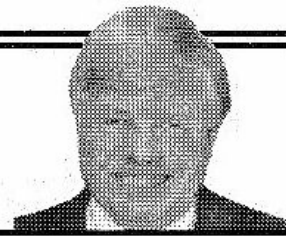


Looking at Our History

by John
Bailey Lloyd



For the span of about three decades in the middle of the nineteenth century the mainland towns of Ocean County found themselves circumstantial beneficiaries of a nearly unlimited demand for firewood in rapidly growing New York City.

The vast pinewood forests of southern New Jersey were certainly no nearer at hand than the hardwood timber of the upper Hudson River Valley but hardwood was preferred for housing, whereas pine was better for the production of charcoal which was lighter, less bulky and made a hotter fire.

This brief bonanza for the towns along Barnegat and Little Egg Harbor Bays came on the eve the development of railroads and the discovery that the huge reserves of anthracite coal in eastern Pennsylvania made an infinitely superior fuel.

Until a practical method was discovered to burn anthracite and to transport it overland, all attention was focused on the virgin pine and cedar forests of southern New Jersey, the density and

extent of which is virtually impossible to imagine today.

The average first growth pine was as big around as a barrel, but even so, a good chopper working entirely with hand tools in the days before the steam-powered sawmill could cut and pile anywhere from four to six cords of market wood in a 12-hour day. It was then hauled by mule to the nearest creek and loaded aboard a schooner bound for New York.

To take advantage of New York's need for cordwood and charcoal, the coastal towns of Toms River, Forked River, Barnegat and Tuckerton became lively centers for shipbuilding.

The cedar for building the basic two masted schooner or "two sticker" came out of the woods and swamps near the mainland villages. The size of the vessels built was governed by the depth of the inlet they used to get out of the bays.

A lighter draught and consequently smaller tonnage was required for the Barnegat Inlet and the entrance to Toms River.

Tuckerton with its deeper inlet

and bay had the advantage and most of the ship building between 1835 and 1867 took place there.

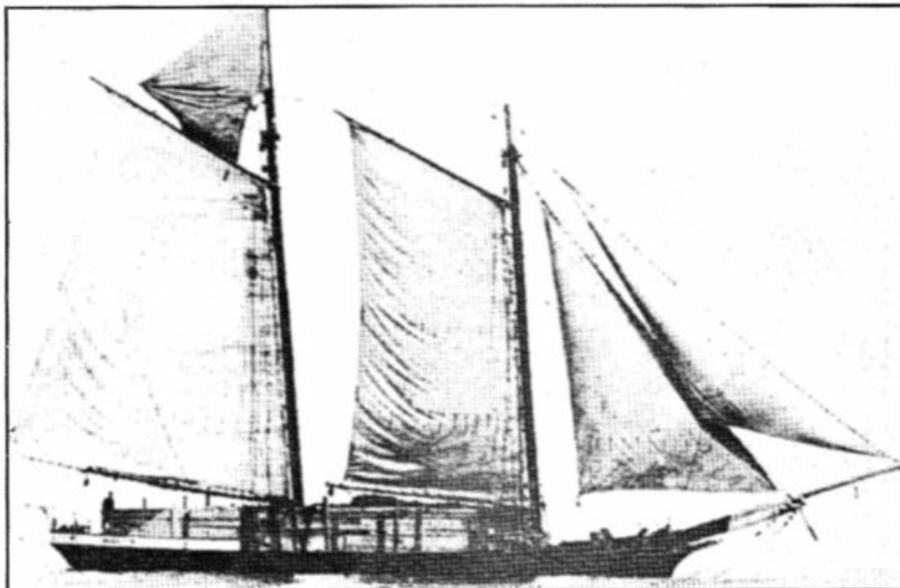
The mid-nineteenth century was the golden age of the coastwise lumber schooner. There was a steady return trade in goods from New York, and small towns like Tuckerton and Barnegat prospered.

The decks of vessels lacking sufficient cargo space were often loaded as well. The cordwood was sometimes piled so high that the sail was kept reefed nearly half way so the boom could pass over the load, should they have to turn about. This situation of a perpetually shortened sail was known in the trade as a lumber reef. It could be very awkward when a lot of tacking was needed in unfavorable winds but the one advantage to shipping aboard a schooner with a cargo of cordwood was they could not sink with all that wood aboard.

There were so many sails on the horizon in those years that they could often not even be counted. Old diaries and lighthouse keepers records mention as many as 200 a day off Long Beach Island. And there were easily that many at night in good weather. This profitable coastwise trade in cordwood, charcoal and lumber was not limited to New Jersey but the great volume of sailing ships slowed dramatically in the decade after the Civil War with the advent of steam powered vessels and, of course, the discovery of the technology of burning anthracite coal for fuel.

Of the 86 vessels built in that 30-year span, 40 were built at Tuckerton, 17 at Forked River, 14 at Toms River, 11 at Barnegat, 2 at Waretown and one each at Manahawkin and West Creek.

(Continued on next page)



A typical two sticker lumber schooner of the middle nineteenth century. Nearly 40 of these vessels were built at Tuckerton to handle the growing demand for cordwood and charcoal in New York City.

Tuckerton, with its access to a better inlet was clearly the leader. At one time, it had more than 100 schooners entered at its custom house.

Since so many of the schooners built in those years were, by tradition, named for family members, usually a wife or a daughter, it may be of interest to descendants of those people still living in the area to see a list of the vessels built in each town. Many should recognize these names even now, 150 years later.

TUCKERTON:

Adeliza, Albert Pharo, Anne E. Cake, Ann S. Brown, Anna Cake, Anna E. Cranmer, Armenia, C.G. Cranmer, D.E. Sawyer, E.M. French, Eliza Pharo, Elizabeth, George Washington, Henry L. Slaughter, J.H. Allen, I.H. Bartlett,

James Veldren, Jesse B. Allen, John H. Rapp, John L. Hess, Julian Nelson, Kate V. Edwards, L.P. Pharo, M.V. Cook, Marion E. Rockhill, Martha Collins, Martha L. Bartlett, Mary D. Cranmer, Montevein, Roxanna Burley, S. Rockhill, Sarah E. Jones, Sarah Lovina, Sarah Quinn, Thomas H.D. White, Union, Walter Pharo, Watson, William F. Phelps, William M. Wilson,

FORKED RIVER:

Amos Falkenburg, Ann Eliza, Daniel S. Williams, Elizabeth & Eleanor, Elmira Rogers, Eva Holmes, Golden Rule, James T. Boyd, Joseph Holmes, L.B. Copperthwaite, Maria Jane, Maria Pierson, Mary J. Mead, Only Daughter, Palestine, Queen of the West, Salma W. Bunnell

TOMS RIVER:

Alice & Mary, Ann Gibson, Britton Cook, Catherine A. Johnson, Cornelia A. Crook, Cornelius, David G. Brower, Helene,

John E. Clayton, John Hale, Mary A. Ivans, Mary O. Towne, Potter & Hooper, William Allen
BARNEGAT:

Albert Collins, C.I. Erickson, George H. Hoyt, John Collins, John Tilton, L. H. Hopkins, Magellan, Mary A. Hyer, Mary Ann Predmore, Moderator, Sarah J. Hoyt,

WARETOWN

Eurotas, Memento

MANAHAWKIN

G.H. Smith

WEST CREEK

Hanna Willits

John Bailey Lloyd
<Lloyd.LBI@worldnet.att.net> is the author of two books, *Six Miles at-Sea* and *Eighteen Miles of History on LBI* and a new video on Island history called *Six Miles at Sea*