HOBOKEN HISTORY



ELYSIAN FIELDS AND RIVER WALK, 1830, page 19

Albini the pharmacist, page 3
The harbor disaster of 1900, page 4
How Hoboken got its name, page 9
Stephen Foster's Hoboken dream, page 18
Bolivars, page 16 Museum News, page 2

The Magazine of the Hoboken Historical Museum
HOBOKEN NJ NUMBER 8 1993

HOBOKEN HISTORY

Published by the Hoboken Historical Museum
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Editor: Paul Lippman
Production Editor: Barbara Lippman
Advertising Sales Director: Edward Lepre
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Published four times a year.
Business address:
PO Box 707, Hoboken NJ 07030
(201) 656-2240

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

First of all, my apologies for the magazine being late. I'll take the brunt of the blame and simply admit my energies were temporarily diverted from the Museum.

This summer Holly Metz and I purchased a home in Hoboken we've always admired, number sixty-three Willow Terrace, also known as the Key House. Although structurally sound, the building has been neglected and needs much attention. I've always fought hard to preserve Hoboken's architecture but this is the first time it's been a hands-on effort. It's this house project that has diverted my attention from Museum business.

This may also be an appropriate time to make a strong plea from the membership and the readers of this publication to get more involved. I believe the Museum has moved forward with definite goals but we don't have the active membership to follow through. For example, many of the same people working on the Museum's numerous committees are stretched so thin they cannot complete all the tasks required.

We need more people to help with the work of the Museum. In particular, we need members for the following committees:

- ▹ Historic markers.
- ▹ Restoration of Sybil's Cave.
- ▹ Acquisition of artifacts.
- ▹ Lectures.
- ▹ Old movies project.

If you are interested in any of these, or have new ideas for activities, contact me at 656-2240.

Bob Foster

SUMMER EXHIBIT

This Summer the Museum mounted a show at Liberty State Park, curated by Robert Foster. Titled "Hoboken Architecture: Interiors and Exteriors," the show included historical and contemporary images of Hoboken's unusual architecture and was on display for several months in the old New Jersey Central Railroad Station waiting room. The exhibit was seen by approximately 30,000 visitors from Memorial Day through Labor Day. The Museum thanks Debra Kindervatter, Historic Specialist at Liberty State Park, for sponsoring the exhibit, and we look forward to participating next summer.



Bob Foster and Holly Metz inside 63 Willow Terrace holding their new building plans

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A one-year membership is only $20. Send your check to our address at the top of this page. If you have any questions, call our machine at 656-2240, or write to us at PO Box 707, Hoboken, NJ 07030.

More Museum News, pages 20-23

My Grandfather, Mr. Albini

by Angela Grimaldi

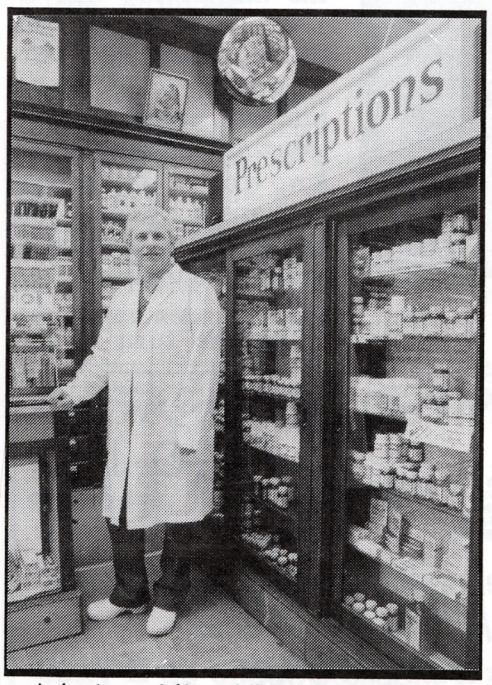
In the *HOBOKEN HISTORY* magazine for Winter, 1993, I came upon "Memories of the Old Neighborhood, Little Italy." There I saw it – 401 Adams Street, Albini Pharmacy. Countless affectionate memories flooded my heart and mind as I recalled a wonderful man, good, kind, and always willing to help his customers at any time. He was their druggist and my revered grandfather, Mr. Bartholomew Albini, a person I will never forget.



Bartholomew Albini preparing prescriptions in his pharmacy on Adams Street.

My grandfather first worked as a clerk in the drug store at 401 Adams Street, until he bought it in 1921. He renamed it The Owl Pharmacy, and, until the day he died, his hours at the store were long: 9am to 11pm. He was behind his counter every one of those hours except from 4 to 5pm when he would come home for dinner.

To his customers he was a godsend; many times he sold them medicines at cost, especially when he knew money was tight. Countless people were helped by my grandfather, too numerous to mention. People loved him for his immense caring, his humanity, his kindness, and his thoughtfulness. They also loved his wit, charm, and winning personality. When in his presence, his customers said, they always felt everything would be all right. To us grandchildren, he was our beloved "Nonno," who unfortunately was taken from us all too prematurely on March 31, 1951.



Interior of the Albini Pharmacy with its present owner, pharmacist Sal Migliorelli

His wake was conducted at our home, since in that time that practice was still permitted. My grandfather's customers and all the people who loved him formed a long line around the block and quietly and reverently filed past his bier. Women and men as well cried openly, knowing that they had lost a dear friend. To many of his former customers who still live in the neighborhood, he is truly a legend.

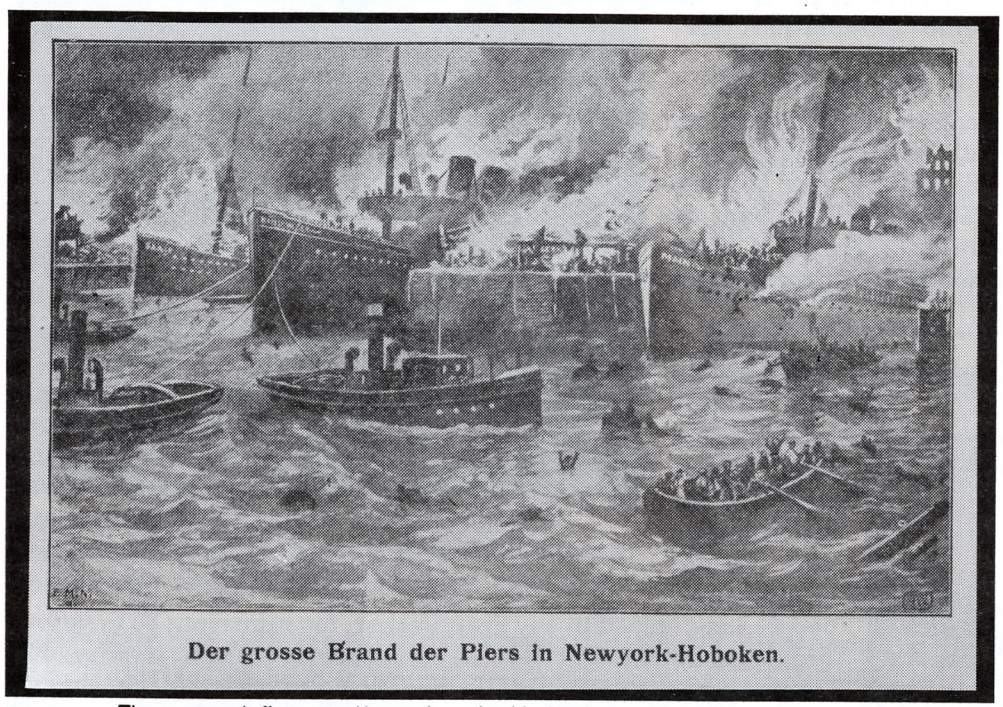
On Adams Street, which no longer is Little Italy, Albini Pharmacy still stands, and, I am sure, knowing my grandfather, his spirit is still very much present there.

