

NEW JERSEY

A GUIDE TO ITS PRESENT AND PAST



*Compiled and Written by the Federal Writers' Project of the
Works Progress Administration for the State of New Jersey*

AMERICAN GUIDE SERIES

ILLUSTRATED



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THE VIKING PRESS · NEW YORK

MCMXXXIX

FIRST PUBLISHED IN JUNE 1939

NEW JERSEY GUILD ASSOCIATES, INC.

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Tour II

Lambertville—Washington Crossing—Trenton; State 29.
Lambertville to Trenton, 15.4 m.

Pennsylvania R.R. parallels the route throughout.
Usual accommodations; good concrete roadbed.

State 29, one of the few sections of well-paved road closely paralleling the Delaware River on the New Jersey shore, runs southeast almost at water level. This traffic lane between the river and the higher ground rising abruptly from the eastern bank offers scenery of more than average charm, including some fine views of the Pennsylvania countryside on the opposite shore. The road passes through Washington Crossing State Park, where Washington landed his army for a successful assault on the Hessians in Trenton.

State 29 branches south from US 202 (*see Tour 4*), with which it is united halfway across the State, at LAMBERTVILLE, 0 m. (50 alt., 4,518 pop.) (*see Tour 4*), 0.5 miles east of New Hope, Pa.

Right of the highway between Lambertville and Scudder's Falls is the wide ditch and towpath of the abandoned DELAWARE AND RARITAN CANAL FEEDER (*see TRANSPORTATION*). A century ago it was the last link in the inland water route between the Pennsylvania coal fields and New York. The coal was carried in barges or scows pulled by mules.

Between the canal and the river are tracks of the Belvidere division of the Pennsylvania R.R. Construction of this line in 1851 doomed the canal.

Hills and woods shut off the view. The Sourland Ridge, rising 450 feet, runs northeast for more than 15 miles. During the Revolution it served as a barrier to keep British and Hessian troops, quartered in Trenton, from raiding the rich Hunterdon County grain farms.

At 1 m. is WELLS FALLS of the Delaware, in reality nothing more than rapids. Old-time raftsmen guiding timber from the upper river to the cities below considered this the most dreaded point on the route.

At 1.4 m. the road makes a dangerous curve at the rocky shoulder of GOAT HILL (L). The hard trap rock of this ridge, volcanic in origin, has been extensively used in road building.

Across the river, which is here less than a quarter-mile wide, are the hills of Bucks County, Pa., in which Washington's battered army found refuge from British pursuers in December, 1776, after the disasters of Long Island and Fort Mifflin. The British were unable to continue the chase into Pennsylvania because the Americans had taken all of the boats for many miles. While an American outpost kept watch from Goat Hill, the troops across the river prepared for their counter-attack on Trenton.

At 3 *m.* the highway passes through MERCER COUNTY FARM, with workhouse and quarries where gray-clad prisoners work with sledge and hoe. A broad stretch of level ground lies between the highway and river. The hill (L) has been blasted for rock, leaving a precipice some 200 feet high.

Across the river is the stone OBSERVATION TOWER, on Bowman's Hill, erected by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on the site of a lookout used by American sentries watching the river ferries in 1776. Resembling a medieval castle, the memorial stands out boldly on the skyline.

The highway descends until it is 10 feet lower than the old canal feeder, with banks upheld by a retaining wall for half a mile.

At 5 *m.* the road bridges Fiddler's Creek, draining a green valley of rolling farm lands, neatly fenced and adequately supplied with farm buildings.

TITUSVILLE, 5.7 *m.* (70 alt., 300 pop.), is a sleepy little village with one narrow street along the riverbank lined by unpretentious homes and green lawns. Outstanding in the town's skyline is the steeple of the FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. Cut off from the mainland by the old canal feeder, the community is almost an island. In its early days it was a shipping point for grain and produce.

Between Titusville and Washington Crossing the highway is through Washington Crossing State Park (*see below*).

WASHINGTON CROSSING, 6.9 *m.* (60 alt., 30 pop.), is a quiet hamlet that won a name and fame from 1776 sufficient to overshadow any future distinction the village may acquire. Its most interesting building is the small, white frame JOHNSON HOUSE (*open daily 9-5; free*), popularly known as the McKonkey House, which stands on a terrace (L) a few hundred feet north of the corner of State 29 and Pennington Rd. There is some evidence that this is not the original Johnson ferry house, but the Johnson Tavern; at any rate, it has been restored by the State. Here, more than 160 years ago, Washington is said to have found shelter on the Christmas night when his troops were crossing the Delaware for the surprise attack on Trenton. In rooms with low, beamed ceilings and great fireplaces are preserved interesting relics of Revolutionary times.

Along the riverbank is WASHINGTON CROSSING STATE PARK (*open all year*), where the Continental troops landed their big flat-bottomed boats, poled through the ice-choked river. Many of Washington's men, disheartened by the defeats of Long Island and New York, had deserted. The term of service for others had nearly ended. Only 2,400 to 2,700 remained, the British holding New Jersey with three times their number. "I fear the game is nearly up," Washington then wrote to his cousin, but as he wrote he planned the recrossing of the river and the blow at Trenton. A staff officer reported:

I am writing in the ferry house. The troops are all over, and the boats have gone back for the artillery. We are three hours behind the set time. Glover's men have had a hard time to force the boats through the floating ice with the snow drifting in their faces. I have never seen Washington so determined as he is now. The storm is changing to sleet and cuts like a knife. The last cannon is being landed.



