

The Contours of New Jersey History

An Essay on Context for the Heritage Tourism Master Plan

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Overview

New Jersey displays a remarkable social, cultural, and historical variety that begins with its physical geography. A mere 220 miles from top to bottom and 70 miles across (at its widest), **New Jersey's boundaries include 130 miles of Atlantic coast, approximately 50 Delaware Bay miles, as well as Hudson and Delaware River frontage.** Its 8720 square miles of landmass comprise five distinct geographic regions. Each has a generally northeast-southwest orientation, and together they hold the key to much of New Jersey history: from patterns of early settlement and General George Washington's use of terrain during the War for Independence to types of **maritime activity**, agricultural practice, and industrial development.

Along the northwestern edge of the state lies the Kittatinny Ridge and Valley region, a narrow belt of ancient mountains and rolling valleys running from near Phillipsburg to High Point. An extension of the Appalachian mountain chain, these mountain ridges have craggy outcrops and intermittently steep slopes. Rock basin lakes such as Sunfish Pond punctuate the hills; the fertile valleys are conducive to agriculture.

Abutting the Kittatinny region to the southeast, the New Jersey Highlands run from the Delaware River near Frenchtown to the Ramapo Mountains. The highlands' rugged northern end was carved roughly 15,000 years ago by the last glacier – whose southern extent approximates the path of Interstate 80 across New Jersey. A rich source of iron ore, this heavily forested area has steep ridges, frequent rock outcroppings, and a number of glacially formed lakes, including Lake Hopatcong, the largest freshwater body in the state. The southern end of the region's terrain, below the terminal moraine, is gentler.

Next, the Piedmont Lowlands help to divide the hills and mountains of northwestern New Jersey from the coastal plain. Running from the Delaware River above Trenton to Bergen County, the Piedmont is a region of broad valleys and gently sloping hills interrupted by traprock ridges such as the Watchung Mountains and the Palisades. Its generally arable soil and flat terrain enabled the dense urban development of northeastern New Jersey.

The boundary between the Piedmont and the coastal plain is called the fall line. Cities such as New Brunswick and Trenton grew up on the fall line where rivers crossed it, because the change in elevation impeded the upriver progress of riverboats and provided a power source for grist and sawmills. U.S. Route 1 traces the fall line along much of the east coast. The New Jersey Piedmont contains the

remnants of two immense lakes left behind by the retreat of the last glacier in the form of the Great Swamp and the Hackensack Meadowlands.

These three regions account for roughly 40 percent of New Jersey. The rest of the state lies in a vast coastal plain that stretches from Massachusetts to the Gulf of Mexico. In New Jersey, an inner coastal plain of fertile soils is separated by a belt of low hills from an outer plain of sandy infertile soil dominated by the Pinelands. Bog iron from the marshy Pinelands was widely used in pre-industrial New Jersey for tools, weaponry, rails, and other implements. **Its cedar forests supplied the boat building industry that flourished in the late eighteenth and mid nineteenth centuries.**

The loamy soils of the inner coastal plain are very productive, and there was much commerce in the Delaware River alongside the inner plain. An important feature of New Jersey's outer coastal plain is the hydrologically-dynamic strip of barrier beaches, spits, and islands, fed by eroded material from the Atlantic Highlands, that buffers the upland from the sea: the world famous "Jersey Shore."

New Jersey history is marked by three great transformations. The first occurred when Europeans settled the area and, in the course of just a few generations, reduced the indigenous population to roughly one tenth its pre-contact size. An era in which agriculture was the mainstay of New Jersey society then ensued that ran for a little more than a hundred years, to the mid nineteenth century. In these years, most New Jersey residents were farmers who participated in a local economy. The American Revolution interrupted this period, but did not change its essential character.

The second great transformation took the state from its age of husbandry into the urban and industrial world. Beginning gradually, but taking off during the second third of the nineteenth century, the manufacturing era also ran a little over a century, through the 1950s. Its characteristics included the growth of cities and towns, transportation by canal and railroad, streams of newcomers to New Jersey, the rise of factory production and wage labor, and the proliferation of domestic-architecture styles.

The third great change began haltingly in the 1920s. Slowed by the Great Depression and the Second World War, it picked up speed in the 1950s and 1960s. During this transformation, New Jersey's cities declined, along with the manufacturing sector on which they were based. In their place automobile-oriented suburbs arose, supported by an economy based on white-collar employment in research and development, commerce, medical care, and the hospitality industry. Women began to play a larger role in the public sphere in this period: working outside the home after marriage in ever-greater numbers, and serving in elective and appointive offices. I will have less to say about this third transformation because the period it ushered in extends to our own day. But it witnessed the increasing racial segregation of New Jersey's population along the lines of municipal boundaries. A wave of immigration from Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa that began in the 1970s brought new population to both cities and suburbs.

