HOBOKEN HISTORY



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HOBOKEN NJ NUMBER 9 1994

HOBOKEN HISTORY

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

I look forward to serving as Museum President for a second year. We have a great returning Board and I welcome its new members, Ed Lepre, D. Rae, Charles Lee, McKevin Shaughnessy, together with a new officer, Susanna Cassell Kopchains. Susanna is taking over the duties of Recording Secretary from Barbara Lippman, whom I want to thank for her years of hard work. I would also like to thank Mayor Anthony Russo for consenting to be an Honorary Board member.

We have many accomplishments this year such as increasing membership by 65 percent, a successful lecture series, our magazine, exhibits throughout the community, an education program in the public schools, and a healthy financial statement allowing for additional future museum projects.

As always, we need your help to move forward and further serve our community. If you can find some time this year to help, please telephone us at 656-2240.

NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

We must apologize for being so late with this issue. From the middle of December right through January, we seem to have hibernated. But be assured, members will receive four isssues for every year of their subscription.

OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES FOR 1994

The Museum has expanded its Board to include 11 trustees, and welcomes new Board members Ed Lepre, D. Rae, Charles Lee, and McKevin Shaughnessy. Mayor Anthony Russo has become an Honorary member of the Board.

We also have a new officer, Susanna Cassell Kopchains, Recording Secretary. Returning officers are Bob Foster, President; Lenny Luizzi Sr., Vice President; Gerard Lisa, Treasurer; and Paul Lippman, Corresponding Secretary. Returning trustees are George Kirchgessner, John De Palma, Steve Hefler, Maureen Allex, Steve Kilnisan, Lynne Shapiro, and Vincent Wassmann.



GRAND OPENING OF 1994: THE MUSEUM BOARD PHOTOGRAPH

From left to right,
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Steve Hefler,
Charles Lee,
Lenny Luizzi,
John De Palma,
Vinny Wassmann,
Lynne Shapiro,
McKevin Shaughnessy,
Steve Kilnisan;
SEATED:
George Kirchgessner,
Barbara Lippman,
Paul Lippman.

Hoboken's Park Avenue Painter of Cowboys and Indians: CHARLES SCHREYVOGEL





↑ *Charles Schreyvogel in 1906.*
→ *"Dead Sure" painted in 1902 (with blue-coated troopers riding red-brown horses, with light sand and a pale blue sky). The model for the first trooper may have been Storle Schultze "the Hoboken athlete"; the second was Grant Bloodgood.*

Among the American artists of the 19th Century and early 20th Century who took their inspiration from America's Wild West was a Hoboken resident, the New York-born sketchmaster named Charles Schreyvogel. In his own time he was one of the American art world's most renowned figures.

When he eventually visited the West, Schreyvogel patrolled its dusty deserts, making countless sketches of every aspect of Indian and US Cavalry life. He applied his obsession with historical accuracy to numerous bronzes, paintings, and twelve large murals. But after he had made his Wild West sketches, he didn't complete the work in the western plains. Instead, he took them to the third-floor apartment and the rooftop at 1220 Park Avenue in Hoboken.

Schreyvogel was born on New York's East Side on



A trooper shares "The Last Drop" of water with his horse.

January 4, 1861 to an immigrant family from Germany. As a youngster he sold newspapers, worked as an office boy, and, when the family moved to Hoboken, served as apprentice to a carver of Meerschaum pipes. Later he became a jewelry engraver, then a lithographer.

He dreamed of going west and painting its cowboys and frontiersmen, and saved every dime he could to pay for a formal art education. In 1887 he received the help of two influential men, Dr. William A. Fisher and H. August Schwab, president of the Newark Art League, and went to Munich, Germany, for three years of study. He learned his craft well, but suffered such poor health that he was unable to practice it. Nor could he afford to undertake the journey west that might, according to doctors, restore him to health.

Working as a painter and lithographic designer, he managed to eke out a precarious living, first at 54 Hudson Street and then at 222 Garden Street (this became 516 Garden when the house numbers changed). He received encouragement from Buffalo Bill Cody, who allowed Schreyvogel to travel with the Wild West Show and use the cowboys, Indians, and horses of the company as models.

Schreyvogel was finally able to go west in 1893. For five months he was the guest of an Army surgeon on

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↑ On the roof of 1220 Park Avenue in Hoboken, Charles Schreyvogel paints one of his rugged action scenes of the Wild West, 1903. The Palisades furnished details that he used in the backgrounds of his paintings.

the Ute Indian Reservation in southwestern Colorado. The artist from Hoboken became an expert horseman and learned the Indian sign language, gaining the friendship of Indian and soldier alike. He also spent time in Arizona and Colorado, gathering information and equipment he hoped to use in painting the West as he saw it.

By the time Schreyvogel returned to Hoboken, his health was restored and he turned out many paintings, but his Western scenes did not sell in the East. Then he received $800 for a portrait of John Stevens, and this windfall led to his marriage. His bride, Louisa (Lulu) Walther, was the daughter of the owner of a Hoboken seltzer-bottling works who refused to attend her wedding to a penniless artist, but the marriage took place anyway in Hoboken on August 24, 1894.

The couple moved into the third floor at 1220 Park Avenue where they remained until moving to 1232 Park in 1903. Charles was soon as poverty-stricken as ever, and Lulu was forced to wear hand-me-downs and take in laundry. But he persisted with his artistic career, painting miniatures and designing lithographs. His first "serious" work was a portrait of his wife.

Neighbors and children of friends acted as models. They described Schreyvogel as a dark-suited, eccentric, neatly dressed man who always wore a derby hat. Although his shoes had holes, he had a generous spirit

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and was well-liked in Hoboken. He gave away many of his unsold paintings and bronzes to neighbors and bill collectors. Everyone called him Charlie.

Once in a great while one of Schreyvogel's Western scenes would sell, offering him just enough encouragement to keep him painting.



Buffalo Bill Cody with Schreyvogel's wife Lulu and daughter Ruth, and a friend, in 1906.

Several of Schreyvogel's paintings were accepted for exhibition in 1897 by the National Academy of Design, and one from this exhibition ("Over a Dangerous Pass") was chosen for reproduction by *Harper's Weekly*. None of them won prizes, however, and he was refused membership in the Academy.

As the deadline drew near for the Academy's exhibit of 1900, he entered an oil he had been trying without success to sell. It was "My Bunkie," which depicted an incident a soldier had related to him in 1893. It shows US Cavalry soldiers in a running fight with Indians, with one soldier scooping up a fallen comrade who shares his bunkhouse. The painting had been refused by a lithographer because its proportions were not correct for calendar reproduction, and it had been hanging in a small Manhattan cafe where it received no attention. So dispirited was the artist that he failed even to leave his address at the Academy.

On January 21 the artist's brother Robert died and Shreyvogel sorrowfully went to New York City to make funeral arrangements. On the street he learned that he was the object of a search and the subject of a newspaper headline:

UNKNOWN ARTIST LEAPS INTO FAME.

