



1 Hoboken Historical Museum, 1301 Hudson Street. One of the oldest buildings on the Hoboken waterfront, the former Bethlehem Steel machine shop was adapted from a ship repair facility into a retail and residential complex in the late 1990s, and space was donated to the Hoboken Historical Museum, which opened in April 2001 at 1301 Hudson St. In the covered walkway by the Museum entrance, a new Frank Sinatra Centennial commemorative plaque will be dedicated December 12, 2015.



Martin and Dolly Sinatra on their wedding day in a Hoboken portrait studio. Garavente family collection.

2 909 Hudson St. This grand, free-standing, single-family house was a gift from Frank to his parents Dolly and Martin Sinatra. His mother, the former Natalie Della Garavente, was a midwife and ward leader during her years on Monroe St. His father, Anthony Martin Sinatra, though born in Sicily, went by the name of

"Marty O'Brien" in order to be allowed to fight in Hoboken's Irish-only gymnasiums. Marty later became a tavern owner and firefighter. While the Sinatras lived here, neighbors reported occasionally seeing a limo pull up to the curb and Ava and Frank walking up the steep steps for Sunday spaghetti dinners.

3 841 Garden Street. The Sinatra family moved up and across town to an apartment on Park Avenue in the more prestigious German/Irish section of Hoboken in 1927, when Frank was twelve years old (see stop #4). The next year, when Sinatra was thirteen, the family moved again, closer still to the elite eastern section of town. Frank lived at this address until he was nineteen. He later bought 837 Garden Street for his parents, when he became a big band singer—and lived out of town.



Dolly, Frank and Martin Sinatra in his Hoboken Fire Department uniform. Garavente family collection.

4 703 Park Avenue. The Sinatras' first move out of the old neighborhood and into a brick house uptown was accomplished when Marty, who had retired from boxing after breaking both wrists and could no longer work on the docks because of asthma, landed a job as a firefighter through Dolly's influence

as a third ward leader in the ninth district. A year later (see #3 above), they moved another block north and east.

5 The Union Club, 600 Hudson Street. Originally the socially prestigious Deutscher Club von Hoboken, founded in 1864 to foster culture and the German language, the club changed its name to the "Union Club" during World War I, when anti-German sentiment was high. It later became known for hosting dances and political events, when it was owned by the Samperi family (see the Museum's oral history chapbook, "A Nice Tavern"). Sinatra performed here in 1935 for \$40 a week. The building was converted into condominiums during the 1980s.



Stevens Institute of Technology

6 Stevens Institute of Technology, Castle Point. Sinatra was presented with an honorary Doctoral Degree in Engineering during the May 23, 1985, commencement. Sinatra told the audience, "I hope you all live to be 400 years old and the last voice you hear is mine."

7 Frank Sinatra Park, on the waterfront at Fourth Street. Dedicated on July 14, 1998, this park offers stunning views of "New York, New York," and hosts the annual Sinatra Idol Contest sponsored by the Hoboken Cultural Affairs Department each June. Reach this park on foot by the Stevens campus stairs at the east end of Sixth Street, or by car through Fifth Street, turning onto Frank Sinatra Drive, which was renamed in 1979.

8 Demarest High School, Fourth and Garden Streets. Frank spent half a year here—then, like many of his peers, he left

school. A bronze plaque, embossed with an honorary high school diploma, was later awarded to Sinatra and is now in the collection of the Hoboken Historical Museum.



Frank signing autographs on the steps of City Hall, Hoboken, October 30, 1947. Hoboken Historical Museum Collection.

9 Lepore's Home Made Chocolates, 105 Fourth Street. When this family-owned confectioner relocated from the corner of Garden and 6th Streets, its collection of Frank Sinatra photos and souvenirs came along and now line the new shop's walls. The admiration is mutual: The Sinatra family has ordered the custom-made chocolates over the years for a sweet taste of home.

10 Frank Sinatra Post Office Building, 89 River Street, dedicated on May 16, 2003, with Frank's daughter Nancy Sinatra representing the family. Frank Sinatra, Jr., attended a ceremony on May 13, 2008, at nearby Pier A Park for the unveiling of a postage stamp honoring his father.

11 City Hall, 94 Washington Street. On October 30, 1947, Hoboken celebrated Sinatra Day. Twenty thousand fans crowded City Hall and lined Washington Street despite a steady downpour. Sinatra managed to get inside City Hall to receive a wooden key to the city, then rode up Hoboken's main street in a fire truck driven by his father, Marty. A deluge of rain stopped the procession at Eleventh Street and Sinatra left Hoboken for a Madison Square Garden benefit performance for Bellevue Hospital.

