

Land Speculation
and the
Proprietary Beginnings of New Jersey

The ownership of real property might today seem so rudimentary that not much thought is given to its nature and origin. Most individuals in an urban\suburban society take for granted the right to own a home or rent an apartment. They also realize that the mere ownership of that home does not afford them any additional rights or privileges in society or government. We think in terms of home ownership and not land ownership. In the Agrarian society of the early English settlers of the North America Continent, real property and access to the large amounts of it, was the driving force behind colonization and development of New Jersey land titles. The dominance of same by a small group of men known as proprietors, classically demonstrates the power and influence that was unalienable from land ownership.

In his Commentaries on the Laws of England, William Blackstone, Esq. discusses the nature of land ownership and its emergence in English law.

“There is nothing which so generally strikes the imagination, and engages the affections of mankind, as the right of property; or that sole and despotic dominion which one man claims and exercises over the external things of the world, in total exclusion of the right of any other individual in the universe.not caring to reflect that (accurately and strictly speaking) there is no foundation in nature or in natural law, why a set of words upon parchment should convey the dominion of land...”

No doubt Mattano, a Lenape sachem, was thinking similar thoughts when he and two other sachems signed a deed for 500,000 acres of land in New Jersey on October 28, 1664. The Indians may have found some amusement in the bargain, as they were getting so much for so little. Although, they did not foresee the future implications for their sale. Daniel Denton, one of the Grantees in the aforementioned deed noted,

“It hath been generally observed that where the English come to settle, a Divine Hand makes way for them, by removing or cutting off the Indians, either by Wars one with the other, or by some raging mortal disease.”

This land would comprise the Elizabethtown Purchase and the deed would establish the source for land title disputes amongst Englishmen in New Jersey which would last until the Revolution. To their credit, the English settlers of what would become known as New Jersey would deal with the Indians in the purchase of lands. One of the earliest known accounts of encounters with the Lenape people noted that the Indians were aware from the beginning that the white man wanted land from them. There was never a doubt that the Indians would concede their rights, it was simply a matter of how. Willem ver Hulst, director of the New Netherlands was instructed to deal with the Indians peaceably and not to “drive them away by force or threats, but by good words be persuaded to leave” or they could be invited to live among the Dutch. The suggestion is not that the Dutch live among the natives. The presumption is that the Dutch have priority over even though the Indians may already be inhabiting it. At first the white man represented that a simple “garden spot” for sustenance was all they wanted, but gradually the white man would require more land and the signing of these curious sheets of writing for which the Indians would receive payment in the form of “twenty fathoms of trading

cloths, two coats, two guns, two kettles, ten bars of lead, and twenty handfuls of powder and four hundred fathoms of white wampum". It is arguable that the natives even comprehended the concept of land conveyance nevertheless the specific terms of the document they were signing. Blackstone's comments reveal how when the tradition of English law is removed, the practice of real property ownership and conveyancing is indefensible in the New World.

The evolution of real property ownership in Europe at the time of settlement was actually still in its infancy. Up until the 16th century most land was held by right of conquest establishing a feudal system (deriving from the terms feoda, feuds, fiefs or fees which mean reward) of land ownership brought to England by William I and the Norman Conquest in 1066 and the physical ability to maintain same from other interlopers. One Lord would exercise authority and dominion over all the land, property and people that existed within his dominion, this would include police powers and the holding of manorial courts. Instead of seeking redress from the government, the vassals of a particular estate would come before the Lord and submit their cause of action to him for settlement and rendering of decision.

The feudal system supposed that all realty was primarily possessed of the sovereign who would then grant certain rights or tenements to lesser noblemen, who would then in turn divide such land amongst other nobles subservient to them. The glue that held this system together was the feudal service which each of these tenants owed to their superior landlord, thus forming a pyramid of indebtedness with the King at the top. The original intent of this network of service was the ability to raise an army to defend the estate or nation at minimal expense and in a limited time. But there were other types of service

and incidents, or reserved to the overlord; i.e., knight service, frankalmoin service and socage; escheat, aids, relief, wardship, and marriage. The Lords retained the right to reach into almost every phase of their idea that those who possess land, possesses power. This system was the specific domain of aristocracy and “not merely a scheme of land ownership; it was also a moral. Ethical and social system, which defined the relationship among different classes in Medieval English Society”.

