it—like other turnpike roads—had become badly deteriorated, and agricultural and business interests were demanding a major reorganization of the state transportation network. In 1903 the Commonwealth condemned the Chambersburg-Bedford Turnpike, seized the property and removed the tollgates. Two years later Pennsylvania established the Department of Highways to maintain and upgrade the decaying overland system.

Farmers and their advocates lobbied the state legislature to fund and maintain market roads, designed to “get farmers out of the mud.” Responsibility for maintenance and upkeep of the old turnpikes remained with the underfunded county authorities until 1911, when Pennsylvania’s Sproul Act authorized the state to purchase remaining turnpike companies to bring the entire road system under state control. The Commonwealth purchased the turnpike right-of-way that year and designated the route as “State Road 1.” At the time few realized the windfall that awaited landowners along the old turnpike route.

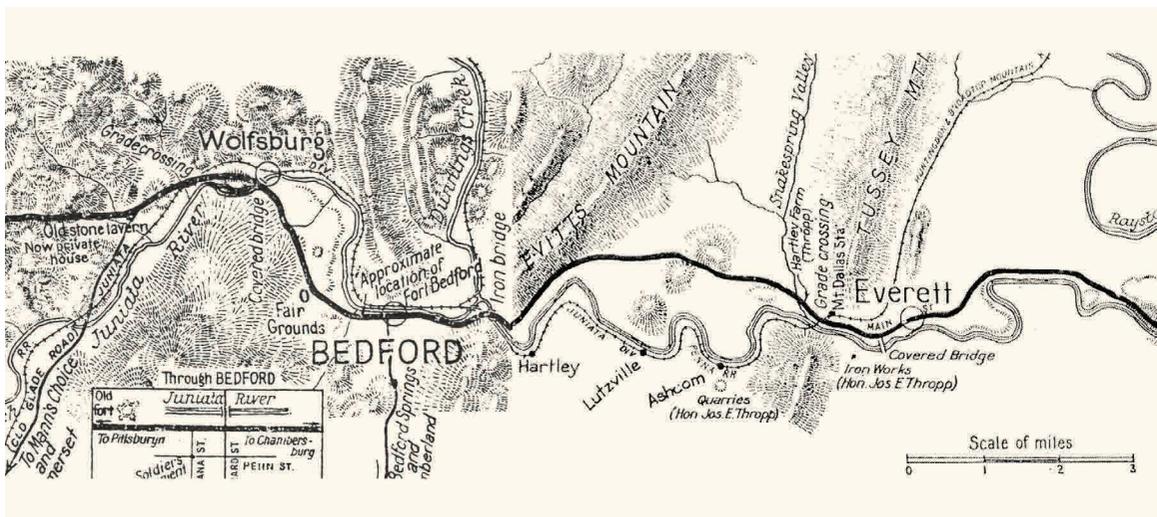


A typical country road in the early automobile era (Source: PHMC)

## Lincoln Highway

At the dawn of the automobile era Americans had virtually no way to travel between cities except by railroad, or by wagon or horseback on wretched country roads. Interstate travel by automobile was attempted only by the most daring drivers. This began to change in 1913 when a group of bankers and auto executives met in Detroit to form the Lincoln Highway Association, forever changing the very concept of automobile travel. Packard Motor Company president Henry Joy and manufacturer Carl Fisher conceived the idea of a cross-country promotional highway in 1913 to assist in the sale and marketing of their firm's products and services. The Association, representing the integrated automobile industry (including the tire, fuel, and construction materials sectors) promoted a continuous improved coast-to-coast highway, extending 3,300 miles through 12 states (Butko 1996).

The federal government balked at funding the project and coordinating the construction. Undeterred, Lincoln Highway promoters developed a route patched together from a network of existing state highways, and set about on a lobbying effort to upgrade the sections in each state. In Pennsylvania the Lincoln Highway stayed close to the old Forbes Road corridor from Everett to Pittsburgh. It incorporated the route of the old Chambersburg and Bedford Turnpike through the Snake Spring Valley, following the present course of today's US Route 30 except for a few minor deviations. This meant that the road retained many of the dramatic grades and sharp curves of its progenitors, challenging even seasoned long haul drivers (Miller 1992:428).



Route of the Lincoln Highway through Bedford County



The Lincoln Highway in the Snake Spring Valley about 1920  
(Source: Audrien Longenecker Henry Postcard Collection)

In only a few short years the industry flood of promotional materials drew tremendous private investment to the Lincoln Highway corridor, leading to the creation of its well-known landscape of hotels, gas stations, tourist camps and roadside attractions. The “last stretch into Bedford” experienced dramatic change during the automobile era as property owners worked to realize the advantage of their position on this heavily promoted cross-country route (Bruce 1920:84).