The Age of Agriculture

We do not know how many Indians inhabited the land that became New Jersey in the early seventeenth century when Europeans began trading for beaver and otter pelts in the area; there were probably more than 5,000 and fewer than 20,000. But from extensive archaeological remains at the Abbott Farm National Historic Landmark, and elsewhere, we do know they had been exploiting its ecological diversity for thousands of years when Europeans arrived. The natives lived in small, independent groups with names such as Mantaes, and Sanhican; they spoke related dialects of the Algonquian language, and wore clothing made of furs, feathers, and skins. During the growing season, they lived adjacent to river and streambeds where women cultivated corn, beans, and squash in the fecund soils. At other times of the year, they inhabited locations conducive to hunting and fishing, making use of rock shelters in the highlands and the well-drained riverside terraces. Their villages were generally unfortified, organized around longhouses in which members of an extended family dwelt. Their clans were matrilineal, and, though headed by male chieftains known as sachems, groups of women elders may have designated the sachems.

While the Mantaes, Sanhicans, and members of the other groups certainly knew who they were, the names for them that Europeans used were so fluid that it suggests the early colonists did not understand the people among whom they took up residence. The Dutch of New Netherland called the various native groups they met “peoples of the rivers.” Swedes, who settled the Delaware Valley in the 1630s, came to call the Indians they met “Renappi.” Over the course of the contact period,

the disparate bands of natives became more unified. As their contact with Europeans increased, some began distinguishing themselves from their new neighbors by calling themselves Lenape, meaning “real” or “original” person. The label Delaware was initially applied to Indians associated with the river named after the royal governor of Virginia, Lord de la Warr, but gradually the English took to describing as Delawares the entire group of natives who inhabited the Hudson and Delaware River valleys.

Disease took an immediate toll on the Lenape. By the early eighteenth century, scarcely 3000 remained in New Jersey. As the pace of European settlement quickened, their number dwindled further; many moved to Pennsylvania, and later further west, ending up in the Oklahoma Territory. By the time the contest for independence began, Delaware Indians were counted in the hundreds in New Jersey. In recent decades, a growing number of people living in New Jersey have been identifying themselves as Delaware.

The early history of New Jersey is difficult to summarize. The English neglected the middle colonies at first, favoring New England and the Chesapeake region. This left an opening for other European powers, notably the Dutch, who traded in the Hudson River valley, and the Swedes who worked the Delaware. The Dutch West India Company created New Amsterdam (now New York City) in the 1620s to protect its upriver trading posts, and soon began trying to populate the west side of the river. For a variety of reasons, including stiff Indian resistance, the first permanent settlement, an outpost that became Jersey City, did not take root until 1660. Eventually the Dutch colony of New Netherland outgrew the fur trade, and farmers spread along the fertile Hackensack, Passaic, and Raritan river valleys.

In the meantime, the New Sweden Company, which was chartered by the Swedish government at the peak of its imperial ambitions, built a fur-trading outpost at what is now Wilmington, Delaware in 1638. Hoping to control both sides of Delaware Bay, New Sweden established a settlement near what is now Salem City in 1643. The settlers were of Dutch and Finnish nationality as well as Swedish, and when the Dutch overran New Sweden in 1655, they easily incorporated the small settlement into New Netherland.

Capturing New Sweden weakened New Netherland because it could not defend both river basins. When a small English fleet sailed into New Amsterdam in 1664, the Dutch governor surrendered to it without a fight. New Netherland became New York, but the Dutch, Swedish, and Finnish residents of the land between the Hudson and Delaware rivers, and their small number of African slaves, tilled the soil and reared families much as before.

Soon after the English conquest, the land between the rivers was granted to a pair of the crown's political allies who named it New Jersey for the channel island of Jersey. After a series of transactions, two separate sets of proprietors – investors with governing powers – ended up with New Jersey. In 1676, they split it into two smaller colonies by drawing a line from the Delaware Water Gap to Little Egg Harbor. English Quakers controlled West Jersey while the group in command of East Jersey was largely Puritan at first. The Jerseys proved difficult to control because of competing land claims among settlers, resentment of proprietary rent charges, and other issues. In 1702, the proprietors surrendered to the crown their right to govern the fractious colonies, which reunited them.

New Jersey grew despite its political turmoil because the proprietors offered generous terms to lure settlers to its productive soils and temperate climate. The English Quakers who populated West Jersey centered themselves around Burlington City. The 200-some tall, narrow, brick houses with bold geometric patterns in their gable ends that survive in Burlington and Salem counties are tangible reminders of the Quaker presence in the area.

In East Jersey, hundreds of families from Puritan Connecticut, a few hundred Scottish Presbyterians, and a smattering of Baptists joined the Dutch settlers who had spread throughout the area. Emigrants from the New Haven colony established Elizabeth-Town, Newark, and a number of other municipalities. The Scots settled in Perth Amboy, the Baptists in Hopewell.

