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Newsletter

OF BY And FOR MuSeum MemberS.

FEBRUARY 1991 HOBOKEN, NJ No. 46

HOBOKEN FIRSTS

Excerpts from a forthcoming book by Jim Hans

Many cities across America claim to have been the site of the first "this" or the first "that." But Hoboken probably can lay claim to more "firsts" in historic, scientific, technical, social, industrial, and commercial endeavors than any other city of its size. I know of more than 38 Hoboken "firsts" and am continually discovering more.

Some of the most widely known are:

➙ the first baseball game played under organized rules, *June 19, 1846;*

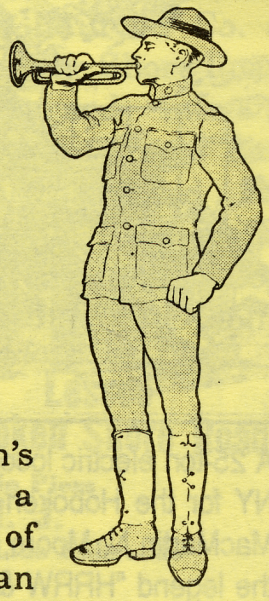
➙ the first steamboat to make an ocean voyage, *the Phoenix, built in Hoboken 1809;*

➙ the first yacht club in the United States, *founded by John Cox Stevens in 1844, with its clubhouse in Hoboken;*

➙ the first locomotive to pull a train in the United States, *built by John Stevens, 1825;*

➙ the first international cricket tournament, *October 3, 1859.*

The endless list of Hoboken "firsts" will grow in the Newsletter as we discover them.



FIRST HIGH SCHOOL MILITARY TRAINING IN NEW JERSEY

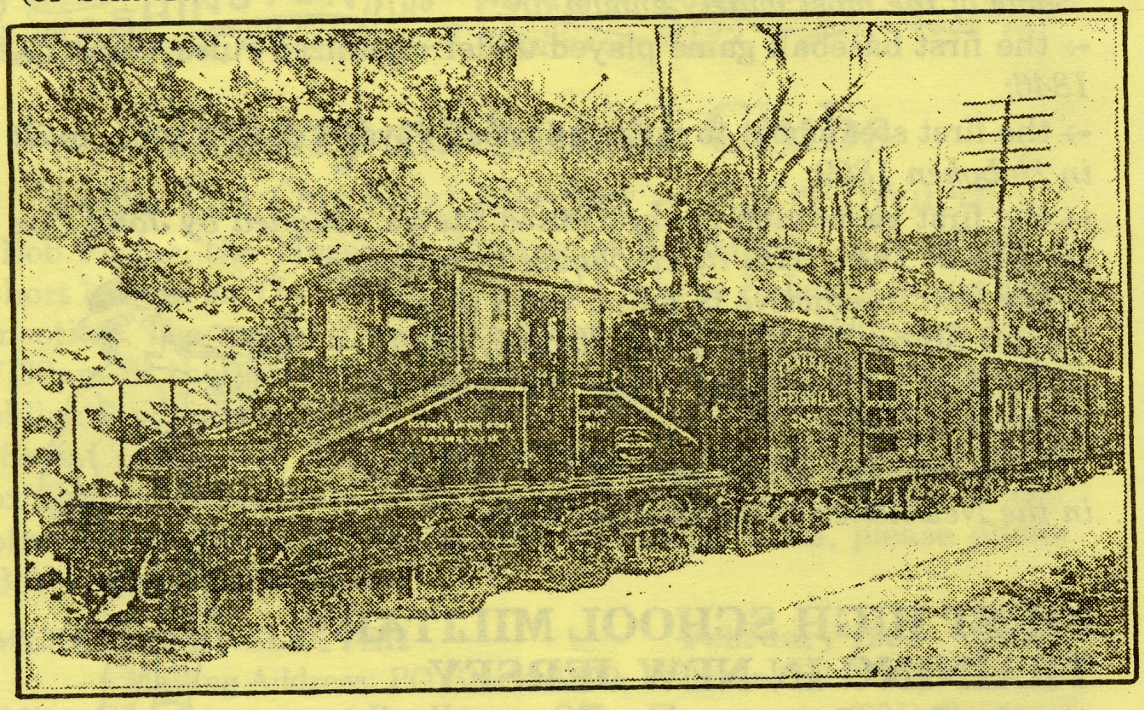
As the flags fluttering proudly along Hoboken's streets attest, Hoboken is and always has been a patriotic community. Perhaps its demonstrations of patriotism were stronger during World War I than at any other time. In 1916, while war was raging in ➙

