HOBOKEN HISTORY



HOBOKEN'S FAMOUS DUKE'S HOUSE RESTAURANT AS IT APPEARED IN 1905
Hoboken Public Library

Horses and Cabbages: A Ferry Tale
The Duke of Hoboken ◘ *Our Town in 1891*
News of the Museum

The Magazine of the Hoboken Historical Museum
HOBOKEN NJ NUMBER 1 AUTUMN 1991

HOBOKEN HISTORY

Published by the Hoboken Historical Museum
President Pro Tem.: John De Palma
Museum Founder: Jim Hans

Editor: Paul Lippman
Production Editor: Barbara Lippman
Photography Director: Robert Foster
Advertising Director: Darrell Whitely

Published four times a year.
Business address:
PO Box 707, Hoboken NJ 07030

Welcome to HOBOKEN HISTORY Magazine

You're reading the first issue of HOBOKEN HISTORY, the new magazine published by the Hoboken Historical Museum, researched, written, and produced by its members. HOBOKEN HISTORY will introduce its readers to the people, places, and events of the fascinating past of the City of Hoboken, the unique and colorful community of which we are so proud.

Hoboken's history is too lively to be embalmed in a dry and pedantic journal. So HOBOKEN HISTORY intends to present Hoboken's past in as sprightly and interesting a manner as possible, in words and pictures. You walk past Hoboken's history every day. It is in our streets and buildings. HOBOKEN HISTORY will try to bring it to life.

So we will avoid tales of long-dead politicians and shun old stories that have been told and re-told endlessly. Instead, as much as we can, we will introduce our readers to the little-known, the unusual, and especially, the past that is visible today if you know where to look. The things you may have walked by every day but never noticed. We want you to see Hoboken as you may never have seen it before. To find for perhaps the first time the fascinating and unexpected discoveries that await you on your way to the bus. If HOBOKEN HISTORY makes you more aware of the special character of our city, we will have done our job.

We also welcome your participation in this magazine. Your knowledge and memories of life in Hoboken are eagerly sought. We'd like to hear from you. You do not have to be a historian or a writer. Just drop us a line — an anecdote, a memory, an old photograph, are all welcome.

To receive HOBOKEN HISTORY four times a year, you need only become a member of the Hoboken Historical Museum. It costs only $20.00 a year and includes the magazine and discounts on Museum souvenirs and reproductions of documents and memorabilia. We hold meetings once a month, except in July, and you are welcome to attend, meet your fellow-members and find out how you can join in the Museum's activities.

Mail your check or money order for $20.00 to the Hoboken Historical Business at the address above.

MUSEUM NEWS

JIM HANS RESIGNS

During the summer, Jim Hans, whose term of office expires in January 1992 and cannot, under Museum by-laws, be renewed beyond the five years he has served, asked for a leave of absence from the presidency of the Museum until January 1, 1992, effective September 1, 1991, citing the increasing burden of the many responsibilities he has carried for so long. John De Palma was voted President Pro Tem. by the Board of Trustees, and Robert Foster, Director.

Jim was then persuaded to continue as President until October 1, to allow time for his responsibilities to be assumed by others. In September, a proposal by Jim to become the Museum's historian with remuneration was declined by the Board which regarded such remuneration as particularly inappropriate in this time of financial constraints, such as the inability of the State Historical Commission to award its usual grant.

Jim then tendered his resignation. With regret and appreciation of Jim's contributions to the organization, the Board accepted, effective October 1, 1991. Members of the Board have stepped forward to assume the task of managing the Museum's affairs.

LETTER FROM JIM HANS

September 19, 1991

Dear Members:

After almost six years I find it is time to sing my swan song.

The Museum, that I started, has grown and became an unknowable entity to me. Some of those whom I entrusted to carry forth my ideas had ideas of their own, which resulted in differences of operation and procedures that I finally found irreconcilable. Thus, I have chosen to give up my active position with the Museum and take up work on various book projects, which have been more or less on hold for five years.

In my opinion, the Museum would have benefited immensely from having a full time, paid Historian/Consultant, however, since the majority ruled against it, I must concentrate my full time efforts elsewhere.

In any case, I wish the Museum success, despite the disputes which have divided its staff.

The Museum was my brainchild, created from my desire to celebrate what I found fascinating and historical about Hoboken. Therefore, I wish it well and hope it can continue to make a valuable contribution in its new incarnation.

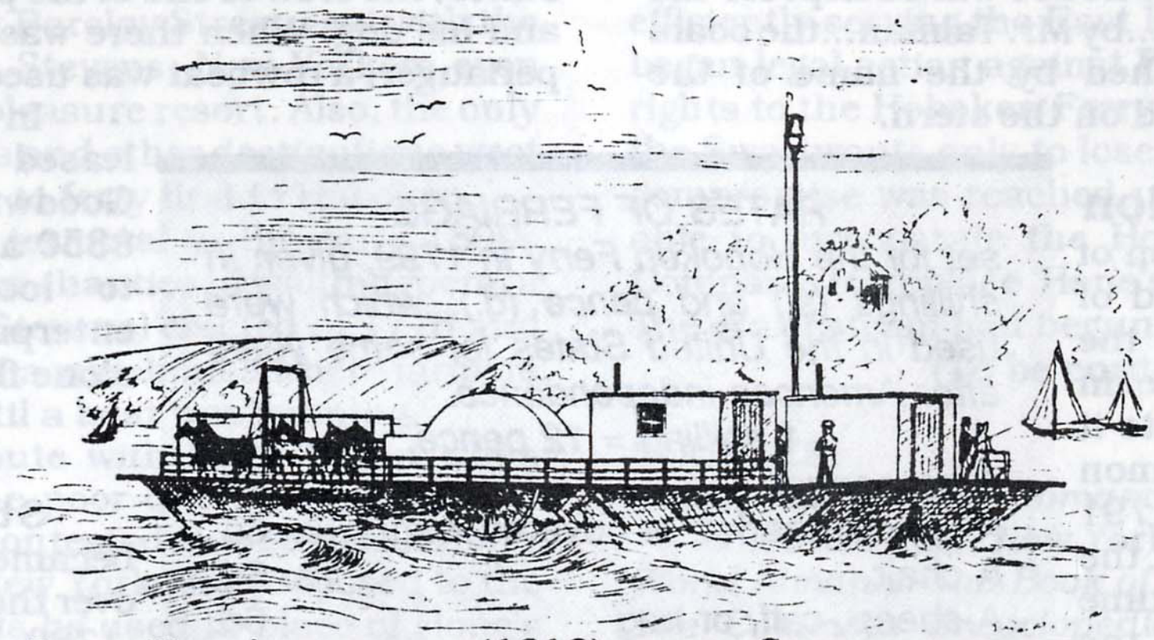
As always, I appreciate the support you, the members, have given me and the Museum.

Sincerely
Jim Hans, President

Museum News continues on inside back cover

FERRY TALE

The story of the Hoboken ferry — it started with one man and a rowboat, and lasted 300 years



PHILIP HONE'S TEAMBOAT (1818) BEFORE STEVENS IMPROVED IT.
Hoboken Public Library

Today's Hoboken Ferry is host to thousands who carry nothing more bulky, interesting, or fragrant than an attaché case or a woman's handbag. You can stroll down to its dock at the Lackawanna Terminal, pay a fare of $2.00, board a fast, safe, comfortable vessel, and be certain that you will arrive in New York less than ten minutes later, on schedule.

But as late as 1717 only slow and unreliable rowboats and canoes provided ferry service between Hoboken and New York. The fare was one shilling (about 25 cents) for a man, a shilling and a half for a man and a horse (how they got a horse into a rowboat is not recorded). Big money in 1717 for very uncertain service. We are told of six-hour crossings to Manhattan in the early years.

It has been said that "in those days, when a member of a family left for New York, he would bid the rest goodby as though starting on a journey of undetermined duration."

Rowing Across the Hudson

Hoboken ferry service began in 1661 when William Jansen, a brawny Dutchman, would row you across in a big open rowboat at a fee which in terms of the value of money of the time was considerably higher than today's fare.