His painting had been displayed in the American Fine Arts Gallery in New York, and had won the top award of the Academy, the Thomas B. Clarke Prize, consisting of $300. "My Bunkie" went on to the exhibitions in Paris, Buffalo (the Pan-American Exposition), and St. Louis, winning the bronze medal in each instance. Later it was purchased by New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. Schreyvogel's collection of unsold paintings was quickly sold out.

The resulting instant success included Schreyvogel's first press notice, which was in the *New York Herald* on New Year's Day, 1900. In 1901 he was elected an associate of the American Academy of Design, and reproductions of "My Bunkie" were sold widely.

Schreyvogel began to be compared with Frederic Remington [1861-1909] as one of America's great Western artists. The next painting was "The Last Drop," a touching portrait of an Army trooper kneeling before his horse, sharing with it his last drop of water from his hat.

In 1902, "Custer's Demand" began a controversy that was widely followed by the press. It showed General George Custer and his officers meeting with Indian chiefs Satanta, Lone Wolf, and Kicking Bird in southwest Kansas in 1869. Frederic Remington, then reigning Western artist in America,

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↑ *"In Safe Hands" shows a trooper rescuing a little girl. Ruth Schreyvogel later wrote, "Father and Grant built a wooden horse. Then he dressed Grant as a trooper and made me sit on a small wooden three-legged chair in front of Grant with my head on his shoulder while Grant sat on the saddled wooden horse." Ruth was 5 years old at the time.*

was incensed at the public acceptance of the younger artist's work, and, in the pages of the *New York Herald* proceeded to attack the painting as "half-baked stuff." He claimed that the pistol holster worn by one Indian was of a type not evolved until about ten years later, and that the same applied to a cartridge belt shown in the scene. One Indian wore a Sioux war bonnet, which was "almost unknown in the southern plains." Custer's boots were of a type not adopted by the Cavalry until 1887. The Cavalry stirrups, the white campaign hat, and the saddle bags were, he declared, equally anachronistic. A yellow stripe was incorrectly shown on an officer's saddle cloth, he stated, and Colonel Crosby's leggings were of a type not in use until after 1890.

Custer's widow leaped to Schreyvogel's defense in a letter to the *Herald*. She wrote that Custer's uniform in the painting was "the unvarying outfit of my husband on a campaign," and the boots were not government

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issue but were made by a Philadelphia bootmaker. She also was "impressed with the fidelity of the likeness and the costume of the Indians, with whom I was familiar, especially with war bonnet and shield, for my husband had both presented to him by chiefs at that time. The whole picture is so free from sensationalism and yet so spirited, that I want to commend your skill...I think the likeness excellent, the composition of the picture and harmony of color admirable."

Remington followed with a vituperative letter offering a reward of $100 to be given to charity if the still-living Colonel Crosby would admit he never saw "a pair of trousers of the color depicted in Mr. Schreyvogel's picture in the year of 1869 in any connection with the regular United States Army."

Crosby, to Remington's discomfiture, came to Schreyvogel's defense after admitting that his trousers *were* of the different shade of blue in the painting. He insisted that he had worn leggings as depicted as early as 1863, that Sioux war bonnets were plentiful at the meeting, that he and Custer had purchased their light-colored hats at Leavenworth, Kansas, a few days before they embarked on the campaign, and that the size and shape of stirrup leathers were often changed to suit the individual. He concluded that "it must be very annoying to a conscientious artist that we were not dressed as we should have been, but in those days our uniforms in the field were not according to regulations and were of the 'catch as catch can' order, and were not changed regularly as Master Frederic Remington's probably were at that date...Doubtless Mr. Remington could have made a better picture, but doubtless he never did." Schreyvogel's published comment was merely, "I think he [Remington] is the greatest of us all."

An important champion of Schreyvogel's work was President Theodore Roosevelt, who invited him to the White House and presented him with a presidential permit to visit any Indian reservation or military post in the United States to gather material for his work. On his Western excursions Schreyvogel made sketches, took photographs, and gathered a notable collection of firearms and Indian artifacts, all of which he brought back to Hoboken to be incorporated in his paintings. He also collected many interviews with old-timers, red and white alike, who participated in the Indian Wars. He found them in the Dakotas, on the reservations of the Blackfoot, Sioux, Crow, and Ute; at Fort Robinson, Nebraska, various places in Montana, Arizona, and Colorado, and even on Governor's Island in New York Harbor. All of his paintings were based upon events he had observed or been told of by participants.

In summertime, Schreyvogel used to visit West Kill, New York, and in 1905 he bought a farm there. It had a house and barns, livestock and pastures, and 36 acres

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of apple orchards, but its most important feature was a stable of horses. With the farm came a taciturn, weather-beaten handyman named Grant Bloodgood whom Schreyvogel had already used as a model. Schreyvogel said Grant looked "as lean and hard as a plains trooper," and he became the favorite model of the painter's later years. Another model was Storie Schultze, who was described as "the Hoboken athlete."

After the death of Remington (December 26, 1909), Schreyvogel came to be known as "America's greatest living interpreter of the Old West," in the words of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly*. Earlier that year Schreyvogel achieved nationwide acclaim with the publication of a book, *My Bunkie and Others* which contained large reproductions of 36 Schreyvogel paintings.

On January 27, 1912, a few weeks after his 51st birthday, Schreyvogel died of blood poisoning, the result of a splinter of chicken bone having lodged in his gum. Today blood poisoning is rarely fatal, and antibiotics would have saved Schreyvogel's life.

Charles Schreyvogel's pre-eminence as a Western artist was eclipsed, temporarily, by the Montana painter Charles Marion Russell, but more recently Schreyvogel has emerged from comparative obscurity to become again one of America's most celebrated and valued American artists. His work is now on permanent display at the National Cowboy Hall of Fame and Western Heritage Center in Oklahoma City and in the Metropolitan Musum of Art in New York. How remarkable that so much of America's Wild West was preserved by a derby-hatted man on the roof of a brick row house on a quiet uptown street of Hoboken, NJ!

OUR COVER ILLUSTRATION: "HOW KOLA"

This painting was based on a story told Schreyvogel by a trooper who served in General Crook's 1870 campaign against the Sioux. Caught in a blizzard, alone, he was freezing to death when he was saved by an Indian. A few years later, at the battle of Rosebud, the trooper was about to shoot one of Crazy Horse's braves who had been thrown from his mount, but the warrior called "How Kola!" which means "Stop, Friend." The trooper recognized him as the man who had saved his life, and held his fire.

MAJOR SOURCES:

Margaret O'Brien, "History of Art in Hoboken," (unpublished), started our research on Schreyvogel.

My Bunkie and Others, Pictures of Western Frontier Life, Moffat, Yard & Co., New York, 1909.

Tex Lowell, "Schreyvogel, Artist on Horseback," in *Southwest Heritage*, December, 1968.

Carlton Bloodgood, private communication, and use of family photographs.

ANOTHER HOBOKEN CONNECTION.

Hoboken-born Dorothy Unruh used to visit the WestKill area of New York every summer with her parents, who had also been born in Hoboken. Her family met the family of Grant Bloodgood, Schreyvogel's favorite model. Eventually, a wedding was performed in Hoboken between Dorothy and Carlton Bloodgood, Grant's grandson. They now live in Bogota and are members of the Hoboken Historical Museum.

