

HOBOKEN HISTORY



THRONGS OF SUNDAY PLEASURE-SEEKERS ARRIVE ON THE HOBOKEN FERRY, 1856

Hoboken Public Library

Hoboken's Ice-Cream Cone Inventor
Law and Order, 1889 ■ *Our Town in 1939*
Museum Annual Report, 1991

The Magazine of the Hoboken Historical Museum
HOBOKEN NJ NUMBER 2 WINTER 1992

HOBOKEN HISTORY

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Photography Director: Robert Foster
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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, meet your fellow-members 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.

MUSEUM NEWS

News of the Hoboken Historical Museum

ANNUAL REPORT 1991

With a membership of nearly 300, the Museum has had a busy year in events, exhibitions, fund raising, and publishing.

We participated in the Hoboken Base Ball Day celebration on the Stevens campus on June 19; the Hoboken Arts Festival in September, and the Hoboken Railroad Terminal Festival in October. In addition we sponsored three successful flea markets, one at the Martha Institute and the others at Church Square Park in June and September.

One the most important events of the year was the introduction of the Museum's new quarterly magazine, *Hoboken History*. The first issue was 16 pages and the second which you are now reading is 20, thanks to growing advertising support from Hoboken's business community. With a circulation of nearly 1000, this is an important new venture for the Museum. It is mailed free to members.

In addition the Museum published Volume III of *History of Theatre, Vaudeville and Movies in Hoboken*. The 48-page book was researched and written by historian Jim Hans, and it goes on from earlier volumes to chronicle the rich history of entertainment in Hoboken

into the 20th Century. It is available from the Museum and selected stores in Hoboken for \$5.00.

On the exhibition front the Museum sponsored a photography exhibit featuring buildings in Hoboken and Hudson County that are on the National Register of Historic Places. The exhibit, curated by Robert Foster, took place in the restored historic New Jersey Central Railroad Terminal in Liberty State Park, Jersey City, and was on view June through September.

The Museum also installed its sixth annual exhibit at Hoboken City Hall, conducting an opening night reception on November 22. The show, entitled "Artifacts and Donations," curated by Robert Foster, features items donated to the Museum over the last six years. It uses the six handsome show cases that the Museum has newly installed on the second floor of City Hall, nearly doubling our exhibition area.

These are some of this year's highlights and we look forward to an eventful year in 1992. Thank you for your past and continued support.

John De Palma
President Pro Tem

1992 BOARD TO BE ELECTED

Elections for the new board of trustees will be held at our next meeting on Monday January 13, at the premises of Traders of Babylon, 259 First Street.

All members are invited to attend and vote. Nominations may be made at the meeting, which will begin at 7:30pm.

The following officers and trustees have been nominated:

President:	John De Palma
Vice-President:	Hugh Kilmer
Treasurer:	Gerard Lisa
Corresponding Secretary:	Kathy Rogers
Recording Secretary:	Barbara Lippman
Trustees:	

Maureen Alex	Gerri Fallo
Robert Foster	Stephen Heffler
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 have decided to try rotating our meeting days. These are the dates of the upcoming board meetings for this quarter:

MONDAY JANUARY 13

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 11

WEDNESDAY MARCH 11.

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

The Museum mourns the passing of
VIRGINIA NEWMAN, who had been our
Corresponding Secretary. She will be missed.

Museum News continues on inside back cover

The Man Who Invented the Ice-Cream Cone

Italo Marchiony created the dish you could eat with the ice cream – and made it in Hoboken

By Jane Marchiony Paretti

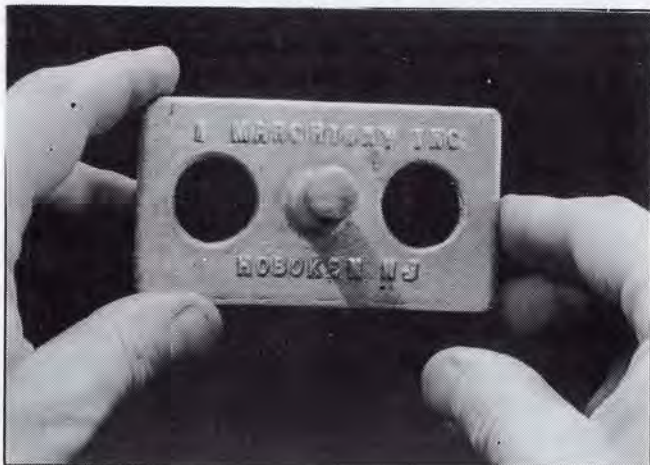


Nothing was a more joyful summertime pleasure when I was a child in Hoboken than to stroll down Washington Street while licking an ice-cream cone. And while the flavors have evolved from routine vanilla, chocolate, and strawberry to such exotics as macadamia chocolate fudge and passion fruit supreme, the crisp waffle-patterned traditional ice-cream cone stays the same. Hoboken is its birthplace, and its inventor was my father.

Ice cream as we know it dates back nearly 200 years, but an edible cup in which ice cream could be served was first created by my Italian immigrant father, Italo Marcioni. (He Americanized the spelling of his name into Marchiony.) In 1903 he patented the first machine to mass-produce ice-cream cups and commenced manufacturing them. His firm, I. Marchiony, Inc., thrived at 219 Grand Street in Hoboken, where millions of ice-cream cones and wafers were made "in a sun light plant" until it was destroyed by fire on May 16, 1934.

Inspiration Strikes

The saga begins in 1895 when father Italo arrived from Italy. He sold lemon ice and ice cream



from a push cart on Wall Street, serving small liquor glasses containing his confections to stockbrokers and Wall Street runners. But too many glasses broke or were taken, and washing them was a chore. That's when Father had his inspiration: serve the ice cream in a cup that could be eaten along with the ice cream and there would be no washing, no waste. So he baked waffles, and, while they were still warm, folded them into the shape of a cup. His customers loved the cups – they were convenient, sanitary, and tasty.

