



Gaslight News

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Historical Society of Riverton

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When you open this issue as a PDF file on the HSR website all of the blue highlighted underlined terms become links. Just place your mouse cursor over the blue words and press **CTRL** plus left-mouse click to follow the link.



COMPUTER TIP



Alfresco barbershop Pine Barons concert May 16 at Riverview Estates

Riverview Estates and the HSR again team up to bring you an event. Please reserve now.



While performers on *Glee* and contestants on various reality television vocal competition shows are newcomers to the acapella arena, the members of the *Pine Barons Chorus* are virtuosos of singing in four-part harmony.

Bring your blankets and lawn chairs to the Meditation Garden at Riverview Estates **Thursday, May 16, 2013, at 6:30 p.m.** when the men and their finely tuned "instruments" will be the featured entertainment at the Historical Society of Riverton's 2013 Annual Meeting.

Be prepared for an evening of fun-filled family entertainment as performed by this local chapter of the 38,000 member Barbershop Harmony Society.

Held rain or shine, we will hope for the best, and plan for the worst, so please call to make reservations. In case of rain, the first fifty people making reservations will be eligible for seats indoors.

Please call Gerald Weaver at 856-786-6961. Leave your name, and phone number indicating the number of people in your party

We appreciate the co-sponsorship of Riverview Estates of this free community musical performance.

Find out more about this uniquely-American art form at www.harmonize.com/pinebarons/

- JMc



HSR Annual Meeting celebrates 'Riverton Preservation on the Riverbank'

Former Biddle Mansion is only one of the renovation projects finishing or underway in town

Join the Historical Society in Riverview Estates Meditation Garden to celebrate Riverton Preservation at our 2013 Annual Meeting on **Thursday May 16, 2013, at 6:30 p.m.** Afterwards, enjoy a performance by the Pine Barons Chorus, co-sponsored by Riverview Estates (details in story above). The garden sits across from the Biddle Mansion, a tangible reminder of

the challenges and rewards of preserving local history by saving the grand homes in Riverton's historic district.

Several preservation 'Angels' have completed impressive renovations to some of the most important private residences in the Riverton historic district.

See **ANNUAL MEET** on 2



Biddle Mansion

Anxiety and dread vs. Ballrooms and river views.



Have a laugh at [Victoria Elizabeth Barnes' blog](http://victoriaelizabethbarnes.com/category/biddle-mansion/).



A clever porch embellishment made from a headboard welcomes tenants home to the 7-unit apartments forged from the sprawling former home of Riverton founder Rodman Wharton.

Occupants certainly have a front row view of the Riverton Yacht Club! IMAGE CREDIT: JMc



ANNUAL MEET from 1

The Hughes Family acquired the long-distressed Second Empire-style Biddle Mansion at 207 Bank Avenue in August 2012, and the new owners are committed to retaining

its historic integrity as they restore the property.

[Preservation New Jersey](#), the statewide grassroots historic preservation advocacy and education organization, placed the prominent Riverton riverfront property on their 2007 list of [Ten Most Endangered Historic Sites in New Jersey](#). Until its purchase in 2012, the survival of the home, built circa 1876 for Charles Miller Biddle, the son of a Riverton founder, seemed in serious peril. (for more on the Biddle Mansion and Charles Biddle, see [GN issue# 149](#))

Clad in Pennsylvania green serpentine stone and its first-floor ballroom built with oak from Germany's Black Forest, a 1902 Philadelphia guidebook acknowledged it as the most notable residence in Riverton.

However, steady deterioration since its conversion to multi-family units in 1962 and a 1978 fire that destroyed the grand convex mansard tower caused some to speculate that the once splendid villa would eventually face the wrecking ball.

A cadre of skilled craftspeople and designers continues to restore, rehab, and resuscitate the ailing edifice in order to fulfill Mrs. Hughes' wish to return the residence "...to its prior grandeur." The HSR commends Helen Hughes for this undertaking.

Michael and Cathy Spinelli have renovated two important

homes in Riverton, their most recent, the former home of Rodman Wharton, a Riverton founder, located at 407 Bank Avenue.

The ten original founders of Riverton hired acclaimed Philadelphia architect Samuel Sloan to layout the village and their villas along the Delaware River. Sloan also designed the Wharton house.

Rodman Wharton was a business partner with his brother, Joseph Wharton; the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and the Wharton State Forest are named in Joseph's honor.



Morning sun washes over the freshly stuccoed and soft-grey painted exterior of 107 Lippincott Avenue, now the home of Beatrice and Dr. Michael Horn. IMAGE CREDIT: JMc

Beatrice and Dr. Michael Horn's recently purchased 107 Lippincott Avenue, most recently, the residence of former Riverton Mayor David Styer, Jr. and his family. Their extensive ongoing renovation has refreshed the Baily and Bassett designed Dutch Colonial that *American Suburbs* magazine featured in a 1910 article. Riverton founder Ezra Lippincott originally built the home in 1910, for Helen Lippincott, one of his daughters.

Bring a blanket or beach chair and come to the HSR's 2013 Annual Meeting beginning at 6:30 p.m. Call Gerald Weaber to make reservations (see Pine Barons story, p. 1). We thank Riverview Estates for co-sponsoring this free community event. Fifteen lucky attendees will win copies of the book, *Ruff Copy*, by Riverton's master storyteller, Anne Knight Ruff.



