



# Gaslight News

May 2009

Historical Society of Riverton

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## “Navigating Burlington Co.” presented by HSR member Paul W. Schopp May 21st

**A virtual trip using vintage postcards and historic images from Philly to Bordentown**

Paul W. Schopp, lifetime member of the historical society and well-known local historian, will present a program entitled “Navigating Burlington County” at the Historical Society of Riverton’s meeting on Thursday, May 21, 2009.

It covers the history and the apex of the steamboat era on the Delaware River within the county. Using postcards and historic images, the audience is taken on a trip from Philadelphia to Bordentown with side trips on the Pennsauken Creek and the Rancocas Creek. Mr. Schopp will

touch upon the Delaware & Raritan Canal as well.

Paul W. Schopp has been a student of history for more than 35 years and has worked as a professional historian in the Cultural Resource field for the past 22 years, specializing in regional history, transportation history, and the history of technology. Paul currently holds the position of Senior Historian with AECOM-Transportation, an international infrastructure engineering firm.

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## First mayor Edward H. Ogden and wife Sarah helped transform Riverton

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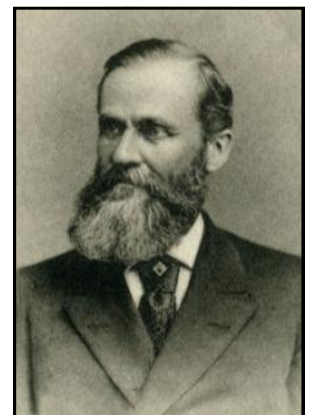
Few individuals could claim to have had such a lasting effect on enriching the quality of life in the early development of Riverton than Edward H. Ogden and his wife, Sarah Morris Perot Ogden. Part One of the couple’s saga was recounted in the March 2009 issue of *Gaslight News*. It outlined Mrs. Ogden’s many accomplishments as an tireless leader of many Philadelphia social, civic, and philanthropic organizations and as the second president of Riverton’s Porch Club.

In this second installment traces the life of a man of incredible achievement, Edward H. Ogden. The 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.

### Edward and Sarah each descended from colonial era Quakers

Edward H. Ogden and his wife, Sarah Morris Perot, came to Riverton from Philadelphia at the time of the Civil



**Edward H. Ogden Riverton’s first mayor, founding member of RYC and RCC**

See **OGDEN** on 2



Steamer Springfield  
Bordentown, NJ

# Respected professional historian and author Paul W. Schopp will take you on a virtual river cruise

NAVIGATING from 1

He is a well known and respected authority in New Jersey historical circles and served as the executive director of the Camden County Historical Society for four years, from 1996-2000. As a co-author, Paul completed the 488-page book, *The Trail of the Blue Comet*, the history of the

Central Railroad of New Jersey's Southern Division in 1994. He has written a variety of articles for specialty publications and peer-reviewed journals. Paul lives in Riverton, New Jersey and has a special affinity for Delaware River and Rancocas Creek steamboats.

-PAT BRUNKER 



# Edgar H. Ogden's 19th century investments in Riverton institutions still paying dividends

OGDEN from 1

War. Both Mr. and Mrs. Ogden came from distinguished early American Quaker families. Edward Ogden was a descendant of David Ogden who came to America with William Penn on *Ye Goode Ship "Welcome"* in 1682.

Edward Ogden was born in 1832, the sixth child of John Melchior Ogden (1791 - 1882) and Harriet Middleton. His father, an architect and a builder, was one of the leading citizens of Philadelphia and member of the Pennsylvania State Legislature from 1832 to 1833 and President of the Preston Retreat for thirty years. He laid out the streets in the Northern Liberties, Spring Garden and Kensington areas north of Philadelphia and was instrumental in those areas being incorporated into the city.

Edward was born and educated in Philadelphia. He was apprenticed to the drug and

chemical business. In 1852, at just twenty years of age, he entered into a partnership with Thomas Morris Perot and became Vice-President of T. Morris Perot and Company, a wholesale drug company. He graduated from the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy in 1853. Presumably, Edward met Sarah Morris Perot through her brother's business as they were married on December 1, 1853.

## Philadelphia born and educated, Ogden enjoyed early business success

In 1862, their firm invented an "army hospital and medical wagon," which was adopted and used by the US Government during the Civil War. Edward served during the Civil War as First Sergeant of Company C in the 32nd Regiment of the Pennsylvania Volunteers and was in the engagement at the shelling of Carlisle on July 1, 1863, the first day's fight at Gettysburg, Pa.