In 1485 when King Henry VII began to establish England as a nation under one supreme sovereign, he began to reconsolidate and redistribute land under the name of the King. Though the use of the Parliament and the passage of various Bills of Attainder, Wardships and Escheat, Henry VII consolidated a significant amount of land. His son Henry VIII would accumulate even greater amounts of land when he seized the lands of the church.

It was Henry VIII's redistribution of those lands to nonaristocrats that was to forever change the feudal concept of land ownership and move towards an allodial or independent land ownership system in England. As early as 1290 the service and duties integral to the feudal system were being challenged first by the enactment of the Statute *Quia Emptores Terrarum*, which replaced subinfeudation with substitution (thereby setting the precedent for the fee simple estate in land); The Statute of Tenures (1660) which converted most feudal obligations into money or goods; The Statute of Uses (1536) which eliminated the mystical ceremony of livery of seisin for the transfer of land (Livery of seisin was a public ritual before the community where the enfeoffer (seller) would stand on the ground to be conveyed, picking up sticks, dirt and rocks from that land and place them in the hands of the enfeoffee (buyer) while proclaiming the boundaries of the

property, along with the terms of payment and the affirmative act of conveyancing); The Statute of Wills (1540) which allowed the transfer of real property by will and finally The Statute of Frauds (1677) which required the use of written deeds in the conveyance of realty. This practice was generally in use since the abolishment of livery of seisin. Many of these ancient Statutes can be found codified in the laws of New Jersey.

It is just precedent to the Statute of Frauds that the history of New Jersey as an English Colony begins. Charles II, who returned to the throne in 1660, granted a large tract of land in the New World to his brother, James the Duke of York on March 20, 1664. James subsequently conveyed what would become the province of Nova Caesaria or New Jersey to John Lord Berkeley, Baron of Stratton and Sir George Carteret, of Saltrum, in the county of Devon, both members of the King's Privy Council by Lease and Release on June 23rd and 24th. Both of these individuals were closely connected to Charles II and James. Governor of Exeter, Berkeley was as one of three commanders in the English Civil War serving under Prince Charles (15 years old), as he attempted to direct the war effort the four Western counties. Berkeley would later be installed as James's Governor while exiled in the Netherlands and France. Not happy with him at first, James would grow to favor Berkeley, so much so that he stood against his brother Charles II in 1657 on Berkeley's behalf until Charles Capitulated, naming Berkeley a Baron.

Carteret was equally important to the King and his brother in that he was the Governor of the Isle of Jersey, a formidable island fortress just off the coast of France, where Charles fled in exile in April of 1646. Charles II was to return to Jersey several times during his exile always taking full advantage of his host, George Carteret. While in

exile Charles's prospects seemed very bleak, only through considerable welfare and charity of royalists like Berkeley and Carteret, could he hope to survive. His financial situation was desperate. In 1649 Charles was forced to sell much of his land on the Isle of Jersey and granted a patent to 7 individuals, which included Berkeley and Carteret, for as yet unappropriated lands, and quite possibly never appropriated, in North America to secure the his indebtedness and the loyalty of these men. It is evident that without land ownership, even the power of the King of England is minimal. He must engage individuals who have the faith that he will once again return to the throne in order to collect upon their debts. Men like Berkeley and Carteret did not follow the exiled boy King for some altruistic love of monarchy. It was their hope that they would continue to profit from the patronage system that had served them so well for generations. Carteret would later considered the "richest man in England". Carteret and Berkeley not only received the New Jersey grant of 7836 square miles (1/6th the size of England, but were also among the eight proprietors of the Carolinas (North Carolina – 52586 square miles, South Carolina – 31055 square miles). When considered together Berkeley and Carteret would receive a dominion almost twice the size of England (58,545,280 acres), over which they were granted the right of soil and the right to govern.

The reason for the conveyance and settlement of New Jersey were twofold. First, to repay loans granted to the King during his exile. William Penn came by way of his colony in a similar manner. Second, and most importantly, to "break the Dutch control of the seas. James the Duke of York, now Lord High Admiral at 27 years old, was determined to establish Britain as the predominant sea power and control the trade routes. He set about forming trading companies consisting of merchants, diplomats. MPs, and

other royalists, including Berkeley and Carteret. Berkeley was named to the Navy Board in 1660 and Carteret was the Treasurer of the Navy. James created the Royal African Company, The Morocco Company and the Corporation of Royal Fishery, directly in response to expanding Dutch trade influence throughout the world. James waged an undeclared war against the Dutch, who had only years before provided safe haven for him and his brother the King in Exile. Although, James had never endeared himself to the Dutch, having run up considerable debt while in the Netherlands and showing contempt for them in general. Quite possibly it was due to his latent Catholicism or just that he was an impudent boy with too much time on his hands. The Dutch would repay him in kind when he finally ascended and then descended from the throne in 1689.

