

CAPE MAY
GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

Eighth Annual Bulletin

JUNE 1954

CAPE MAY, NEW JERSEY

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THE SOCIETY'S ACTIVITIES

Every Saturday morning from July 4 to September 5 inclusive in 1953 the Society sponsored nature trips. Three of these were led by Dr. Ernest Choate to observe the birds of Cape May Point or the salt marshes back of Cape May; one by Mr. Robert C. Alexander to observe the noteworthy trees of Cape May and vicinity; one by Dr. Horace G. Richards to study the shells and marine life on the beach between Cape May and Cape May Point; two to study plants, the first led by Mr. Frank McLaughlin at Bennett Bog and the other by Mr. Alexander at Cape May Point and the garden of Mr. Joseph Long with its large variety of fig trees and unusual plants; a trip to the oyster grounds at Pierce's Point under the direction of Dr. Thurlow C. Nelson; a combination trip to observe birds, plants, and marine life at Higbee's Beach led by Dr. Choate, Mr. Alexander, and Dr. Richards; and on one occasion the group divided into two sections, one led by Dr. Richards to the fossil beds on the Canal bank and the other by Dr. Choate to watch the birds on the salt marshes along the Ocean Highway.

The following series of lectures was presented on Friday evenings at the Cape May High School Auditorium:

July 24. Horace G. Richards. "A Trip to North Africa."

August 7. Frank McLaughlin. "High Point to Cape May Point."

August 21. Paul J. Storm. "The Story of Gem Stones." August 28.

Round Table Program:

Horace G. Richards. "Old Cape May."

Ernest A. Choate. "Wild Life Of Cape May."

Robert C. Alexander. "Davy's Lake."

Marie A. Richards. "A Flying Trip to Peru."

September 4. Russell Fowler. "Sand, Surf, and Sky."

New Jersey Audubon Society

The New Jersey Audubon Society held its annual Cape May weekend, October 9-11, 1953, and the Cape May Geographic Society, together with the Witmer Stone Club of Stone Harbor, acted as host and assisted in planning the activities. On Friday evening, October 9, Dr. Richards, Dr. Choate, and Mr. Alexander

gave illustrated talks on the natural history of the Cape May region, and they also conducted some of the nature walks the following days.

Otzvay Brown Manuscript

Among the personal effects of the late Otway H. Brown, formerly Curator of the Cape May Geographic Society, was found a manuscript prepared by him entitled "Plants of Cape May County, New Jersey, Collected from 1893 to 1931." This manuscript represents years of careful collection and compilation of data on the local flora and would be of value to future naturalists interested in this region. With the permission of Mrs. Brown, the Society had the manuscript bound in cloth, and presented it to the Cape May County Library at Cape May Court House where it may be consulted.

Old Maps of Cape May County

A new publication entitled "A Book of Maps of Cape May 1610-1878," compiled and edited by Horace G. Richards, will be issued by the Society about June 1, 1954. The book consists of some 28 maps of the Cape May region reprinted from original American, English, Dutch, Swedish, German, and other sources. While most of these have been published before, this is the first compilation of maps especially concerned with the Cape May region. The book consists of 28 pages (9% x 11%), and is priced at \$2.60. Copies may be ordered from the Society.

BIRD WATCHING

The cattle egret which made its first appearance on the North American continent in 1952 appeared again at Cape May in 1953. During the year of their first appearance never more than two were seen and these twain were not recorded from any other locality than about the McPherson farm on the Higbee Beach Road.

Three cattle egrets appeared about the McPherson farm in the spring of 1953. William Bailey was the first to record the appearance of these birds in a damp meadow near Rio Grande. There was considerable speculation as to whether the birds seen here were the same ones that were about McPherson's. Whether they were or not, six cattle egrets were seen together by Norman McDonald on September 5.

To date the birds' roost is unknown. Those about the McPherson farm fly toward the woods and thickets about the Pond

Creek marshes as twilight begins to fall. Birds of the heron and egret tribe quite frequently breed on the spot where successful and safe roosts are established. An interesting project for the 1954 season will be the location of the roost and possible nests if the bird again returns. We are looking forward to this quite optimistically.