The Great Harbor Fire:

The North German Lloyd Disaster of 1900

by Robert Gordon

The most spectacular, destructive fire in the history of the lower Hudson River occurred on Saturday, June 30, 1900. It was a perfect summer day at Hoboken, warm, almost cloudless, with a fresh wind kicking up whitecaps on the Hudson River. Had the air been still, the fire that broke out that afternoon might have been contained, with little harm. But the wind, predicted as west-northwest in the morning newspapers, swung around to the southwest, and held steady. It was strong enough to fan a fire-storm that set four transatlantic liners ablaze, with three of them sinking in the harbor. Twenty-seven barges and workboats were destroyed. Railroad cars, warehouses, and four piers were consumed. Total damage, according to insurance estimates, amounted to $4,627,000 the largest fire loss of 1900 in the United States. Between two hundred and four hundred people – their exact number was never known – died by drowning, burns, or asphyxiation. Hundreds more were injured.



Der grosse Brand der Piers in Newyork-Hoboken.

The great fire on the piers in Hoboken, New York Harbor.

At the turn of the

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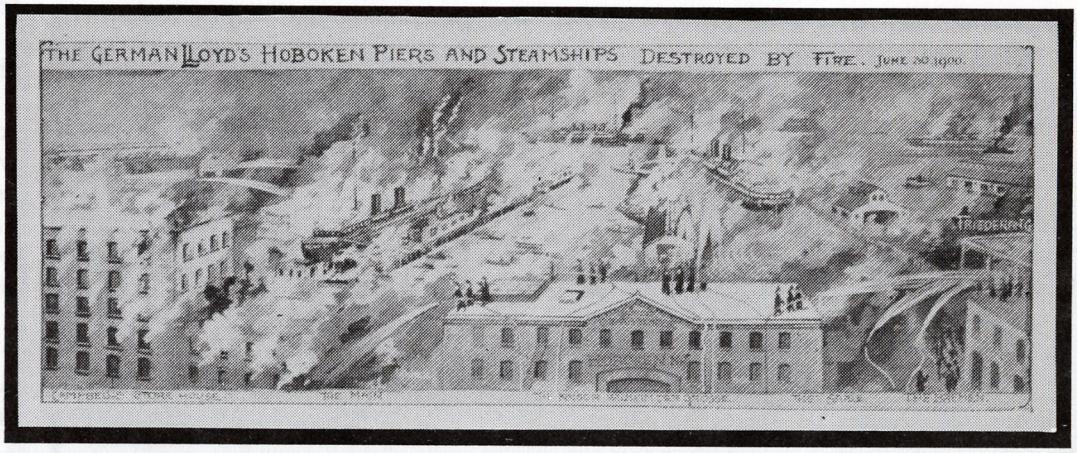
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century, Hoboken – with its proximity to Ellis Island, open since 1892 – was one of the New World's greatest ports of entry, and the one which boasted the largest railroad facilities. The 1900 census tallied 59,364 inhabitants within its square mile of land, making it the most densely populated city in the region. Ethnically it was German, with more than one-fifth of its residents German-born. Busch's and Meyer's were the leading hotels, the firm of Keuffel & Esser manufactured precision instruments. There were German singing clubs, social clubs, boating clubs, dance halls, and beer gardens. The Lutheran and Catholic churches had German clergymen, and the parochial schools taught in German.



The North German Lloyd's piers and steamships destroyed by fire, 1900

In 1863, the ruthlessly competitive North German Lloyd and Hamburg/America shipping lines rented adjacent pier spaces, and the boom of immigration began. Those piers were within short, sometimes even walking distances of the terminals for the Erie-Lackawanna, Pennsylvania, Baltimore & Ohio, and other great railroads that opened the way to all of America. By 1900 each German line was transporting a quarter-million passengers a year, primarily westbound from Europe to the United States. On midafternoon of June 30, six liners were moored at Hoboken. More than five hundred stevedores were working, most of the crews were on duty, dozens of visitors were aboard, but luckily no ships were loading or carrying passengers. Hamburg America's *Phoenicia* and *Kaiser Friedrich* lay at the southernmost docks, next to the ferry slips. Northward at the three North German Lloyd wharfs were the *Saale*, *Bremen*, *Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse*, and *Main*. With their bristling clusters of masts and smokestacks, the six vessels formed an impressive rank, dominated by the *Kaiser Wilhelm*.

The flagship of the North German Lloyd, *Kaiser Wilhelm*, represented German's maritime pride. Constructed secretly in 1897, she was designed, by express direction of Kaiser Wilhelm II, to challenge Great Britain's rule of the seas. Named after his grandfather, she was the world's first four-funneled steamer, its largest (at 649 feet and 14,350 tons), and its fastest. She was, in fact, the largest moving manmade object on earth. Nicknamed "Rolling Billy" for her lubberly performance in rough seas, she nevertheless held the transatlantic speed

