The Official Journal of the Organization

The Hoboken Historical Museum Newsletter

OF BY And FOR Museum Members.

Vol. 2, No. 32 HOBOKEN, N. J. November 1989




Castle Point in the 1830's as seen from Weehawken cliffs.

## FOURTH EXHIBIT STARS LANDMARKS

Landmarks of two centuries and historical highlights of the colorful mile-square city of Hoboken will be the theme of the fourth annual exhibition of the Hoboken Historical Museum, opening in City hall on Friday, November 17 for a one-year run, funded in part by the New Jersey State Historical Commission. A first-night reception, open to the public, will take place at City Hall, Washington and First Streets, from 6:30 to 9:30. Admission to both exhibition and reception is free. Entertainment will be provided by Frankie Fame and other musicians.

Major displays of the exhibit will include Castle

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Point, past and present; the old Stevens Villa and Stevens Castle; Henry Hudson's landing from the vessel Half Moon in 1609; River Walk and River Road; site of Sybil's Cave; John Stevens, Father of the American Patent Law; The First Demonstration of a Steam Locomotive in the United States; historically important buildings such as the former Lipton Tea plant and the present Maxwell House coffee complex; and nearby, the site of the first organized game of baseball in Elysian Fields, Hoboken on June 19, 1846; numerous landmark church edifices; and the Hoboken Public Library, the State's third-oldest.

These historic subjects will be displayed in pictures, artifacts, and informative panels in the Museum's new ground-floor quarters in City Hall for a year beginning November.

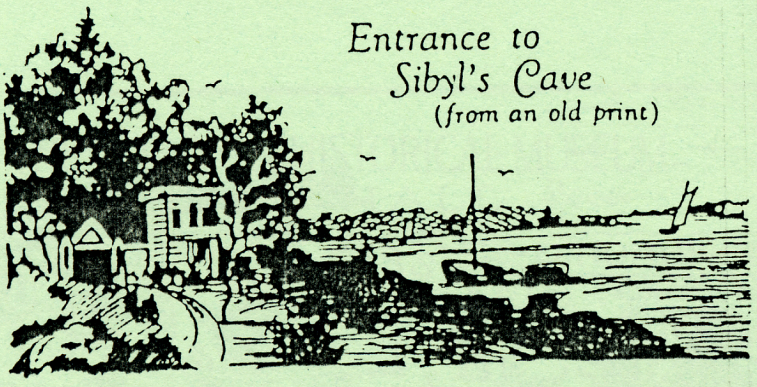
### Historical Map

A large two-color map showing most of Hoboken's many landmarks and other points of interest will be on display and available as a reproduction. The new map is copied partly from the original history map of 1906 and copies prepared by the Museum will be available to the public during and after the City Hall show. Since Hoboken is frequently visited by tour groups as well as by sightseeing individuals, the map will encourage greater outside interest in the city.

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## SYBIL'S CAVE AND RIVER WALK.

Among the more intriguing Hoboken landmarks which will be on exhbit at City Hall through September 1990 are the sites of Sybil's Cave and the famed River Walk.



*Entrance to Sibyl's Cave*
*(from an old print)*

Before 1860, Hoboken was the pleasure resert of New York City. Sybil's Cave, the River Walk, and the Elysian Fields were visited by thousands, especially on Sundays. In 1836 Sybil's cave was opened on River Walk as a spa where one could buy a refreshing glass of mineral water for a penny.

For many years Hoboken and Sybil's Cave were known far and wide. *Gleason's Pictorial Drawing-room Companion*, a popular publication in far-away Boston at the time, had this to

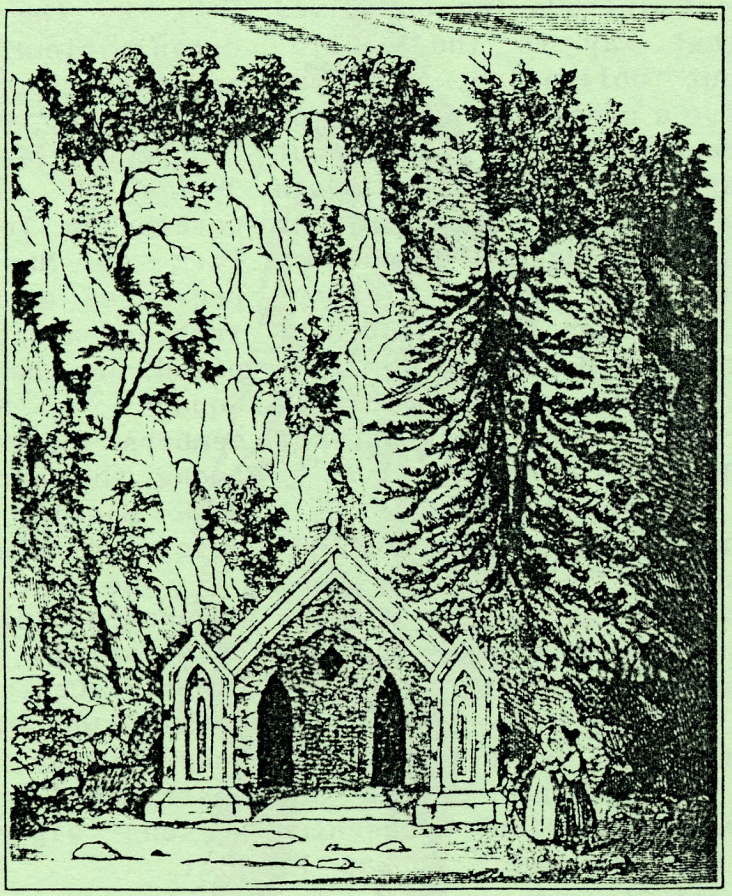
say about Hoboken and the Cave:

