

HOBOKEN HISTORY

\$3.00

IN THIS ISSUE:

THE HISTORY OF HOBOKEN'S SAINT MARY HOSPITAL
DEMAREST'S PRINCIPAL STOVER • HOBOKEN ACADEMY
DAN-DEE BELT & BAG, ... & MORE



Postcard courtesy of Leonard Luizzi

Hoboken's Saint Mary Hospital
Story on page 2

Issue No. 20 - 1997

Anyone can make history. Only a great teacher can make it come alive!



Ms. Baldwin's 1995-1996 Sixth Grade History Class

THE HUDSON SCHOOL

506 Park Avenue • Hoboken, NJ 07030

For the student who loves to learn and doesn't mind a bit of hard work.

Grades Five through Twelve

Tel: 201-659-8335

Fax: 201-222-3669

BANK WITH THE MIGHTY HUDSON!

MORTGAGES • HOME EQUITY LOANS
CHECKING ACCOUNTS • SAVING PLANS
MAC/NYCE 24-HOUR BANKING

Hudson City
Savings Bank

1018 Washington St. • Hoboken, NJ 07030 • (201) 653-774

Member Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation



Equal Opportunity Lender

HOBOKEN HISTORY

Published by
The Hoboken Historical Museum

Editor: Nicholas Acocella
Design: McKevin Shaughnessy
Magazine Committee
Chairman: Leonard Luizzi
Committee:

John DePalma, George Kirchgessner,
and Marie Luizzi

Museum Founder: Jim Hans

Hoboken Historical Museum
P.O. Box 707
Hoboken, NJ 07030

<http://www.tradersofbabylon.com/museum.htm>

Museum Officers & Trustees

President: Robert Foster
Vice President: Marie Luizzi
Treasurer: Maureen Allex
Corresponding Secretary:
Ciorsdan Conran
Recording Secretary:
Hank Forrest

Nicholas Acocella
Theresa Castellano
John DePalma
Steve Kilnisan
George Kirchgessner
Charles Lee
Leonard Luizzi
Claire Lukacs
McKevin Shaughnessy
Vincent Wassman
Mayor Anthony Russo,
Honorary board member

On the Cover

A 1916 color postcard of the former St. Mary Hospital looking southwest from Church Square Park. Our Lady of Grace Church stands to the right.

Back cover: Postcard of the present St. Mary Hospital from the 1970s. Postcards from the collection of Leonard Luizzi.

In this Issue...



In 1870 St. Mary Hospital opened its first of many expansions at Fourth and Willow Streets. See story on page 2. Postcard courtesy of Leonard Luizzi.

St. Mary Hospital 2
by Marie Luizzi

Mr. Stover 6
by George Irwin

Hoboken Academy
A Day in the Life
of Stevens Academy 10
by Linda Kelly & Jack Satter

Dan-Dee Belt & Bag 16
by Nicholas Acocella

Members Mailbag..... 19

Membership Information 20

A large type edition of this magazine is available by writing to us at: P.O. Box 707, Hoboken, NJ 07030.

SAINT MARY HOSPITAL



*St. Mary Hospital circa 1900 looking south from the corner of 4th and Willow Streets.
Postcard courtesy of Leonard Luizzi.*

BY MARIE LUZZI

IT WAS ON A COLD JANUARY 8, 1863, WHEN SISTER FELICITAS, MOTHER SUPERIOR OF THE FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF THE POOR, ACCOMPANIED BY FOUR NUNS AND ONE POSTULANT, ARRIVED IN HOBOKEN. THE SISTERS HAD JUST COMPLETED A TWO-DAY TRAIN RIDE FROM CINCINNATI, OHIO. THEY WERE MET AT THE TRAIN STATION BY FATHER ANTHONY COUVIN, PASTOR OF THE HOBOKEN CATHOLIC MISSION, LATER TO BE KNOWN AS OUR LADY OF GRACE CHURCH.

This was during the Civil War, when wounded men were arriving in the hospitals of the East by the thousands and there were few doctors and fewer hospitals. The purpose of the sisters' journey was to establish a Franciscan hospital in Hoboken. (One year later, Saint Francis Hospital in Jersey City was established.) Father Couvin had secured a building from a local butcher named Bryant Smith. Then known as 134 Meadow Street, it was located at the present 324 Park Avenue. (It wasn't until 1890 that all street numbers were changed to the address systems in use today.) The sisters worked tirelessly to put the old house in order, and, when it

was ready, they began their visitation of the sick and the needy. This old twelve-room home was to become Saint Mary Hospital. Later that year, Dr. Romeo Chabert, a native of England who had settled in Hoboken in 1856, was named head of the medical staff, a position he held until his death in 1904.