OLD COVERED BRIDGE ACROSS DELAWARE RIVER AT STOCKTON

To carry his army across the river, Washington had gathered from upstream and downstream the so-called Durham boats, named for the designer, Robert Durham. These flat-bottomed, sharp-ended craft, some of them 66 feet long, were capable of holding 15 tons. They were propelled either by oars or by sails.

Washington wrote to Congress that his soldiers' march through the storm "did not in the least abate their ardor, and when they came to the charge each seemed to vie with the other in pressing forward." Many of the men crossed barefoot or with old rags wrapped around their feet in place of shoes, and thus they marched all night and fought and won in the bleak morning (*see* TRENTON).

In the park are memorials to these events. Daughters of the Revolution have installed an old-fashioned flower garden in the rear of the ferry house. The rival Daughters of the American Revolution have erected a historic marker for the landing site on the riverbank. An old-fashioned Colonial pump on one of the public water-supply wells was given by the Sons of the American Revolution, and a tall flagpole displaying the colors came from their rivals, the Sons of the Revolution. The American Tree Association has planted 13 American elms, one for each of the 13 Colonies. In SULLIVAN GROVE and WASHINGTON GROVE tables and other picnicking facilities are available. A third grove at the east end of the park is being developed and will be named for Gen. Nathaniel Greene, a division commander in the battle.

In the old-fashioned garden is a fountain, erected by the Patriotic Order Sons of America in honor of John Honeyman, a spy who aided Washington with information before the battle. Learning of the Hessian plans for a drunken celebration, Honeyman left Trenton, allegedly to buy more cattle for the British. He allowed himself to be "captured," gave his information to Washington and was allowed to escape. At Griggstown, where he lived, Honeyman was first denounced by his neighbors. When Washington appeared there and told the people of Honeyman's great services, the spy became a hero.

Nearly half of the open land within the 293 acres of the park has been planted with seedling evergreens, enough to create a small forest. These were provided by a State Forest Nursery adjoining the park, where 2,500,000 seedlings are grown annually.

At the rear of the ferry house is (L) CONTINENTAL LANE, a dirt road, the path that the army followed on the march to the battle.

Between Washington Crossing and Scudder's Falls the highway is at the base of low hills. Summer homes and estates are on the slopes, their lawns close to the road.

SOMERSET, 8.1 *m.* (60 alt.), once a Colonial village, is now a handful of suburban homes straggling along the highway. The JEDEDIAH SCUDDER HOUSE, built more than 200 years ago, stands L. of the highway. An old-fashioned rambling stone and frame structure, it is said to have sheltered several of Washington's soldiers who, fatigued or nearly frozen, were unable to march to Trenton.

Left from Somerset on a stone road to MERCER AIRPORT, 1.7 *m.*, owned by the

City of Trenton and equipped with three runways and plane-servicing facilities. The green rotating beacon is seen at night for long distances.

SCUDDER'S FALLS, 8.9 *m.* (50 alt.), a small residential community, was named for a pioneer landowning family. Amos Scudder was one of Washington's guides in the march on Trenton.

Swinging R. at 10.2 *m.*, the highway crosses the canal and railroad. Here the country flattens out into the broad plains typical of the lower end of Delaware River.

On spacious grounds at 10.7 *m.* is the VILLA VICTORIA ACADEMY (R), a school taught by Italian nuns, formerly the Harvey E. Fish home. It is a sturdy, simple, brownstone mansion.

The highway turns L., following Sanhican Dr. On the R. is Sanhican Creek.

BOXWOOD MANOR (*private*), an old yellow stone house, is on a tree-covered knoll at 11.8 *m.* (L). Built in 1775, it has the fine lines of the Colonial period.

At 11.9 *m.* the road passes under the attractively designed READING RAILROAD BRIDGE, with a series of arches spanning the highway, creek and river. The tracks carry main-line traffic between New York and Philadelphia.

State 29 (Sanhican Drive West), here W. State St., leads to Warren St. TRENTON, 15.4 *m.* (55 alt., 123,356 pop.) (*see* TRENTON).

Points of Interest: State Buildings, Library and Museum, Old Barracks, Mahlon Stacy Park, First Presbyterian Church, Bloomsbury Court, Bow Hill, Lenox Potteries, and others.

At Trenton State 29 forms a junction with US 1 (*see* Tour 1).



Tour 12

Junction with State 30—Flemington—Frenchtown—(Uhlerstown, Pa.); State 12.

Junction with State 30 to Pennsylvania Line, 12.8 *m.*

Accommodations in Flemington and Frenchtown; few roadstands.

Two-lane macadamized roadbed.

State 12 runs west through hilly country, a sparsely populated farming and poultry section. From the crest of hills on the dipping road, wide panoramas open with low mountains forming the horizon. The road slopes from the last rise sharply down to the Delaware River.