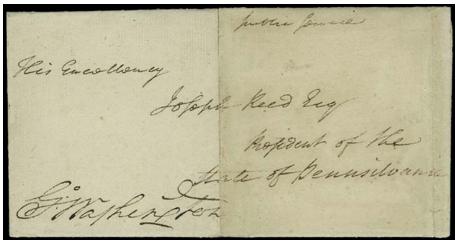
New Jersey County Formation



By Jean R. Walton

GEORGE WASHINGTON SLEPT HERE!



Letter sent from George Washington at Morristown NJ to the President of the State of Pennsylvania.

FOREWORD

New Jersey is a unique state – long in history and full of possibilities. It has existed from Colonial times, and has been a crossroads between New York City to Philadelphia from that time. The Post has crisscrossed it for all that time, from towns that existed than and perhaps no longer exist.

Counties formed over time. This is intended to give the reader an idea of which counties were formed when, and out of what territories – a necessary tool when dealing with post offices that have existed for a long time, first in one county, then in another – without moving an inch.

We hope you will find it useful.

NEW JERSEY CAPITALS AND COUNTY FORMATION

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THE CAPITAL QUESTION! For Starters, where is the Capital of New Jersey?

This is a question not easily answered in a few words.

Trenton was made the Capital of New Jersey in 1790 – then in Hunterdon County. What was it before that?

Perhaps it is better to start at the beginning: New Jersey's first Capital was Elizabethtown (now simply Elizabeth), so declared in 1668, when New Jersey was a proprietorship.

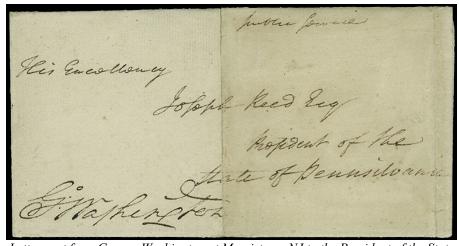
Then the proprietorship of New Jersey was split (in 1674) in two proprietorships – East and West Jersey, often referred to as "The Jerseys." The Capital of East Jersey was moved to Perth Amboy (then just Amboy) in 1683. Burlington, founded in 1677, was named Capital of West Jersey in 1681.

In 1702, these two proprietorships were combined into one Crown Colony, but the two Capitals were maintained until the Revolutionary War, with the Governor sharing his time between each.

During the Revolution, and until 1790, the State Legislature met in Princeton – a point somewhat midway between the two Capitals. Although not actually named as Capital, Princeton certainly functioned as such during the Revolution. New Jersey became a State on December 18, 1787, and Trenton was declared the official Capital on November 25, 1790, replacing Perth Amboy and Burlington.

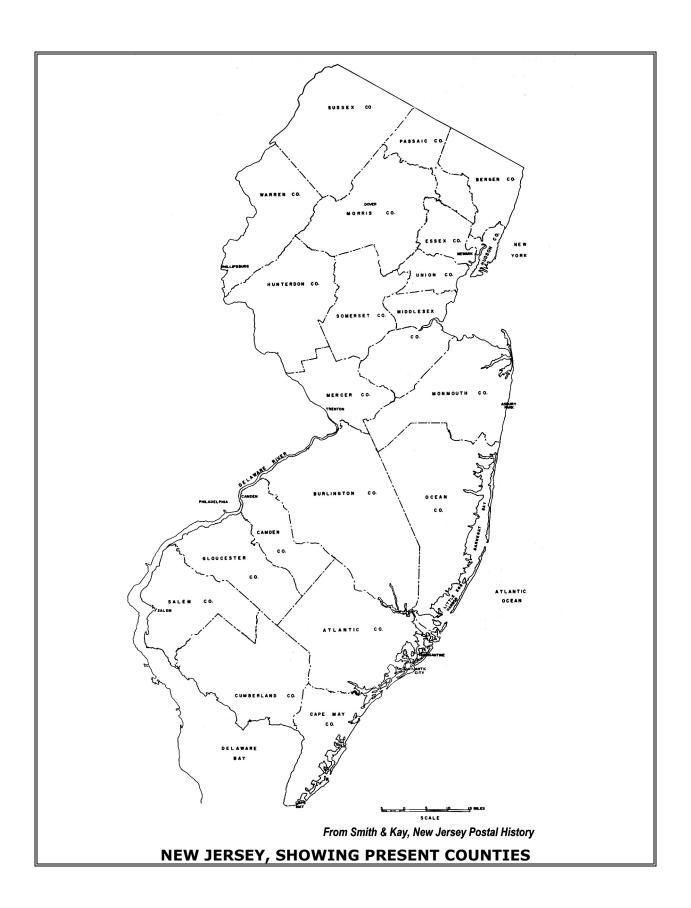
With the formation of Mercer County in 1838, Trenton, which had been in Hunterdon County, was now located in Mercer County – as it still is today.

Thanks to NJPHS member Ed Siskin for help with this information. Additional information also found on an old web site, NJ History's Mysteries at https://web.archive.org/web/20070929061940/http://www.njhm.com/, with a specific article at https://web.archive.org/web/20070927230255/http://www.njhm.com/statecapitals.htm.



Letter sent from George Washington at Morristown NJ to the President of the State of Pennsylvania.

