

**SHIPS AND MEN
OF THE
BROAD KILL**

The early history of the locale of this book, history such as is contained in the Duke of York Record, interchangeably uses kil, kill and creek in designating the waterways which were actually the highways for the earliest settlers of eastern Sussex County.

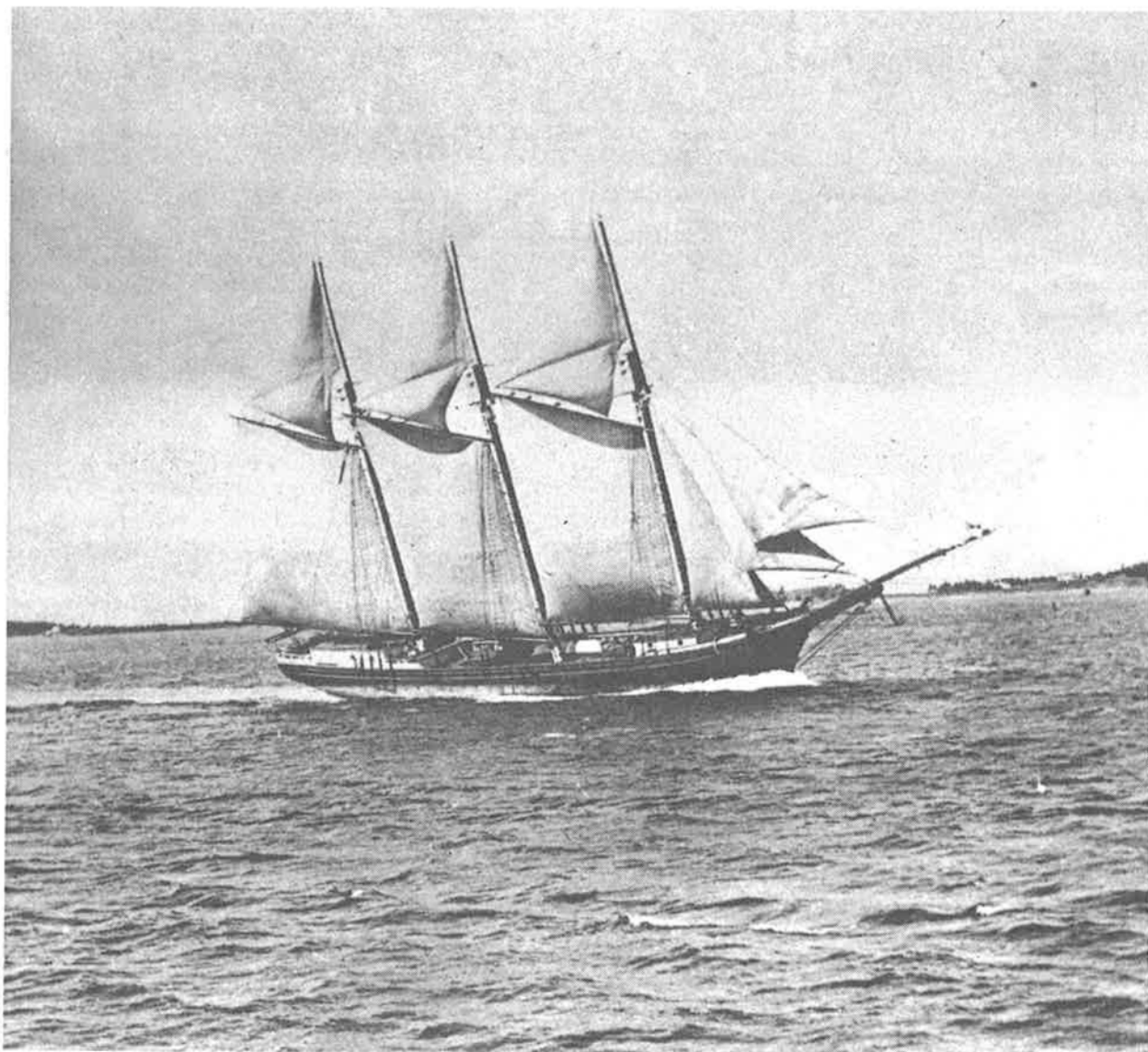
Over the years the historic waterway of this book has experienced name variations including Broadkiln which is absolutely meaningless. A kiln is an oven, certainly not even remotely connected with a waterway.

In the English language broad is defined as "of unusual width." The Dutch define kil in a very terse fashion by translating it into one English word, channel. The combination of these words accurately describes the waterway of this book at the time of settlement of the area. Even in the earliest records kil was frequently written as kill by the English.

At this rather late date this text undertakes to inaugurate the restoration, at least in the thoughts of readers, of the historically correct designation for this English/Dutch named waterway, the Broad Kill.

This book would not have come into being had it not been for the complete understanding of my objective by my wife, Helen Burton Conwell, a native of New York City (Manhattan) with a warm attachment to Broad Kill. Hundreds of evenings and a considerable portion of scores of week-ends were consumed in the development of this result. For her understanding and continuous encouragement in this undertaking, this book is very properly dedicated to her with my deep gratitude.

H.B.C.



The Broad Kill's shipbuilding industry thrived in an era prior to the advanced development of the art of photography. Only a very few of these vessels remained by the time maritime photography became commonplace. The image of some Broad Kill vessels was contained in oil paintings which were photographed and reproduced in this book.

The above photograph has been identified by an authority as the REBECCA M. WALLS, number 220. Reportedly, the photograph was taken about 1910 in Deer Island Thorofare, Maine.

The WALLS was one of 39 three-masted schooners built at Milton. Though positive identification of this vessel cannot be read from the photograph, it does serve to vividly portray such a Milton-built vessel under exhilarating sailing conditions. (Photograph courtesy Captain W. J. Lewis Parker, USCG.)

DELAWARE PUBLIC ARCHIVES

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PREFACE

This is a facet of local history, a history comprising the building of 251 ships on the Broad Kill, a meandering tidal waterway originating in eastern Sussex County, Delaware, and flowing to the Delaware Bay, a distance of about ten miles. At the head of the navigable portion of the Kill a community came into being. In this community, formally named Milton by an Act of the Legislature in 1807, most of the Broad Kill's vessels were built.

Local histories have a tendency to become encumbered to some degree with material of a mythological nature. Such a situation certainly is latent in an undertaking to probe a subject such as a community's shipbuilding to its very beginning, in this instance at least 229 years ago. In this accounting only two sources of base material are used. The earliest covers 16 vessels and was obtained from the Pennsylvania Magazine of History, Volumes 23 through 28, in a compilation entitled, "Ship Registers for the Port of Philadelphia, 1726-1775." An unsuccessful search was made for the actual volumes from which this information was abstracted about 65 years ago. The other source material was obtained from 235 photostats of existing descriptive vessel documents, most of them originals, obtained from the National Archives, Washington. These documents were printed forms on which customs clerks inscribed the specific details pertaining to the vessel being recorded. To decipher some of the writing in these documents, particularly the names of persons, is a challenge of considerable magnitude. These sources supplied much of the information published herein. Most important, the search of the Archives' files produced scores of names of vessels long since forgotten about in Broad Kill Hundred. These records led to published statistical tabulations of vessels and information on their daily activities which furnished the remainder of this text. The reader will find a degree of appraisal of certain situations which the writer considers himself pro-

professionally qualified to make.

These 251 are not considered to be a complete tally of all the vessels built on the Broad Kill. Others probably were built during and immediately after the Revolutionary War though their documentations have not survived, if any were made during those difficult years. Further, a fire occurred in 1920 among the files of such records then stored in the basement of the Department of Commerce, Washington. Some of the photostats used in this project show charred edges on the originals. It is reasonable to assume that some records were consumed beyond identification, possibly a number of them concerning Broad Kill vessels.

At some unrecorded date a clearing was made at a suitable location on a bank of the Broad Kill and a vessel was built on the site. It is quite likely that some of the trees cut to make space for the construction were then shaped into timbers for the vessel. From this beginning a shipbuilding industry came into being, centered in its peak years on the south bank of the Kill at Milton.

It is recognized that the text pertaining to approximately the first 100 vessels consists mostly of information noted in the base documents obtained from the Pennsylvania Magazine of History and from the National Archives. The paucity of text about these vessels stems from the fact that there are no published maritime records covering those years as contrasted to the situation in respect to subsequent vessels. Rather than simply tabulate the earlier vessels it was decided to report upon them in the same fashion as was planned to be used for the later vessels. In this manner every shred of information at hand about them was incorporated in the text.

Those familiar with the history of Broad Kill Hundred will recognize names such as the Cades, Coulters, Hazzards, Marshalls, Parkers and Paynters. A studied effort was made in this undertaking to correctly record the many members of these

and other families who participated in the building, owning or sailing of these vessels. For purpose of positive identification at this late date of closely similar names, it is unfortunate that the documentation of vessels did not require the complete name and profession or trade of the individuals whose names appeared in the document.

The reader should bear in mind that these 251 vessels comprised a portion of the total fleet engaged in the commerce of our country from before the Revolution. Their owners brought them into being for the purpose of making a profit, vessels not being built and operated as a philanthropy. The Broad Kill's shipbuilders conducted business in eras of keen competition and obtained orders for the building of vessels premised solely upon the quality of their materials and workmanship. It may be assumed that the Broad Kill's shipbuilding industry grew and prospered upon merit alone.

Naval architecture is a subject of vast scope and for that reason was not incorporated to any particular degree in this undertaking. Many authoritative references are readily available to anyone interested in the details of construction of wooden vessels of the sizes reported upon herein. Further, maps or photographs of the Broad Kill area have not been reproduced in this work. It is assumed that the reader would either be familiar with the Kill and adjacent countryside or, if not, and really interested, would personally visit Broad Kill Hundred and even cruise the historic Broad Kill in a craft more modern than those described in this work.

