

# Crossing New Jersey

From dirt roads to parkways, from inns to motels, from ordinaries to diners, from stagecoaches to railroads, commuting has long been part of the Garden State's cultural and economic evolution.

Part 1: New York to Philadelphia 1604 - 1776

by Arthur Mierisch





### COLONY POPULATIONS

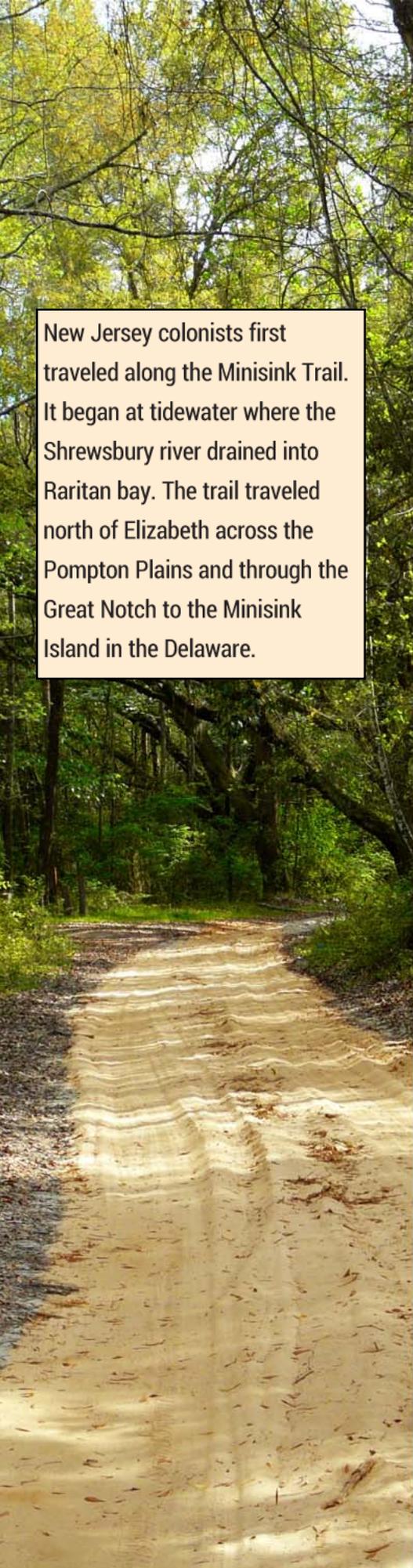
Colony	1630*	1700	1776
NJ	250	14,010	117,400
NY	350	19,107	162,900
PA	300	17,950	240,057

\* Estimated

Their overland journey began in the wee dark hours of the fourth Monday of October 1775. The nasty gulls, wild fowl from the sea, resting in the yard were an omen that another storm was brewing. At 2:30 A.M., King George, the red-crested rooster maddened by Jacob's swearing, flew off the fence, strutted into the coop, swore at the chickens, and stayed there until dawn. He worried about losing sleep and cared less about the passengers rushing to leave Perth Amboy's Good Woman Inn. They looked tired, each carrying a heavy stained and tattered leather bag while boarding the *Flying Machine*. The coach was about to leave for New Brunswick. "ALL ABOARD!" shouted Jacob the driver.

The travelers were a mixed group of merchants, inventors, and military couriers all anxious to cross New Jersey and arrive in Philadelphia, the colonial capital. They had messages to deliver about merchandise lost and destroyed, uprisings in Boston, a machine that ran on vapors, taxes not being collected, and the need to protect Loyalist land owners from the Patriots. Last night, Jacob boasted that he was the best driver east of Crosswicks, and that they'll be in Burlington by 12:00 noon, and with a good tide Philadelphia is only four hours away.

The passengers looked forward to today's journey. For some, the boat trip from New York yesterday did not go well. Strong winds and rough seas threatened to overturn their small sloop. Their venture into the Atlantic upset the hardiest of travelers. They knew of many who drowned attempting the crossing when, without warning, the weather turned. Several became ill and swore that next time they would cross further up on the North (Hudson) river. Their boat docked at Perth Amboy late in the afternoon. It was a short walk to the inn where they were met with a sneer from Silas the arrogant innkeeper, and the pleasant aroma of a freshly made rabbit stew. A passenger whose stomach was still unsettled sat near the door, ready if necessary to take his discomfort outside. Those that enjoyed the dinner commented on the stew served with a chilled grape wine (it had cooled in the creek for six hours). They all complained about the 4 pence (\$1.80 in 2015) charge for a quart of ale. They told Silas, the innkeeper that the ordinance says 2 pence (\$0.90 in 2015). Silas laughed saying: "Go tell the magistrate. ME! You'll all be gone tomorrow." That evening while sitting by the fireplace, the only light and warmth in the room, they played whist. Some talked with rowdy town residents about events in Boston, but soon changed the subject when tempers flared. There were loud conversations about happenings last July some place in France. One elderly passenger reading from a two-week old edition of the *Rivington Press*, stopped when it irritated another traveler. The paper had printed a revelation about William Franklin, the Governor of New Jersey. It linked him to an unresolved £6,570



New Jersey colonists first traveled along the Minisink Trail. It began at tidewater where the Shrewsbury river drained into Raritan bay. The trail traveled north of Elizabeth across the Pompton Plains and through the Great Notch to the Minisink Island in the Delaware.

(about \$1,200,000 in 2015) robbery from the Colonies Treasury in 1768. The money had not been found.

