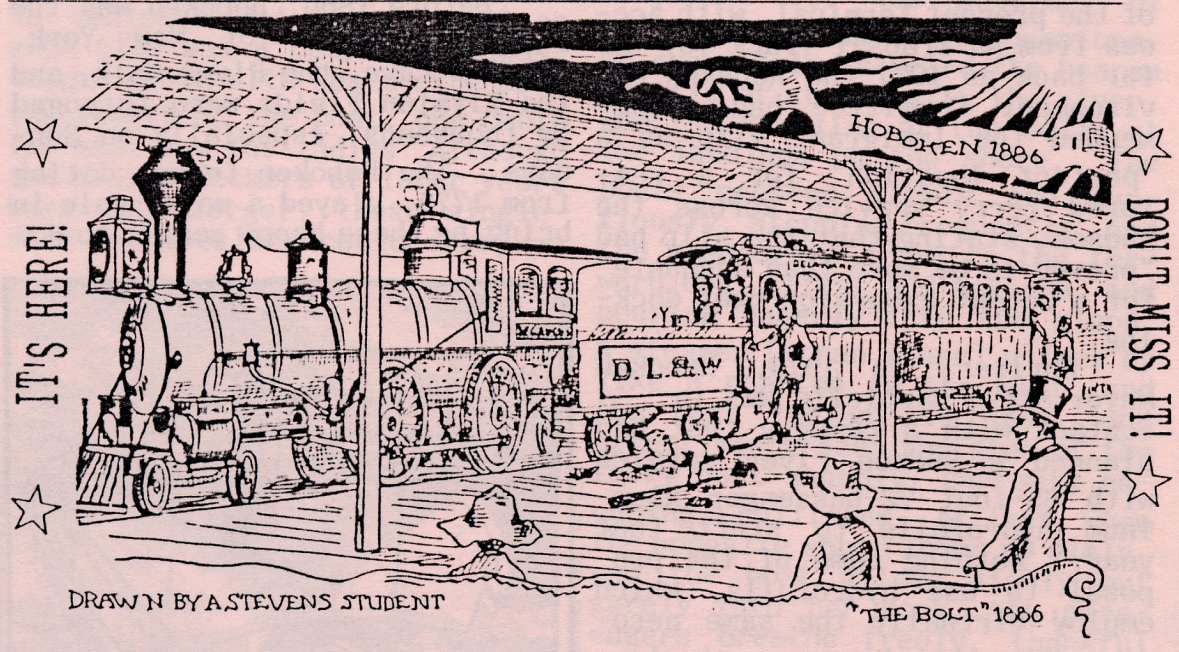
The Official Journal of the Organization

The Hoboken Historical Museum Newsletter

OF BY And FOR MuSeum MemberS.

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GREAT TRAIN FESTIVAL ARRIVES

NJ Transit's annual Hoboken train festival chugs into our historic terminal, rain or shine, on Saturday, October 7 at 11 AM and won't depart until 5 PM.

The Museum will be there as usual, check the official program to see where we are.

On sale at the Museum's table will be our new Erie Lackawanna Railroad tee-shirt, as well as our Ocean Liner and Baseball shirts, plus old Hoboken pictures, maps, and other attractive things to decorate your walls and your chest.

When not gazing with admiration at our wares, you will be able to inspect a large assortment of rail passenger and maintenance equipment, as well as antique buses, some even older than those on Washington Street. Festival-goers will be kept on the move by a number of free train rides, courtesy of NJ Transit. In addition, there will be a special free Mystery Train Ride with an Old West flavor. (Will the train be held up in West Orange by bandits? Go see for yourself.)

The Hoboken Environmental Committee will sponsor ten free 35-minute bus tours of Hoboken that will take riders to various points of interest, including a vacant parking spot on Bloomfield St. Throughout the day there will be continuous live entertainment on two stages, one featuring Hoboken's ever-popular terpsichorean Tracy Everitt and the Historical Museum's very own clarinet virtuoso, Perry Robinson.

Make sure to not miss the train!