By far the schooner rig was predominant in the Broad Kill scene. Unless otherwise specified as being of three or four masts, all schooners mentioned herein are of two masts.

"Document" is frequently used in this text. All vessels are required by our

Government to be documented for their intended sphere of operation. In the early days of sail documentation of vessels offered proof of their nationality and ownership, particularly necessary during the time privateers roamed the seas. Documentation also provides the government with a degree of control over the collection of money from customs assessments. A "document" could be either an "enrollment" which enabled a vessel to trade freely between United States ports or a "register" which was required for all vessels trading between the United States and foreign ports. Under registry a vessel must be "cleared" or "entered," as the case may be, at the Customs House at which time the cargo manifest is reviewed for customs purposes.

Milton's waterfront between Federal and Walnut Streets was the location of a considerable portion of the total vessel construction, particularly at the site where launching ways could be directed toward Hazzard's Slip. At high tide the Slip provided increased distance in which a vessel could "run" upon being launched. In the latter years of Milton's shipbuilding even the Slip would not permit the launching of the large vessels required to be built to meet the needs of shipowners. Davidson's shipyard then came into being at Scull Town. Two parallel slips were dredged into the bank, affording facilities to build two large vessels simultaneously. The length of the slips combined with the width of the Kill enabled large vessels to be launched safely.

About a half-mile eastward of Davidson's shipyard was the location of another shipbuilding site identified as Martin's Shipyard. Presumably this was Samuel Martin though on an early map of Milton his shipyard is shown as occupying all of the waterfront between Federal and Chestnut Streets. On this same map James Ponder's shipyard is shown at the east end of Front Street near Scull Town, the general area where Davidson's yard came into being. Ponder's facilities apparently

were used by several ship carpenters in the construction of vessels.

The index is contained in two parts, the listing of the 251 vessels and a listing of the names of about 950 people appearing in the text. The numbers used in the latter index refer to the sequential number of the account of the vessel in the text. Hyphenated numbers, such as 2-3, refer to text lying between two vessels. It was considered that this somewhat unusual indexing would be better than attempting an indexing by page number for this particular compilation.

It is most difficult to establish a cut-off time for an undertaking such as this. With so many vessels involved there has been a steady flow, "trickle" probable would be a more accurate word, of information pertaining to one or more of them. However, after accumulating this volume of material I deem it advisable to not delay the finalization. This compilation represents about fifteen years of relaxation research during which I probed into all discovered potential sources of material pertaining to the ships and men of the Broad Kill.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tilney Clark Council". The signature is written in dark ink on a white background.

Dated at
578 Chapman Drive
Corte Madera
California
April 16, 1966

The 229th anniversary of the registration
at Philadelphia of the Shallop BROAD KILL,
the first vessel known to have been built
on the Broad Kill.

"Sailing up the western shore the two vessels passed the sandy point, now known as Cape Henlopen, and entered what was recorded as 'a fine navigable stream filled with islands, abounding in good oysters' and flowing through a fertile region. They were met by the land odors and saw the bursting vegetation of a smiling April; and, wearied with the ship odors and the confinement and monotony of a four months' sea voyage, the immigrants gladly yielded to the allurements of the fragrant new home in its fresh spring apparel. There they landed with their supplies and their appliances for farming, for whale-fishing and for a permanent fixed settlement in a virginal and new land of promise. The settlers were about thirty in number, all males, and nearby, in good faith and high hopes they began that first Delaware colony which was destined to so brief an existence and so sad a fate."

("History of Lewes, Delaware"--The Historical Society of Delaware-1903)

This was April, 1631. The two vessels were the WALVIS (WHALE) and a yacht, a smaller vessel accompanying the WALVIS, bearing the DeVries expedition. Earlier voyagers had cruised the waters of the Delaware but the DeVries record is the earliest description of the waterway and area now known as Broad Kill.

The entrance to the Broad Kill of this era, as shown on Joan (Johannes) Vingboon's map of the Delaware drawn about 1639, was about one-half mile in width. No doubt many sand shoals obstructed the entrance, some probably being bare at low tide. Inside the entrance small islands were to be found in the Broad Kill such as Green Island which was charted as recently as 1905. To encounter islands, to meet the land odors and see the bursting vegetation required the DeVries people to sail westward through the Broad Kill marshes. In this exploration they came upon the oysters, presumably at the Oyster Rocks of modern times, for which the Broad Kill has been noted from the days of the first settlers. The present Drawbridge is about where fertile land forms the Kill banks so it seems reasonable that this expedition initially explored the Broad Kill to approximately this point before turning and settling on the bank of Lewes Creek in a location close to the sea for their intended whale fishing.

"The (ship-building) timber originally covered the whole face of the country from the Delaware River to the Chesapeake Bay and beyond, and the trees were so tall that the majority of them would yield logs 2½

feet square and 60 feet in length without a spot or defect, the moist lands in which they grew and the exposure to the breezes of the sea being particularly favorable to the production of durable timber. Delaware . . . white oak became famous . . . for its lasting quality and its general excellence."

(Tenth Census, Vol. 8, Shipbuilding Industry of the United States)

Colonizing pressures continued and new settlers came to the Broad Kill. Roads being non-existent, they came by water and their very existence depended upon transportation and communication by water. These needs were met by building vessels with the abundant timber close at hand and so ideally suited for the purpose. In meeting these basic requirements for survival and growth, a ship-building industry came into being and continued on the banks of the Broad Kill for approximately 200 years.

Certainly the early colonists had much more important things to do than to establish and maintain records of their ship-building. The earliest public records of Broad Kill shipbuilding appear to be those contained in the Ship Registers for the Port of Philadelphia, 1726-1775. These Registers do not contain the year of building of vessels, though they do establish the place of building and the date of registry. Philadelphia was the trading center for the Delaware Bay community and Broad Kill vessels probably sailed there shortly after building. Many Sussex-built vessels registered during these years were owned by parties in other places, principally Philadelphia, illustrating the early existence of a true shipbuilding industry, the building of ships for owners in distant places.

BROAD KILL (1)

At the Philadelphia Custom House on April 16, 1737, Nathaniel Naws registered the shallop BROAD KILL, stating that the vessel had been built on the Broad Kill, was of 10 tons burden and was owned by himself and Edward Naws, both of Broad Kill Hundred. A shallop is defined as "a light open boat, used chiefly on rivers,

propelled by oars or sails or by both." This definition probably correctly describes Broad Kill's shallops and early schooners. Old prints show these types with an open cargo hold and a cuddy in the stern. A crew of two would be adequate to operate these small vessels. It is very likely that they moved with the tides, anchoring when it turned unless there was sufficient favorable breeze for sailing.

"The principal industry in which the people of Milton were ever engaged was ship-building. Baptist Lay, the pioneer of this business built his first vessel a short distance from Milton over a century ago."

("History of Delaware," Vol. II - Scharf - 1888.)

The inventory of Lay's estate, dated March 15, 1793, almost fifty-six years after the BROAD KILL was registered in Philadelphia, contains a number of ship-carpentry tools and items of equipment though it appears dubious that he built the BROAD KILL unless he lived to a very advanced age. There is evidence that Lay held land on the southeast side of the junction of the "great Creek" (Broad Kill) and Round Pole Branch, "a short distance from Milton." There also is a record of Articles of Agreement dated December 6, 1764, for Lay to build a schooner for Samuel Rowland, Jr., a pilot. The vessel was to measure 40 feet on the keel, 17 feet beam, 6½ feet in the hold and to cost 160 pounds with 12 months stated to be the building time.

BROADKILN ENDEAVOUR (2)

Eleven years passed before the next Broad Kill vessel was registered and its place of building is shown simply as "Sussex Co." However, on November 26, 1748, when Captain Joseph Cord registered the schooner BROADKILN ENDEAVOUR, of 10 tons burden, with such Broad Kill names as Joseph Cord and John Cord as owners, it is safe to assume that she was built on the Broad Kill.

In these early years the Register contains the records of a number of vessels built in "Sussex County." Owners were listed as being of Sussex County, Lewes,

Philadelphia and other places. With ship-building established on the Broad Kill, it is possible that vessels were built there but the owners, having no personal tie to the sparsely inhabited area, recorded the place of building as simply "Sussex County." In this compilation the BROADKILN ENDEAVOUR is the only vessel included whose place of building was not specifically identified as being on the Broad Kill. The name of this vessel and names of its owners is sufficient evidence to accept that it was built on the Broad Kill.

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It was not unusual in the mid-1700's for small vessels to venture onto large waters. For the open-deck vessels of the Broad Kill the Delaware Bay was a large water. The volume of traffic in these craft was such that Joshua Fisher of Lewistown (Lewes), in his 1756 chart of the Delaware Bay and River, defined a "Westernmost Channel used only by Shallops." This channel skirted the western shore of the Bay from the Broad Kill entrance to south of Bombay Hook where it joined the main ship channel.

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ENDEAVOUR (3)

Another eleven year period passed before the next Broad Kill vessel, a schooner of 15 tons, was registered at Philadelphia. On March 26, 1760, Presgrove Kennett, Master, registered the ENDEAVOUR. Owners were recorded as being Presgrove Kennett and Ebenezer Franklin, both of Sussex County.

POLLY (4)

On June 25, 1760, only three months after the ENDEAVOUR (3) was registered, David Clowes registered the Broad Kill-built schooner POLLY, of 15 tons. Humphrey Smith of Philadelphia and "David Clowes of Lewis Town, Sussex Co." were recorded as owners. Presumably this is the David Clowes noted in the Clowes family Bible as

living in the span September 16, 1733 - May 25, 1770, and being interred at Heaveloe's Landing on the Broad Kill. David Clowes was a brother of John Clowes, Jr., a noted Delaware patriot of the Revolution who also was buried at Heaveloe's Landing.