The greatest insult to Great Britain was the existence of the New Netherlands colony in the middle of England's domain in North America. Not only did the Dutch use New Netherlands as a center of trade and a haven for smugglers and privateers in the midst of the English possessions, but they held the potential to cut off New England from Virginia and Maryland. It was at this point in March of 1664 that Charles conveyed all the land between the Delaware and Connecticut Rivers to James with the right of governance. It is evident that while Charles was concerned about the Dutch influence in the colonies, he had no particular concern for the colony itself. The granting of a feudal type colony was a way to accomplish a task, but relieve himself of the burdens of what would otherwise be an inconsequential possession.

In Hutton's biography of Charles II he goes on for some 458 pages and the New Jersey Colony is only mentioned once. The expedition sent by James, under the command of Colonel Richard Nicolls, arrived in August of 1664 and after months

correspondence between Nicolls and Peter Stuyvesant, the Dutch colony was surrendered and renamed New York. Nicolls was given the power to convey and confirm lands along with the power of governance. Unbeknownst to Nicolls, the Duke had conveyed New Jersey in June of 1664 to Berkeley and Carteret and their representative, Philip Carteret cousin of George, did not arrive in New Jersey until August of 1665. Nicolls was immediately beset upon by a group of Englishmen from Jamaica, Long Island led by John Bailey, Daniel and Nathaniel Denton, Thomas Benedick, John Foster and Luke Watson, later known as the Elizabethtown Associators. They had been trying for some time to obtain land in New Jersey along the Achter Kull (Arthur Kill). The Dutch had tried to settle in New Jersey but failed to deal fairly with Lenape Indians and suffered at their hands. Nicolls said that he would grant them the lands if they first obtained them from the natives. By Indenture dated October 28, 1664, the Indians Sachem Mattano, Conveyed what would become known as the Elizabethtown Patent to John Bailey, Daniel Denton and Luke Watson. This grant would include all of what is today known as Essex, Hudson, Union, Middlesex and part of Somerset County. Nicolls then confirmed the conveyance and granted liberal conditions including the right of self government. The settlement was begun in November of 1664 and was there to greet Governor Philip Carteret when he arrived the next year. Carteret seemed amiable enough and the Associators were willing to readily accept him as their Governor. Carteret himself became an Associator in order to secure land in Elizabethtown (named in honor of the wife of Sir George Carteret.)

In April of 1665, Nicolls had also granted the Monmouth Patent to a group of Baptists and Quakers from Long Island, who had left New England to escape persecution

and attain religious toleration. These two patents would be the source of “revolutions” in 1672 and 1699 and Land riots in 1742 and 1746. Land ownership was the purpose and impetus for settlement in New Jersey. Unlike the Puritans who were resolved to create a protectorate for true Protestantism, or Virginia who were only interested in exploiting the soil and climate to corner the world tobacco market, the New Jersey Colony was a grand scheme of land speculation that saw a plethora of factions. A few of the many groups to play a significant role in the division of land in New Jersey were the Resident Proprietors, English Proprietors, Quakers, Associates, Nicolls Patentees, Land-grabbers, Quitrenters, foreign investors, and Clinker Lot Right Men.

The two original Proprietors, Carteret and Berkeley, had little desire to do anything more than make a profit from the New Jersey Colony. They expected to obtain revenue from land sales and quitrents. Quitrent would become the most hated word in the New Jersey lexicon up until the revolution. The Quitrent is defined by the Encyclopedia Britannica as:

“A yearly payment of rent having its origin in the feudal services due by the copyholder or freeholder of an English Manor to its lord, acquitting the tenant of all dues and obligations. It was a custom based on immemorial usage.”