In 1863, the population of Hoboken was 9,662. That number would double in a decade, and so, naturally, would the need for medical treatment. In December 1863, in anticipation of this population explosion, the sisters purchased five lots at Fourth and Willow, where the so-called "New Hospital" would rise. The tiny 28-bed facility, organized to treat the Civil War wounded and the ill and needy of the village that was old Hoboken, simply was not large enough. So in September of 1865, work began on what would be the first hospital to occupy the present day site of Saint Mary.

The money to pay for the land was raised through donations and subscription. The Stevens family, through the efforts of Martha Bayard Stevens, donated additional land and endowed a St. Martha's ward to the new hospital.

The Most Reverend James Roosevelt Bayley, first Bishop of the Diocese of Newark, blessed the completed 125-bed institution on May 6, 1866, just three and a half years

after the sisters arrived in Hoboken! In that same year, a home for abandoned children was opened. In 1870, Saint Mary Hospital expanded once more to meet the demands of what was now a growing city! In 1888, the Sisters began to treat sailors with infectious diseases from the Hoboken docks. The following year, a South wing was added, just months before the Spanish-American War began filling the seaport hospital with wounded servicemen. By 1916, once again Saint Mary had outgrown its facility, so a new complex that would better serve the needs of the people of Hoboken replaced the 1866 building.

The year 1889 saw the construction of a large chapel that would serve the religious needs of the sisters, patients, and staff. The chapel could seat 250 worshipers, and was actually a small church with its own resident priest. The church had splendid stained glass windows and a large marble altar. Mass was offered daily for 86 years, until



Postcard view of the chapel inside St. Mary Hospital circa 1900. Constructed in 1889, the chapel provided 86 years of service before it was torn down in 1975.



Rendering of St. Mary Hospital resembling the structure as it appears today. Courtesy of Leonard Luizzi.

December 22, 1975, when the chapel was torn down in order to enlarge the medical facilities.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, Hoboken was an important seaport city. Many notable people traveled to and from Europe through the Mile Square City. In 1910, New York City Mayor William J. Gaynor was boarding a vessel for a European vacation when a gun-toting fanatic shot him. Gaynor spent the next 19 days at Saint Mary, where the staff waged a heroic struggle to save his life. In gratitude, Gaynor's family erected a plaque in tribute to the hospital staff. That plaque is still in the emergency room entrance. (For more about this story see "The Day

a Mayor was Shot in Hoboken" by Paul Lippman in *Hoboken History* issue No.11.)

When America entered World War I in 1917, the United States government took control of the German-owned piers and any ships that were docked in Hoboken's Hamburg-America and North German Lloyd Lines. The government also took over the operation of Saint Mary Hospital. Hoboken became the main port of embarkation for the nearly two million doughboys bound for the Western Front, and Saint Mary became "Embarkation Hospital Number One." The hospital treated soldiers who had fallen sick on their journey to Hoboken and the less serious wounded on their way home.

For the third time in the fifty four year history of the hospital soldiers were again patients at Saint Mary's. Among the changes at the hospital to accommodate the boys from the AEF was the conversion of the chapel to a stage for vaudeville shows and movies!

In 1920, after the armistice and most of the troops were back home, the Army repainted the hospital and returned it to the sisters. The School of Nursing, established before the Army took over, was reorganized, medical and administrative staffs were formed, and the hospital began functioning as before.

During the Great Depression the sisters opened a soup kitchen that fed 200 to 300 people twice a day. This facility remained open for many years.

In 1927, St. Mary opened one of the first Tuberculosis Clinics in the state, and in 1955 the Infectious Diseases Wing became a maternity ward. In 1971, the new South Wing was dedicated, and the first Mass was offered in the new chapel on Christmas Eve 1975.

On October 24, 1977, Jerome Pechillo, the archdiocesan Auxiliary Bishop for Hudson County, officiated at the dedication ceremonies for the new \$10 million North Tower health care facility. On that day, US Senators Clifford Case and Harrison Williams joined with city officials to extol the praises of the Franciscan Sisters.

After 134 years, Saint Mary Hospital still tends to the medical needs of the

EAST LA



THE ROBERTS FAMILY

508 WASHINGTON ST
HOBOKEN
798-0052

21

MILE SQUARE HOBOKEN BREWERY COMPANY

*thanks the Hoboken Historical Museum
for its display at the brewery.*

*Come visit us at 1125 Hudson Street.
Open Mon. - Fri. 9am - 5pm
TOURS: Mon. - Fri. 11am, 12 noon, & 1pm*

792-BEER

20

UNITED DECORATING Co. Inc.

Est. 1899

FLAGS, PENNANTS, BUNTING DECORATIONS
MOURNING DRAPERIES

POSTCARDS • COSTUMES • MASKS
MAKE-UP • WIGS • BANNERS • PARTY ITEMS

421 WASHINGTON ST. (201) 659-1922

22

Carlo's
Since 1910

659-3671

CITY HALL BAKE SHOP

Love at First Bite

- Italian Pastries
- Minature Pastries
- Cookie Trays
- Spumoni
- Danish, Muffins, & Donuts
- Famous Jumbo Crumcake
- Wedding & Birthday Cakes

Cakes our Specialty!