But Jansen's rowboat was only the beginning of a ferry service that lasted until November 22, 1967, the longest continuous public ferry operation in the United States. Ride the Hoboken ferry of today and you are taking part in history.

Understandably weary, Jansen later turned over the job to another Dutchman, Peter Hetfelsen, who was licensed by Philip Carteret (1639-1682), first Colonial governor of New Jersey. Under Carteret's license, Hetfelsen held a monopoly on ferrying people, cattle, and goods between Hoboken and Manhattan, but anyone could "keep a canoe or boate of his owne for transporting such goodes as belong to himselfe."

Over the first century the ferry didn't improve very much. Oars and wind powered the boats and the vessels advanced only from a rowboat to a "periauger," a large sail boat decked over, with a rail all around, two masts and no bowsprit or boom.

"...in those days, when a member of a family left for New York, he would bid the rest goodby as though starting on a journey of undetermined duration."

A Formal Ferry

On February 20, 1775 the Hoboken Ferry was formally chartered, one that continued to run in one form or another until 1967 and since 1989 serves Hoboken once again. New York City records show that a ferry to be established "from the Dock belonging to this Corporation, at the Bear Market at the North River to Hobock," was leased for two years to Hermanus Talman at an annual rent of £50.

On May 8 the lease was signed by New York Mayor Whitehead Hicks and ordered to be delivered to Talman. He must have made some private arrangement with a man named Cornelius Haring, for on May 1 Haring opened the ferry. As late as May 24, 1776, Talman was considered the lessee.

Losing little time, Haring advertised on May 11, 1775 his new ferry service in the *New-York Journal or General Advertiser* :

Cornelius Haring, Presents his most respectful Compliments to the Public, and informs them that on...the 1st of May, he opened the New Established Ferry, from the remarkable pleasant and convenient situated place of William Bayard, Esq. at Hobuck -- from which place all gentlemen travellers and others...will be accommodated with the best of boats...to convey them from thence to New York, near the new Corporation Pier, at North River, opposite Vesey Street at which place a suitable house will be kept for the reception of travellers...by Mr. Talman...the boats are to be distinguished by the name of the Hobuck Ferry, painted on the stern.

Comes the Revolution

After a brief disruption of the Ferry towards the end of the American Revolution, the ferries were resumed late in 1784 and rights to operate it were put up by the Common Council for bidding. In 1791 John Cox Stevens was the highest bidder, the first time his name appears in the history of the Hoboken Ferry. He obtained a three-year lease, but it was not renewed. The Council leased Haring's old Hoboken ferry to John Van Alen.

Stevens probably was not overly concerned; so long as the Ferry was well operated, it would enhance the value of his Hoboken properties.

From 1789 John Stevens' main interest was development of steam engines and their application to land and water transportation. But legal and technical barriers delayed his exploitation of the steamboat.

Leased but Not Last

The history of the Ferry becomes at this point a rather tedious tale of leases granted to one operator after another, year after year, according to *Romance of the Hoboken Ferry*, by Harry J. Smith, Jr. and John M. Emery, 1931. (Captain Emery, manager of the marine department of the Lackawanna Railroad, in 1915 lived at 1214 Garden Street.)

The Common Council rented the ferry to Joseph Smith in 1791 for a term of three years at an annual charge of £91. The terms were changed in 1795 to two years at £95 a year. In 1796 the Council leased the Ferry to Smith for three years at £120 a year.

In 1799 the Council proposed to lease the Hobock Ferry (the spelling changed) for three years and accepted the bid of a man named Zadock Hedden, who lasted only a few months. When the Council asked Hedden for a security deposit, he resented the insinuation and quit. In his absence, the Ferry sank into mismanagement. In 1802 a Garret Covenhoven took over for two years and nine months at $250 a year.

A man named Elis Haynes then took charge of the Ferry on the New York side and John Town on the Hoboken side. Smith and Emery write that the Hoboken Ferry fleet at his time consisted of two rowboats and two periaugers. For a long time, it states, the crew of one of the periaugers was one man and his dog! When there was not enough wind for a periauger, a rowboat was used.

In 1808 the Ferry was leased yet again, to David Goodwin for three years at $350 a year. It was beginning to look as if the Ferry enterprise would never fly, let alone float.

RATES OF FERRIAGE
set for the Hoboken Ferry in 1799, given in shillings (s.) and pence (d.), which were used in the United States for some years after American independence.
1 shilling = 12 pence.

A passenger	9d.
A coach, chariot, or covered wagon	8s. 6d.
A chair	2s. 6d.
A sheep, calf, or hog	6d.
A bushel of salt	2½d.
A hogshead of wine or molasses	8s. 0d.
A barrel of beef, flour, or fish	1s. 3d.
Planks of every kind	2d.
A side of sole leather	2d.
A raw hide	3d.
A desk	3s. 0d.
A large table	1s. 0d.
A small table	6d.
A basket of fruit or bag of two bushels	4d.
A mahogany chair	2d.
A common chair	1d.
A feather bed	6d.
A clock case	1s. 0d.
A chest of tea	2s. 0d.
Large bale of cotton	2s. 0d.
Cabbage per hundred	1s. 6d.
Shad per hundred	2s. 0d.
And all other articles and things in like proportion.	

Stevens vs. Hone

Stevens eventually became embroiled in a dispute over the Ferry with Philip Hone (1780-1851), a merchant and auctioneer who became Mayor of New York in 1825. How this dispute came about is a tangled tale, with confusion and conflict among surviving records and later accounts.

Apparently Stevens obtained a 14-year lease in 1813 for a ferry between Spring Street, Manhattan and Hoboken. He later sold this ferry lease to John, Robert, and Samuel Swartwouts (or Swarthout). Either they, in turn, sold the lease to Hone, or the New York Ferry Committee took it for non-payment of rent and transferred it to Hone. This occurred in 1818 at the same time that the Ferry terminal in New York was moved from Murray Street two blocks south to Barclay Street, the terminal until 1967.

It was in 1818 that the first significant improvement took place in the ferryboats themselves took place. It was the teamboat, invented and later improved by John Stevens, a twin-hulled vessel propelled by horses or mules walking on a wheel, its rotation geared to a paddlewheel between the hulls.

Though quite slow, it could maintain a schedule, and wagons could be driven on at one end and straight off at the other without unhitching the horses or turning the boats around. Stevens had invented the first double-ended ferry boat.

Hone operated at least one horse boat on the Barclay Street route and in 1819 obtained a lease for

a new line between Hoboken and Christopher Street, a ferry service maintained until March 1955.

Why the continual effort to provide regular ferry service between Hoboken and New York? The farmers of New Jersey were anxious to deliver their produce to the market in New York, which was conveniently situated near the river at Barclay Street, and with the encouragement of John Stevens, New Yorkers even then saw Hoboken as a pleasure resort. Also, the only way to get to Philadelphia and other destinations west of the Hudson River was to ferry first to Hoboken.

> "How this orbicular movement can promote the rectilinear advancement of this mammoth boat is to me a mystery."

The Hoboken ferry terminal in the early 1800s consisted of three wooden shanties, a waiting room, a tavern (owned by John Stevens) erected in 1776 and called the 76 House, and a warehouse where farmers stored their produce until a boat was running.

John Stevens' dispute with Hone began when Stevens, fed up with the poor quality of service on Hone's Hoboken Ferry, contested Hone's right to ferry between Hoboken and New York and proposed to the Council that steam boats be used in place of Hone's horse and mule boats.

Stevens was irked by Hone's service mainly for business reasons, and possibly because Stevens had not only designed a superior teamboat but wanted to use steamboats on the ferry. Stevens' improved teamboat was a paddlewheel vessel, 90 feet long, consisting of three hulls fastened together, with a treadmill cleated for footholds, on which teams of horses or mules walked. Two horses might propel the boat in a calm if it were lightly loaded, but there was room for as many as eight horses. It had the power of 40 oars, and accommodated six to eight loaded wagons and nearly 100 passengers.

All for 3 Cents

In a broadside criticizing Hone's horse-powered ferry service from Hoboken to New York Stevens wrote:

"We embarked upon an aquatic conveyance called by the people of these parts a horse boat. But I am inclined to believe that this novelty is a mere sham, a trick upon travellers.