An accolade is due to Mr. McPherson for his interest in and protection of these fine birds. Had they happened to attempt their first visit on a less hospitable farm, the pleasure and enjoyment of seeing the egrets would have been denied several hundred Cape May visitors.

During the winter of 1952-53, the sea several times flooded the area behind the strand at South Cape May. The large drainage ditch running through the area was filled with sand. This resulted in the building up of some shallow pools in the old marsh area between the Rutherford farm and the army station at Cape May Point and to some extent north of this. The wading and shore birds were quick to take advantage of this appealing (at least to them) change in the environment.

On August 8, about 580 individuals of 17 different species were counted here. Most notable was a flock of nine glossy ibises. This metallic black bird with a long decurved bill could be seen daily, feeding or flying over the area. While single birds have been seen almost every summer, this was the first time that a flock was to be seen regularly. Would they stay? In this same small area were 50 American egrets, 75 little blue herons, 75 snowy egrets, 15 black ducks and 5 blue-winged teal. Among the several hundred shore birds was the comparatively rare stilt sandpiper.

Such an area of shallow pond and marsh receives careful attention from those responsible for mosquito control. After it began to fill up with some August rains this area was often sprayed by airplane several times daily. The noisy traversing by the plane alarmed and scared away the birds. They would come back, but in decreasing numbers. The chemicals probably eliminated a considerable amount of their food along with the mosquitoes.

By August 18, only 22 birds of eight species could be found. There were five ibises. On August 24, a diligent search located only six birds and two ibises. From then on the area was lifeless as far as birds were concerned. I hope that the mosquitoes were equally discouraged.

On January 3, 1954, 64 bird watchers covered a circle with a seven and a half mile radius centered at Rio Grande. They

recorded approximately 71,000 birds of 141 different species. This latter number is the highest number ever recorded on a Christmas census and is quite likely to set a record for the whole Atlantic coast from Maine to Florida for this time of year. Four birds were recorded for the first time; a Bullock's oriole, a wanderer from the west, a spotted sandpiper, a willet, and nine Louisiana herons. Among the other rarities were the snowy owl, an Arctic species which in times of short food supply wanders far to the south; a puffin, an Arctic sea bird; and a kittiwake, a gull which approaches land in this area only at very rare intervals.

ERNEST A. CHOATE

CAPE MAY DIAMONDS

Among the souvenirs most frequently brought back from Cape May are Cape May Diamonds. These small, colorless, translucent pebbles, measuring up to about an inch in diameter (although a few larger ones are known), are especially common on the beach of Delaware Bay between Cape May Point and Higbee's Beach. These diamonds are pieces of quartz that have been ground to their present condition by abrasion and rubbing against sand and rocks over a period of thousands or millions of years. Just where they came from is unknown, but it is probable that they were carried down an ancient Delaware River from some rocks containing vein quartz perhaps in northern New Jersey, Pennsylvania, or New York. They have been popular with visitors for more than a hundred years and are mentioned in old newspaper accounts and books. These stones, when cut or polished, are very attractive when set in rings or other jewelry. Although they are locally known by such names as "corundum" and "sapphire," Cape May Diamonds are actually nothing more than almost pure quartz (silicon dioxide).

HORACE G. RICHARDS

THE GLASTONBURY THORN

After the crucifixion of Christ, St. Philip sent forth twelve disciples to go into Britain to establish Christianity. The leader of the twelve was Joseph of Arimathea. At Glastonbury, the inhabitants giving but little heed to his preaching, he prayed for a miracle in order to convince them of the holy purpose of his mission. His prayer was answered when his staff upon being struck

into the earth on Christmas Day sent forth foliage and burst into flower, as it continued to do on every Christmas Day thereafter. Here Joseph was buried and here the primitive church was founded that afterwards became Glastonbury Abbey. This is the legend of Joseph of Arimathea and the Glastonbury Thorn.

