

# Shipwrecks a continuing saga locally

This past Fourth of July, two boats ran up on Dick Rock approaching High and Governor's Islands in the Thimbles. A number of vessels throughout history have had difficulty navigating Branford's waters.

The most famous of Branford's shipwrecks was that of the "Jenny Lind," a 70-foot schooner from Sag Harbor that hit Morris Rocks off Sumac Island in Indian Neck on July 12, 1878.



PICTURES  
OF THE PAST

Jane Peterson Bouley

The schooner sunk and scattered its cargo of pine boards into the Sound. The crew abandoned ship and were rescued by a passing fishing boat. George Averill laid claim to the boat and hauled it to the shore at the end of Linden Avenue. The boat was converted into a restaurant known as the "Ark," which served shoreline dinners for many years.

A two-masted schooner from New York, the "Amelia Wright," sprung a leak in November 1899 off the Branford Beacon and its cargo of bricks destined for New London soon soaked up the water. Capt. Hallock and two crew members were saved by a passing fisherman, but the boat was never raised. Two months later the barge "Roger" turned upside down off the Branford Beacon, dumping 500 tons of coal into the water. The barge drifted east and went ashore at Race Point and was towed to New London.

The Dec. 1, 1900 *Branford Opinion* reported that Capt. Simon Lake of Bridgeport in the "Argonaut" was out looking for treasure in the Thimbles. The barge "Gypsy Girl" filled with cooper ingots sank several years before and the treasure had never been found. There was no further report of Capt. Lake's findings. Brown, East and Wheaton Reefs southwest of Outer Island claimed a number of vessels at the turn of the century. A bill was introduced in 1907 to have the state erect a lighthouse because of the many wrecks. The bill did not pass because of the cost.

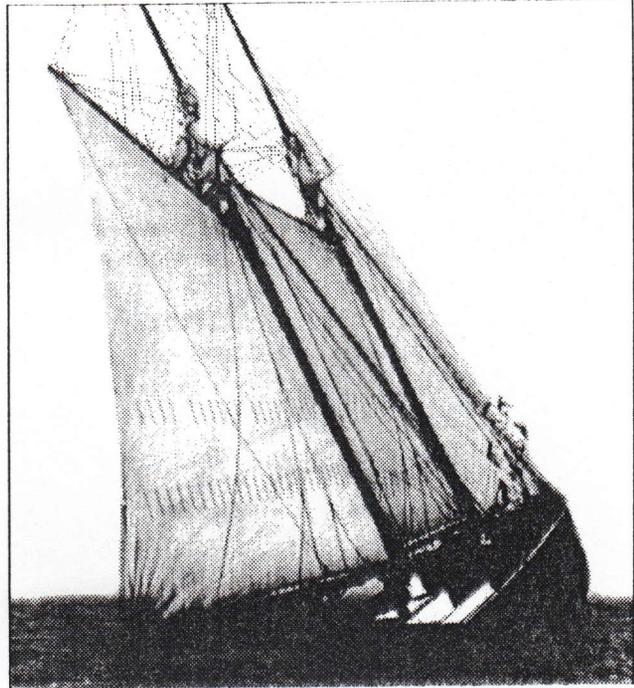


Photo courtesy Branford Historical Society

*The two-masted schooner "The Traveler" carrying 2,500 tons of brownstone, struck Brown's Reef off Outer Island in 1907 and sank. Photo taken by Harlan C. Paige.*

Another two-masted schooner, "Mary Buck," carrying 10,000 bricks enroute to Bridgeport was wrecked March 1906 on Flat Rock off Johnson's Point in a gale and blinding snowstorm. Capt. Dunn and four crew members were saved.

"The Traveler" was a two-masted schooner built by David Mack of Essex in 1869. During August 1907, it was carrying 25 blocks of brownstone weighing 10 tons each from Portland, Conn., to New York. The schooner ran into Brown's Reef in heavy fog at night and the hole in the side filled with water and the boat sank. About 15 blocks and the crew were saved when the wreck was abandoned. Some of the ship remained in view until it disappeared in a gale on Sept. 23.

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Jane Peterson Bouley is town historian for the town of Branford.*