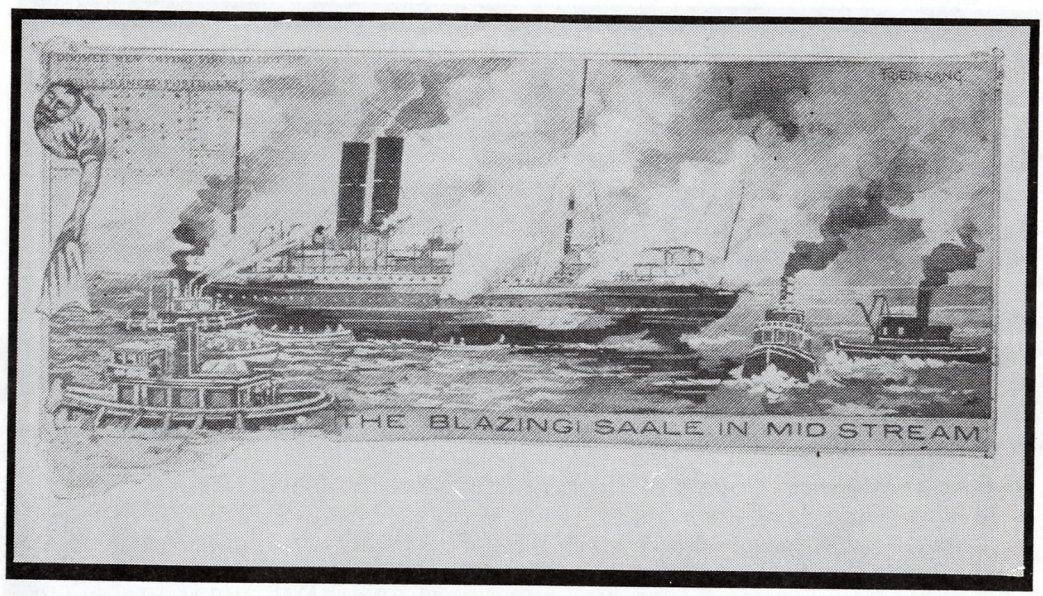
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record, over twenty-one knots in a six-day crossing. Speed was the catchword of the day, and the *Kaiser Wilhelm*'s immediate fame brought North German Lloyd the largest share of the ever-growing emigrant traffic from Europe. She was the first ship to carry wireless radio (in 1899) and the first whose hull had remote-controlled watertight doors. For her 352 first-class passengers (there were 343 in second and 1,074 in third) she offered heavy Teutonic luxury: marble statuary, stained glass, varnished wooden panelling, plaster ornamentation, tapestries, and carpeting. She and her sister-ships were meant to resemble floating hotels and, like most land-based hotels, they were highly flammable.



The blazing Saale in mid-stream

Today an ocean liner can berth in the morning, replenish necessary oil and food in a few hours, and sail by evening. But not so in the era of coal when steamers spent anywhere from four to ten days in port. Once their furnaces were stilled, they had no motive power. To refire the boilers to build steam pressure in the reciprocating engines took a whole day's stoking. First, though, the ships had to be refuelled. Stewards spread coverings over the furniture in all the public rooms and cabins; portholes and ventilators were sealed. Then the hulls were usually boomed out from their piers while coal barges were lashed to port and starboard. Coal-ports were swing outward from the ships' sides, and the gruelling job of loading began. Laborers winched or hand-carried buckets of soft, dusty bituminous up from the barges, dumping it into chutes that ran to the bunkers. Sealed containers when they were at sea, ships in port lay open. Their yawning hatches were like flues in chimneys.

North German Lloyd's piers that summer day held 4,951 bales of cotton, 112 bales of tobacco, and 225 barrels of cottonseed oil; all American products which European buyers demanded. The wharves themselves, 5600 to 900 feet long, consisted of wooden platforms and sheds mounted over the river on wooden pilings. Long years' deposits of cotton lint, grit, and coat dust must have permeated them, so each one, with

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its volatile cargoes, had become a gigantic tinderbox. Together, the liners and piers contained the materials for an inferno. All that was lacking was a simple incendiary act, either purposeful or accidental.

At 3:55pm, North German Lloyd's watchman William Northmaid, saw flames darting up from one of the stacked bales of cotton. He ran to telephone fire headquarters two blocks away where his call was recorded at 4:01, but already it was too late. Propelled by the wind, a cascade of fire leaped from sheds to barges and from barges to ships. Within twenty minutes, while hundreds of tug and steamer whistles hooted to give the alarm, a quarter-square mile of waterfront was uncontrollably ablaze. Some stevedores tried to run ahead of the flames, or through them, to River Street. Others were driven back toward the Hudson. As the piers caught fire, the men either jumped into the river or burned to death. "My God, what a sight to behold!" a Hoboken police commissioner said afterwards. "There were at least 200 persons in the river, mostly longshoremen. Just picture a scene on the beach at Coney Island with the bathers bobbing up and down, and then realize that each person was fighting for his life. Of the number I saw in the river, only a few came to shore." (Swimming was not a common skill in 1900, even among those whose lives were spent on the water.)

Moored nearest the spot where the cotton had ignited was the *Saale*, at 5,381 tons and 4128 feet the smallest of the liners. Her crew swiftly cast off her lines, but not soon enough. Before the *Saale* drifted away from the pier, all her upper decks were burning. At least twenty of her crew dropped overside, hanging on to her rudder or to ropes dangling from her stern. Some were rescued by harborboats; but others, exhausted, were swept away and



The burning Bremen drifting to the New York shore

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drowned. Next to catch was the *Bremen*, perhaps the ship that had borne the premonition of disaster with her. At Southamptom, England, on June 17, westward bound, she had loaded a coffin containing the wasted body of the writer Stephen Crane, being brought home to New Jersey for burial after his death at twenty-nine from tuberculosis. In the superstition of sailors, having a corpse aboard is bad luck. Now, by way of proof, the 550-foot steamer was engulfed by flames, only minutes after the *Saale*.

From the bridge of the *Kaiser Wilhelm*, Captain Engelbart ordered the hawsers linking his ship to Pier One to be cut. Two tugboats caught lines from her yachtlike overhanging stern and made ready to pull; but one mooring cable still held her at the bow. Sailor Eric Sorenson swung down the rope hand over hand, released it, and, to the cheers of those who watched him, ran through the flames to safety. Freed by 4:10pm, the *Kaiser Wilhelm* was towed into the Hudson. A barge of burning cotton was still lashed to her bow. By mid-river two hundred feet of paint had burned away, portholes had shattered from the heat, planking and lifeboats were damaged; but the world's greatest ship had been saved. Her fires were quickly extinguished, and not one of her 488 officers and men had been killed. She was the only one of the North German Lloyd fleet to be so fortunate. Farthest from the fire's starting place was the sleek new *Main*, 520 feet long and 10,058 gross tons. Moored almost immediately below the Stevens mansion on Castle Point, she was the only one of the four liners which failed to get clear during daylight. Immobile, she became a charnel house for at least forty-four of her crew as the flames swept over her.

Nevertheless there were lucky escapes. On the *Bremen*, Herman Laschman was painting the foremast when he saw the fire-wall rolling toward him. Running aft, he found two messboys cowering by the railing. "Follow me!" he shouted, but the children were paralysed by fear. The sailor seized a boy with each hand and jumped overboard. When they surfaced, he held onto them until a boatman hauled them from the water. Ashore, Laschman discovered how close they had been to death, his shirt had been burned off his back, and his skin was blistered.

Others were not so fortunate, including American workmen and visitors. On the *Saale*, which suffered the heaviest casualties, was a young German-born woman, Barbara Kopter. With her two-year-old nephew, she had travelled from Brooklyn to meet her fiance, crewman Lewis Meister. When the three fled to the *Saale*'s deck Meister took the child, told Miss Kopter to leap, and jumped. She hesitated in terror and was swept up by the flames. Struggling in the water, the sailor had to let go of the infant before he alone was rescued.

REPRINTED FROM *NEW JERSEY HISTORY* FALL/WINTER 1982, BY PERMISSION OF THE PUBLISHER, THE NEW JERSEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

[To Be Continued]

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WhY "hOBOKeN" ?

