

Last of Indians in Bayonne Told to "Get Out" in 1840

Other Interesting Incidents in City's Early History Recalled

Bayonne Times 3/10/34 ?

Interesting facts about Bayonne's early days – some of the information little known—have been compiled by Earnest F. Hoyer of this city, who has been delving exhaustively into the city's beginnings.

After considerable investigation, Mr. Hoyer, is able to present the following as historically accurate facts:

The first white man, who set foot on the shores of what is now the Hook, was a seaman of Hendrik Hudson's ships the "Half Moon." His name was John Coleman and he died the day he came ashore on September 6, 1609. The Indians trapped him and he was killed with a shot through the throat from an arrow.

The last Indians in Bayonne, Captain William Vreeland, who was 84 years old in 1906, remembered that when he as a young man, about 1840, that several families of Mohawk Indians lived in Bayonne, who never worked. They lived off what they could steal from the farmers. A town meeting was held and they were told: To make themselves scarce, that the town people meant business and so get out and get out for good... That was the last of the Indians in the Bergen Point section.

The first Bayonne newspaper was printed in December 1869, and was called: "The Bayonne Herald."

The Lighthouse in the Kill was begun in 1847 and finished in 1849. Newark bay in those days was called "Achter Kull."

The first Protestant Church in Bayonne was erected at Twenty-ninth Street and Avenue D, (now Broadway) in 1827. The timber for it was cut from the land surrounding the property. The meeting, in which it was decided to build the church, was held in the house of Ms. Penelope Wauters.

Constable Hook, ("Konstable" means gunner) was originally called "Nipnichsen" by the Raritains, an Indian tribe who fished there. It was named after Jacob J. Roy, a gunner from Fort Amsterdam (New York City), who had received a grant of land including the Hook section in March 1646.

First Catholic Church

The first mass at St. Mary's Star of the Sea parish was celebrated in the house of John Welsh on Lord Avenue by the Rev. John Kelly of Saint Peter's Church, Jersey City, in 1852. Eight years later the first St. Mary's church was erected in 1860 on Evergreen Street by the Rev. James Callan of St. James Newark, and was made into a parish by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Baley in 1863, which appointed the Rt. Rev. Peter P. Niederhauser its first rector. In 1880, the Rev. Thomas M. Killen, who had come to Bayonne in 1876, erected the present church on Fourteenth Street and Avenue C.

The first St. Mary's school was opened in September 1879 on Evergreen Street with 40 children and five Sisters of St. Joseph. The building was abandoned in 1886 and a new schoolhouse was opened on Fourteenth Street with 700 children and eleven Sisters.

George Washington came through Bayonne, when he was on his way from Elizabethtown Point (Elizabeth Port) to New York City to be inaugurated as the first

President of our country. His state barge passed through the Kill Van Kull, both shores lined with singing school children and flag-waving people, in April 1789.

Slaves were made free by law in Bergen Point in 1820. The most of them remained with their former owners.

The first ferry from Staten Island to Bergen Point was operated by Jacob Corsen, who received the King's grant in September 1750. The stages to Philadelphia passed over his ferry.

The Bayonne police force was organized on August 31, 1869. George B. Whitney was appointed chief; Michael Connelly and C. van Horn were the first policemen. They were appointed by Bayonne's first mayor, Henry Miegs.

In 1872, Chief Whitney reported 225 arrests and also, that the number of places selling liquor was then 25 in the city limits. In 1895, the detective bureau was organized under Mayor William C Farr. In 1903 Chief Thomas Magner reported that the number of arrests had climbed to 1,962 and that 1,311 prisoners had been furnished with meals, costing the city 25 cents per prisoner.

In January 1904, the first police official board was created: Egbert Seymour, Samuel Graham, and John J. Cain were appointed "to hear and try charges against members of the police force." The salaries of the force in 1904 amounted to \$64,200. The present police headquarter was set up in September 1904, costing 457,471.

The Standard Oil Co. started the building of its refinery on Constable Hook in June 1877, the beginning of the present enormous plant. In 1892, the Bergen Neck Railway spur from Communipaw to Constable Hook was completed for the purpose of conveying oil and other products form the Hook.

In the night of the 4 or 5 of July 1901, a number of oil tanks exploded, having been struck by lightning and a disastrous fire raged for five days, destroying millions of gallons of oil and the greater part of the plant. Houses close were threatened and the people removed their household effects and camped out on the salt meadows.

Some of the devastating fires occurred in Bayonne from that time. In September 1902, the St. Luke Hospital on Twenty-second Street was totally destroyed.

In the same year, on December 19, fire destroyed a row of frame houses at Avenue C and Eighteenth Street, rendering 40 families homeless. The victims of this fire were mostly Hebrews.

January 24, 1904, fire again destroyed a row of frame houses in Twenty-second Street and 35 families were made homeless.

An explosion at the Case and Can Department of the Standard Oil Company on May 24, 1919, caused the death of six people and 14 were badly burned.

Recent big fires were the Nut and Bolt Plant, that burned for over 24 hours and started on the seventh of April 1928, and then the last big fire in the Gulf Co. in May 1930.