



January 2015

Gaslight News

Historical Society of Riverton

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Founded 1970

Riverton, NJ 08077

Incorporated 1978

http://thegraphicalfairy.com/retro-new-year-image/

GRUESOME RELICS OF BY GONE AGES

Workmen employed by Louis Corner while at work on Monday in clearing and rebuilding the bank along the Delaware at Dreer's unearthed the bones and skulls of men and women.

MOULDERING BONES MYSTERY

RIVERTON, N. J., Feb. 24.—Further investigation in regard to the finding of five skeletons near the river shore at this place dispels the theory that they are the remains of Indians. Dr. Alex. Marcy, Jr., says the bodies may have been buried a century or more ago. They may be the skeletons of early settlers, of sailors who lived along the Delaware, or of Dutch men who lived in the river.

FIVE SKELETONS FOUND AT RIVERTON

Dug Up Back of Faunce's Fish Cabin on the River Shore.

SKULL OF ONE CRUSHED IN

No One Can Tell the History of These Gruesome Relics—A Dutchman's Skull Was a White

Clue to the Riverton Mystery,

Special to The Inquirer. RIVERTON, N. J., March 5.—Wallace Toy, of Palmyra, has thrown some light on the finding of ten male skeletons in a trench near the Faunce fish cabin on the bank of the Delaware River. He says his father, who formerly owned the property, having purchased it eighty years ago, was a justice of the peace and acted as Coroner. He had charge of the disposal of the unknown dead and probably buried unclaimed bodies in one place.

Digging Up History in Riverton (Pt. 1)

Borough Historian Paul W. Schopp investigates human remains found here - past and present

At the end of October 2014, just in time for Halloween, workmen from [Budd's Pools](#) excavating for a new installation behind 603 Bank Avenue, uncovered a human skeleton at a depth of approximately six feet. The discovery became a [media event](#) as various television station helicopters hovered over the hole in the ground while print media photographers and reporters swarmed Second Street to obtain what few facts and photographic vantages then existed. Rampant speculation concerning the identity of these remains swirled throughout Riverton and across the region and nation as the story went viral via the internet.

As a forensic anthropologist working with the State Police took control of the site and had a crew remove the skeleton and any associated evidence, I fielded numerous telephone calls from journalists and emails from those seeking my opinion on any possible identification for the burial. The story now appears to have run its course, particularly since the forensic professionals have deter-

mined the bones to be "very old," resulting in the osteological analysis being back-shelved for more pressing modern crime forensic work. Without the completion of this crucial analytical work, any suggestion about the sex, ethnicity, age, origin and potential burial date of the remains is pure speculation.

This was not, however, the first time that workmen uncovered human remains along Riverton's waterfront. On February 23, 1897, a crew of laborers digging and grading to rebuild the riverbank on the [Henry A. Dreer Company](#) grounds, reached a layer of soft mucky soil a few yards behind Captain Albert Faunce's old fish cabin, where the men unearthed a human skeleton a few feet underground. The men then opened a trench and discovered four more skeletons. All five were "full-sized men."

Those involved in the excavation worked for Louis Corner, an Englishman who had arrived in the United States during 1859 and resided at 509 Main Street. While his regular employment was an expressman associated with the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1897, he also had a small contracting business. Louis's daughter, Mary B. Corner, served as Riverton's assistant postmaster. By 1910, Corner had developed his

See DIGGING on 2

Mysterious skeletal remains discovered in Riverton may be over a century old!

It's déjà vu all over again as Town Historian Paul W. Schopp draws parallels between macabre events that occurred over a hundred years apart.

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HSR looks ahead & plans

In case of snow, check website for cancellation

HSR Combined Board/General Meeting at Riverton School, *Thursday, Feb. 12, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.* In addition to routine business and committee reports, agenda items include a discussion of assessing and implementing preservation requirements of HSR archives and welcoming John Laverty to our HSR Board.

ANTIQUE AND COLLECTIBLE FAIR

The HSR and the Palmyra Historical & Cultural Society will co-sponsor an **Antique & Collectible Fair, March 28, 12-3 pm** at the Palmyra Community Center. Look for details on neighborhood flyers and [rivertonhistory.com](#)

Expert Opinions Offered by

Mr. Ronald E. Shaffer

Accredited Member

THE International Society of Appraisers

- JMC





Faunce's Fish Cabin Sketch colorized, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, February 28, 1897, p.10.

