

Early History of Bayonne

Can you visualize the peninsula as they saw it that early morning? Heavy forests covered all that upland. Along the north shore and extending out to the mouth of the Hackensack River was a growth of meadow grasses and cattails far more extensive than it is now. Half way down the peninsula the marshland gave a to a shelving, white beach along which waters of the bay rippled and sparkled in the morning light. The center of the peninsula seemed much higher than now and in spots, giant hemlocks and buttonball trees reared their heads above the surrounding forest. Wild animals of all kinds made the forest their hiding place, for these beasts, like the Indians themselves, traveled an open trail for many miles, to reach the place for feeding upon the swarming fish, the millions of swans, geese, duck and pelican which built up the fatty tissues to sustain them during the months of winter.

It was toward the lower end of he peninsula that Pequona directed his canoe, rounding the point into the rushing water of what is now called the Kill Van Kull. Past the intended shoreline, beautiful with wild flowers, the songs of birds and the frequent call of animals, the canoe shot to near the point, which projected into the open water off Staten Island. On the shelving shore of what has since been named Constable Hook, Pequona drove his canoe and as he and the squaw leaped to the land he pulled the light vessel entirely from the water, hiding it skillfully in the bushes nearby.

Pequona's attitude changed as he strode forward toward the rising ground, which led to the hilltop crowning the Hook. He was again the mystic, and as he reached the hilltop he spread both arms upward and outward toward the east saying, sententiously to his squaw.

“This the place and soon the hour comes with big canoes and men of the rising sun land.”

The squaw made camp while Pequona sat silently on a fallen tree trunk, gazing steadily out across the water.

It was late October 1609, when the English maritime adventurer and explorer, Henry Hudson, first looked upon the white sand bar which we now call Sandy Hook.

The great harbor, which in three centuries since then has come the chief seaport of the world. Was not visible from the decks of the hardy explorers' vessel. He sailed south for several days but the unbroken white beach along the Jersey coast caused him to return. He was under engagement to the Dutch government to find the fabled western passage and was not to sail south of latitude 60. He was already south of that line, so the order was given to about ship and the small vessel turned and on the morning of September 3, rounded the white sand bar and under easy sail passed in toward the high land of Staten Island. Dusk found them still in the waters of the lower bay carefully feeling for safe channels toward more attractive western shore. The great explorer as well as members of his sea worn crew was full of excitement. They had obtained brief glimpses of darting canoes along Staten Island shore and their nostrils were filled with a fragrance of a teeming land, full of strange life, flowers and scented woods. They were all anxious to essay the risk of a landing, but with his customer precaution, Hudson ordered that no one take the hazard until he gave the order.

Five days were passed in the lower bay, the explorers seeking channels making soundings. Some of the canoes had approached with a short distance but the aborigines

were too much in awe of the great ship to be free of fear and when attempts were made to reach them in the ship's clumsy boats, the more graceful and swifter canoes darted off.

In one of the boats making these overtures, either friendship or of curiosity, was John Coleman, who succeeded in seizing the thwart of one of the canoes, but his act was not understood by the Indians and one of them resented the exhibition of force by shooting him through the neck with an arrow, inflicting a wound from which he died a few minutes later. His body was buried in one of the sand dunes on Sandy Hook.

Early on the morning of September 11, Hudson ordered easy sail to be made and lead the way through the narrow portals formed by the Long Island shore Staten Island which he believed might be the mouth of the western passage. He had sailed so far to discover, past the bluff, which forms one of the picturesque attractions of Tompkinsville, into the upper bay and into sight of Pequona and his squaw, who watch from the hills on Constable Hook.

The records tell us that Henry Hudson cast anchor off Constable Hook at the mouth of the Kill Van Kull and soon after sent a boat ashore to ascertain whether or not the natives were friendly and to explore the immediate neighborhood. He took every precaution against attack and all of these were armed. But their dears provided unfounded as the landing party was welcome by Pequona, who pointed out a safe landing and by his friendly bearing and signs, proved to the adventurers that they need fear no attack.

Report of the strange vessels' arrival had spread through all the tribes inhabiting the region and before nightfall that day, canoes carrying Indian chiefs, and warriors, began to assemble at the point. But to the surprise of Hudson and his men, the Indians

unbounded astonishment over his great ship and the martial equipment clothing of his men, was second to the great reverence and respect shown to Pequona. What the explorers could not understand was that his presence there had been long foretold, and that they venerated Pequona as a mystic whose powers had brought him there.

The appearance of so many Indians caused Hudson much concern and he ordered the landing party to maintain unusual vigilance. Pequona sat with many chiefs about him waiting for the coming of the ~~white~~^{right} leader whom he knew had not yet landed. Hudson landed later in the day, adopting every precaution against surprise and keeping one of the ship's boats some distance from the landing place with a small canoe in its bow. The explorer was deeply impressed with the dignity bearing of Pequona, but as the only means of communication was by signs, he continued his attitude of watchfulness.

From the campfires of Indians, food was furnished ^{to} the explorers. There was an abundance of game of all kinds including deer, bear, fowls; eggs, pumpkins, and Indian corn, the latter unknown vegetable to the whites. As the afternoon waned Hudson by signs invited Pequona to go with abroad the Half Moon and the ready yet dignified acceptance of his offer did much to prove to him the real friendliness of the Indians.

The visit of Pequona to the great vessel and their subsequent return just as dusk came on, removed the feelings of distrust and suspicion also active in the Indian breast.

That night there was a great Council of all the chiefs which Pequona addressed and this address is the last one of the old Indian tradition has one of the greatest Indians of the time before the white man came to America.

He told the assembled chiefs that the white man was a friend of the Indian and that in time he would come to occupy that land, bringing many gifts, and strange presents to exchange for the land.

Subsequently, Pequona and his squaw accompanied Hudson up the great river, which now bears the explorers' name. In October, when Hudson returned down the river, he again cast anchor off Constable Hook, but Pequona was not aboard. He had left the Half Moon soon after the vessel started on its trip down the river, and with his wife disappeared in the forest, which covered the mountains north of the present Bear Mountain.

Hudson was very reluctant to have him go, and by sign, which Pequona apparently understood, he expressed the desire to have him and his squaw accompany him on his return to Holland. But mystic refused the proposal and pointing toward the northwest dictated his intention of traveling in that direction.

Persistent inquiry has failed to reveal further information respecting this remarkable aborigine. Gifted, he certainly was, with the mystic qualifications common enough in the East, but seldom possessed by the natives in America. His power of divination or second sight – whatever it may have been—made him a strange personage even for tribes far separated in language, thought and tradition. He was a unique character and because he was always an exponent of peace and a peacemaker, between warlike tribes, he was looked upon as a being different from others. His time was anterior to the whites and for that reason little as come to us of his strange personality and powers.

Had we the means of knowing, perhaps the tribes of Red Men living during the centuries before the white man came, had teachers and all mystics just as all other races of men have had. Maybe Pequona was the last of his kind and he may have known that too. For there is a pathos in the old tradition of his prophecies, bearing a note of that wistfulness found only in the messages of one who knows that at a time appointed, his voice and power shall cease.

During the days Hudson and his men remained at Constable Hook, the friendly chiefs, at Pequona's direction, had escorted landing parties through the forests and uplands to the heights of land where they viewed the surrounding country and by signs obtained some understanding of the geography of the surrounding country.

The explorers found that the peninsula fairly alive with wild creatures, including rattlesnakes and copperheads. Myriads of snow-white swans, pelicans, geese and ducks of all kinds thronged its bordering waters. Newark Bay was full fish and at some time places along the shore lying on the floor of the transparent water were acres after acres of oysters of the most succulent and appetizing flavor. Deer, black bears, wolves, foxes, panthers, beavers, all the wild animals native to the country for hundreds of miles around were seen and some of them killed.

Thus begins in 1609, the authentic history of a section destined to become known throughout the world for its industrial activity and civic virtues, under the name Bayonne.

The First Settlement

In a story, history or book, intended to be of purely local interest, it must be tiresome and wasteful of effort to relate the chronological events of other places. But in

the settlement of a new country the interwoven interests of contiguous places make it necessary to give some general outline often to make clear the motives, hopes, ambitions and purpose, which is created in the place of the interest.

For this reason will be necessary to relate the doings of men and people who ever concerned themselves with the territory known as Bayonne. But it will be the purpose of your sympathetic author to make these adventures into dry and musty records as brief as possible and to lighten these passages with unpublished incidents gathered from ancient times found in historical collection, manuscripts and records of colonial and other officers.

Hudson's narrative of his adventures and discoveries in the new world on his return to Holland in the summer of 1610, fires the adventurous men of the day "with the desire to open trade with a rich and friendly country." Some of the merchants formed a small company, purchased a vessel, the De Groote River and filled it with trading goods. The Dutch records declare that this venture was successful but failed to state particulars. Heckewelder, one of the chroniclers of the time, states that the Dutch made a settlement on the Jersey shore that year, but no other records are found to substantiate the claim. At any rate it appears that the first successful trading voyage was in 1610 was followed by others, for it established that in 1614, Sir Samuel Agall, of Virginia, sailed to New York Harbor and after an attack upon the settlement he found Manhattan Island and forced the few settlers to pay tribute to and acknowledge the authority of the Governor of Virginia. This authority, however, was almost immediately thrown off. New fortifications were elected and the Dutch remained in undisputable possession thereafter for fifty years.

