

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

NEW JERSEY

HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

SECOND SERIES.

VOL. VI.

1879—1881.

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ERRATA.

Page 55, Note, Precede " N. J. Historical Collection " with *Barber & Howe's*.

" 87-88, Last line on page 88 belongs at foot of page 87.

" 92, For " Newton J. Ryerson " read *Marlin J. Ryerson*.

" 105, Signature to letter should be Samuel B. Stafford.

" 112, Date to the number should be 1881.

" 112 to 124, Headings of pages for " Meeting in Newark " read *Meeting in Trenton*.

" 133, For " I. E. Learned " read *J. E. Learned*.

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
New Jersey Historical Society.

SECOND SERIES.

VOL. VI.

1879.

No. 1.

NEWARK, May 15th, 1879.

THE SOCIETY met at 11 o'clock in their rooms, the President, SAMUEL M. HAMILL, D.D., presiding, assisted by Vice Presidents NIXON and PENNINGTON, the members present being from various parts of the State.

Mr. ADOLPHUS P. YOUNG, Recording Secretary, read the minutes of the last meeting, which were approved.

Mr. WILLIAM A. WHITEHEAD, Corresponding Secretary, made his report on the correspondence since January, and laid before the Society letters from gentlemen accepting membership; from Historical Societies of Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Virginia, Vermont, New Hampshire and Delaware, Yale and Harvard Colleges; American Antiquarian Society; Regents of New York University and Massachusetts Medical Society, acknowledging the receipt of the Society's publications; from Historical Societies of Minnesota and Wisconsin, Michigan Library Association, St. John's Library New Brunswick Nova Scotia, soliciting donations; from Messrs. Sam'l Allinson of Yardville, Wm. L. Stone

—THE—
CHARACTER AND EMPLOYMENTS
—OF THE—
EARLY SETTLERS
—ON THE—
SEA-COAST OF NEW JERSEY.
—BY—
REV. ALLEN H. BROWN.

*Prepared at the request of The New Jersey Historical Society, and
read at their meeting in the City of Newark, May 15th, 1880.*

THE CHARACTER AND EMPLOYMENTS

—OF THE—

EARLY SETTLERS ON THE SEA-COAST OF NEW JERSEY.

To many, even citizens of our own State, the coast of New Jersey has been *terra incognita*. From the seventeenth century, when Henry Hudson landed at Sandy Hook, and Cornelius Jacobsen Mey gave name to the Southern Cape, until recently, the coast of New Jersey has been more readily accessible from the sea than from the land. A vast pine forest extended from the Atlantic ocean to the Delaware river. Cape May county was isolated from the upper districts of the State by extensive cedar swamps, and no communication could have been held with Cohansey or Burlington, except by the waters of the Delaware or by horse paths through those swamps, until 1707, when was completed the road which had been ordered by act of Assembly ten years previously.*

As early as 1692 a ferry was established by law over Great Egg Harbor river, at the place now called Beesley's Point. The old Indian trails or bridle paths, when straightened and widened, became wagon roads. In the march of improvement, a slowly dragging stage conveyed a few passengers from the great cities to different points upon the seashore. The first stage line between Philadelphia and Tuckerton was established by Isaac Jenkins about 1816. He made one trip a week, leaving on Monday and returning on Saturday. It took two days to travel each way.†

* Beesley's Cape May. p. 170.

† Coast Atlas. p. 40.

Many yet retain a painful remembrance of the wearisome journey to Cape May or Absecon, when it was accomplished within twenty-four hours. Wonderful is the change! Now railroad trains convey multitudes over the same routes in from two to four hours, and fast lines run from the Delaware to Atlantic City in ninety minutes.

THE SUBJECT AND TERRITORY DEFINED.

The New Jersey Historical Society assigned to the writer, most unexpectedly, the duty of preparing a paper upon the history, manners, customs and character of the people residing in early times on the sea coast of New Jersey. Since this appointment was made Messrs. Woolman and Rose have published a large Historical* and Biographical Atlas of the New Jersey Coast, illustrated with many maps.

A stranger now crossing the State, as he emerges from the wilderness and beholds for the first time the prominent villages which dot the shore-line, exclaims: What large houses are here! What handsome furniture! What intelligent people! What hospitality! I had not expected to see such evidences of thrift and refinement. But hold! Do not imagine that all the people live thus, or you will make as great a mistake as does another, who, meeting an ignorant, stupid woodman, begrimed with charcoal dust, and unable to answer the first question in the Child's Catechism, regards *him* as a representative of all the inhabitants. Truth lies between extremes. So somewhere between these two classes you shall find the majority of the people.

The sea-coast extends from Sandy Hook on the north to Cape May on the south. Its breadth is not so easily determined. Four counties, Monmouth, Ocean, Atlantic and Cape May lie upon the shore; while Burlington county, with its base upon the Delaware river, extends almost to a point at the sea. Monmouth county was first established in 1675, Bur-

*The Historical portion was prepared by Dr. T. T. Price, of Tuckerton, and the Biographical, by Bernard Connolly of Freehold.

lington county in 1694, Gloucester county was first laid out in 1677; Cape May county was instituted by act of Assembly November 12, 1692; Atlantic county was formed from the eastern portion of Gloucester in 1837, and Ocean county from the southern part of old Monmouth in 1850. Dr. Price, in the Coast Atlas, reckons as belonging to the "Coast" only twenty-six of the sixty-six townships and cities of the five counties, and assigns to them a population of 61,853. The total population of the four counties, exclusive of Burlington, in 1850 was 55,793. In 1875 it was 84,364. If between one-third and one-fourth of the people of Burlington county (53,155) be added to the four counties, the population of the counties along the shore will equal one hundred thousand.

The present inquiry must not extend to that broad territory of which Governor Marcus L. Ward well said in his annual message of 1868: "There is still a quarter of the State, mainly in South Jersey, more than a million of acres susceptible of easy improvement and cultivation, which is still uncleared. It is now coming into market, and needs only to be known to be quickly taken up. For purposes of fruit culture and market gardening these lands are not inferior to the oldest and richest parts of the State."

While forbidden to explore that extensive country commonly called "The Pines," it is not only allowable, but necessary, to extend our inquiry to the people living upon the banks of the navigable rivers which empty into the sea, such as the Little Egg Harbor or Mullica—the Great Egg Harbor and their tributaries; for the same people who discovered and settled on the shore and bays ascended these rivers and settled upon their banks for similar reasons.

Who were the first settlers? Whence came they, and for what? What have been their employments? What their educational opportunities? Who were their religious teachers? What the testimony of reliable and unprejudiced contemporary writers?

It is easier to ask than to answer these questions, which open a wide field for investigation. Our theme must be restricted to this one question: Who were the early settlers on the sea-coast and adjacent rivers of New Jersey, and what their character and employments?

THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

In the seventeenth century Lord Berkley sold his undivided half of the Province of New Jersey to two members of the Society of Friends. As a result, large numbers of that Society emigrated from England and settled in West Jersey. Among these were many persons possessing intelligence and substantial means. In the words of the historian Smith,* “Views of permanent stability to religious and civil freedom must have been the inducement to the original adventurers to think of such a voyage. The New England governments had before been considerably settled from motives of this kind. These, though nearly forty years later in their removal, were also protestant dissenters and involved in the general insecurity that such with reason apprehended in the reign of Charles the Second.”