95 Washington Street • Hoboken, New Jersey

22

LION ASSOCIATES INSURANCE



CNA

The
Salem
Group

USF&G
INSURANCE

THE
HARTFORD

Leo V. Natalicchio Agent

Commercial Package Policies

Condos • Business • Contractors

Manufacturing & Industrial Risks

Auto • Fire • Homeowners

Life-Pension
Profit Sharing
Disability Income

**QUALITY COVERAGE AT AN
AFFORDABLE PRICE**

Professional Staff Providing Professional Service

22

792-1404

FAX # 792-4434

94 Hudson St. Hoboken

people of Hoboken and the rest of Hudson County with the same philosophy the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor brought with them when they first came to Hoboken: excellence in health care and promotion of the dignity of the human person.

Author's Note: Among the many families that have been treated at St. Mary generation after generation is that of my husband. In 1900, John Russo, my husband's great-grandfather, was a patient there. Francesca Russo, John's daughter, met her future husband, Angelo Lepre, while visiting her father at the hospital. My mother-in-law, the former Lucy Lepre, and my husband Lenny were both patients there, and my sons Lenny, Jr. and Joseph, were both born there. So was my grandson Lenny III. In all, the staff of this Hoboken institution has cared for six generations of our family.



The author would also like to thank the following people, who supplied information for this article: Charles E. Markey, Esq., The New Jersey Room at the Jersey City Public Library, Thomasina Nolan of St. Mary Hospital, Lucille Casulli of St. Mary's Auxiliary, and longtime Hobokenite Mike Visceglie, formerly of 324 Park Avenue.

Marie Luizzi, a Jersey City native, has lived in Hoboken for more than 30 years. She teaches kindergarten at Sts. Peter and Paul School and she is the first female vice-president of the Hoboken Historical Museum.



HOBOKEN 621 Washington St.
SECAUCUS 1234 Paterson Plank Rd.
WESTWOOD 301 Center Avenue

FDIC Insured

MR. STOVER

George Irwin

Mr. Stover always dressed in a suit, white shirt, and tie. No one ever saw him in sports or casual clothes. He stood out in his suit at Demarest football games. He was in the stands with all the fans — no special treatment for him. Demarest did not win many football games while I was there (1950-54), but he was there to support the team and join in the cheers.

There was a comic strip in the *Daily News*, Bill Holman's "Smokey Stover," and the Demarest students adopted the name for our principal. It seems like only last weekend, at a Demarest football game, that a group of us noticed Mr. Stover sitting a few rows behind us, intently watching the game. To be funny and to embarrass Mr. Stover, although I think we were more embarrassed, we began to chant/sing



Postcard courtesy of Leonard Luizzi

"Three cheers for Smokey Stover, three cheers for Smokey Stover, the best of them all." He just smiled at us. I still remember that smile today, although it was 44 years ago.

Mr. Stover made the weekly assembly an important part of our school week. It was a time when a prayer was said, the flag saluted, the national anthem sung. And everyone joined in. We were Americans first, last, and always — nothing else.

He made announcements, introduced special guests, and gave out awards. But it was not really his show. He preferred to sit back, watch, and listen to programs put on by the faculty and students. He would applaud them loudly, showing how much he appreciated their efforts.

The assembly always ended with Mr. Stover leading us all in singing "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." He loved it.

There were several ice cream parlors in Hoboken, one of them, on Washington Street between 5th and 6th Streets, called Umlands. The ice cream was served in silver-plated dishes, and every spoonful melted in your mouth. Once, a few years after my graduation, I saw Mr. Stover, sitting alone enjoying that ice cream. I stopped by to say hello, and he responded by asking about my career. He was always interested in people, honest and sincere in that interest. In fact, a classmate of mine relates a story about just how caring he was. Upon visiting her home, he was always interested in knowing how she was faring in

school. He would always ask to see her report card, give her a dollar for her good grades, and encourage her to keep up the good work.

I always respected Mr. Stover and admired him as a leader. I didn't know then that day in Umlands would be the last time I would see him. Times have changed so much since those high school days of the 1950s, and the revisionists are writing that they weren't so good. But, then again, they didn't live then, so what do they know? Mr. Stover was a fine example of what the 1950s were all about. He was truly a man for all seasons.

We always called him Mr. Stover, and I don't remember anyone, including the faculty, calling him by his first name, which was Arthur. His personal life was always a mystery to us. I do recall that he and his brother owned some property, but that's all I knew.

