Keystone of the Keystone: The Falls of the Delaware and Bucks County 1609-1692

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Introduction

Often, the history of an area's founding and establishment is a simplistic and narrow story. To explain the founding story of Pennsylvania, one simply states that William Penn and the Quakers settled the land on the west bank of the Delaware River and established the colony. Or perhaps, more broadly, the English did this. However, too rarely does one answer why specific sites were chosen for settlement, and why it developed the way that it did. Specifically, the origins of the heavily populated areas of southeastern Pennsylvania, and Central New Jersey have been incompletely written. However, their settlement and subsequent development were not random and disorganized. Rather, their development was logical and practical. Infrastructure, like highways, railroads, streets, rivers and creeks has had a strong influence on the development of Pennsylvania and the entire Delaware Valley.

Humans have needed avenues of transportation, and evidence suggests that most of the significant routes through the region have remained relatively unchanged since the beginning of European settlements in the Delaware Valley. It was practical and necessary for potential new settlements to be located either on or immediately near these avenues, for obvious economic and social. Transportation routes are absolutely necessary to facilitate trade. People have needed routes to organize socially, whether it be at church, a friends home or in a government body. Roads are rarely moved, or removed and large bodies of water like the Delaware River cannot disappear due to human activity. Throughout the history of the Delaware Valley, towns have developed around the infrastructure that was developed in the 17th century. Specifically, overland routes were incredibly important prior to the invention of planes last century. Prior to the 20th century, all transportation of people or physical objects was done overland or by water. And prior to telephones and computers, even information traveled via the same routes.

The Lenape Indians and Dutch who inhabited the Delaware Valley prior to the establishment of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York, have left a lasting impression on the infrastructure of the Delaware Valley. This fact is not appreciate by historians. This general infrastructure of transportation that these two nations, and subsequently the English, developed in 17th century still exists today. And in effect, Pennsylvania and the Delaware Valley became geographical links for multiple regions, i.e. they were keystones of English North America. Thus, the area's infrastructure, particularly travel networks, became an incredible part of overland inter-colonial, and later inter-state land routes of the eastern seaboard of continental America.

The most major and commonly used transportation routes in the Delaware Valley have stayed constant. Philadelphia and other riverfront areas are still accessed by boats mainly for recreational and industrial purposes. Overland, most of the roads did not originate in the 17th century. The majority of roads were created after automobiles were mass produced in the 20th century. Nevertheless, the some of the most important and commonly used routes were already developed by that time. Specifically, the most commonly used roads of the Falls and Bucks County have origins in the 1600s. A few of the roads follow routes that have origins from hundreds of years ago.

In order to further our understanding of the Delaware Valley, and specifically Bucks County, the historical development of these routes must be known. In the 17th century, the Lenape, Dutch and English created a transportation infrastructure that not facilitated and shaped the pattern of settlement during subsequent centuries.

First, for one to understand this project's broader significance, they must become familiar with the status of 17th century Delaware Valley History, which is predominately part of Pennsylvania history. Overall, historical research on 17th century Pennsylvania is scarce; in the

last quarter century the topic has been rarely researched. Even colonial Pennsylvania scholars have noted that research on the topic is scant. *Chronicles of Pennsylvania 1688-1714*, published by Charles P. Keith, aimed to make up for the lack of research by providing a detailed account of each year within the title.[1] That author even felt that the first half of the 18th century was under researched. In 1962, *"Holy Experiment": The Founding of Pennsylvania 1681-1701* also meant to further develop the account of the colony during the 17th century more vividly.[2] This author wanted to illuminate the contributions of the lesser known actors other than William Penn or Quakers to the formation of the colony. This theme carried over to other later projects about the colony after 1962; scholars began to research other historical actors and subjects in the 17th century Delaware Valley.

The Dutch and English were the most active European nations in the Delaware Valley before the establishment of Pennsylvania in 1682. Many articles and books in the 20th century focused on one of the two, all of which covered many of the same facts and details. This project incorporates the information from these histories which pertained to the future lands of Bucks County. C.A Weslager wrote the two most authoritative and more recent books these two nations, *The English on the Delaware 1610-1682* and Dutch Explorers, *Traders and Settlers in the Delaware Valley.* Together, these two books serve as the most detailed account of the Europeans' involvement in the valley up until 1682. Also, Weslager authored the most useful account of the Lenape Indians, the native people of the Delaware. The first chapter of this book will draw secondary information primarily from his three works. Weslager did a tremendous job filling in the gaps of research about the area during that century ante-Pennsylvania. However, he only presents a general account of the actual settlement of the entire valley, his works lacked descriptions about

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[1] Charles P. Keith. *Chronicles of Pennsylvania 1688-1748.* 1 (Philadephia: Patterson and White Company, 1917)

[2] Edwin B. Bronner. *William Penn's "Holy Experiment": The Founding of Pennsylvania 1681-1701*(Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1962)

specific areas, especially the Falls of the Delaware River and the lands that became Bucks County.

After Weslager, historical research continued to focus on the ordinary settlers and the overall settlement process. Specifically pertaining to Bucks County and its adjacent lands on the west bank of the river were *Bristol: The Origins of a Pennsylvania Market Town* and *The Planting of Philadelphia: A Seventeenth Century Real Estate Development* which both focused on the actual settlement of two areas.[3] This paper draws on and significantly supplements these earlier works by investigating the settlement history of Bucks County and demonstrating how the three nations most active in the valley -the Dutch, English and Lenape-were all instrumental in establishing of the area as a critical part - the keystone - of a colony, Pennsylvania, that in turn served as the geographical keystone of the English North American Empire. The area became the main link of an inter-colonial route across the Delaware River, which subsequently led to Manhattan and the other English colonies north of the valley. Thus, Bucks County was an essential area to settle and develop.

This paper aims to fill this important gap in our understanding of the Delaware Valley Region. The first chapter focuses on the general exploration and early European attempts at settling in the Delaware Valley. Specifically, this section turns primary attention to the discovery of the Falls of Delaware during 1609-1632, drawing on explorers accounts of their voyages through the valley.

The second chapter covers be area's role as a link across the Delaware River for the overland route that the Dutch and English began to use at mid-century. Although the land of Bucks County was the last of the well known areas of the river valley settled by Europeans, earlier in the century the area served as a crossroads in the native and colonial evolution of the valley, a

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[3] Terry A. McNealy. "Bristol: The Origins of a Pennsylvania Market Town." *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 95, no. 4 (1971): 484-510. Hannah Roach. "The Planting of Philadelphia: A 17th century Real Estate Development." *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 92, no. 1 (1968): 3-47.

development largely ignored in previous research about Bucks. The earliest settlements were all situated on the southern portion of the river, and the only inhabitants near the Falls were American Indians - Lenape Indians - of whom relatively little is known.

The third chapter gives the history of Bucks and the Falls from 1664-1680. More significantly, it sheds light on previously ignored facts about the Lenape's relationship with the Falls and lands on both sides of the river. The Lenape valued the Falls for its natural resources. Secondly and more importantly, the area was the point to cross the Delaware in the Assunpink Trail. Many European overland routes followed the trail's path. The Falls, on both sides of the river, was not a land to which the Lenape wanted to lose access. It was an important hunting ground and the area to cross the Delaware River. The Falls was a shallow and relatively narrow part of the river that had been used by Indians for generations to cross the river. This crossing was part of the Lenape's Assunpink Trail that led to the Falls, across the river and then through New Jersey and north to other Lenape Indian settlements including those on Manhattan Island and Connecticut.[4] The actual Falls is an area of bed of rocks and smalls islands in the Delaware river that are the northern most tidal point in the valley to which boats can travel from the Bay.

The fourth chapter will begin with the establishment of Pennsylvania, when William Penn was granted the charter for his land on the west bank of the Delaware River in 1681 and end with the establishment of the first Pennsylvania townships in 1692. Primarily, the attention is on the development of the routes that would become Kings Paths. The Falls was the easiest and most common point of the river to cross. However, its importance grew exponentially because of the establishment of Pennsylvania and due to that colony's subsequent growth on the west bank of the river during the following centuries. As this chapter argues, Bucks County's foundation as a crossroads was laid in the 17th century and the development of that century left a lasting

[4] Kraft,Herbert C. *The Lenape or Delaware Indians* (Union, New Jersey: Lenape Books, 1999), 45.

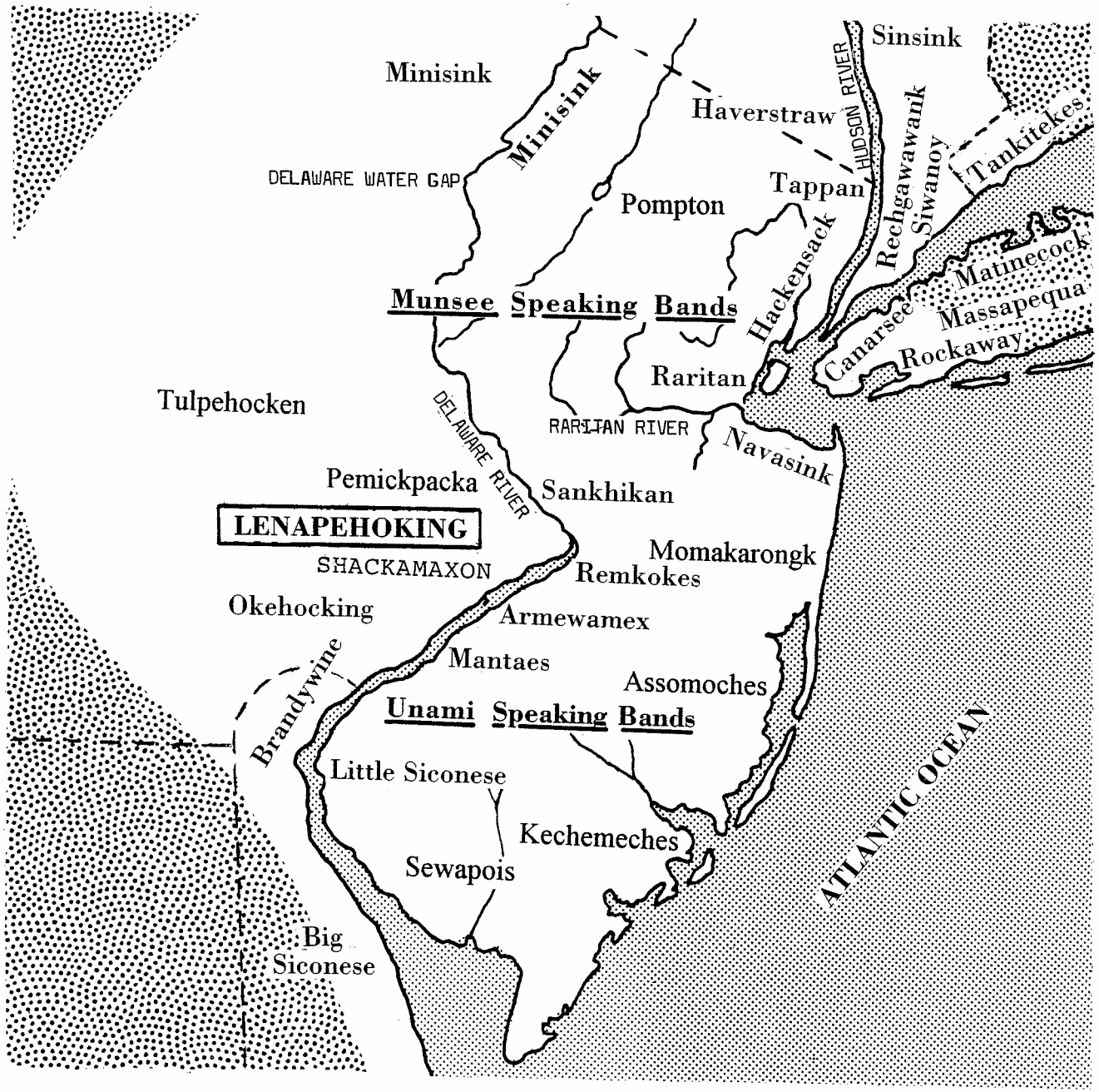
impression on the area that can still be perceived today.

