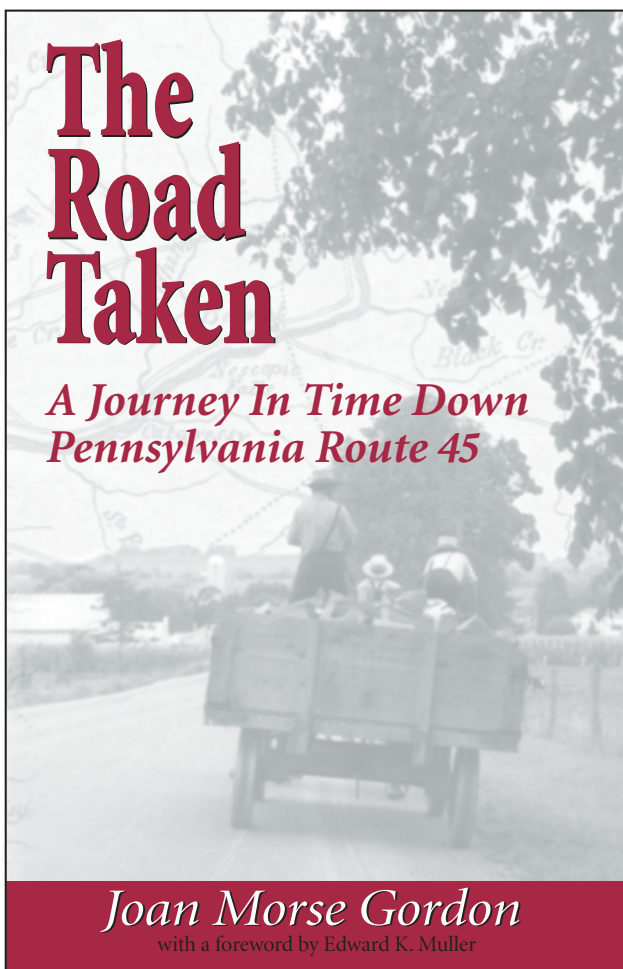


**5 Stars Rating from: *The Midwest Book Review*, June 2002**

“Joan Morse Gordon’s *The Road Taken: A Journey In Time Down Pennsylvania Route 45* is the story of one woman’s journey that began with an Interstate drive, and which led to her fascinating survey of regional Pennsylvania, its history, and the people who call the land home. Picturesque black-and-white photographs, soulful observations and colorful local personalities make *The Road Taken* a genuine treat for the armchair traveler and/or the Pennsylvania history buff.”

It often takes an outsider to see the value of a place. Just as early settlers knew a good thing when they saw it, Joan Morse Gordon recognizes the innate beauty of the area and the strength of its history and people. She invites the reader on a journey worth taking for anyone interested in history, Pennsylvania, or just a good tale, covering a time span from the region’s geological formation to today.



ISBN 0-9711835-1-1, \$19.95.

With 40 photos, maps, and illustrations, bibliography and name plus subject index.

Softcover, 5.5x8.5 in., 204 pages, 60 per carton.

Subject categories include non-fiction, local history, travel, religious tolerance, Amish, Palentine, immigration, historic sites, Pennsylvania, Centre, Huntingdon, Union, and Montour counties, State College, Lewisburg.

The author began simply enough by seeking an alternative to a long Interstate drive. Soon she was cat-sitting and peppering people with questions all along PA Route 45’s ridges and valleys for the next five years. She knew she hadn’t stumbled on a land that time forgot, but nevertheless, this was a place that time had seemingly treated well, present intrusions notwithstanding. In addition to conveying a marvelous sense of place, there are historical illustrations and contemporary photos gathered from public and private archives to give the reader a visual link between past and present along PA’s Purple Heart Highway.

### **Discover . . .**

- William Penn’s legacy of religious tolerance and the people who found their way here to enjoy it.
- The story of Jewish immigrant and land developer Aaron Levy, who’s ecumenical gift of a communion set to the local Protestant churches led to an international celebration over 150 years later that attracted 30,000 visitors to Aaronsburg.
- Why chemist/minister Joseph Priestley escaped to Pennsylvania ahead of an English mob.
- Why a lop of the guillotine kept Marie Antoinette from becoming a Pennsylvanian.
- The legacy of “steel farms”.
- Potters and squatters, poets and thieves.
- A contemporary local who dowses for graves.
- Young urban emigrants seeking a gentler place to live and raise a family.

*“There is another America awaiting the traveler, if he or she takes the time to experience it. The traveler must abandon the Interstates and journey along the older U.S. and state routes that traverse what was once called ‘the countryside’...Gordon asks us to rediscover this other America.”*

From the foreword by Edward K. Muller

#### **From the book:**

- *This road of mine, I was pleased to note, was no thruway. This was a byway, a road less traveled, less transient, with a greater sense of permanence, of roots. I like roots, mine being fairly shallow.*
- *Direction signs at crossroads indicated springs, forges, mills and caves nearby, all echoes of the past. More important was what wasn't there: billboards, graffiti, used car lots, and even worse, auto graveyards and adult movie shacks, typical despoilers of the landscape of so many highways today.*
- *Nailed to the siding on the northwest corner of Stover's Village Store, in Aaronsburg, PA, is a small corroded bronze-colored plaque with the words “Geographic Center of Pennsylvania,” half hidden by a large PEPSI cooler standing alongside its COCA COLA cousin. No one quite remembers when the sign was put there, but it was quite some time ago.*
- *The surnames one comes across most frequently are Beachy, Peachy, Zook, Beiler, Hostetler, Stolfus and Yoder. (Peirce) Lewis describes the newly arrived Amish as “hermit crabs,” converting an old farm or a California ranch house to their own needs.*
- *It is the Palatine Germans and Swiss who have had the biggest impact on Route 45 and whose descendants have prevailed....Unlike second or third generation offspring of immigrants who cluster in heavily ethnic neighborhoods in cities, with churches onion-domed or medieval, who celebrate in a stopped time ritual with food and dance and song the traditions of their forebears, the citizens along Route 45 tend to think of themselves as village or township or county residents; Pennsylvanians or American first.*
- *In 1737, long after his father's departure, William Penn's son, Thomas, used the same walking measure contorted by deceit to trick the Lenape out of their rightful land. In what was called the “Walking Purchase,” the Lenape lost 1,200 square miles. Lenape Lappawinsoe protested, “The walkers should have walkt for a few miles and then sat down and smoakt a Pipe . . . and not kept upon the Run, Run, Run all Day.”*
- *The lure of this region is in its resistance to radical change. The place teaches us lessons about returns: a return to the values of land, work and community; a return to living relatives and long-departed ancestors; a return to the traditions of neighborliness and self-reliance; a return to life as it should be. Bruce Teeple, Curator, Penns Valley Historical Association*

#### **About the Author**

Joan Morse Gordon is a retired fundraising event planner who, when not writing, carves in wood and stone. She travels extensively and is an avid gardener, mushroom hunter, cook, and art museum docent. She previously co-authored several works for children and obtained an MFA in creative non-fiction from the University of Pittsburgh. This is her first solo book-length work.

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