"There are a dozen sorry nags in this contrivance, which go round in a circular walk with halters on one end and beams at the other extremity. How this orbicular movement can promote the rectilinear advancement of this mammoth boat is to me a mystery. [Stevens' engineering mind evidently thought ill of the horse boat. He could do better with steam!] And as we were six hours in crossing the river, I suspect that they go and come with the tide and that the horses are a mere catch-penny to bring their masters the trigesimosecundal part of a dollar [almost three cents] more on each head than the customary ferriage..."

Stevens had other grievances with Hone. Stranding his passengers in mid-river for hours at a time, Hone furnished his boats with liquor bars, depriving Stevens' 76 House in Hoboken of its trade. And Hone failed to provide ferry service after sundown, cutting off Stevens' tavern from the profitable evening bar customers from New York, even then a feature of Hoboken nightlife!

By this time Robert Fulton's steamboats were efficiently serving the East River ferries, and Stevens began legal action against Philip Hone to recover the rights to the Hoboken Ferry which he had granted to the Swartwouts only to lose them to Hone. In 1821 a compromise was reached under which Stevens was able to incorporate the Hoboken Steamboat Ferry Company to replace Hone's horse-powered service. The era of steam had begun on the Hoboken Ferry.

(To be continued in the next issue)

SOURCES:

Smith and Emery, *Romance of the Hoboken Ferry*, Prentice-Hall, New York, 1931.

World Almanac and Book of Facts, 1934.

The Columbia Encyclopedia, Third Ed., Columbia Univ. Press, New York and London.

Valdes Travel, Inc.

830 WASHINGTON ST., PO BOX M 46
HOBOKEN

Miriam Valdes
Sales Manager

(201) 659-3312

Comics — Books at Discount

GOLDEN AGE BOOKS AND COMICS

1200 Washington St.
(just inside 12th St.)

Mon-Wed 12-7:30
Th-Sat 10-10
Sun 1-5

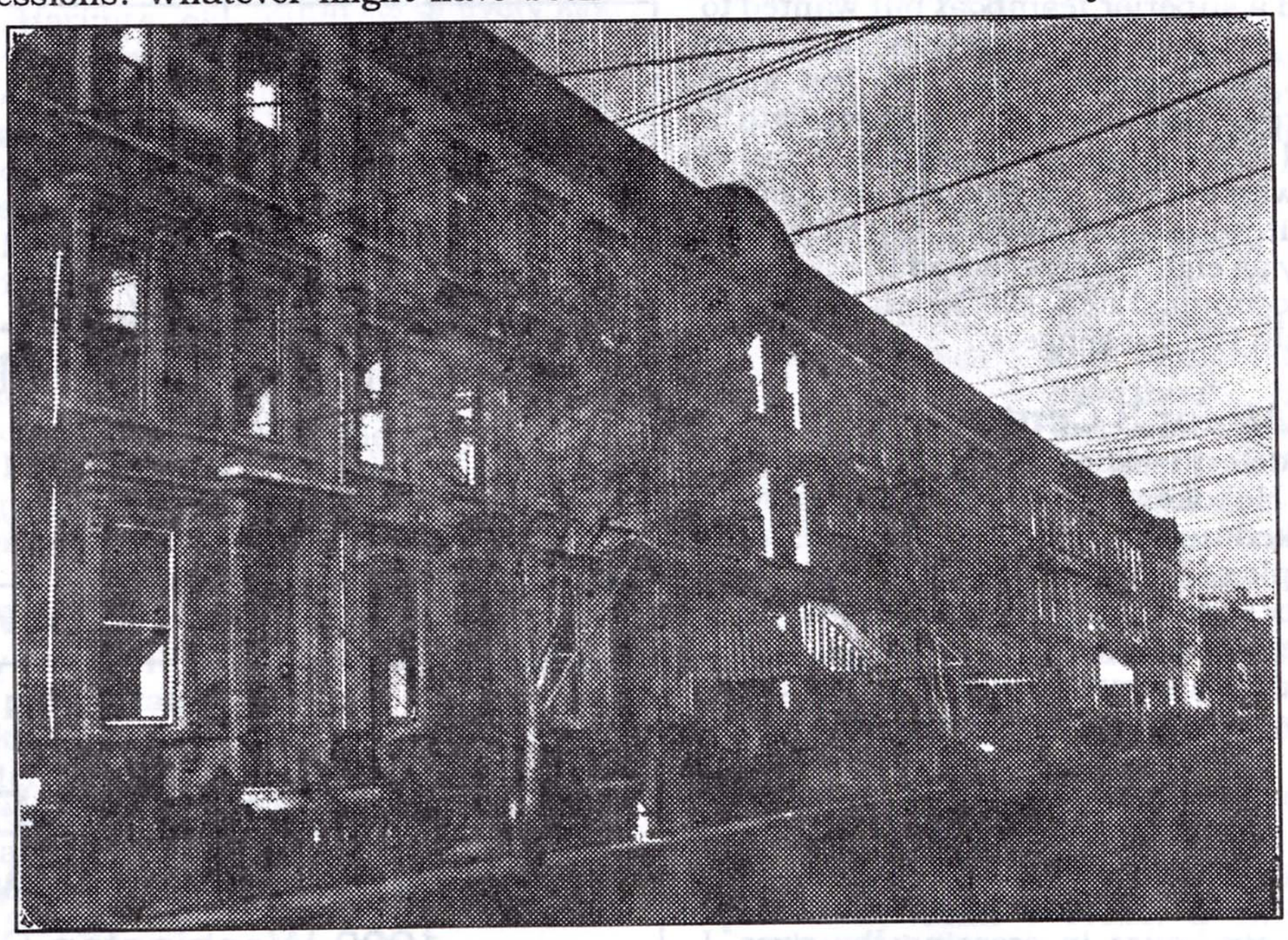
(201) 792-7820

The times and Hoboken itself have changed since April 25, 1891
when this puff piece for the Hoboken Land and Improvement Co.
appeared in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper.
It was a century ago,
but much of what it says about Hoboken still holds true.

HOBOKEN ... A DELIGHTFUL SUBURB

GENERAL MISAPPREHENSION ABOUT ONE OF THE MOST PLEASANT OUTLYING CITIES NEAR NEW YORK

It may sound strange to those who have been under a misapprehension regarding Hoboken, New Jersey, to learn how attractive and beautiful this delightful suburb of New York really is. Minstrels have for years have been fond of making their jokes about Hoboken, and comic writers have seen fit to take up the place as a proper subject for contemptuous remarks and humorous expressions. Whatever might have been said in disparagement of Hoboken as an unattractive spot ten or twenty years ago, no one who visits it today can deny that it offers the greatest advantages to be found in any city adjacent to New York in the way of pleasant, healthful, and comfortable homes at prices within the reach of all.



THE 1200 BLOCK OF GARDEN STREET TODAY LOOKS MUCH AS IT DID A CENTURY AGO WHEN IT WAS BUILT. RESIDENTS THEN INCLUDED JUDGE FREDERICK OGDEN, VENEER MANUFACTURER JOEL WOODMAN, EDUCATOR JOSEPH BRANDT, AND CARL HECKER AND HIS ART SCHOOL, AS WELL AS CLERKS, FIREMEN, GROCERS, AND JANITORS.
PHOTOGRAPHED BY BARBARA LIPPMAN IN 1982

For many years the Hoboken Land and Improvement Company *[incorporated in 1838 and dissolved in 1956]* largely representing the capital and enterprise of the famous Stevens estate, has been the life and spirit of the development of Hoboken. Mr. T. C. Dunn, its agent, has given us some interesting facts about it and its great success. This wealthy company, with an eye to the prosperity of Hoboken, has erected a large number of dwellings. These are sold to purchasers for ten per cent of the price in cash, the balance payable by installments that can be easily met by any prosperous young man.