One of these thorns, kept trimmed to a height of about eight feet, grows in the yard at 115 Ocean Street, Cape May, N. J. Mrs. Virgil M. D. Marcy has written the following account about it:

"My little Glastonbury Thorn was given to me by a friend who had brought three of them from her home in England. It was about four inches high. The first of the three was planted in the rectory garden at St. Luke in Germantown, Pa., where it had good care; and the second in the garden at 'Carlton' in Germantown where it also had good care. Nevertheless, these two plants died. The third one was given to me. I planted it in the yard and, while it did not die, it did not grow. I dug it up and planted it in another part of the yard, and still it did not grow. Finally, I moved it again and this time gave it deep fertilization. After a time, it began to grow and quite rapidly became a fair-sized bush. Then it began to blossom.

"My English friend had told me quite earnestly that it would bloom 'at Christmas time and when royalty came.' However, it did not bloom at Christmas time and royalty never came. It blooms in early spring and the flowers resemble quince blossoms. The thorns are stout and large, two to four and a half inches long, and very sharp. After the flowers fade, the fruits form which look like very small oranges. The dark green waxy leaves and the brilliant fruits make a very attractive plant."

The Glastonbury Thorn is a variety of the Single Seed Hawthorn, *Crataegus monogyna*, native to Europe, northern Africa, and east to the Himalayas. It is known as variety *biflora*. This plant, which becomes a small tree, is interesting not only for the legend associated with it but also because in mild seasons in England it actually bears flowers in mid-winter, though not as profusely as in the spring.

AS SAID HENRY THOREAU

"The wasps came by thousands to my lodge in October, as to winter quarters, and settled on my windows within and on the walls overhead, sometimes deterring visitors from entering. Each

morning, when they were numbed with cold, I swept some of them out, but I did not trouble myself much to get rid of them; I felt complimented by their regarding my house as a desirable shelter. They never molested me seriously . . . and they gradually disappeared into what crevices I do not know, avoiding winter and unspeakable cold."

Wasps can also be found around the windows when a summer cottage at Cape May Point is first opened after the winter. Quantities of dead ones can be found on the window sills and on the floors beneath. However, few people, if any, have a regard for them beyond sweeping them out as quickly as possible. It took Henry Thoreau, of Walden, Massachusetts, to respect these insects as almost human visitors when they came to his retreat. He had a regard for them, as he had for all of Nature's creatures. They became his friends as he observed the truth and mystery of Nature. The fox, the birds, the wasps, the house fly, the bumble Lee, even the loon on the lake became his soul's companions.

He said, "I am no more lonely than a single mullein or dandelion in a pasture, or a bean leaf, or sorrel, or a horse-fly, or a bumble-bee. I am no more lonely than the Mill Brook, or a weathercock, or the North Star, or the south wind, or an April shower, or a January thaw, or the first spider in a new house."

Perhaps Thoreau did not have the scientific knowledge of each creature as did Witmer Stone, but he had a personal, spiritual feeling and intimacy with wild life. Anyone who loves all Nature as did Henry Thoreau will do well to read Walden and step over a few states from New Jersey to Massachusetts for a little visit with Nature in the woods.

THE BARRIER BEACHES OF CAPE MAY

The ocean waves break forever on the shore, sunshine gleams on the white sand, and dune grasses bend in the sea wind • on the barrier beaches of Cape May. Broad salt marshes lie between the beaches and the upland; and the ocean reaches out from the beaches to the far horizon. Each of the beaches is an island surrounded by the ocean, the ocean inlets, and the sounds and channels of the salt marshes. Stretching along the coast in a long line, they are the guardians of the mainland at the meeting place of land and sea.

In 1875, when Sea Grove, now Cape May Point, was founded as a Presbyterian summer resort at the tip of the cape and Cape Island, now Cape May City, had been a popular "watering place" for three-quarters of a century, the barrier beaches north of Cape Island were still wild remote places. Great flocks of birds frequented the beaches and nested there; and on the larger ones, the woods were so dense that an occasional visitor had been known to get lost in them. Wild cattle roamed the beaches ; sedge hay was gathered there and transported by scows to the farms on the upland; and red cedars were cut for fence posts and rails. Gunners and fishermen, picnic parties, berry-pickers and treasure hunters visited the beaches once in a while; and the

crews of the lifesaving stations patrolled the lonely shore on the lookout for shipwrecks. There was only a house or two on any of them, besides the lifesaving stations. Great Egg Harbor Inlet, Peck's Beach, Corson's Inlet, Ludlam's Beach, Townsend's Inlet, Seven Mile Beach, Hereford Inlet, Five Mile Beach, Turtle Gut Inlet, Two Mile Beach, Cold Spring Inlet, Poverty Beach— these were the beaches and the inlets south to Cape Island.