12 111 Newark Street, formerly the offices of the *Jersey Observer*, where Frank earned \$12 a week bundling newspapers. Sinatra told Frank Garrick, his godfather and the paper's circulation manager, that he had considered becoming a sportswriter, but he lasted only a few weeks as a copy boy.

13 Piccolo's, 92 Clinton Street. Piccolo's founder, Joseph "Sparky" Spaccavento, installed nearly 300 Sinatra photos and paintings in the back room of the family-owned lunch place, which his son, Patleo "Patty Boy" Spaccavento, has preserved as a shrine to the singer.

14 Leo's Grandezvous, 200 Grand Street. The walls of this bar and restaurant are given over to hundreds of items of Sinatraabilia, including photographs of Frank tap-dancing with Gene Kelly in *On the Town* and visiting Hoboken's St. Ann's feast with presidential candidate Ronald Reagan, as well as a juke box filled with Sinatra hits.

15 St. Francis Church, 300 Jefferson Street. Sinatra was baptized here on April 2, 1916. Frank Garrick, a young Irishman, was chosen by Dolly to be Sinatra's godfather. Garrick was not only a good friend of Marty's, and the circulation manager of the *Jersey Observer*, he was well-



Dolly and Frank Sinatra at St. Francis Church with Franciscan friars and others, ca. 1936-39. Gift of Lorraine Calabrese, Hoboken Historical Museum Collection.

connected politically: His uncle was a police captain. Her choice is also noteworthy for its influence on Sinatra's given name. The priest mistakenly used Garrick's name, "Francis," during the christening, instead of "Martin," Sinatra's intended first name. The church was also the site of his hometown memorial service in 1998.

16 333 Jefferson Street, former site of Marty O'Brien's, the bar opened by Dolly and Marty Sinatra before Prohibition. Later, they kept the tavern in Dolly's name because firefighters were not allowed to own or operate saloons. Frank used to sing there, accompanied by the player piano.

17 Firehouse Engine Co. No. 5, 412 Grand Street. When Dolly Sinatra helped her husband Marty gain a position in the Hoboken Fire Department, he was assigned to Engine No. 5, where he later became fire captain. He retired in 1956. This 1898 Francis I style building is now privately owned housing and is listed in the National and State Registers of Historic Places.

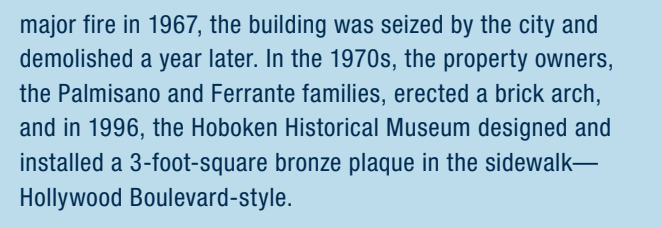


Dolly Sinatra with Mayor DeSapio, 2nd Place Miss Hoboken, and Frank Sinatra at City Hall. Part of Frank Sinatra Day, October 30, 1947, ceremonies when he was presented with the Key to the City. Hoboken Historical Museum Collection.

