

## STORIES of New Jersey

The bridge over the Raritan at New Brunswick was also constructed in 1795, and 11 years later the largest and most expensive of these structures, the 1,000-foot span over the Delaware at Trenton, was completed.

The supremacy of the Trenton-New Brunswick-Powles Hook route was assured. All other lines at the time were forced to ferry across streams, and consequently their trips took longer. The stage traffic over the Trenton route was dominated by the J. N. Cumming Company, which ran four stages daily, leaving Philadelphia and Powles Hook at 8 in the morning and at 3 in the afternoon. The fare was set first at \$4 and later raised to \$6. When Cumming added stagecoaches he charged \$8 for a trip on the more comfortable vehicle, but his stagewagons continued to make the same trip for \$6. In 1796 Cumming secured the mail contract and added two more stages. They left both cities at 1 in the afternoon and arrived at their destinations the following morning.

Almost at the end of the 18th century another line was started by the Douglas Vandervoort Company. To take business from the Cumming company, the rates were cut to \$4, and a great number of travelers were immediately attracted. To avoid ruinous competition, the lines were joined, as many others were during the next few years. The people of New Jersey still did not like monopolies, however, and the stage companies were split again although there was no competition but friendliness and cooperation among them.

Although stages still ran over the old Burlington and Bordentown routes, they did not seriously threaten the lines running over the Trenton road. However, in 1799 the old York road came into prominence again when after an inspection of the bridges along the route the Swift Sure Stage company was formed. They ran stages every weekday through Newark, Springfield, Scotch Plains, Bound Brook and Lambertville. The fare on the Swift Sure Line was \$5, as cheap as any other line then running, and in addition they offered to insure all baggage and freight for 1 percent of its declared value.

The discovery of the pleasures of the Jersey coast led to the establishment of new lines carrying vacationers to the shore. Cape May, Little Egg Harbor and Great Egg Harbor were already linked to Philadelphia, and stages were also going to Tucker's Beach, opposite Tuckerton, and to Long Branch. A northern route that became popular at the turn of the century ran from Newark through Morristown, Washington and Phillipsburg and ended at Easton. Over this route each year went hundreds of New England families in the search for fertile lands farther west.

Although the stages of the 1790's were more comfortable than the earlier ones, they were still for the most part wagons. The coachee, introduced about this time, was a small stage wagon that carried six or seven people. It was much better finished and better sprung and had doors at the sides which eliminated the necessity of travelers' climbing over each other to reach the rear seats. But the more comfortable wagons, coachees and coaches were also faster, and the drivers delighted in racing down hills. When the conveyance got out of control, those lucky passengers near the windows jumped out. Those who could not get out waited for the vehicle to stop of its own accord or overturn, as it sometimes did.

### *Turnpikes and Steamboats*

Two other developments were to affect stagecoaches before they disappeared. The first was the turnpike or toll road; the second was the steamboat. Both speeded stagecoach transportation, but the steamboat spelled the end of staging. For as soon as steam transportation on the water became a fact, inventors turned to adapting steam transportation to land.