Overall this project synthesizes the limited secondary sources and primary documents pertaining to the Falls of the Delaware and Bucks County to provide a new narrative of the region and its importance for the development of Pennsylvania and the colonies. This project does not focus on a particular nation's contribution to the development of that area, nor does it primarily focus on the land after the establishment Pennsylvania as previous histories of the county tended to do. Instead, it focuses on the land itself, and how it was an essential place to settle for the any inter-colonial route to be possible.

Lastly, there are two issues which this paper attempts to alleviate. First, serious historical research on the 17th Delaware Valley is essentially a dead and forgotten subject. Second, the Falls has changed drastically since the 17th century. Moreover, the archaeological discoveries of Lenape artifacts around the Falls did not occur until the 1960s. These discoveries have not been utilized by historians when researching Pennsylvania or Delaware Valley history and synthesized with the stories of the Europeans during the 17th century.

Chapter One

It is not known the first time a European discovered and reached the part of the Delaware River past which boats could not navigate. As mentioned in the introduction, that area of the river valley became known as the Falls of the Delaware. It is a peculiar name to give to an area that has no waterfall. Presuming that it was high enough to be a dangerous drop, a water fall could cut off the navigable route of a river for a boat. However, the Falls was not a waterfall. In fact, it noticeably lacked water. The Falls was an area of the river, between present day Trenton and Morrisville that was shallow enough for the large rocks which lay at the bottom of the river to



Lenape Indians were divided into two large groups. Those who lived north of the Raritan River and Dela-

River spoke a **Unami** (Wu-nah-mi) dialect. The Siconese (Sick-uh-nees), Mantaes (Man-tie), Ramb[illegible] (R[illegible]

impede the advance of any boat, even the small canoes and "shallops" of the 17th century.[5] This bed of jagged rocks was about one mile long and stretching across the entire river from bank to bank. It is unknown, at least to American historians, who first discovered the Falls and why they named it so. The first descriptive account of the Delaware River written in English, and one of the first to explicitly mention "the falls" was written in 1633. That account attributed the name to the Dutch, but offered no explanation of what the name meant. Today the area has no waterfall, and there is no evidence of there ever having been one.

Rather, there is concrete evidence that there was not a waterfall there during the 17th century. Two Dutch explorers, in order to travel over land from Manhattan to the west bank of the Delaware, had to cross the river at the Falls. Apparently naive of the area's characteristics, he stated that he wished to view the waterfall. However, he was sorely disappointed. The Falls was only a shallow part of the river full of rocks.[6] Every account of the Falls during that period described it similarly and there was never any mention of an actual waterfall. Interestingly though, these particular explorers also noticed that the sound of the river rapids crashing against the rocks made a "great noise."[7] This author has walked across the "Trenton Makes" Bridge, which crosses directly over the Falls, several times and has noticed that "great noise." The sound is similar to that of a waterfall.

Regardless of the name's origin, the Falls became recognized as the most northern point of navigation before the rocks at the Falls ended a boat's route. Also, it was most northern area known to Europeans in the 17th century since they did not settle north of this area on the west bank

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[5] *South River Walk Park.* Mercer County Park Commission, Trenton, New Jersey. 2010. This source is a park in Trenton ,New Jersey in between Ferry and Lalor Streets. It one of the best sources for 17th century history of the Falls and Trenton. The informational pieces located there were put together by local historical societies.

[6] Trenton Historical Society, *A History of Trenton.* vol. 1 (Princeton University Press, 1929), 33-34.

[7] Ibid., 33

of the river until the following century.[8] In contrast, the valley's southern region - present day Delaware State - was the first discovered and settled by Europeans.

Historians agree that Henry Hudson was the first European to discover the river that would be known initially as the South River to the Dutch, and then the Delaware to the English. While sailing on the *Half Moon* looking for a water route to Asia, a member of Hudson's crew spotted the great bay of the river during September 28, 1690.[9] Hudson only anchored his boat a short way up the bay near Cape Henlopen, present day Delaware. He believed that the waters were too shallow to continue further and there was no smaller boat on board with which to explore the waterway.

After a brief stay in the Delaware Bay, Hudson left once he determined that the river was not a route to Asia. But, because he was employed by the Dutch East Indies Company, Hudson left the banners of the Dutch Empire and the company. Hudson thus claimed the valley for that Dutch, although he was English.[10] Almost exactly a year later, September 27,1610, Samuel Argall noticed the same bay while returning to Virginia from New England.[11] Three months prior, he had left Jamestown in search of food for the hungry Virginia settlers.[12] While on the Delaware, Argall met with the Lenape Indians, the native inhabitants of the valley who lived on Cape Henlopen. They provided Argall with corn, which he presumably brought back to Jamestown where it was desperately needed. C.A. Weslager believed that Argall did not stay on the Delaware for more than a few days, given the pressing need to bring the corn to Jamestown. Argall believed that that he was the first European to find the river, and thus he claimed ownership for the English since no

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[8] During the 17th century, Europeans hardly ever traveled past the Falls. The Delaware Valley's geographical southern and northern borders for the Delaware Bay and the Falls. The Falls as area is today's Lower Bucks County and Trenton region.

[9] C.A. Weslager. *Dutch Explorers, Traders and Settlers in the Delaware Valley 1609-1664* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvnia Press, 1961), 25.

[10] Ibid., 26.

[11] C.A. Weslager. *The English on the Delaware 1610-1682.* New Brunswick (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1967), 3-7.

[12] Ibid., 7.

Christians yet owned it. More significantly, he provided it with a permanent name, the De la Warre River.[13]

After the first decade of the 17th century, two European nations with expanding empires were aware of the existence of the Delaware Bay and river. However, these nations knew virtually nothing about the river past the capes since both explorers traveled along the actual river. While the English would not be active in the area for another twenty years, the Dutch had more interest in the area for its economic potential i.e. the fur trade with the Lenape and neighboring Minquas Indians.[14] The Dutch would not attempt a settlement until the 1620s, but up until that time other Dutch explorers and traders would visit the Delaware.[15] However, accounts of their explorations are very limited.

Also missing is the firsthand account of the Dutchmen who attempted the first settlement in the Delaware Valley in 1624.[16] Weslager is certain that this first settlement was on present day Burlington Island, but his assertion is not beyond all reasonable doubt.[17] Burlington Island is situated in between Bristol, Bucks County, PA and Burlington, NJ. The only available primary source that provided information about the 1624 settlement is a letter of instructions sent to Willem Verhults, the newly appointed commander of the Dutch West Indies Company in 1625. The instructions from the company's board of directors in Holland, ordered Verhults to establish a settlement on the same island as the settlers in 1624. The island was described as being "below the first falls," heavily wooded and large enough to have several families live on it.[18]This location could have been three different islands: Biles, Newbold and Burlington were all islands were all

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[13] Named after Argall's superior, Baron De la Warre, who never actually saw the river or bay.
[14] C.A. Weslager. *Dutch Explorers, Traders and Settlers in the Delaware Valley 1609-1664.*
[15] Ibid.
[16] C.A. Weslager. *Dutch Explorers, Traders and Settlers in the Delaware Valley 1609-1664,* 63.
[17] C.A. Weslager. *The English on the Delaware 1610-1682,* 37.
[18] C.A. Weslager. *Dutch Explorers, Traders and Settlers in the Delaware Valley 1609-1664,* 64-68.

heavily forested; approximately the same size and located near the Falls. Biles is the closest to the Falls, Newbold next and then Burlington. Weslager is confident that the site of the 1624 settlement was at Burlington, but it is possible that the settlement was at Biles. It is explicitly written that the island was "below [south of] the first falls," but the description remains open to inquiry.[19]

The settlement that Verhults was supposed to establish on the Delaware, in 1625, was to be the capital of the Dutch colony New Netherlands.[20] However, it was quickly abandoned and Verhults and the settlers who came to America with him settled on Manhattan Island instead. The Dutch would only travel by boat to the Delaware in order to trade, and then return to Manhattan.[21] For the time being, the Dutch decided to center their colony around that settlement, making Manhattan their economic and political center. In 1626, Peter Minuit replaced Verhults as commander of the West Indies Company, and he overlooked the construction of Fort Nassau, near present day Gloucester, New Jersey.[22] The fort was intended to be the place to meet Indians during the winter when the fur trade was busiest. It was situated directly across from the confluence of the Delaware and Schuylkill rivers. However, this location was not a good choice because most of the Minquas Indians lived on the west side of river, and this part of the river was very wide and difficult to cross.[23]

By the 1620s, no Englishman had yet explored along the Delaware River or inland in the

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[19] There are two problems with the way Weslager addressed this issue. First, he admitted that the "first falls" probably referred to the beginning of the Falls. Burlington Island was not directly below the Falls, thus if the "first falls" was the beginning of the actual Falls, then Weslager weakened his own assertion since Burlington was about ten miles away from the Falls. Secondly, only one other available primary document mentioned a "first falls," and it seemed like it was located near Burlington. Moreover, the town of Morrisville (where Biles Island is) claims on their town signs that the area was settled in 1624.# Obviously this sign could be wrong, but so could Weslager. Either way, this settlement was in the vicinity of Bucks County. wo problems with the way Weslager addressed this issue.

[20] C.A. Weslager. "The Island in the Delaware," *Dutch Explorers, Traders and Settlers in the Delaware Valley 1609-1664.*

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid., 68.