There are many stories of the origin of our city's name, chief among them that "Hoboken" is derived from "Hopoghan Hackingh," an Indian name, and another that Hoboken comes from the name of a town in Belgium on the Scheldt River opposite Antwerp. There is today a Hoboken in Georgia's Brantley County, on Route 84 near Waycross. Also, a 19th-century map of Pennsylvania shows a community named Hoboken that does not appear on modern maps.

A strong case for Hoboken's name being derived from the Indian "Hopoghan Hackingh" is made in a book published in 1895 with the title *Hopoghan Hackingh*, and subtitle *Hoboken, a Pleasure Resort of old New York*, by Charles H. Winfield, of the historical societies of New Jersey and other states. A copy of the book is in the library of the Hoboken Historical Museum.

Winfield's argument is persuasive but he does not mention the probability that the *spelling* of "Hoboken" came from the town in Belgium. Otherwise, we might more likely be spelled Hopoghan, or Ho-Po-Gan, or some other variation closer to the Indian name.

The book reproduces the Indian deed of Hoboken, the first recorded deed in the records of New Netherlands, dated July 12, 1630. In it the Director and Council of New Netherlands convey ownership to Michael Pauw, Lord of Achtienhoven.

In the following pages are the translation of the deed, the reproduction as it appeared in the book, and Winfield's argument. ⇒

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Any part, right, action, or authority, thereto in the least, either of ownership or jurisdiction; but altogether to the behoof as aforesaid, henceforth, forever, wholly and finally desisting, renouncing, and quit-claiming; promising thereby moreover, not only to keep, maintain, and fulfill this, their grant, and whatever shall be done by virtue thereof, inviolable and irrevocable forever, but also to keep and maintain the same land against all persons free from any claim, challenge, or incumbrance to be made thereon by any person; as also to cause this sale and grant to be approved of and held valid by the remaining joint owners as they are by right obliged to do; all in good faith without fraud or deceit.

In witness whereof these presents are confirmed with our usual signature and with our seal thereto affixed. Done at the aforesaid Island of Manahatas, in Fort Amsterdam, this 12th July, 1630."

ON THE ORIGINS OF THE NAME HOBOKEN, writing in 1895, Charles Winfield admitted, "I confess that my views are not in accord with the view of historians who have expressed themselves on the subject, but I submit them to the reader and his candid judgement." His argument follows:

WHENCE CAME THE NAME HOBOKEN as applied to this place? With much unanimity writers have adopted the opinion of Mr. O'Callaghan in his *History of New Netherland*: 'Hoboken is so called after a village of the same name, situate on the Scheldt, a few miles south of Antwerp.' The statement does not bear on its face any indication of doubt of its correctness. Yet I venture to affirm that if he or any one who adopts his opinion, should be asked for his authority, or to give a reason for his assertion, he would face a difficult task. I admit that the present spelling of the name on the Hudson lends plausibility to the claim of its origin. This, probably, would be the best, if not the only reason that could be given for its alleged relationship to the village on the Scheldt.

1. Why should the place have been named after such an insignificant village? Why not honor it with the name of some town of more prominence as was done in 'Amsterdam' on Manhattan, and 'Flushing' on Long Island. It does not appear that any of the men acting for Mr. Pauw in this purchase claimed that village as his birth place or former residence, nor that Pauw was interested in it. Certainly the surroundings and features of the two places were not so alike that the name of the one naturally suggested a name for the other. In fact, there was no resemblance. That [Belgium's Hoboken] was a plain sandy level, this [our Hoboken] an island – hilly and rolling; that [Belgium's] was reclaimed from the sea and protected from inundation by dykes this [our Hoboken] was glacial drift deposited on the outcropping rock, and in some places nearly one hundred feet above high water.

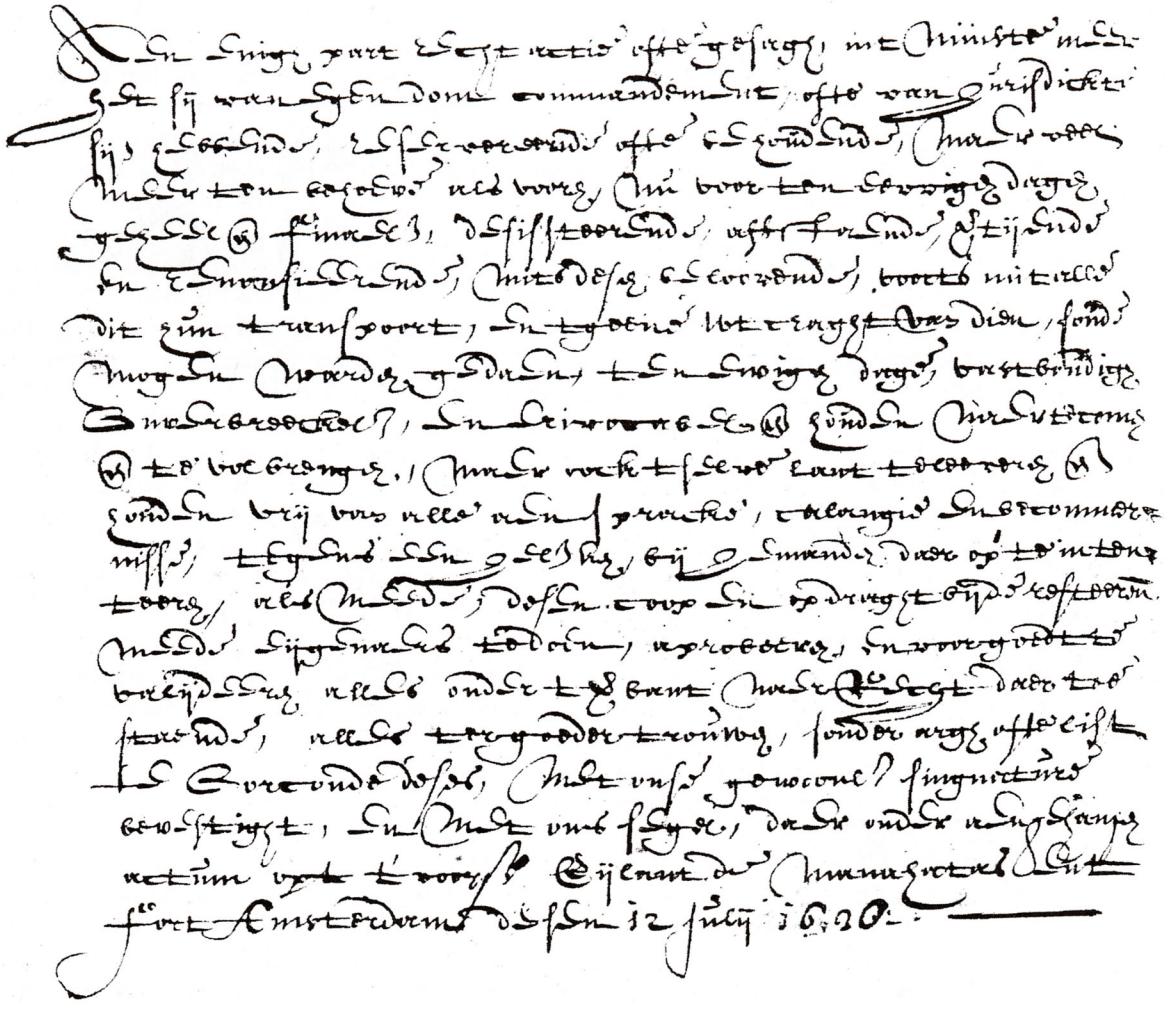
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2. If it was the intention to name this place in honor of the village on the Scheldt why was not that intention carried out? It must be presumed that the Director and Council of New Netherland were men of at least fair education. They must have known something of the geography of their own country. The village of Hoboken so near to Antwerp, at that time one of the most flourishing towns in the country, could not have been unknown to them, insignificant though it was. Yet, in this deed for an important tract of land, where the conveyance was made as much by the name of the land as by boundaries, and therefore accuracy of expression is to be looked for, the name is written as no Dutchmen, before or since, ever wrote the name of the village on the Scheldt. All contemporaneous writings (and I think for a hundred and fifty years afterward) in this country and in Europe, show that

