



Gaslight News

November 2014

Historical Society of Riverton

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Founded 1970

Riverton, NJ 08077

Incorporated 1978

PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD LOCAL TIME TABLE.
Trains leave Riverton for Philadelphia, at 6.01, 6.49, 7.31, 8.14, 8.53, 10.44, A. M. 2.10, 3.44, 5.09, 6.07, 7.54, and 10.14 P. M.
Trains leave Riverton for Burlington at 3.47 and 10.47 P. M. for Bordentown at 4.57, 7.42 and 11.58 P. M. For Trenton connecting with Express trains for New York at 6.42, 7.36, 10.58 A. M., 12.33, 2.28, 3.47, 5.39, 7.06 P. M.
For New York via Monmouth Junction at 7.36 A. M., 2.28 P. M.
Sunday Trains leave Riverton for Philadelphia at 8.52 A. M., 12.10 and 6.32 P. M. Leave Riverton for Burlington at 10 A. M. and 2 P. M. For Trenton connecting for New York at 7.45 P. M.

1881 railroad schedule - 12 trains daily from Riverton to Philadelphia *Riverton Journal*, July 15, 1881, p. 2

DAILY EXCURSIONS UP the Delaware - the steamboat JOHN A. WAGNOL leaves Chestnut Street Wharf, Philadelphia at 2 and 6 o'clock P. M. for Burlington and Bristol, stopping at Riverton, Annapolis and Ivers; returning, leaves Bristol at 7 A. M. and 4 o'clock P. M., and Riverton at 7.15 A. M. and 4.15 P. M. Fare, 25c. Lunch, 10c.

Steamboat ad, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Sept. 4, 1875, p. 6

—Hotel business is booming. The "White House" is full, with a fair prospect of remaining so all summer.

—A sociable by the young ladies and gentlemen of Riverton was held on Wednesday 6th inst. Dancing was the order of the evening.

—The arrivals at the White House are J. D'Invilliers, H. Carson, Capt. White and family, Mrs. McNarrey and Wm. Middleton.

—The Lawn House is at last completed, and from an interview with one of the proprietors we have learned that a goodly company of boarders is expected by the end of this week.

The new house is complete in every respect, being furnished with all the modern conveniences, excepting the telephone, electric bells and elevator, these will probably be added as the house grows.

Riverton Journal, July 15, 1881, p. 2

Summering in Riverton

Founded as a refuge from sultry city life

When ten Philadelphians, mainly members of The Society of Friends, established Riverton in 1851, they did so to create a summer haven away from urban life. They carved their summer resort from a large riverside section of the Joseph Lippincott farm, built themselves summer "cottages" on the riverbank, and developed the rest of the parcel into lots to sell.

The founders established Riverton's charm early by its careful design, which favored large, spacious

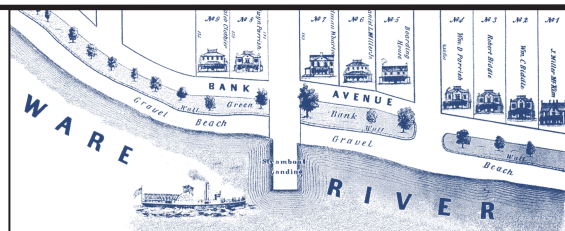
homes built along the Delaware River and then down

Main Street. The investors' shrewd placement of their summer retreat gave visitors access to the village by means of the steamboat landing and the Camden-Amboy Railroad, each of which pre-existed the town.

A farmhouse occupying the land at Bank Avenue and Penn Street was included in the sale to the founders. Author Lloyd Griscom explains the origin of the Lawn House in his 1981 book, *Tales of Three Towns*. The founders, incorporated as Riverton Improvement Company, undertook repairs and improvements to the property 1852-1854, and rented the farm-

COUNTRY HOUSES TO RENT.—Two large HOUSES, five rooms each, at Riverton, on the Delaware. Rent \$72. Fare to the city and back, 12 cents, by Steamboats six times daily. Apply to R. BIDDLE, 47 MARKET ST., or GEO. W. SHINN, Riverton. je21-61'33

Public Ledger, June 25, 1853, p. 4



Plan of the New Town of Riverton N.J., undated map, c.1851

house out as a rooming house. It became known as the Lawn House.

A dearth of [steamboats](#) during the Civil War years caused a lack of boarders inducing them to trim the rent received from proprietor John Seckel.

