

surrounding marsh, yet it still holds its tree-crowned head many feet above the meadows, on its summit stand several red cedar trees, which the oldest inhabitant says have graced its brow since his earliest remembrance. This hummock is composed of earth and the shells of shell-fish, which the Indians must have caught in the adjacent waters and heaped there for some purpose unknown to us. One would suppose they would have scattered the shells near the bay shore, instead of carrying them a considerable distance and putting them all together in one vast circular heap. It is probable that at this time the upland was much nearer the bay than it is at present, so that when the foundation of the hummock was laid it was on the upland, and intended as a burial place for the Indian dead, as there have been human bones found in similar though smaller mounds in other sections of Egg Harbor. These Indian burial mounds, contained perhaps, the dust of a people who lived, died and were buried, ages before Columbus dreamed his first day-dream of a Western world.

On the farms along the sea coast of Egg Harbor, the farmer, in turning up the soil, often finds implements, such as arrow heads, spears or darts, stone hatchets, sling stones and other relics, which once belonged to the aboriginal inhabitants.

There is a tradition handed down from the Indians to the first white settlers, that many years before the Europeans visited Egg Harbor, there was a tribe of Indians residing at Leeds' Point, in Atlantic county, another on Osborn's and Wills' Islands, in Little Egg Harbor, and still another tribe, who were located at Mannahawkin, in Ocean county. Between the Leeds' Point and the Egg Harbor tribes there existed a bitter hostility. At that time there was an Indian village on what is now called Zebedee M. Wills' Island. The village was situated on that portion of the island known as the Mulberry field, and one night when the inhabitants of the village island were sleeping in apparent security, the Leeds' Point warriors crossed over Mullica river, and taking their slumbering foes by surprise, massacred them all, except one man, who fled unnoticed by the enemy, and went to Mannahawkin, and informed the chief of the Mannahawkin tribe of the disaster which had befallen his tribe, and requested the aid of his warriors in avenging the wholesale murder of his friends.

The chief of the Mannahawkins called a council of war, and it was unanimously agreed upon to assist their unfortunate neighbor. The Mannahawkin braves painted and armed themselves, and marched for the scene of carnage, which they reached the next night after the fatal skirmish, and found the victorious warriors singing and dancing and "making night hideous," as they exulted over their slain and scalped enemies. The Mannahawkin warriors stealthily marched around the island to the eastern shore of Mullica river, where they took possession of the canoes of the Leeds' Point warriors, and after placing a guard

over them, the braves rushed in among the unsuspecting revellers, slaying them on every hand. Those of the enemy who fled to their canoes found them in possession of the guard, who dealt such death blows among them that in a short time there was not a Leeds' Point warrior left to tell the history of the battle. Mulberry field, where the battle took place, has always been remarkable for the fertility of the soil, owing, no doubt, to its being enriched with the blood of so many slain, and further from being the site of an Indian village. Near the field were several small mounds, and several years ago a farmer who owned the Island farm resolved on turning these mounds to a profitable account, and accordingly removed them and scattered their contents over his land for purposes of fertilization. In digging into these mounds many human bones were discovered, there being alternate layers of bones, earth and shells; the bones, on being exposed to the air, rapidly mouldered to dust. Mingled with the bones were a number of savage implements, which had doubtless, according to Indian custom, been buried with the dead in order to be conveyed with them to the "Land of Shadows."

Ashatama was an ancient and honorable name among the Indians of Egg Harbor. The last Indian of this tribe who had a residence in the place, was Elisha Ashatama, his mother's name was Nancy Ashatama, and he also had a sister Nancy, who was one of the settlers of Oneida lake.

Elisha Ashatama and his mother and a few other of the Edge-pe-lick Indians refused to go with the company, that emigrated to Oneida lake, and the few who were left behind kept up the ancient custom of visiting the sea-shore.

Elisha Ashatama and his friends continued their annual visits to the sea-shore until the war of 1812, when Elisha, (according to his own account,) went on board the renowned war vessel, the Chesapeake, and partook of his share of the good and bad fortunes of that celebrated craft.

Elisha was gone from home five years, and his wife (Patty,) supposing herself a widow, married a mulatto, and became the mother of a child in whose veins coursed the blood of three races.

At the expiration of five years Elisha returned and found his wife living with her mulatto spouse. He drove off the intruder and took Patty to himself, but whenever he was intoxicated, he would abuse his wife about her negro husband. On a certain time when he and his friends had been on a visit to the sea-shore, and were on their return home, they encamped for the night on the "plains" where they held an Indian cantico, being well supplied with whiskey which contributed greatly to the enjoyments of their uncouth revels. Next morning when they were about to resume their journey, it was ascertained that Patty's mulatto child was missing, and their search for it proved

unsuccessful. It was supposed that Elisha, while his mind was influenced with liquor, had murdered the child, and concealed it in some thicket or pond. Some years after the circumstance just narrated, Elisha Ashatama and another Indian named Job, came to Egg Harbor and took up their abode. Elisha's companion Job said the cause of Elisha's coming to reside at Egg Harbor, was that in a drunken fit he had murdered his wife to be avenged on her for marrying during his absence, and further, that when his wife's kindred discovered the murder, they were for serving him in the same manner, and to avoid their wrath he fled from them and came to the shore.

Shortly after his arrival, Job being under the influence of liquor, was drowned in Tuckerton creek.

Soon after his coming to Egg Harbor Elisha Ashatama built a rude hut or wigwam on Flax Island, where he resided a number of years, and followed his trade of making baskets and selling them to the inhabitants of the surrounding country. He was indeed a proficient in the art of basket making. He was skilled in the medical prescriptions of his race, and often prescribed for those who had faith in his rude practice. About the year 1833 or 1834, Elisha was (while intoxicated) drowned in Mullica river—near the gravelling. He was buried in the Methodist graveyard at Tuckerton.

The following table is a specimen of the arithmetic of the Egg Harbor Indians. It is affirmed that these numbers comprised the whole of their knowledge in numeration. In the following manner they counted twenty and commenced again at one and counted twenty, which was their highest number, so if they desired to count an hundred, they counted twenty, five times.

INDIAN METHOD OF COUNTING TWENTY.

Cooti, 1; Nishi, 2; Nawhaw, 3; Nayway, 4; Plainah, 5; Hosh, 6; Coot-Hosh, 7; Nish-Hosh, 8; Pesh-Konk, 9; Tellon, 10; Tellon-Cooti, 10 and 1, or 11; Tellon-Nishi, 10 2, 12, Tellon-Nawhaw, 10 3, 13; Tellon-Nayway, 10 4, 14; Tellon-Plainah, 10 5, 15; Tellon-Hosh, 10 6, 16; Tellon-Coot-Hosh, 10 7, 17; Tellon-Nish-Hosh, 10 8, 18; Tellon-Pesh-Kong, 10 9, 19; Tellon-Tellon, 10 10, 20.