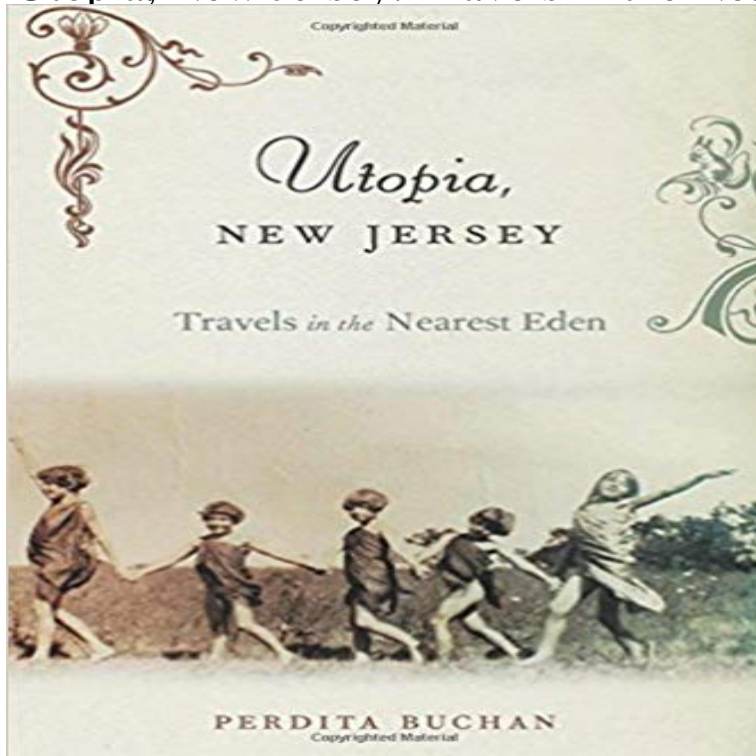


## Utopia, New Jersey: Travels in the Nearest Eden



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 philanthropic 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. 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 widespread. Despite their grand intentions, all but one of the utopias a single-tax colony in Berkeley Heights failed to survive. But Buchan shows how each of them left a legacy of much more than the buildings or street names that remain today legacies that are inspiring, surprising, and often outright quirky.

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