And Bancroft† adds: The Quaker Proprietaries in England said to the few who had emigrated, We lay a foundation for after ages to understand their liberty as Christians and as men, that they may not be brought into bondage, but by their own consent, for we put the power in the people, and on March 3, 1677, the charter and fundamental laws of West Jersey were perfected and published. Among these it was provided that No person shall, at any time, in any ways, or on any pretence be called in question or in the least punished or hurt for opinion in religion. No man (nor number of men) hath power over conscience. The General Assembly shall be chosen not by the confused way of cries and voices, but by the balloting box. No man can be imprisoned for

* Smith's Preface. pp. xi.-xii.

† Vol. II., pp. 356, 357, 375.

debts. The native was protected against encroachments; the helpless orphan educated by the State.

William Penn declared: "We cannot be false to our principles, though it were to relieve ourselves, for we would have none to suffer for dissent on any hand;" and, pleading before a Committee of the House of Commons, said: "We must give the liberty we ask." Such was the sublime language of the Quakers.

The Friends settled along the coast in East Jersey as well as in West Jersey. About one-half of the coast was on the eastern side of the line of division. The Friends were not the only settlers, for others came from New England and Long Island seeking to improve their fortunes.

SETTLERS OF MONMOUTH COUNTY.

The Historian Smith expresses a doubt whether there were English and Dutch settlers at an earlier period than 1669, but adds: About this time many industrious and respectable farmers—English inhabitants—came from the West End of Long Island and settled about Middletown, and thence to Freehold and vicinity. To Shrewsbury there came many families from New England. There was also an accession of the Scotch.

Rev. A. A. Marcellus has solved the doubt and uncertainty of Smith, and proves that already many English families had settled in these parts, and adds: I have a list of one hundred and eighteen names of settlers, nearly all English. Several had been residents among the Dutch in New Netherlands previous to the surrender. The Patentees were chiefly from Long Island, but the greater part of the purchasers came from Rhode Island, the Massachusetts and Plymouth Colonies, and from Barbadoes. Middletown and Shrewsbury soon sprung to be towns of some importance.*

* Proceedings of New Jersey Historical Society. Vol. I., p. 158.

SETTLERS OF OCEAN COUNTY.

Letters of Hon. Edwin Salter, published in the *New Jersey Courier* (in 1877 and '78), give many interesting items respecting the early settlers of Ocean county, which was originally a part of Monmouth. The Rogerine Baptists came from New London (via Schooley's Mountain) to Waertown in 1737. Abraham Waer, one of their number, who gave name to Waertown, is said to have come from near the Hurlgate, above New York. The Brown family came originally from Goshen, N. Y.; the Headleys from the same State. Samuel Bennett came from New England; John Perkins came from England during the old French war. The first Soper who landed in West Jersey, was Thomas Soper, in 1678. Tradition says that the Sopers were of Huguenot descent. The Camburns came from New England, probably from Nantucket. They went on whaling voyages. The Birdsall family originally came from Long Island. The Predmores are said to be from Middlesex county.*

The Stout family of Ocean and Monmouth counties descended from John Stout, a gentleman of good family of Nottinghamshire, England. His son Richard married a widow, whose maiden name was Penelope Van Princes. Her romantic history and marvellous escape from the Indians are described by Smith.†

The Falkenberg families of Ocean county are said to have descended from Henry Jacob Falkenberg, who came from Holstein, a little province adjoining Denmark. He acted as interpreter between the English and the Indians, near Trenton, in 1677. He removed his residence from Burlington about 1698 to Little Egg Harbor, settling a short distance below Tuckerton.‡

The Holmes family in Ocean county are descended from Rev. Obadiah Holmes, so favorably remembered in the

* *N. J. Courier*, Nov. 1, 1877.

† *N. J. Courier*, Jan. 10, 1878. *Smith's History*. pp. 66-67.

‡ *N. J. Courier*, Jan. 24, 1878.

annals of the Baptist Church in America. His son Jonathan became a resident of Monmouth county, and was in 1668 a member of the Assembly.*

In the Mount Holly Mirror, Mrs. Leah Blackman gives an extended account of the Andrews family, especially of Edward and Mordecai Andrews, who were the first white settlers in what is now the village of Tuckerton, removing thither about the year 1700. Very interesting is her account of the conversion and reformation of Edward Andrews, who, in 1708, deeded two acres of land to the Society of Friends on which to build a meeting-house and form a grave yard.†

Cranmertown, in Ocean county, was settled at an early day by Josiah and William Cranmer, who came from Staten Island. They have left a numerous posterity, who are scattered up and down the coast in several villages. They claim descent from the celebrated Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury.‡

OLD GLOUCESTER, NOW ATLANTIC COUNTY.

Of the settlers in old Gloucester county it is on record that in 1695 John Somers, Jonathan Adams, John Scull, Jonas Valentine and Peter Conover, of Long Island, whalemens, purchased of Thomas Budd, land lying on Great Egg Harbor River. John Somers settled at Somers' Point, and the others in the neighborhood, and were, perhaps, the first settlers along the coast in that part of Gloucester county.**

The descendants of the Somers family are very numerous at this day. Captain Richard Somers, one of the most gallant and intrepid officers of the United States Navy, was from Egg Harbor. He sacrificed his life in an attempt to explode a fire-ship in the harbor of Tripoli in 1804.††

*N. J. Courier, Feb. 21, 1878.

†N. J. Mirror, June 27, July 4, July 11, 1878.

‡Coast Atlas. p. 39.

**John Clement.

††N. J. Historical Collections. pp. 64-66.

In 1726 John Budd (son of Thomas Budd above mentioned) conveyed part of Absecon Beach, and where Atlantic City now stands, to James Steelman. Andrew Steelman, Jonathan Adams, John Scull, Peter Scull, Peter Conover, John Conover, Richard Risley, Thomas Risley, Samuel Gale and Edmund Doughty. These are all old and now familiar names along the shore, and it is supposable that they lived somewhere in the region about Absecon.* Edmund Iliff built a saw-mill and had quite a town about Babcock's Creek, near Mays Landing, in the beginning of the eighteenth century.

John Endicott came from England in 1628. He was Governor of the Colony of Massachusetts, and longer at the head of the administration than any other Governor. His grandson Joseph, christened at the First Church of Salem July 17, 1672, removed to North Hampton, in the county of Burlington, N. J., in 1698. Joseph's son John and grandson Benjamin lived in New Jersey. The latter suffered much during the Revolutionary war. In Atlantic county and in other parts of New Jersey are now many descendants of old Governor John Endicott, of Massachusetts, occupying positions honorable to themselves and their renowned ancestor.†

Ephraim Pennington, who came from England, swore allegiance to the New Haven Colony in 1643. His son Ephraim removed to Newark. The grandson of Ephraim (second) was Samuel, who married Mary Sandford. They

* Andrew Steelman subsequently became owner of most of the shares of the other persons above named, and in 1736 obtained by deed three hundred additional acres, which John Scott, of Rhode Island, had located on said Beach by return dated June 16, 1714.

In the deeds made by Thomas Budd the following words often occur: "With the privilege of cutting cedar and commonidge for cattell, &c., on ye swamps and beaches laid out by ye said Thomas Budd for Commons." —See Judge Clement's letter.

