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The Official Journal of the Organization

The Hoboken Historical Museum ESTB. 1986

# Newsletter

OF BY And FOR Museum Members.

MARCH 1991 HOBOKEN, NJ No. 47

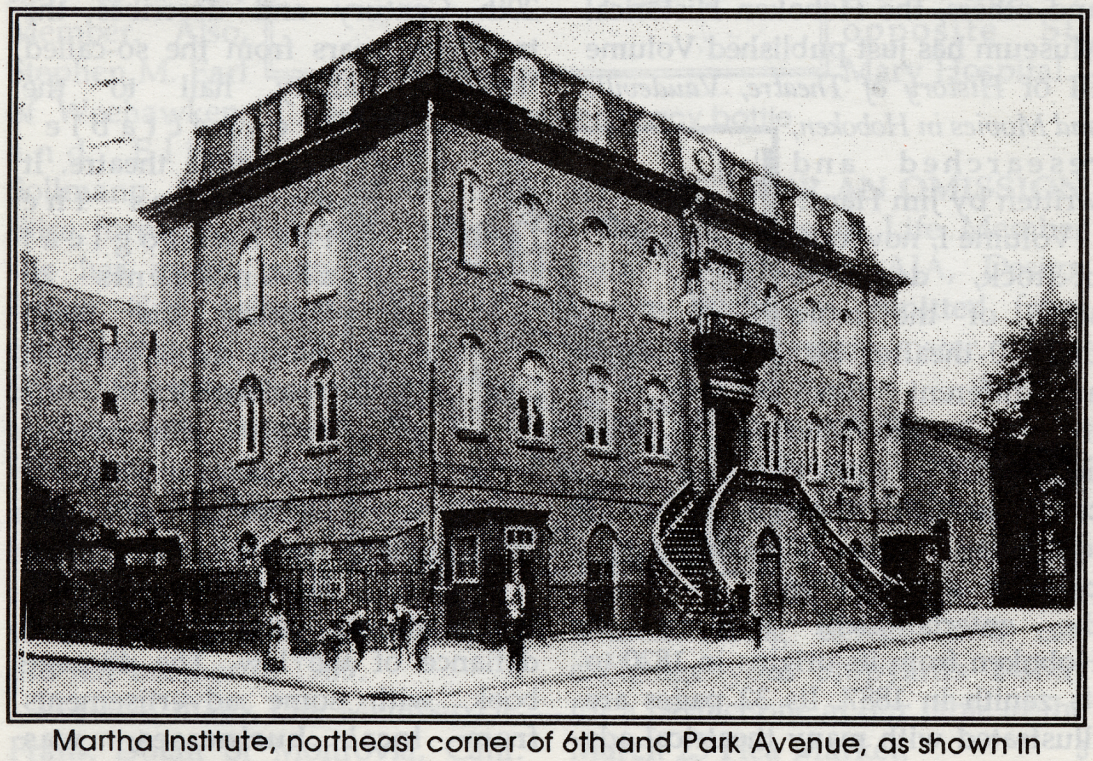
# *Flea Market* Saturday March 23

So successful were the Museum's flea markets in 1990, with throngs of Hobokenites crowding the stalls for bargains, we are scheduling another soon, our first Arts & Crafts Fair of 1991. It will take place indoors, in the former Martha Institute building at 6th and Park on Saturday, March 23 from 10am to 5pm.

*More HOBOKEN FIRSTS . . . page 4*

Vendors can expect good attendance, as we have placed advertisements in four local newspapers and are distributing flyers all over town.

All profit from rental of tables and spaces will support future Museum activities. Museum-sponsored tables will sell Hoboken memorabilia. If



Martha Institute, northeast corner of 6th and Park Avenue, as shown in an old photograph (about 1905), before removal of the entrance stairs.

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you have any items to donate to the flea market, to be sold on behalf of the Museum, please being them with you.

