

OCTOBER 12, 1951 Newspaper Article
Early Chichester Settlers Used Original Indian Trails

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The early settlers, no matter of what origin, upon landing and settling along the shores of the Delaware, were content in using the well established Indian trails which followed the creek valleys and ridges. The exception to this was the Great North-South trail which skirted the head of tidewater.

Since the early mode of travel was by boat, or by foot, and since these early settlers had little of which we are familiar today, the mode of travel by foot persisted for some 20 years before an attempt was made to blaze new roads, or to improve the old trails due to settling away from the Delaware River, and due to trading with the Indians farther removed.

Also, it is interesting to note that at this period there were no wheels and the movement of produce or other heavy objects, was by sled, either drawn by horse or at a later period by oxen. Then too as places of worship began to appear, and as ore was discovered at Cornwall, these were further incentives to broaden the trails and to make intercourse between families easier.

Thus, in 1686 we find need for a road from Bethel to Chichester, the following year from Concord to the King's Highway in Chester, and in 1688 from Chichester to Aston and Bethel to Chichester, and in 1690 from Chichester Creek to Chester creek.

Chichester Avenue

The present Chichester avenue, one of the above referred to, had further proceedings as to change of route and width in 1704, 1749, 1752, and its purpose was to give a route for the settlers at Marcus Hook to Concord, while the Naaman's Creek, which might indicate a more continuous occupancy of the McCay mill site.

The most interesting route was the one from Marcus Hook to Aston, which led to Sarum Forge at the present Glen Mills, and was created for the additional purpose of having forgings from there to a shipping point on the river.

The original route after leaving Rock Hill passed northwardly in the general location of Huddell street, passing up the right bank of Marcus Hook Creek on lands recently of Mrs. Harriet C. Malatesta, crossing the creek by the wall of the Friends' Meeting House, and thence by the Meeting House and due north and to the west of the Stevenson property to the present Jefferson avenue at Bethel avenue and by the Kingsman Dut-

ton house and Weir house through to Mt. Hope.

When, in 1753, the present road was laid off from Marcus Hook to Village Green, the old route was abandoned and extensions made from the Meeting House in either direction to the present Market street and Chichester avenue.

Road Signs Remain
Evidence of this ancient road, of cart width, may be seen near the Meeting House, and at points in the neighborhood of the Kingsman Dutton house. On the meadow of Mrs. Malatesta are enormous pin oaks, which family tradition states have been there for many generations, and it is near these trees, and near to Marcus Hook Creek that Rachel Collett Dutton lived.

By the latter part of the last century, Upper Chichester and Lower Chichester were thoroughly interlaced with highways leading in all directions from the river and their lay-out, by reference in each instance would require an article greater in scope than this one.

Ridge avenue or 9th street did not have its beginning until the last century, and the most interesting east-west highway is the original Indian trail referred to where streams were forded at high water, and which trail by many movements and changes in widths became the existing Post Road, 10th street, or 4th street, as it is generally known, however, retaining the original crossing at Naaman's Creek. Originally from this crossing it passed up the ridge and along the ridge to the present 12th street in Lennox Park, and then to Feltonville, where the ford lay at Baldwin's Run.

William Penn in having his major highways planned and laid out, specified a width of 80 feet, but subsequent local pressure from economically minded citizens successively reduced these widths until the only one retained at the 60 feet width was the present Post road.

Another interesting angle was the maintaining of a passable foot path, bridle path, then highway to Chester, after bridges had been placed over Marcus Hook Creek and Chester Creek, from 1695 to 1706. This ancient highway began at the present 4th street and Church street in Marcus Hook, and in the lives of our older residents was known as Penn avenue, and from thence to Chester, its history being that of the Post road referred to.

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When, in 1758, the present road was laid off from Marcus Hook to Village Green, the old route was abandoned and extensions made from the Meeting House in either direction to the present Market Street and Chichester Avenue.

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