The object of the quitrent was provide a steady cash flow to the Proprietors to sustain the cost of government and military. But it’s main purpose was to provide a perpetual annuity to the Lords. Although both Nicolls and Proprietary grants contained language that provided for the payment of these rents, which were usually assessed at the rate of ½ penny per acre but could be as 7 pence per annum for town lots in Perth Amboy, the settlers did not have the money or inclination to pay them. The proprietors would later

raise the quitrent rate by 25% in 1686 to allow for the exchange rate from English money or sterling to New York money. The Proprietors put off the payment until 1670 for Elizabethtown and 1672 for Monmouth, but that day came and went without payment. The settlers objected to the quitrents not merely due to the cost, but also the concept. The quitrent was the last vestige of feudal servitude. It was obvious that the Lord Proprietors, who fought to preserve the monarchy wanted to enjoy the fruits of this huge manorial estate in the New World. The services they provide in the way of government and military protection were not comparable to the amount of money they stood to accrue if all rents were paid. It also stood as a permanent mortgage on all lands. Non-payment of the quitrents would allow the Proprietors to distrain the owners property and sell it to recover the rents. This idea of self government and taxation without representation was firmly entrenched in the anti-quitrent movement. If these moneys were to be used for governance than they should be raised by an act of the legislature with the consent of the people.

The dispute came to a head in 1672 when Captain James Carteret, son of George, was staying in Elizabethtown on his way to the Carolinas to look after his father's interest there. Two years earlier the quitrents had become due and Governor Philip Carteret made some moves to collect and to assert his authority over the settlers. Carteret infringed upon the Town rights by conveying property to Richard Michell, without the approval of the townspeople. The Associators attempted to control the 500,000 acres by restraining any sale within the first three years and after which the first option to buy must be given to one of the 80 members, after which the consent of the town was necessary. Carteret purposefully disregarded the Associators and was slowly created his

own clique consisting of men like John Berry who had been granted 5300 acres in the area known as new Barbados. The townspeople attacked the property of Michell and were soon presented before a Court of Oyer and Terminer packed with Carteret men. The people of New Jersey were appalled at this exercise of absolute authority. The Assembly met without being called by Philip and elected James Carteret, President of New Jersey, stating that Philip's "wanton disregard of the rights of the people and the welfare of the province, had caused him to forfeit the governorship. James assumed the office and Philip and Council fled to Bergen. Philip tried to divide and conquer by appealing to the various towns individually, gaining the support of Middletown and Shrewsbury by granting them the full power to convey all lands within the Monmouth Patent. They were willing to compromise their principals for greater control over and confirmation for their land grants. It also might be that the Quaker influence in this area might have held some disdain for the brutality and rebellion that the assembly had undertaken. At this point the Associators set upon the house of William Pardon to recover the provincial records summarily trashing it in the process. At this point Philip set off for England as the situation seemed untenable. James took over for a brief period when papers arrived from England including a letter from his father George Carteret. Understanding that discretion is the better part of valor, James continued on his way to the Carolinas. John Berry, who had come to New Jersey as part of a group of Barbadian investors now found himself the Deputy Governor of this province that he had come to only a few years ago. His ownership of vast amounts of land and service to the dominant landholders (the Lord Proprietors) had proven to be fortuitous.

This was all happening on the eve of the Second Dutch War. The Dutch arrived and took back New York and New Jersey without a fight and the Associators gladly accepted the Dutch rule, which placed John Ogden, Sr., the leader of the Associators, in the office of Schout which was comparable to that of Governor. Unfortunately, the Dutch lost the war in about six months and the Associators found themselves in a very uncomfortable position of being back under the Proprietors thumb. In the interim Berkeley had sold his share of New Jersey to John Fenwick, in trust for Edward Byllinge. Carteret found himself a tenant in common with a group of Quaker investors. Due to the Dutch conquest, Charles II gave a confirming Grant to the Duke of York in June 1674 and James confirmed the Northerly portion of New Jersey, which would become known as the Province of East Jersey, to Sir George Carteret. He failed to confirm West Jersey to the Quakers. Philip Carteret returned and proclaimed that because of the Dutch conquest all previous grants had been wiped out. Therefore, all inhabitants would be given one year to have their land patented and confirmed by the Governor. This not only meant that they would have to submit to the Proprietary authority, but that they would have to enter their names on the Quitrent Rolls. If this was not done then the Proprietor would confiscate and sell all unregistered land. In the face of this proclamation most still did not comply. England was a long way away and there was very little that Philip could do to enforce any of this. In order to avoid the payment of quitrents but still comply with the order, many landholders had only taken out a warrant of survey, which kept their names off the quitrent rolls but prevented Carteret from selling the property.

