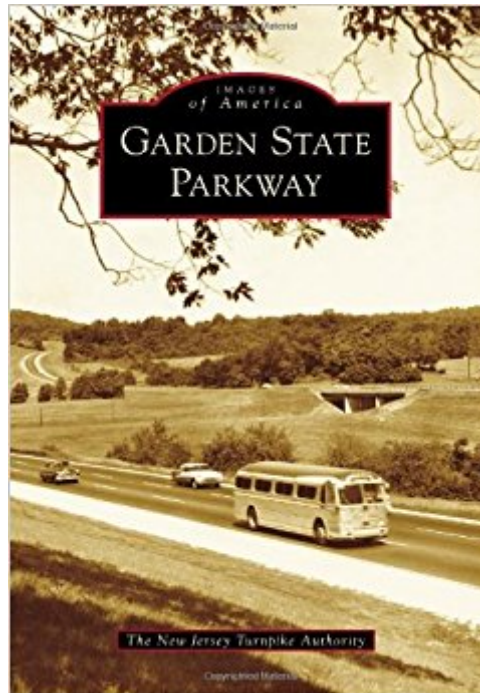




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Garden State Parkway (Images Of America)



Synopsis

The Garden State Parkway has transformed the lives of New Jersey residents since opening in 1954. Spanning 173 miles from Cape May to the New York State line, it has fostered tourism to the Jersey Shore and given commuters an easier way to get to work. Gov. Alfred E. Driscoll had envisioned the impact a new highway could have on the state, and a large team of planners, engineers, and contractors made it happen. In 1952, the legislature created the New Jersey Highway Authority to ensure the funding and completion of the \$330-million parkway and to self-sufficiently operate the roadway through toll revenue. Garden State Parkway shows how this iconic roadway gained its place in history and continues to combine safe transportation in a parklike setting with the scenic beauty of New Jersey.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Images within Garden State Parkway come from the archives of the former New Jersey Highway Authority, which merged with the New Jersey Turnpike Authority in 2003. This story was created through the efforts of staff that served at both authorities and specifically of those in the Constituent Services and Engineering Departments and their professional services consultants.

During the past 35 years I've traveled the GSP as a commuter coach operator, interesting to learn its beginnings. During my years using it and the Turnpike, I've seen many changes.

Garden State ParkwayThe Garden State Parkway was designated as an historic district in 2001. [Some sort of political cover?] This 2013 book commemorates its construction. It has 127 pages for its five chapters, mostly filled with photographs; no Index. The GSP runs from the NY state line to Cape May. In the mid 19th century industrial towns and cities developed near railroad terminals. [Actually, it was the other way around.] Cities grew and trolley lines transported in and to cities. Roads and highways connected the Main Streets of cities to their neighbors. Most working people lived within walking distance of their jobs and shops. Trolleys died out after WW I because of their higher costs (compared to automotive omnibuses). Roads were the responsibility of municipalities and counties. The 1921 Federal Highway Act led to double the number of paved roads. In 1945 the NJ Legislature authorized the GSP project (originally Route 4) to connect the cities in the north with the shore towns. The lack of funding by the state limited construction. [No mention of any railroad lobby.] In 1952 a new agency was created to build a toll highway using state-supported bonds. [No mention that the GSP would bypass existing cities and avoid this traffic, a new design for roads.] The portions constructed with state funds were toll free (Middlesex and Union counties). Cloverleaf intersections were used instead of circles due to the different grade levels. [Those rest stops (p.17) were sometimes used as Lover's Lanes at night.] The goal was to create a highway that was uninterrupted, safe, fast, and scenic [compared to Route 9]. Curves were meant to avoid long, straight stretches of road. [This increased costs.] Much of the southern portions were built on undeveloped lands. Rapid construction resulted from parallel development. The GSP ran from Cape May to the NY state line in 1957. The completed GSP allowed families to vacation down the shore [and allow development of suburban housing on farm lands]. The Garden State Arts Center was built. Exits were named by miles from the origin in Cape May, rather than a sequential number. Service areas were located between opposing lanes of traffic to access by either lane. Commuter parking lots were created to benefit car pools. The painting on page 78 raises the question of collisions with deer. None reported? Chapter Four discusses the safety designs (p.83). Singing shoulders warned a driver if he drifted off the road. Swales prevented crossovers and distracting headlights at night. Curves and hills avoided monotony. Many of the original picnic areas are closed today. Note the old paper tape Teletype machine on page 98. Barriers at too plazas prevented toll cheats. Chapter Five lists the design principles to promote safety, functionality, and aesthetics. There were almost no grade crossings, access was restricted. Billboards and advertising were banned. Lanes were separated by wide medians and high berms. Steep grades and vertical

grades were eliminated [But most of the area south of the Raritan River was flat land.]. Population expansion created a need for new construction. In turn this created more traffic. [No mention of the effects of Hurricane Sandy on these towns.]In 2003 the NJ Highway Authority was consolidated with the NJ Turnpike Authority. The 1956 Federal-Aid Highway Act gave Federal funds to states to build highways (with lower cost designs). Can the NJ toll roads ever be abolished? Not as long as powerful interests benefit from these tolls. The E-Z Pass system is bad policy in itself, and sets a bad example for other roads and states. Imagine a more repressive tax where every automobile is forced to use this system on every road! Where is the right to travel freely now? Taxes on taxes? Should any state turn over its highways to a private agency to tax people so the very rich can benefit from these new taxes?

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