

GEHR Watershed Minute #3

Early Settlers: (146 words)

Long before Europeans arrived in North America, the Lenape Indians settled in the Great Egg Harbor Watershed and traveled about the waterways in their canoes. The Lenape hunted deer and elk, caught herring and shad in their fish weirs, gathered berries and fruits, harvested clams and oysters, and raised corn, beans, and squash.

The Dutch, the first European settlers, first settled along the coast and up the riverways in the early 1600s and made their living primarily from fishing, trading and shipbuilding. The discovery of swamps full of rot-resistant cedars bolstered the shipbuilding and timbering industries in the Pinelands.

Mays Landing was founded in the 1740s as both a port and shipbuilding town. Swedes and other Europeans moved into the area. During and after the American Revolution, Quakers, bootleggers, smugglers and pirates sought refuge in the pine forests. Individualism became an enduring characteristic of Pinelands residents.