BLUE UNDERLINED

TERMS LINK TO MORE CONTENT WHEN YOU OPEN YOUR NEWSLETTER AS A PDF AT RIVERTONHISTORY.COM

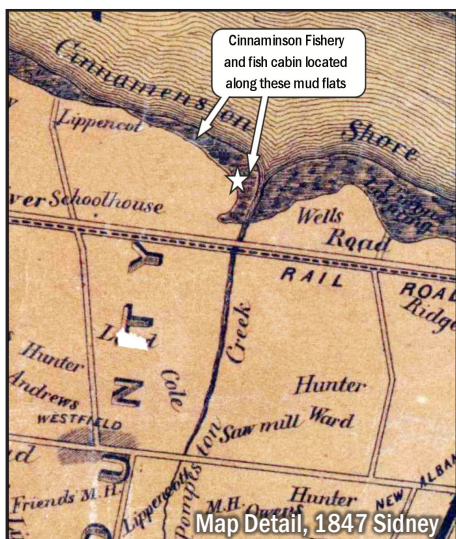


The New Era's Si Hology sez:

Just visit our Society's website and find the tab for *Gaslight News*.

Scroll down to find issue #159—January 2015 and open the link for the PDF file.

In this issue, online content includes [original newspaper articles](#) describing the 1897 discovery of Riverton bones. [map details](#), as well as links to [print](#) and [video](#) news coverage for the October 2014 event.



In 1847, cartographer J.C. Sidney prepared a map to depict a circle of ten miles around Philadelphia. On the eastern extremity of the map, Sidney labeled the "Cinnaminson Shore." The Faunce fishery stood on the west side of Pompeston Creek, stretching along the mud flats associated with the Delaware River. The star (☆) marks the approximate location of the burials found in 1897.

DIGGING from 1

contracting business enough to leave his position as an expressman.

Riverton physician Alexander Marcy, Jr. arrived at the excavation site and examined the human remains. Dr. Marcy

noted one skeleton, a white man of mature age, exhibited signs of a "comparatively recent burial," but his skull had suffered a severe fracture, suggesting the man had endured a crushing blow that likely killed him.

Over the next four days, the workmen continued with their grading work and found additional remains. On Friday, February 27, two more craniums brought the total number of burials to ten. As a result of these latest finds, the Burlington County Coroner's Office dispatched several investigators to the site on Leap Day. The coroner's men revealed two additional skeletons, bringing the final count to twelve sets of human remains.

Despite a diligent search, however, these officials found nothing that could be construed as a weapon or any other type of artifacts in the immediate area proximate to the burials.

The only thing found with the skeletons was a "curiously engraved bowl of an ancient Dutch pipe," which apparently demonstrated "remarkable skill in workmanship and design." The lack of stone implements in and around the skeletons seemingly ruled out indigenous interments.

When news of the discoveries spread around the area, no one wanted to come anywhere near the excavation site or the fish cabin. Similar to the remains found in October 2014, residents could not shed any light on the burials, but theories abounded! Some thought the remains were Native Americans while others expressed the viewpoint that these were fishermen who had died during their work or this was a private burial ground for early

settlers. The fishery operated at this location beginning in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

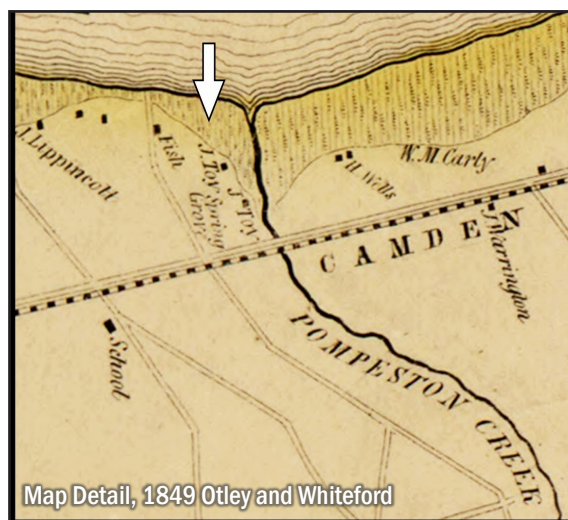
Local residents did finally have the opportunity to look at the bones, satisfying their curiosity and allaying the fears of those who had shied away from the fish cabin area. The county coroner's officials then placed the remains in a box for reburial. It is unknown what happened to the pipe bowl found with the burials.