Aside from the sightly location of Hoboken, the healthfulness of the city itself, its fine churches, places of amusement, plentiful supply of water from the Hackensack River, its public library and other attractions, it has what no other suburb of New York possesses, *i.e.*, a magnificent, splendidly equipped institution of learning, the famous Stevens Institute, which offers, perhaps, the best scientific and mechanical education that can be had in this section. Connected with it is a high school, where students can prepare for an academic or collegiate education. The Stevens Institute faces the Hudson River. It occupies a commanding situation, with an outlook of surpassing beauty. ☛

The streets of Hoboken are neatly kept, and its population of 50,000 is growing with extraordinary rapidity. It has two savings banks, national banks, a paid fire department, a well-organized police force, and a magnificent club-house is being built by the Hoboken Quartette Club, which will be one of the attractive social features of the city.

One of the essential requirements of a suburb is rapid transit. This Hoboken has to such a degree that it is as near to the heart of New York City as Central Park. Magnificent ferry-boats, owned by the Land and Improvement Company, spacious and modern in construction, with new and elegant ferry-houses at the terminal, make direct connection from Hoboken to central points along New York's water front, and at every landing-place further connection is made by street cars promptly and conveniently with all parts of the city. The boats at the Fourteenth Street Ferry, Hoboken, connect with cars at the Twenty-third Street Ferry, New York side, which run to all the theatres and to the leading shopping centres of the city. The ferries to Barclay and Christopher Streets connect on the New York side with street cars running to all parts of the city, and with three cross-town lines of cars, the Christopher Street cars passing through Fourteenth Street to Broadway, while another line connects with the East Twenty-third Street Ferry to Brooklyn. It is a fact that one can reach the shopping and business centres of New York much more quickly from Hoboken than from Brooklyn or Harlem.

No suburb of New York offers cheaper, more rapid, or more convenient facilities than Hoboken for residents to reach New York, and it is not surprising, therefore, that in late years particularly, many prominent business and professional men of New York have made their homes in Hoboken. The offices of the Land and Improvement Company in Hoboken face the joint entrance of the Barclay and Christopher Street ferries on that side, and visitors are cordially welcomed who desire to make inquiries regarding the purchase or renting of houses. Well-built houses rent as low as $40 and $50 per month, and can be had from this figure up to $800 and $1,000 per year. Convenient flat houses rent from $18 to $60 per month, or less than half of the ordinary flat rental of this city.

It speaks well for the government of the city of Hoboken that is debt is less than that of any other city in the State of New Jersey. There is a feeling of pride among the people in reference to the maintenance of a superior standard of government that is specially manifested at this time. It is important to bear in mind that the growth of the city, dependent as it is in such a large measure upon the efforts of the Hoboken Land and Improvement Company, has been well directed. The power and resources of the company have been employed to make Hoboken a city of pleasant homes.

Realizing the value of rapid transit, no money has been spared for the improvement of the ferry-boat service. In fact, the Hoboken ferries were the first to introduce the propeller ferry boats with the superior speed they command. From year to year the facilities for rapid transit are increasing, and the time has already come when the few minutes spent on the ferry boat are regarded as a matter of no account. The preference of those who seek suburban homes is, by all odds, for a pleasant journey by water rather than a half-hour's ride on dusty street cars or smoky elevated trains.

The rising tendency in real estate values has been strongly felt in Hoboken and will constantly increase with the growth of its population, as it has in New York. This tendency must make itself phenomenally felt in the course of a few years, so that, as an investment, real estate in Hoboken is held in the highest favor. In a number of instances, young men on small salaries who have bought property on the installment plan from the Hoboken Land and Improvement Company, have found before they have completed payments on their purchase, that the property has doubled in value.

No location about New York is more favored by nature, and none has been more splendidly developed by man than Hoboken, and the time is not far distant when it will be fully appreciated as the most attractive and advantageous residential suburb, for people who labor in New York and who find that city undesirable as a place of residence.

Hoboken Health & Fitness Center

Hoboken Health & Fitness Center

70 Hudson St., Hoboken, N.J. 07030
(201) 795-9000

Guest may use the club once a month.
Must be completely filled out to be valid.

Please Print

Date Used _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/St/Zip _____

Phone: Day _____ Eve. _____

Hoboken Health & Fitness Center

Hoboken Health & Fitness Center

SPECIAL COURTESY PASS

WAIVER OF LIABILITY

I accept full responsibility for my use of any and all facility privileges. I agree to participate in any class at my own risk and shall hold Hoboken Health & Fitness Center, its employees, representatives, and teachers harmless from any and all loss, claim, injury, damage or liability sustained or incurred by me resulting therefrom.

Signature _____ Must be 18 years or Older _____ Date

SIGNS OF LIFE IN HOBOKEN

The Maxwell House sign isn't the only one. Raise your eyes as you walk the streets of Hoboken and you will see many fascinating signs of a bygone time you may have never noticed. Here are just a few of them.
Are there any old and nearly forgotten signs you would like to see in the pages of HOBOKEN HISTORY *magazine? Tell us about them.*



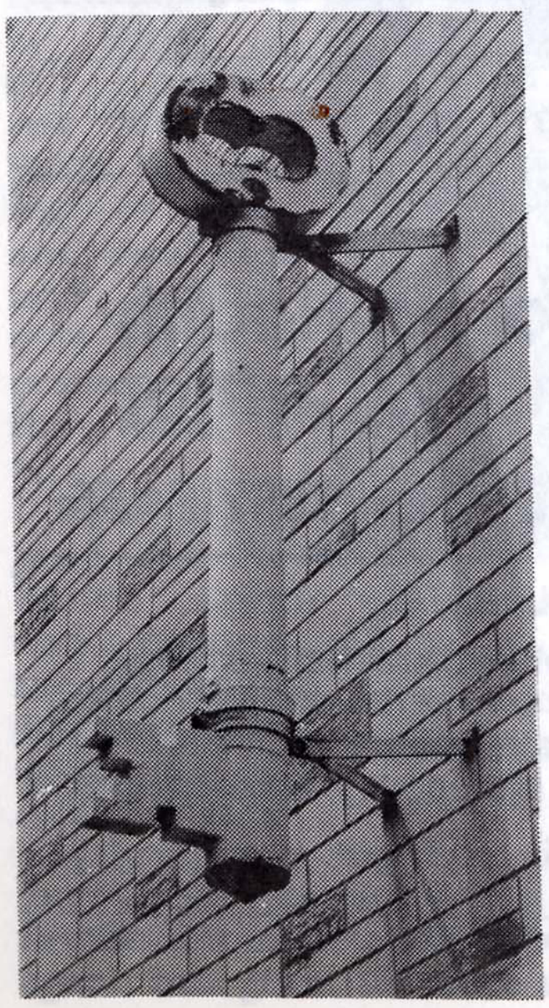
S. ZORN'S GROCERY STORE AT 413 FIRST STREET IS NO LONGER WITH US, BUT HIS SHEET METAL SIGN SURVIVES.



SWINGING DOORS USED TO WELCOME YOU TO THE SHOT-AND-A-BEER OF THE FORMER HOTEL VICTOR'S BAR AT HUDSON STREET AND HUDSON PLACE. TODAY THIS SIGN REMAINS TO WELCOME YOU TO THE BURRITOS AND ENCHILADAS OF A MEXICAN RESTAURANT.



ESTABLISHED IN 1899, THE CLAM BROTH HOUSE IS STILL POINTED OUT BY THIS LANDMARK HOBOKEN SIGN, THE FREE CLAM BROTH IS STILL ON TAP, BUT SHUCKED CLAM SHELLS NO LONGER ADORN THE BARROOM FLOOR.



THIS GIANT KEY ON WILLOW AVENUE AT WILLOW TERRACE MUST HAVE ONCE MARKED THE PRESENCE OF A LOCKSMITH, AND HAS OUTLIVED THE SHOP IT IDENTIFIED.

A portfolio of photographs by Robert Foster



When the ice cream parlor below this sign was in business, lunch counter slang for a chocolate and pineapple soda was "Hoboken Special." Today 926 Washington Street is a Chinese restaurant. But Hoboken is still pretty special.