In the mid eighteenth century, New Jersey was growing rapidly. Its population of roughly 60,000 included English, Irish, Scots, Scots-Irish, German, and Dutch settlers. Perhaps ten percent of the population was African, mostly slaves.

A wave of religious revivals known as the Great Awakening swept through the United Kingdom and its North American colonies in the second third of the eighteenth century. New Jersey was strongly influenced by this evangelical fervor. Under its influence, the Presbyterian and Dutch Reformed churches both built seminaries for training ministers that grew into major universities. In 1746, Presbyterians started the College of New Jersey, which became Princeton University, and in 1766 the Dutch Reformed Church received a charter for Queens College, which grew into Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. Their

original buildings – Nassau Hall (despite alterations) and Old Queens, respectively – are elegant examples of Georgian architecture.

Throughout this entire period, most New Jerseyans lived on family farms of 150 acres or less. Raising livestock and growing grains, they lived an ample subsistence, producing most of what they needed and buying or bartering for the rest. Wealthier farmers employed servants and slaves. As the eighteenth century progressed, New Jersey farmers began to sell some crops for export to New England, the West Indies, and Europe, and to own a few things that came from those same places.

Despite their growing involvement in the Atlantic world, New Jersey's farmers did not get deeply involved in the rift between the colonies and the British imperial administration as it widened in the 1760s and 1770s. In 1765, during the Stamp Act crisis, lawyers and merchants led New Jersey's protest. A decade later, in 1774, a group of 40 residents of Greenwich disguised as Indians torched a boatload of tea that had been offloaded there in the hope of sneaking it into Philadelphia by land. The last royal governor in New Jersey, William Franklin, son of Benjamin Franklin (by an unknown woman who was not his wife), tried to slow the colony's move toward independence – at the cost of his freedom and his previously close relationship with his father. The provincial Congress had him arrested in June 1776 and sent to Connecticut, though he was later released. After the war, despite William's pleas for reconciliation, his father disowned him.

During the War for Independence, geography was destiny for the approximately 100,000 inhabitants of New Jersey. The state witnessed five major battles and many hundreds of minor encounters. Shortly after Franklin was

incarcerated, British forces gained control of New York, pushing the Continentals across the river to New Jersey. Under threat of invasion, lacking a governor, and deeply divided on the issue of breaking with the king, New Jersey's provincial congress hastily drafted a constitution. Written in five days during late June 1776, the new charter created a strong, annually-elected legislature, and a weak governor. Whether by accident or design, the constitution allowed property-owning women (of whom there were few) and free blacks with property (of whom there were fewer) to vote: a right the legislature removed in 1807, due to its alleged abuse.

When British troops crossed the Hudson and captured Fort Lee in the fall of 1776, Washington began a hasty retreat across New Jersey heading for safety on the far side of the Delaware River. His forces narrowly averted a quick defeat in Bergen County in late November by outrunning British forces to a drawbridge spanning the Hackensack River at New Bridge Landing, where British General Charles Cornwallis had been hoping to hem them in. For supporters of independence those were indeed “times that try men's souls,” as Thomas Paine famously wrote during the hurried evacuation, and to which President Barack Obama referred in his inaugural address. It was also a pivotal moment when American military fortunes were reversed. With a daring sneak attack, Washington scored his well-known victory at Trenton in late 1776, followed by another at Princeton in early 1777. The Continental Army wintered in Morristown, where the Great Swamp and the Watchung hills protected it, and from where Washington could defend the crucial iron industry in the highlands: a source of ammunition, tools, and other vital military needs. The wins strengthened American resolve, and Washington began reorganizing his forces for a protracted struggle.

British troops took Philadelphia in September 1777, but they did not gain control of Delaware Bay, which they needed to hold the city, until late November when they defeated a small, but very determined, American force stationed at Fort Mercer in Red Bank, Gloucester County.

Washington's reformed troops passed their first major test at the Battle of Monmouth in June 1778, when they fought the British to a stand still before the Redcoats sneaked off under cover of darkness. This was the last major engagement in the northern theater of war. American General Charles Lee was later convicted by a court-martial of disobeying Washington's orders during the battle.

Following the Battle of Monmouth, the fighting in New Jersey was mostly "desultory," according to Washington. The Continental Army spent one of the worst winters on record in Morristown in 1779-1780, after which it faltered. Looking to exploit this weakness, British forces stationed in Elizabethtown tried in June 1780 to punch through Hobart's Gap and reach Morristown. This last major British incursion onto New Jersey soil was stopped in Springfield. But before retreating, the Redcoats burned the village.

For many New Jerseyans, conditions of life during the Revolution resembled a civil war. Important supply routes crossed the state, and there were numerous skirmishes as rival foraging parties scoured the countryside. Roughly one third or a little more of New Jersey's population actively sympathized with the cause of the revolution, and nearly another third sided with the loyalists. Some New Jerseyans changed sides mid conflict. A large group – mainly Quaker pacifists – strove to remain neutral.