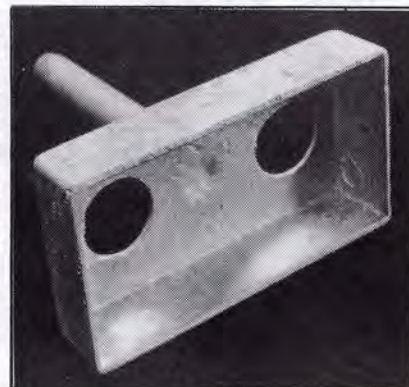
Mass Production

So popular was Father's waffle cup, there was a Wall Street boom in his ice-cream sales. Soon he had a chain of 45 carts operated by men he hired. Ice cream in his cup became known as a "toot," possibly derived from the Italian *tutti* or "all" as customers were urged to "eat it all."

But hand-made cups couldn't keep up with the demand. Father had a good head for mechanics as well as for business. So he adapted the design of the waffle iron to create a device into which batter could be poured, baked, and so mass-produce ice-cream cups. It was difficult to take the fragile cups out of the mold without their breaking. He solved the problem by dividing the bottom half of the mold, to separate it from the baked cups. And instead of one

OUTSIDE AND INSIDE VIEWS OF ITALO MARCHIONY'S MOLD. A WAFER PLACED INSIDE WAS COVERED WITH ICE CREAM, THEN TOPPED WITH ANOTHER WAFER, AND THE SANDWICH WAS PUSHED OUT.

PHOTOS BY ROBERT FOSTER.



mold for each cup, he arranged two rows of five in each mold to produce ten cups at a time.

When Father sold his "toots," ice cream vendors were a familiar sight on city sidewalks and children called them "hokey pokey" men, a corruption of their cry, *Ecco un poco* - "Here's a little" in Italian.

Father applied for a patent on his device in 1902 and it was awarded in 1903, US Patent number 746,971. In 1904 he established a wholesale ice cream and candy business in Hoboken, operating a fleet of horse-drawn wagons to supply retailers all over the metropolitan area.

From Pushcart to Big Business

Legend has it that serving ice cream in an edible dish originated at the Louisiana Exposition of 1904 in St. Louis. It is said that a man with a waffle concession came to the rescue of an ice cream vendor in the next booth by rolling a waffle into a cone to meet a shortage of dishes. What actually happened was that my father was among the exhibitors, selling ice cream in his patented cups. Ice cream he could make fresh every day, but the cups had to be brought from Hoboken, and he ran out. That was when he turned to the waffle maker in the next booth and asked him to roll the waffles into the next best thing to a cup - a cone. Because of its success at the Exposition the idea of an edible ice-cream container was spread all over the country.

Not wanting to get into the machinery business, Italo made no effort to sell his molding machines to other manufacturers. Instead he built up an extensive trade in bulk orders for those fragile, delicious cones themselves. Children adored them as they still do, but some adults felt undignified to be



SOME 19TH-CENTURY HOKEY-POKEY MEN SERVED THEIR ICE CREAM ON SLIPS OF PAPER, UNLIKE ITALO WHO USED CUPS.

seen licking an ice-cream cone in public, so Father developed ice cream sandwich wafers in the form of clam shells, fish, and bananas, as well as simple rectangles.

My mother was Italo's second wife. She was 25 years younger than him and was also a Marcioni - a distant cousin. I have nephews who are older than me because they are my father's grandsons by his first wife. Italo Marchiony continued in business until his retirement in 1938 and died in 1954 at the age of 86. The Marchiony brand of ice cream was sold to

Schrafft's.

His advertising proudly and properly identified him as "the oldest manufacturer of ice-cream cones and wafers," and Italo Marchiony of Hoboken, my immigrant father, became the founder of a great American institution: the ice-cream cone.

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Old Timers

Hoboken's tall, skinny relics haven't worked for years.

They stand idly on street corners all over Hoboken.

Twenty or more of them survive.

They're relics of Hoboken's era of trolley cars, the rumbling trams that clanged through Hoboken's streets and would take you uptown and downtown for a nickel.

They're the poles that once carried the wires that brought electric power to Hoboken's street cars, and now sometimes support traffic lights for the buses that took their place in 1949. You probably pass old poles several times a day without noticing.

HOBOKEN HISTORY took an inventory of these survivors of a past time. They're dark green, weathered by decades of Hoboken summers and winters. Some still support their original telephone wire crossarms, others hold traffic lights and signs. Many still have their pointy tops. Some lean a little.

Here's a census of the survivors we've found. If you spot others we'd be happy to hear from you.

Washington Street:

NW corner of 14th St.

SE corner of 10th St.

SE corner of 8th St.

SW corner of 3rd St.

SE corner of 1st St.

SW corner of 13th St.

NW corner of 9th St.

NW corner of 7th St.

NE corner of 2nd St.

SE corner of Newark St.

Hudson Place:

North side between Hudson and River Sts.

NW corner of River St.

NE corner of Hudson Place and River St.



TYPICAL HOBOKEN TROLLEY HEADING FOR SUMMIT AVE.
— ONE OF MANY DESTINATIONS. JOSEPH EID COLLECTION.



TROLLEY POLES WITH THEIR CROSS-ARMS PEEK OUT FROM
BEHIND A 14TH ST. LAMPPOST. PHOTO BY BOB FOSTER.

Willow Avenue:

West side at 13th St.

Newark Street:

NW corner of Hudson St. NW corner of Court St.

1st Street:

South side between Washington and Bloomfield Sts.

2nd Street:

North side, between Garden St. and Park Ave.

14th Street:

NE corner of Bloomfield St.

NE corner of Garden St.

North side between Garden and Bloomfield Sts.,

— three of them!

FERRY TALE II

Hoboken's ferry flourishes under steam power until menaced by a tunnel beneath the river



FERRYBOAT ELMIRA LEAVING HOBOKEN FOR NEW YORK

John De Palma Collection

The first 200 years of ferry service between Hoboken and New York were marked by progress from a boat propelled by an oarsman to a boat driven by horsepower and hampered by continuous dispute over who actually held the privilege to operate the service. By 1821 the management responsibility was resolved in favor of John Stevens and steam took over from muscle. The next hundred years was a century of continual technological improvement as the boats grew bigger, faster, and more dependable. Even a series of fires failed to halt the Hoboken ferry. Then higher technology doomed the ferry when tunnels connecting New Jersey with New York bored beneath the river.

On November 3, 1821 the Hoboken Steamboat Ferry Company was incorporated and less than a year later the steam ferryboat *Hoboken* was completed and placed into service on May 11, 1822. A newspaper account of the time describes it:

The Steamboat Hoboken, moves through the water at nine miles an hour. It is 98 feet long on deck, 26 feet wide, with a draft of only 3½ feet, about 200 tons burden and between 9 and 10 feet deep in the middle of her hold. She can afford accommodations for at least one hundred persons.