I went back to our yearbook and read the page he wrote to us. In it, he discusses a victim of a tragic accident. Because this accident victim was confined to his bed for several years he became proficient at chess. Mr. Stover: "His handicap was the cause of his success. People succeed because of handicaps, not despite them! These people are no exceptions. Senior students and prospective graduates, from observation, I know that most of you seem physically and mentally sound. Perhaps somewhere, however, in the private recesses of your brain cells, you know of some little mental or physical deviation that you regard as a weakness. If you have not found it yet, you may find it as a few years pass you by. If that time should come, do not write it in life's ledger as a liability; make it an asset, and so surely it will be if you possess the character to face it squarely, and with courage born of the conviction that it is not really your weakness, but the source of your strength, and your key to successful life."

This country needs more people like Mr. Stover today. But, then, he lived at a time when respect, responsibility, and morality meant a good deal.



21

Pasquale Capporino

830 Willow Avenue
Hoboken, NJ 07030



General Contractor
Specialty: Tile • Marble • Cement

Call
201 792-0439
Between 5PM - 8PM

21

M A D
H A U S

202 WASHINGTON ST
HOBOKEN, NJ 07030
201/963-9018

21

Barnes & Noble

"The Book Lover's Second Home"

Ask for a schedule of special children's events, author signings, readings, and lectures.

Store and Cafe Hours:
Monday - Saturday
10am - 11pm
Sunday
10am - 9pm

59 Washington St
Hoboken, NJ 07030
TEL (201) 653-1126
FAX (201) 653-2256

21



HOBOKEN ACADEMY

A Day in the Life of Stevens Academy: Fond Memories of a Bygone Era

BY LINDA KELLY & JACK SATTER

The story of Stevens Academy begins some 137 years ago when Hoboken was a flourishing seaport and center of commerce and industry. The Hoboken Academy, as it was originally called, was founded by German-American citizens in 1860. The founders bought stock in the school at \$10 a share and, with the help of Edwin A. Stevens, one of the town's leading citizens, purchased four lots on Fifth Street running



east from Willow Avenue. There they built a three-story building.

The school was organized into four de-

partments: headquarters for children under six years old; the primary department; the intermediate department; and the academic department. With the first year's enrollment at 250 students, the academy is credited with having the first kindergarten in the state of New Jersey.

Ten years later, Stevens Institute of Technology opened. It had a high school section as a feeder known as Stevens School. By 1917, the college was cramped for space and Stevens School was spun off and relocated at the Martha Institute adjoining the Hoboken First Reformed Church. At this time, it became Stevens Preparatory School and retained a benevolent relationship with the college.

Meanwhile, with a two-story wing added prior

Above: Postcard of the Hoboken Academy on the corner of Fifth Street and Willow Avenue, courtesy of Leonard Luizzi.

to the turn of the century, Hoboken Academy thrived and in 1927, added a second wing housing a gymnasium and auditorium. This gave the facility a "U" shape.

The Stock Market crash of 1929, and the ensuing depression did not spare these two institutions, and in 1934, they merged. Drawing half the staff from each school, they took the name Stevens Hoboken Academy and operated in the academy's facilities. The school once again prospered and when enrollment reached 225 students, a third floor was added to the Willow Avenue wing.

In the mid-1950's, a decision was made to expand the high school grades while phasing out the lower ones since enrollment seemed to be growing in the "Upper School" and dwindling in the "Lower School." Another building was acquired. Named after the industrialist and chief benefactor Walter Fregang, it abutted the gymnasium and auditorium and was located on Park Avenue. The ground floor became the locker room and showers for the gymnasium while the second floor became the cafeteria. At about the same time, it was decided to change the name once more. Due to the violent stigma Hoboken had gained as epitomized by the film *On The Waterfront*, Stevens Hoboken Academy was shortened to Stevens Academy.

The mid-60s, saw a decline in enrollment as the migration to the suburbs had begun and teachers' salaries began to increase, driving up the cost of tuition. Enrollment plummeted to 160 students. By 1969, it was decided to reinstate the lower grades as a feeder. However, with tuition reaching \$1,400.00 per year the decline was irreversible and enrollment sank to 80 in the upper grades and about 35 in the lower ones.

On Thursday, June 6, 1974, Stevens Academy closed its doors on 114 years of academic excellence ending an illustrious Hoboken tradition.

Two years later, despite a petition drive and objections by the Hoboken Environmental Committee, the 116-year-old building that was the acad-



THE HISTORY LESSON

Stevens Academy opened in 1860 under the name Hoboken Academy as a college preparatory school that considered itself "disciplined" as opposed to either "permissive or strict." Its goal was to serve what was then Hoboken's largely German population. The institution's founders purchased stock in the school at \$10 a share, bought four lots at Willow and 5th with the help of Colonel Edwin Stevens, and built a three-story school building on the site. In 1934, Hoboken Academy merged with Stevens Preparatory School, which had begun as a feeder for Stevens Institute but had severed itself from the college in 1917 and moved into the Martha Institute. The new amalgamation took the name Stevens Hoboken Academy.