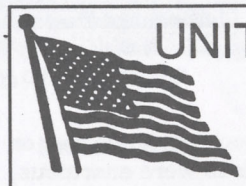
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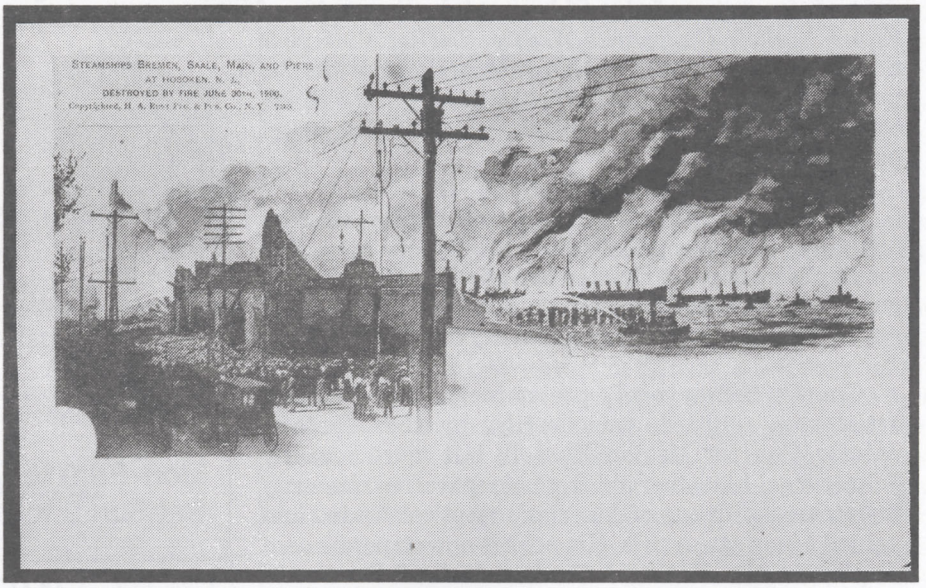
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The Great Harbor Fire

Part 2: Rescue from the Torment

by Robert Gordon

In those years before tunnels had been dug between New Jersey and Manhattan, hundreds of railroad-car ferries, drifters, barges, and other workboats crowded the harbor. It was said that a man could almost walk across the Hudson on them. During the afternoon of the great fire of 1900, 27 such craft went ablaze. Propelled by the wind and the river currents, they spread danger up and down the waterfront; two floated as far down river as Governor's Island, more than three miles from the North German Lloyd piers. Fear of the blaze's spreading to New York led to the mobilization of troops on Governor's Island and the placement of Manhattan's firefighting companies at the docks along the North River.



Steamships Bremen, Saale, and Main, and the piers of Hoboken, destroyed by fire on June 30, 1900.

More than a hundred tugboats took part, one way or another, in the rescue effort. The risks were enormous, but so too were the possibilities of reward. For some of the captains, aiding survivors was not a paramount issue. Cotton bales floating in the river carried a bounty of $40 apiece; saving coal barges was more valuable still. In at least one instance, men floundering in the water were asked how much they would pay to be saved. When they cried out that they had no money, the captain supposedly remarked, "Let the greenhorns drown."

Chief Engineer Barends of the *Kaiser Wilhelm*, now anchored safely upstream, took command of a lifeboat lowered from the flagship. Alongside the *Saale*, Barends begged a tugboat captain to lend him the use of his firehose. The man refused. Losing his self-control, Barends scrambled aboard the tug and knocked its captain down. "Take that hose," he ordered his man. They passed it to a stewardess, whose head poked out from a porthole, so that she could soak down the cabin in which she was trapped. (The portholes on the ships

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were nine to eleven inches across and thus too narrow to serve as a means of escape.) When the tugman regained his feet, he pulled his vessel away without warning, hauling off the hose and nearly swamping Barends' boat. Once Barends got ashore, he filed a public complaint: "I wish the Captain of the tug would make himself known and ask for my arrest," he declared, "as then I might make charges against him for his cowardly action." The records hold no evidence that anyone ever responded to his challenge.

On shore, Hoboken's fire chief and 59 firemen faced chaos. The freight sheds of the Shore Line Railroad became so hot that the firefighters had to flee, leaving their horses and wagons to be devoured by the flames. Rubber protective coats melted from the men's backs; the water supply was inadequate. Their battle was not to quench the holocaust, which was impossible, but to contain it. They concentrated their efforts on River Street, which parallels the Hudson, by shielding its buildings with streams of water. They ordered the structures facing the piers to be evacuated, lest they ignite; fortunately those buildings were for the most part constructed of brick and stone. In their efforts they were helped by the wind, which carried the flames and sparks eastward, over the river. Through the whole calamity, not one cinder struck the Hamburg America ships or docks, which began only 150 feet from the place of the fire's initial outbreak. (Reacting almost immediately, Hamburg America's dockworkers had torn down the wooden sheds linking its piers to North German Lloyd's; this action prevented the fires from moving southward.)



The North German Lloyd docks the day after the fire.

But there were flammable materials other than the ships and piers. Campbell's Stores, new six-story warehouses, stood near the northern edge of the dockage. They were almost adjacent to the grounds of Castle Point, where hundreds were gathering on the lawns to witness the devastation. Campbell's contained a thousand barrels of molasses, forty-thousand bags of raw sugar, and 50 casks of liquors. The flames rushed toward Campbell's so rapidly that the fleeing employees were unable to lower the fireproof shutters over the windows; or more probably, they fled without thinking. One after one, the buildings caught fire. While whiskey kegs exploded throughout the afternoon and night, Campbell's Stores burned to the ground, at a loss estimated afterwards as $1,350,000.

Over the whole metropolitan area a huge lurid pall of reddish brown smoke lifted skyward. It was visible in Chatham, New Jersey, 18 miles to the west, and eastward over Long Island. Through the smoke the sun was magnified to three times its normal size, looming like a giant eye surveying the pandemonium. Yet in the middle of the chaos, the Lackawanna ferries continued shuttling back and forth across the river. In fact,

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business boomed: that day the line rang up record numbers of fares. Extra boats were added to handle the crowds of sightseers, and at least one ferry sailed within 700 feet of the *Bremen*, which was listing to port and drifting toward lower Manhattan.

Only the bravery of Captain Fagan of the railroad tug *Pennsylvania* prevented the *Bremen* from crashing into the Manhattan piers, which were just as flammable as those in Hoboken. Maneuvering his boat leeward of the liner, he succeeded in nudging her back into the channel; but not, however, before she collided with Manhattan Pier 32. (Waiting New York firemen quenched the resulting flames before they could spread.) *Pennsylvania*'s crewmen had to hose down the wooden tug to keep her from burning, and Fagan's face was blistered from the heat, so close had he come to *Bremen*'s hull.

