

# The Changing Course of the Delaware River at Philadelphia

## Purpose:

- To show how the Delaware River and surrounding area has changed over time
- Maps show how the depth and course of the Delaware has changed

## Map Data and Other Data obtained from:

- Maritime Commerce in Greater Philadelphia
- Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library
  - Battlemaps.us
  - Library of Congress
  - PhilaPort

How has the Delaware River been modified over time as Philadelphia has grown?

## Contact Information:

Douglas Veit: s1229604@monmouth.edu  
 Geoffrey Fouad: gfouad@monmouth.edu

## Methods:

- Archival search for historic maps of Delaware River
- Overlay historic maps on top of a modern map of the river
- Compare historic maps to modern map to document shoreline changes
- Research changes to the depth of the river



Figure 2: American Revolutionary War map of Delaware River and Philadelphia, circa 1776  
<https://www.battlemaps.us/products/delaware-river-1776-1777-new-york-new-jersey-philadelphia-revolutionary-war-map>

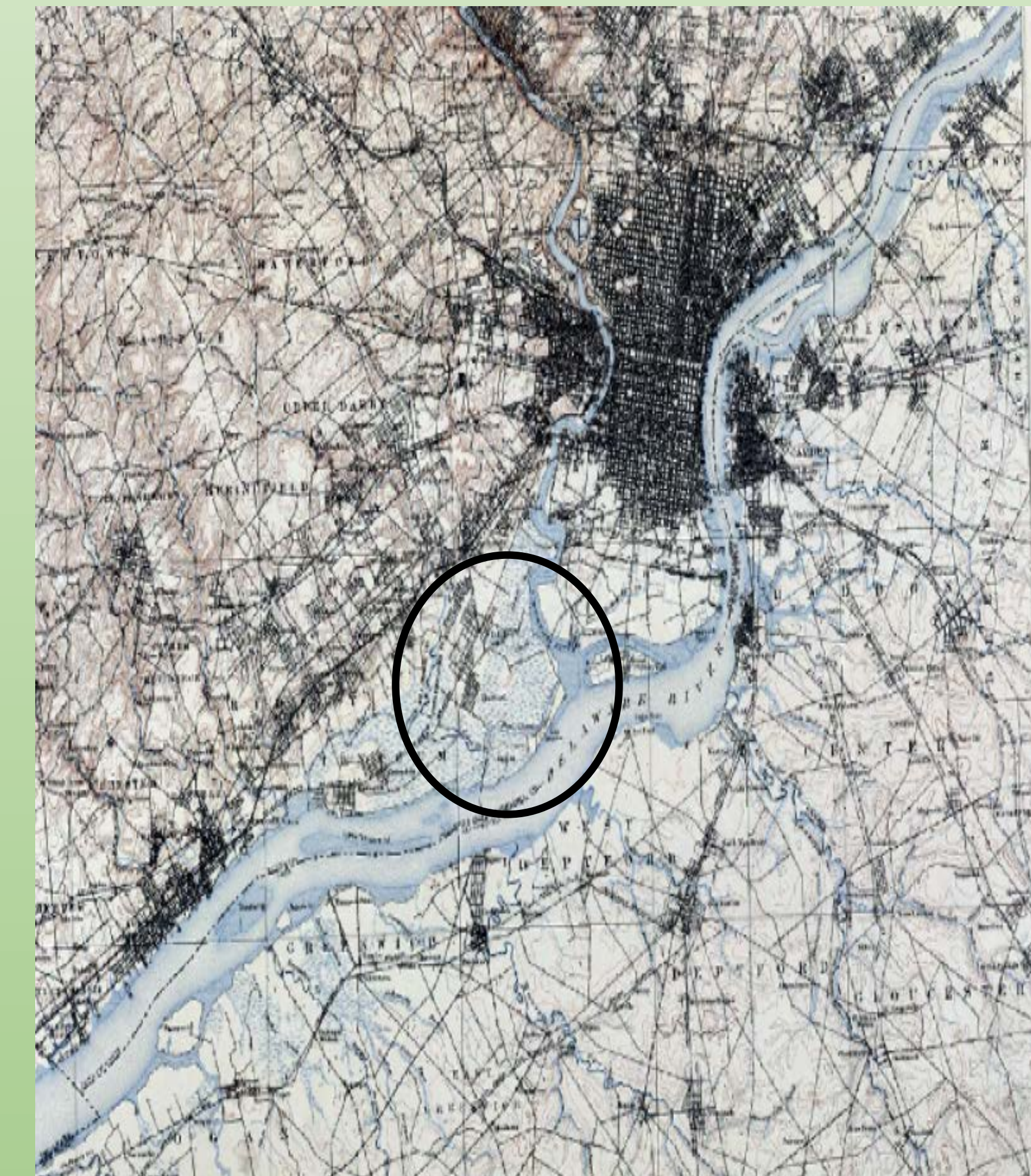


Figure 5: Map of Delaware River and Philadelphia showing Mud Island (circled) as part of the mainland in 1908  
<https://orbis.library.yale.edu/vwebv/holdingsInfo?searchId=2192&recCount=50&recPointer=1&bibId=13703565>