SOCIETY ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS

The Board of Directors of the Historical Society of Riverton proudly nominate the following individuals to serve a three year term as board members effective July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2016:

- *Pat Brunker
- *Susan Dechnik
- *Agnes Kennedy
- *Cheryl Smekal
- *Pat Solin
- *Harvey Sklar
- *Elsie Waters

MEMBERS OF THE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY MAY
NOMINATE AND VOTE FOR
BOARD MEMBERS
AT THE ANNUAL MEETING
MAY 16, 2013 AT 6:30PM

Scores gathered at [Westfield Friends Meeting](#) April 6 to remember Anne Knight Ruff, known as Bay, who passed in March at age 92. See the [HSR's remembrance page](#) for the local artist and author whose delightful folk art painting of Bank Avenue welcomes visitors to our website homepage.

Riverton Free Library Director, Michael Robinson's eBay purchase of a baby's portrait c.1898 led him to find out more about Lothrop Photography, at 4th & Main, the subject of the feature article next time in the June *Gaslight News*.



ANNOUNCEMENT

THE DANIEL CAMPBELL
RIVERTON
PRESERVATION
AWARD

In the fall of 2013, the Society will award its first **Riverton Preservation Award** honoring an individual, business, or organization making a significant contribution to Riverton historic preservation or by completing substantial improvements to an important building, structure, or site.

We welcome nominations from the community for a building, structure or site worthy of recognition by the historical society with a Riverton Preservation Award.

Daniel Campbell, AIA is a Historic Architect widely recognized for his experience in architecture and historic preservation. Mr. Campbell is also a distinguished past President of the Historical Society of Riverton and editor of the *Gaslight News*.

After careful and exhaustive research by Society members and the borough led by Daniel Campbell and Betty Hahle the National Register of Historic Places designated The [Riverton Historic District](#), with its 800 acres and 371 buildings, on March 5, 1999. The [National Register of Historic Places](#) is the official list of American historic places worthy of preservation

Mr. Campbell's historical projects include the *Riverton Yacht Club*, Riverton, NJ; *Mount Pleasant Mansion* and other Fairmount Park houses in Philadelphia, PA; *Big House*, Andalusia; the *Nicholas Biddle Estate*, Bucks Co, PA; *New Bolton Center*; *University of Pennsylvania Veterinary School*, Kennett Square, PA; *Merion Friends Meetinghouse*, and other meeting-houses; and the *Washington Memorial Chapel*, Valley Forge, PA., among other projects.

- GERALD WEABER



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the Society will
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RIVERTON
PRESERVATION
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honoring an
individual, business,
or organization



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THIS NEWSLETTER
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Si Kology dispensed home-spun advice to readers of the New Era during the 1930s from atop its masthead. Here, he gives some advice to our newsletter readers.

Stay in touch between issues with rivertonhistory.com

Since the last newsletter
website visitors...

...learned how the
Newspaper Digitalization
Project came about,



...accessed back issues of
four local newspapers,



IMAGE CREDIT: DPaladino

...saw the Yacht Club
shrouded in fog,



...had tea with Queen
Victoria at the New Leaf,



...were fooled by the
groundhog,

...opened some Easter
eye-candy,



...met
the
Friday
Ladies



...and saw some of
Bay Ruff's art,



...recalled memories of the
old grandstand and broke
ground for a new one,



...anticipated the return of the
Historic Riverton Criterium,

...and
'liked' us
on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/rivertonhistory).



Come visit and leave behind some of
your Riverton history.

- JMc

Visit our content-rich HSR website at <http://rivertonhistory.com/> for information on
events, past issues of *Gaslight News*, vintage images, a veterans' page, our blog, and more.

Readers: Inside this issue find news of the
upcoming 2013 Annual HSR Meeting on
May 16, during which we elect Board mem-
bers for the next 3-year term, learn of a new
aim to recognize Preservation, and enjoy the
4-part harmonies of The Pine Barons.

Gaslight News

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THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RIVERTON

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Phyllis Rodgers	Vice President
Paul Daly	Treasurer
Susan Dechnik	Publicity
Nancy Hall	Membership
Charlotte Lippincott	Secretary
John McCormick	Editor, Archivist, Website

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Recently, we heard from former
Riverton resident Jacalyn Hicks who
needed help with how to go about
getting her parents' names on the
Riverton War Memorial. We
directed her to Riverton's Military &
Veterans Affairs Committee thru the
[Borough webpage](#), and she applied
to have the names of her parents,
Richard & Terry Buckalew, both
now passed, added to the War
Memorial. We expect to update the
[Riverton Honor Roll Album](#) after
Memorial Day observances.



Save the Date the Original HISTORIC RIVERTON CRITERIUM

returns

SUNDAY

June 9, 2013

1:00 P.M.

HRC



BICYCLE RACE through the historic streets of Riverton, N.J.

USAC CATEGORIES:

3/4, 45+, PRO 1/2

plus

TWO MORE
FUN RACES

a KIDZ RACE

AND

THE FIREMAN'S FUN LAP

This year's race benefits

Riverton Fire Co.

