



# There's More to New Jersey than the Sopranos

*Marc Mappen*

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## **There's More to New Jersey than the Sopranos** Marc Mappen

An American tourist in Europe stopped at a restaurant in Gdansk, Poland, and struck up a conversation with a local. "Where do you come from?" he asked. "New Jersey," she said. He smiled and replied, "Ah, Sopranos!"

Even fans of that popular show, one that held viewers captive, may be a bit disheartened to discover that the first thing that pops into minds around the world about New Jersey is a dysfunctional crime family, just an exit or two off the infamous N.J. Turnpike. But there's no need to live in fear that the only culture and history that the state is known for is, well, let's say, a bit of bada bing. Actually, the echo of the Big Bang—the cosmic event that marked the birth of our universe some 13.7 billion years ago—was first identified by scientists from Bell Labs in Murray Hill, New Jersey.

In this lively romp through history from the primitive past to the present day, Marc Mappen's message resonates. *There's More to New Jersey than the Sopranos*. Real tales, wise tales, tall tales abound throughout the pages of Mappen's collection, filled with zest, humor, scandal, and occasionally tragedy. *Annie Oakley*. *Ulysses S. Grant*. *Benedict Arnold*. *Ezra Pound*. *Shoeless Joe Jackson*. These luminaries and many others share a common bond with the state that witnessed prehistoric elephants roaming its pastures, the explosion on the USS *Princeton*, a Martian invasion, famous firsts like the phonograph, electric light, and movies, and, well, step aside Tony Soprano: mobster Al Capone strolling along the Atlantic City boardwalk.

Providing a lens into American history through lively prose and more than twenty-five illustrations, *There's More to New Jersey than the Sopranos* is as much fun as a trip to the Jersey Shore and definitely more rewarding than a night home watching television—simply stated, this book is one you can't refuse to read.

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