

## **Rambling Roads of Rye**

“Two paths diverged in a wood and I took the one less traveled by and that has made all the difference.” The modest spider web that is the first map of Rye, drawn by Morrill in 1805, tells many a tale of blazed trails, hunting patterns, early homesteads and deliberate efforts to inhabit a place and make it connect. Geography is the mother of history. The pattern of Rye’s roads is no exception.

Natives were semi-nomadic along the coast and in land. Washington road is one of their trails and later the Jenness family widened the path into a road all the way from Breakfast Hill to the sea. Washington’s visit to Portsmouth in 1789 changed the name. When farmers began to work their grants they made a rough path and when three or four grants were made together the connected paths became a “public highway.” By 1644 there was a path along the shore from Strawberry Banke, by Great Island (where there was ferry service from the 1640’s) out by Rendezvous Point and all along the six miles of Sandy Beach to Hampton. What was it like to be out walking these paths and come upon another soul, and engaging in conversation. Until the railroads time was not of the essence and real encounters were a daily ritual of Rye. This remained true until we found other means of conveyance and such encounters became much less frequent.

There was a path before 1644 from Frosts point Odiorne Point along the creek and above it and over into Strawberry Banke. This avoided crossing Sagamore Creek.

Another path ran from Frosts point along what is now Pioneer road and up Sagamore through what would become the center and on to North Hampton. In 1727 the path that lead from the Center southeast to the beach was finished as a wagon road that became Central road. So people wove their human web and knitted their community together.