

# STORIES of New Jersey

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472 Orange Street, Newark, New Jersey

## THE STORY OF ALLAIRE

Along the Manasquan River and near the historic "Cedar Trail" and "Fish Trail," three miles west of the highway between Belmar and Spring Lake, lies the old Indian ceremonial area known since before 1650 as Squankum. At the end of a private road bordered by pine and native undergrowth is the village of Allaire. For many years this was one of New Jersey's ghost towns, remnant of the feudal communities that grew up around the now forgotten bog-iron industry. Vestiges of these crumbling villages are still to be found here and there in New Jersey's forests.

Allaire, which seemed destined to similar oblivion, has recently been partially restored. Buildings have been repaired, weeds and underbrush cleared. Sturdy, century-old brick buildings stand under the trees. Cleared paths and well-kept roads wind through deep woods, and rustic bridges once more span the small stream that flows into Manasquan River.

In about 1750 Isaac Palmer built a sawmill here, one of several hundred then scattered through New Jersey. At this time the bog-iron industry was rising in South Jersey; charcoal fuel for smelting the ore was easily available in the forests. About 1810 a furnace was built near the Palmer sawmill. In 1821 the outfit, then known as the Monmouth Furnace, was purchased by Benjamin Howell. His forge produced a variety of products ranging from farm implements to cooking utensils. The following year the Howell Works, as the plant was called, was purchased by James P. Allaire. He was the foremost steam engine manufacturer in the country and recognized the possibilities of the plant as a source of supply for his engine works.

Allaire, who started business as a brass founder, had cast the brass chamber for Robert Fulton's *CLERMONT*. Later he took over Robert Fulton's Jersey City engine works and, from his Cherry Street shop in New York, turned out parts for many of the vessels of the day. He cast the cylinder for the *SAVANNAH*, the first American steamship to cross the Atlantic.



*A workman's cottage*