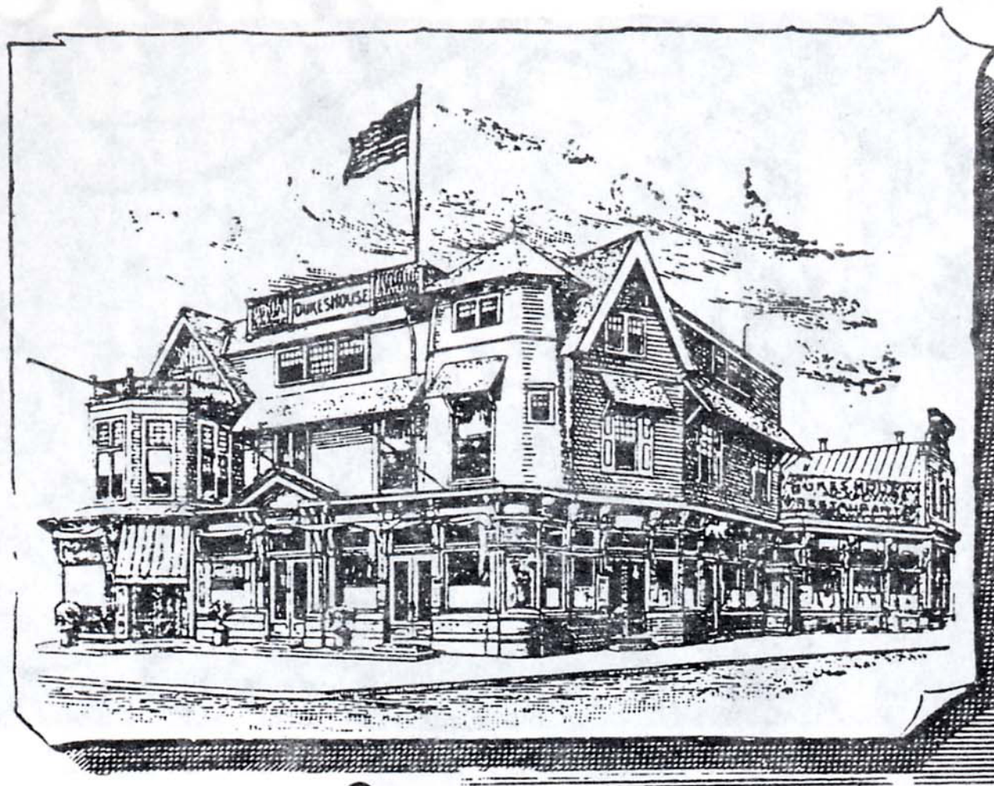
You can probably get a "Hoboken Special" beneath this vintage Coca-Cola sign which is at 1110 Washington. Street. It's above Hoboken's oldest ice cream parlor: Schnackenberg's.

the Elysian Cafe

Serving Hoboken Since 1896

Live
Every Friday and Saturday Night:
RHYTHM AND BLUES

1001 WASHINGTON STREET
659-9110



The Duke's House
CAFE & RESTAURANT.

MARTIN DAAB
PROPRIETOR.

OPPOSITE
LACKAWANNA R.R. DEPOT
AND HOBOKEN FERRIES.

HUDSON PLACE & NEWARK ST.

LETTERHEAD FROM THE JIM HANS COLLECTION

Lillian Russell and Diamond Jim Brady dined here, but who was the Duke?

Hoboken has always been known for the quality of its restaurants, and as far back as the 1870s, its "Duke's House" on Hudson Place opposite the ferry on the present site of the Baker Waterfront Plaza building at Two Hudson Place was among the best, ranked with New York's internationally famous Delmonico's.

The Duke's House attracted a celebrity clientele, among them Chester A. Arthur, who succeeded the assassinated James Garfield as President of the United States; actresses Lillian Russell and Marie Dressler; prizefighter John L. Sullivan; yachtsman William K. Vanderbilt; actors Maurice Barrymore, De Wolf Hopper, and Nat Goodwin; vaudeville stars Weber & Fields; and financiers Jay Gould and James Buchanan ("Diamond Jim") Brady.

Duke Louis?

The Duke's House had all these glamorous patrons, but did it ever have a duke? Legend says it did. About 1879, according to some sources, an Italian, styling himself Duke Louis Calibretto (or Calibritto) arrived in New York. A question arose as to the authenticity of his title. August Belmont, who later became the driving force behind the construction of New York's Interborough Rapid Transit subway, confirmed through correspondence with business associates abroad that not only was Calibretto a "veritable duke," but that he represented one of the oldest of the Italian nobility.

Notwithstanding his noble birth, Calibretto is said to have later taken a job in a bar in Hoboken and ultimately became proprietor of it and finally of the restaurant that became the Duke's House.

That is the legend of the duke, but the Duke's House story really begins with a French baron, whose name is given by newspaper accounts in probable misspelling as Edmund D' Y' Vernos. He is said to have been driven from France during the French Revolution when many nobles fled to avoid execution, his departure hastened by playing a role in defending the Bastille against the revolutionaries. In Europe he acquired a reputation as a *maître d'hôtel*, and when he came to the United States the Baron was appointed *maître* of the famous original Willard Hotel in Washington, D.C. There, it is said, he arranged the very first presidential inauguration dinner to be given in Washington. The president was John Tyler and the year was 1841.

On to New York

From the Willard, the Baron went to New York to take charge of the New-York Hotel, which had opened in 1847 at 721 Broadway, between Washington Place and Waverly Place, next to the fashionable Broadway Central Hotel. The New-York Hotel was known during the

Civil War as a "hotbed of Southern sympathizers," so much so that it was under constant surveillance by the US Secret Service. Here was hatched the Confederate plot to burn the city of New York.

From New York the Baron came to Hoboken, opening a restaurant and hotel at First and Washington Streets, which he named the Napoleon House, after his friend, a nephew of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte (1808-1873), who ruled as Emperor Napoleon III of France from 1852 to 1870.

A Son-in-Law Takes Over

Alphonsine, the Baron's daughter, married John Huneke (also given as Huncke) and he took over management of the Napoleon House from the aging Baron.

The Napoleon House was abandoned in 1860 for a new establishment called the Hoboken House, erected between Washington and Hudson Streets, near what is now Observer Highway. Ten years later a new and more luxurious Hoboken House was planned at River and Newark Streets. Construction began in 1873 and was half completed when John Huneke died.

A family conference was held, attended by Huneke's widow, the Duke of Calibretto, and William Shippen, an official of the Hoboken Land & Improvement Company. They decided to name the new restaurant the Duke's House after the Duke of Calibretto. One newspaper account attributes the name of the restaurant to the "Duke of Calibrese," who it describes as a frequent visitor. The similarity of "Calibretto" and "Calibrese" suggests that they may have been the same person.

The restaurant, which opened on May 1, 1874, offered French cuisine, and there was a large dining room, a wine room, and a public bar. But despite some stories, the Duke's House was never a hotel. Its sole guest seems to have been the Duke himself. Alphonsine and Alphonsine's daughter Mathilde Huneke, known as Miss Tillie, took charge of the restaurant's staff of 37.

An average dinner cost from three to eight dollars a person (a high price in those days). French delicacies such as frog's legs and snails, then unknown in most American restaurants, were always available at the Duke's House.

So renowned was the restaurant, people came all the way from New York just for breakfast. The chef, Michalo, was himself almost as well-known as were his employers. He supervised his kitchen rigidly. Four times a day it was cleaned and scrubbed.

Hoboken's best families dined every Sunday at the Duke's House, then traveled uptown in carriages or by horseback to an afternoon of relaxation in Elysian Fields. Reservations were made by telegraph.

Miss Tillie's Prize Fight

The great prize fighter John L. Sullivan once clashed with Miss Tillie.

The story is that John L. was at a table with his manager, waiting to be served. John L. was well-filled already with wine. He became boisterous.

THE Gallery TAPAS BAR
Fine Spanish Cuisine

MADRID COMES TO HOBOKEN

30 DIFFERENT COLD & HOT TAPAS APPETIZERS
34 NEWARK STREET (201) 216-0777
Next to the Clam Broth House

ROSES
Roses, all colors sensibly priced
Fresh, Silk & Dried Flowers
Greeting Cards ❀ Balloons
Gifts ❀ Jewelry

Open 7 days to 8pm
International Wire Service
Local Delivery
LAURIE L. COLES
207 WASHINGTON ST.
(201) 963-3877
etc.

