
REPORT
OF THE
PILOT COMMISSIONERS

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OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF
PILOT COMMISSIONERS OF NEW JERSEY, }
JERSEY CITY, January 2, 1867.

To His Excellency Marcus L. Ward, Governor of New Jersey :

The Board of Pilot Commissioners has the honor to submit to the Governor and Legislature of New Jersey, as required by law, a report of its proceedings for the past year, together with the number of pilot boats in commission, the number of pilots and deputy pilots in service, and the number of vessels brought in and taken out of port.

The pilot boats now commissioned are as follows, viz: "Jane," "Ezra Nye," "Mary E. Fish," "David Mitchell," "A. T. Stewart," and "Mystery." The last named "The Mystery," has been commissioned during the past year, and another boat is building for the service. There are thirty-eight pilots, with full branches, and eleven deputy pilots, licensed by this Board, and in service, for the bar of Sandy Hook, and six for the adjacent bays and rivers, and eleven apprentices.

There have been brought into port 827 vessels, of which 525 were boarded off shore, and 611 taken to sea, very nearly all of which were from, or bound to, foreign or distant ports of the United States.

The Board take pleasure, as an evidence of the activity and energy of the Bar Pilots, in calling the attention of the Legislature to the large proportion of the vessels brought in having been boarded by our pilots "off shore," or out sight of land. Few accidents have happened to vessels under their charge, and none have been lost. The Commissioners feel that it is due to the pilots, with *some exceptions*, to commend them for their zeal, subordination, and usefulness.

Prior to the year 1837, the pilots for Sandy Hook bar and the port of New York, were licensed exclusively under the laws of the State of New York, and there being no rivalry among them, they rarely cruised off shore to offer their services to vessels approaching the coast, and in consequence, during the inclement winter of 1836-'37, a number of disastrous wrecks occurred on the New Jersey coast.

Congress, in order to correct this evil, passed a bill giving authority to any master of a vessel coming into or going out of port, situated on waters which are the boundary between two States, to employ any pilot duly licensed, or authorized by law of either State, &c. Under this law of Congress the Legislature of New Jersey passed "An act to establish and regulate pilots for the ports of Jersey City, Newark and Perth Amboy, by the way of Sandy Hook," approved February 8th, 1837. The Commissioners appointed to execute this law experienced much difficulty in obtaining proper boats for the service, and a sufficient corps of pilots, but with a small number of active and energetic men, a wholesome rivalry with the New York pilots was created, with incalculable benefit to commerce. As is shown by the present report, our pilots cruised far off the land, and a few vessels only escape their vigilance. The usefulness of our pilot establishment now needs no argument or illustration to prove it. The law, however, under which it was created, was hurriedly passed, with many imperfections which have been only partially remedied by supplements since enacted. The Board, therefore, feel constrained, from a sense of the importance of this branch of the public service, to recommend to the honorable Legislature the revision of the laws, particularly as to the classification of the pilots, according to their qualifications, the mode of licensing them, and in some other particulars experience has shown it to be insufficient for the increased proportions of the present establishment and the change of circumstances.

The Board has been frequently invoked to cause sunken wrecks and other obstructions to be removed from the channels of the bay and rivers adjacent to New York, which are exclusively within the jurisdiction of New Jersey, but it has no such authority, nor is it aware that there is any law extant which applies to such cases. The interest of navigation would be promoted by the removal of such obstructions, and the Board respectfully recommend the subject matter to the consideration of the Legislature.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

J. M. CORNELISON, *President.*

GEO. B. RAYMOND, *Secretary.*