By 1881, the Lawn House was ready for a makeover. The [Riverton Journal](#) followed developments of the thorough renovation and subsequent comeback success of the riverbank hostelry for its readers. We applaud the writer's frankness, if not his writing style - "...if it were it not for the Lawn House, Riverton would be unbearably stupid."

The reinvented Lawn House was the most prominent among the boarding houses of old Riverton. A Lawn House photo caption in *The* See [SUMMERING](#) on 2

—The Lawn House is doing a good business this season, better than ever before. This is due in a great measure to the efficient management of its proprietress, Miss S. Seckel, who by her unflinching efforts has made the house this year what it has never been before.

People are constantly coming and going which gives the place an animation it would not otherwise have, and if it were not for the Lawn House, Riverton would be unbearably stupid. All the hops given this summer have been through the activity of Lawn House people.

Riverton Journal, August 16, 1882, p. 1

In this issue

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Slugger goes out on top - thanks members

A real gentleman and a throwback to an earlier era retires from the game

No, this is not about that Yankee baseball phenomenon who recently retired after a 20-year career. This is about another man with a longer record than Jeeter's—26 years of service as Treasurer of the Historical Society of Riverton.

The HSR accepts with regret Mr. Paul V. Daly's resignation letter. He (and wife, Cathy - you know the spouse works, too) served under six HSR Presidents and has been a tireless work-horse for the Society for decades.

For over 20 years he decorated gaslights for the holidays with red bows. He walked the length of the July Fourth Parade for 15 years giving out "[Do You Know?](#)" cards and even delivered newsletters in person until I begged him to let me mail them. Just more reasons Paul is part of the [Greatest Generation](#). Thank you, [Mr. and Mrs. Daly!](#)

Paul Daly PHOTO: JMC

- JMC



There is but one distinctively fashionable boarding house in the town, and this is also located on the river front. "The Lawn House," as it is termed, is well patronized by wealthy Philadelphians, among the guests at present being Mr. Walter Wilson and family, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Wilson, Mr. and Mrs. Fell, Mr. and Mrs. William Parry, Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Myers, Mrs. Lacy, Mr. Murray Middleton, Mr. C. Krewson and Mr. Edward King.

There is but one distinctively fashionable boarding house in the town...The Lawn House. Note FELL above and below.

Philadelphia Inquirer, June 23, 1887, p. 7

Fell Edward R., 1030 Spruce, **sum res**
Riverton, N.J.

Boyd's Blue Book, 1889-90, p 340



The Lawn House - undated vintage postcard

LAWN HOUSE, RIVERTON, N. J.—Directly on river front; boating, bathing, fishing; cuisine the best; hop every Saturday; 21 trains daily.

Philadelphia Inquirer, June 25, 1899, p. 5

LAWN HOUSE, Riverton, N. J.—Directly on river front; large lawn, old shade; boating, bathing, fishing, big rooms; table first-class.

"Table first-class" denotes food and service of the highest quality. *Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 25, 1899, p. 11

CINNAMINSON HOUSE, RIVERTON, N. Jersey.—Permanent and Transient Boarding. 174-1m*50 C. HALL, Proprietor

Public Ledger, July 22, 1853, p. 4

DESIRABLE SUMMER BOARDING—At Temperance Hotel, Riverton, N. J. Communicating Rooms for families, if desired. Accessible five times each day per steamboats Wilmington, Barclay and Rancocas—lower side Market Street wharf. jol3-cud:2* C. HALL, Proprietor.

DESIRABLE SUMMER BOARDING AT THE TEMPERANCE HOTEL *Public Ledger*, June 22, 1853, p.4



Kern's Tourist Home - undated postcard

RESORTS
NEW JERSEY
Riverton, N. J.
THE WYATT 104 Lippincott Ave
MRS. F. C. WILSON.

Philadelphia Inquirer, June 3, 1903, p. 15

SUMMERING from 1

New Era 1939 Anniversary Issue declared "many gathered here" and it was "the summer rendezvous for members of society in this section."

Main Line and Philadelphia social registers of the day included a number of families who, noting Riverton summer addresses, came for "the season", typically lasting from late spring through early fall.

Newspaper social columns and ads asserted that the beautiful and spacious accommodations were rated "first-class," with "all modern conveniences."

