
An Old Highway To An Old Bridge

Sources: <http://www.thisiscooperstown.com/attractions/hyde-hall-covered-bridge>
<http://austin.directrouter.com/~nyroute20/>



U.S. Route 20 is the longest highway in the United States. From a geographic standpoint, “America’s Main Street” extends from Newport, Oregon to Boston, Massachusetts, a distance of 3,365 miles. In New York State, the highway stretches from Massachusetts to Pennsylvania, a distance of 372 miles - New York’s longest highway.

Beyond its geographic importance, this long stretch of pavement is one of America’s unique Scenic Byways, which connects us with our past. Less traveled than the New York State Thruway, Route 20 offers a slower-paced alternative, which allows time to discover the remnants of by-gone times.

According to the Route 20 Association of New York State:

“U. S. Route 20 began as Native American trails in the early years of America. During our nation's first century, these trails were transformed with the construction of several turnpikes to handle the burgeoning westward traffic by horse and wagon. The most famous of the turnpikes connected Albany to Cherry Valley and later was extended to Cazenovia and the Syracuse area. This roadway became known as the Cherry Valley Turnpike and soon was dotted with taverns, hotels and other amenities for travelers. In the 1860s, the Cherry Valley Turnpike became the property of New York State. State and federal programs began providing funds for road building and management assistance by the turn of the century. With the coming of the automobile, the highway had once again taken on a new life. In 1926, the road was designated as U.S. Route 20, the longest road in the country...”

Route 20 is our access to historic communities, which contributed to the growth of our State and nation. Roadside attractions, architectural styles, and other artifacts of our past are yours to discover. Follow the road over rolling landscapes and through well-preserved historic villages; open 24-hours a day, 7-days a week...including Sunday!

A suggestion...take Route 20, traveling east from Richmond Springs. Follow the signs to Glimmerglass State Park. Located within the park is the Hyde Hall Covered Bridge; a privately-owned bridge, which provided access to Hyde Hall - a neoclassical country house designed by architect Philip Hooker for George Clarke, a wealthy landowner. The house was constructed between 1817 and 1834.

The Hyde Hall Covered Bridge is the only covered bridge still standing in Otsego County. Built by Cyrenus Clark, Andrew Alden and Lorenzo Bates in 1825, this 53-foot-long, single span structure incorporates the Burr arch design patented in 1817 by Theodore Burr of Torrington, Connecticut. It is one of two authentic Burr arch truss bridges in the state and is located at the northern tip of Otsego Lake in Glimmerglass State Park. The Hyde Hall Covered Bridge is not only the oldest existing covered bridge in New York State, but the oldest in United States. It is one of three covered bridges in New York State with horizontal siding. The bridge was listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places on December 17, 1998. (source: <http://www.thisiscooperstown.com/a.../hyde-hall-covered-bridge>)

