



# Gaslight News

March 2009

Historical Society of Riverton

vol. XXXIX, no. 1 (#135)

Founded 1970

Riverton, NJ 08077

Incorporated 1978



Kim Hanley (also known as Abigail Adams) is an actor, dancer, singer, choreographer, and costume designer who has loved history all her life.

## HSR presents Abigail Adams... Remember the Ladies March 26th

portrayed by Kim Hanley of the AMERICAN HISTORICAL THEATRE

In support of Women's History Month, please join the Historical Society of Riverton on Thursday, March 26 at Riverton School, 7:30 P.M. for an extraordinary performance and re-enactment by "Abigail Adams."

### Abigail and husband John were prolific letter writers

Abigail and John Adams spent most of the years during the War for Independence apart, but their prolific letter writing kept this remarkable couple in constant

communication. From matters of Congress in Philadelphia to matters of family life on the farm in Braintree, Massachusetts, no issue was too minute or unimportant to Abigail and John. Although she was almost entirely self-educated, Abigail's letters stand as a testimony to the power of womanhood in the eighteenth century, and her advocacy of American independence included strong arguments for equality for all Americans. Claiming her role in life to be that of wife and mother, she was also a successful

See ADAMS on 2

Mrs. Pat Brunker is vice-president of the Historical Society of Riverton, manager of the HSR website at [www.gaslightnews.homestead.com](http://www.gaslightnews.homestead.com) and Porch Club President. A frequent contributor to the GN, she has been busy panning for more historical gold by researching the lives of one of Riverton's earliest power couples, the Ogdens. She has struck us rich with this compelling story of two lives which were full of purpose and achievement. Perhaps it was their deep Quaker ancestral roots going back to the time of William Penn which led each of them to live lives which benefited so many people both within and far beyond the boundaries of Riverton.



## First mayor Edward H. Ogden and wife Sarah were active in business and civics

Edward H. Ogden, a prominent Philadelphia businessman who was elected as Riverton's first mayor, played key roles in the establishment of several local institutions, including the Riverton Yacht Club and Riverton Golf Club. However, few people realize the extent of the activism of Sarah Ogden, his wife, who was an energetic leader of many Philadelphia social, civic, and philanthropic organizations and the second president of Riverton's Porch Club. Their respective contributions to the region's society and, in particular, Riverton's are still evident today.

In this first of a two-part article HSR Board member Mrs. Pat Brunker traces the life of a woman of truly remarkable achievement, Sarah Ogden.

Sarah Morris Perot Ogden came from an old and distinguished Philadelphia family. She was descended through her mother's family from Anthony Morris, a Quaker minister, brewer, judge, and second mayor of Philadelphia. Morris had arrived with William Penn in Burlington, NJ, in 1682 from England and later moved to Philadelphia.



Sarah Ogden, Porch Club president and social activist

See OGDEN on 2



Portrait of Abigail Adams, and  
Portrait of John Adams  
Collection of the Massachusetts  
Historical Society

Excerpt from a Letter from  
Abigail Adams to John  
Adams, 31 March - 5 April  
1776

"I long to hear that  
you have declared an  
independency -- and by  
the way in the new Code  
of Laws which I suppose it  
will be necessary for you  
to make I desire you would  
Remember the Ladies,  
and be more generous  
and favourable to them  
than your ancestors. Do  
not put such unlimited  
power into the hands of  
the Husbands. Remember  
all Men would be tyrants if  
they could."

## Kim Hanley brings her interpretation of Abigail Adams to the next HSR meeting

ADAMS from 1

farmer, real estate broker, accountant, and merchant. In addition to admonishing her husband to "...remember the ladies," she clearly voiced the need for women's education and the abolition of slavery.

### Creative artist Kim Hanley holds impressive credentials

Kim Hanley (aka Abigail Adams) is an actor, dancer, singer, choreographer, and costume designer who has loved history all her life. Initially trained as a ballet dancer in New York, Kim's resume includes appearances with the Bolshoi and New York City Ballet companies and the first National Tour of the musical "She Loves Me". She holds her B.F.A. degree from the State University of N.Y. at F.I.T. in the Restoration and History of Decorative Arts. In the Philadelphia area, she has appeared at the Media Theatre (Rockwell Productions), with Storybook Musical Theatre for young audiences, and singing with The Libertytones in the historic district. She was discovered by the American Historical Theatre when appearing in short historical drama presentations during the summer of 1997. Since then she has

appeared as Abigail Adams, Betsy Ross, Philadelphia seamstress, upholsterer, and flag maker, Elizabeth Powel, 18th century hostess and friend of George Washington, and as a chanteuse in AHT's Victorian Music Hall. Kim has also widened her field of interpretation to include the characters of Molly Pitcher, soldier's wife and Elizabeth Drinker, a Philadelphia Quaker who kept her diary for almost fifty years.

