HOBOKEN HISTORY



CORNER OF WASHINGTON STREET AND SECOND STREET IN 1905

He lived at Stevens Castle for 98 years
Street Cars to the Sky ◘ Dead Man's Cave
Hoboken Under Foot

The Magazine of the Hoboken Historical Museum
HOBOKEN NJ NUMBER 3 SPRING 1992

HOBOKEN HISTORY

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

Editor: Paul Lippman
Production Editor: Barbara Lippman
Photography Director: Robert Foster
Advertising Manager: Kathy Rogers

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

MUSEUM NEWS

News of the Hoboken Historical Museum

1992 BOARD ELECTED

The following officers and trustees of the Museum were elected at our meeting on January 13:

President:	John De Palma
Vice-President:	Hugh Kilmer
Treasurer:	Gerard Lisa
Corresponding Secretary:	Kathy Rogers
Recording Secretary:	Barbara Lippman
Trustees:	
Maureen Allex	Geri Fallo
Robert Foster	Stephen Hefler
Steve Kilnisan	George Kirchgessner
Paul Lippman	Mary Stoeffhaas

FUTURE MEETINGS

Since each day of the week causes conflicts for at least one board member, we are now rotating the days of our business meetings. These are the dates of the upcoming board meetings for this quarter:

THURSDAY APRIL 23
WEDNESDAY MAY 20
TUESDAY JUNE 16.

All these meetings will be held
at 7:30pm, at Traders of Babylon, 259 First Street.
All members are invited to attend.

TO OUR READERS

We 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, 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 Museum at the address above.

FLEA MARKET AND ANTIQUES SHOW

The Museum's first sale and antiques show of 1992 will take place at the Martha Institute, Park Avenue and 6th Street, on Saturday, April 25. Proceeds will help support the Hoboken Photo Project.

In addition to this indoor sale, the Museum plans to conduct its regular outdoor flea markets at Church Square Park in June and September.

Shop or sell at the
Great Hoboken Treasure Hunt!
THE MUSEUM'S FIRST 1992 FLEA MARKET AND ANTIQUES SHOW
SATURDAY, APRIL 25 • 11 TO 6
Indoors & outdoors
at the Martha Institute
Park Ave. and 6th St.

Vendors can reserve space,
indoors or a limited number
of sidewalk spaces,
by calling Bob Foster
at 656-2240, now.

Museum News continues on inside back cover

AMANDA'S
RESTAURANT

908 Washington Street
Hoboken, N.J. 07030
(201) 798-0101
(201) 798-1199

BARON'S
HOME HEALTH CARE SPECIALIST

FREE DELIVERY
OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

91 MOONACHIE RD.
MOONACHIE, NJ 07074
641-1110

416 WASHINGTON ST.
HOBOKEN, NJ 07030
659-8484

515 WASHINGTON ST.
HOBOKEN, NJ 07030
659-7755

PORTRAIT FROM THE PAST

Peter Lee

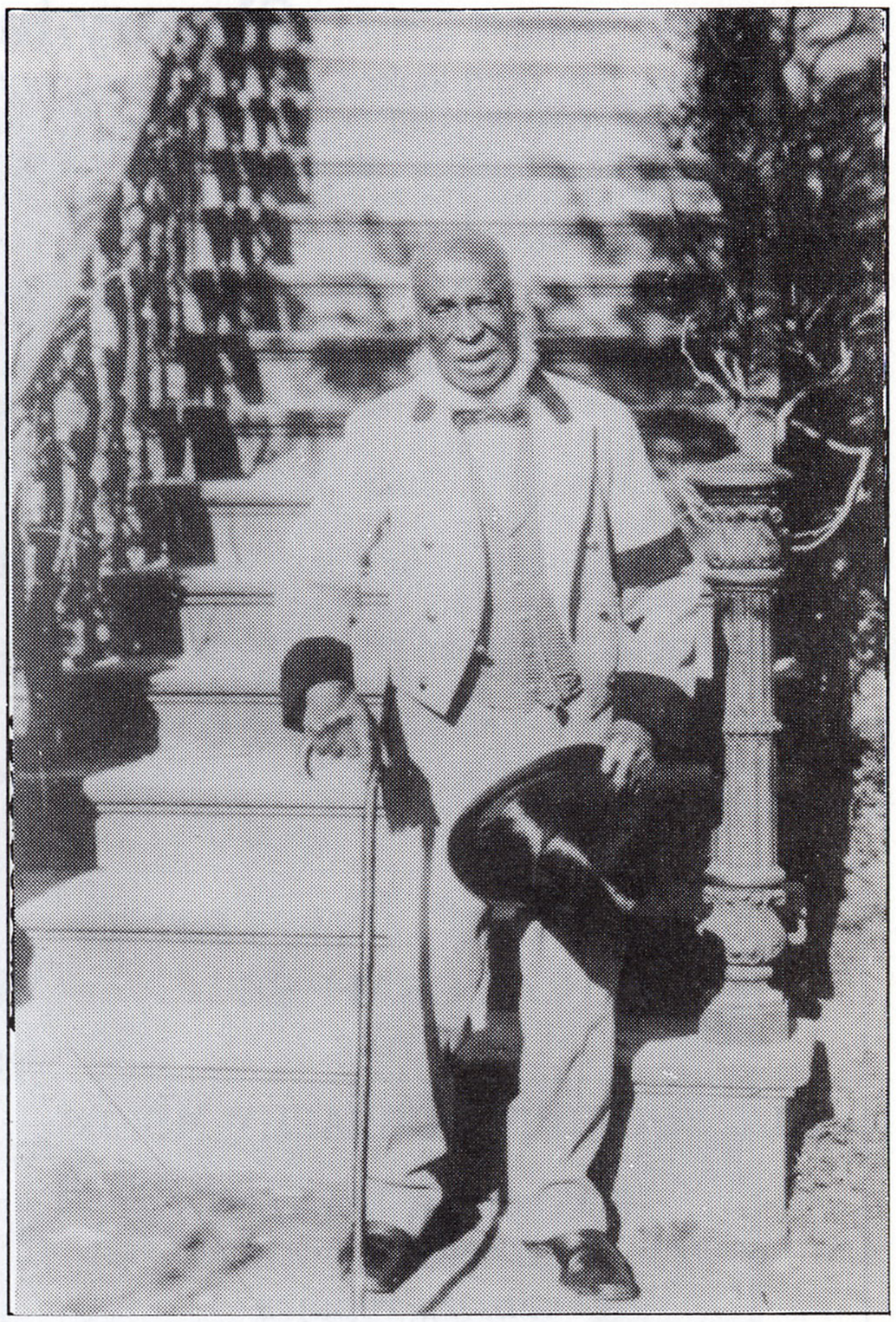
Servant to five generations of the Stevens family

Hoboken's history has more than its share of interesting people. The life of one of them spanned nearly a century, from our origins as little more than a cluster of houses at a ferry landing to a bustling and prosperous city at the end of the 19th Century. He is Peter Lee, a servant to Hoboken's most prominent family for nearly a century.

Before 1850, Robert Livingston Stevens (1787-1856) ordered construction of the 46-room mansion visible in the background of the staff photograph on page 5.

One of the family's servants was Peter Lee, who had been born a slave in 1804, probably on the Stevens estate. Lee rose to be the major-domo of the household. He kept the young sons of the family in line, and protectively followed through the streets of Hoboken Martha Bayard Stevens, the wife of Edwin Augustus Stevens I (1795-1868). Lee's proudest task was to welcome guests to the frequent hospitality of Castle Point. And twice a year the mansion was turned over to the servants for balls; Lee would have been the host at these events. He rejoiced in being a family retainer, and served the Stevens family for all but two days of his 98 years. When he was emancipated from slavery by the State of New Jersey, he mysteriously disappeared. A man was appointed to his position, but Lee turned up after two days to reclaim his old job by thoroughly thrashing his unfortunate successor.

