



The Society Scroll

Newsletter of
The Ocean County Historical Society
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“Telling The Stories Of Ocean County”

On-Line Extra February 2008

Amos Birdsall

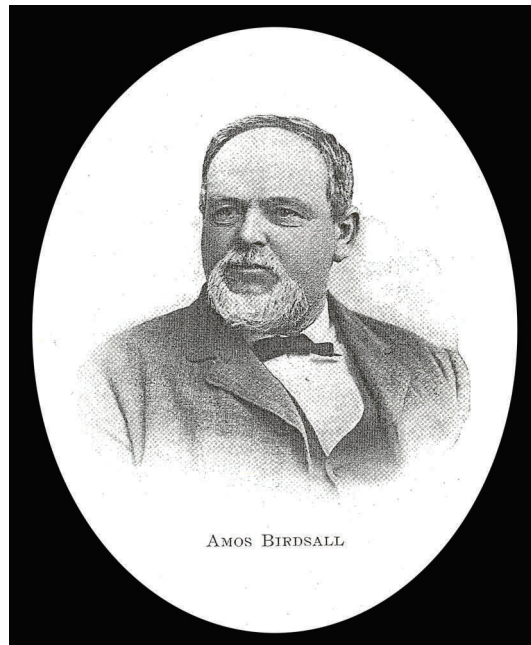
Biographical Cyclopedia of Ocean County,
New Jersey Illustrated - 1899*

For nearly two centuries the name of Birdsall has been a prominent one in what is now Ocean County, and the men of that name have taken a leading part in the commercial, industrial, and political life of the Ocean County shore. Benjamin Birdsall came from England and settled at the Quaker colony of Hempstead, Long Island, in 1657. The first Birdsalls in what is now Ocean County were Nathan and Stephen Birdsall, who came from Long Island (probably from Oyster Bay), and settled in the lower part of Ocean County in the early years of the eighteenth century. They were Friends, and Stephen married into the Willet family, of Little Egg Harbor, who were also Friends, and also came from Oyster Bay.

Captain Amos Birdsall, of Toms River, the President of the Toms River National Bank, was born in December, 1829, and was the son of Jacob and Rhoda Brown Birdsall. His parental grandfather was also named Amos Birdsall, and for many years was a seaman. He afterward engaged in the mercantile business on shore, and was elected Justice of the Peace, an officer of responsibility and honor, far exceeding, in those day,

what it is at present. He was a man of ability and energy, active in business, untiring in his attention to public affairs—characteristics that have descended to his children of the fourth generation.

Captain Birdsall's maternal grandfather was Stephen Brown, also a native of the shore. He was a farmer, and was a man of influence in old Stafford and Dover Townships. His father was Lay Judge in the county for several terms. He was master builder of a number of coasting vessels; also a Freeholder for a long time.



Jacob Birdsall, father of the subject of our sketch, also followed the sea for many years, and subsequently engaged in the business of surveying, in addition to managing a farm. In politics he was an outspoken and determined Whig, as ardent an advocate of the Whig principles as he

afterward became of Republican Party doctrines. He was one of the founders of the Republican Party in Ocean County, having been one of the active spirits in the creation of the County of Ocean from the County of Monmouth. In the trying times of 1864 and 1865, he was chosen by the suffrages of his fellow countians to represent them in the New Jersey Legislature. In religion he was a Universalist, and was one of the staunch supporters of the Waretown Universalist Church. His children were Abigail, Amos, Stephen, Amy, Herschel, Jacob, and Rhoda.

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Captain Amos Birdsall attended school at Waretown, and at an early age went to sea. When but eighteen years of age, he trod the deck of his own vessel, and for a number of years was one of the most successful mariners in the coastal trade, amassing one of the largest fortunes on the Ocean County shore. About thirty years ago, he moved from Waretown to Toms River, building a handsome residence on Washington Street, where he has since resided in comfort and affluence. After retiring from the sea, he continued to be a builder of and owner of coasting vessels, and is now the managing owner of as fine a fleet of fourmasters as can be found on the Atlantic Coast. He is heavily interested in the First National Bank at Toms River, and, in 1897, he was elected President, an office he has since filled with satisfaction to his fellow directors and to the advancement of the financial interests of the bank.

Mr. Birdsall married in 1856 Miss Louisa, daughter of Joseph Holmes, a prominent citizen of Ocean County. He has had six children, J. Holmes Birdsall, now deceased, a leading member of the Ocean County Bar, Captain Clarence Birdsall and Captain Amos Birdsall, Jr., each the master of a big four-mast collier; Percy Birdsall, who conducts a large carriage and harness business at Red Bank, N.J., and the Misses Lulu and Ida, who are members of the first social circles.

* This book was reprinted by the Ocean County Historical Society in August, 2003. Copies are available at our Museum book shop.