

STORIES of New Jersey

1866 spread the Cape's name far and wide. Congressmen, bankers, large manufacturers, and noted writers came here. Society leaders from Washington, Richmond, and Baltimore made the place a fashion center. Five Presidents of the United States--Lincoln, Grant, Pierce, Buchanan, and Harrison--were entertained in the large hotels.

Days were spent pleasantly in bathing, sunning on the beach, and driving on the firm sands at low tide. In the evenings there were dancing, gambling, and other amusements. The resort offered such attractions as the Annapolis Naval Academy Band, and the Marine Band with John Philip Sousa.

By 1900, with the development of other resorts along the coast, Cape May began to lose its popularity. However, in 1903 Henry Ford visited the resort but not for recreation purposes. In the summer of that year, he came to the Cape with several other men who were interested in racing to try out his experimental car in a race on the three-mile stretch of smooth beach. A touring car was brought along to assist in starting Ford's racing auto. The race was not won by the Ford entry.

Ford had to sell the touring car later in order to get enough money to return to Detroit with the racing car. Daniel Focer was the buyer, and Ford appointed him the agent for the new Ford car. The agency is operating today, and the old touring car stands on the display floor among the streamlined modern models.

Cape May is no longer the famous resort it was; however, the old homes and stately hotels are standing, and people who like its beauty and quiet still return year after year.



Bathing Suits Were Substantial in the Gay 90's.