INFORMATION BRIEF

on the

GARDEN STATE PARKWAY,
TELEGRAPH HILL PARK

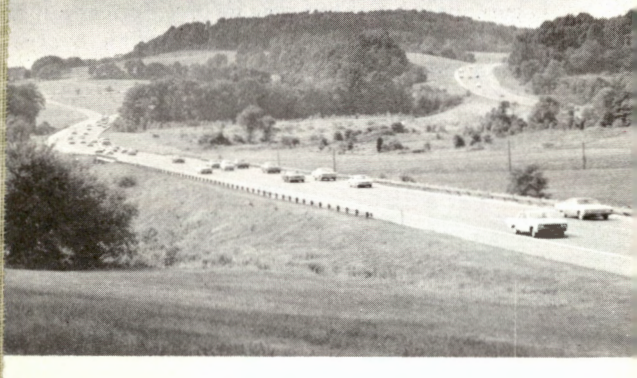
and the

GARDEN STATE ARTS CENTER.

PROPERTY OF
NEW JERSEY STATE LIBRARY

JUL 22 1970

185 W. State Street
Trenton, N. J.



built and operated by the:

NEW JERSEY, HIGHWAY AUTHORITY,
Garden State Parkway
Woodbridge, New Jersey 07095

974.90
A792
1969a copy 3.

The **GARDEN STATE PARKWAY** is a toll road, but the original parts (20 miles) of this New Jersey superhighway were built with tax funds and remain toll-free and tax-maintained.

The Parkway runs the length of New Jersey for 173 miles between Montvale in the north (where it connects with the New York State Thruway at the N.J. - N.Y. border) and Cape May in the south (where a connector road links it to the Cape May-Lewes Ferry across Delaware Bay). It is the main artery for travel to the famed Jersey seashore resorts from the northern metropolitan area

Plans for the Parkway project originated in 1945 legislation and involved the use ot annual tax-money appropriations. But lack of public funds so limited the construction by the State Highway Department (since renamed the N.J. Department of Transportation) that only some 20 miles in three scat-

(cont.)

Sylvester C. Smith, Jr.
Chairman

John B. Townsend
Vice Chairman

Richard R. O'Connor
Secretary - Treasurer

D. Louis Tonti
Executive Director

August, 1969

GARDEN STATE PARKWAY

tered sections were built in six years.

Recognizing that it would have taken until the 1990's to finish the Parkway project at that rate of progress, the administration of Governor Alfred E. Driscoll in 1952 asked the N.J. Legislature to speed the construction through the toll road concept of revenue-bond financing.

An Act of the Legislature, approved April 14, 1952, created the New Jersey Highway Authority and assigned it to complete the Parkway as a self-supporting toll road. The Act empowered the Authority (1) to issue bonds or notes to finance the Parkway project and (2) to establish and collect tolls and other charges to pay the cost of maintenance and operation and such bonds and interest thereon.

On July 2, 1952, the original three-member Authority was organized. Three years later, on July 1, 1955, the Authority had completed and opened the remaining 144 miles of the basic Parkway except for one new bridge in the south. The missing link was forged May 25, 1956. The Parkway's first toll section had been opened January 15, 1954.

A nine-mile feeder road to link the Parkway directly with the New York State Thruway at the N.J. - N.Y. line was added on July 3, 1957. The Thruway opened its connecting spur August 30th. Thus, the Parkway became a 173-mile artery for north and south travel in New Jersey.

The three original sections built by the former State Highway Department with public funds prior to 1954, including the busy 13-mile stretch between U.S. Route 22 and The Raritan River, remain toll-free and under the jurisdiction of that agency's successor, the Transportation Dept. Only users pay for the toll sections; all N.J. taxpayers pay for the toll-free sections.

Excluding those three State sections, Parkway construction was financed by Authority bond issues totaling $370,000,000. Its initial bond issues of $285,000,000 carry a State guarantee of credit behind them by virtue of N.J. voters' overwhelming referendum approval of such a proposal on November 4, 1952. As it stands, only tolls and other revenue collected on the Parkway from users have been sufficient to pay the Authority's bond debts and operating costs--and provide a balance of funds for necessary capital improvements along the road.

By the start of 1969--15 years after opening the first Parkway toll section, The New Jersey Highway Authority had reduced its bond debt by almost $50,000,000 and retired more than $10-million of the obligations ahead of schedule.

