

Gaslight News

May 2012

Historical Society of Riverton

vol. XXXXII, no. 2 (#148)

Founded 1970

Riverton, NJ 08077

Incorporated 1978



Meet Agenda: elections, actual Walking Tour, Nancy Washington tribute, project news

Annual Meeting, June 5, Riverton Public School, 7-9 p.m. Wear comfortable shoes.

HISTORIC RIVERTON CRITERIUM

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Our Annual Meeting convenes at Riverton Public School, Fifth and Howard Streets, Tuesday, June 5, 2012, from 7-9 p.m. The election of HSR Board Members will head the agenda, followed by a remembrance of Nancy Washington, and ending with an account of three recent projects undertaken by the Society intended to make local history more relevant and accessible to the public. Weather permitting, the meeting will culminate in a preview a just revised Riverton Walking Tour by actually walking it.

Please call President Gerald Weaber to confirm your attendance at 856-786-6961.

Nominations for new HSR Board members for

a three-year term beginning July 1, 2012 will be taken from the membership. The Board heartily recommends that we renew the terms of two of our valued Directors—Treasurer, Mr. Paul Daley and Secretary, Miss Charlotte Lippincott.

See a separate article, page 2, “Remembering Margaret Garwood Washington.”

Board members have been working on developing projects consistent with the Society’s mission to create an awareness of our heritage, to discover, restore and preserve local objects and landmarks, and to continue to expand our knowledge of the history of the area. Each of these ambitious

See ANNUAL MEETING on 5

The Annual Riverton Historic Criterium returns Sun., June 10



One year ago race promoter Carlos Rogers introduced residents to a new Riverton tradition when cycling competitors from several states converged on the gaslamp-lined streets of our village for the first Historic Riverton Criterium. Given the hearty re-

ception shown by athletes, spectators, and residents last year, Mr. Rogers anticipates a bigger and better bicycling event for 2012 with more sponsors, more cyclists, and more prizes when the USA Cycling sanctioned contest returns Sunday, June 10, 2012, for its sophomore run through Riverton’s thoroughfares. The first race starts at 1 p.m.,



Carlos Rogers breaks down the art of amateur bicycle racing PHOTO CREDIT: JMc

cri-te-ri-um
/krī'ti(ə)rēəm/
Noun: a bicycle race of a specified number of laps on a closed course over public roads closed to normal traffic
merriam-webster.com



See CRITERIUM on 3

Some of the beneficiaries
of Nancy's generous spirit

Remembering Margaret G. Washington

October 2, 1935 - May 9, 2012

Animal  Orphanage



RIVERTON PORCH CLUB



Catholic
Charities



Girl Scouts



American Red Cross



RIVERTON FREE LIBRARY



TREE CITY USA



HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF RIVERTON



201 Main Street
PHOTO CREDIT: JMc

We fondly remember Margaret Garwood Washington (known to her friends as Nancy) as a life member of the Society, past Board Secretary and a tireless advocate for preserving Riverton's historic district. Nancy and her husband Bill retired to their home in Brunswick, Maine several years ago after seven decades in Riverton.

Born in Camden, NJ to Alexander and Anna Garwood, she later lived with her parents in a Victorian home at 201 Lippincott Avenue. She attended Riverton Public School, Palmyra High School, and graduated from William & Mary College in 1956.

Recently, Nancy and Bill celebrated 56 years of marriage together as parents to three sons, John, Charles, and Richard, two daughters, Laura Russell, and Katie Hickey, and grandparents to nine children.

Natalie Ragamo, retired teacher and wife of former Riverton Mayor Ralph Ragamo, remembers Nancy as a deeply caring and generous woman whose house was always open to children in the neighborhood to take a cool dip in the Washington pool on a hot summer day.

You could say that a commitment to serving her community and volunteerism was in her blood. Nancy was a regular volunteer to the Red Cross and donated an incredible fifty gallons of blood in her lifetime.

Nancy was a Girl Scout leader and spent many hours of service with Catholic Charities assisting refugees from Kosovo and Serbia. She was an avid dog lover caring for many animals and serving as a dedicated volunteer for area animal welfare agencies.