UNITED DECORATING CO. INC.
Est. 1899
Flags, Pennants, Bunting Decorations
Mourning Draperies
Costumes ☺ Masks ☺ Make-up ☺ Wigs
Banners ☺ Party Items
421 Washington St. (201) 659-1922



LILLIAN RUSSELL ON A TOBACCO ADVERTISING CARD, CA. 1890
PAUL LIPPMAN COLLECTION

"Said Miss Tillie to a waiter, 'Please tell that big man to be quiet or he won't be served.' The waiter trembled, and refused to reprimand Sullivan. So Miss Tillie politely delivered her own message. Up leaped John L, spluttering with rage. Manager Muldoon clutched Sullivan's arm and led him from the place.

"'Miss Tillie,' quavered the waiter, 'don't you know who that man was?'

"'I do not, and I don't care,' answered Miss Tillie."

The Duke's House was severely damaged in the great pier fire of 1905 which destroyed the Lackawanna Ferry House and the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Rail Road sheds. Eventually the property and goodwill were sold to Martin Daab Jr., Commissioner of the Hoboken Police Department and brother of Miss Tillie's husband Frederick Daab. Martin Daab ran the restaurant until he died in 1915, and it achieved a reputation for steaks, seafood, and beer, but never recovered its original stature or clientele.

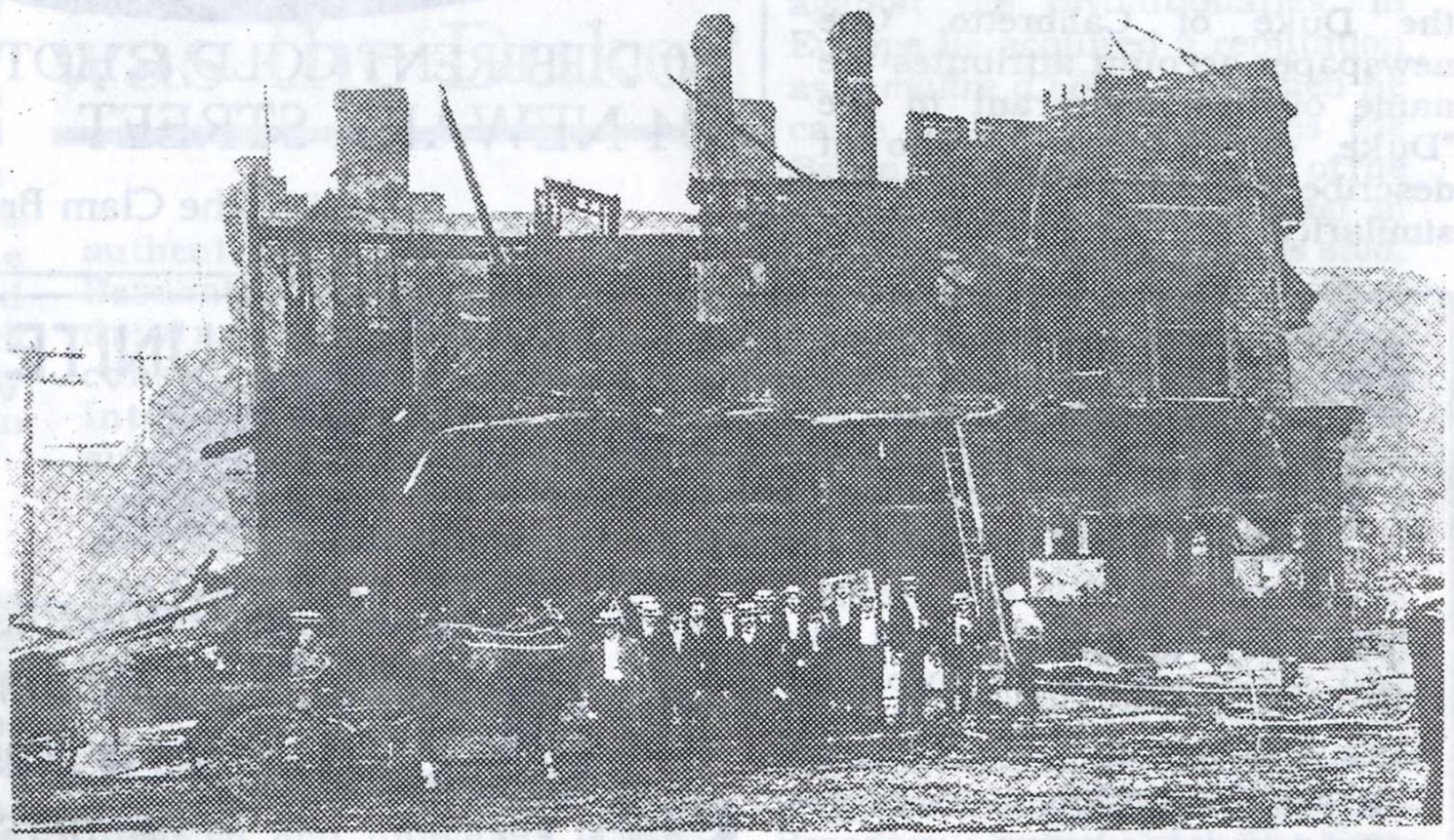
It was then sold to Eugene Nelson, who was forced to close it during World War I when Hoboken's role as a port of embarkation for the American Expeditionary Forces dried up the city's bars. Re-opened, the Duke's House lingered on until a second fire destroyed it on July 20, 1935. During its decline, the building, now reduced to a single story, gathered an accumulation of small businesses about it, including the Duke's House Barber Shop, Samuel Lev's cigar store, Daniel Seville's cafe, a newsstand, and Martin Bertolf's Ideal Restaurant.

Plans to rebuild the Duke's House after the 1935 fire were never fulfilled, and as the author of the newspaper obituary of the Duke's House in 1935 wrote, it never would have attained "the glamour, the air, of the old days, when a man made a ritual of his dinner, and a religion of his wine."

SOURCES:
Chas. H. Haswell, *Reminiscences of an Octogenarian of the City of New York (1816-1860)*, Harper & Bros., 1897.
Jim Hans, *The History of Theatre, Vaudeville and Movies in Hoboken*, Hoboken Historical Museum, 1990.
Kobbé's New York and its Environs, Harper and Bros., New York, 1891.
Rider's New York City, Henry Holt and Co., New York, 1916.
The Hudson Dispatch, July 22, 1935, and other newspaper accounts in the Hoboken Public Library.

SMOKE · AND · CHEW
NAVY
TOBACCO.
BEWARE OF COUNTERFEITS
NOT ALL TOBACCO IN BLUE PAPERS IS
G. W. GAIL & AX'S
NAVY.
When you buy a package look SHARP that it bears their NAME and
TRADE MARK

REVERSE OF THE LILLIAN RUSSELL TOBACCO ADVERTISING CARD.



