

The Bayonne Times, Friday, May 22, 1964

Verrazano Came Here Before Hudson

More than 100 years after the first white man gazed on the east shore of what is now Bayonne the first settlers took up permanent residence here.

Giovanni de Verrazano, a Florentine in the service of Francis I, King of France, sailed into New York Harbor as early as 1524 and is credited by some historians as being the first white man to set eyes on Bayonne.

Indians Attack

In September of 1609 Henry Hudson, while sailing in the Half Moon through the Narrows, found a swift-flowing river to the westward between two islands — the Kill Van Kull.

Reports state that Hudson and some crew members went through the Kills in a small boat far enough to see Newark Bay. On their return they were attacked by 28 Indians in two canoes at a point off the shore of what is now Killeen Park. One of the seamen was killed by an arrow.

There is no record, however, of Hudson or any of his crew setting foot on Bayonne.

After Hudson's 1609 voyage, the Dutch claimed all the land from the Connecticut River to the Delaware. In 1630 they granted to Michael Pauw, a

wealthy Hollander, a tract of land on the west shore of the Hudson stretching from Hoboken to Staten Island. Farms and trading posts soon sprang up in what is now Jersey City.

Constable Hook Grant

The earliest record referring to the Bayonne section is dated March, 1648, when a grant of land at Constable Hook was granted to Jacob J. Roy, a gunner at Fort Amsterdam. However, indications are that Roy never settled here and that Constable Hook was not inhabited by white settlers until 1664.

In 1654, the Dutch governor, Peter Stuyvesant, gave to seven workers in the Dutch West India Company land grants of about 50 acres each in what is now upper Bayonne. This area was called "Pamrapo" by the Indians.

But the stay of these Dutchmen turned out to be a short one. Indians attacked their settlement and the survivors fled to Fort Amsterdam in Manhattan, where they remained for about five years.

Governor Stuyvesant wisely made peace with the rampaging Indians by purchasing all their lands between the Hudson and Hackensack Rivers in 1658.

Sensing the danger of isolated farms and homes, Stuyvesant ordered his surveyor to lay out a square fortified village at what is now Bergen Square.

Around this square was founded and built the village of Bergen, the first permanent settlement in New Jersey, and from the period 1661 to 1861 the Bayonne peninsula was the southern part of the township.

English Conquest

In 1664, the English seized New Amsterdam, renaming it New York. The Dutch Township of Bergen became part of the British colony of New Jersey.

All the residents of the Dutch township became British subjects, and soon after English and Scottish settlers began arriving in the area.

By 1680, about two dozen houses dotted the eastern shore of upper Bayonne. The peninsula was on its way to development.