Nancy was an active member of the Riverton Yacht Club as well as the Riverton Free Library where she organized the first Library Book Fair. Nancy worked with Barry Emens for years on the Riverton Tree Commission cataloguing over 2,500 trees at a time when there were almost as

many trees as people in town. The effort won recognition for Riverton as a Tree City USA in 1989.

Former Riverton Councilwoman, Muriel Alls-Moffatt, admired Nancy's leadership of several citizen campaigns to preserve Riverton, including proposed development plans for Bank Avenue, the former Nuway Shopping Center and the Riverline Light Rail Line.

Nancy was widely known for her successful real estate career and her unique Greek Revival brick residence at 201 Main Street in Riverton, one of the earliest houses in the Borough.

At our June 5th Annual Meeting the Society will display some of Nancy's donations to our archives including:

- ◆ A rare black and white framed photo of the 207 Bank Ave. home of Charles M. Biddle prior to the fire that destroyed the convex mansard tower, which burned in 1978, and was not replaced.
- ◆ Text of the address by local historian, Lloyd E. Griscom, before the celebration of the *100th Anniversary of the Riverton Yacht Club* on March 1st, 1965 at the Porch Club.
- ◆ *Riverton Yacht Club Centennial* publication 1965-1965 during the leadership of Commodore John F. Morton.

The Society deeply misses Nancy's energy, warmth, and rare devotion to her community. Donations in her memory may be made to: The Animal Orphanage, PO Box 1363, 419 Cooper Rd., Voorhees, NJ 08043. <http://www.theanimalorphanage.org/>

Should you care to leave the family a message, please do so at <http://www.stetsonsfuneralhome.com/memorial.aspx?oid=1173&pic=>

- GERALD WEAVER, HSR PRESIDENT



Years from now, the Riverton Criterium will be the history that people recall

CRITERIUM from 1

but come early, make a day of it, and become part of the next chapter of Riverton history.

To the uninitiated, a criterium is a bicycle race of a specified number of laps on a closed course over public roads closed to normal traffic. According to USA Cycling, it is the most popular form of competitive road cycling in the US but, until last year, most Rivertonians were unfamiliar with this exciting sport which brings the excitement of high-speed racing to Main Street, USA where the action unfolds to within feet of spectators lining the one kilometer course along neighborhood streets.

During a typical hour-or-so long match of 20-50 laps (depending on ability), racers speed by onlookers in the battle for supremacy that tests the athlete's racing strategy and technique as much, if not more than, his conditioning and endurance. Cyclists accelerate to 30 mph or more on a straightaway and barely brake as they lean into a tight turn at an angle on those impossibly skinny tires that seem to defy the Laws of Motion.



Spectators cheer on cyclists during the First Annual Historic Riverton Criterium, June 2011 PHOTO CREDIT: SHAWNEE PHOTO CLUB

Attacks and chases ensue as riders jockey for pack position. Those who find themselves at a rear position experience the "accordion effect" of having to slow down more than others as the pack bunches up

going into the turn while others who spend early effort to stay out front may find that they have nothing left for the sprint of that last critical lap. Racers who cannot react to changing course conditions in a split second crash or get left behind. Writers have compared the thrill of "crit" racing to being part Nascar, part Thunderdome, part Tour de France.



HRC cowbells on sale on race day! \$5, proceeds benefit the Riverton Free Library. PHOTO CREDIT: CARLOS ROGERS

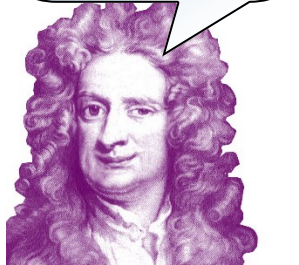
Whether one is aware of the nuances of competitive cycling or not, you will enjoy the experience of feeling the whoosh of riders careen by as fans cheer and clang cowbells in support of their favorites. Just as porch parties, cookouts, reunions, and good old-fashioned family fun accompany Riverton's Glorious Fourth festivities, Carlos hopes that the Historic Riverton Criterium generates the same kind of hometown celebrations. The bonus is that everybody wins in this race when proceeds benefit Riverton Free Library, an institution which serves so many area residents.