All told, New Jersey played a pivotal role in the war. Washington's main army spent roughly a quarter of the war on New Jersey soil, wintering three times in the northwestern hills, including important encampments at Middlebrook and Pluckemin. The Continental Congress, which had been forced to flee Philadelphia, was meeting at Nassau Hall in Princeton when news reached it, in late 1783, that the Treaty of Paris had been signed, formally ending the conflict. New Jersey's central place in the struggle for independence is marked by Morristown National Historical Park, the first historical park to enter the national parks system.

The end result of the war in New Jersey was a badly tattered social fabric. The hope that a strengthened central government, as provided for in the United States Constitution, would hasten recovery, led New Jersey to quickly ratify both the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

After the war, New Jerseyans set about mending fences and planting crops to rebuild the economy they had known before it. For a number of decades the state remained largely agrarian, though slowly things began to change. Early signs of the great transformation to come could be detected in 1791 when Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton proposed to locate a textile manufacturing center in Paterson that would exploit the Great Falls of the Passaic River for power and employ war widows in its mills. Looking to implement his vision of a self-sufficient industrial nation, Hamilton and other investors formed The Society for Establishing Useful Manufactures, through which they hoped to build the nation's first industrial city. But the first textile mill in Paterson lasted only two years. After the society improved the original raceways (designed by Pierre L'Enfant, architect of Washington D.C.), manufacturers gradually found their way to the foot of the Great Falls. Thomas Rogers's locomotive works and Peter Colt's plant for making

his famous revolvers opened in the 1830s. After Colt moved his operation to Connecticut, Englishman John Ryle began weaving silk in the Colt building, and “Silk City” was born. The recently established Great Falls National Historical Park will interpret Paterson’s industrial history.

The Industrial Years

Newark was New Jersey’s most important industrial city. Its leading nineteenth century industry, shoemaking, got a boost in 1818 when Seth Boyden succeeded in treating leather with linseed oil in such a way that it retained its durability yet took on a shiny appearance. His “patent leather” enabled the production of shoes with a dressier appearance than the work boots that had been the mainstay of Newark’s shoe trade. Around the Civil War, when Newark made 90 percent of the nation’s patent leather, almost three quarters of its workforce was engaged in manufacturing, the highest such percentage in the country. After the Civil War, jewelry making and brewing became major industries in Newark.

Trenton too began to industrialize before the Civil War. Peter Cooper opened an iron works and John A. Roebling moved his wire rope factory to Trenton in the 1840s. Cooper produced the first wrought iron rails structurally suitable for skyscrapers, and Roebling designed the Brooklyn Bridge from Trenton. In the years to follow, Roebling wire and wire rope products could be found in virtually every industry in the country, from shipbuilding to mining, elevators to steam shovels. The famous Trenton ceramics industry took root in the 1850s, producing drainpipes, sanitary ware, china, decorative objects, and tiles.

Cities were not the only sites of technological innovation. Outside Morristown, Stephen Vail, owner of the Speedwell Iron Works, allowed his son, Alfred, and Alfred’s partner, Samuel F.B. Morse, to conduct experiments in the vacant second floor of his gristmill. In 1837, when the two carried out the first successful demonstration that messages could be transmitted over wire, they gave birth to the telegraph. Suddenly, information that had taken two days to cross New Jersey did so in seconds.

Pre-Civil War industrial development in New Jersey was expedited by important improvements in transportation. Companies to build two canals and the state’s first railroad were authorized by the state legislature in the late 1820s. Nationwide, most canals were public works, but in New Jersey they were built by the private sector. The Morris Canal linked Phillipsburg with Newark in 1831 and Jersey City in 1836. It was built in hope of finding new markets for Morris and Essex County produce and of reinvigorating the flagging iron industry in the northwestern hills. Despite its ingenious use of inclined planes, however, the Morris Canal was not very successful.

The Delaware and Raritan Canal by contrast, which joined Trenton and New Brunswick in 1834, was profitable for more than 30 years, until railroads began to surpass the canal’s ability to move heavy goods. Millions of tons of anthracite coal from northeastern Pennsylvania – the fuel that fired the Industrial Revolution – reached Newark, New York, and other manufacturing centers via the Delaware and Raritan Canal. The Camden and Amboy Railroad, briefly the longest rail line in the country, and an innovator in railroad technology, was also completed in 1834. Initially its business was largely passengers, for whom the two-

day journey between New York and Philadelphia was reduced to a few hours by the 44-mile line that linked the Delaware River with the Raritan Bay.

The coastwise trade, which remained brisk in this period despite improvements in land travel, **was aided by the many lighthouses that punctuate the state's Atlantic Coast.** The federal life-saving service, an antecedent of the United States Coast Guard, grew out of an amendment to a lighthouse bill secured by New Jersey congressman (and later governor) William A. Newell in 1848 to provide \$10,000 “for the better preservation of life and property from shipwreck on the coast of New Jersey, between Sandy Hook and Little Egg Harbor.”