Our use of the building is by courtesy of the Community Church of Hoboken at 6th and Garden. This structure, erected about 1869, housed a German-American school and classical academy founded by the Rev. Leopold Mohn in 1857. The building accommodated 500 pupils and was occupied by Hoboken's first public high school, then by the Stevens School, and then the Industrial School.

**STEVENS SCHOOL**

Stevens School, a boys' prep school founded in 1872 by the Trustees of Stevens Institute of Technology, occupied a building on the campus until it moved into the Martha Institute building on September 17, 1917. It was one of the first schools in the nation to offer satisfactory training in mathematics and science. In 1935 it merged with the Hoboken Academy at 5th and Willow and stayed there until 1976.

# MUSEUM PUBLISHES VOLUME III OF HOBOKEN'S THEATRICAL HISTORY

With the help and financial support of many of our members and others, the Hoboken Historical Museum has just published Volume III of *History of Theatre, Vaudeville and Movies in Hoboken*, researched and written by Jim Hans.

Volume I, now out-of-stock, describes some of the more than 50 theatres that at different times thrived in the Mile Square City, with a complete list of their locations. Volume II presents a history of the entertainment industry in Hoboken from its origins in 1820 to its zenith in 1887. Its 32 pages are illustrated with many theatrical ads and portraits from 19th-century sources.



Volume III continues up to the 20th Century and describes the transition years from the so-called "lowlife" variety hall to the "respectable" vaudeville theatre. It describes the technological advancements in lighting and stage effects made possible by electricity.

It also tells of the notorious Siegfried Cronheim, owner of a "variety den" in Hoboken, who ran the place on Sundays in open defiance of the law. The 48-page book, with some advertisements from local businesses, was exhaustively researched for more

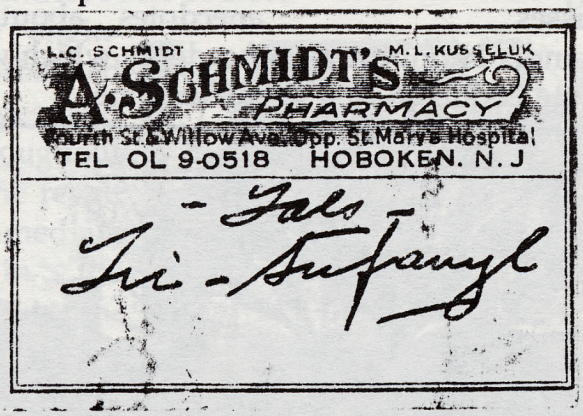
than two years, in which the author combed through old periodicals, theatrical programs, and other sources to present a colorful and detailed account of one of America's most lively theatrical communities.

Volumes II and III are on sale in Hoboken at four stores on Washington: the Literary Shop at 736; Hoboken Books at 626; Blackwater Books, 514; United Decorating at 421; and at Hoboken's newest book store: Golden Age on 12th St. just west of Washington. Also at our table at Hoboken festivals and public events. Both volumes may be purchased by mail at $5 and $6 each respectively, from the Museum.

# MEMBERSHIP NEWS

We thank all who have recently joined or have renewed your memberships, it keeps us alive. New members are: Ray Kroeker of Red Bluff, Calif. Ray is an old friend and a fine musician, who joins us now as a Life Member. Also, Stephen M. Earl of Weehawken, and Elise Sollmann Miller of Livingston. Elise, formerly of Hoboken, tells us she has many memories of her father Carl Sallmann and her grandfather at 1006 Bloomfield Street. She recalls as a child going to *kinderfests* at the Union Club (6th and Hudson) with her parents and their parents, where they bowled downstairs and partied upstairs. Her mother and father went to the Hoboken Academy as did her brother in 1939.

We also thank Life Member Dr. Frank Dolan of Monrovia, Calif. for enrolling Robert Schmidt of Murray Hill, NJ as a new member. Robert's father and grandfather before him operated Schmidt's Pharmacy on Washington Street. His uncle also had a pharmacy opposite St. Mary Hospital.



