

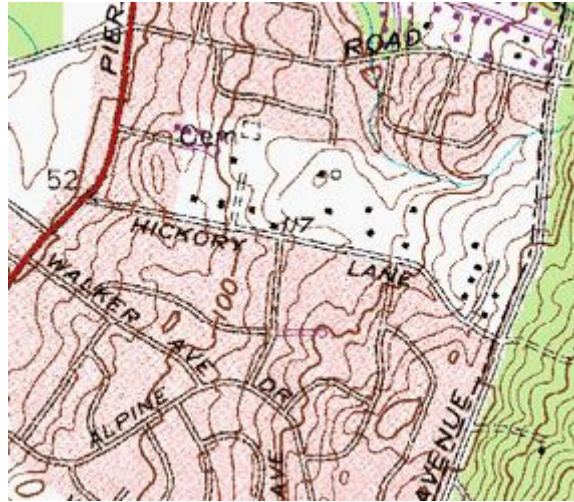
**Nomination Report
For Historic Designation of
Hickory Lane
Closter, NJ**



**Closter Historic Preservation Commission
December 2014**

DESCRIPTION:

Hickory Lane is a public roadway in the Borough of Closter. It runs roughly East-West for .59 of a mile from Piermont Road (Western terminus) to Anderson Avenue (Eastern terminus).



This historic roadway has miraculously maintained its rustic charm as it slopes upward from Piermont Road to Anderson Avenue. The western portion of the lane remains as a 304 year old farm lane, and modern changes such as sidewalks begin at Sherman Avenue and continue to Anderson Avenue. In the summer the green canopy provided by the dense tree growth transports one back to an earlier time. There is also an amazing amount of wildlife living in this area including deer, groundhogs, woodchucks, foxes, rabbits, red tail hawks, owls, turkeys, raccoons, swallows, turkey buzzards, coyotes, snakes, frogs, and field mice.

Hickory Lane has two operational farms along it and as such it is a "Farm Lane." The first farm, located at 119 Hickory Lane, has the oldest continuously used farm house in New Jersey - the Resolvert Nagel House, and the farm is a protected historic farm property through the County of Bergen Open Space Program. The second farm, located at 203 Hickory Lane is the MacBain farm, which is a Borough of Closter town park.



Resolvert Nagel House along Hickory Lane

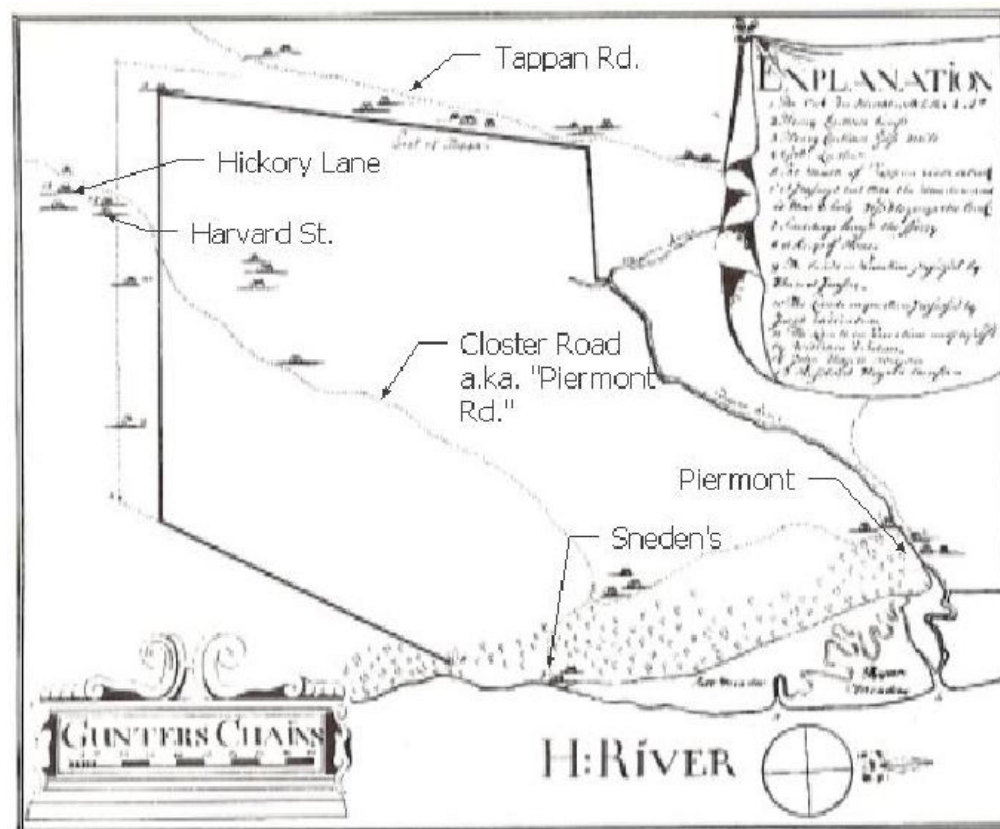
On Hickory Lane, at the western end of the MacBain Farm Park, there is a hiking trail head that leads around the farm, through a wetlands and out to Anderson Avenue near the Boy Scout Camp. You can also take a trail through the farm plantings (inside the fence) that connects to this trail. The Closter Environmental Commission has placed signage and bridges along this trail.

