I will confess to a predilection for “Pennsylvania every time;” yet I must admit that for down-towners and for cyclists who object to the ups and downs of the Bristol pike, the Burlington-Bristol route to Trenton has not a few advantages. Nor is it necessary to zigzag as some of us do, from the Burlington pike to the river road and back again to the pike in search of easy riding; the direct road will be found comfortable enough in its present condition.

The river road via Palmyra, Riverton, etc., we shall visit one of these days. It was the good old pike that I tackled in the early hours of last Tuesday, hoping to catch it at its best after the heavy rain of the preceding night, which I then foolishly hoped to be all over.

As it turned out, I was caught in the course of these 18 miles by four different showers, three of which I was fortunate enough to dodge under as many friendly roofs and the fourth I smiled at beneath a huge mulberry tree (my finger tips did not quite lose a certain purple tint for the remainder of the day); and yet so improved is the road nowadays for most of its length that I was able to travel it after each one of these showers without any discomfort – I except of course the immediate neighborhood of Camden, that goes without saying.

TO AVOID MUCH OF CAMDEN.

If you live up town you have an easy way to strike the Burlington pike: ride out East Girard avenue and down to Otis street wharf, cross the Delaware and there you have brand new macadamized Cooper avenue, the opening of which our Camden friends fitly celebrated the other day, and which will take you to a drug-store corner on Westfield avenue, where you will please wait for us.

Pending those anxiously looked-for improvements in the centre of Camden, those of us who start from the middle or the lower portion of Philadelphia had better make their way to Vine street wharf and take the ferry to Cooper’s Point.

I can see the stranger’s look of bewilderment at the mixum-gatherum bed of cobblestones that stretches out before him as he leaves the ferry house; but let him brace up just for a couple of blocks; there a little taste of smooth bricks will reward him for his trouble; then he will get very fair Belgian paving for a change; and ultimately a gravel sidepath will take him across the river road at Pavonia Park, past State Street Station, and on to Federal street. This path is uncertain in places, but had our stranger taken the ferry to Market or Federal street and worked his way from there to this spot, he would have fared worse.
The point we have just struck (2 m. from ferry), is Cramer Hill postoffice; the street that brought us here is State street; its continuation southeastward is the Marlton pike; Federal street crosses us right and left; let us turn L into it. A good thing for us that we shall have to follow it only for a short distance, just as far as Twenty-sixth street. There you notice a bifurcation: the right branch is the Moorestown pike, the left one is the Burlington pike, here official labeled “Westfield Avenue.”

THE BURLINGTON PIKE.

A hundred and thirty years ago they spoke of it as the New Road, and maybe the Pennsylvania Chronicle did not think it had a “scoop” when it announced on March 30, 1767:

“We hear from Burlington that on Tuesday last the New Road from thence to William Cooper’s Ferry, opposite the City, was measured by the Surveyor-General, and Mile-Stones, at the Expense of a few Subscribers, erected thereon, the Distance being seventeen miles from Burlington Court-House to the East end of Cooper’s Lane. The stones are numbered from 1 to 17, and wrote at length. We should be glad to see Mile-Stones on every Public Road through the two Provinces, the Expense of which would be very trifling to the Inhabitants, being only about 17s. per Stone.”

Many a change has come to pass along here since then, not the least being the partial transformation of the old sandy road into a cyclable pike; and those who knew it but three years ago feel inclined to bear somewhat leniently with at the six cents toll that we now have to pay for its use, out of all proportion as the tax is in the case of our wheels. Indeed in wet weather such as this, the path is better for us than the roadway.

This is Dudley village and station.

“Dudley” may perchance remind you of smoky Dudley in Worcestershire in England, with its iron works and its ancient castle, constructed, way back during the Heptarchy, by a certain Saxon Prince called Dudo (whence the name Dud-ley, “Dudo’s Field”).

