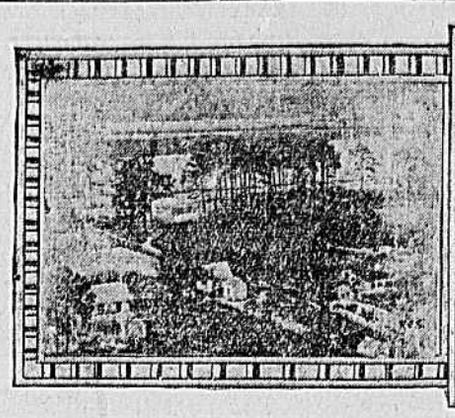
PENNING WILD PONIES ON ASSATEAGUE ISLAND

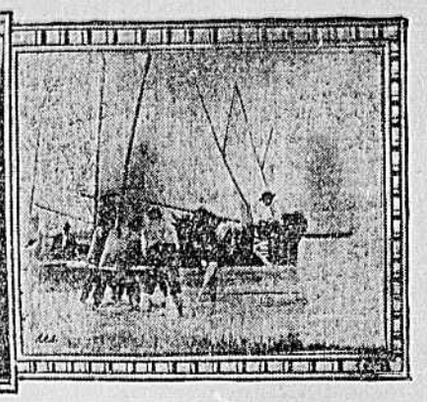


A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE HORSE PEN FROM THE DISTANCE FROM THE TOP OF THE LIGHT-HOUSE—180 FEET.

LONGING TO BE FREE.

JOCKEYS.

IN THE PEN AFTER THE LONG CHASE THE YOUNG COLTS BEING SELECTED FOR BRANDING.



LIFTING A PONY INTO THE SCOW FOR TRANSPORTATION, MUCH AGAINST HIS WILL.

(Special from a Staff Correspondent.)

CHINCOTEAGUE ISLAND, ACCOMAC COUNTY, VA., August 7.—The combination of a sailor and a horse generally results in fun for disinterested third parties. Probably that is why I enjoyed so much the annual pony penning on Assateague Island this year. These sailor men, when they begin to handle the wild ponies which run on Chincoteague and Assateague indicate in a hundred ways that they would be far more at home with a tiller or sail rope in their hands. Probably that is why they approach the undertaking with such diffidence and the certainty of a "show" causes a large crowd to gather. The pony pennings bring many people to the islands every year. The pennings this year were not such great events as usual, owing largely to the fact that the owners of the ponies are not anxious to sell, for prices are so much higher than ever before that the men who own the animals think they ought to receive even more. Good prices have dazzled them. The ponies are bringing twice what they did ten years ago.

The Chincoteague penning was a failure, only a few ponies being corralled, and but three or four sold. But nearly two hundred were penned in Assateague and many were sold at fine prices.

Assateague may be termed the sister island of Chincoteague, lying between the latter and the ocean. In reality, it is a peninsula, though old people say this has been true for only a comparatively short time. However, "the island" is one in effect, being practically inaccessible except by boat.

After a drive of a mile and a half across Chincoteague, through woods, where there was a mosquito for every grain of sand in the road and several for every one of the pine reedies that carpeted the ground on either hand, I went aboard the little batteau that was to take us across to the island. Mr. G. Walter Mapp, who says he is going to be the next Commonwealth's attorney of Accomack, and Captain John Jones, of Chincoteague, but now in charge of a life-saving station ten miles up the coast, were also aboard. It seemed to me the wind was blowing too hard for any vessel below a warship in size to be anywhere except in some place where it could be tied fast to something. But nobody said anything, and I didn't. Before I had been aboard a minute I saw that our skipper had "something aboard." A box containing two dozen empty beer bottles was in the bottom of the boat.

Just as we started down the channel Captain Jones saw a somewhat larger boat running down behind us.

A RACE.

"She'll beat us there," he remarked, and our skipper, who was holding the mainsail rope, flared up:

"I'll bet you five dollars she don't!" he exclaimed, and he threw out several expletives which the Mergenthaler does not often meet.

Captain Jones' pocket-book was out in a flash.

"She carries more sail than we do," said the skipper.

"Are you going to bet?" asked Captain Jones, jeeringly.

"She's a bigger boat than this'n," said the skipper.

"There won't be no race and there won't be no bet," said the captain, in a taunting way, as he put his pocket-book back into his pocket.