† New England Historical and Genealogical Register. Vol. 1. July and October, 1847. pp. 335-342.

had nine children. Their fifth child was William S. Pennington, Governor of New Jersey from 1813 to 1815. Their eighth child, and brother to the Governor, was Nathan. Nathan Pennington, born at Dutch Farms, volunteered at the age of nineteen in the Revolutionary war. He served also against the whiskey insurrection. During the Revolution he was taken prisoner and sent to Quebec, where he nearly died of starvation, but finally escaped. He was at Chestnut Neck, in old Gloucester county, in charge of captured property, when he married Margaret Westcott Leonard, daughter of Colonel Richard Westcott, a man famous in those days in the history of the Forks of Little Egg Harbor and of Mays Landing, at the head of navigation on the Great Egg Harbor River. Nathan Pennington and Margaret Westcott Leonard, his wife, had nine children. Their descendants, especially on the female side of the family, are numerous and highly esteemed in Atlantic county to this day, while the men bearing the honored name of Pennington are scattered abroad upon the sea and in different parts of the land.*

SETTLERS OF CAPE MAY COUNTY.

The original settlers of Cape May county, or those who were there previous to the year 1700, were principally attracted by the inducements held out by the whale fishery, and Long Island supplied the principal proportion of those who came prior to that time.†

Dr. Beesley, in his history of Cape May county, mentions the names of forty-seven persons who purchased of the agents of Dr. Cox and the West Jersey Society, mostly previous to 1696, some few as early as 1689. Among these are the familiar names Leamyeng (now Leaming), Weldon (now Whilldin), Hughes, Hand, Eldridge, Gandy, Stites,

* See Genealogy of the Pennington Family, by Capt. A. C. M. Pennington.

† Beesley's Cape May. p. 171.

Causon, Townsend, Smith, Spicer, Reeves, and others. Besides the above, who located land previous to 1700, he mentions the names of eighty-six persons who were at that time residing in the county, many of whom possessed land by secondary purchases.*

He gives a particular account of Thomas and Christopher and Aaron Leaming, also of Colonel Jacob Spicer. Jacob Spicer, Jr., was a member of the Legislature twenty-one years. Aaron Leaming, Jr., was a member of the Legislature thirty years, and was one of the most prominent and influential men the county ever produced. The Legislature selected Aaron Leaming, Jr. (born 1716, died 1780), and Jacob Spicer, Jr., to compile the laws of the State, known as Leaming and Spicer's Collection.

REV. JOHN BRAINERD'S LETTER IN 1761.

The Rev. John Brainerd, in a letter to Rev. Enoch Green in 1761, mentions the names of Thomas Potter,† David Woodmonsie, Mr. Rulon, Mr. Haywood, Mr. Randall, Charles Loveman, John Leake, Captain Davis, William Reed, Benj. Ingersoll, Andrew Blackman, John English, Philip Schull, George May, Elijah Clark, Captain Stillwell and John Golden as the persons at whose houses public religious services were held, at a time when there were few or no churches. These persons lived along the coast and on the rivers from Toms River on the north to Tuckahoe on the south.

It is impossible to trace all the families upon the coast. From these representative names one may draw an inference respecting many others, equally deserving of mention, who first settled upon the Jersey coast, and conclude that they were not inferior to settlers in other counties, and that there were men, and women too, worthy of their ancestry, and of whom their posterity need not be ashamed.

* Beesley's Cape May. pp. 174-175.

† The Memoir of Rev. John Murray (pp. 136 to 140) gives an account of Thomas Potter and Goodluck in 1770. See also the Life of John Brainerd.

DAVID'S MEN OF NECESSITY.

It is true Smith's History (page 487), speaking of the abundance of white and red cedars (in 1765), says: "The towering retreat of the former have afforded many an asylum for David's men of necessity," referring to I Samuel, xxii: 2, where it is recorded, "And everyone that was in distress, and everyone that was in debt, and everyone that was discontented, gathered themselves unto David." Admitting, for a moment, the most unfavorable interpretation, which some have given to this testimony, what does it amount to? Simply this, that some lawless men have found the thicket or the forest a good hiding place, until driven out by the officers of justice or by advancing civilization. Some such there may have been in earlier, as certainly there have been in later times; but, if true at all, it is only of the few, and not of the majority of the people.

Again, Smith's words will bear a more favorable construction. Why do many now emigrate from the old to the new sections of our country? Is it not because they have been unsuccessful in business, are in debt and distress, and must go where lands are cheaper and labor in demand, and because they are not satisfied with their present condition and wish to better their fortunes? Colonel Morris, describing the state of religion in the Jerseys, and in no flattering terms, in the year 1700, mentions ten towns in East Jersey, and among these Middletown and Freehold, and remarks: "Those towns and the whole Province was peopled by those of very narrow fortunes, and such as could not well subsist in the places they left." Divested of sarcasm and expressed in simple words, the assertion of Smith may mean nothing more than that of Colonel Morris.*

EMPLOYMENTS.—NATURAL PRIVILEGES.

Having considered, imperfectly, who were the early settlers, the next question is, What were their employments?

* See Proceedings of N. J. Historical Society, 1849. pp. 118-121.

At an early period the settlers, Dutch and Swedes, carried on an extensive trade with the Indians for furs and skins. The beaver dams are yet to be seen in the forests of Atlantic county.*

As already intimated, many of the early settlers at Cape May and Egg Harbor were engaged in catching whales. The advantages afforded by the fisheries of the Province were always dwelt upon in the various publications of the Proprietors.†

Gabriel Thomas, in 1698, said: The commodities of Cape May county are oyl and whalebone, of which they make a prodigious quantity every year, having mightily advanced that great fishery, taking great numbers of whales yearly.‡

The natural privileges of the sea-coast have always been highly esteemed. Those who first located lands in the county of Cape May were particular to select such portions as were contiguous to the waters of the bay and ocean, hence the sea-shore and bay-shore were first settled upon, evidently for the purpose of being within reach of the oysters, fish and clams abounding in our waters. Thus we find the whole sea-shore, from Beesley's Point to Cape Island, a continuous line of farms and settlements, regardless of the quality of the soil, whilst the interior portion, and considered by some the better part, remains to this day unimproved and uncultivated. The above remarks of Dr. Beesley, concerning his native county, are emphatically true, and applicable to the upper coast also. Again, says Gabriel Thomas (1698), of Great Egg Harbor and Little Egg Harbor Creek, they take their names from the great abundance of eggs which the swans, geese, ducks and other wild fowls of those rivers lay thereabouts.*

The early natural beds of oysters have been almost exhausted, but the business of planting and cultivating them,

* John Clement's Letter Feb. 9, 1879, and N. J. Courier, July 8. 1868.

† New Jersey Historical Collections. pp. 40-41.

‡ Beesley's Cape May. pp. 167, 171. N. J. Historical Collections. p. 369, and Coast Atlas p. 46.

bringing the plants from Virginia and Maryland, has been pursued in modern times. It is not easy to obtain reliable statistics of this business, yet it has been computed by some that the proceeds of the oyster business, with that of fishing and clamming, exceed in value the products of an area of cultivated land equal in size to the bays and sounds.*

The salt marshes or salt prairies of the coast may be reckoned among the natural privileges, as they produce annually, without cultivation, large crops of natural grasses. The arable land comes down to the sea in the northern portion of Monmouth county, and again at Cape May; but in the long interval the sea breaks upon a succession of low sandy beaches. Between these long narrow islands and the mainland, which is commonly called "The Shore," are salt meadows extending for miles, yet broken and interrupted by bays and thoroughfares. More than 155,000 acres of salt marshes are distributed along the coast from Sandy Hook to the point of Cape May, including also the marshes on the Delaware Bay side of that county. As of old, so now, they furnish good natural pastures for cattle and sheep all the year round, and are highly esteemed by the farmers whose lands border on them, as they constitute also an unailing source of hay for winter use and a surplus for exportation.†

Smith's History, in 1765, said almost the whole extent of the Province on the Atlantic is barrens, or nearly approaching to it, yet there are scattering settlements all along the coast, the people subsisting in great part by raising cattle in the bogs, undrained meadows and marshes and selling them to graziers, and cutting down the cedars. There were originally plenty of both the white and red sorts. They are now much worked out. He mentions fish and oysters carried to New York and Philadelphia markets, and considered the lands of little value after the pines and cedars are removed.