Even when old age made Lee's hands tremble so much he spilled the wine at table, he insisted on his privilege of serving. Although he professed democratic equality for all, he delighted in the reflected glory of the family and its aristocratic friends.



PETER LEE WEARING A MOURNING BAND ON HIS SLEEVE, WHICH SUGGESTS THAT THE PHOTOGRAPH WAS TAKEN SHORTLY AFTER THE DEATH OF MARTHA BAYARD STEVENS IN 1899. LEE WOULD HAVE BEEN 95 YEARS OLD AT THE TIME.
(PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS.)

The old servant was a stubborn character. His obstinacy led to a renowned episode with a local jeweler in which he persuaded the salesman, after much dispute, to accept $12 for a $10 watch! He was finally induced to retire after the death of Martha Bayard Stevens in 1899, but refused to put aside the gray and blue livery of the Stevens family which he wore proudly for the rest of his life.

Peter Lee continued to live in the Stevens household until his death on January 29, 1902. He was laid to rest in the Stevens family plot in the Hoboken Cemetery in North Bergen. In Lee's memory a tablet was placed by the family in the Church of the Holy Innocents erected at Sixth and Willow in 1872 by Martha Bayard Stevens (1831-1899).

SOURCE: *Once upon a City*, Macmillan, New York, 1958.

CAPPUCCINO ESPRESSO

Caffe  Roma

FINE ITALIAN PASTRIES

518 WASHINGTON ST
HOBOKEN, NJ
201-792-3302

385 BROOME ST
NEW YORK, NY
212-226-8413

Slavery in New Jersey

New Jersey has been looked upon as prominent among what were called the Free States of the Union before the Civil War. But among the first of the institutions established in New Jersey by its early settlers was the system of slavery. This was the case not only here, but in all the American colonies. The settlers of New England, as well as those of the South, used slaves as laborers on their farms; and the trade in slaves was a very important branch of industry.

A great many slaves must have been brought direct from Africa to New Jersey, for at Perth Amboy there was a barracks in which captives who landed there from slave ships were confined until they were sold and sent out into the country.

When the House of Representatives for the province of New Jersey met at Burlington in 1704, an act was brought before it for the regulating of Indian and African slaves.

After a time, slaves became so numerous in New Jersey, laws were passed restricting their importation, and a considerable tax was levied upon each one brought into the state.

Slavery grew and flourished until it became a part of the New Jersey social system, but about the end of the seventeenth century, Quakers began to believe that property in human beings was morally wrong. Opposition to slavery in New Jersey grew, and people in New Jersey other than Quakers began to consider slavery an injustice and an evil. By the beginning of the nineteenth century anti-slavery feeling became very strong in the state and in 1820 an act was passed by the Legislature for the emancipation of slaves in New Jersey.

Under this law, slaves were not set free all at once, but a system of gradual emancipation was adopted by which young people obtained their freedom when they came of age, while masters were obliged to take care of old people as long as they lived.

By this plan slavery was gradually abolished in New Jersey, so that by 1840 there were only 674 slaves in the state and by the eve of the Civil War in 1860, 18 slaves remained, all of whom must have been very old.

In 1820, when the emancipation law was passed, Peter Lee was 16 years old. Within a few years he would have been set free by the Stevens family. At this time he disappeared, but stayed away from his birthplace for only a few days and then returned to reclaim his old job, but as a servant not a slave.

SOURCE: *Stories of New Jersey* by Frank R. Stockton, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick NJ.

Robert Foster

PHOTOGRAPHER
supplying

ALL YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY NEEDS:

- studio or location
- darkroom rental
- camera repairs

CALL 656-2240

Golden Age
Books & Comics

Comics Delivered Weekly
Marvel - DC - Independents
& Collectibles
15% Off New Hardcovers
10% Off All Paperbacks:
Sci Fi, Horror, History, etc.
Mon-Wed: Noon to 7:30pm
Thurs-Sat: 10am to 10pm

Vinny Rossi

1200 Washington Street
(off corner of 12th St.)
792-7820

FULL HOUSE
PRINTING
&
GRAPHICS

• Typesetting •
• Two Color Printing •
• High Speed Copier •
• Film & Stats •
• Bindery •

SPECIAL 4¢ COPIES
Call For Details

Larry Weiss • Rosette Capotorto

210 Adams Street, Hoboken
Tel.: 798-7073 • Fax: 798-5521

SSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS

TRAPANI
JEWELERS

Specializing in
Gold and Diamonds

Watch and Jewelry
Repair

THOMAS TRAPANI

106 Fifth Street
Hoboken
798-5976

SOME OF THE STAFF OF THE STEVENS MANSION AT CASTLE POINT, 1895.



Identified by descendants of Mrs. Edwin Augustus Stevens are:

[Left to right, top row] Dilly Shane, kitchen maid; PETER LEE; Fannie Niedbeck, lady's maid of Mrs. Edwin A. (Martha Bayard) Stevens; Selma and Annie Johnston; Christine Muller; James McFadden, and Henry Tangerman.

(Front row) Lizzie McKeon, laundry maid; Henry Ott, footman and later butler-valet of Richard Stevens; Benjamin Coleman; beyond "Zurich" the dog, Nora Lacey, parlor maid; Polly French [?], lady's maid, who asked her mistress Mrs. Archibald Alexander (Caroline Bayard Stevens), to choose between her and a second marriage, carrying out her threat to return to France when Mrs. Alexander became Mrs. Henry O. Wittpenn in 1915; and Mary McQuillen.

PHOTO TAKEN BY PERCY C. BYRON IN 1895. BYRON COLLECTION, MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK.

- Vitamin Live
- Organic Products
- Organic Grains & Beans
- Deli
- Juice Bar
- Take out / to stay
- Body Care
- Frozen Goods
- Books, tapes, magazines

Mon–Fri 9 to 9
Sat-Sun 9 to 8

Raman Sharma
President

HOBOKEN FARMBOY

Natural Foods Market & Organic Deli
229 Washington St.
656-0581

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

FERRY TALE III

Hoboken's ferry boats go to war, and are torpedoed by the H&M Tubes and the Holland Tunnel



THE *BINGHAMTON* ARRIVING AT HOBOKEN IN 1930

President Theodore Roosevelt, seated in his office in the White House in Washington, pressed a button on his desk and a train began its first journey from New York to Hoboken through a tunnel beneath the Hudson River. It was February 25, 1908 and the Hudson & Manhattan Tubes, now called PATH, were open for business.

Hoboken's ferry line was undismayed even though the number of passengers carried during the first week after the opening of the Tubes was smaller than the week before. In an interview, Captain John M. Emery, manager of the marine department of the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad Company, confidently shrugged off the ferry's underwater competition.

"Forty per cent of our business," he said, "is carrying commuters, who pay us to take them from their homes in New Jersey to Manhattan. If they do not choose to cross the Hudson in our ferries, it does not mean any monetary loss to us. Then, too, the tunnel cannot carry automobiles, and a large part of our business consists of transportation of trucks and automobiles. We get 25 cents each for automobiles and for trucks from 25 to 50 cents. On the first day the tunnel opened, our fares dropped off two thousand. But the next day the shortage was only 800, and it has continued to grow less each day since.

"I do not believe the tunnel will cut into us very much, even after the entire system is in full operation. Anyway, the number of commuters in New Jersey is constantly growing, so there will be enough business for all of us."

Emery took a dim view of automobiles abroad his ferryboats. A rule was put into effect in 1908 that only four cars could be carried at one time on a boat, two up front and two in the rear. This made it possible to push a burning car off the boat. The rule was never rescinded.

The Ferry Boat Race

Possibly to garner publicity for the ferry, a race was conducted in 1909 between the ferryboats *Ithaca* and *Lackawanna* from Hoboken to Newburgh, N.Y. and back.

The Hoboken *Observer*, the newspaper after which Observer Highway is named, wrote excitedly about the event.