Mrs. Pat Brunker is vice president of the Historical Society of Riverton and manager of the HSR website at [www.gaslightnews.homestead.com](http://www.gaslightnews.homestead.com)

A frequent contributor to the GN, here she concludes her two part article on the lives of one of Riverton's earliest power couples, the Ogdens. One can just imagine the activities which must have filled their days at the many places mentioned in this fascinating narrative. Riverton benefited greatly as a result of the extraordinary accomplishments of this selfless Quaker couple.



After the building housing their drug business burned in 1869, Edward H. Ogden entered the malting business with his partner (and brother-in-law) as vice president of Francis Perot's Sons Malting Company. That company was formed from an earlier malting company of Francis Perot, Edward's father-in-law, and became known as one of the oldest business houses in the US, going back to 1687 and open until at least 1954.

**Ogden's business and civic accomplishments a product of a rare work ethic**

During his years in Riverton, Edward Ogden's list of accomplishments in business and in his numerous civic and philanthropic activities is truly formidable. He was vice-president of the People's Gas Light Company of Jersey City, NJ, vice-president and director of the Consolidation National Bank, and director of the Provident Life and Trust Company.

He was President of the Grandom Institution. This fund, still in existence today, was established by the will of Hart Grandom in 1842 "to be an annual permanent fund to alleviate the most prudent of the poor (but not the intemperate) in procuring fuel, clothing and other necessities, which such persons want in winter."



Swarthmore College  
The Art Work of Delaware County  
published in 1897

and Trustee of the Endowment Fund. He was manager of the Hayes Mechanics' Home and president of the trustees of the Home for Destitute Colored Children. Mr. Ogden was president of the Preston Retreat, named for Dr. Jonas Preston, a

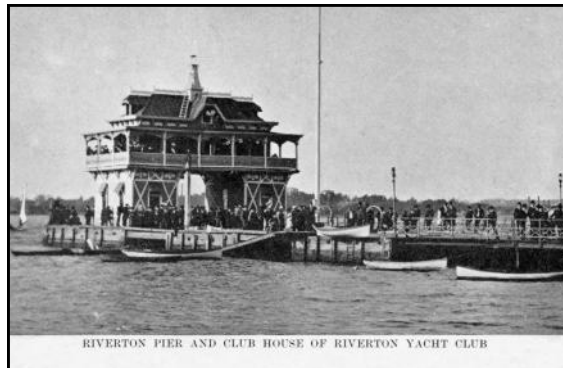
19th century Philadelphia obstetrician and philanthropist. His wife, you may recall from the last issue of *GN*, was the president of the Woman's



Preston Retreat  
Hamilton Street  
20th to 21st Streets

Committee of Preston Retreat. He created an endowment through a bequest in 1865 to benefit "indigent married women of good character". The institution shared mutually beneficial programs with Presbyterian Hospital (the retreat providing a training site for the hospital's School of Nursing). The Retreat later became part of Pennsylvania Hospital.

**Boat owners met at Ogden's home to found Riverton Yacht Club**



Riverton Yacht Club  
Vintage postcard, early 20th century

In 1865 some boat owners met at the Ogden home to consider forming a yacht club. It was unanimously decided to organize the Riverton Yacht Club and on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1865, the Club was formed. Casper W. Morris was elected commodore; Jacob G. Morris, vice commodore; and Edward H. Ogden, secretary and treasurer. According to the 1899 *Riverton Yacht Club Yearbook*, "Much of the success of the Club is due to Edward H. Ogden, who succeeded Caspar W. Morris as Commodore in 1875, and

"Much of the success of the Club is due to Edward H. Ogden, who succeeded Caspar W. Morris as Commodore in 1875, and continued to act in this capacity until the spring of 1895, when he declined re-election, having served for twenty years."

1899 *Riverton Yacht Club Yearbook*



Ogden family crest  
ET SI OSTENDO NON JACTO  
And if I show, I do not boast

# Edward Ogden's activities in Riverton were a fraction of his considerable achievements

OGDEN from 3

continued to act in this capacity until the spring of 1895, when he declined re-election, having served for twenty years."

In December 1893, a special election was held in Riverton and the decision to become a borough was unanimous. Edward Ogden became Riverton's first mayor and a four-man borough council was elected and installed on January 1, 1894. At their first meeting, the boundaries of the borough were established for the first time. Mr. Ogden was elected Mayor twice, and served until 1895.