* Coast Atlas. p. 63.

† Coast Atlas. p. 21.

During the war of the revolution salt-works were quite numerous on Barnegat Bay and along the coast. The State of Pennsylvania sent a detachment to protect its salt-works near Toms River. Frequent mention is made of Government salt-works.*

The natural privileges have been a detriment to agricultural industry. When a man can in a few hours or a day obtain food to supply his family for a week, he is tempted to spend much of his time in idleness. The improvidence of the regular bayman or gunner is proverbial, and to him the cultivation of the land is too much like hard work. The woodman, whose business has been to destroy trees, learns not to plant. Sons of the ocean, familiar with the excitement of the sea, prefer to plough the waves and not the ground. From these causes combined, it is probable that, relatively to the population, the early settlers cultivated the land for cereals as much, or more, than their descendants. Necessity begins to drive the latter to give more attention to agriculture, while the fish of the sea and mud of the marshes and rivers, affording abundant fertilizers, take away all valid excuse on account of the lightness of the soil, and, at the same time, modern watering-places afford a ready market.

ERA OF SHINGLES, PINE WOOD AND CHARCOAL.

At an early period the cedar swamps were highly esteemed at a time when the pines were of little worth. Between the years 1740 and 1750 the cedar swamps of Cape May county were mostly located, and the amount of lumber since taken from them is incalculable, not only as an article of export, but to supply the home demand for fencing and building. Large portions of these swamps have been worked a second and some a third time. †

Cedar boards and staves were carried to New York and Philadelphia, and thence exported to Europe and the West

* Coast Atlas. p. 67.

† Beesley's Cape May. p. 197.

Indies. A writer in Watson's Annals, who visited Tuckerton in 1823, says: "Little Egg Harbor was once (in my grandfather's time, when he went there to trade) a place of great commerce and prosperity. The little river there used to be filled with masted vessels. It was a place rich in money. Farming was but little attended to. Hundreds of men were engaged in the swamps cutting cedar, and saw-mills were numerous and always in business cutting cedar and pine boards. The Forks of Egg Harbor was the place of chief prosperity. Many ship-yards were there. Vessels were built and loaded out to the West Indies. New York, Philadelphia and the Southern and Eastern cities received their chief supplies of shingles, boards and iron from this place.*"

As the business in cedar declined, the coasters anxiously asked, "What shall we do to sustain ourselves and vessels?" Then the invention of steamboats created a demand for pine wood, and at the same time charcoal was required for export as well as for the blast furnaces, which manufactured iron. Again, the saw-mills were erected where the streams would sustain them, and there was renewed activity along the coast and rivers.

A history of those extinct furnaces belongs more to the history of the Pines than of the Coast. One of them at Batsto, near the Forks of Little Egg Harbor, was established in 1762; kept in continuous operation until 1846. At one period it cast cannon, mortars, shot and shell.†

MARITIME EMPLOYMENTS.

The pine forests were utilized not only in propelling steamboats, but also in the construction of sailing vessels, at first of small schooners of from fifty to one hundred tons; but as the nearer trade declined and the ambition of captains increased, three-mast vessels of six and eight hundred tons have been launched for long voyages.

* Coast Atlas. p. 39. N. J. Historical Collections. p. 108.

† Proceedings of N. J. Historical Society, 1865. p. 12.

This opens the way to consider the strictly maritime employments of the coasters of New Jersey, and for many years their most profitable and important business, which has in its turn declined. From 1815 to 1845 one hundred vessels of from twenty to a hundred tons sailed with wood from the Mullica river and fifty from Barnegat, and so from other harbors. Then they began to build larger vessels for longer voyages, and now, said the old Captain, sorrowfully, "That business is played out, too."

Whether in pursuit of whales or smaller fish; looking to the bay for pleasure or support; trading to our own cities or more distant climes, the Jersey coaster could not live without his boat. The young man takes to the water as to his natural element, or because he knows not what else to do, and, almost amphibious, eagerly pushes out upon the exciting wave or gladly returns to his nest; for be it ever so humble there is to him no place like home. The most common expression, to describe the business of his life, is to say "He goes by water."

There have always been bold pilots at Sandy Hook and Cape May, renowned for their skill and enterprise. In 1758 there were fourteen Pilots at Cape May, and in 1850 thirty-five. During the year ending November 1, 1877, fifty-one New Jersey Pilots from Sandy Hook and Amboy piloted (out and in) 2,644 vessels, and boarded 692 of these off shore.*

By the kindness of Senator Frelinghuysen, in 1873, valuable tables were obtained in regard to twenty-three Maritime States and Territories:

* Report of the Pilot Commissioners. December, 1878

**ORDER OF MAGNITUDE IN
POPULATION, AREA, SHORE LINE AND TONNAGE
OF THE SEVERAL MARITIME STATES AND TERRITORIES OF THE
UNION ON THE ATLANTIC, GULF AND PACIFIC COASTS.**

STATES AND TERRITORIES.	ORDER OF MAGNITUDE.			
	IN POPULATION.	IN AREA.	IN SHORE LINE.	IN TONNAGE.
Maine	Fourteenth.	Fourteenth.	Fourth.	Third.
New Hampshire	Seventeenth.	Seventeenth.	Twentieth.	Nineteenth.
Massachusetts	Third.	Nineteenth.	Tenth.	Second.
Rhode Island	Eighteenth.	Twenty-second.	Nineteenth.	Tenth.
Connecticut	Sixteenth.	Twentieth.	Sixteenth.	Eighth.
New York	First.	Ninth.	Eleventh.	First.
New Jersey	Eighth.	Eighteenth.	Fifteenth.	Seventh.
Pennsylvania	Second.	Eleventh.	Twenty-second.	Fourth.
Delaware	Twenty-first.	Twenty-first.	Twenty-first.	Sixteenth.
Dist. of Columbia	Twentieth.	Twenty-third.	Twenty-third.	Thirteenth.
Maryland	Eleventh.	Sixteenth.	Ninth.	Fifth.
Virginia	Fourth.	Thirteenth.	Eighth.	Eleventh.
North Carolina	Sixth.	Twelfth.	Sixth.	Twentieth.
South Carolina	Thirteenth.	Fifteenth.	Twelfth.	Twenty-first.
Georgia	Fifth.	Sixth.	Fourteenth.	Seventeenth.
Florida	Nineteenth.	Fifth.	First.	Eighth.
Alabama	Seventh.	Seventh.	Seventeenth.	Fourteenth.
Mississippi	Ninth.	Eighth.	Eighteenth.	Twenty-third.
Louisiana	Twelfth.	Tenth.	Second.	Ninth.
Texas	Tenth.	First.	Third.	Fifteenth.
California	Fifteenth.	Second.	Seventh.	Sixth.
Oregon	Twenty-second.	Third.	Thirteenth.	Twenty-second.
Washington Terr'y	Twenty-third.	Fourth.	Fifth.	Twelfth.