The Dutch merchants in 1614, finding their ventures into the new territory profitable, obtained from their government a monopoly of the trade for what was then first called New Netherlands, the concession to run for four voyages to be made within three years, from January 1, 1615. The merchants assumed the name of "The United New Netherlands Company," and its charter gave it authority to protect the monopoly by seizure of "vessel and cargo and to inflict a fine of 50,000 Netherland ducats."

This company established trading posts at the head of navigation on the Hudson near Albany, sent exploring expeditions as far as the Schuykill, made treaties with the Indians and established inland trading posts, which the Indians proceeded to fill with rare pelts and furs in exchange for the inexpensive but novel productions of a civilization they knew nothing of. Wealth flowed into the coffers of the company and in 1618, when its charter expired, its members tried availingly to secure a renewal.

In June 1621, the Dutch West India Company was chartered, giving it authority and trading monopoly over New Netherlands for twenty-one years. This charter was of a more formal character than the first granted to the Dutch merchants, and it prescribed ways and means of government, divided its government into five chambers, and the executive function in a board of nineteen delegates to be named by the five chambers, including one to represent the States General.

In 1623, these nineteen delegates established New Netherlands as a province, and its direct management was given to the Amsterdam chamber. One of its members of that chamber was Michael Pauw, destined to become for a period of years, one of the great factors in the settlement and evolution of the Jersey Shore.

Permanent settlement was effected in 1623, by sending over thirty families.

These colonists were in charge of Cornelius Jacobsen Mey, who was elected one of the first directors. His leadership gave way at the expiration of a year to William Verhulst, and he in turn was succeeded in 1626 by Peter Minuit, who proceeded to place his name among the immortals by purchasing Manhattan Island from its native owners for 60 guilders.

One of the first activities of the colonists was the erection of a blockhouse of fort, large enough to hold all of the colonists, room inside to palisades for their cattle and livestock. While the fort was under construction, three of Minuit's men killed an Indian from what is now Westchester County, and stole pelts and furs he had brought to the settlement for trade. The murder was committed in the presence of his nephew, a young Indian boy, who swore to revenge himself and did so fifteen years later, by killing and robbing Claes Cornelisz Smits, who lived north of the settlement, near what is now called Canal Street. This murder was a direct cause of the Indian massacres and depredation which at two different periods devastated the Jersey settlements from Hoboken to Bergen Point, the story of which is to be told later, in more detail.

For some years after the erection of the fort and the permanent settlement of New Amsterdam, the affairs of the controlling company languished and it became necessary to offer unusual privileges to capitalists to tempt them to invest. These privileges, however, were restricted to members of the company. One of these offers provided that if a member should within four years, start a colony of fifty adults in any part of New Netherland outside of the Island of Manhattan, he should be acknowledged as a Patron with feudal authority over such territory. Each colony was to allot a tract of land sixteen

miles wide as navigable stream, and extending as far back as might desire. Each patron was required to treat the Indian tribe in possession of the land so taken to satisfy him or her before the titles or patent issued. The company agreed to furnish protection and to defend the colonies thus established and "to import as many blacks as they conveniently could."

Under these provisions, Michael Pauw, then Burgomaster of the Amsterdam, obtained deeds for the west shore opposite Manhattan Island. These are the first conveyances by duly recorded deed to any land in New Jersey and the first recorded in New Netherland. They may be read in full in Winfield's History of Bergen County.

The deed recites that: "The Indian Chiefs Arommenauw, Tekwappo, and Sackwomeek, joint owners of the land named Ahasimus and the peninsula Aressick and for Mingm, Wathkath and Eauwins joint proprietors of the same parcels, having ceded and delivered to the Noble Lord Michael Pauw, all the lands contemplated by the aforesaid Noble's Lord's desires and ambitions," is duly confirmed and approved by their High Mightiness the Lords, the States General of the United Netherlands and the General Incorporated West India Company." The two deeds are dated respectively, July 12 and November 22, 1630. On August 10, the same year, Michael Pauw recorded a deed from the Indian proprietors for Staten Island, the description thereof connecting that Island with New Jersey.

Pauw's purchase constituted one of the most important transactions to the Indians. Aressick, one of the places named in the first deed, was an India trading post and what might be called the commercial exchange for all the tribes for a hundred miles around. Many of them made camp on the territory near the river, visiting it season after season,

much as we do favored places along the Jersey shore. It was convenient to the fort, where they exchanged their pelts and fur for trading goods, and like people of today, with the payment of their month's labor in hand they made Aressick a place of rejoicing and pleasure.

Pauw gave his purchase name Pavonia, a name that continues today for a portion of the original territory.

Some of the directors of the company who had been tardy in seizing upon these opportunities, looked upon the newly created patrons with jealousy, Their discontent finally forced all the patrons, except Pauw, to divide with the others and this concentrated bitterness upon the latter, which resulted in his transferring to the company, all his Pavonia properties, receiving therefore 26,000 florins or somewhere about \$10,500.

During the years following 1614, when the Dutch merchants first began their trading expeditions to New Amsterdam, it is probable, but not subject to circumstantial proof, that a number of the adventurers participating in these voyages made friends with the Indians that Aressick and settled on the Jersey side of the river. Some writers believe that men from these ships took up that land at or near Bergen Hill and established themselves permanently in that location. Others of these men journeyed further north and south. It is obvious that in the settlement of a new country, the keeping of records was impossible. Very likely such a formal proceeding was not even considered. The fact is, that up to the time of Pauw's purchase there is no record of any settlement on the Jersey shore. Yet it is also a fact that long before that date many adventurous whites did successfully establish themselves, as a subsequent events proved the presence of a

population not otherwise accounted for. It is also quite apparent that some of the hardy spirits journeyed down the forest tracts into the present territory of Bayonne.

Indian warfare continued until 1645, when a more lasting peace was made. In the year following Petrus Stuyvesant arrived at New Amsterdam as Director General. He was a man of discretion and judgment and made a study of the Indian character and methods. He had but little trouble with them until 1655. Settlers returned to the burned homesteads and prosperity again filled the coffers of the company and the community.

John Jacobson Roy, gunner at Fort Amsterdam, was the first to take up land on the peninsula. He selected a tract about 300 acres covering the entire point known as Constable Hook, for which he received a patent dated March, 1646, the year Stuyvesant's Governor's appearance, however, and was probably a gift from Kieft for his military services.

This patent to Roy is the earliest record of property within the present confines of Bayonne, but presently the attractions of the peninsula became better known; and in 1654 ten patents, or grants for land in the upper section of the city were executed as follows: Jacob Wallingen, October 23; Jan Cornelissen Buys, December 4; Jan Lubersten, December 5; Jan Cornelissen Schoenmaker, December 5; Jan Gerrtisen Van Immen, December 5; Hendrick Jansen Van Schalckwyck, December 5; Jan Cornelissen Crynnen, December 5.

All of these grants were for "25 morgens" and their location was described in general terms as lying "between Genoenepaen (Communipaw) and the Kill Van Kull."

Of these early grantees, Wallingen is believed to have come from Holland with Captain deVries in 1635. Buys, who was also known as "Jan the Soldier," was awarded

the rights of a burger in 1657. Lubbersten was appointed a clerk of the West India Company, but refused to accept. In 1658, he was licensed to keep school in New Amsterdam, was made a burger in 1657, and appointed a commissioner to fortify Bergen in 1663. Lubbersten soon sold his property to Hendrick Jansen Speir. Van Immen also soon disposed of his grant, the property finally being purchased by the Vreeland family. Jan the Shoemaker," likewise held his grant but a short time, selling it to Dirck Lycan, who finally transferred it to William Douglas for "One Negro boy by the name of Emanuel."

Gybersten, who was a wheelwright and a blacksmith, maintained possession of his grant and it passed to his grandchildren. Crynnen held his tract for ten years, selling it to Issac De Forest. Most of these grantees were retired soldiers.

Other grantees of about the same date were Clacs Jansen, who was a baker, and his brother Michael. Farms were springing up in various sections of the peninsula and in the older places at Paulus Hook and in Hoboken; the settlement began to assume an appearance of stability and permanence.

The First Indian War

But again the Jersey side of the river was laid waste and devastated because of the passion and anger of the inhabitant of New Amsterdam.

Near Trinity Church and extending from Broadway to the Hudson, ran the farm of Hendrick Van Dyck. He had imported and was cultivating peach trees. The Indians considered the fruit a wonderful delicacy and after persistent looting of his orchard, Van Dyck secreted him one night and shot a marauder who proved to be an Indian girl.

The killing of this girl aroused the Indians in Manhattan and Pavonia and in the early fall of 1655, canoes carrying 500 warriors landed secretly and scattered through the streets of New Amsterdam seeking for Van Dyck, who when found, fled to the house of a neighbor where he was wounded by an arrow and the neighbor by a tomahawk.

The attack was soon suppressed and the Indians fled to their canoes. They crossed to Pavonia and Hoboken, spreading fan-wise and in a few minutes the torch and scalping knife was busy from Hoboken to Communipaw, and the colonists in New Amsterdam watched while one farm after the other went up in smoke. The only family left unmolested, so far as records show, was that of Michiel Jansen at Communipaw.

The raid of the Indians swept down the entire length of Bayonne Peninsula and across the Kill Van Kull to Staten Island. The attack continued over three days and over one hundred of the Dutch, Hoboken, Paulus Hook, Communipaw, and the scattered farms on Staten Island were smoking ruins.

