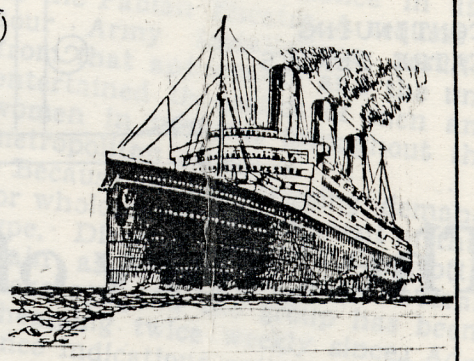
The Official Journal of the Organization

The Hoboken Historical Museum Newsletter



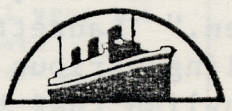
Published monthly Hoboken, NJ Tuesday, February 2, 1988 Vol. 2, No. 13

BILL MILLER'S SLIDE LECTURE

The great ocean liners of the past dropped anchor in the Hudson once again at our January meeting when Bill Miller gave a slide show and lecture on the floating palaces that once linked the Old World with the New.

His pictures and narration about the giant ships were absolutely fascinating and should not be missed if one has the opportunity to see and hear him again.

The Museum thanks Mr. Miller for his time and effort. About 35 people attended, despite it being one of the coldest nights so far this winter.



NEXT MUSEUM EXHIBIT TO FEATURE HOBOKEN LINERS

Plans are being formed for the Museum's third exhibition, entitled "The Great Ocean Liners in Hoboken," scheduled for this coming fall. Bob Foster, the Museum's newly elected Vice President, has agreed to curate the show, which will feature the giant liners and their piers.

We would like to get in touch with anyone who would be willing to share us their first-hand account of any experience they have had with the steamships or the docks in Hoboken.

We also welcome any memorabilia, pictures, or articles related to the liners or the Hoboken waterfront.

Please contact Bob Foster at (201) 656-2240.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES ELECTED

At the January meeting the following Museum officers and trustees were elected:

Jim Hans, President
Bob Foster, Vice President
Joyce Tatom, Treasurer pro tem
Hugh Kilmer, Recording Secretary
Kathy McBrady, Corresponding Secretary

The new Board of Trustees, composed of six members-at-large, is comprised of Chris Andre, Marty Andrews, John DePalma, Paul Lippman, and Perry Robinson, plus a member to be designated at the February 2 meeting by a run-off election due to a tie between Geraldine Fallo and George Kirchgessner.

We make a special note of appreciation to those Board members who have stepped aside, at least for the time being, = Marty Andrews, Mary Manhardt, and Virginia Parrott as officers; and Ken Clare and Carol Huffman as Trustees. We thank them all for their service and hope that they will continue to help in any way they can in this new year.

We especially want to thank Mary Manhardt, who had the responsibility of Recording Secretary for a year and a half, and who also spent a great deal of time writing, editing, and typing various important Museum papers.

Of course, you don't have to be elected to be an active member. We encourage all members to be active, for the museum is an ongoing enterprise that demands constant effort and quick response to its needs.

CONTINUING
THEATRE SERIES

The Story of the Theatre

in Hoboken

RIALTO THEATRE

118-120 HUDSON STREET



Patsy Di Menza

Impresario Patsy Di Menza "operates the Rialto Theatre for the sake of bringing Italian plays and pictures to those hungry for that kind of entertainment", said the local press. "He is a credit to the city, kind, intelligent, and mainly honest!"

Throughout the 1940's Italian and American plays were staged; some English language films as well were presented, but the main fare was stage productions.