"The *Ithaca*, with picked coal and her engines

keyed up to the highest notch of safety in the matter of speed, ran neck and neck with the *Lackawanna* a good part of the way up the river and toward the end of the journey ran ahead of her rival with the ease and grace of a salmon jumping from an inexperienced spearsman.

"Newburgh is 65 miles from Hoboken. The run was made by the *Ithaca* in three hours and thirty minutes. The time of the *Lackawanna* from Hoboken to Newburgh was three hours and forty-eight minutes.

"The time of the *Ithaca* from Newburgh to Hoboken was three hours and thirty-five minutes. The time of the *Lackawanna* over the same course was three hours and fifty-five minutes.

"Thousands who travel daily on the two boats...little realize that they are capable of moving faster than the average battleship."

Hoboken Ferries go to war.

In 1918 the Federal Government took over the nation's railroads and ferries. Hoboken became a World War I port of embarkation for the American armies sent to Europe. Beginning May 15, 1918, the ferries transported 242,330 officers and men to Hoboken to board ships to France, and after the war carried 127,432 officers and men back to New York from returning troop transports docking in Hoboken. Altogether, 1,777,109 doughboys embarked for overseas from Hoboken in World War I.

The greatest number of men carried in one day was on August 8, 1919, when 9,803 soldiers were taken to New York city aboard Hoboken ferries to march in the victory parade.

The War over, the ferries were returned to civilian ownership on March 1, 1920. But a new kind of wars broke out: labor strikes.

Four strikes had been called while the ferries were under government control. From 1910 through 1920, there had been two strikes while the ferries were not controlled by the government. And in the 1920s there were further strikes.

In 1909 Harbor Union No. 1 called a strike of tugboats. It didn't include ferry boats. When the strike was called the union head had led the men to believe that there was $35,000 in the Harbor Union treasury, but when the strike had been on for a few days, the men found out that instead of $35,000 in the union treasury there was only $300. Nevertheless, the strike lasted three weeks.

The next strike was called in 1918, and lasted for only four days. The ferry workers lost again. Subsequent strikes in 1919 and 1920 also failed, and the ferries kept running. But most of the men who went out did not get their jobs back.

In 1918 when the US entered World War I, ferry passengers became troubled by the German names of some of the ferries. The *Bremen* and *Hamburg* were renamed *Maplewood* and *Chatham*. But the name change did not save the *Bremen*. In 1919 it was badly damaged by fire while tied up at the north side of 14th Street, Hoboken.

Despite competition from the Hudson Tubes, the Hoboken ferry thrived. Two new boats were added to the fleet in 1922, the *Hoboken* and the *Buffalo*. Our city's namesake vessel was built in Elizabethport, N.J. by the John W. Sullivan Co. It was 221 feet long, 62 feet wide, weighed 1292 tons, and cost $355,399. She was placed in service on the 14th Street route.

Then the underwater potential doom of the ferry hit. The Holland Tunnel opened November 12, 1927. Vehicle traffic on the ferries dropped off immediately

MARCIANO & CONN

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Frank P. Marciano
Lisa M. Conn

86 HUDSON STREET • HOBOKEN
656-1000

Town & Country Crafts
527 WASHINGTON ST.
HOBOKEN

Handmade in America with Love

659-7079
Pat Narciso
J.P. Narciso
PROPS.

by thirty to forty percent. An extra crew was taken off the Christopher Street route and in 1928 the Christopher Street ferry shut down for the night at 9PM and all day Sunday. In 1942 single-deck ferryboats replaced double deckers on the Christopher Street route.

But Harry J. Smith and John M. Emery, chroniclers of the history of the Hoboken ferry in 1931, ended their book on an optimistic note: "While it is true that ferryboats have been superseded in many sections of the United States by bridges and tunnels, the growth of vehicle and passenger traffic in the metropolitan district of New York is so rapid that possibly another hundred years will elapse before this system of transportation is abandoned."

Then, with the posting of a simple sign at the ferry terminal in Hoboken in 1967, the 300-year history of the original Hoboken ferry ended.

But Hoboken does not give up easily. You can cross the Hudson river to Manhattan aboard a ferry from Hoboken today. The Hoboken ferry lives again, this time with swift modern vessels that reduce the crossing time to eight minutes. No farm wagons, no steam whistles. But the tradition lives on, this time under the sponsorship of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

Smith and Emery were right. Another hundred years will elapse before this system of transportation is abandoned.