HISTORY:

Hickory Lane is important in Closter's history as one of the earliest Colonial period roadways. Created in 1710 as an access lane to one of the original settlers' home site, the lane (a simple wagon path) ran easterly to the houses of Resolvert Nagel from what was likely a former Indian path, which would become known as Closter Road, and now is called Piermont Road.

On April 25, 1710, brothers Barent and Resolvert Nagel purchased a 1,030 acre irregular "L" shaped tract from Lancaster Symes an English land speculator. The brothers became the first permanent settlers in what is now Closter by immediately establishing farms on their new land.

By 1745 a boundary dispute with the Nagel brothers was triggered when their northerly neighbors Henry and Mary Ludlow began to divide up and sell their land. A survey of the boundary was made and what is now known as the "1745 Verplanck Map" was created. The map shows what was described in a 1749 deed as "the road that cometh from Coester and goeth to the North River ferry" as the only road in Closter (Piermont Road). Indicated on the map are the three houses of Resolvert Nagel on what is now Hickory Lane. The houses needed to be accessed, of course, and a non-descript farm lane certainly went from Piermont Road to the dwellings in 1745. That access lane would become what is now known as Hickory Lane.



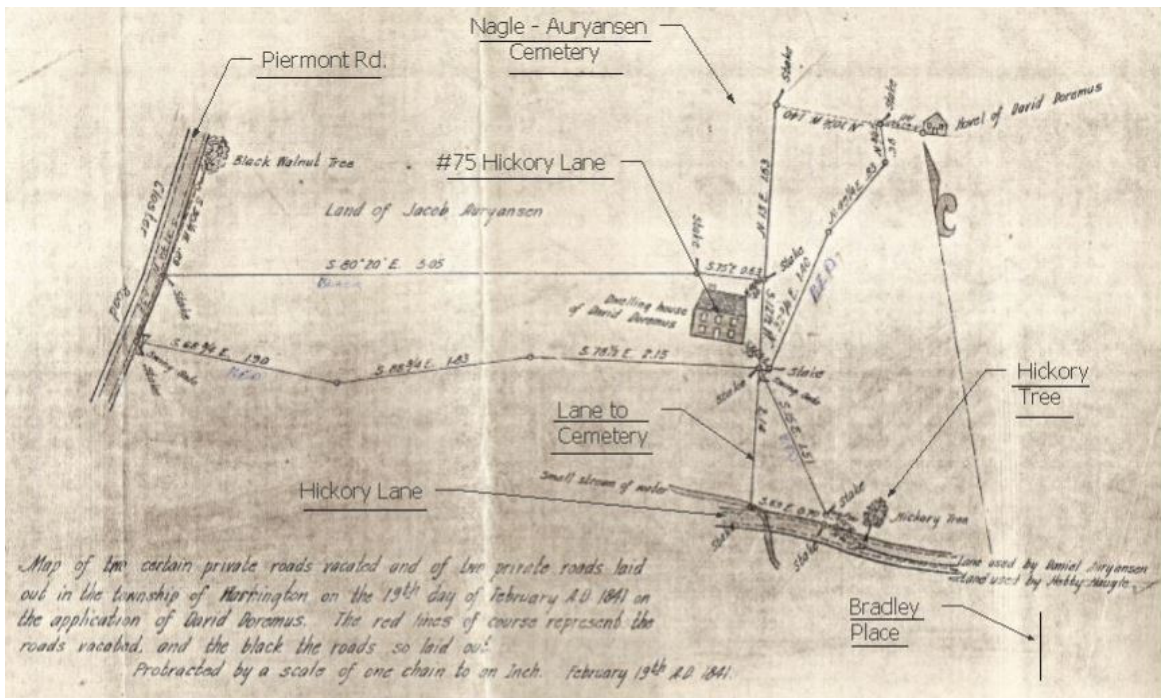
1745 Verplanck Map (with added labels)

