The Official Journal of the Organization

The Hoboken Historical Museum

Newsletter

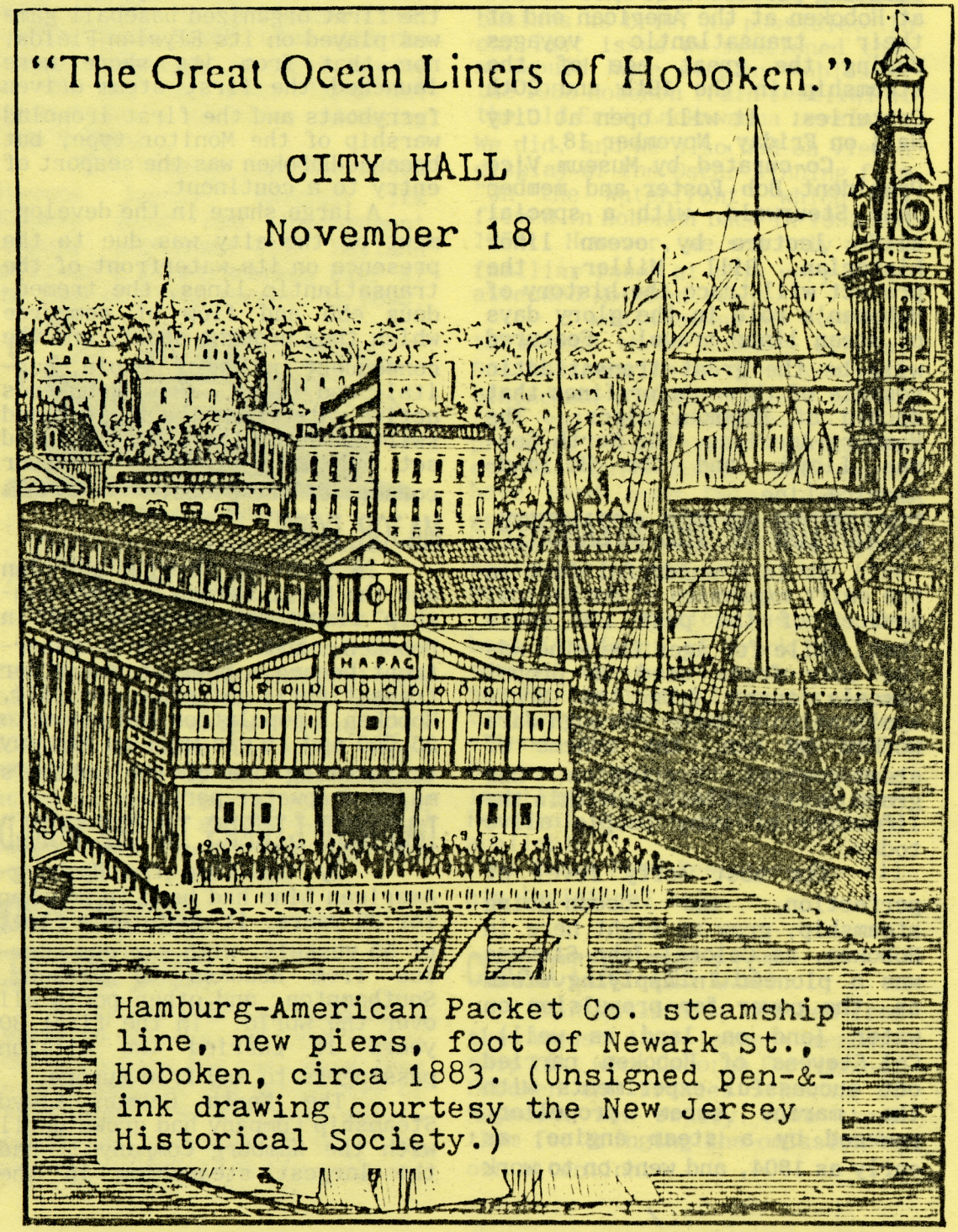
OF BY And FOR Museum Members.

October 1988 Hoboken, N.J. No. 20

"The Great Ocean Liners of Hoboken."

CITY HALL

November 18



Hamburg-American Packet Co. steamship line, new piers, foot of Newark St., Hoboken, circa 1883. (Unsigned pen-&-ink drawing courtesy the New Jersey Historical Society.)

THE GREAT OCEAN LINERS RETURN TO HOBOKEN

The Museum will present as its Third Annual major exhibition a panorama on the fascinating subject of the magnificent floating palaces that once docked at Hoboken at the American end of their transatlantic voyages during the great age of the steamship in the 19th and 20th Centuries. It will open at City Hall on Friday, November 18.

Co-curated by Museum Vice President Bob Foster and member Jane Steurwald, with a special slide lecture by ocean liner historian Bill Miller, the project will trace the history of Hoboken's role in the glory days of ocean liner travel. Featured will be the great transatlantic vessels of three major lines that docked at Hoboken piers: The Hamburg-American, the North German Lloyd, and the Holland-America Line

EVOLUTION OF THE STEAMSHIP

It is a wonderful fact in the swift expansion of mechanical devices of the past 150 years that, while for ages the wind was the only force used to propel vessels apart from the brute application of power through oars worked by men, the scheme of steam-powered propulsion has grown to its perfection within the lifetimes of many people alive today.

Its most lofty level of perfection, the ocean-going steamship, grew up right here in Hoboken, as Colonel John Stevens was a pioneer in applying steam as the power for propulsion on water (and on land as well). Col.Stevens of Hoboken carried out successful experiments with the marine screw propeller, powered by a steam engine, as early as 1804, and went on to work with the advanced twin-screw propeller as well.