For nearly five years after this Indian outbreak, the Jersey shore remained a desolate wilderness, according to the records. All of those who fled from Jersey settlements to New Amsterdam, including Jansen and his family, were afraid to renew their trust in the Indians. Stuyvesant, subsequently ransomed the captives taken by the Indians to the number of nearly 100, by the payment of certain quantities of powder and "staves" of lead.

To prevent a recurrence of these raids, Governor Stuyvesant prepared an ordinance requiring settlers to build their homes in compact groups. A part of this ordinance reads as follows:

“On order that this may be the better executed and obeyed in the future, the Director-General and Council aforesaid, so hereby not only warn their good subjects, by likewise charge and command them to concentrate themselves by next spring in the form of town villages and hamlets, so that they may be the more effectually protected, maintained and defended against all assaults and attacks of the barbarians, by each other and by the military entrusted to the Director-General and Council. Warning all those who will, contrary hereunto, remain here after on their isolated plantations, that they will do so at their peril, without obtaining in time of need assistance from the Director-General and Council. They shall, moreover, be fined annually in the sum of 25 guilders for the behoove of the public.

“Furthermore, the Director-General and Council, in order to prevent a too sudden conflagration, do ordain that from now henceforth, no houses shall be covered with straw or reed, nor anymore chimneys of clapboards or wood.

“This done, resolved, resumed and enacted in the Assembly of the Director-General holds in Fort Amsterdam, New Netherlands.

“Dated as above, January 18, 1656.”

In January 1658, Governor Stuyvesant negotiated for the re-purchase of all the lands in Pavonia at the cost of 80 fathoms of wampum, 20 fathoms of cloth, 12 kettles, 6 guns, 2 blankets, 1 double kettle and a half a barrel of strong beer, secured the signatures of all the chiefs claiming ownership.

About the time of this purchase, which was also a treaty of was another of hamlet or group of farm buildings about this time, some where in the neighborhood of Currie’s Woods and scattered farms in the lower section of the peninsula.

Bergen was a palisade enclosure of 800 feet square, laid out in streets with a public square in the center. Jacques Cortelyou, the town surveyor, laid out the land inside the palisade in lots.

On September 8, 1664, the English under the Duke of York, captured New Amsterdam, the tract of land lying between the Hudson and Delaware River, was named New Jersey and conveyed by him to Lord Berkeley and Sir George Carteret. The latter on February 10, 1665, commissioned Philip Carteret as Governor of New Jersey, and the latter in the July following, organized a court of procedure at Bergen.

Beginning of Democracy

Following this important step toward organizing democratic government, there was rapid growth and development throughout the entire section, but perhaps because of the recapture, of their old province by the Dutch, July 29, 1673, and its subsequent return to the English, there are no available records showing to what extent these developments have progressed. They must have been remarkable, however, for a State assembly was created for the "making of laws and carrying on the public affairs of the whole province." Elections were held, the boundary lines of the county of Bergen were fixed, and a court for the trial of causes appointed with all necessary officers and assistants. All of which proves the presence of a rapidly increasing and prosperous community.

That considerable and growing settlements enlisted at this time at several places south of Bergen is proved by the fact that oysters, fish and wild fowl from Newark Bay were sold to the housewives of New Amsterdam by these settlers, who made regular trips in their clumsy and ungainly sail boats. These same food products were also sold to the people in Bergen and other settlements at Paulus Hook and Hoboken.

The settlement at Van Buskirk Point on the north side of Constable Hook, was well established long before 1680, as Captain George Scott, and English adventurer and writer, who published a description of the province that year, declares that the "plantation" covered from 1,200 to 1,500 acres, "well stocked" and improved. The same writer declares that there were other plantations along the neck to the village of Pamrapo, which he alludes to as "Penelipe," with a population of 100 or more; another village of about the same size, probably near Currie's Woods, and one of 200 upward at Communipaw, which he also misspells.

From 1633 to 1638, there is little of record concerning the territory taken over by Pauw. William Keift arrived during this year as Director-General of the Province. He was an administrator but a poor leader or captain. Under his administration many reforms in government took place and the colonists became hopeful and thriving. He paid little attention to the study of the aboriginal character and his policy with respect to them was one of force and mild repression. In the early fall, of 1639, he declared peace with the Indians, and one that was thereafter observed, the Jersey settlers who had been forced to assume unpleasant occupations, petitioned for permission to return the Jersey shore and this was granted on condition that they build villages and otherwise provide protection measures for themselves.

This was the beginning of permanent settlement on the west shore of the Hudson and in the territory known as Pavonia and including the peninsula we now call Bayonne.

During the years elapsing, from 1609 to 1668, a very considerable change in the viewpoint and outlook of those who had secured grants of land or established themselves otherwise on the Jersey shore or territory was apparent. In the beginning, all of them

looked upon their experiments in farming and land clearing, as adventures, which might or might not be successful.

Practically all of them were men acquainted with arms and most of them had been soldiers in the Dutch army in West India Company. They had a natural ability in the production of crops and their art as farmers held a strong appeal for the Indians, many of who profited by the teaching of the settlers.

The Dutch settlers were natural traders and all of them held remunerative traffic with the Indians, receiving pelts and rare fur for trading goods of little cost or intrinsic value. Many of their wives carried on a profitable exchange for the goods of their kitchen and as these furs and pelts were converted into cash in New Amsterdam, the settlers found their strong boxes or secret hoardings rapidly accumulating.

The free life, the ever-present hazard of danger from reedmen or the denizens of the primeval forest, also held strong attractions for these adventurous spirits. And as time wore on, their first attitude of experimental residence or settlement gave way to a fixed determination to occupy the land and build permanently.

This was the psychological change which caused the Jersey settlers to get together in obedience to Governor Stuyvesant's ordinance, which for several years after their return had been ignored.

As these groups of farm houses and settlements grew and expanded, through the increase of new immigration from overseas, the change of former conditions became more and more pronounced and very shortly we see them forming the essential organization of a crude form of political government.

There are no records showing when settlers first took up permanent residence south of Communipaw, but it is quite probable that the same influences, which operated in the section north of the place, actuated those below. And it is to be observed again, that some of the settlers might have survived the Indian attack of 1655, and after a period of hiding and the adoption of all possible precautions, continued to live in a desolate territory.

It is of record that on September 5, 1661, Governor Stuyvesant and his council christened the "Village of Bergen," and this established that old place as the first New Jersey municipal organization.

They demanded from them tributes of maize, furs and wampum, and threatened to exact the tributes by force of arms. The Indians, however, proved rebellious and as many of them were now owners of firearms themselves and skillful in their use, the settlers were much disturbed and many of them protested.

This agitation condition continued throughout the year 1640, and part of 1641 when the murder of Smits, already related, took place. Kieft as a plausible pretext to punish not only Smits' murderer, but also all the chiefs who had refused the payment of the tribute demanded seized this upon. The feelings among the colonists was strongly against such action, however, and until 1643, Kieft's desires remained unfilled.

In the winter of 1643-4, the Mohawks from the far North swooped down on the peaceful tribes of Westchester and many of them were killed and scalped, and their women and children carried into captivity. Many of those who survived the Mohawk raid fled to the protection of the colonists and were well received and supported for some time.

Soon after the return to Westchester and other places, they were again attacked and without giving battle to the fierce northern tribe, they again fled to protection of the whites, many of them going to camp at Pavonia. Tribes from Hackensack, Tappan, and even more distant places, were in camp at Pavonia, on February 23, 1643, occupying territory all the way from Hoboken where Aert Teunissen Van Putten had established himself, to the western confines of Jan Evertsen Bout's farm at Communipaw or very close to the present north line of Bayonne.

The Indians were left undisturbed for three days. Keift, who seemed to have been a man of strong determination, and who had all along nursed his anger for the Indians, seized this as the psychological time to seek his revenge for their refusal to pay him tribute.

Taking council with three prominent colonists, with whom he was intimate, he gained their approval for his plan of punishment and issued the following order:

“Sergeant Rodolf is commanded and authorized to take under his command a troop of soldiers and lead them to Pavonia, and drive away and destroy the savages being behind Jan Eversens' but to spare as much as possible their wives and children and to take the savages prisoners. He may watch there for the proper opportunity to make his assault successful; for which end Hans Stein who is well acquainted with every spot on which the savages are sulking, accompanied him. He, therefore, shall consult with the aforesaid Hans Stein and the corporals. The exploit ought to be executed at night, with the greatest caution and prudence. Our God may bless the expedition.

“Done 25 February, 1643.”

Plain directions for a massacre and very definitely were the directions followed out. Rudolf gathered his company of 80 men, fully armed and with extra ammunition, and marched them to the waiting boats. The colonists were horrified when the purport of the expedition became known and some of them protested vigorously and in person to Keift, but the latter refused to forgo his crime. As the soldiers rowed away Captain DeVries warned him:

“You will kill the Indians, but you will murder our nation.”

Rudolf and his company landed at the mouth of Mill Creek and marched silently across the Bouts property, creeping upon the sleeping Indians who were camped near the west boarder of the property. Silently, they surrounded the trustful reedmen and then poured volley after volley into their wigwams and the sleeping forms, which lay about the campfires.

The Indians believed they again attacked by the terrible Mohawks and made no resistance. They were afflicted with panic before the slaughter ceased, 80 braves, squaws, and children were lying dead, some of them terribly mutilated with bayonets and swords.

