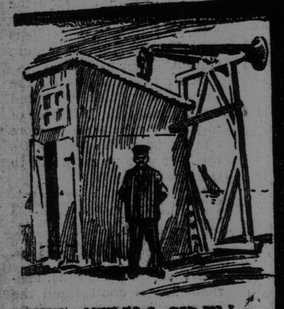
MC2289

POOR DOCUMENT

THE STORY OF SANDY HOOK



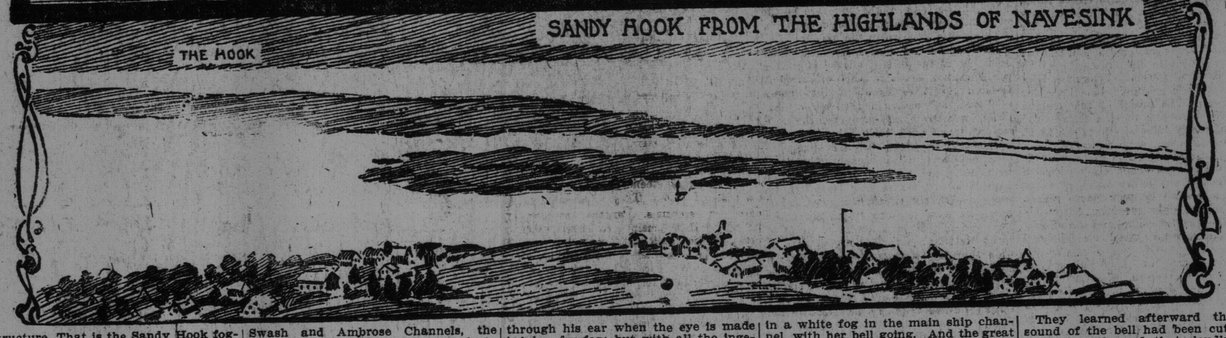
THE STEAM SIREN

SHE SANK IN SEVENTY FEET OF WATER LIKE A STONE

NAVBSINK LIGHT

SANDY HOOK LIGHT-VESSEL 51

SANDY HOOK FROM THE HIGHLANDS OF NAVESINK



THE HOOK

"S. S. Campania passed the Lizard, 8 p.m. yesterday." "S. S. Columbia reported off Sandy Hook, 2 a.m. this morning." "S. S. Cedric passed Nantucket Shoals Lightship No. 66, bound in, 4 a. m. this morning." "Full rigged ship Ebenezer Knight reported a total loss by Lloyds."

All the world that reads newspapers, from Boston Common to Vladivostok, knows these names, Sandy Hook, Lizard, Nantucket and Lloyds, as well as if they were family names.

Sandy Hook and the Lizard are probably the most frequently mentioned points of land in the world; but not one in ten thousand of the captains who pass them have ever set foot on them.

Not one of the hundreds of thousands of passengers who have seen the red, black and white Nantucket lightship knows what the shoals are.

Who of all the millions that read almost daily of Lloyds knows anything about it?

This series of articles will tell of them.

Best known in America of all these names is Sandy Hook. Board ship after ship, from sloop and schooner to turbine liner, and ask about it. You will find no one who can tell anything except that it extends its long, snowy white finger of sand, three miles long and a few hundred feet wide, from the State of New Jersey north across the entrance to the harbor of New York.

The great tides that have bored their way out to the deep sea through so many geographical epochs, have tossed thin white sand out thus on both sides of the harbor entrance. One of these white sand keys is famous Coney Island. It thrusts its dazzling beach west and east to within six miles of the sandy hook that reaches north. And that six miles of open water is the harbor entrance. Ships volleyed across 3,000 miles of sea have that tiny target to aim at, and no more.

Sandy Hook lies so low in the sea that it can hardly be seen before it is almost under foot. But south of it rise bluff hills, almost two hundred feet high. These are the Highlands of Navesink, where James Fenimore Cooper laid the scene of his story "The Water Witch," that dealt with the adventures of a sea rover in the waters around New York.

THE NAVESINK TWINS.

