The Official Journal of the Organization

The Hoboken Historical Museum Newsletter

OF BY And FOR Museum Members.

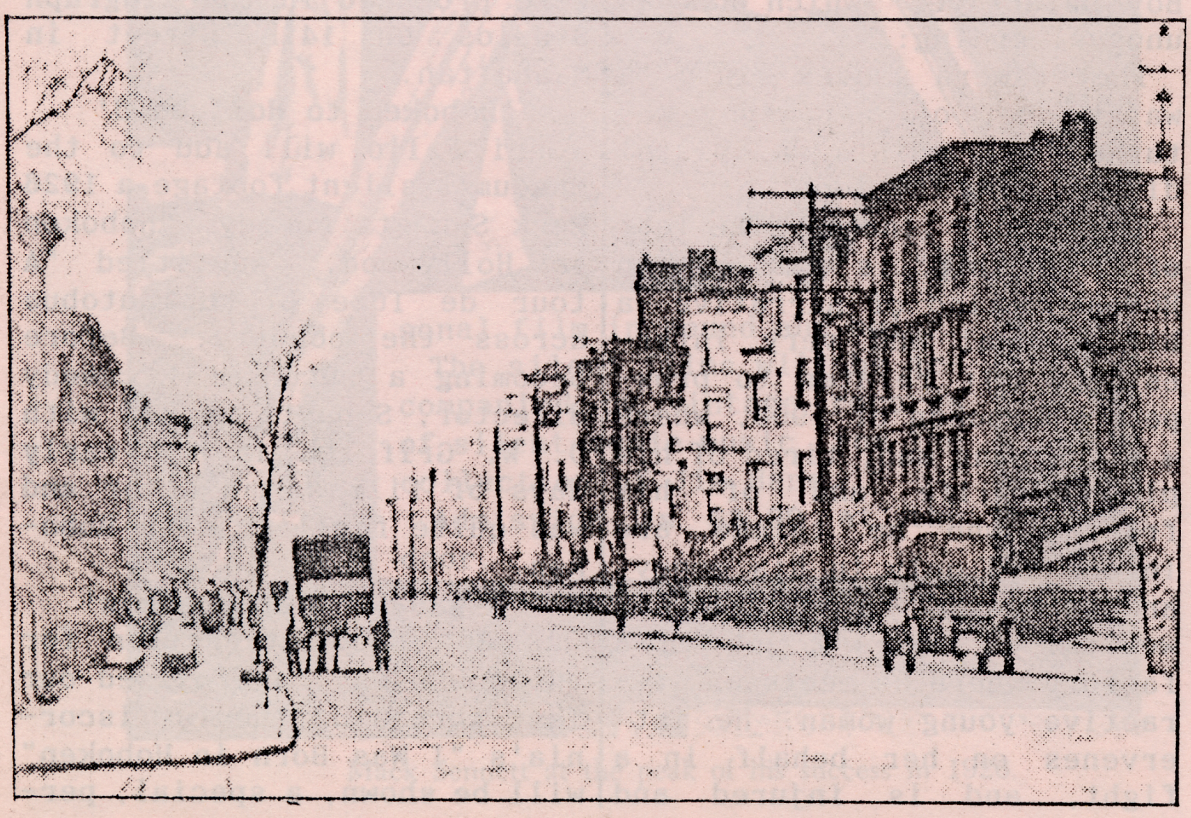
FEBRUARY 1990 HOBOKEN, NJ NO.35

HOBOKEN STARS ON SILVER SCREEN

Rare film footage of Hoboken, dating back to the turn of the century acquired by the Hoboken Historical Museum will be screened once again on Wednesday, February 28th at 8:30 pm at Maxwell's, 11th and Washington Streets, Hoboken.

Geraldine Fallo, director of Projected Images of Hudson County, will show the vintage films on behalf of the Museum, as part of its Wednesday night film series.

The archival footage includes a scene of a large transatlantic liner leaving her dock in Hoboken, a parade making the turn from 14th into Washington Street, a fire in the same vicinity (possibly staged!), throngs leaving the



HUDSON STREET CIRCA 1912 LOOKING NORTH FROM EIGHTH STREET, A SCENE FEATURED AT MAXWELL'S FILM NIGHT ON FEBRUARY 28TH.

then-new Empire Theatre in 1902 on Hudson Street between 1st and 2nd Streets, and a crowd departing Our Lady of Grace Church on Willow Avenue.

Hoboken appears in two short film dramas produced in 1908: "The Boy Detective," and "The Test of Friendship." The latter was directed by D. W. Griffith of "Birth of a Nation" fame, and its cameraman was Billy Bitzer.