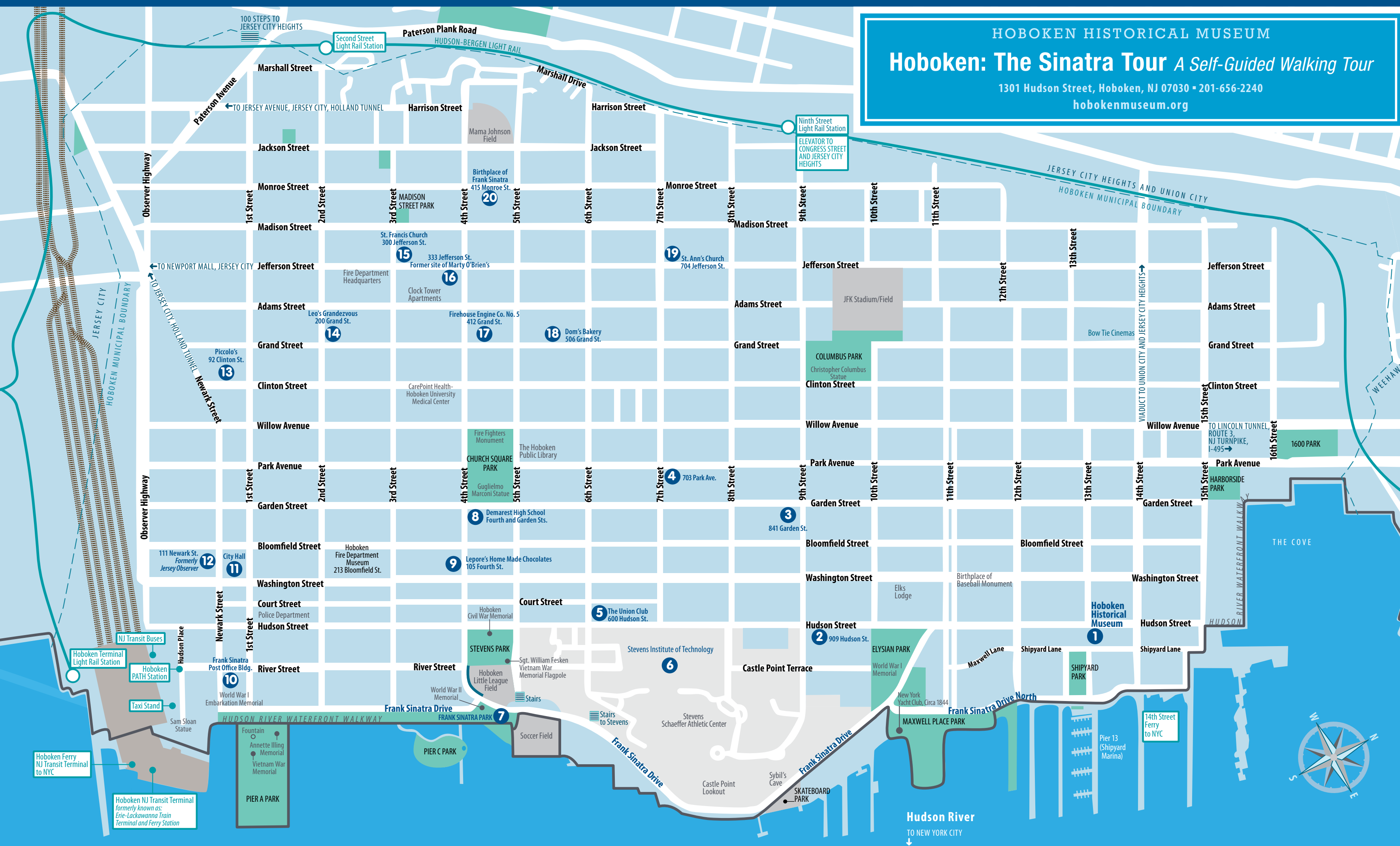
18 Dom's Bakery, 506 Grand Street. Sinatra may have turned his back on Hoboken after achieving success—he claimed suburban Hasbrouck Heights as his hometown when he moved there with his first wife, Nancy—but his stomach remained true to the Mile Square City. He continued to receive regular deliveries of Dom's bread for many years thereafter.

19 St. Ann's Church, 704 Jefferson Street. According to local lore, Frank Sinatra made his singing debut at a St. Ann's ravioli dinner. The church is known throughout the state for its annual feast, honoring the patron saint of women. In July of 1984, Sinatra made a public appearance in Hoboken for the first time in nearly forty years, when he appeared at St. Ann's Feast with presidential candidate Ronald Reagan. Reagan's advisors had suggested a visit to St. Ann's when polls indicated he was losing the "women's vote."

20 415 Monroe Street. The birthplace of Francis Albert Sinatra, December 12, 1915. Frank, who was an only child, lived with his parents on the second floor, on the south side of the building, until he was 12 years old. The original four-story, eight-family, wood frame, cold-water apartment house no longer exists. After a major fire in 1967, the building was seized by the city and demolished a year later. In the 1970s, the property owners, the Palmisano and Ferrante families, erected a brick arch, and in 1996, the Hoboken Historical Museum designed and installed a 3-foot-square bronze plaque in the sidewalk—Hollywood Boulevard-style.



A Note to Tour-Goers: To visit every stop on the tour, be sure to allow at least two hours' walking time. Some businesses or locations may not be open at all times. Please call ahead to confirm. Wear comfortable shoes and enjoy the trip!



HOBOKEN HISTORICAL MUSEUM
Hoboken: The Sinatra Tour A Self-Guided Walking Tour
 1301 Hudson Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030 • 201-656-2240
 hobokenmuseum.org



The Hoboken Historical Museum

The **Hoboken Historical Museum** was formed in 1986. Its purpose and objectives are many: to stimulate interest in the city's history, architecture, and genealogy, and to offer exhibits, lectures, films, and historic walking tours. The Museum also documents historic events and landmarks, records oral histories of its citizens, and acquires artifacts relating to Hoboken's rich history.

