

Gaslight News

November 2010

Historical Society of Riverton

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Riverton, NJ 08077

Incorporated 1978



front page of the *NY Tribune*, April 16, 1912
Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Titanic “survivor” speaks at historic New Leaf Tea Room 7:30 pm Nov. 30

Costumed historical interpreter will describe the lavish cruise which took a tragic turn



Join the Historical Society of Riverton for an entertaining evening at the New Leaf Tea Room Tuesday, November 30 at 7:30 p.m. for a character role-play featuring Alisa Dupuy as Eliza Blackwell Dupree, a fictional survivor of the 1912 Titanic sinking.

As explained on her charming website at <http://www.historicalteas.com/>, Alisa Dupuy is a historical re-enactor and middle school French teacher in Princeton, NJ. Born in the USA, she lived in France for eight years before returning to the States in 1994 with her husband and two children. Alisa is known for her creative energy and

dramatic flair. She loves the Renaissance and the Victorian era and enjoys imparting her knowledge of history in a fun and interesting way. Alisa has always loved to play "dress-up" and has quite an array of costumes to bring her many characters to life.

The program will offer light refreshment (this special event is not a tea party program). The public is invited to attend at \$5 per person and historical society members are \$3 per person. The New Leaf Tea Room and Gift Shop is located at 606 Main Street, Riverton, NJ with parking in the rear of the building or in the lot by

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Cole Dairy, 5th & Main — Where Riverton “Got Milk”

Mr. Francis Cole, Riverton amateur athlete and WWII vet recalls his first job at grandparents’ dairy

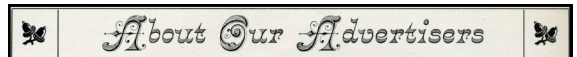


501 Main, home of Cole's Dairy c. 1903-1940

Gaslight News reader who vividly recalls a time when, through rain or shine, hot or cold, and despite attacking dogs and backyard hazards the Riverton milkman completed his appointed early morning rounds.

For most of us, home delivery of fresh milk and cream went the way of black-and-white TVs, but there is at least one

hand carrying one-quart and pint bottles of fresh dairy to households across four towns.



F. C. COLE, milk dealer, had his first stand on Cinnaminson street, where he started in January, 1896. In 1903 he purchased the Harper property, 501 Main street, which he now occupies. His specialty is nursery milk.

The New Era, Christmas, 1909, p. 35

This was pre-homogenization, non-pasteurized, fresh from the farm, high-octane lactose milk that you could see in the clear glass bottle—rich whole butterfatty milk with a couple inches of cream sitting on top. It was sealed with a paper cardboard cap with a little tab to grasp so that you could pull it off.

Starting at 4 a.m., the then 13 year-old helped out the Depression era family business at 501 Main Street in Riverton by

See COLE DAIRY on 3





PHOTO - SUSAN DECHNIK

Ms. Lucy Beard reminded us of the heroic fight for women's basic rights waged by Alice Stokes Paul, a renowned suffragette with roots nearby.

Ms. Lucy Beard of Alice Paul Institute acknowledges our debt to the past

It is difficult to imagine today a time when women were denied the right to vote, but those times were not so very long ago. This year marks the 90th anniversary of the 19th Amendment of the Constitution which guaranteed that fundamental principle. As midterm elections approached, the presentation for the first general meeting of this 40th anniversary year of the Historical Society of Riverton served as a timely reminder of our debt to the past.

Ms. Lucy Beard of the Alice Paul Institute presented a detailed personal portrait of the dedicated suffragette born January 11, 1885 to Quaker parents in Mt. Laurel who endured verbal and physical abuse and jailed in her long relentless pursuit of equal rights and the vote for women.

Viewed within the context of the culture of early 20th century America as explained by

Ms. Beard, the efforts and achievements of Alice Paul Stokes are even more extraordinary. Ms. Beard amply illustrated her remarks with period photographs and referenced primary source material in presenting the absorbing and informative production while allowing for questions from audience members who pressed for more insights.

Readers may be interested to know that the Alice Paul Institute, established in 1985 on its namesake's centennial anniversary, promotes women's history and provides leadership programs throughout the year. The three-story farmhouse in Mt. Laurel, NJ where Alice Paul spent her childhood is now a National Historic Landmark and serves as headquarters of the API. For more information go to

<http://www.alicepaul.org/>

-JMC



Headquarters of the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage c. 1911
Courtesy of the Library of Congress



undated vintage postcard
courtesy of Mrs. Betty Hahle

DID YOU KNOW?