There is nothing of old Dudley hereabouts but the name; nothing very special, either, to attract our attention as we proceed along, save turnings L and R to Beideman’s and Merchantville respectively, till we reach Bethel (4 ½ m.). There the Cove road (gravel) would take us L to Fish House and R to Church road outside Merchantville. – keep an eye on this Church road. Half a mile ahead we cross the new branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and yet another half mile farther, at a crossroad by a school, L to Delair and R to Pensauken and the Moorestown pike (no signpost). We go straight on, and down quite a little hill to Pensauken Creek (7 ¼ m.). Do beware of those hills if you be a stranger.

AN ANECDOTE OF LONG AGO.

“Nothing very special,” I said, “to attract our attention along here;” I referred to our naked eye, of course; for in common with most of our old highways in this section of the country, this pike could tell long stories of the scenes it witnessed during our Revolutionary struggle.
The very mention of it recalls a little anecdote that happened right here after, the war was over.

While Washington resided in Philadelphia during his Presidency, he frequently crossed the Delaware for a quiet ride in New Jersey. One winter day that he had come over on horseback, the river being ice-bound, he was riding along this very “Cooper’s Ferry Road” toward Burlington, when he met a Camden friend and halted to have a chat with him.

Presently they were joined by a Hessian deserter, who, like so many others, had decided to settle permanently in the country he had been hired to fight against.

“I tink I have seen your face before; vat ish your name?” inquired the new comer.

“My name is General Washington,” was the reply.

“Ach mine Gott,” burst out the Hessian, half crazed with fright, “I vish I vas unter te ice! I vish I vas unter te ice, ach mine Gott!”

The kindly words that our only George addressed to him failed to completely reassure him, and it was not until he had ridden away with a smile on his placed countenance that the unfortunate foreigner recovered from his shock.

ROADSIDE HAMLETS.

North Pennsville or Five Points toll gate is just on the other side of Pensauken Creek; L to Palmyra, R to Moorestown; Parry postoffice is ½ m. farther.

In the centre of long, straggling Westfield (9 ¼ m.) Riverton is 1 ½ m. on L., and Moorestown 3 ½ m. on R. These are favorite roads with local riders.

At New Albany (10 m.), a fresh-painted post points to another road to ‘Moorestown, 3 ¼ m.”

AS TO BELL RINGING.

We keep straight ahead. What should we do this rainy day, but for this tiny path half covered with grass?

“Get along home out of the wet!” “Thank you sir; much obliged!” These two ejaculations were respectively addressed, within half a minute of each other, to a young rabbit, who (I thought), was needlessly exposing himself to an attach of grippe while gazing at my wheel, and a pedestrian who stepped off the path with a friendly nod when I approached him from behind striking up “Sweet Rosie O’Grady” at the top of my whistle.

Don’t I always bang my bell for all it is worth when I overtake a fellow-traveler in narrow quarters? Verily, I use it as seldom as ever I can. I do not pose as an authority, I simply record the result of my observations when I say that, with nine persons out of ten, the sound of a bell has an imperative tone about it that grates upon their nerves; ring it as softly as you can, your simple warning is translated by the average non-cycling wayfarer “get off the earth,” and is received accordingly, not always with an
oath (and that is frequent enough), but uniformly with a frown. Personally, when out on the road, I find an accidental little cough, a snatch of music (the less classical the better), a friendly remark about the weather, or, according to circumstances, a polite "I beg your pardon" much more acceptable and no less effective than the metallic ring-ding of my bell.

TO BRIDGEBORO'.

It is hardly a couple of miles across Swedes’ Creek into little Fairview, where a turning R goes to Hartford, 4 m., and another L to Riverside; and in a few minutes we are at Bridgeboro on Rancocas River (13 m.). At the crossroad by the hotel, Riverside is 2 m. away on L., Moorestown, Centreton and Lumberton lie on R.

This Rancocas stream was the upper boundary of a tract of land that the red men sold to the first European settlers in these parts, and the lower boundary of which was Timber Creek, below what is now Gloucester.

A MEMORABLE BARGAIN.

Would you feel curious know what our forefathers agreed to pay for the whole of the section comprised within those two creeks under date of September 10, 1677?