Subsequently, eye witnesses described the massacre to Captain DeVries, who after he scene with the Director-General went to the kitchen of the latter's house where he was guest, and remained awake until midnight when he heard the shooting and the yells of the Indians coming across the river. That description proves that Rudolf and his company were as barbarous, unrelenting and inhumane as the imagination can conceive.

In such inhumane fashion did the Dutch precipitate a blood feud between the whites and Indians, which was destined to count its victims by the thousands during the two centuries to follow.

Retribution and revenge followed far more rapidly than Keift or anyone else anticipated. Keift, perhaps, really believed that the slaughter and frightfulness of the night attack would overawe the Indians and render them tractable and subservient forever after. But, as we have said, he knew nothing of Indian nature. Other of the colonists, however having more intimate acquaintance with the natives, fully expected that reprisals would follow and it was because of this that they had opposed the forcible punishment of the slayer of Smit.

Even before Sergeant Rudolf and his band of murderers left Communipaw, Dirk Straatmacker, his wife and child and two or three Englishmen who had heard the firing in the night, and news of the massacre at daybreak, immediately started for the scene of carnage, hoping to secure some of the rich pelts, maize, and other loot left by the dead Indians.

While they were busy at their cold-blooded work, some of the Indians who had escaped into the nearby thickets or forest, returned to the clearing seeing the soldiers departing, fired upon the looters killing Mrs. Straatmaker and wounding Straatmacker so that he died shortly after.

The story of this first act of reprisal was reported before 10 o'clock that morning to Keift, in a report that reads as follows:

"We, undersigned, sergeant, corporal, and soldiers, at the request of the Attorney-General attest that on that day in February, 1643, in the morning after we had beaten a

party of savages, at Pavonia, behind Egbert Woustersson's the wife of Dirck Straatmacker, with a few Englishmen, arrived on the spot where the slain were lying, with view to plunder maize or any other article. We declare solemnly we warned said Dirck Straatmacker and his wife and told them to go home, to which Dirck replied, 'There is no danger. If there were a hundred savages; none of them would hurt us.' Upon which the undersigned left the spot, according to their orders, to go to the house of Egbert. When they arrived there they heard a shriek then a sergeant ordered some of his soldiers toward the spot, where they found Dirck, aforesaid, wounded (who died a while after his wounds), and his wife dead. The soldiers saved the English, who had only one gun amongst them all.

"Thomas Willet declared the Dirck aforesaid, being asked "Why did you not come with us when we warned? Answered, "I might have escaped by running, but I did not wish to leave my wife."

All, which the undersigned declare to be true. Done 18th May 1643, in New Netherlands.

"Juriaen Rodolf, Sergeant.
Peter Peterson, Corporal
Thomas Willet.

Many of the Indians fled from Pavonia while the massacre was in progress, and so sure were they that the attack was made by the Mohawks, most of them dashed to their canoes and hurried across the river. Those who were unsuspecting enough to essay a landing near the fort were met with musket fire and thereby had their eyes open to the real estate of affairs.

Before night the Indians of all the tribes gathered at Pavonia, met in council and within an hour chief after chief donned war paint and all the horrors of a ruthless warfare was on. Eleven tribes joined forces and from Connecticut to the Raritan River the tomahawk and scalping knife held sway. No settler was safe, the towns, villages, and lonely farmhouses went up in smoke with ghastly relics left behind to make noble Kieft's great Roman victory, as he described the massacre.

New Amsterdam, a Sanctuary

The only safe settlement was the fort at New Amsterdam and its immediate environment. All the settlers, with a possible few exceptions, living on the Jersey shore, either fled by boat to Manhattan Island and thence to the fort, or made a losing fight. The entire country was swept clear of whites and colonists gathered together in or near the fort of New Amsterdam, passed a month in vilification of Keift, who was threatened with death and deposition.

The Indians, however, brought an end to the situation at the end of that time by proffers of an armistice, and a big pow-wow was held on Long Island, at the end of which Oritany, chief sachem of the Hackensack tribe, went to Fort Amsterdam and made the following compact:

“This day, the twenty-second of April, 1643, between William Keift, Director-General, and the Council of New Netherlands, on the one side, and Oratalin, Sachem of the savages, residing at Ack-kin-kas-hacky, who declared that he was delegated by and for those at Tappan, Reckgawawanc, Kickauanic and Sinkinck, on the other side, is a peace concluded in the following manner to wit:

“All the injustices committed by said nations against the Netherlands or by the Netherlanders against said nations, shall be forgiven and forgotten forever; reciprocally promising, one the other to cause no trouble, the one the other; but whenever the savages understand that any nation, not mentioned in the treaty, may be plotting mischief against the Christians, then they will give them a timely warning, and not admit a nation within their own limits.”

This peace, however, continued only until the Indian harvest was gathered. In early August, the whoop of reedmen again sounded and a bloody warfare was again in full swing. Aert Teunissen, of Hoboken, was killed by canoe Indians near Sandy Hook. Ide Van Vorst, a boy, was captured and held for ransom, the colony of patron Nederhorst was slaughtered and a company of soldiers detailed on guard duty there were burned alive in the manor house.

Notwithstanding all these horrible deeds of reprisal, the Indians remained true to those who had been their friends and although their enmity remained unappeased, they protected their friends and saved many men. Thus, when the Indians came suddenly to the farm of Jacob Stoffelsen, on Paulus Hook, who had secured the attendance of several soldiers for protection, they induced the farmer, who had always been a friend of the Indians, to visit Fort Amsterdam. Soon after his departure, by apparent friendliness, they put the soldiers off their guard, when they were instantly killed and scalped and Stoeffelsen saw his farmhouse wrapped in flames, before he had rowed half way across the river.

Captain DeVries was also a firm friend with the Indians and his presence at the fort had much to do with saving it from attack. When word was received of the capture

of young VanVoerst, he was asked by Kieft, to make the journey to Tappan, where the boy had been taken and seeks his release by the payment of the ransom demanded. He made the trip in perfect safety, although both banks of the river were full of marauding Indians. He returned by nightfall and the boy was with him.

It is the recurrence of incidents like these last two mentioned, which prove that the Indians were not naturally bloodthirsty or murderous. They also have a string bearing upon the mooted question of continuous residence of some of the settlers, who were known far and wide, as the friends of the Indians.

Many of these hardy settlers had learned sufficient of the Indian language to converse with them at length. They made their homes free to the visiting chiefs and braves and by the gifts of small presents which all Indians prized more highly than any of their own possessions, gained lasting friendships, as these incidents demonstrate.

For these reasons, and in the absence of evidence to the contrary, it is very likely that the settlers who survived these Indian raids and massacres were in reality more numerous than is generally believed. The supposition gains added strength from later evidence of the presence in New Jersey of families about whom no early records can be found.

Few of the written histories have much to say of the period intervening between 1680 and the beginning of the Revolutionary War, yet in that period some incidents of interest occurred which are duly recorded in the archives of the colonial history. These incidents throw a very strong light on the mental processes and activities of our territorial ancestors.

In a general way, at this point, the development of American colonies was largely influenced by the political exigencies and caprices of England and its rulers. During certain periods the inflow into the colonies was large and during other periods it practically ceased. However, there was sure increase in population and the reclamation of lands from forest growth went steadily on. As the settlements grew the Indians gradually retired more and York. They did this openly without danger for the reason that more inland, although almost to the outbreak of the Revolution the Bayonne peninsula continued to be a favorite resort to which numbers of the redmen returned, for fishing and feasting of oysters.

First One Hundred Years

It was during this hundred-year period also known that this peninsula ceased to be the home of forest creatures. The bear, panther, and wolf, the beaver and other valuable fur-bearing animals, at first abundant, were trapped and hunted and finally disappeared, save on severe winters. The swan, pelicans and myriads of fowl, remained until about the middle of the 18th century, when they, too, found more secluded feeding places.

If we are to understand the thoughts and activities of the early settlers of Bayonne, if we desire to comprehend their ambitions, determination, and persistence, in holding fast to a territory, that for many years prior to the Revolution, was the playground of many desperate characters, a meeting place for pirates and other outlaws, we must derive deeply into colonial history and go rather far a field for suggestive details.

We have shown that about 1680, there were a number of settler districts along the borders of New York Bay, and at least, one inland, somewhere near the present site of Curries' Woods. Undoubtedly, besides these small settlements there were isolated farms

occupied by families who gained their livelihood by raising truck for the nearby markets at Bergen and New York. Practically all of them added to their incomes by trapping and hunting during the winter months and these earnings were increased by the sale of fish, oysters and the very plentiful game birds then abundant on both bays, in the marshes and upland clearing.

Prosperity was the common lot of all the settlers, and as their accumulations increased certain of them manifested a genius for using their accumulations with a foresight, which is presently made them conspicuous as property owners and men of wealth.

Gradually there developed a distinction between those who had exercised judgment and foresight in the handling of their possessions and those who had not. Roads led from Pamrapo and Van Buskirk's shore to the other settlements, and most of these visitors took advantage of the opportunity to view the broad water of Newark Bay and inspect the picturesque peninsula, the fame the unique beauty of which, had even then, been spread abroad by the tales of returning adventurers.

The entertainment of these visitors, some of whom were men of position and importance, naturally fell to those best able to offer the generous hospitality which for lack of other things, had to take place of luxurious home appointments. So, in course of the distinction alluded to, became more and more pronounced and we have at least, the beginning of social classification in the new land, between families, the founders of which had fought and suffered side by side on exact equality.