Figure 3: Map of Delaware River showing depths, circa 1776  
[https://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/4208487?image\\_id=15811973](https://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/4208487?image_id=15811973)

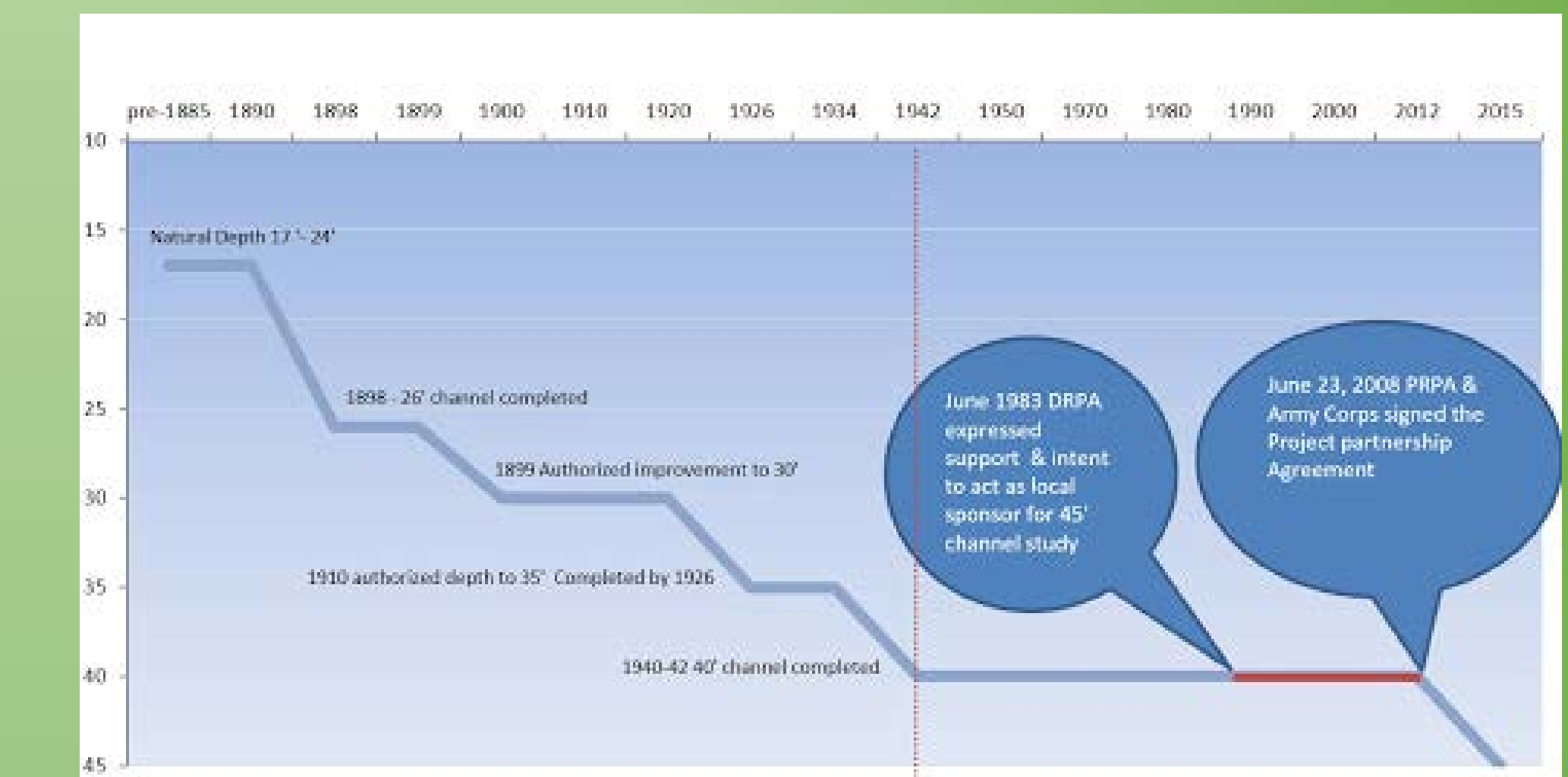


Figure 7: Changes in depth of Delaware River at the Port of Philadelphia attributed to major dredging projects over time  
<http://www.philaport.com/channel-deepening>



Figure 1: Dutch map of Delaware River and surrounding Philadelphia area, circa 1639  
<https://www.loc.gov/maps/?fa=location%3Adelaware+river&dates=1630-1639>