The experiment in West Jersey held such promise for the Quaker community. They had experienced significant persecution in England and wanted to settle a “utopian”

community in the New World. But will all go off intentions from the start, John Fenwick, who purchased the province on behalf of his friends Edward Byllinge to protect the land from creditors, later disputed the exact quantity of ownership between himself and Byllinge. The respected and venerable William Penn was called in to arrive at an amicable agreement between the parties. Unreconcilable, Fenwick was awarded 1/10th of the province which he settles to Salem. The rest was retained by Penn, Gawen Lawrie and Nicholas Lucas on behalf of Byllinge under the “tripartite agreement”. They approached the Duke of York and received the Quintipartite Deed in 1676 which established the line between East and West Jersey, a line that would be disputed and moved several times in the future.

The Quakers planned their province to be fully settled by Quakers, splitting the land into 100 shares to be sold at 350 pounds each. In 1677, they implemented the Concessions and Agreements of the Proprietors, Freeholders and Inhabitants of the Province of New Jersey, in America, which was at the time the most liberal governing document in the Colonies. This document provided for, freedom of religion, right to a trial by jury (comprised of twelve “good and lawful men of his neighborhood), due process through summons and freedom from slavery. The Quaker influence of fairness was evident in the manner in which they distributed and divided the land. They were very cautious of any one person or Proprietor becoming too powerful. The first Assembly created a Board of Commissioners responsible for this important undertaking. They adopted the following regulations:

1. No one was entitled to more than 400 acres of town land
2. A dwelling must be erected on the town lands lots.

3. No Proprietor could claim more than 500 acres in one tract in he owned more than a 1/8th share.
4. No one was allowed to own land on both sides of a creek.
5. No one was allowed to own more than 660 feet frontage per 100 acres on any stream
6. The signatures of two commissioners are required for all conveyances.
7. All deeds must be registered
8. All lands must be settled within 6 months after the deed is registered.

An obvious attempt was made to avoid the creation of large manorial estates, monopolization of the best land, or assemblage of large tracts by land-grabbers. They would have liked to collect quitrents but the competition amongst so many proprietors (120) made them implausible. Unfortunately, due to the machinations of Edward Byllinge and Dr. Daniel Coxe, all of the best intentions of the Quakers were compromised. Since the Duke of York conveyed West Jersey to Byllinge he proclaimed himself Governor and then appointed Samuel Jennings, a man he had never met to be the Deputy Governor in his absentia. He refused to recognize the Concessions and Agreements of 1677, in 1686 Byllinge presented a new charter to Assembly which was struck down on the grounds that an “absentee governor could not make amendments to the constitutions of the province” since he did not have requisite knowledge of those matters most concern to the residents. The justification for such an act by the Assembly was truly an exercise of their perceived rights of self determination. The practice of popular sovereignty was now deeply entrenched in the political philosophies of the New

Jersey colonists. They had taken the risk of leaving the land of their ancestors, giving up their possessions and station in English society, crossed the ocean on treacherous journey and braved the hardship of life in a strange undeveloped country (not to mention the Jersey Mosquito who features prominently in all accounts of the early settlers.) They would not be restrained by a “Lord “who lives on the opposite side of the ocean.

Edward Byllinge would die on January 16, 1687 and leave the West Jersey Quakers at the mercy of Dr. Daniel Coxe, purchaser of Byllinge’s interest in the province. Coxe intended to take over as Governor, although he was not a Quaker and to amass great expanses of land creating a huge manorial estate at Cape May. He became possessed of 20 shares in the West Jersey and 2 in East Jersey. He held hundreds of thousands of acres throughout New Jersey. He refused to recognize the Concession of 1677 and cared little for the altruism of the province. In 1692, Coxe sold his interest to the West Jersey Society, a group of London merchants and traders who immediately divided his holdings and put them up for sale. This marked the end of the social experiment in West Jersey. William Penn no doubt saw the handwriting on the wall before this as he gave up on West Jersey to devote himself completely and more successfully to the Western side of the Delaware River.

George Carteret died in 1681 having never realized a considerable profit from his Proprietorship. In 1682 Lady Carteret conveyed East Jersey to 12 Quakers, who included William Penn and several of the West Jersey Friends. William Penn would visit Elizabethtown in 1683 when he would purchase Luke Watson’s of the original Elizabethtown Purchase. He was criticized for recognizing the Associators claims while being a Proprietor himself. The Original 12 proprietors would immediately split their

divide their shares with 12 other investors mostly Scottish. Robert Barclay was made Governor for life, although he never came to the province. East Jersey was administered by a series of Deputy Governors, several of whom were recalled due to attempts to use their positions to accumulate large tracts of land through fraud and coercion.