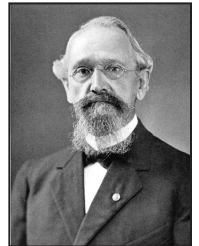
Classified ads catalogued the many charms of the Lawn House; guests could golf at Riverton Golf Club, sail or swim at the Yacht Club, enjoy a "hop every Saturday," fine wheeling (bicycling), fishing, and other social events. A *Riverton Journal* article heaped praise upon proprietress, Miss S. Seckel, for making it "better than ever before."

Like the grand hotels at the time of the [Great Cape May Fire](#) in November, 1878, which decimated 40 acres of that resort, Riverton, too, became firmly established as a first-class refuge for Victorian era summer dwellers, albeit a much smaller one. Riverton fared much better during this time; the height of vacationing in Riverton proved to be from after the Civil War until World War I.

Proprietors placed numerable ads for summer boarding under the resorts section of newspaper classified pages in those early days. In addition to the Lawn House, other rooming houses were the White House on Main Street, the Wyatt, the Temperance Hotel, the Home Mansion, Cinnaminson House, and Kern's Tourist Home, plus smaller owner-rented properties.

In 1909, *The New Era* reported, "The advantages of Riverton as a summer residence was appreciated even in its earliest days, as is shown by the large patronage enjoyed by the boarding houses of that period..." Convenient connections to train, trolley, and rail service, access to telephone, telegraph, and postal service, plus amenities such as sewer, water, and gas systems, streetlamps and sidewalks were increasingly making it a place of year-round residence.

Early landowners were encouraged to build homes in which people would live for part of the season or all year. One local entrepreneur was very successful in anticipating demands of the local rental and residential housing market.



E.H. Pancoast - b.1835. builder, real estate developer, census taker settled in Riverton after the Civil War, died there 1915.

Civil War veteran Edward Hackney Pancoast took up carpentry and during the next 20 years built many such houses in the area. Two Pancoast built homes include one known in town lore as The Home Mansion, a guesthouse for summer visitors, and its companion next door belonging to the property owner. Author Lloyd E. Griscom and Town Historian Betty Hahle had each previously identified 404 Main as The Home Mansion.

Mr. Keith Betten, current owner of 404 Main Street, offers his insights into this chapter of local history as he gives reasons for instead designating 402 Main as The Home Mansion. He explains:

The lot at 404 and the one at 402 Main Street were bought simultaneously in 1868 by Palmyra entrepreneur Edward H. Pancoast, as this block of Main Street was developed after the close of the Civil War. Pancoast, whose monument stands in the [cemetery](#) behind Palmyra Town Hall,

EDW. H. PANCOAST,
Carpenter and Builder,
MAIN STREET,
RIVERTON, N. J.
—o—
Estimates, Plans and Specifications furnished.
Jobbing promptly attended to.

Riverton Journal, Dec 15, 1881, p. 4

Riverton—Furnished
FOR RENT—FURNISHED OR UNFURNISHED, Riverton, N. J., 12-room cottage; all modern improvements; near railroad station and steamboat landing; rent low. Edward H. Pancoast, Riverton.

Philadelphia Inquirer, May 29, 1897, p. 9

For Rent Cheap in Riverton, 16 room boarding house; Cottage 402 Main street, Cottage 620 Main street, all with modern improvements; Brick dwelling 526 Main street, near station, suitable for business; For Rent Cheap in Palmyra houses \$6, 8 and 12 per month; For Sale Cheap 9 room cottages open staircase with large hall, lot 139x150, east corner of Charles street and Parry avenue. Edw. H. Pancoast, 404 Main street, Riverton.

Weekly News, April 2, 1898, p. 2

Starting as a summer retreat for Philly's elite, now a year-round treat for us

formerly the Methodist Church, purchased the two lots for residential and investment purposes. In addition to deed records, as proof of Pancoast's involvement, we (Keith and wife, Mimo) uncovered a closet lintel at 404 signed by "E.H. Pancoast, Palmyra, NJ," which, unfortunately, he failed to date...

While the main, first floor blocks of the two houses match perfectly (entrance hall with flanking principal rooms), only 402 has a back staircase which would allow "staff" to pass up and down undetected.

Further, 402 has five chambers on the second floor and two baths, and a second floor veranda, and four chambers on the third, Mansard floor, and at least one bath. Conversely, 404 had five chambers on the second floor but only one bath, no back staircase, and no third floor. Further, while 404 faces Main Street, 402 faces 404 - allowing the residents of 404 to observe activity at the entrance of 402 - a helpful feature for the owners, living in 404 to monitor the comings and goings of the guests."

