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DOES NEW JERSEY HAVE AN OFFICIAL DEMON?

New Jersey has had a state bird – the eastern goldfinch – since 1935, a state tree – the red oak – since 1950, and a state dinosaur – *hadrosaurus foulkii* – since 1991. But does New Jersey have an official state demon, the “Jersey Devil”?



According to various newspaper articles, yes, the Jersey Devil is New Jersey's official state demon. The earliest such newspaper account we have found is from the *Wall Street Journal* from October 31, 1979, which said: “For 244 years, the hideous ‘Jersey Devil’ – appointed New Jersey’s ‘official state demon’ in 1939 – is said to have prowled the Pine Barrens, a dank, 1500-square mile wilderness infested with rattlesnakes and black widow spiders.” The New Jersey Public Broadcasting Authority also produced a documentary about the Jersey Devil in the 1970s that said that the Jersey Devil “was officially declared the state’s demon in 1939.”

But is it true? A search of the “Laws of New Jersey” from 1939, available on the New Jersey State Library’s [HeinOnline](http://www.njstatelib.org) database, has revealed no law designating the Jersey Devil as the official state demon. The notion that the Jersey Devil was given imprimatur as state demon in 1939 seems to be due to a book published in 1939 called *New Jersey: A guide to its Present and Past*. The chapter on “Folklore and Folkways” begins:

By default, the title of official State demon has rested for nearly a century with the Leeds Devil, a friendly native of Atlantic County who has traveled extensively throughout southern New Jersey.

The reliability of this book is questionable, as it also declared that the Jersey Devil was working on his doctorate from the University of Hell and that he discussed Republican politics with “old Judge French” every morning over breakfast. The idea that the legendary Jersey Devil is the official state demon of New Jersey is itself an urban legend.

Note: You can find a list of New Jersey’s state symbols at
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_New_Jersey_state_symbols#state_symbols.

HEINONLINE SUBSCRIPTION NOW INCLUDES ACCESS TO FASTCASE



Our [HeinOnline](http://www.njstatelib.org) subscription now includes partial access of Fastcase, a highly popular database for researching case law.

Until this upgrade, case law available on [HeinOnline](http://www.njstatelib.org) was limited to early editions of the *Federal Reporter* (1891-1922) and *U.S. Supreme Court Reports*. With the Fastcase enhancement, case law coverage is now expanded to include the Federal Circuits (1924-present), Board of Tax Appeals (vols. 1-47), Tax Court Memorandum Decisions (vols. 1-59), U.S. Customs Court (vols. 1-70), Board of Immigration Appeals (1996-present), Federal District Courts (1924-present), and Federal Bankruptcy Courts (1 B.R. 1 – present). The enhancement also includes access to case law of all 50 states, about half of them back to the 1800s, the remainder back to 1950 (New Jersey coverage begins at 1885).

With our subscription, case law can be retrieved by entering the case citation. Case law can also be retrieved through hyperlinks in other [HeinOnline](#) articles citing the opinions. Those citing articles can be retrieved through links at the top of the opinions.

[HeinOnline](#) is available at public terminals in the library, and remotely to authorized users.

Questions? Contact the Law Department at reflaw@njstatelib.org or 609-278-2640 ext. 102.

BATTLESHIP NEW JERSEY SHARES ORAL HISTORY WITH STATE LIBRARY

The New Jersey State Library has acquired a copy of the oral history collection of the [Battleship New Jersey](#), compiled over a 14-year period. The collection includes 320 video and audio interviews with U.S. Navy crew members, U.S. Marine Corps personnel as well as other military veterans and civilians who helped build or maintain the ship. Those interviewed include veterans who served aboard the New Jersey during its four commissionings in World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Middle East conflict up through 1992.



Join us on February 3 from noon to 1 p.m. in the Level 2 Reading Room as Ronald Gottardi, director of the Battleship New Jersey Oral History Program, shares how the oral histories were compiled and what is included.

Come to the library and search the collection for a specific individual or specific topics. Then watch or listen to interviews on DVD or CD players at the library.

Questions? Contact the Reference Department at refdesk@njstatelib.org or 609-278-2640 ext. 103.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS AND CLASSES

Visit the [upcoming events](#) section of our website for information on our free programs and Lunchtime Learning offerings. Classes include interesting topics such as getting started with genealogy and locating grants for education.

Upcoming programming includes the next author talk on January 7th entitled Owing New Jersey with author Joseph Grabas and the January 14th Book Café with the topic of the sea. All programs run from noon to 1 p.m. and most of the Lunchtime Learning classes are noon to 1 p.m. as well.

Questions? Lunchtime Learning – contact Andrea Levandowski at alevandowski@njstatelib.org

Book Café – contact Laura Shiber at lsiber@njstatelib.org

Author Talks – contact Cindy Warrick at cwarrick@njstatelib.org

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If you would like to sign up to receive The LINK, contact Cindy Warrick at cwarrick@njstatelib.org or 609-278-2640 ext. 172.

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