



Gaslight News

September 2014

Historical Society of Riverton

vol. XXXIV, no. 3 (#157)

Founded 1970

Riverton, NJ 08077

Incorporated 1978

STOP WHINING!
We have plenty



Alisa DuPuy as The Dowager Countess

HSR President Phyllis Rodgers' Message tells of 2014-2015 aims and events

Preserving Riverton's unique historical legacy is not entirely *all work*

September 1, 2014

Greetings and Happy Labor Day, Members, We look forward to your participation in all the exciting events planned for the 2014-2015 season. You are welcome to attend our Board meetings as we plan and strategize for upcoming events and projects.

Board Meetings will take place at Riverton School Media Center on *Sept. 18, Nov. 13, Jan. 21, and May 13. at 7 p.m.*

We open with a HSR sponsored **Downton Abbey Tea** at The New Leaf Tearoom Sunday, Sept. 28, at 1:00 p.m. The \$40 all-inclusive admission for this fundraiser includes a Downton inspired tea menu, an appearance by



A tea truly fit for the manor born.

Dowager Countess, games and prizes and surprises. Vintage dress encouraged. Please call The New Leaf for reservations and make checks payable to *Historical Society of Riverton.*

Actor/historian **Bob**

Gleason returns for an encore Wednesday, Oct. 22, 2014, at 7:00 p.m., channeling **EDGAR ALLAN POE**, this time at the venerable Porch Club. What a perfect venue in

See **MESSAGE** on 2

BACK TO SCHOOL
FIND RIVERTON SCHOOL NOTES IN THE ONLINE NEW ERA ARCHIVE AT RIVERTONHISTORY.COM



In this issue

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - MRS. PHYLLIS RODGERS	1
TWO GIFTS SWELL HSR COLLECTIONS - JMc	1
MAILBOX - JMc	4
VETERANS - JMc	4
PHOTOS by JMc unless noted otherwise	

Two gifts swell HSR collections

Lorraine Gambone's July 4th Programs & Jeff Cole's postcards are stunning archive additions

We built most of our online archive of vintage images by straight out asking people with collections if we could scan them, but recently two treasure troves showed up here without us even asking.

In these days of easy liquidations at a garage sale or on eBay it is rare for us to receive actual material goods.

Mrs. Lorraine Gambone gave the Society two cabinet cards, six postcards, fourteen different July 4th Programs



(1899-1938), and a 1931 Memorial Park Dedication Souvenir Program.

I gasped out loud when I opened the envelope.

I guess you'd have to be interested in this kind of stuff.

These are cool to look at and highly collectible, to be sure, and they are priceless sources of information about the historical events, people, and places they concern. So, yes, I am excited about them.

I first met Jeff Cole in 2007, when he asked if I could work with him on a presentation about the Welsbach Gas Streetlighting Company—the same firm that manufactured Riverton's original gaslights and posts.

His grandfather had worked for the Philadel-

See **GIFTS** on 3



LOGO BY ANNE RACIOPPI



PHOTO BY HOLLY SHANER-McRAE



ABOVE

PHOTO #1: Photo op for the riders in NYC

PHOTO #2: Historic Riverton Century riders arrive in Riverton, June 7, 2014

PHOTO #3: L-Bill Hall, R-Rob Gusky. Bill rode in from Burlington.

PHOTO #4: Historic marker

MESSAGE from 1

which to experience Gleason's portrayal of "...the all-too-human Poe, the passionate poet, the intense husband, the haunted soul."

Considered the inventor of the detective story, Poe wrote most of his greatest work while living in Philadelphia. Gleason's portrayal of Poe "...provides vivid images, terrifying tales, and heart-thumping excitement."

Although he died tragically in 1849, at age 40, Poe and his work continue to appear throughout popular culture in literature, music, films, and television.

A nominal \$5.00 admission includes light refreshment.

The Downton frenzy continues as the HSR sponsors a bus trip to Wintertur Museum in Delaware, Friday, December 5, to attend

[The Costumes of Downton Abbey Exhibition.](#) Plus, being at Wintertur decorated for the Holidays is a bonus!

Call 856-786-8422 for info and reservations. The \$55 cost for trip includes bus transportation to Wintertur, general admission fees, gratuity, snacks. Lunch on your own at the Museum. Make checks payable to Historical Society of Riverton

Departs 9:00 a.m. sharp from CVS parking lot and returns about 4:30 p.m.