A check of the 1900 Federal Census shows Mr. and Mrs. E.H. Pancoast firmly ensconced in their home at 404 (as they were in 1880 as well) and iron merchant George Newton, his wife,

and servant occupying #402 with an "R" notation to indicate that it was rented. Mr. Betten sure nailed it!



Edward H. Pancoast resided in 404, rented 402 to tenants, known as The Home Mansion. PHOTO: JMc

No longer simply a summer destination as the 20th century began, Riverton had become an established, year-round community. The land for the old bicycle track and the Lyceum was developed into lots for homes (1909 and 1919, respectively). By 1926, Riverton claimed some 70 businesses. An optimistic Chamber of Commerce, eager to promote Riverton as a fine place to live and work, engaged a film company to produce a movie about Riverton and its people called *The Romance of Riverton*.

That decade saw an end to Riverton's double-digit population growth (except for those later baby-boomer years at mid-century) and foreshadowed the economic downturn ahead. The Shreve Family had owned the Lawn House since 1881, and rented it to various managers. Faced with declining demand for rooms in 1928, E. Mercer Shreve took over the reins of

the Lawn House and oversaw improvements, but to no avail; the *New Era* ads for Lawn House rooms dwindled by summer 1929, and the building was eventually razed in the early 1930s, a victim of the Great Depression.

Now fully developed with a head count just under 3,000, much has changed from its inception as a speculative hamlet of less than 200 residents to today's relative steadiness.

Riverton's charms are no longer exclusively for wealthy elite; today we all celebrate and enjoy Riverton's attractions throughout the summer, and indeed all year.

Lucky us.

- MRS. PATRICIA SMITH SOLIN
& JOHN MCCORMICK



POPULATION OF RIVERTON, NJ		
YEAR	POP.	% change
1880	586	-
1890	1075	+ 83.4%
1900	1332	+ 23.0%
1910	1788	+ 35.2%
1920	2341	+ 30.9%
1930	2483	+ 6.1%
1940	2354	- 5.2%
1950	2761	+ 17.3%
1960	3324	+ 20.4%
1970	3412	+ 2.6%
1980	3068	- 10.1%
1990	2775	- 9.6%
2000	2759	- 0.6%
2010	2779	+ 0.7%

The incomparable Mr. Bob Gleason returned Oct. 22 to portray another of his many characters - Edgar Allan Poe.



Once upon a night so dreary, while I waited, feeling cheery
Inside the chambers of the Porch Club's charming décor.
While I sat there yapping, just then there came a tapping.
It was someone gently rapping, rapping at the chamber door.
"Tis our presenter, Mr. Poe, tapping at our chamber door—
Merely him, and nothing more."

Ah, distinctly, I remember it was in mid-to-late October,
Back from the grave, he talked and walked about the floor.
One hundred sixty-five years ago he died, and now this happens?
Just forty years of age at passing, leaving readers wanting more.
We sat amazed as he recited scary tales of horror,
Plus our favorite one with "Nevermore."

The Apparition (with apologies to Mr. Poe)

And the author still beguiling set our faces smiling
As he told of many hardships in his days of yore,
When writing prose for a living was quite trying.
Author, poet, and literary critic, his voice did soar,
He memorized every word in the lengthy score.
Wouldn't this make Lit-101 way less of a bore?

This passionate poet invented detective fiction.
Orphaned and widowed, he had much to endure.
His death still a mystery—was it drink or addiction?
We do not know; and may nevermore.
Thank you, Maestro Gleason. Encore! Encore!
Now for Elsie's [gingersnaps](#)—That's what I came for.

Thank you to everyone who brought refreshments and set such an inviting table.



PHOTO CREDITS:
Susan Dechnik

- ANONYMOUS



mail
box

From HSR member Mary Hutton Honeyford comes this honey of a photo of [Hutton Chevrolet](#), the Riverside dealership owned and operated by Clyde F. Hutton 1948-1968. The clipping and ad at right come from our [New Era online archive](#). A June 16, 1949 issue with the same group photo as below listed the names: L-R: L.J. Hutton, Officer Albert Pierce and Sgt. John J. Robinson of the Riverton force, and salesman William Wagner.



L. John Hutton

L. John Hutton, former General Motors executive, has invited the general public to attend the formal opening of his new Chevrolet dealership in Riverton, Saturday, April 9. Hutton has been associated with the Chevrolet Motor Division of General Motors since 1924 and has served in several capacities in their offices in New York, Philadelphia, and Tarrytown, New York. Most recently he was Regional Organization Manager and Assistant Zone Manager in Tarrytown.

