

STORIES of New Jersey

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NEW JERSEY WRITERS' PROJECT, WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION

44 Chestnut Street, Newark, New Jersey

THE RAILROAD INDUSTRY

Laying The Rails

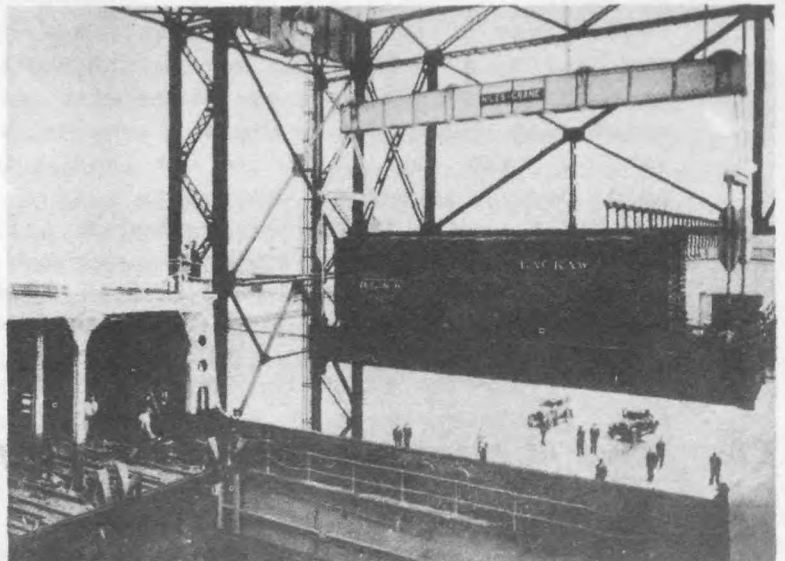
Clattering past crossroad gates on the sandy earth of southern counties, rumbling on bridges over the Raritan, the Passaic and the Hackensack rivers, screeching through cuts in the Ramapo hills--24 hours a day, trains move swiftly across New Jersey to the great terminals that make the Garden State one of the most vital points on the American transportation map.

Since Colonial times New Jersey has been a major highway for commerce and travelers because it lies between New York and Philadelphia. Through the door of New Jersey pass coal, vegetables, cereals, lumber, automobiles, Christmas trees and thousands of other products for the 12,000,000 people in the metropolitan area and for the countless millions all over the world who use commodities which freight cars carry to the ships in New York Harbor.

With more than 2,000 miles of railroad, New Jersey exceeds all other States in the amount of trackage per square mile of land, and few places in the world have as great a concentration of railway terminal facilities, passenger stations, railroad repair shops and roundhouses, huge warehouses for storing export goods, facilities for handling grain, livestock and perishable commodities, vast freight yards and equipment for the fascinating business of railroading over water.

In the number of employees, the wages paid and equipment purchased, New Jersey railroads rank tenth in the Nation. Thirty thousand men and women are paid \$56,000,000 in wages each year by the railroads of the State.

New Jersey has been a center of railroad activity since the beginning of the industry in this country. In 1815 the first railroad charter in America was granted to the New Jersey Railroad Company after a long campaign by John Stevens. Because he could not collect the necessary private funds, Stevens had to abandon plans for the road which was to have connected the Delaware and Raritan Rivers. Ten years later on the grounds of his Hoboken home (now Stevens Institute of Technology) he gave a successful demonstration of his steam locomotive, the first built and operated in the United States. His son, Robert L. Stevens, designed the T-shaped rail, the standard rail on all American roads today.



*Loading freight cars
for an ocean voyage.
Courtesy Seatrain Line*