American Historical Theatre Credits include:

The NJ Council for the Humanities,  
Horizons Speakers Bureau

The White House Visitors Center

The National Archives

The National Constitution Center

Carpenters' Hall

The Pennsylvania Society

The National Liberty Museum

Chatham School

The Republican National Convention  
in Philadelphia

Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge

Valley Forge Elderhostel

© American Historical Theatre 2003



This program is offered through the Horizons Speakers Bureau of the New Jersey Council for the Humanities, a state partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

## Sarah Ogden was a woman of astonishing accomplishment and purpose

OGDEN from 1

### Beer money and drugs the source of family wealth

Her grandfather, Francis Perot, a Philadelphia merchant, purchased a brewing and malting plant on Vine Street. He later took his brother, William S. Perot, into partnership in 1818 and they produced both beer and malt until 1850, afterward focusing exclusively on malting. In 1823, Francis

married Elizabeth Marshall Morris and later absorbed the brewery of his father-in-law

**T. MORRIS PEROT & CO.,**  
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T. MORRIS PEROT. EDWARD H. OGDEN.

Thomas Morris, to whom he had been apprenticed. The Morris brewery was established in 1687, making it one of the oldest companies in Philadelphia at the time.

Francis and Elizabeth Perot had three children, Elliston (born in 1824), Thomas or T. Morris (born in 1828), and Sarah Morris (born in 1831). T. Morris Perot started a wholesale drug company in 1851. In 1852, he entered into a partnership with Edward Ogden, Sarah's future husband, who became Vice-President of T. Morris Perot and Company. Ogden was only twenty years of age at the time.

**Married, with children, but tragedy was ahead**



Elizabeth M. (Ogden) Ellison

Harriet M. (Ogden) Nevin

Sarah and Edward may have gotten to know each other through Sarah's brother's business

as Sarah Morris Perot and Edward H. Ogden were married a year later on December 1, 1853.

Sarah and Edward Ogden had three children, all born in Philadelphia, but she would lose two of them as young adults. Their son, Francis Perot Ogden, born in 1855, died at age 32 in 1887, before he could assume a leadership role in the malting company.

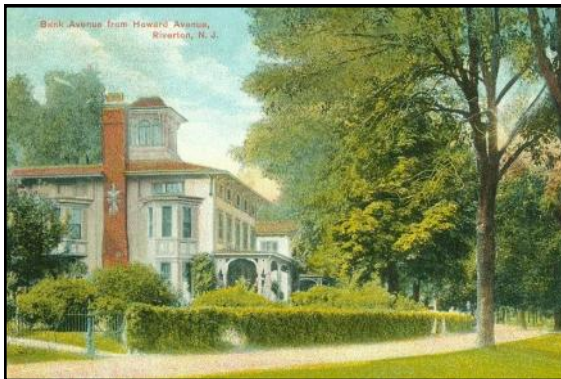
Their two daughters, Elizabeth and Harriet, were born in 1856 and 1859, respectively. Elizabeth married Henry H. Ellison, but passed away at just 24 years of age. Harriet married Reverend Charles W. Nevin, a Presbyterian minister.

**Networking with Quakers may have led Ogdens to move to Riverton**

Sarah Ogden served on the Board of the

Home for the Incurables, originally at 47th and Woodland Avenues in Philadelphia. That part of the city had been designed by Samuel Sloan, who was also the designer of the town of Riverton. It is possible that he and Mrs. Ogden met in Philadelphia, and Mrs. Ogden learned through him about the planned community he had designed in Riverton.

It could also have been through Mrs. Ogden's brother, T. Morris Perot, who was a member of the Central Soup Society in Philadelphia that she learned of Riverton. This society was incorporated in 1861 with the charitable purpose of distributing soup and other food to the poor and needy. Other noteworthy members included William C. Biddle and Dillwyn Parrish, two of the founders of Riverton. Regardless of how it happened, the family moved to Riverton, where they bought the Caleb Clothier house at 503 Bank Avenue.



The house at 503 Bank Avenue originally built for founder Caleb Clothier had six bedrooms, not counting the maid's quarters, a typical size for the riverfront mansions. The large front porch afforded a meeting place for Porch Club members after the Ogdens made it their home.

Sarah Ogden performed other philanthropic work through her membership in social and civic organizations. From 1862 to 1865, she was a daily visitor to the Broad and Cherry St. US Military Hospital.