[23] The Minquas mostly lived around the Susquehanna River, but came to the Delaware to trade. The Susquehanna River Valley was rich in furs and pelts. And the Lenape also traded with the Dutch.

valley. Samuel Argall and Henry Hudson only anchored in the bay. In fact, the English still had very limited information about the river valley that lay between their two developing North American settlements. However, another Englishman would discover the river, while believing that it was a potential water route to Asia. In 1634, the wealthy merchant Thomas Yong set sail for American in order to occupy territories that he could economically exploit for the English crown and himself.[24] Yong's descriptive account of his explorations of the Delaware River is an extremely important primary document for two reasons. First, it was the first account of the region done in English. Secondly, it is one of the first explicitly to mention the Falls and the first actually to give a description of the area.[25] Moreover, this account was the first to present the complexities of the future relationships of the three nations involved in the Delaware Valley throughout the 17th century.

Once Yong reached the new world, he stayed at Jamestown for a short period of time. After he constructed a small canoe called a "shallop," he set sail for the Delaware River on July 20, 1634.[26] Yong had been told by Governor Harvey of Jamestown that parts of the river, just north of the bay, appeared too shallow to navigate through with their larger boats. When Yong arrived in the Delaware Bay on July 24, he sent his lieutenant ashore on the west bank to meet with any natives but to no avail. The next day they continued up the river roughly twenty miles, where they spotted four Lenape Indians on the shore of the west bank.[27] Yong stated that he had an interpreter with him, but no other Englishmen, besides Argall and his crew, had ever encountered the Lenape. This group of Lenape informed Yong that their nation was in a state of war with the neighboring Minquas Indians from the Susquehanna Valley. The Minquas had been coming to the Delaware

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[24] Thomas Yong. "Relation of Captain Thomas Yong, 1634" in *Narratives of Early Pennsylvania, West New Jersey and Delaware: 1630-1707,* ed. by Albert Cook Myers (New York: Barnes and Noble Inc., 1967)
[25] Ibid., 41.
[26] Ibid., 34.
[27] Ibid., 42-45.

and attacking the Lenape villages and burning Lenape homes and crops. Because of these attacks, some of Lenape tribes had taken refuge on the other side of the Delaware, in present day New Jersey, or into the "woods."[28]

Some of these refugee Lenape were likely the Sankikans and Axiom tribes who were situated at the Falls of the Delaware.[29] However, these tribes of Lenape and their territories would not be threatened by the prospects of European settlement until the 1670's. Until that decade, Europeans would only pass through the area while traveling overland through the Mid-Atlantic region.

Chapter Two

After Yong, thirteen years would pass until another European would reach the Falls and record their findings. Few Europeans traveled to the Falls from the time of Yong's visit in 1634 until 1645 when the Dutch gained control of the Delaware from the Swedes, who were situated in small settlements at near the bay of the river in the present day Delaware.[30] In 1645 Swedish settlers were situated on the west bank of the lower Delaware Valley. Andries Hudde, an agent of the Dutch West Indies Company and resident of Manhattan Island, was employed to visit the valley and write an account of Swedish settlements in that region for the company's directors. Hudde's report is important for two reasons.[31] First, it contained the last mention of a "first falls." Secondly, the conversation between Hudde and the Lenape was the first that explicitly mentioned European settlement of that Falls.[32]

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[28] Ibid.

[29] C.A. Weslager. *The Delaware Indians* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1972), 38.

[30] The governor of New Sweden visited the area in the 1640's. He was delighted by the fruit trees he found at the Falls.

[31] Andries Hudde. "Report of Andries Hudde concerning the Swedes at the South River," in *Delaware Papers. Dutch Period 1648-1664.* trans. and ed. by Charles Gehrig (New York: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1981)

[32] Hudde apparently believed that the Falls was a waterfall too. He mentioned that he "sought to go to the great falls" to look for minerals. This was presumably the first time he ever visited the area, and he must have never spoken to

While traveling northward on the river Hudde mentioned that he was crossing over the "first falls."[33] Since he was able to cross this falls, it could not have bee exactly like the Falls, since the latter was impassible. And while passing over this "first falls," Hudde was met by a local Lenape sachem.[34] This is the earliest mention of any possible settlement on the main land of the Falls, i.e. not on an island, like Burlington. The sachem would not let Hudde proceed further up the river because he and other local Lenape had heard that the Dutch wanted to settle at the Falls and drive the Indians out. The Swedish Governor of New Sweden, their Delaware colony's name, had told the Indians so, which Hudde claimed was a false assertion.[35] Presumably, it was in Sweden's interest to have the Lenape concern about Dutch intentions of settlement. This would give them a de facto monopoly of the economic relationship with the Lenape i.e. the lucrative fur trade, by keeping the Dutch out of region. Hudde had only traveled to the Falls to look for mineral reserves. Moreover, there is no mention of a plan for Dutch settlement of the Falls in any primary documents consulted for this paper. However, if Hudde had found the minerals he sought at the Falls, it can be presumed that the Dutch would settle there in order to extract those materials.

Although the plans for settlement at the Falls were likely not true, some inferences can be made from the event. By these accounts the Lenape prepared to act aggressively in order to stop the settlement of the Falls. According to the Lenape Sachem with whom Hudde spoke, settling the Falls was a step that the Dutch would take in order to control the entire Delaware Valley, from the Bay to the Falls. The Dutch would settle at the Falls and then cause a conflict with the Lenape to create the pretext for more Dutch from Manhattan to come to the Delaware. And, the "two hundred and fifty men" who would come by ship would kill the Lenape from the Bay to the Falls and

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anyone that ever visited the area personally. The adjective "great" suggests that he believed it to be something large, perhaps a high waterfall. In actuality there was nothing "great" about the Falls.

[33] Ibid., 2.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid., 4.

northward.

The Falls was an important area of the Lenape country. It lay in the middle of the two different sects of Lenape Indians; one sect in the Manhattan and Hudson Valley area and another in the Delaware Valley[36] It was most definitely an area through which Lenape of the mid-Atlantic region traveled, for possibly centuries, before the Europeans began frequenting the same routes. According to a map of Lenape trails, there were three major routes that started at the confluence of the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers on the west bank of the former.[37] The first of these, the Minsi Trail followed along the Schuylkill on its east bank. It proceeded northward through eastern Pennsylvania, then crossed the Delaware River about one hundred miles north of the confluence and ended in near Albany, New York. The two others lead to a point directly across from Manhattan. The more direct route of the two was the Assunpink Trail. The Lenni Lenape Trail cut through present day Montgomery and Bucks Counties and crossed the Delaware River to New Jersey at the approximate point that Interstate 95 does today.[38]

Today, there is no single road that closely follows the routes of either the Minsi or Lenni Lenpae. But, Amtrak's Northeast Corridor railroad line is the route that most closely follows the Assunpink Trail through Philadelphia, Bucks, New Jersey Manhattan to the New England area. This railway's position and location has presumably stayed stagnant, considering railroads are not commonly removed even when no longer in use. And since the rail road does follow the trail closely, even through urban areas, most of it was likely laid out prior to track expansion. Amtrak has only been around since the 20th century, but the railroad route from Washington D.C. to Manhattan, through Philadelphia and crossing the Falls to Trenton, has been there since at least

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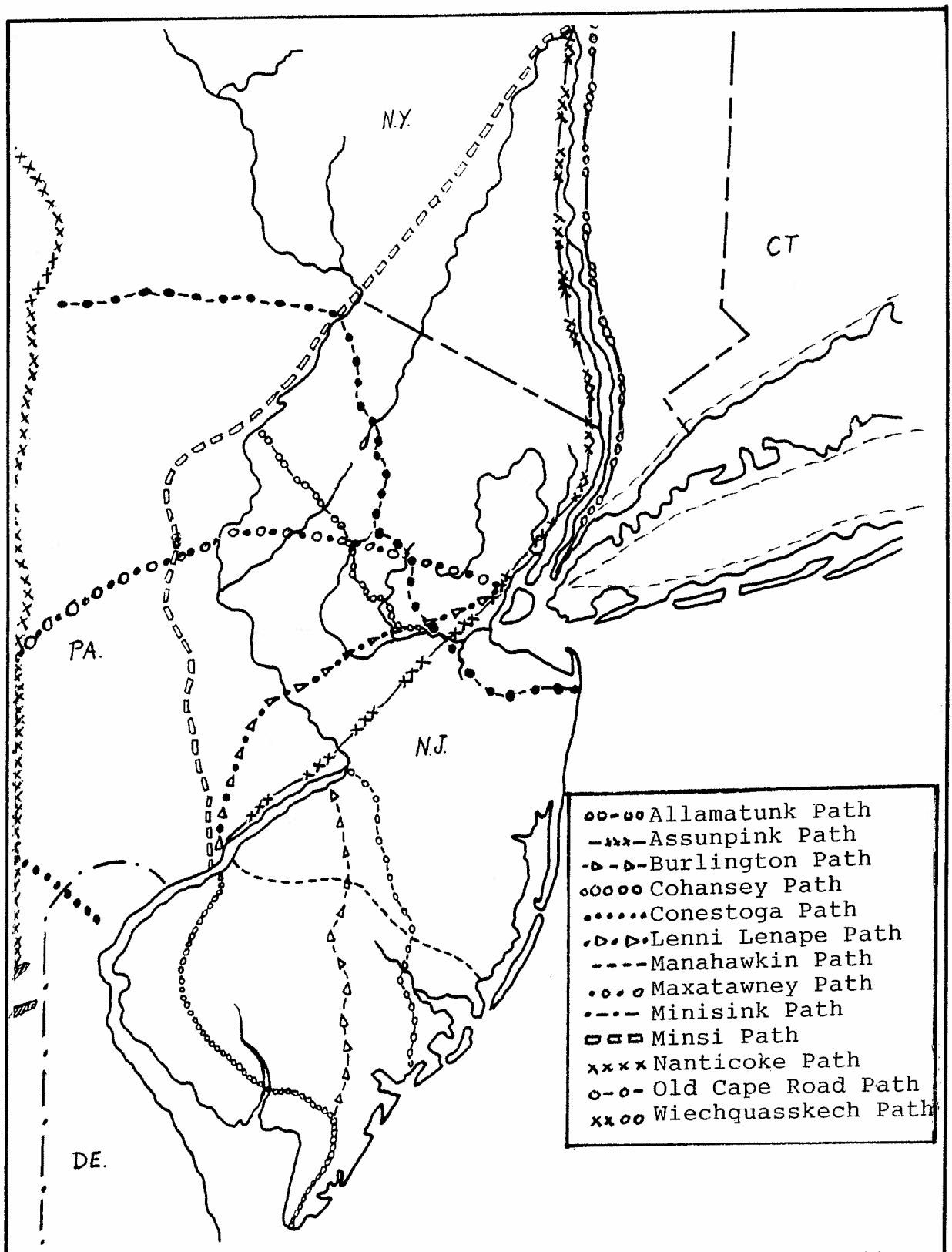
[36] Herbert C. Kraft. *The Lenape or Delaware Indians (*Union, New Jersey: Lenape Books, 1999), 10.
[37] Ibid., 45.
[38] Ibid.



Some of the more famous Indian trails that once criss-crossed Lenapehoking. Later roads followed some of these paths.

