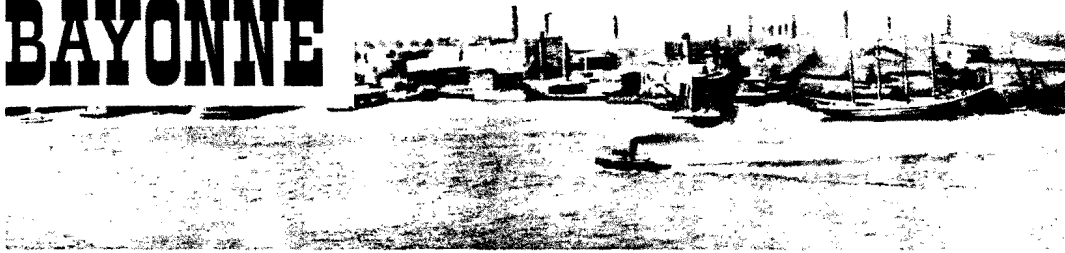


BAYONNE



View of Bayonne waterfront on the Kill Van Kull, circa 1914, when the community was world's largest oil refining center.

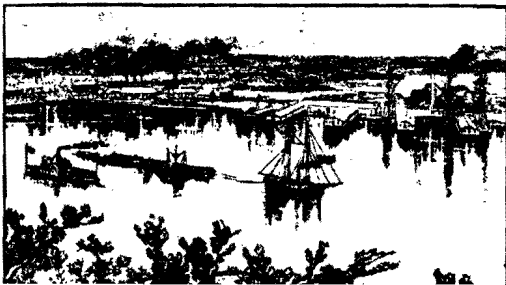
ONE OF a number of New Jersey communities whose recorded history begins with Henry Hudson's voyage of 1609, Bayonne is a city that literally exploded into being. The first grant of land in what is now Bayonne was made in 1645 at the conclusion of a war which had raged for two years between the Dutch and the Indians. In celebration of the peace treaty, Konstapel (gunner) Jacob Jacobsen Roy was ordered to fire a "grand salvo of three guns" from his post at Fort Amsterdam. Something went wrong. A brass six-pounder exploded upon discharge, wounding the gunner's right arm seriously.

In compensation for his injuries, Konstapel Roy was granted a tract of "150 morgens"—318 acres of land jutting out to a point into the Kill Van Kull, a scant 4½ miles from Manhattan. The land grant became known as "Konstapel's Hoeck," now familiarly known as Constable Hook.

Although this grant provided Bayonne with its earliest settlers, the present name of the community does not appear until March 15, 1861, when, by an act of the state legislature, the Township of Bayonne was set off from the Town of Bergen (now part of Jersey City).

The derivation of the name Bayonne is still shrouded in mystery. Although many of its residents believe that it was named after Bayonne, France, most historians now accept the fact that the city acquired its name from a group of real estate developers. Apparently the syndicate

The Standard Oil refinery at Constable Hook in 1885; this was the original refining unit of today's Esso Standard Oil Company.



had selected the name "Bay-on" for their real estate development since their property fronted on bays on both the east and west. Ultimately, residents of the vicinity began to use the name to designate the entire area of the peninsula.

Bayonne's earliest years were those of quiet farming. After the Revolutionary War, many of its residents turned from agriculture to shad and oyster fishing. Although the shad fishing was excellent, the exceptional quality of the bay oysters prompted development of Bayonne's first important industry. By 1850 it was estimated that more than half of the peninsula's total population was engaged in oyster seeding or merchandising.

The early part of the 19th century also witnessed the emergence of the community as an ultra-fashionable resort center, drawing society people from throughout the Northeast. One of its principal attractions was La Tourette House, which served as a center of social activity for many of New York's wealthiest residents for almost a century.

The discovery of oil in Pennsylvania and the establishment of the Prentice Refining Company's plant at Constable Hook in 1875 marked the industrial birth of the city. Industrial development reached its zenith during World War I, when Bayonne, for a few years, was the world's most important oil refining and terminal center.

The Prentice plant was the predecessor of today's large Esso refinery at Constable Hook—the original refining unit of the Standard Oil group of companies.

Lombard & Ayers established a refinery in 1876 at the Hook. This plant, in turn, was sold to the Tide Water Associated Oil Company, which expanded it into one of the East's largest refineries.

Bayonne's unexcelled waterfront accessibility, together with the city's three miles of undeveloped waterfront, were the main factors in attracting the oil industry to the peninsula. However, another element responsible for the city's rapid industrial growth was the building, in 1864, of a railroad trestle across Newark Bay connecting Bayonne with Elizabeth. The only overland link with the mainland for a half century, it was replaced in 1926.

The Bayonne Bridge, opened on November 15, 1931.

the peninsula's semi-isolation by enabling motor vehicles to travel to and from Staten Island and to all interior points via the Port Authority's two other Staten Island bridges—Outerbridge Crossing and the Goethals Bridge.

It was inevitable that Bayonne's strategic location between two bays of America's greatest port would keep it in the fore as one of the Port of New York District's leading industrial communities. Among the concerns still contributing to the vitality and economic well-being of the entire Port District are the American Radiator Company; Best Foods, Inc.; Electro Dynamic Division of the General Dynamics Corporation; Baker Castor Oil Company; General Cable Corporation; and International Nickel Corporation.

On January 17, 1939, one of the city's most ambitious undertakings, the Bayonne Port Terminal, was formally dedicated. The terminal, containing docks, railroad tracks and a motor causeway—the latter an artificial peninsula extending two miles into New York Bay—was destined to give Bayonne one of the largest and most modern marine and industrial terminals in the country.

The U.S. entry into World War II brought Bayonne's visions of a gigantic seaport to a hasty end. The property was taken over by the U.S. Navy and redeveloped into one of the Navy's largest and most important naval supply depots. Among its features is a drydock over 1,000 feet long—one of the world's largest—capable of handling any ship afloat.

This turn of events deprived the city of a chance of becoming an important cog in the Port District's huge complex of commercial marine terminals; nevertheless, it proved beneficial. Today, the Bayonne Naval Supply Depot employs some 2,250 people and contributes significantly to the community's economy.

Although the city no longer enjoys its former status as the world's leading refining center, it has a growing diversified industry and importance as a key transportation center. The future holds much promise for the peninsula city of the New Jersey-New York Port.

The La Tourette House in 1860 was originally a chateau built by the DuPont family in the 18th century. Sold in 1806, the mansion was converted into a hotel. For over a century, the sumptuous rooms of the hostelry made it a favorite with New York's society leaders.



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