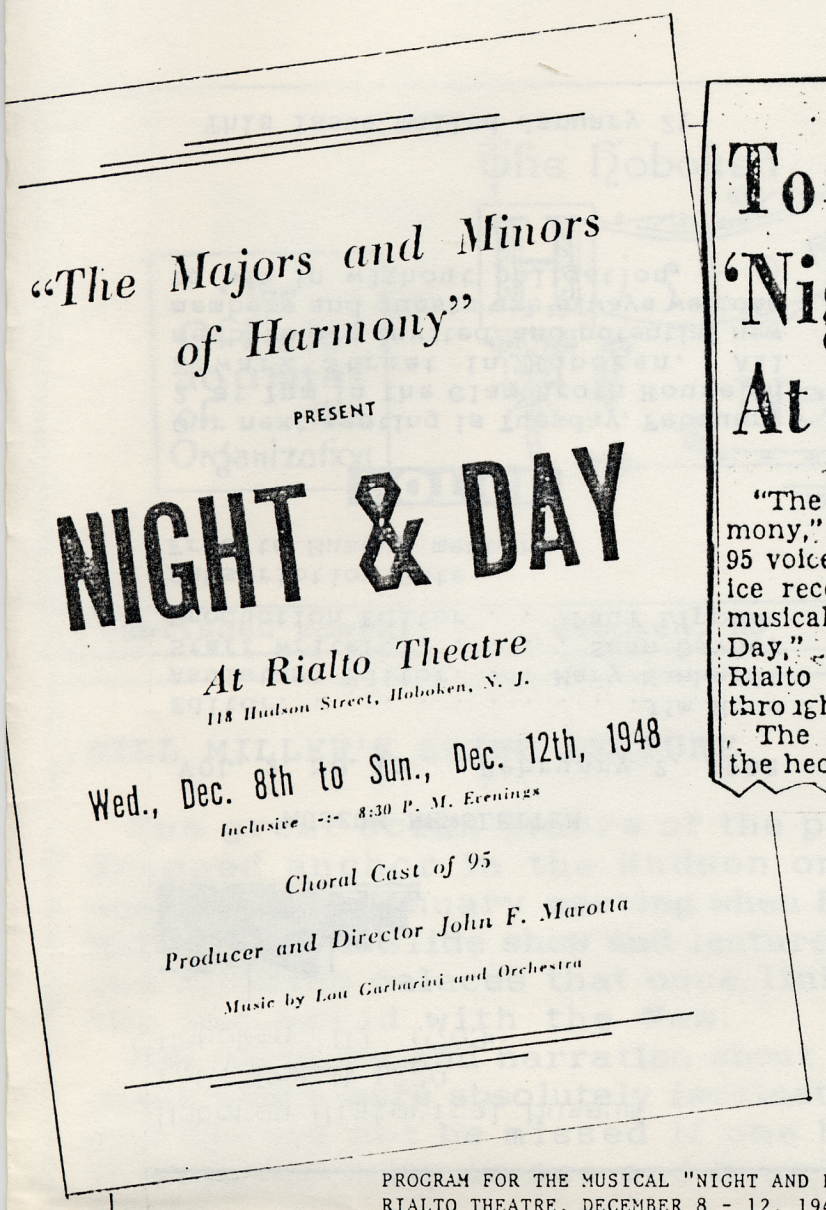
HOBOKEN'S 92-YEAR OLD JAMES LANZETTI WORKED THE RIALTO

If you have occasion to visit City Hall for any reason (the new exhibit there is one good reason), you might see James Lanzetti. He frequents the second floor of City Hall, visiting with people, sitting and watching the goings-on, sometimes nodding in his seat, but always available to help people any way he can. Museum member Sean Devney met Lanzetti recently and found out that between 1940 and 1948 he worked as cashier and manager of the Rialto Theatre. According to Lanzetti, Italian plays and operas were performed on the Rialto's stage at that time, and many important Italian artists performed, including Carlo Butti, known as "the Italian Bing Crosby." Lanzetti was Butti's manager from 1945 until Butti left the United States in 1948 to return to Italy.

James Lanzetti worked for the US Government as an Italian interpreter during World War II, translating war claims. He knew Frank Sinatra and his family when Sinatra's career was just beginning to take off. Today, at age 92, "James is a sharp-eyed gentleman, with a firm, strong handshake" says our reporter Devney. "He has lived most of his rich, colorful life in Hoboken." Lanzetti is busy now compiling various proverbs in Italian and English that he has collected over the years. We present one here for your enlightenment, and in praise of his long and good life: "When neither their property nor their honor is touched, the majority of people become content." In Italian, "Quando non toccano la loro proprieta o onore, la maggioranza del popolo sono contenti."

Lanzetti has one daughter, Catherine Mossi of Union City, who is the principle clerk in the City Clerk's Office there.

Di Menza, owner of the Rialto,made possible the 1948 large scale musical production "Night and Day", staged by Hoboken's own John Marotta, from whose scrapbook the following clippings are reproduced.



PROGRAM FOR THE MUSICAL "NIGHT AND DAY"
RIALTO THEATRE, DECEMBER 8 - 12, 1948

To Present 'Night and Day' At Rialto

"The Majors and Minors of Harmony," a Hoboken choral group of 95 voices with an enviable war service record behind it, opens with a musical production, "Night and Day," Wednesday evening at the Rialto Theatre. The show will run through December 12.

The group was organized during the hectic war years and held a record breaking performance in 1942 at the Fabian Theatre. A request to tour Army installations resulted from that appearance and the unit entertained thousands of men and women in uniform throughout the metropolitan area.

Because of the pressing demand for wholesome entertainment of this type, Director John F. Marotta again assembled the cast several weeks ago and the group has been rehearsing twice weekly since. Advance indications point to this production surpassing that of the war years, because of the vast experience which the members gained through their appearances for the armed forces. Louis Garbarini and his orchestra are appearing with the group during their Ritalto engagement.

The revue, "Night and Day", played to a full house over the 1948 weekend it ran. The last day of the run was, coincidentally, Sinatra's birthday, relates Marotta, and, as it turned out, his mother Dolly Sinatra attended that night. She'd waited until hearing whether the word about her Frankie was favorable or not before deciding to attend. It was.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO: THE BLIZZARD OF '88

If you think the weather has been bad lately, you should have been around in 1888 when the great blizzard of that year hit Hoboken and the eastern seaboard.