We are looking forward in 2015, to our second annual *Preservation Award Night* in which we honor deserving homeowners. If you know of a home in Riverton that has been lovingly restored, please call me to nominate. (856-786-8422)



Edgar Allan Poe, as interpreted by Bob Gleason
IMAGE CREDIT: American Historical Theatre

The newly installed *historic marker* at the Porch Club was a collaborative project between the HSR and the Porch Club.



Another sign of the times is now up at the site of Riverton's former bicycle track, near So. Broad and Lippincott, thanks to the efforts of Rob Gusky.

He created the [Historic Riverton Century](#) ride to commemorate the 1895 New York Times Tri-State Relay Race and used a combination of grant money and crowdfunding through [indiegogo.com](#) to finance the project.

That, plus he and a few friends he made along the way actually biked over a hundred miles from the steps of the New York Times Building to Riverton on June 7.

This year also saw the designation by Borough Council of HSR member *Paul W. Schopp as Town Historian* to fill the vacancy left by the passing of Mrs. Betty Hahle. He took to the podium in Riverton style, attired

in top hat, vest, and string tie, to deliver the [informative keynote](#) for the dedication of the Riverton Bicycle Track.

We are anxious to present more *Historic House Plaques* this year. If your home is 100 Years old or more and you are willing to do a



Society President Phyllis Rodgers looks on as Mayor Bill Brown congratulates Rob Gusky during the dedication for the Riverton Bicycle Track Historical Marker June 8, 2014.



Engage with the HSR at meets, on the web, wherever you are!

New goals to achieve and possibilities await; the HSR will be what we make it

little research, please contact Pat Bruncker (856-303-1777) for an application. The process promises to be painless.

In our full-page ad in the 2014 July Fourth Program booklet, Uncle Sam declared, "I WANT YOU to join the Historical Society of Riverton."

Please help recruit your neighbors and friends across the miles to join our efforts to help preserve and promote our local history through research, special events and public education programs.

Show them the [Gaslight News](#), our [FB page](#), and the wonderful resources such as the vintage postcards and newspaper archives on our content-rich website.

Riverton has a unique historic legacy. Know that your membership support helps the Historical Society of Riverton

fulfill its 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."

What can you do to help contribute to Riverton's historic legacy? Join the conversation at a meeting and add your voice to the Facebook page. HSR membership is not supposed to be a spectator sport.

See you all soon at an upcoming event, or visit us wherever you are at rivertonhistory.com and on [Facebook](#).

Regards,
Phyllis Rodgers, President
Historical Society of Riverton



GIFTS from 1

phia offices of the company where he literally worked his way to the top, starting as a floor sweeper and retiring with 61 years of service after becoming vice-president and treasurer.

Jeff's collection of Welsbach items and related ephemera plus his familial link to a Welsbach exec made him well suited to tell the story of the old-fashioned gas streetlights so closely associated with his hometown and he felt duty-bound to do it.

Over the course of meeting that summer at his home over coffee to plan the presentation I formed a friendship with the former Coast Guardsman, then working locally as a handyman.

An avid collector, he had gleaned heaps of antique postcards, memorabilia, souvenirs, and advertising collectibles from his frequent forays into early morning garage and estate sales.

Passionate about nature in general, and the ocean and beaches in particular, he accrued an incredible collection of rare and exotic seashells—each one tagged with the common name as well as the scientific term.

As a boy in Riverton he often went dig-

ging along the Delaware and found old patent medicine bottles, and arrowheads. Later, he taught himself about these subjects and amassed a museum-quality array of Burlington County Native American artifacts and hundreds of antique glassware items representing many Delaware Valley businesses.

Unable to keep the Riverton home in which he grew up after his mother passed, he moved to Florida in 2011, where he soon made a surf fishing buddy in Louis Claude.

Jeff kept in touch with his friends back home. Meanwhile, he started selling off his belongings to meet expenses and sent me three binders of his postcards to sell at a postcard show.

This June he told me he was again undergoing treatments for the cancer he had battled for several years, and in July Louis called; Jeff had passed.

Later, two medium flat-rate US Mail boxes arrived at my home with a letter from Louis, who executed Jeff's bequest with this gift to the Society.

It is an eclectic assortment of over 800 individual postcards from all points, including dozens of travel folder postcards, cabinet cards, photographs, and various other ephemera.