On these hills, in a spare cleared to make it stand boldly against the western sky, is a castle-like building with a brownstone tower on each end. That is the home of the famous Navesink twin lights. A few years ago one of the twins shut its eye and has never opened it since, for, the Government decided to put a monster light into the southern tower alone and send a single flashing beam swinging into the seanight.

The story of the twins would almost cover the story of American navigation, for the double lights shone over the sea as far back as 1828. They guided the sailing ships in from a steamless sea, they welcomed the first engined vessel, they shone faithfully through the time of the first feeble steamers and saw them grow in size and number till their roaring herds trampled the North Atlantic pastures in unending procession.

Beautiful lights were they—perhaps as beautiful as any beacons in all the world. Dwellers far away in the city of New York could see them, and lonely ships laboring in the dark were kept true by them—shining ever steady and brave, side by side, 246 feet in the air above the black ocean.

A GIANT BROTHER.

The remaining brother is a giant now. His fierce white eye sends a flash around the whole horizon every five seconds that is so dazzling, that five miles away the man who gets it straight into his face is momentarily blinded by it.

It can be seen 22¼ nautical miles away, and that is almost twenty-six land miles. Practically it reaches to the visual horizon—that is, it shines on the sea to the utter distance permitted by the curvature of the earth. But its work is not limited by the distance to which its direct rays can reach, for captains have often reported that they have seen the gigantic light flash thirty and more miles out, while their ships were still beneath the dip of the sea, so that the direct light-beam could not have been seen even from the masthead. What they saw was the light-shaft whirl on the low-hanging clouds above their vessels.

"Sandy Hook," says everybody aboard when the great light winks at the in-coming ship at night, or when above the undulation of the green ocean the two towers rise in the day. And Sandy Hook it is, though technicality the Navesink are independent lights, distinct from the Sandy Hook system.

As the incoming ship approaches shore nothing but the Navesink bluffs can be seen at first; but at last, low on the sea, is "raised" a white strip, like a tiny ribbon. There is little more to see even when the ship steams close to it and swings around its northern end to turn into the ship channel and head for New York's water gate of the Narrows.

BARREN AND DESOLATE.

Low and white and barren and desolate it looks. Close to the point, so that passengers on the tall liners can almost look down on it, stands a brown, conical tower, the North Hook Beacon, with a fog siren and a hut near it. About half a mile west is a white wedge-shaped skeleton of a structure. That is the Sandy Hook fog-bell.

A great square tower shows where the men sit who watch for ships to telegraph their approach to New York. A little farther away among the sand dunes can be seen parts of an old stone fort, two other white lighthouses and a few smaller buildings.

But hidden away where not even spy-glasses can discover them, are fortresses that rank among the mightiest in the world.

This white sandhook, that looks as bare from the sea, produces a curious and thick jungle of its own in the deep valleys between the drifted dunes. Holly trees and beach plums grow there, and all manner of strange shrubs that would seem more at home in the Carolinas than in this harsh latitude. And screened by them are batteries of concrete and steel, mounting steel rifled mortars and cannon enough to crush a whole national fleet.

A STONE FRAUD.

The stone fort that everybody can see is only a fraud—a mere series of walls with nothing inside of them. But it is made of magnificent walls, built during the Civil War, it was erected at a time when it was still thought that stone was the best shield against cannon-fire; and the walls were made so thick that a coach could be driven along their tops. It is used to-day for the storage of powder and other explosives that are sent to the United States Ordnance Proving Grounds to be tested. And as Congress does not always bother about giving permission to destroy old samples, a fearful and wonderful collection of explosive material used to accumulate in the casemates of the old fort-walls—enough to blow Sandy Hook into the moon.

THE SLUMBERING VOLCANO.

Under the walls lies the Proving Ground, where innumerable slender, black steel cannon point out to sea, not to fight, but to be tested for fight. From this point so much shot and shell has been rained into the Atlantic that for ten miles out from shore the bottom is paved with Bessemer steel projectiles ranging from two pounder shells to the great four-foot, half-ton shot that is spat out by the wonderful twelve inch rifles.

Farther away, and hidden in all kinds of cunning ways, is a terrible battery, concealed in an innocent sand mound. Sixteen steel rifled mortars point their muzzles skyward there from the deep wells in which they are sunk. Farther south still is a square mound that hides a ten inch cannon on an elevator that will throw it up just long enough to fire a shot and then dive back with it again to take it out of harm's way.