The Authority is similar to a private corporation, except that it is publicly controlled as an entity of the State. Its three Members or Commissioners function in effect as a board of directors. The Commissioners, who serve without pay, are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the State Senate for 9-year terms each.

The Parkway is a divided highway, with separate roadways for north and south travel. There are 83 interchanges along its course where traffic can exit or enter to or from many local areas of New Jersey. Because of the uniquely large number of interchanges and the scattered toll-free sections in the midst of the Parkway length, the Authority had to adopt the across-the-road toll barrier system for collections instead of the closed ticket system as on other more conventional turnpikes.

Its arrangement of toll collection plazas along the main-line has been considered a prime reason for the Parkway's nationally-outstanding safety record over the years. Such intermittent toll stops, give motorists a break in their long-distance, high-speed travel against the hazards of "highway hypnosis", and convenient opportunities to get information and assistance.

The Parkway also includes along its course a number of both roadside picnic-rest areas at which motorists may stop in daylight hours and restaurant-gasoline service areas generally open 24 hours a day year-round. Trucks are prohibited by New Jersey law from using the Parkway's busier northern sections above Interchange 97A near Belmar. The Parkway's basic speed limit is 60 miles per hour, but it permits a 65mph maximum for passenger vehicles only south of Toms River Milepost 80 .

TELEGRAPH HILL PARK is a picturesque area of some 400 acres which roll up from both sides of the Garden State Parkway's main north-south roadways around Milepost (and special Exit) 116 in Holmdel Township, Monmouth County.

It is by far the biggest of the roadside tracts that the New Jersey Highway Authority purchased when, under 1952 legislative directive, it acquired property for recreational and service area purposes as well as for the right-of-way for the Parkway roadways.

The Telegraph Hill area land was bought by the Authority with the concurrence of the State Department of Conservation and Economic Development, as required by law. It stands today as a Parkway landmark for recreation and rest--a very special haven for the New Jersey toll road's motorists.

The name practically came with the acquisition in 1953-54. At that time, historians said the east side of the tract was known as Tele-

(cont.)

TELEGRAPH HILL PARK

graph Hill and the west side as Crawfords Hill. The Authority decided to call the entire area Telegraph Hill for easy identification.

It formally added Park to the name in 1957 when the Authority dedicated the expansive Parkway roadside area to "lovers of history, nature and good old-fashioned picnics" after preliminarily improving the tract and providing public facilities there. Improvements included a network of paved roads through the Park, a picnic grove, parking area, a rustic trail, and a scenic overlook enclosure.

The scenic overlook, on the east side of the Park some 280 feet above sea level, affords clear-day views of Raritan Bay, the lower New York City skyline, Staten Island, the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge and the surrounding countryside of Monmouth County.

Historical significance has been attributed to Telegraph Hill as an Indian smoke-signal point. Historians have said it later was a Revolutionary War site of a beacon that relayed warnings to American militia watching the action of the British then encamped in New York City. Still later, they said, semaphore-type signals were sent from there to give New York shipping merchants news of the arrival of sailing vessels within Sandy Hook, which the Hill also overlooks from a distance.

Speaking of the Revolutionary War period when the beacons were to have been built at Telegraph Hill and various other high points north of there, one historian said "these positions were not called 'Telegraph' but rather Beacon or Signal Hills," and added:

"The word Telegraph merely means distance and writing (from the Greek telos) and was used by many even before S.F.B. Morse's time and telegraph machine. However, the early maps of this area do not show any such name as Telegraph Hill; it was probably a local cognomen given the N.J. topographers (Geological Survey-1863 on)."

