

tion he purchased a large adjoining tract of land in Weehawken. Soon after these acquisitions, Colonel Stevens built a homestead on the site of the present Castle. Here he lived every summer until 1814, when this became his residence the year round. He cultivated his grounds with keen and intelligent interest, planting many fruit trees new to the region. His library was one of the best in America for its day. Here philosophy and religion, history and biography, travels and poetry, were not the mere ornaments of handsome shelves, but well-thumbed tomes, furnishing and refreshing a brain of uncommon activity. Then, as now, the windows of the Stevens homestead commanded a full view of the city of New York, distant no more than a mile. Colonel Stevens as early as 1824 proposed that his estate should become a park for the metropolis, for which its easy accessibility and long shore-line fitted it admirably. But his suggestion met with no response. In 1911, however, the Palisades Park, to stretch for fifty miles along the Hudson River, was planned for Greater New York, one of its commissioners being Edwin A. Stevens II., a grandson of Colonel Stevens.

So long as Colonel Stevens maintained a home at 7 Broadway, near the Battery, his sole means of reaching Hoboken was a boat impelled by oars or a sail. In fine weather nothing could be pleasanter. In a fog or a storm, the trip was perilous and uncomfortable. No wonder, then, that he listened with both ears to reports that John Fitch was running a steamboat on the Delaware. Why could not the same feat be accomplished on the Hudson? Steam engines for years had driven the huge pumps of Cornish mines; they were now entering upon the less arduous task of propelling canal barges and excursion boats. One memorable morning in 1787, about a year before Symington's success on the Forth and Clyde Canal, Colonel Stevens saw Fitch's little craft as she sped between Burlington and