A notice appeared in the *New York Evening Post* on May 14:

The beautiful steam ferryboat built by Messrs. Stevens, to ply between this city and Hoboken commences its trips. The construction of this boat, which unites all

that is desirable in speed, convenience, safety and economy, is highly creditable to the gentlemen who planned it, and in fact, to the mechanical ingenuity of the country.

The Hoboken made trips "every hour by St. Paul's Church clock."

Yellow Fever Strikes

An outbreak of yellow fever in New York caused the ferry terminal to be temporarily moved from the foot of Barclay Street, as reported in *The Centennial of Freedom*, a Newark newspaper, September 3, 1822. *The Hoboken Ferry has been removed because of Yellow Fever to the North Battery at the Foot of Hulbert Street, opposite St. John's Church. This is near the market, at present in Hudson Square.*

The editing of *The Centennial* is faulty, for the North Battery, built for defense during the War of 1812, was at Hubert, not at a non-existent Hulbert Street. It was this same yellow fever epidemic that led to the populating of Greenwich Village, which

at that time was a rural area. Residents of New York City fled there to escape the fever.

In 1823 Stevens asked the New York Common Council for the right to operate a steam ferry from the vicinity of Spring Street to Hoboken. The Council's Ferry Committee granted Stevens the right to operate steam ferry between Canal Street and Hoboken, requiring that the steamboat should depart for

"Easy travel between New York and Hoboken had much to do with the attractiveness of our city."



THE FOURTEENTH STREET FERRY TERMINAL BEFORE ITS SITE WAS OCCUPIED BY THE BETHLEHEM STEEL SHIPYARD.

JOHN DE PALMA COLLECTION

Hoboken once an hour from sunrise to sunset.

In September of the same year the ferryboat *Pioneer* made its first trial trip on the run. The boat was much faster than the *Hoboken*. It had a ladies' cabin below deck, carpeted and warmed by open fireplaces; and a further temptation to lady passengers was the installation of two large looking-glasses.

Additional steam ferries followed in quick succession. The *Fairy Queen* appeared in April 1825 and horse boats were taken out of service. The *Queen* was rebuilt in 1851 and re-named *Phoenix*.

Ferries Lost in War and Peace

Following the *Fairy Queen* came the *Newark* in 1828 and the *Passaic* in 1844. The *Passaic* was taken off the Hoboken Ferry later and sent to Newark. The *John Fitch* was built in 1846, followed by the *James Rumsey* the same year. In 1853 the *Rumsey* was destroyed by fire while lying in its slip at Barclay Street. Her machinery was afterward installed in the ferryboat *Paterson*, which was built in 1854. The ferryboat *James Watt* was built in 1852 and destroyed by fire in 1870.

The ferry *Chancellor Livingston* was built in 1853. It was chartered by the Federal Government and served as a Civil War troop transport for a year.

A second ferryboat *Hoboken* was built in 1861,

chartered by the Federal Government and lost in a Civil War expedition by General Ambrose Burnside in 1862.

Undaunted by these wartime losses, the Stevens family built a third ferryboat *Hoboken* in 1863. Curiously, the United States Navy has never commissioned a ship named for the city of Hoboken.

With the convenience of frequent, fast, and dependable ferry service, the city of Hoboken grew rapidly in those pre-Civil War years, so much so that the city was incorporated on March 28, 1855. Easy travel between New York and Hoboken had much to do with the attractiveness of our city to people working in Manhattan, much as it does today.

Improved ferry service by steamboats prompted Stevens to raise fares in 1825, which had been unchanged for decades. A one-way passenger fare was increased to all of 12½ cents, and an "ordinary market wagon, loaded, covered or uncovered with two horses and driver" went to 50 cents. The most costly vehicle to travel to New York aboard the ferry was a loaded "large Pennsylvania wagon, or a similar one empty, drawn by two horses, and driver," \$2.00. A "Pennsylvania wagon" was probably what became known later as the Conestoga wagon of the Oregon Trail pioneers. But you could lug a bushel of salt with you for only two cents. A hundred pounds of gunpowder "only when properly secured," was 25 cents. No rates were



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TERMINAL OF THE BARCLAY STREET AND CHRISTOPHER STREET FERRIES BEFORE IT WAS DEMOLISHED BY FIRE IN 1905.

JOHN DE PALMA COLLECTION.



given for an attaché case.

The Christopher Street ferry began to run in 1836, connecting Hoboken with Greenwich Village until 1955. Christopher Street, a narrow thoroughfare for most of its length, widens out as it reaches the Hudson River so that there was room for traffic to the ferry house at its foot. Ironically, there is still a station of the PATH there. PATH is the successor to the H&M Tubes which contributed to the death of ferry service from Hoboken. The Christopher Street Ferry replaced the Spring and Canal Street Ferries.

Night boat to Hoboken.

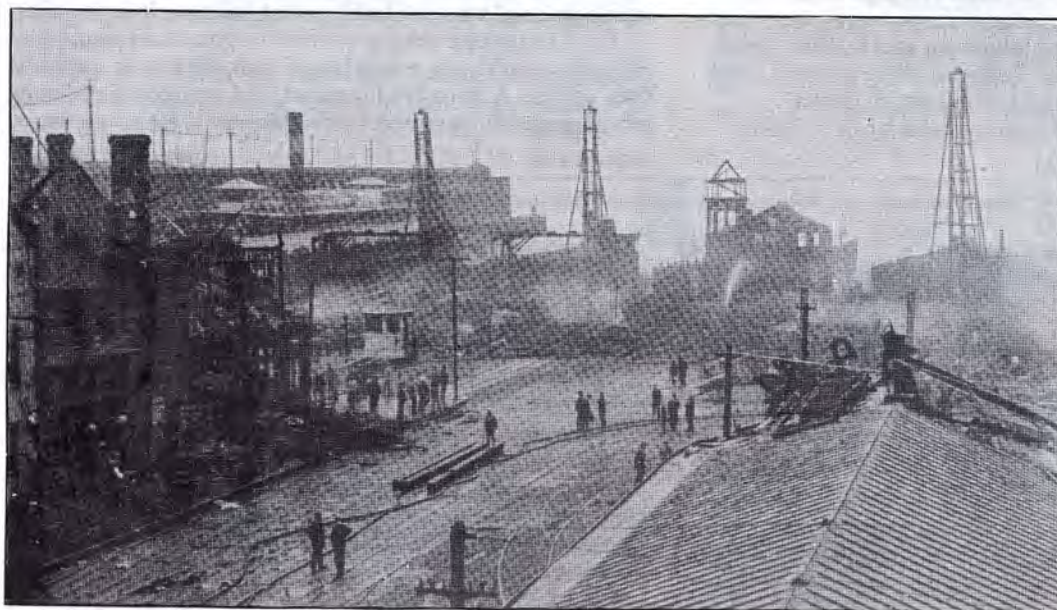
Traffic on the Hoboken ferries boomed, and in 1856 the first night boat, the *Phoenix*, was placed in service. The Civil War also increased traffic and Stevens had to build more boats. The *Morristown* was launched in 1864, built by John Stuart of Hoboken. Stuart also built the second *James Rumsey*, 1867, and in 1868 the *Weehawken*.