In the mid-1950s, the school expanded its Upper School at the expense of the Lower. One casualty of this decision was the school's kindergarten, the first in New Jersey. At about the same time, the school changed its name to Stevens Academy. The Lower school was reinstated in 1969 as enrollment in the Upper School decreased. The decline in enrollment continued, however, as costs escalated. At the time the school closed in 1974, the Upper School had about 80 students, the Lower about 35 — down from a high of 225 in the 1930s.

emy met its fate with a wrecking ball to make way for a drive-through banking facility which today stands vacant.

It was 1958, when I first made the trip from the Greenville section in Jersey City to Hoboken and Stevens Academy. Still in elementary school, my brother and I were enrolled at Stevens Academy due to overcrowding in the Jersey City public school system which was forced to go to half-day sessions in order to accommodate the growing population. We were there until we graduated in 1965 and 1967, respectively. Our memories of Stevens Academy and its wonderful and distinguished faculty will live on in our hearts. The academy was a truly unique school not only in its academic philosophy, but also in its outstanding teachers and the family atmosphere that permeated every aspect of student life. Even Mr. Pace, the janitor, was held in respect by the students. And while the school liked to think of itself as "a traditional conservative college preparatory school which considers itself 'disciplined' as opposed to being either permissive or strict," there were times, oh there were times, when even today we can't help but laugh at some of the predicaments we would find ourselves in.

Take, for instance, Howard H. Bennett, English teacher and Stevens' last headmaster. Just knowing Mr. Bennett was an education in itself. He began his tenure at the school back in 1948. A former drama major at the University of Oklahoma, he was theatrical, flamboyant, and at times, downright intimidating. Ninety-five percent of Stevens students were spoiled brats and he was our own personal Anti-Christ. He was our "de-spoiler," a taste of reality, that kick in the pants we all needed. Clever, witty, and acid tongued, at one time or another, we all felt the slow burn of humiliation as he singled us out. He would expose us to the world as the thoughtless, self-absorbed, over-privileged twits that we were. Woe to the student who failed to turn in an assignment on time. Here's how it would play out:

Mr. Bennett:

"Please hand in your assignments now. Anyone who does not have the assignment, please rise and come to the front of the room." Most students handed in

the assignment, but two or three would end up at the front of the room. Mr. Bennett would scowl at them, then address them individually.

Mr. Bennett: "Mr. Satter, where is your assignment?"

Mr. Satter in a very meek tone: "I don't have it."

Mr. Bennett: "Sir?"

Mr. Satter: "I don't have it, Mr. Bennett."

Mr. Bennett: "SIR?"

Mr. Satter: "I don't have it!"

Mr. Bennett: "I can't believe I'm hearing this. Did your house burn down last night, Mr. Satter?"

Mr. Satter: "No, sir."

Mr. Bennett: "Were your parents killed in an accident last night?"

Mr. Satter: "No, sir."

Mr. Bennett: "Was there an earthquake, flood, or other natural disaster that I am somehow unaware of, Mr. Satter?"

Mr. Satter: "No, sir."

Mr. Bennett: "I see. Then the reason you don't have your assignment?"

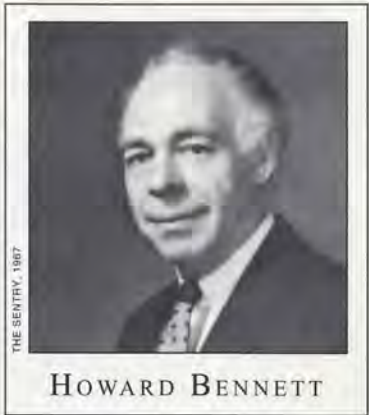
Mr. Satter: "I didn't do it, sir."

Mr. Bennett: "Pardon?"

Mr. Satter: "I didn't do it, sir."

Mr. Bennett: "And why is it that you didn't do it?"

Mr. Satter: "I forgot, sir."



HOWARD BENNETT

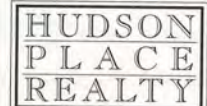
HUDSON PLACE REALTY

SPECIALIZING IN THE HOBOKEN
AREA FOR OVER 15 YEARS

BROWNSTONES • CONDOMINIUMS • RENTALS
PROPERTY MANAGEMENT • INVESTMENTS

201-420-7393

132 WASHINGTON STREET
HOBOKEN, NJ 07030



STACK & STACK, INC.