The site of the Veterans Memorial was the location of Riverton's first railroad station in 1863. It was the home of Charles Mattis, the first Station Master, and passengers and freight waited for trains on his porch. They purchased tickets inside the house. When the post office was established in 1871, Mattis was appointed Postmaster and the post office was located in the house as well. Later, when those functions moved elsewhere, it became the home of the crossing watchman.
- Betty Hahle's research, 1997

Riverton's Veterans Memorial being upgraded as more names are sought

I recently received a telephone call from Riverton Borough Councilman Bill Brown with a request to publicize to our readers efforts currently underway to refresh the Veterans Memorial site and to find more eligible names to be placed on the honor roll. An email followed with an explanation, part of which is copied below:

"There is a group of guys who meet every Saturday morning at Zena's, and we would like to upgrade the War Memorial. There is some power washing and cement repairs that need to be completed. We will purchase the plaque when we receive some more names."

Any present or former resident of the Borough of Riverton, living or deceased,

who served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States of America, during a time of war, is eligible to have their name placed on the memorial.

To verify eligibility, you must present a copy of your DD-214 (discharge papers) or a copy of your military orders.

Contact either Councilman Bill Brown at 856-303-8513 or Councilman Bob Smyth at 856-786-3264.

Mr. Brown is convinced that more names will be nominated if eligibility is understood. Pass it along.

-JMC



PHOTO - JMcC

Cole Dairy served area residents for nearly four decades, dissolving in 1940

COLE DAIRY from 1

Sometimes during the winter it would be cold enough to freeze the milk. Expanding, it would push off the cardboard milkcap and then you could eat the frozen cream treat with a spoon.

That former 13 year-old milkman, Mr. Francis Cole, a.k.a. Socks or Moose during his ball playing days, grew up in Riverton and now spends his retirement in nearby Palmyra Harbour. He said to call him Franny. On a Sunday in August, HSR President Gerald Weaber, *Gaslight News* Editor John McCormick, and HSR member Don Deitz met at his home to be treated to a glimpse into Riverton's past.

The affable nonagenarian had generously agreed to be interviewed to tell about F.C. Cole Dairy, an enterprise which capably served the community for about four decades before its demise in 1940 due to a number of circumstances.

Mr. Cole's own personal dissertation on the operations of F.C. Cole Dairy, which was frequently punctuated with anecdotes of his childhood memories of swimming in Pompeston Creek, playing mumblety-peg with neighborhood chums, and playing third base for Riverton Athletic Association, virtually transported the trio to another epoch in Riverton's development when the tempo of life moved at a different pace than today.

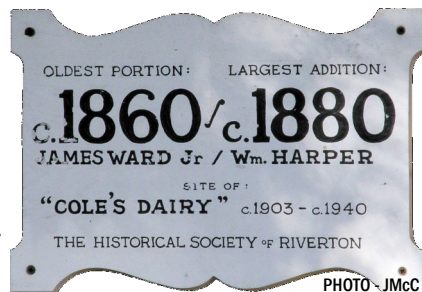
Franny poured out details of his recollections of the dairy's operations with 20-20 clarity undimmed by the passage of over six decades since he had last worked there.

Born in 1920, Franny explained that after his parents passed away he lived with his grandparents in the home at 501 Main

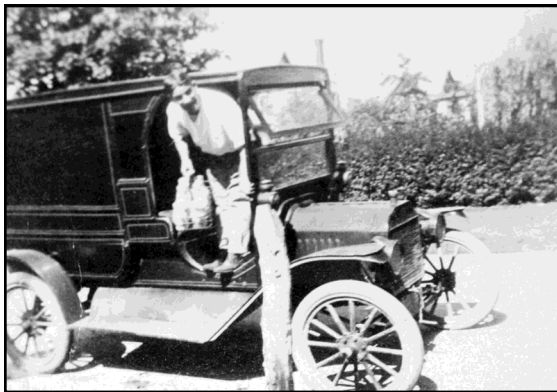
which also served as a milk depot, or local distribution facility, for dairy products which were trucked in from regional dairies located in Mt. Holly and Pemberton. By the time that he became aware of the dairy as a five year-old in 1925, the business had already been well established, probably around 1895.

