



Atlas of New Castle County Delaware, G.W. Baist; Courtesy of Delaware Historical Society

Around 1840, Philip (later "Major") Reybold began growing peaches just north of Delaware City. By 1845, he had 110,000 peach trees and was shipping tens of thousands of baskets of peaches to Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New York on his own steamboats, which docked at Major's Wharf. In the late 1800s, a peach blight struck and by 1880 Reybold's peaches were largely a thing of the past. At the height of the peach boom the illustration below appeared in Harper's Weekly, September 11, 1878.



In August, 1885, Captain Eugene Reybold, brought the Major Reybold to port through a tornado that killed two people on shore and injured several others. The ship's pilot, Emory Townsend, drowned. The ship was repaired and continued to carry passengers between Philadelphia and points south until about 1908.

Courtesy of Delaware Historical Society

This quiet waterfront promenade was once part of a busy, noisy commercial district that included coal wharves, a steamboat dock, sheds and stores, and broad staging areas for local produce destined for markets in Philadelphia and Baltimore. Piers at both ends of the waterfront extended into the river some 250 feet to offer additional mooring places.

Although the arrival of the railroad in 1873 challenged water transportation, commercial fishing and shipment of wood and coal kept the port busy into the 20th century. The river is still a vital shipping lane; less than two miles north of the city, modern docks serve vessels destined for the oil refinery that stands on land where peach orchards once flourished.

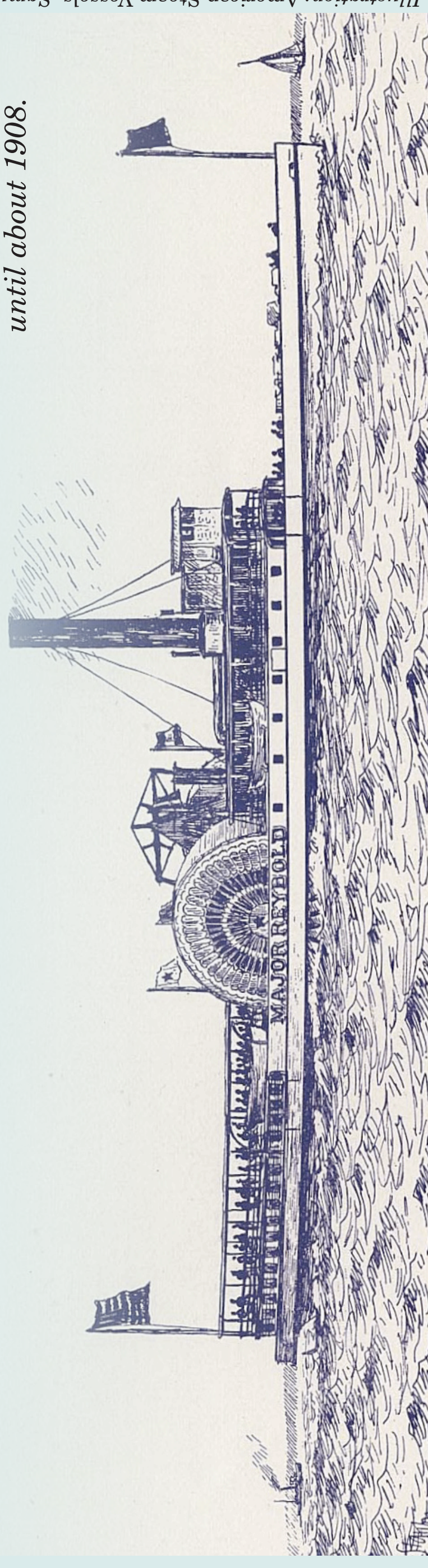


Illustration: American Steam Vessels, Samuel Ward Stanton, New York, 1895

## WATERFRONT AT DELAWARE CITY



Sources: Atlas of the State of Delaware, Pomeroy and Beers, 1868, Delaware City—Port of History; Federal Writers' Project—Delaware; Donna Federanko, Penns Grove and Carneys Point; Ralph D. Gray, The National Waterway, A History of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal, 1769-1965; Carol E. Hofecker, Delaware—A Bicentennial History; The New York Times; J. Thomas Scharf, History of Delaware, University of Delaware Special Collections; University of Guelph, Ontario