Conditioning and training are key for the competitors, however, it is the race promoter's planning and preparation that are crucial to a successful and well-executed crit for athletes and spectators alike. Mr. Rogers has certainly done his due diligence in coordinating with Public Works, law enforcement, government officials, USA Cycling officials, and residents while enlisting the participation and support of athletes, sponsors, friends, and family through Facebook.

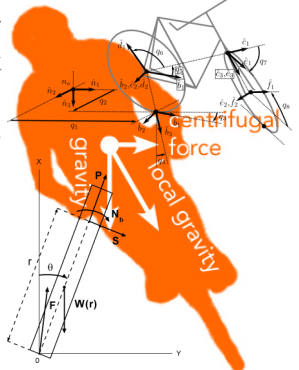
His twenty years of competitive cycling experience have given Carlos a perspective of things from the administration side. He



*Dudes!
By my calculations,
I predict...*



Sir Isaac Newton
1643-1727



*... a gravity check¹
followed by a case
of road rash.²*



¹gravity check - when an individual or object falls due to gravity; usually implies injury (or at least that it hurt).

²road rash - skin abrasions from sliding on the pavement after a cycle accident.

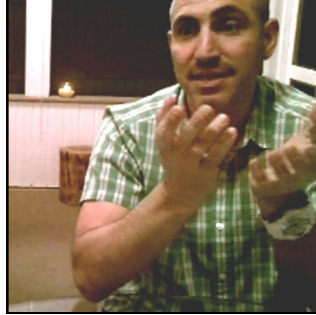


Please visit our website at rivertonhistory.com You can further check out this topic in an expanded online version with more text, images, and links to other related articles, than is practical to display here.



CRITERIUM from 3

remembers in his racing days holding off on registering until mere days before an event to provide options in case of injury or a change in his plans, but he admits, from where he now stands, waiting for sign-ups as the event draws closer is nerve-racking.



Carlos has created a new family-friendly Riverton event that also helps neighborhood institutions. PHOTO CREDIT: JMc

In the best tradition of the Ogdens, Grices, Biddles, Flanagans, Wrights and others who strove to improve Riverton during its early days, Mr. Rogers' meticulous attention to detail, passion for the sport, and selfless desire to give back to the town and its organizations have added a new chapter to Riverton's history and lore. He has established something worthwhile; the racers and spectators will come. -JMc

HISTORIC RIVERTON CRITERIUM

Sunday, June 10th | 1pm

.8 mi course through the historic streets of Riverton, NJ
Start/Finish 4th and Main Streets
A USA Cycling sanctioned bicycle race

Proceeds benefit the Riverton Free Library

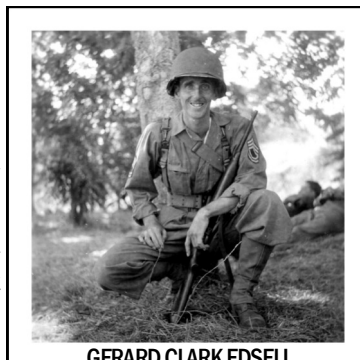
Historic Riverton Criterium

For the latest developments, check out the Historic Riverton Criterium on facebook.
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Historic-Riverton-Criterium/183652518332010>

May 27 Memorial Day ceremony will install 14 more names of veterans on Riverton's War Memorial; please send photos for website tribute

- Armand J. BIANCHINI,
- Joseph A. CREIGHTON, Jr.
- Robert I. HECK
- George E. HORNER, Jr.
- Donald R. HUBBS
- Elwood C. JOHNSON
- John S. LATIMER
- Joseph MATERA
- Bryan H. NORCROSS
- Frank C. QUATTROCCHI
- Richard W. SCHWERING
- Monroe O. STEEDLE
- Donald R. TAYLOR
- Thomas C. WHITELOCK

Mayor Bill Brown sends us this new list of veterans' names that will be installed on the Honor Roll on the Riverton War Memorial during Memorial Day ceremonies on May 27. Find an account of it on the Veterans Page at rivertonhistory.com



GERARD CLARK EDSSELL
Here is the latest photo of a veteran we have received. It arrived with a very kind letter from son Martin who found us on the Internet even though the last family member moved out of Riverton last year.