In 1840 the Federal Government made a detailed and accurate Coastal Survey map of the area along the west side of the Hudson River. The map clearly shows an established road extending east from the Closter (Piermont) Road to a farm labeled “Auryonson.” By this time the lands of Resolvert Nagel (now deceased) were associated with the Auryansen name (Aury Auryansen married Resolvert Nagel’s eldest daughter Cornelia). The road shown in the 1840 Coastal Survey map is Hickory Lane.



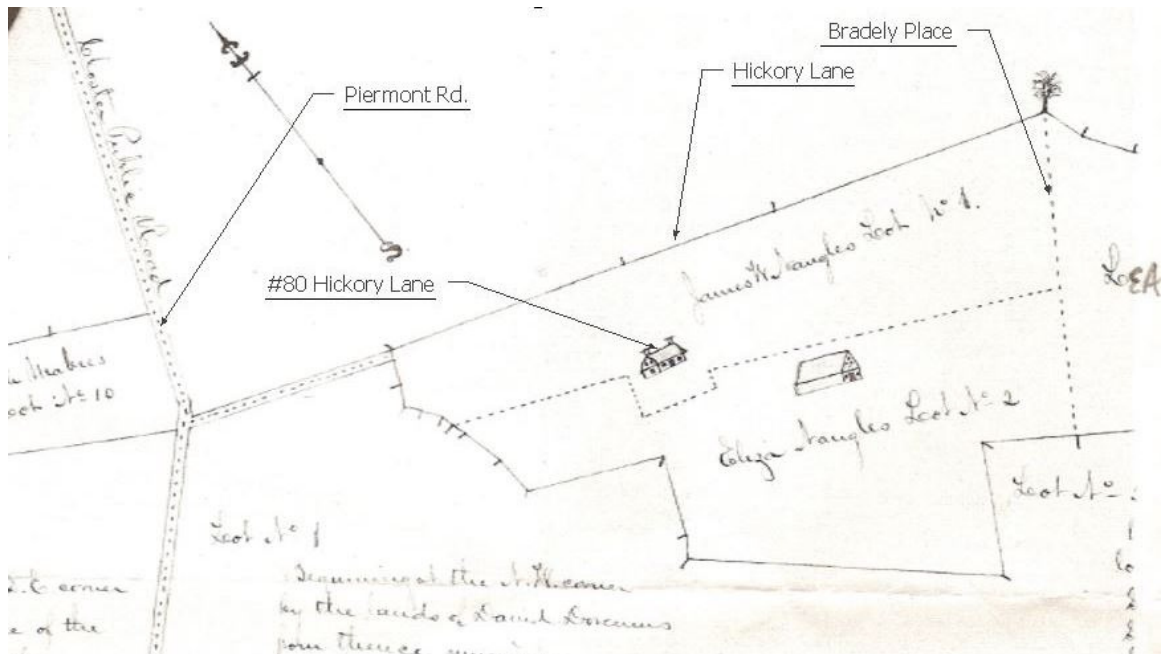
1840 Coastal Survey map

In 1841, a Bergen County Road Return (a document like a deed for the creation of roads with a survey map of the roads) was filed at the Court House. The Road Return map label states “Map of two private roads laid out in the Township of Harrington on the 19th day of February A D 1841 on the application of David Doremus.” The roads in question were immediately north of Hickory Lane. On the map, Closter Road (Piermont Road) is shown and labeled as such. Hickory Lane is shown on the map as a farm lane running east and west (the entire path of the road is not shown). According to this map Hickory Lane is shown split at a point where a Hickory tree stood in the middle of the road. The Hickory tree stood approximately 225 feet east of the lane that went northward to the “Dwelling house of David Doremus,” (now the driveway for 83 & 75 Hickory Lane and access right-of-way to the Nagel-Auryansen Cemetery), the tree location was due north of the current driveway for 110 Hickory Lane. The north fork of Hickory Lane was used by Daniel Auryansen, who lived in the Resolvert Nagel house (119 Hickory Lane). The south fork was used by Hetty Naugle (Naugle and Nagel are variant spellings of the same family name), who was born Hester Westervelt, who was the widow of Henry I. Naugle (son of Isaac Naugle). This branch of the Naugle family lived east of the Isaac Naugle house (80 Hickory Lane).