"By ——! there will be a race!" exclaimed the skipper, springing to his feet. "Gimme that rope!" he cried to the young man who was holding the mainsail. The young man demurred, but the skipper was so violently insistent the junior had to yield.

"Bug juice makes a —— fool of a man," he said, as he took his seat in the stern. But the boat jumped forward when the skipper took the rope. He seemed to me to be trying to catch all the wind that was blowing in that locality, and to be succeeding remarkably well. I felt like I was sitting on a steep and very slick hip-roof. That boat was running on her side.

The boat behind us was creeping up steadily. She was larger and carried much more canvas. Finally she was almost at arm's length from us and to windward.

"You done let him get your wind; as well give up now!" shouted Captain King in tones of disgust, though he winked at me. The skipper used some more words from his choice vocabulary and apparently gave her more sail. But the skipper of the other vessel didn't give him any more wind. In the excitement of the race I had forgotten about how our boat was heeling over. I was standing holding on to the gunwale with one hand and my hat with the other, feeling that I wanted to cheer. Mapp was doing the same thing and probably feeling the same way. Captain King was standing watching the other boat, occasionally making a remark calculated to exasperate the skipper, and as cool as if he were smoking his pipe and swapping yarns on the porch at the Atlantic Hotel, in Chincoteague, as he is doing while I write this.

Suddenly I felt the water about my feet, and looked down. Then I almost fell down. My knees came near giving way. The water was rippling over the side of that boat like I had seen it do over a dam in the brook in boyhood days, when flutter-wheels claimed an unjust portion of my time. I thought about some sort of resolution not to be afraid of things other people were not afraid of—and broke it then and there. But I didn't tell. Still, I didn't watch the race any more, only the face of the skipper and the water running over the side. Mr. Mapp quit watching the other boat about the same time, and kept his eyes busy upon that stream of water.

The skipper looked once at the same thing I was watching and looked away. I made sure he would ease her off a little, but he didn't. The other boat had passed us by this time. The two men in her were jeering at the tops of their voices, and our captain seemed exasperated beyond all reasonable limits. So was I, for their taunts, I thought, would make him try to sail our boat keel upwards. Finally, our skipper grew disgusted, and did something with the rope that made the seats in the vessel assume a position approaching the horizontal. When we made the landing and the athletic young man, barefooted and bareleged to his knees, carried us ashore on his back, my nerves were somewhat quieted. And O, reader, hear what that skipper said, as he blustered about on the boat while we were being carried to land:

"We'd a-beat if we'd only had more wind."

More wind!

THE PENNING.

Several hundred people were on the island for the penning. The corral is only a few steps from the beach, and contains less than a quarter of an acre. A permanent fence around it is kept up by the men who own the ponies, which run wild on the island. Assateague, unlike Chincoteague, is rugged. The magnificent light-house is situated on a considerable eminence at the southern end of the island; towards the north there are high hills, unlike those of the up-country, for there is not a stone large enough to throw at a snake to be found on the island, and no earth but sand. The soil and the grass is precisely the same as in Florida, and the tall pines suggest those of the forests of the Land of the Flowers. The woods take up the greater portion of the island. Perhaps fifteen families reside on Assateague. These have gardens and corn-patches. But the people live off the money they make from the oysters and clams and the fish that teem in the waters about the island. Mr. J. L. Anderton, who has resided on the island for many years as the keeper of the light-house, is extensively engaged in oystering and clamming. He is estimated to be worth $50,000 or $60,000. He also owns a large portion of the ponies on the island. The ponies, however, are owned chiefly by the people of Chincoteague.

The fun connected with the penning began shortly after dawn. A dozen men and boys, mounted on their ponies, started out to corral the various bunches. The young ponies appeared to be as wild as the mustangs which used to roam our Western plains. But the old brood mares, many of them twenty years of age or more, are quite gentle by comparison, though they are hard to corner.

When the riders have gotten together a dozen or more ponies, old and young, the work grows steadily easier. The men and boys drive the accumulated bunch up with a drove not yet driven, and this constant work of "benevolent assimilation" finally results in bringing all the ponies to the corral gate. It is not an easy task at all to get the animals within the enclosure, and there are many wild breakaways; but the inclination of the pony to follow the leaders is worked upon with success. Several of the tame animals are turned into the corral; one or two of the ponies, smart young fellows who know it all, venture in; others follow when they see that no harm has come to those who have shown more temerity, and finally the gate is closed upon the entire drove.

