

NEW JERSEY HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

Statewide Historic Context #7

Initial Colonial Settlement, 1630-1775

By Michael Swanda

Office of New Jersey Heritage

CN-404

Trenton, New Jersey

(609) 292-2023

May, 1991

CONTEXT #7: INITIAL COLONIAL SETTLEMENT, 1630-1775

New Jersey was settled in the 17th and 18th centuries by a diverse group of Europeans and colonial Americans. Dutch settlement, beginning as early as the 1630's, was initially shaped by West India Company's desire to augment the commercial fur trade centered in New Amsterdam (Manhattan). Sporadic occupation west of the Hudson River was hindered by often violent Lenape Indian resistance and delayed the establishment of the first permanent European settlement in New Jersey at Bergen (Jersey City) until 1660.

In the 1640's, Sweden made its first and only attempt at American settlement in the southern Delaware River Valley with the establishment of primary settlements in Delaware and Pennsylvania. In New Jersey, a handful of Swedish soldiers garrisoned Fort Elfsborg in 1641 and were soon followed by a few Swedish and Finnish settlers dispersed along the eastern bank of the Delaware River and Bay.

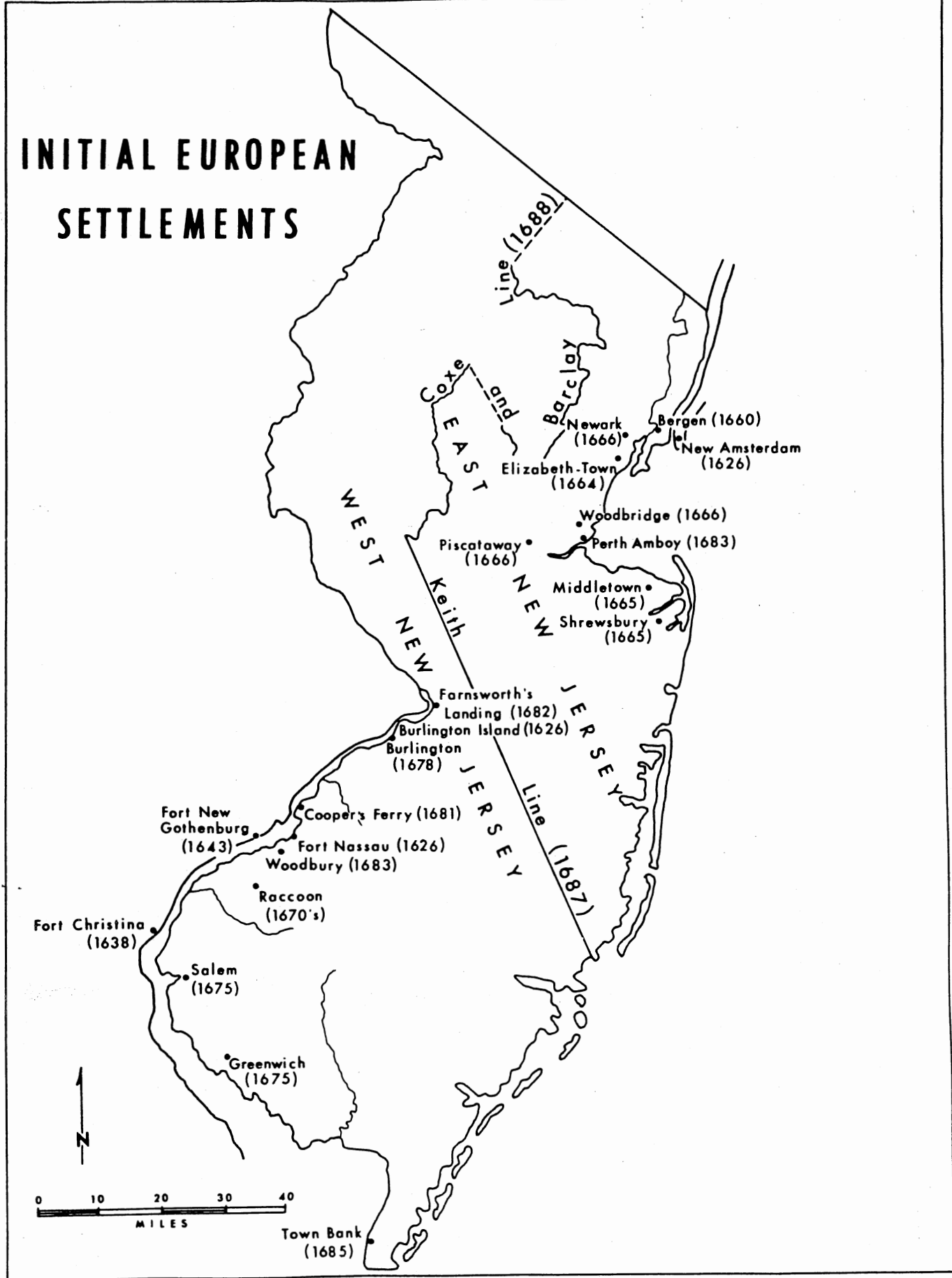
The provinces of East and West New Jersey were established under English rule in 1664. Provincial proprietors encouraged immigration into the State by offering an unusually high degree of social and religious freedoms secured in the documents of Concessions and Agreements. Different patterns of settlement soon developed, with each province establishing a separate government with its own governor and legislature.

