The Official Journal of the Organization

The Hoboken Historical Museum Newsletter

OF BY And FOR MuSeum MembersS.

November 1988 Hoboken, N.J. No. 21

OUR NEW EXHIBIT ARRIVES

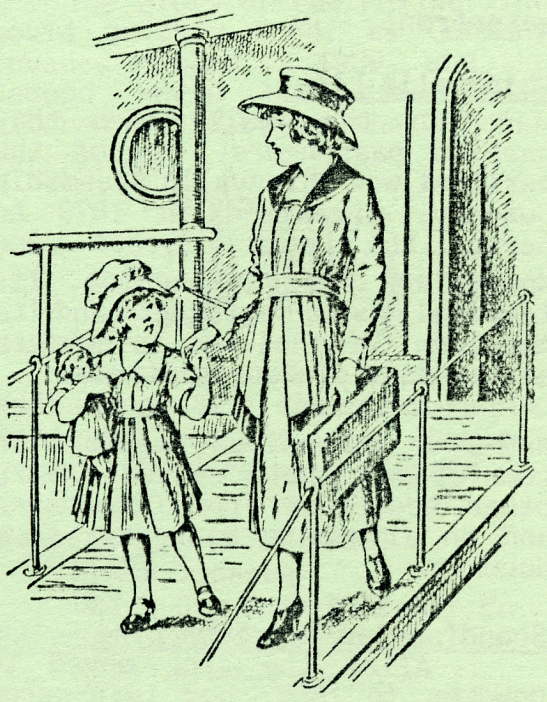
The third annual exhibition of the Hoboken Historical Museum, "The Great Ocean Liners of Hoboken," opens on November 18, with a festive opening night party from 6:30 PM to 9:30 PM.

The exhibit, on view on the second floor of Hoboken's City Hall at Washington and First Streets, is the culmination of many months of research and hard work by co-curators Robert Foster and Jane Steuerwald.

They aimed to present ocean liner history through the recollections of Hobokenites who remember when great vessels docked in their city, welcoming thousands aboard to travel in luxury we may never again see.

Opening night activities will recall those times by recreating the setting of an ocean liner deck, with dozens of signal flags, musicians, shuffleboard courts, deck chairs, and the aural background of the waterfront. There will even be a photographic backdrop, where visitors may have their pictures taken with them at the wheel of the "Leviathan." The exhibit also includes original shipboard menus, flags and souvenirs, ocean liner posters, ship models, post cards and relics from the great fire of 1900 that devastated the Hoboken waterfront.

Highlight of the evening will be an hour-long slide lecture on the great ocean liners conducted by author-historian Bill Miller, who teaches at Hoboken's Calabro School and has devoted his life to becoming one of the world's leading authorities on the vanished glories of the great transatlantic ocean liners. He has written more than 20 books on the subject.



As a reminder of the bygone elegance of pre-war transatlantic travel, music will be performed on the harpsichord by Mark Nicholas, a Hoboken resident who is a frequent concert soloist in the New York-New Jersey metropolitan area.

Admission is free and refreshments will be served. After the opening, the exhibit will be on view in the museum for a year, during regular museum hours, also at no charge.

STEAMSHIP LINES

Besides the three major steamship lines, Hamburg-American, North German Lloyd, and Holland-America Line, which will be featured in the Museum's third exhibition ,there were many other, smaller, steamship companies that had docks at Hoboken in the heyday of the transatlantic liners. Over the years more than 30 different lines operated piers on the Hoboken waterfront.

Thingvalla Line

Of the small lines that carried passengers, one of the earliest was Thingvalla Steamship Company, organized in 1879 to serve the many Swedes and Norwegians coming to America. Its terminal was in Copenhagen and its American terminal was in Hoboken at the foot of Fourth Street.

In the early 1890s the line had four commodious steamers in commission that sailed every other Wednesday from Copenhagen and on alternate Saturdays from Hoboken.

Scandinavian-American Line

After the line moved to Hoboken in 1898, new twin-screw steamers of the most modern type were built expressly for service between Scandinavia and New York. Due to the great pier fire of 1900 in which many piers were destroyed, the line opened a new pier uptown at 17th Street. In 1907 the number of passenger and cargo steamers sailing between Hoboken and foreign ports was twelve, with a tonnage of 78,000. Passengers carried to and from our port numbered 36,262. This popular line was still operating out of Hoboken as late as 1940.

The National Line

Located at the foot of First Street in 1881, the National Line helped increase the flow of emigrants to this country for a few years. The Hamburg-American line later absorbed National.