Jeff told me many times how much he loved growing up in Riverton and expressed great affection for his town.



Four Cowboys: L-R: Bruce Gunn, Bob Waters, Jeff Cole, John Waters, Cole family photo, no date

"See you among the shells," Jeff's quote in the 1961 Tillicum, proved uncannily prophetic. His wish was to have his ashes spread over his favorite fishing spot along the beach.

Jeff's [Welsbach research](#) remains one of the most popularly searched topics on our website.

We are grateful for each of these enduring gifts and will post more detailed scans on our website sometime this fall.

-JMC



... plans to be a
skin diver ... must have
see you among the shells.
Activities: Tillicum. Riverton



Hello dear Riverton Historical friend,
 My sisters and I grew up in Riverton at 200 Linden Avenue. I have a few photos of the house as it was in the 1950s when we were children, which I'd be pleased to send you as attachments. Please write back with an email address where I may send them. Thanks for your work. Browsing through the website brought back many happy memories.
 Sincerely,
 Gretchen Williams Santa Rosa, CA



Me and my mother Juanita Williams... must have been 1951. Thanks for running the website. I got a kick out of visiting it.



Moorestown COMMUNITY BAND RIVERVIEW ESTATES
 Weds., May 28

A too-small crowd was on hand at Riverview Estates for a superb concert by the Moorestown Community Band under the direction of L. Bruce Smith, conductor.

Go to rivertonhistory.com for a story about the HSR-Riverview jointly sponsored event, more photos by Susan Dechnik, and even a YouTube video.



We heartily welcome two new household memberships:

- Jeffrey & Frederika Blatz, Riverton
- Debra Cerra, Riverton

REMINDER
Blue highlighted
underlined terms are hotlinks to more material when you open this as a PDF at rivertonhistory.com

Help make our growing HSR website at <http://rivertonhistory.com/> more collaborative with your comments and contributions. Check in for information on events, past issues of *Gaslight News*, vintage images, a veterans' page, our blog, and more.

Readers: Inside this issue read President Phyllis Rodgers' recap of past accomplishments as she sets our sights on goals for 2014-2015. Also, we acknowledge two major donor gifts.



It was an honor again to be at Riverton's Annual Memorial Day Week-end Service at the Riverton War Memorial on Sunday, May 25.



and devotion to service these veterans demonstrate are somber reminders to us all of the reason for Memorial Day.

The commitment of these brothers-in-arms to their fellow veterans and area communities is a year-round concern as they provide the final military salute for deceased veterans, lay wreaths at cemeteries, serve as honor guard at Riverton's Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies, support veterans and their families, welcome soldiers returning home from deployment, and even march in Riverton's July Fourth Parade.



Please show **all** veterans that we appreciate their service and perhaps thank the members of Post 3020 for their efforts in performing this community service year after year.

REPRINTED FROM RIVERTONHISTORY.COM. See more photos in a slideshow online. The [Riverton Veterans' Album](#) is an online tribute containing photos of service personnel, hometown newspaper clippings and period advertisements, information about the Riverton War Memorial, and much more. Please contact the HSR if you have anything to share in this virtual scrapbook.

Gaslight News

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

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RIVERTON

Post Office Box # 112
 Riverton, NJ 08077
 AREA CODE 856

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------|
| Phyllis Rodgers | President | 786-8422 |
| Pat Brunker | Vice President | 303-1777 |
| Cheryl Smekal | Vice President | 829-9375 |
| Susan Dechnik | Vice President | 829-9619 |
| Paul Daly | Treasurer | 829-7655 |
| Pat Solin | Secretary | 829-7805 |
| John McCormick | Editor, Website | 764-1551 |



E-mail/Web: rivertonhistory@gmail.com
rivertonhistory.com/

The Military & Veterans Affairs Committee added three names to the memorial: **Norman E. Harris** - Air Force, **William A. Kupper** - Army, **Martin L. Schlindwein** - Army.

The steadfast team of Veterans and Auxiliary Supporters from [VFW Post 3020](#) who volunteer their time to perform Memorial Ritual Services once again carried out honor guard duties.

On this weekend traditionally seen as the beginning of summer, many others were probably enjoying picnics, sports events and family gatherings this beautiful Sunday even as these dedicated veterans executed their ceremonial duties here - Riverton being only one of eleven such services they would do that day.

The extraordinary self-sacrifice, dedication,