

PIEZ PUTS TABOO ON WOODEN SHIPS

Hulls Not Completed to Be Made Into Barges—Others to Lack Machinery

CAUSED MANY DISPUTES

The wooden ship program of the government is to be wound up within the next few months, according to Charles Piez, director general of the Emergency Fleet Corporation.

Vessels now on the shipyard on which superstructure work has been started will be completed and launched, but no machinery installed, and hulls recently started will be converted on the ways into barges.

The whole flotilla of more than 125 vessels will then be offered for sale by the shipping board, according to Mr. Piez.

The construction of the wooden ships caused one of the most heated controversies of the war period. It was regarded as a blunder because the production was slow and the use of the craft limited. They cost about \$185 per ton to build.

A board of engineers has fixed a price of \$110 a ton as their price. Fifteen have been sold, but because they appeal only to small ship owners it is estimated that a still lower price will have to be set, Mr. Piez said.

"The matter of selling these vessels is in the hands of the shipping board. I believe the price fixed by the committee that studied the subject was \$110 a ton. The cost was about \$185 a ton."

The contracts with the Taylor Shipbuilding Company at Cornwallville were cancelled by the shipping board three weeks ago. Seven wooden vessels have been launched by the company, and the rest, the eight, will slide into the Delaware river some time this week.

Two uncompleted vessels are on the ways. Only about 400 of the original 4000 men at the yard are now employed there, according to Samuel W. Taylor, Jr., who said today that as soon as the government takes away its equipment the yard will be willing to make and repair road-building machinery. There are ten shipways at the Taylor yard.

Sack of Sugar Kills Stevedore

Ernest Sawney, thirty-two years old, 819 North Marvine street, died in the Lankenau Hospital late yesterday afternoon from injuries received when a sack of sugar fell on him at the plant of the Pennsylvania Sugar Refining Company, 1030 North Delaware avenue. Sawney was employed as a stevedore at the refining plant and was engaged in shifting heavy sacks of sugar when the topmost sack on the pile slipped off, striking him on the head and fracturing his skull.

TOM AND MARTHA GEORGE "FISHERMEN" STILL AT 78

Famous Characters of Delaware's Shore Have Lived Happily for More Than Half a Century on What They Have Taken From Its Waters

(A photograph illustrating this article appears on the back page.)

Old Tom George and his wife Martha have watched the shore of the Delaware River at Wissinoming change from farm lands, with a row of trees along the river's edge, to a manufacturing center.

While they have grown old and seen great factories and other improvements supplant the farms and a railroad track—only a freight track, of course, but still a railroad track—take the place of the row of trees, they are still catching fish—their means of living.

Every person who ever visits the "beach"—they still call it that, even though the beach is now nothing but a fond memory in the minds of the old residents—knows Tom and his wife by sight.

For fifty-eight years they have lived within one block of their present home on the river front, just above the mouth of Wissinoming Creek, and for forty-eight years they have lived in the little frame house that they built for themselves when they were thirty years old.

The passing years have built up their fame as fishermen, and even now, when the waters of the river are spoiled by sewage and waste from factories and the number of fish is smaller yearly, old Tom and Martha manage to catch enough during the season to provide for themselves during the remainder of the year.

Fish Less Plentiful They both remember when almost any quantity of fish could be got by casting a line or a net fifty feet from the Pennsylvania shore. Now they have to row across to the Jersey side, and even there the fish are not so plentiful as formerly.

Just now Tom and Martha are preparing their nets for the run of shad they expect to reach the upper Delaware next week. It is a question in the minds of others along the river front as to which of the two is the most dexterous with the net, and they are both anxious to provide all-around longshoremen.

Neither Tom nor Martha questions it, though. Tom was surprised that any person should be in ignorance of the best "riverman" in Wissinoming.

"Just look at the way she pulls an oar," he said with pardonable pride as Martha drove a heavy fishing boat toward the shore with long, powerful strokes.

"She's like wine, she improves with age," he continued, his eyes lighting up as Martha beached the boat, sprang lightly to the shore, despite her seventy-eight years, and pulled the heavy boat above the line of the beach.

"Wisnoming never had a better boatman than my Tom, and the days when this beach has a chance to train one are over," Martha said when asked her opinion as to the better boaters.

Others may dispute in their own minds the superiority of the two oldest residents of the beach, but when some particularly tough piece of ship carpentering or caulking or other waterfront work is to be done they look for Tom, or, failing to find him, ask Martha.

to lend a hand. They are never met with a refusal.

Nothing to Get "Fussed Up" About "Storm!" Tom snorted when asked if he had ever witnessed a harder blow than the gale of week before last.

"Why that was no storm. Our houseboat is only about fifteen feet above the water mark and it didn't even get wet. The thing you call a wind didn't even rock the boat on a slighting."

"You know you see a whole lot in fifty-eight years," he continued, "and we have seen some storms along here that flooded the shore for squares back and set our hope afloat. That was a tolerable blow last week but nothing to get fussed up about."

"Yes, sir," he continued, "a person certainly does see a lot around here in fifty-eight years. I remember when we came here people thought we were crazy. Then ten years later, when we built our houseboat and they saw we were really catching fish others began to come, and about thirty years ago this stretch of beach was the best fishing ground along the upper Delaware."

"But look at it now. All the other regular fishers have gone or died and we are left, the last, as well as the first of the colony. I remember when they built the first factory around here. Others soon followed."

"Now look at them," he said, his eyes sweeping in a semicircle and taking in the city pumping station at Lardner's Point, the Philadelphia Electric Company powerhouse, the trolley barn of the Frankford, Tacony and Holmesburg Traction Company, the Glindler glass works and the Quaker City Rubber Company's plant.

"Then the trees were chopped down to make way for a railroad to haul to

and from the factories. And the water began to get greasy. The fish stayed away from this shore, and year after year we find we have to pull further before we finally strike them.

"But there are many things to make up for what we lost. We miss the trees and farms of course, but we really don't need the fish so much any more and the colony of pleasure houses around here has brought much pleasant companionship."

He stopped. Tom rescued Martha "Go ahead, tell him," Martha urged. "Such a snail the railroad—"

Tom began again. "No!" Martha interrupted impatiently, "tell him about the time you saved the four men from drowning and the time you fished me out just in the nick of time."

"But Tom refused and Martha detailed the circumstances surrounding the rescue of the men from the 'one of the hard blows' to which he had referred.

"She didn't tell you I got her out after she fell in trying to save a poor cat that was drowning," Tom said triumphantly.

"Each is seventy-eight years old, and proud of it. Both are healthy. Their activity would do credit to men and women half their age."

"They explained their health and activity by saying that they have never bothered purchasing a boat with power, preferring to 'push' their craft along with oars."

"We have outlived five good boats already and expect to use up a few more," Tom said as he cast his line in the bottom of boat number six and pushed off toward Straight Ditch, on the Jersey side, to see if the "catties" were biting.

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