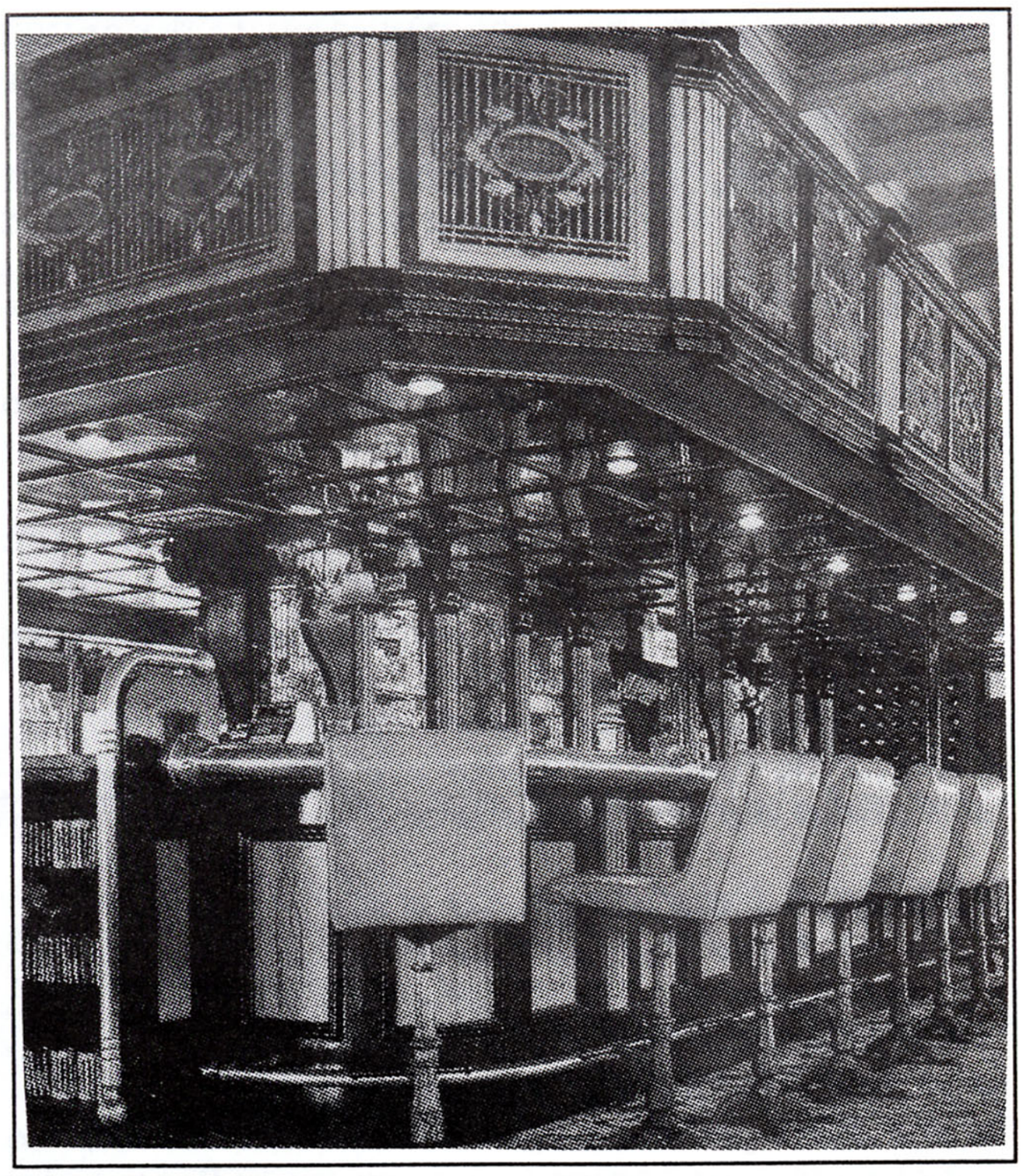
ONE-HOUR PHOTO

PEOPLE'S PHOTO SERVICE

510 WASHINGTON ST.
HOBOKEN, NJ 07030
659-1344

D'Angelo
Florists & Gifts

523 Washington St. 659-5242
1218 Washington St. 659-4334
315 Willow Ave. 659-4880
Est. 1951 Open 7 days



THE BAR OF THE *BINGHAMTON* FERRY

THE BINGHAMTON:
Hoboken's Last Steam Ferryboat

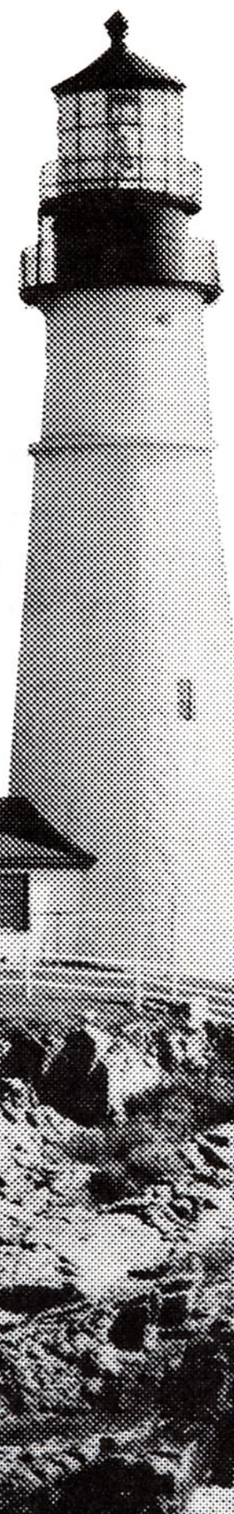
The final voyage of a Hoboken steam-powered double-ended ferry took place on the afternoon of Wednesday November 22, 1967, but a century-old Hoboken tradition of floating on the Hudson in style did not die. The final ferry was the *Binghamton*, which now graces the river at Edgewater.

The *Binghamton* was built at a cost of $211,478 and went into service in March, 1905. True to Hoboken tradition, it endured a fire in August when flames swept the Hoboken ferry terminal. Towed to safety in mid-river, the *Binghamton* went on after repairs to run continuously between Hoboken and Barclay Street, Manhattan until 1967. In those 62 years the *Binghamton* carried more than 125 million passengers more than 200,000 miles. Many a Hoboken resident of today can remember crossing the Hudson aboard the *Binghamton*.

Today, the *Binghamton*, a National Historic Landmark, is the only double-ended steam ferry still afloat on the Hudson, permanently moored three miles south of the George Washington Bridge.

Retired from ferry service, it is now a restaurant. Its bar (pictured above) still serves the gregarious and thirsty, with its stained glass, varnished woodwork, and polished brass still gleaming in turn-of-the-century splendor.

Over half a century, a definition of strength you can bank on.



haven (hā′vən), *n.*
a safe or sheltered place.

For today's very best savings or lending rates, Call 659-3600

Haven Savings Bank SLA

621 Washington Street, Hoboken • (201) 659-3600
1234 Paterson Plank Road, Secaucus • (201) 865-2500

FDIC INSURED

EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

Street Cars to the Sky

Part 1, The Horse Car Days

By Joseph Eid

A few lengths of track surviving in the pavement of Hudson Place, a scattering of old trolley poles on street corners, and the little kiosk in the corner of the parking lot at Hudson Place and Hudson Street are the only remainders of when Hoboken was the focal point of virtually every trolley car line in northern New Jersey. At the Lackawanna ferry terminal trolleys converged from Jersey City, Newark, Paterson, Weehawken, and from points north, south and west.

Today's Observer Highway, then Ferry Street, owes its great width to the lines that traveled its length, on the surface and later on a trestle. The cars on the trestle were hauled by a cable, making Hoboken one of the earliest and most active cable-car cities in America, rivaling San Francisco. But while San Francisco's cable cars climbed mere hills, Hoboken's cable cars (and the horse cars that preceded them) soared toward the sky, rising to the top of the Palisades on an elevator and a ramp that took them more than 100 feet above Hoboken's sea-level streets.

When Hoboken was a hub of New Jersey trolley lines, our city had cable cars that rivaled San Francisco's.

There was a huge trolley terminal at what is now the PATH station and NJ Transit bus depot. There the trolleys, on a structure above the street, unloaded and loaded thousands of commuters, then circled around for their return trips.

(This article uses today's street names to help in tracing the routes we describe.)

Washington Street was once served by horse car and trolley lines that swung west to Willow Avenue at 11th Street, then headed north to Weehawken, West New York, and the far reaches of Bergen County. The Washington Street line went to 14th Street where it sent a spur to the 14th Street Ferry Terminal or continued west to Willow Avenue. Cars on Willow Avenue branched off at 15th Street to ascend a serpentine trestle that took them to Jersey City Heights. That accounts for the generous width of 11th and of Willow above 11th Street, and the extra width of 15th west of Willow.

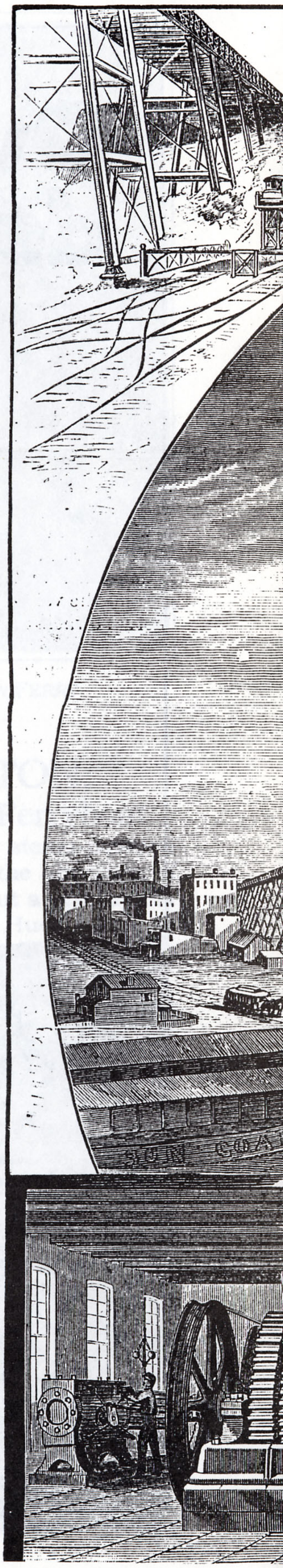
Cars also ran on Newark and First Streets to connect with lines on lower Willow and Clinton. Those thoroughfares were too narrow to accommodate two sets of trolley tracks so trolleys ran on them in one direction, returning on the parallel street.

Hoboken's trolley era began with horse cars. The first horse car line, the Hoboken & Hudson City Horse Car Railroad, was chartered in 1859, with Cornelius V. Clicker, Edwin Augustus Stevens, and Edmund Charles as directors, and John H. Bonn as president. A line from the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad ferry and terminal went along what is now Observer Highway and then into New York Avenue up to what is now Jersey City Heights. From there the line turned into Franklin Street on to Palisade Avenue and terminated at the Hudson County Court House. The Hoboken & Hudson operated seven horse cars on five miles of track. It merged in 1865 with the North Hudson County Railway.

The horse car lines were very successful and more and more of them were built. Hoboken became a center for horse car lines. It was easy and inexpensive to build them in those days. As steam locomotives and railroad cars became heavier just before the Civil War, railroads had to replace their rails with heavier ones. This freed up the original lightweight rails for cheap sale to horse car companies.