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one name was spelled differently from the other. Even the Directors and States-General spelled the word as they received it from the New Netherland, seemingly without a suspicion that it was the name of their own village. This certainly seems incredible. It can be accounted for only on the supposition that they regarded the name of the two places as entirely different.

3. The deed was drawn and put into its present shape by the authorities of New Netherland. In the last descriptive of the grantors they are said to be 'inhabitants and joint owners of the land called Hobocan Hackingh.' It was *the land*, (Hackingh) not a settlement that had the name by which the Indians were supposed to know it and by which they were conveying it. It would appear from this expression that this was a well-known name of the place. But when the framers of the deed came to write a description of the land granted, a doubt seems to have entered their minds, if they had correctly named it in the early part of the deed. A fair construction of the phrase 'Inhabitants and joint owners of the land called Hobocan Hackingh' is that the grantors knew the land by that name. Therefore, in the granting part of the deed the phrase was modified by saying 'the land was *by us named* Hobocan Hackingh.' This I regard as a confession that the writers of the deed were doing the best they could with a name in a language new and difficult to them. But they were not confident that they had understood the word correctly. To them it sounded like Hobocan Hackingh, and, therefore, they hesitatingly said 'by us called Hobocan Hackingh.'

4. When did Hoboken on the Scheldt become burdened with an Indian suffix? When and where, before or since, was it so written? The suffix, 'Hackingh' is said to mean *the land of*, or *the place of*. When it is added to Hobocan (if by that name Hoboken on the Scheldt is meant) what is the meaning of the compound word? Will it be said 'the land of Hoboken?' Is there any sense in that? Sewanhacky is said to mean 'the land of the Sewan,' or the place where that money was made. So 'Hobocan Hackingh' must mean *the land of something* which had existed *on that spot*, not on the Scheldt, and by which the place was then known. The Indians had never heard of the Scheldt or its village. If the word 'Hobocan' is Dutch, and was intended for 'Hoboken,' that is easily understood. It is only an instance of different spelling. But why add to it a word which had never belonged to it and which only confuses. If they had said 'Antwerp Hackingh,' the name would have contained as much sense as the name 'Hobocan Hackingh.' 'Hackingh' is admittedly an Indian word, and if 'Hobocan' is Dutch, the two when united form a hybrid, half Dutch and half Indian, reminding one of the Minotaur of Euripides: 'A mingled form prodigious to behold, Half-bull, half-man.'

5. Many places in this vicinity had Indian names, as Pembrepogh, Minkakwa, Kewan, Apopealyk, Gemoenepaen, Araseck, Ahasimus, Sikakes and Awichaken. It would have been a singular and striking omission, if so prominent and beautiful a body of land as Hoboken had been left nameless. It is true that many of these names are sadly deformed in their transition from one language to the other. But when a name, pronounced in the native gutturals, had been filtered through a Dutchman's ear, and licked into shape by a Dutchman's tongue, very close resemblance to the original was not in all cases to be found or expected. In many instances its recognition was beyond the skill of the philologist.

Hopoghan was the name which had been given to the place by the natives. They knew it by that name and were conveying it by that name. It is easily seen how 'Hobocan' was made out of 'Hopoghan.' The only way the Dutchmen could get at the name was by the sound. The natives pronounced it and the strangers wrote it phonetically. Add to the words 'Hopoghan' the suffix 'Hackingh,' and the conclusion is irresistible that the compound is exactly the word which the Dutchman wrote 'Hobocan Hackingh.' 'Hopoghan' is said to mean *tobacco pipe*, made from the soapstone found at Castle Point. It is also frequently used in a symbolic sense to express crookedness, and may have been here so used in reference to the shore of the river. The notion of writers that the name comes from the village on the Scheldt is wholly erroneous. It is Indian and nothing else; 'Hopoghan Hackingh' *the land of the tobacco pipe*, or symbolically, *the land of crookedness.*