Ferryboat building became a major industry in Hoboken. In 1871 Stuart built the *Hackensack* and in

1873 the *Secaucus*. The *Secaucus* was still in service in 1920 between Carteret, NJ and the romantically named Linoleumville, NY. There apparently being no end to New Jersey communities after which to name ferry boats, and no slackening in need for more boats, the *Moonachie* was built in 1877 by Stuart. It was sold in 1907 to the New York and College Point Ferry Co.

The Hoboken Ferry's next boat was a technological advance, the *Lackawanna* of 1881. It was the first steel hull ferry boat to be built and was constructed in Newburgh, NY. In 1907 the *Lackawanna* was sold to the Norfolk (VA) and Washington (DC) Steamboat Company only to be sunk in a collision in the Potomac River and never raised.

A new steel-hulled *Hoboken* was built in 1881 in Newburgh and served until it was sold in 1910. There appeared to be a very brisk market for used ferry boats in those days. The steel-hulled *Paunpeck* was built in 1882 in Newburgh and ended its days shuttling between Yonkers, NY and Alpine, NJ for the Westchester Ferry Company.



SKELETAL REMAINS OF THE HOBOKEN FERRY TERMINAL AFTER THE GREAT FIRE OF 1905.

JOHN DE PALMA COLLECTION

The Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad Company took over the Hoboken Ferry Company in 1903. The following year a new ferry terminal was built at 23rd Street in Manhattan and the original 14th Street, Manhattan terminal was torn down. The fateful year 1905 was at hand.

The Great Fire of 1905.

The night of August 7 a fire broke out around the smokestack of the ferry *Hopatcong*, lying at the north Christopher Street slip at the Hoboken Terminal. Within a minute the entire upper deck of the *Hopatcong* was ablaze and the flames spread to the shed of the ferryhouse. From the ferry sheds the fire spread to the railroad depot, which was also completely destroyed. A pall of smoke hung over Hoboken.

According to the *Observer* the following day, The devastation was complete. "Where the Lackawanna Railroad depot and the ferry houses of that company stood yesterday, today there is nothing but a mass of ruins. Those portions of the buildings that remained upright after the great fire were pulled down by a gang of over 300 laborers. So thorough were the ravages of the flames that the debris at no place is more than five

feet high."

The newspaper went on to report that "...the two bar rooms of the Duke's House are practically gutted." The steel hull of the *Hopatcong*, built in 1885, was eventually converted into a coal barge.

By August 10 temporary ferry sheds were completed and work was begun on the new ferry terminal and railroad depot. Then fire struck again, this time in December and the 23rd Street terminal in Manhattan was destroyed. Firemen were late in arriving due to a defective fire alarm box.

Undaunted by the fires, the Hoboken ferries continued to serve the public. The present terminal, which replaced the one destroyed by fire, was opened on February 25, 1907. Prudently, the new building was of fireproof construction, and the elegance of the structure which was described in newspapers of the time still survives to make the Hoboken Lackawanna Terminal a national historic landmark.

But while the new terminal was being celebrated, an invisible menace to the Hoboken ferry was being boded beneath the Hudson River: the Hudson & Manhattan Railroad. The Hoboken Ferry flourished as never before, its doom unsuspected.

[To be continued in the next issue]

Chewing Gum: First Sold in Hoboken

While Texans remember the Alamo for heroism, we can remember it for Hoboken. The first time a branded, packaged chewing gum went on sale was in a drugstore in Hoboken. And it was Mexico's loss of the Texan war of independence that brought chicle, the gummy chew, to our area.

Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, the Mexican General whose 5000-man army stormed the Alamo in 1836, had a favorite "chew" — chicle, the dried milky sap of the sapodilla, a tree of the Mexican jungle. When Santa Anna was later exiled to the United States, he brought a chunk of the gummy resin, and it caught the interest of Thomas Adams, a local photographer and inventor.

Adams imported a large quantity of chicle and tried unsuccessfully to convert it into an inexpensive synthetic rubber. To recover a portion of his investment, he decided to market chicle as an alternative to the wads of paraffin wax that were then being sold as a popular chew.

Thomas Adams' first small tasteless chicle balls went on sale

in a drugstore in Hoboken in February 1871 for a penny apiece. One of Adams' sons sold them along the east coast, packaged in a box labeled "Adams New York Gum — Snapping and Stretching." Chicle was superior to wax and

soon it was marketed in long, thin strips, notched so that a druggist could break off a penny length.

Later entrepreneurs added flavoring, and now Americans chew ten million pounds a year. But it started in our town.



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GREAT STONE FACES OF HOBOKEN



When you look at many buildings in Hoboken they look back. Some of them appear here. Look for more. They help give Hoboken architecture the distinctiveness and character that make Hoboken the unique place that it is.

This page:

Top left, a placid woman at 1208 Park Avenue.

Above left, a mustached face at 909 Hudson Street peers through stone-carved foliage.

Right, one of two ladies who flank the doorway of the Eldorado apartments at 12th and Washington Streets. Restoration since this photo was taken repaired her elegant nose.

Facing page:

Top left, one of two modern maidens atop the façade of the Terminal Building at 70 Hudson St.



Top right, a fierce helmeted Viking above the door of 1120 Washington Street.