A barrier beach, in its natural state, consisted of a part called the old beach made up of uninterrupted parallel ridges of dunes extending almost its entire length and a part called the young beach made up of shorter, more irregular dunes situated nearer the ocean. The highest dunes, such as one or two on Seven Mile Beach, were over thirty-five feet high. The shifting dunes of the young beach, consisting almost exclusively of fine white sand, were covered with grasses and shrubs; the more stable dunes of the old beach, containing a small percentage of clay and vegetable mould mixed with the sand, were covered with old timber. Coarse grasses, rushes, vines, shrubs, and trees including red cedar, holly, and oak grew in the valleys, or swales, between the dunes of the old beach. Beach plums, fox grapes, huckleberries, and other plants bearing edible fruit were abundant in some places. Rainwater collected in the low areas during the winter and spring forming fresh water ponds known as slashes which frequently dried up in the summer. The nearly level expanse of sand between the dunes and the ocean was called the strand.

The contour of the beaches was constantly changing. Wind and ocean combined to bring sand to build the dunes; the strand varied in width as ocean currents deposited sand from the shoals offshore or swept it away; strong tides in the inlets enlarged a sandspit at the end of one beach while, at the same time, washing away the sandspit on the beach opposite. Sometimes the formation of great bars closed the mouth of an inlet;

and sometimes stormy seas breaking across a low beach cut a new inlet. Significant changes seldom came abruptly. Generally they occurred gradually, even imperceptibly, over long periods of time.

Since the year 1621 when Captain Cornelius Jacobsen Mey explored Delaware Bay in the ship *Bliide Boodschap* (Glad Tidings) for the Dutch West India Company and gave his name to Cape May, the ocean has washed away the shore of the cape over a mile in some places. In a report published in 1857, George H. Cook wrote, "Mr.

Ezekiel Stevens says, that from the accounts given him by his father, the shore in front of the boarding houses at Cape Island must have worn away nearly a mile since the Revolution. During the war of that period a militia artillery company had its practicing ground here. Their gun was placed near a house which stood just outside the present shore line, and their target was set up at the outer side of a corn field three-quarters of a mile east. Beyond this there were sand beaches for nearly or quite a quarter of a mile, and then the seashore. The whole of this ground is now gone."

Poverty Beach, extending south from Cold Spring Inlet for three miles, apparently included the ocean front of Cape Island. On a map published in London in 1777 and other maps of that period, it is called Four Mile Beach. By 1857 the part of this beach with dunes was scarcely half a mile long, but its broad strand was unexcelled as a drive for the visitors with carriages at Cape Island.

The value of the timber on the beaches for building material was recognized by the inhabitants of the county at an early date, particularly the red cedar which, being more durable than the red cedar of the upland because it was "of slow growth, fine grain and a good heart," was in demand for fence posts and rails. Consequently, much of the valuable timber that covered the beaches at one time had been cut down even before the seashore resorts were built. In 1878 Peck's Beach was still wooded with red cedar, wild cherry, and some other timber; Ludlam's Beach, which had been covered with fine red cedar trees, was devastated by a furious gale in the winter of 1863-1864 that left only three or four clumps of trees on it; Two Mile Beach, covered with old timber in 1857, was a nearly bare and sandy waste; and Poverty Beach was bare and sandy. Holly Beach, established on Five Mile Beach in 1882, was named for the abundance of holly growing there; and Wildwood, established in 1887, for fifty of its one hundred acres covered with woodland. About 1890 Five Mile Beach was still thickly wooded and Seven Mile Beach boasted of "stately forests of oak, cedar, and holly."