Underneath these and related developments lay wrenching social change. As machines driven by waterpower, and later steam, replaced handiwork, shops manned by artisans and apprentices gave way to small factories. Some farm villages declined, others grew into manufacturing centers to which the children of farm families moved for jobs that paid wages. Beginning in the 1840s, these early farm-to-factory migrants were joined by a stream of Irish and German immigrants. On the eve of the Civil War, Essex County was over one third foreign born, and Hudson County over 40 per cent so. New Jersey had two thirds of a million inhabitants in 1860, more than a quarter of whom lived in cities over 10,000 in population.

The pre-Civil War spread of cities provoked a variety of reactions. One, the picturesque suburb, took early form in Essex County. Llewellyn Park, arguably the first gated, residential subdivision in the nation, was envisaged by successful drug importer Llewellyn Haskell as an antidote to the grit and grime of city life. Haskell hired well-known architect Andrew Jackson Davis to plan a

community of lavish homes situated on the slope of the first Watchung Mountain. The plan took advantage of its setting with curving streets, irregularly sized lots, and naturalistic landscaping.

The mostly-Roman Catholic, immigrant factory hands who populated the cities provoked another sort of reaction from middle-class Protestants who feared social disorder. They hoped to combat a decline in what they defined as Christian values, by organizing Bible distribution programs, Sunday schools, and a range of caretaker institutions such as reformatories and mental hospitals. None of these pre-Civil War reforms had more far reaching effect than the public elementary schools that were a product of this period. Conceived as a remedy for poverty, crime, and hardening class lines, the common schools, as they were known, were designed to create a common American culture by presenting a shared curriculum. Their purpose was to instill core democratic values and teach the requisite skills of a rapidly changing society: literacy, punctuality, and work-discipline. New Jersey was not a leader in the campaign for common schools, but as the Civil War approached, a growing number of cities and towns were adopting the idea, radical in its day, that all children, regardless of the social standing of their parents, should be educated at public expense. After the Civil War, the public school system spread, as the number of jobs grew that required the skills taught in school. In 1876, New Jersey made the provision to all children of a “thorough and efficient” education a constitutional mandate.

It is often maintained that New Jersey's Civil War politics were comparable to situations in the Border States – slave states that remained in the Union. It is true that the electorate was closely divided between Democrats and Republicans. But neither New Jersey Republicans nor Democrats believed in a

state's right to secede from the union or supported the expansion of slavery into the territories. Most New Jersey Democrats supported the war effort even as they attacked the Lincoln administration's handling of it, particularly at election time; and many New Jersey Republicans objected when President Lincoln broadened his war aims to include the ending of chattel slavery.

The degree of New Jersey's support for the union cause can be measured by its troop count. From President Lincoln's first call for militia, to which New Jersey sent four regiments, to the nearly 3,000 African American soldiers from New Jersey who served in the United States Colored Troops in 1864 and 1865, New Jersey responded well. All told 37 infantry regiments, three cavalry regiments, and five artillery batteries were raised. Over 73,000 men from New Jersey served in the Civil War, many for more than one tour of duty. This represents more than two thirds of the number of men between 20 and 40 years of age recorded in the 1860 census. Proportional to population, Cumberland County supplied a greater number of men to the war effort than any county in the United States.

New Jersey's population grew rapidly after the war, especially in the cities. In 1900, eight in ten New Jersey residents either lived in a large city or worked in one. The U. S. Census counted almost 3.2 million New Jerseyans in 1920, six and half times as many as in 1850, when the great urban/industrial takeoff had just begun. All these people required homes, of course, and many thousands, in both vernacular and high styles, went up in cities and towns from Dover to Cape May. Utilizing an eclectic mix of historical-revival idioms as well as other styles, architects and builders met the state's housing needs.

Railroads laid miles of track in these years, as factories opened or expanded, seemingly overnight. The well-known slogan "Trenton makes, the world takes" (which came to life in 1911 as "the world takes, Trenton makes") could have been said equally well of Newark, Paterson, Jersey City, Camden, Elizabeth, and other cities. It is not possible to do justice here to the number and variety of industries that called New Jersey home in its heavy industrial period. Camden and Jersey City both became multi industry cities after the Civil War, their waterfronts the termini of multiple railroads. Camden was home to Esterbrook pens, Campbell Soup, and later the Victor Talking Machine Company, which pioneered recording on plastic discs and dominated the industry for decades. Jersey City hosted the American Can Company, the Colgate Company, which put toothpaste in a tube in 1908, and the Dixon Ticonderoga Company, maker of the ubiquitous No. 2 yellow pencil. When the Singer sewing machine plant opened in Elizabeth in 1873, it was the largest manufacturing facility under one roof in the world.