Then comes the work of branding the little colts and cutting out the ponies which it is desired to sell. A fire of branches and knots in which to heat the branding irons was burning at the corral gate, the smoke helping to keep off the mosquitoes, which were keeping man and beast busy.

I cannot quite understand yet why it was that somebody was not hurt by those ponies, for the little fellows used their heels in truly pugilistic fashion. With a noose affixed to the end of a pole, a man would approach the drove carefully, and after considerable manoeuvering drop it over the head of the animal desired. Then he would let the pole fall and seize the rope, which had been loosely wrapped around it. As the noose would begin to tighten the pony would commence rearing and plunging, and it would require several men to hold him. The pony rarely ceased to resist until choked down. The slip-noose would then be changed for one of a different knot, in the making of which watermen are experts. When the pony would be gotten to its feet, and the men would start to draw it from the corral, the animal's struggles would become greatest.

BY MAIN FORCE.

In nearly every case it was gotten out only by main force and to the accompaniment of loud words, to which the women serving oysters and ice cream at stands on the beach a few feet away appeared to be turning deaf ears. For really forcible and unequivocal English, give me a Chincoteaguer trying to get a pony out of the corral at a penning.

The struggling would not end when the animal was finally out. It would try in vain to escape from the brawny men who held it, and a game two-year-old always gave its captors a a few minutes' warm work. A beautiful chestnut sorrel filly did not cease to try to get away for fifteen minutes after the men who dragged her out had taken several turns with the rope around a large pine near the corral gate. She would leap and rear, striking out with her feet, and whinny-like, squealing, in a way that sounded rather uncanny. Several times she would become so entangled in the rope that she would fall, at the imminent risk of breaking her neck.

The colt was owned by Captain Bill Bunting, of Chincoteague, who was the leading spirit in the work of the day. He acted as the auctioneer. He would not allow the beautiful filly to be sold, thinking the highest bid of sixty-odd dollars was not as much as she was worth.

A beautiful pair of what appeared to be yearlings, almost perfect matches, sold for $74. Two or three of the same age sold for about $30 apiece. One two-year-old brought $60.

The hardest, and apparently the most dangerous, part of the day's work came when the ponies were brought away from the island. The animals were coaxed and dragged across the beach and aboard a scow, which had been brought over for the purpose of conveying the ponies to Chincoteague. There was a high railing at the sides of the scow, but, of course, none at the end. It was generally hard work to get all the ponies aboard, and occasionally some of them were so obstreperous when aboard that they had to be tied. But they were all landed on the beach at Chincoteague and nobody was hurt. Incidentally I may say the same thing of our own return. The weather was calmer and we had a different skipper.

WALTER EDWARD HARRIS.

CHINCOTEAGUE---ITS QUEER PEOPLE AND CUSTOMS.

(Special to The Times-Dispatch.)

CHINCOTEAGUE ISLAND, ACCAMAC COUNTY, VA., August 7.—Many attempts have been made to tell the outside world of Chincoteague and its inhabitants, and all that I have seen have failed. I came to the island with very hazy ideas concerning the nature and appearance of the people and their manners and costums. I cannot say that I have learned all there is to know concerning Chincoteague and the Chincoteaguers in the course of my stay, but I have learned enough to make me look forward with anything but pleasure to the time to-morrow morning when I must board the Franklin city boat and say good-bye to Chincoteague, probably for good, for though this old world is small it is very busy.

I do not believe that one-half the boys and girls of Virginia, who are studying geography, could tell where Chincoteague is if asked the question offhand. The other half would say it is an island off the coast of Virginia, inhabited by about 3,000 people and wild ponies. A few of the older generation who have come here would tell stories to illustrate the primitive way in which the people live. A smaller number, imbued with the latter day spirit of commercialism, would tell of the money the people make off the oysters and clams and the fish and crabs, and would speak of the number of stores on the island, and the volume of business done.