Franny's real initiation into the family business occurred during his 13th year when school was dismissed for the summer and he could help out with vacation relief shifts for the adult employees. As he showed responsibility in

performing his duties it grew into a part-time job during the academic year requiring pre-dawn wake-up calls in order to get milk delivered before the school day started.



Sign at 5th & Main residence indicating historical notes and Cole Dairy connection



Frank C. Cole, Franny's grandfather, is pictured here in a family photo servicing his milk route in his Ford delivery truck about 1920. Note the vehicle's crank starter and Mr. Cole's 6-bottle carrier.

At 4 a.m. trucks were loaded with wooden cases, each holding six quart or pint bottles. Pint bottles could hold milk or cream. Delivery areas included Riverton, Palmyra, Cinnaminson, and Delran. Jogging alongside with the truck which his Uncle Charles drove, Franny delivered to customers.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1922, there were 33 milk dealers, including licensed ones and those smaller dealers exempt from license, listed by the NJ Dept. of Agriculture for Burlington County. Among them were F.C. Cole of Riverton (exempt), Bishop's of Riverside, and Supplee-Wills-Jones of Phila.

- *Circular, Issues 41-80*, NJ Dept. of Agriculture, 1922
http://books.google.com/books?id=0MphAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA204&dq=bishop's+dairy+riverside+nj&hl=en&ei=b2_gTOjVAcL38Ab0vuyHDw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CC4Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false



Please advise if you have any snapshots, memorabilia, advertisements, bottles, milkcaps, even bills or letter-heads, etc. regarding Cole's Dairy.



typical milk bottle carrier



A pint Cole's Dairy bottle found by Mrs. Pam Deitz



PHOTOS- JOHN McCORMICK

Mr. Francis Cole has a wealth of first-hand knowledge regarding the NJ raw milk industry before 1940.

"Charles Cole is building garages on his lot at Fifth and Howard Streets."

- *The New Era*, Jan. 31, 1929



A Chinese laundry stood here in 1919. - Sandborn Insurance Maps



PHOTO - JMC



1950s era postcard of Millside Farms, Riverside and vintage glass milk bottle. It, too, is gone, the property having been subdivided into suburban homesites and a shopping center in the 1970s. Can anyone remember the mammoth "Lost Weekend" sundaes that they served?

On the job training during the Great Depression prepared Cole for later life

COLE DAIRY from 3

Half-pint bottles were delivered to Riverton Public School every day at 11 o'clock and they picked up the empties the same afternoon. Franny attributes all of that heavy lifting and running to helping keep him in shape.

In addition to all of the aerobics and developing strength through exercise on the job, Franny even sharpened his reflexes, albeit accidentally. Racing through a back yard by Orchard Lane in the early morning darkness, he was clothes-lined— literally— when he collided with a rope which flipped him over backwards. He promptly righted himself and realized in amazement that both of the full quart milk bottles he carried were unscathed.

He surpassed that stunt when he delivered to a home with a screened in porch on Lippincott Avenue. He entered stealthily, left the milk, and retrieved six empties, holding three with the fingers of each hand. His entrance had apparently awaked the family's German shepherd which rebuked him with a bark. Franny leapt backwards only to slip on icy steps and somersault to the pavement. Astonishingly, all six bottles were still intact.

A quart of milk cost 15¢; a pint 10¢; ½ pint 5¢. Every week they had to go collect accounts, especially on Monday and Tuesday afternoons. Sometimes the bill piled up because Grandfather Cole was reluctant to cut off someone when times were hard. One family which owed a large sum (about \$1,300) asked his grandmother to accept a piece of antique furniture in payment. She did, and years later Franny even realized a \$700 profit when he sold the heirloom.

In addition to delivery, many customers would come right to the milk house to be served. Kindhearted Grandmom Cole was

known to give the transients (they were called hobos back then) who came knocking a glass of milk and a sandwich before they hitched a ride on an empty rail car.

In 1940, pressures were building which would spell the end of the local dairy business in Riverton. Grandfather Cole had passed away, and Grandmother Cole and Uncle Charles, despite his diabetes, strove to continue the operation.

But the foremost reason for the demise of the tiny enterprise was that it could not prevail against the bigger corporate dairies such as Abbott's and Supplee of Philadelphia and Millside Farms and the pressure to change over to pasteurization. Ending a unique era in Riverton's history, F.C. Cole Dairy went out of business when it sold out to Bishop's in Riverside in 1940.

