

Indians Made First Pine Bush Roads, But Even They Didn't Like the Section

When the Dutch settled Albany in 1614 they, like the Indian and ancient man before the Indian, used the sand plains of the Pine Bush country as the link between the Hudson and Mohawk valleys. The first settlers heard the Indian, when he beached his canoe at the Hudson shore, utter some kind of doleful sound like "Schenectady." And when Dutch traders met the Indian on the banks of the Mohawk, they heard him make the same almost unpronounceable sound.

"Schenectady," as the Indian used the word, was not a place-name. It was an expression which, very freely translated, meant: "Ugh! Now I must walk through those miserable pine plains."

The history of this expression in the Indian language is even more involved than it has been since the Dutch first heard it. (The Dutch punned on the sound — "Schone-ect-en-dael" — their expression for "a beautiful section of land")

It crosses under Route 20 and joins the Norman's Kill, a stream made famous in Longfellow's poem, "Song of Hiawatha."

When Van Corlaer made his first journey to the Mohawk, he traveled across the Pine Bush land. He did not like the country at all. It was only when he reached the top of the bluffs and looked across the valley that he admitted the land looked good.

About 20 years later he re-

tween Albany and Schenectady followed a route south of and parallel to the present Washington Ave. in Albany through the site of what is now the Albany Country club-straight into the pine barrens. This road went around and sometimes over the sand dunes, depending on the whim or judgment of the wagon drivers. Later, stagecoach drivers added to the confusion of paths by striking out over new routes to suit themselves.