After spending some days on Chincoteague I find it impossible to give any of the descriptions I have given above. It may be the air, but I think it is the people; at any rate, I have found in Chincoteague that which makes me hate to leave. The island is so contradictory It is up-to-date in many ways; it is fifty years behind in others. There is a railway terminus only six miles away, but three hundred or four hundred ponies run wild on the island, and men with money in their pockets walk along the main streets of the town in their bare feet, and nobody thinks of looking at the feet. Those facts seem to me to state in a satisfactory way the contradictory conditions on Chincoteague.

Chincoteaguers are amphibious. Living on an island half a mile wide and seven miles long, these three thousand islanders have occasion to know much more of the sea than of the land. Only a very small fraction of the vegetables eaten on Chincoteague are grown on the island, and more than six hundred vessels of various sizes are owned in Chincoteague and call Chincoteague the home port. An average of one sailing craft for every five of population is probably greater than at any other sea town in the country.

THREE MAILS A DAY.

Chincoteague is out of the world in the sense that it is a few thousand acres of land surrounded by water, but in other senses it is close to what outsiders are pleased to call the world. Franklin City and Greenbackville are only six miles away. Franklin is the terminus of one branch of the Pennsylvania Railway. There are three mails to and from the island every day. The Baltimore papers are received by noon of the day on which they are printed, and the Philadelphia papers come in on the same train. There are but few dailies taken on the island. Many weeklies come to the Chincoteague postoffice.

There are forty-four licensed stores of various kinds in Chincoteague. D. J. Whealton, the wealthiest man on the island is the proprietor of one of the largest general stores I have seen anywhere. The stock carried is probably worth $25,000. The trade at all the stores appeared to be good. The islanders have plenty of money, and they spend it.

The oyster and clam industries form the chief sources of income. I was told of one man who had made for several weeks an average of between $25 and $30 a week digging and marketing clams. The clam industry is comparatively new, but several persons have told me that it will soon become more profitable than oystering, unless the Baylor survey is broken by act of the Legislature. What I have seen in this oyster country in the past week convinces me that legislation breaking the survey would mean much suffering, if not starvation to Chincoteague.

Captain J. T. Rowley, who deals more extensively in clams than any other man on the island, sold seven million clams last winter a year ago, and last winter he sold between five million and six million. He is rich, and growing richer. The hundreds of men and women who sell him clams are making good livings. They could not do so if the Legislature throws open the State oyster beds to preemption by individuals. It is the constant fear of such action that makes the average Chincoteaguer grow old before his time.

But I was talking of the prosperity of the people of Chincoteague.

"There is not another place of three thousand inhabitants in the United States where more than ninety per cent. of the people own their own homes," said Captain Rowley the other afternoon, as we were driving over the island behind his fast horse. "There are very few renters on the island, though, of course, there are no large landholders."

Just about that time Captain Rowley stopped in front of a tiny house in the pine grove a few yards away. It was a frame structure, one story high, and not an inch over twelve feet square. I admitted that I hardly thought a person could live in so small a house.

"A man and his wife and five children live there," said the Captain, as he started up his horse. "The oldest child is a boy twelve years of age, and he works with his father every day, making good money."

MANY CHILDREN.

An evidence of the prosperity of Chincotague, or possibly another form of it, may be found in the number of children one sees on the street. Where two or three men and women are gathered together, there are sure to be found twice as many boys and girls. At the pony penning on Chincotague there were three hundred people at the least, and at least half the number were boys from five years to fifteen. Early marriages are the rule. There is living here now a young woman who was a grandmother at thirty-one years of age. She was a mother at thirteen. Her daughter became a mother at fourteen. The population of Chincotague was only 1,100 in 1870, and is now over 3,000.

The people of Chincotague appear to be more generally church members than are the inhabitants of other towns. But there are five saloons here, and I did not see evidences of threatened insolvency for any of them. While drinking is more or less general, drunkenness is extremely rare. The sergeant, or constable, told me last night he had not made an arrest in a year.

The majority of the church people are probably Baptists, or have leanings in that direction. This sect has a beautiful church and parsonage on the island. There are also Protestant Methodist and Methodist Episcopal churches and parsonages.

There are three public schools in Chincoteague, including the graded school. But the schools only continue five months and a half, and I was informed that the average number of pupils to a room in the primary grade was from 75 to 110. Better school facilities are badly needed.