GREYHOUND (5)

The excellent shipbuilding timber of the Broad Kill caused men from other areas to have vessels built on the Kill. Isaac and Richard Kallam, "both of Little Creek, Kent Co., on Delaware," were recorded as owners of the schooner GREYHOUND, 12 tons, when Richard Kallam, Master, registered the vessel on August 17, 1761.

TIGHT MATCH (6)

Levi Collins registered the schooner TIGHT MATCH, 10 tons, on May 20, 1765, and recorded that he and Uriah Hazard, of Maryland, owned the vessel. The place of building was recorded as "Broadkill."

TRYAL (7)

TRYAL was one of the Broad Kill's smallest vessels, recorded as being of only 8 tons though rigged as a schooner. The registry was made on January 7, 1766, Francis Coatam, Master, and William Ball, of Philadelphia, owner.

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The Bay frequently was the scene of shipwrecks involving Broad Kill's people as evidenced by these entries in the Clowes family Bible:

"Anno Domini, 1727, August 25th, at 5 afternoon, John Clowes was married unto Mary his wife at Lewes Town, in the County of Sussex on Delaware, by the Rev. William Beckett, Missionary, from the Society for Propagating the Gospel.

"1747-8, March 12, at 10 in the morning, their fifth son, Gerhardus Clowes, was born at Parktown on the Broad Kill, in Sd County of Sussex and was Christened by the Rev. Mr. Usher, a missionary at Lewes, on the 18th September following. His sponsors were the said Mr. Usher, Mr. Daniel Nunez and his own Mother.

finished discharging a cargo of ice from Boston, at Atlantic City, New Jersey, and was hauling from the wharf out into the stream, when she drifted ashore on the beach inside the harbor, about three quarters of a mile north of the Atlantic City Station (Fourth District). The mate, who was in charge at the time, being unable to float her off without assistance, requested aid from the keeper of the station. The house was then closed for the summer, but the keeper quickly mustered a boat's crew, five of them belonging to the regular crew, and two volunteers; and with the surf-boat carried out the schooner's anchor with the station hawser attached, and after an all-night job succeeded at 4 o'clock in the morning (August 29) in hauling the schooner safely off the beach."

At this time the DAY was reported as being valued at \$15,000. The stranding did not create a loss.

"ESTELLA DAY: April 11, 1883 - At 3 o'clock in the morning four schooners went ashore in a thick fog on the east side of Huntington Bay, at distances varying from a half-mile to a mile from the Eaton's Neck Station (Third District) Long Island, New York. One of them, the ESTELLA DAY, of New Castle, Delaware, bound thither from Providence, Rhode Island, with six men on board and no cargo, was hove off about noon, the sailors and station men working together."

On this occasion, somewhat over seven months later, the DAY was reported as being valued at \$20,000.

This closing of the DAY's career was recorded in the 1886 Annual Report of the U. S. Life Saving Service:

"Of the lives lost, reported after the 1885 report, one was lost on the schooner ESTELLA DAY, of New Castle, Delaware, which foundered south of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, March 20, 1885."

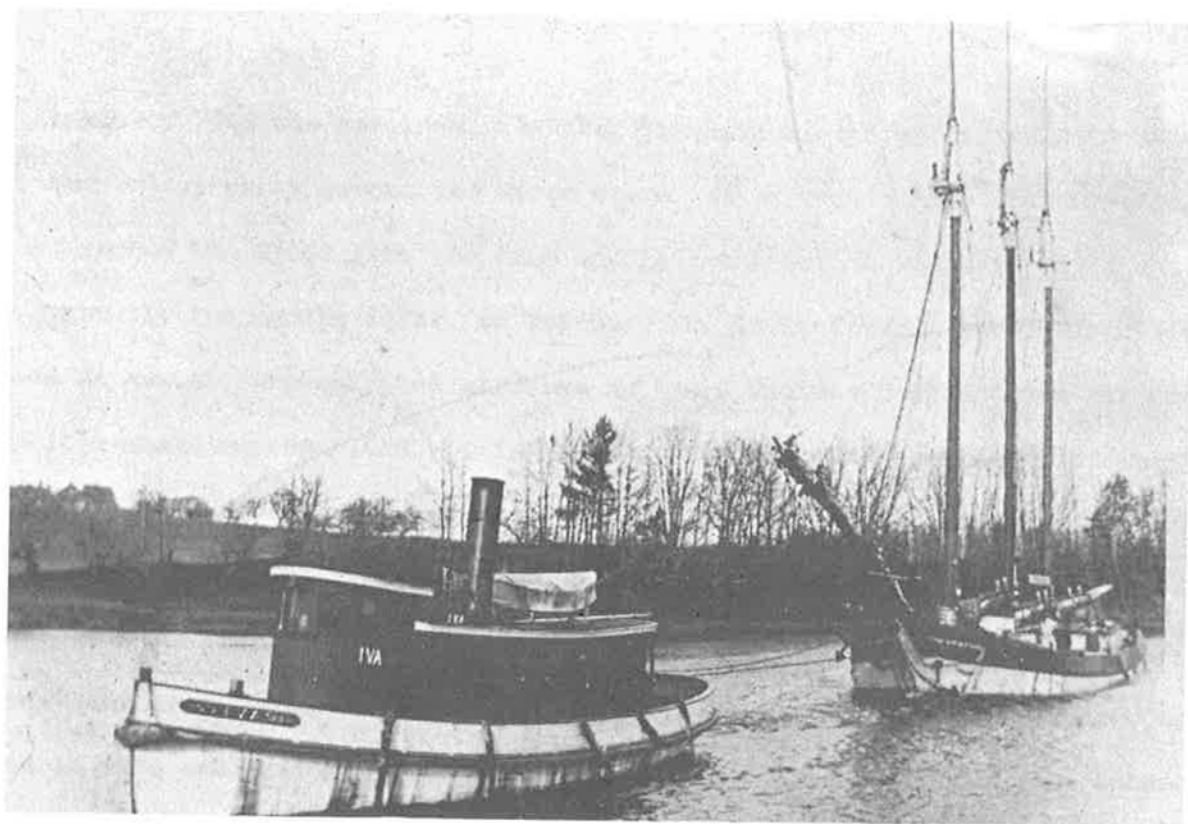
It will be noted that in all of these casualty items the name of the DAY was misspelled though her original document contains, without question, ESTELLE. Though such errors were rather commonplace, it was unusual that one would continue for so many years.

Dimensions: 111.1' x 29.6' x 10.3'

Tonnage: 227-60/100ths, measure

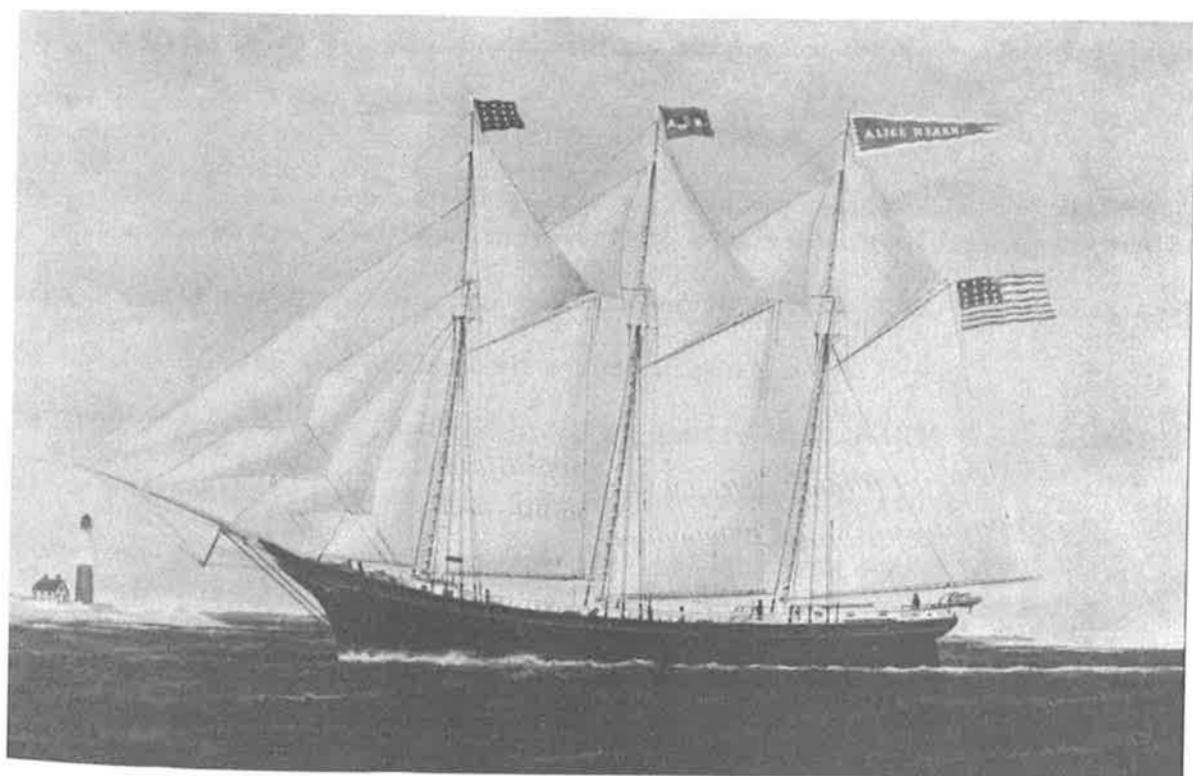
BENJAMIN T. BIGGS (196)

James Ponder, then Governor of the State of Delaware, enrolled this 3-masted schooner at New Castle on December 20, 1870, stating that he was sole owner and Master.



BENJAMIN T. BIGGS (196)

Squamscot River, Stratham, New Hampshire. Photograph courtesy of The Peabody Museum of Salem (Massachusetts).