MILITARY, from p.1

Europe, Hoboken Mayor Patrick Griffin advocated military training in the city's public schools. Demarest High School, which was then at Fourth and Garden Streets, led in New Jersey with the first uniformed group of high school boys under military training, according to *The Jersey Observer*, Golden Jubilee Edition, Feb. 7, 1942.

FIRST RAILROAD OPERATING ENTIRELY WITHIN A CITY

Hoboken claims the distinction of having had the only railroad operating entirely within the confines of a city. The Hoboken Shore Railroad, often called the Shore Road, originally extended from the foot of Fourth Street along what is now River Road (or Sinatra Drive) north to 15th Street and west to a junction of the New Jersey Junction Railroad and Erie Rail Road at the Weehawken border near Park Avenue, Hoboken. During World War I, when the line was taken over by the U.S. Government, the Shore Road was extended south to



A 25-ton electric locomotive built by the General Electric Company of Schenectady, NY for the Hoboken Shore Road, from a photograph found in an 1898 thesis by MacMartin N. Moore, Stevens Institute Library. On the side of the locomotive cab is the legend "HRRW & SSC Co." for the rarely seen full name of the line: "Hoboken Rail Road, Warehouse and Steamship Connecting Company," which is almost longer than the Rail Road itself!

HOBOKEN SHORE ROAD, Foot 5th St., Hoboken

PROMPT FREIGHT SERVICE.
SAVE TIME AND FERRY TOLLS.

Hoboken City Directory, 1915

Second Street, parallel with River Street, to carry troops of the American Expeditionary Forces to the piers of the ocean liners that would take them to Europe.

Although the Shore Road was one of the shortest, it was one of the most important links in the great American railroad network, connecting directly with the Baltimore & Ohio, the Central Railroad of NJ, the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western, the Erie, the Lehigh Valley, the West Shore, the New York Central, and the Pennsylvania Railroad. It was the carrier that moved freight from the all these railroads to the piers of eleven steamship companies on the Hoboken waterfront. These were principally the North German Lloyd Steamship Company, Holland-America Line, the Wilson line which sailed to Hull in England, the Scandinavian American Line, and the Hamburg-American Line which in turn delivered to the "front doors" of Europe. The German-owned steamship lines were confiscated by the federal government in 1917 when the United States entered the war.

Based on an idea by John Stevens, whose descendants established the Hoboken Land & Improvement Co., the Company built the two miles of track known as the Shore Road mainly to transfer produce from the Stevens estate's farmlands to the Hoboken wharves.

In 1897 the Stevens family granted to the Hoboken Manufacturers Railroad Co. a 99-year lease on the Shore Road which was turned into a commercial venture. The Stevens family granted its right-of-way along River Walk. Although this road (now called Sinatra Drive) which runs along

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HOBOKEN MANUFACTURERS' RAILROAD CO. **Lessee**

TELEPHONE HOBOKEN 200 **"Hoboken Shore Road"**

Offices and Freight Station adjacent to Steamship Piers
Foot of Fifth Street, Hoboken, N. J.
Handles freight in any quantity to or from all Trunk Line Railroads

Hoboken City Directory, 1922

the waterfront around Stevens Bluff from Fifth to 11th Streets was originally dedicated to the city as a public thoroughfare, the railroad retained the right of way and its old tracks are still visible embedded in the pavement. The last train ran about 1977.

