

**THE LAST PENACOOK:  
A TALE OF  
PROVINCIAL TIMES**

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The Last Penacook: A Tale of Provincial Times by Abel B. Berry

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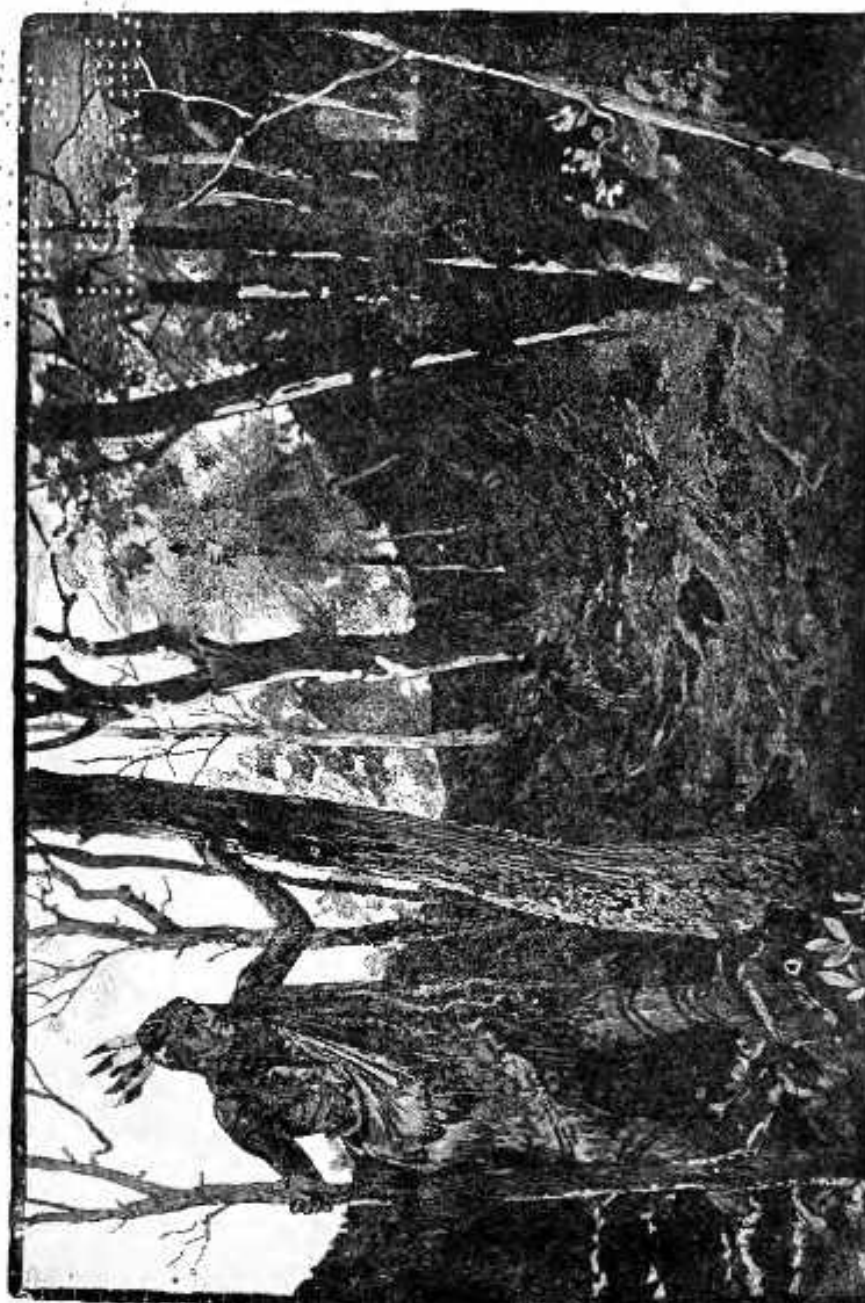
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**ABEL B. BERRY**

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PROVINCIAL TIMES**





# THE LAST PENACOOK

A TALE OF PROVINCIAL TIMES

BY  
ABEL B. BERRY

UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA



BOSTON  
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## THE LAST PENACOOK.

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CHAPTER I.

## STRANGE VISITORS.

SOMEWHERE on the coast of New Jersey, during the early part of the last half of the last century, there stood a little rude hut, so near the surf-beaten shore, that it was often drenched, when storms were abroad, with the salt spray of the dashing waves.

The location of the little dwelling was a peculiar one. It stood at the head of a little bay, across the entrance of which, except on one side, was a low reef of rocks, but high enough not to be wholly covered at flood tide, unless at times when the tide was very high. A sandy and gravel beach a few feet high rises up from the water's edge at high tide, and upon this stood the little cabin, its door, when open, command-

ing a view of the open sea. A few rods back of the cabin rose low, sandy, and mostly barren hills or dunes. The place altogether had a barren, desolate and unpropitious aspect. The wonder was, that any human being should select such a spot for habitation.

The cabin itself seemed made mostly of drift-wood and poles, and yet was devoid wholly of the appearance of squalor and degradation, usually observable around places of poverty and want. The inmates of this humble dwelling were a man about thirty years old, and his wife, somewhat younger, and one child, a feeble, puny little boy four or five years of age, who required the most assiduous care to keep alive in his feeble frame the flickering flame of life. The father was a mild-tempered man, tall, slender, and slightly round-shouldered. His light hair and rather fair complexion gave him almost a youthful look. The light of his clear blue eye showed that he was not of that hopeless, shiftless, worthless class known as poor whites of a later generation, and the wonder would arise at once, why was he content to dwell in this forlorn and desolate place?