1858, but probably even earlier.[39] The Assunpink Path crossed the river just south of the Falls, just like the two later Kings Paths would do.[40] The Minsi Path crossed through and over the river approximately where Interstate 95 does today, at the Scudders Falls.[41]

In addition to its importance as a travel route, the Lenape used the Falls as a hunting grounds. The Falls was a Lenape hunting ground for thousands of years prior to European settlement.[42] The Lenape hunted throughout the dense mainland forest, islands and several tributaries of the Delaware on both sides of the river at the Falls. The west bank of the area had a three large creeks. Indians often frequented the creeks of the Delaware in search of otters or beavers, both of which provided pelts and furs to be traded to Europeans.[43] It is likely that this land had several animals which the Indians hunted. In addition, the Falls was a accessible area to Lenape on both sides of the Delaware because of routes like the Assunpink Trail. In subsequent years, the Lenape Indians would be reluctant about giving up land on the west bank of the Falls. Considering all of these facts, it is reasonable to suggest that the Lenape valued that area.

William Davis stated that the Dutch began to use the Falls as a crossing point for land travel back and forth between the lower Delaware and Manhattan in the 1650's.[44] It is not known when Europeans first began making this trip, but it is explicitly stated in official Dutch West Indies Company's records that the Dutch began to ship mail via land as early as 1648.[45] The Dutch began

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[39] Brothers of the Brush,*Falls Township 275th Anniversary 1692-1968.* Committee of Falls Township 275th Anniversary (Falls Township, Pennsylvania: 1968), Cover.

[40] Herbert C. Kraft. *The Lenape or Delaware Indians (*Union, New Jersey: Lenape Books, 1999), 45.

[41] Ibid.

[42] *South River Walk Park.* Mercer County Park Commission, Trenton, New Jersey. 2010.

[43] C.A. Weslager. *Dutch Explorers, Traders and Settlers in the Delaware Valley 1609-1664.*

[44] William W.H. Davis. *The History of Bucks County.* 1,3, Pipersville, Pennsylvania: A.E. Lear Inc. Publishers, 1905), 6. Davis does not cite any sources, thus it is unknown where he got this information from. However, he probably made such inference using similar evidence as this paper.

[45] *Delaware Papers. Dutch Period 1648-1664.* Translated and edited by Charles Gehrig This settlement and another at present day Wilmington, Delaware served as the economic and political center of the Dutch's colony in the Delaware Valley.

to travel or ship items over land between Manhattan and the Delaware before they took over New Sweden in 1651. In fact the Dutch sent soldiers over land, probably on the Assunpink Path, to invade New Sweden.

However, it is doubtful that the Dutch used the over land routes extensively. There are many references that suggest that the overland route was not their preferred method of transportation. They were unfamiliar with the routes, and the Dutch seemed hesitant about using them their selves. It is explicitly stated within their text that the letters by New Netherlands officials were sent over land from the Delaware to Manhattan by Lenape carriers in the 1650s.[46] One letter dated December 13, 1659 stated that Andres Hudde intended to sail up the river just south of the Falls, and forward a report to an Indian for delivery to Manhattan.[47] These are only the letters that explicitly stated their mode of transportation, but it is likely that several others were sent by this route. The Dutch probably began using this method of transportation once they learned of it from the Indians. They, more so than the Lenape, needed a land route from the Delaware to Manhattan because the latter was the headquarters of all Dutch activity in America. A consistent relaying of information back and forth via the Assunpink Trail occurred from the time the Dutch found out about the path in the 1640s until 1664, when the Delaware became under English rule.

The Dutch primarily used the Assunpink Trail for sending communications of administrative issues, via letters or word of mouth. As mentioned before, New Netherland's political center was at Manhattan. Thus, information had to travel between Manhattan and New Amstel, where Dutch administrators of the Delaware in charge of settling the Delaware, were situated. This transportation of information was not necessary for the Swedes. Their only colony was on the Delaware, and there was not a need for a route that led to the Hudson Valley or

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[46] Ibid. There are nearly twenty letters in this collection that state they were carried by Indians.

[47] Ibid., "Letter from Willem Beeckman to Petrus Stuyvesant."

anywhere else.

Local Indians were probably used to deliver mail and other packages for two specific reasons. First, they knew of the set routes to Manhattan and through all of the Delaware Valley. And secondly, they would not come across any enemies. The Lenape controlled all of the land on the routes running from present day Delaware state to Manhattan and even as far north as Connecticut. The Dutch were extremely unfamiliar with the territories of the Delaware not within a few miles of the river, especially all of those north of the Schuylkill River. And, they would possibly be attacked or killed by a tribe of Lenape whom they did not know. The Lenape would kill Europeans commonly up until the establishment of Pennsylvania. In fact, in 1661 one Dutchman would not travel to Manhattan overland for fear of being murdered.[48] In his letter he stated that four Englishman had been murdered by the Lenape Indians. Thus, he felt it was not safe to travel overland, presumably along the Assunpink Trail.

The overland route was usually used when a boat was not available. Some letters suggested that letters were sent overland as a last resort or if their delivery had to be immediate.[49] It seemed as if the Indians were not completely trusted.

The Dutch occupation of the Delaware would be short lived.[50] Economically, the English had much more to gain by acquiring the Delaware Valley. By the 1660s the English already had one permanent colony immediately south and north of the region and the presence of the Dutch was disturbing the transport of goods between the two areas. The English could not make their own continuous overland transportation route without occupying the Delaware and Hudson valleys. In order to travel overland from Virginia to New England, one had to pass over Dutch

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[48] Ibid., "Letter from Augustine Herrman to Willem Beeckman."

[49] Ibid. Herman mentioned that it was carried by an Indian in order for it to be sent immediately.

[50] C.A. Weslager. "The End of the Dutch Era" in *Dutch Explorers, Traders and Settlers in the Delaware Valley 1609-1664.*

land. The Dutch sometimes interfered with the transport of English goods through the region. Thus, in England prominent figures, including the Duke of York, were already petitioning the monarch to use physical force to remove the Dutch from the Delaware and Hudson Valleys.[51] In addition, these two areas were known for their rich resources and suitable lands for settlement. In 1664, the British forcefully occupied Manhattan and then New Amstel, thus taking control of both the river valleys. Following the precedent set by the Dutch when they took over New Sweden, the English allowed their fellow Europeans to stay in their areas as long as they acknowledged the English as their rulers.[52]

With the English occupation of the Delaware and Hudson Valleys in 1664, the potential for the Falls to become a link over the Delaware River grew exponentially. The Dutch settlements at Manhattan and Delaware were never large, in population terms, and lacked potential to grow.[53] The Assunpink Trail was used primarily to deliver letters from Dutch West Indies Company officials between the administrative seats of the Hudson and Delaware. On the other hand, the English had the steadily growing colonies of New England, Maryland, and Virginia, which remained essentially disconnected by land until the Hudson and Delaware Valleys were settled and inter-colonial routes developed. Thus the Assunpink Trail would later connect to trails coming from the areas south of the Delaware and north of the Hudson. Due to the Lenape having inhabited the two valleys for decades, possibly centuries, this area had already established routes connecting the areas where Indian and European settlements were concentrated. Consequently there was great potential for inter-colonial routes to develop quickly, although these valleys were largely uninhabited by any Europeans and relatively unknown geographically to the English. As C.A.

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[51] C.A. Weslager. "The Duke of York seizes the Delaware," in *The English on the Delaware 1610-1682.*

[52] The mere presence of the English navy caused the Dutch to surrender. There was no battles.

[53] The Dutch were never successful in getting ordinary people to settle the land permanently. Most the Dutch who settled in the Delaware did so in order to economically exploit the area, not to make their homes.

Weslager, the premier Delaware Valley historian, has noted that the English later mimicked several Lenape routes with roads.

The year 1664 was a pivotal point in the history of American colonial history overall, and specifically in the 17th century history of the Delaware Valley. Following this, the increased interest and subsequent settling by the English would transform the region completely. The English started with the region of Indian country, sparsely populated by Swedes and Dutch, and developed it into the location of Philadelphia, the United States capital in roughly one hundred years. It must be noticed that the choice of Philadelphia had to take into account its geographical location. The area had an obvious geographical advantage, since Philadelphia lay in the middle of the thirteen colonies. More specifically, the inter-colonial route through Philadelphia - Kings Path - connected the major population areas including Virginia, Baltimore, Wilmington, Trenton, New York and Boston ran directly through Philadelphia.

But before Delaware Valley could play any pivotal role in the English North America, the west bank of the Delaware River had to be populated. Settlements would have been developed along that bank from the bay to the Falls, the ideal location to cross the river to New Jersey. For the first seventeen years following the English takeover of the valley in 1664, this process would be slow and uncoordinated. Specifically, the English would encounter problems in obtaining the west bank of the Falls and other future lands of Bucks County from the Indians.

Chapter 3

In 1664, the English obtained took control of the lands they needed to create any continuous. All of the English colonies either lay south or north of the Delaware and Hudson Valleys they obtained from the Dutch. Carolina, Virginia and Maryland were to the south. All the New England region was to the north, which included Rhode Island, New Hampshire and

Massachusetts. From 1664 until the establishment of Pennsylvania in 1681, the Delaware Valley only attracted relatively few settlers, no more than a few thousands.[54] But, the English were still able to take further develop the regions transportation infrastructure by settling strategic locations along such routes as the Assunpink Trail. Two of the key locations were in Bucks County.

Historians agree that the first European permanent settlement began in today's Bucks County with the appropriation of "two certain islands" southwest of Burlington Island to Peter Alrichs in 1664.[55] Alrichs subsequently leased these two islands to two other settlers, as he and his family lived at New Castle instead.[56] Since that date, the areas of these "islands" have been inhabited. The larger island is referred to as "Kipp's island," which Terry McNealy believed to be current day Bristol Borough.[57] The second island may have been a current day nameless island situated at the confluence of the Delaware River and Poquessing Creek.[58] Kipp's Island was situated adjacent to current day Mill Creek, which made any inhabitant of that area responsible for the ferry across it for anyone traveling on the Assunpink Trail.[59] Moreover, Kipp's Island and later Bristol would serve as the ferry to Burlington, New Jersey. This ferry spot would be critical for the social lives of the Quakers who immigrated to the Delaware in the last two decades of the 17th century.[60]

With the occupation of these two islands, the English had one last frontier on the west bank

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[54] Until the establishment of Pennsylvania, the Delaware Valley was owned by the Duke of York.

[55] " A Confirmation Granted to Peter Alrichs for Two Islands in the Delaware River," in *Delaware Papers. English Period 1664-1682.* Translated and edited by Charles Gehrig (New York: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1977)

[56] Terry A. McNealy. "Bristol: The Origins of a Pennsylvania Market Town." *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 95, no. 4 (1971): 488. Once the English took over the Delaware, they changed New Amstel's name to New Castle.

[57] Ibid., 487. Bristol is still technically an island since completed surrounded by water.