We also need more photos of servicemen and women to match the names on the Memorial. Please send a scan by email, a photo by mail, or contact us if you need assistance.

Military veteran Thomas C. Whitelock will also be honored with a memorial of

another kind on Saturday, June 2, 2012. On Jan. 14, 1976, the seven-year veteran Riverton patrolman was killed in the line of duty as the result of responding to a call of a suicidal man in an apartment on Lippincott Avenue.

The Police Department and the Borough invites the community to the plaque dedication ceremony to honor Patrolman Whitelock's heroism at the corner of Broad and Main Streets near the gazebo on Saturday, June 2, 2012 at 10:00 a.m.

HSR projects include new historical signs, revised Walking Tours, digitalized vintage news

ANNUAL MEETING from 1



Historical marker sign near Broad & Main IMAGE CREDIT: JMC

ventures needs membership effort and support actively directed toward them if they are to flourish.

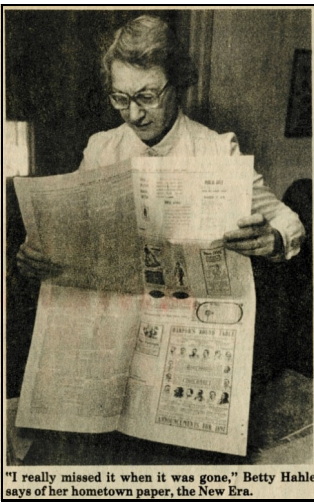
Board Member Ed Gilmore has been a champion of our fledgling Riverton Historic Markers campaign that not only helps share our proud local

history with young people and town visitors—it's also good business. There is a compelling argument that historical signage can add to the value of a town and support a community's economic development efforts because it helps in creating an engaging visitor experience as part of the tourism development process.

Currently, we have no shortage of suggestions for sites to erect such signs; how to carry out the expensive task is the question. Participate in the research, planning, and fund-raising for this important project. Help guide our efforts in collaborating with local government, organizations, businesses, and homeowners to create a series of attractive and informative interpretive signage.

Another project promising huge potential benefits

Betty Hahle spearheaded the 1985 drive to microfilm issues of the *New Era* and the *Palmyra News*. The current digitalization effort builds upon that foundation. IMAGE CREDIT: MARY FLANAGAN "She's looking for yesterday's news," *Burlington County Times*, Feb. 7, 1985, pg. 9



"I really missed it when it was gone," Betty Hahle says of her hometown paper, the *New Era*.

for students, historians, genealogists, and researchers is our collaboration with the Riverton Free Library Association to digitize our collection of local vintage newspapers in order that they may be searched for local news and events for the years 1894 through 1924. Imagine being able to use search terms on a computer to find notices of births, deaths, and marriages for the many ancestors of individuals whose family trees are rooted in this area.

Mrs. Pat Solin, Library Board Member and HSR Member, has already done considerable homework on this enterprise by checking feasibility, consulting with vendors, and such, but costs need to be estimated and the partners will still have discussions about implementation and financing. Help build an invaluable research tool for the community by volunteering to serve on this committee that hopes to digitalize the microfilm newspaper collection that includes issues from Riverton's *New Era* from 1894-1924, the *Riverton Journal* from 1880-82, the *Palmyra Record* from 1913-18, and the *Weekly News* from 1887-1922.

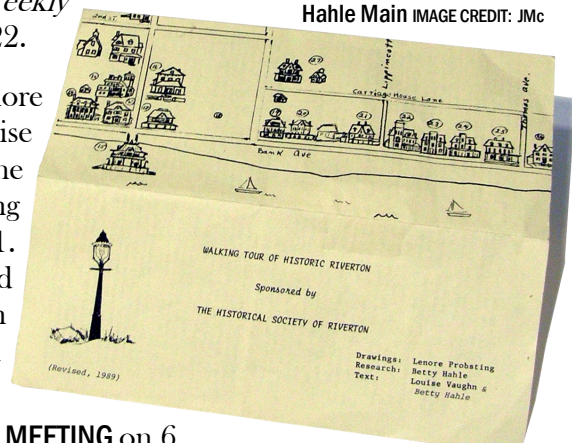
HSR members Lenore Probsting and Louise Vaughn created the first Riverton Walking Tour in May 1981. Betty Hahle teamed up with the pair in 1989 to revise it and add a Children's