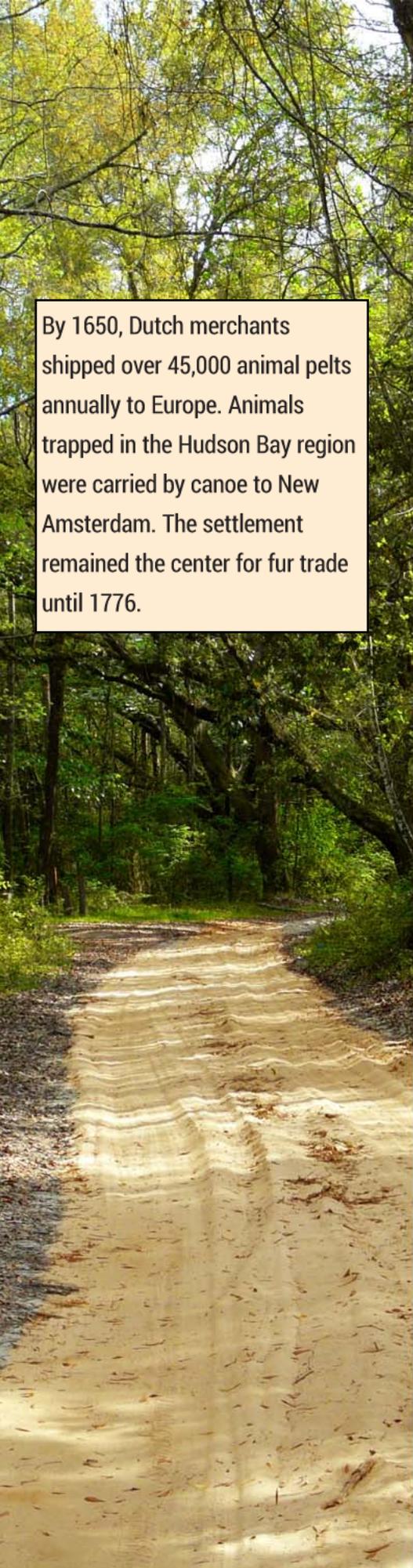
The passengers, ignoring Jacob's language, began boarding the coach. With heads bent low, they stepped silently hoping that they would not have to carry the lantern. As Silas helped an elderly traveler board, he said in a gruff voice loud enough for everyone to hear "He's always like this. Still hung over from last night. And all his storytelling. He's the best driver this side of Cranberry. You'll be in Philadelphia in time for dinner." He continued even louder "Which of you is going to carry the lantern? The horses won't go if they can't see the road! You better get moving!" Everybody, even the horses sensing a storm were anxious to leave. They wanted to avoid a heavy rainfall. No one wanted to get off and push the coach through knee deep mud and puddles.

In 1775, King George, the rooster did not exist nor did travelers stay at the fictitious Good Woman Inn. However, the *Flying Machine*, an express marvel, did depart in the early morning to keep its promise of arriving in Philadelphia in eight hours! Well, no one really believed that. As the colonies population and economy grew, the proprietors and governors enlarged the trade routes and improved communications. They enacted ordinances to build bridges and highways, and to regulate the inns and taverns along roadways. Businessmen responded by building coaches as the Flying Machine that provided express transportation between settlements. By the 1700s, these trade routes, lying in a straight line between New York and Philadelphia became known as the "upper" and "lower" roads.

### **Mercantilism**

By 1600, European countries adopted the concept of mercantilism where a nation's power depended on its wealth. To gain wealth, England established colonies in North America ruled by a system of proprietary governors who owned stock in the settlements. Colonists were obligated to sell raw materials to England. There factories produced higher priced products to sell to the colonies. They created a trade imbalance that only enriched the English treasury.

The colonies sold rye, buckwheat, barley, flour, rice, cotton, corn, flaxseed, sugar, tobacco, and beaver and deer skins to England. In return fine clothing and linens, milled flours, wine, and pipe and cigarette tobaccos were sold to the colonies. Iron and copper ingots, rosin, tar, pitch, whale oil, potash, indigo, and lumber were exchanged for English-made boats, farm implements, metal hardware, wooden shingles, and firearms. Cattle, pigs, oxen, horses and saddles, sheep, chickens, processed meat, and fish were imported. Colonial merchants also imported fine linens, fabrics, jewelry, and wines crafted throughout Europe.



By 1650, Dutch merchants shipped over 45,000 animal pelts annually to Europe. Animals trapped in the Hudson Bay region were carried by canoe to New Amsterdam. The settlement remained the center for fur trade until 1776.

For their daily needs, colonists hunted, fished, made shingles, clapboard, barrels, stoves, and bricks. They made simple unfashionable clothing, baked bread, did carpentry and sold handicrafts to their neighbors. To supplement their need for lower priced merchandise, an underground economy emerged ignored by governors who dared not trigger an uprising. Pirates and poachers, operating along the southern coast and inland, sold captured cargo at lower prices than if purchased from legitimate merchants. No one complained, except English tradesmen.

### **Early Colonization: 1600 to 1664**

In 1604, New Jersey was a vast wilderness covering over 8-million acres of highlands in the north and plains in the south. The land having plentiful mineral and agricultural resources attracted Dutch settlers who established the colony of New Netherland with New Amsterdam (New York City) as their capitol. The territory extended westward towards Pennsylvania and south to Cape May. Swedish colonists settled in southern New Jersey along the Delaware River and into Pennsylvania near Philadelphia, and built forts along the Hudson and Delaware rivers. In 1642, emigrants from Connecticut settled in Burlington, New Jersey, and established the towns of Newark along the Passaic River and New Brunswick along the Raritan River. They cleared and farmed the land, and widened the paths and trails that became roads connecting settlements.

