

The Most Historic Place in My Town

The most historic place in my town that I am interested in is a group of ancient Indian campsites that existed near my home off of Fairmont Road in Tewksbury Township, New Jersey. The people that lived in these campsites were Indians and they were the first residents of Hunterdon County. They arrived during the Ice Age. After the Ice Age was over, all of the areas around New Jersey turned into a big forest. The group of Indians that lived in Hunterdon County at that time was called the Lenape Indians.

When the Indians were choosing a campsite, there were many things to consider such as water supply, shelter, soil conditions, and accessibility. The early groups of Lenape Indians did not have permanent campsites because they followed herds of animals for hunting and followed the run of fish down the river. They also knew where and when fruits, berries, nuts, and other food sources would be available. Often they were on the move every few weeks. At that time their homes were small trees with skins over them that could be easily taken down and moved to the next spot. Life became a lot easier after they discovered farming. The Lenapes were able to build more permanent houses, and gardens. The houses were now made of tree bark and had mats, platforms, and fire pits.

There were many different things that the Indians could eat. There were deer, geese, ducks, fish, rabbits, and

other wild animals. They also could eat certain plants. Later on they learned to grow corn, beans, squash, and other vegetables. Many of their tools were made from a very hard stone called flint. The Indians would chip at the ends of the flint with another rock until it was sharp. They would put a wooden handle on it and use it to get more food.

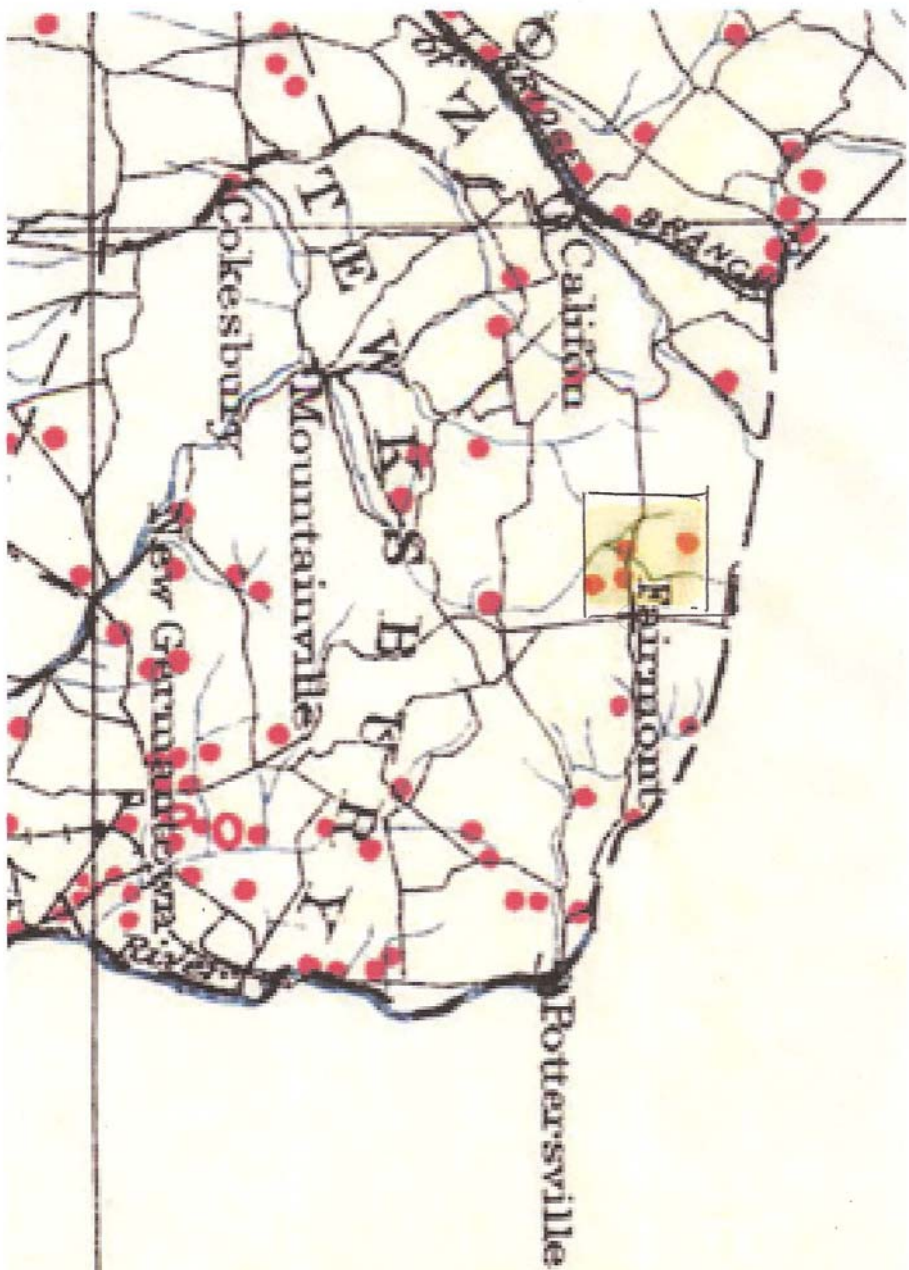
In Tewksbury, about 60 different sites were located in different areas. These areas were identified because of arrowheads, rock chips, and spear points that were left behind. While many of these sites are not clearly marked today, I have provided a map showing where they existed. I have highlighted the four campsites that are near my home on Big Spring Road. I think it would be fun to go out in the woods behind my house and see if I can find evidence of even more campsites.