In 2001, we moved into our current location in one of the **oldest buildings on Hoboken's waterfront**, a former machine shop for Bethlehem Steel. Through award-winning exhibitions and publications, a dedicated team of professionals and an army of volunteers collaborate to bring interesting aspects of Hoboken's past to light in exhibits that change every six to 12 months. Our education curator creates educational programs and family-friendly activities for children of all ages. Our Upper Gallery features local artists whose work interprets Hoboken and our area in a range of visual media.

Our **support** comes in part from public grants and fundraising events such as the annual Gala, Secret Garden Tour, House Tour, and more. But a major source of our funding **comes from donations by local businesses and individual members of the community like you.**

As an **active and fun organization, we are always looking for new volunteers and members** to assist us. If you would like to become a Museum member and receive our email newsletter, earn discounts on merchandise and events, plus free admission, please visit our website: hobokenmuseum.org/support-us/membership.

If you prefer to mail in your payment, please provide the following information: name, address, phone, and email, and mail it with your check, payable to the Hoboken Historical Museum, to: Hoboken Historical Museum, P.O. Box 3296, Hoboken, N.J. 07030.

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Francis Albert Sinatra (1915 – 1998)

"A Kid from Hoboken Who Got the Breaks"

Old Blue Eyes. The Voice. Chairman of the Board. Or, in Hoboken, simply "Frankie." Old-timers here may argue about whether Frank Sinatra was a class act or a bum, whether he was the best or others were better, but whatever they say about Sinatra, they say it like *family*. They knew the guy. He was from Hoboken. Nothing can change that.

He was, as one writer put it, "a kid from Hoboken who got the breaks." And in the course of his sixty-year career, that skinny kid the others called "Slats" reshaped American popular music and ideas about style.

Frank Sinatra was America's first teen heart-throb, earning another nickname—"Swoonatra"—after girls started fainting at his concerts during the 1940s. Boys imitated his slicked-back hair and cocky demeanor. All across the country—and then the world—singing, swooning, swaggering fans fell in love with that voice, with an intimate style of singing that brought the listener inside the song, alongside the singer.

Perhaps this is why former bobby-soxers and zoot-suiters—sometimes with their kids and grandkids in tow—have journeyed for years to Sinatra's birthplace, or packed into local taverns to celebrate the birth of this city's most famous native son. Younger fans mention the Rat Pack and the Chairman's cool, but many also cite his musical artistry as inspiration.

And when the news broke on May 14, 1998, that Frank Sinatra had died, the fans came again to Hoboken, to pay respects and to mourn. The Hollywood Boulevard-style bronze star the Hoboken Historical Museum had installed at the singer's birthplace two years before was soon surrounded by candles, handmade signs, flowers, notes, photographs, and even a loaf of coal-fired oven bread, a Hoboken specialty that the singer sometimes had shipped to California.

About Hoboken

Hoboken, New Jersey, is a community that simultaneously enjoys all the benefits of a big city and the neighborliness of a small town. Bordered by the Hudson River and the Palisades, and centered between the Lincoln and Holland Tunnels, Hoboken is just over one mile square. One can walk to everything, yet the city is also a transportation hub, with a subway, ferry, and railroad terminal.

Known as the birthplace of Frank Sinatra and baseball, Hoboken's physical character and charm have been preserved for over 160 years. The city is arranged in a tidy urban grid, lined with owner-occupied and cherished Victorian row houses punctuated by turn-of-the-century churches and storefronts.

Hoboken's street grid was laid out in the early 1800s by the city's founder, Col. John Stevens III, who acquired the land in 1784 that had been forfeited by British loyalist William Bayard during the Revolutionary War. The name is a Dutch derivation of the Lenni Lenape Indian name, "Hopoghan Hackingh," or Land of the Tobacco Pipe. It became an important port for transatlantic passenger and cargo shipping lines in the late 1800s, then served as the primary port of embarkation for US troops in World War I,—inspiring General Pershing's famous rallying cry, "Heaven, Hell or Hoboken by Christmas"—and in 1953, was the setting for the Oscar award-winning film, "On the Waterfront."

The city has many fine and varied restaurants, including Chinese, Cuban, Indian, Italian, Japanese, Mexican, Middle Eastern, Thai, and a luncheonette intact from the 1930s. You can shop in a modern supermarket or at a brick-oven bakery, and buy fresh produce directly from growers at a farmers market. Although parking spaces are few and far between, festive out-of-towners visit every weekend anyway, something they have done here since horse-and-buggy days.