Another battery of twelve inch rifles is there, too. That quiet, lonely cape of white sand is a hell asleep.

SANDY HOOK BAR.

Extending from Sandy Hook to Coney Island lies a bar, deeply submerged, clean across the entrance to the harbor of New York. The action of the tidal currents has cut deep furrows across this bar, making channels: and the best of these channels have been dredged, widened and deepened by the United States Government to make the famous South, Gedney, Main, Swash and Ambrose Channels, the deepest of which are big enough to take the monster ships of the present day. But they will have to be deepened considerably in the future if vessels continue to increase in size and burden.

The sea-road to the Hook and past it up the double harbor to the metropolis is marked as plainly as a street on land. Spar buoys, can buoys, range marks on shore and sirens and bells show the sailor his way by day; and by night more than twenty light ships and light houses, with more than three-score lighted buoys, mark the channels as clearly as a street is illuminated by street lamps.

Almost every light house and every light ship is armed with fog horns, sirens or bells to warn the mariner in a white fog in the main ship channel, with her bell going. And the great Bourgoyne, outlined, came creeping down at less than half-speed with her pilot and captain on the bridge and the first officer at the bow, all listening with all their ears through the thickness for sounds that would betoken danger. Never a sound came to them of that bell that was ringing steadily.

The Bourgoyne came down on the Ailsa, reversed as the ghostly form of the anchored ship appeared dead ahead, and almost stopped her headway, but not quite. She touched the Ailsa in the bow—a touch so soft that it scarcely caused a shock to the big French liner. At that soft, soft touch the steel Ailsa split wide open and sank in seventy feet of water like a stone.

They learned afterward that the sound of the bell had been cut off by the forecastle and that, loudly as it pealed on the doomed ship, never a sound of it had penetrated beyond the vessel's own area.

Then there were two other liners, one going out and one coming in. Each sounded her hoarse siren continuously, and as they approached each other the officers and men on each heard the other plainly. Suddenly neither of them could hear the other at all. Each stopped, sounding the siren harder than ever without getting a reply.

Then they saw each other—just like vague forms passing close, side by side, in the clinging fog. And even as they passed, the sirens both burst out again so that all could hear. But at the most critical moment, when they might have collided except for luck, the sounds of the two sirens had actually managed to meet in mid-air in such a way that they killed each other.

Such stories, and grimmer stories, cluster around the Hook. If they could all be written, they would make a wild series of romances of the sea—of the ocean grasping victims at the very portal of the land, after letting them romp with impunity over his green breast for thousands of miles.

A GREAT LOST RIVER.

The Hook could tell a more wonderful story than that. It could tell how it was born; how a whole mainland, with a mighty river rolling a torrent vaster than the Amazon, sank into the ocean bed at that birth of the slender white sand spit that has become so famous.

Sounding lead and dredge tell the story of the prehistoric catastrophe today, for the ocean has held its record faithfully through whole geological epochs. For a hundred miles out to sea there still is a great channel that once was the river bed; and now all that land and its river are lying thirty fathoms deep and more under the ocean.

The surveys of the sea approaches to New York have traced this ancient lost river in the sea bed from Sandy Hook bar clear out to the deep sea. This channel is deeper by from twenty-five feet to ninety feet than the surrounding ocean floor near shore. About ten miles out it has a depth of from 1,200 to 2,700 feet, while the depth of the surrounding ocean bottom is only 270 to 1,200 feet. There the average width of the ravine is about three miles.

And now the little hook is all that is left of that old mighty scene of roaring river, sweeping headlong, and of the lands that surround it. To-day, twenty miles of rolling sea toss between it and the City of New York, and they who go down to it must make a long trip of it by water.

(Copyright, 1906, by Julius Muller.)

CAHAN ON THE JEW IN RUSSIA---By H. E. Clayton.

Abraham Cahan, the well known Jewish author and editor, was seated in his office overlooking William H. Seward Park, a breathing spot in the very heart of New York's east side.