The production was filmed along Hudson Street and at other Hoboken locations. Viewers may recognize some remarkably unchanged scenes, and knowing that they were made 80 years ago may give one a feeling of traveling in time.

Film pioneer Billy Bitzer was also the cameraman of "The Boy Detective," which has an unusual ending:

The camera moves into a waist shot of a newsboy who turns and points a pistol directly at the lens.

The story line of "The Test of Friendship" is an "only in Hoboken" kind of narrative--a bit unusual and very interesting. It relates to prosperous Hoboken of 1908, where a rich young man, tired of his playboy life and of his friends who he thinks are interested only in his money, announces that he has lost his wealth. He takes a job in a factory where he meets an attractive young woman. He intervenes on her behalf in a fight, and is injured and bedridden. The young woman visits him at the same time that some medicine is delivered. He having no money to pay for it, she sells her long beautiful hair to obtain the cash. When the young man recovers, he proposes to the girl who he is sure loves him not for his wealth but for himself. They marry, and after the wedding he tells her of his true wealth and bedecks



her in jewels and finery. Interior scenes for the film were produced in the Biograph Studios on 14th Street in Manhattan.

'Hoboken to Hollywood'

Geri Fallo will add to the Museum's silent footage a 1926 Mack Sennett comedy, "Hoboken to Hollywood," subtitled "A tour de luxe of an autobus across the country." Before becoming a successful comedy director, Sennett worked with D. W. Griffith in the early days of film as an actor and was quite familiar with Hoboken.

'I Was Born in Hoboken'

As an added attraction for those who may have missed our last screening, Louis Tiscornia's "I Was Born in Hoboken" will be shown, a special, per-



Mack Sennett at the peak of his success in 1926.



50 YEARS OF MAXWELL HOUSE COFFEE

The Maxwell House Division of General Foods Corporation, operator of the largest coffee processing facility in the world, celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

A Hoboken resident since 1939, Maxwell House is an active participant in community affairs. At press time we received the sad news that after half a century, Maxwell House may close its plant and depart Hoboken forever.

From 11th Street the plant stretches three blocks north along Hudson Street and occupies a space of about five blocks to the river. Its several acres of waterfront were once a portion of the famed Elysian Fields, site of the first game of organized baseball.

The story of Maxwell House coffee begins about 1880 when Joel Cheek, a salesman for a wholesale grocery firm in Nashville, Tennessee began experimenting to create a superior blend of coffee. In 1882, he became so engrossed in this work he resigned from the firm, even though he had become a partner, to devote full time to his coffee project.

Legend has it that in 1907 President Theodore Roosevelt stopped at the Maxwell House Hotel in Nashville where Joel Cheek's coffee was served, had a cup, and said: "My, that's good to the last drop!"

Note in the above coffee label of 1922 the original name of the Maxwell House brand's producer before General Foods took over the brand.

Other coffee brands blended at the plant, besides Maxwell House, include Yuban and Sanka and Brim decaffeinated.

At the Museum's current City Hall exhibition, "Hoboken Landmarks and Historic Highlights," which features the Maxwell House plant, there is on display a "Kaffee Haag" coffee tin dating from 1939 or the early 1940s with its origin as Hoboken on the label. The exhibit runs until October 1990.

The giant Maxwell House Coffee illuminated sign (and structure) standing on the roof of the plant were designed by Arthur R. Blair,

father of artist Barry Blair, long-time Hoboken resident. The great sign, erected in 1938 by the Claud Neon Lights Company, is 182 feet long and 75 feet high--the largest sign in New York Harbor. The cup is about 35 feet in diameter, and the coffee drop is about 18 feet high. If you look at the illuminated blinking coffee drop long enough it sometimes looks as if it is leaping back up to the brim of the cup!

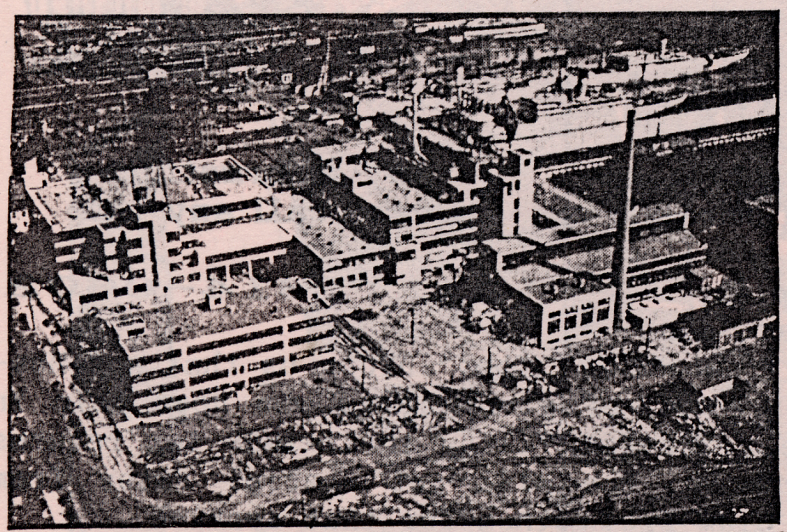
'Christmas in July'