Franny would go on to work for Railway Express, the forerunner of UPS, for a time after high school, and serve in the US Army during World War Two. He married and raised a family. Decades later in 2010, his daughter Donna remarked on a visit that *someone* should tell the story of Cole's dairy, and later a "little bird" with the initials CMC told the *Gaslight News* editor.

Hmmm... I think her dad just did.

-JMC



The Editor expresses sincere appreciation to Mr. Carl McDermott for bringing this worthwhile story to our attention and to Mr. Don Deitz for brokering the meeting in August which resulted in the interview with Mr. Cole. Mr. Nick Morgu provided photos of his Cole Dairy bottles and his property and was consulted regarding the his residence at 501 Main.

F. C. COLE
PURE MILK AND CREAM
Nursery Milk a Specialty
BUTTERMILK

501 Main Street

Riverton

Phone 29-X

ad from the Christmas 1909 issue of *The New Era*, p. 35

AN OVERVIEW OF F.C. COLE DAIRY OPERATIONS

Pemberton and Mt. Holly dairy farmers transported milk to the icehouse in Mt. Holly for distribution

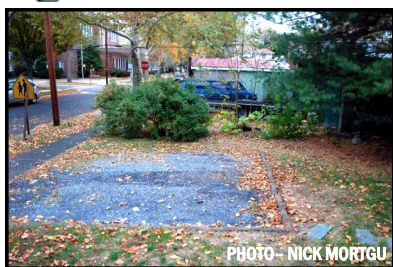
A Cole Dairy truck made the daily run via Beverly-Mt. Holly Rd. (Old Oyster Shell Road) to pick up six or seven 10 gallon milk cans and a couple of 100 lb. cakes of ice ("Great for the biceps," says Franny)

Cole workers used tongs to unload ice and stored it in Cole's walk-in refrigerator.

In the milk house two men lifted the hefty milk cans and poured the fresh milk through cheese-cloth into a large tank to remove impurities.

Four faucets which fit right into the head of the bottle were controlled by levers which could then fill four bottles at a time.

From there, the bottles spun around to the capper which applied the paper milk bottle caps printed with "F.C. Cole 501 Main." Does anybody have one?



The filled and capped bottles then went into the stand-up refrigerator to be delivered the next morning starting at 4 a.m.

They had two big tubs and used Oakite cleaner with electric motorized brushes to clean out empties. Milk house equipment and floor had to be washed down every day.



Since the milk was not pasteurized, county inspectors would come for surprise inspections to check for tuberculosis.

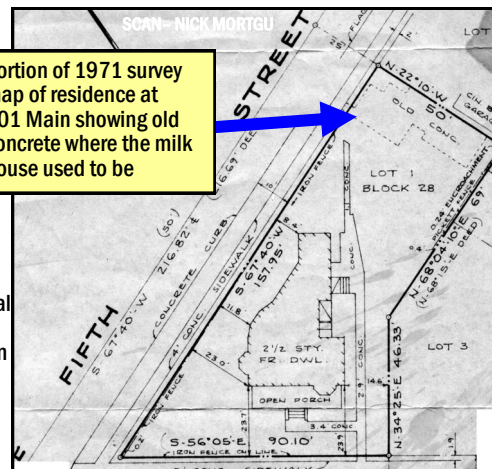
- FRANCIS COLE



portion of 1971 survey map of residence at 501 Main showing old concrete where the milk house used to be



typical 10 gallon milk can



Current residents of 501 Main are Mr. Nick Mortgu and his wife, Beth. Nick reports that when he broke up two concrete pads at the rear of his property in 1974 one had an electric power line running to it from the house, and the other had a drain in the middle of the floor. Presumably, this was the site of the milk house.

In 1912, Riverton and the world waited

TITANIC from 1

the U.S. Post Office. Seating is limited so reservations are required by telephone to Gerald Weaber at 856-786-6961.

Our dramatization may be of particular interest to Rivertonians as we have a local connection to the White Star cruise liner thought to be unsinkable. Our small town followed the horror of the Titanic disaster with great interest in 1912 with news that Riverton's own Boulton Earnshaw was on his way to Pier 54 in New York to meet the rescue ship Carpathia in hope that his wife Olive Potter Earnshaw was among the survivors of the lost ship Titanic. Mrs. Earnshaw and her mother did indeed survive the sinking.