ALICE HEARN (221)

Photograph courtesy of James E. Marvil, M.D., Laurel, Delaware.

Official Number 2745 was assigned. In that it would be quite difficult to command a vessel and concurrently govern the First State, it is very likely that Captain Wm. S. Mason commanded the BIGGS from the time she left the Milton shipyard where she was built. Exactly two months later, on February 20, 1871, Captain Mason was officially recorded as Master, probably the earliest he could visit a Custom House for that purpose. In commanding the BIGGS, it is obvious that Captain Mason did not remain associated very long if, in fact, he was associated at all with the small schooner, built two years earlier, which carried his name.

Benjamin T. Biggs (October 1, 1821 - December 25, 1893) was a native of Pencader Hundred, New Castle County. He became the forty-third Governor of Delaware, being elected in 1886 and served the full term, 1887-1891. It is obvious that he and Governor Ponder were good friends by 1870, the year of the building of this vessel bearing his name.

The original enrollment does not contain the builder's name. However, in the issue of 1894/95 Lloyd's Register records the builder as W. F. Lamb.

In being rigged as a 3-master, the BIGGS became one of the Broad Kill's smallest vessels of that rig. The immediately preceding Milton-built vessel to be documented, the DAY, was appreciably larger than the BIGGS though rigged as a 2-master. In retrospect, both vessels may have been improved had they exchanged rigging during construction. While the BIGGS went to the extreme in rigging, she was a step backward in respect to model. She was built with a square stern.

In 1879 Captain Quillen was recorded as Master and in 1885 Capt. Joseph H. Dodd was Master. Apparently Ponder sold the BIGGS between 1885 and 1889. In 1889 the vessel was owned in New York and engaged in trading along the Atlantic Coast and to Canada. Early in 1900 she was recorded by Lloyd's as home ported at Portsmouth, N. H. After about 30 years of active service the BIGGS' career was drawing to a close. The New York Maritime Register reported the event with these items:

THOMAS WINSMORE (242)

"Milton, Del.

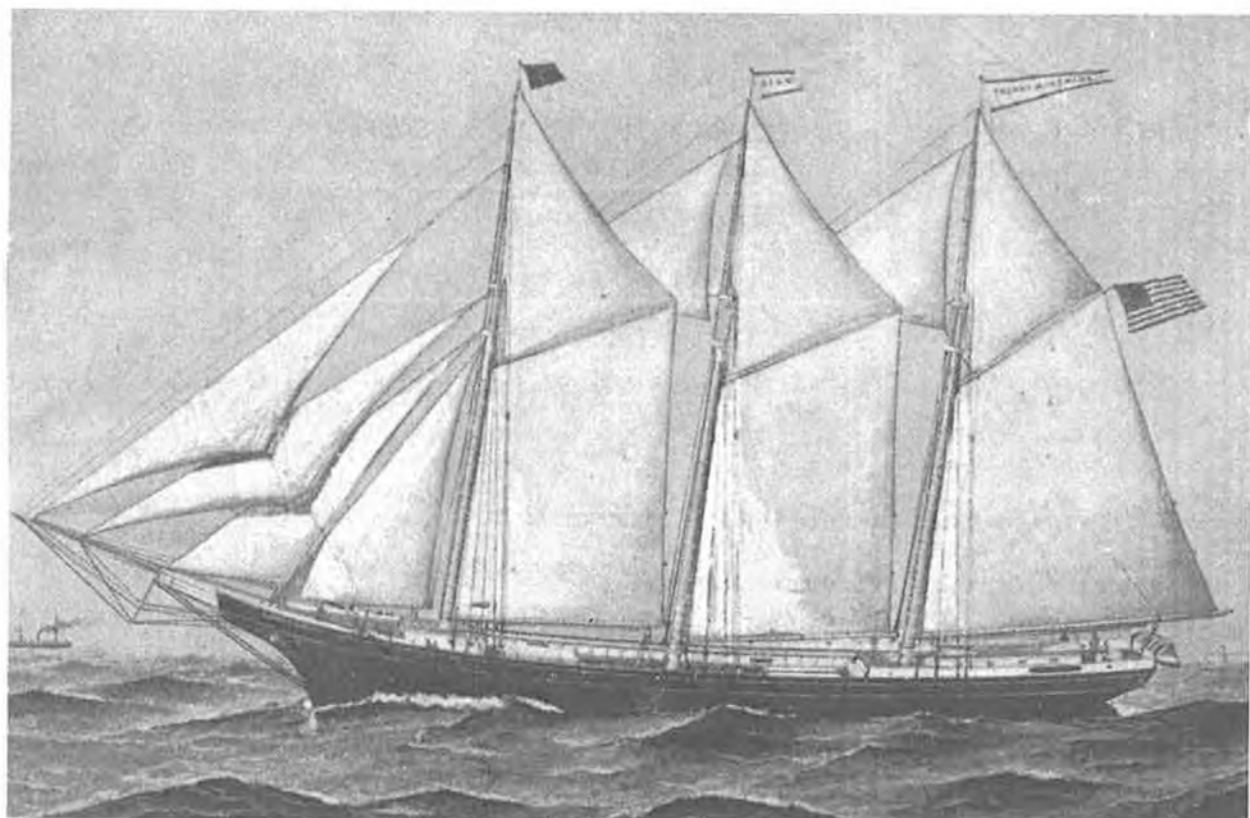
C. C. Davidson, Launched Dec. 15th the 3-Mst. schr. THOMAS WINSMORE. Her measurements are: 136 length, 34 breadth, 10½ depth. She is intended for the general coasting trade, and will be commanded by Capt. James C. Conwell." (New York Maritime Register, Dec. 24, 1890)

After completing the CREADICK (241) in late 1889, C. C. Davidson commenced construction of the WINSMORE for this group of owners:

8/64, Jas. C. Conwell	2/64, Edward Trainer
2/64, Clara Conwell	4/64, A. P. Nowell
4/64, Thomas Winsmore	of Philadelphia
4/64, Lewis Hess	4/64, C. C. Davidson
4/64, D. S. Stetson & Co.	2/64, J. T. V. Bloxsom
2/64, Thomas M. Green	2/64, C. C. Rickards
1/64, John Nevenger	2/64, Sallie E. Sipple
2/64, Jos. H. Dodd	1/64, Willard H. Collins
2/64, George C. Harrison	1/64, James A. Carey
1/64, C. Frank Lacey	1/64, B. V. Wolfe
1/64, Thomas E. Lynch	1/64, George B. Hunter
1/64, John B. Cutler	of Sussex County, Del.
1/64, John Cranmer	2/64, Dana Baird
1/64, Paul J. Field	1/64, Emma M. Fries
1/64, E. A. Cathrall	1/64, James S. Fisher
1/64, Charles L. Walker	of Camden, N. J.
1/64, Ellicott Fisher	1/64, John Breen
2/64, Henry J. Trainer	of New York
(next column)	

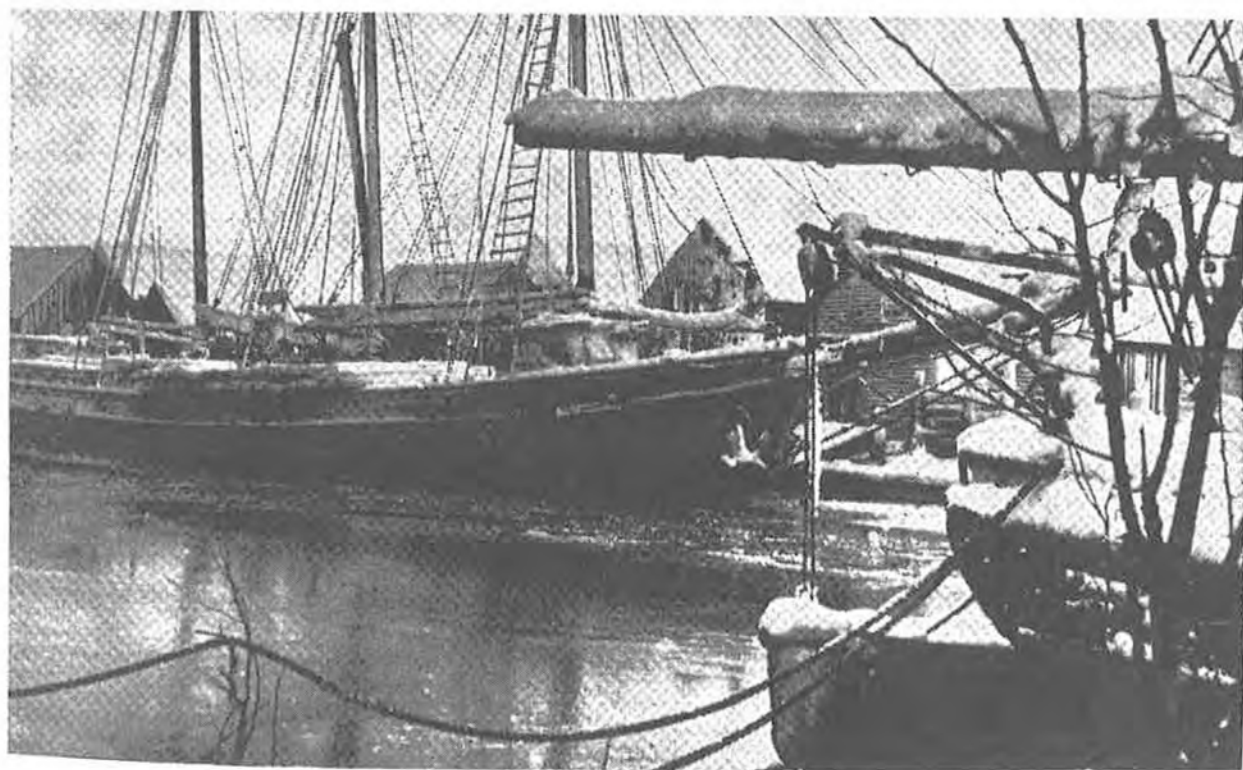
This trim three-masted schooner is probably better known in Milton in this day (1966) than any other vessel built on the Broad Kill. For well over half a century an oil painting of the WINSMORE under full sail has hung in the living room of the home on the northeast corner of Milton's Federal and Mill streets, the home of the WINSMORE's first Master, Captain James Carey Conwell and, later, the home of his grandson, Dr. James C. White.

