

Better History of Rt. 208

Lee Williams Kevin, I was only 3 in 1940, so I am definitely not an authority, but my earliest memory of S 4-B, or 208, is of a deep scar of a wide path over the mountain as seen from town, where the trees had been clear cut to accommodate it. I think Skyline Drive went only as far as the McEvoy property or perhaps to the Passaic County line and was the work of the WPA. The downside of the terrain west of the crest of the mountain was extremely rugged. If there was grading done, it probably was used for the completion of Skyline Drive over the mountain. I think that was late 40's or early 50's.

Bill Tjaden 208 was designated "north/south" because the original plans had it connecting with NY 208 which does run north and south. The rest of the highway was never finished.

Kevin, You are correct. In the early stages of planning S4-B was supposed to be routed along what is now Skyline Drive. That plan was apparently altered at some point, as different versions of the extension of 208 would be recommended by Passaic County. From an internet source: NJ 208 was first plotted in 1929 as Route S4B, a spur off Route 4 that was to run from Fair Lawn northwest through Ringwood, and West Milford to the New York border near Greenwood Lake.[3] This route was to replace what was to be a portion of Route 3 between Paterson and the New York border that was designated in the 1927 New Jersey state highway renumbering.[4][5] The road was projected to continue into New York and continue through Sterling Forest and Monroe, New York, where it would join New York's Route 208 at its intersection with New York State Route 17. By 1953, the portion of Route S4B between Route 4 and Maple Avenue in Fair Lawn was completed; that same year, it was renumbered to Route 208 in order to match NY 208.[6][7] By 1960, the road was extended to a northern terminus at U.S. Route 202 and West Oakland Avenue in Oakland, where traffic could exit and continue over Skyline Drive to Ringwood. When first constructed, this portion of Route 208 was a two-lane undivided road.[8] By 1969, the portion between Maple Avenue and Goffle Road was widened to a divided highway with the entire route built into a multi-lane divided highway by the 1980s. Meanwhile, plans still existed to build Route 208 past Oakland to the New York border. PASSAIC COUNTY CALLED FOR A PLAN TO BYPASS SKYLINE DRIVE, and in 1967 the New Jersey Department of Transportation proposed a Route 208 freeway through the Ramapo Mountains that would run from Oakland to the New York border in Greenwood Lake, where it would connect to a proposed NY 208 freeway (called the Orange Expressway) that would continue north to Interstate 84 in Maybrook, New York.[11] This freeway, which was to cost \$66.3 million, was to improve traffic in the resort areas of the Ramapo Mountains and also connect to the proposed Route 94 freeway leading to Warren County and the proposed Route 178 freeway leading to Morris County.[11][12] In 1975, this

proposed freeway was recommended by the Tri-State Regional Planning Commission to be completed by 2000. However, it was never built.