POSTCARD SHOWING THE RUINS OF THE DUKE'S HOUSE AFTER THE FIRE OF 1905.
JOHN DE PALMA COLLECTION

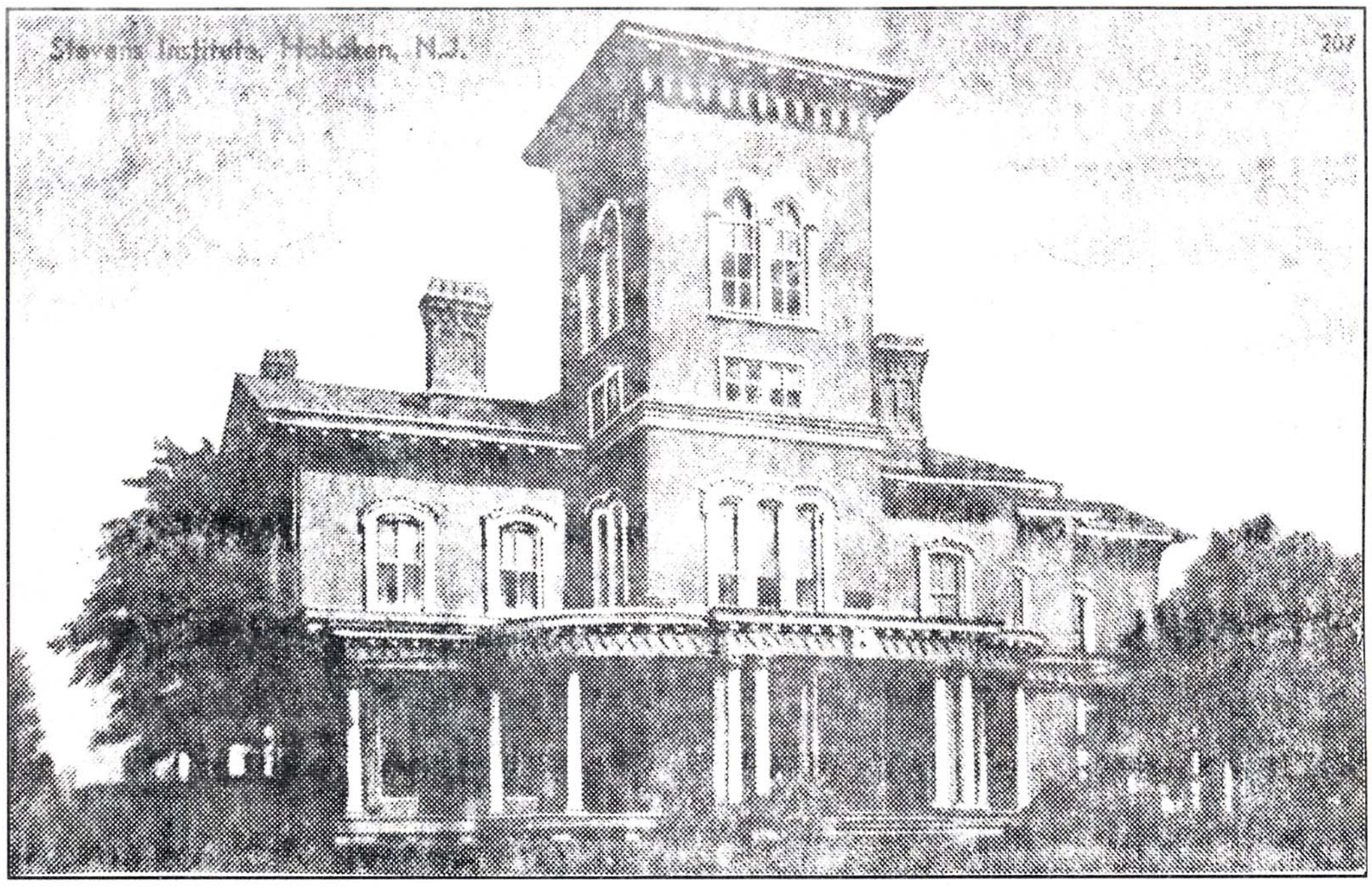
STEVENS CASTLE WAS A ROCK NOT A CASTLE.

Histories and pictures always refer to the Stevens family home that stood for over a century in Hoboken as "Stevens Castle," and the height on which is stood as "Castle Point."

But that may be an error.

The house, placed under construction before 1850 by Robert Livingston Stevens (1787-1856) and completed two years before his death, has been long called Stevens Castle because of its location on Castle Point. But Castle Point is actually a corruption of "Point of Castile." Castile is a region and former kingdom in central and northern Spain. The Spanish word for "castle" is "castillo."

Colonel John Stevens' (1749-1838) originally called the promontory on the Hoboken shoreline his American Gibraltar. The connection with Spain seems to be remote, but from 1779 to 1783, while Stevens was acquiring ownership of what is now Hoboken, British-held Gibraltar was under seige by France and Spain, during the Napoleonic Wars. The relief of the seige followed stirring naval battles and may well have captured the popular imagination.



STEVENS CASTLE IN THE 1930S

IN THE WORKS

Here are some of the topics we are working on for future issues — and we're looking for help. Were you there? Did your parents or grandparents tell you about them? Do you have any photographs from way back when...?

Trolley cars to the Heights: did you take one?
Stone faces carved on buildings: do you know where any are?
Hoboken at the time of the WPA: remember the Fabian Theater?
Sybil's Cave: Did you crawl in there when you were a kid?
Street Trees: do you remember when the Mayor tried to cut them down? Can you identify them?
The Filming of *On the Waterfront*: were you an extra?
The Fagan Iron Works: is its name on your house?
Hoboken Police in the 19th century: was your great-grandpa one?
More on the history of the Hoboken Ferry: did you ever ride it?

Is there something about Hoboken you'd like to tell to others? The pages of HOBOKEN HISTORY are open to you and we'd like to hear from anyone who has a Hoboken story to tell. Drop us a line at

HOBOKEN HISTORY
PO Box 707
Hoboken, NJ, 07030

You don't have to be a writer, you just have to know and love Hoboken!

Carmelita's CAFÉ
121 Washington Street
Hoboken
798-2657
Genuine Mexican Food To Go

Book Review

THE JERSEY GAME

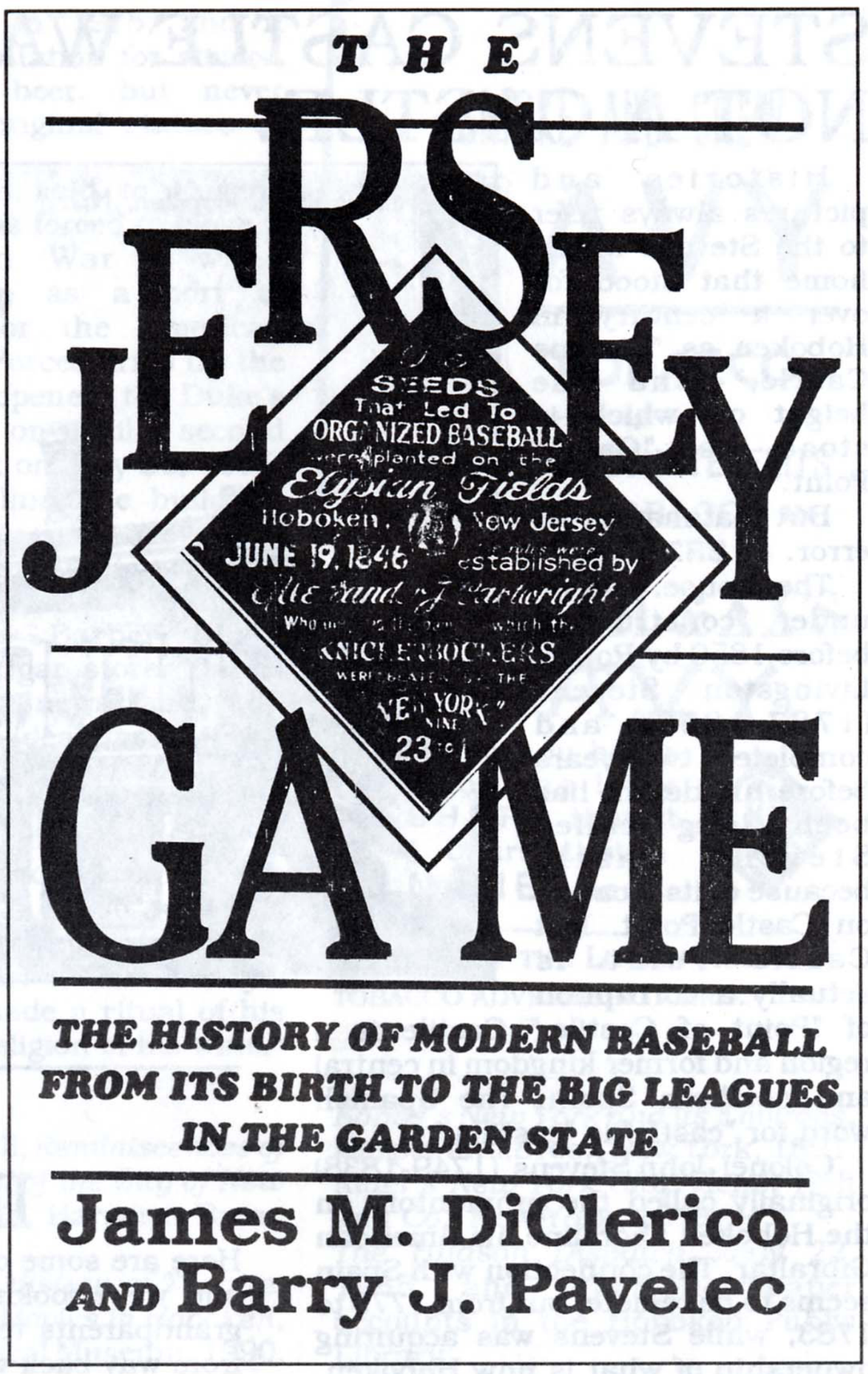
The History of Modern Baseball from its Birth to the Big Leagues in the Garden State
by James M. DiClerico and Barry J. Pavelec
Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, NJ, 1991
279 pp, appendices, bibliography, index, illustrated