The route was opened for traffic on September 20, 1897 and first hauled its trains with a repair car borrowed from the Hudson County Electric Railway Company, a converted trolley, used as a locomotive until January 4, 1898.

Power for the road was taken from a station of the Hudson County Electric Light Company.

Thomas H. McCann, a Civil War hero and one-time president of the Hoboken Board of Education, was the road's chief engineer.

In May 1924, the U.S. Secretary of War (the U.S. government took over operation of America's railroads during World War I) sold the Hoboken Shore Road to the Port of New York Authority.

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MUSEUM ACQUISITIONS

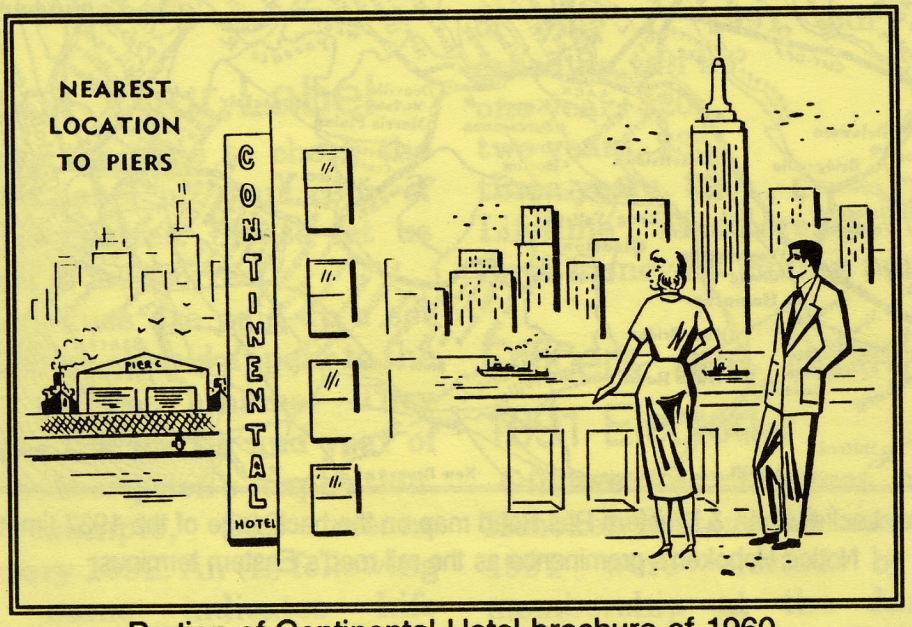
Among the recent items donated to the Museum is a **Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Rail Road timetable** of 1937. It is a good addition to our holdings as we are low on Lackawanna Rail Road items. A map from this timetable is shown on page 6. We thank Herbert H. Hefler of Larchmont, NY, who is the father of Museum trustee Stephen Hefler.

An old **post card view of the River Walk**, Hoboken and a **Centennial booklet of the First Baptist Church** of Hoboken, published in December 1945, providing a detailed history of the old Hoboken church which occupied the building at Ninth and Bloomfield Streets now the home of the Spanish Seventh Day Adventist Church, cornerstone of which was laid on June 18, 1890. The Baptist congregation today uses the Mount Olive Baptist Church at 721 Washington Street.

The booklet and card were found in the family archives of Leonard J. Taylor, Netcong, NJ and given to the Museum. Mr. Taylor and many of our readers may be familiar with the names in the booklet: Matthias H. Taylor and Mary Georgia (Hulse) Taylor (Mr. Hulse's grandparents), Herring, Rev. Cusworth, Houseman, Terhune,

Rue, Biggio, Andrew B. VanWoert, and Robert VanWoert. Andrew is Mr. Hulse's cousin and now lives in Jersey City. Robert died early last year. We thank Mr. Taylor for his thoughtfulness.