Below left, a horned monster at 1031 Park Avenue. Below right, a cherub at 909 Hudson Street who looks like he lost a street fight.

Photographs
by
Robert
Foster



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A Policeman's Lot in 1889

Police blotters of a century ago reveal a Victorian world of lost children, runaway horses, and fires.

by David H. Lippman

Rudolph Vollmann, 40, male, white, German, laborer, married, drunk, fined \$3.

So begins the police blotter for February 27, 1889.

Hoboken's history of felonies and misdemeanors were taking up too much space at our cramped police headquarters in the basement of City Hall, so officials were grateful when State regulations permitted them to dispose of the large brown ledgers, whose pages are filled with neat Victorian pen-and-ink entries.

They reveal an interesting picture of Hoboken's sins of 100 years ago. We were a city of 42,700 according to the 1890 census, close to the present level. People – mostly German, Dutch, Italian, and Irish – lived in what is now the southeast corner of Hoboken, near the rail yards, ferry slips, and docks that fueled an economy that supported a bar every other store on River Street.

Life moved at a

slower pace a century ago. On October 2, 1886, John Mitchell, 40, of East Newark, broke his leg while loading a cart in Fort Lee. He was taken by rowboat to Hoboken's Fourth Street Dock for treatment at St. Mary Hospital.

Edward Buck, 37, male, white, German, cigarmaker, abandoned his wife, paroled.

But children died young. Kate Toole, 7, of Grand Street, stood in front of a bonfire made by boys on October 3, 1886, and was burned fatally. Katherine Kriel, 3, fell into a boiler of hot water and died. John Yeck, 3, was reported on "the point of death" after eating poisoned candy bought at a store.

Marie Mahone, 9, came from New York to visit her aunt. While in the kitchen, she was burned fatally by a stove fire. Officer Murray, who lived next door, ran to the child's assistance and put out the fire, police

Handlebar moustaches were standard equipment for the Hoboken cops of a century ago. The unidentified policemen above are in the photo collection of the Hoboken Public Library.

aid. This was on December 20, 1886.

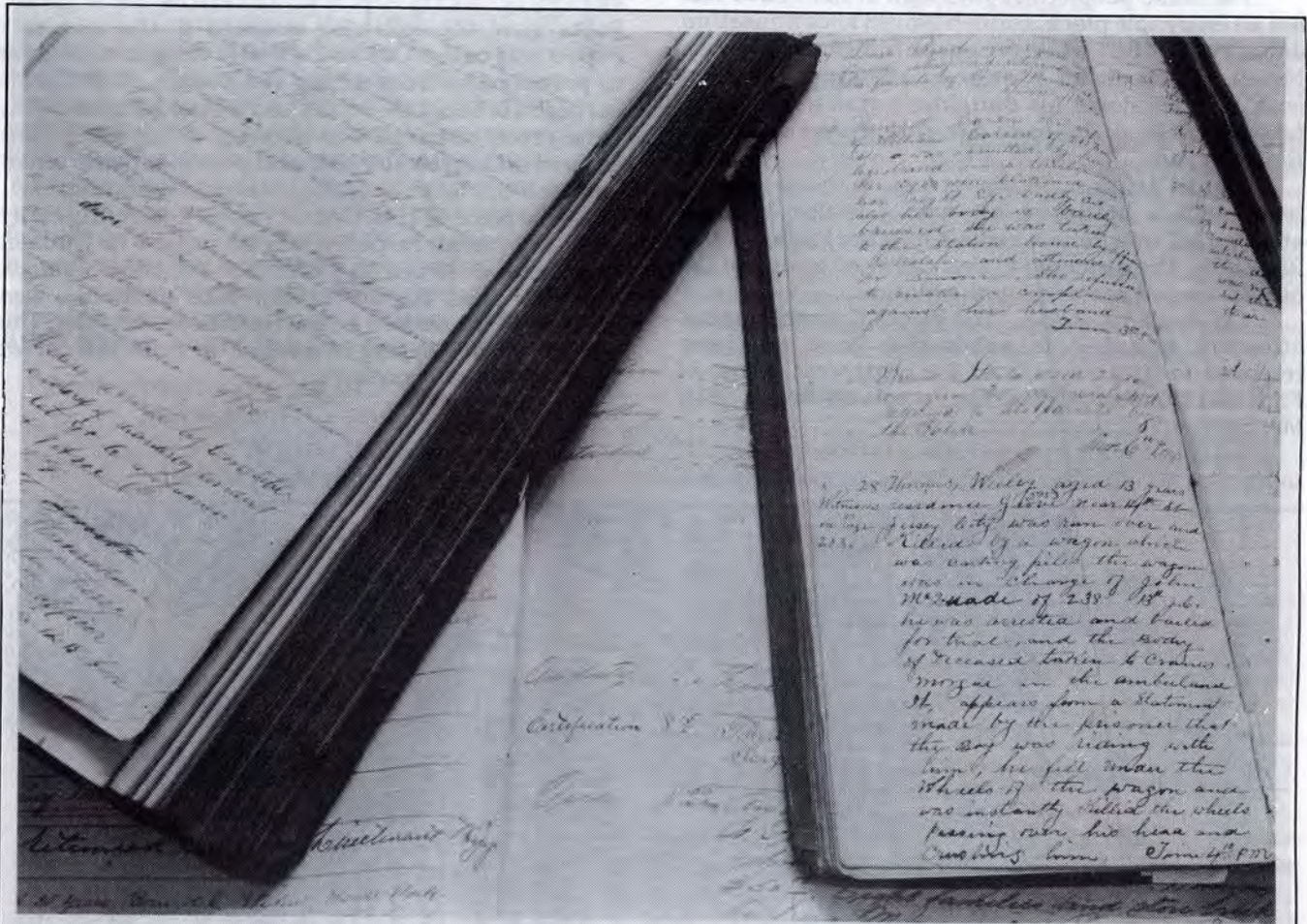
Henry Ebert, 20, male, white, American, teamster, single, assault and battery, Fred Cohley, complainant, case discharged.

Street traffic consisted strictly of horses and wagons. A runaway horse attached to a buggy was caught by Officer David Harrison on Bloomfield Street on December 4, 1886. Then January 9, 1887, brought another big horse case, one drawing a sleigh on First

Street panicked, hurled the driver off his sleigh, and bolted. The errant horse collided with a junk wagon and a coach, injuring one of the passengers, and finally was stopped five blocks later, "after making kindling of the sleigh."