But Chincoteague is not an incorporated town. A few years ago, Mr. S. Wilkins Matthews, member of the House from Accomac, in response to a petition signed by many of the leading men of the island, went to work and had the Legislature pass an act incorporating the island into a town. But so many of the people were opposed to the measure that a vote was taken on it, and the charter was rejected. The act was repealed.

There are no street lights. There are no water mains. Insurance rates run from five to six per cent. On nearly every house, stores and dwellings, one sees over the door a tin placard bearing the name of the company in which the building is insured. And some day there are going to be numerous policies to pay unless Chincoteague gets a charter and a water system. There is only one brick building on the island.

BANK DEPOSITS.

The deposits in the bank of the Banking Company of L. L. Dirickson, Jr., at Chincoteague, amounts to $99,109.74. The total resources are $150,661.74. The capital stock is 49,200. And the bank is only nine months old.

I remarked once before that everybody in Chincoteague has money. D. J. Whealton is worth perhaps $200,000, and has recently erected on the island a fine house costing a goodly sum. Joshua Whealton is worth well on towards a hundred thousand, some people say he is worth more. Captain Rowley has a snug fortune and is making more every day. John L. Anderton, who lives across on Assateague, is worth at least fifty thousand. Captain John Bunting is "mightly well fixed" as one of his neighbors expressed it, and the same might have been said of Captain John A. M. Whealton, and a number of others. The men are "not much on clothes," as one of them said, but it would be hard to find a Virginia town where the women are so well dressed as in Chincoteague. It was apparent to the male eye that all the gowns were not of the very latest design, but they were of good quality, and were worn as though the wearers were used to dressing well.

There is at least one piano in Chincoteague, and probably more. The strains from many cottage organs may be heard in the course of a stroll down the main street.

When it comes to dealing with the negroes the Chincoteaguers are far ahead of the people of any other town in the country. A negro is not allowed on the streets after 7 o'clock at night. There are only about 300 colored people on the island, and these give little trouble. There were never as many as a half dozen slaves held in Chincoteague.

There are three doctors on Chincoteague, and they each appear to have a fair practice. One physician told me that two-thirds of the deaths on the island, probably, were due to pulmonary troubles. Another said that in cases of what he termed dry catarrhal affections, he had known patients to be relieved by a stay here. However, the fine physical specimens one encounters here forbids the impression that Chincoteague is not a good place in which to grow men. The men down here do not conceal their manly development by too many clothes. One of the handsomest fellows I ever saw, who carried me from his boat to the landing on Assateague, wore only shirt and trousers, and the latter were rolled to his knees.

SWIM NATURALLY.

Swimming appears to be almost natural. Everybody is as much at home in the water as on land. One of the first sights I saw as I came over from Wisbart's Point in the launch that carries the mail was a dozen boys, from six to ten years old, sporting in the water near the wharf, clad in bright colored trunks of the scantiest character.

Living is expensive in Chincoteague, despite the fact that every variety of sea food is right at hand. But flour and meal, meat of every character, poultry and eggs, groceries, of course, and all fuel, have to be brought from the outside. A leading man here told me he believed it was possible to clear a thousand dollars a year raising eggs and poultry on the island. Very few are raised. Ducks and geese are seen much more frequently than chickens. I was struck with the small number of dogs.

BORN ON ISLAND.

Everybody knows everybody else on Chincoteague. Perhaps not more than 5 per cent. of the inhabitants were born off the island. There are said to be factions and more or less dissension among the people, but none of this was apparent to me. There was a jollity, freedom of speech and manner, and a propensity to "skylark" among the men, young and old, that is not found generally. I saw a man in front of the hotel this morning knock a pipe out of the mouth of a friend with whom he had been talking and then run to escape punishment.

Chincoteaguers work hard in the oyster season. I have not seen many men at work since I have been here, and it has always been easy to find a group of six or a dozen men who are ready to talk indefinitely. And to me it is about the best talking I have heard in a long time. The quaint language, the rich flavor of the sea in all conversation, the sailor-like directness of speech, are all wonderfully pleasing and make it hard for one to tear himself away and work. "Peculiosity" and "phenomity" are two words I have added to my vocabulary since I came to Chincoteague.

The Chincoteague people have not had the school advantages which many of them desire, yet in recent years the sons of several men have gone to college from the island, and there were Chincoteague boys in two or three Virginia colleges last year.