During the following week, Wallace Toy, who resided in the Pennsville section of Cinnaminson, came forward and offered a possible explanation for the twelve burials. A son of Isaiah Toy, owner of Spring Grove Farm prior to its sale to Henry A. Dreer, Wallace reported that his father frequently mentioned burying twelve men on the farm near the river. A person of importance and renown, Isaiah Toy served as a congressman and the local Justice of the Peace. In the latter role, he was responsible

for the burial of any unidentifiable bodies that washed up on the river shore or were found along local roads or in the woods. These interments occurred long before the county had established the position of coroner, now known as the medical examiner. Isaiah Toy buried the bodies on his own land to preclude the taxpayers from incurring the interment costs.



Dr. Alexander Marcy, Jr. as depicted in the Riverton Gun Club History, 1906.



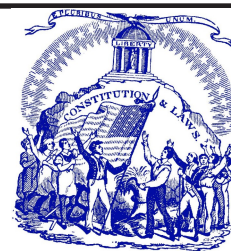
This detail from the 1849 Map of Burlington County clearly labels Isaiah Toy's Spring Grove Farm. The cartographers made an error in using a "J" instead of an "I" for Toy's given name. The label "Fish" is for a surname and not indicative of anything related to the fishery.

CHANGES PROPOSED TO THE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

No, not that Constitution – the HSR constitution. Patricia Solin, our Society's secretary, explains below.

This past year the Board of the Historical Society of Riverton reviewed the its constitution and bylaws.

After careful consideration, an Ad Hoc committee suggested changes. The Executive Board voted to accept those changes, which now require review by the full membership. Please read below those changes and the rationale for making the changes, and be prepared to vote on it at our General Membership meeting Feb. 12. **RED** text shows changes. *Italics* below explain the context.



Proposed: Historical Society of Riverton Constitution and Bylaws Board of Directors Reviewed and Approved, June 24 & November 18, 2014

Constitution of the Historical Society of Riverton

Article II – Purpose

The Society's major function will be to create an awareness of our heritage, **to recognize persons of local historic significance**, to discover, restore and preserve local objects and landmarks, and to continue to expand our knowledge of the history of the area.

Explanation: The Board believes that the Constitution should specify that the Society's mandate include making the contributions of persons of local historic significance, which should be noted in the Constitution.

Article III – Membership

General Membership is open to all who are interested in the purpose and functions of this organization.

Explanation: There no longer exists the two remaining categories of membership, Senior Citizen or Honorary Member, so only General Membership remains.

Article V – Directors and Officers

Section 1. The Board of Directors of this Society shall not exceed **sixteen** members, no less than five of whom shall be elected each year at the Annual Meeting, to serve for a three-year term.

Explanation: The number of Board members was increased by four in order to facilitate the completion of the Society's mandate and work. Board members will rotate in three-year terms.

Section 2. The Officers of this Society shall be: President, **1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, and 3rd Vice President**, Secretary, and Treasurer, and shall be elected by and from the Board of Directors at the Board's Re-Organization meeting in June, following the Annual Meeting. Terms for Officers shall be two years, or until their successors are elected.

Explanation: These new Officer positions will share special responsibilities with the President, noting the special work of planning and executing Programs, enhancing Membership in the Society, and ensuring Publicity of the Society's events. Due to the length of the Annual May meeting (Awards Program), the Society's Re-organization Meeting is now scheduled for June.

Article VI – Election of Officers and Directors

Section 2. The Nominating Committee shall present a slate of **no less than five** candidates for election to the Board of Directors to the membership two weeks before the Annual Meeting.

Explanation: The former slate of candidates numbered four, but not to limit choices, there is to be at least five candidates in the Nomination slate that can go before the General Membership for vote.

Bylaws of the Historical Society of Riverton

Article 1 -- Membership

Section 2. Dues of this Society shall be payable to the Treasurer, with renewal notices to be sent out on or before November 1st of each year for membership in following **January 1st to December 31st calendar year**.

Explanation: Dues used to become due on November 1st. In order to better plan and budget for upcoming programs and events, as well as conform to a calendar year, the date of membership is to be moved to January 1st and run until December 31st. Payment any date during that calendar year will be dues for that year, ending December 31st.

Section 3. If dues have not been paid by **December 31st**, membership will be considered terminated.

