

Dispatch 5/18/77

Reveal bits of Bayonne in time-worn cemetery

By MARTIN GOLAN

Hidden beside huge oil holding tanks in the Hook industrial section lies a piece of Bayonne history: a tiny graveyard whose thin, timeworn stones read like a Who's Who of Bayonne's past.

Visited once a year by local war veterans who decorate and place flowers on the graves, and several times a year by teenage vandals who climb fences to damage the ancient tombstones, the Constable Hook Graveyard holds in a single stretch of overgrown earth a panorama of Bayonne history.

William Wernicke is 84 years old, and for 50 years the World War I veteran has been visiting the Constable Hook Graveyard to honor the dead buried there.

"Some of the graves date back to the 1700s," said Wernicke, who went there yesterday with other members of Bayonne's MacKenzie American Legion Post 165, in preparation for Memorial Day observances.

Wernicke, who is chairman of the Bayonne Veterans Day Committee, said that some of the dead in the graveyard are Civil War veterans, while others fought in the Spanish-American War.

Miniature American flags were set in the ground yesterday near a dozen graves. Some

of the wafer-thin head stones have been broken by time and the elements.

Others were disfigured by vandals.

"It's a bunch of kids who sneak in here at night," said a spokesman for the area's industry, which owns all the land around the cemetery and is not eager for any publicity that might attract those who find pleasure in destroying priceless head stones.

The many oil tanks that tower above are evidence of Bayonne's present use of the land for heavy industry. But the names still legible on the ancient stones are reminders of Constable Hook in centuries gone by.

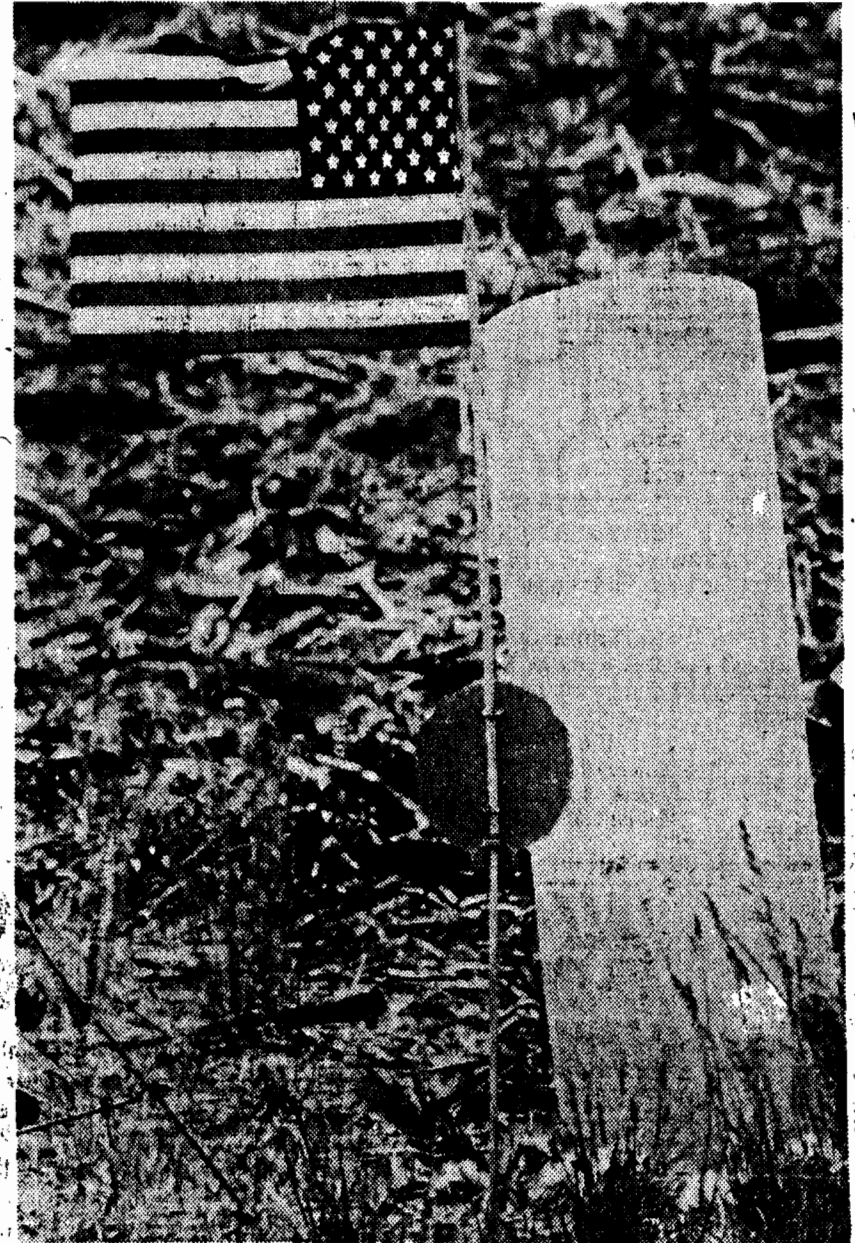
One stone reads: James J. Van Boskerck
23 Dec. 1840
9 Feb. 1891

Those familiar with the city's history know that the Van Buskirks (an Americanized version of Van Boskerck), owned a farm on Hook rd., in addition to many acres of the peninsula. Another stone reads:

Wife of C. Cadmus
Died May 25, 1881
Aged 65 years
At Rest

The Cadmus family was also prominent in Bayonne history. They owned virtually all the land north of 33rd st., on the East side.

(Continued on page 2)



Dispatch 5/18/77

Cemetery tells Bayonne history

(Continued from page 1)

The problems with vandals was not halted when a barbed wire fence was erected to protect the area. The industry spokesman said he would still find damage to the graves

I don't know how anyone can get their kicks doing this," he said. Yesterday, the sun was hot. The odor of oil was in the air. Tiny American flags stood on a dozen graves, along with red, white and blue