

STORIES of New Jersey

rest of the crew, with the exception of the captain and five men, were drowned as they attempted to lower the long boat. The emigrants, obeying orders, remained below.

When assistance reached the wreck and succeeded in securing a line, the captain eagerly entered the life car with a few of the first and second class passengers. The line parted, however, and only the captain and two others were saved. Panicky immigrants swarmed the shattered deck. John Stacy, a Maine lad, was the only sailor to stick by the ship, but he could be of but slight aid as the stormy waves hurled men, women and children into the sea. Of the 415 who left Europe, 132 were landed safely. Two hundred and forty drowned that icy day in November, many dragged to the ocean's floor by the gold hidden in their clothes, which was to start them on a new life.

The New Era Association, a German-American benevolent group, places a wreath each year at West Long Branch on the common grave of the unidentified dead recovered from the wreck.

In 1915 the Life Saving Service was combined with the Revenue Cutter Service to form the United States Coast Guard. The Revenue Cutter Service had been established by the first Congress in 1790 at the request of Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton to enforce the customs laws. As Congress enacted additional laws to regulate commerce and navigation and to protect seafaring nationals, the service became the primary marine law-enforcement agency for the executive departments of the Federal Government. The duties included maintenance of order and protection of fishing in American waters, supervision of customs, immigration and quarantine, clearing shipping channels and carrying the United States mails in Alaska and elsewhere.

Since the United States had no navy at first, the President was authorized, when hostilities with France seemed imminent in 1797, to employ the revenue cutters to defend the coasts and to protect merchant vessels. The Service has taken part in every subsequent war except the one with Tripoli. During the War of 1812, 16 cutters guarded the coast from Portland, Maine, to New Orleans, and two of them were involved in encounters with the British. For 20 years afterward the Service continually fought pirates in the Gulf of Mexico and finally drove them from the sea. Between 1836 and 1842 it cooperated with the Army and Navy in the war against the Seminoles in the Florida Everglades. Cutters participated in blockading and in naval engagements during the Mexican, Civil and Spanish Wars.

Under the 1915 act combining the two services the Coast Guard, ordinarily under the Secretary of the Treasury, operates as a part of the Navy in time of war. During the World War it was used for antisubmarine patrol and for convoying ships from the northern Atlantic and from Gibraltar. In that war the service lost a larger percentage of its personnel than either the Army or the Navy. The cutter *Seneca* particularly distinguished itself. In April 1918 it rescued the crew of its British companion patrol sloop by surfboat when the latter was blown to bits by a torpedo. Five months later, while it was convoying 21 slow British steamers from Wales to Gibraltar, it drove off two submarines and manned one of the British convoy whose crew had deserted. This ship, the *Wellington*, leaking and unable to anchor, went alone for 350 miles through a storm and sank as nine of the coast guards escaped to an improvised raft. Eleven others were drowned.