It started on Sunday, March 11 and continued into Tuesday, March 14. "By midmorning of Monday, March 12, there was no longer any question that this was a blizzard--the worst in the memory of then living man," said historian John T. Cunningham years later.*

"Bitter cold--close to the zero mark--dropped in on the heels of the storm to complicate the troubles. [Railroad] engines which had been left steaming to keep from freezing ran out of water. Other locomotives froze up tight. Livestock in open box cars froze to death. No Lackawanna trains ran on Tuesday," Cunningham continued.

Service in and out of Hoboken wasn't completely restored until Thursday.

Gale winds blew down poles and snapped wires, cutting off power, fire alarms, and communications. Hansom cabbies fed their horses whiskey and challenged, in some places, 15-foot snowdrifts. Hobokenites tunneled from their houses if they went out at all. Life was far from normal for most of a week during that famous blizzard of a century ago.

**Railroading in New Jersey*, Associated Railroads of N.J., 1951 (A series of articles written for the magazine of *The Newark Sunday News*, Jan. 7 to Apr. 29, 1957.)

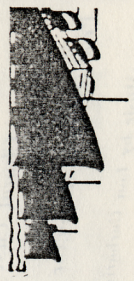
Below: From *Hoboken 1855-1955*, souvenir booklet published by the City of Hoboken, 1955. If anyone can identify the location shown in this picture, please let us know. (Editor)



FAMOUS BLIZZARD — Poles are toppled over in downtown Hoboken in the wake of the famous blizzard of 1888. It was during this year that the Steven's Family built the "Bergen," first ferryboat on the Hoboken-New York run to be propelled from both ends. Another record.

100 YEARS AGO

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



MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

VOL. 2, NO. 13 February 2, 1988

Editor. . . . . .Jim Hans
Assistant Editor. . . Mary Manhardt
Staff Writer. . . . . Sean Devney
Production Editor . . .Paul Lippman

Subscription Rate:
Free to Museum members.

NOTICE

Our next meeting is Tuesday, February 2, at 7pm in the Clam Broth House on Newark Street in Hoboken. All members are invited, and potential new members and guests are always welcome to sit in without obligation.

This issue mailed January 21

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HOBOKEN HISTORICAL MUSEUM
ANNUAL REPORT 1987

This time last year (January 1987) the Museum had about $2,500 in its bank account; over $500 more than was recently reported by our Treasurer this year at $1981.72. The great difference being that in 1987 there were monthly payments of at least $150 towards office rent and utilities, telephone bills ranging from $15 to $45 each month, plus the expense of producing a monthly newsletter. While during the previous year, the Museum's first, the office space and utilities were donated. So we have progressed to a much more realistic and responsible level in a year's time.

We mailed out the first issue of the Museum Newsletter in January and maintained on the average, four pages, monthly (11 issues). The following month we began issuing attractive membership cards and kicked off our first drive to acquire new members; we needed 200 addresses (which could include honorary members) to apply for the special bulk mail which we received in time for the July issue of the Newsletter. Although the price of annual membership was increased from $10 to $15 ($25 for 2 years), our percentage of acquired new members was greater than last year. At the beginning of 1987 we had about 30 paid members; at the end of 1987 we had over 150.

The organization's first fund-raising event was a successful week-end of musical talent (at a local popular night spot) sponsored by the Museum in June, raising $2,900.

During the year the Museum had tables set up and was represented at the following events: the St. Patrick's Day Parade, The Third Annual Hoboken Waterfront Arts Festival in May, The River City Fair, August 15th and 16th, and the Hoboken Terminal Festival, September 26. Portable displays were at some of these outdoor events, including one at Maxwell's (11th & Washington St.) during the fund raising week-end. There were also two large window displays, one at the Lacawanna Terminal Station for over two months during the spring and one at Museum member Frank Marciano's window on Newark Street. A historical Hoboken slide show was presented at a Hoboken Rotary Club meeting, May 19.

In March we were informed that the New Jersey Historical Commission awarded the Museum a $5,500 grant to assist our second exhibition: "The History of Theatre, Vaudeville and Movies in Hoboken", which opened November 20 and was a big success. This year at the opening there were special events presented on all three floors of the City Hall. The attendance, estimated at over 500, was greater than at last year's opening.

The exhibit, which will run through September, 1988, is located on the main floor and the stairways and featured prominently on the second floor. It is a much more expansive exhibition than last year with more original historical items and larger pictures, plus two additional display cases purchased by the Museum during the year, bringing the total number of cases to eleven.

Considering that the organization is only a little over two years old and that we started on a shoestring, so to speak, we are fortunate that we have been so successful in many ways, one being that we have reached so many people with the knowledge and appreciation of Hoboken history and that we have made a difference in terms of instilling community pride.