It was deeply interesting to hear John A. M. Whealton, who was born on the island seventy-three years ago, tell of his struggles to obtain education enough to enable him to get along in the world. If I could convey to the reader's eye a true picture of the old gentleman, and could reproduce his language as he told me of his life, I am sure the recital would be as interesting at second hand as it was to me.

"When I was six years old I went to work with the women helping my father pick up oysters," he said. "The women folks worked in that day and time. I never went to school but three months in my life. But I saw that a man had to have some education if he was going to get along in the world. I studied my speller at home and worked all the sums in Pike's arithmetic until I got to the single rule of three. That was so tough I sent to Philadelphia and got another arithmetic—Bennett's—and in that I worked until I got so I could understand fractions, and could work out percentage and fellowship. Then I got Mitchell's geography and atlas, and it didn't take me so very long to learn the names of all the countries and the States and capitals and rivers. I read Goldsmith's history of England and a history of the United States. I have always liked history, and have read histories of old Greece and Rome."

Mr. Whealton's language is, as a rule, that of an educated man, though he occasionally drops into the careless speech of the waterman.

"I belong to the universal church of God," said the old man solemnly when I asked him regarding his church preferences. "I do not go to church often. But I read the Bible and God is good."

Mr. Wealton's wife, two years his senior, is still living. He is in very comfortable circumstances, though in 1867 he saw all his property swept away through his having to pay a security debt. He is the authority on all matters pertaining to the history of Chincoteague.

OLD TRADITIONS.

"The old people in Chincoteague used to have the habit of handing down traditions like the Indians," said Mr. Whealton, "and I used to love to listen to them."

He has a most remarkable memory. Frequently, he gives the year, the day of the week, and of the month of an event, and will then remark in an interjectory way:

"I remember the wind was blowing, nor'west," or "nor'east," as the case might be.

Mr. Whealton says that Chincoteague was first granted to John Jennifer in 1670. The grant was allowed to lapse and once or twice after that people who received grants of the island allowed them to lapse also. On the 29th of April, 1692, the island was granted to William Kendall and John Robins by Lieutenant-Governor Nicholson, on condition of their paying the passage of thirty-five emigrants from England to Virginia. Robins took the south end of the island, consisting of 2,765 acres, and Kendall the north end, 2,725 acres.

Robins and Kendall lived on the mainland and put stock on the island, sending over negroes and whites to care for them. Mr. Whealton thinks the ponies on the island at present are descendants of the horses which Robins and Kendall put here over two centuries ago. The long main and tall and fetlock he thinks due to exposure, and the small size to interbreeding. There is a theory that the ponies are descended from horses which escaped from a South American ship which was washed ashore here two hundred years ago. Mr. Whealton's seems much more plausible. I have neglected to mention that there are no commons on this island. All the land is held by deed or will, but the owners do not fence the grazing land, and the ponies run together, the drove often having forty or fifty owners.

A number of Quakers bought 500 acres on the north end of the island about 1800, but in 1828 they sold to Mr. Whealton's father and settled in Delaware, having become greatly dissatisfied with slavery as it existed in Virginia. Delaware slaves could not be sold outside that State.

The population of Chincoteague in 1840 was 540. Mr. Whealton does not remember the figures for 1850; the census was taken in 1860, but the war came on the next year and he never saw the returns. By the census of 1870 there were 1,100 people on the island.

FIRST OYSTER PLANTING.

"I saw the first oysters planted in the United States and may be in the world," said Mr. Whealton. "In 1838 two steamers loaded here with oysters for Philadelphia. The weather got so foggy the boats couldn't get out and after waiting several days the oysters were placed in shallow water right here in front of the town. When the owners took them up the next fall the oysters were so fat that all of us began planting, seeing that the oysters were so much better by being moved. Now oysters are planted everywhere."

So Chincoteague has the distinction of having given the world the most important fact concerning the oyster that has ever been discovered.

Chincoteague does not know much of the war between the States. There was very little war so far as she was concerned. When the question of the adoption or rejection of the ordinance of secession was submitted to the people in 1861, there were only two votes for secession cast in this island.

"I was born and reared a Democrat and am a Democrat to-day," said Mr. Whealton. "But while I was a strong Southern man at heart, my mind was made up that the South could not succeed. Besides, all our interests were in the North. We sold nearly all the oysters we raised in Philadelphia. It would have meant starvation to us to have seceded and cut us off from that market. Nearly all of us felt that way and so Joseph T. Hill and Littleton Nock, father of N. W. Nock, of Onancock, were the only men on the island who voted for secession."

