

STORIES of New Jersey

load grain. Trains also ran alongside the elevator so that grain could be transferred directly from or to ships docked alongside.

Often ships come from the Great Lakes to New Jersey grain elevators loaded to the gunwales with wheat. At the dock the hatches are opened and a huge conveyor belt with its many buckets is swung into the hold. The wheat is scooped up, carried to a storage room at the top of the elevator, weighed and shunted into bins. At the other side of the pier a ship is waiting to receive the wheat cargo destined for some foreign port. Long spouts swing out from the grain elevator, and from the bins the grains of wheat are blown into the hold of the vessel. The Erie grain elevator, with a storage capacity of one million tons, could unload 125 freight cars a day, or about 250,000 tons of grain in 8 hours. Through the long spouts 15,000 tons could be loaded in an hour into ships which carry between 7,000 and 8,000 tons each.

Also destroyed by the blaze was the Jersey City stockyard, a maze of wooden stalls alive with the sounds and movements of sheep, pigs and steers, waiting to board the cattle boats to New York. The Erie brought livestock to the north end of the stockyard; the Penn, to the south end which adjoined its Harsimus Cove Terminal. Jutting more than one-quarter mile into the Hudson, the piers of the Harsimus Cove Terminal are busy all through the day and night. Every 24 hours about 60 carfloats are loaded and move slowly across the river to the docks of Manhattan. Crates of machinery for the Oil Well Supply Company at Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia, auto chassis for Ecuador and other products for ports all over the world are piled on the three Harsimus Cove piers waiting to be loaded on ships which bring to the terminal cargoes from abroad that will be carried to American consumers by the Penn's freight cars.

Trains come to Harsimus Cove from the Pennsylvania Railroad's enormous receiving and breakup yard at Kearny. The yard in Kearny is also the watermelon center for this area. On 12 tracks, separated by 60-foot driveways for trucks, are displayed carloads of the fruit sent here by commission merchants who made their purchases in Florida or the Carolinas. Prospective buyers inspect the open samples at each freight car door and then gather in the auction room where on the stage an auctioneer chants the bids in the rapid sing-song comprehensible only to the experienced. The auctioneer is paid a percentage of the selling price. Retailers, who will truck the green fruit away to their vegetable markets, and speculators, who buy up carloads in expectations of reselling at a profit, bid by a scarcely perceptible system of motions: raising a finger, nodding the head or winking an eye. The price for a carload of the melons averages about \$375 but has gone as high as \$600. In a peak year 3,800 carloads are sold at Kearny.

The Pennsylvania has several other depots in New Jersey. A few miles south of Harsimus Cove are the Greenville Yards, a heavy machinery export center, and to South Amboy come the three and one-half million tons of coal that the railroad's barges tow to factories, power plants and piers all around the great har-



1876 view of Penn's chief eastern terminal, Jersey City. Now being razed.