During the many years necessary to bring in these social differences, other developments were taking place. From all countries in Europe, but largely from North

countries, came adventurers led by tales of the great prosperity of the province. Many of these men were real soldiers of fortune. They were veterans of land and sea battles, old enough to fend for themselves, and to be full of the desire to have homes for their coming families. Resourceful, by reason of their martial or maritime training, they roam a field, settling where the prospect appealed to their sense of beauty and advantageous location. Many of these free laces of the world, found in the combined attractions of field and water, this peninsula still offers, the ideal they searched for. Some of them took up the free lands still to be had, or purchased property whereon they erected the homes, which increased, which steadily increased the stability and value of the territory.

These were the men who descendants became the bone and sinew of the revolution. But unfortunately, there were other have much the same training and ambition who lacked the energy, enterprise or moral certitude necessary for the taking over of permanent responsibilities. During the progress of the years the covetousness of these men found expression in outlawry, and finally in the building up of more or less well organized piratical combination, which eventually bore a greater menace to the lives and belongings, of the people settled in the whole territory about this harbor, than did and of the old time tribal wars.

To understand the situation thus outlined, it must be remembered that the increase of population in New York for many years after the beginning of the 18th Century, while healthy, was of slow growth. Commerce and trading had increased out of al proportion to the increase of population. The products of the colonies were chiefly those gained by barter with the Indians, but this had become an extensive and highly remunerative industry.

Trading posts ran north to the Great Lakes and beyond Champlain; to the Delaware and the fur producing mountains of Northern Pennsylvania and New York State. All of these regions were then uncharted and unknown regions, save to the few hardy and adventurous hunters and trappers who had made themselves blood kin to the roaming redmen.

From all these forests, there poured over Indian rail, river route and land haul, great packs and bales of precious pelts to the selling and shipping of port of New York. And to that port, the hungry merchant from overseas sent his vessel loaded with trading goods and the gold to buy commodity, which he could in his turn, by the simple process of several laundered percent, profit, convert into fortune for him.

Many of the vessels so sent were chartered for the trip. Some of them were large for that day, but most of them were small and not to heavily manned. The sailors forming the crews were the typical sailors of that period. Without other than maritime education and lacking the ties of kindred or home, they were as a class, brutal, unthinking, reckless horde, always ready for a fight, a frolic or a drunken orgy.

It is but natural, when such men saw the captain or owner of their small craft growing rich and richer each voyage they made that they should become envious and seek a share of the income. There were no seamen's unions to appeal to, so in the course of time they took the law into their own hands.

Captain, and maybe mates, of trading boats disappeared between trips or while on their way from Europe to America. Not many, perhaps, but enough of them to make piracy a desirable occupation for ignorant men of determined character and natural leadership.

This practice became common enough, however, to draw the attention of the English and other maritime nations and warships scourged them from the seas. But the taste of wealth has always inspired outlawry to greater enterprise, and so it was about 1700, some of these pirates found hiding places in the lower reach about New York, preying when opportunity offered on well-laden vessels lying in the lower bay.

Theses enterprises were carefully planned, the pirates getting information from sailing dates and cargoes, by mixing with the sailors in boarding houses and drinking places of lower New York, in their various piratical ventures, they left no trace behind. That is to say, they were exponents of the truism, that "dead men tell no tales," and their performance was equal to their belief in this respect, for a more murderous and cruel horde never existed.

The vessels and boats used by theses men were just as mysterious as the personality of the pirates, to the officials of the colony. They remained unknown for years for the simple reason that they took advantage of the geography of the harbor to secret their boats in hiding places up the Hackensack river and in the heavy woods-covered marsh land lying between that and the Passaic River.

In these secret places the vessel, usually a harmless looking sloop or small schooner, would remain concealed, at times for months. Then, when the signal was given, she would slip down at night on the down-flowing stream, gliding like a ghost through the Arthur Kills and then up sail through Raritan Bay to intercept the outgoing merchant. Very often the attack was made while the unsuspecting vessel was lying at anchor while waiting for favorable weather, or daylight, before starting to sea.

The territory of our peninsula gave pirates the necessary location for outlook and signal stations, and they were quick to avail themselves of its natural advantages for the purpose. And many of our ancestors have, without suspicion of their identity, given their hospitality to black-browed but well-to-do seamen, who declared their visit to this region was inspired by its manifest beauty. They were careful to repress outward semblance of their calling and by reason of their cunning carried on their murderous occupation with success for many years and until growing influence and wealth of the merchant colonists organized a patrol of armed schooners to kill or drive them from the port. This desirable action took place in 1751.

Many years before this date Captain Kidd led a band of his outlaws up a stream, opening into Raritan Bay to Middletown. It was Sunday morning and the colonists were all attending service. In those days people drove in for miles around for Sunday worship carrying their lunches with them. The pirates first attacked the people at Mahwah and it was a frightened resident of that village who sounded the alarm to the Middletown church congregation. The old records now in the archives of Monmouth County state that the fight with the pirates continued for three days. Many of the colonists were killed, a number of the pirates were slain, and two of them captured and hung. On their retreat from Middletown, they crossed the country toward Amboy, but that settlement being too strongly held they took boats and passed up through the Arthur Kills, while horsemen, dashed along the wooded roads to sound the alarm.

Without doubt this band of pirates landed on Bayonne and latter secreted themselves in the favorite haunts of their kind on the Hackensack meadows, for, although armed sloops set out from New York to attack them, the records contain no further

reference to this raid. They probably remained in hiding until the hue and cry ceased and then slipped away at night.

Subsequent to 1751, we find but casual reference to river or harbor pirated until after the Revolution, when we come to one of the most romantic, adventurous, and bloodiest incidents, in the entire history of the New York Port. This incident proves how close is the identity of this section of New Jersey is to New York City.

After the concerted action taken by the Province officials or New York to drive out the pirates in 1751, piracy as practiced on the high seas ceased forever. That is to say, those piratical vessels from other ports never attempted to renew the conditions, which prevailed before that cleans up. But even before the Revolution River and harbor pirates were common and gradually these men fell heir to all the traditions and lurking places of their more ferocious predecessors. As the years rolled by their depredations became bolder and instead of merely stealing from unprotected vessels or at night, they proceeded to attack small sloops, schooners, and other vessels, often holding up the crews and captain with guns and pistols. Frequent assaults too place finally, they became so reckless in their piracy, they killed the men who opposed them and carried off the women and girls they found aboard.

Pirates and Buccaneers

These desperate acts continued for a long time before their frequent recurrence led the authorities of New York and New Jersey to adopt concerted measures for mutual protection.

It was known that the pirates had lurking places in the Hackensack fastness, by their numbers were only guessed at. It was also known that they had hiding places in the

woods and marsh land along our peninsula where they readily secreted the rowboats which all of them had adopted as the most inconspicuous and easily hidden vessel available for their peculiar needs.

Military and naval advisors of the sheriffs of New York and Bergen County deliberately planned the attack. The sheriff of Bergen County formed a posse of several hundred men familiar with the use of arms, about one half of them mounted. One hundred mounted men were stationed on the west bank of the Passaic River as far north as the present site of Belleville. Another mounted force was stationed on the east bank of the Passaic River from Harrison to a point opposite of Bellville and a third mounted force of nearly 150 men were scattered along the "riser" or edge which borders Hackensack meadows from Harrison to above the town of Hackensack.

At the time spoken of, the entire meadow section now almost growth of stunted trees, called at that time "gum-woods." These forests were impenetrable except by the watercourses, which meandered through them for varying distances. Some of them were real watercourses that exist today. Others were mere ditches dug out in the soft soil of the meadowland by heavy storms or freshets.

Up the larger of these forests shadowed and snake infested watercourses, the pirates had their secret hiding places. Contrary, to the general belief, most of the land in the Hackensack meadows is dry and solid and it was on the solid portion of this wilderness of meadow grass and stunted forest that they had their places of last defense. It was a fearsome battleground with creeping and gliding terrors unknown to the posse until after the threat was made.

After the New Jersey forces were stationed and ready, the sheriff of New York swept down the Hudson and East Rivers in every sailboat then in port and available for the purpose. Each boat had its rowboat trailing behind and in the bow, small cannon were mounted. Several warships then in port contributed officers, boats and sailors to the little navy.

Along the Jersey shore every hiding place was searched by the smaller boats while the larger ones swept through the bay around Staten Island, searching its shores, up through the Arthur Kills. While this was going on, along the shore of Jersey City, and this peninsula the other division cleaned everything up, driving pirates through the Kill Van Kull, where the two divisions joined and continued the drive up Newark Bay to the mouths of the Passaic and Hackensack.

During this drive, the fighting between the outlaws and navy was incessant and many were killed on both sides, the pirates losing more heavily, however, because of the cannon carried by the sailboats.

The naval drive began in the early dawn and it was dark when the pirates disappeared up the Hackensack River. Signal fires were lighted at Bergen Point by prearrangement, conveying to the mounted patrol along the highland, that those pirates had passed that point.

On the following morning, after an all night vigil at the mouth of the respective rivers, the naval force entered the Hackensack River and journeying up that stream well above Snake Hill, found the mouth of a water course up which a band of volunteers in row boats proceeded, while the cannon in the sloops, bombarded the wilderness on the

chance of hitting some of the hidden men and maybe to frighten them with the noise or knowledge that it was a fight to the finish.