Label from an old pharmacy bottle

**APOLOGY FOR AN OMISSION**

Our apologies to Life Member John C. Sweeney, AIA, Design Forum, Hoboken, omitted from our last membership roster.

**THE GLORY FADES**

The Museum's new Hoboken Shipyards T-shirts (black with white image) have been found to fade in the wash -- a manufacturing defect. You can exchange your Shipyards T-shirt for a perfect one at our table at the March 23 Flea Market.

# HOBOKEN FIRSTS

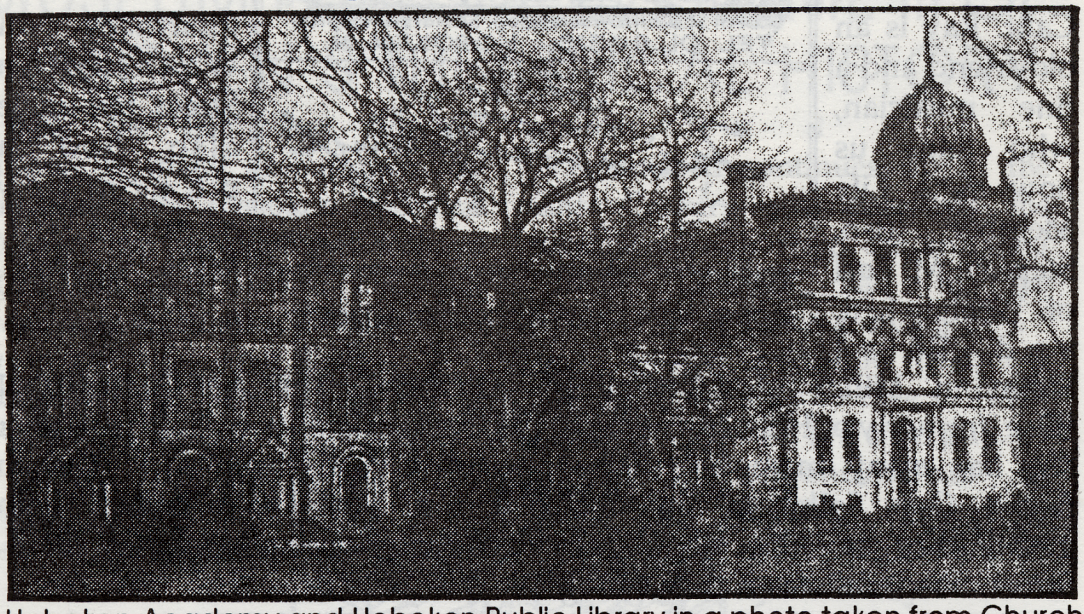
Installment No. 2 of a series being compiled by Jim Hans for a future book.

## FIRST KINDERGARTEN IN AN AMERICAN SCHOOL

The Hoboken Academy introduced the concept of "Kindergarten" (German for "Children's Garden") to its regular course of instruction shortly after its opening on February 11, 1861. For many years located at the northeast corner of 5th Street and Willow Avenue, it began with 177 pupils and six other classes.

President Alexander Humphreys of Stevens Institute is quoted in a 1911 Academy publication as saying "I was interested tonight to learn that this [the Hoboken Academy] is the first school in the United States to introduce the kindergarten and physical culture in connection with the regular courses; I congratulate you."

There are many interesting anecdotes about the Hoboken Academy which we will go into at a later time.

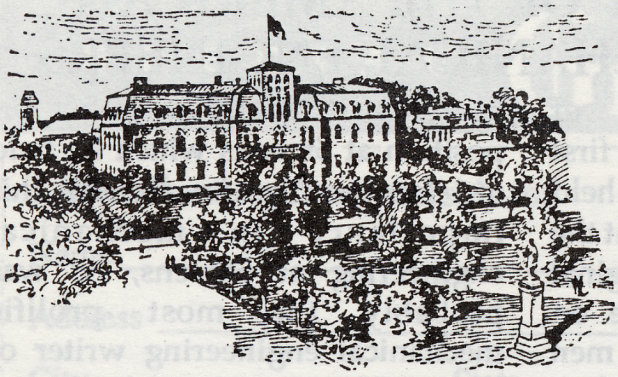


Hoboken Academy and Hoboken Public Library in a photo taken from Church Square Park, on a post card postmarked February 17, 1907. The Library, New Jersey's first public library building, still stands, with an altered dome.