If any one man defined the age, it was the incomparable Thomas Alva Edison. Working in Newark in the early 1870s, Edison conceived some important improvements to the telegraph before moving to Menlo Park in 1876. There he built the world's first industrial research and development laboratory, and used it to invent the phonograph, a microphone that made the telephone practical, and the incandescent light bulb. In 1887, Edison moved to a larger laboratory in West Orange where he improved the phonograph, helped to establish the sound recording industry, and launched the film industry by developing the first commercially-viable motion picture camera. Edison's story is told at the Edison National Historic Site in West Orange.

Agriculture lost its dominant role in the New Jersey economy in these years, but it did not disappear, particularly in the Delaware River counties. Rather, it adapted to the urban-industrial world. Until the last third of the nineteenth century, most New Jersey farmers grew grain. But advances in refrigerated rail cars, which increased competition from the west, and other developments, drove New Jersey farmers to diversify. Some farms became dairies, others truck farms that grew fruit and vegetables for transport. Cranberry and blueberry cultivation advanced through the pioneering efforts of Elizabeth White. The success of White, and others, in providing perishable produce for the cities, augmented by the promotional support of state agricultural officials, earned New Jersey its nickname, “the Garden State.” **Oystering, which those same officials considered treating as farming, provided seasonal employment to tens of thousands. The restaurants in Newark, New York, Philadelphia, and elsewhere that served New Jersey oysters by the millions, also had an appetite for the fluke, striped bass, bluefish, and other species supplied them by the state’s commercial fishermen.**

Throughout this period, immigrants from Europe did most of the labor on farms and in factories. In the 1880s, emigrants from Italy, Poland, Hungary, and elsewhere in southern and eastern Europe began to join the stream of Europeans that had started finding work in New Jersey’s manufactories in the decades preceding the Civil War. Over the next forty-plus years, they came to New Jersey by the hundreds of thousands. Millions more immigrants who arrived at Ellis Island passed through New Jersey. They left for Chicago, Minneapolis, and other points west from the terminal of the Central Railroad of New Jersey in Jersey City.

In the first decades of the twentieth century, a slight majority of the inhabitants of New Jersey were either born in Europe or had a parent who was. In the big manufacturing cities, the immigrant presence was greater. In Paterson, for example, where tens of thousands of silk workers demanding an eight-hour workday famously struck in vain for six months in 1913, first or second generation immigrants constituted over three quarters of the population.

Because the Paterson strikers gained the support of many writers and artists, their struggle became the most well known labor dispute in New Jersey history, but it was only one of many that took place in the first third of the twentieth century, a period of tumultuous relations between capital and labor. One corporation that had some success in avoiding labor strife was the John A. Roebling’s Sons Company. In 1905, when the Roebling firm built a steel mill on the east bank of the Delaware below Trenton, it also constructed a company town. The promise of decent, affordable housing was the carrot on a stick that helped the company keep the peace in its steel mill, while its plants in Trenton were the scene of much conflict between labor and management.

White-collar employment opportunities accompanied industrial growth. Factories needed managers; offices required clerks and bookkeepers; everyone needed salesmen. Slowly a middle class way of life that is sometimes associated with the Victorian era emerged, and gradually employers began offering annual weeks of paid vacation to salaried employees. As the expanding rail network brought the coast within reach of families from Philadelphia and New York City, vacationers began visiting the New Jersey shore.

Many different kinds of vacation retreats developed. Cape May, which early promoted the healthful and restorative character of sea air, was already an established resort favored by southern planters in 1854, when a railroad linked Camden to a real estate venture on the coast called Atlantic City. Growth there was swift. Atlantic City built its first boardwalk in 1870 – legendarily at the urging of a hotelier who tired of sweeping sand from his lobby – and its first amusement pier in 1882. In 1921, it debuted the Miss America Pageant in an effort to extend the tourism season beyond Labor Day.

Pious Methodists created Ocean Grove in 1870 to be free from the “follies and dissipations” of other seaside resorts. Its charter, which stated that “in Ocean Grove the church shall be the state and the state shall be church,” was declared unconstitutional by the New Jersey Supreme Court in 1979. This ruling forced the community to remove the chains that blocked automobiles from driving in on Sunday.

Long Branch, a resort for presidents in the late nineteenth century, was perhaps the most exclusive resort on the coast. It boasted many opulent summer houses for the wealthy, including the palatial Guggenheim mansion designed by the New York architects J.M. Carrère and Thomas Hastings.

Recreational fishing was a mainstay of many coastal resorts, but the coast was not the only place for **fishing and other forms of** recreation in New Jersey. Lake Hopatcong was a popular destination, as were rivers and streams in northwestern New Jersey and the Pinelands. Essex County, which created the first county park system in the nation in 1895 – designed by the Olmstead brothers firm – was followed by other counties and municipalities as outdoor recreation grew in

popularity. Renowned designer Frederick Law Olmstead, or his firm, had a hand in a number of parks in the state, including Cadwalader Park in Trenton, Branch Brook Park in Newark, and High Point State Park in Sussex County.