Mr. Whealton told how after the Virginia Convention had adopted the ordinance of secession he bought a bill of goods for his store, amounting to $214. He had paid for them and probably had them aboard his vessel, when it was reported that he had contraband of war aboard and the goods were seized. He had to come home without either goods or the money he had paid for them. The people were completely cut off. The Federal troops held Fort Monroe and Norfolk could not be reached and, of course, there was no such thing as trading with Philadelphia. The lighthouse was using refuse oil and the people were suffering. On the night of the day the vote was taken on the ratification of the ordinance of secession, he and three or four other citizens started to Philadelphia. He was still thinking of that $214 also.

In Philadelphia he was told by all the merchants with whom he had traded that it was impossible to ship goods to Chincoteague. The Chincoteaguers were blue. There seemed no means of relief. Finally, it occurred to Mr. Whealton that he had in his pocket a slip of paper on which he had set down the result of the vote at Chincoteague on the question of leaving the Union.

"I suggested to some of my friends that it might be a good thing for us to show that paper to Mayor Henry and secure from him a permit to bring goods South. None of them thought it would do any good, but I insisted, and finally one of them who knew the Mayor said he would go with me to see him."

Mr. Whealton says they had great difficulty in gaining admission to Mayor White. He was busy making appointments to positions as dog-catchers and policemen, and the office was crowded. After waiting several hours, a bailiff showed the Chincoteaguer and his friend into the Mayor's private office. But the latter had to ask them to postpone their business until the next day. At the time set, Mr. Whealton was there, and at once stated to the Mayor the object of the visit, declared that Chincoteague was loyal and told him of a pole 110 feet high in front of his house on the island from which floated the stars and stripes.

"That seemed to impress him very much," said Mr. Whealton. "Then I showed him the paper giving the result of the vote on secession. That impressed him still more. He called for a map and made me point out Chincoteague to him.

"'I suppose the old flag is not floating anywhere on Virginia soil except on that little speck in the ocean,' he said. 'I shall never forget the words.'

The upshot of the matter was that Mr. Whealton got a note from the Mayor which gave them permission to bring from Philadelphia to Chincoteague goods of any character save contraband of war. Mr. Whealton knew it was not binding upon the customs officials to respect any such order, and he knew that a war vessel probably would not do so. But he says he knew the customs people would not disregard such a paper from the Mayor of the city, and he was willing to take chances with the men of war.

GOT THE GOODS.

He got his goods, got back those he had paid for and never gotten, and reached Chincoteague in safety with them. Once they sighted a steamer off Brandywine getting up steam. They thought she was a revenue cutter and Mr. Whealton says they were badly scared. They gave her the slip, going to the east of Brandywine, and probably causing the steamer to think they were bound for Cape May.

The permit given Chincoteague by the Mayor of Philadelphia, was good for the one trip out. Trade was again shut off and again Mr. Whealton undertook to relieve Chincoteague from the stress of war. This time he went to see Colonel Smith, a friend of his at Snow Hill, Md., who had organized a regiment in for service in the Northern army. Through the influence of Colonel Smith, President Lincoln granted permits to fourteen masters of Chincoteague vessels to trade with the Northern ports. Some of those permits, signed "A. Lincoln," are still on the island.

"I was hating old Lincoln all the time like the devil," said Mr. Whealton with a laugh, "but we had to use him as our best friend, which he afterwards proved himself to be."

The permits were never used. A very short time afterwards, some time in the month of August, the Federal cruiser Louisiana came into Chincoteague Bay and remained in front of the town several months.

The battle of Wishart's Point is not described in any history of the war, but there was a battle there, a somewhat ludicrous affair in the beginning and without a very tragic ending. Wishart's Point is on the mainland, eight or ten miles below Chincoteague. When the Louisiana came almost abreast the point, she dropped anchor, and Mr. Whealton recalls that two parties sent ashore, numbering 11 men each, were in command of Lieutenant Hopkins, and Lieutenant Furness, respectively. The parties were on anything but a belligerent mission. Captain Murray afterwards told Mr. Whealton that he had simply sent his men ashore for poultry and eggs. But the people on the mainland were intensely loyal to the Confederacy and refused to sell a fowl or an egg. Mr. Whealton does not say that the party took anything by force.