Toward evening the sidewheeler *Grand Republic* joined the jam of vessels in the Hudson River. Flags flapping from a dozen poles, she threaded her way downstream past the *Kaiser Wilhelm*, mobbed ferryboats, smoldering barges, and scurrying tugs. She slowed her pace, not only because of the danger in navigating, but to permit her well-dressed passengers to watch their second spectacle of the day. They had been to Poughkeepsie to see the annual intercollegiate crew regatta, and now they lined the rails again, while the band played dance tunes.

Meanwhile, at the Battery, Father John Brosnan administered the sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church to the inured and dying as they were brought ashore. About 9pm, when a fireman gave him a rubber coat, the Killarney-born priest boarded the tug *Mutual*, which had been chartered by the harbor police and which was instrumental in efforts to save the *Saale*. As heads frantic with terror and desperation emerged from the *Saale*'s portholes, the priest, shouting out the Latin phrases, granted a general absolution from sin (an act permitted by the Church in the event of catastrophe). It was not a question, Brosnan said later, of asking anyone's religion.

Among the fleet of rescue vessels were New York City's two fireboats, *Robert A. Van Wyck* and *New Yorker*. Under bi-state agreement since 1834, New York had charge of putting out fires on either side of the harbor, but, in the case of New Jersey communities, only if summoned. The telephone call requesting help did not come until after 5 PM, by which time the steamers and most of those aboard them were beyond saving. The fireboats shuttled from one emergency to another, pulling men off the *Bremen*, wetting down cotton



Ruins at the entrance of the North German Lloyd pier, after the fire on June 30, 1900.

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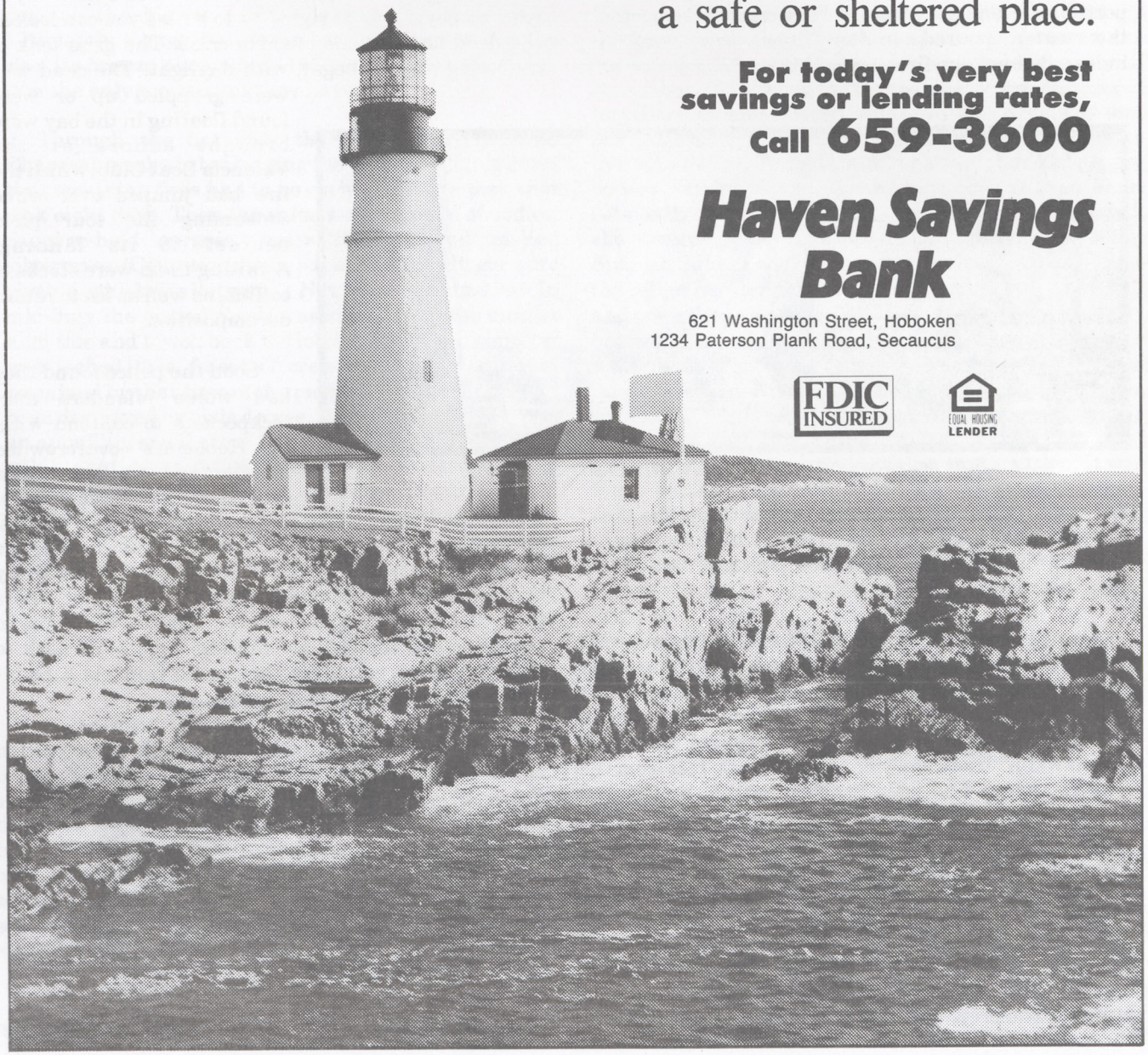
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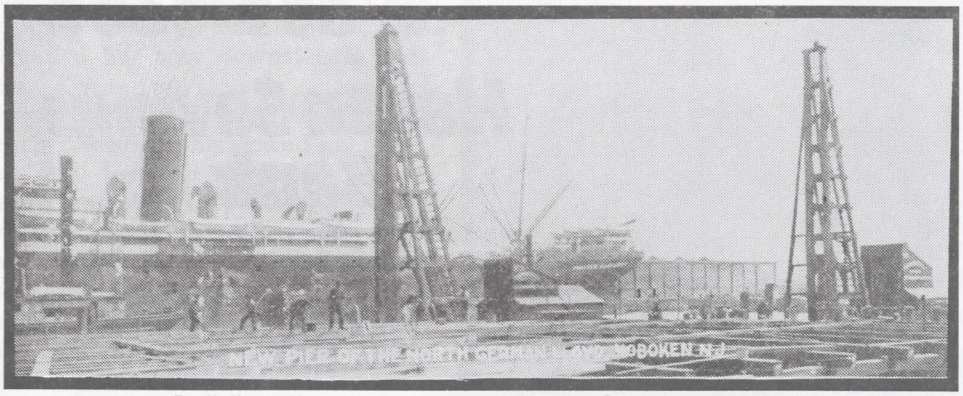
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barges. Some heroic firemen boarded the *Saale*, fighting their way down to the engine room. There they found 30 men working the pumps, trying to keep the sea from swallowing them. Already the water was so deep that some of the crew were swimming. Forming a human chain, the firemen brought those sailors out -- "raving maniacs" by the time they were rescued. Twenty or more bodies were left behind.