EST. 1920



Everything you need for:
• BUSINESS • HOME • LIFE

*Independent Agent with a Rock Solid
Reputation for affordable coverage and financing*

Call: 659-1000

Personal Service
90 Hudson Street in Hoboken

21

IN SUPPORT OF HOBOKEN HISTORY

BERNARD F. KENNY

SENATOR, 33RD DISTRICT
235 HUDSON STREET
HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY 07030

(201) 653-1466
FAX (201) 714-9825

22

The Secret Ingredient*

"We're Ready
for the
Holidays"

23

LOW COST INSURANCE

- Homeowners
- Apartment
- Building
- Workers Comp.
- Condo
- Business
- Contractors
- Life

LET US SAVE YOU SOME MONEY

Call and Save 659-2403

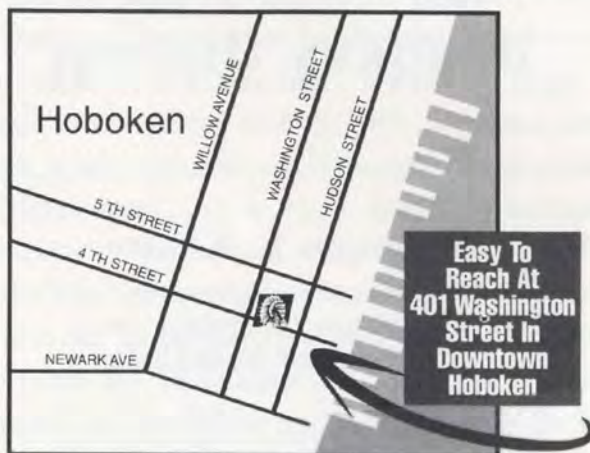
R. JOHN MULLER INSURANCE

930 Washington St., Hoboken

Selling All Types of Insurance Since 1906

22

Pamrapo Savings' Convenient Hoboken Location



401 Washington Street, Hoboken N.J. 07030
(201) 659-8281

21

"Serving Hoboken for 14 Years"



Len Wesling, president

Bergen County: 201-941-9499

Hudson County: 201-798-3178

Pager: 201-547-9164

23

Mr. Bennett: "Oh! You forgot. How unfortunate. I guess you thought your nanny would remind you. Is that it, Mr. Satter?"

Mr. Satter: "No, sir."

Mr. Bennett: "Oh, then you must think that I am your nanny. Do you think that I am your nanny?"

(Giggling breaks out in the classroom at this point.)

Mr. Satter: "No, sir."

Mr. Bennett: "Well thank goodness for that, because I am NOT your nanny! And here's another bit of information, you charming child. Just because your Mommy and Daddy think you're wonderful does not mean that I think your wonderful. Is that clear?"

Mr. Satter: "Yes, sir."

Mr. Bennett: "And now, Mr. Satter, if you would be so kind as to join me for tea and sympathy this afternoon. Only there will be no tea and certainly NO SYMPATHY!"

Mr. Satter: "Yes, sir."

Mr. Bennett, trying not to smile: "Out of my sight! Out of my sight! I don't want to see you any more."

My brother, having been successfully exposed and humiliated, returns to his seat. Then, Mr. Bennett would continue his tirade on the next unfortunate who failed to turn in his assignment.

A true teacher in the sense that he wanted to prepare us to live effectively in the real world, his term papers were designed to make the student really think for himself and not parrot the ideas of others. One such assignment for juniors was the "Career Project." The student had to select a career and then thoroughly research it. The paper had to contain the following:

- 1) a description of the career;
- 2) why this career interested the student;
- 3) educational and other requirements to begin in that field;
- 4) salary range;

5) growth opportunities and trends;

6) description of the tasks performed in a typical eight-hour day preferably obtained by first hand observation or at least an interview with someone in that field; and

7) qualities the student possessed that were necessary to excel in that career. This was an excellent way to get us dreamy, unfocused students down from the clouds and grounded in reality.

Another term paper for seniors was called: "My Philosophy of Life." It forced us to think things through, arrive at conclusions, and articulate them. These were challenging assignments that almost always lead to surprises for us since rarely did we give much thought to such topics.

He also made us read great authors such as Dorothy Parker, Ring Lardner, James Baldwin, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Dreiser, and, of course, Shakespeare, Milton, and Dante. Reading these books and discussing them in class opened a window in my mind. I began to see things I never noticed before and understand things that previously baffled me. I learned that there are many ways to view life, many angles besides my own.

When I think of it, Mr. Bennett really educated me. He expanded my awareness and created in me a desire for more knowledge.

Now I am half a century old and still learning, thanks to that flame he ignited. I try to pass on his legacy to as many people as I can. It is such a life changing lesson. When your perspective changes, so does the very fabric of your life. This teacher opened the door for me and my fellow students, the door to a richer life.

Howard H. Bennett is but one of many notable teachers that touched our lives and made Stevens Academy an educational icon in the Hoboken community. There are many stories to be told about life at the academy. This is only the beginning.



Dan-Dee

BELT AND BAG COMPANY

BY NICHOLAS ACOCCELLA

Dan-Dee Belt and Bag Company has been a Hoboken institution for almost half a century. Founded in 1934 by Charles Rotondi, a native of a small southern Italian town named Torre le Nocelle, and two partners, Dan-Dee operated in the Hudson County community of West New York for the first 16 years of its existence. Rotondi and his partners came up with a brilliant innovation, what we now call diaper bags, those brightly-colored carry-all bags mothers use to



CHARLES ROTONDI

In 1950, Rotondi, by now the sole owner of the company, moved its operations to the old Number 5 school building on the corner of Second and Clinton Streets in Hoboken. The 1950s were boom years for Dan-Dee, as for the nation, and the company, bolstered by contracts to manufac-



transport the paraphernalia young children seem to require at all times. The idea coincided with the post-World War II baby boom and launched what was to become a typical thriving small manufacturing business.

ture Girl Scout handbags and belts, increased its number of employees to more than 200. This made the company the third largest private-sector, non-institutional employer in the city after Maxwell House and Levolor.