The Lincoln Highway was a visionary concept designed to encourage recreational motoring among the general public. At first the highway was only a collection of pre-existing local routes, but with its use and evolution over the years, the road was shifted, graded, and widened. In 1919 the Pennsylvania Department of Highways began to pave its entire 360 miles of the road in concrete (Butko 1996:xxvi). By 1925 the Lincoln was designated a major trunk highway: US Route 30 from



The Lincoln Highway east of Bedford (Source: Audrien Longenecker Henry Postcard Collection)

Atlantic City, New Jersey to Astoria, Oregon. The original web of unrelated roads began to change form and function with the new designation, as industry lobbyists coerced state legislatures to pour money into its continuous improvement. The Lincoln Highway became a well-known place in the American scene, an example of the organization of the automobile industry and the development of effective advertising tactics on behalf of the makers of automobile products.

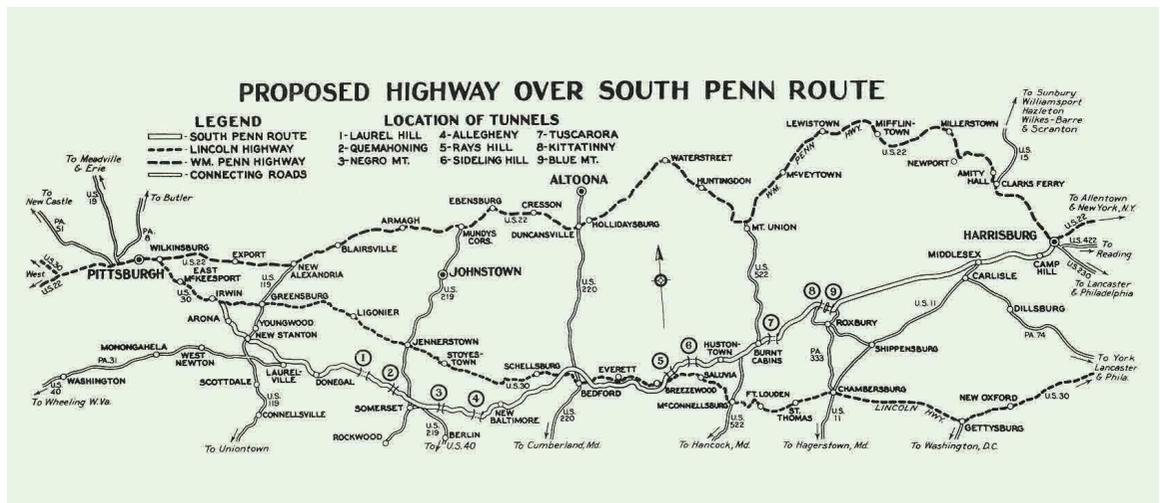
By the mid-1920s a new roadside landscape was developing. With the rapidly increasing popularity of automobile travel, sections of the roadside evolved into a “road town,” featuring elements such as gas stations, auto camps, motels, drive-in theaters, restaurants, signs and a motor-truck landscape (Raitz 1996:305). In Bedford County the trace of the old Pennsylvania Road, already bypassed, faded further from both sight and local memory.

## The Second Turnpike Era

In spite of the designation of US Route 30 as a coast-to-coast highway, its creation from a network of local and state roads meant that long distance travel still depended on local conditions. Business and the military could not rely on timely travel over the route. Defense officials advocated long distance all-weather roads suitable for the rapid movement of large convoys of troops and supplies. In 1935 a series of studies began to consider converting the abandoned South Penn Railroad right-of-way, tunnels and bridges included, into a “super” highway. Two years later the state formed the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission to pursue the goal (Shank 1973:28-31).

The Commission had the same challenge that earlier had faced James Burd and Henry Bouquet: to build a road from Carlisle to Pittsburgh. Funded by the federal government and assisted by work relief programs, the work on the original 160-mile turnpike section began in 1938 and ended with opening of the road on October 1, 1940 (Swetnam 1968:99). Over 18,000 workers toiled around the clock on rotating shifts to meet the deadline.

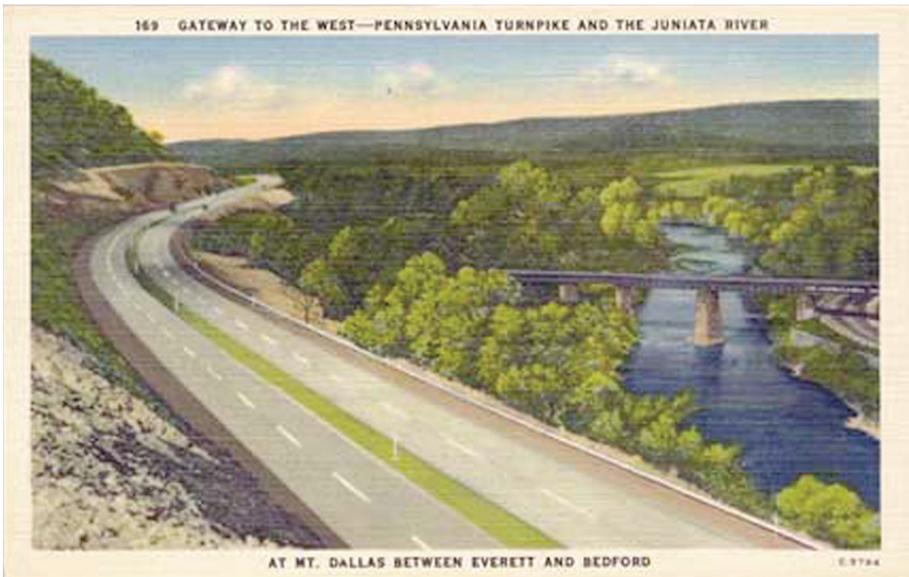
Following the general South Penn route through Bedford County, the four-lane divided highway broke through Aliquippa’s Gap south of the river, traversed Friends Cove south of the Raytown Branch until crossing in its approach to the Narrows of Evitts Mountain, diverting much through traffic from the traditional route north of the river. It included two Bedford County interchanges, at Bedford and Brezewood.