"Hoboken is beautifully situated in New Jersey, on the Hudson River, directly opposite New York City. You take the ferry at the foot of Barclay Street, Canal Street, or Christopher Street, and in five minutes you are in the country. Thousands visit this 'Paradise of Gotham' daily. The shore is wild and rocky; it is beautifully laid out into walks, promenades and parks, overshadowed by the richest foliage. Sybil's Cave, Hoboken, is one of the principal attractions of the place.

No one visits Hoboken without seeing it. It is hewn out and excavated from a solid rock to the depth of thirty feet. In the middle is a spring of pure and sparkling water, thousands of glasses of which are sold daily in the summer for a penny per glass."

Today it is difficult to find the exact location of the Cave as little seems to remain. However we can determine from old prints and photographs that the Cave was on the southern end of Castle Point just before you round its tip. It was on a level with what later became River Road, since re-named Sinatra Drive.

# SYBIL'S CAVE



A natural spring in the rocks below Castle Point was converted into a commercial proposition. A romance was wound around the place and it was named Sybil's Cave. Drinks from the spring were sold at one cent a glass.

# MEET THE MUSEUM

During the past few months we have had many requests from people to be placed on our mailing list and a great many have inquired about the Museum in general. Friends have given us names and addresses of those who might find an interest in our organization and its activities. We have acquired various mailing lists of Hoboken residents and are in the process of introducing ourselves in that way to the public. Without obligation, you may receive a complimentary copy of our Newsletter, of which about 800 are distributed each month to announce the dates of our monthly meetings and to publish Museum news, Hoboken history, and articles of interest relating to Hoboken.

The Newsletter is highly regarded as a valuable part of the Museum's activities.

**Humble beginnings**

The Hoboken Historical Museum was founded to present the city's fascinating history to the public through publications and exhibits, drawing upon various collections, contemporary as well as historic. Jim Hans, artist and Hoboken historian, presented the idea to Major Thomas F. Vezzetti in early 1986. The idea was well-received, and the Museum was given official status and space in City Hall, where its exhibitions are now held.

The Museum was organized at a meeting in the home of Barbara Cole MacKay on April 15, 1986. At this first meeting were John Calligy, Jim Hans, Ross D. London, Barbara C. MacKay, Kevin P. McCloskey, and Virginia Parrott. On May 12, the Museum held its first public meeting at the Gold Coast Cafe, with a history slide presentation. The next day, nine members strong, the Museum filed with the State as a non-profit New Jersey corporation.

By the end of May the organization had taken shape and laid groundwork for future activities.

Our first exhibit took place at the rededication ceremonies for Church Square Park on May 31, where we presented a display and distributed a booklet we had compiled on the history of the Square. Several charter members joined at this event. Among the earliest were True Lash Moseley and Thomas E. Moseley of Bloomfield Street.

We next gave exhibits at Hoboken's July 4th festival celebrating the Statue of Liberty Centennial. Though nothing was offered for sale, many Museum brochures were distributed and more than 150 persons signed our mailing list.

At other public events during the summer of that year we recruited more members and distributed Museum literature announcing our grand opening at City Hall in November. On October 15, the Mayor and City Council passed a resolution officially recognizing the Hoboken Historical Museum.

## Grand opening

Through the efforts of the Mayor's office, many local organizations, citizens, and corporations helpingin various ways with the grand opening, it was a huge success. Between four and five hundred people atttended our opening exhibition at City Hall, where photographs, maps, prints, and other items on the theme "Hoboken Changing Scenes" hung on the wall and adorned display cases. We supplied souvenir programs and bookets and presented a slide show of Hoboken past and present.

After three years of healthy growth the Museum's current situation is sound. The number of active members at any given time has varied from ten to fifteen. The following list represents the core of the




**ERECTED TO THE MEMORY OF HOBOKEN'S EXEMPT FIREMEN,** this monument is in Church Square Park, just facing Willow avenue, near Fourth street. Funds were raised by G. A. Seide by public subscription when he published the News.

1891

Organization up to now, but is in no way complete. Many have helped in many ways.