It was in 1698 that Lewis Morris II came to the aid of the Quitrenters and blasted the Proprietary government claiming that if quitrents that they would not care “whether the King or the Devil has the Governm’t”. Morris knew that governing the colony was a burden to the Proprietors. Because the quitrents were not paid, the board could not pay Governor Hamilton’s salary in 1700, and there was “no expectation of recovering the same.” He incited the Elizabethtown Associates and in 1699 they surveyed and sold off a portion of the unappropriated land left under the original Elizabethtown Grant without any concern for the conflicting Proprietary Grants, to the Clinker Lot Right Men as they came to be known. Mob uprisings were reported across the province, one such instance where a trial was moved to Newark from Elizabethtown provoked the First Citizens of Elizabethtown to go by horse to Newark with clubs in hand to demand the release of the prisoner.

In 1911, Dr. Edward J. Fisher was quoted to have said “The adjustment of conflicting land claims was the most annoying and distracting feature of New Jersey History during the colonial period.” The East Jersey Board of Proprietors would find themselves embroiled in an unending series of lawsuits, *Fullerton v Jones*, *Vaughan v Woodruff*, and *Lithgow v Robinson*. The most famous of which was the Elizabethtown Bill in Chancery filed April 13, 1745 by the Proprietors against the Clinker Lot Right Men. This was an attempt to settle, once and for all, the claims under the Nicolls Grants.

The Associators retained William Livingston and William Smith to file an Answer in 1751. This case languished in the courts until the War for Independence overshadowed its importance. To this day these adverse land claims have not been settled.

The battle between the Associators and the Proprietors is a classic example of two land holding factions yielding various degrees of power at different intervals. Hutton never mentions the subject of the land title disputes. The English were so heavily involved in reinventing government and fighting three Dutch wars that the only consideration that they afforded New Jersey was concerned over the payment of quitrents to help lessen the exorbitant national debt. The King's concern and for that matter his brother James, who had a stake in the colony's success, was negligible. This salutary neglect would foster the ideas of self-determination already growing in the minds of the settlers. Their obstinance towards the rightful government of the King and Proprietors was a foreshadow of things to come. When it came to the denial of property rights and the payment of what amounted to a land tax, in quitrents, the settlers were undaunted in their rebellion. The story of New Jersey's land title disputes continues to this day. The Council of the Proprietors of West Jersey and the Board of East Jersey Proprietors continue until this day. Not only are they relied upon for historical information and evidence in the settling of land title disputes. The East Jersey Board is currently actively asserting its interest in large tracts of land in Ocean County. This dispute will most likely find the East Jersey Board in court once more to confirm their undeniable right to all of the unappropriated lands left in New Jersey.

It is not simply enough to say that it was the avaricious nature of the early settlers that caused them to desire land ownership. Certainly some could be seen in that light, the

Lord Proprietors who never came to the province and saw New Jersey as an investment opportunity or that chance to recapture some of the lost romance and power of a feudal era fast eroding. There is evidence that, the dozen or so residence proprietors who actually controlled the distribution of land took advantage of their position to line their own pockets. But the men who answered the entreaty of Gabriel Thomas in 1698, when reading his pamphlet entitled *An Historical and Geographical Account of the Province and Country of Pennsylvania and West Jersey in America*, saw something that they could not begin to image happening if they remained in England.

My chief design in writing this short account of West Jersey, is to inform all (but especially the poor) what ample and happy livelihoods people may gain in those parts, whereby they may subsist very well without either begging or stealing...They have a fair prospect of...living very plentifully and happily, which medium of life is far better than lingering out their days so miserably poor and half starved; or whipping, burning, and hanging for villainies, they will have little temptation...to perpetrate here...

These individuals looking to move up the social ladder saw an opportunity in the new World that they were witnessing in England, but reality dictated that there would not be enough for them to enjoy. The simple ethic presented itself that if one worked hard in America, one could improve his lot in life. Land ownership was an integral part of that social mobility. What today simply presents itself as mobility of lifestyle, was the key to a better life. In 1702 a man had to possess 100 acres of land to vote and 1000 acres of land to sit in the Assembly. Land ownership was a means to an end. Today, a larger house will not get you a seat in the New Jersey State Assembly. There is still plenty of profit to be made in land speculation, but the intrinsic value of land has been diluted over

the year and cannot begin approach the necessity to life that land meant in the agrarian society of the 17th and 18th centuries in New Jersey.