Captain Conwell and his wife were the only captain-and-wife to own original shares in a Milton-built vessel, their combined ownership being a substantial part of the total. Mrs. Conwell frequently made voyages with the Captain, actions deemed newsworthy by the compiler of the Milton Letter in The Milford Chronicle, particularly in the 1890's. From these voyages she sometimes was referred to as "Cap'n Clara" by



THOMAS WINSMORE (242)

Photograph courtesy of Dr. James C. White, Milton, Delaware.



MARIE THOMAS (249)

Loading piling at a Milton wharf in 1907. Photograph by the late Mr. Walter C. Welch, Milton, Delaware. From Milton's Sesquicentennial Program 1957.

many of their seafaring friends. It is quite probable that her exposure to the skill necessary in sailing a vessel would have enabled her to be most helpful in a shipboard emergency.

It was fitting that a vessel be named for such a consistent investor in the products of Milton's shipyards. This was the tenth vessel, commencing with the HEARN (221) in 1880, in which Winsmore was an initial shareholder and he was to invest in one more. The firm of Cain and Winsmore were Philadelphia shipchandlers (Swanson and Queen Streets, Philadelphia) and it was customary for owners of such enterprises to participate in the building of vessels in order to gain a business advantage in furnishing the vessel's requirements for stores, supplies and equipment.

Captain Conwell enrolled the WINSMORE at Philadelphia on April 24, 1891, recording himself as Master, Philadelphia the home port, Milton the place of building "in the year 1891" and noted the Carpenter's Certificate as being on file. Official Number 145575 was assigned. The vessel was described as being a schooner with one deck, three masts, a billet head and a counter stern. Over four months elapsed between the launching date and documentation. This could have been the effect of severe winter weather which delayed the completion or the Broad Kill being frozen to such a degree that the vessel could not be moved out.

The WINSMORE managed to keep out of recorded difficulty for an unusually long period. It was not until January 24, 1913, almost 22 years from entering service, until she received unspecified assistance from the Life Saving Service at a point 94 miles WSW of their Cape Lookout Station. At this time the vessel was lumber laden on a voyage from Charleston to New York. Value of the vessel was given as \$12,000, cargo at \$6,000, no losses were sustained and 7 persons were noted to be on board. Some clarification, or confusion, about this incident is contained in the 1913 Annual Report of the U. S. Revenue Cutter Service. It contains an item that the Cutter SEMINOLE assisted the WINSMORE at Lookout Bight, N. C., on January 24, 1913, stating

quality timber and shipcarpenter talent was used in both vessels. Fate decreed that the elements of nature at sea would cause the early loss of one while the other was to avoid such catastrophic peril.

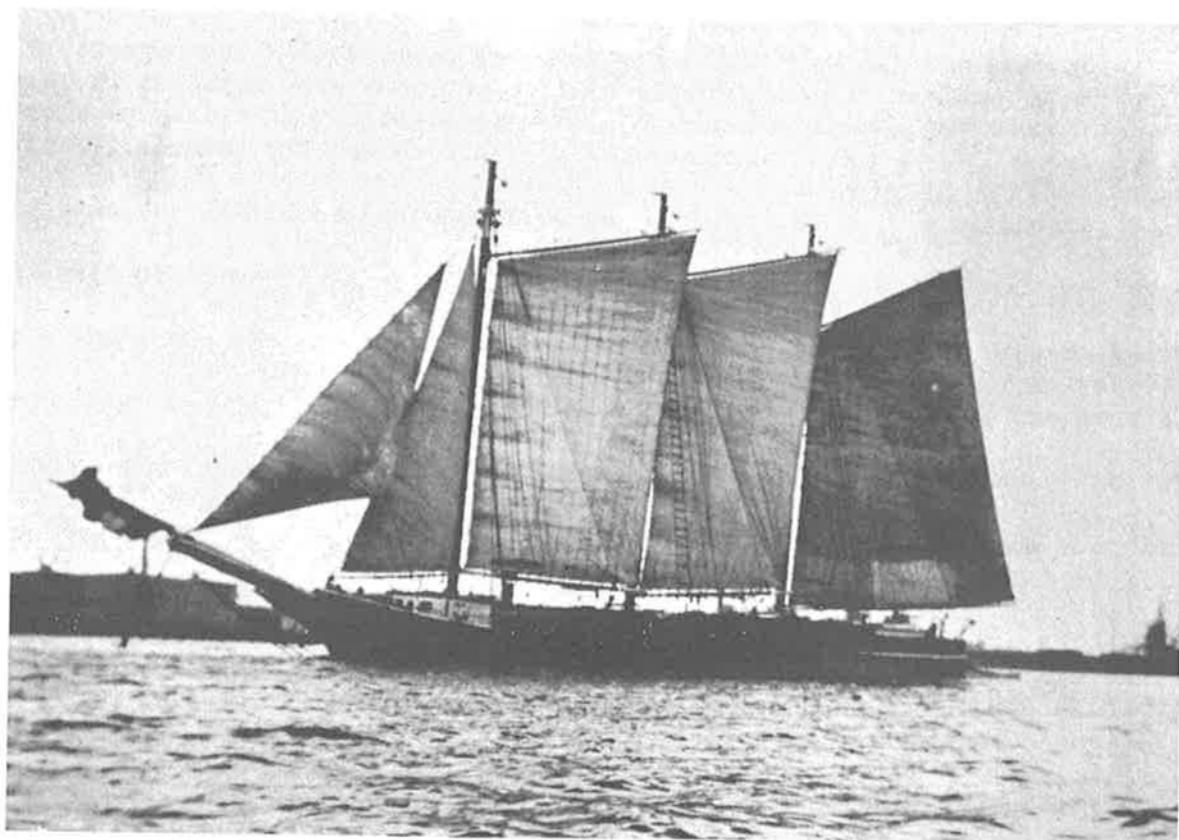
A few days less than a year after the PARKER's original documentation a new enrollment was issued at Wilmington (August 12, 1892) for the purpose of recording this new alignment of ownership:

1/32, Charles A. Burrows	1/32, John B. Cutler
1/4, William T. Parker	1/16, George Taulane
1/4, Emma W. Burton	1/32, Joseph Dodd
1/32, John R. Megee	1/32, James Hughes
all of Milton	all of Philadelphia
1/4, John B. Dorman	1/32, Henry P. Havens
of Drawbridge	of New York
(next column)	

The PARKER's shallow, deep-loaded draft indicates that she was intended for trading to places with similar channel depths. This is substantiated by her appearance off Fire Island Inlet, Long Island, on April 16, 1893. On this occasion the Life Saving Service recorded "Unacquainted with channel into inlet. Launched surfboat and piloted her in."

For a vessel trading for years along the coast, frequently entering and leaving inlets and waters of a rather hazardous nature, the PARKER was remarkably free of recorded adversities. On August 27, 1899, she did, however, become involved in a potentially serious difficulty within sight of the entrance to the Broad Kill. This episode was covered in this manner in the 1900 Annual Report of the U. S. Life Saving Service:

"WILLIAM T. PARKER: Aug. 27, 1899 - Am. sc. WILLIAM T. PARKER, Lewes and Cape Henlopen, Delaware - Stranded on point of Cape Henlopen at 7.30 p.m. Patrolmen from both Lewes and Cape Henlopen stations saw signal of distress from the point of the cape, burned a Coston signal in response, and then reported to their respective stations by telephone from the watchhouse. Surfmen from both stations soon assembled at the cape, launched the surfboat, and boarded the stranded schooner. They took the crew of six persons into the surfboat and landed them safely inside the point, the master going to Lewes and the rest to Cape Henlopen Station for the night. On the next morning the surfmen pulled out to the wreck again with three of the crew,



WILLIAM T. PARKER (244)

Entering Baltimore in 1932 with cargo of lumber. Topmasts removed about 1929, the slight "hogging" of this 41-year old vessel further accentuates her age.



WILLIAM T. PARKER (244)

Photographs this page courtesy of Mr. Robert H. Burgess, Curator of Exhibits, The Mariners Museum, Newport News, Virginia.

in a rough sea, and obtained the personal effects of all the rescued men. Four of the crew were succored at Lewes Station until the 30th, when railroad passes to Philadelphia were procured for them. The schooner was finally floated and taken into port for repairs."

At this time the PARKER was enroute from Bogue Inlet, N. C., to Patchogue, N. Y. with a cargo of lumber. Value of the vessel was given as \$10,000 and the cargo at \$1,500. The estimated amount of the loss was \$1,200; six persons were on board, none were lost though a total of 12-man days of succor was afforded the crew by the Life Saving Stations. No reason was given for her entering the Delaware Bay while enroute Patchogue though it could have been any one of several reasons such as prospective adverse weather, sickness or shortage of water or stores.