By evening the *Saale* had floated three miles downstream from Hoboken onto Communipaw Flats near Ellis Island. There she settled into the mud, pushed down by the weight of the water that had been pumped into her. In the steerage quarters some 40 to 50 survivors were penned, within sight and sound of their would-be saviors. But fire-axes proved useless in hacking through the ship's steel plates. Then the tide turned and the incoming sea flowed through the open portholes to end the torment. "The cries of the people as the water poured in on them was something indescribable," one fireman said later. "Some of us have had trying experiences at fires, but nothing like that." Altogether, at least 109 died on the *Saale*, including her captain. Only his pearl-handled penknife was found, days afterward.



Building the new pier for North German Lloyd.

One last astonishing incident occurred near midnight. After more than seven hours of burning at her berth, the hapless *Main*, cut away finally from the ruins of Pier One, moved at last with the tide. Tugs pushed her gingerly two miles upriver to shoal water off Weehawken. There she went aground 100 feet from the *Bremen*, which had been beached earlier. Smoke and flames still shot from her portholes and hatches, and the tugmen doubted that anyone aboard could still be alive. But 15 sailors, hours before, had fled to an empty coal bunker. Obsessed by the fear that they would be baked to death, they stripped off their clothes in the blackness, using them to stuff the chinks in the plating to keep out the smoke. When they felt the ship's movement, they frantically pried open a coal port and waved their only lantern. The crew of the *Edwin A. Stevens*, which was just about to pull away, saw the lamp; their captain hazarded his own craft's safety to come alongside and take the trapped men off. "*Wasser*! *Wasser*!" they cried, collapsing onto the tug's deck. Naked, in shock, and the oldest of them gone blind, they were the final survivors of the catastrophe to be saved. Soon after midnight, the last of the flotilla of harborboats turned homeward. Their exhausted crews could do nothing more. Behind them they left the three beached liners glowing red through the summer night.

The next day, Sunday, police estimated the number of spectators at 100,000. J.P. Morgan's sumptuous yacht *Corsair*, at 304 feet almost an ocean liner in herself, was the most notable of hundreds of vessels cruising among the wrecks. On land, among the crowds, the pickpockets and hustlers found themselves in a criminal's paradise, while along the river, boatmen discovered a new way to earn money: "Row ye right out to where you can look at the dead bodies," one of them cried. The grim task of collecting corpses began with daylight. The dead who were grappled up or were found floating in the bay were brought ashore at the Valencia Boat Club, which the fire had jumped over while consuming the four piers nearest to its landing. Awaiting them were stacks of coffins, as well as ice to retard decomposition.

Soon the police found they had worse offenders than pickpockets to contend with. In Hoboken's overcrowded morgue and funeral homes over the next several days, bodies were being robbed even while relatives, friends, and company officials sought to identify the victims. The police had to patrol the river, too, after the discovery that some of the dead had their possessions rifled before they had been carried ashore. Thieves even began rowing out to the still-smoldering hulls after dark to steal whatever valuables they could find. As a result guards had to be posted on board.

Meanwhile the business of transatlantic navigation had to go on. On Tuesday, July 3, the hastily repainted *Kaiser Wilhelm* sailed from a rented Cunard Line pier on Manhattan's West Side; on schedule, just as North German Lloyd's newspaper advertisements had promised. She was carrying 1,029 passengers and more than 300 crewmen from her three sister-ships. As the great liner steamed past the still-smoking *Saale*, the survivors, lined up in ranks on the deck, saluted their dead comrades.

North German Lloyd, while publicly denying any

responsibility for the fire, hurriedly bought a large plot in North Bergen's Flower Hill Cemetery, six miles from Hoboken (tidewater Hoboken, then as today, had no burial space.) On Thursday, July 5, with temperatures in the nineties, it was deemed, in the words of one official, "unwise to keep the bodies any longer" so a mass funeral took place. Every flag in Hoboken was at half staff and every clergyman in Hudson County had been invited to participate. To supplement the available hearses, seven flat-bed horsecarts, draped in black tarpaulins, were piled high with coffins. The procession marched along River Street past the burnt-out piers, then up Washington Street north to the cemetery entrance, and downslope to the flat land at the base of the Palisades. Bands from four German ships, including those men who had escaped from the *Saale*, played dirges along the route. Eighty bodies, the majority unidentified, were laid to rest. More followed, day after day, as the harbor and hulls gave up their dead. Ultimately, a huge granite tombstone was erected on the site. Its bronze plaque lists 167 victims from the ships. It is the only monument they have.

Through the hot July the firm of Merritt and Chapman worked at salvaging the grounded liners. First the remaining fires had to be extinguished, a task that took eight days. Then the ships were emptied of bodies, baggage-hold cargoes, brass fittings, and melted silverware. (Conditions were so bad that the divers were given a whiskey allotment.) Next came fumigation. In mid-July the gutted *Saale* was raised from the mud at high tide and towed back to Hoboken. Her black specter was lashed to a forest of creosoted pilings, all that remained by that time of the piers, whose remnants had been destroyed by civic decree. A few days after the fire, an appalling smell arose from the river. Rumors spread wildly that decomposing bodies were wedged into the wreckage. Hoboken's Mayor Lawrance Fagan, alarmed by the possibility of an epidemic, insisted that the wharves be dynamited, then he left for a vacation on the Jersey Shore. To general relief, it was found that the stench originated in a grain barge that had sunk between the piers.

Soon after, the *Bremen* and *Main* were refloated. In due course they and the *Saale* were rebuilt and put back into service, contrary to North German Lloyd's initial assumption that they were total losses. Each one sailed for more than twenty years before being scrapped. By 1902 North German Lloyd had constructed new, larger facilities on the site of the old. Its piers were mounted on concrete, and the sheds were declared to be fire-proof. (That was not to be so, as fires broke out again in 1921 and 1944.) With immigration to the United States swelling to over a million persons a year, bigger and faster liners joined North German Lloyd's fleet almost annually. The great disaster was rapidly forgotten. Indeed, in the line's 235-page official history of 1957, it received exactly three sentences.

Of the four ships damaged in 1900, it was the opulent *Kaiser Wilhelm* that had the most curious fate. Her speed record was eclipsed repeatedly, first by German and then by British competitors. However, she continued her profitable ocean crossings until November, 1913, when the German navy commandeered her. She was camouflaged, equipped with guns, and sent out as a commerce raider as soon as World War I began in August 1914. To maintain her speed, her 120 greedy boilers consumed twenty-two tons of coal each hour. After only two weeks at sea, with her bunkers depleted, she steamed to desolate Rio de Oro on the coast of the Spanish Sahara on the northwest bulge of Africa. There the collier *Bethania* was waiting to refuel her. At anchor and powerless, the *Kaiser Wilhelm* fuelled for a leisurely nine days, long enough for the British cruiser *Highflyer* to track her down on August 28. This time there was no escaping destruction. The captain ordered all his men, except the gunners, to abandon ship. Once again, her crew was lucky. But within an hour, riddled by Royal Navy shells, the great four-stacker was scuttled. It was a sad ending thousands of miles away from Hoboken, the port of the routes that brought her fame.

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Illustrations from George Kirchgessner's postcard collection.

