

Gaslight News



June 2013

Historical Society of Riverton

vol. XXXXIII, no. 3 (#152)

Founded 1970

Riverton, NJ 08077

Incorporated 1978



Michael Robinson instigated this closer examination of Lothrop Photography when he purchased this cabinet card of an infant Charles Horace Haines through an online auction. Robinson observes that the Haines family has deep roots in Burlington County.

IMAGE CREDIT : Michael Robinson

Riverton's Lothrop Photography chronicled our ancestors' milestones

From a studio at 4th & Main Bertha Lothrop gained a reputation for innovative child portraiture.

During the 1890s, in an age when photography as a fine-art was just emerging, a pioneering young artist from Riverton exhibited children's portraits at the Photographic Society of Philadelphia, became a successful advertising photographer, published a technical pamphlet, and had a studio built expressly for taking pictures. The surprise? A woman named Bertha Lothrop accomplished all these feats.

A small item in Mrs. Betty B. Hahle long-running signature "Yesterday" column that once appeared in this newsletter informed readers in 1984 that "Lothrop's new Photographic Studio, at 4th & Main, boasted one of the finest skylights in the state, assuring the best and pleasant photos for its patrons."

In 2008, an English professor writing a book about antique photographs of people with their dogs contacted the Society requesting help in dating a cabinet card. HSR member and professional historian Paul W. Schopp responded with his customary thoroughness to her inquiry with an email listing five members of the Lothrop household residing at 401 Main Street according to the 1900 census and an account of the 60 year-old head-of-household's employment since 1880.

Given the Massachusetts native's movements and a Philadelphia business address from 1863-1882, Mr. Schopp speculated that David Lothrop may have been "a bit of an itinerant photographer" and that the "Riverton studio may have been a part-time operation."

Paul's authoritative findings indicated that in 1900, thirty year-old Bertha, David's daughter living in the same house, was also a photographer. In 1905, she married Frederick W. Radell in Riverton, and by the 1910 census had moved with him to Pennsylvania with her mother, suggesting that David had died sometime between 1900 and 1910.

In late January 2013, RFL Director, Mr. Michael Robinson watched a PowerPoint presentation about the recently digitized local newspapers that included a small Lothrop Photography newspaper ad from the (Palmyra) *Weekly News*, July 10, 1897, and the Lothrop photo at lower left.

LOTHROP'S

New Photographic Studio.

COR. FOURTH AND MAIN STREETS,
RIVERTON, N. J.

Having one of the finest skylights in the State, we are now ready to take the very best and most pleasing photographs of every style and finish. Only the very best work, will be allowed to go out from this Studio.

PLEASE GIVE US A TRIAL.

With his curiosity clearly piqued about the prospect of a historic photography studio being within a stone's throw from the Library, Mr. Robinson soon found an online auction for another Lothrop-stamped portrait. Mr. Robinson writes:

"On eBay recently I came across a studio photograph of a magisterial looking baby named Charles Horace Haines... It was the name that caught my attention (I know a local Charles Haines,



Lothrop Studio photograph
Unidentified subject.

Mr. Paul W. Schopp assisted Dr. Ann-Janine Morey of James Madison University in dating this cabinet card to about 1890 for her forthcoming book, *Romancing the Dog: American Vernacular Photography, 1860-1950*.

IMAGE CREDIT: Dr. A.J. Morey

See **LOTHROP** on 2

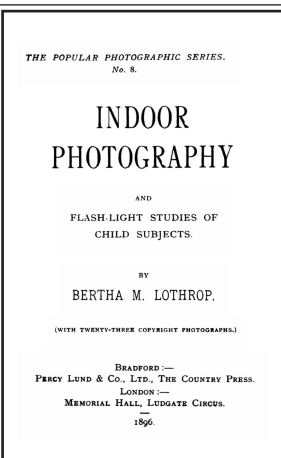


Iris and Richard Gaughan live in the home that the 1900 census listed as the Lothrop residence. Behind it, where the photography studio once stood, now rests the home of Adrienne and Carlos Rogers at 501 Fourth Street. Old maps, newspaper accounts, and census records may hold the keys to the mysteries of your home's history.

PHOTO CREDIT: JMc

"Nine miles out of Philadelphia, at Riverton, on the banks of the Delaware, lives Miss Bertha M. Lothrop, a young woman who... has achieved a reputation in her particular work."

