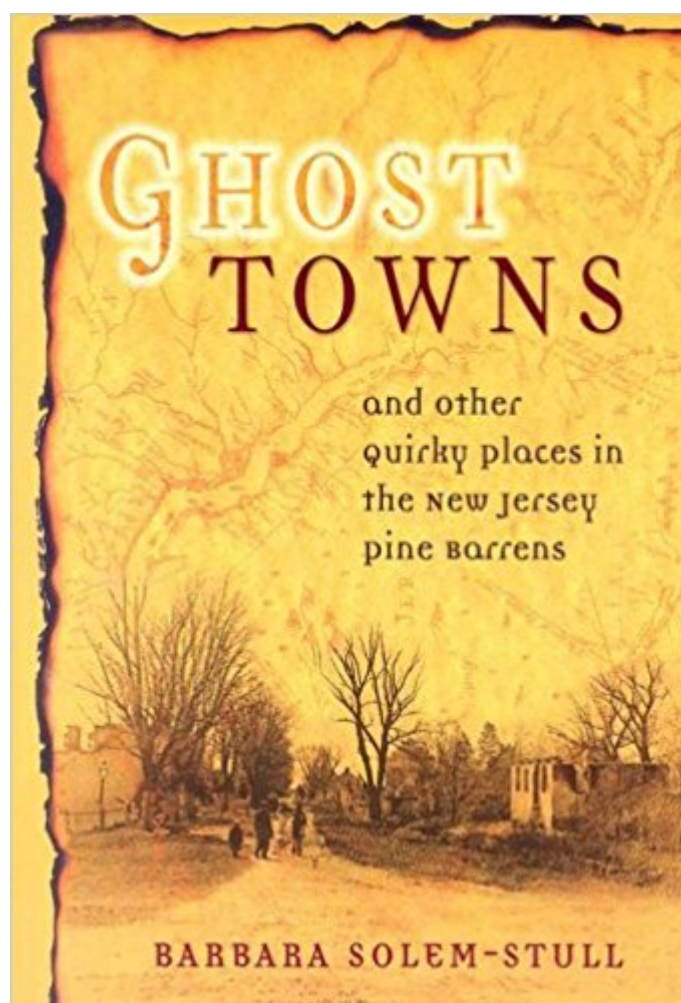


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Ghost Towns: And Other Quirky Places In The New Jersey Pine Barrens



Synopsis

The Pine Barrens of New Jersey contain more ghost towns, some say, than the entire American West. In *Ghost Towns and Other Quirky Places in the New Jersey Pine Barrens*, Barbara Solem-Stull tells the story of the towns that rose up around the iron furnaces, glass factories, paper mills, cranberry farms, and brick-making establishments of the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries. Loaded with easy-to-use maps and more than 100 photographs and illustrations, the book provides driving directions and self-guided walking tours of many of the Pine Barrens's most intriguing historic sites and ruins. This is a unique field guide for anyone interested in reading about the history of Pinelands ghost towns and in exploring these long-ago communities firsthand.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The world can be divided into those who are content to keep to the main roads of life and those who venture onto the roads less traveled. This unique and indispensable book is decidedly geared towards the latter. Back in 1936 Henry Charlton Beck's *Forgotten Towns Of Southern New Jersey* introduced the "civilized world" to the mysteries and historical treasures hidden deep within the Pine Barrens. Ignorance and superstition among urbanites had combined to create a sense of foreboding about the Pine Barrens that, in their imaginations, were inhabited by an irrational, dangerous and xenophobic community of people they referred to, disparagingly, as "Pineys". Some claimed these people were direct descendants of American loyalists who had taken refuge in the forest to escape the retaliation of their patriot neighbors. Others claimed these people were descendents of Hessian mercenaries who had chosen to desert the British army rather than be used as cannon fodder in a

war in which they were mere pawns. In reality, the Pine Barrens is an area rich in colonial history that has been neglected and under appreciated by the State and by those who inhabit its urbanized areas. However, ignorance of the many provides opportunity for an adventurous few who will take the time to learn the history of this area. The ruins in the Pine Barrens are not grandly spectacular but rather subtle and at times hidden within the forests of scrub pine and oak and they require a discerning eye and a good map to find. Often the only visible remnant will be a collection of cellar holes that belies the layout of a once-thriving village that has disappeared into history. This is investigative amateur archeology at its best and this is where this book proves its worth. The perceptive and sensitive historian will thrill at discovering these relics of our colonial past by way of a more intellectual appreciation of their significance. Our American colonial forbears lived, worked and died in these places. The iron dug from the stream banks and the associated furnaces and forges made cannon balls and utensils that supplied Washington's soldiers as well as those of local militiamen. With exceptions such as Batsto and Atsion, state government has rarely dedicated the resources to mark these places or to explain their significance adequately to those who might happen upon them inadvertently. Thus, the adventurer/historian must actively seek them out and develop a subtle appreciation for the things that happened here and how they were connected to the greater scheme of the origins of early American industry and everyday life in revolutionary America. The fact that so many of these vestiges are untended and unprotected engenders feelings of anxiety about their preservation and vulnerability but also gives rise to a sense of opportunity to interact intimately with these places in ways that would be impossible if they were behind protective barriers or in a museum. Here one encounters the cellar hole of the Washington Tavern that was locally famous as a recruiting center for local militia as well as for Washington's Continental soldiers. It is totally exposed, unprotected, unmarked. There is nothing to stop one from descending into it, touching the very bricks that were laid by some colonial mason's hand two centuries ago. It is precisely this seeming indifference on the part of the State that leaves these sites accessible, if vulnerable, but also unidentified and hidden. And this is precisely where Solem-Stull's book proves its worth. Whereas Beck provided a charming and literary account of these sites, his purpose was more to document and preserve their folklore than to provide a guide for use by amateur historians and adventurers in reaching the sites for themselves. Solem-Stull, on the other hand, has tracked down and identified the precise location for each of these sites, provided a map and historical background information in addition to warning about the potential dangers one may encounter. For those of us who have ventured into the Pine Barrens prior to the advent of global positioning technology, accessing these areas was a challenge, as was attempting to make sense of the

intricate network of constantly bifurcating unpaved sand roads. GPS and Solem-Stull's book have made these tasks less daunting and much more accessible to those adventurous souls who long to take the road less traveled.

A well-researched piece of writing. This area of NJ is a fascinating ecological and sociological curiosity. There are many stories and legends about the area. Some are based on an actual place, person, or event. Some sound like they might have been created around a campfire by a lake or maybe sheltering in a tent waiting for the rain to stop so the folks could go hiking or fishing or ...whatever else you do in the woods. There was also a book called Mystery in the Pine Pine Barrens, or something like that, that was just as good, but it's not available any more. I read it around 1951.

Shipped, arrived as described. Product was as described, very happy with it.

great info....directions....history....story....loved it

Great book for anyone interested in reading about the NJ Pine Barrens. I live in the area so it extra special to learn about its history.

This book had almost everything about the history of the land I live on. It was great in details. I would highly recommend this for any history buff. Great Book.

Still reading this one , but as always a great book

This is an interesting book unless you want to actually find the locations in it. It has only hand-drawn, not-to-scale maps. There are written directions, but to easily convert them you are going to need a printed map so you can trace out the route. Overall, this was just ok.

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