White oak, post oak, willow oak, Spanish oak, red cedar, holly, red maple, black cherry, sweet gum, sassafras, persimmon, and swamp magnolia grew in the woods at Wildwood in 1890. Beach plum and bayberry bushes were abundant. The branches of many of the larger trees, especially the red maples, were draped with festoons of a beautiful green lichen (*Usnea*) three to six feet in length, reminiscent of the gray Spanish moss (*Tillandsia*) growing on the live oaks in the South. Enormous vines of the fox

grape grew here, one vine nearly three feet in circumference ten feet above the ground trailing among the branches of the oaks for two hundred feet; and an immense huckleberry bush bearing a great quantity of fruit had rooted itself in the trunk of a large tree twenty feet from the ground. Here were sassafras trees six feet in circumference and holly trees sixty-five feet tall. One red cedar, nearly three feet in diameter and fifty feet tall, was estimated to be over five hundred years old. Many of the trees, particularly the cedars, were contorted in picturesque and grotesque shapes. Wild flowers carpeted the ground where the underbrush, a tangled mass of greenbriars, had been cleared away; and a little body of fresh water about three feet deep called Magnolia Lake, fed by a small stream rising a mile or so distant, was located in the center of this woodland.

The earliest white settlers at Cape May were whalers and their families from Long Island and New England. By 1691 they had built Cape May Town, later called Portsmouth, a settlement of fifteen or twenty cabins at Town Bank on the bay shore about five miles above the tip of the cape. The site of this old settlement is now believed to be over half a mile out in Delaware Bay. When whales were sighted spouting off the coast or in the mouth of the bay, the whalers would row out in their small boats to capture them. The carcasses were towed to the beach, fires built to boil the oil out of the blubber, and the whalebone removed. Peck's Beach may have been named for John Peck, a whaler, who operated in that vicinity about 1700 and used the beach to process whales. Herford Inlet is also referred to as Whale Boat Channel in a survey made in 1825 suggesting its association with the whalers. Whale Creek located directly behind the resort of Whale Beach on Ludlam's Beach also recalls the early whaling period.

Prior to and during the Revolutionary War when many salt works were in operation on the coast of New Jersey, Dr. Harris owned an extensive works near Townsend's Inlet. In 1777 Levi Huglingsworth operated a salt works at Turtle Gut Inlet; and John Holmes and Persons Leaming made five tons of salt that year at a works owned by Aaron Leaming, 2nd.

The inhabitants of Cape May owned cattle from the early days of settlement. Earmarks, so-called because the ears of cattle and other livestock were branded to identify them, were entered in county records as early as 1691. The beaches afforded good pasture and the owners turned their cattle loose on them to graze. The wild cattle on Five Mile Beach, according to legend,

were descended from thoroughbred stock escaped from an English brigantine that came ashore there. It is more likely that the wild cattle on this beach, and those on the other beaches, were descended from local cattle left there by the settlers and never recaptured.

Aaron Leaming, 2nd, the wealthiest man in the county in his time, wrote in his diary on November 6, 1761 "burned (branded) cattle on Five Mile Beach, Nummy Island (in Hereford Inlet) and on Seven Mile Beach." By 1788, it was customary to pasture cattle on Peck's Beach and the owners, objecting to fences on the boundaries of each property, petitioned the legislature for the use of the beach as common pasture. In 1789 an act was passed authorizing the pasturing of ten head of cattle or horses on every hundred acres. Fines were imposed for pasturing more than the prescribed number, for allowing horses to graze longer than eighteen months, and for permitting hogs, sheep, and goats to graze on the beach.

Sometimes the cattle were driven to the beaches by men and boys on horseback who swam them across the thoroughfares; sometimes they were towed two or three at a time behind rowboats or ferried over in scows. They grazed on the herbage, drank the water in the marsh ponds and slashes and soon became wild. Occasionally, an animal would venture too far into the marsh and get stuck in the mud, sinking deeper as it struggled to get free. When a bellowing beast was found in this predicament, a rope would be thrown around its neck and it would be pulled out. But, as soon as it reached solid ground, it would turn on its rescuer who, having saved the creature, would have to climb the nearest tree to save himself. When winter snow and sleet covered the vegetation on the beaches, red cedars and other trees were chopped down to provide forage.

