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SWEDES' CHURCH ON RIVER BANK

Edifice Which Stood Below Yawp Shore Has Long Since Passed Away.

BIT OF ANCIENT HISTORY

River Washing Away Bank Brings to Light Bones of Swede Ancestors.

During the past several years the Republican has published considerable authentic historical notes concerning Millville and vicinity, but none has been more interesting than that which has been furnished to the reporter by our esteemed townsman Lewis R. Corson, of Smith Street, in relation to the old Swedish church which was founded way back in colonial days and has long disappeared in decay and ruin.

Off the east bank of the Maurice River, about an eighth of a mile above the old Spring Garden Ferry, about a half mile below Menantico Creek, and directly back in a westerly direction of the lower field, which is portion of the property of the holdings of the directors of the Convalescent Home for veterans of the world war, is a plot of ground on which once stood what was called the Old Swedish Church and connected with it was a burial ground, grave farit as they called cemeteries in those days of long ago. The spot is now covered with oak and cedar trees.

All of the stones which marked the graves of those buried there have been removed by persons who did not value these historical remains as much as they did slight financial gain. All remains of the old historic building are gone.

At the time the church stood on this spot there was quite a fair sized community within the radius of a mile, who worshipped there.

We say, a fair sized community, for a half mile north of it was Yawp Shore, where seven families resided. There were the antecedents of Sharps, Branins, Rogers, Foxs, and Fights (now known as Bethel) whose descendants have lived and many still live in Millville and vicinity.

The male members of these families all followed the water and have furnished Millville with sea captains for two or three generations. These people thus following the water were absent from their homes two or three weeks and possibly longer at a time and as the female portion of the families would become anxious for the safety of husbands, sons, and brothers, and would stand along the shore eand the crews of passing vessels returning from the sea would be saluted with the expression, "Have you seen anything of our folks?"

So common did this practice become that the sailors would say, "We cannot get by without the women all yawping at us." Thus they began calling the beach, Yawp Shore, and it has retained the name to this day, a couple of centuries later.

On Menantico Creek, about three miles above the present bridge was located a wharf or landing place, which was called Schooners' Landing, from the fact that the schooners that carried supplies to and the output from the Cumberland Furnace were unloaded and loaded there. These cargoes were drawn overland by teams over the old Blue Anchor Road.

There were located here about six or seven families about a store, in addition to these there were several farms scattered about. Elderly men who lived in this vicinity have said that they had seen as many as fourteen vessels in Menantico Creek at one time.

In addition to the iron products of Cumberland Furnace there were great quantities of wood and charcoal shipped out of the creek, the charcoal burning industry being quite extensive in the community at that time, and traces of this are yet found in some

localities. The operators of these industries were also identifies with the old Swedes Church.

As far as the history can be traced the church was built more than 200 years ago, or in the early part of the 18th century.

The only evidence left of the church and graveyard is the uncovering done by the ebbing and flowing of the river gradually carting its way into the embankment, which has in the past sixty years been moved eastward some twenty-five feet.

This unceasing action of the river had washed bones out from the banks which were the final resting places of the Swedes. Newspaper writers not familiar with the facts reported that the banks were an old Indian burying ground, and was located at Yawp Shore, both statements being incorrect.

An ancestor of the Sharp family was buried in the grave yard. A descendent of the original Sharp family, Captain Levi Sharp, some years ago sold Yawp Shore to George Garrison, who now lives in a house he built on the property.

Yawp Shore is now used as a fishing ground and a large percentage of Delaware shad caught in South Jersey are usually landed there.