- [The Delineator, Paris; New York: Butterick Pub. Co. v.58: no.5 \(1901: Nov.\). WOMEN PHOTOGRAPHERS AND THEIR WORK.](#)



Title page of *Indoor Photography and Flash-Light Studies of Child Subjects* by Bertha Lothrop. View the entire scanned 40-page booklet on Google Books.

IMAGE CREDIT: Google Books

LOTHROP from 1

and there are Haines all over Burlington County), but it was a Riverton connection that influenced me to buy the photograph. Charles at 5 months is propped up in a chair on a white fur rug, squinting at the camera and waving his right hand like a Pope issuing a blessing.

Michael's online search turned up [Naomi Rosenblum's *A History of Women Photographers*](#) (Abbeville Press, various editions), which cites Bertha Lothrop as an example of women photographers succeeding in advertising:

"In 1901, for example the demand for advertising images by one Bertha M. Lothrop, a Philadelphian who made this a specialty, was so pressing that their overburdened maker claimed she had little time to join photographic societies or submit work to exhibitions... in any magazine one might find 'at least a half dozen pictures which her [Lothrop's] fertile brain has thought out. ...Her work was said to have commanded comparatively high prices, but the actual figures are unknown."

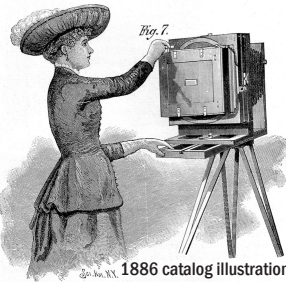


IMAGE CREDIT: <http://www.pierceabel.com/cam/index.htm>

Next, Mr. Robinson found a pamphlet authored by Bertha Lothrop in 1896, [Indoor Photography and Flash-Light Studies of Child Subjects](#) (available at Google Books). In addition to "Twenty-three Copyright Photographs" it includes Miss Lothrop's observations on the challenges and rewards of working with children, her sources of inspiration, and technical information about lighting, exposure, flash powder, chemicals, and darkroom technique.

Mr. Robinson follows up with this item in [Photographic Times of December 21, 1894](#), (Google Books) which includes notice of a Photographic Society of Philadelphia

meeting on November 7, 1894, at which,

"...a large audience was assembled to see a collection of slides of child studies by Miss Bertha M. Lothrop of Riverton... Miss Lothrop's slides constituted an exhibit of figure work such as has rarely, if ever, been equaled at meetings of the Society, and showed that she possesses artistic feeling, rare skill in posing children, and a technical knowledge altogether admirable."

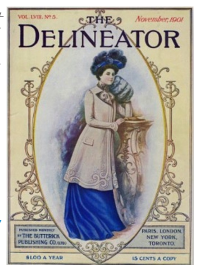


So who was the master photographer here—father, David, formerly of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Pennsylvania, now 56 years old in 1896, or his twenty-something daughter, Bertha, published in her field of photography and highly regarded by her peers? And from where in Riverton did Lothrop Photography conduct business?

At this point, your *Gaslight News* editor covers the next part of the course in this research relay.

In ["Women Photographers and Their Work," The Delineator, November 1901](#),

author Juan C. Abel explains that advertisers paid high prices for her photographs because, when she was attending the Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia, she was determined to avoid the "stiff, conventional poses" of portraits of the day.



EVENING PRAYER, by Bertha M. Lothrop.

At a friend's suggestion, she experimented with a flash-lamp to provide the light so that she could picture "children in their various moods and pranks."



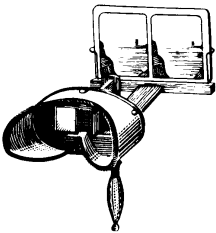
The Pillow Fight.



Playmates.

No doubt, *Evening Prayer*, *Pillow Fight*, and *Playmates* typify the innovative flash-light studies of child subjects by Miss Bertha Lothrop of whom the Photographic Society of Philadelphia found to possess "...artistic feeling, rare skill in posing children, and a technical knowledge altogether admirable." IMAGE CREDIT : *The Delineator*, November 1901 and *Indoor Photography and Flash-Light Studies of Child Subjects*

This she tried with great success and then took up stereoscopic, or 3D, photography. One maker of pictures for the stereoscope bought practically all she could make. Bertha Lothrop, "realizing sufficient to build herself a comfortable little studio out at her home," could "...barely keep pace with the orders" for her calendar and advertising work.



If the present-day home at 401 Main was the Lothrop residence, what became of the "comfortable little studio"?