Honesty was different, too. Many entries read like this one for June 5, 1887: "The store door of 64 First St. found open by Officer Walsh. Nothing missing." Many lost children were returned to their parents, earning only a brief note in the blotter.

POLICE BLOTTERS RESCUED BY THE HOBOKEN HISTORICAL MUSEUM. A GREAT MANY MORE VOLUMES WERE DESTROYED BEFORE THE MUSEUM COULD ACQUIRE THEM. PHOTO BY ROBERT FOSTER



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But many things were not so different. On New Year's Day 1887, Fritz Kienst was beaten by "unknown roughs." Next day, waiter Franz Kapka of Robert Gantzberg's Saloon, which later became a theater, was "atrociously assaulted" by a co-worker. A party of Hungarians was attacked on Jan. 26, 1887, while enroute to their steamship for the voyage home. Andrew Ardan lost an eye.

Charles Vindor, 40, male, white, German, laborer, married, drunk, discharged.

For some people, the Hoboken of the 1880s was not an enjoyable place. Gotlieb Wagen shot himself on January 26, 1887 while riding the 5:50 ferry. Thomas Hovell, 62, "took off his shoes, stockings, hat and coat" and fell down his daughter's stairs, dying of a broken neck. A January fire devastated four Erie Railroad cars.

Daniel Kiernan, 38, was struck on the back of his head with a bottle by his wife. Charles McNulty stabbed his wife Rebecca with a butcher knife on April 28, 1887. The outcome of this case – of or any of the others – is not recorded in the blotter.

On April 12, 1887, "The street Commissioners' attention is called to ashes that have not been removed for three weeks at the northwest corner of Fifth and Hudson Streets. The complaint was made by Mr. Spiffen."

An unknown man aged about 60 "dropped dead" in front of 105 Clinton Street. "He is supposed to be a

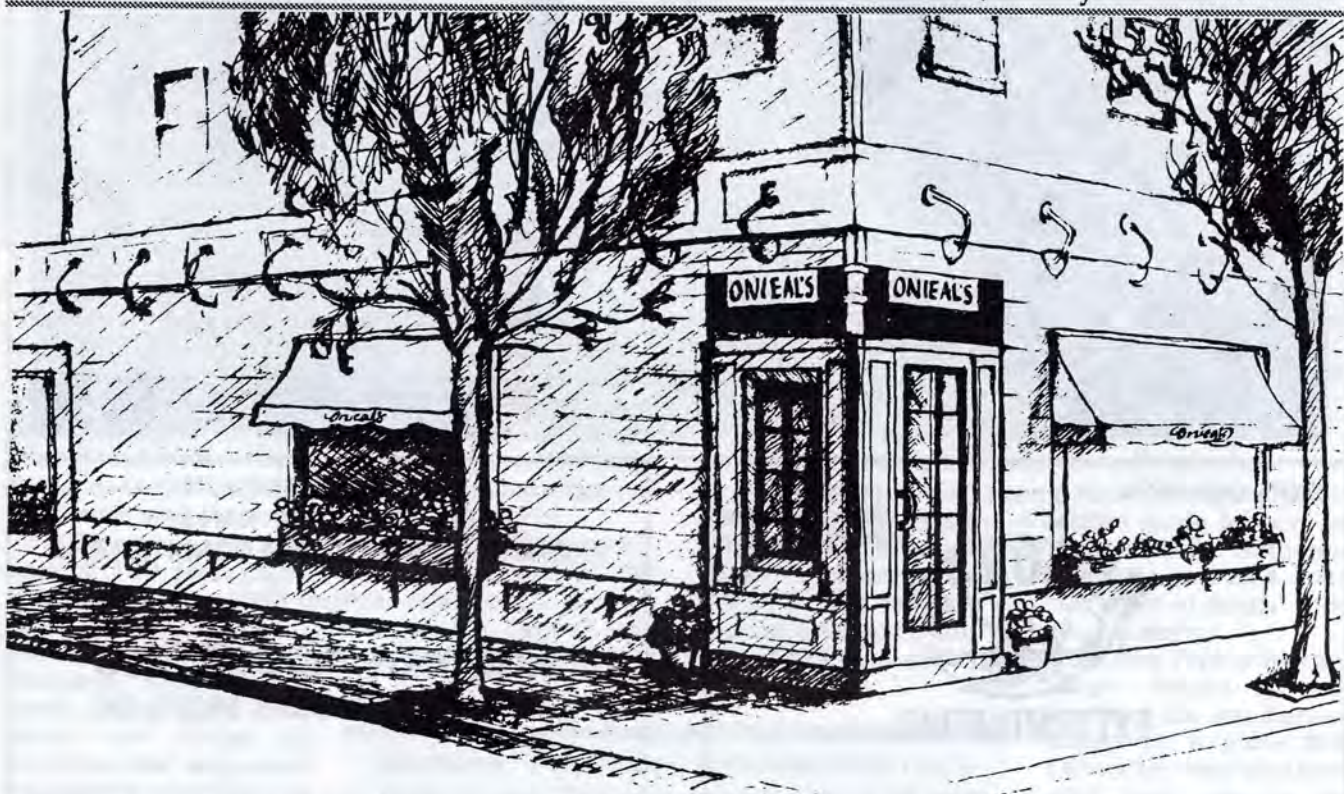
tramp," the blotter recorded laconically. The body was removed to Crane's Morgue.

That name crops up again and again. Crane's Ambulance, Crane's Funeral Home, Crane's Morgue – all the same outfit – were there to pick up the bodies, such as when blacksmith Fritz Doies was found after he drowned in the Hudson River. Sailor William Gregg drowned while bathing in the Hudson. "He sank but did not come to surface." The bodies of Doies and Gregg were removed by Crane's hearses.

The blotters had their share of mysteries. John H. Pope apparently felt morose on the afternoon of June 4, 1887. According to police he attempted to commit suicide by taking a poison known as Paris green. Police gave the following account of the incident: Pope's wife called Officer Ford into the house in time to prevent him from taking the poison. Pope had a kettle full of beer beside him and a glassful mixed with Paris green which he was about to drink when Ford entered and threw the beer and poison into the street and took the balance of the poison to headquarters.

