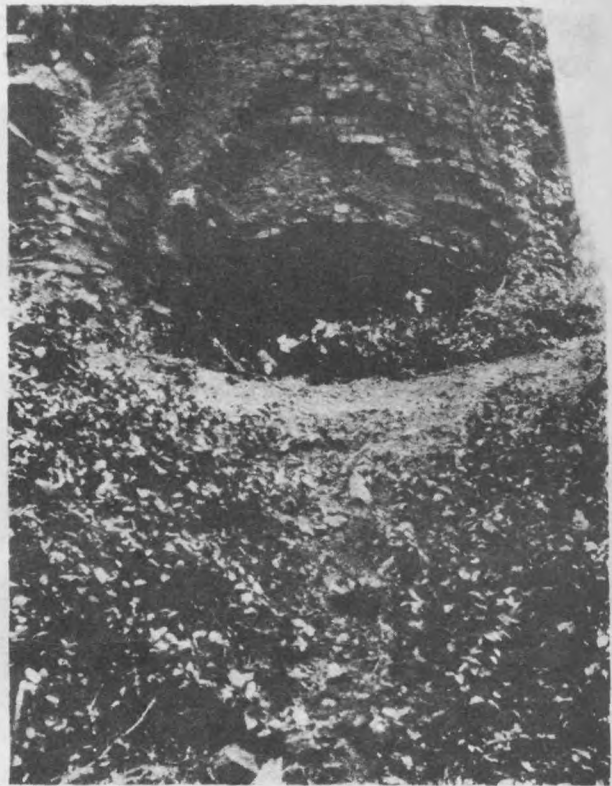


STORIES of New Jersey

spikes for their ships and, later, cannon and munitions for the Continental Army.

Early in the 19th century these forges began turning out iron stoves, lampposts, water pipes and other iron products. In the 1850's they were forced out of business by the development of the Pennsylvania iron fields.



RUINS OF ETNA FURNACE SHOWING EXTERIOR AND VARIOUS LAYERS OF BRICK COMPOSING THE STACK

Today piles of slag, an occasional dam, a chimney, the foundations of a house, old cannonballs, crumbling remnants of forges and mere rotted splinters of the homes of the men who worked the bog-iron mines are all that remain of these once busy woodland villages. The woods echo only the sounds of birds, or the roar of motor cars on their way to and from the Jersey coast. The lonely rivers flow through miles of empty country.

It was Charles Read, an enterprising politician of the day, who gave the south Jersey iron industry its greatest impetus. Read, who had been Collector of the Port of Burlington, a member of the Provincial Assembly, a Judge of the Supreme Court and an outstanding leader in public affairs, became possessed with the desire to become the greatest ironmaster of the Province. About 1750, impressed with the possibilities of developing the bog-iron resources, he set about promoting the industry on some of the large tracts of land which he owned. He had visions of himself as the center of a vast enterprise, but for all his energy he was not quite equal to the demands of the task he set for himself. He was forced by poor health to dispose of much of his property and to leave the conduct of his affairs in the hands of trustees, keeping only a part interest in some of the iron plants he had started. However, the industry he had set in motion was to extend over 80 years and to attract to the unbroken forests hundreds of people.