[58] A Confirmation Granted to Peter Alrichs for Two Islands in the Delaware River," in *Delaware Papers. English Period 1664-1682.* Trans. and ed. by Charles Gehrig. Poquessing Creek was, and still is the borderline between Philadelphia and Bucks County. The island is situated on the Bucks side of creek.

[59] In the scarce populated woods of the Delaware Valley, the Europeans would have to help each other out in the wilderness. It was assumed that if one lived a ferry spot, they would help travelers crossing the creek or river.

[60] Terry A. McNealy. "Bristol: The Origins of a Pennsylvania Market Town." Many Quakers would arrive in America in New Jersey and later move to Pennsylvania.

of the Delaware Valley. This final frontier was the Falls of the Delaware, which the Lenape Indians persistently refused, allow the English to settle of this area until William Markham bought much of the area for the behalf of William Penn in 1682. In the intervening years, the English still traveled through the Falls in order to get to Manhattan. However the Indians of the Falls, from both banks, caused travelers trouble. In late 1670, English officials had a meeting with eleven Lenape sachems in order find the murderers of their countrymen since their occupation of the Delaware in 1664.[61]

The report detailing this meeting sheds light on the relationship between the Lenape and English at this time. The Lenape were cooperative with the English, but not submissive to their authority. First, the sachems were a few days late to meeting. Secondly, a number of sachems who were supposed to attend did not. And those who did attend were too reluctant to provide the English with any information about the murderers. The English named their two suspects, but the sachems denied that they were involved. Instead, they provided alibis for the two men. Also, the English accused them of theft from two settlers, which the sachems simply blamed on the Lenape from the east bank of the Falls and in effect, "absolve[d] themselves from [the thefts]."[62] Presumably these sachems knew that the English did not have any type of foothold around the Falls, especially on the east bank. Moreover, they knew that the English would not go out into relatively unknown territory to find suspected killers or thieves who, may not have existed.

Also during this meeting, the sachems expressed their concern about the growing European population in the Delaware Valley. The Lenape desired no war with the English since the latter were situated all along the valley and had superior weapons than they.[63] For the rest of the 1670's,

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[61] "Report of a Meeting with Indians on the Delaware about a Murder," in *Delaware Papers. English Period 1664-1682.* Trans. and ed. by Charles Gehrig

[62] Ibid., 18.

[63] Ibid.

the English would have a tough time dealing with the local Lenape tribes of the Falls. Starting in 1675, English settlers and migrants began to be interested in settling the Falls and the lands of what would be Bucks County.

Beginning in 1675, English settlers would establish towns at strategic locations. Many of the settlers' estates would be situated along or near the Assunpink Trail. The trail, going northeast from the confluence of the Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers, crossed over the Frankford, Pennypack, Poquessing, and Neshaminy Creeks. These creeks were hundreds of feet wide at parts, and ferries would be needed for the transport of goods and people. Specifically, the Falls was a significant place to settle in order to create the infrastructure for routes connecting Pennsylvania routes to Trenton and then Manhattan.

The Falls and the future lands Bucks County attracted attention because of its accessibility and fertile soil. The area has always been known for its rich farmland. Most of the landscape was commercial and private farms before the 20th century. Because of the inter-colonial routes that crossed the region, commercial farms could easily ship their products to several large markets along the Atlantic seaboard. Furthermore, the fertile soil could yield abundant amounts of staple American crops like corn, potatoes and tobacco.[64] Throughout history, all economic activities were aided by these routes. The Assunpink Trail was the most commonly traveled route in the area before, during and after the 17th century. Before European settlement, the hunting and gathering Lenape used the Assunpink Trail to obtain their economic subsistence i.e. animals and fruits of the hunting ground at the Falls. And ever since the establishment of Pennsylvania, its roadways that mimicked the trail's path has been essential for the economic and social lives of Americans on the East coast.

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[64] Brothers of the Brush. *Falls Township 275th Anniversary 1692-1968.* These crops could be grown throughout most of the Philadelphia region. The area has been used for farming since the 17th century.

In 1675 a group of English immigrants petitioned Governor Andros, the agent of the English Monarchy in charge of activities around the Delaware, for land.[65] The petition asked specifically for four thousand acres, and eight miles of water front property. This included four miles above the Falls, and four miles below on the west bank. This area would have been in present day Falls and Lower Makefield townships. The actual names of the petitioners are not known, but they were most likely English. They asked to be able to trade with all "his majesties dominions" i.e. English settlements and colonies. Presumably, these immigrants wanted to export goods out of their potential settlement. This meant that this land at the Falls was deemed profitable (presumably by farming), and the area was accessible by boats and land vehicles in order to ship out their goods. They believed that they might ship goods as far as Boston or Barbados.[66]

This petition for land at the Falls, the first ever, was not immediately acted on by Governor Andros and his administration. The English did not formally own the land at the Falls on the west bank. Moreover, it was known that this area was frequented by Lenape and used as a crossing over the Delaware. Thus the English would have to obtain the land legitimately, in order to have their settlements develop peacefully and successfully, without interference from the Lenape. In response to the petition, Governor Andros bought a "large tract of land lying on the west side of the Delaware River near the Falls" from the Lenape sachems Mamarakickan and Auricktan during September, 1675.[67] The actual deed of sale is partially unreadable, and the specific boundaries of this tract are hard to determine. It may have included the water front land in between the Falls and the "cold spring" in present day Tullytown.[68] However, it is certain that the tract included at least

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[65] "Petition for a Grant of Land on the Delaware," in *Delaware Papers. English Period 1664-1682.* Trans. and ed. by Charles Gehrig.
[66] Ibid., 69.
[67] Ibid., "Memorandum by Mathias Nicolls concerning land purchased from Indians."
[68] Ibid., "Memorandum by Mathias Nicolls concerning a land transaction with Indians on the Delaware."

the land of Morrisville and part of Falls Township.[69]

No historians mention any settlement at the Falls in 1675. In fact, all of them recognized Crewcorne as the first of Bucks County in 1679. In between the first purchase of the Falls, and the first settlements, the English had to convince the Lenape tribes that they owned the land on the west bank at the Falls. The Lenape did not arbitrarily choose to contest the English settlement of the Falls and its vicinity. The lands a few miles south of Trenton on the east bank were extremely fertile and rich in natural resources and wildlife.[70] Also, the land south of the Falls on the west bank was noted for its attractiveness. This particular tract of land on the west bank was like a heavily wooded coastal plain and, was known for trees that produces various fruits. The Lenape, a hunting and gathering people, most certainly frequented the Falls on both banks. Moreover, this area contained thousands of flat land acres that were high enough to not be flood prone with the approximate four miles of accessible river front land. During the years 1675-1680, the Lenape would try to salvage this land of the Falls immediately below the south end of Biles Island and as far south as Bristol.[71] But at the same time, the English did start to move in on the land which the Lenape did yield.

In 1677, twenty five Englishmen from Upland requested land to form a town at the Falls.[72] This was the second request for land at the Falls. These men wanted one hundred acres allotted to each man and their families, to be settled on the west side below the Falls.[73] The petition also mentioned that the location of the settlement would be "well for the strength of the river as for the

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[69] Terry A. McNealy. "Bristol: The Origins of a Pennsylvania Market Town," 496.

[70] *South River Walk Park.* Mercer County Park Commission, Trenton, New Jersey. 2010. C.A. Weslager also stated that the Lenape had hunting grounds south of Trenton in *The Delaware Indians.*

[71] North of Biles Island is the oldest ferry spot, and the current crossing spot of Route 1 and Amtrak/Septa.

[72] "Petition of the Inhabitants at Upland to Form a town below the Falls," in *Delaware Papers. English Period 1664-1682.* Trans. and ed. by Charles Gehrig. Upland is now Chester, PA. Upland served as the administration seat for English activities on the west bank of the Delaware until Philadelphia replaced it in 1683.

[73] Ibid., 166.

convenience of travelers."[74] It was recognized that the settlement's location would be beneficial for any travel that involved crossing the Delaware to or from the future Pennsylvania side of the river.

Once again, there is no evidence of an active attempt to settlement that area immediately after the petition in 1677. Apparently the English were still trying to obtain legitimate ownership of the land near the Falls. Governor Andros and his agents, most notably Mathias Nicolls, took care of payment plans for lands that they arranged to purchase from the Lenape in 1675. In 1677, Nicolls wrote Andros to inform him that they still owed the Lenape "five guns, thirty hoes and one ancker (sic) of rum" for land between Bristol and the Falls.[75]

The next petition for land at the Falls would be successful. A group of men situated at Burlington, across the river from Bristol, petitioned the Duke of York during June, 1679.[76] They asked for land between the Falls and Bristol, like the two previous petitions. This petition led to the establishment of the first town in Bucks County, Crewcorne.[77] Samuel Clift, one of the petitioners that June, would not settle at Crewcorne. Instead, he settled at Mill Creek and helped establish Bristol on what was previously referred to as Peter Alrich's land. Clift's settlement was essential for the ferry across the river to Burlington.[78] That ferry would become incredibly important for the social lives of the Quakers in Bucks and Mercer counties, and the rest of the river valley in 17th century. Some of these petitioners were probably Quaker, since Burlington was a settlement established by the religion's adherents. They stated that they could obtain land on the

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[74] Ibid.

[75] "The Magistrates of New Castle to Gov. Andros about Municipal affairs," in *Delaware Papers. English Period 1664-1682.* Trans. and ed. by Charles Gehrig.

[76] Ibid., "Petition of Immigrants from England to settle near the Falls." At that time, the Duke of York owned the land of the Delaware Valley on the west side. The east bank had become both West and East New Jersey. West Jersey included the Falls of the Delaware and everything south of there along the river.

[77] Terry A. McNealy. "Bristol: The Origins of a Pennsylvania Market Town," 490.

[78] Ibid.

"jersie (New Jersey) side but we (petitioners) are willing to become tenants to his highness the Duke of York." And importantly, they requested for the Indians to be cleared from the land. This land had apparently been bought four years prior, but no attempt at settlement yet.

In July, 1679 Phillip Pocock was employed to survey and their purchased lands at the Falls.[79] The letter was written by Nicolls and sent to Captain Cantwell, who was probably in charge of keeping Pocock safe during the survey. In case any Lenape obstructed the survey, Cantwell was ordered to "admonish them [Lenape Indians] of their duties and the purchase sold by [ ] [ ]." The last two words are unintelligible, but they are probably the names of the sachems who signed the land deed in 1675.[80] Presumably, the English had been having trouble with surveying the area. They had obtained a deed for the land four years prior, and had three specific requests for the land, but it still remained unsettled. This survey was supposed to allot land for "some persons lately come." These "persons" probably meant the petitioners from the month before, on the 23rd of June request for land at the Falls.