The object of the investigation was to ascertain the relative position of New Jersey in regard to the *coasting trade*; but as the tonnage of New York, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania included all the great ocean-going steamers it was not possible to eliminate the coasting tonnage. These tables are valuable, and show that among the twenty-three States and Territories upon the Atlantic, Gulf and Pacific coasts, New Jersey is the eighth in population; the eighteenth in area; the fifteenth in length of shore line, and the seventh in tonnage.

The seven maritime States which have a larger population are New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Virginia, Georgia, North Carolina and Alabama.

The five maritime States and territory having less area are Massachusetts, Connecticut, Delaware, Rhode Island and the District of Columbia.

Those (eight) having less shore line (New Jersey having 446 statute miles) are Connecticut with 425; Alabama, 227; Mississippi, 224; Rhode Island, 223; New Hampshire, 122; Delaware, 122; Pennsylvania, 56, and District of Columbia, 25.

The (six) States having more tonnage than New Jersey are: New York, 1,164,403; Massachusetts, 514,180; Maine, 397,022; Pennsylvania, 323,557; Maryland, 146,201; California, 133,300; New Jersey having 87,552.

It should be remembered that the tonnage of New Jersey has been almost entirely employed in the coasting trade, and has been largely owned and manned by the hardy watermen, who live along our sea-coast and adjacent rivers.

WRECKS.

Innumerable have been the wrecks on the New Jersey coast. Skeletons of noble vessels, their ribs protruding from the sands, are now visible. If the story of those wrecks could be written the simple narrative would be more intensely interesting than a library of fiction. They have been numerous, not only because bars and shoals extend to a distance from the shore, but because of the greater number of vessels which, steering for the great commercial port of our country, sight first the land on the Jersey shore.

The report of the Life-Saving Service for 1877 affords a striking illustration of the importance and the dangers of the New Jersey coast, which from Sandy Hook to Cape May is called District No. 4. The coast from Maine to Florida then comprised six districts. Of the one hundred and twenty-nine disasters which occurred during that year in all the six districts, forty, or almost one-third, were upon the Jersey coast. The loss of property was in much greater proportion, for while the value of vessels and cargoes wrecked at the other five stations amounted to \$1,109,115, the value on the New Jersey coast alone was \$1,813,845. That was an exceptional year, including the two great steamers *Rusland* and *Amerique*. In District No. 4, for the year ending June

30, 1878, there were wrecked on the Jersey coast thirty-five vessels, of which the total value was \$550,223.

LIGHT-HOUSES.

The number of wrecks may have been relatively larger in ancient times, because of inferior vessels and inferior seamen, and also because of the absence of light-houses, which, with one or two exceptions, have been established within fifty years, while only one dates back to the last century.

In chronological order they are, viz.:

Sandy Hook, established.....	1762	Refitted last in.....	1875
Cape May, ".....	1823	Rebuilt in.....	1850
Highland Lights, ".....	1828	Rebuilt in.....	1862
Barnegat, established first....	1834	Present Tower in.....	1858
Little Egg Harbor, ".....	1848		
" abandoned.....	1859		
" restored.....	1867		
Absecon, established.....	1856		
Hereford Inlet, on Five-Mile Beach.....	1874		

The horrors of an ancient shipwreck must have been aggravated by the absence of the appliances, which modern science and a paternal government now supply. When a vessel strikes among the breakers, intelligence is flashed with lightning speed, and in a few hours the agents and steamers of the Underwriters or the Coast Wrecking Company are alongside to save the vessel; while life-saving crews are so successful in their philanthropic work, that the cases of drowning from shipwreck begin to be annually less than at the summer watering-places on the same coast. The official report of District No. 4, for the year ending June 30th, 1878, is that two hundred and forty-four lives were imperilled. How many were lost? Not one. All were rescued.

PIRACY.

Some writers of romance have invested the Jersey coast with greater horrors and have invented tales of barbarity and of false lights to lure vessels to destruction. In addition to unnatural views of life, they falsify history.

The author of the article upon light-houses in the Coast Atlas, remarks, "The opinion that dwellers upon the sea build beacon-fires in stormy nights to lure the anxious seaman to the fatal coast can find a place only in careless and credulous minds. The necessities of navigation, which gave rise to light-houses, should be sufficient to dispel such erroneous and unfriendly views. The first were built expressly to warn seamen when approaching the coast in the night, that they were nearing land and to prevent them from dashing their ships upon the shore in the darkness. Whenever the mariner beholds a fixed light, he knows that land is near, and either sheers off till morning, or stops the onward career of his ship."*

During the years from 1832 to 1835, not only all New England; but the whole civilized world was horrified by the fiendish crime, for which seven real pirates were executed at Boston. In mid-ocean, on the 22d of September, 1832, they attacked the Brig Mexican, Capt. Butman of Salem, compelled him to surrender twenty thousand dollars; locked the crew below and having set fire to the vessel, abandoned them to a horrible fate. Providentially, one sailor, escaping through a small scuttle which had been left open, released his companions and having cautiously extinguished the fire, they returned to Salem.

Tidings of the horrible crime, together with a description of the piratical vessel, were borne upon the wings of the wind to the uttermost parts of the earth. Months passed away. A British vessel, cruising on the African coast, captured the Pirate Panda, and after a lapse of two years, the crew were brought to Salem and confronted by the men, whom they had robbed and tried to murder. The crime was most extraordinary and the trial most important and interesting. Thus, the popular mind was excited to the highest pitch, and when a few of the inhabitants of old Monmouth

*Coast Atlas, p. 53.

county robbed some vessels upon our coast, during the same period of the excitement occasioned by the above trial and executions, it can not be doubted that the above mentioned facts stimulated the clamorous cry of "Land Pirates."*

The facts, which gave notoriety to the charge of the so-called "Land Piracy" cases are substantially these. The schooner Henry Franklin, on a voyage from Boston to Philadelphia, was cast away on Barnegat Beach, on the night of March 17, 1834 and the James Fisher, on her passage from New York to Philadelphia, was cast away near Barnegat Inlet, on the morning of October 12th, in the same year. Certain lawless persons, and notorious among them, one William Platt, esq. (who happened most unworthily to be a Justice of the Peace) came over from the mainland and plundered the goods, which were landed from the vessel. Six men were arrested, tried in the Circuit Court of the United States before Judge Baldwin. The case was argued by Garret D. Wall for the Government and Messrs. Southard, Randolph and Ryall for the defence. The indictments were for stealing and plundering from the said vessels, viz: an anchor, bags of coffee, mackerel and boxes of soap.

Counsel, in behalf of the defendants, contended that: 1st. The vessel was not in distress upon the *sea*, but upon the shore. 2d. The vessel was not wrecked; wreck implying entire destruction. 3d. She was not lost, but saved. 4th. Not stranded upon a bank of the sea, but upon the main shore. 5th. Not cast away, but purposely run on the shore to save her. They also contended, as the vessel was on the shore above low water, and as her bow was dry at the time of the larceny, that the case was without the jurisdiction of the United States Court, and the offence, if any, was triable by the State Courts. They also urged that the vessel had been

* For an account of the seven Pirates, see Sentinel of Freedom, Dec. 2, 1834, which copies from Boston Centinel of Thursday. See N. J. State Gazette, June 20, 1835. It copies from the Boston Morning Post of June 11, 1835.

abandoned and was not the property of the persons named in the indictment (at Boston), but of the Underwriters. Judge Baldwin in his charge to the jury, claimed jurisdiction, and that there was no proof of abandonment.*

Notwithstanding the efforts of eloquent and able counsel, the six men were convicted and justly sentenced, besides the payment of a fine, to imprisonments, varying from three months to four and a half years. The ringleader, Platt, escaped imprisonment, by flight to a distant land and forfeiting his recognizance. It appears that other persons were implicated; but having settled the claims of the Insurance Companies, the District Attorney, with the consent of the Court, entered "Nolle Prosequi" upon the indictments.†

In the records of the trial, no charge of decoying vessels appears. The only charges made, proven and punished, were stealing and plundering. It is manifest also, that comparatively, only a few persons were guilty.

