



NEW YORK

PALATINE ROAD
First Road West travelled
by German refugees
to Schoharie Valley

STATE EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT 1932

Marker #18

In 1712 the Palatines, earliest European settlers in the Schoharie Valley, travelled over rough and rutty ox-trails that had once been Indian footpaths through Guilderland to reach their new promised land. For these Palatine pioneers, Schoharie was the end of a long, weary journey from along the Rhine in the Palatinate of Germany. These immigrants had been harassed by French armies crossing and recrossing their lands, by unbearable taxes and by persecution because of their religion. After first seeking refuge in Holland and then England, they crossed the Atlantic in the crowded holds of small ships and landed in America to begin their trek through the Mohawk Valley, where they had been promised land in Schoharie.

The Palatine Road historic marker, on Route 146 north of the Guilderland Center Industrial Park bridge, designates a spur of the old Schoharie Road that reached from Albany through the Pine Bush to Willow Street in Guilderland, thence across the Western Turnpike to Foundry Road and the Normanskill Creek, to Guilderland Center and the Black Creek and through Altamont and Knox to Schoharie.

There is great historical connection between the peoples of the Schoharie Valley and Guilderland. Among the early English settlers of Schoharie was James Calcraft, soldier of Queen Anne and veteran of the war in Flanders. At the request of the Palatine settlers, Calcraft set up an English school to teach the German immigrants and their children the language of their new country. Calcraft's name was Americanized to Schoolcraft. Guilderland residents will recognize him as the grandfather of John and Lawrence Schoolcraft, owner of the Schoolcraft Tavern and Supervisor of the Glass Works respectively, and as the great-grandfather of John L. Schoolcraft, Congressman, banker and owner of the Schoolcraft Mansion and of Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, poet, author and explorer. Lawrence Schoolcraft's name is etched in the stone of Schoharie's Old Stone Fort.

The historic marker denotes the Indian footpath that became the old Schoharie Road on which the German Palatine refugees travelled in their search for freedom and a promised land. It also illustrates the richness of Guilderland's history. Later travelling Palatine refugees arrived in Guilderland and chose to stay in the shadow of the "clear mountain" named Hellebergh to build their farms and lives.