Another type of interpretive signage to consider. In this typical historical interpretive sign for events of the American Civil War, note the use of a map, photographs, and text to explain the subject, sited at a relevant location. IMAGE CREDIT: en.wikipedia.org

Walking Tour of Historic Riverton, 1989

Drawings: Lenore Probsting
Research: Betty Hahle
Text: Louise Vaughn & Betty Hahle Main IMAGE CREDIT: JMC



ANNUAL MEETING from 5

Walking Tour. Twenty-three years later the Society is re-designing the self-guided walk to include a series of tours of local sites with ties to people and events of local and national historical significance.



A first draft of the Walking Tour of Historic Riverton awaits a test drive by Society members attending the Annual Meeting Tuesday, June 5, 2011 PHOTO CREDIT: JMc

Wear your walking shoes as we try a dress rehearsal for a loop of Walking Tour stops along Main Street from Broad to 3rd and then back along Howard. Your ideas and feedback on the first tour will guide our development efforts for future tours in Riverton. The new Riverton Walking Tours may have the future capability to use a GPS enabled smart phone to access photos, maps, and additional information during the tour for an in-depth and interactive history experience. We have the creative ideas and plenty of content; how to utilize the technology remains a challenge.

The meeting will conclude with refreshments at the end of the Walking Tour.

Please call Gerald Weaber to confirm your attendance at 856-786-6961.



- GERALD WEABER

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RIVERTON PRESENTS A SELF-GUIDED WALKING TOUR of Historic RIVERTON Burlington County NEW JERSEY

©2012 DONATION \$1.00

I. HISTORICAL SIGN, BROAD & MAIN
Ten Philadelphia merchants seeking summer homes for their families founded Riverton in 1851. They purchased 120 acres of Lippincott farmland and engaged prominent architect Samuel Sloan to design a new village and villas for the Founders.

The all-residential plan also included a walled and landscaped riverbank and a pier for transportation by riverboats. According to 19th century architectural historian Henry Russell Hitchcock, Riverton was the first fully planned residential sub-division in America. All but one of the ten Founders were Quakers, and their influence set the tone of the new community and its growth over the next fifty years.

Almost fully developed today, Riverton's gaslamp-lined streets still retain much of the Victorian charm of an earlier era. More than half of Riverton's buildings are included in the State and National Directories of Historic Places. In its less than one square mile area

Self-Guided Walking Tour of Historic Riverton 3.0

Wear comfortable shoes on Tuesday for the walk

Visit the growing 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, video clips, our blog, and more.

Readers: Much is in store for the Annual Meeting. Pres. Gerald Weaber remembers Margaret "Nancy" Washington. The Annual Historic Riverton Criterium returns June 10. As you enjoy the summer, stay in touch with your hometown at <http://rivertonhistory.com/>

A SPECIAL THANKS TO SOCIETY DONORS

Library Board member Mr. Ken Smith donated a November 8, 1956 *Palmira News*. BurlCo voters overwhelmingly liked Ike in the presidential election that year.

Mrs. Mary Yearly Flanagan called to say that she had "a few" things to donate to the Society. The shopping bag full of goodies dear to the heart of a retired history teacher include: 29 Riverton July Fourth Programs for various years, a folder full of post office related news clippings, 1989 Library calendar, History of the Bank of NJ 1973, "Blizzard of 1993" *Phila. Inq.*, Last *Phila. Bulletin* 1982, *Courier-Post* 7-21-1969, and number of vintage newspapers, the most remarkable of which is a April 30, 1909 *New Era*. Readers may expect many articles and blog posts to be inspired by these wonderful resources.

Sandy Steedle, great-granddaughter of George "Pat" Steedle, sent us a big manila envelope filled with photos of vintage trucks like the one below from the Steedle Express business that some of you may recall. Send us your recollections, photo scans, or donations of Steedle related items so that we can consolidate what we have into a blog piece or *Gaslight News* article.



Gaslight News
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- JMc