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More Letters to Hattie:

THE STORY SO FAR:
In 1876, 29-year-old Hattie Dewey of Hoboken married Benjamin F. Potter, a 50-year-old farmer from Himrods, a town near Seneca Lake in Yates County, near the middle of New York State. Hattie's mother and other relatives remained in Hoboken, and in the mid-1890s, Hattie's daughter Katie was sent to Hoboken for her last three years of school.

Hattie kept letters; former Museum Board member Mary Stoeffhaas acquired some from Hattie's great-grandson, and gave us copies. (We don't have Hattie's replies.)

Most of the letters we have were written by teenage Katie when she lived with Mr. and Mrs. E.J. Gardinier, 732 Bloomfield Street. The Gardinier's daughter Cora was about Katie's age and spent summers with Katie's family in Himrods. There were also some Gardinier sons, the oldest called Arthur. No other children of Hattie's are mentioned except "dear little Olive" who had died.



There are a few letters from friends of Hattie. One, Henrietta, lived at 148 Heyward St. in Brooklyn. Friend Annie C. Church lived in Roseville (Ohio?). When Hattie herself visited Hoboken, she usually stayed with her mother, Mrs. James Dewey, at 48 Third St.

In Issue 6, we printed segments from the letters, collected by topic. in this isssue, the topic is Health, and, appropriately for 1994, Health Care.

From daughter Katie in Hoboken

Jan 1895

I am well except a slight cold. but Jimmie has been very sick with pneumonia but is some better. Lin(?) Odell is sick and so is Hettie Scott. And Aunt Nellie isn't well.



A BOTTLE OF THIS SHOULD BE IN EVERY HOME.
[1893]

April

It is very sad about May Hobart and Mrs. Almy. Where was May buried? I wish you had some nice flowers for Dear Little Olive's grave. Annie's brother-in-law is a florist and she gets lots for Nellie's.
Grandma is feeling much better. Uncle Tom is better, he walked around her tonight the first time since I have been here I think, but he is a great cripple.
Aunt Nellie says she sympathizes with you with your head, as her head hurts her all the time.
All send Love. Write soon.

May 5

Nellie Scott is very sick with Typhoid fever.

From Mr. E.J. Gardinier,
732 Bloomfield St.

Mrs. Potter: July

I take the liberty of writing you a few lines. I suppose you think it strange that we have not come out to your house this weak as it is vacation weak, but the next day after you went home my wife was fealing so bad that I went with her to see a doctor in New York. She sed nothing but an operation would do her any good so arrangements was made at once and last Monday she went to the hospital. On Wensday she was operated on. She is dewing splended. The Doctor say she will halfto stay there about 3 weaks. I go to see her every day. I wish you would not say anything to Cora about it. Arthur has gawn in the country and neather of them no anything of it and I think it better for them not to no it as long as she

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is getting better.
I will close for this time.
With Love & Kind wishes to you all
I reamin yous respectfuly

Postmarked Erie PA Sept
Dear Cousins Hattie & Ben
As I do not hear from Mary Ann or have not for a long time I thought I would write you & ask you if you hear or know anything about her. When Evan wrote to me asking if I was willing he shoould take charge of Mary Ann's business, he said Ben & Mary Ann herself was willing & if I would consent he would do so. Of course if all the others were willing I would not object.

From that time on she has been a prisoner - no convict - in Auburn or Ling-Ling. Has been more so after I found out how she was managed. Or had her Liberty taken from her. I should have gone there immediately had my health permitted. But all set in & decided I could not stand the journey. So I waited & Waited for returning health which did not come. After I found out I could not go. I planted my Battery and commenced firing. I wrote some hateful things I know, but what else could I do? She was sick there with mind conssiderably unsettled. I was sick here, with nerves awfully on the stretch. I told them if I said one word that was not so I would take it all back & beg pardon, but nothing has ever come back. But they were very indignent. Louise pretty little Louise wrote to Charlie that his mother was writing very insulting letters to members of the family, but did not deny the truth of them. They knew what I said was true. Too true to bear the light.

Just see how they have managed her mail. About two months ago Louise wrote to me asking me why I did not write to Mary Ann. I sat down & wrote to her just as I would if I thought no one but herself would see the letters. I told her not to stay there all the while, but to go wherever she wanted to. I have never heard from the letters.

She (MaryAnn) wrote me a few lines in the spring. She told me she was going to Millport & to direct there after the first of April. I did as she reequested me to do. But found out afterward she did not go & the reason was she did not have money to pay her way.

She wrote to me also she did not know as I would be able to read her letters as she wrote without glasses. I would not be able to write as well as she did without spectacles. What in the name of common sense they mean by sick inhuman treatment I don't know. To keep her shut up away from everyone with no glasses to see to read. It is shameful & they ought to be exposed. They don't allow anyone to see her. & Who knows how she is treated.

I have written one sheet & will start in on another. My children that are away from me, Susan & Gilbert, ask me what I hear from Aunt Mary Ann. But what answer can I give them. Only that she is shut up away from all of us. She might as well be in the moon or on some other planet as to be where she is.

All communication has been shut off since Evan has been in power. I wrote to him sometime ago to either give her her Liberty or give her business in the hands of some one that would. No reply has ever been made to the letter. Louise wrote a few lines telling how contented Mary Ann was & how much they were doing for her. & that she was not able to travel. I think when her money is all gone she will be able to travel. At least as far as the Poor House. After taking all her money they would be the first ones to turn her in the street. I don't like to write in the way I do, but if I should keep still the very stones would cry out against me.

If I was well I would go & see how it is with her. I dare not trust myself to take so long a journey alone. I have sick spells that come on very sudden. There is a woman near here that is going to New York to spend the winter. I thought I could go with her part way, but she cannot go until Nov. The daughter she is staying with here is sick & she cannot leave any sooner. Then it will be too late for me to go. As I have a troublesome cough & must be where it is warm & comfortable.

Now what I would like to have you do would be when you go to Penn Yan to go to Burrills & see Mary Ann. Put on a bold front & if they turn the cold shoulder march right along & go in & see her & talk to her as if no one was by & see what condition she is in & ask her any question you wish to & not be afraid. Ask her why she don't answer my letters & see what condition her clothes are in & if she has spectacles so she can read if she wants too. & have someone go with you. Don't go alone.

I am sorry to ask any one to do what I would so willingly do if I could. I have spun out a long yarn but the half has not been told. I cannot understand if everything is all right why everything is right kept so dark. Ann used to write. But she too is mum. I cannot understand it. Is beyond me they have a reason but I am sure I don't know what it is.

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[1892]

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[1894]

Now if you will go & see Mary Ann & inform me of her condition I will take it as a great favor. It is possible I may go there this fall. But I hardly think my strength will allow of it. If it was possible for me to go there I would not ask anyone to do it. As it is anything but a pleasant job. But for humanity's sake some one ought to do it. ?? is willing to do all she can but it is quite a circumstance for her to go. The expense is quite an item with her. You live nearer & have horses, so I ask you to interest yourself in the matter.

I hope you will answer this letter soon & relieve my anxiety. Ask her if she goes down stairs to her meals. Ask her if she walks out. You know much she would walk in the morning. I think it is the duty of someone outside of the family to go there & see to her. Tell them I request it. As I hear nothing from her.