Riverton Golf Club has grown since its inception in 1900 as a 9-hole course. Additional land purchased in 1916 enabled it to become a full 18-hole course designed by famous golf architect Donald Ross. The club's lands are actually in two townships, Riverton and Cinnaminson. The original clubhouse was in Riverton but in 1958, a new clubhouse was built on the Cinnaminson side and it has recently undergone a \$5 million expansion and renovation.



Philadelphia Union League  
140 South Broad Street



Art Club of Philadelphia  
222 South Broad Street

Even with so many business, civic, and philanthropic duties which must have demanded much of his time, he was a member of such prestigious Philadelphia social clubs as the Union League, the Art Club, and Philadelphia Lodge No. 72 of the Ancient York Masons where he served as secretary.

The Union League was founded in 1862 as a patriotic society to support the Union and the policies of President Abraham Lincoln. It has hosted U.S. presidents, heads of state, industrialists, entertainers and visiting dignitaries from around the world. The Art Club was a social as well as an art organization which was incorporated in 1887 to encourage interest in the fine arts among the general public.

Edward Ogden's son, Francis Perot Ogden, was one of the founding members and secretary treasurer of the Riverton Gun Club in 1878. During its twenty-eight

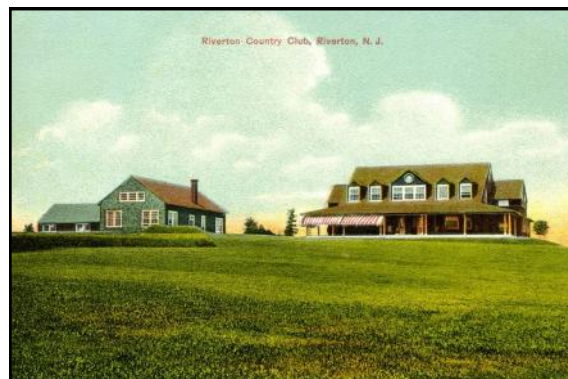
year existence there were 348 members of the club.

Portraits of both father and son are pictured in the chronicle of that organization, *Riverton Gun Club History 1877-1906*.



## Ogden helps found, then presides over Riverton Country Club

Mr. Ogden was also instrumental in founding the Riverton Country Club and he became its first President. When the course opened for play in the summer of 1900, the club could already boast more than one hundred members.



Riverton Country Club  
early 20th century vintage postcard

Edward Ogden died in 1903 at the age of 71 and was survived by his wife, Sarah. In February of 1908, Mrs. Sarah Morris Ogden deeded the present Carpenter Gothic building to the Library Association, in memory of her husband, Edward H. Ogden. That organization and others were the beneficiaries of the generous contributions of a civic-minded couple who "gave back" to their community decades before the words were to become a catch phrase.

-PAT BRUNKER 



# Nellie Bly's namesake still proves elusive

Nellie Bly the pen name for a real life late 19th century reporter named Elizabeth Cochran who worked for the New York World newspaper. She was a pioneer of investigative journalism and what was to become known as "stunt" reporting. She created a sensation when she feigned insanity in order to be committed to the Women's Lunatic Asylum on Blackwell's Island. Her reports led to an investigation, increased funding for the treatment of the mentally ill, and increased newspaper circulation.

Bly is best remembered for encircling the globe in even less time than the fictional hero of Jules Verne's *Around the World in 80 Days*. During each leg of the highly publicized trip newspaper readers followed the intrepid reporter's travels day by day and made Bly an international celebrity.

As a stunt of its own, the Pennsylvania Railroad called its fastest train the Nellie Bly in her honor. The train steamed past a hundred small towns, including Riverton and Palmyra as it traveled through New Jersey between New York City and Atlantic City.



Spectators gawk at the spectacular wreckage of the Nellie Bly a few days after the Feb. 21, 1901 wreck.

Barreling along at 60 miles per hour on Feb. 21, 1901, on a track curving through Hamilton, NJ, the Nellie Bly smashed head

-on into a local train from Bordentown leaving 17 dead and 21 badly injured.

In another incarnation of the Nelly Bly, the Pennsylvania Railroad operated an express train between New York and Atlantic City until 1961, that also bore the same name.