The wild cattle had the reputation of being fierce, particularly the bulls and the cows with calves, but a writer remarked in 1884 that those on Five Mile Beach were very tame, sometimes allowing the stagecoach that ran between Anglesea and Holly Beach in the early days of these resorts to pass between them and the water as they were lying on the beach. The bulls at Anglesea were said to be very Old, some having lived on the beach twenty-five years. Charles S. Westcott reported that the cattle "are regularly hunted with dogs, twenty or thirty of which are kept for the purpose." In 1889 a writer observed, "There

are numbers of what is known as the Buffalo fly molesting the cows now on the beach (at Anglesea), getting on their horns above the hair, and feet also below the hair, sapping out their life, giving them no rest." The herd often went into the ocean

to escape the flies. The last round-up of the wild cattle on Five Mile Beach took place not long afterwards. James Hawn said that five drivers drove them from the meadows and the woods across the open beach into the surf where five gunners killed them. The carcasses were carted away and sold for a dollar apiece. The poor ones were given away. Descendants of the cattle put on Ludlam's Beach by Joseph Ludlam, the first private owner of the beach, survived until about 1875; the last wild cattle on Seven Mile Beach were killed in 1887.

The low sandy beaches, the gradual slope of the shore, the bars in the inlets, and the treacherous shoals offshore were hazardous to shipping and many ships were wrecked every year. Before paid keepers and crews manned the life-saving stations, volunteer crews in sturdy boats modeled after whale boats, used by the fishermen for fishing offshore and by the Delaware River pilots, courageously and heroically battled the storms and the waves to save lives and cargo from shipwrecked vessels. Their reward was a share of the cargo they saved.

In 1688 Philip Richards complained in court that when the sloop *Susanna*, carrying a cargo of his merchandise from New York to Philadelphia, came on shore to the nor'ward of Cape May and Peter Lawrison, her master, and the crew went ashore for help, Caleb Carman, a whaler, and his sons went on board the vessel, prevented the crew from returning by a show of force, and claimed half of the cargo as their share for saving the wrecked ship. Being overpowered, the crew consented, whereupon Caleb Carman and his sons carried off goods belonging to Philip Richards. Apparently the case never came to trial.

In 1849 surf boats and other lifesaving equipment were placed at stations on the Cape May beaches with funds appropriated by the United States Government. No accounting was required for the boats and equipment and, left in the custody of the people, everything that could be carried off was stolen and the rest was hardly ever kept in repair. In 1854 the government authorized the appointment of keepers for the lifesaving stations at a salary of \$200 a year, and appropriated additional funds. There were no

regular crews and if a keeper needed assistance he had to row to the mainland for a volunteer crew.

Eli Barnett, keeper of the Turtle Gut Lifesaving Station at the south end of Five Mile Beach near old Turtle Gut Inlet, told Frank Dickinson, his grandson, that one day as he was watching through his spyglass he saw a sailing vessel heading straight for the shore. Just when it seemed certain that the ship would run aground and be wrecked, she came about and dropped anchor. Her yawl boat was lowered and four or five men rowed to the beach where they sighted along the shore and then disappeared among the dunes. When they returned to the beach a short time later, they carried a chest which they put in the yawl boat and rowed back to the ship. The chest was hoisted on board and the vessel weighed anchor, set her sails, and sailed away. Eli Barnett, alone at the station, had not dared to reveal himself for fear the men might kill him. But, after they had gone, he searched among the dunes and discovered the spot where the chest had been dug up. Legends state that Captain Kidd and other pirates frequented this part of the coast and buried their treasure here. The holes dug by treasure hunters could be seen on Five Mile Beach up to the time the resorts were built. Had Eli Barnett seen a pirate ship? Were these men pirates of a later day returning to the beach to recover buried treasure? Perhaps not—but the real identity of this ship and her crew probably will remain a mystery.

The government's interest in providing funds for the lifesaving stations may have been motivated to a certain extent by the operations of the Jersey wreckers. The Barnegat Pirates, so-called because they were most active in the Barnegat Bay region, drew vessels ashore with false lights and plundered the shipwrecked people. Rebecca Harding Davis in 1876 quoted a fisherman as saying, "Well, sir, them stories is unjust, the men as is called Barnegat pirates are not us fishermen; they're from the main, colliers and sech as come down to a wreck, and they will have something to kerry home when they're kept up all night. They do their share of stealing, I'll confess ; but from Sandy Hook to Cape May it's innocent to what is done on Long Island. No man or woman was ever robbed on this beach till they was dead. Of course, I don't mean their trunks and sech, but not the body. The Long Islanders cut off fingers of living people for rings, but the Barnegat men never touch the body till it's dead, no, sir."

