

Part of What the World Did not Know Until Now...

November 19, 1946

The history of Bayonne, New Jersey, dates from the time of the first white settlements in this country.



We have it on the authority of Bayonne's Historical Society that the ancient mouth of the Hudson River, beginning at a place which is now Piermont, N.Y., covered the Hackensack meadows and the low lands back to the Orange Mountains so that Newark, Elizabeth, Hackensack, Jersey City and Bayonne among other present communities stand where all was once water.



The fabulous Hudson, which includes Rip van Winkle, had a double channel one time, one east of the Palisades and the other west. A glacier changed all that, slowly grinding its rumbling way down into the sea where it melted, dragging a deposit of pulverized rock, pebbles, stones, silt and like matter to leave a peninsula now Bayonne.



Naturally enough, the first humans to establish here were Indians, the Delaware or Lennape tribes: peaceable, friendly hunters and fishermen. They were trailed by the Mohawks and other notoriously savage tribes who found them easy prey in raids which were inspired by lust and jealousy.



The first settlers in Bayonne, New Jersey were mainly from Holland, came to Bayonne from “New Amsterdam” which is now New York City. They crossed New York Bay to Bayonne in 1655.



It was at Constable Hook, Bayonne that Henry Hudson after leaving his famous vessel, the “Half Moon” on September 11, 1609 first set forth on American soil.

He had an interesting but confusing visit. The Indians here professed complete ignorance of Jean and Sebastian Cabot who claimed they discovered New York Harbor in 1497; of Jean de Verrazzano who said he visited here in 1524; of Estevan Gomez who told the old world of our harbor in 1525; of the Dutch who represented the Greenland Company and insisted that they were here in 1598.



Significantly, the first person to receive a land grant in Bayonne—1646 was John Jacobson Roy, a disabled gunner at Fort Amsterdam. Today—1946 Bayonne, New Jersey is nationally recognized for its progressive veterans housing activities.



In 1700 the pioneer house was erected in Bayonne at “Constable Hook” by one of the Van Buskirk family.

“Constable Hook” was originally intended to be called “Konstaple” which in Dutch, means “gunner” and was in honor of Gunner Jacob Roy.



During the Revolutionary war Bayonne was the scene of frequent military skirmishes in the vital move to take and hold what is now New York City.



When George Washington was inaugurated in New York he was transported by boat from Elisabethport through the Kill van Kull and Bayonne people lined the shore at 1st Street to cheer him and receive his appreciative hand wave.



General William L. Morris, a Mexican War Veteran lived on West 8th Street Bayonne and liked to tell of the \$340,000 his father raised from Irish-American members of the “Friendly Sons of Saint Patrick” which was handed to George Washington when he needed it most. Washington proudly accepted honorary membership in the society.



Bayonne, too had its stagecoach in the dear, dead days beyond recall but old codgers like to tell the story of the trolley car pulled by mules. When the one-man crew neglected the pot-stove in the chilled car the passengers spit up the wooden seats for fuel.



Once upon a time Bayonne people desiring to reach Staten Island had to use a rowboat. Later a flatboat or scow was put into use for the main purpose of ferrying the New York to Philadelphia stagecoach across the Kill van Kull (meaning “the stream of the bay”). Today a ferry and the world’s longest arch bridge serve the public.



Bayonne today boast of one of the most modern of street lighting systems.

Not so in 1871 when folks traveled after dark with their own hand lanterns. Then Bayonne got gas-lit streetlights, one to each block. A paid agent lit the lamps at night and put them out at dawn.



Believe it or not, the worldwide famous duPont family helped to settle and sprung from Bayonne, New Jersey. Admiral Samuel duPont, who commanded the famed frigate "Constitution" 1821 was born in Bayonne.

The LaTourette house originally owned by the DuPont family, in 1803 the birthplace of Admiral duPont, passed through several hands. It acquired an east and west wing making a spacious hotel and thus became the pioneer of New Jersey's coastline resorts.



Little old Bayonne grew up in 1861 and by an act of the New Jersey Legislature, all her various sections were turned into a Township.

