A Short History Of New Jersey's Oldest Major Man Made Water Resource
Canal 1834-1832
Water Supply 1834-
State Park 1974

William Penn ordered a survey for inland navigation between the Delaware and the Delaware in 1682. Construction was commenced by John Armiger in 1786 and by Governor Richard Stockton in 1788.
In order to finance and complete both the canal and the railroad, the so-called "Marriage Bill" was enacted in 1831 enabling all counties and municipalities to issue bonds, secured by the canal and railroad, to fund the construction. The total cost of the project was $3.5 million.

The canal was used for many years after its completion, but due to changes in transportation, it fell into disuse and was eventually abandoned in the early 20th century. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974.