In East Jersey, a relatively large number of New Englanders rapidly settled areas south of Bergen, including Essex, Union, Middlesex and Monmouth Counties, while regions in Bergen, Passaic and Hudson Counties continued to attract people of Dutch, Flemish, German and Scandinavian descent. In the 1680's, Dutch farmers from Long Island inhabited northern Monmouth County, Somerset County and the Raritan Valley.

Scottish immigrants settled the provincial port capital of Perth Amboy in 1683 and rapidly occupied portions of Middlesex, Monmouth, and Somerset counties. By the early 1700's, Pennsylvanians of German and Scotch-Irish descent were beginning to move into the northwestern counties of New Jersey. A substantial number of Africans, transported primarily from the Caribbean, were purchased by many New Jersey settlers as slaves.

The settlement of East Jersey resulted in religious and ethnic clustering of communities. Some early communities were initially surveyed in street patterns similar to older New England designs and were often dominated by a single religious group. Examples include the Puritan communities of Newark and Elizabethtown, the Baptist settlements of Middletown and Piscataway, the Quaker community of Shrewsbury, and the early Dutch Reformed town of Bergen.

INITIAL EUROPEAN SETTLEMENTS



Contrary to the cultural and religious diversification exhibited by new settlements in East Jersey, the province of West Jersey was populated primarily by Quakers of English and Irish origins. Although small numbers of Dutch, Swedes, Finns, New Englanders, and others were also present, the province would exhibit essentially Quaker social, cultural and religious values well into the 18th century.

The earliest permanent settlements in West Jersey were established in the 1670's at Salem (Salem County) and on the Cohansey River at Greenwich (Cumberland County). Although these villages were initially linear in plan, a general pattern of dispersed settlement prevailed in the province. The Delaware River port of Burlington was organized in 1677 as the administrative center of government while a considerable amount of individual farmsteads were established along a relatively narrow corridor adjacent to the Delaware River from Trenton south to the Delaware Bay.

The intensity of settlement did not substantially subside until the middle of the 18th century and eventually spread throughout all but the most marginal agricultural areas of the State by the end of this historic period.













Although early settlers eventually included merchants, craftsman, fisherman, tavern keepers, millers, iron miners, lumberman and others, the vast majority of people moving into New Jersey at this time were farmers. Dispersed farmsteads, surrounded by dense woodlands, were initially situated in prime agricultural areas adjacent to navigable waterways and were often connected by a network of pre-existing Indian trails. Increased demand for over-land routes resulted in the development of colonial roadways, such as the Upper Road, an important cross-state road linking the fall lines of the Raritan and Delaware Rivers, and the Old York Road, King's Highway and Lawrie's Road.