The "upper" road began at Elizabeth and passed through New Brunswick and continued south-west to Trenton. It then turned south traveling along the Delaware River to Tinicum Island near Burlington "whence it crossed the river and followed the west bank, past Philadelphia to New Castle, Delaware." The "lower" road ran from Elizabeth to Woodbridge, then to New Brunswick and south-west to Burlington.

Colonists walked, or rode in wagons to buy/sell and barter for animals, and agricultural and hand made products. The wagons, crude farm vehicles were uncovered and offered no protection against rain and snow. The passengers sat alongside animals on a wooden floor covered with dirt when dry, or mud when wet. Next to them was merchandise, chickens, goats, pigs, and ducks. Weary travelers stayed overnight in barns where they shared sleeping accommodations with animals, or in homes where they shared meals with the owner's family.

### **East and West New Jersey: 1664 to 1702**

In 1664, England, using its powerful navy and army, began consolidation of territories in North America. Colonel Richard Nicolls, supported by the Royal Navy, sailed into the harbor at New Amsterdam. He took control of the Dutch colony of New

Netherland and renamed it the Province of New York. As deputy-governor, he purchased from the Indians a tract between the Raritan and Passaic rivers, 34 miles long by 17 miles wide. With a contingent of armed men, he then took over the Swedish settlement in the south. Afterwards forty families from Brooklyn settled in Woodbridge and Amboy, and thirty families settled in Elizabeth and Piscataway. King James II and IV then granted the land to two proprietors Sir George Carteret and Lord Berkeley. The Proprietors appointed Philip Carteret, Governor of New Caesarea (New Jersey). Elizabeth became the colonies English capital.

In 1674, the proprietors unable to collect unpopular land fees divided the colony. Sir George Carteret retained the eastern portion that today approximates Bergen, Essex, Middlesex, and Monmouth counties. John Berkeley sold his share to the Quakers including Sussex, Morris, Hunterdon, Burlington, Gloucester, Salem, Cumberland, and Cape May counties. The proprietors gained jurisdictional rights including:

*...all rivers, mines, minerals, quarries, woods, marshes, fishing, hawking, hunting waters and fowling, and all royalties, profits, and commodities.*

The proprietors, and their council's created constitutions and ordinances that guaranteed exclusive trading with England, maintained order, and protected the colony from foreign interference. They nominated "Military Officers" to "suppress all Rebellions and Mutinies," and "selected freeholders, justices, and assemblies." Proprietors levied taxes necessary to operate the colony. They surveyed the land, and built new roads and port facilities to ease trade between settlements and colonies to the north and south. In 1697, entrepreneurs were chartered to connect settlements with toll roads and bridges.

In 1675, the Assembly passed a highway act calling for "two men in each town in the Province to lay out common highways." The ordinance required roads to be 6 rods (96 feet) wide. In the 1700s, the width was reduced to 2 rods (32 feet).

The proprietors established mail service between colonies. In 1690, the postal delivery schedule depended on: the desire of the post-rider to travel; if there was enough mail to make the trip; it was not freezing; and the weather was fair. Correspondence of any size required 4 pence (\$4.24 in 2015) postage. Mail was grouped into packets that fit into the rider's saddle bags. Often the mail did not arrive or was received months late. In 1711, it took six days for mail to travel from Perth Amboy to Burlington. Riders from the north met riders from the south at the Cranbury Tavern. They exchanged packets, turned around and rode back cutting their round-trip



travel time in half. In 1729, mail was delivered once a week in summer and every two weeks in winter. In 1739, riders were dispatched every twenty-four hours. Deep snow delayed the mail until next spring.

The Puritans and Quakers “noted for their neighborliness, and to ensure their godliness established hostelries also known as ordinaries for the comfort and entertainment of settlers.” Inns and taverns were included as ordinaries, and were licensed to provide for the comfort and relief of strangers. They became gathering places for travelers and colonists living nearby. An ordinary keeper was required to “oblige himself to make sufficient provision of meat, drink, and lodging for strangers; and neglect thereof, in any town, shall forfeit 40 shillings (\$500.00 in 2015) to the county for each month’s default.” Ordinances regulated the price of strong liquors, good wine, victuals, pasture for animals, and oats for feed. Travelers were required to report to magistrates and deputies all abuses to the ordinances.

In 1677, ordinary keepers were not allowed to serve Indians and if proved, before a justice of the peace, that they caused a disturbance, the seller was fined 20 shillings (\$250 in 2015) payable to the town.

*...sell, give, lend, or any other way dispose to any Indian, any sort of strong drink, viz, rum, brandy, wine or cyder, strong beer, or any other toxicatious liquor, under penalty of corporal punishment, to be inflicted upon and person or persons so offending, that is to say, to receive twenty lashes upon the bare back for the first offence; thirty for the second, and for the third imprisonment during the Governor’s pleasure.*

Disturbances on the Sabbath (Sunday, the first day of the week) were severely dealt with. Any “inhabitant or house-keeper” observing any person or persons misbehaving, as by drinking were required to “repair to a legal authority to suppress the same.” The offender paid 10 shillings (\$125.00 in 2015) for the first offence and 20 shillings (\$250.00 in 2015) for every offence thereafter. Constables finding the misbehaving offender/s to be “namely staggering, reeling, drinking, swearing, quarreling, or singing any vain songs, or tunes, shall cause said person or persons to be set in stocks for two whole hours without relief.”

