“OCEAN BORN MARY”

In the May, 1902, issue of the Granite Monthly is a poem relative to Mary Wilson Wallace and how the now famous “Ocean Mary House” got its name.

The basis of this story appears in the Henniker Town History and is told in writing by Mrs. Ida J. Graves, who was the last written about it since the publication in the town history as far as the writer knows.

The result was that much interest soon became manifest in this bit of history and many visitors come to see this place annually and it is reported that the present owners purchased this residence through reading this poem. This has been many times copied and retailed.

There have been many requests for copies of this poem, the original wording of which is given:

MARY WILSON WALLACE

Born on passage to this country July 23, 1720.


“Elizabeth,” spoke James Wilson,

To his bride of nearly a year;

“Could you leave our home in Ireland

With scarce a regretful tear?

We are young with our lives before

us,

Each of us brave and true,

Shall we go to seek our fortunes

Far away o’er the ocean blue?”

“An emigrant ship is coming,

A ship of the very best class;

Our neighbors and friends are going,

Shall you and I go, my love?”

“My Jamie,” the young wife answered;

“You surely must know what is best,”

So when the good ship sails away,

We will go along with the rest.”

It was then in early springtime,

And one sunny June day.

They, on the deck of the vessel,

Watched Ireland’s shore fade away

With pensive heart, and looking far,

Toward the glories and the home

They hie to, o’er the deep blue main,

When, at the close of a sultry day,

A strange craft sailed near and nearer.

With a full set of canvas gray.

Not more than a dozen masts—

Heavily laden and slow—

The emigrant ship was powerless.

There was only one thing to do—

Nothing else to do so she waited—

Watts, but not very long.

For soon alongside came the robbers—

A heavy crew and cruel through,

Over the deck of the good ship

Swarmed the pirates as men who knew

Their unhappy business of plundering—

Hanging officers and crew.

While on the babe’s face fell a tear.

Oh! tiny ocean-born baby,

Your presence was timely indeed;

You softened the heart of the pirate.

A little child surely did lead!

“Now loose all the captives,” he ordered,

“And goods and money restore

We’ll go aboard our won vessel

And trouble these people no more.”

The astonished emigrants, grateful

That their lives had been spared that day,

Thanked God for their timely deliverance,

And joyfully went on their way.

But scarce had the good ship started

On her lonely ocean track,

When the emigrants were dismayed to see

That the pirate was coming back.

He came on board alone, and went

To the berth where the baby lay,

And placing a parcel near her

Said, “For Mary’s wedding day!”

He kissed the hand of the baby,

Kneel’d a moment on the floor,

Then, his eyes with tears overflow’d,

Left the ship and was seen no more.

The ship, with fair winds and God’s favor

Came to port ere many days.

And for years there was thanksgiving

To God, “who by wondrous care brought this people safe to our shore.”

James Wilson died soon, they relate—

And Elizabeth with baby Mary

Came to our Granite State.

A hundred and seventy years ago,

In good Londonderry town,

Ocean Mary was married;

The pirate’s gift was her own.

Four sons were born to Mary;

In a town where hills abound,

One built by far the grandest house

In all the country round.

There in the town of Henniker,

Ocean Mary lived many years

Having her share with others

Of sweet happiness and tears,

And there in a quiet churchyard,

Her body is laid away,

Safe from perils of sea or land,

Awaiting the judgment day.

(Written May 10, 1895, by

Mrs. Arthur C. Graves.)

The following item accompanied the earlier publication of this poem:

People of this town regret to learn of the death of Judge H. M.
Now, God of the brave, watch over them!  
For the distance is surely great  
From Londonderry in Ireland  
To the same in our own Granite State.

The journey was partly accomplished.  
When, at the close of a sultry day,  
A strange craft sailed near and nearer,  
With all the sense of canvas-gray.  
Not more than a dozen muskets—  
Heavily laden and slow—  
The emigrant ship was powerless.  
There was only one thing to do.

Nothing else to do so she waited—  
Waited, but not very long.  
For soon alongside came the robbers—  
A heartless and cruel throng.  
Over the deck of the good ship  
Swarmed the pirates as men who knew  
Their unholiness of plundering—  
Binding officers and crew.

To search the officers' quarters  
The pirate chief went.  
To add a few more trophies  
Was doubtless his only intent.  
But seeing a woman lying  
On a berth just inside the place,  
"Why are you there?" he cried roughly.  
"See," and she showed him her baby's face.

The rough old robber came nearer—  
"A boy or a girl?" he cried.  
"A girl," whispered the mother,  
For she was sore afraid.  
"Have you named her?"—"No."  
He took up the babe's tiny hand.  
"May I name her? If I may  
I will go, taking all of my band.

"We will leave unharmed both ship  
and men.  
I am only a robber wild,  
But my word is good and I give it  
If I may but name the child."

"Name her," said Elizabeth gently.  
And, so softly she scarce could hear,  
He whispered, "I name her Mary.

A hundred and seventy years ago.  
In good Londonderry town,  
Ocean Mary was married;  
The pirate's gift was her gown.  
Four sons were born to Mary.  
In a town where hills abound,  
One built by far the grandest house  
In all the country round.

There in the town of New London  
Ocean Mary lived many years  
Having her share with others  
Of sweet happiness and tears.  
And there in a quiet churchyard  
Her body is laid away,  
Safe from peril of sea or land,  
Awaiting the judgment-day."

(Written May 10, 1802, by  
Mrs. Arthur O. Graves.)

The following item accompanying the purchase of this paper:

People of this town regret to learn of the death of Judge R. M.  
Wallace of Milford, a native of this town who spent much of his summer vacation here. A sketch of