STEAMSHIP LINES BUILT HOBOKEN

Hoboken's fame is directly due not to the fact that at one time it was a famous recreational resort of New York City, nor that the first organized baseball game was played on its Elysian Fields, nor that from its shore were launched the first steam-driven ferryboats and the first ironclad warship of the Monitor type, but because Hoboken was the seaport of entry to a continent.

A large share in the development of the city was due to the presence on its waterfront of the transatlantic lines, the tremendous ebb and flow of commerce which they brought about, and the consequent influx of people, capital, and ideas. From Hoboken's active waterfront the largest and swiftest ocean liners of the world set out each week to the four corners of the globe.

MAJOR PORT

In 1863 the Hamburg-American and the North German Lloyd steamship lines were established in Hoboken, and the city's waterfront became a port of entry for transatlantic shipping. By 1874, Hoboken's population had grown to 25,000 and it was well on its way to becoming one of the nation's major deepwater ports.

LARGEST LINERS IN THE WORLD

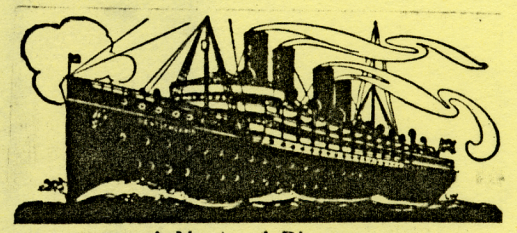
By the time the Hamburg-American Line had been in Hoboken for 30 years, it operated a fleet of 55 vessels, with express service from Hoboken to Hamburg, Southampton, and other ports all over the world. In the first 30 years it carried two million passengers to and from Europe.

The North German Lloyd Steamship Company had grown until with the Hamburg Company it had the largest steamships in the world. For many years the great ships of this popular line plied between Hoboken, Southampton, and Bremen.

HOLLAND-AMERICA LINE

The Netherland-American Steam Navigation Company, popularly known to the public as the Holland Line, the Rotterdam Line, and the Rhine Route, vied with the German companies in their heyday as one of the most important transatlantic services steaming from Hoboken.

The company had the noted Stevens family, through its Hoboken Land and Improvement Company, construct the Holland American's first Hoboken pier at the foot of Fifth street, in 1890.



A Nautycal Rhyme

THERE was a young lady named Banker,
Who slept while the ship lay at anchor;
She awoke in dismay
When she heard the mate say,
"Now hoist up the top sheet and spanker."

Until 1963 the Holland-America Line had been an integral part of the Hoboken maritime scene, with its own ships, those affiliated services and still other vessels for which the Company acted as agent carrying thousand of passengers and mountains of cargo from their 5th and 6th street piers each year.

MONEY MATTERS (IT SURE DOES)

Every two years we send out a letter to corporations and individuals, asking for cash donations to help support the activities of the Museum. So far this year's appeal has received $2,150. We are very grateful for the support.

WE SET A FESTIVE TABLE, BUT FEW CAME TO DINE

We like to include in the Newsletter timely Hoboken historical items of interest as much as possible, so we try to keep everyday news of Museum busines as brief as possible. In our last issue we mentioned that we would have display tables at the 1988 Hoboken train festival at the old Erie-Lackawanna terminal. We did, and we also had on view a display of the Oscar-winning film "On the Waterfront" which was filmed in Hoboken back in 1953 and 1954. However, we saw only a few familiar faces at this very well-attended Hoboken event.

I would encourage everyone to attend these Hoboken events, not that we insist that you work behind our display tables, but so that you would add your valued presence to these enjoyable events. Quite honestly, we could have used some help. We are grateful to member Jeanne Valentin, who was there from beginning to end, more than nine hours in all.

Our location was not the best (in front of Track 13), so some of those looking for us did not find us in the large throng of visitors, the largest to ever attend the railroad festival. However, the Musuem's table location was listed in the free Festival directories that were available.

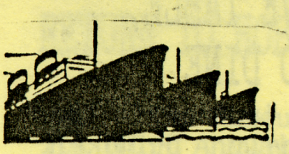
We thank Fred Pescatore for all his logistical help.

CORRECTING THE LIST

Unintentionally omitted from the August 1988 issue's membership list were Deborah Ferrigno of Hoboken and Frances Schenone of Maywood, New Jersey. We thank them for bringing the omission to our attention.

Hoboken Historical Museum
P.O. Box M-1220
Hoboken NJ 07030

NON PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 6
HOBOKEN, NJ



MUSEUM HOURS
9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
weekdays
6.30 p.m. - 9.00 p.m.
wednesday evenings

THE HOBOKEN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

CITY HALL

WASHINGTON AND FIRST STS. HOBOKEN, N.J.

SPECIAL MEETING NOTICE

The Hoboken Historical Museum will hold its October meeting at City Hall, second floor, 7 PM, on Tuesday, October 18 to set plans in motion for the upcoming ocean liner exhibit, and to help dismantle the current show. Please pass the word--bring a friend if you wish.

For those who live out of town and might receive notice of this meeting too late, perhaps they can attend the following meeting on Tuesday, November 8 at the Clam Broth House at 7 PM on their way home from the polls.

MUSEUM NEWSLETTER
October 1988 No. 20

Editor Jim Hans
Production Ed. Paul Lippman
Office Phone: (201)653-7392