"Look at the boys and girls exercising in the park," he said. "I venture to say that nine-tenths of them are children of Russian parents. The East Side has hundreds of thousands of Russian Jews to-day—and yet, when I came here from Russia twenty-four years ago, Russian was such a strange tongue on the East Side that people turned around and gazed at me in curiosity when I spoke it. Indeed, the Russian Jew has built up the East Side as it is known, the country over to-day; and until the Russian Jew began coming to this country the entire Jewish population was not over 200,000. Now it is close on to one million and a half.

"In view of the important part the Jew of Russian birth is already playing in America, especially in municipal affairs, it strikes me that it would be well for the average American to understand clearly the cause of the great migration hither of the Russian Jew. I am the more forcibly constrained to take this view when I consider that all the time I am hearing and reading erroneous statements on this head.

"The story really goes back to the days immediately following the assassination of Alexander III, succeeded to the throne. Nihilism 'removed', the liberator; its success was evidence of a strong revolutionary feeling rampant throughout the empire. The problem of the Minister of the Interior, General Ignatieff, and his subordinate in office, von Plehve, then Director of the Police Department for the empire, was how to cope successfully with the movement.

"To the everlasting disgrace of General Ignatieff, be it said that he conceived the idea that the best way to cope with the turbulent elements was to let them vent their pent-up feelings in outrages on the Jews.

"To all practical intents and purposes the Jews in Russia have been compelled by law to live within the pale since time immemorial. They have ever been referred to by the Russian people as 'Christ killers,' there has never been any love for them in the breasts of the Russians, but, nevertheless, they had been allowed to live in comparative peace and were reasonably sure of protection of life and property under the law.

"But when Ignatieff conceived his scheme for overcoming the revolutionary movement without a possible resort to arms, all this was changed.

"In those mysterious ways best known to the Russian police, word was speedily passed along to the turbulent elements and to the generally law abiding peasantry that it might be to their advantage to see what harm short of murder they could wreak on the Jews and what of their property they could confiscate.

"I am not making this charge without being supported by evidence of the most damning character. In Elizabetgrad, Odessa, Kieff, wherever outbreaks against the Jews speedily occurred, the police were notoriously inactive on the side of law. Several days before the outrages began, peasants drove in from the country, equipped to carry away plunder. On their inquiring when the fun would begin, they were told to ask the policemen, and this dialogue was frequently overheard:

"'When will the circus begin?'

"'This afternoon.'

"'Or, possibly, the reply was 'tomorrow.' Whatever the time named, then the attack on the Jews began—and the 'fun' raged fast and furious until the revelers were satiated.

"Immediately following the outrages many of the stringent laws now in force against the Jews were passed. One of these laws prohibits Jews from practicing law. Another gives the Jews opportunity to fill only five per cent. of the vacancies occurring in educational institutions, even in those towns where Jews make up the largest portion of the population. As a result of this latter law the Jew has not been kept in the ignorance devoutly desired by the Russian autocracy. The authorities have been circumvented by those Jews desirous of education flocking in colonies to such educational centres as Munich, Geneva and Zurich. It is probable that in Munich to-day there are at least two thousand Russian Jews in the universities and various schools.

"But the outrages and the laws have this effect—they turned the thoughts of the Russian Jew American-ward for the first time. On my way to this country at that time I passed through a large part of the belt of outrages, confined to the southern part of the empire. Everywhere the Jew was standing in the streets, trying to sell the few household goods of which he had not been pillaged. The well-nigh universal supplication was, 'Buy my cooking pot,' 'Buy my chair, buy, buy, buy—I am going to America.' And when I crossed over the border into Galicia and reached the town of Brody, I found there ten thousand victims camping while waiting to be sent to the land of new hopes and new life.

"'Easy, boys; easy,' cautioned the governor of Kieff province, as he drove through the streets and beheld the outrages. Perhaps the authorities did not think it necessary, in order to stamp out the revolutionary feeling, to let the Jew-haters indulge in wholesale murder in 1881 and 1882. At any rate, the great bloodshed that has marked the riots of latter years was not present. The purposes in all the places where attacks were made was to pillage the pales and outrage as many women as possible, with the secondary object, apparently, of driving as many Jews as possible out of the country. Indeed, when Jews made complaints after the outrages to the district attorneys, their stereotyped reply was, 'Well, if you don't like your treatment here and the laws we have put you under, why don't you go to America?'