One piece of 19th Century news might ring eerily familiar to modern policemen anywhere in Hudson County. At 3:40 pm on December 26, 1888, Francis McAuliff, aged 10, an orphan with no home, was brought to the station house by Officer Mulcahy. The boy had been sleeping in a cellar on Jefferson Street for the past two months.

Michael McCune, 21, male, white, American, laborer, single, atrocious assault, bailed for trial.



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Hoboken as the WPA saw it

Our town in the 1930s looked to the Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration much like it does today, and much as it did 80 years before.

The make-work program of the Federal government in the depression of the 1930s was the Works Progress Administration, familiar to grandparents as the WPA. Among its many efforts to put people to work was the Federal Writers' Project which kept writers writing for pay when there were no regular jobs for any of them. Among other assignments, the WPA kept thousands of writers and nonwriters on "relief" to develop a set of travel books. A guide was written for each of the forty-eight states and Alaska, as well as several large cities and towns.

Their description of Hoboken appeared in *New Jersey, a guide to its present and past*, published in 1939. The picture of Hoboken is one in with which

today's inhabitants would feel rather at home. In some respects the Hoboken of 1939 sounds a lot like the Hoboken of 1991.

"The old residents
do not apologize
for Hoboken –
they like it"

Let's see what the WPA said about Hoboken in 1939:

"HOBOKEN (10' alt., 59,261 pop.), incorrectly pronounced "Hobucken" by railroad conductors and a considerable part of the population, has three picturesque characteristics: a water front given over to commerce on a super-technicalized scale; a survival of the 'nineties, revealed in the staid solidity of the old-fashioned streets back of the waterfront; and a certain cosmopolitan atmosphere, due largely to the presence of restaurants and cafes where the European culture

PIGEON-RAISING WAS POPULAR IN THE '30S WITH LOFTS ON MANY ROOFTOPS.

ROSE NOTOLI FAMILY PHOTO



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that started them still remains. Outstanding also is Stevens Institute, one of the first-rank engineering colleges of the country. The old residents and the Institute people do not apologize for Hoboken; they like it. Here they find much of the pleasurable life – however different in form – that marked the town 80 years ago [in the 1850s] when it was a resort for the first families of New York.

The city is cramped in a mile-square area between the Hudson River and the rump of the Palisades. Downtown Hoboken borders Jersey City; at Washington Street the workers in one factory can cross from one city to the other without leaving their room. On the northern boundary are Union city on the Heights and Weehawken on the narrow strip of river front. There is hardly any empty space except for the little block-square parks and the Institute campus. Factories, stores, and out-of-date tenements are crowded together flush with the sidewalk. The most densely populated city in the United States, Hoboken has evenly laid-out streets in both directions, each packed with a mass of low, flat-roofed buildings. ”

Sound familiar? Yet a trolley ride the length of Washington street cost then only a nickel and a taxi ride anywhere in town was 25 cents. There were a first-run movie house (the Fabian) and three others. Parking was limited only on Washington Street and

Willow Avenue. Ten steamship lines and five railroads made Hoboken a transportation center in 1939, but commuters were yet to turn it into a parking lot.

Streetcars snaked up a rail viaduct from 15th and Madison streets to the top of the Palisades. Stevens Castle still stood on Castle Point, a secret tunnel leading from its basement to River Road.

GROCERIES WERE DELIVERED BY BASKET IN THE '30S. ROSE NOTOLI FAMILY PHOTO



But in 1939 changes in Hoboken had already taken place. The WPA writers point out: "Nothing more strikingly illustrates the post-war change in America's maritime life than the stories of River Street's yesterdays, and its life today. The River Street saloons, the sailors' boarding houses and resorts have been known the world over to sea-faring men for generations. The shop-talk of the seven seas was town gossip on River Street sidewalks. Strangers from inland could listen wide-eyed to casual stories of hardship and adventure, of hardboiled captains and wily owners, of nautical feats of sail and steam." And the writers, who surely must have enjoyed their research into Hoboken, report that "Hoboken has been famous for its beer since

1642, though none is brewed here today."

For more about Hoboken in 1939, see *The WPA Guide to 1930s New Jersey*, Rutgers University Press, 1989, reprint of "New Jersey, a guide to its present and past," originally published by Viking Press, 1939, as part of the American Guide series.

Hoboken as Jennie saw it

Hoboken Remembered

by Jennie Carulli

"*Eh paesano?* How about some Hoboken Nostalgia?"

"What? You *no comprende?*"

"How about you? You in the BMW?"

"Oh – you're new here?"

"Holy smokes. Born and Bred, where are you?"

Today a stroll through Hoboken's Willow Avenue (in my home town) in a 1991 record-breaking 96-degree sizzler. Sure enough! "Tar Beach" ever true! It never disappoints us. Along Willow Terrace (Renaissance Christening: "Willow Mews") the City maintenance dump truck is in the process of depositing molten tar at the intersections. Filling in where the street had been broken to construct level curb space for handicap access. While one worker packs down the hot tar, another levels it off. This operation is carried out under the careful scrutiny of various senior sidewalk superintendents. The assemblage appears to be mostly retired construction workers. They observe intently with an exaggerated air of connoisseurian critique and either nod in approval or volunteer pointed unflattering comments.

I'm enjoying this scene when suddenly I hear a cry above the roar of the dump truck engine: "Trippa-Trippa!" Am I dreaming? I look around – it's a peddler arrived in our midst, hawking fresh tripe from his truck. I can't believe it! A resurrection! Music from the past. Except that years ago I remember the call was always "Trippa – Trippa e Capuzelle! Eh!" "Tripe, tripe and suckling pig heads." This incantation was always vocalized in deep melodic baritones.