Write Soon.
Sarah B. Hurd

special invitation to Ben but he did not accept it. I will send you paper that speaks of the funeral. Sarah {must be Sarah Hurd, who wrote the long letter} was not here as she is in Chicago this winter. She did not feel well enought for the trip. Come to see me & I can tell you more than I can write.

I remain as ever
Kappie(?)



To Mrs. Hattie Potter,
48 Third St., Hoboken, NJ
Postmarked Millport Jan 1896

Dear Hattie:
I received a note yesterday telling me of your Mother's death. How sad. How sad. Only one day between her and Mary Ann's death. Mary Ann died the 18th Saturday morning. 10 o'clock. She was brought to MIllport for burial Monday on first train. We had the funeral Monday 3:30 p.m. I heard you were in Hoboken but I sent a

To Mrs. B.F. Potter,
Himrods, Yates Co., NY
Roseville July 22

I would just be delighted to go to the Falls with you but could not possibly do so; you just about make me sick at the mention of it. Oh! wouldn't I love to be up there with you now. The heat is terrible here, and so much rain it just seems to keep us steamed all the time. I was quite sick about three weeks ago with inflamation of bladder and it seems I cannot feel like myself yet. This heat knocks me out completely. I saw Mrs. Doty in Hoboken shortly after Mrs. Pool came home, and she said she (Mrs. Pool) was very sick. Mr. Doty was sitting on the front stoop, but was still very weak.
If you go to Niagara be sure and take a "pumpkin pie."
Well, I hope you will all have a good time and come back feeling better than we did from our sail on the canal.
Your loving friend,
Annie C. Church

From daughter Katie in Hoboken
Sept

I was very sick nearly all of last week and didn't go to school only two days. I thought I was getting scarlet fever as I had such a hight fever. I am feeling better and went to school today. I think that I have malaria and am glad you sent that medicine and wish you would send those little tablets the Dr. gave me for the headache. I think they are in the room where I slept on the bureau.

From friend Henrietta in Brooklyn
Nov

I suppose you will be surprised at hearing from me, but I have been away all summer with my small family. I spent three weeks at Asbury Park, NJ. It is quite a watering place, and five weeks I was on a farm to Mr. William's house, where Aunt Mary stopped when she was sick.

The last time you was at the house you know I was sick with rheumatism, & my dear baby had a cold from cutting her teeth, & the Dr. that attended me, doctored the baby, but some how he could not conquer her cold, on her lungs, & on the 14th of April pneumonia set in at 4 in the morning, & 5 o'clock at night, she was taken from us. She was just 9 months & 4 days old, & so cunning, just an interesting age, it seems that I can't have any girls spared to me. To lose one at six years & then the baby we dwelt on so much. But I suppose we have got to bear all the trouble given to us.

My three boys are well & just as noisy as boys are.

During the time that I was sick with the rheumatism my doctor's bill was over $155. & my druggist's bill was $65, besides my trained nurse, at $21 a week & I had her for 3 weeks, it all counts up.

Aunt Mary has that sore eye & it troubles her very much. Mama is still in good health, & thank goodness for that. How is your husband's health? Did you ever recover any thing from the railroad for the loss of your horses?

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Hoboken School Problems: Nineteenth-Century Style

by Otto Hottendorf

In about 1855, an educational crisis had developed in Hoboken, because the only public school in the city was a three-story building on a single lot. It housed about 200 students while there were a couple of thousand students seeking education. Edwin A. Stevens came to the rescue: with his own money, he built a three-story school building on the site of the present Rue School. It was named Number One School. This school was large enough to accommodate about 1200 students, but this was still too small for the school population, so he then built another school on Garden Street, between 8th and 9th Street, which was named Number Two School.

Considering the time, the buildings were modern in every way, for he built the first building over a running spring, and that building had running water, which is still running under the Rue School. The water from the spring could be used to furnish – for free – the water to reduce the temperature of the condenser of an air conditioner, and we could use this building in the summertime today. Each classroom had a modern potbelly stove, and light was furnished by the latest thing, gas. Again, with his own money he provided the furniture for each class, but the subsequent Boards of Education honored him by never naming a school after him. What a shame! When Edwin Stevens helped the Deutsche Evangelical Kirche erect its school on 6th and Park Avenue, that church named the school the Martha Institute in honor of Martha Stevens, but the local school Board never named a school after a Stevens.

Edwin Stevens built the Stevens Institute after he had furnished Hoboken with the necessary schools to educate our students. The school year at that time was much longer than it is now: students went to school in July, because, in 1866, the summer vacation was from July 20 to September 3. Edwin Stevens wanted our students to have a thorough and efficient education, but over the years the school calendar was substantially reduced, and now we are finding out that his educational philosophy was the correct one. This does not mean that everything that was done at that time was the right thing to do. Can you imagine my reaction, when I read in the minutes of a meeting that a female teacher reported to the Board that she had been married, and a Board member immediately introduced a resolution to fire her, and it passed seven to three? On the other hand, male teachers were allowed to be married, and woe to the female teacher who desired to become the principal of the school. Also, it was permitted to chastise boys by corporal punishment, but not girls.



Public School No.1 *from a postcard in the Lenny Luizzi collection*

The history of the public schools in Hoboken proves that we must select the best people to become teachers and school Board members. A short time after Edwin Stevens started the school system, the Board mem-

bers refused to pay for the coal that was delivered, and in the resulting litigation, it was discovered that the Board members wanted the merchant to deliver coal to their basements, and charge the Board for it. This matter was written in a Hudson County newspaper in August 1866, while Edwin Stevens was still alive, and shows how one man can give of his reserves, and other men can steal. In another case, two pianos belonging to the Board disappeared, and in the investigation, it was found out that the business manager had loaned the pianos to some political clubs in Union Hill, and they disappeared from the clubs. The business manager was suspended from his job at the beginning of the meeting of the Board, the business manager was given a raise in pay.

When A.J. Demarest was the school superintendent, he wrote the Demarest Reader, which used the Socratic Method of Teaching, and if you analyze it you will see that it looks like the modern program learning method of teaching. All of the students that used that reader learned to read more rapidly than students using other readers. We in Hoboken can be proud of the professionalism of A.J. Demarest, which is the reason that we named a school after him.

Despite the fine character that A.J. Demarest had, and the professional way that he did his job, he had his troubles, which did not detract from his ability to do his job. When he wrote his reader, his wife was the love of his life, and the main character in the book was Fannie, which was his wife's name. I remember learning to read from his reader, and from memory I am quoting from his book, "Does Fannie have an apple? Yes, Fannie has an apple." Despite the long years since I last saw that book, it was so educational that I can still quote from memory. Something happened to Fannie later that seems to look like a modern soap opera.

Otto Hottendorf, the author of this article, lived all his life in Hoboken, and when he went to school there, John Zata was a member of the Hoboken Board of Education. In 1952, Hottendorf first became a member of the Board, and John Zata was still a member of the Board, yet the National School Boards Association determined that Hottendorf had the longest tenure of any Board member in New Jersey, and the third longest in the U.S.A. During Hottendorf's tenure, he served as the co-chairman of the New Jersey Urban Educational Committee, and for 15 years he was a director of the N.J.S.B.A. He and Dr. Duroy wrote an article that was published in the prestigious educational journal, The Leader.