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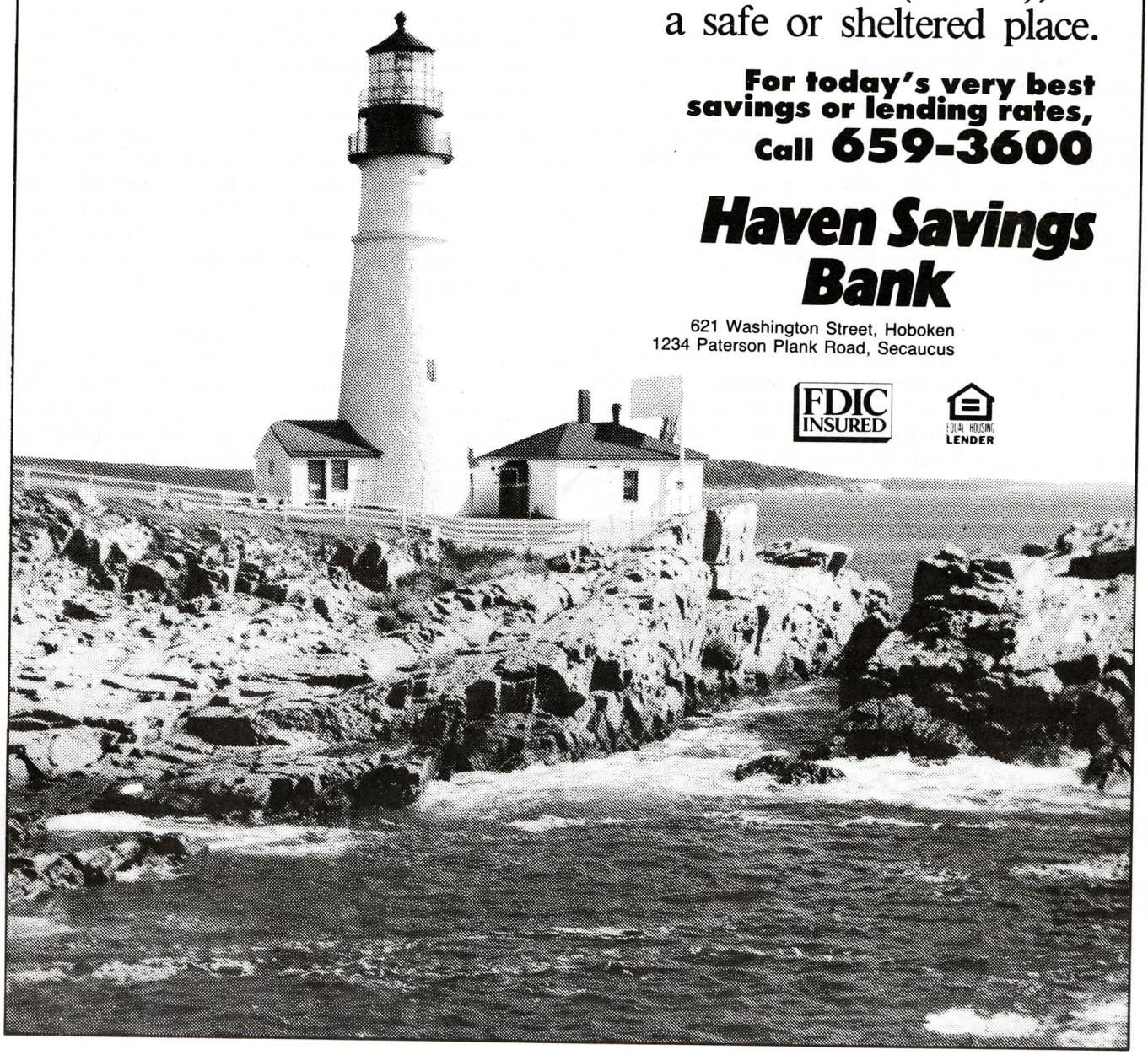
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THE BOLIVARS OF BOLIVAR HOUSE

Built on pilings over a swamp on the shore of Weehawken Cove at what is now the south side of 15th Street and Park Avenue, was a popular Hoboken place of refreshment a century ago. It was called, in spelling that varied, the Bolivar or Bolaver House. The ramshackle establishment was earlier called the Meadow House, probably when Park Avenue bore its original name, Meadow Street. Our cover is a postcard illustration of the building in 1880.

✪ Quite a few glasses of ale were raised at the old weatherbeaten resort which stood for many years in a swampy patch of land now a parking lot. Narrow wooden catwalks on stilts led to it. "If it had received a coat of paint in its halcyon days it was not noticeable," wrote Richard Anzer in a series of articles which began to appear in the *Hudson News* in June, 1929. "Its dilapidation was in contrast to the famous general [Simon] Bolivar [1783-1830] who liberated so many South American countries from Spain and after whom it was named.

"The House was a few feet from the Hudson river, which swerved in from beyond Hudson Street to Park Avenue. In this inlet were rafts of thousands of logs. The water was only a few feet deep and its muddy bottom made it a favorite place for crabs. It was an easy matter for boys to catch hundreds in an afternoon. Swimming from rafts was quite feasible at high tide. This site was later occupied by Tietjen & Lang's mammoth dry docks, while the shores were crowded with the Terminal building, Lipton Tea Company, Continental Baking Company, and other industries."

✪ At the Bolivar House is where good ale, ginger pop and the real old-fashioned bolivars were to be had," reported the *Inquirer* in 1905. "A pond, just in the rear of the house, afforded great amusement to the youngsters and was known as the 'killying' pond. Day after day during the vacation period the shoreline of this pond was crowded with juvenile fishermen, they selling their catch to the old fishermen for bait to catch larger game. The 'rafts' directly in front of the Bolivar House furnished all-day bathing for both young and old."

✪ The last documentation we find of the Bolivar House is in May, 1897, when a Mrs. Samuel Watson was issued a summons by the Hoboken District Court to vacate premises of the "frame dwelling house known as the Bolivar House situated above 14th Street between Garden Street and Park Avenue," belonging to the "Hoboken Land & improvement Co., the Landlord." [The shaky signature of a Samuel Watson appears on a note of 1892 certifying that one Robert A. Carpenter had bought from a Cathaline Babcock "all right, title and interest in all the wood Boats and Tools in the wood yard at 15th St. and Park Ave. in consideration of fifty dollars in hand paid."] The 1897 tenant, Mrs. Watson, the summons states, had not paid the rent of 15 dollars per month for the past eight months.

THE COOKIE

According to the memoirs of John Perkins Field (*Halo Over Hoboken*, Exposition Press, New York, 1955), "In 1891 the Bolivar House still specialized in coconut cakes, nickel beer, and bolivars, and New Yorkers and other visitors knew it." Field described bolivars as "pancake-sized ginger cakes with scalloped edges."

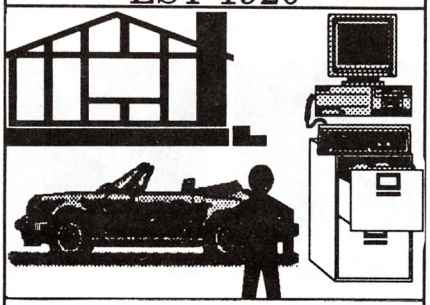


4151 BOLAVER HOUSE 15TH STREET AND PARK AVE, IN 1880, HOBOKEN, N. J.

The soft, flat ginger cake called a "bolivar" that the Bolivar House sold was enormously popular in the nineteenth century and was hawked on the streets of Mew York as well. Whether the Bolivar House was named after the cake or the cake after the house is not known, but it did sell for a modest penny apiece. Whether it actually had any relationship to Simon Bolivar is not known. ⇒

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We've found the original recipe for a ginger cookie like the bolivar in the 1888 edition of a classic English cookbook that is commonly known as "Mrs. Beeton's." First published in 1861, it was written by Isabella Mary Beeton (1836-1865), with the title *The Book of Household Management*. It was the standard throughout the Victorian era. If you enjoy baking cookies from scratch, you may appreciate this authentic nineteenth-century recipe for an old Hoboken favorite. In Britain, the word for "cookie," is *biscuit*, (and the British word for "biscuit" is *scone*) so this *is* a cookie recipe.

AUTHENTIC GINGER BISCUITS
LIKE BOLIVAR COOKIES

Ingredients. 1 lb. of flour, ½lb. of fresh butter, ½lb. of powdered lump sugar, ¾oz. of ground ginger, 2 eggs.

Mode. Rub the butter into the flour, add the sugar, ginger, and eggs. Mix thoroughly, divide into small round biscuits, and bake 5 minutes in a quick [hot] oven.

Time. 5 minutes to bake.