The Life Saving report that "The schooner was finally floated and taken into port for repairs" was quite an understatement as to what actually happened during these processes! The Service, however, was concerned only with rescuing the PARKER's people and would not extend their report into this chronology of interesting subsequent happenings:

"WM. T. PARKER (Sc) with a cargo of lumber from Bogue Inlet, N. C. for New York, stranded night of Aug 27 on Round Shoal Point, off Cape Henlopen while trying to enter the Delaware Breakwater. The crew was saved by the Lewes and Henlopen Life Savers. Tugs on the 28th failed to move the stranded schooner. She lay in a bad position and her deckload was being washed off." (New York Maritime Register - Aug. 30, 1899)

"SCHOONER WILLIAM T. PARKER ASHORE ON CAPE HENLOPEN - Last Sunday night the Schooner WILLIAM T. PARKER, bound to New York loaded with lumber, grounded on point of Cape Henlopen. It was reported that the vessel would be a total loss but the board of survey composed of Capt. Wiltbank, Capt. Torbert and Capt. Chambers reported her in good condition and recommended that efforts be made at once to pull her into deep water.

"The PARKER is commanded by Capt. Thomas Lynch of Lewes and is owned by William T. Parker of Milton and John B. Dorman of Drawbridge, Del. The vessel and cargo are both insured.

"About seven thousand feet of lumber, part of the deck-load of schooner WILLIAM T. PARKER, washed ashore this week and has been piled up on the beach."

the 1907 document though a new man, Capt. William T. Chase, was recorded in command in 1908.

The only THOMAS adversity disclosed in this research occurred in February, 1909, as contained in this entry in the 1909 Annual Report of the U. S. Life Saving Service:

"Stranded 1½ miles SW of Two-Mile Beach station and 2½ miles E. of Cold Spring station. Discovered by Two-Mile Beach lookout, and the crew of that station, in their surfboat, put off to the steamer. On account of the heavy seas, the Cold Spring crew was required to haul their surfboat 2 miles up the beach in order to launch it. After the surfmen had taken the Master ashore to communicate with his agents, they carried out an anchor and succeeded in floating the steamer."

At this time the THOMAS, then home ported at Wilmington, was enroute from Cold Spring Inlet (Cape May) to Milton. Eight persons were reported to be aboard and the vessel was valued at \$20,000.

Between March and May, 1909, the THOMAS was again converted. This time a freight house was built on deck which appreciably increased the vessel's measurement tonnage. The structure indicated that it was intended to carry package cargo rather than timber. A new enrollment to reflect this change was issued to Captain Megee at Wilmington on May 31, 1909. This was the final document issued to the vessel and it recorded these owners, most of whom had continued their investment:

19/32, George E. Megee of Milton	1/48, Lewis B. Taulane
4/32, W. H. Thomas	1/48, George Taulane, Jr. of Philadelphia
2/32, W. H. Megee	2/32, E. D. Stafford of Camden
2/32, Thomas Winsmore	1/32, Joseph L. Black of Milton
1/48, Edward G. Taulane (next column)	

Captain John R. Megee was recorded as being in command. The structural changes brought about these tonnage measurements:

Under deck	112.74
Cabin trunk	9.72
Freight house	<u>65.69</u>
Gross	188.15
Bosun stores	2.31
Prop. space	1.75
Engine space	<u>38.15</u>
Net	<u>145.94</u>

Some time before the night of December 3, 1910, the THOMAS arrived at her Milton wharf. She may have arrived that very evening. During the night the town fire bell was sounded; the THOMAS was afire! In spite of the efforts of the firefighters, the vessel burned to the water edge, drifted away from the wharf and settled to the bottom in the channel. Fortunately there were no injuries, it was likely that the entire crew were safely in their homes when the fire started. In due course a derrick barge arrived in Milton, lifted the THOMAS's remains onto the bank on the north side of the channel where some remnants may exist to this day.

Dimensions: 96' x 23.9' x 6.5'

BREAKWATER (250)

BREAKWATER joined the list of Milton's distinctive vessels when she became a commissioned vessel of the U. S. Navy.

Rouse Thomas Potter of Fall River, Mass., came to Milton and proceeded to build this steamer for use in his marine salvage business. Only one more vessel was to be built at Milton and Potter was to be the builder.

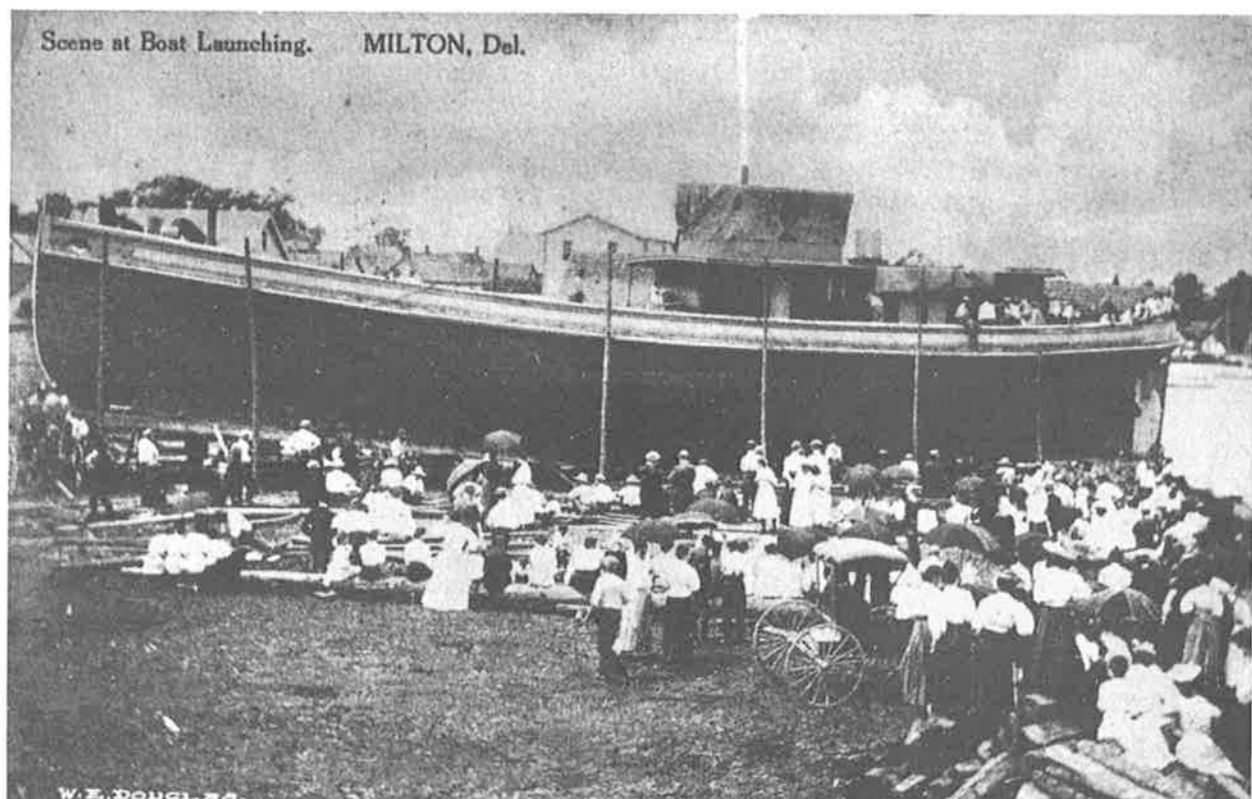
Vessel launchings generally are gala affairs and those at Milton were so considered. When a vessel slid into the Broad Kill the event culminated months of strenuous physical effort by many of Milton's citizens. On the day of launching the construction scaffolding is cleared away, disclosing the results of the shipcarpenter's labors. Launching is timed for high water and generally arranged for a date when this time coincides with the convenience of people to attend. When the BREAKWATER slid into her element the scene probably was in duplication of scores of such Broad Kill events over past years. It was a summery day, many women and children were present and the vessel was readied for launching. To be on board a vessel as it left the building ways was considered to be a special thrill.

Considerable work needed to be done to complete the BREAKWATER after launching.

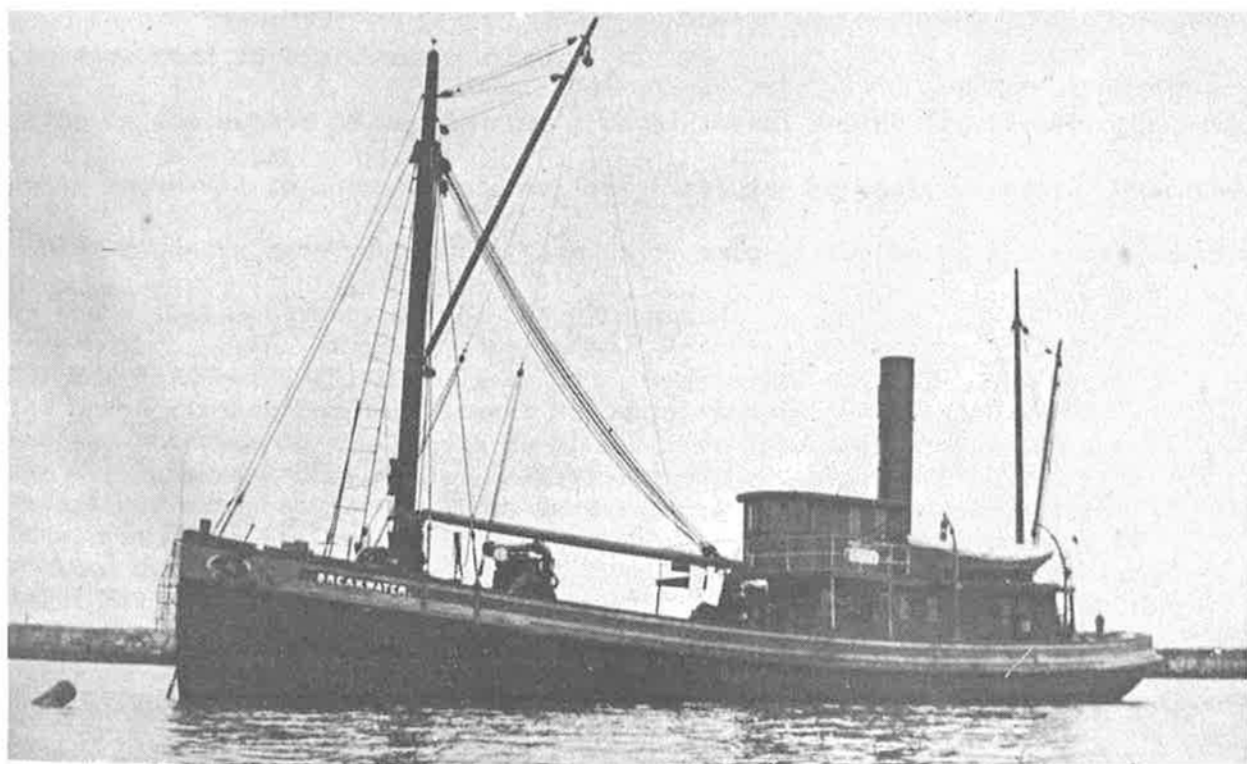
On November 23, 1907, Potter enrolled his vessel at Wilmington, recording himself (of Fall River) as sole owner and Master, Fall River as the home port, the building year as 1907 "as appears by Master Carpenter's Certificate made by Rouse T. Potter, builder, Nov. 23, 1907, now on file in this office." (Seldom is one man identified with a vessel as sole owner, master and builder.) The BREAKWATER was described as a "steam screw" having one deck, two masts, sharp head and pointed stern. Official Number 204704 was assigned. Presumably Captain Potter gave the name to the vessel because he planned to base it at the Delaware Breakwater in his salvage business. In this activity the vessel was rigged with a heavy-lift boom on the foremast, possibly capable of lifting 5 tons, as well as a gaff on the foremast capable of something less in lift capacity. On her mainmast she was rigged with a boom which possibly had a capacity of two tons. On deck she carried a large windlass which was standard equipment for wrecking steamers and one, possibly two, large capacity wrecking pumps. In her hold she undoubtedly carried all the gear usually carried by salvage vessels.