Horse car lines were built with rails 4 feet, 10 inches apart, as early horse car companies could build to whatever guage suited them so long as they did not compete with steam railroads. Therefore, most chose any gauge except the railroad standard of 4 feet 8½ inches.

Horse cars were custom-built by hand to the lines' specifications. Standardization came at the turn of the century when rapid





THE HOBOKEN INCLINED CABLE RAILWAY.
A HOBOKEN CABLE CAR HEADS FOR THE TOP OF THE PALISADES. HORSE CARS BELOW ASCEND AND DESCEND VIA AN ELEVATOR THAT WAS BUILT IN 1873 AND OPERATED UNTIL 1928. THE YEAR HOBOKEN'S CABLE CARS STARTED, 1873, WAS THE SAME YEAR SAN FRANCISCO OPENED ITS FIRST EXPERIMENTAL LINE. Woodcut from *Scientific American 1886.*

consolidation of New Jersey's trolley lines took place. When horse cars began, the fare was 12½ cents a hefty chunk out of workers' daily wages, so they continued to walk to work. But as wages rose during the Civil War, people flocked to the convenience of the horse car and the Street Car Age began in New Jersey.



NORTH HUDSON COUNTY RAILROAD COMPANY HORSE CAR. LETTERING BELOW THE COMPANY NAME READS "HOBOKEN FERRIES."

The Jersey City & Hoboken Horse Railroad, also chartered in 1859, branched off at Hoboken Avenue and ran along Grove Street to Newark Avenue. There it joined the Jersey City & Bergen Railroad's tracks to the Pennsylvania Railroad Exchange Place Terminal. The North Hudson County Railway was chartered in 1865 and merged with the earlier companies.

The county was now divided into two regional streetcar groups. The Jersey City & Bergen Railroad served Bayonne and Jersey City. The North Hudson County Railway shared the northwestern portion of Jersey City with the Jersey City & Bergen Railroad and had all of the rest of then sparsely settled Hudson County to itself.

Hauling horse cars on level ground from Hoboken to lower Jersey City was simple in comparison with trying to reach Jersey City Heights atop the Palisades. The climb needed teams of up to four horses per car with a frequent change of horses. It took 20 minutes to reach the top of the hill from the ferry, a distance of only one mile. So in 1874 the North Hudson County Railway Co built a short but steep inclined ramp and planned to elevate both cars and horses via steam powered machinery.

A car and horses arriving at the foot of the cliff would pass onto a large and substantial platform and be drawn by a steam powered elevator up the incline, 480 feet long and 102 feet high, in one minute. It was the first horse car elevator in the world.

The elevator connected the horse car line from the foot of the Palisades at Driveway in Hoboken's southwest corner to Palisade Avenue at the top. With the rerouting of the horse cars onto the elevator a circuitous climb up and down the Palisades was eliminated. The facility opened November 21, 1874. Horse cars stopped using it in 1886, but the elevator remained in service for freight wagons until May 1, 1928.

In an article in *Scientific American*, February 20, 1886, the elevator, or truck, is described as triangular in shape, with four sets of wheels which ran on a track extending up the incline. "When at rest the horizontal side of the truck is on a level with the main track, either at the bottom or top of the hill, and is of sufficient length to receive a car and horses. There are two of these trucks, one upon each track. Two wire ropes lead from each car around drums operated by engines at the top of the hill. The cables are so arranged that one truck passes up while the other is going down. A third cable, attached to each truck and passing around sheaves at the top of the hill, serves as as a safeguard in case either set of hoisting cables should break."

A new viaduct was opened in 1886 from the ferry to the top of the Palisades at Palisade Avenue to replace the horse car line that used the elevator. A cable railroad from the ferry to the top of the Palisades, 1.13 miles long, was built atop the viaduct. Ten passenger cable cars ran on the Observer Highway elevated cable railway, similar to the

Bel Gusto Bakery / Café

- *The **best** Italian Pastries imported directly from Brooklyn*
- *The **best** Birthday – Holiday – Wedding cakes made to order*
- ***EROTIC** Cakes*
- *Coffee & Coffee Beans, Espresso, Cappuccino (all brewed with filtered water)*
- *Hoboken's **best** Bagels*
- *Hoboken's largest variety of Low-Cholesterol Muffins*
- *Home-made Low-Salt Soups and Sandwiches*
- *Pleasant Service and Atmosphere*

718 Washington Street, Hoboken
217-9119

cable car service for which San Francisco is famous now. Two steam locomotives were held in reserve to haul the cars in the event of a cable failure. There was a station at Clinton St. The structure was called the Hoboken Inclined Cable Railway. The cable road shortened the time to the top of the hill from ten minutes to five.



SCALE MODEL OF A WASHINGTON ST. HORSE CAR ON DISPLAY AT THE SMITHSONIAN'S NATIONAL MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND TECHNOLOGY.

Scientific American goes on to write: "The loading and unloading of passengers at the ferry is quickly done, and without confusion. Near the terminal the down-track runs by a switch into the up-track, so that only one track enters the station. The down-cable continues, of course, in a straight direction, and leaves the down-track; it passes to the end of the station below the platform and around a large sheave, and then returns on the up-track. The single track in the station is flanked on each side by a wide platform. When a car arrives, it comes in by momentum, having let go of the cable some 700 or 800 feet before reaching the station.

"The passengers pass out of the car to the right and by the front door, and at the same time passengers enter the car from the left and by the rear door. Where the car stops to let out the passengers it remains until it has taken in passengers again, and is ready to start. One minute is sufficient to unload and load one car, or several if coupled together. The up cable is right underneath the car; the grip man lowers the rope lifter, raises the cable betwen the open jaws of the grip, closes them gradually, and the car moves off."

The North Hudson County Railway added three new lines to its original horse car lines, wagon elevator, and cable elevated: the Union Hill and Guttenberg line began at 48th Street and Bergenline Avenue and ran along Bergenline to 69th Street. A Court House and Oakland Avenue line began at the Hoboken ferry, ran along Observer Highway, up the Palisades to Palisade Avenue, along Prospect Street and Oakland Avenue to the Court House on Newark Avenue. The Washington Street line began at the Hoboken ferry, ran along Washington Street to 11th, then was extended to the 14th Street ferry terminal.

The North Hudson County Railway also operated the Palisades Railroad, powered by steam locomotives, from above the Weehawken Ferry at Liberty Place to Fort Lee. The Palisades Railroad terminated at the end of a viaduct about 100 feet above the Weehawken ferry terminal. To get up to the trains or from them down to the ferry terminal one took a passenger

☞ page 17

THE LITERARY SHOP
736 WASHINGTON STREET
420-7917



Comic Books
MORE COMICS FOR LESS MONEY

MARVEL, DC, DARKHORSE, INDEPENDENTS & SUPPLIES

SUBSCRIPTIONS FROM 10% TO 30% OFF COVER
PREPAID SUBSCRIPTIONS FROM 20% TO 50% OFF COVER

RETAILERS AND DEALERS WELCOME

DISCOUNTS ON BACKING BOARDS, BAGS, OTHER SUPPLIES
ALL BACK ISSUES START AT 20% OFF MINIMUM DISCOUNT!

WE BUY COMICS: GOLDEN AGE, SILVER AGE, AND CURRENT

HOBOKEN *UNDER FOOT*

Hoboken's past crops up everywhere you stroll. In this issue, Bob Foster's camera focuses on some of the fascinating Nineteenth Century Hoboken that survives beneath your feet.