And then, on April 26, 1869 Bayonne said "I'm a big girl now." That day she became a City.

The name of Bayonne's first Mayor was Henry Meigs (Meggs) Jr. He was a "modern" for that era—to such an extent that, at the instigation of his son who was quite a "blade" he had a resolution passed which permitted the ladies to shorten their skirts.

Elected with Meigs were William D. Myers, Police Recorder; Rufus Story and William Baumont, Councilmen 1st Ward; Jacob R. Schuyler and Charles C. Hough, Councilmen 2nd Ward; John Combs and Joseph Elsworth, Councilmen 3rd Ward.



Bayonne's first little red schoolhouse was set up in 1857. Today Bayonne proudly boasts of a school system second to none. In addition to its grammar schools it has a Binet School for backward pupils; the very best school in vocational training. Junior and Senior High Schools and a new Junior College where veterans are making up for lost time.

Prior to 1892 for several years, Bayonne Schools 2, 4, and 6 had what appears to have been the first two years of high school education. In 1892 these classes were merged and high school classes firmly established in an old church building at 29th Street and Avenue E, later being moved to Schuyler Hall.

At the close of 1851 Bayonne had three districts schools: one on what is now Broadway near 29th Street, another on Avenue E at the junction of Grand and Centre Streets and the third at First Street.



Bayonne's streets are well paved today. But once upon a time the main thoroughfare was comprised of planks and a celebration was held when the business block at Cottage Street was laid out with stones.



The trunk line system used by railroads today was originated by Solon Humphreys who lived in Bayonne.



To the consternation of sports writers several sections of our nation continue to wrangle over the birthplace of Abner Doubleday's "brain child"—the national pastime, baseball. In Bayonne Abner was addressed as "General" and he had plenty trouble getting kids to make up a "nine" for a game that then seemed too rough.



The first newspaper published in Bayonne was the Herald and Greenville Register in 1869, when a death in the community was a spread line feature.



With a population of 10,000 people electric streetlights were installed in Bayonne 1888.



Billy Mann, a retired letter carrier in Bayonne and once an outstanding track athletic served personal mail to Mrs. Leslie Carter at the old LaTourette Hotel. He agrees with old-timers such as John L. Collins, who claim that Mrs. Carter had not been surpassed on the American stage.



Sarah Frances Front was a kid from England sent to a lady named Ada Dow who lived at 2nd Street and Broadway, Bayonne. Sarah had talent, and Ada could tutor. It took a long time but eventually Sarah became the famous Julia Marlowe.



Fred Hoey who founded the American Express Company worked it out on a kitchen table in Bayonne.



General Hugh Drum, Commander of the Eastern District lived at West 6th Street, Bayonne.



Those of us who sport store teeth might well pause and give a moment of thanks to a Doctor Parmely who many years ago introduced by way of Bayonne the first enamel artificial teeth.



Samuel J. Seabury, Lt. Commander U.S.N. invented the gun sight. He lived at 128 West 8th Street.



The free Public Library in Bayonne was organized in 1893. Eleven years later Andrew Carnegie, noted steel man and philanthropist, holding to his hobby, provided funds for a library building and in 1913 gave an additional gift to enlarge the building. Bayonne's library today through local support features 700,000 volumes a years with particular attention to the technical needs of the city. Miss Mary Peters is librarian. The building is considered an artistic "must" for any Bayonne visitor.



Bayonne is proud of a daughter named Dvora Nadworney who resided at West 51st Street. The talented lady made operatic heights in the Chicago Civic Company, San Carlo Opera Company, grouped at times with Mary Lewis and Reinald Werrenrath.



Bayonne insists that William Donnelly originated the "place kick" in football when the "drop kick" was orthodox.



Many years ago a brilliant writer whose right name was "Clemens" but who, for reason best know to himself will forever be known as Mark Twain, watched the rushing tides of the Kill van Kull, Bayonne, from the porch of Hotel LaTourette and then proceeded to write "Huckleberry Fin" which had to do with the more or less peaceful Mississippi River.



The first established manufacturing company in Bayonne was E.C. Hazard's powder works, 1750. Note that last name!