Average Cost. 1s. 2d. for this quantity [about 23¢ in 1888].

Sufficient to make 4 dozen biscuits.

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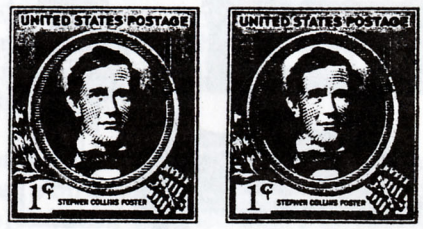
Stephen Foster dreamed of Jeanie in Hoboken

Hoboken's modern reputation as a center for composition and performance of popular music began early, with American writer and composer Stephen Collins Foster calling Hoboken home while he composed his classic *Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair*. His name can be found in the Hoboken Directory of 1854-55, listing his address as 233 Bloomfield Street. A search of records showed that the house number was later changed to 601. The house at 601 Bloomfield Street is marked today by a modest plaque.

Foster was born in Pennsylvania, in Lawrenceville, (now part of Pittsburgh) in 1826. His pioneer family was aware of his talent for music, but not understanding it, they provided him with little formal musical education. Foster's familiarity with African-American music was gained from minstrel shows, in particular the troupe of E.P. Christy, for which many of his songs were written.

Feeling that prejudice against his "Ethiopian songs" existed, he was at first unwilling to risk his reputation by having his name appear on them. But because of their utter simplicity, many of his songs are often thought of as folk music.

The word "Hoboken" appears on the original manuscript of *Jeanie*. It is believed that Foster was inspired to compose the song by his separation from his wife.



Foster had little aptitude for business, and his earnings were never commensurate with the popularity of his songs. When he gave away manuscript copies of *Oh! Susannah*, a publisher made thousands of dollars, but Stephen did not receive a single cent. Excessive drinking and extreme poverty marked his last years. He died in Bellevue Hospital, New York, in 1864, at the age of 38.

Some people consider that some of Foster's work is marred by banality, but songs such as *Oh! Susannah* (1848), *Camptown Races* (1850), *Old Folks at Home* (1851), *My Old Kentucky Home* (1853), *Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair* (1854), and *Beautiful Dreamer* (1862) are unpretentious and have remained popular. The editors could not find out whether Frank Sinatra was aware that *Jeanie* had been written in Hoboken when he sang the song. Does anyone know?



Preparing to dedicate the plaque on 601 Bloomfield Street in 1954, to commemorate Stephen Foster's residing there one hundred years before.

A Place Called Hoboken — in 1831

In 1832, a book published in England, *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, was an account of the three-year visit to the United States (most of which spent in Cincinnati) by an Englishwoman. It delighted British readers but angered Americans by its negative opinions and criticisms.

The author was Frances Trollope [1780-1863], mother of novelist Anthony Trollope, who herself went on to write a number of novels. In this, Mrs. Trollope's first work, she described a Sunday afternoon in Hoboken in 1831 in fairly flattering terms.

She spent the day in Elysian Fields and wrote:

On the opposite side of the North River, about three miles higher up *[from New York City, which then occupied only the southernmost tip of Manhattan]*, is a place called Hoboken. A gentleman who possessed a handsome mansion and grounds there *[probably Col. John Stevens]*, also possessed the right of ferry; and to render this productive, he has restricted his pleasure grounds to a few beautiful acres *[probably Elysian Fields]*, laying out the remainder simply and tastefully as a public walk *[probably River Walk, later River Road, now Sinatra Drive]*.

It is hardly possible to imagine one of greater attraction; a broad belt of light underwood and flowering shrubs, studded at intervals with lofty forest trees, runs for two miles along a cliff which overhangs the matchless Hudson; sometimes it feathers the rocks down to its very margin, and at others leaves a pebbly shore, just rude enough to break the gentle waves, and make a music which mimics softly the loud chorus of the ocean. Through this beautiful little wood a broad, well-gravelled terrace is led by every point which can exhibit the scenery to advantage; narrower and wider paths diverge at intervals, some into the deeper shadow of the woods, and some shelving gradually to the pretty coves below.

The price of entrance to this little Eden is the six cents you pay at the ferry. We went there on a bright Sunday afternoon, expressly to see the humours of the place. Many thousand persons were scattered through the grounds; of these we ascertained, by repeatedly counting, that nineteen-twentieths were men. The ladies were at church...

It is impossible not to feel, after passing one Sunday in the churches and chapels of New York, and the next in the gardens of Hoboken, that the thousands of well-dressed men you see enjoying themselves at the latter *[Hoboken]*, have turned over the thousands of well-dressed women you saw exhibited at the former *[churches of New York]*, into the hands of the priests, at least for the day. The American people arrogate to themselves a character of superior morality and religion, but this division of their hours of leisure does not give me a favorable idea of either.

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Letters to the Museum

I have no intention of canceling my subscription, as my early "growing up" years took place at 207 Seventh Street, with my education in both our public schools and St. Joseph's School.

Enjoyed "The Girls of Hoboken" by John Fitzpatrick. Brought back a lot of memories for me, too.

Florence Patricia "Grogan" Maupai

Enclosed is $20 dues for current year.

Enjoyed the Spring 1993 magazine stories, especially the one about the Holland-America Line. My family lived at Fifth and Hudson Streets since 1947 and we remember seeing the passengers carrying their suitcases down Fifth Street to board the cruise ships or coming in taxis and buses. It was very exciting!

Many sincere thanks for the program given at the Women's Club of Hoboken last March by Robert Foster. It was greatly enjoyed and brought back many memories. Continued good stories!

Theresa Cilento
President, Women's Club of Hoboken

Having grown up and lived at 1208 Hudson Street in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s, I take great interest in the people and places in each issue of Hoboken History. I would be delighted if I could purchase back issues.

Daniel G. Ruddy
Cinnaminson, NJ

⇒



Historian Ted Scull leads a group inside the Erie-Lackawanna train station during a Museum-sponsored tour.

Photo by Hank Forrest

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MUSEUM NEWS

I am a former resident of Hoboken and last week returned for a visit. The city is a charming, absolute delight!

It's been 27 years since I lived there. Periodically I would return to visit my parents who still live on Tenth Street in the same house in which I grew up. But, for the most part we'd walk in the door, say "Hi," and take off for Manhattan. Not this time. We walked in the door, said "Hi," and took off for Hoboken. I even bought a T-shirt. Who would think!

The reason I am writing is, I was in about the fifth or sixth grade at Jos. Brandt School when Hoboken celebrated its 100th birthday as an incorporated city. Our teachers (I even remember all their names) had us do a special project where we took pictures of parts of the city and learned about Hoboken's history. (By the way, it was a big mistake when Stevens Castle was "kissed" by the wrecking ball.)

I would give my eye teeth for the book we put together with the pictures we took for the project. But I'm realistic. Our book is gone, trashed, ground up and buried. And I really would not be an attractive lady minus teeth.