The following extract from one of the most influential papers of the State, indicates the excitable condition of popular feeling at that time, (1835,) and shows how easily slanderous stories may be propagated; while the truth slowly, if ever, overtakes them.‡

"New Jersey Land Pirates Again! The Passengers, who were thrown on our shore, on Tuesday last, from the wreck of the packet ship *Sovereign*, at the imminent peril of their lives, were, we are told, mostly robbed of their money and clothing. A lady passenger states, that after being landed on the beach, the miscreant inhabitants stole her baggage, watch and money. The other passengers were also robbed and their trunks broken open and pilfered before their eyes. Other parties of these harpies, it is said, were lying off the wreck in their boats, ready to seize the prey, as soon as by

* State Gazette, Oct. 10, 1835.

† See State Gazette, Dec. 5, 1835, and Sentinel of Freedom, Dec. 8, 1835.

‡ Sentinel of Freedom Feb. 24, 1835.

the destruction of the vessel, it should come within their grasp. It is a burning shame, a deep disgrace that these pirates are suffered to live and plunder upon our shores."

The novelist rejoiced to find such a beautiful tale. But turn over a page. Seek the truth of history and you must wonder that so respectable a journal ever admitted to its columns the above sensational story. The very next issue of the same paper contains an honorable and editorial retraction in these words.

"The New Jersey Pirates Acquitted. We are very much gratified in being able to state explicitly that the story, which has gone abroad through the whole country of the plundering of the passengers of the ship *Sovereign* on the Jersey shore, has not the slightest color of truth. We learn from a conversation with the United States Marshal, whose name has been freely used on the occasion that he has ascertained in the most authentic manner, that the people in the neighborhood are not in the least degree culpable. The robberies appear to have been committed by the sailors and others belonging to the vessel, on the credit of the Jersey wreckers. The only lady passenger, Mrs. S——, said to have been robbed of her wardrobe, watch and other valuables, stated to the Marshal yesterday, that she lost only a chain and some small trinkets and that these were abstracted from her on board the vessel. During the thirty-six hours, that she remained with the wreck and on shore, she saw nothing of the fleet of pirates spoken of and neither saw nor heard of any improper conduct in the people of the neighborhood."*

The truth of history demands the record that the same United States Court, which tried and condemned the afore-said criminals of our own coast, also convicted four of the sailors of the ship *Sovereign* for stealing gold coins and sentenced them to the jail in terms varying from three to twelve months.†

* *Sentinel of Freedom*, March 3, 1835.

† *State Gazette*, December 5, 1835.

FICTION AND FALSE LIGHTS.

The exciting events really occurring upon the Jersey coast, simultaneously with the Boston tragedy, have afforded rich material for the novelist and dramatist, who have not failed to falsify history. Their falsehoods have done more mischief than false lights along our shore. The writers of these fictions display their own ignorance of the shore. Their absurdities would be simply amusing, were it not that strangers accept their statements as verities.

One novelist represents a ship of the largest dimensions driven up at high tide upon the beach below Squan. All were lost, save a babe, who becomes the heroine. The ship is now the home of the wreckers. A peaked roof covers the deck. In the rent side, is a door for its present inhabitants. Within—for the house has several rooms adequate for the accommodation of boarders from New York—within, the rudest furniture stands side by side with polished rosewood and carving and gilding. And see! Above the roof, night after night, upon the crosstrees is suspended a large lantern with a brilliant tin reflector!

Who, acquainted with the sandy coast, does not know that a ship of largest size would ground upon the bar before reaching the beach, and would there be broken by the violence of the sea and succeeding storms? Or, if it could possibly reach the strand, everything of value would be sold by the owners or underwriters, and removed speedily. Yes, when you can find a ship inhabited under circumstances, as above described, you shall see above it also the large lantern and the brilliant tin reflector.

Among the ephemeral publications which, fortunately perhaps, cannot now be found for the purpose of criticism: another author, seeing the improbability of a fixed light deceiving any sailor, is said to have described her heroine, as leading around a lame horse with a lantern attached to his head—possibly to represent the motion of a vessel in deep water. Another mendacious writer is said to have described

the Pirates, as living in the high cliffs and hiding in the caves of the rock-bound coast of New Jersey. Such misrepresentations are too puerile and absurd for serious consideration.

Navigators, especially when making the land in a fog or snow storm, after a long voyage, are liable to mistake one light-house for another and to escape censure, may charge that there is something wrong in the light. The barque A. J. Donaldson from Lima and seventy-five days from Coquimbo, went ashore in March, 1835, about one A. M., on Squan beach in a N. E. gale, in consequence, it was said, of mistaking the light on the wreck of the ship Sovereign, for the lights on the Highlands.* The captain may have been puzzled and deceived by seeing a fixed light in an unusual place, not laid down in his chart; but it is unaccountably strange, if he exercised due vigilance, that he should have mistaken it for the Highland light, which consists of two light-houses in separate towers, while at a short distance, Sandy Hook light ought to be at the same time visible. Certainly, the light on the Sovereign was placed there to warn; not to mislead other vessels.

With the highest respect for the press and editors, it is not safe to credit every statement which finds its way into newspapers. One of the most respectable journals, lately, published the following paragraph. "On Tuesday, December 19th, the schooner J. F. Barnes, laden with oysters, bound from Virginia to New York, mistook the lights of the patrolmen of the life-saving station for the lights of schooners lying at anchor and struck the shoals abreast of the Barnegat station." One familiar with the inlet and the shoals extending two or three miles seaward, would see the internal improbability of this story. The first remark of an old wreck-master, when he heard it was "That man found himself ashore before he knew it and wanted to make some excuse to his owners." A desire to know the truth and to vindicate

* Sentinel of Freedom, March 24, 1835.

the government from the charge of holding out false lights prompted an inquiry to the Hon. J. G. W. Havens, Superintendent of the life-saving stations, and this is his official reply. "The schooner L. D. Barnes of New York, grounded on Barnegat shoals, Dec. 25, 1878, in the evening about a-half mile east of life saving station No. 17. Twenty-five minutes after she struck, she was boarded by the crew of No. 17, who run anchor and hove her off at 9 A. M. the following day. The *cause* of the disaster, as reported by the captain, was *negligence in taking soundings*. But one vessel by name of Barnes has been wrecked since Sept. 1878."

Thus is another story of false lights proven to be false.

TESTIMONY OF HON. EDWIN SALTER AND DR. T. T. PRICE.