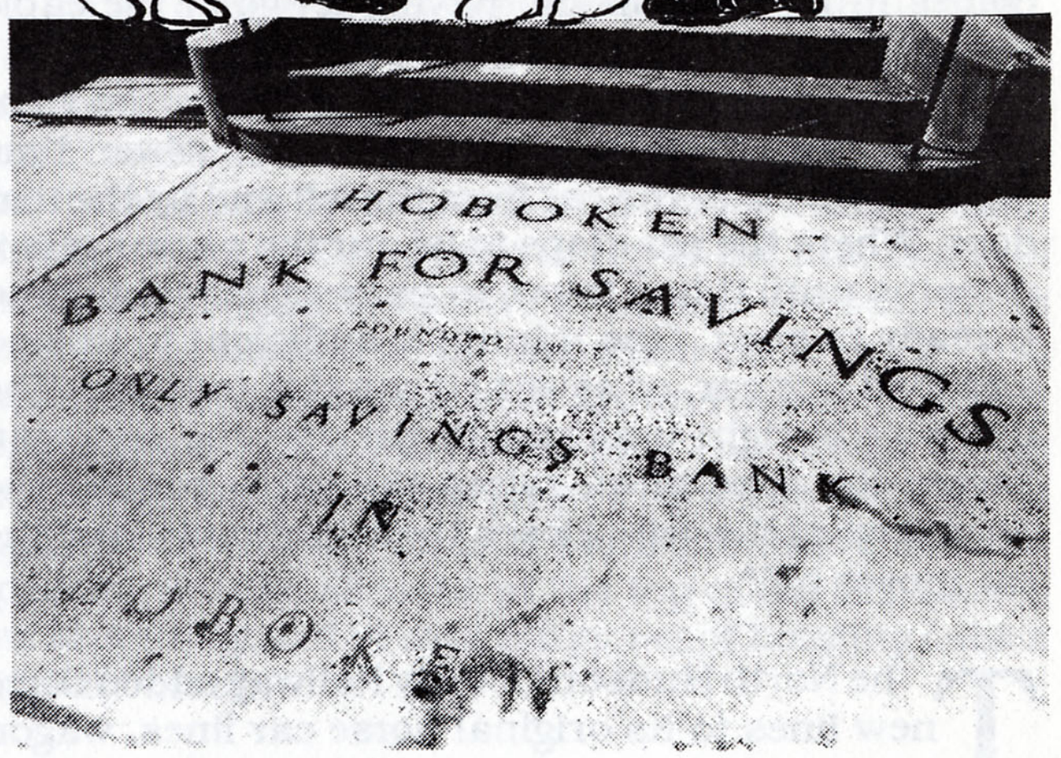


"Snyder's Says Hats," these terra cotta letters still proclaim at 102 Washington Street. ☞





Look down as you pass 222 Washington Street and see brass lettering set into the sidewalk before the building that, until the end of the 1980s, was Hoboken's number one department store, Geismar's.

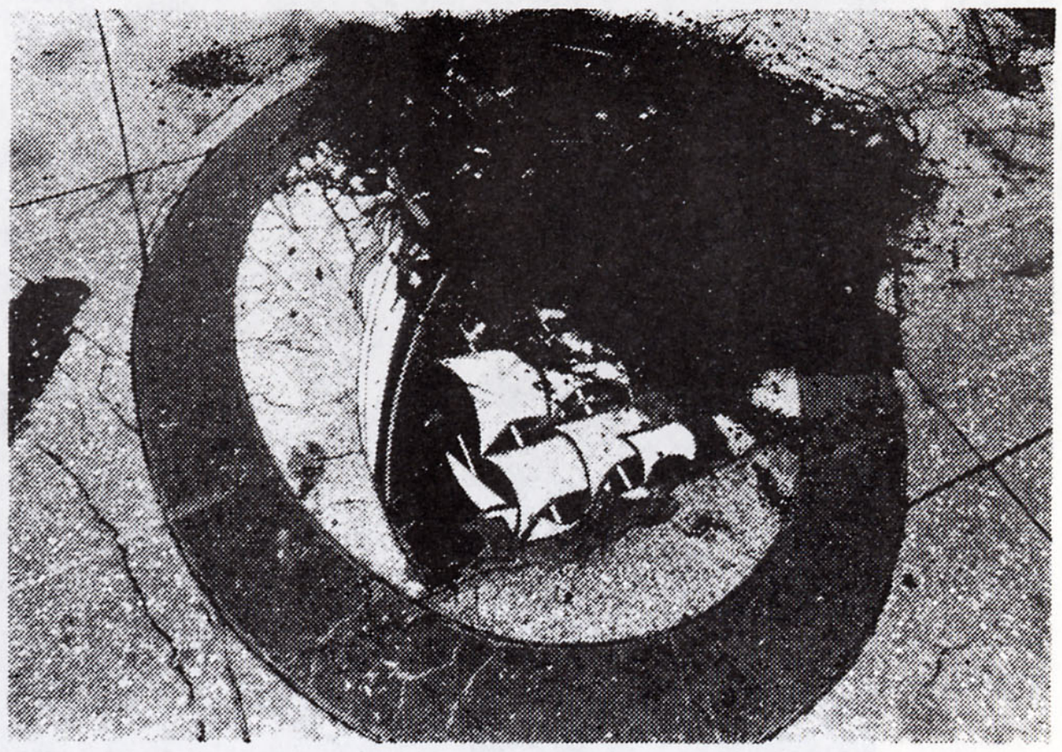


Once the only savings bank in Hoboken, the Hoboken Bank for Savings, founded in 1857, today is only brass letters set into the pavement before its building at 84 Washington Street.

In the front yards of many of Hoboken's homes are cast-iron coal chute covers cast over a century ago by the Fagan Iron Works which not only created the iron work for innumerable Hoboken buildings, but also supplied our city with one of its mayors. This cover is at 520 Garden Street.

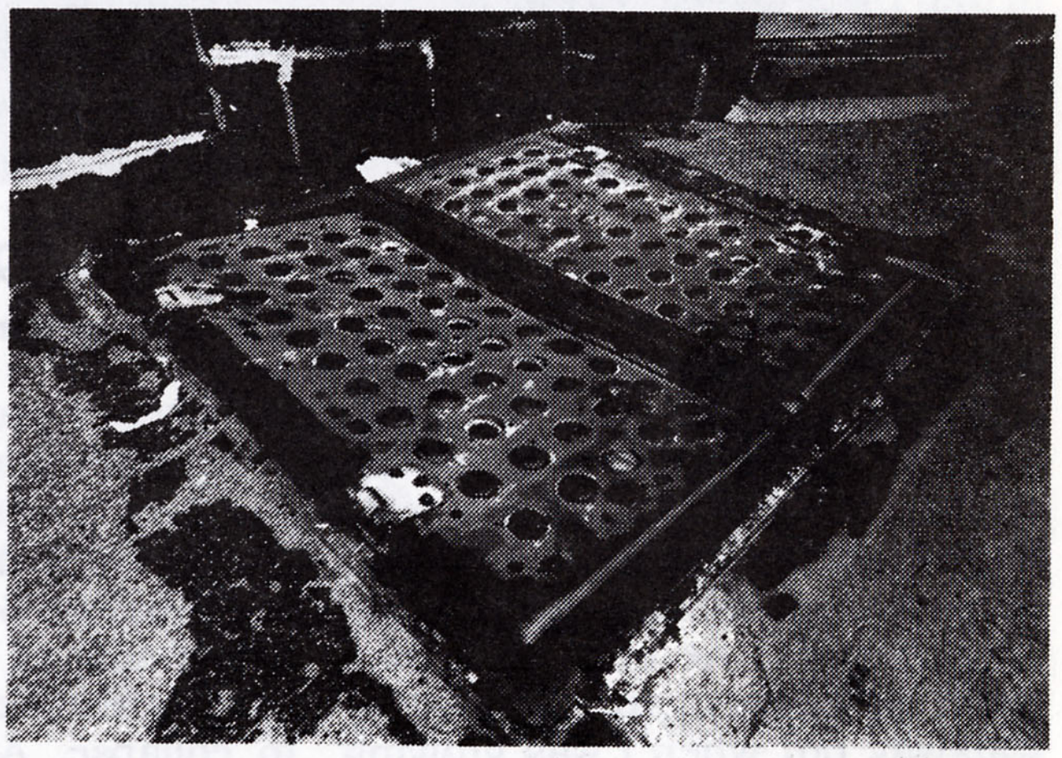


A ghost of Hoboken's once-busy waterfront survives on the 5th Street pier in a remnant of the terrazzo floor of the lobby of the Holland America Line's terminal. The great steamship line was established in Hoboken in 1910 and docked here until 1963. The black blotch is asphalt patching a pothole.