In 1967, two years after the elder Rotondi died, his son, Paul, moved the company's operation to its present location at 115-131 Grand Street, a two-story, 36,000-square-foot space. (The Clinton Street building remained in the company's possession for some time after the move. It is currently under renovation for St. Mary Hospital's new family care center.) The mainstays of the family business have always been belts and bags, but, over the years, the nature of the business has changed.

The company has always made belts. (The wonderful odor of freshly tanned leather is still one of the delights of entering the premises.) For a while, Dan-Dee dabbled in importing them as well, but the volatility of the market dictated and the relative simplicity of cutting belts made it possible to remain in the manufacturing end of the business.

The handbag side of the business is another story, however. The process of manufacturing even simple handbags is so labor-intensive that, early in the 1980s, Rotondi decided to look abroad, where labor costs are considerably lower. After a thorough search of plants in the Far East — a search that took almost three years — Dan-Dee found a Taiwanese manufacturer on which it could rely. With that relationship in place, Dan-Dee became an importer. This shift in emphasis created a whole new set of problems for the family-run business. Paul Rotondi and his son Charles, who has headed the

Alan Nelson

Tel: 201 420-7926

Counter·Fit

Quick Printing & Copy Center

Fax: 201 420-7322

Complete Mac Workstation · Canon Color Copies

128 Washington Street • Hoboken, NJ • 07030

21

HOBOKEN REALTY MANAGEMENT CO.

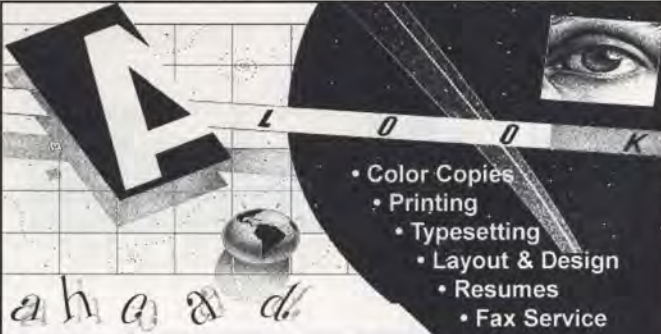
Full Service Management
of Condo and Coop Properties

Edward McLaughlin, ICA, CREA, Lic. RE Brokers

(201) 659-8001
(201) 659-8719
Fax: (201) 659-1749

264 1st Street
Hoboken
NJ 07030

21



- Color Copies
- Printing
- Typesetting
- Layout & Design
- Resumes
- Fax Service

TypeWorks, Inc.
254 First Street, Hoboken, NJ • 201-653-8380

21

CANNAROZZI & PICARDO

CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

Income Tax Service

518 Adams Street • Hoboken, NJ 07030

(201) 963-1301

21

"When Your Standards Are Demanding"



An International Award Winning Studio

HAND CARVED • FINE GLASS GOLD GILDING
THEME SIGNS • PERIOD SIGNS
3D SCULPTED SIGNS • PICTORIALS

Specializing in Restaurants, Bars, & Storefronts

201/798-0688 Fax 201/798-8405
www.hobokensign.com

Tel: 201 798-1919

Fax: 201 798-9099



601 Adams Street • Hoboken, NJ 07030

- SIGNS
- LETTERING
- ENGRAVED BRASS PLAQUES

FRANK P. MARCIANO

Attorney At Law

86 Hudson Street
Hoboken, NJ 07030

(201) 656-1000
Fax (201) 963-1140

company since 1989, had to become instant experts in financing mechanisms, such as letters of credit, which allow the company to purchase imports before the revenue from sales is available. In the last few years, however, the company has moved back in the direction of manufacturing domestically, although most of its handbag products are still made overseas.

According to the younger Charles Rotondi, Dan-Dee, unlike most of the rest of the old industrial base of Hoboken, isn't going anywhere. "We've been here a long time," he says. "We're part of the community." (His father has served on the board of directors of the YMCA, as chairman of the City's Waterfront Advisory Commission in the early 1980s, and as CEO of Washington Savings Bank before its absorption by Hudson United Bank.) "We own our own building, which makes doing business easier. We have always had a good and plentiful labor supply here. And it's home and has been for a long time."



