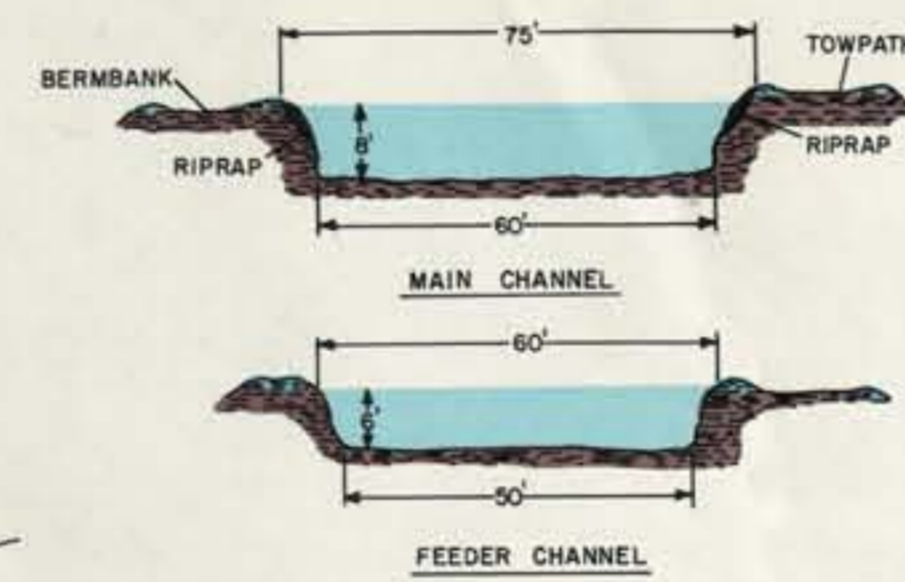


# DELAWARE AND RARITAN CANAL HISTORIC MAP

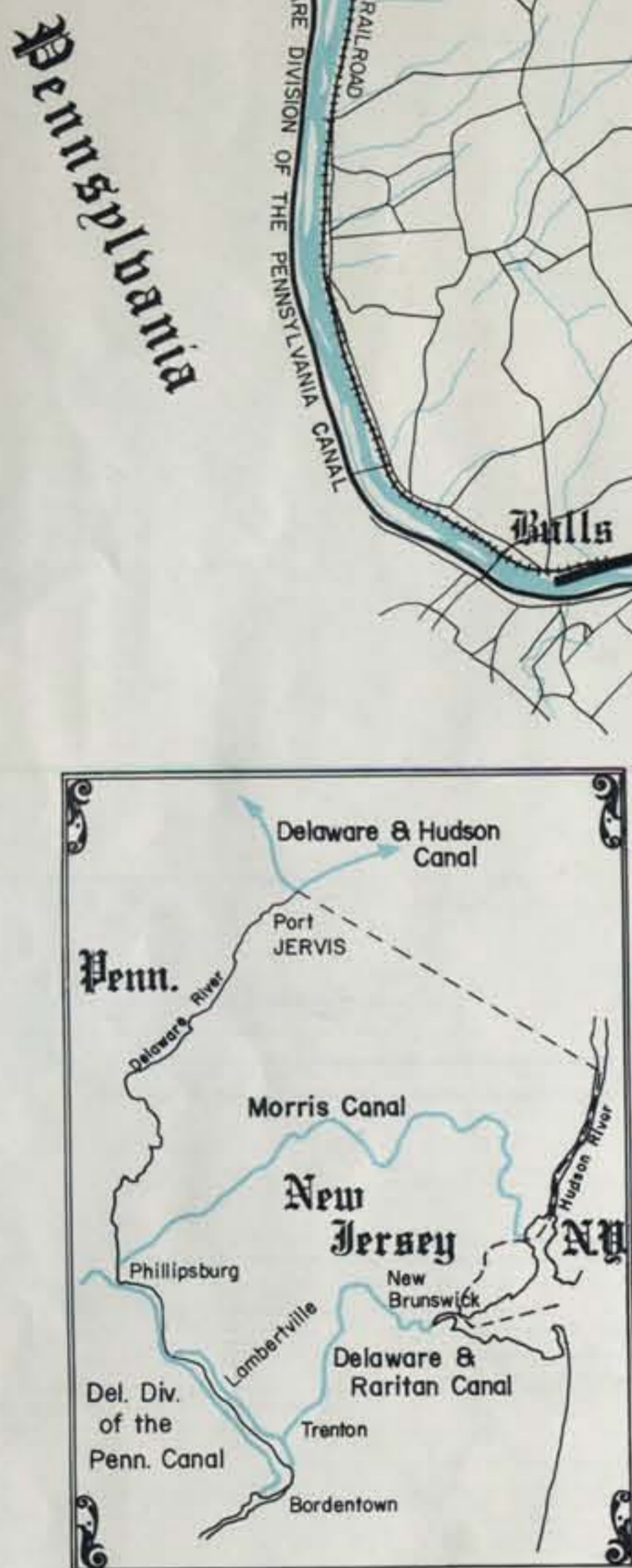
A Short History Of New Jersey's Oldest  
Major Man Made Water Resource  
Canal 1834-1932  
Water Supply 1934-  
State Park 1974-

State Of New Jersey  
Department Of Environmental Protection  
Brendan Byrne  
Governor  
David J. Gardin  
Commissioner

DELAWARE AND RARITAN CANAL: PRISMS



The Belvidere-Delaware Railroad (not shown) runs along the river side of the canal from Bulls Island to Trenton.