1841 Road Return (with labels)

In 1847 a Bergen County Road Return shows Hickory Lane as a proposed established road west of the Isaac Naugle house (80 Hickory Lane), and the path of the road was laid out eastward toward Anderson Ave. A tree is shown where the dog leg turn is located, just east of Sherman Court.



1847 Road Return (with labels)

The 1876 Walkers Atlas shows Hickory Lane as a fully established road from Piermont Avenue east to Anderson Avenue. An overlay of that map with a modern map shows that the course of today's Hickory Lane is the same as that of 1876.



1876 Walkers Atlas (with labels)

On Hickory Lane are situated two houses which are on The State and National Register of Historic Places, the Resolvert Nagel House (119 Hickory Lane) on the northerly side of the road and the Isaac Nagel House (80 Hickory Lane) which is set back upon a large lot on the southern side, a bit west of Bradley Place. The most notable adjacent site is the Nagel – Auryansen Cemetery, or the Old Closter Burial Ground, with an entrance off the north side of Hickory Lane. This cemetery is listed as a New Jersey Revolutionary War Historic Site.



Resolvert Nagel House



Isaac Nagel House

Other historic properties which are along or adjacent to Hickory Lane include: the pre-1876 C. D. Doremus house (7 Hickory Lane), the “Dwelling house of David Doremus” (75 Hickory Lane), the “composite Nagel/Naugle house” (96 Bradley Place) which incorporates a portion of Resolvert Nagel’s third pre 1745 house and two farm buildings, and the MacBain farm, now a 5 1/2 acre park (203 Hickory Lane) which is a prehistoric archaeological site with Lenni Lenape Indian artifacts from the Early to Middle Archaic to Late Woodland Periods. The houses on Hickory Lane are located by the Dwars Kill (Dutch for “Cross Creek”), and a branch of the Anderson Brook, both of which are indicated on early maps and deeds.



C. D. Doremus House



David Doremus



“Composite” Nagel/Naugle House



MacBain Farm House

CURRENT DAY VIEWS:









DESIGNATION RATIONALE:

The designation of Hickory Lane as a Historic Site is in keeping with the following applicable criteria set forth via ordinance in *The Closter Borough Code, Chapter 35 Section 54, Designation of buildings, structures, objects, sites and districts as historic*, which states –

The Commission shall consider as worthy of designation those sites, and districts that have integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association, and that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- (1) That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the Borough of Closter by reflecting or exemplifying the broad cultural, political, economic, or social history of the nation, state, or community;
- (2) That are associated with historic personages important in national, state, or local history;
- (3) That is the site of an historic event which had a significant effect on the development of the nation, state or community;
- (4) That embody distinctive characteristics of a type, or period;
- (5) That are otherwise of particular historic significance to the Borough of Closter by reflecting or exemplifying the broad cultural, political, economic or social history of the nation, state, or community.

Hickory Lane is a physical direct link to the very earliest settlement of Closter; it retains the rural feeling of when it was simply a “farm lane”, and is one of the most unique historic sites in all of Closter. Hickory Lane as a road which leads from point “A” to point “B,” metaphorically tells the 304 year story of Closter from colonial settlement to suburban community. Hickory Lane needs to be designated in order to officially note its unique history, and to help retain it as a “lane” with its historic character intact for future generations of Closter residents.

Hickory Lane thus meets Designation Criteria (1), (2) and (5). Furthermore, a roadway can be designated historic, as it falls within the definition of a “landmark”

(“A building, structure, site, or object which has a special character or special historical or aesthetic interest as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the Borough, state, or nation . . .”) as a “site” under the ordinance. “Site” is defined as “Any real property, whether public or private, with or without improvements, which is the location of a significant event or series of events, a prehistoric or historic occupation or activity, or a building, structure, or object, or any configuration, portion, or group of forgoing, which has been designated by the Commission as having historical, archeological, cultural, scenic, or architectural significance pursuant to the provisions of this article.” As noted in the foregoing report, Hickory Lane has prehistoric, historic and scenic relevance.

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