In 1888 most of our cross streets were changed from all sorts of confusing names to numbers (the avenues remaining lettered) and the houses were given numbers for purposes of address.

Four small post offices were consolidated at West 8th Street, and carrier delivery inaugurated in May, 1889.



Bayonne's population was 1100 in 1861 and jumped to 2500 in 1869. In 1915 the Mayor and Council form of government was replaced by the present Commission form. That idea originated at a meeting of the First Reformed Churchmen's Club when Mayor Reichelm reported on the system as studied by him in Des Moines, Iowa. Woodrow Wilson, then Governor of New Jersey, came into Bayonne to urge its adoption.



Bayonne, N.J., is "home base" for research laboratory and most important of several plants under guidance of General Cable Corporation, the world's largest manufacturing concern of electrical wires and cables. Its Bayonne employees at the turn of this century pioneered in the development of rubber covered submarine telephone lines laid from Seattle to Sitka, Alaska and another which joined the United States with Mexico. The General Cable Corporation is preeminent in the high voltage underground cable field. The sudden outbreak of an unwelcome war in 1941 found General Cable Corporation calling upon its Bayonne employees—skilled in the manufacture of complicated electrical conductors, a laboratory staffed by engineers, chemists, physicists, and metallurgists—for an unprecedented task. Out of that emergency came—right here in Bayonne—use of synthetic rubber, plastics, wires for radar, flexible lead pipe under the English Channel for General Patton's tank, truck, and plane fueling.

The armies and navies of the United Nations can best tell the story of Bayonne's General Cable as to field and maritime wiring and cabling so vital to victory in the last war.

But they cannot, and would not describe the delicate cables developed in Bayonne which were so vital in the making of the atomic bomb.



The F.W. Fitch Company, founded over 50 years ago in Des Moines, Iowa, made its second move of importance in a plan of expansion by locating an Eastern plant in Bayonne.

The Fitch Company, which for 22 years over N.B.C. has been attending to the hirsute grooming of the male species, did a great job out of Bayonne during the late war. In addition to forwarding several million bottles of Fitch products the busy concern packed millions of pounds of the vital DDT for a nearby concern, which ultimately went where it could best help win the battle.



Old-timers in Bayonne are persistent in the belief that a man named Holland tried out a new-fangled gadget which he termed a "submarine" and practiced with his invention in the Kill van Kull. They claim it had fair success. But we moderns can certainly claim that the Electro-Dynamic Company of Bayonne had a fine technical hand in designing and building the motors of "The Plunger," first U.S. Submarine, 1895. And we can take the word of Bayonne employees in the same company that they have been on top of the blueprint designs and construction of all that submarines, battleships, cruisers, destroyers, mine sweepers, etc., needed in electric motors and generators, since and during the last two wars.

In Bayonne this enterprise is warmly referred to as "The Elco," more so now than ever before since it was a Bayonne "Elco" P.T. Boat, with a hard-boiled

commander named John Bulkeley at the controls, thundered away from the Japanese besieged Philippines with a man named MacArthur, under orders of the Commander-in-Chief...President Roosevelt.



The unpretentious steel barrel made by the Rheem Manufacturing Company in Bayonne could tell a thrilling story, if it could talk. It might even boast that within an hour from the time its original flat sheet of steel was fed into the roller, bent into a cylinder, welded, turned and curled, reinforced, given a top and bottom, inspected, washed, painted, bakes—within that hour it was on a truck ready for service. And that service could mean carrying the world's supply of gasoline, oil, other petroleum products, chemicals, dyes, paints, varnishes, vegetable oils, liquid foods, soaps, fats, etc.

In Bayonne it is proudly referred to as the "Atlas" Steel Barrel. During the war it was dropped fully loaded in flight to ground and dock. Neither intensive heat nor extreme cold put it out of commission. It was used in emergency for floats, roofs, small docks, washing machines, fox holes, shower baths, water pipes, water towers, building sides, solar tanks, and innumerable purposes for which it was not originally intended.



The Maiden Form Brassiere Company, Bayonne, dealing with countries throughout the world stepped completely out of character when the last war broke out.