The Hon. Edwin Salter, a native of Newark, and long a resident of Ocean county, represented that county in the legislature for several years, and in 1859 was Speaker of the Assembly. He indignantly protests against the injustice done to his constituents, as if the people were once guilty of enormous crimes and emphatically asserts that no section of the United States, of the same size as Ocean county, where the piracies were said to have been committed, can present a record more free of serious criminal offences. No person in the *village* of Barnegat was ever guilty of any offence or ever charged with any offence, that would give the slightest color to the charge of piracy. The alleged crimes were charged to people, who lived ten or fifteen miles from Barnegat village, near the bay and inlet. which bear the same name. That some wrong was done, Mr. Salter freely admits: but maintains that the offences were greatly magnified, intentionally for a purpose by designing persons, some of whom were greater rogues than the shore ever produced. "To the best of my knowledge and belief," he says, "the charges were made only at a time when vessels and cargoes were insured for more than their value; which was an inducement for rogues who commanded vessels, to wreck their ships and

destroy as much cargo as possible, and hence as a partial excuse, the notoriously untrue charges of false lights on the beach and land piracies." Mr. Salter gives instances to illustrate his position.

Similar is the testimony of Dr. T. T. Price, a native of Cape May county and long a resident of Tuckerton. He writes: "I have felt, for a long time, a sentiment similar to indignation at the unjust aspersions cast upon the inhabitants of the coast of New Jersey, by uninformed and unfriendly people of other States and *our own*. I venture the assertion, that as a community, taken as a whole, there is not a more brave, generous, humane and honest class of people in the world. My life has been spent among them, and I know whereof I affirm. There are exceptions. There are in every community, men who do not fear God or regard man, but there are fewer of them, I believe, among the hardy seafaring men on the Jersey coast than in any other communities.*

CRIMINAL STATISTICS.

It is unnecessary, as it would be in vain, to maintain that the people on the coast are saints. It will be sufficient, to prove that they are not sinners above the rest of their fellow citizens. The statistics of crime ought to throw some light upon the question, "Are the shore people any worse than their neighbors?" An exhaustive inquiry would bring into review the Reform School, all city and county jails, as well as cases of capital punishment. It will suffice for the present and for an approximate answer, to take as a single illustration the reports of the State Prison. Even here it is not possible to decide how far the commitments to prison, from different counties, may have been modified by the zeal and fidelity of different prosecutors and by the severity or leniency of different judges.

* See also Dr. M. Beesley's defence of Cape May people in N. J. Historical Collections, p. 135.

The State Prison report for 1874 contains most valuable tables from 1799 to 1845 inclusive, prepared at the suggestion of the New Jersey Historical Society.* A comparison of the last three years with the preceeding five years indicates, not only a large increase of crime, but an alarming increase among the natives of New Jersey. How far will the long continued financial depression account for this increase? The average *total of commitments* from 1871 to 1875, was 592. While the average from 1876 to 1878 has been 809, an increase of 217 or more than 36 per cent. The average of *natives* of New Jersey among these prisoners was in the first period 176 and in the later period 300, an increase of 124 or 70 per cent.

Making now an examination by counties, without regard to population, the scale of average annual commitments to State Prison for eight years, from 1871 to 1878, inclusive, begins with Ocean county and its two and seventy-five hundredths, and ends with Hudson county and its one hundred and thirty-five commitments.

Table of Average Annual Commitments to State Prison for Eight Years by Counties, Irrespective of Population.

Ocean.....	2.75	Salem.....	13.	Burlington.....	32.6
Cape May	5.87	Warren.....	14.6	Middlesex	38.1
Atlantic	6.	Somerset	14.25	Passaic.....	45.75
Sussex.....	9.	Morris.....	16.6	Union.....	45.75
Gloucester.....	9.2	Cumberland.....	18.6	Camden	52.
Monmouth	11.6	Mercer.....	30.5	Essex.....	115.5
Hunterdon	11.25	Bergen.....	32.1	Hudson.....	135.

Table of Average Annual Commitments for the same period in proportion to the Population of these Counties.

Ocean one convict to.....	4984	Salem one convict to	1744
Monmouth "	4181	Mercer "	1635
Hunterdon "	3390	Burlington "	1630

* In the present investigation of Prison reports for the last eight years, commitments by the United States Courts, and those prisoners, who came by double indictment in two counties, are omitted.

Morris	“	-----2952	Essex	“	-----1461
Sussex	“	-----2667	Cape May	“	-----1395
Gloucester	“	-----2661	Middlesex	“	-----1268
Warren	“	-----2560	Hudson	“	-----1207
Atlantic	“	-----2327	Passaic	“	-----1171
Somerset	“	-----1926	Union	“	-----1131
Cumberland	“	-----1898	Bergen	“	-----1106
			Camden	“	-----1019

Is it not surprising that Ocean county, whose inhabitants have suffered so much reproach, because of the wrong-doing of a few, nearly fifty-years ago, should be found standing at the head in both tables, having the fewest actual commitments and the smallest number relatively to population? It can boast, as no other county can, that for eighteen out of twenty years, from 1851 to 1870, it had no representative in the State Prison. In this commendation Cape May stands next to Ocean county.*

LEGISLATIVE INVESTIGATION.

Finally, a Legislative investigation, established under oath by many witnesses, shall afford cumulative proof that the inhabitants of the coast are not sinners above all their fellow-citizens. †

In the Senate of New Jersey, Mr. Wurts, from Hunterdon county, offered the following concurrent preamble and resolutions:

WHEREAS, It is represented in the public journals that at the time of the late distressing shipwrecks of the John Minturn and other vessels on the New Jersey coast some persons on the shore neglected and refused to render relief and assistance to the perishing passengers and seamen, plundered the bodies of the dead of everything valuable found upon them, and in other cases exacted money for the delivery of the bodies; and,

WHEREAS, Such charges require investigation, that, if true, the inhuman and guilty actors may be punished to the utmost extent of the law, and proper and efficient means devised to prevent the repetition of conduct so

* See Prison Report of 1874. p. 73.

† Senate Journal. pp. 434-435; February 25, 1846.

barbarous and shocking, and, if not true, that the State may be relieved from the odium of such barbarity; therefore,

1. *Resolved*, The House of Assembly concurring, That the Legislature of New Jersey view with detestation and abhorrence the conduct charged upon a portion of the people on the shore at the time of the said shipwrecks.

2. *Resolved*, That the Governor is hereby requested to ascertain the facts connected with the said shipwrecks, in relation to said charges, and communicate the same to the Legislature, with a recommendation of such other legislation (if any) as in his judgment may be necessary.

In less than a month the Governor sent to the President of the Senate the following:

SIR:—In pursuance of the resolution of the 5th inst., to investigate the charges against citizens of this State in the vicinity of the vessels wrecked on the Monmouth coast, I appointed Peter Vredenburg, Jr., John S. Darcy and John C. Ten Eyck Commissioners, whose report and accompanying evidence I have the honor herewith to lay before the Legislature.

Very respectfully,

CHARLES C. STRATTON.

TRENTON, March 20, 1846.

The Commissioners reported that they visited the scene of the wrecks for more than twenty miles south of Sandy Hook to Barnegat Beach. Eight vessels had been wrecked, all of them, excepting one, on the 15th of February; including one pilot boat, four schooners, two barques, one brig and the ship John Minturn. The Commissioners examined, under oath, thirty-six witnesses in private, whose testimony, reduced in writing, accompanied the report. They had also procured and submitted a copy of the testimony of seven of the crew of the John Minturn and others, taken by the New York Shipwreck Society. The report fills more than fifteen closely printed pages of the Senate Journal. It is impossible, even now, to peruse without emotion the simple and thrilling narrative of the sufferings of the crews and the daring heroism of the life-savers upon the shore. Let it be remembered that those who then risked their lives to save others were volunteers and received no wages.