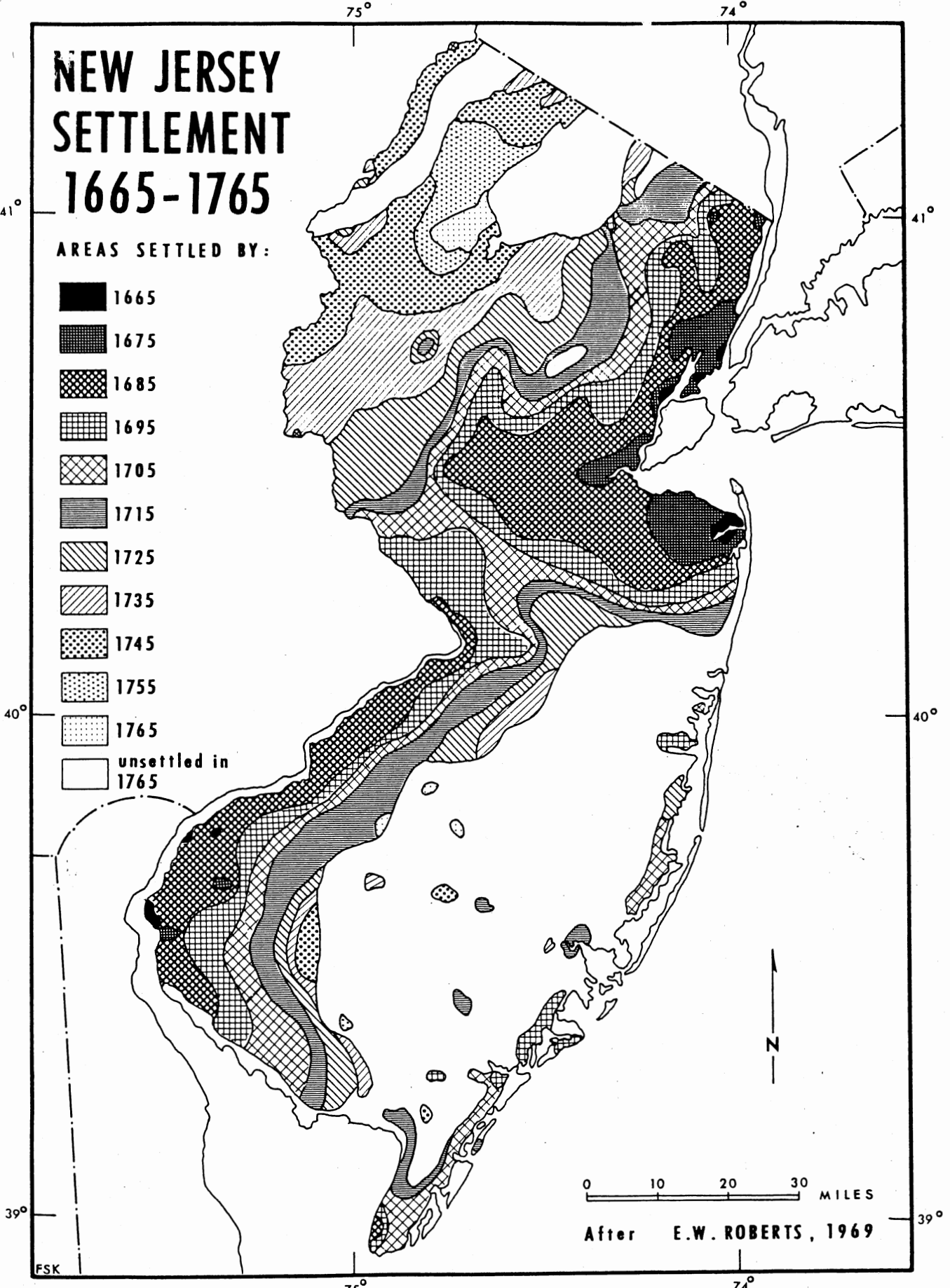
Settlers used local resources and quickly adapted to their new surroundings. Homes, barns and agricultural out-buildings were constructed according to traditional plans and values which are recognized today as "vernacular" or "folk". Regional availability of building material, such as native stone, timber and clay for fired brick, is exhibited within a variety of recognizable vernacular styles primarily associated with Dutch, English and German designs.

Farmers produced a variety of crops, including oats and barley, and grains were often supplemented by vegetables, fruit and livestock. Oriented to a market economy from the outset, farmers initially grew wheat as a major cash crop for export to markets in the growing communities of New York and Philadelphia.