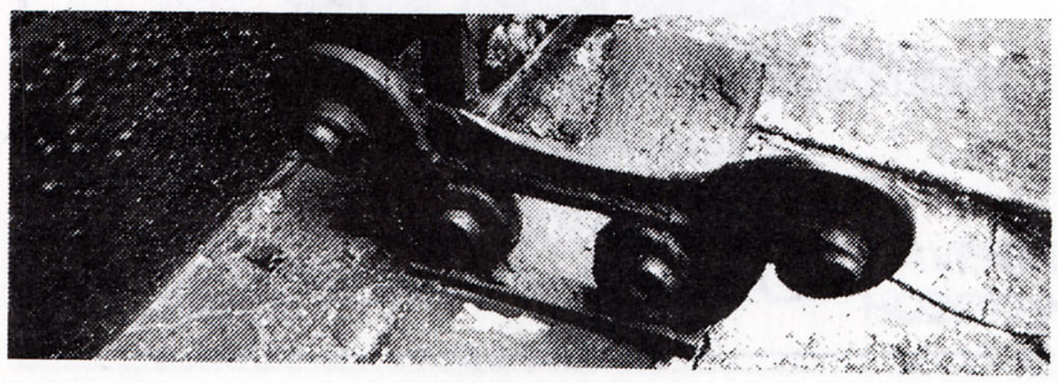




Cobblestone pavements suitable for horses, and trolley tracks worn smooth by the buses that replaced the trolleys, are still visible in busy Hudson Place.



Sadly in need of restoration, these sidewalk doors lead to the basement of Fire House No. 3 on Observer Highway. The once ornate building was designed in 1892 by Hoboken architect Charles Fall.



Most homes in Hoboken sported a boot-scraper at their front steps in horse-and-buggy days. This one survives at 164 Fifth Street.

Photographs by Robert Foster

Dead Man's Cave was my playground



by Jason E. Davis

I was recently reminded of Dead Man's Cave in the Southwest corner of Hoboken where my friends and I played when we were young, near a now-decrepit structure known as the Franklin Street "Hundred Steps." The Hundred Steps linked Hoboken and Jersey City Heights. At one time they must have been an easy-access walkway but when I was growing up they were already abandoned and closed off.

Being born and raised in Hoboken, I was a tough tyke. My friends and I would have courage contests to see who had enough guts to climb down the remains of the Hundred Steps and make it to the bottom in one piece. Half the Steps are either missing or ready to collapse. At some points the staircase is over 100 feet above the ground.

Now I see what we did as dangerous and stupid, but to an 11-year-old it was fun. Those who weren't crazy enough to risk their necks on the stairs would walk down the nearby steep and winding cobblestone stretch of New York Avenue which still connects Hoboken and Jersey City Heights.

At the bottom of the Hundred Steps in the wall of the cliff was an opening in the hill known to us as "Dead Man's Cave." Local legend is that years ago the cave lead to long and winding tunnels which bran-

(201) 659-1534

PROMPT
PROFESSIONAL
SERVICE

HOBOKEN
EXTERMINATING

W.D. WHELAN
Field Rep.

419 Washington Street
Hoboken, NJ 07030

792-3604

Heaven
In Hoboken

Stereo Distributors of N.J.®

"AUDIO & VIDEO" FOR PROGRAMMED ENTERTAINMENT

844 PARK AVE.
"HEAVEN IN HOBOKEN"®

ched out from its central opening. It was believed that anyone wandering around in those tunnels would be lost forever.

By my time, the tunnels had been sealed off and all that was left of Dead Man's Cave was a one-room cavern, little more than a large hole in the side of the cliff. The opening was big enough to enter freely by only ducking your head.

I recently re-visited Dead Man's Cave, and was surprised to find it hasn't changed very much. The cobblestone road is still pretty much intact, but there's garbage from being closed to traffic for 10 years. The Hundred Steps, on the other hand, is almost completely gone. All that remains is a skeleton of a staircase, consisting of 23 surviving steel tread supports on a cracked brick base. The Steps lead halfway down, then stop dead about 50 feet above the ground.



DEAD MAN'S CAVE bottom left, AND THE HUNDRED STEPS, top right
PHOTOS: JASON E. DAVIS

Dead Man's Cave is almost completely covered over except for a small opening still visible to those who remember its existence.

As I stood back and gazed at the overall picture I couldn't help but wonder what this place means to others. The road and steps must have been there for at least a century and have seen a lot of traffic over the years. I was amazed to learn that my parents played there when they were teenagers and have memories of it similar to mine. It's remarkable how a feature of Hoboken can mean much to so many and then be forgotten. But Dead Man's Cave and the Hundred Steps will always live in my memory.

[*HOBOKEN HISTORY would like to hear from other readers who have memories of Dead Man's Cave and the Hundred Steps.*]

TROLLEYS from page 13

elevator. The line went west, into a tunnel under Liberty Place (41st and 42nd St), then headed north on its private right-of-way in West New York after crossing 48th St. It was a lot easier to get around the county in those days than it is today. By 1892 the North Hudson County Railway operated 50 miles of track, owned 152 horse cars, 821 horses, six steam locomotives, 20 railroad passenger cars, and 14 cable cars. *Did you ride the Hoboken trolleys? Do you have any pictures of them?* HOBOKEN HISTORY *would like to hear from readers who would share their memories of the Hoboken trolleys.*

Lepore's
HOME MADE CHOCOLATES

MARIO LEPORE – Proprietor

537 Garden Street
Hoboken
659-4783

FRESH RICOTTA & MOZZARELLA
"THE ITALIAN EATERY"

LISA'S LIQUOR & ITALIAN DELI

SPECIAL ITALIAN DELICACIES
DELICIOUS HOT & COLD SANDWICHES

QUALITY CATERING

795-3212
795-3508

901 PARK AVENUE
HOBOKEN

HUDSON LEGAL CENTER

Prime Office Space Available
reasonable rates

GIOIA MARCIANO
656-1000 731-6452
FAX: 736-0440

Sybil's Cave—

lost for 55 years, it may be found again.

One of Hoboken's sturdiest legends is Sybil's Cave, in the cliff face above River Road where history claims Hendrik Hudson landed more than 350 years ago.

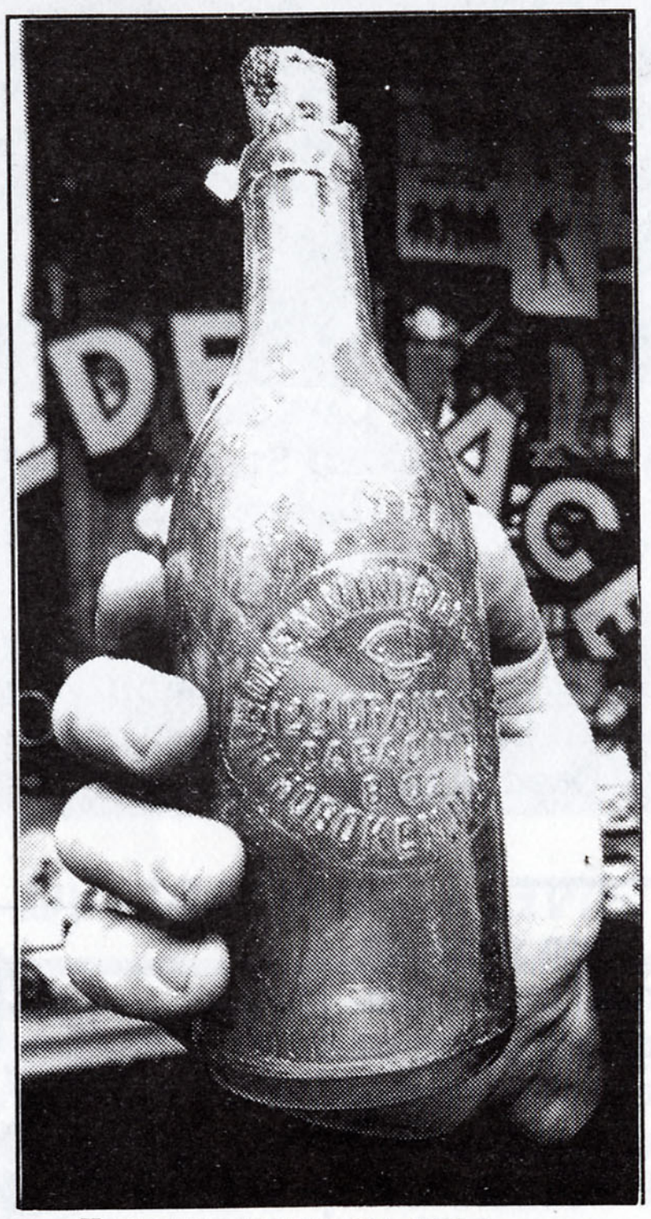
Sybil was not a Hoboken woman. In Roman mythology, a sybil is a female prophet or witch.