Other important landscape architects besides Olmstead left their marks on New Jersey terrain, including two female pioneers. Martha Brooks Hutcheson, one of the first women in the field, transformed her Chester Township farm into an influential country style garden, which is now part of the Morris County park system. Beatrix Farrand oversaw landscape design at Princeton University for most of the first half of the twentieth century.

The First World War was very good for New Jersey manufacturers, and the labor strife that marked the earlier decades subsided when war production resulted in higher wages and better working conditions. Led by Dupont and Hercules Powder, New Jersey was briefly the nation’s largest manufacturer of munitions. Refiners in Middlesex County smelted half the nation’s wartime copper. Shipyards in Camden, Kearney, and elsewhere, recipients of contracts from the administration of President (and former New Jersey governor) Woodrow Wilson, built or refit thousands of men-of-war and merchant vessels. Many other companies converted their plants to war production. In total, the state’s industrial output increased by nearly 300 percent between 1914 and 1919.

Facing a labor shortage when immigration slowed during the war, some New Jersey manufacturers turned south. African Americans had been coming to New Jersey steadily since the end of the Civil War, but their percentage of the population was essentially the same in 1910 as it had been at the end of the Civil War – roughly 3.5 percent. When industrialists began welcoming black workers

from the Jim Crow south into New Jersey factories, the pace of migration quickened. The movement of African Americans from the south to the urban north in these years is known as the Great Migration, and it was very influential in New Jersey. The fewer than 90,000 African American residents of New Jersey in 1910 grew to nearly 209,000 in 1930, and to more than half a million in 1960. The newcomers encountered a color line in housing from the start, and as soon as the war-based labor shortage ended they were shunted into the lowest paid, dead end jobs. Signs of segregation and discrimination that became dismayingly familiar in subsequent decades began to appear: inner city neighborhoods of overcrowded and dilapidated buildings, inadequate sanitation, under-employment, and poverty. In 1930, of 21 northeastern cities with black populations above 10,000, four were in New Jersey: Newark, Atlantic City, Camden, and Jersey City.

Growing racial problems notwithstanding, the 1920s were the years of the city in New Jersey. Six of the largest – Atlantic City, Bayonne, Camden, Elizabeth, Jersey City, and Newark – hit population peaks in the decade. But the seeds of the third great transformation were becoming visible. Even before the First World War, native-born whites, including in some cases the children of immigrants, began leaving the cities for suburbs. New Jersey's first commuters were wealthy businessmen who rode trains to Newark and New York from such places as South Orange and Montclair. As streetcar companies extended their lines, however, they made more land available for housing, and the suburbs changed their character. Streetcar suburbs turned middle level managers, accountants, salesmen, clerks, and even laborers into commuters.

The automobile further spurred the suburbs. Before 1920, few paved surfaces connected New Jersey's cities and towns to one another. But as the motor

car became more popular – in the late 1920s there were more than 800,000 autos on New Jersey roads for fewer than 3 million potential drivers – a network of highways, roads, and bridges evolved. Suburban Bergen County was the fastest growing county in New Jersey during the first third of the twentieth century, followed closely by the suburban portion of Union County. From 1900 to 1930 Bergen's population increased by 365 percent and Union's suburban sector by 300 percent.

In Fair Lawn, in 1928, the architects Clarence Stein and Henry Wright designed a "town for the motor age," which used cul-de-sacs, community park space, and other means to accommodate but not be dominated by the automobile. Of a plan for 25,000 families, only a small fraction of homes were built before the developer declared bankruptcy in 1933. Despite much acclaim, the Radburn plan was not implemented elsewhere.

The Great Depression, which hit New Jersey hard, slowed not only suburbanization but just about everything else too. Six hundred factories closed in Newark alone. Average personal income was halved.

The New Deal spent a lot of money in New Jersey; much of it distributed under the influence of Jersey City's powerful mayor Frank Hague, whose early support was crucial to Franklin D. Roosevelt's first presidential campaign. Many parks were built, sewer systems installed, and streets paved by the alphabet-soup of agencies. Three hundred twenty bridges were built, and a like number repaired. Morristown National Historical Park was a project of the Civilian Conservation Corps. The Rutgers University football stadium and the Jersey City Medical Center were Works Progress Administration projects. Princeton's segregated

elementary school, the Witherspoon Street School, received a long overdue remodeling funded by the Public Works Administration, which also loaned the Port Authority funds for the Lincoln Tunnel. The sleek, Art-Deco terminal at Newark Airport, which many consider the nation's first commercial airline terminal, was funded by the Civil Works Administration.

Among the more visible results of New Deal spending are the approximately 50 murals that dot the state from Cliffside Park to Penns Grove. Most were painted in post offices, but there were at least two other notable murals: Ben Shahn's depiction of the history of the cooperative effort undertaken by the New Deal Resettlement Agency known as Jersey Homesteads, and the abstract masterpiece Arshile Gorky created for the Newark Airport terminal. Shahn's mural is located in the elementary school in Roosevelt (to which Jersey Homesteads changed its name in 1945), where the unadorned International Style homes designed by Alfred Kastner and Louis I. Kahn suited the experimental spirit of the community.