Is there a possibility someone wrote a book, pamphlet, article, paragraph, sentence or anything regarding the history of Hoboken?

Also, while we are at it, I am an avid cross-stitcher (I really need a life!) and do you have any cross-stitch needlepoint, postcards, etc. scenes of Hoboken? Anything? If not, I'll be forced to come back and take amateur pictures and it will look like – we know what.

If I can be of any help with memories from 1943 to 1967 (make that from 1947 or 1948 because I was born in 1943 and can't tell much about that year), please let me know.

Helen (Youshkewich) Muskin
Houston, Texas

My late uncle William Craig had been an employee of the Bethlehem Shipyard in Hoboken until the mid forties. I believe he was foreman for machinists. With the recent death of his daughter, Pauline Craig of Weehawken, our family has come across numerous photos of ships being repaired in drydocks at Bethlehem.

I have these photos and would consider giving some of them to the Museum. The negatives may still exist, but it may take time to sort through the few hundred we have.

I recently passed the area where the Bethlehem Shipyard once thrived, and found many of the buildings demolished and the entire perimeter fenced in. Before the entire area is leveled, I would like to take some photographs of the surviving buildings if possible. I hope that you have permission to gain access.

Craig J. Grybowski
River Edge, NJ

Thank you so much for a Spring 1993 copy of Hoboken History.

My mother, Kathryn Harp Schmalz, recently visited Hoboken. She will be 90 in November. She was born in the brownstone at 1208 Garden Street.

My grandfather, the father of my father Alfred Schmalz, owned a bakery at the corner of 8th and Clinton Streets. The building is still there.

If you would like some pictures and information on the bakery, I can send them to you.

Nan Harp Nelson
Hilton Head, NC

The enclosed check is to honor the 95th birthday of Mrs. Constance Stanton Cooke, who was born and lived in Hoboken for many, many years. (The Freys lived in Hoboken for many years in the late 1800s and early 1900s.)

Clarence & Margaret Frey
Fort Lee, NJ

We wanted to congratulate you on receiving a grant recently from the New Jersey Historical Commission. In having been selected as a grant recipient through the Commission's thorough evaluation criteria, you have demonstrated that your project will make a viable contribution to the public knowledge about New Jersey history.

Once again, congratulations on your grant award. Best wishes for much success with your New Jersey history project.

Jim Florio
Governor

Daniel J. Dalton
Secretary of State

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Marie Dettmering
Louise M. Chardos
Joanne Scully
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Jason Burch & Ann Wallace
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Sheilah Scully
James Robertson
Mayme Jurkat (3 yrs)
Walter Willenborg (2 yrs)

DONATIONS

The Museum wishes to thank the donors of these artifacts for their generosity.

Decorative shelf manufactured by Ferguson Bros. Furniture Co., Hoboken, c1930.
Decorative lead crystal bowl.
Donated by Marie Dettmering.

Political campaign linen hat for Mayor De Sapio and other candidates.
Songs of Stevens published by Alumni Association of Stevens Institute of Technology, 1910.
Donated by Robert Foster.

Photograph of Columbia Club c1900.
Donated by Dean Marchetto & Associates, Architects.

Four photogaphs of interior of St. Francis Church, Jefferson St., c1930s.
Prints from original negatives of photographs of 425-419 Washington Street and Court Street. Donated by George and Dolores Kirchgessner.

Copy prints of north end of Hoboken waterfront, including Bethlehem and Todd shipyards. Donated by John and Kathleen Mann.

Political campign cap and T-shirt for Amato Team, mayoral election 1993.
Donated by Andrew Amato.

Aerial photo of Hoboken looking east to Manhattan, c1956.
Ticket of admission to Stevens Institute Alumni Day, June 6, 1914. Donated by Paul and Barbara Lippman.

Numerous documents from City Hall vault dating from 1850s to 1930s. Cataloging is necessary.
Blueprints for proposed extension of City Hall by architect Meystre c1911.
Donated by City Clerk's office.

Metal enamel sign in 3 sections, reading "New Jersey Restaurant," c1940.
Donated by Peter Superti.

PURCHASES

- Challenger's ribbon for June 3, 1969 primary, Hoboken.
- Pin, Industrial Union of Marine Shipbuilder Workers of America, 1942.
- World War II "E" Award pin, Textile Machine Worker, c1943.
- Business card for George Fenton, Agent for Saltine Chemical Company, Hoboken, manufacturers of Rocal Saltine, "A non-poisonous salt and a sure destroyer of roaches, waterbugs, and ants."

MUSEUM RECEIVES RESTORED GRANT

A major grant of $5,882 has been awarded to the Museum by the New Jersey State Historical Commission. It has been awarded for our coming exhibition, "Hudson County Goes to War: The Story of Hudson County's Role in World War II."

You may remember that we were originally awarded this grant a year ago, but the state legislature cut funding for the work of the Commission and its grant program. The funding has been restored and, happily, so has our grant. We thank the Commission for the honor.

Because of the temporary delay of the award, we have been forced to reschedule the Fall 1993 show to which it was to have been applied. The exhibit will open in our City Hall display space some time in May.

MUSEUM SPONSORS A SCHOOL PROGRAM

The Museum is piloting an Arts In Education program, "A Sense of Place, Discovering Hoboken Through its Architecture," in collaboration with the Hoboken Board of Education. Funding for the program has been provided by the Hudson County Department of Cultural & Heritage Affairs.

Two classes from the Brandt School will participate in the 15-week program that will begin in February 1994 and will include visits to Stevens Institute of Technology, the Erie-Lackawanna Terminal building, several houses of worship, and a tour of a different municipality for the sake of comparison with Hoboken. During the "Preservation Week" of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in May, the students will lead community walking tours in Hoboken sponsored by the Museum.

As a warm-up, four classes from the Kealy School summer school program visited the Hoboken Historical Museum's exhibit in City Hall during the week of July 28. The program was organized by Hoboken teacher Madeline George.

The students toured City Hall, inside and out, including a surprise visit to the Mayor's chambers. The Mayor met most of the students, who were then on their way to the train terminal and other buildings along the way. They became experts on dentil and egg-and-dart moldings, and other classic architectural ornament that appears on Hoboken's classic structures. On their way back to school, the children noticed details on buildings they'd never noticed before.

Lynne Shapiro

CONSTANCE STANTON COOKE'S 95th BIRTHDAY

Museum Trustees were invited to a reception in honor of the 95th birthday of Constance Stanton Cooke, matriarch of a distinguished Hoboken family, on September 4th at St. Joseph's in Jersey City.

Mrs. Cooke, a long-time resident of Hoboken, is the mother of Edward Stanton Cooke, one of the Museum's most energetic and enthusiastic supporters. The festive occasion gave me a chance to meet many former Hobokenites now residing in other parts of the state. It was also a pleasure to meet Constance Cooke herself, who has experienced so much of Hoboken's history at first hand. We thank the Cooke family for the invitation and also extend our thanks to the Frey family for its donation to the Museum.

Bob Foster

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