There were eighteen in the party of volunteers and after their departure and hour or more elapsed before sounds of fighting were heard. What happened is not known, for not one of these brave men ever returned. They were probably killed in an ambush. After long delay another party advanced up another water course still further up the river and it was the description given by these men of the horrors of the snake infested wilderness that brought the battle to a temporary end. Couriers sent to the mounted force brought up another conference and a "brisk wind from the south having started up, it was suggested that the forest be set on fire."

The was done that same night, the fire being started at extreme end of the point and it is of record that the fire swept up the Hackensack almost to Little Ferry. The fire raged during three days and nights.

During the first night, many of the pirates sought to escape by way of the "riser" or high ground west of the meadows. Some of them made an attempt this side of the present site of Rutherford and were either killed or captured by the mountain police. Others were killed or caught up as far as Hasbrouck Heights. One of the outlaws was killed by the grandfather of John Van Bussan formerly sheriff of Bergen County.

After the fire, no trace was found of the pirates or their secret hiding places. Where heavy woods had fought off the growth of the meadow grass was a blackened, arid tract with only smoldering stumps to showed that it had been timbered region and since that time only in occasional patches have these tree growths reappeared.

This ended piracy as a regular vocation in New York harbor. The Arthur Kills and even the Kill Von Kull has been credited on occasion in more modern periods with being the scene of outlawry and piracy, but even if these reports were true, they were merely incidental cases of looting such as take place everywhere.

Throughout all these years and in despite of the fact that some of the incidents we have related, gave our peninsula a somewhat sinister reputation as a place of residence or location for permanent home, its population steadily, but slowly increased with courageous and fearless settlers. Most of them built their own homes within the confines of the small hamlets already alluded to, their farms usually lying some distance away. Farm work was primitive, but intensive, practically all of them being devoted to the raising of vegetables. Haw was cut to some extent, but the production of grain was generally left to the better-protected and more convenient farms lying north.

This was the condition of affairs on the peninsula and practically throughout the Province when the Revolutionary War began. As we have pointed out, many of the early settlers were trained in warfare. Their children, brought up under harsher conditions, where frequent fighting for self-preservation and as carrying of arms was a common custom, they were natural soldiers. They inherited also much of the adventurous spirit which brought their parents to the new world, and absorbed with their birth, the atmosphere of freedom which from discovery of America, was the dominant note of civil life and individual longing.

It is but natural therefore, that in the French and Indian wars and in the minor difficulties that marked the progress of the century ushering in the Revolution, that many youths born in this section, were either drafted or volunteered for service. Some of these

soldiers drifted to other place, but to a greater extent than might be expected they returned to those settlements and took up homesteads.

Bayonne During the Revolution

The residents of Bayonne peninsula were not especially enthusiastic for independence when the Declaration of Independence was signed on July 4, 1776. Several colonial records show it, that but thirteen families were publicly known as followers of Washington and supporters of the Declaration of Independence. There is a reason for this, which students and writers of our early history have overlooked.

In a previous chapter, we have said that in 1767, the stage route from Bergen down the peninsula to Bergen Point was transferred to the route by which Newark, and that thereafter, the Bergen Point ferry ceased business. The stoppage of this stage line meant to the settlers a cessation on intercourse with the outside world and a consequent lack of knowledge of current events. Then, too, from the beginning, the settlers, even those in the small villages, which had grown up about the site of the earlier groups of the farmhouses, had not suffered directly from tax imposition, for the very simple reason that they paid none to anyone. Up to this time they had overcome all their own individual or collective difficulties without receiving outside help. Money, for exchange of goods, was practically unused, and that which was obtained by the sale of products in the New York or Bergen market, was carefully stored away, Neighbors bought and sold between themselves by barter or swapping.

The land on which most of them settled was taken from the common or wild lands, and for many years transfers by title and duly record deed, were very infrequent.

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The peninsula, bereft of its stage line, became isolated and out of harmony with the general sentiment of other colonies. This lack of interest in colonial affairs was supplemented by the fact where the settlers held sentiments very similar to those of the people on the peninsula, and for precisely the same reasons.

Before the arrival of the English, General Hugh Mercer, who was in command of the New Jersey Continentals, had stationed at Bergen what he called a flying camp. General Mercer had been directed by Washington to prepare for the arrival of the English by fortifying Paulus Hook, expecting a more direct attack from the point toward the interior of New Jersey. But the landing at Van Bus Kirk's Point and Staten Island, made necessary additional fortifications to hold the English from advancing north up Bergen Neck.

To meet this necessity, Washington ordered that a guard of 500 men be sent to Bergen Neck, but General Mercer not having that number available, General Wadsworth's brigade and a battalion of Jersey troops, were sent down the neck and plans were laid to attack the enemy on Staten Island.

In Winfield's History of Hudson County, a part of General Mercer's orders for this campaign is quoted as follows:

"Sixth. A party 'to attempt to surprise the enemy's guard on Bus Kirk's Point, which is on the southeast corner of Bergen Point; this party, or guard, does not seem to be large, it is said that they are possessed of two six-pounders. The party that makes the attack must not attempt to go over the causability appointed to command that pass, but should be provided with some boards, and proceed with two or three columns over the meadow, where they will meet with no other obstruction than a small creek or ditch,

which they will easily pass, with the help of the boards. If this place is carried cannonade and bombardment should also commence on Bergen Point, opposite the church and Dtcher's where it is said about 600 men are posted; this cannonade, with round and grape shot, would confuse the troops in forming, and prevent their succoring the guard at Elizabeth Point, or opposing our party who make their descent near Shutter's Island. The cannonade should also keep up on such parts of the shore of Staten Island where any boats are collected or many assemble. The party for these several matters on Bergen Neck should be about several hundred men, besides riflemen."

These plans, however, were rendered abortive by a severe storm, but the Continentals occupied the woods and points vantage throughout the peninsula, Van Buskirk's Point and Bergen Point near the old ferry landing alone being unoccupied. Engagements between the sharpshooters in the woods and the English were continuous throughout July. Every boat leaving the fleet was a target for the American riflemen and their fire was so galling that in revenge the light batteries from a part of the fleet, were turned backward and the round grape shots swept ashore to find that practically all business carried on by sloop and rowboat traffic with New York, brought the peninsula people in contact with New York sentiment, which was evenly divided between independence of and loyalty to England.

From the first time of its first arrival incoming boats carrying troops augmented the English fleet, and as fast as these arrived they made camp on Staten Island. By August 1st, nearly 30,000 troops were there assembled; meanwhile, Washington had sent reinforcements to General Mercer, until he had probably nearly 6,000 men stationed at

Bergen Point and at different strategic points along the peninsula, ready to oppose the expected advance from Staten Island.

At this time, Washington was sorely beset for want of men. The battle of Long Island was on the verge of starting and about the middle of August, he made known of his need to General Mercer, who promptly sent 800 men to Long Island, where they joined the commander in chief, in time to take part in the battle which soon started. On August 28th, while the battle of Long Island was being fought, the Continentals were being driven before superior veteran forces under Howe, nearly 4,000 troops from New Jersey and Pennsylvania, were assembled near the fort at Paulus Hook, and ready to cross to Washington's help, but as the retreat from Long Island had started, these reinforcements were retained at Paulus Hook 2,500 of them going down to strengthen the guard on the peninsula.

After the retreat from Long Island and the capture of New York by the English, Washington remained in camp in Westchester. On September 23, the small guard General Mercer left there, the Continentals retiring to Bergen, leaving nothing of a military character for the enemy to capture, evacuated Paulus Hook. The reinforcements scattered along the peninsula were gradually called in as Washington completed his plans for his strategic retreat to the Delaware. At this time, Bergen was army headquarters, with General Green in command.

On October 4, in announcing the evacuation of Bergen, General Green wrote:

“For my own part, I am sorry that the enemy should possess another inch of American ground, but prudence requires another sacrifice. The reasons for leaving this place I state to be these: Bergen is a narrow neck of land, accessible on three sides of

water, and exposed to a variety of attacks in different places at one and the same time. A large body of the enemy might infallibly take possession of the place whenever they pleased, unless we kept a stronger force than our numbers will allow. The spot itself is not an object of our arms: if they attacked, it would cut off those who defended it, and secure the grain and military stores. These have been removed; and when we are gone, a naked spot is all they will find.

General Green left observation guards on the peninsula, at Bergen and other points for some time, but as winter approached, these, also, were called in and the English occupied both Bergen and Paulus Hook. Col. Abraham Van Buskirk of Saddle River a cousin of the owner of Van Bus Kirk's Point was appointed the commanding officer of the British forces in New Jersey, the position being given in recognition of his desertion of the American cause.

The fortification erected by the Americans on the peninsula, was strengthened and garrisoned and named Fort Delancey, in honor of noted New York Tory. This fort was located on land just west of the present Avenue C and near Fifty-second Street. It was to bear a sinister reputation in the closing years of the Revolution.

From the time of Green's evacuation, until Major Henry Lee's famous attack on Paulus Hook, in August 1779, all of East New Jersey remained in possession of the English. During the winter of 1776, outpost guards were stationed at Bergen Point and other places along the peninsula, and at points north. In Fort Delancey, a renegade crew under showing of military discipline, held sway Paulus Hook was made headquarters by Col. Van Buskirk, and from here sent out, during succeeding periods, raiding bodies to gather in cattle and forage. His troops were not too tender in their treatment of the families

they met in their journeying, but to all these misdeeds their commander turned a blind eye.

Americans and Tories alike were forced to hide away their valuables and practically every farmhouse in the peninsula and in the entire region had a secret burying place where the family silver plate and money were kept.