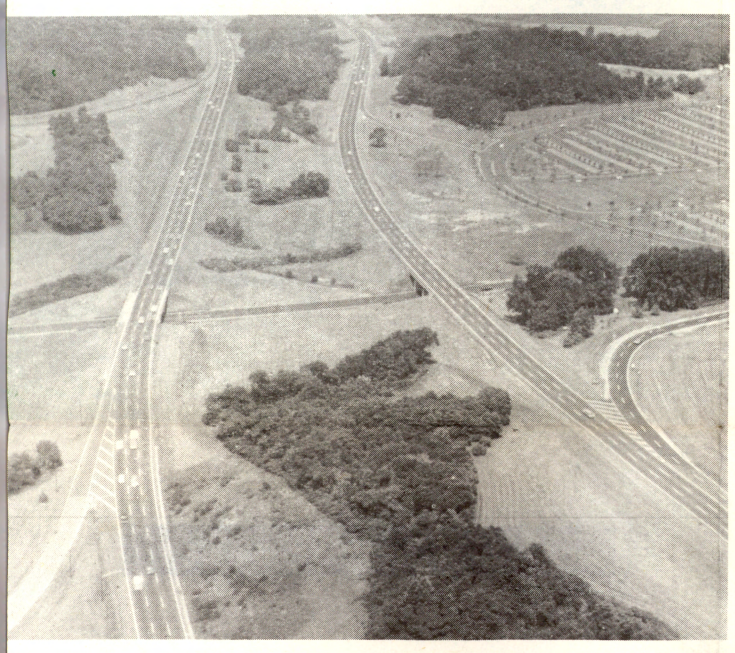
There are stories too that Captain Kidd and his pirates roamed the area many years ago. He is supposed to have carried on some of his piratical activities from Cape May to the Raritan River along the Parkway's coastal route. If he used Telegraph Hill to bury treasure, none was found there while the Highway Authority was carrying out work to build the Parkway or to improve the area.

Shades of Captain Kidd crept back, however, when the site was dedicated as a Park in 1957. To mark the occasion, Mrs. Katharine Elkus White, then Chairman of the Highway Authority, buried a "treasure chest" since marked by a placque on the east side near the scenic overlook. This one contained several timely items, including the first toll quarter ever collected on the Parkway (circa 1954) and the current map, annual report and illustrated guide of the Parkway.

Subsequent improvement of Telegraph Hill Park in following the original legislative directive and executive thinking has left it today with additional picnicking and parking facilities, and nature trails guided by the Monmouth Museum, all on the east side along with the principal development--the Garden State Arts Center amphitheater.

On the west side are picnic, parking and sanitary facilities along with some Authority installations that are vital to the day-to-day operations of the Parkway--a State Police district station, central and divisional headquarters of the Maintenance Division, the Parkway's own Sign Shop, and buildings for storage and supplies.

Both sides of Telegraph Hill Park abound with trees, shrubs and flowers, including such varieties as Dogwood, White and Red Pine, Pear, Spice Bush, and native Azalea.



GARDEN STATE ARTS CENTER

AT TELEGRAPH HILL PARK

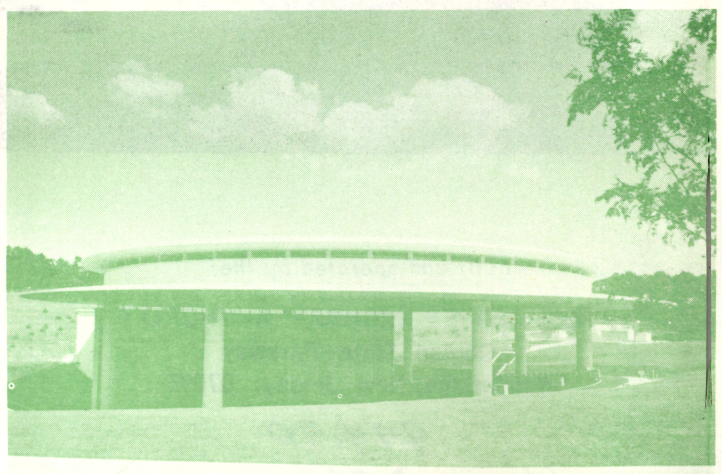
on the Garden State Parkway • Exit 116

The **GARDEN STATE ARTS CENTER** was built by the New Jersey Highway Authority as a development of its Telegraph Hill park and recreational area on the Garden State Parkway under terms of the 1952 legislation which created the Authority.

The legislation directed the Authority to complete the Parkway as a toll road, and at the same time gave it the responsibility to develop roadside recreational facilities along the route for the promotion of the public health and welfare.

The Authority followed such directive when it acquired the Telegraph Hill property in Holmdel Township as early as 1953 while concurrently purchasing right-of-way for the Parkway lanes. The Arts Center development which evolved stands today as a New Jersey home for the per-

(cont.)



GARDEN STATE ARTS CENTER

forming arts.