For several years Mrs. Ogden was a manager of the Western House of Employment and the Penn Sewing School. There, needy women were taught to sew and then paid

**Their son, Francis Perot Ogden, born in 1855, died at age 32 in 1887, before he could assume a leadership role in the malting company.**

Francis Perot Ogden, born 1855, died 1887



# Sarah Ogden's activities in Riverton were a fraction of her considerable achievements

OGDEN from 3

for their labor. Penn Sewing School, originally Friends Sewing School, was organized with the help of those two benevolent Quakers, Dillwyn Parrish and William C. Biddle. Sarah's daughter Elizabeth had been an instructor there.

## Mrs. Ogden even collected money for Uncle Sam

She was a member of the Board of Managers of the Pennsylvania Society of Colonial Dames of America (1907) and

Regent of the Philadelphia Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (1892).

Under her leadership, the Philadelphia Chapter of the DAR collected \$10,000 (approximately \$270,000 in today's money) for the erection of the Manila Club House in 1903. The check was presented to Secretary Elihu H. Root, United States Secretary of War, by Mrs. Francis Howard Williams, chairman, and Mrs. Edward H. Ogden, treasurer of the committee. A special act of Congress was passed authorizing the government to receive the gift and build the Club House for the use of the enlisted men.

## She had the heart of an artist and a mind for business

She served as vice-president of the New Century Company, a stock company of women, whose members belonged to the New Century Club, one of the nation's oldest women's clubs devoted to the protection and promotion of women's interests and social concerns.

Sarah Ogden was also manager of the Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art, the predecessor of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. She became an active member in 1895, in 1899 she accepted the office of vice-president, and in 1902, she became president and held that office for three years, during which time she was ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees, attending its meetings. In 1904, declining re-election for the presidency, Mrs. Ogden was made vice-president, an office she held until her death, thereby completing seventeen years of continuous service.

Her work on behalf of charities was considerable. She was president of the Philadelphia Home for Incurables, president of Exchange for Women's Work, president of the Woman's Committee of Preston Retreat, president of the Female Association of Philadelphia for the Relief and Employment of the Poor, vice-president of the Old Man's Home and manager of the Pennsylvania Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (1904).

## Mrs. Ogden labored at the Porch Club, summered in Newport



Founded in 1890, the Porch Club is now one of the oldest women's clubs in New Jersey. Eight young women originally met on porches as a reading circle each week.

Meanwhile, in Riverton, Sarah Ogden was elected the second President of The Porch Club in 1897. She served in this capacity



Mrs. Sarah Ogden served as VP of the New Century Club, one of the nation's oldest women's clubs devoted to the protection and promotion of women's interests and social concerns



until 1901. The building, built in 1909, was designed by Robeson Lea Perot, a well-known architect in Philadelphia and Wilmington, Delaware. Since this would have been a very small commission for him, it seems likely that he was related to Mrs. Ogden, possibly a cousin.

In addition to their homes at 314 Vine Street in Philadelphia and 503 Bank Avenue in Riverton, the Ogdens also owned a "cottage" in Jamestown, near Newport, RI, where great mansions were frequented by American high society of the period, including the likes of the Vanderbilts and Astors. Jamestown became a popular tourist spot around the turn of

the 20th century, and there were a number of homes there owned by wealthy Philadelphia Quakers who wished to maintain a safe distance from the flamboyance of Newport society. The major form of transportation was ferries that would take

**THE NEWS OF NEWPORT.**  
Special to The New York Times.

NEWPORT, R. I., June 24.—Mme. Nordica is a guest of Dr. and Mrs. William T. Bull, who gave a dinner to-night at Dudley Place in her honor.

Mr. and Mrs. Elisha Dyer, Jr., gave a dinner to-night in honor of Harry S. Lehr, who is their guest while awaiting the opening of Arleigh, which Mr. and Mrs. Lehr have rented for the Summer. Mrs. Lehr will arrive to-morrow.

Gen. and Mrs. Glen Collins, who left here a few days ago after a visit to Mr. and Mrs. Reginald C. Vanderbilt, returned today and have taken apartments at the New Cliffs.

Dr. and Mrs. Charles H. May of Washington are also at the New Cliffs.

Mrs. Moses Taylor Campbell has rented the Thomas Janney cottage, Del Main, on Narragansett Avenue, for the Summer.

James J. Van Alen arrived to-day from his fishing trip in Canada, and is to remain at the Hill Top Cottage until June 30, when he will open Wakehurst for the Summer.

Mrs. Astor's villa, Beechwood, has been opened preparatory to her arrival early in July.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry A. C. Taylor, who arrived here on the steam yacht Wanderer, are occupying their cottage on Anandale Road.

Mrs. E. H. Ogden of Riverton, N. J., and Commander and Mrs. Washburn Maynard have arrived at their Jamestown cottages.

J. F. D. Lanier has sold his twenty-one-foot knockabout Surprise to M. T. Chester Walbridge of Germantown, Penn., who will race her in Narragansett Bay during the Summer.

Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Leeds have gone on a week's cruise to the eastward in their steam yacht.

*The New York Times*  
Published: June 25, 1904  
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people to and from Newport, RI. In 1903, Jamestown was a bustling resort with nine hotels. *New York Times* society page articles dated 1891 through 1907 heralded the arrival of either Edward Ogden, or Mrs. E.H. Ogden, after her husband's death.

**Riverton Library bldg. was Mrs. Ogden's memorial for her husband**

The Riverton Free Library Association was founded on January 12, 1899, by a group of community volunteers. For nine years, the Library occupied the reading room of

Christ Church. In February of 1908, Mrs. Sarah Morris Ogden deeded the present Carpenter Gothic building to the Library Association, in memory of her husband.



The Museum, Memorial Hall, Fairmount Park



Riverton Free Library - postcard available at the library

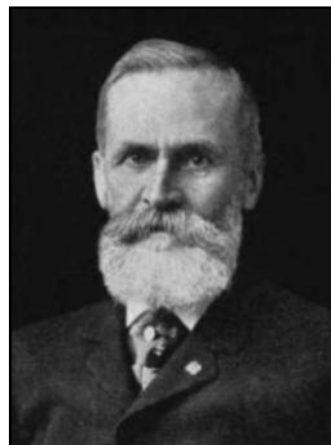
She died at her home in Riverton on July 30th, 1912, at the age of 81.

Upon her death, Georgine N. W. Shillard-Smith, the Secretary of the Associate Committee of Women of the Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art said of her, "In reviewing Mrs. Ogden's career, simplicity of character, honesty, courage, calm judgment, clear vision and earnestness of purpose stand out conspicuously. Add to these qualifications and expert knowledge of parliamentary law, and her peculiar fitness for the work so successfully done will be fully realized. To us her fellow-workers, who follow in her steps, she has bequeathed an ideal which all who knew her will never cease to revere."

-PAT BRUNKER 



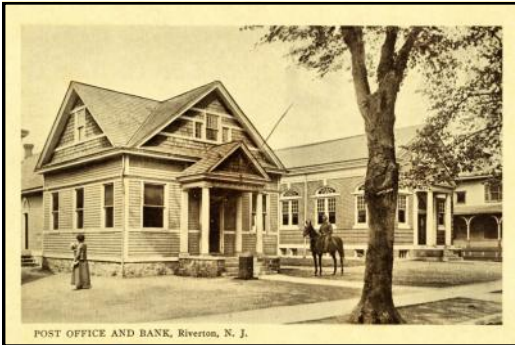
Riverton's first mayor, first Riverton Yacht Club secretary treasurer, and Riverton Golf Club president, Edward H. Ogden, will be the subject of the next installment of this article. As has been in the case of his wife, Sarah, he was a person of extraordinary achievement.



"...simplicity of character, honesty, courage, calm judgment, clear vision and earnestness of purpose... To us her fellow-workers... she has bequeathed an ideal which all who knew her will never cease to revere."  
Georgine N. W. Shillard-Smith, Secretary, Associate Committee of Women of the Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art in reference to Mrs. Edward H. Ogden *Annual Report of the Pennsylvania Museum of Art for the Year 1912*

⑥ THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RIVERTON

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Do you have any vintage photos, postcards, maps, ephemera, or recollections to share which you would allow to be highlighted in an upcoming issue or a future program? Please contact Mr. McCormick directly in order to make arrangements. 856-764-1551 [jmccormick@comcast.net](mailto:jmccormick@comcast.net)

Readers: Find inside Part One of a two part feature article by Mrs. Pat Brunker on Mr. and Mrs. Edward H. Ogden.

It's 'Ladies, first' as we get to know Sarah Ogden, a woman of rare thought and action. Part Two on this late 19th century Quaker power couple continues next issue.



"Her devotion to duty, her knowledge of the methods of deliberative bodies, her sane, wise, calm judgment made her of inestimable value to us all."

*Excerpted from Minutes of the Council of the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America 1912*



## Gaslight News

is a publication of the Historical Society of Riverton, and is published five times per year.



### THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RIVERTON

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Detail of 1908 postcard courtesy of Mr. Ed Gilmore



former Grice home

Perfect Timing! The Historical Society of Riverton is participating in Women's History Month on Saturday, March 21. The Porch Club is one of the six featured stops on the Burlington Tourism Office's "Celebrating Notable Women of Burlington County" tour, each honoring a Burlington County woman who made significant

contributions to women's causes with a self-guided tour. Visit us at the Porch Club from 10AM-4PM where there will be information displayed about Riverton's Mary VanMeter Grice, founder of the New Jersey PTA and first President of the Porch Club.