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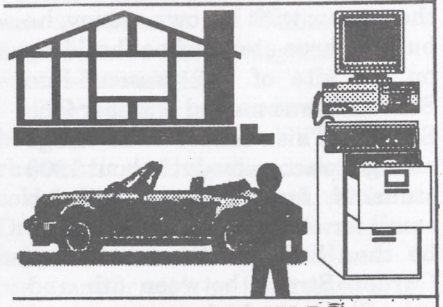
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Letters to the Museum

Please send your magazine to my mother, Mrs. Josephine Sica, 28 Livingston Avenue, Roseland, NJ 07068.

I had the opportunity recently to read your magazine and it made me homesick for my childhood city. My mother and father were born in Hoboken in 1920 and 1921 and were raised there.

I was born in Hoboken and attended St. Francis Church and School. Our family moved to Union City in 1956, but we still have cousins in your fair city. It is a real joy to see how Hoboken has changed for the better in recent years. My mother will enjoy having your magazine.
Sincerely,
Anne Sica Chamos

Thank you, Mrs. Chamos, we've added your Mom to the mailing list. Yes, Hoboken has *changed in recent years, and if you have any family photos that show your old neighborhood as it was years ago, we'd like to publish them in* Hoboken History. *Your memories are welcome, too. We can reproduce your photos and return them intact.*

I would like some assistance from your historical society.

In Sept. 1917 my father sailed from Hoboken to World War I. He was on the *Kroonland*. It belonged to the Red Star line.

I am writing the story of his life and I would like some background information from you.

The ship sailed Sept. 12, 1917. The pier was North German Lloyd and Hamburg-Amerika Lines.

I think you have a picture of this. My dad was in New York City, but he sailed with 500 other men who sailed on that ship. Please send me information.
Janet Pollard
Midland, Texas

The next issue of Hoboken History *will focus on Hoboken in the wars, to accompany the Museum's show in City Hall that will open in May. However, a total of 1,777,109 American officers and men passed through here to serve their country in World War I, so it will be difficult to find out about one of them. Can any of our readers help out? Ms. Pollard is willing to pay for any information she obtains.*

I an forwarding to you, under separate cover, a 23" x 32" Holland-America Line print of the SS *Nieuw Amsterdam* which I would like to donate to the Museum.

I lived at 422 Hudson Street in the 40s and 50s, and when this ship was docked at its Fifth Street pier (and when there were no leaves on the trees in the park), I used to be able to look directly out at it from my third-story bedroom window.
Edward M. Stuart
West Caldwell, NJ

We're delighted to have the print. And, by coincidence, one of our editors (Barbara) arrived in this country in the late 50s by a Holland-American Line ship, the Maasdam. *She was very puzzled about where she had landed because she had been told she was sailing to New York! Our readers would like to know more about your childhood ship-watching from your window. Let's hear from you again, Mr. Stuart.*

Enclosed is a check for a subscription to *Hoboken History* magazine.

I will enjoy the Magazine so much as I was born and raised in Hoboken (12th and Garden St.) and have thoroughly enjoyed the nostalgic articles of John Fitzpatrick in recent issues.
Elizabeth Willenborg Harte
Brick, NJ

We were delighted to meet you on the day you visited your (and our) block. We would love to hear more about your corner way back then. The shop at 12th and Garden is now a dry cleaner. What was it when you were living there?

TIME-PIECES

The clock that once adorned the entrance to City Hall has been absent too long. A fund-raising event is now planned to restore that clock to its rightful place and condition. The Museum Board has voted to collaborate with the Hoboken Historic Preservation Commission, in this fund raising to help restore the clock and to assist the Museum with acquisitions and new projects.



The clock, taken down from City Hall, with Charles Lee, Mayor Anthony Russo, Theresa Castellano, and Bob Foster.

The centerpiece of the planned fund-raiser is a gala reception on November 4 at the Jefferson Trust Gallery for an exhibition titled "Time-Pieces, an Exhibition of Art and Architecture" celebrating Hoboken's rich history. Time-Pieces will feature architectural design and sculptural works by four promising regional artists: Charles Lee, McKevin Shaughnessy, Tyler Smith, and Robert Pfitzenmeier. The City Hall Clock will also be on display, alongside a presentation about City Hall's architectural history. Mayor Anthony Russo, the honorary chairperson, will deliver a brief keynote address followed by presentation of the funds raised. Admission to the event, including a copy of a souvenir catalog, will be $10 per person.

Project coordinators Terry Castellano, chairperson of the Hoboken Historic Preservation Commission; architect Charles Lee; light sculptor McKevin Shaughnessy; and the Museum's president Bob Foster are hoping the event will raise a target sum of $10,000 through ticket sales and donations solicited from local merchants, corporations, organizations, professional firms, and the general public. Contributors' names will be prominently displayed at the exhibition and will appear in a souvenir exhibition catalog distributed to all those who attend the event.

Hoboken's historic character and rich architectural heritage have been integral to the city's vital civic life and sense of community. With this collaborative project, the Museum and the Historic Preservation Commission seek to foster a greater appreciation for and awareness of the city's unique history and architectural distinction, and to help preserve our community treasures.

More on inside back cover ⇒

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Elizabeth M. Harte
Josephine Sica
Mrs. Alfred Schmalz
Dorothy Havens
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Robert and Terry Castellano (Lifetime)
Joan Prout
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Robert Parry
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DONATIONS

The Museum extends its appreciation and thanks to the generous donors of cash and artifacts:

Cash

David Sandt
Steve Hefler

Artifacts

by Edward Stuart
Contemporary print, 23" x 24", depicting S.S. *Nieuw Amsterdam* of the Holland-America Line.

Hoboken 1993 mayoral political campaign T-Shirt imprinted "Fighting for Truth and Justice and a Better Way."

by Mr. and Mrs. Narcisco
Cup and saucer picturing Trinity Church, Hoboken circa 1860.
Plate picturing First Presbyterian Church, Hoboken circa 1952.
Plate picturing Trinity Episcopal Church, Hoboken, circa 1954.

by the Frey family
Three track & field athletics medals, Hoboken circa 1900.

TIME-PIECES continued

If you'd like to contribute to the fund to restore the City Hall clock, please write your check to

Hoboken Historical Museum/Time-Pieces

and send it to:

Hoboken Historical Museum
PO Box 707
Hoboken, NJ 07030.

Sponsors will appear in the souvenir catalog according to the following schedule:

LEVEL	CONTRIBUTION	SOUVENIR CATALOG DISPLAY	NO. TICKETS & CATALOGS
CORPORATE	$1000	Full page	10
BENEFACTOR	$500	Half page	5
PATRON	$100	Quarter page	2
FRIEND	$25	Friends listing	1
General Admission	$10		1

If you have any questions, please call us at 656-2240.
And reserve the date of the Gala Reception:
November 4, 1994, at the Jefferson Trust Gallery, First & Clinton Streets, Hoboken.

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