By Nick Matukaitis

Sources:

- 1). State of New Jersey, Dept. of Conservation and Development, Division of Geology – Archaeology of Warren and Hunterdon counties (with maps) by Max Schrabisch, 1917
- 2) Hunterdon Herald, Volume 1, Number 1 *
- Hunterdon Herald, Volume 1, Number 3 *

* A Publication of Hunterdon County Cultural and Heritage Commission.
www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/depts/c&h/herald1.htm and 3.htm.



40°
 40'

LEGEND

● Camp Site

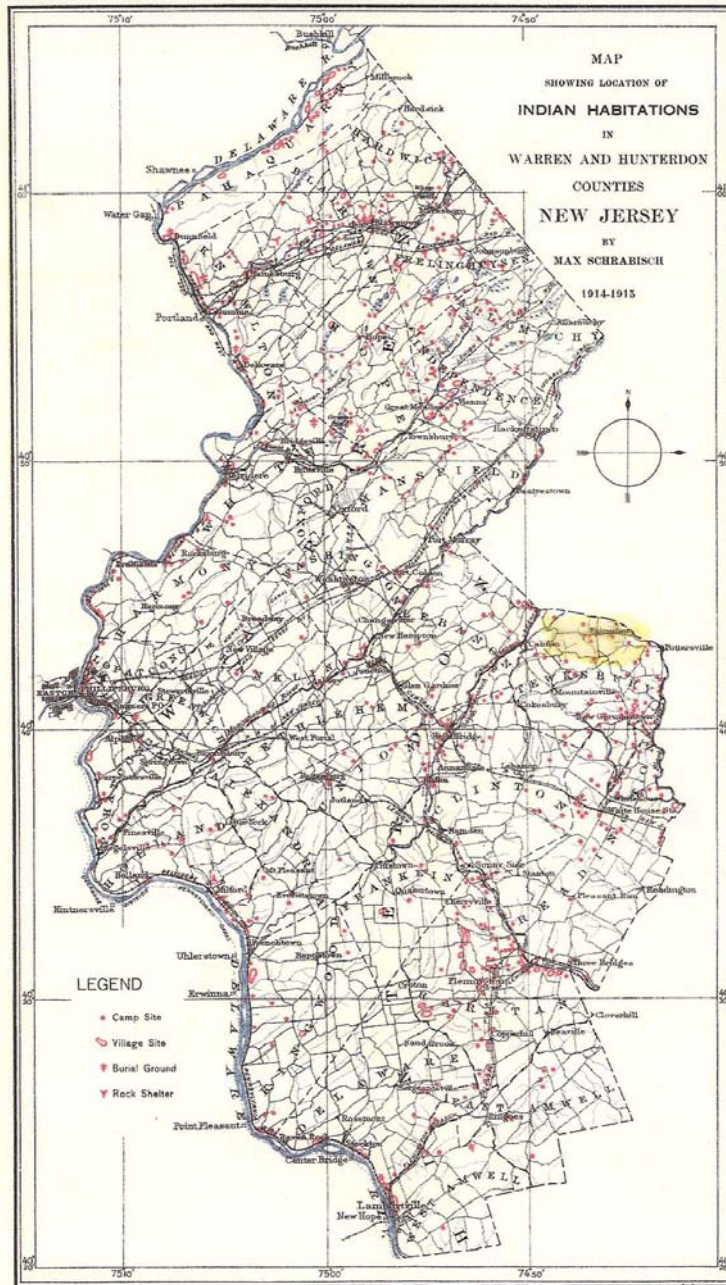
○ Village Site

Burial Ground

Y Rock Shelter



MAP
SHOWING LOCATION OF
INDIAN HABITATIONS
IN
WARREN AND HUNTERDON
COUNTIES
NEW JERSEY
BY
MAX SCHRABISCH
1914-1915



LEGEND

- Camp Site
- Village Site
- ▽ Burial Ground
- ▲ Rock Shelter

SCALE: 1:280 000 (approximately 4 miles to an inch)