Originally the development of the Telegraph Hill area was to take the form of swimming pools, baseball fields, tennis courts and the like. But such plans were put aside in the early days of Parkway establishment and later abandoned, upon greater reflection, in favor of the more imaginative approach to a cultural-recreational development.

Ground was broken May 2, 1966 for the Arts Center construction, about a year and a quarter after Governor Richard J. Hughes had introduced the project in his Annual Message to the State Legislature. The Authority's selected architect for the Arts Center was world-famous Edward Durell Stone, and he unveiled the master design late in 1965.

The Arts Center was formally opened June 12, 1968.

Commenting in a letter after the close of the inaugural season, Alfred E. Driscoll, Governor of New Jersey at the time the Authority was created in 1952, said:

"In our planning for the Parkway, we always considered Telegraph Hill in Monmouth County to be a unique opportunity for the carrying out of the purposes of the legislative intent. Construction of the Garden State Arts Center and related facilities, including nature trails, picnic areas, more than fulfilled our hopes."

The basic facility of the $7-million Arts Center is its amphitheater--a white concrete, open-sided, eight-columned structure of circular design. It seats 5,058 persons under an overhanging roof and has surrounding lawn space for another 3,000 under the stars.

This handsome home for the performing arts was opened with an invitational preview on Wednesday evening, June 12, 1968, in the face of one of New Jersey's worst rainstorms. Despite a temporarily flooded stage that delayed scheduled ceremonies and the premier program, the show went on to great acclaim with the Philadelphia Orchestra under conductor Eugene Ormandy and guest pianist Van Cliburn.

The majestic amphitheater prevailed in foul and fair weather through the first summer season of performances by popular and classical artists of distinction.

More than 300,000 persons were counted as amphitheater attendees in the approximate 12 weeks of almost nightly and some daytime programs between June 12 and September 7, when a two-day Jazz Festival brought down the curtain on the Arts Center's first basic season covering the musical spectrum.

But of equal if not more significance is the role the Arts Center played in hosting additional thousands of New Jersey school children, youngsters from disadvantaged areas of the State, and senior citizens at special free performances both during the basic season and later in September.

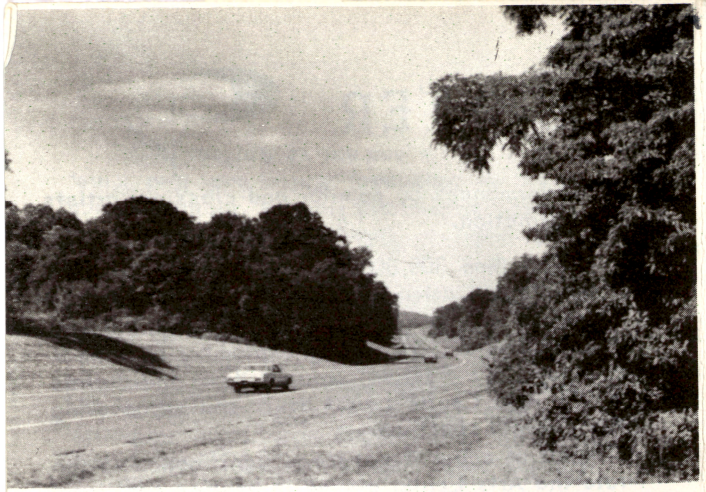
The Arts Center has continued this program into 1969 with a May series of Young People's Concerts for New Jersey schools during classroom hours and plans for further extension of the efforts in behalf of the youth, including a second annual Talent Expo for young amateurs through local and regional auditions and a high school's own outstanding production of a musical.

All such activities are held under the auspices of the Garden State Arts Center Fund, which the New Jersey Highway Authority es tablished in 1968 to receive contributions toward the financing of its special Center events for the youth and elderly citizens of the State. Contributions to the Fund are tax deductible.

