

# Spanning the Gap

## A Chronology of River Road and Its Ferries



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Recreation Area  
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Adapted from  
*The River Road, Pennsylvania*  
DRAFT Cultural Landscapes Inventory 2003



(Left, top) Markers of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission along River Road.

(Left, bottom) A marker of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission along River Road, and a marker of Monroe County Historical Society (Fort Hyndshaw) at the intersection of Community Drive and Route 209 in Bushkill PA.

### 1682

Dutch settlers move into the area on both sides of the Delaware River.

### 1725

Nicholas DePui (Depuy) arrives at Shawnee-on-Delaware PA.

### 1737

Because the area was not covered by treaty, the *Walking Purchase* was used to officially establish possession of all lands along the river as far as Narrowsburg NY.

### 1741-42

Dutch Reformed Church is built on the Kautz farmstead on River Road.

### 1744

River Road is laid out as a highway linking the river crossing at Walpack Bend to DePui Trading Post in Shawnee.

### 1744-1898

Walpack Ferry operates. (See feature at right)

### 1755-63

Many farmsteads along River Road destroyed by fires set by Native Americans during the *French and Indian War*. Fort

## Delaware River Ferries

The three bridges that cross the Delaware within the recreation area are successors to a number of ferry crossings that served travelers and local people for 200 years. Operating under the various names of their owners through time, they kept going until the last one closed in 1937. The following ferries connected to River Road:

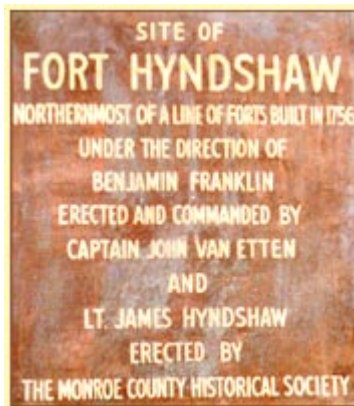
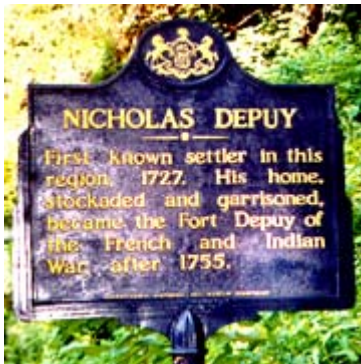
Hyndshaw and DePui's fort are established.

**1768**

Colonel John Chambers builds his house along River Road.  
(Now known as Newcomb House)



Decker Ferry.



A postcard of Rosencrans Ferry.

**1779**

In a significant action of the Revolutionary War, American General Philip Van Cortlandt crosses the Delaware River on the Walpack Ferry and marches down River Road to Stroudsburg and thence to Tannersville PA, where he joined forces with General John Sullivan and they proceeded to Wyoming (present-day Wilkes Barre PA.)

**1780s to 1820s**

Additional settlers arrive from Bucks County PA.

**1800-1900**

Farmsteads increase along River Road and economy of the area grows.

**1812-1927**

Shoemaker's Ferry operates. *(See feature at right)*

**1826-1927**

Dimmick's Ferry operates. *(See feature at right)*

**1843-1867**

Post Office established in Peter Treible House along River Road. House served as a tavern in the 1800s.

**1851**

Zions Evangelical Lutheran Church built.

**1870-1920**

Recreation industry grows in the area. Some homes along River Road become summer boarding houses.

**1875-1900**

LaBar Ferry operates. *(See feature at right)*

**1902-27**

Zimmerman Ferry operates. *(See feature at right)*

**1744-1898 Walpack Ferry**

(also Decker's Ferry, Grube's Ferry, Smith's Ferry) operated between Flatbrookville NJ and the point of Walpack Bend in Pennsylvania. Philip **Rosencrans** purchased the ferry and in 1898 moved it about 3/4 mile upstream to Bushkill PA. As Rosencrans ferry, the service lasted until 1945 when a plane accidentally cut the cable.

**1812-1927 Shoemaker's**

**Ferry** (later Lutz Ferry and Zimmerman Ferry) operated between the area of Coppermine Inn NJ and the Pennsylvania side, about 1/2 mile upstream from Tocks Island.

**1913**

Short section of River Road opposite present-day Smithfield Beach is realigned. Old section is abandoned.

**1934**

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation paves the road and widens curves.



Dimmick's Ferry around 1923. The ferry used an underwater cable in low water and an overhead cable in high water.

**1950-70**

Pardee Beach (present-day Smithfield Beach area) developed. Hialeah developed as a summer bungalow colony.

**1962**

Tocks Island Dam authorized by U.S. Congress.

**1965**

Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area is authorized.

**1972**

Zions Evangelical Lutheran Church closes.

**1978**

Proposed Tocks Island Dam Project is abandoned.

**1986**

River Road is under management on the National Park Service.

**1993**

Proposed Tocks Island Dam Project is officially de-authorized.

**1826-1927 Dimmick's Ferry** operates between the area of Coppermines NJ and Zion Church Rd./Michael Farm PA.

**1875-1900 Daniel LaBar Ferry** operated a ferry private ferry from his lands on the New Jersey side to the Pennsylvania side near the downstream end of Tocks Island today's and today's Hialeah Picnic Area.

**1902-27 Zimmerman Ferry** operated about 2 miles upstream between Hiram Zimmerman's boarding house on the New Jersey side from Zions Evangelical Lutheran Church. Zimmerman owned a resort on the New Jersey side and used the ferry to bring his customers across, as well as other travelers.