The industrial build up that accompanied American entry into the Second World War lifted New Jersey's economy in a way the New Deal could not. The state got nine percent of early war contracts, trailing only California and New York. More than 10,000 New Jerseyans lost their lives at war, while on the home front the war years saw the most rapid period of industrial expansion in state history. New Jersey produced \$12 billion worth of munitions and other war products, approximately six percent of total war spending. The Naval Air station in Wildwood, which trained dive-bomber pilots, was one of many facilities that made important contributions to the war effort.

The Suburban Era

Postwar New Jersey witnessed a land rush, which put the third great transformation into high gear, and turned New Jersey inside out. As the children and grandchildren of earlier immigrant generations began moving from the cities, political and economic power passed to the suburbs. Enticed by developers offering to pay three or four times the going price for farmland, thousands of farmers sold their property. Barns, silos, and cornfields became housing tracts and offices in rapidly growing suburbs such as East Brunswick, Wayne, Cherry Hill, Brick, and Livingston. New Jersey's population expanded at twice the national pace. Between 1940 and 1970, the state added three million people, an increase of over 70 percent.

No place grew like Willingboro in Burlington County, the site of the third and largest development of pioneer builders Levitt and Sons. Along with the "G.I. Bill," the single-family detached houses the Levitts built using mass production techniques (soon emulated by other builders) put home ownership within the reach of middle-income and working-class families. Willingboro's 1950 population of less than 900 grew to nearly 12,000 in 1960 and to more than 43,000 in 1970. Willingboro is today one of New Jersey's few largely African-American suburbs.

Newark, Jersey City, Camden, Elizabeth, and Trenton, meanwhile, lost jobs and population in the 1950s, and, in all but Elizabeth, during the 1960s as well. Factory districts declined as manufacturers who were shifting from rail to truck transportation found that their old multi-story plants were less efficient than

the horizontal buildings they could erect in the suburbs. The disruption to city life of de-industrialization was compounded because African Americans from the south continued to pour into New Jersey's cities in the decades after the war. Hoping to find the entry-level manufacturing jobs that had greeted immigrants from Europe, they instead got trapped in declining urban economies where good jobs were disappearing. The six infamous days of disorder that left 26 dead and hundreds injured in Newark during July 1967, were paralleled by smaller episodes in Jersey City, Plainfield, and Trenton. They were equally symbols of declining cities and catalysts of further white flight and urban decay.

Cars dominated the postwar decades. Highways designed for long distance travelers became instead main streets of suburban sprawl. When the New Jersey Turnpike opened in 1951, it carried three quarters of a billion vehicle miles in its first year, and adjacent land became favored locations for malls and industrial parks. The opening of the Garden State Parkway in 1954 put the shore in reach of millions. It brought 150,000 new residents to Ocean County between 1950 and 1970, and tens of thousands of new vacationers. The sweeping angles, bright colors, and plastic exoticism of Wildwood's "Doo-Wop" motels, most built during the 1960s, reflected the exuberant and expansive mood of the postwar decades.

In addition to the space-age modernism of the Wildwood motels, the post-war years saw high-style modernist undertakings as well. One of the most noteworthy examples is AT&T's Bell Labs complex in Holmdel designed by Eero Saarinen in 1962. The innovations that emerged from AT&T's research and development laboratories – in Holmdel and elsewhere – are staggering. They

include the cell phone, laser, solar cell, UNIX – the operating system that undergirds the internet – and the Big Bang theory that explains the origins of the cosmos, to name just a few.

Another notable example is the headquarters building of pharmaceutical and medical equipment and supplies conglomerate Johnson & Johnson in New Brunswick. Almost alone among its sister cities, New Brunswick has had some success rebounding from deindustrialization, through the efforts of a unique partnership involving Rutgers, the University of Medicine and Dentistry, and Johnson & Johnson. The 1979 tower designed by Pei Cobb Freed & Partners symbolizes this turnaround.

It is impossible to predict where New Jersey will go next. Can other cities follow New Brunswick's course? Can suburbs continue to grow? What will be the sources of prosperity in the future? A new wave of international immigration, this time from Latin America, Asia, and Africa, picked up speed after changes in federal immigration policy were enacted in 1965. These newcomers will shape New Jersey's history just as other immigrants did in the past. Today, the state has roughly 8.7 million inhabitants, and they face serious challenges. Chiefly, how to create a climate in which all citizens have a chance to share in the benefits of economic productivity; and how to balance economic growth with the need to conserve, protect, and replenish scarce resources. A successful heritage tourism program has a role to play in this process. Heritage tourism can be an economic engine, a source of jobs and revenue. But perhaps equally important, it can help infuse a sense of history into these and other pressing social questions.