Two months following that letter about Pocock's survey, Captain Cantwell sent back his report on the mission.[81] Cantwell, along with Peter Alrich and Israel Helm, had a meeting with the Lenape of the Falls. The Indians were willing only to give up the land from the beginning of the Falls to the bottom of Biles Island. In response, Cantwell showed the Lenape the 1675 deed which stated the English owned the land from the Falls to the vicinity of Tullytown at the cold spring. These sachems claimed that they were the legitimate owners of the land. Therefore the contract from 1675 was void, since those sachems could not sell land that was not their own. And the Lenape rejected a request by Cantwell's party to discuss the purchase of more land, probably near

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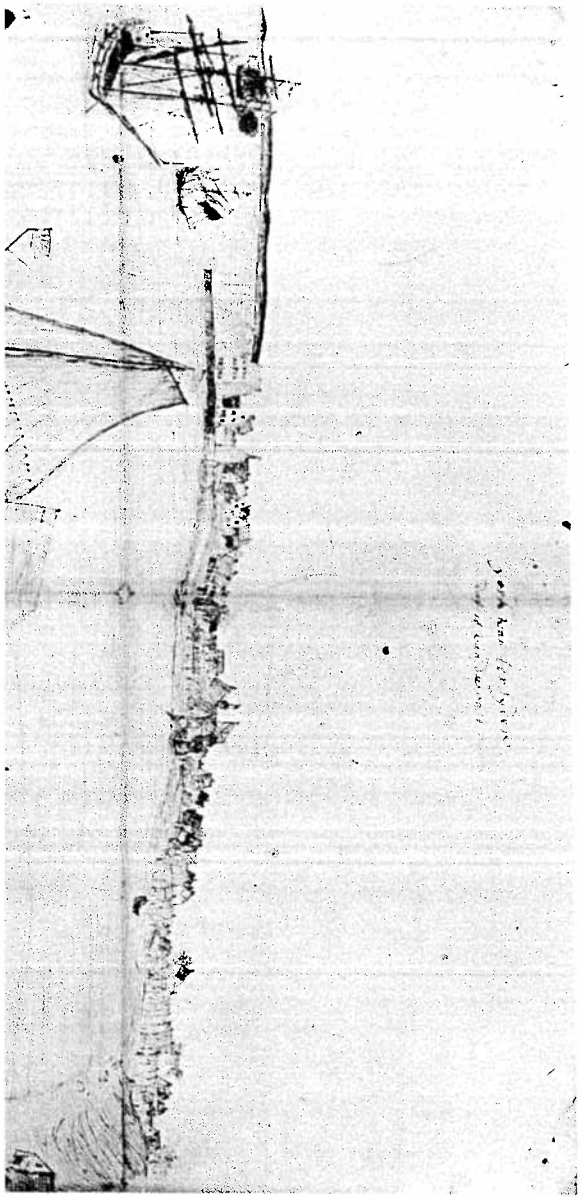
[79] "Mathias Niccols to Capt. Cantwell concerning Philip Pocock's survey near the Falls." in *Delaware Papers. English Period 1664-1682.* Trans. and ed. by Charles Gehrig.

[80] Ibid., 256.

[81] Ibid., "Capt. Cantwell to Gov. Andros about land near the Falls."



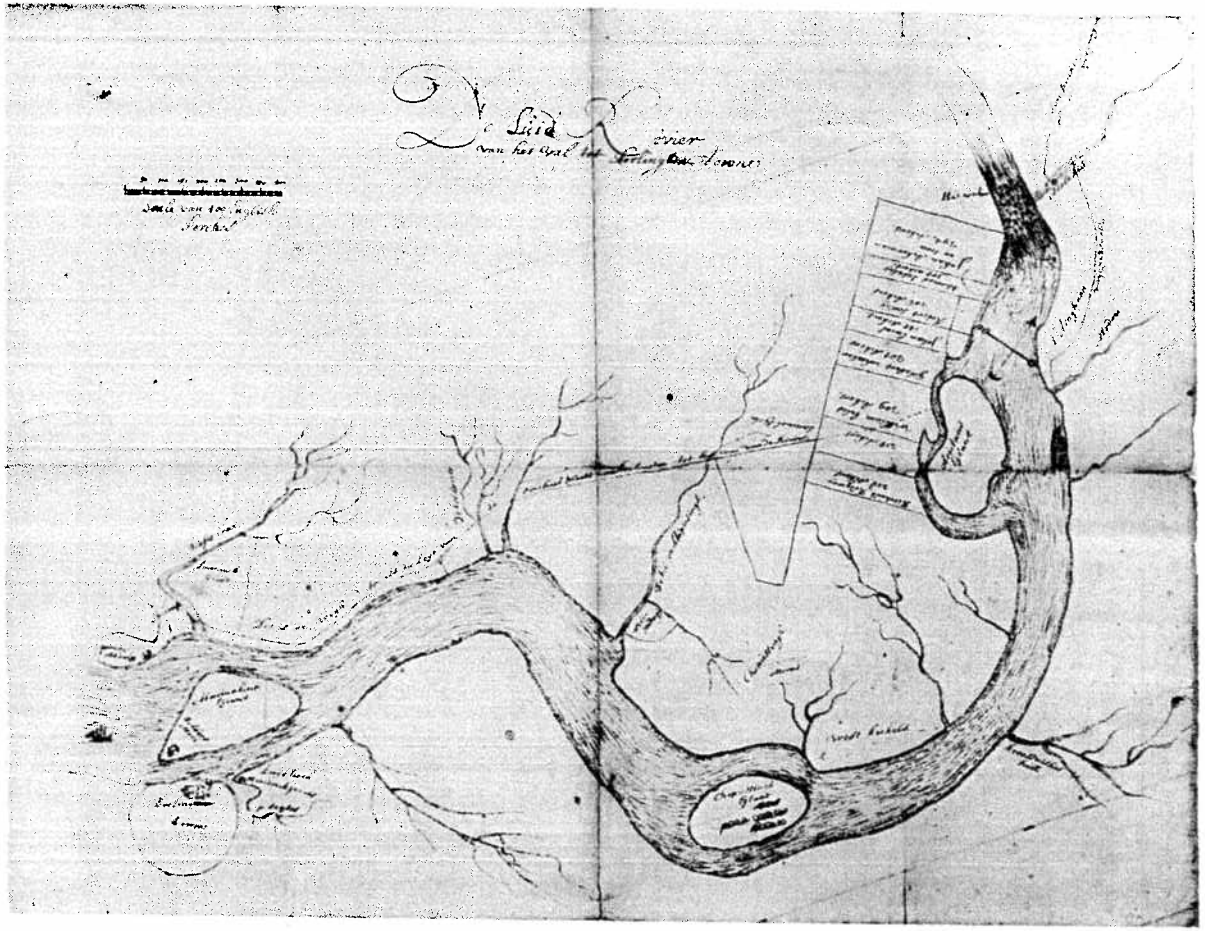


Fig. 15: Map of the South or Delaware River from the falls to Burlington. Pen and sepia ink drawing on paper by Danckaerts, 1680. $16^1/_2 \times 12^1/_2$ inches. (*Courtesy of the Long Island Historical Society*). In the journal of his first voyage, under the date of January 3, 1680, Danckaerts noted that he saw at M. de la Grange's a newly drawn map of the South River, from the falls to Burlington, made by the land surveyor there. Very likely Danckaerts copied this map.

the Falls.[82]

In November of that year, Nicolls penned a memo of Ephraim Herman's request for land south of Chiepiessing Creek near the Falls.[83] Herman had traveled through the Delaware Valley, via the Falls where he crossed the river. He must have been impressed with the area, since he requested two or three hundred acres in the area. The Lenape who lived on the banks of the Chiepiessing were likely those who did not want to sell their part of the Falls to the English. In February, 1680, Pocock stopped at the Falls while traveling from Manhattan. [84] Pocock informed Governor Andros by letter that the Indians still enforced the boundary line at the bottom of Biles Island. He also said that the "Chiepiessing Indians" got drunk and stole rum from Gilbert Wheeler's house.[85]

Also in 1679, the Dutch adventurer Japser Danckaerts traveled to the Delaware Valley via the Assunpink Trail. He later drew a map of Bucks County from Bristol to Crewcorne at the Falls.[86] This is the first map ever to show the part of Assupink Trail that ran through Bucks.[87] It led to Crewcorne and ended at the ferry spot just below the Falls.

The establishment of Crewcorne on the west side of the river was critical to for the English to regulate a crossing over the Delaware River. The other side of the Falls was also settled in 1679. A Quaker, Mahlon Stacy, planted his estate on the bank of the Assunpink Creek in the vicinity of

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[82] Ibid., 271.

[83] "Memorandum by Matthias Nicolls on Ephraim Herman's request for land," in *Delaware Papers. English Period 1664-1682.* Trans. and ed. by Charles Gehrig.. This creek was probably the one which Penn called Welcome Creek, located at Pennsbury Manor.

[84] Ibid., "Phillip Pocock to Gov. Andros concerning the death of Robert Hoskins and the survey of land near the Falls."

[85] Wheeler was one of the original inhabitants of Crewcorne.

[86] Japser Danckaerts. *Diary of our Second Trip from Holland to New Netherland.* Trans. and ed. by Kenneth Scott (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: The Gregg Press, 1969)., figure 15 in between pages 40-41.

[87] Ibid.

today's historic William Trent's House.[88] This creek, which the Assunpink Trail followed for much of its stretch through New Jersey, lay not even a mile north along the bank from the ferry landing.[89] In 1680, the lands that would soon become Bucks County were home to two crossings over the Delaware River into West Jersey and routes that connected the area to other regions hundreds of miles away i.e. overland routes and accessibility from the Delaware River.

Chapter 4

In March of 1681, William Penn was presented with the charter for Pennsylvania. Penn inherited a land with already commonly used transportation routes. The river was navigable as far north as the Falls. And overland routes like the Assunpink Trail already connected the largest riverfront settlements from present day Delaware to the Falls. Therefore, Penn was very fortunate when he was granted all of the land on the west side of the Delaware River from the Bay to New York.[90] The charter for Pennsylvania was significant for three reasons. First, the beginning of the colony caused thousands of Europeans to settle in the west bank of the river. This increase in settlement forced out the Lenape from their riverfront settlements to inland areas. Second, Philadelphia was planted on the confluence of the Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers and became a geographical link for the west bank of the valley. Third, Pennsylvania became the keystone of English North America due to its geographical location and transportation infrastructure.

The charter for Pennsylvania in 1681 was a definitive moment for the Lenape Indians. In the years prior to the charter the Lenape were still holding on much of the land at the Falls. Thousands of the most desirable land of the Falls was still not subject to English settlement.

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[88] Trenton Historical Society, *A History of Trenton.* 1 (Princeton University Press, 1929), 7. This house is said to be circa 1710's. William Trent is whom Trenton is named after.

[89] Ibid., 33-34. The ferry landing/launching spots on both sides of the Falls are preserved and known spots. Ferry street in Trenton still exists, and it lay not even a mile from the Assunpink Creek.