A Continental Hotel brochure from the period of 1959-1960. The brick, five-story hotel at the northeast corner of First and Hudson Streets claimed to be "Hoboken's largest and best-known hotel" at the time. Also billed as "the hotel with the homelike atmosphere," it had 64 rooms, some facing the interesting panorama of Manhattan," with "newly decorated wall-to-wall carpeting, and equipped with Simmons furniture." A coffee shop and room service were available as well as an air-conditioned marine cocktail bar. The large fold-out pamphlet advertised to tourists visiting New York city: "The CONTINENTAL Hotel, an established landmark for over 65 years, invites you to visit us while in the big city. Folks have found out that although they enjoy Manhattan's many sights and pleasures it is a relief to leave its turmoil and relax at our quiet hotel."



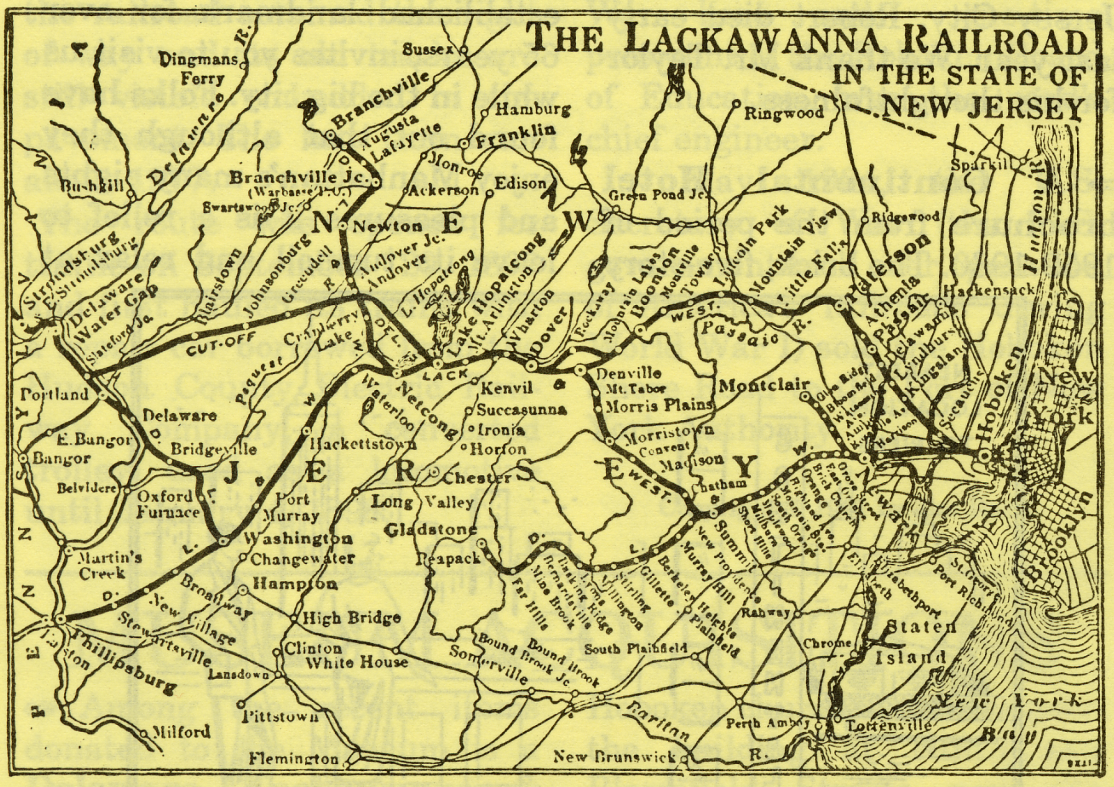
Portion of Continental Hotel brochure of 1960.

We thank Hoboken Antiques on Washington Street for this attractive bit of Hoboken memorabilia.

FIVE LARGE DISPLAY CASES have been given us by the Newark Museum. All are trimmed in brass, seven feet high, four feet wide, one foot deep, with glass on four sides above a base three feet high. Bob Foster, Curator of Exhib-

itions, arranged to obtain them and bring them to Hoboken. These attractive cases will expand our display capability.