In 1842, Sybil's Cave earned brief notoriety when the body of a young girl, Marie Cecilia Rogers, was found floating in the nearby river. Writer Edgar Allen Poe [1809-1849] used the case as the basis of one of his most famous stories, *The Mystery of Marie Roget*, a sequel to *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*.

In 1852 Sybil's Cave was described as a site of "picturesque beauty" in the Weehawken Mountains, "carved out of the rock and bored for water, which is sold in large quantities at a penny a glass, by the lessee of this inviting grotto, as he stands, bucket in hand, and tin-dipper in the other, watching, with a calculating eye, the adventurous pennies and the dewy, cool tumblers."

Water in the area of Sybil's Cave was considered to have medicinal properties. Some was pumped from nearby wells, and people walked for blocks to collect it in pitchers and drink it with meals. The faithful called these pumps "one-armed doctors." The water in Sybil's Cave comes from a spring, the one that continually wets a stretch of River Road.

During the early 1880s a building was erected at Sybil's Cave, operated as a high-class eating and drinking place by a man named Fred Eckstein. He served meals at tables along the river front (called River Walk in those days). A feature of Eckstein's establishment was a heavy, iron-plated sliding door which closed the cave entrance, and the cave was used as a cool storage room for beer. The place was said to have taken on the appearance of an Old World resort, but it gradually faded as shipping, industry, and the Shore Railroad encroached upon that part of the Hoboken waterfront.



BOTTLE USED TO SELL SIBYL'S CAVE WATER AS HOBOKEN SPRING WATER.

Later it became a drinking place, no longer featuring water, and was patronized by river workers. When the structure became uninhabitable it was vacated and vandalized.

Gradually Sybil's Cave faded from sight and memory, not to be thought of until the remains of the Eckstein building were demolished. In 1937 *The Hudson Dispatch* reported that "many flocked to Sybil's Cave after reading of the 'reopening.'" But Sybil's Cave has been neglected ever since. The reputedly health-giving water was eventually analyzed by a skeptical Board of Health and found to be slightly contaminated.

Now a group of Hobokenites wants to re-open Sybils' Cave, as the visitors' attraction it once was. Leading the restoration effort is Hoboken Historical Museum trustee Steve Kilnisan, aided by other Hoboken citizens.

If you would like to participate in the project or to tell us of your own memories of exploring Sybil's Cave, write *HOBOKEN HISTORY*.

Hoboken Antiques



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

EAST LA
Mexican Restaurant
508
Washington Street
798-0052 798-0093

DONATIONS RECEIVED

We are grateful for the following donations which we have recently received:

from John Besante, 40 photographs from a Hoboken portrait studio, early 20th Century.

from Jennie Carulli, painted portrait, 16" x 20", of Frank Sinatra by D. Francis Mazzeo, noted local painter whose studio was at 934 Washington Street.

from Vincent Wassmann, political campaign sticker of Grogan for U.S. Senator, circa 1950s.

framed hand-colored photograph of interior of the Brass Rail bar in Hoboken, circa 1920s.

from W. D. Whelan, Hoboken Exterminator, 619 Washington Street, electronic tube testing device in wooden box, possibly used in the Todd Shipyards, World War II.

from Lee Raines, snapshot of Republican Presidential candidate Wendell L. Willkie visiting Hoboken in 1941.

from John P. Fitzpatrick of Summit, two books by Christopher Morley: *Seacoast of Bohemia*, (autographed), and *Born in a Beer Garden*.

from George Cuhaj of Long Island City, two ferry posters of the DL&W

The Museum thanks all who have donated items. We encourage members to donate to the Museum. If you have a possible gift, please telephone Bob Foster at 656-2240.

We are especially interested in acquiring objects for our next annual exhibition, opening in November, which will focus on Hoboken's role in World War II. The 1992-1993 exhibit will commemorate the 50th anniversary of our nation's entry into World War II.

PURCHASES

framed photograph of the Bonaldi family, circa late 19th Century. The family emigrated from Italy and lived in Hoboken and Jersey City.

framed hand-colored photograph of an altar boy in the Bonaldi family, circa early 20th Century.

framed certificate of the Fraternal Union of the Italian Society, Hoboken, 1894, signed by Bernardo Vezzetti, father of the late mayor.

book, *The Port of New York: the Harbor of New York and New Jersey*, published by the Port Authority, 1952.

four World War II banners hung in homes to exhibit support for the war effort.

THE HOBOKEN PHOTO PROJECT

The Hoboken Photo Project is under way with ten local photographers pledged to participate. They are Museum members Peter Ziebel, Eric Hummel, Elizabeth Feeley, Lori Van Houten, Virginia Ralston Parrott, Sharon Guynup, Sheilah Scully, Dave Dianni, Mike Flannigan, and project coordinator Robert Foster.

They are being supplied with photography supplies for creating new pictures of places and people based on existing archival photographs from Hoboken's past.

The project is supported by an arts grant from the County of Hudson Division of Cultural and Heritage affairs, Bill La Rosa, Director.

The photographers plan to finish their work in late spring and place it on exhibition locally in the fall.

THE NEXT MUSEUM ANNUAL EXHIBIT

"Hudson County Goes to War 1940-1945" is the title and theme of the Museum's 1992-1993 annual exhibit in City Hall. It will explore Hudson County's service at home and overseas by means of wartime memories and artifacts of Hudson County residents.

The exhibition will be designed to show to visitors how local residents participated in the war effort. On display will be objects, photographs and transcripts of oral history to reconstruct and personalize the experience of Hoboken citizens' wartime experiences. The show will highlight eight areas of interest:

The impact of Pearl Harbor
The Hoboken waterfront shifts to high gear
Rosie the Riveter
On guard at home
Medal of Honor winners
Horrors of the Holocaust
African-Americans in the war effort
GI's come back to the future

If you can contribute to the World War II exhibit in any way, please phone Bob Foster at 656-2240. We seek souvenirs and memorabilia such as photographs, items of uniform, posters, ration books and tokens, letters, and spoken memories we can preserve on tape.

To help fund this exhibit we have applied to the New Jersey Historical Commission for a grant and hope to receive their approval in early June.

COUNTER-FIT
Quick Printing
& Copy Center

128 Washington Street
Hoboken, N.J. 07030

(201) 420-7926
Fax: (201) 420-7322



714-9323

ANTIQUE BAKERY CORP.
THE FINEST ITALIAN BREAD
COAL BRICK OVEN

122 WILLOW AVENUE
HOBOKEN

WHOLESALE
RETAIL

Unusually Fine Gemstones



Rare Quality Diamonds

Watch Repairs

Jewelry Repairs

Antique & Estate Jewelry

Wedding Bands

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