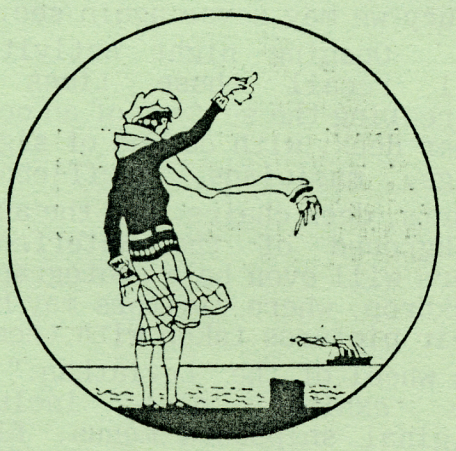
The Savannah Line

In the steamship world, a name well known in coastwise traffic in the early 1890s was the Ocean Steamship Company, or The Savannah Line as it was called. The Atlantic coast line had seven ships at this time. For many years the company had docks in Hoboken on the waterfront between 11th snd 12th Streets.

The Wilson Line

The Wilson line, which occupied a pier on River Street between 2nd and 3rd Streets, operated eight steamers in 1893.

The vessels of this line crossed the Atlantic between



Hoboken and Hull, England. The line was almost exclusively engaged in cargo; only a limited number of passengers were carried. In 1922 the line was operating as Ellerman's Wilson Lines at the foot of 7th Street and also at the large dock then parallel to River Road below Castle Point between 7th and 9th Streets.

The line at that time also ran the well-known Phoenix Lines, which ran piers at the foot of 6th Street for many years. Its ships sailed between Hoboken and Antwerp, Belgium. (And it is interesting to note that directly across the river Scheldt on which Antwerp is situated is a small city named Hoboken!) The Wilson Line company was also joint agent with Messrs. Norton, Lilly & Co., operating steamships out of Hoboken to India and the Far East.

The Munson Line

Munson was in Hoboken for many years and made regular sailings to South America. In 1929 the Company had piers at the foot of 3rd Street which formerly belonged to the North German Lloyd Line. Their passenger ship "Munargo", in 1935, also took short cruises to Nassau, Miami, and Havana.

Gdynia (Polish Line)

The American-Gdynia Line , having outgrown its mooring space at the foot of 6th Street in 1938, moved on April 4 to the large Castle Point pier, below Stevens Castle. The first Gdynia ship to tie up at the new pier was the "Pilsudski", disembarking Bermuda cruise passengers on April 8.

After being leased from the Hoboken Land and Improvement Company, the pier was renovated and equipped at a cost of $200,000, quite a sum in those days.

Description of Terminal

"Passengers will land on the second story or upper deck of the pier, which is the only big-ship passenger pier running parallel to the shore in the entire harbor." So a writer for the Hoboken Review, a small publication published by the Hoboken Chamber of Commerce describes what the ocean traveler would encounter immediately after arriving by liner and departing here in Hoboken, at that time a popular gateway to the United States. The article continues: "They will find themselves in a single room 950 feet long and 100 feet wide. The walls, rising into large skylights, are painted in aluminum. The floor is covered with asphalt tile in green and black, and the upper deck is opened along the entire harborside wall by 218 large rolling doors to give a panoramic view of the Manhattan shore."

The steamship company started in 1930 with three old vessels, and replaced them with the modern, fast diesel-powered liners "Pilsudski" and "Batory", commissioned in 1935 and 1936.

The glory of the Polish line would quickly fade, as Germany invaded Poland in 1939, and the Second World War drastically altered activity on the Hoboken waterfront.

THANKS

We wish to thank the following for their financial contributions to the Museum's general fund-raising efforts.

Benefactors ($500-$999)

Frank Sinatra
Union Dry Dock & Repair Co.

Patrons ($200-$499)

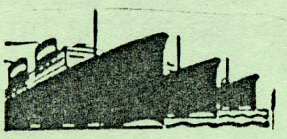
Applied Housing Mngmt Co.
Gerald Baker, Hoboken Land Building
Haven Savings Bank, sla
Maxwell House Coffee
Dale Walker

Friends and Boosters ($100 or less)

Jim Florio, Bernie and Roberta Kenny, Richard Seltzer, Judith S. Stewart, Helen Schulz VandenBerg

We also thank the Hoboken Public Library, Robert Rivard, Maurice Fitzgibbons, Catherine Miranda, and Tom Louis for their time and personal donations.

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



MUSEUM HOURS
9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
weekdays
6:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Wednesday evenings

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HOBOKEN, NJ

THE HOBOKEN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

CITY HALL

WASHINGTON AND FIRST STS. HOBOKEN, N.J.

YOU'RE INVITED TO A HANGING AT CITY HALL.

The hanging of the Museum's new Ocean Liner exhibit, of course.

The Hoboken Historical Museum will again hold a meeting at Hoboken City Hall, second floor, this time on Wednesday, November 16 at 7 PM to help set up the Ocean Liner exhibit. Please bring some of your friends to help. Our regular meeting business will be very brief. Liquid refreshments will be on hand to ease the evening.

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