In the 1908 issue of List of Vessels (Department of Commerce) BREAKWATER was recorded as a Wrecking Steamer of 240 horsepower, a crew of 7 and home ported at Fall River. This same statistical information was contained in the issues for 1909 and 1910. It is doubtful that the salvage business was particularly profitable though it is known that Captain Potter and his BREAKWATER succeeded in raising the SS CHESAPEAKE which had sunk within the confines of the Delaware Breakwater.

The year 1911 brought a decided change in the operational sphere of BREAKWATER. On July 3 of that year a new, and final, enrollment was issued the vessel at Wilmington in the name of David W. Burbage, Vice-President, Lewes Fisheries Company, sole owner; Captain V. D. Townsend was recorded as Master. At this point she became a unit in the menhaden fishing fleet of the Lewes company. In 1912 she was noted to carry a crew of 24, reflecting her fishing activity. This situation remained unchanged through the 1918 issue of List of Vessels which was in cover of vessels in 1917.



BREAKWATER (250)



BREAKWATER (250)

Rigged and equipped as a wrecking steamer. At anchor in the Delaware Breakwater
Photographs this page courtesy of Mrs. D. Anthony Potter, Lewes, Delaware.

In May, 1917, in the early days of our participation in World War I, BREAKWATER was sold to the Government for \$89,792 which probably represented a very appreciable profit. Transfer of title was effected on May 18 and she became U. S. S. BREAKWATER (S. P. 681) ("S.P." is the naval designation for "Section Patrol," a duty generally assigned vessels of this class). A Navy vessel data publication recorded these characteristics:

Length	105 ⁰
Breadth	24 ⁰
Mean draft	11 ⁰
Speed	10 knots
Net tonnage	95
Fuel capacity	@ 40 cu. ft./ton - 187 tons
Rig	1 funnel and 1 pole mast
Engine	Vertical, compound with 12 inch H.P., 20 inch, L.P. and 18 inch stroke.
Boiler	1 SE (Single end)
Horsepower	270
Propellers	one
Battery	two 3-pounders
Complement	3 officers, 2 CPO and 20 men

In creating a fuel capacity of 187 tons it is obvious that the wrecking gear/fish hold had been converted to coal bunker usage.

Owing to the number of men manning a naval vessel during its career, the Navy is frequently requested to furnish information pertaining to their vessels. Over the years these requests have caused the Navy to prepare histories of all naval vessels.

This is the official history of the USS BREAKWATER:

"The USS BREAKWATER (S.P. 681), a 105 foot trawler, was purchased from the Lewes Fishing Company, Lewes, Delaware, and delivered in May 1917. She was attached to the Fourth Naval District (Philadelphia) where she was utilized as a minesweeper, patrol vessel, and tug, until 1919. The vessel was assigned to the First Submarine Division, Coco Solo, Canal Zone, where she arrived on 16 October 1919. The BREAKWATER attended to routine duty at the Coco Solo Naval Station until late 1920 when declared unfit for further Naval service. She was sold to the Panama Construction Company on 31 March 1921."

Inquiries made to appropriate agencies in Panama failed to develop further information on the career of this product of Milton's shipcarpenters.

\$3,500 to \$4,000 could be made over what the Maine men, for instance, have to pay. Wages are lower than in Maine, for a great deal of colored labor can be utilized. The state is close by the greatest iron-producing region of the country, and iron can be bought to advantage. Outfits can also be bought at a lower cost than in the east. With a proper equipment, such as derricks, steam-saws, etc., vessels could be built in Delaware, to class A 1, with a red star in Lloyds for 11 years, at \$45 a ton."

Associated with any review of Delaware's shipbuilding is this comment by Hall under his report for Pennsylvania:

"PENNSYLVANIA

"One branch of the business which is quite active yet in Philadelphia is the fitting out of vessels; nearly all the hulls built on streams flowing into Delaware bay are sent up to the city in tow of a tug and receive their masts and spars, sails, rigging, spar iron work, anchors, and chains there. Some are fitted out at the yards, but the outfits are bought in the city, several prosperous firms living by this outfitting business."

Hall wrote of Milton, "In the census year 4 schooners were built, aggregating 1,362 tons, costing \$79,700, an average of \$59 a ton; but larger vessels were built for \$50 per register ton." Hall's "census year" apparently meant the government fiscal year for 1880, July 1, 1879-June 30, 1880. The 4 schooners referred to, and their dates of documentation were:

PETER J. HART (218)	Sept. 16, 1879	40.09 tons
FANNIE KIMMEY (219)	Dec. 11, 1879	384.23 tons
REBECCA M. WALLS (220)	Dec. 27, 1879	590.50 tons
ALICE HEARN (221)	June 10, 1880	347.42 tons
Total		1,362.24 tons

It is extremely unlikely that the average of \$59 per ton would be valid in applying to a 40 ton vessel and one of 590 tons. The smaller vessel undoubtedly cost more per ton than the average and the larger vessel cost less per ton than the average. However, a figure of \$50 per register ton for Milton's large vessels probably was a close approximation.

Hall referred to 3 yards in Milton. He obviously was referring to the yards of David H. Atkins, Cornelius Coulter Davidson and Joseph L. Black & Bro. For some unrecorded reason Drawbridge was not mentioned in the Hall survey, perhaps because the

size and number of vessels built there did not warrant their incorporation in the report.

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ROBERT W. DASEY (222)

For several months the DASEY and the HEARN were concurrently in their respective builders' construction stocks. Their official measurements reflect that they came very close to being identical schooners. The DASEY was measured at 4' longer, 0.2' beamier and of the same depth. As will be noted, the DASEY's measured tonnage was less than 10 tons greater than the HEARN.

The building of wooden vessels in this era in communities such as Milton was certainly not an exact science. It is doubtful that the keels were laid on a surveyed straight line though the sighting method used did prove at least adequate. David H. Atkins, the builder of the DASEY, used as a mold loft the upper floor of the old four-storied Atkin's establishment at the southwest corner of Broad and Union Streets. From a small, constructed half-model of a vessel to be built, he would "take off" its hull form and translate the lines into actual size patterns for the frames for the vessel. (Source: Miss Sarah Atkins). Other builders are presumed to have had such facilities elsewhere in Milton though it is very possible that the Atkins loft was a cooperative undertaking, available to each of the three or four builders. Dimension variations built into the structure by the ship carpenters as they assembled a vessel caused the exact dimensions to remain somewhat in doubt until the official measurements were taken for incorporation in the original documentation. It is highly likely that the small, local trading two-masted vessels were built without benefit of any design engineering such as Atkins used in preparing to build his larger vessels.