In 1690, the selling of alcoholic drinks in private homes was thought to “dishonor God and impoverish the commonwealth, and to wrong several poor persons within the town or towns.” An enactment by the General Assembly sought to stop the sale of small quantities of alcohol in homes, however, large

From 1675 and 1806, New Brunswick became a hub for commerce with roads radiating in all directions.

- 1670 - The Piscataway Road
- 1675 - The Trenton Road
- 1676 - The Middletown Road
- 1686 - The Bound Brook Road
- 1696 - The Burlington Road, Road to Cranbury Brook and Crosswicks Bridge
- 1716 - The Amwell Road
- 1804 - The New Brunswick & Trenton Turnpike
- 1806 - The New Brunswick to Phillipsburg Turnpike
- 1809 - The Essex and Middlesex Turnpike



City Populations	1700	1790
Boston	6,700	18,038
New York	4,937	13,131
Philadelphia	4,000	42,520
Baltimore	--	13,503

quantities over a gallon were permitted.

Charging higher prices for the only available beverage was fined with the proceeds going to the informer and the poor.

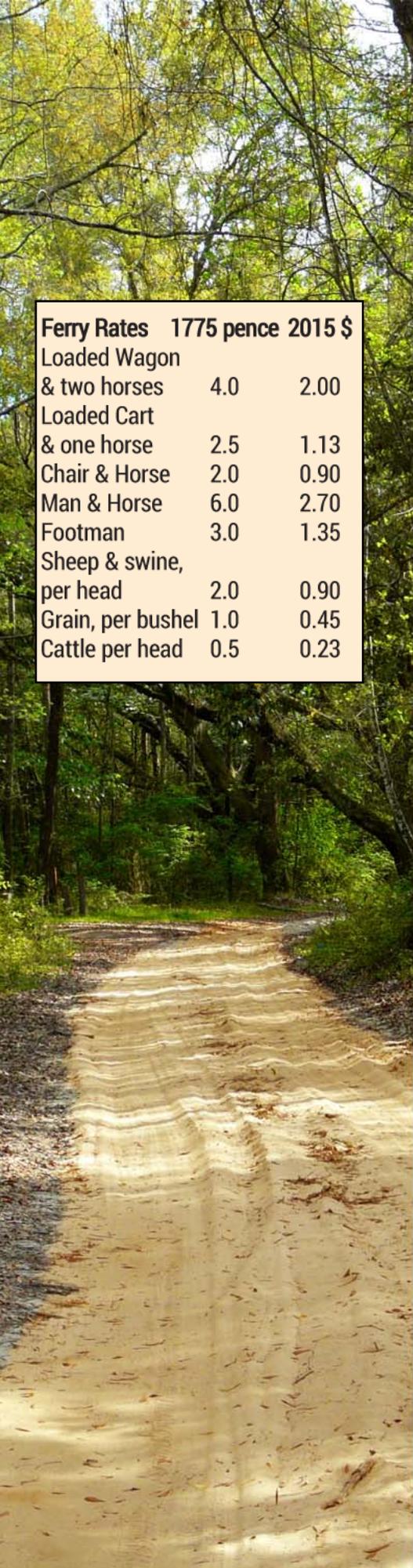
*...be it therefore enacted by this General Assembly, that no person within this Province, shall be suffered to [made to because that was the only drink available] draw any manner of strong drink, as beer, cider, wine, or liquors under the quantity of one gallon, directly or indirectly, upon penalty of paying 10 shillings (\$125.00 in 2015) fine for every small quantity so drawn or sold, the one third-part to the informer, the other two-thirds to the poor of the town.*

By 1690, the quality of food and its packaging was regulated. Ordinances specified that "a packer chosen by the freeholders is to put meat that is good and merchantable and be well packed and salted into thirty-two gallon barrels made of good and well-seasoned timber."

### **The Royal Colony: 1702 to 1776**

In 1702, New Jersey became a Royal Colony when the East and West proprietors jointly surrendered the right of government to England's Queen Anne. She appointed a governor and an assembly of twenty-four members who met alternately at Perth Amboy and Burlington. In 1703, the first Governor, Edward Hyde, aka Lord Cornbury, arrived. He was recalled in 1708, after Queen Anne received complaints about his "numerous malpractices and misappropriations" and dressing habits. The colonists called him a "degenerate and pervert." In 1731, Governor Lewis Morris, known as the wealthiest man in Morris County advocated to separate New Jersey from New York. His tenure was marked with bitter disputes and deadlocks between himself and factions in the colonial legislature. In 1768, William Franklin, the illegitimate son of Benjamin Franklin, known for his arrogance, stubbornness, and a fiery temper governed until 1776. He issued charters founding Queen's College (Rutgers University). Franklin Township and Franklin Lakes are named after him. Peter Kemble, the second richest man in Morris County challenged Franklin to solve a theft of coins and notes from the treasury. However, Franklin was arrested, not for robbing the treasury, but for being a Loyalist. Within months, he escaped from a Connecticut prison and returned to New Jersey to conduct despotic raids against Patriot families. Some believed that Franklin used the money to finance his subversive military activity. Franklin escaped to England after the War. The money was never found.