NEW JERSEY SETTLEMENT 1665-1765

AREAS SETTLED BY:

-  1665
-  1675
-  1685
-  1695
-  1705
-  1715
-  1725
-  1735
-  1745
-  1755
-  1765
-  unsettled in 1765



0 10 20 30 MILES

After E.W. ROBERTS, 1969

The establishment of small villages furnished needed services and local markets for agricultural produce while often becoming the centers for social, religious and local government activities. Scotch and Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, German and Swedish Lutherans, and other religious groups previously mentioned, all formed and maintained successful congregations. Urban residential, commercial and religious buildings were constructed along village main streets in the popular architectural styles of the period, including formal Georgian styles and the more common vernacular forms. The Philadelphia region significantly influenced the introduction of formal architectural styles into New Jersey north along the Delaware Valley through the Trenton to New Brunswick corridor.

Traditional crafts and rural industry, such as saw, grist and fulling mills, blacksmith/wheelwright shops, rural potteries, and iron production had a dramatic impact in the development of settlement in New Jersey during this historic period and is discussed in Historic Context #8: Early Industrialization, Urbanization, and Agricultural Development, 1670-1850.

An important hallmark of this historic period was the ability of most ethnic groups to successfully retain their cultural identity. Distinctive cultural traits such as religious beliefs, social organization, arts and crafts, architectural traditions and possibly native languages were often maintained. A number of residential, commercial, agricultural and religious properties representing these diverse cultural traditions still survive in the form of buildings, structures, landscapes and archeological sites.

Properties from this period will seldom retain all their original physical features or characteristics. Throughout the state, properties associated with this period are relatively rare and, consequently, justify acceptance of some alterations and changes provided enough of the property survives to visually convey its historical association. In addition, it must be remembered that the existence of potentially significant archeological deposits associated with each Context #7 property type is considerable.

NJHT 1991 APPLICATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH CONTEXT #7 AND CATEGORIZED BY PROPERTY TYPE

1) **Residential:**

May include English, Dutch and German vernacular, as well as high style Georgian examples. Residential properties are uncommon in New Jersey but do represent the largest existing property category from this historic period. Residential properties listed in the New Jersey and National Registers represent over 75% of all registered examples associated with Context #7 and are recognized primarily for architecture, followed by examples associated with New Jersey's early settlement/exploration, agricultural, military and political history, and African-American heritage.

1991 NJHT applications associated with this property category include the following high style and vernacular examples:

High Style;

- #91041 Buccleuch Mansion, New Brunswick City, Middlesex County.
- #91042 Cornelius Low House (Ivy Hall), Piscataway Township, Middlesex County.
- #91075 Major John Burrowes Mansion, Matawan Borough, Monmouth County.

Vernacular;

- #91002 Griffith Morgan House, Pennsauken Township, Camden County.
- #91047 William Green House, Ewing Township, Mercer County.
- #91061 Metlar House, Piscataway Township, Middlesex County.
- #91067 Baker-Brearly House, Lawrence Township, Mercer County.
- #91091 Seabrook-Wilson House (Spy House), Middletown Township, Monmouth County.

2) **Commercial:**

This property category includes taverns, stagecoach houses, general stores, etc., and are considered extremely rare. Commercial properties from this time period represent less than 5% of all Context #7 properties registered. 1991 grant applicants associated with this property category include the following:

#91009 Village Inn (Davis Tavern), Englishtown Borough,
Monmouth County

#91068 Gabriel Davis Tavern (Hillman Hospital House),
Gloucester Township, Camden County

3) **Religious:**

Churches and cemeteries are the primary examples in this category and are considered rare property types for this time period. Religious properties represent less than 5% of all registered properties types associated with Context #7. There is one 1991 NJHT application associated with this category.

#91045 Christ Church, Shrewsbury Borough, Monmouth County.

4) **Military:**

A relatively few number of buildings, structures and sites have been identified for this category. These include examples such as barracks, fortifications, encampments, shipwrecks, and lighthouses and are considered extremely rare property types. This category represents less than 2% of all registered property types from this time period. There is one 1991 application associated with this property category.

#91081 Old Barracks, Trenton City, Mercer County.