The raiding was not, however, confined to the British. There were plenty of Americans still in the occupied territories and to the west of Newark, New Barbados, the present site of Harrison, Kearny and Arlington – they formed a large majority of the scattered population. Many of them were former soldiers and some of them had served for short periods in the Continental Army. Groups of these, usually neighbors, of those who had suffered loss of property at the hands of British raiding parties, banded together for reprisal trips into the British territory, where they raided and looted the homes of men known to be Tories.

In January 1779, for instance, John Allen, an officer in the Continental Army, in command of a party of three militiamen, was captured at Bergen Point and taken to Hoboken. One of the militiamen, the records say, was a member of Bayley's Light Horse and the others were Continentals. They had gone to Bergen Point to punish and take reprisal for a raid made by some of Captain Ward's men.

One of the brilliant affairs of the Revolution took place in midsummer of this year, 1779, and although it is not, strictly speaking a part of the history of Bayonne is worth repeating.

Major Lee, who was one of Washington's trusted scouting cavalry officers and widely known as "Light Horse Harry," while looking over the East Jersey situation,

discovered that the force at Paulus Hook, under Col. Van Buskirk, had retrograded for lack of military discipline. He formulated a plan for the capture of that place by surprise attack, which he presented with much ardor to as he expected. Cautioning his forces to maintain silence, he made the attack, captured the main works of the fortifications and made prisoners of all but forty of the Hessians guarding the fort.

The exploit was all the more remarkable for the reasons that in their night march through the ditches and meadows which had to be crossed before reaching the fortifications, all the ammunition of his troops had been ruined with water.

Col. Van Buskirk, as it happened, had left the night before on one of his numerous raids and Major Sutherland was in command. He very quickly perceived the lack of ammunition on the part of his assailants, and with less than half a hundred of Hessians he threw himself into one of the redoubts and fought off his would-be captors. All other soldiers in the fort were lined up, disarmed and marched rapidly away under guard, Major Lee, fearing that the noise of the fight would draw reinforcements or artillery fire from New York. He intended setting to work on fire, but here are his own reasons for not doing so:

“I intended to have burnt the barracks, but on finding a number of sick soldiers and women with young children in them, humanity forbade the execution of my intention.

Washington, his army, Congress, and all America, was aflame with Major Lee's successful exploit and subsequently Congress voted him a gold medal and resolutions thanking him for:

“Remarkable prudence, address and bravery displayed by him on this occasion; and that they approve the humanity shown in the circumstances prompting severity; as honorable to the arms of the United States, and correspondent to the noble principles on which they were assumed.”

The British lost 20 killed and many wounded. Seven officers and 160 soldiers were captured, in this brilliant enterprise.

The winter of 1779-80 was unusually cold and there was a shortage of fuel in New York. To meet this shortage, parties of Tories formed lumber cutting bands and began felling the hard wood, timber from Fort Lee to Bergen Point. At Fort Delancey, Captain Thomas Ward, who was in command of the outlaws, Negroes, renegades, and Hessians, forming its guard, seized the opportunity to increase his depredations. His raids extended toward Newark, New Bridge, and New Barbados Neck and even further away.

The campaign of 1780 brought General “Mad Anthony Wayne” to Bergen, but he soon retired from there to New Barbados Neck. Following him, Washington send the Marquise Lafayette to occupy the place and to Bergen Point for the purpose of gathering cattle and forage. A party formed of the forces under Lafayette’s command during this period, made an unsuccessful attack upon Fort Delancey. The attack was not premeditated and the detachment had no artillery or other means for breaking the heavy oak logs which formed the gates of the port. On another foraging trip to Bergen Point, Lafayette’s party had spirited interchange of rifle fire across the Kill Von Kull, with British forces on Staten Island.

During the summer of this year, Washington and Lafayette, with other members of the commander in chief's staff, were frequently at Bergen and on one or two occasions, at least, they journeyed south to Bergen Point to view the topographical conditions of Staten Island.

An Atrocious Murder

Early in the year 1781, occurred in Constable Hook, one of the most atrocious murders the Revolutionary chronicles tell of.

Sir Henry Clinton, who had a penchant for residing on Staten Island, issued a proclamation that all persons who brought provisions to Staten Island should be protected and paid. The proclamation was posted and broadcasted so that supplies could be obtained for the troops still encamped near Tompkinsville. Stephen Ball, of Rahway, who owned beef cattle, placed several sides aboard a boat secretly, so his neighbors would not know of his trading with the enemy. He sailed through the Kill Van Kull and landed near the spot where the British were in camp, but before he could reach the camp one Cornelius Hatfield, and a party of six other Tories captured him. His meat was stolen and the prisoner was taken before the British General Patterson, who refused to listen to Hatfield's charges. He was then taken before another British officer who declared that Ball receive thanks instead of punishment.

Hatfield and his band of Tories then took Ball to Bird Point, held a mock trial and on the pretext that Ball had wounded one of them, condemned him to death within ten minutes. HE was hung on a small tree "near the tide mill on Constable's Hook." Before the war ended Hatfield fled to Nova Scotia, following the example of Col. Van Buskirk, who fled to the same place, to escape the vengeance of those he had robbed and injured.

Because of his repulse of an attack by General Wayne on one of the block house forts erected to protect the lumber cutters, Captain Ward was made a major and in New York, his exploit was made much of. He was written about and lionized by the Tories to such an extent that many recruits joined him and early in 1781, he erected a small post at Bergen Point, which he called Refugee Post. Some of the worst cutthroats from Fort Delancey were sent down to this new military station and they utilized there opportunities to the limit, extending their depredations to Elizabeth port, Amboy, Elizabeth, and other places, until Americans determined to punish them.

In December, a party of Americans in Newark and Barbados Neck, assembled under Captain Hendricks, rowed to the Refugee Post in large whaleboats, where they captured half a dozen of the outlaws, two or three of them among the most notorious of Ward's force. They were carried to Newark and after court martial proceedings, executed. In February 1782, a company of militia in command of Captain Bowman marched across the ice on Newark Bay, where they captured three more of the outlaws and killed the fourth. Other attacks were made on both Refugee Post and Fort Delancey and in September these attacks became so insistent Major Ward was forced to evacuate. He is said to have taken most of his murderous crew with him to Nova Scotia.

Paulus Hook was evacuated November 22, 1783, and three days later the British left New York. Cornwallis had already surrendered to Washington at Yorktown, on October 19.

IT is impossible for one enjoying the boundless comforts of modern civilization today to realize the homely and frugal existence of our forefathers, who faced the great political problems confronting then as citizens of a new formed nation, founded on

principles of and animated by spirit, before then unknown to human existence. Had they not been subjected to limitations and privations, had they not learned to properly estimate the value of exalted purpose, they had surely never survived the spiritual trials of the years, which followed.

Powerful men of groups of men, in the larger states, strove mightily to control the affairs of the smaller and weaker ones. The Halls of Congress resounded rhetoric, but through all the sophistry and confusion, the real hearts of America, listened and heeded true voices of its patriots. The Constitutional Convention met and held heated and sometimes disturbing meetings. The question of slavery and slave-holding was one of menace to concerted action and agreement; but finally as we all know, out of the throes and bitterness of these long debates; came forth, clear and triumphant, the logical and sane Constitution under which we have grown a might nation, with laws that assure liberty to mankind, until the end of time shall come.

While in the travail of national birth, our ancestors on the Bayonne peninsula made no indelible mark on the records of history.

The Revolutionary War had made the seas again open to freebooters, privateers, and Letters of Marquis. And many of these sea rovers, as of by instinct, found natural harborage in the waters east and west of the peninsula. Most of these visitors, however, had practiced their ancient profession under the aegis of the law during the revolution, or in the longer and greater fight England had waged against France and Spain.

Throughout the period prosperity flowed in upon all the States and in the three ports of New York, Boston and Philadelphia especially, the commerce of the world, began to acquire its later habit of frequent and profitable calls.

Population increased rapidly. With liberty and freedom the common rights of men; its responsibilities and opportunities becoming assimilated and understood, consistent law were welded into shape. America had passed into the entrance hall of Democracy, but found it a labyrinth in its paths, some of which led upward to the mountain heights and others to disasters.

Means of communication between Congress and the people were poor and it took weeks and even months for news to spread to the more isolated settlements. Slavery, State Rights, rent laws, and taxation problems, were the subject of political discussion and until adequate laws were enacted, some of these subjects became a source of trouble for local authorities.

Men of enterprise and courage found it a time for profitable adventure into the untracked wilderness and many of them journeyed to far places where they built their homes. There were the pioneers who founded families and established places since grown into towns and cities.

Bergen Neck offered its attractions, then as now, to all lovers of open water and during the years following the surrender of Cornwallis, new farms and settlers appeared.

In 1789, Washington on his way to inauguration, as first President of the United States, journeyed by stage from Mount Vernon to Elizabeth port. All Bergen County passed over our old roadways to Bergen Point to welcome him and most of the people living on the peninsula, who possessed boats, decorated them with flags and assembled along the shores of the Kill Van Kull to await his arrival.

At Elizabeth port, a state barge sent over from New York, received Washington and his party. There was a crowd of convoying vessels, all of them gaily bedecked with

flags. As the marine cortege passed through the Kill Van Kull, cannons mounted at places along the shore thundered out a salute while bands of music played and the Jerseyman shouted. So great was the crowd it formed a continuous line along Bergen Point from bay to bay.