Routes of the Pennsylvania Turnpike and South Penn Railroad (Source: Shank 1973)



Pennsylvania Turnpike and Lincoln Highway in the Bedford Narrows  
(Source: Audrien Longnecker Henry Postcard Collection)



The Pennsylvania Turnpike in the Snake Spring Valley, about 1940  
(Source: Audrien Longnecker Henry Postcard Collection)



Abandoned section of the Lincoln Highway and new US 30 in the Snake Spring Valley, 2006



Reconstructed US 30 in the Snake Spring Valley, 2006

The Pennsylvania Turnpike, built without intersections, railroad crossings, or traffic lights, reduced the travel time from Harrisburg to Pittsburgh from 9 hours to 5.5 hours (Miller 1992:428). Even in the mountainous sections maximum grades were only 3%, compared to 9% on the Lincoln Highway. Three-quarters of its length had no curves. We take it for granted today, but in 1940 nobody had ever seen this kind of a road before. The Pennsylvania Turnpike was America's first all-weather limited-access superhighway and the model for all of the modern interstate highways that followed (Copper 1995:10-11; Shank 1973:34-35).

Although embraced enthusiastically by the motoring public, the turnpike was not universally well received due to its economic impact on businesses that had depended on the old Lincoln Highway, and interest groups rallied to promote improvement of the traditional route (Bedford County Planning Commission 1973). Because of the lobbying the state continued to maintain and improve old US Route 30 in spite of its decline as trunk route. In 1947 the state constructed a new alignment of US Route 30 designed for higher volume and greater speed, again altering the landscape along the line of the old Western Road. The new roadway essentially followed the Lincoln Highway route but was straightened and widened, bypassing small sections of the earlier road. The new right-of-way split properties once oriented to the old turnpike and opened level spaces to large-scale development. In Snake Spring Township the development of "The Willows" shopping plaza near the site of the old Willow Grove tavern and service complex demonstrates how transportation corridors shift in scale over time.

The evolution of transportation in Bedford County continues with the recent US Route 30 Improvements Project. Once again, the roadway through the Snake Spring Valley has been widened and straightened in an effort to increase capacity and decrease travel time. This project is just the latest stage in a process that has been underway for thousands of years. The long-abandoned remnant of the Pennsylvania Road on the Haver property reminds us of the countless generations of travelers who have passed through the nearby water gaps on their journey from east to west.

History surrounds us, and speaks to us from books, maps, letters, and legend. Nowhere is it more visible than in the landscape, and we need only the right perspective to see it reflected there. The complex historic landscapes of the southern Allegheny Mountains of Pennsylvania show clearly how the evolution of the transportation network is an important key to understanding our past.

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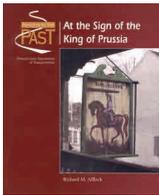
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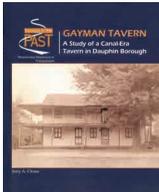
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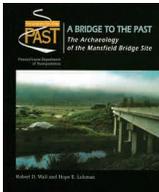
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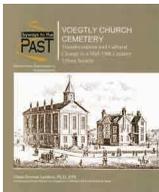
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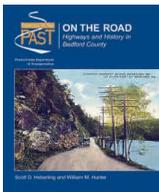
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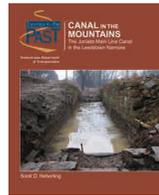
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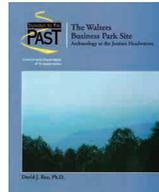
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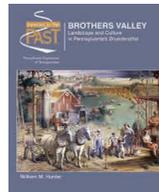
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For thousands of years the Snake Spring Valley of Bedford County has been a vital transportation corridor through the mountains of south-central Pennsylvania. The Snake Spring Valley contains a series of important historic trails and roads, each built on the remains of those that came before. From early native trails to the modern Pennsylvania Turnpike, each resulted from steady improvements in technology and the public's desire for increased mobility, speed, and convenience. Although many of the early routes were obliterated by later development, traces still survive in the landscape. Recent historical and archaeological studies completed in connection with improvements to US Route 30 provided an opportunity to rediscover the area's fascinating transportation history.



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