He resigned this position on March 25 to open the Hutton Chevrolet Company, at Polk street and Pavilion avenue, in Riverton. This new dealership will serve Riverside, Delanco, Riverton, Palmyra and vicinity.

Hutton has completely renovated the large garage building at Polk street and Pavilion avenue and on Saturday will open for inspection this spacious and attractive showroom and parts and service department. He will at that time have on display a complete line of Chevrolet passenger cars and trucks.

Two experienced Chevrolet men have been brought here by the new dealer and in addition he has hired several others from Riverside, Delanco and Riverton. Hutton expects to take on several other local men in the near future.

The new proprietor is proud to have been chosen the Chevrolet dealer in this territory and is pleased to offer the most popular car and the biggest seller in America to the people of this vicinity.

THE NEW ERA, THURSDAY, APRIL 7, 1949
New Era, April 7, 1949, p.8

YOU
ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO ATTEND
THE OPENING
SATURDAY, APRIL 9th
OF THE
HUTTON CHEVROLET CO.
PAVILION AVENUE and POLK ST. RIVERSIDE, NEW JERSEY
AUTHORIZED DEALER FOR
Chevrolet Cars, Trucks, Parts and Accessories
IN
RIVERSIDE, PALMYRA, RIVERTON, DELANCO and VICINITY

COME ONE

JUST ONE WORD—
A touch of the finger and your Chevrolet world's champion engine puts into life. Slip in the clutch and off you dash for one of the smoothest, thrill-packed rides of your life. It will take just one ride to convince you that Chevrolet is America's leading low-priced car for smooth power and performance, for comfort and safety.

AND DON'T FORGET FOR A MOMENT—
Chevrolet alone brings you the advantage of highest price cars at the lowest prices and with the low cost of operation and upkeep for which Chevrolet products have always been famous.

QUALITY SERVICE
Every one of our Chevrolet Service Stations is staffed by trained mechanics who will help you understand the Chevrolet line of cars and trucks. We have a complete line of parts and accessories to meet your needs. Service Specialists for Chevrolet Cars and Trucks.

THE NEW OF SERVICE... THE NEW OF SATISFACTION

ADVANCE-DESIGN TRUCKS
Chevrolet Advance Design Trucks are trucks that give lowest operating and maintenance costs. Trucks that have a host of amazing features, trucks that mean comfort, safety and economy. Whether your job calls for a Medium Delivery or a Heavy Duty Truck, you'll find the leader, the industry's biggest value in CHEVROLET.

Choose Chevrolet
—the most beautiful BUY of all!

COME ALL

Help make the HSR grow and visit our website at <http://rivertonhistory.com/> We welcome your comments and contributions. Check in for information on events, past issues of *Gaslight News*, vintage images, a veterans' page, our blog, and more. - Ed.

Readers: Inside this issue read Summering in Riverton, the feature story that tells about the Lawn House and other boarding houses of the late 1800s-early 1900s. Paul Daly retires after serving 28 years as HSR treasurer, Mayor Brown carves a new staff for July 4th, and we recap the October Poe presentation.



Gaslight News

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THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RIVERTON

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The Tradition Conditions

The Mayor of Riverton's tradition of carrying a staff during the Annual Fourth of July Parade, was started by Mayor E.C. Stroughton in 1897.



c. WWI July 4 Parade, mayor is possibly Flagg or Bennett

So that every year since then, a metal plate was added with the current mayor's name, the year, and the number of children that marched in the parade.

There are three staffs in the Borough office, and legend has it that they came from trees located in Riverton. I've not found anything written about the first two, however I can state that the current staff did come from a Riverton tree.

I searched the wooded area along the park till I found a tree floating in the Pompeston Creek. I cut it loose, trimmed it out, and took it home, where I stripped, sanded, stained and applied two coats of varnish to preserve it.

- Bill Brown

Mayor William C. Brown July 4, 2014



PHOTO: S. Dechnik

Reverends
Anne & Richard Wrede
Peg Lawlor-Kelly
Wm. C. Probsting

WELCOME to our NEW MEMBERS

DONATION:

LOOK Membership Renewal Form included in this mailing

Names to be Added to Memorial

Richard B. Frost	Army
Richard J. Laverty	Air Force
Alan Saville	Army

Thank you for your service.