The Arts Center amphitheater stands in a landscaped bowl on the east side of Telegraph Hill Park, with tree-lined parking areas for the visitors' cars or buses before it. With auxiliary spaces nearby within the Park, there are facilities for parking some 3,000 vehicles

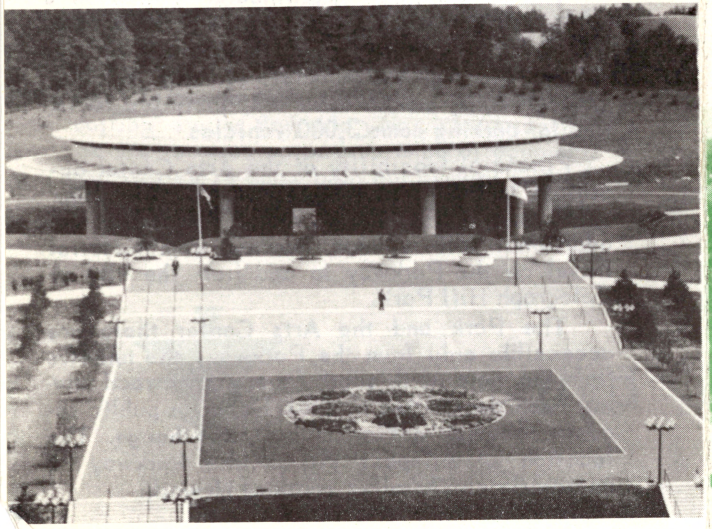
Financial feasibility of the Arts Center operation is based on the Authority income from paid admissions and services there and on the additional toll revenue derived from motorist travel on the Parkway to and from the site at Telegraph Hill Park.

The Park and the Arts Center there are accessible only from the Parkway, the turnoffs from the main north-south lanes of the road having been designated at Exit 116 upon public request although not an actual interchange. The location at Milepost 116 of the Parkway is approximately 30 miles south of Newark.



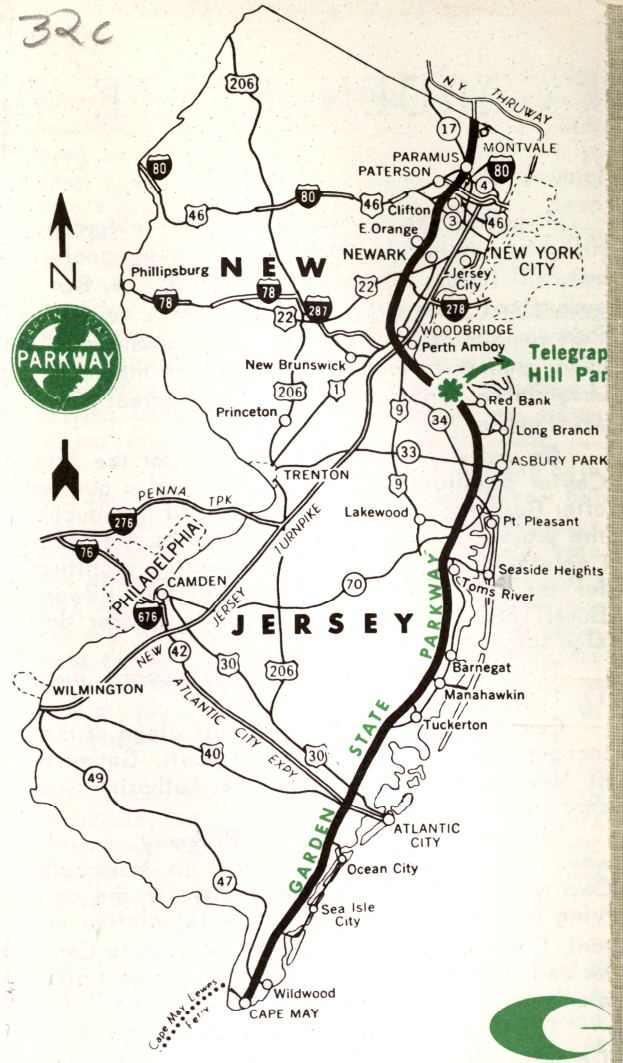
GARDEN STATE PARKWAY

TELEGRAPH HILL PARK



GARDEN STATE ARTS CENTER

32c



Garden State Arts Center

at Telegraph Hill Park on The Garden State Parkway

INFORMATION BRIEF

on the

GARDEN STATE PARKWAY,
TELEGRAPH HILL PARK

and the

GARDEN STATE ARTS CENTER

PROPERTY OF
NEW JERSEY STATE LIBRARY

JUL 22 1970

185 W. State Street
Trenton, N. J.

built and operated by the:

NEW JERSEY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY
Garden State Parkway
Woodbridge, New Jersey 07095

974.90
A792
1969a copy 3.