[90] *Colonial Records of Pennsylvania.* 1, *Containing the Proceedings of Council from March 10, 1683 to November 27, 1700* (Philadelphia: Severns and Company , 1852), 17-26.

English settlement often meant that the Lenape could not longer freely use that land for hunting or gather, or any other resource. The English had a sense of landed property which the Lenape did not.[91] The Quakers, especially William Penn, must be credited for their attempts to "legally" obtain the lands from the Lenape. These men attempted to legitimatize their ownership by payments of goods, a binding contract in English culture.[92] Before Pennsylvania, the Lenape's west bank was not an area of acute interest. But once Penn was granted all of the land, he and other Quakers enthusiastically advertised Pennsylvania and went on European tours in order to recruit migrants.[93] Prior to Penn's arrival in America, he sent William Markham and others to purchase as much land along the river as possible. The Falls was probably the single most unsettled tract of river front property left on the west bank.

By the time of Penn's charter in 1681, the foundations for two important towns in Bucks County were establish, Bristol and Crewcorne. Also, these towns were placed at strategic locations, locations that facilitated the growth of transportation routes and the layout for infrastructure. Crewcorne at the Falls was the ferry spot to Trenton and the easiest part of the river to cross. Bristol was ferry that many Quaker immigrants, who first landed in America at West Jersey, used to enter Bucks and settle.[94] Moreover, the Bristol ferry was essential for Quaker social activities. Bucks Quakers would attend the older Burlington Meeting House prior to one being built in their county.[95] Secondary roads developed in Bucks County in order for further inland estates and settlements to gain access to the two King's Roads which led to the Falls ferry,

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[91] C.A. Weslager. "How the Delaware Lived," *The Delaware Indians.*

[92] In later years the Lenape would dispute some of these contracts, especially the Walking Purchase. Basically, the Lenape claimed they were never paid all of the goods which were promised.

[93] Edwin B. Bronner. *William Penn's "Holy Experiment": The Founding of Pennsylvania 1681-1701,* ch. 1-4.

[94] West Jersey was established earlier than Pennsylvania. It was the first Quaker colony in America.

[95] Terry A. McNealy. "Bristol: The Origins of a Pennsylvania Market Town."

and another road which ran along the Neshaminy Creek to the Bristol ferry.[96]

The route was established, known and probably used for all overland transportation from the west bank to anywhere north. However, it is hard to know exactly how cleared and easy to follow was this route. Bristol's surrounding areas were swamp, and the Falls was heavily wooded. The route have been somewhat cleared because of the usage by Indians and the Dutch in years before. However, since Pennsylvania was split into three counties in 1683, a local government was established in Bucks. One of this government's concerns was the development of official county roads. The first roads they would develop were those that led to the two ferries.[97]

Starting with the establishment of Pennsylvania, settlers and government officials focused on buying all the land on the west bank of the Delaware and establishing settlements. These lands were important for the future inter-colonial routes because of the critical crossing areas in Bucks County. William Penn, after his arrival in 1682, continued to advertise his colony with pamphlets that were sent all over Europe.[98] Shortly after his arrival, he sailed up river from Philadelphia to the Falls, in order to trail overland by horse back to Manhattan. This is believed to be the first time that Penn saw the land of his future manor. William Markham, Pennsylvania's acting governor, bought the land of Bucks County from the Falls to the Neshaminy Creek.[99] Markham allotted part of this land for Pennsbury Manor, Penn's estate. Penn must have been pleased with the choice, since his manor was later constructed there.[100] Importantly, his estate was immediately south of the Crewcorne ferry which he used whenever traveling to or from East Jersey or New York. Penn

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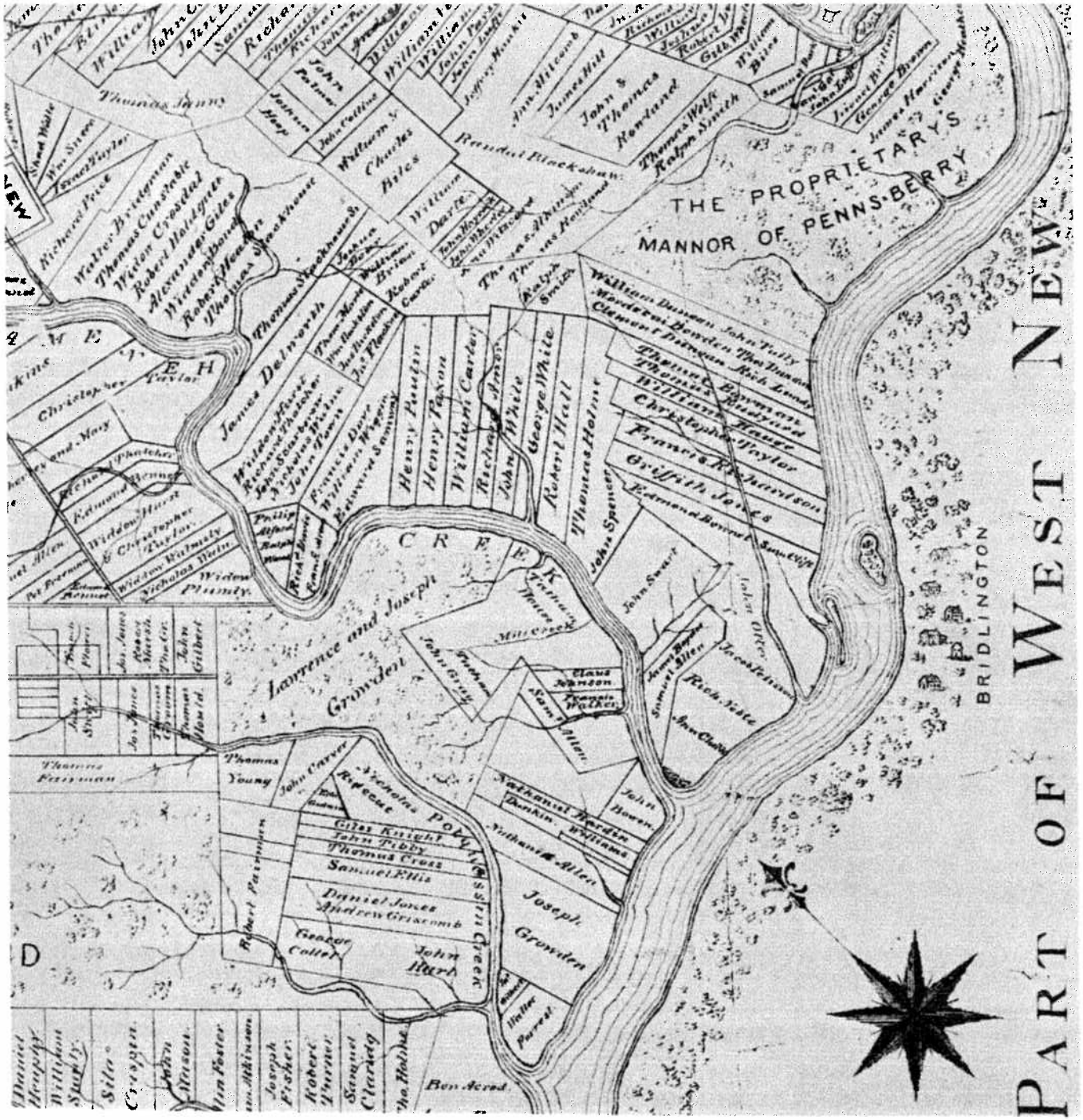
[96] Joseph E. Illick. *Colonial Pennsylvania, A History*, 108, 250.

[97] This conclusion is ostensibly unanimous.

[98] William Davis. "Penn Sails for his New Colony," in *History of Bucks County*. Penn arrived in Pennsylvania on board the *Welcome* in 1682. Among the nearly one hundred on board were thirty six people who settled in Bucks.

[99] "Deed from the Delaware Indians, 15 July 1682," in *The Papers of William Penn.* 2, *1680-1684* (Richard and Mary Dunn. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982)

[100] There is are not many surviving primary documents about Pennsbury Manor in the 17th century. Specifically, there are no letters from Penn which articulated his opinion of the manor.



Reduced from Holme's "Map of the Improved Part of the Province of Pennsylvania", With the names of the Original Purchasers from WILLIAM PENN begun in 1681.

The establishment of Falls Town separate political unit occurred on t 7th month 1692 by order of the Count

Bucks, along with Philadelphia an Counties, had been laid out by or Provincial Council in 1682. All gove administered on a county basis courthouse located at Crewcorne Delaware River, near the Victor Che This location just south of Mo addition to a courthouse, contained a ferry landing.

The inhabited portion of the coun what is now Bensalem, Bristol, Makefield, and Southampton in Falls.

The Court consisted of five laym justices. The position of Clerk of C Phineas Pemberton, seems, to h position of greater importance t justice.

The Provincial Council in Ph 1690 had authorized the county co the county into townships. Consequ justices appointed themselves and e early 1692 to accomplish this.

This County Court sat at an alte in the Friends meeting-house on th (originally called Neshaminah by Creek in alternate months.

It was thus that the order crea the other five original townships wa

had the ferry officially recognized and regulated by the Pennsylvania government around this time.[101]

In the summer of 1683, Penn was able to buy the land between Pennypack and Neshaminy Creek. The land in between Pennypack and Poquessing became part of Philadelphia County. From the Poquessing to Neshaminy became Bucks. Philadelphia had already been established on the peninsula between the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers. The Assunpink Trail ran from the site of Philadelphia through the newly purchased land to Bristol, an already established area. Frankford Avenue became the name of the portion of Assunpink Trail through Philadelphia. It led to High Street in the very center of the newly established Philadelphia approximately fifteen miles south of Bucks County. The English intentionally adapted the Assunpink Trail to fit the exact placement of their settlements. Pennsylvania settlers extended and developed the Assunpink Trail southward from Philadelphia, to extend it to other market towns like Chester, Wilmington, Newark. Consequently, these towns south of Philadelphia were connected to settlements in New Jersey and New York because of the routes' critical crossing point at the Falls in Bucks County. Penn intended for Philadelphia was intended to be the political and economic center of Pennsylvania. It quickly became the largest city in the area, and has remained so since. With the purchase of that land during the summer of 1683, settlers could move into those areas and roads could be developed by the local government. It was now possible to develop and regulate crossings over both the Pennypack and Poquessing Creeks for the establishment of route from Philadlephia into Bucks and so forth.[102]

The land between the Poquessing and Neshaminy Creeks became Salem Township in

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[101] William Davis. "Penn Sails for his New Colony," in *History of Bucks County.*

[102] One of the oldest bridges in the U.S. is the one which crosses over the Pennypack Creek. It was built in 1696.