Criss Andre, Martin Andrews, John De Palma, Betty De Marco, Geraldine Fallo, Luke Faust, Virginia Fenner, Sue Ellen Fiedler, Robert Foster, Jim Hans, Edward F. Hays, Otto Hottendorf, Larry Von Holland, Carol Huffman, Mayme Jurkat, Hugh Kilmer, George M. Kirchgessner, Paul Lippman, Gerard Lisa, Mary Manhardt, Kathleen McBrady, Kevin McCloskey, Virginia Parrott, Perry Robinson, Joyce Tatom, Jeanne West Valentin. Others who have helped out in the past when they could, or have recently joined and participate in Museum activities are Helena Berger, Chris and Avery Brighton, George and Betsy Cannon, Doris China, Dennis Darragh, Frankie Fame, Frances X. Ferrante, Danielle Foster, Michael Goldfine, Stephen Hefler, Glenn Hughes, Gloria Lambson, Marty Leahy, Ann O'Brien, Fred Pescatore, Tim Rehm, Dena Reynolds, Carol Rogers, Sandy Sobanski, Lynn Spencer, Ignatius Spinella, Jane Steuerwald, Greg Tamminga, and Jeff Wilson.

Today there are more than 200 paid members and several honorary members. Dues are still only $15 a year and a bargain at $25 for two years. And we have 13 members who have joined our new Lifetime Membership category at $100.



Col. John Stevens, Founder of Hoboken and one of America's Foremost Engineers and Inventors. Father of the American Railway and the United States Patent Law.

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*From an Oil Painting in Possession of His Descendants*

**The story of Hoboken cannot be disassociated from the name of Stevens and the achievements of this famous family. Colonel John Stevens possessed a wonderful versatility coupled with a scientific imagination which led him to undertake projects far in advance of his age. Many of his inventions conceived and developed in Hoboken have contributed much to engineering science, especially in the field of railroad and steamboat construction.**

**Hoboken Follies**

Each year we sponsor a large fund-raising event for the Museum (As we never charge admission to our exhibitions, sources of income are limited). Last year our friends and supporters were fortunate to be entertained by many talented musicians, mostly local groups with a loyal Hoboken following. The next event is scheduled for Spring 1990 and promises to be even greater under the title of "The Hoboken Follies of 1990." (We've had some wonderful Hoboken follies for 150 years; this may be the first one to raise funds for a history museum!)

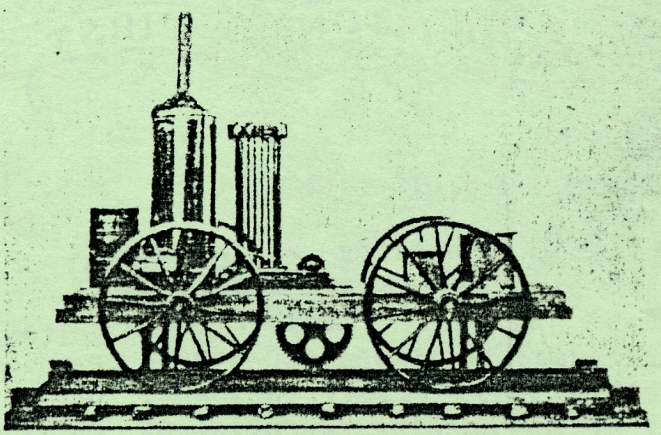
Our other meaningful source of funding is grants. We recently received one of $5,500 from the New Jersey Historical Commission toward our" Hoboken Landmarks and Historical Highlights" exhibit.

Previous exhibits included "The History of Theatre, Vaudeville and Movies in Hoboken" in 1987 and "The Great Ocean Liners of Hoboken" which opened in 1988.

Our City Hall displays continue to attract visitors and are always well-received.

Yes, we are pleased with the progress the organization has made in just a short time. But are we satisfied? Well, that's a different story. For this is just the beginning. And, being the beginning, it's the most exciting time to join us. So, if the idea of a Hoboken Historical Museum appeals to you, if you wish it success and want it to continue to grow, and if you think you would enjoy receiving its journal, the Newsletter, regularly you can very substantially help by becoming a member and sharing with us the adventure of our common future.

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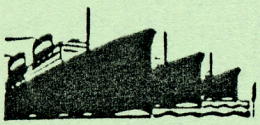


Model of John Stevens' Locomotive, the First to Run on a Track in America, at Hoboken. Model with Original Engine Now Preserved in the National Museum at Washington.

## Private Sector Initiative

Volunteering and giving play an essential role in the economic well-being of our nation. The advent of the 1980s brought with it a shift in political thinking at the national level. Federal policies are continuing to stress that nonprofit organizations must rely less on government money and more on resources from the private sector.

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# THE HOBOKEN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

CITY HALL

WASHINGTON AND FIRST STS. HOBOKEN, N.J.

## MEETING NOTICE

November's meeting will not take place as such, rather we hope all active members and friends will attend and lend a helping hand Friday, November 17, at the opening reception of the Museum's fourth major exhibition, "Hoboken Landmarks and Historical Highlights." As evident at last year's opening, people will begin to arrive shortly after 6 PM. So if you plan to help, we could use your help beginning at 5:30. There is always much last-minute preparation.

Here's to another great opening night!

## MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

Vol. 2, No. 32 November 1989

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Mailing Address P.O. Box M-1220
Hoboken, NJ 07030
Subscription Rate: Free to Museum Members

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*Celebrate yourself*
*by sharing yourself.*
*For it is only in giving*
*that we, in turn, receive.*