Approximately 3,000,000 essential (but male) items were put under way in that national emergency. They included head nets, mosquito bars, other insect bars, mattress covers, bush shirts, etc. and pigeon belts. The latter were used by paratroopers for comfort and safety of their messenger birds when these fighting men dropped from high sky to enemy earth. Maiden Form, Bayonne, designed, perfected and manufactured the "pigeon vests" exclusively.



"Brevity is the soul of wit," it has been said. And wit can be wisdom, too! The American Radiator and Standard Sanitary Corporation modestly, briefly claims it is "Serving the Nation's Health and Comfort." Truly, it is—once again.

But during the last two wars in which this country was involved it regeared to the production of naval guns and gun mechanisms; 46,000,000 cast iron bomb nose inserts for magnesium incendiary bombs; 2,600,000 magnesium bomb bodies!

Next time you turn on your radiator, that sound you'll get will be a well-earned cheer from a Bayonne plant—the largest in the world for manufacture of cast iron radiation and which concern like so many others, in Bayonne, helped in the vital matters of "health and comfort" by way of quick victory for our armed forces.



The Pharma Chemical Corporation of Bayonne has two very human and important time-stories of its own history to tell if the concern so desired. We tell all of it here.

In 1918 when a terrifying “flu” epidemic broke out leaving death in its path “Pharma” produced in vast quantities a preventative drug. In the last war Atribine, an anti-malarial drug. It now is specializing on rayon, silk, cotton, and wool dyes.



The present Tide Water Associated Oil Company has been gladly feeling growing pains with Bayonne since 1888. Its latest big stretch was the erection of a twenty-three story Thermofor catalytic cracking unit—the most advanced in the world today—dominates the daytime landscape for miles around and stands out against the night sky like a giant Christmas tree. Its towering 235 feet are bedecked with more than 750 vari-colored light bulbs. It recently broke all worlds’ records for continuous operation by operating at full capacity for 240 days. It has been inspected by specialists from England, Russia, France, Holland, China, and Chile. Bayonne fondly refers to this massive modern machine as “Big Jinni” and, appropriately enough it was furnished for purposes of producing new high-powered motor fuels in 1945—at Christmas time.



Today every schoolchild in Bayonne fully understands the vital artery “Esso” is to the industrial life stream of the city. With the grownups—many of them employees of Standard Oil Company—they appreciate the fine record of the concern in supplying the refined fuel that kept ships sailing the seas, the planes flying the skies and the latest of land war machines. “Esso” lost vessels and with them many esteemed local citizens, giving up their lives in the hazardous task of feeding fuel to the armed forces. Here in Bayonne we rate Standard Oil Company

as the groundbreaker and therefore as the granddaddy of all our splendid industries.



Downtown Bayonne rates the Geigy Company, Inc., as an industrial institution not only interested in the city but likewise proud of the neighborhood in which it lives. Its painstaking care of the exterior as well as interior of its clean, neat, and modern buildings is a source of joy to dwellers in the immediate vicinity.

But all of Bayonne was thrilled with the discovery and development of the worldwide famous "D.D.T.," the insecticide that meant so much to our armed forces where it was needed most and meant so much in a battle against typhus-carrying winged enemies of mankind.

They Geigy Company, originating in Basile, Switzerland, in 1784 hit its high spot from Bayonne when in 1942 the U.S. Department of Agriculture verified its latest laboratory findings and later the armed forces virtually said, "You have something there!" They got it and from there on the bugaboo malaria was on retreat.

In addition to "D.D.T." Geigy concentrates on important dyestuffs and essential chemicals.



Bayonne is the home of a laboratory rated as the show place of its kind in the food industry of our Nation. Best Foods, Inc., tickles the palates of discerning diners with mayonnaise and margarine, the product and development of which are supervised in the local model plant. Next time you hear someone mention Nucoa

margarine, mayonnaise, French dressing, sandwich spread, Thousand Island dressing, mustard with horseradish call all of it something from your own hometown!

Best Foods, Inc., forgot our salads during the war to produce hydrogen, oxygen and concentrated foods for our men at war and the home front. Believe it or not, this food plant also turned out the shell dies for our 50-calibre machine guns!