1692.[103] However, people started to settle the area in the early 1680s.[104] These settlements were primarily on the banks of the Neshaminy. In 1685 residents of this area petitioned the Bucks County government to create a road from the Bristol ferry to Wrightstown. Presumably, this road would run through Middle Township and Newtown. Today's Route 413 is the predecessor of this road, as it connects to the Burlington-Bristol bridge and runs through Middle Township, Newtown and Wrightstown. In this paper, it will be called the Neshaminy Road. Also, they wanted a road to connect the settlements of the Neshaminy Creek to the Falls. This road's sucessor is today's Route 1, that crosses the river at the Falls. This road would eventually be known as a Kings Path during the colonial period, the one which mimicked Assunpink Trail.[105] The Kings Path from Neshaminy to the Falls will be referred to as the Upper King's Road and the other as the Lower, in this paper.

During 1688 the Grand Jury of Bucks County proclaimed the need for a "cart road" from Bristol to Makefield was necessary. The road would serve four purposes. First, it connected the areas of Bucks at the time. The Upper Kings Road was laid out to lead from the Falls to the Neshaminy, where it met with the Lower Kings Road that led through Falls to Bristol. Secondly, it provided Makefield residents access to the Bristol ferry to Burlington. Presumably, the Lower King's Road was extended from the Crewcorne ferry through Makefield, along the river.[106] Lastly, since this road connected Makefield to Lower King's Road, the area's residents could travel to Philadelphia and southward.

By the time Bucks County was divided in five townships in 1692, the infrastructure for a

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[103] William W.H. Davis. *The History of Bucks County,*. 107.

[104] William Davis. "Bensalem" in *History of Bucks County.* Ten thousand acres of this area was bought by the Growden family ten days after Penn received his charter for Pennsylvania in 1681. The Growdens settled there in 1682. Throughout the end of the century the family sold parts of their land to other settlers.

[105] *Records of the Courts of Quarter Sessions and Common Pleas of Bucks County Pennsylvania, 1684-1700* . Ed. by The Colonial Society of Pennsylvania (Meadville, Pennsylvania: Tribune Publishing Company, 1943), 49. The King's Road which mimics Assunpink Trail is Route 13.

[106] Ibid.., 96. This road is most certainly today's River Road.

BRISTOL
FALLSINGTON
TRUSK
MORRISVILLE

system of roads was already established.[107] Throughout the 1690s, the Bucks County Grand Jury ordered several roads to be laid out to connect the various estates being settled in the five townships. Essentially, these secondary roads were all made to connect the further inland settlements to the three main roads which led to ferries: Upper and Lower Kings Road and the Neshaminy Road. The most significant function of the area had been established by the end of the 17th century; the area was a largely a crossroads, one through which many people and goods would travel through on their way along the eastern seaboard. In the 20th century, Bucks County developed drastically. The county now has over six hundred thousand residents, and the oldest part of Bucks is most densely populated. The areas settled in 17th century are now as known Lower Bucks County.

Epilogue: Lower Bucks County 2010

Lower Bucks County has remained a crossroads since the 17th century. However, the area's transportation infrastructure would significantly influence the development of area in two ways during the 20th century. First, the area's routes made the area an attractive place to create thousands of homes for towns like Fairless Hills and Levittown. A lot of Lower Bucks County became urbanized. Secondly, the infrastructure facilitated the several industries that moved to Lower Bucks County in order to take advantage of the labor brought in by the urbanization. The biggest industries located in Falls Township have resulted in environmental degradation.

Overall, the character off the colonial origins is evident in the small boroughs of Lower Bucks County. Bristol, Langhorne, Yardley, Newtown, Wrightstown have all been constants in the area since the 17th century, and their historical buildings and places have been properly preserved. Morrisville is a cased mixed case. The parts of the town built after that century are still residential and commercial areas, and accessible to the public. The lower end of Morrisville, the portion that

[107] William W.H. Davis. "The Organization of Townships," in *The History of Bucks County.*

was once Crewcorne, is now only partially residential and commercial. Crewcorne, which was situated in parts of present day Morrisville and Falls Township, has left no last mark on the landscape. Transportation routes still cross the Delaware River at the Falls, like during the 17th century, but the entire layout of the town has vanished. More generally, the lands of the Falls below the crossing spots, on both banks, has retained little of its character from even a century ago.

The west bank of the Falls is nothing like it was even at the beginning of the 20th century. Up until the 20th century, the area's rich farm land was used to produce potatoes, tobacco, wheat and corn. Moreover, the transportation routes that ran through the township made it easy to ship crops out of the area to economic centers (Philadelphia and Trenton) to be purchased. In the 19th century, the train tracks for today's Amtrak Northeast Corridor were laid out in Falls Township.[108] Thus, the area was now accessible to another mode of transportation other than land or river. Moreover, trains would be used for heavy industry in the 20th century.

Most of Falls Township is a fertile alluvial plain created over the years by the Delaware River.[109] Until the 20th century, this plain was used to produce and create crops for personal and commercial use. But during that century, the land started to be used for different purposes. Farmers sold their lands and now Falls Township is largely a land of industry and waste, literally.

If one looks at a map of Falls Township they will spot large lakes on the east side of the Amtrak rail road tracks.[110] Some of these lakes look picturesque and natural, but they were all manmade. The lakes were made after areas were dug up in order to sell the land for the sand and mineral sediments in the soil.[111] A lot of the soil was used to make concrete for the building the

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[108] This section of the corridor follows the general path of the Lower Kings Road through all of Lower Bucks County

[109] An alluvial plain is caused by the build of sediments of mud, clay, rocks and minerals flowing from the rivers and creeks.

[110] There are also three other manmade lakes on the west side of the rail road tracks, on Penn Valley Road. The biggest ones are part of Penn Warner Club, a recreational institution that stocks the lakes with fish.

[111] It is common knowledge in the area that the water table in the ground is unusually high in the area. If the ground is

17,000 houses of Levittown during the 1950s. Situated around the lakes train tracks are several industries, most notably U.S. and Fairless Steel mills. The mills are situated to the east of the lakes, on the bank of the river. They are no longer as productive as they in their heyday following the Second World War, but various buildings, roads and train tracks still take up an area larger than South Philadelphia.[112]

The other prominent industry still active in the area is Waste Management. There are three landfills in Falls and another in adjacent Tullytown to the south.[113] Largely because of this, Falls Township is essentially a wasteland. The land literally has enumerable tons of trashed on it because of the landfills. In addition, the dozens of other industries in the township have done untold harm to the environment and landscape. On the sides of the roads in this area one can find trash and debris from vehicles and the industries.[114]

It was unfortunate that this part of Falls has been abused. The area was once a treasured huntinggrounds for the Lenape. Its natural beauty and production value were retained by English succeeded the Natives for over two hundred years. But the 20th century brought a permanent change to the landscape. Most Falls Township will never again be farm or residential land. Approximately half other township is not even accessible to the public. Now the township is just an ugly part of the most commonly used rail road in the U.S., as part of Amtrak and Septa.[115]

The story of Falls is the typical. The presence of commonly used transportation has influenced the development of Lower Bucks County, especially Bristol and Morrisville. The

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dug deep enough one will hit water, and thus that is how the lakes were made.

[112] The Steel mills are essentially their own town. There are two main set of railroads that connect to the Amtrak tracks near Morrisville that come from the steel mill area. This area is inaccessible to the public, and this author has never actually been on this land. Moreover, this author has only been able to see the area from the New Jersey side of the river.

[113] One is situated adjacent to the recreation of Pennsbury Manor.

[114] There are two junk yards adjacent to the train tracks. Presumably, trash falls out of the hundreds of trucks transport to the landfills from areas all around the Delaware Valley. The air is tainted by pollution, and never smells fresh.

[115] It is also used for industrial purposes.

crossing to Burlington is still in Bristol, and is now known as Route 413. In addition, the Pennsylvania Turnpike also crossed the river in Bristol Township. Morrisville is home to four different crosses over the Delaware into Trenton. Most notable are the Route 1 and Amtrak crossings.[116] In addition, there are the Calhoun Street and Trenton Makes Bridges. The latter was the first bridge to ever cross the Delaware, circa 1806.[117] Lastly, there are the Interstate 95 and Septa bridges that cross the river from Yardley, three miles north of Morrisville.[118]

Not surprisingly, the most populated areas in Bucks County have developed around these transportation routes. Levittown is the most obvious case.[119] The town is situated in between all of the main routes. Levittown's borders are as follows: Route 413 and Interstate 95 on the west, Route 1 to the North, Route 13 and Amtrak are the south and east borders. When William Levitt decided to build Levittown in this area, he had to have taken the presence of these routes into consideration.[120] The transportation routes were key for two reasons. First, people from all directions could move to this area because of its accessibility. Secondly, the routes provided the potential for industries and other businesses to operate in the area. These two facts about the transportation routes made development possible. Levitt may have been able to provide thousands of houses to live in, but the residents of the town would obviously need jobs. These jobs were provided by the various industries and businesses mainly situated around the transportation routes like Route 1, Route 13 and the three railroads of Lower Bucks County. These routes made it possible for these businesses to function, since they made it possible to move resources and

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[116] There is also another industrial rail road that runs along Route 1 from Morrisville until Langhorne where it merges onto the Septa West Trenton rail road line. The other commuter rails are also used for industrial purposes today.

[117] *South River Walk Park.* Mercer County Park Commission (Trenton, New Jersey. 2010). The Trenton Makes, Route 1 and Amtrak crossings are all in within hundreds of feet of each other. The first bridge was presumably where Kings Road ended in Pennsylvania, which is today's Old Bristol Pike and Route 13.

[118] Yardley is small borough on the river, named after William Yardley, an original Quaker settler. The borough was originally part of Makefield Township.

[119] Levittown is the most populated

[120] Interstate 95 was not built until the 1960s.

finished goods in and out of the county. It is no wonder why company's like U.S. Steel and Waste Management chose the area. Moreover, these routes did not lead to just anywhere, they led heavily populated economic centers like Philadelphia, Trenton, Newark and New York.

More specifically, the most populated areas of Lower Bucks County are centered on the three roads established in the 17th century: today's Route 1, 13 and 413. Between the five original townships there are over two hundred thousand people.[121] Lower Bucks County has become very urban, but it has retained some of its colonial character. It is still the keystone of the Keystone State geographically, and will remain so for years to come.

The Delaware Valley became this geographical keystone from the years 1609-1692. During the first half of the century, Europeans explored the area and became familiar with its landscape. Through mid-century, the Dutch began to use overland routes between the Delaware and Manhattan to transport information between the administrative officials of their colony New Netherlands. In 1664, the English forcefully took control of the region and started to settle the area slowly. Although it was sparsely populated, inter-colonial overland routes developed through the area. In 1681 most of the Delaware Valley became Pennsylvania and the colony quickly attracted thousands of Quakers and other English immigrants. From that point forward in history the Delaware Valley would serve as a geographical keystone of English North America and the United States. Its critical link across the Delaware is still at the Falls in Bucks County.

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[121] This includes Falls, Bristol Township and Borough, Middletown, Langhorne, Morrisville, Bensalem, Lower and Upper Makefield, Yardley

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