New Jersey attracted farmers and merchants from the New



Ferry Rates	1775 pence	2015 \$
Loaded Wagon & two horses	4.0	2.00
Loaded Cart & one horse	2.5	1.13
Chair & Horse	2.0	0.90
Man & Horse	6.0	2.70
Footman	3.0	1.35
Sheep & swine, per head	2.0	0.90
Grain, per bushel	1.0	0.45
Cattle per head	0.5	0.23

England colonies during times of religious strife. From 1700 through 1735, hundreds of families from Long Island and Staten Island moved into the Raritan Valley. New Brunswick, situated along the Raritan river incorporated in 1730, had access to Perth Amboy, an ocean port. To the north, Elizabeth incorporated in 1740, featured a sheltered port for commerce to and from New York. Trenton incorporated in 1746, was a navigable port on the Delaware river. Further south, Burlington ferries crossed to Bristol, Pennsylvania.

In 1704, an act provided for the laying out, regulating, clearing, and the preserving of public highways throughout the province. Ordinances specified highways to be from 2 to 6 rods roads wide (32 to 96 feet) and accommodate two-way traffic. During the next seventy-two years, regulations required herds of animals, riders, and wagons to keep right and to allow passing. Traveling muddy roads, and through bogs and marshes was difficult. Wagon wheels sank in sandy soil, and clay clung to wheels, hooves, and boots. During the spring and fall wet seasons, coaches were drawn by four lead horses, and two relief horses were tied behind the coach.

### Crossing the Hudson River

In colonial times, aching joints and gulls flying inland foretold of changing weather conditions hazardous to travel especially when crossing rivers or venturing out into the ocean. Many drowned as boats capsized when blown over by sudden gusts, or swamped when waves flowed over the sides. People on shore worried, while waiting to hear from the brave souls who attempted these crossings. The Hudson River, emptying into New York Bay and joining the Atlantic Ocean, was a perilous trip for boats that dared cross to New Jersey. Boatmen who ignored the winds, tides, currents, and their intuition did not return to shore. In the 1600s, colonists traveled along rivers and harbors in boats and rafts rowed or oared by eight or more stout men. By 1710, immigrant shipwrights built sloops, boats having one mast and a shallow flat bottom. Boats now sailed against the tides using wind power instead of man power. Sloops carried ten or more passengers, depending on the number of animals and cargo onboard. North of Manhattan Island, travelers crossed the Hudson River where it narrowed at Washington Heights across from Fort Lee. The trip, the safest crossing to New Jersey, took an hour in good weather, a high-tide, and a light breeze. Arriving at Fort Lee, coaches carried travelers south to Newark and Elizabeth, and with luck one might continue to Perth Amboy. Travelers missing a connection bided their time at Burdett's Tavern until a coach arrived. Other routes crossed from Manhattan Island to Paulus Hook, Jersey City. Boats also sailed directly from New York harbor to Perth Amboy. They

traveled south across New York Bay and into the Atlantic, sailing around Staten Island. If all went well, they arrived at the dock in Perth Amboy in time to board the afternoon coach for New Brunswick.

### Highways

In the early 1600s, colonists traded for products in nearby settlements. Carrying their wares, and shepherding their flocks, took five hours to reach a market five miles away. To shield themselves from branches, briars, and muck they wore protective clothing. Men preferred knee-high boots and "spatter dashes" for pants. Women wore a platform clog called "pattens," and dresses made of thick cotton able to survive taring underbrush. Arriving at the market they negotiated with butchers, bakers, weavers, cobblers, and candle stick and broom makers for the best buying or selling price. Tinkers came to town selling metal ware and bringing news heard from along the way. Along wide trails small wagons and carts carried passengers, merchandise, farm produce and animals to and from markets. By 1650, New Jersey colonists traveled to Elizabeth, New Brunswick, and Perth Amboy to purchase English made goods and animals. Provincial governors, to give easy access to markets, legislated that pathways be cleared and widened to the width of a coach.

Before 1700, stage wagons conveyed gentlemen, ladies, merchants, tradesmen, and cargo. The coaches were advertised as being "light" or "airy." However, travelers knew them as "cold" and "wet" as none had overhead or side protection. A few did have a cloth roof to protect riders from rain, sleet, and snow.

In 1704, Madam Knight, living in the Massachusetts Colony, became a long-distance traveler. She recorded the difficulties of traveling between settlements. To settle an estate and obtain supplies for her business, she decided to journey unescorted to Hartford, Connecticut, and then to New York City. She rode her horse and carried in saddle bags: money; clothing; documents; and writing materials to document her trip. Not knowing the direction, she hired a guide (a postal rider) to show her the way. During her five-month journey, she told of crossing rivers, sudden storms, being swatted with branches along narrow paths, wading through swamps, and being cut in passages lined with briars. Road markers warned about "barbarous Indians" and advised travelers to go by day into dangerous areas. Ten miles a day was considered "a good-days travel."

*...bad rivers to ride [on horseback] through...losing their way in a sudden and great storm...great difficulty in traveling, the way being very narrow,*



In 1770, sloops represented 90% of the lower Hudson river, and New York harbor traffic. Small schooners accounted for 8%.



A path and a trail are both made by continual treading. A trail is a marked path through rough country.

*and on each side the trees and bushes gave us very unpleasant welcomes with their branches and bows...*

At times, however, Madam Knight's overnight stays in taverns and homes were pleasant.