## FIRST AMERICAN DEGREE IN MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

Stevens Institute of Technology was the first educational institution in America to give a course in mechanical engineering and to grant a degree in that subject.

After the first college of

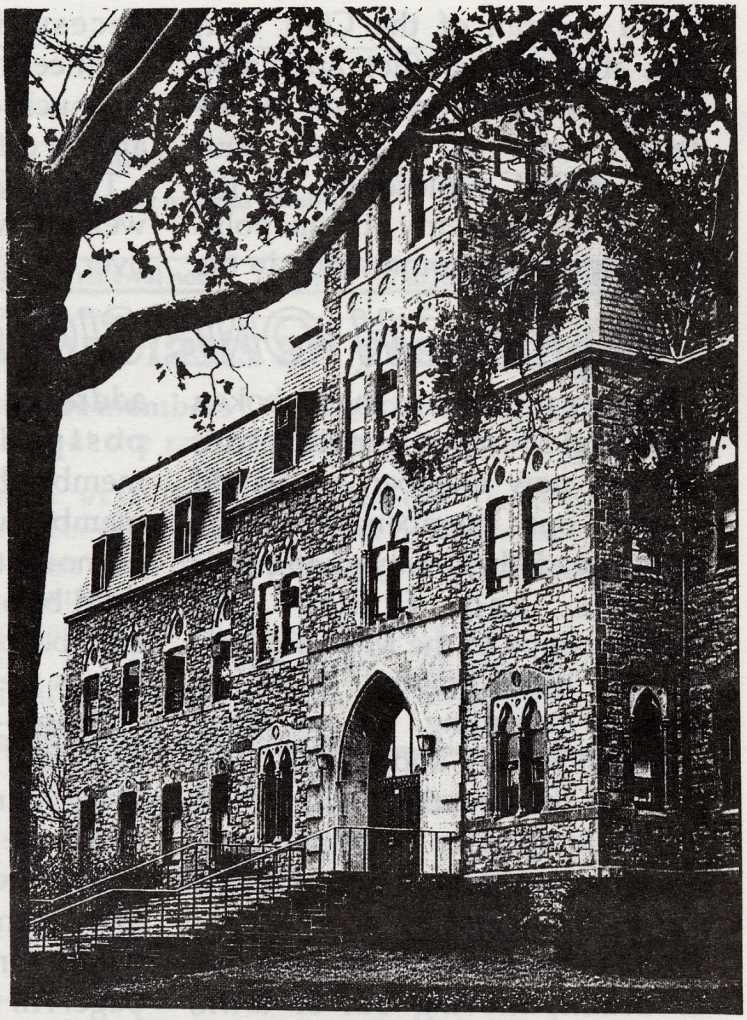


HOBOKEN : THE STEVENS INSTITUTE.

This 1891 engraving of the Stevens Institute "A" Building includes Hudson Square Park in the foreground. Designed by R.M. Upjohn in the late nineteenth century, the "A" Building at 5th and River Streets was the original home of the college. Today it houses the departments of mechanical, civil and oceanographic engineering.

engineering had been established in 1870 in Hoboken, through the generous gift of Edwin A. Stevens, the school's founder, other courses in mechanical engineering were established in other colleges and universities throughout the country. The result was: "An immediate acceleration in the progress of the mechanic arts that has no parallel in history, not even in painting, sculpture, or literature, where development had been carried to the highest point of human enjoyment. But none of these, in a brief period of about forty years, has developed so swiftly, so universally as have the mechanic arts since 1870," [from "Contributions of Stevens Tech to the Welfare and Progress of the Country," in the Stevens *Indicator*, 1915.