"It is an undisputed historical fact that until just before the revolting Kishineff massacre, the revolutionary feeling that was rampant in 1881 and 1882 was comparatively quiescent. Hence, the comparative immunity of the Jews from attacks during that period. But just before Kishineff, the labor movement became decidedly revolutionary, and the government found itself hedged in by revolutionary sentiment.

"The notorious von Plehve, who had been Ignatieff's right hand in 1881 and 1882, was now himself Minister of the Interior. He recalled how the revolutionary movement had been checked before by official license to 'take it out' on the Jews. Then came his sinister remark that he would make quick work of stamping out the new revolutionary movement, adding that all he wanted was six months' time.

"Von Plehve then set to work and organized the Kishineff massacre. One of the two heads of the massacre was an army officer of the name of Krushevan, editor of an anti-Semitic paper subsidized by von Plehve. The other head was the vice-governor of the province himself, a trusted subordinate of von Plehve's. If it is still doubted that von Plehve organized the massacre, it is only necessary to point to the testimony brought out—inadvertently, no doubt—at the trial, not a few persons declaring that they were furnished with money to go to the scene of the massacre and were tacitly told by the authorities what to do when they got there. Again, it was proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that bicycle men were sent around to give the word to start the massacring.

"It was a diabolical scheme, carefully concocted and put into execution. And wholesale killing was permitted because the revolutionary movement was decidedly stronger than it was in 1881 and 1882, and mere pillaging and the outraging of women in the streets before the eyes of their powerless kinsmen would not have been a sufficient outlet for the pent-up revolutionary feelings.

"I am convinced that since von Plehve's 'taking off' the movement against the Jews has been guided by a member of the Czar's family. I do not believe that Witte has even covertly sanctioned it. Indeed, I feel that he has always been determinedly opposed to this bloody work, but he has not been powerful enough to curb this most diabolical living member of the Romanoff family.

"The Bund is a Jewish revolutionary organization, and is the strongest of the sort among the Jews. Recognizing that it could not look to the authorities to defend the Jews in times of turmoil, the Bund organized a self-defense militia. When the present massacres began the Self-Defense fought the bands of murderers, and in many cases fought them successfully. For example, three streets of the pale in Odessa were not touched by the rioters, because the Bundists held them against all comers. In Odessa the Bundists fought for their own and the lives of their brothers, despite the proclamation of the governor forbidding Jews to defend themselves by shooting from the house tops or in any other manner.

"In many places the Bundists proved successful until they were shot down or dispersed by the Cossacks, when the 'hooligans' rushed in, and, unhindered, accomplished their foul work of tearing little babies to pieces, throwing old men out of fifth-story windows and doing other things too horrible to think about, even.

"Still, in a good many localities the Bundists were wholly successful in coping with the murderous bands. I have every reason to believe that massacres were planned to take place in two hundred different parts of the empire. They did occur in eighty-three, according to my latest advices. I give the Bundists credit for frustrating the government in many quarters. In not a few of the unscathed localities the authorities did not send Cossacks, that the Jews might be kept terrorized while the rioters did their work. The strength of the Bundists was underestimated or unsuspected, and when signs of trouble appeared they took matters in hand and firmly kept their grip as long as necessary. This was the situation, also, in those places where the forces of soldiery had mistakenly been made too small to cope with the well-organized and surprisingly large Self-Defense.

"I look for massacres of Jews until the revolutionary movement has been satiated in rivers of Jewish blood, or the revolutionists gain the upper hand, deposing the Romanoffs. Every Jew now in Russia knows in his heart of hearts that his life is not worth a candle there, and so all who can are coming to this country as fast as circumstances will permit. This stream of immigration will keep up—fresh thousands will be poured into the already over-crowded East Side—just so long as the Russian Jew's life and property are not secure in his native land. It is, therefore, conceivable that in time there will be transferred to this country, in its entirety, the great Jewish population that is now the bloody food for the wildest of the Russian revolutionaries, through the grace of the scheming Romanoffs, frantically anxious to maintain their hold on the throne of all the Russias.

(Copyright, 1906, by McClure, Phillips & Co.)