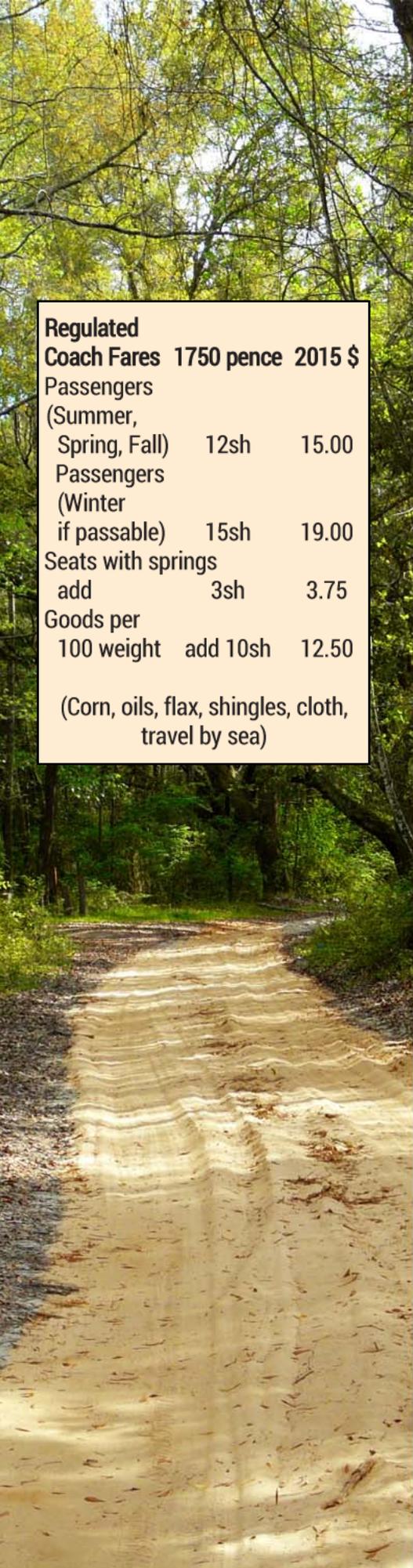
*...good lodgings but often these were "intolerable...to lodge at the home of a very kind and civil gentlewoman, by whom I was handsomely and kindly entertained...a comfortable lodging we had, though nothing but straw to lay on...*

In the 1730s, open coaches were enclosed with roofs, sides, and a door on each side. Passengers sat inside on cushioned seats. The driver sat in front and luggage was placed on the roof. Coaches travelled in winter until the first heavy snow fall. Travel resumed in the spring or when a winter thaw cleared the highway. Coaches traveling the Princeton and Kingston Branch Turnpike Road, when hampered by mud took over a week to complete the journey to Philadelphia. To ride on dry firm soil they detoured to Kingston and then to Princeton.

By 1750, royal governors had commissioned the widening, clearing, and leveling of roadways. Depressions were filled with dirt taken from steep slopes, and bridges were built to span small rivers and streams, and planks were laid across soggy ground. In 1753, Joseph Borden's coach, competed with the Flying Machine. He claimed that he traveled from Bordentown to Elizabeth in less than two days. He said: "two in the summer and three days in winter." In 1769, Ezihid Ball advertised a "road leveling machine." Drawn by horses it cut down ridges and filled in hollows. The equipment was never adopted as being too expensive.

Axles and wheels would break while riding over rough roads. The driver carried tools, and parts to repair the coach, and if unrepairable, disgruntled passengers took their possessions, abandoned the coach, and walked to their destination. If mired down by rain or flooding, passengers were expected to pull and push it to higher ground. Anybody too weak to step up into the coach, rode in a "wheeled chair" or a chaise on wheels pulled by a horse tied behind the back of coach. As the chairs front wheels could not turn when the roadway curved, the chair overturned or rolled into the horse or hit the back of the coach throwing the passenger out of the chair.

Coaches traveling to Philadelphia began the trip at 3:00 A.M. Even if the road was hard and flat, the horses still needed to stop often for food, water, and rest. The six passengers inside sat three facing forward and three facing to the rear, shoulder to shoulder on hard padded seats. From the start, they were



Regulated Coach Fares		
	1750 pence	2015 \$
Passengers (Summer, Spring, Fall)	12sh	15.00
Passengers (Winter if passable)	15sh	19.00
Seats with springs add	3sh	3.75
Goods per 100 weight add	10sh	12.50
(Corn, oils, flax, shingles, cloth, travel by sea)		

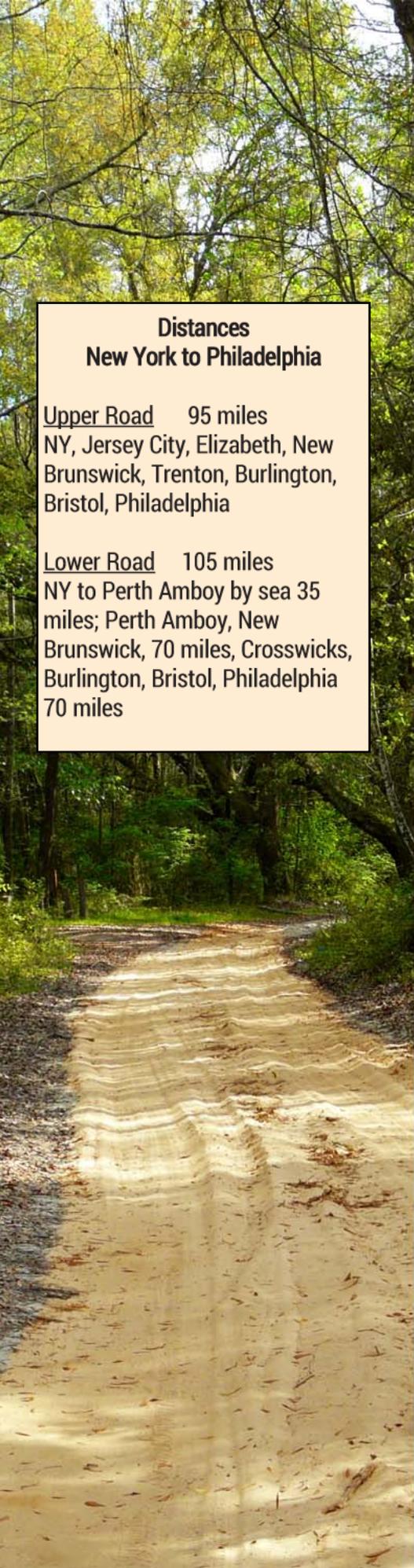
jostled continuously after the driver yelled *giddy-up* and until he yelled *whoa*. The ride was bumpy as the coach wheels fell into depressions and rolled over rocks and other debris along the highway. In the cramped interior, the passenger's knees touched and they rested their heads on each other's shoulder. Some passed the time by drinking or joining songfests while others worried about Indian attacks.