FERRIES RETURN TO HOBOKEN

Outstanding among Hoboken landmarks is the former Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad terminal and ferry slips, site of the annual Hoboken Train Festival at the lower end of the waterfront. A new Hoboken ferry terminal will return to life in the old Immigrant Building just south of the present terminal, with access from NJ Transit Track 16. As far back as 1977 the Hoboken Environment Committee had recommended the Immigrant slip as a "perfect location" for a restored ferry service across the Hudson, stating that the slip had "proved to be more than adequate" for a recent excursion boat docking.

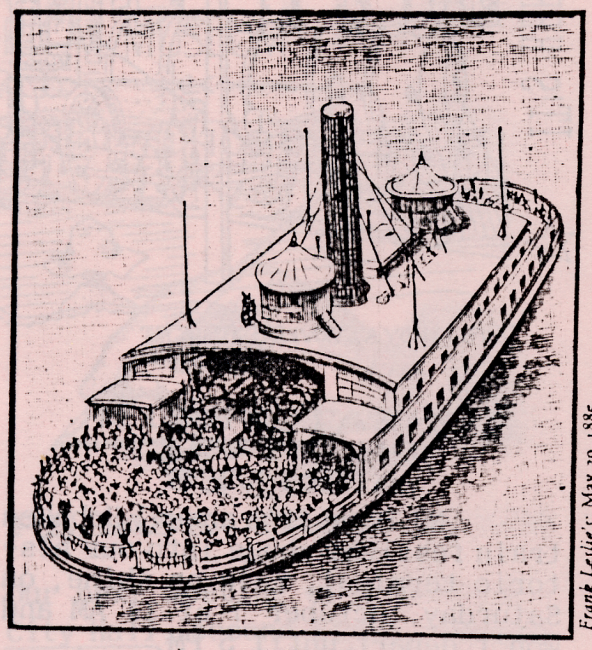
Earlier, in 1973, Hoboken Mayor Steve Cappiello was in contact with a company that had planned a Hudson river service with 65-foot 72-passenger aluminum hydrofoils to start that year. Nothing came of the proposal to use hydrofoils, which employ virtually the same aerodynamic principles as an airplane wing, the foils raising the hull of the vessel out of the water at a certain speed and permitting the boat to skim above the water's surface at high speed.

Now, according to press releases, a new Hoboken-Manhattan ferry will go into service this fall, with four 350-passenger conventional boats. The new service, designed more for the commuter than for the general public, is sponsored by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and will be operated by Arcorp/Hartz, who operate the existing ferry services that depart from Weehawken. Those ferries, which run at 8 to 10-minute intervals only during peak commuting hours--7 to 10 AM and 4 to 7 PM weekdays--do not compare with the larger old ferryboats of yesterday, but are a welcome relief from congested tunnel and PATH travel. One-way fare will be $2.00, double that of the PATH, but less than the Weehawken service, providing Hoboken commuters with a fresh-air alternative ride to New York City.

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THE OLD FERRIES

Before 1860, Hoboken was the pleasure resort of New York. Sybil's Cave, the River Walk, and the Elysian Fields were thronged by thousands, especially on Sundays. The Hoboken ferry, dating from 1775, played a major role in bringing these happy people to Hoboken. The doom of the ferry in this area came many years later, after bridges and tunnels were constructed and lured away the ferry riders. In 1908 when the PATH tubes (then called the Hudson & Manhattan Railroad) opened an underwater route to Hoboken, there were two terminals in town, the new one of the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad, built the year before, and a ferry and trolley terminal at 14th Street

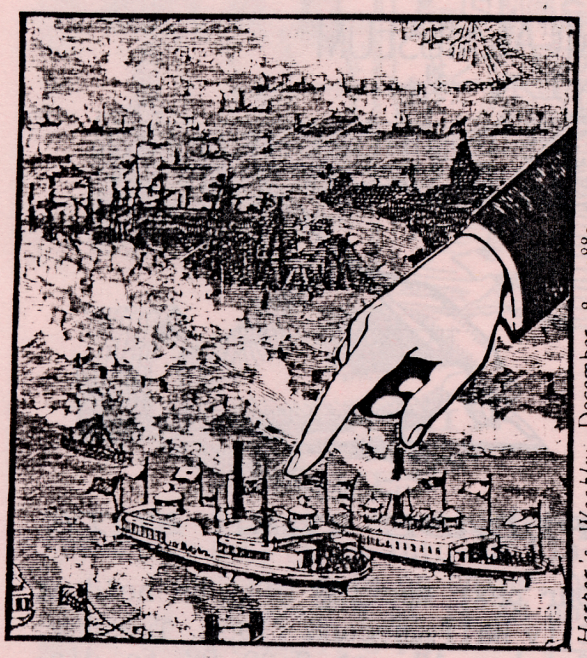


Frank Leslie's; May 30, 1885.

