

STORIES of New Jersey

Under Allaire's supervision the Howell Works expanded rapidly. He purchased 8,000 acres of woodland to insure a fuel supply; dug a canal to float barges right up to the works; and built a small railroad to shunt the ore to the smelter.

At first Allaire traveled to New York on horseback. The route, by way of New Brunswick and Perth Amboy, led past a wayside inn kept by the mother of Cornelius Vanderbilt, who later worked with Allaire. By 1824 his schooners were sailing up the Shrewsbury River to Eatontown, where in 1832 he built a private wharf and large storehouse. He also had a warehouse and dock at Red Bank on the Navesink River. A stagecoach made connections with the steamboats.

In 1831 a post office was established. Prior to that time the mail had been carried by a post boy who galloped between Monmouth Courthouse (Freehold) and Toms River. The name given to the post office, Howell Works, was continued until after Allaire's death.

Allaire's supervision extended far beyond the industrial development of the works, whose value at one time reached \$250,000. When activity was at its height there were 500 employees, all of whom lived on the property with their families. Sixty brick buildings, replacing the 14 or 15 wooden buildings originally at the forge, were needed to accommodate the personnel and varied enterprises. In addition to the furnace there were carpenter, wheelwright and blacksmith shops, a file and screw factory, a sawmill and gristmill, stables, store, a bakeshop, slaughter house, school, church, a boarding house for unmarried men and dwellings for employees with families.

Furnace employees were paid according to the quantity of work performed; all materials being furnished by the company. Apprentices were required to pay \$60 as an initiation fee. Employees were of all nationalities and included men of every trade, from masons and builders to harnessmakers and school teachers.

Several of the men who served apprenticeships at Allaire's works became famous in their own right. John Roach, the chubby Irish boy who later was recognized as one of the foremost shipbuilders in America, came to the works in 1835. In the village he met the woman whom he later married. His experience with ironworking led him into the manufacture of ironclad ships for the United States Navy. The Navy also called Charles H. Haswell, who had entered Allaire's service in 1829. Haswell wrote several widely used books on engineering and finally was appointed chief engineer of the naval department.

The store at the works had a greater volume of business than A.T. Stewart's thread and needle shop (now Wanamaker's) in New York. As the village was the last stop before Perth Amboy on the stagecoach route from Toms River, there was considerable passenger trade. The superintendent boasted that nothing could be asked for that was not in stock.

The plant had its own money--two denominations of copper coins, made on the premises, and engraved notes, resembling bank bills, ranging in value from six and a quarter cents to ten dollars.



The old store