As you take your walking tour of Hoboken, you will find yourself traveling back in time, to a warm, human-scaled world that is still alive and well in the Mile Square City. **Welcome!**

It is Sinatra's fans who inspired this guide, with their frequent requests for information on Hoboken sites linked to the legendary entertainer. We hope the information we have gathered helps invoke a teenaged Sinatra and his family, and also the long-vanished social clubs, pool halls, and bars of the thirties, where Frank and his contemporaries sang. We hope you'll gain a sense of what life was like here during the singer's early years—and what remains from that time.

Writer Pete Hamill noted in a tribute to Sinatra that when the singer's career began, "there was an America that now doesn't exist very much, a kind of blue collar America, industrial America...and nobody had represented that before," Sinatra could easily summon images from working-class, urban life. In his neighborhood, he told a radio audience in 1980, boys became fighters or they worked in factories. And Sinatra knew more than a little about street-tough guys, from spending time in smoky nightspots like the Cat's Meow—one of nearly 200 social clubs in the city during the thirties.

And yet, Frank's growing-up years weren't nearly as rough as some biographies have suggested. He was a rare only child, in a family whose fortunes increased through his mother's savvy political connections. (In fact, one of young Frank's other nicknames, "Slacksy O'Brien," stemmed from his family's ability to buy him so many pairs of dressy pants.) Although it's certainly true that Frank was born in a cold-water flat, many immigrant families made homes in such apartments. And the Sinatras, after all, did not remain on Monroe Street for long.

As a third ward leader, Frank's mother Dolly was a significant cog in the city's political machine, gaining Democratic votes for higher-ups and dispensing and gaining favors. Like most Hoboken residents, she was aware of the division of power—and the city—between the Irish and the Italians, but her close involvement with those in power allowed her to literally cross those lines. In 1920s Hoboken, Italians didn't dare cross Willow Avenue, a kind of dividing line between the Italian and Irish neighborhoods; and yet, the Sinatras—sometimes calling themselves "the O'Briens"—moved across Willow, and then moved again,



Frank Sinatra in between 2nd Place Miss Hoboken on the left and 1st Place Miss Hoboken on the right at City Hall. Part of Frank Sinatra Day, October 30, 1947, ceremonies. Gift of Dr. Gerard DeSapio, Hoboken Historical Museum Collection.



Mayor Fred M. DeSapio presenting the Key to the City to Frank Sinatra with Dolly Sinatra at City Hall on Frank Sinatra Day, October 30, 1947. Gift of Dr. Gerard DeSapio, Hoboken Historical Museum Collection.

each time closer to the prestigious Irish/German section of town. As you take the tour you will see, in the changing architecture of each Sinatra family home, the city's marked class distinctions.

The Hoboken of the 1920s and '30s was also a city brimming with young singers, who performed on street corners, in clubs, in private homes, and in pool rooms—wherever they could get an audience. In September 1935 Sinatra joined up with a Hoboken trio, The Three Flashes, to form the Hoboken Four. They sang on the nationally broadcast radio show, Mayor Bowes and His Original Amateur Hour, and were voted its most popular act. The group toured the country for several months, then Sinatra went solo, singing at dances at Hoboken clubs, until he got a gig at the Rustic Cabin in Englewood Cliffs. Bandleader Harry James heard Sinatra on a WNEW Dance Parade broadcast from the Cabin and offered him a position as a vocalist. In late 1939, he joined the Tommy Dorsey band.

By then Frank had already married and moved out of Hoboken, and his singing engagements seemed to be everywhere *but* his hometown. Within five years he was a true star—his new home was California.

Sinatra continued to visit family in Hoboken, but in 1947 he made his last public appearance here for nearly forty years—until he returned to accompany President Ronald Reagan to St. Ann's Feast in 1984. On October 30, 1947, Hoboken celebrated Sinatra Day, the final event in a month-long March of Progress celebration orchestrated by Mayor Fred M. DeSapio with the assistance of his dedicated ward leader, Dolly Sinatra. Twenty-thousand people lined Washington Street in the pouring rain to catch a glimpse of the star, who announced, "I've met people in cities all over the country, but folks here in Hoboken, well, they're just wonderful—that's all."

As you walk this tour, you will meet more than a few Hobokenites who will return the compliment. As one man wrote to "Blue Eyes" in the sign-in book at Sinatra's birthplace: "I was much younger than you, but grew up in this town, and all my family knew you and your legacy growing up here. Thanks for the world."

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