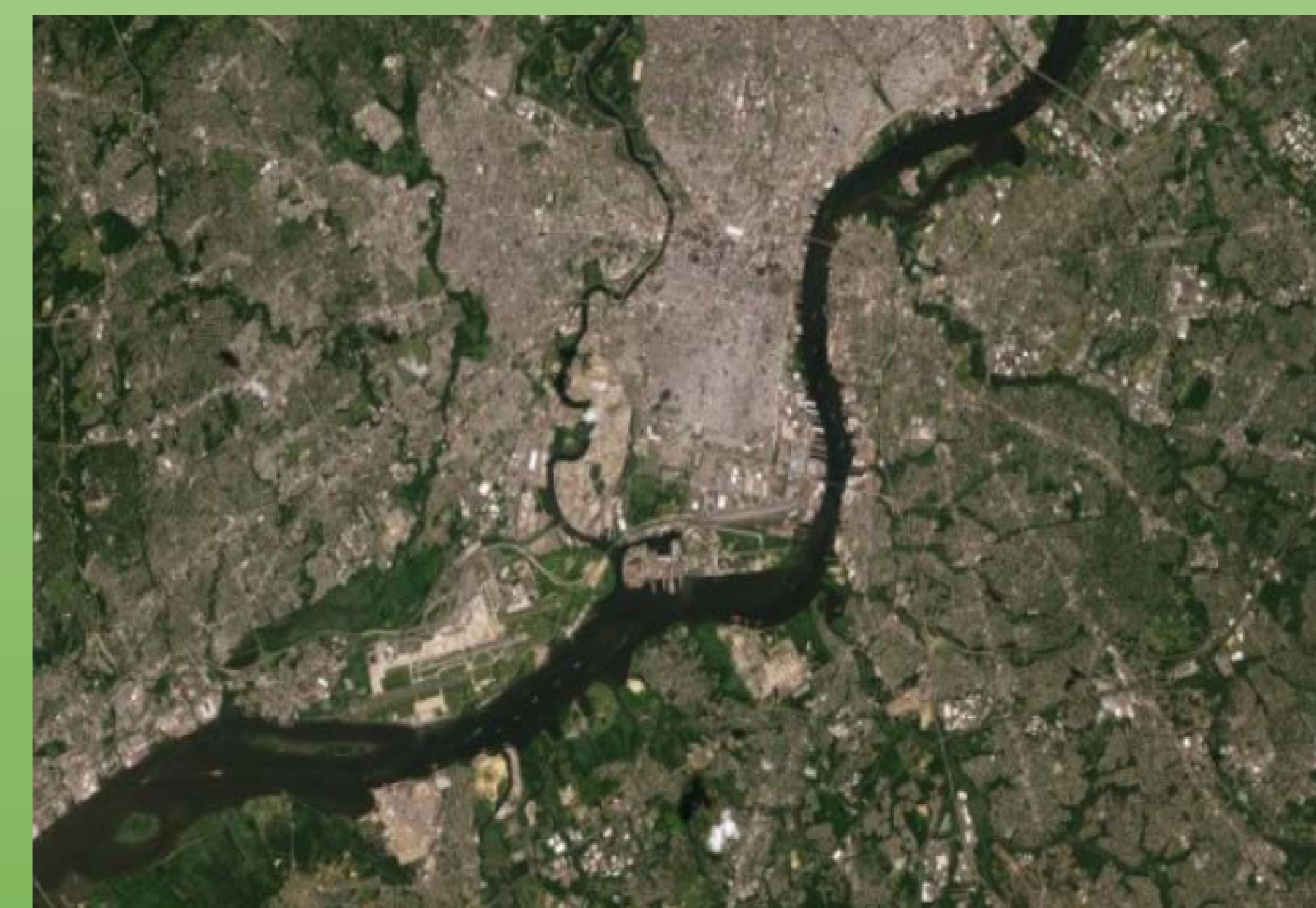


Figure 6: Modern map of the Delaware River in the Philadelphia area (ArcGIS basemap)

Rankings of U.S. Ports by Tonnage and Value, 2005					
Cargo Tonnage					
Imports			Exports		
Rank	Port	Short Tons	Rank	Port	Short Tons
11	Philadelphia	25,914,744	60	Camden-Gloucester	545,293
17	Paulsboro	18,133,852	66	Chester	400,092
33	Wilmington	6,896,449	67	Wilmington	381,567
40	Camden-Gloucester	4,742,854	70	Philadelphia	322,702
66	Chester	1,243,599			
Cargo Value					
Rank	Port	Value (\$)	Rank	Port	Value (\$)
6	Philadelphia	29,462,379,151	22	Philadelphia	2,430,517,679
35	Chester	5,684,957,894	24	Wilmington	2,175,543,116
37	Wilmington	5,499,289,565	32	Chester	1,594,532,247
79	Paulsboro	255,203,257	74	Camden	149,968,973
103	Camden	67,409,025	84	Paulsboro	88,580,455

Note: Tonnage is for foreign trade only.

Figure 4 (left): Trade in and out of ports on the Delaware River measured as cargo tonnage and monetary value  
<http://economyleague.org/uploads/files/243954419196508911-maritime-commerce-in-greater-philadelphia.pdf>

## Outcomes:

- Islands in the river have either been removed or become part of the mainland (compare Figures 2 and 6)
- The depth of the river has increased (Figure 7)
- The river is deeper due to dredging designed to accommodate trade