Many peninsula residents joined the convoy of boats and followed to New York, where they joined the multitude who watched as Washington took the oath of office on the platform erected where the sub-treasury now stands.

When Transportation Began

One of the first necessities of commercial existence is means for travel and transportation. The earliest settlers, who found these shores covered with heavy forests and undergrowth, were of necessity, compelled to follow trails made by earlier animals or the aborigines in their journeying from place to place.

With the first temporary settlement on our peninsula came roads. Crude at first, but as more settlers arrived the trails gave way to cleared causeways, along which springless wagons or horses drew draught sleds.

On the Bayonne peninsula, a very ready means of transportation to New York was found by water and every Dutch settler had his clumsy sailboat or rowboats. But as population increased, the need for roadways became more and more insistent and although action taken was deliberate in the days of the Dutch, in due course there was a good roadway running from Bergen to Bergen Point in the main roadway followed the old Indian trails and its course lay well over toward Newark Bay.

The settlement of Pennsylvania, in 1682, and its rapid progress under the wise administration of William Penn, made necessary during the opening years of the century,

a line of overland communication between that settlement and New York. In the beginning, this route was partly by water, sloops and other vessels carrying travelers and coaches through the upper bay by way of the Kill Van Kull and Arthur Kills, to Amboy. Subsequently, the delays and dangers of this round about way made another route necessary and the voyagers were ferried from New York to Paulus Hook, where these horses carried them through Bergen and by rough road which followed the old Indian trail, to Bergen Point, where a ferry carried them to Staten Island. The route then led them to Tottenville where the third ferry carried them to Amboy. Still later, the ferry at Bergen was used to convey them to Elisabeth port, whence they proceeded to Amboy.

The routing of these travelers through our peninsula was the first of long series of progressive steps, which have resulted in making Bayonne one of the great manufacturing and distributing centers of the world. But at first there was no indication of the wonderful changes the passing years would bring. The men following this route passed through a picturesque country showing wonderful marine views through upland clearing in either hand, with farms and fields centered in the midst of the primeval forest. But no stops were made until the ferry at Bergen Point was reached, and here, in relatively short time, grew up a small but thriving settlement, one of the newer groups now consolidated in the present municipality.

By reason of this land route, Amboy rapidly became an important settlement and toward the end of the pre-Revolutionary period, it had grown to be the most populous town between Penn's colony and New York. During the administration of Governor Franklin it was the place settled for the boundary conference between him and Governor Tyron.

The development of Bergen Neck – the name given this peninsula as it grew into territorial recognition during the quarter century period prior to the Revolution – although constantly handicapped by difficulties of drawbacks of one sort or another, was constant and positive. The settlers most of them were the plodding persistent temperament, with a leaven of ability and some conspicuous examples of that high order of intelligence which makes civilization, even in a wilderness.

The roadway leading from Bergen Town down to Bergen Point, grew gradually from its old time condition of a mere trail through primeval forest land to be a well defined route which all travelers used on their way to Staten Island.

In 1682, by an act of the General Assembly, John Berry and Laurence Van Buskirk of Bergen Neck with others from sections of the county were appointed Highway Commissioners to lay road board in New Jersey, but there is no known record of their performance. It is certain however, that the old road from Bergen Town to the point was much improved and broadened by these commissioners.

The General Assembly in 1704 passed an act for the appointment of two persons from each division in this county to lie out cross roads “four rods wide.” There is no map showing the work of these local commissioners, but it is reason to believe that they are responsible for the construction of most of the original cross roads on the peninsula.

All of these activities indicated the growing demand of the settlers for the better transportation of facilities but the money for road building was hard to obtain. Some of the old road acts provided that lotteries are held to supply the sums. It was money obtained from a lottery that built the first roadway from Newark to Paulus Hook.

The King's Highway from Bergen Town to Bergen Point was the first important road construction on the peninsula. It was completed on November 2, 1743, and followed very closely the line of the trail road, planks and hewn logs being laid down in the meadow on wet sections through which the road lay. In the main the King's Highway was a mere dirt road, well dragged perhaps and fairly good in dry weather, but in the wet season long stretches were covered with water, making them practically impassible. On the stretches became mud holes and sandy places killed off the horses.

For many years, however, this King's Highway was the only route for travelers to Staten Island or to the distant, but important settlement, Philadelphia. The latter city settled by Penn in 1682, as we have elsewhere related, was in 1743, probably more prosperous even than New York. Communication between these two cities had been up to this time, a real adventure and only those compelled to make the journey essayed it. Messages of importance were sent by Indian runners at large expense, the Indians transferring the message or package from tribe to tribe and dividing the honorarium between them.

Personal visits were first made by sea voyage, but this was long and expensive. The land route, with all its dangers, from Indians or wild beasts, became more and more in demand. Early pioneers of the millions of passengers now traveling from New York to Philadelphia, therefore, donned buckskins, hired their scouts and stride horses, made the risky journey in from three to five days, according to the season of the year.

Then about 1750, several venturesome and enterprising settlers who owned vehicles suitable for carrying people, offered these conveniences to travelers by written notices posted at taverns, in New York and other centers. These first passenger

conveyances made no regular trips. They were purely emergency conveniences and only used when necessity compelled.

That the use of these vehicles created a demand for better accommodations, is shown by the fact that on October 10, 1764 a second King's highway was opened. This road ran further to the east than the first and became the route of the first stage line running to Philadelphia, connecting at Bergen Point with the ferry to Staten Island.

In 1750, Jacob Coarsen, who had established a crude ferry years before carrying wayfarers across the Kill Van Kull, to and from Staten Island, and who, on occasion, conveyed travelers down the Arthur Kills to Amboy, filed a petition with the English Governor of New York for a patent granting him a monopoly for the ferry rights between these two places and for shore rights extending a half a mile on each side of his ferry. He received his grant, but his request for riparian land was limited to that in front of his own property. For many years before and after his time, this ferry carried the settlers of Bergen Neck on Sunday to the landing leading to the Old Dutch church on Staten Island, then the only church in this section.

The stages were carried across the Kills on this ferry by a barge or flat boat. Houses and taverns sprang up along the route and at or near the ferry, a settlement came to being. In 1767, the stage route to Philadelphia turned to the new Plank Road route through Newark, and the old ferry declined and was abandoned, not to be regularly resumed until well into the following century. It is a fact, however, that means for conveying wayfarers across the Kill Von Kull continued in operation during all these years; but as a regular business and as a source of income it ceased with the transfer of the route to Newark.

The Bergen Point plank road from Currie's Woods to that place was opened June 29, 1796.

Along the New York Bay, where most of the farmers and settlers were located, boat landings were constructed and from these places the products of the farms, fields, and waters were carried to New York in sloops and heavy rowboats, the latter sometimes manned by a half dozen rowers.

At Van Buskirk's Point and Pamrapo, passenger sloops provided accommodations for travelers to the growing city. Many of the settlers made merchandising trips, family affairs, and all hands joining the arrival in New York, to sell the products of the field and farm or the pelts secured by trading with the Indians who still visited the peninsula.

It was widely scattered, homely, determined, but nonetheless homogenous community, slowly and stubbornly coming into its own.

We may pass over the later colonial and Revolutionary period, road and transportation conditions, during that time being changed but little from those already described.

With the opening of the Nineteenth Century we find a distinct broadening of purpose and a wider vision of life's possibilities animating the residents of our peninsula. They were only responding to and sympathetic, with a wave of progress, enterprise and endeavor which pervaded all the people of who were then first beginning to realize and assimilate the opportunities of a free republic and self-government. Commerce to foreign ports was rapidly increasing. Our ships and flag sailed the seven seas and our business men were laying foundations on which to erect before the century ended a mightily nation extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

Navigation by steam had become a fact and the brothers John R. and Robert J. Livingston were operating steamboats on the Hudson River.

Many years prior to this time, a ferry had been started at Elizabeth port. At first this ferry provided sailboat or sloop transportation to New York. It was successful route and with the opening of the century had a well-established carrying trade for passengers and freight.

1808, Col. Aaron Ogden purchased this ferry and immediately leased it to the Livingston's, who inaugurated a steamboat service with the Raritan and Sea Horse both of them small vessel, but able to convey freight and passengers regularly despite wind or tide. These boats made landings during a course of years off a dock located almost in front of where the LaTourette Hotel is now located. These steamboats made two shillings for the trip. In 1821, a rival steamboat line was started from Elizabeth port to Jersey City, which carried passengers for 12 ½ cents each trip. It is not known whether or not this rival ship made stops at Bergen Point.

Following close on the heels of the steamboats came the first steam railroad. On March 7, 1832 the New Jersey Railroad and Transportation Company was incorporated. Horse-drawn carriages first operated this, the trip to Jersey City and along the northern boundary of Bayonne being completed in 1836.

None of these transportation lines and improvements, however, had been of direct benefit to the Bayonne peninsula and during these formative and progressive years for almost all other sections of New Jersey, the territory forming our peninsula had merely marked time, its people holding fast to the benefits they enjoyed, awaiting with

expectancy, the magic touch which would convert there bucolic condition into one of opportunity and civic activity.

This great change came during the Civil War period, when the Central Railroad; operating for many years with its terminus at Elizabeth port, in 1860 secured an act of Legislation permitting it to build its bridge across Newark Bay and lay tracks thence into Jersey City. The work was completed on August 1, 1864, and with its completion a new and greater page of history was turned for every inhabitant of the peninsula.