

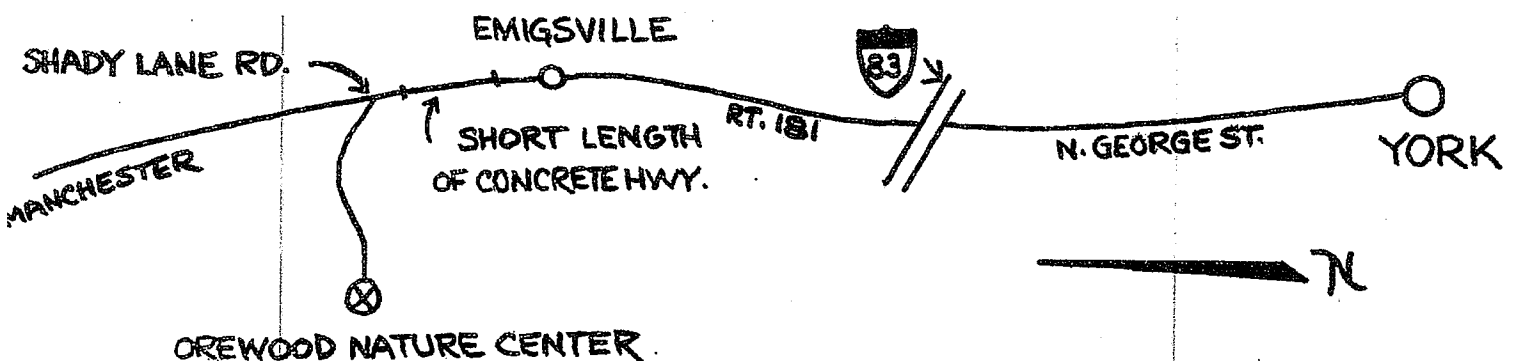


OERWOOD BRAILLE TRAIL

In 1969 when James Brett, who was a teacher at the Northeastern High School and sponsor of its Ecology Club, visited in Aspen, Colorado, he was impressed with the Roaring Fork Braille Trail. When school reconvened in the fall, he suggested to his Club members that they add a Braille Trail to the Oerwood Nature Center where they had already developed two trails. In June 1970 Oerwood Braille Trail, the first of its kind in Pennsylvania, was dedicated after a few members of the York Jaycees, Scouts, Mitch Gallaway, who was then a blind student in high school, and Ecology Club members had given many hours of work in its development. In 1971, the Susquehanna Lions Club and the Oerwood Nature Club adopted the Trail as a project and have since been responsible for its maintenance.

The Braille Trail was designed to give the blind and partially sighted an opportunity to experience nature with some independence. Nature can be felt, heard and smelled-leaves, bark, birds, herbs, rocks, soil, sand, flowers, rippling water. Nylon ropes, waist high, keep the sightless on the wood-chipped trail and directs the walker to the signs and other points of interest. The anodized aluminum signs are mini lessons in Braille and large print. A small shelter is situated at the half way point of the trail and there are benches along the way. There is a small stream on the path and a person has the choice of crossing it by bridge or stones. A large feeder and several bird houses invite many species of birds to the area. A box is located at one spot and in it are 'things' of nature. None are labeled and guests are encouraged to use their imagination.

The Oerwood Nature Center is located about 1.5 miles south of Manchester, Pa. on a tract of land which includes 35 acres consisting of woodland, gardens, field, lawn, and a pond. It is owned by Mrs. Carl Oermann who loans the land to the Oerwood Nature Association. The Center is open year round and it includes three trails, a small museum, workshop and headquarters building. All the work is donated. No campaigns for funds are ever held; donations are accepted and these are used for supplies and bird seed. The fifteen Junior and Senior high school students who make up the Oerwood Nature Club do most of the work. Eight of these are trained as guides and help with the many school and scout troops who come to the Center.



YORK TO NATURE CENTER - APPROX. 5 M.