

## STORIES of New Jersey

Allaire supported the school in the community for 14 years. In addition to the children of the workmen, who were compelled to attend, the school drew others from families in the surrounding communities and even boarding pupils from a distance. Attendance sometimes reached 100.

Christ Episcopal Church, a chapel of the parish of Christ Church, Shrewsbury, was also supported by Allaire. Frequently the preacher served as teacher, too, at an annual salary of \$500 for the double job. The church had a small pipe organ made by the celebrated organ builder of the period, Henry Erben. The bell was made at the Howell Works. Instead of tossing silver coins into the molten metal, as was the custom, Allaire threw in gold eagles to give the bell greater purity of tone.

At the height of his success in 1841 Allaire entertained lavishly at the Big House. His home was frequently crowded with guests for dinner parties and dances; sometimes as many as 40 sleighs were needed to carry the visitors from Freehold and the neighboring towns. Robert Fulton and his wife were regular visitors. Allaire, who had been a business associate of Fulton for many years, was later named an executor of his will.

The employees, too, were active in the social program of the community. Plays in which Allaire children took part were given, sometimes at the school, sometimes at the Big House. In the summer an orchestra composed of employees gave outdoor concerts.

Before long a harder and less expensive metal than charcoal iron was being produced in Pennsylvania; the day of New Jersey iron had gone. The fires in the furnace of the Howell Works went out for the last time in 1848. The people drifted away to find other employment, but Allaire continued to live on the estate until his death ten years later. To his second wife and to Hal, his 11-year-old son by this marriage, he left the closed plant and about 7,000 acres of surrounding land. The children by his first marriage, he claimed, had been generously provided for during the years of his prosperity. His will was contested, however, and 18 years of litigation followed. The court finally decided the case in favor of the second Mrs. Allaire and her son, but their inheritance came heavily burdened with debt.

After the death of his mother "Prince Hal," as he was often called, lived on in the Big House alone save for an old French servant, his father's former valet. His clean-cut features and small dark eyes gave him a strong resemblance to Napoleon III, which was emphasized by a moustache and beard. He had studied architecture at Columbia University and in the early days of Lakewood designed some of the most noted residences there.

Devotion to the memory of his mother, whose room he left unchanged, and loss of his fortune, it is said, kept him from marrying, although he was in love with a young lady in Freehold for many years. Gradually he withdrew from all social life and devoted himself to his drawings and books. The extensive gardens were overgrown, the buildings dilapidated and the people gone. The only visitors were Sunday School children from neighboring communities who used to picnic on his estate. The village itself was crumbling. To drive out to the "Deserted Village" was a popular diversion, and an enterprising Frenchman opened a restaurant in the old wheelwright shop.