Before 1870 the only technical courses available in America were civil and mining engineering.



The "A" Building in 1985

# FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERS

The American Society of Mechanical Engineers, the first American society of its kind, held its first organization meeting at the Assembly Hall in the original building of Stevens Institute on April 7, 1880. Founded by 40 men from 8 states, its first president was Robert Henry Thurston, professor of mechanical engineering at Stevens Institute. [Joseph N. Kane, *Famous First Facts.*]

Thurston, born October 25, 1829 and a veteran of the Civil War, was, after that conflict, appointed acting assistant professor in the department of natural and experimental philosophy in the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis. He resigned his commission in the Navy in 1872 and accepted his position at Stevens which he held for fourteen years. Besides his importance in mechanical engineering at Stevens, he was probably the most prolific mechanical engineering writer of history. He was an inspiring writer as well, and he has been read and quoted perhaps more than any other American engineer, especially during the early days when information on the necessities of mechanical engineering for rapid progress was so much desired and sought for, and so difficult to obtain.

The work of Thurston was still well known to engineers the world over as late as 1915.

## ☞ EACH ONE SIGN ONE ✍

If every member of the Hoboken Historical Museum were to recruit just one new member, we would double our membership! Some have already begun by giving their friends and family gift memberships in the Museum, and we are most grateful. If we all work at recruiting, we can attain our goal readily and quickly. Just think of the resources with which we could sponsor exhibitions and Museum projects if we doubled our membership!

We lose members all the time due to deaths, moving out of town, and failure to notify us of new addresses. And so many of us postpone renewing their membership. If every delinquent member were to write a check to us now, today, as you read this, we'd be on sound financial footing and be better able to do all the things we want to do!

Please -- recruit new members. **Each one sign one.**

Tell your friends and relatives about the Museum.

Show them our Newsletter. Or give them a gift memberhip. A handy form is printed on the next page. All together now -- seek new members -- each one get one!

*No wrapping paper! No post office lines! No crowds!*

# SPECIAL Gift ORDER FORM

**1. Please send a gift membership to:** PLEASE PRINT

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please sign my name as follows:

_____

Next year please send renewal notice ☐ to me, ☐ to recipient.

**2. Please send a gift membership to:**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please sign my name as follows:

_____

Next year please send renewal notice ☐ to me, ☐ to recipient.

## Give the gift that lasts all year long—

☐ **Yes, I'll sign on some more members.** Enclosed is $_____ for _____ members at the rate of $15.00 each.

NOTE: Each new member will receive the latest issue of the Museum's Newsletter and our attractive membership card, plus a greetings with your name on it. Please specify occasion: Birthday:_____ Other:_____ And of couse, he or she will be sent invitations, etc., and twelve issues of the Newsletter for one year. ----- We pay the postage on all gift memberships. -----

## GIFT MEMBERSHIPS FROM

Your name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

☐ My check payable to the Hoboken Historical Museum is enclosed.

Mailing Address: P.O. Box M-1220, Hoboken, N.J. 07030

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# SLIDES OF OLD HOBOKEN CLUBS

At our next meeting Bob Foster, Museum Curator of Exhibitions, will show slides and deliver a brief lecture on the History of Clubs and Societies in Hoboken. The meeting takes place Monday, March 18 at 7:30pm in the private dining room of the Clam Broth House. The show will begin at about 9:30; open to the public. No obligation, no solicitation of funds.

Clubs, organizations, and societies will be the subject of our 1991-1992 exhibition beginning in November. If you have any artifacts, documents, photographs, or any other memorabilia related to that Hoboken subject, please phone Bob Foster at 656-2240. Fame can be yours!

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| Virginia Newman | Hugh Kilmer |
| Paul Blocklyn | Gene Turonis |

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