The Texas Company exemplifies the determined spirit of Bayonne to “keep on going on.” In 1910 its warehouse and pump house burned down. Within a week they were rebuilt—only to burn down again within that time. From there on “Texaco” expanded: 50 percent of its occupied acreage today is filled in—or man-made—land. During the war Texas Company supplied to the Army, Navy, and Maritime services millions of barrels of high-octane gasoline, fuel oils and lubricants.



The Solar Manufacturing Corporation, one of the Nation’s top makers of capacitors (electric condensers) and radio noise filters came to Bayonne in 1936. During the war they earned the Army-Navy “E” four-starred flag, the coveted “E” award of the United States Navy Bureau of Ordinance—all of which were expressions of appreciation to Bayonne workers from a Nation in a do-or-die struggle for efforts in the production of radio and radar equipment; equally as important, the developing of ultra-tiny capacitors for use in the Navy’s “hush-hush” proximity fuse for anti-aircraft shells.



Every piece of mobile equipment: such as trucks, cars, jeeps and tanks used in the last war for service in Europe and African theatres of action was first tested, serviced in and shipped from Bayonne.



The greatest single contributing factor in the industrial growth of Bayonne has been its labor, and Bayonne is blessed with an abundance, doubly blessed with the spirit of cooperation which prevails between labor and capital. This cordial relationship has built Bayonne to an industrial preeminence otherwise unattainable. In a city of diversified industry such as Bayonne, there is a constant demand for workers skilled in every craft. Bayonne meets that demand through the unexcelled training it affords in the shops and laboratories of its technical and vocational schools. These are the reservoirs from which Bayonne industries constantly draw to meet their every need. This is indeed teamwork which pays off—to the workers in increased pay—to the industries in increased production—and to the community in increased prosperity. Bayonne salutes its working men and women.



Bayonne is justly proud of her sons and daughters who have compiled impressive records in the service of their country. From the days of the Revolution to World war II in which 11,000 men and women from Bayonne served in the armed forces of the United States, this community has been generous with its most cherished treasure—its sons and daughters. Many of its citizens, still living, served in the Spanish-America war; many more came home from the first World War to

form the nucleus of the fifteen or more Veterans' organizations which offer outstanding civic service to the community today.

Former Mayor James J. Donovan and Waclaw Solinski won the Distinguished Service Cross in World War I for heroic achievement while many others came home with other decorations. In fact, today every medal offered by the Army, Navy or Air Corps is worn by some Bayonne citizen. World War II gave this community two Congressional Medal of Honors men, Stephen Gregg and Nicholas Oresko, and two more Distinguished Service Crosses proudly worn by Michael Donovan and Angelo Squitieri.

Bayonne honors 261 men of all races, creeds and colors who did not come home from World War II—who gave their lives that freedom might live—who sleep in heroes' graves in far off lands throughout the world where there will forever be a bit of Bayonne. Those living who served in the armed forces of our wars at any time are civic leaders in Bayonne. They are as proud of their hometown and its splendid war record as their hometown is of them.



Bayonne salutes its newest industries, moving in with us within the year: General Products Company, Divera Sportswear Company, Kraft Container Company, Eldorado Company.



What might be Robert Ripley's greatest "Believe It or Not," is the story of the Bayonne Naval Base. To properly tell the story would require reams of space. Suffice it to say, it is one of the largest in the world—started in 1940 and completed

soon after the Pearl Harbor debacle to serve our country well. It was from here that food, clothing, and supplies were sent to every part of the world—from the insect-ridden tropical to the icebound lands of the Arctic. Transformed from a desolate mud flat, it is now and will always be a monument to our Navy's efficiency, skill and courage.



The progress and welfare of any American community is measured by the types of organizations extant in its community. Bayonne is the ideal melting pot of immigrants whose following generations have been thoroughly assimilated in our American way of life.

Bayonne's church organizations are active bodies. It is through the action of these groups that we have warded off any semblance of foreign ideologies creeping into our city's diversified assemblies and combined ambition.

