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HAPPY 350<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY, COEYMANS!

Coeymans is celebrating its 350th anniversary in 2023 and the Ravena News-Herald is delighted to join in the festivities. Welcome to our com-

memorative 350th anniversary issue celebrating the history of Coeymans and its hopes for the future. The town has held

events this year but the biggest festivities are still ahead with a weekend of celebrations June 9 and 10, first at Joralemon Park and then Coeymans Land-

ing. A highlight of the weekend will be a parade starting in the village of Ravena and ending at the Landing in the Hamlet. Everyone is invited to all

of the festivities!

In this special issue, we celebrate the history of Coeymans and share information about the upcoming celebrations.

There are also lots of photos of Coeymans Past, which we hope you enjoy.

So get ready to party, Coeymans. This one is all about you.



A brief history of the town of Coeymans

Submitted by the Ravena Coeymans Historical Society For Capital Region Independent Media

The town of Coeymans was formed from the original town of Watervliet, on March 18, 1791, and was the second town formed in Albany County.

The first settler was Barent Pieterse Koeijemans (the Dutch spelling of Coeymans), who arrived in the area in the 1670s. Coeymans had arrived in New Amsterdam (New York), from Texel, Holland, in 1639, with his father Pieter and brothers Arent, Jacob and Lucas.

In that same year he was indentured to the Patroon, Killian Van Rensselaer, to serve as an apprentice in his Rensselaerwyck (Albany) mills under Pieter Cornelise. In 1673, after nearly 30 years working for and leasing land and mills from the Patroon, Coeymans purchased from the Katskill Indians a vast tract of land along the Hudson River south of the Patroon's land. The land was approximately 120 square miles along the Hudson River, from Bethlehem to Cossack-

ie (including the modern towns of Coeymans, New Baltimore and Westerlo). On April 7, 1673, Gov. Francis Lovelace granted a patent for the tract eight or 10 miles on the river and extending back 10 or 12 miles to Barent Pieterse Coeymans. This tract fell within the bounds of Rensselaerwyck, and Coeymans purchased the patroon's claim, agreeing to pay quit-rent of nine

shilling a year. In 1714, he obtained a patent from Queen Anne of England confirming this tract to him and his heirs forever.

It was along the west bank of the Hudson River between the mouths of the Hannacroix and Coeymans (Onesquethaw) Creeks within this patent that Coeymans established the center of his milling complex and home.

Barent's first home was a large stone dwelling known as the Coeymans Castle (demolished in the 1830s), with two sawmills and two gristmills along Coeymans Creek. The Coeymans mills were the catalyst that turned the mostly rural area into a flourishing commercial and industrial river port, making Coeymans well known to river travelers for hundreds of years.

A second, larger Coeymans stone home was built in early 1700s. Known as the Ariaantje Coeymans Stone House, it was erected in the decade before his death. It was the home of Barent's children, Samuel and Ariaantje Coeymans.

Upon the death of Barent Coeymans in 1710, Andries Coeymans, the oldest son, came into possession of all the Coeymans' property, and after the confirmation of the patent by Queen Anne in 1714, he divided the property among his siblings Pieter, Samuel and Ariaantje.

It is this riverfront area that served as the center of the Coeymans family settlement and their busi-

ness concerns that would become known as the hamlet, Coeymans Landing.

During the Revolutionary War between the Americans and the British, the ship building industry in Coeymans flourished, with the local sawmills supplying lumber for the construction of ships (gunboats or gundeolos). An encampment of colonial troops was also stationed in Coeymans.

Among the early settlers of Coeymans Landing were Andreas and Leoart Whitbeck, the Verplanks, Ten Eycks, Vanderveers and David McCarty, who surveyed the patent.

Brigadier General David McCarty's home still stands in Coeymans Landing. McCarty was an active participant in the events leading up to the American Revolution, served in the Continental Army, and held numerous appointments in the post-Revolutionary era. He also distinguished himself as a local businessman and land holder of note.

On June 30, 1770, David McCarty married Charlotte Whitbeck (1746-1828), the granddaughter of Pieter Coeymans and his first wife, Charlotte Amelia Drawyer, and the great-granddaughter of Barent Coeymans. Charlotte Whitbeck's parents, Maykie Coeymans (1714-1796) and Andries Whitbeck (1707-1765), had extensive family land holdings in the western portion of the Coeymans patent.