Editorial Disclaimer: *The author has a personal connection with Dan-Dee. The elder Charles Rotondi was my father's uncle (and his wife was my mother's aunt, which is another story altogether). In addition, my first job — in the summer of 1959, when I was 16 years old — was as a shipping clerk for Uncle Charlie.*

6201 Maple Run Court
Clifton, VA 20124-2318

Dear Hoboken History Magazine,

I recently received a copy of *Hoboken History* and it truly brings back many, many fond memories.

I attended Sunday School at Temple Adas Emuno traveling from West New York to attend. My parents had a candy store cross from the park near the hospital, and my baby sitters were the McLaughlin twins, who lived on Hudson Street next door to the Knights of Columbus. Is that building still in existence? I also used to sneak through the fence from the McLaughlin's yard to the Catholic school that was on Washington Street.

After I married in 1942, we returned to Hoboken and lived in an apartment on Hudson Street on the same block with the Knights of Columbus. My husband attended Stevens and we had many wonderful times at the Union Club. Is that still around?

A fond memory of Hoboken is Shortmayer's Ice Cream Parlor and its wonderful, sinful Creoles. Are you familiar with those? We visited Kell's Clam bar often and of course rode the tubes to New York and eventually took the Public Service bus through the Lincoln Tunnel to New York City.

Those were the good old days. I earned all of \$12.00 a week working in New York and my husband worked for Bethlehem Ship Yards and made \$17.00 per week. But we lived like royalty and ate filet mignon purchased from Uncle Bill's on Washington Street. I received all my florists from Funke's Florist.

I am sure that none of these landmarks is still there, but they are etched in my memories.

My inlaws, husband, and brothers attended Demarest High School. My husband and brother-in-law were there at the same time as Frank Sinatra. I also remember Frank singing at the Rustic Cabin in Englewood on Route 9W.

I just thought I would tickle your mind to see if you know what happened to Shortmayer's, Funke's Florist, the market that Uncle Bill worked in on Washington Street (between 5th and 6th, I think).

What happened to the Zorn, Gordon, and Toohey families?

Keep up the good work. I am looking forward to the next issue.

Sincerely,

Judith C. Lieberman (Mrs. Marc Lieberman)

Editors' Note: *The Knights of Columbus had their headquarters at 716 Hudson Street, which is today a private home. The Union Club is now a condominium called Union Apartments. Shortmayer's was on the west side of Washington Street, between Sixth and Seventh, across the street from Sacred Heart; today it is a doctor's office. Kelly's Clam Bar was on 14th and Hudson; it is also currently a condo. Uncle Bill's establishment was, we believe, the Alberta Market on the 600 block of Washington; it is now a laundromat. Funke's Florist, at 523 Washington, is now DeAngelo's Florist.*

MUSEUM MEMBERSHIP

Do you enjoy reading *Hoboken History*?

Become a member of the Hoboken Historical Museum and receive four fascinating issues of *Hoboken History* delivered right to your door. As a member of the Museum, you will also receive our bimonthly newsletter, a discount on Museum merchandise, plus invitations to all Museum exhibitions and events, to which you will be admitted free of charge.

We also invite you to share your own memories of Hoboken history with us. If you have some old photographs to share, a story to tell, or an idea for an article for the magazine, please call Leonard Luizzi, Sr., chairperson of the Hoboken Historical Museum's magazine *Hoboken History* at (201) 420-1803.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND RENEWAL FORM

Individual Membership: ☐ 1 year: \$20 ☐ 2 years: \$35 ☐ 3 years: \$50 ☐ Lifetime: \$125
Family Membership: ☐ 1 year: \$25

Is this a ☐ **New Membership** or a ☐ **Renewal**?

☐ Mr. ☐ Ms. ☐ Miss ☐ Mrs.

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone (Day) _____ (Evening) _____

☐ **Volunteer** Yes, I can lend a spare hour (staffing tables at events, stuffing envelopes, etc.)

Telephone (Day) _____ (Evening) _____

To become a member, send completed form (PLEASE PHOTOCOPY) with a check payable to:
Hoboken Historical Museum P.O. Box 707, Hoboken, NJ 07030

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY: Check No. _____ Date Received: _____ Valid thru: _____

UNUSUALLY
FINE
GEMSTONES

WATCH
REPAIRS

ANTIQUE
& ESTATE
JEWELRY



WEDDING
BANDS

RARE
QUALITY
DIAMONDS

JEWELRY
REPAIRS

CUSTOM-
MADE
JEWELRY

TRADERS OF BABYLON

Fine Jewelers

259 First Street, Hoboken, NJ
(201) 659-0802

Monday – Friday: 9 – 8
Saturday: 9 – 6



All Major Credit Cards Accepted



St. Mary Hospital, Hoboken, NJ. *Postcard courtesy of Leonard Luizzi.*

HOBOKEN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

P.O. Box 707
Hoboken, NJ 07030

Telephone: 201 656-2240

On the Internet at:

<http://www.tradersofbabylon.com/museum.htm>

Non-Profit Organization U.S. Postage Paid Permit No. 6 Hoboken, NJ
--