In this first book on baseball in New Jersey, we get documented and awesomely detailed confirmation of the fact that baseball as we know it today was NOT invented by Abner Doubleday in Cooperstown, New York, in 1839. In fact, its rules were drafted and the game under those rules first played here in Hoboken at Elysian Fields on October 21, 1845.

In *The Jersey Game*, the authors colorfully recount the history of amateur and professional baseball in New Jersey. We learn about the ten major-leaguers from Hoboken. The earliest was Charlie Bierman (born 1879) who played first base for one season with the Fort Wayne, Indiana, Kekiongas of the National Association and batted a sizzling .000. And the latest mentioned in the book is Bill Kunkel (born 1936) who pitched for five seasons with Kansas City of the American League (4.28 ERA and 6-6 won-lost).

The story is told of how the first rules for the modern game of baseball were drawn up in McCarty's Hotel in Hoboken at what is now Hudson and 12th Streets on September 23, 1845. The scorecard of a game played under those rules in Elysian Fields in October, 1845 is reproduced in this fascinating baseball history.

On October 21, 1995, an American celebration should commemorate the birth of the Great American Game and should appropriately take place in Hoboken, where the first match game of baseball was played 150 years ago. This book confirms Hoboken's place in baseball.



Every baseball fan and Hoboken history buff will enjoy this 279-page volume, its telling of previously untold history, and its rare photographs. The book is currently on sale at Golden Age Books, 1200 Washington St. (on 12th St. just west of Washington), but other dealers can order it from the publisher.

Hoboken Antiques



511 Washington Street
Tues, Wed, Sat: 11-6
Thurs, Fri: 12-8
Dora Stern
659-7329

CAFE 659-3671

Carlo's Since 1910



CITY HALL BAKE SHOP
Love at first bite

95 Washington St., Hoboken

MUSEUM NEWS

News of the Hoboken Historical Museum

PURCHASES:

A group of twelve Hoboken-related letters were acquired by the Museum in June. The letters were from the following:

Andrew Fletcher, March 3, 1906, to First National Bank, Hoboken, with a letter from the Hoboken Trust Company enclosed.
Valencia Boat Club, 1901.
First National Bank, 1900.
Trust Company of New Jersey, 1904.
Valencia Boat Club, 1903.
Columbia Club, 1914.
Castle Point Cyclers, 1900.
Fraternal Lodge No. 112, I.O.O.F., Odd Fellows, 1910
Balas Frères, Ltd., Manufacturers of Plain and Fancy Silk Ribbons, Silk Mills, Hoboken, 1899
Euclid Lodge No. 136, F. & A.M., 1910
Court Stevens No. 98, Foresters of America, Hoboken, 1911
Office of The Hoboken Ferry Co., 1903.

DONATIONS:

The Museum wishes to thank the following donors for artifacts and photographs they have generously given:

Donald Shachat, 1231 Bloomfield Street, a 6½-ounce soft drink bottle, eight inches high, light green glass, bearing a picture and lettering reading S. FELDMAN INC. 407-409 GRAND St., HOBOKEN, N.J.

Jack O'Brien of Hoboken a badge, circa 1920, lettered "Mayor's Aide" and a Hoboken Tercentenary badge, 1930, complete with red, white, and blue ribbon.

Also, a copy of a Frank Sinatra business card from when he lived at 841 Garden Street.

Edward Stanton Cooke of Miami on behalf of the Stanton-Cooke family, the following photographs:
Portrait of Edward R. Stanton, Mayor of Hoboken 1891-92, ca. 1915.
Portrait of Sgt. John Stanton, Hoboken Police Department, undated, ca. 1910.
Interior of Hoboken 2nd Precinct station, ca. 1912.
Group portrait photograph, Hoboken 2nd Precinct, ca. 1912-1915.
Group portrait, Hoboken Board of Fire Commissioners, undated.
Class, Our Lady of Grace School, 1914.

Diete Boehmer, via his mother, Gerda, 76 Bloomfield Street, original newspaper article with woodcut, "Encampment of Gipsies, near the Elysian Fields, Hoboken, N.J.," undated, circa 1855.

In memory of John R. McKinney, 518 Court St., a program from Christopher Morley's Old Rialto Theatre in Hoboken, signed by Morley, for the 1928 revival of the 1868 drama "After Dark."

MUSEUM MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 1991

Members and non-members of the Museum are welcome to attend without obligation our public meetings, which will be held at Traders of Babylon, 259 First St., starting at 7:30pm on these dates:
October: Thursday, October 10.
November: Thursday, November 14.
December: Thursday, December 12.

FLEA MARKET CLEARS $1129.40

John DePalma, who handled the event's business affairs, reported that a net profit of $1129.40 was earned by the Museum from the flea market it sponsored in Church Square Park on Sunday, September 15. Maureen Allex, Luke Faust, Bob Foster, Hugh Kilmer, Jim and Beverley Hans, Paul and Barbara Lippman, Kathy Rogers, and Mary Stoeffhaas, all helped organise and run the event. Vendors were pleased with the customer turnout and we expect a successful Museum flea market again next Spring.

TRAIN FESTIVAL: OCTOBER 5.

Museum publications will be on sale at the Museum table at the Hoboken train festival in the Erie-Lackawanna Rail Road Terminal on Saturday, October 5.

Volunteers are needed to help man the table, which will offer this magazine, volumes II and III of Jim Hans' *History of Theatre, Vaudeville and Movies in Hoboken*, the Museum's popular T-shirts, and other souvenirs. Museum representatives will accept memberships.

NEXT SHOW: NOVEMBER 22, CITY HALL

Our 1991-1992 annual Museum Show has had to be changed because the New Jersey State Historical Commission failed to give us a grant this year. Our annual major shows usually cost several thousand dollars and have been underwritten in the past by grants from the Commission whose budget this year has been heavily reduced.

Instead we are mounting an exhibit of Hoboken artifacts and memorabilia drawn from Museum holdings. Opening night will be Friday, November 22 in City Hall. Our exhibition space will expand to the second floor corridors of City Hall, furnished with six new display cases donated by the Newark Museum. We thank both the Newark Museum and the City Hall staff for aiding us in this growth.

Opening night activities will include a presentation at 8pm in the Council Chamber of Hoboken Historic Preservation Commission awards, a showing of slides of historic Hoboken by the Hoboken Public Library and "Hoboken then and now" slides by the Museum. Refreshments will be served on opening night.

After opening night the exhibition will be open to the public in City Hall, Washington and First Streets, Mondays through Fridays from 9am to 4:00pm.

Admission at all times is free.

Unusually Fine Gemstones

Watch Repairs

Antique & Estate Jewelry



Wedding Bands

Rare Quality Diamonds

Jewelry Repairs

Custom-Made Jewelry

TRADERS OF BABYLON

FINE JEWELERS

259 First Street, Hoboken, NJ

(201) 659-0802

Monday — Friday, 9 — 8

Saturday, 9 — 6



All Major Credit Cards Accepted