Mrs. Earnshaw's ill-fated voyage began on a European vacation to distract her from her ongoing divorce proceedings from Boulton

Earnshaw. Olive eventually remarried and, despite her near-death experience with an iceberg, later travelled to Spain by sea in the mid and late 1920s with her husband and two children as well as taking cruises to Bermuda.

The Earnshaw clan was a prominent local family whose patriarch emigrated from England and died in Riverton in 1892. In Riverton in 1900, his daughter married into the Clothier family which helped found the Strawbridge and Clothier department store in Philadelphia. Boulton Earnshaw, born November 1880 in Riverton, served as a purchasing agent for the University of Pennsylvania. After his divorce from Olive Potter he remarried his first wife.

Our appreciation to Michael A. Findlay for the research on the Riverton Earnshaw families.

- GERALD WEABER



The talented Ms. Alisa Dupuy channels an intriguing cast of characters as she assumes personas in authentic costumes throughout history. Her dramatic portrayal of a Titanic survivor is sure to entertain and inform.



⑥ THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RIVERTON

Post Office Box # 112

Riverton, NJ 08077

856-786-6961



A portrait of man and his dog is one of many shot at the Lothrop Photography Studio at 4th & Main in Riverton. Do you have any photos, ephemera, or recollections to share

which you would allow to be highlighted in an upcoming issue or a future program? Please contact John McCormick directly in order to make arrangements. 856-764-1551

jlmccormick@comcast.net

Our web address has changed. Visit the dynamic HSR website at <http://rivertonhistory.com/> for information regarding events, past issues of *Gaslight News*, membership information, links to Riverton School's Riverton Project, slide shows of vintage images, and more.

Readers: Find inside a feature article, "Cole Dairy, 5th & Main – Where Riverton 'Got Milk,'" a recap of the Sept. Alice Paul meeting, notice of the Nov. Titanic dramatization, and a plea to readers to help get eligible veteran's names for the Veterans Memorial.

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THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RIVERTON

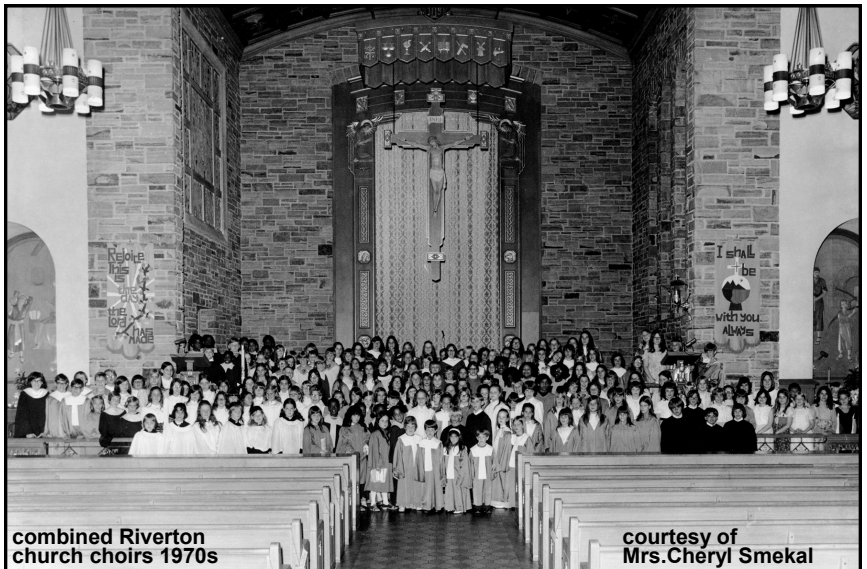
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combined Riverton church choirs 1970s

courtesy of Mrs. Cheryl Smekal

Efforts to locate photos of Riverton School's 8th grade graduation classes during Riverton School's 100th anniversary observances have resulted in a much shorter list of photos still missing. If you can help by emailing a scan, loaning a picture to be scanned, or by donating one of the class photos still missing, please contact Editor John McCormick jlmccormick@comcast.net

Eighth grade class photos missing from the lineup: 1910-1916, 1918-1920, 1922, 1923, 1927-1930, 1933-1934, 1938, 1940-1942, 1947, 1959-1960, 1964, 1966, 1969, 1972