Travelers along the upper and lower roads proceeded with caution during the French and Indian War (1754–1763). In 1755, New Jersey Native-Americans from the Indian town of Bethel, and other natives from Pennsylvania, raided along the Raritan River. They killed one person and wounded another protesting unfair treatment by the English. In 1756, after making peace, the Indians met with a Commission appointed by Governor Jonathan Belcher. They resolved their differences in an agreement known as the Treaty of Crosswicks.

From 1746 until 1759, a mixed group of Pompton Indians and other tribes lived in Bethel Indian Town, an agricultural community on "very fine farm land" lying along the road from Freehold to Princeton near Cranbury, at a place formerly known as Indian Town. In 1755, they crossed the "great post roads" and raided communities along the Raritan River north of New Brunswick, but then immediately resumed friendly relations with the English. In 1756, at the Treaty of Crosswicks, Ohiockechoque, their spokesman gave up the names of the Indians who raided up north, and agreed to tell of any strange Indians moving into Bethel. He complained of Indians being forced into debt when they needed to borrow to support their families. He asked that the English not give them "strong drink" saying that drunken Indians sold their land impoverishing their community. Ohiockechoque asked for "relief" if they become displaced by the War, and aid be given to the families not able to support themselves while their husbands and fathers were away.

The Commission, convinced of the sincerity of the Indians (as recorded by an English member of the Commission) recommend that Bethel's English neighbors be kind to the Indians and be careful not to supply them with strong drink, "whereby many disorders may be prevented." They also requested neighbors not to use aggravating language when speaking to the Indians, "whereby rude and threatening expressions may be drawn from them in their drink, and those improved into tales to alarm the weak." They recommend neighbors not "spreading reports, without a good foundation, can only serve to give the inhabitants uneasiness, they request them carefully to suppress all idle stories, as they will tend to destroy their own Quiet and Repose."

From 1760 until 1776, a coach nicknamed the *Flying Machine*, delivered mail and passengers traveling from Elizabeth to Philadelphia. Although claiming eight hours to



**Distances  
New York to Philadelphia**

Upper Road 95 miles  
NY, Jersey City, Elizabeth, New  
Brunswick, Trenton, Burlington,  
Bristol, Philadelphia

Lower Road 105 miles  
NY to Perth Amboy by sea 35  
miles; Perth Amboy, New  
Brunswick, 70 miles, Crosswicks,  
Burlington, Bristol, Philadelphia  
70 miles

complete the journey, the actual time was an amazing two days. Of course, weather permitting. The coach ran three times a week from May to November, and two times a week from November to May. Heavy snows cancelled trips until the next thaw. Flying down dirt roads at eight miles per hour, the coach rested the horses many times. Also, muddy roads caused delays giving exhausted passengers time to stop at taverns and inns. Always welcomed, travelers exchanged newspapers and news with interested residents.

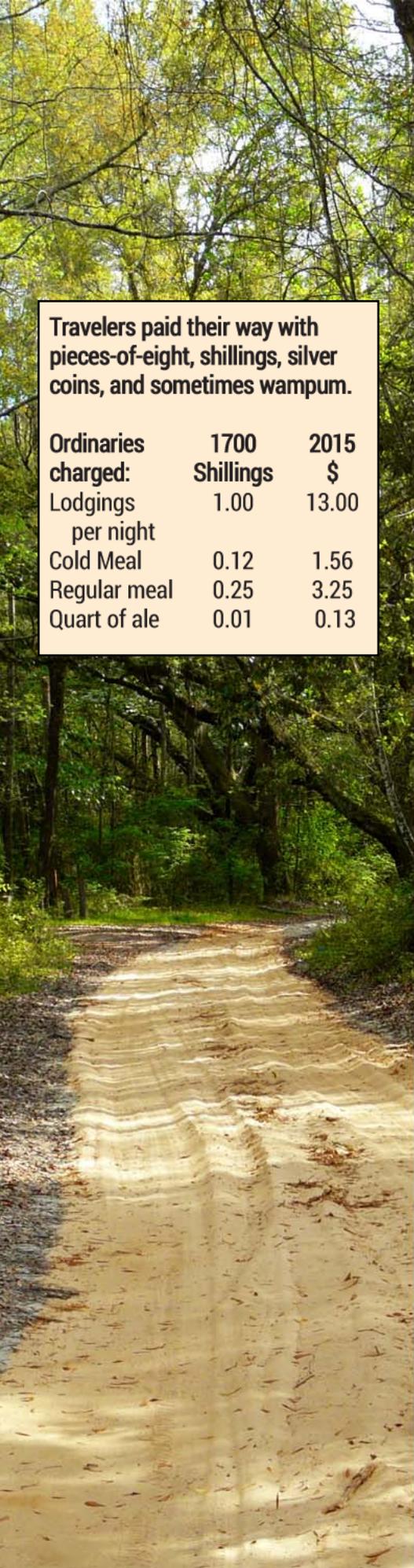
**Ordinaries**

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, New Jersey assemblies ordered that there be an ordinary (an inn or a tavern) in every town. Ordinaries were to be gathering places for the convenience and sociability of travelers and the town. They provided accommodations, food, wine, ale and liquors, and entertainment. Besides serving customers, inn and tavern keepers watered, fed, and harnessed the patrons' horses. Around firesides travelers and residents exchanged news, opinions, and conducted business. Private homes provided "bed and board" without government restrictions.