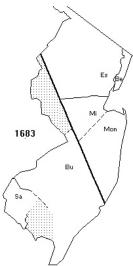
NEW JERSEY COUNTIES (alphabetically)	DATE FORMED
Atlantic County	1837-02-07
Bergen County	1683-03-01
Burlington County	1694-05-17
Camden County	1844-03-13
Cape May County	1692-11-12
Cumberland County	1748-01-19
Essex County	1683-03-01
Gloucester County	1686-05-28
Hudson County	1840-02-22
Hunterdon County	1714-03-13
Mercer County	1838-02-22
Middlesex County	1683-03-01
Monmouth County	1683-03-01
Morris County	1739-03-15
Ocean County	1850-02-15
Passaic County	1837-02-07
Salem County	1694-05-17
Somerset County	1688-05-00
Sussex County	1753-05-16
Union County	1857-03-19
Warren County	1824-11-20



NEW JERSEY COUNTY FORMATION

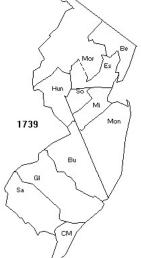
New Jersey, as a colony, was originally East and West Jersey, divided by a line drawn from a point in the NW along the Delaware River to a point on the Jersey shoreline near Little Egg Harbor.

New Jersey did not always have 21 counties. It began – as a colony – with only 4 in 1683 [Bergen, Essex, Middlesex, and Monmouth], soon to expand to 9 in 1694, with the addition of Gloucester, Cape May, Burlington and Salem in West Jersey, and Somerset in East Jersey. But it has evolved over time and here are the broad strokes:



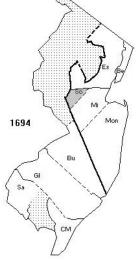
1683 4 original counties The original 4 counties, Bergen,

Essex, Middlesex & Monmouth in East Jersey, were established in 1683. (This map shows Burlington & Salem in West Jersey because courts were established there in 1681.)



1739 10 becomes 11

Morris County is formed in 1739, from Hunterdon County.



1694 4 becomes 9

In West Jersey, Gloucester was created in 1686; In East Jersey, Somerset was established in 1688. Again in West Jersey, Cape May County was formed in 1692, and Burlington & Salem formally became counties in 1694.



753 11 becomes 13

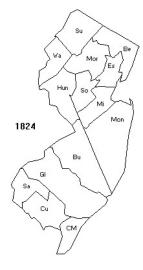
In 1748, Cumberland is formed from parts of Salem. Sussex is formed from parts of Morris in 1753.



1714

9 becomes 10

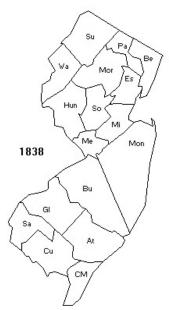
In 1702, the two Jerseys \sim East and West \sim have consolidated. Hunterdon (in 1714) is added to the others. .



1824

13 becomes 14

Sussex is divided to form Warren County in 1824. (Note the northern border with NY, redrawn in 1773.)

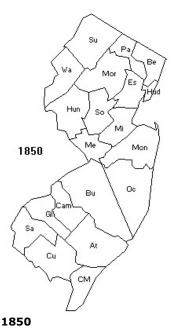


1838

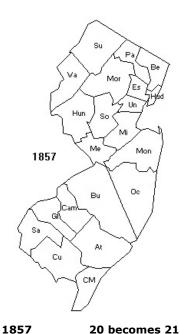
In 1837, half of Gloucester becomes Atlantic. Passaic is formed from parts of Bergen & Essex and in 1838, Mercer is established, and includes the Capital of Trenton.

So by 1857, New Jersey had all 21 of its current counties. Minor changes occurred after that \sim some shifts in territory occurred, barely noticeable on a map of this size, except for the notable change in Burlington County; the one country that still spanned the State from the Delaware River to the Atlantic Ocean lost its ocean access to Ocean County in 1891, ceding Little Egg Harbor Twp. To Ocean Co.

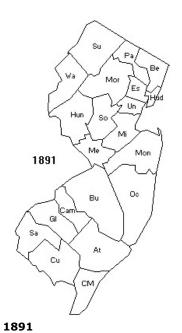
Otherwise this map has remained largely the same since that time.

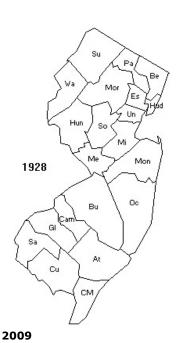


Hudson (1840), Camden (1844) & Ocean (1850) are carved out of neighboring counties. Gloucester has become but a shadow of its former self.



The last county to be formed in New Jersey [so far!] was Union, cutting Essex in half and taking a bit of Middlesex in 1857.





These great maps are from https://www.mapofus.org/newjersey/

Hence we end up with an historical list of New Jersey's 21 counties, as follows:

COUNTY	DATE FORMED	FROM
Bergen Co.	1683-03-01	East Jersey
Essex Co.	1683-03-01	East Jersey
Middlesex Co.	1683-03-01	East Jersey
Monmouth Co.	1683-03-01	East Jersey
Gloucester Co.	1686-05-28	Burlington
Somerset Co.	1688-05-00	Middlesex
Cape May Co.	1692-11-12	West Jersey
Burlington Co.	1694-05-17	West Jersey
Salem Co.	1694-05-17	West Jersey
Hunterdon Co.	1714-03-13	Burlington & West Jersey
Morris Co.	1739-03-15	Hunterdon
Cumberland Co.	1748-01-19	Salem
Sussex Co.	1753-05-16	Morris
Warren Co.	1824-11-20	Sussex
Atlantic Co.	1837-02-07	Gloucester
Passaic Co.	1837-02-07	Bergen & Essex
Mercer Co.	1838-02-22	Burlington, Hunterdon, & Middlesex
Hudson Co.	1840-02-22	Bergen
Camden Co.	1844-03-13	Gloucester
Ocean Co.	1850-02-15	Monmouth
Union Co.	1857-03-19	Essex & Middlesex

List courtesy Kay & Smith, *New Jersey Postal History*, Quarterman Publications, Lawrence, MA, 1977.



Contact Secretary@NJPostalHistory.org for more information.