Coeymans Landing prospered as it had an ide-

al location with two creeks, one to the north of the village and the other to the south, for water supply to power the grist, plaster and saw mills, and the Hudson River to ship their products to market. In the next hundred years, a hat (felt), paper, saw, grist and flax mills, and a tannery were built along the Haanakrois (old spelling) Creek from the river to present day Alcove.

Until the railroad came to Coeymans Junction in 1883, the town of Coeymans consisted of Coeymans Landing, Achequetuck (Peacock's corners), Coeymans Hollow, Stephenville (Alcove), Indian Fields (later to be destroyed to make way for the Alcove reservoir) and Keefer's Corners. All but the latter had their own post offices and hotels, which were regular stops on the Coeymans & Westerlo Stage Coach Line.

The farmlands from Aquetuck to Indian Fields were very fertile and sent their excess produce to New York City and Albany. In 1850, the present Route 143 was incorporated as the Coeymans & Westerlo Plank Road Company. In 1860, the roadway of plank was taken up and broken stone was substituted, improving the road for the stage travelers.

Among the early families to settle in this section of the town were the Whitbecks, Verplanks, Ten Eycks, Vanderzee, Shear, Whiltise, Schoonmakers, Lamoreaux, Stephens, Blodgetts and Wickhams. Three of the original houses are still standing and occupied today. The Whitbeck House, the Ver-

plank House (owned by the Collins Family) and the Vanderzee farm and homestead. The old Ten Eyck House and fort, which stood where the former E.V. Shear farm was located, was torn down in the early part of the 20th century.

The town was first connected by rail to the city of Albany in 1864. The Saratoga and Hudson Railroad only operated for a short period of time and was later called the "White elephant Railroad." It left the town without a railroad until 1883 when the New York West Short Buffalo Line was completed. With it, Coeymans Square, whose name was changed to Coeymans Junction, flourished.

That same year, Peter Pulver built a hotel and restaurant and three dwellings. This was the nucleus of the present village of Ravena. The village grew rapidly in the next five years and another hotel, The Vincent House, and several stores and businesses were built. In 1893, the name Coeymans Junction was changed to Ravena.

Coeymans Landing was very prosperous at the height of Hudson River travel. First shipped were products produced by the many mills near the river. Later, it was a shipping point for hay, straw, apples and other farm products. During winter months, the ice harvesting industry became a popular new business in Coeymans, with an ice storage house capable of holding 100 tons of river ice, which was mostly shipped to New York City by barge or steamboat.

There were a few icehouses in Coeymans Landing and one on Barren Island. J.N. Briggs ran the largest ice operation.

Later, when modern refrigeration replaced the need for iceboxes, the icehouses were used to grow mushrooms. In 1879, Briggs developed an amusement park called Baerena Park on Barren Island. The park included docks, a covered dance platform, a Ferris wheel, merry-go-round, refreshments and an observation tower. A steamboat docked at Coeymans Landing was used to ferry people to the island on a regular schedule.

In 1886, the first brickyards were built by Sutton & Sudderley. By the year 1907, four yards were in operation and 40 million bricks were shipped from Coeymans. Other brick companies included Roah Hook, Hardwick & Walsh, Zeigler & Zeigler and Powell & Minnock, which was the last company to remain in operation.

By the late 1890s, Coeymans began to change dramatically. The Coeymans family gristmills closed after 200 years of operation, and John Briggs purchased the rest of the Coeymans family land. Several fires destroyed numerous buildings in Coeymans Landing. In the early 1900s, John N. Briggs started the Atlantic Light & Power Company, which provided power to Coeymans, Ravena and New Baltimore.

Through the 20th century, the principle industries shifted from the docks to the rail yards, and the riverfront, once the focus of life within the hamlet of Coeymans, slowly began to decline. By the early 20th century, the railroad virtually replaced the river as the way of transporting goods, and a new community began to blossom in and around the new transportation center (Ravena).

As the riverfront docks were abandoned, commerce in the Hamlet slowed, many of the long-

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Sports

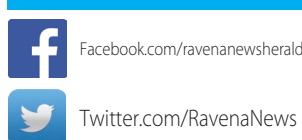


Unbridled builds bridges between horses and humans. See page B1

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