Historian Paul Schopp used a succession of Sanborn Insurance maps to explain what happened. The residence at 401 Main Street and a separate smaller structure labeled "PHOTO" are apparent on the 1896 Sanborn map. The 1900 map shows both the corner residence and the photo studio at the rear of the property receiving additions, and each expanding again by 1905. But the lot behind 401 Main Street is vacant for the 1911 map, and a new dwelling at 501 Fourth Street first appears on the 1919 map.

In other words, the Lothrop residence still stands, but Bertha's photography studio disappeared sometime between 1905-1911.

The disappearance of the photo studio corresponds with Paul's estimate for the

absolute termination date for the photography studio in Riverton as sometime between 1900 and 1910 and, more closely, sometime between 1905 and 1910, given the date of Bertha's marriage.

Drilling into the recently digitized local newspaper files available on the HSR website and some more research in the archives of genealogybank.com yielded a few more clues regarding our renowned Miss Bertha, Lothrop Photographers, and her husband-to-be.

RIVERTON

Special to The Inquirer.
RIVERTON, Aug. 26.—Edward R. M. Showell had as a recent guest Walter McIlwain, of West Philadelphia.
 Dr. Alex Marcy, Jr., has been spending the week with his family at Cape May.
 Ezra Perkins and his two daughters, the Misses Sadie and Ethel Perkins, returned on Monday from a three days' stay at Atlantic City.
 John Davidson and Charley Stratton are back from a week's camping at Ocean City.
 Mr. and Mrs. Moffatt have been entertaining Philadelphia friends during the week.
 Miss Bertha Lothrop and Miss Florence Sharp are at Ocean City.

"Riverton." *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 27 August 1899: Volume: 141 Issue: 58, Section: Sunday Magazine, p. 9.

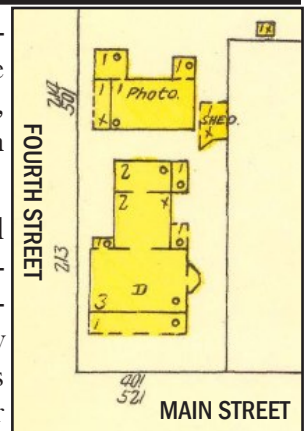
Newspaper social and gossip columns of the day often reported on the activities of people within their subscribers' area, so reporting on Miss Bertha Lothrop's comings and goings was not unusual. In 1897, she had just returned from two weeks' visit in Lancaster, in August 1899 she was in Ocean City, and in April 1900 she was off visiting friends in New York City. Think of them as the Facebook status updates of their era. Bertha turned 30 in 1900, apparently an accomplished independent career woman.

In April 1905, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* reported that a Mr. Frederick W. Radell of Bank and Howard Street had just lost his 23 year-old wife, presumably as a result of complications from childbirth, since she left a two-week-old infant.

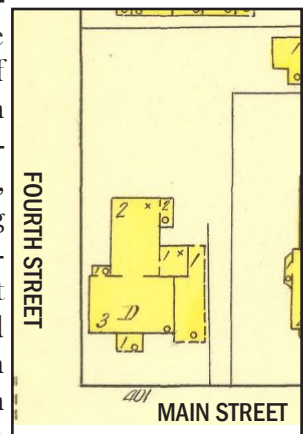
The course of one's life can certainly turn on a dime, and that is about to be the case for the subject of this essay.

Eight months later the widower, Mr. Radell, married Bertha, now 35, here in Riverton on December 6, 1905, and sometime before the 1910 census they moved to Abington Township, Pennsylvania.

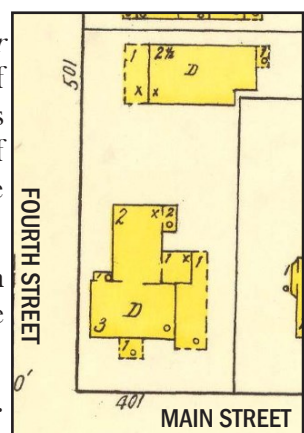
See **LOTHROP** on 4



This detail from a 1905 Sanborn Insurance Map, corner of Fourth & Main, shows the Lothrop residence at 401 Main and adjacent photography studio.



By 1911, owners added to 401 Main, but the lot where the photography studio once stood was vacant.



The 1919 Riverton Sanborn Insurance map shows a new home at 501 Fourth Street. Further research may hold answers to what events ended Lothrop Photography.

What became of the talented former Miss Lothrop, now Mrs. Bertha L. Radell? Did she give up her passion for capturing photographic images for domestic life in Montgomery County, PA? For now, the record reveals few details of Mrs. Radell's remaining years.