During a presentation I was giving at least two years ago in which a number of historical images of Riverton were being

shown I made a reference to the Nellie Bly passenger train which once journeyed through here. Some in the audience recalled seeing it. I lamented that we did not have any photographs of it and Riverton resident Mr. Tom Cardea generously offered to let me scan his vintage 8x10 glossy. It turned out to be a gorgeous photo of Nellie Bly with billows



The "Nellie Bly" in Haddonfield photo courtesy of Mr. Tom Cardea

of white smoke and steam on a section of track in Haddonfield. So the quest continued.

Meanwhile, I found an image of the Nelly Bly on the Internet. This time the shot is in Trenton and the California collector has graciously given permission for it to be printed here.



The "Nellie Bly" in Trenton photo courtesy of Mr. Charles Freericks

Mr. Freericks kindly explained, "Nellie Bly wasn't a steam engine, it was a passenger train, which meant the equipment actually could change on any given run. This is most likely PRR train #1077, the "Nellie Bly" which ran from New York to Atlantic City in 2 hrs and 45 minutes and would have received an engine change here from a GG1 to the K4s."

If you have any photos of historical interest, vintage postcards, or ephemera which you would donate to the HSR or allow to be scanned, please contact us.

-JOHN MCCORMICK

Let today's **NELLIE BLY** take you to **ATLANTIC CITY!**

Go to Atlantic City conveniently, comfortably and economically on today's Nelly Bly. Ample baggage and parking spaces exist away from the train. The train will leave for the city in an air-conditioned coach and arrive in Atlantic City cool and refreshed. Let today's Nelly Bly take you to Atlantic City.

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Trenton	\$6.50

including 10% Federal Tax  
Children 4 years and under 1/2 ADULT FARE  
Under 5 - FREE

Stn. & Schedule	Weekday	Haddonfield	Windsor	Stn. & Schedule	Weekday
8:52 A.M.	9:20 P.M.	10:20 P.M.	11:20 P.M.	8:52 A.M.	9:20 P.M.
9:00 A.M.	1:34 P.M.	1:44 P.M.	2:44 P.M.	9:00 A.M.	1:34 P.M.
9:08 A.M.	1:42 P.M.	1:52 P.M.	2:52 P.M.	9:08 A.M.	1:42 P.M.
10:12 A.M.	2:14 P.M.	2:24 P.M.	3:24 P.M.	10:12 A.M.	2:14 P.M.
10:20 A.M.	2:22 P.M.	2:32 P.M.	3:32 P.M.	10:20 A.M.	2:22 P.M.
11:12 A.M.	3:01 P.M.	3:11 P.M.	4:11 P.M.	11:12 A.M.	3:01 P.M.
11:20 A.M.	3:09 P.M.	3:19 P.M.	4:19 P.M.	11:20 A.M.	3:09 P.M.
12:42 P.M.	4:22 P.M.	4:32 P.M.	5:32 P.M.	12:42 P.M.	4:22 P.M.

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**PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD**

"Nellie Bly wasn't a steam engine, it was a passenger train, which meant the equipment actually could change on any given run. ...PRR train #1077, the "Nellie Bly" ...ran from New York to Atlantic City in 2 hrs and 45 minutes." Charles Freericks



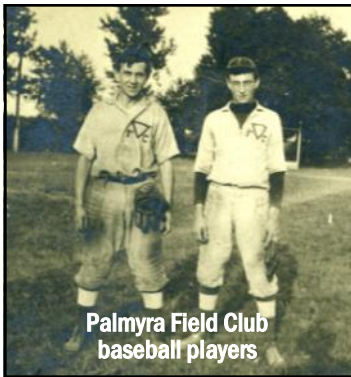
Nellie Bly trade card

⑥ THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RIVERTON

Post Office Box # 112

Riverton, NJ 08077

856-786-6961



Palmyra Field Club  
baseball players

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  
jlmccormick@comcast.net

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

It's hubby's turn for the telling of his half of the Ogden family business, civic, and philanthropic accomplishments.



He was Riverton's first mayor, a founding member and officer of both the Riverton Yacht Club and Riverton Golf Club. However great these achievements may be, they are only a fraction of what this extraordinary gentleman accomplished in a life well lived.

## Gaslight News

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### THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RIVERTON

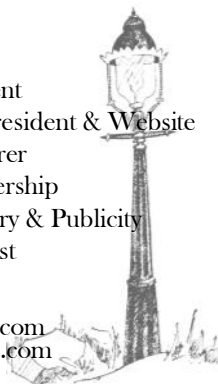
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E-mail: Rivertonhistory@usa.com  
www.gaslightnews.homestead.com



real photo courtesy of Mr. Hank Croft