Exactly what follows:

“Thirty match-coats, 20 guns, 30 kettles and one great one, 30 pairs of hoes, 20 fathoms of duffields, 30 petticoats, 30 narrow hoes, 30 bars of lead, 15 small barrels of powder, 70 knives, 30 Indian axes, 70 combs, 60 pair of tobacco tongs, 60 scissors, 60 tinshaw looking-glasses, 120 awl-blades, 120 fish hooks, 2 grasps of red paint, 120 needles, 60 tobacco boxes, 120 pipes, 100 bells, 100 Jewsharps, 6 anchors of rum.”

My younger readers might care to be told that a matchcoat was a large, loose coat made of matchcloth, a woolen cloth, the coarseness of which may be gathered from the fact that “match” originally meant ‘wick,” just think of a coat made of ‘candle-wick cloth.”

And “duffields” here stands for “duffel,” a thick kind of woolen frieze cloth, first made in Duffel, near Antwerp, in Belgium.

And did you ever hear of an “anchor” of rum? It would have been well for the poor Indian if he had never been given more rum than could be conveyed in, on or about an anchor; unfortunately for him an “anker” (to which I alluded in our trip No. 3, in connection with Blue Anchor) was a very different thing. The English anker was a measure that held over eight gallons, and the Dutch anker (“anker” is a Dutch word, of course) was worse still, it contained more than ten imperial gallons.

Apropos of that, I am not aware than any rum is now manufactured by the successors of the men who struck this bargain, but they do make excellent grape wine round hereabouts (at Fairview for instance). On that point all doctors agree for once.
THE FIRST N.J. TAVERN.

And this reminds me that the first tavern ever opened in New Jersey was started near the mouth of the Assunpink Creek as early as 1665 by a Swede, of the name of Peter Jegon. When the commissioners of the Quaker Company of Yorkshire sailed up the Delaware and made the bargain referred to above, they found Jegon doing a good business by the side of the bridle-path by which the Swedes of New York (or Manhattan) came to see their brethren near Philadelphia.

It was an unlucky day when Quaker George Fox “registered” at that tavern. Jegon had run out of provisions and history says that the preacher had to put in four days on bacon and squirrels, without any syrup. But, I anticipate, this really belongs to Burlington.

EASY GLIDING.

And now who could wish for a smoother stone road than that which now takes us from the Rancocas to Burlington?

One mile from the bridge, L to Beverly, R to Mt. Holly 7 m. A mile farther is the hamlet of Cooperstown; 1 mile of stone pike to Beverly on L, the same distance and the same kind of road to Charlestown on R.

We enjoy our own straight road too much to deviate into any of those turnings; presently (a little over 17 m.) we are joined from L by the River Road alluded to above, and another mile brings us to railroad station in the centre of Burlington (practically 18 m. from start.).

HISTORIC BURLINGTON.

Burlington is five years older than our own Quaker city, and if you had time to find it out, there is a small house on Pearl street, near the Presbyterian church, which is as old as 1703 or 1704.

Indeed a whole day might be pleasantly spent in “Bridlington,” as it used to be called, by anyone interested in the history of this country.

Don’t leave it, anyway, before you see, quite close to the station, the old Surveyor-General’s office, the last remnant of royalty in this section, dating, as it does, from the time of King Charles II, gracious sovereign of Great Britain, Ireland and France, etc., etc.

See the little old Quarter meeting house, with the original pine table, which Isaac Marriott and Benjamin Wherf were appointed to provide in 1693.

Try and get a peep at the huge sycamore (probably the oldest tree in New Jersey), in front of the Grubb mansion; tradition says that when the Quaker settlers came here in the good ship Shield in 1679, they moored her to this tree.

Get somebody to show you where Commodore Lawrence and James Fenimore Cooper were born.

Don’t forget General Grant’s cottage, and when you have seen as much as your time or circumstances permit, you may vary your trip by returning to Philadelphia by steamer (fare twenty-five cents), or take
the ferry across to Bristol and ride home by the Bristol pike, as per our Trip No. 1, making a forty-mile round trip.

A.E.