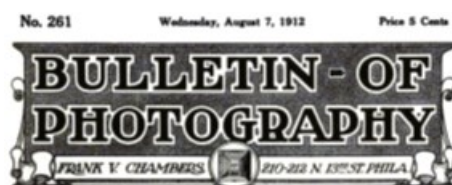
Lothrop family burial plot, Epworth Methodist Church Cemetery PHOTO CREDIT: JMc

Epworth Methodist Church Cemetery in Palmyra holds the Lothrop family burial plot for Bertha's mother,

Lucy Lothrop, and her sister, Florence, but not Bertha. And although a metal marker identifies the owner as David Lothrop, the headstone for Bertha's father is absent.

The 1932 Bucks County Intelligencer Obituary Index has an entry that reads, "Bertha L., wife of Frederick W. Radell, died on Tuesday, Dec. 6, at their home on York road, above Hartsville, after a five week's illness. Her husband and 2 da..." The rest is cut off, but in all likelihood it refers to a husband and two surviving daughters.

One final clue emerged that Bertha Radell may have continued the pursuit of her photographic art even after leaving Riverton.



Exhibitors at the 32d Annual Convention P. A. of A.
183 Bertha L. Radell, Glenside, Pa.
184 Clarissa Hovey, Boston, Mass.
185 Imogene Cunningham, Seattle, Wash.
Bulletin of Photography, Volume 11 edited by John Bartlett, Frank V. Chambers, Francis Stapleton Chambers, page 199.

The name "Bertha L. Radell, Glenside, Pa." appears in the Bulletin of Photography as an exhibitor at the 32nd Annual Photographers Association of America Convention in Philadelphia on July 22-27, 1912.

Our account ends here, but this is where the networking potential of the Internet holds some promise and another contributor may anchor this long-distance research relay and complete the course started by Mrs. Hahle in 1984.

If anyone reading this can forward to us originals or scans of additional Lothrop photographs, references to Lothrop Photography in any media not already seen here, anecdotal information about Lothrop Photography, or anything else pertinent to this theme, then we can enlarge on this topic at a later date.

Contributors: Betty B. Hahle, John McCormick, Michael Robinson, Paul W. Schopp



This summer, take the HSR website with you as you travel and show off your hometown. Go to <http://rivertonhistory.com/> for event updates, *Gaslight News* back issues, historical newspapers, 100s of vintage images (shore points, too), video clips, our blog, and more.

Readers: This issue is entirely devoted to an unfinished subject—Lothrop Photography. Perhaps fresh eyes can complete the last lap.



Gaslight News

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

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RIVERTON

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THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RIVERTON SALUTES ITS VETERANS

Sunday, April 26, 2013.

The distinguished Honor Roll of military veterans listed on the Riverton War Memorial grew by ten names during a Memorial Day ceremony directed by Mayor Bill Brown and Robert Smyth, Chairman of Riverton's Military & Veterans Affairs Committee

Uniformed members of VFW Post 3020 and American Legion Post 146, both of Riverside, lent solemnity to the occasion with a display of colors, a wreath laying, and rifle salute.

A respectful crowd applauded for each of the ten names Robert Smyth read aloud. Mayor Brown explained that new wood plaques with metal nameplates will eventually replace the memorial's original lists that date from 1945.

Richard N. Buckalew	Theresa Buckalew
James Hamlin	William A. Kupper Jr.
George J. Mack Jr.	Elliot Richardson III
Robert E. Richardson	Frank Siefert
Herman R. Trout Jr.	Samuel Wargny

During our summer hiatus visit the Historical Society of Riverton's website at rivertonhistory.com, and see what is developing in your old hometown.

How many times have you read of someone's story in the *Gaslight News* or seen an image on the HSR website that evoked a memory that is part of your own unique Riverton experience?

Telling your story is part of your legacy to your family and community. If you don't tell it, then who will?

We invite submissions of essays, poems, photographs, articles, suggestions for topics, corrections and additions to articles, and other such contributions from our readers.

Yesterday's advertising matter, maps, photos, newspapers, audio and video recordings, catalogs, invoices and bills, home movies, magazines, postcards, and many such commonplace items of everyday living have become the antiques of today, so please keep the Society in mind before you dispose of any such items of local historical interest.

Help us prepare for the day when we will have a real home in which to make Riverton artifacts and information available for public use.

-JMC