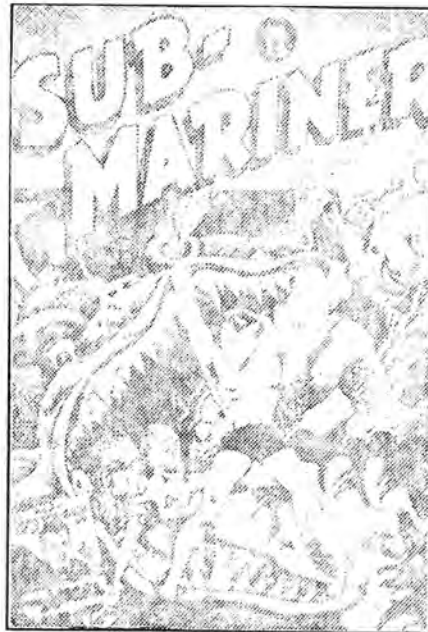
Ah – street peddlers! One of Hoboken's bustling arteries before she suffered her stroke and was subsequently rehabilitated. Now she has emerged as

an elegant grand lady with many parasols. Abruptly the clockspring snaps and it's 1938 on Madison Street as I regress back, back, back to my childhood. Boys hittin' runs against the high stoops. Connie, Millie, and Rosalie jumpin' double dutch. Andrew chasin' his sister Mary, and Jo Jo their dog barkin' wildly and chasin' both of them. Mikie walkin' Prinnie, the all-white canine pride of Madison Street. Oh,

what's this? Nickie and Gabriel shootin' bottle caps stuffed with pressed orange skins. Nickie's knuckles keep gettin' scraped against the cement but he doesn't feel a thing. Winnin's what counts here. Hey, Jimmie's still workin' on his scooter. Fruit and vegetable crates all over the place. He's a perfectionist – every project is an engineering feat for him. Nothin's ever good enough.

Here comes Tony home from the piers. Gee whiz – is it 5 o'clock already? Boy, Tony sure looks tough as he struts along. He's always sweaty and dirty with his jacket flung over one shoulder, red neckerchief tied around his neck, cap pushed back to one side. I stare at the longshoreman's hook stickin' outta his belt as he passes by. A window scrapes open – we look up – it's Connie's mother. "Con-n-getta!" "Five more minutes, Ma."

Here's Vinny comin' from Fourth Street, home from his first office job. He smiles at his baby sister. He's got a new comic book for her. We all gather round. "Ooo-o-oh a new Sub-Mariner. Wow!" "Can I see it when you're through? Huh?" Suddenly I'm jolted by an insistent tapping on my shoulder. I nearly jump out of my skin. "You OK, lady?" I'm back to reality. "Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't realize I was in your way." "What? Did I have a sad smile? No, nothing is wrong. It's just that I had a vision of past happiness."



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SYBIL'S CAVE

Museum members plan to restore a landmark.

Trustee Steve Kilnisan, with the participation of Hoboken Municipal Court Judge Ross London and Museum member Gene Cricco, has begun a project to restore and re-open Sybil's Cave.

In the 19th Century visitors came in droves to Hoboken to drink the reputedly medicinal spring water of the cave. Though the cave has been blocked up, it is known to still be present and its spring flows beneath the underbrush that now covers the cliff-face above River Road.

In the old book from which this illustration of Sybil's Cave is taken, it is described as having been excavated through solid rock to a depth of 30 feet. About five feet within the interior of the cave there was a spring of water slightly impregnated with magnesia and thousands of glasses of it were sold to visitors for a few pennies.

When you drive along River Road past its site, you'll see water puddled on the pavement, still flowing from the spring that feeds Sybil's Cave. The cave can be made accessible, says Kilnisan. It is his hope that the old attraction can again be a place of interest to the public. If its waters test out to be safe to drink, they could once again be sold. In any case the location, with its history, could attract visitors and souvenir seekers, to the benefit of the Museum and our community.

The Cave Committee seeks help from other members. At present the committee is working on enlisting the cooperation of Stevens Institute, on whose property the cave is located.

Members interested in working on this project are asked to phone Steve at 659-0802.

In a future issue of Hoboken History we plan to publish an article on Sybil's Cave. If you have any personal memories of the place, please tell us about them. Drop us a line at 1216 Garden Street.



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DONATIONS

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

By John Foster, a print of Sibyl's Cave from *Pictorial Library and Family Encyclopedia*, Boston, Philps, Sampson & Co., 1859 [reproduced on p.18].

By Monica Bohringer, group portrait photograph of members of the Hudsonia Club, 1919.

By Monica Bohringer, photograph of funeral services conducted for members by the Hudsonia Club, circa 1920.

By Tim Daly, *National Geographic Magazine* containing an article "Here's the New York Harbor," highlighting Hoboken's Bethlehem Steel shipyard, December 1954.

By Eric Hummel, stereoscope photo card showing the Hoboken piers circa 1916.

By Ken Schultze, official program of the Hoboken Amateur Rowing Association, 1902.

By Ken Schultze, playbill for the German-language version of the motion picture "On the Waterfront," circa 1955.

By Officer Nicholas Manente Jr. of the Hoboken Police Department, a large hand-tinted wall map of Hoboken, mounted on canvas, 19th Century.

The Museum thanks to all who have donated objects, memorabilia, photographs, books, maps, letters, and drawings which relate to Hoboken's rich history and which so many people were so happy to see at our show. We are actively encouraging residents and former residents of Hoboken to donate to the Museum more items for display. If you have a possible donation, please telephone me at 656-2240. Your donations will find no safer home, and will be enjoyed by many more people.

Robert Foster
Curator

OUR ANNUAL SHOW

More than 200 people defied the worst rain storm of the year to attend opening night of the Museum's sixth annual exhibition, "Artifacts and Donations," at City Hall on Friday evening, November



GROUP PORTRAIT OF THE HUDSONIA CLUB, 1919
DONATED BY MONICA BOHRINGER.

22. This year the Museum expanded its exhibition space to the second floor of City Hall, displaying its Hoboken memorabilia in newly refurbished show-cases donated by the Newark Museum.

The 1991-1992 exhibit can be seen through the coming year on the first and second floors of City Hall, First and Washington, Monday through Friday 9am to 4pm. Admission is free.

Curator of the exhibit was Robert Foster, helped by Peter Pockriss, Kathy Rogers, Maureen Alex, George Kirschgessner, Steve Hefler, Steve Kilnisan, John De Palma, and Paul and Barbara Lippman.

The Museum wishes to thank the Mayor's office, Ed Chius, Angela Servello, Mayor Pat Pasculli, and the Hoboken Public Works crew for their support, understanding, and cooperation.

Also, our opening night reception could not have been the success it was without the generous donations of food and beverages by Vitale Foodtown, East LA, Hoboken Gourmet, Lisa's Deli, Carlo's Bakery, Antique Bakery, Sparrow Liquor, and Garden Deli. Their donations were coordinated by Steve Kilnisan, John DePalma, and Hugh Kilmer.

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