Edward Tracey, of Philadelphia, enrolled the DASEY at Philadelphia on August 27, 1880, recording this list of owners:

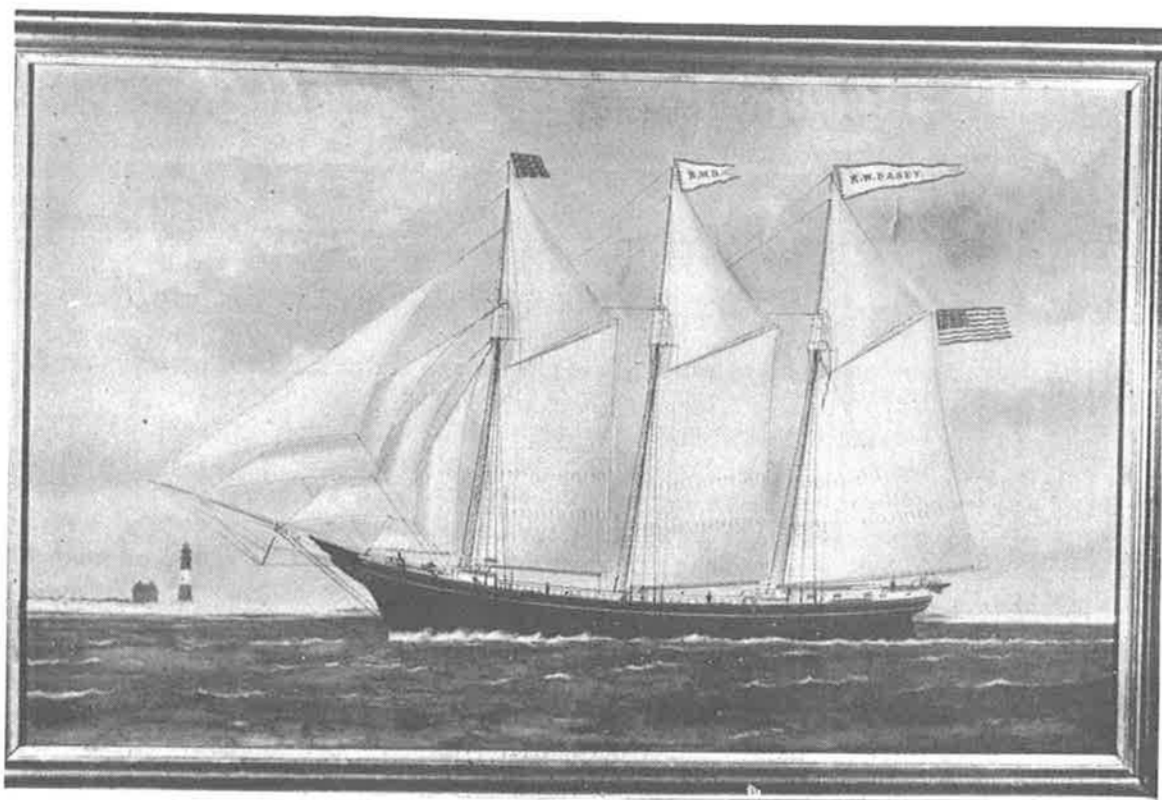
6/64, Edward Tracey
6/64, Robert W. Dasey
4/64, A. H. Stillwell
4/64, Geo. Taulane
4/64, Christopher Gallagher
4/64, Maggie A. Holden
2/64, A. H. Cain
2/64, Thomas Winsmore
2/64, Elias P. Smithers
2/64, Benjamin V. Wolfe
2/64, David H. Richards
(next column)

2/64, J. H. Warrington
2/64, Arthur McArdle
2/64, Thomas McCormack
1/64, Jno. B. Cutler
of Philadelphia
10/64, Charles H. Atkins
4/64, Henry F. Maul
2/64, David Robins
2/64, Rebecca W. Paynter
1/64, Thomas Paynter
of Milton, Del.

Captain Tracey was recorded as Master, Philadelphia the home port, 110439 was the Official Number, 1880 was the building year, the Carpenter's Certificate was "on file" and the vessel was described as having three masts, one deck, scroll head and elliptic stern. There was not too much difference between the shape of counter and elliptic sterns. Obviously this vessel was named for one of its substantial owners, Capt. Robert W. Dasey. Captain Dasey, an investor in several Milton-built vessels, was of Sussex County, Delaware, though the Philadelphia Directories for 1878-1879 recorded his home as being at 1313 Moyamensing Ave. He was not listed in 1880. In 1884 the American Bureau of Shipping published that David H. Atkins had built the DASEY and in 1894/1895 Lloyds published the same.

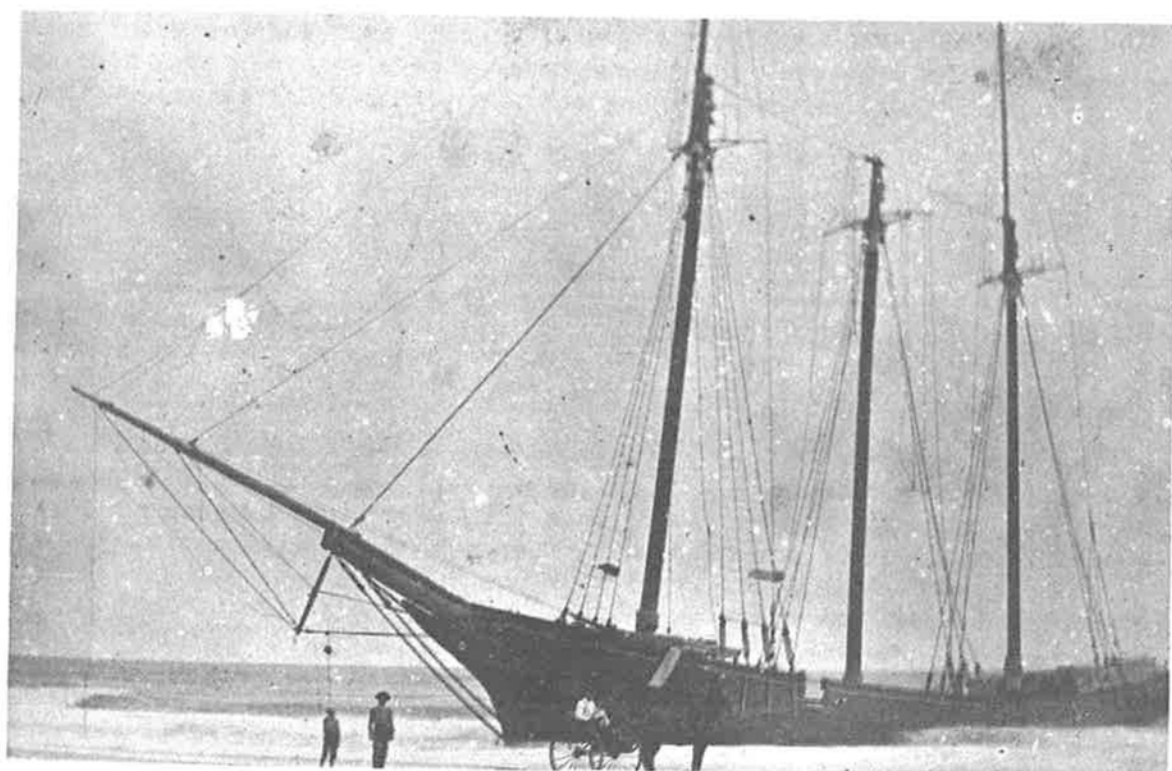
On October 7, 1885, a new document was issued at Wilmington in which Lewes became the home port and Captain Tracey gave his home as Lewes. The list of owners at this time remained substantially as they had been in 1880. In 1890 Captain J. A. Hall was documented as Master. Lloyds, in their Register for 1894/1895, published that "W. Dasey" was Master, having joined the vessel in 1892. In their 1896/1897 Register Captain G. B. Hunter was recorded as Master. He had been in the NOWELL (207) when she was lost in December, 1892, and apparently missed being wrecked in the DASEY by a fairly close margin.

After working along the Atlantic seaboard for 19 years, a respectable performance, the DASEY closed her career in what the New York Maritime Register called a



ROBERT W. DASEY (222)

Photograph courtesy of James E. Marvil, M.D., Laurel, Delaware.



ROBERT W. DASEY (222)

Wrecked August 17, 1899. Photograph courtesy of Miss Mary Cobb and The Mariners Museum, Newport News, Virginia.

cyclone. In the Life Saving Service's Annual Report for 1900 the storm was dramatically described as a hurricane, pronounced by the Cape Hatteras observer of the U. S. Weather Bureau as "the most severe in the history of Hatteras." A sizeable loss of life resulted from the destruction of vessels in the immediate area where the loss of the DASEY was described in this account in the 1900 Report:

"ROBERT W. DASEY: Aug. 17, 1899 - Am. sc. ROBERT W. DASEY - Little Kinnakeet, N C. - Driven ashore by the terrible ENE. storm 3/4 mile S. of station, at 5.30 p.m. Life-saving crew started for the wreck with the beach apparatus as soon as possible after its discovery by the patrolman, but the beach cart and the horses became mired in the quicksand on the way, delaying them nearly an hour. They found the wreck, bows-on to the beach, with the outer jib stay, which had parted, hanging over the bow. They went into the surf and caught hold of the stay; then, while they held it fast, the crew of the schooner came down upon it, one by one, and surfmen carried them all safely up the beach. Taking them to station, the keeper gave them stimulants and food and provided them with dry clothing from the stores of the Women's National Relief Association. On the next day the station crew went on board the wreck with the shipwrecked crew and aided them to search for their personal effects, finding very few, however. The crew were succored at the station until the 21st, when they were given transportation to Elizabeth City. The captain remained at the station until the 30th, when, having sold the wreck, he left for his home. (See letter of acknowledgment.) (On page 57, in accounting for supplies furnished during the year, the WNRA states, 'Forty-six of these (the total) destitute people - many almost naked - were the survivors of six vessels driven ashore in the vicinity of Cape Hatteras by the disastrous storm which swept the Atlantic seaboard from August 16 to 18, 1899.')

"Little Kinnakeet Life-Saving Station,
August 18, 1899

"We, the undersigned, captain and crew of the wrecked schooner ROBERT W. DASEY, which was driven ashore by an east-northeast hurricane with very high surf and tide on August 17, 1899, at 5.30 p.m., wish to make the following statement:

"At that time no person could have reached us, but as early as anything could possibly be done the life-saving crew were on hand with their beach apparatus ready to land us. Our vessel, however, had gone high up, so that the life-savers caught the outer jib stay, which was loose, and held it while we came down upon it, one at a time. Then they took us up on the beach clear of the surf. They arrived at the wreck about 6 a m on August 18, 1899. After landing us they took us to station three-quarters of a mile distant, and provided us with dry clothing, stimulants, and food; they gave us the very best treatment, and aided us in every possible way to save our effects so far as we could find them on board our vessel.

Milton Historical Society
Compliments of
Joe and Chris Hudson
and Family