Other generously donated items will be described in future newsletters.



Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Rail Road map on the back page of the 1937 timetable. Notice Hoboken's prominence as the rail road's Eastern terminus.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

This month we welcome as a new member Joseph A. Bocco of Freehold and Lifetime Member Mark Schubin of New York, former resident of Hoboken and a graduate of Stevens Institute.

We also welcome David P. Doyle, Steve and Peg Finnerty, Mr. & Mrs. William R. Jones, William Eric Neu, Life Member Harold J. Raveché, Constance Unger, and Laurie Peterson Wardell, all of Hoboken.

Mr. Raveché is President of Stevens Institute. In a letter to the Museum he wrote: "Your activities add a great deal to the pleasure of living in Hoboken. Keep up the good work!"

Regular members who have renewed as Lifetime Members are: Martin Andrews and Stephen Hefler, both of Hoboken; noted musician

Frankie Fame of Rahway, and Rita Winter of Brick Town. Ms Winter is the sister of Catherine Ruchovansky, nee Donnelly, who is also a Lifetime Member.

We note that Member John L. Block resides in Roxboro, Quebec, Canada, making our organization more than ever an international one!

Check Your Label

Now is the time to check the address label on your copy of this Newsletter. Please let us know if it is incorrect.

If your dues are paid-up a set of numbers should appear to the right of your name. They indicate the month and year of your subscription's expiration. For example, 292 means February 1992. An (L) following your name indicates Life Membership.

Complimentary Copies

If no numbers appear to the right of your name on the label, your Museum Newsletter has come to you with our compliments at no charge. We hope you will find it interesting enough to encourage you to take out a membership in the Museum and continue to receive the Newsletter regularly.

High Costs Hit Hard

Due to the increased cost of printing the Newsletter, the increase in postal rates, and other expenses in carrying out the Museum's activities, we are regretfully compelled to raise dues for membership in the Hoboken Historical Museum. As of July 1, 1991, our dues schedule will be:

one year, $20;
two years, $35;
three years, $50;
Lifetime Membership $125.

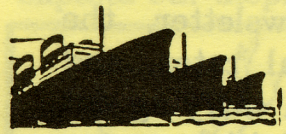
Save money by joining now.

Officers and Board for 1991 Elected

Officers and Trustees of the Hoboken Historical Museum for 1991 were elected by the membership at the January meeting. Re-elected President was the Museum's founder, Jim Hans, with John DePalma elected Vice President, Gerard Lisa Treasurer, Virginia Newman Corresponding Secretary, and Barbara Lippman Recording Secretary.

Elected Trustees were Maureen Allex, Luke Faust, Robert Foster, Stephen Hefler, Kathi Hoffman, Hugh Kilmer, Stephen Kilnisan, George Kirchgessner, Paul Lippman, and Perry Robinson.

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THE HOBOKEN HISTORICAL MUSEUM
CITY HALL
WASHINGTON AND FIRST STS. HOBOKEN, N.J.

History of Social Clubs

Lecture at Our Next Meeting -- You're Invited!

Bob Foster, the Museum's Curator of Exhibitions, will deliver a short lecture on *The History of Social Clubs in Hoboken* at our next meeting. The meeting will take place on Monday, February 18 at 7:30pm in the private dining room of the Clam Broth House. No obligation; no solicitation of funds; meeting is open to the public.

Social Clubs will also be the subject of our 1991-1992 annual exhibition.If you have artifacts, documents, photographs, or any other memorabilia related to Hoboken social clubs, please phone Bob Foster at 656-2240.

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Editor	Jim Hans	Office Phone:	(201) 653-7392
Typesetting	The Lippmans	Membership: 1 year	$15
Production:		2 years	$25
Paul Blocklyn	Kathi Hoffman	Out of Town	add $3/year
Luke Faust	Perry Robinson	Lifetime Membership	$100
Stephen Hefler	Nancy Wenner	Dues will increase	July 1, 1991