**Key**

- roads
- railroads
- canals
- ⊙ historic sites
- lakes, mill ponds, rivers, and streams
- locks
- pool elevations above sea level

Scale: 2 miles to an inch

Based on the 1866 Geologic map which shows the towns, streets, roads, railroads, canals and drainage at that time.

Obtainable from and prepared by:  
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William Penn ordered a survey for inland navigation between the Raritan and the Delaware in 1676. Construction was recommended by Jefferson's Secretary of the Treasury in 1808 and by Governor Mahlon Dickinson to the legislature in 1816. The Camden-Amboy Railroad and Transportation Co. and the Delaware and Raritan Canal Co. were both chartered in 1830. In order to finance and complete both the canal and the railroad, the so-called Marriage Act was passed in 1831 combining all revenues and expenditures. Construction by gangs of Irish laborers, using pick, shovel, and wheelbarrow probably supplemented by some mule-drawn scoops, began in 1830. The railroad from Bordertown to South Amboy was in operation by September 1833. While Asiatic cholera slowed canal construction, excavation of the canal was more difficult than preparing a railroad right of way. The Irishmen had to dig out more than 6,000,000 cu. yds. of dirt and rock. The canal was finally open to traffic in 1834.



Path Walker - Walked out 14 miles, filling muskrat holes and cutting brush. The next day he walked back on the other side.



Ratters - Paid daily wages to trap muskrat within one mile of his designated section of the canal. He could keep the pelt, worth 18¢ each, and would redeem noses and tails at 15¢ each once a month. Usual catch 10 to 15 per day.

Seven locks, each 24' wide by 110' long, raised boats to the summit level in Trenton, 56' above sea level. From Kingston to New Brunswick seven more locks carried boats down to the Raritan. Only one change of level was required on the feeder between Bulls Island and Trenton.

Coal from the Reading, Pa., area delivered by the Schuylkill Navigation Canal, which formerly had to go by sea around N.J. to N.Y., was most of the early traffic. In 1847 a connection was made at Lambertville to permit boats to cross the Delaware River from the Delaware Division of the Pennsylvania Canal which greatly shortened the route to New York City for coal from Mauch Chunk on the Lehigh River.

The peak traffic year for the D.&R. was 1871 with 2,990,095 tons of cargo, of which 2,326,925 was coal, traversed by a total of 15,862 steamboats, sailing vessels, canal boats and rafts.

In 1871 the Pennsylvania R.R. gained control of the D.&R. Canal by leasing the Camden-Amboy R.R. With control of both railroad and canal the P.R.R. refused shipments which originated on the Schuylkill from the coal mines controlled by the Reading R.R.

In 1850 the Canal Co. had an English firm build the tugboat, Robert F. Stockton, the first propeller driven ship operated commercially in American waters. This action opened the era of mechanically propelled barges on American canals.

One of the earliest commercial installations of the Morse telegraph was established in Kingston to enable the company to rapidly obtain information as to canal traffic at Trenton, Princeton, Griggstown, and New Brunswick. Not only could they check progress of particular barges, but they could also determine when the steamboats or tugs were exceeding the legal speed limit of four miles per hour. Rough freight (coal, iron, lumber, etc.) was carried at 2¢ per ton mile; grain, flour, manufactured goods were 5¢.

The canal was operated 12 hours a day for about 250 days per year. New Brunswick to Bordertown was 42.89 miles. The Lambertville transfer from the Delaware Canal was 14.5 miles above Trenton, while Bulls Island was 21.6 miles.



A "sheer leg" bridge. The canal was crossed by over 60 bridges. A few were lift bridges, many were off center swing bridges, and a number were the unusual "A frame" or "sheer leg" bridges.



Some Trenton residents secured a free winter supply of coal by presenting the irresistible target of bottles on a fence.

The canal did not open for navigation in 1933 and was taken over by the State in 1934. Since 1934 the main canal from Coalport south to Lock #1 north of the Bordertown tide lock and all of the canal basins in Trenton have been obliterated. The U.S. 1 freeway was excavated from the canal south of Coalport. It runs on a cover over the canal, which is still used for water supply from Coalport eastward to the vicinity of Whitehead Road. The feeder northwards from Coalport to Cadwalader Park has been fenced to prevent swimming, hiking, and canoeing. Locks have been converted to water supply spillways at Lambertville, at Kingston, and eastward.

Trenton, with water power on the Delaware and Assunpink, developed the Water Power from Scudders Falls on the Delaware. The industrial development of Trenton, as shown on this 1897 map of center city was greatly stimulated by the D.&R. canal with its numerous loading basins.