With a title like that, where else would a movie take place but in Hoboken? Being new to the metropolitan area, Maxwell House was very active in publicizing itself in 1940.

So active, it resulted in the company being spoofed in a little Paramount Pictures romantic comedy called "Christmas in July," released in 1940.

Starring Dick Powell and Ellen Drew, it is a heart-warming story of a young office worker who lives in Manhattan and works in Hoboken (a switch!) at the "Maxford House Coffee" company. He plays Santa Claus to his neighborhood when he thinks he's won an ad contest sponsored by the coffee company. The large "Good to the Last Drop" slogan, coffee cup and drop are seen from a Manhattan rooftop when veteran actor Raymond Walburn says to Powell: "I'll see you in Hoboken before I'll pay you anything," substituting "Hoboken" for "Hell."

On another occasion he says "...stay here until Hoboken freezes over." The use of "Hoboken" for "Hell" wasn't pejorative--Hoboken was still linked to the World War I phrase "Heaven, Hell, or Hobo



Engineering News-Record

Multiple-story design lets gravity do much of the work in the new Maxwell House Coffee plant of General Foods Corp., in Hoboken, N. J. 1940

"*Good to the Last Drop*"

REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.



ken by Christmas," used by soldiers of the AEF who sailed from our port and yearned to return.

This minor movie classic was directed by Preston Sturgis.

ELECTION RESULTS

Officers and Trustees of the Hoboken Historical Museum for 1990 were elected at the January meeting.

Re-elected President was Jim Hans, Hugh Kilmer was newly elected Vice President; Gerard Lisa was re-elected Treasurer; as was Kathleen McBrady, Corresponding Secretary. Barbara Lippman was newly elected Recording Secretary.

For 1990 the Board of Trustees is composed of six members-at-large: John De Palma, Luke Faust, Stephen Hefler, George Kirchgessner, Ann O'Brien, and Nancy Wenner.

Robert Foster, formerly Vice President, was appointed Curator of Exhibitions.

Congratulations to all.

UPCOMING EVENT

We have begun planning the Museum's 1990 fundraising event, "Hoboken Follies," which will take place Saturday, April 28. Participants will be recruited from Hoboken's large and varied pool of talent and will be presented at Sharky's (formerly the Marlin Room of the Clam Broth House where we held our successful "Fun and Fortune-Telling" event two years ago). It is one of the largest and most attractive nightspots in Hoboken.

Musicians, performers, and others who wish to donate their talents to this project are urged and invited to phone Perry Robinson, our entertainment chairperson, at 795-9081.

PAID AD

Long-time active Museum members Mike Goldfine and Criss Andre', recently married and living in New York, wish to move back to Hoboken. They are:

LOOKING FOR SANELY PRICED TWO-BEDROOM

CONDO

OR

CO-OP



Any information, please call any time

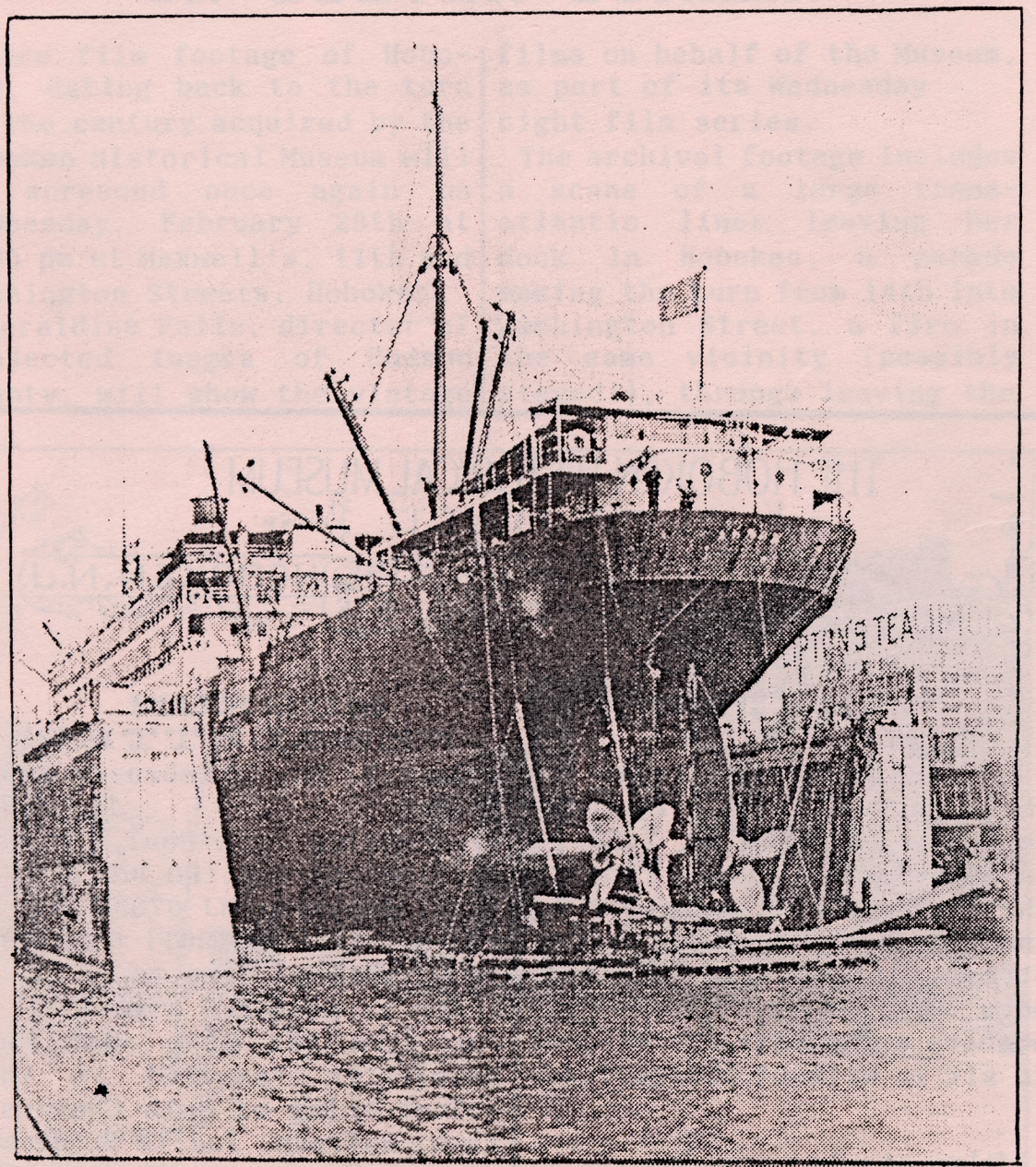
(212) 614-0602

They inform us that any Museum members who need help in filing their 1989 tax returns will get special rates from them for that service.

SHIPYARD ARTIFACTS

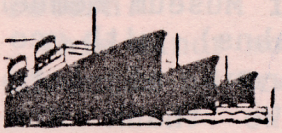
The Museum is seeking Hoboken shipyard artifacts, pictures, newspaper and magazine clippings, etc. or stories from people who worked at the yards, or relatives who worked there.

Recently donated were four fine photographs taken at the Tietjen-Lang Dry Dock, two showing shipfitter Willia Kruse (uncle of Museum membe Lois Kruse Mohns) with co workers in front of larg machinery. We thank Mrs Mohns for these origina pictures which will be show in the Museum's major exhibit "Hoboken Shipyards Past an Present," in November.



BETHLEHEM STEEL SHIPYARD, HOBOKEN; "S.S. ANCON," JUNE 1, 1933.

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



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

THE HOBOKEN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

CITY HALL

WASHINGTON AND FIRST STS. HOBOKEN, N.J.

MEETING NOTICE

Our next meeting, open to the public, is Tuesday, February 20, 1990 at 7:30 pm in the private dining room to the right of the main bar of the Clam Broth House on Newark Street, in Hoboken. All members are invited and non-members and guests are welcome to sit in without obligation.

It's not what you do-
It's how you look doing it.

MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

Volume 2, No. 35 February 1990
Editor Jim Hans
Typesetting Paul Lippman
Mailing Address: PO Box M 1220, Hoboken, NJ 07030
Phone (201) 653-7392
Subscription: Free to Members; dues $15 a year.

Our plea for help with the Newsletter resulted in the volunteering of Ruth Charnes, Kathi Hoffman, Judith S. Stewart, and Nancy Wenner. We thank them.