As the men from the ships were returning to their vessel, a man named James Parker, from a position on the hill above Wishart's, fired at them. The next morning the same force from the vessel returned to the shore, but in the night, a force of Confederates stationed further down on the Peninsula, had been notified of the near presence of the enemy. There was a brisk fire kept up between the two sides and the ship took a hand.

Then a Southern sympathizer took a hand also. Further down the Louisiana had taken aboard as pilot a Captain Shelly, who was an ardent Southerner from Maryland, but who took any chance to get back to his home. When Shelly got the Louisiana as far as Four Mouth and saw that he was expected to pilot the Louisiana into a fight he refused, though he put his refusal on the ground that there were shoals off the point. So the vessel did not get close enough to do much harm, though the firing of the howitzer, which she carried forward, created great excitement and consternation in Chincoteague. When the party from the ship finally retired, several of the number were wounded. There were no fatalities on either side.

On Sunday the Louisiana came to Chincoteague. Mr. Whealton went down and had a glass of riot whiskey with Captain Murray, whom he and the people of the island generally learned to like before the end of his stay of several months, though he was not off his ship more than once or twice in the entire time. His surgeon, however, treated a great many cases on the island, and nearly rid it of malaria.

Shortly after the war vessel arrived off Chincoteague, a force of Delaware and Maryland troops came down the Peninsula, and Accomac and Northampton were in the hands of the North until the close of the war. Chincoteague rather overcold itself in the matter of loyalty by furnishing a company of the Northern army, which did service at Fort Monroe.

LEVIED A TAX.

Chincoteague recognized Governor Pierpont as the Governor of Virginia during the war, and in 1863 he repaid their loyalty by levying a tax of $5 on every boat used in taking oysters. That is said to be the first oyster tax ever heard of.

Mr. Whealton can remember when Andrew Jackson retired from office. I found, however, that his memory of what had been told him by old islanders more valuable than his personal reminiscences. The old fellow has lost the sight of one eye, but he appears to be good for years to come.

The oldest man in Chincoteague is Thomas Melvin, who was 81 years old on May 17th. Kendall Thornton was 78 on the 16th of January. William Andrews, who is not a native, though for many years resident on the island, was 78 in May last. Joseph Hutson is 79. Mrs. Liza Reynolds is 73. Mrs. Liza Thornton is 84, and her father died at the age of 93.

Mr. Whealton recalls that James Scott, who died on the island in the fall of 1852, would have been one hundred years old in the next Christmas week; his wife died at the age of ninety-eight. James Scott used to regale Mr. Whealton and others with recollections of the Revolutionary war. Scott made salt at Green Run, Md., a short distance up the coast and though Philadelphia was in the hands of the British, he used to run his salt into that city and receive $2 a bushel for it. Once he had to take to land, so closely was he pursued. A volley was fired at him and one of the soldier in his excitement forgot to take his iron ram rod out of his musket after loading. It whizzed over Scott's head and stuck in the ground in front of him. He seized it as he ran by and carried it in his hand to safety. The ramrod is still in the possession of his descendant.

On the third day of September a cyclone and tidal wave wept over Chincoteague, destroying many lives and much property. Many people left the island through fear of its being eventually totally destroyed.

Sometimes as I hear the waves pounding upon the shore of the island, I think perhaps the sea will some day claim Chincoteague as its own, but when the sky is fair and the sun shimmers upon the glassy water, and the soft haze of the summer's day hangs upon the line of green fields and forests on the mainland away across yonder in the west, I think of the ocean as the island's lover, wooing her with gentle murmurings and caresses.

And this I know full well. In days to come when I am far from the little island I am going to wish mighty hard that I was back on the porch at Harry Phillips's Atlantic Hotel and that John Jones and Captain Fetterhan and Joe Rowley and Bun Conquest from the mainland and Captain Tom Milliner, from Louisville, and Matthews and Snead and Lewis and Hutson and a dozen more were there with me, talking of ships and storms and wrecks and spinning yarns of the sea—the wonderful, terrible, beautiful sea, that gives life and death impartially to the people of fair Chincoteague.

WALTER EDWARD HARRIS.

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