In 1871 the Lifesaving Service was reorganized, more funds appropriated, crews of experienced surfmen employed, new stations built and old ones enlarged to accommodate the crews,

medals were authorized, beach patrols introduced, a code of signals adopted, the technique of using the breeches buoy developed, and regular inspection and reconditioning of equipment provided for. Stations were manned from November to April, the time of year when the greatest number of shipwrecks were expected. This period was gradually extended until it included the whole year. The importance of this service can readily be appreciated from the fact that forty-seven shipwrecks occurred on Peck's Beach alone from 1854 to 1890. The Lifesaving Service became a part of the Coast Guard in 1915.

The stations on Cape May were located at the north end, middle, and south end of Peck's Beach, the middle and south end of Ludlam's Beach, the middle of Seven Mile Beach, the north and south ends of Five Mile Beach, the north end of Two Mile Beach, Poverty Beach east of Madison Avenue in Cape May City, Cape May Point near the lighthouse, and on the shore of Delaware Bay above Cape May Point.

Lighthouses were erected at strategic points on the Atlantic coast to aid navigation many years before the Lifesaving Service was established. The British are believed to have built a lighthouse on Cape May about 1744, the year one was built on Cape Henlopen. The first Cape May Light built by the United States Government at Cape May Point in 1823 was described by Reuben Haines five years later as "a brick building seventy feet high, arched at the top, on which stands the lantern containing a revolving light." An iron railing surrounded the walk at the top from which visitors had "a fine view of the ocean, the bay and a distant sight of the two lighthouses at Cape Henlopen." The building was removed and rebuilt farther from the ocean in 1847 because the sea had encroached to such an extent that water surrounded it at every high tide threatening its foundation. The site of the 1823 lighthouse is entirely covered by the ocean now, considerably more than one hundred yards out from the present shore line. When the present lighthouse, a brick structure 170 feet tall with a more efficient light, was erected in 1859, the 1847 lighthouse a short distance away was torn down, except its base which is still standing. The Hereford Light, a wooden structure with the light tower surmounting the dwelling, was built in a grove at the north end of Five Mile Beach in 1874. A lighthouse was erected on the middle of Ludlam's Beach in 1885.

Great flocks of birds frequented the barrier beaches. Fish hawks, herons, egrets, and various smaller birds nested in the

thickets and in the wooded areas; common terns, least terns, piping plovers, black skimmers, and others nested on the flats and sandspits. Shore birds flocked on the strand and waterfowl congregated in the slashes. In the winter of 1877 large numbers of ducks feasted on a cargo of corn washed out of a vessel wrecked on Five Mile Beach. The birds gorged themselves on the corn made salty by sea water and then flew to the slashes for fresh water where gunners lying in wait shot them. The surfeited birds nearly exploded when they struck the ground. One duck was reported to have had over a pint of corn in its crop.

So great was the number of birds in the early days that gunning and egg collecting by the local inhabitants had little or no effect on their abundance. But, as more and more sportsmen came from the cities and killed them by the thousands, the destruction began to tell. The nesting birds became fewer and the number of migratory birds decreased. As early as 1843, William N. Baird deplored the abundance of gunners and the scarcity of birds at Cape Island. Then came the market gunners who slaughtered birds to supply the city markets. The herons and egrets, not being game birds, escaped the persecution until it became

fashionable to use their feathers to decorate ladies' hats. In the 1880's when plume hunting reached its peak the hunters slaughtered them as ruthlessly as they had the game birds. By the early 1900's they were almost exterminated. Steadily increasing interest in wildlife conservation and protective federal laws including the Migratory Bird Treaty with Canada in 1913 gave the shore birds that were left a chance for survival. In time their numbers increased. Birds on the verge of extinction half a century ago can be seen on the beaches in fairly large numbers now, though many of their former nesting sites were destroyed by the development of the seashore resorts.

