



Utopia, New Jersey: Travels in the Nearest Eden

By Perdita Buchan

Rutgers University Press. Hardcover. Book Condition: New. Hardcover. 253 pages. Utopia. New Jersey. For most people--even the most satisfied New Jersey residents--these words hardly belong in the same sentence. Yet, unbeknown to many, history shows that the state has been a favorite location for utopian experiments for more than a century. Thanks to its location between New York and Philadelphia and its affordable land, it became an ideal proving ground where philosophical and philanthropical organizations and individuals could test their utopian theories. In this intriguing look at this little-known side of New Jersey, Perdita Buchan explores eight of these communities. Adopting a wide definition of the term utopia--broadening it to include experimental living arrangements with a variety of missions--Buchan explains that what the founders of each of these colonies had in common was the goal of improving life, at least as they saw it, not just the goal of selling homes. In every other way, the communities varied greatly, ranging from a cooperative colony in Englewood founded by Upton Sinclair, to an anarchist village in Piscataway centered on an educational experiment, to the fascinating Physical Culture City in Spotswood, where drugs, tobacco, and corsets were banned, but where nudity was...

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