

Chapter 5 Getting About at the Shore

The New Jersey shore area was not on the transportation mainline since most travel in 1850 was between New York City, Philadelphia and Washington, DC. Four stagecoaches seating seven passengers left each city at 5 AM and traveled for fifteen hours for a cost of \$10. Each coach stopped in Trenton. A mail stagecoach could seat six passengers and departed at 1:00 PM for Philadelphia. Since there were no bridges or tunnels New York passengers were ferried across the Hudson River to Jersey City and Paul's Hook, then loaded on coaches.

The costs of mailing a letter was based on distance-30 miles costs .08cents, over 30 miles costs .10 cents, 150 miles costs 12 ½ cents, 400 miles costs 18 ½ cents, and beyond costs .25 cents. Post offices opened briefly on Sundays since that might be the only day patrons were able to come in to town. In 1810 Congress required Postmasters to deliver mail seven days a week.

Traveling around the New York area was very difficult because of so many river crossings. Houseboats to Brooklyn cost .75 cents for a carriage and .12 cents per person. Three steamboats traveled from New York to Philadelphia each day at a cost of \$8.00 per person. A sailboat from New York to Boston took four days. John Stevens applied for a Charter for a railroad between New York and Philadelphia in 1814, but it took another fifteen years for a locomotive to run between the cities. Private toll roads crossed the area. Horse farms are still numerous in the area for boarding and training racehorses.

The shore area of Long Branch developed as a popular resort area for presidents and the upper classes from Philadelphia, which was the social and cultural capital at the time. Philadelphians brought their cultural activities, dances, waltzes, reels and jigs with them to the resort hotels. Many of Ike's grandchildren became musicians who entertained summer visitors. There were plays, theatre and concerts throughout the summer seasons for the Irish, Episcopalian and Catholic visitors, but unacceptable to the Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists and Quakers at the time.