



Logs as Big as This Are Not Uncommon.

conclusively. One school of thought has it that the land on which the trees stood sank gradually. As water began to stand around the trees the earth softened, the trees lost their hold, and overturned. The land continued to sink and eventually the growth was entirely buried beneath the silt. Another theory maintains that a great hurricane once leveled the entire forest of about 12 square miles. The felled giants then slowly sank beneath the ooze. Among the many legends of South Jersey is one that attributes the submergence of the cedar forest to the Flood that prompted the building of Noah's Ark.

The surface of the swamp is largely covered with brush and a few stunted trees surrounded by pools of water. There are higher spots, however, where the ground is dry and where farming has been made possible by the use of dykes that keep out floods.

That South Jersey land is sinking has been well known for a century or more. Commodore Stephen Decatur when a guest at Cape May Point measured the loss each year from 1804 to 1820 and found that the coast had receded about 160 feet in that time. The State geologist 70 years ago reported the sea still advancing. The silt that has buried the trees has also filled some of the streams. There are records and pictures of large ship building along Dennis Creek where only motor boats now run. There are great areas of salt marsh on the coast of Delaware Bay once said to have been farmland.

When the first white settlers came to southern New Jersey they found themselves much hampered in their explorations of the interior by the Great Swamp which prevented their building roads across the land, and they had to use boats to travel. It is not certain how or when they discovered the sunken forest, but it probably was very early in the State's history. There is a cabin of hand-hewn cedar timber on the grounds of the Hancock House, at Hancock's Bridge near Salem, that is said to have been built by the Swedes more than 200 years ago with cedar mined from the swamps of New Jersey. In 1740, when Independence Hall needed a roof, hand-split shingles were used from the Great Cedar Swamp's logs.

For many years there has been at Dennisville a sawmill that cuts the logs into planks and shingles. Captain Ogden Gandy, now 90 years old, runs the saw-

in swampy places throughout the United States; but there are few places where men have troubled to dig for the hidden treasure.

No one can estimate how long these logs have lain in their mucky bed. The count of the annual ring growths on one of the logs recently mined showed that the tree was 500 years old when it fell. There is a tradition of a log found a century ago with more than 1,000 rings.

The submergence of these cedar trees is explained in several ways--none of which has been proved