In the 1880's Ocean City was built on Peck's Beach, Sea Isle City on Ludlam's Beach, Avalon on Seven Mile Beach, and Anglesea, Wildwood, and Holly Beach on Five Mile Beach. It was the beginning of a new era and the days Of the wild barrier beaches were over.

ROBERT C. ALEXANDER

EARLY QUAKERS

Since this is the year for the biennial Friends Conference to be held at Cape May, it is fitting to pause and look over one's shoulder to the early days of these faithful people, to the ardent followers of George Fox, their founder, and to note some of their early visits to Cape May.

In his journal, published in 1783, William Reckitt of Lincolnshire in Great Britain tells of his "Life and Gospel Labours," and of his journeys through England, Wales, and America. Many hardships were suffered during his voyage of ten weeks from London to Philadelphia. After traveling in New England and Pennsylvania, he visited numerous towns in New Jersey—Mount Holly, Old Springfield, Bordentown, Crosswicks, Haddonfield, and others—where he attended meetings "to good satisfaction" with the hospitality of "lodging" with friends.

"On fifth day I went to Little Egg-Harbour and had a meeting there next day . . . We crossed the river in the evening to Great Egg-Harbour. The weather being very cold, and having much ice, our journey was attended with some difficulty; but we got well over the river, . . . to Great Egg-Harbour . . . We had a solemn comfortable time together and after meeting rode to the other meeting, along the Bay shore, towards Cape May, which was on first day, the twenty-fourth of the twelfth month 1758 . . . The frost was so sharp, we could not cross the Bay to Cape-May, but were obliged to ride round to a bridge, where we crossed the river; which was about forty miles out of the way.■ ■ ■

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we met with much difficulty through the woods, and there was no beaten path . . . I was uneasy. Upon this (the guide) took out his compass . . . and altered his course . . . I said not much to the friends, but was thankful to the Lord, to find he was pleased to draw my mind towards the way we wanted to go."

Through many hardships William Reckitt and many other followers of George Fox and William Penn, despite dissention and differences, traveled through the Colonies furthering their Faith.

Time has permitted many historic meeting houses to stand, among them the little building near Seaville in Cape May County. Originally built in 1716, this house has become a landmark where many visitors stop to pay homage to the early Quakers of Cape May County.

FLOTSAM AND JETSAM

Nature notes relating to Cape May County

Ducks on Lily Lake

During the late fall and early winter numerous mallards and native geese were introduced in Lily Lake in Cape May Point. Their wings were clipped to prevent them from migrating. At last report they were thriving and had attracted many other water birds including the canvas-back, coot, and

redhead duck. Several times during the winter the lake was frozen over and passers-by would break the ice so that the birds could obtain food from beneath the water. The presence of these graceful birds adds considerably to the picturesqueness of the lake and it is hoped that they will be encouraged to make a permanent home there.

Rare Crabs

Two rare crabs have been reported from New Jersey waters by Henry W. Fowler, Curator of Fishes at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia. The masked crab (*Ethusa micropthalma*), a deep water form, was taken eighteen miles off Atlantic City (Fish Culturist, Vol. 31, No. 1, p. 1, 1951), and the swimming crab (*Portunus sayi*) was found off Ventnor (Fish Culturist, vol 28, No. 6, pp. 41-42, 1949).

Unusual Fish

Among the unusual fish taken in New Jersey waters during the past year is the Greeneyes (*Chlorophthalmus chalybalus*).

This was reported by Henry W. Fowler in the Fish Culturist, Vol.

33, No. 4, p. 25, 1953.

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Rare Shells

Hundreds of empty shells of the little bubble shell *Haminoem solitaria* were washed up on the Delaware Bay shore near Norbury's Landing and Fishing Creek from the middle of August to the middle of September in 1953. This little sea snail inhabits the coast from Massachusetts to Florida. The only other New Jersey record is a single shell collected at Ocean City in 1952.

Some shells of the tiny sea snail *Actaeon punctostriatus* were found last autumn in the sand on the shore of Delaware Bay near Villas, Cape May County, by Albert V. Tyler, of Philadelphia. This appears to be the first New Jersey record although the species lives from Vineyard Sound, Massachusetts, to Florida and the Gulf of Mexico.

Membership in the Cape May Geographic Society includes subscription to the Bulletin. Annual dues one dollar.