

***The Jersey Shore: The Past, Present & Future of a National Treasure*****Dominick Mazzagetti****New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2018****352 pages, 32 images, 4 tables, index****\$29.95 (cloth)****ISBN: 9780813593746****DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14713/njs.v5i1.163>**

Dominick Mazzagetti's *The Jersey Shore: The Past, Present & Future of a National Treasure* provides an updated reference of the history of the New Jersey shore communities and the modern issues confronting them. Published as part of the Rutgers University Press series commemorating New Jersey's 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the book radiates the author's love of New Jersey and its beaches. While *The Jersey Shore* relies heavily on other previously published histories, the strength of the book lies in the updating of these histories to include current issues and modern themes.

In summarizing the "past," Mazzagetti highlights the recorded history of New Jersey and the shore towns. Using earlier histories on the same topic, the book explores the historically shifting landscape and changes to the shoreline, the settlement and development of the land along the oceanfront, and the social and economic events at the shore. The scope of the book only covers the land fronting the Atlantic Ocean, although it names the towns along the Raritan Bay several times. An exploration of the history and development of each beach is presented, and those of added historical importance and local renown appear in the thematic chapters as well.

Chapters jump between a chronological history of the New Jersey shore, a county-by-county examination of individual settlements, and thematic chapters focusing on aspects relevant to the history and development of the areas. Readers of the book will find chapters on each of the four ocean-facing New Jersey counties with in-depth histories of the communities therein. Additional chapters cover topics such as the geologic formation of the shore, the role of religion

in the founding of some New Jersey beach communities, the contribution of the railroads on the ease of visiting the coast, and on oceanic themes such as lifeguards, shipwrecks, natural disasters, rumrunners, lighthouses, fishing, and boating. Race relations and segregated beaches are also mentioned. With so many topics to cover, the summary of each is concise and informative.

Mazzagetti adds a modern element to the historical context by briefly exploring “present” twenty-first-century issues confronting New Jersey shore towns. These issues include climate change, rising sea levels, beach erosion and replenishment, and the construction of dunes. The description of the impact of Superstorm Sandy and other recent storms updates the older published histories with detailed explanations of the flooding and destruction caused by each. Recognizing the role of local politics and “home rule” in New Jersey, the discussions of beach access and dune construction explain the relevant legal proceedings and resulting effects on the shore towns. Missing from the discussion of current topics is the shore tourism industry and its impact on New Jersey’s economy.

Looking to the “future” of the Jersey shore, Mazzagetti avoids speculation and neutrally maneuvers around politically charged topics. He touches on the urban redevelopment and economic challenges currently facing Asbury Park and Atlantic City, contrasting them to the recent renaissance of Cape May and Long Branch. Alluding to pending litigation relating to the construction of dunes and the taking of land through eminent domain, the reader is advised that the future will hold even more such cases. Similarly, the reconstruction of homes damaged in recent storms and arguments for and against building along the shoreline are analyzed. The breadth of “present” and “future” topics lend themselves to further exploration and are a possible endeavor for the author in another book.

The book's organization varies between chapters that are chronological, topical, and geographical, which contributes to a feeling that the book is meant to be a reference, rather than to be read cover-to-cover. A list of recommended reading at the end of each chapter enhances this feeling of the book as a reference and provides more in-depth resources to study the topics presented in this work. A section of black and white and color photographs includes some of the iconic images representing the Jersey shore, for example, that of the first Miss America walking on the Atlantic City beach and the Seaside Park roller coaster in the ocean after Superstorm Sandy. The book includes a few maps, but these are mainly political, showing the locations of the cities and towns discussed. Detail maps indicating the geographic changes of the shoreline and waterways would be a welcome addition to accompany the text on these. The tables provide useful information on incorporation and population growth in the various towns and descriptions of the inlets along the coast.

With its statewide appeal and treatment of current-day issues facing New Jersey beaches and coastal settlements, those researching the development of the shore will find the book to be a useful reference and guidebook. The book is certainly a welcome addition to New Jersey collections at public and academic libraries, as well as for those readers interested in the history of and problems facing their favorite Jersey Shore community.

**Heather Perez**  
**Stockton University**