Travelers complained about the high prices paid for services, and questioned the honesty and integrity of proprietors. In 1768, the assembly required that county, city, and town taverns "be issued licenses" based on letters of recommendation from freeholders and neighbors. When issued, the tavern owner, normally a male paid a bond for a peddler's license. If the owner died or could not work, the license passed on to a closely related male heir. If none existed, and if the owner had married, or was assisted by a capable woman, the license passed to the woman. Licenses were canceled on the death or incapacity of a women owner. Taverns provided "honest work" for the poor or potentially poor. Employment in taverns "attached both morality and self-worth to their [peoples] lives."

Towns were fined for not providing "one sufficient inhabitant" to keep an ordinary. Often a magistrate, justice of peace, or a sheriff became tavern and inn keepers. They posted notices of town meetings, elections, new laws, and changes in administration at all gathering places about town. Taverns became business exchanges where bills-of-sale and transfers of land and property were made and posted. Ordinaries had to comply with ordinances set forth by colonial legislatures. Proprietors were required to report to the town's magistrate all persons deemed harmful to the community. Many offensive persons were "put out of town." A proprietor could not "knowingly harbor in-house or stable any rogues, vagabonds, thieves, sturdy beggars or women."

Before 1700, inn keepers were prohibited from brewing



**Travelers paid their way with pieces-of-eight, shillings, silver coins, and sometimes wampum.**

Ordinaries charged:	1700 Shillings	2015 \$
Lodgings per night	1.00	13.00
Cold Meal	0.12	1.56
Regular meal	0.25	3.25
Quart of ale	0.01	0.13

beer. Ordinaries did not serve "pore people." Most of the time gayety was not allowed in an ordinary. However, on occasion, marrying couples could dance and sing. When the magistrate wasn't looking, carding, dicing, bowls, quoits, ninepins, and shuffleboard were permitted. Lights had to be put out or hidden from outside view after dark. Magistrates recorded the names of persons caught singing or dancing. Folk tunes as *Michael* ("row your boat ashore"), *The British Grenadiers*, and *The Old Lady* were forbidden at any time. Too many offenses resulted in a fine of 3 shillings (\$39.00 in 2015). Young men and maidens of questionable fidelity found walking around after ten at night were detained until morning if they refused to return to their lodgings.

By 1730, restrictions were eased. People could drink, dance, sing, and play games without hiding the lights. This alarmed the New Jersey Assembly who passed bills to do away with vices suspected of spawning in taverns. They wished to restore establishments to their:

*True and original Design of accommodating Strangers, Travelers and other Persons, for the Benefit of Men's Meeting together for the dispatch of Business, and for the entertaining and refreshing mankind in a reasonable Manner.*

Landlords were forbidden to continue serving anyone drinking excessively. Drunkards were whipped and spent hours in stocks. They wore a D made of red cloth on a white background hung around their necks. Women guilty of "intemperate drinking" were also punished.

Ordinaries provided tolerable meals and rooms. They served stews of deer and small animals. Roasted or stewed, rabbit and pork served with cabbage delighted guests. Travelers rushed to leave as Madam Knight wrote in her diary about accommodations offered in a "wretchedist hut" or fed decaying three-day old food, or encountering a "crazy" along the route. The walls of bedrooms next to bar-rooms were thin. On one side, uncomfortable travelers tried to sleep while on the other side rowdy patrons celebrated into the early morning hours. Travelers preferred staying in homes or inns where they received personal attention. John Adams in 1771 wrote: "landlord and landlady are some of the grandest people alive." Most inns were clean and comfortable serving milk and chocolate in the evenings.

**Crossing the Delaware River**

In 1713, the Assembly passed an act establishing a "ferry from the town of Burlington, in the province of New Jersey, to the town of New Bristol, in the province of Pennsylvania." For



the first time, a published and most of the time a reliable service carried travelers across the Delaware River. Rowboats, oared flat boats and barges crossed at Burlington avoiding the sailboats navigating between Camden and Philadelphia. In 1750, Stage coach companies often misrepresented the time to cross the Delaware. They did not include the possible thirty-seven hours to cross the river. Passengers awaiting high or low tides and calm weather bided their time at inns and taverns paying for the hospitality of the owner. A tavern keeper who also operated the *Flying Machine* often told of unsafe crossings so that travelers would spend more time and money in his bar.

From 1604 to 1776, English proprietors and governors transformed the Caesarean wilderness into the organized, regulated, and economically successful colony of New Jersey. They built trade and communication routes along the upper and lower roads connecting New York and Philadelphia. These routes were improved and renamed in the 1800s in response to the demand to reduce the time to transport people and merchandise. King George, the rooster might not have lived to see the colony become the state of New Jersey. But if he did, he would have marveled at the wondrous technological advancements affecting the upper and lower roads.

Part II of Crossing New Jersey, Philadelphia to New York will chronical how a monopoly along these highways restrained economic progress.



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