A PACKED FERRYBOAT

which opened on May 1, 1886, plus three in New York, at the foot of Barclay, Christopher and 23rd Streets.

One of the more interesting types of ferry boats active in the 1880s was the large and powerful side-wheel steamer, constructed on the double-end pattern, with a pilot house at each end. The center of the main deck was devoted to vehicles and horses, and on each side was a comfortable passenger cabin with seats extending the length of the boat; one cabin for men, one for ladies. Although the double-deckers of later years were much larger, these single-deck sidewheelers could carry as



A SIDE-WHEEL FERRY

Harper's Weekly, December 8, 1883.

many as 1000 passengers per crossing at the busy hours of the day, with a proportionate load of vehicles. They were "handsomely fitted up," and on the principal lines were lighted by gas and heated by steam.

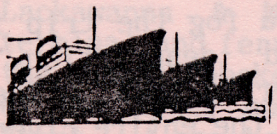
The passage across the Hudson was made quickly and without difficulty in fair weather, but when the river was filled with floating ice, or shrouded in heavy fog, one or more hours were sometimes consumed in a crossing which otherwise required but a few minutes.

"During a fog the trip is exciting beyond description," exclaims a writer in 1883. "The dense mist hides the entire river and the opposite shores from view, and the pilots must trust to their compasses for the accuracy of their course on such occasions. On every trip is heard the hoarse whistle of steamers in the river, and the trolling of the bells at the landings on the shore. The boats proceed slowly and cautiously, stopping frequently, and the passengers crowd to the forward end, silent and anxious, and peering eagerly into the gloom. A steamer [ocean liner] glides by like a phantom in the mist, and the next instant is lost, and oftentimes grazes the side of the ferry boat sharply, narrowly escaping a collision. At last, when the opposite shore looms up dimly, and the boat glides slowly but surely into her dock, the passengers breathe freely, thankful that danger has once more been passed, and glad to set foot again upon terra firma.

"No greater pleasure can be enjoyed by the visitor to the Metropolis than a ride on one of the ferries by night. The river is alive with the lights of the vessels lying in the stream, at anchor along the shores, or gliding swiftly by over the dark waters. The long rows of lamps on the opposite sides of the river stretch away in unbroken lines of light. The boats are brilliantly lighted, and are filled with lively throngs. Vessels glide swiftly and silently by, exchanging signals by sharp blasts of a whistle or the tolling of bells."

Isn't it pleasant to think that not long from now one will be able to once again enjoy such a pleasure of life in Hoboken? ▲

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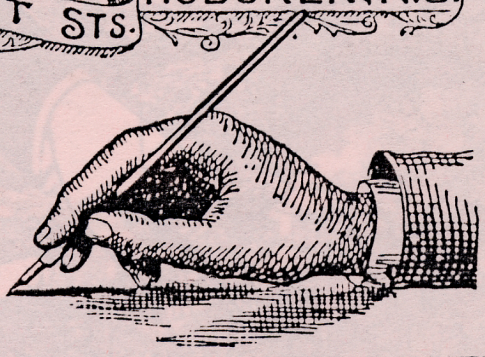
WASHINGTON AND FIRST STS. HOBOKEN, N.J.

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A LONDON CONNECTION

We've received return word from a British actor who had phoned from London a while back for information about Hoboken for a role in which he portrayed a character from Hoboken of the mid-1940s. We sent him some general history and specific information on 1940s happenings in Hoboken which he said "provided a great background to the character, especially when I had to talk about my 'home town' in an improvisation." He's coming to the end of his tour which has been very successful, and he said he will send a photograph and a playbill. More on this later.

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PLEASE TAKE NOTE

Our next meeting will be held at City Hall, second floor, Tuesday, October 10, at 7:30 PM to dismantle the Ocean Liner exhibit. Please join us to help. And bring a sturdy friend if you have one. The business meeting will be brief.

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