Edward Lewis, Captain of the barque *New Jersey*, voluntarily appeared, and was examined under oath. In his card of thanks to the people of Squan, he said: "I, the master of the barque *New Jersey*, had the misfortune of being wrecked on your coast in the gale of 15th of February. We came on shore about half-past six A. M., the surf raging in such violence that it was almost impossible to walk or look to windward. * * I give my thanks and good wishes to the people, as far as my acquaintance extends, for their honesty and perseverance; also for the immediate assistance by Mr. Garret Newman. To him we are indebted for our lives.

"I also speak of the barque *Lotty* as being one of the most heart-rending scenes I ever witnessed. * * We returned to the barque *Lotty* and there beheld some twelve or more men in the rigging, clinging for life and waiting for assistance. Time alone could determine their fate, as the surf-boat was a mile off; but there were some true-hearted and daring men who risked their own lives to save those of the *Lotty*, and they succeeded in their first attempt."

The Commissioners express the opinion that those who ventured in that surf-boat were at that time exposed to greater immediate peril than were those upon the ship. The violence of the gale was such that the persons sent for the surf-boat could not keep it on the wagon, nor drive their horses against the storm. Then some thirty or forty men dragged it through the edge of the surf, over a mile, opposite to the wreck of the *Lotty*.

THE JOHN MINTURN.

The loss of life on the ship *John Minturn* was great, and it was impossible to render aid from the shore by boat. Some of the crew started from the ship in the long boat. As it was carried by the current to the south, the people on the shore followed it, and, familiar from daily practice with the precise point of danger, as the boat neared the land, instantly

forming a rope of hands, with one end resting on the shore, the others pushed into the sea, and as the waves were curling over, at its moment of extremest peril, seized the boat and brought it to the shore. Another moment and it would have been too late; she would have been drawn down beneath the waters and everyone on board probably lost.

There was no surf-boat, then the Wreck-Master offered ten dollars, twenty dollars, then any money to each man who would venture off in the long boat. They refused the money and said: "*We will go off without money, as soon as with.*"

ROBBERY.—PLUNDERING THE DEAD.

In regard to the charge of robbery the Commissioners reported that, while the guard was called to rescue survivors of the John Minturn some person did break open the trunk of a cabin passenger. The Commission reported that "the cargoes of the Minturn and the Alabama were valued by Mr. S. M. Thompson, the agent of the underwriters, at about \$84,000, and that, by his estimation, the aggregate of property purloined, except the trunk, is about three hundred dollars. In regard to the wrecks in the other district (No. 2), of which John Remsen is Wreck-Master, we report to your Excellency that there is no evidence or suspicion that any of the property has been illegally taken."

The Commissioners fully and specifically exonerate the people from the charge of plundering the dead and exacting money for the delivery of the bodies. The Coroner incurred heavy expenses for teams and coffins, and deemed it proper that, when friends came for the bodies, those who had money and could afford it, should pay such expenses; but the payment was never made a condition precedent to the delivery of the body. The Commissioners believe the charge to be utterly untrue.*

The public journals have also charged that the people of the shore have been in the habit of raising false lights to decoy

*Senate Journal, pp. 601-602-603.

vessels, which has been disproved, so far as it can be disproved by testimony.

The Commissioners therefore report that the charges in the resolutions,* under which we act are, according to the best of our judgment upon the evidence, each and everyone of them untrue; that there are no inhuman and guilty actors therein to be punished, and that the State ought to be relieved from the odium of such barbarity.

Signed by

P. VREDENBERGH, JR.,

JOHN S. DARCY,

JOHN C. TEN EYCK,

Commissioners.

TRENTON, N. J., March 20, 1846.

HEROISM OF SURFMEN.

A volume might be filled with narratives of individual heroism and daring in the business known as wrecking, which, correctly defined, is that of saving and assisting vessels, which have been wrecked. Often, have they sacrificed their own lives to save others. Hon. Edwin Salter mentions various instances of the heroism of life-savers. One may serve as an example: "In December, 1856, as Justice of the Peace at Barnegat, I had to take official action in the case of the barque Tasso, when five persons were drowned from a life-boat which went off to rescue the shipwrecked crew."†

Captain John Maxson, of Squan Beach, has the honor of having fired the first ball over a wrecked vessel, for the saving of life, that was ever accomplished. In 1850 the ship Ayreshire, with two hundred and one passengers, stranded in a severe gale and snow-storm. At that time the apparatus was under the control of the New York Life-Saving Company, and the surfmen volunteered their services without remuneration. By means of the line, which Captain Maxson shot from the mortar, two hundred passengers were safely landed.

His son Charles Williamson Maxson, when in his sixteenth

* See pages 57-58.

† Letter, February 9, 1878.

year, threw a squid-line to the wrecked schooner *Carolinsey*, in 1823, and thus saved the crew, who were lashed in the rigging, and who would have perished but for this timely assistance.*

About twenty-eight years ago Captain Caleb Grant, of Toms River, during a voyage from Charleston to New York, encountered a hurricane. He discovered an English vessel flying a signal of distress, and instantly started to her relief. Finding that she could not be boarded by the use of small boats he boldly decided to drive his vessel "bow on" the disabled craft. To the surprise of his own crew, he was successful and rescued a large number of persons. As a token of the appreciation in which this act of bravery was held by the British Government, Captain Grant was presented, through the British Minister, with a magnificent gold watch, suitably inscribed with a record of his heroic deed.†

In June, 1860, about three A. M., as Captain Sheppard S. Hudson, from Mays Landing, of the schooner *R. G. Porter*, was running before a gale off Absecon Beach, he was startled by appalling cries of distress from drowning men, struggling in the waves all around him. The United States Revenue Steam Cutter "*Walker*" had been sunk a few minutes previously by collision with the schooner *Fanny*. Captain Hudson, with great labor and risk to his own vessel, remained until he had rescued fifty-one out of seventy-one persons, and for this noble deed he has to this day received no token of regard, not even the thanks of our own Government.

Captain James S. Ireland, of Somers Point, received a silver medal from the Vessel Owners and Captains Association of Philadelphia for humane and meritorious services rendered to the officers and crew of the schooner *H. B. McCaully*, at sea, February 2d, 1876.

Captain John M. Brown, of Squan village, has been

* Coast Atlas pp. 87-88.

† N. J. Courier, February 27, 1879.

widely known for his skill and daring in wrecking. At one time he had charge of three ships, a brig and a schooner, all on the beach at once. The John Farnum, Cornelius Grinnell, New Era, New York and Western World were among the most noted. From the New York, three hundred and fifty passengers, and from the Grinnell five hundred passengers were saved in midwinter, and Captain Brown received the gold medal of the Life-Saving Association for his humane and Christian efforts in saving the crews and passengers of these and other vessels.*

Such are some of the wreckers, and surfmen, and captains of whom Jersey men may boast a little. They deserve to be and, when better known, must be more highly esteemed. They are not worse by nature than others. God grant that they shall be saved by His grace, even as we.

The materials for the history of the early settlers on the coast and their descendants are not exhausted. Further knowledge of them might be gained could we trace the history of education and the history of religious teachers, who have proclaimed to them the way of life. These topics are too extensive. Your time and patience must be exhausted, and here this imperfect sketch must end abruptly.

MAY 15th, 1879.

* Coast Atlas. p. 86.