Explanation: If dues are not paid for a full year to the Society, that individual's membership would end by December 31st.

Section 4. Senior Citizen Membership is for those 65 years of age or more. – **DELETE**

Explanation: This membership category was closed years ago with the agreement of the General Membership.

Section 4. **The Society no longer confers new Honorary Memberships, but continues to respect the membership of those who currently hold this designation.** Honorary members are exempt from paying dues.

Honorary members are entitled to all privileges and rights of membership except voting or holding office.

Explanation: This membership category was closed years ago with the agreement of the General Membership, but may have several members still in this category who remain Honorary Members.

Article II – Meetings

Section 1. General Meetings: a minimum of four shall be held each fiscal year.

Explanation: The former bylaws noted that meetings were open to the public, then to the membership. The Board did not want to exclude either non-members or specify that the General Meetings were open to the public, hence, a more open statement.

Section 2. Special meetings may be called by the President, or by **nine** members of the Board of Directors.

Explanation: With sixteen members now on the Board, a quorum is now nine.

Section 4. A quorum at a general meeting or special meeting shall consist of at least **nine** members in good standing.

Explanation: With sixteen members now on the Board, a quorum is now nine. Board members are in good standing if they continue to be members of the HSR and maintain attendance at Board meetings.

Section 5. The Board of Directors shall meet prior to each scheduled general meeting, or special meeting, and in **June**, following the Annual Meeting for re-organization. A quorum shall consist of **nine** Board members.

Explanation: The Re-organization Meeting is to be moved to June as to allow for a less rushed Awards program at May's Annual Meeting as well as ample time for the Board to begin its business for the new year. With sixteen members now on the Board, a quorum is now nine.

Section 7. **Chairpersons** of Committees may attend meetings of the Board of Directors, but do not have the right to vote at meetings.

Explanation: The Board recognizes the importance of changing the terminology from Chairmen to Chairperson, which will be changed wherever used in its documents.

Article III – Duties of Officers and Directors

Section 1. President: The President shall serve as chief executive officer, preside at all meetings, enforce strict observance of the Constitution and Bylaws; shall countersign all checks drawn by the Treasurer for disbursement of funds; may call special meetings when deemed necessary, and serve as an ex-officio member of all committees except the Nominating Committee. Expenditures by the President of any sum beyond **\$150.00** requires Board approval before action.

Explanation: In order to facilitate emergency expenditures on a limited basis, the Board approved enlarging the President's discretionary expenditure from \$50 to \$150.

Section 2. Vice President: **The 1st Vice President shall assist the President and assume the duties of the office in the President's absence. The 2nd Vice President may serve as Program and Publicity Chairperson and the 3rd Vice President may serve as the Membership Chairperson.**

Explanation: As noted in the change, above in the Constitution, these new Officer positions will share special responsibilities with the President, recognizing the special work of planning and executing Programs, enhancing Membership in the Society, and ensuring Publicity of the Society's events. Due to the length of the Annual May meeting (Awards Program), the Society's Re-organization Meeting is now scheduled for June.

Section 4. Treasurer: The Treasurer shall be responsible for the safe-keeping of the Society's funds, shall maintain proper financial records, and with the President, sign all checks drawn on the Society's account; shall be responsible for the safe-keeping of legal documents as directed by the Board; shall present the Society's books for auditing each year prior to the Annual Meeting, **which may be audited each year by an outside agent; shall pre-**

DIGGING from 2

Despite the two episodes of finding human remains in Riverton occurring more than 100 years apart, they both garnered intense public interest and the 2014 discovery will continue to be a point of fascination. When the [forensic anthropologist](#) provides her analysis report about the burial from 603 Bank, it might provide a lead to a more certain identification of the remains.

In the next installment of this article, we will return to the site of the 2014 discovery for a more thorough discussion of what existed there before construction of the current house, completed in the first decade of the twentieth century.

- PAUL W. SCHOPP
RIVERTON BOROUGH HISTORIAN



CHANGES from 3

sent tax filing documents to the Board at the annual Re-organization Meeting.

Explanation: The Treasurer's financial books may be audited by a committee of the Board and/or audited by an outside agent. The annual tax filing report by the Treasurer will be submitted to the Board at its June Re-organization Meeting.

Section 6. Town Historian: The Town Historian shall keep historical records, including printed documents, and shall direct such research as is necessary to assure proper information to all persons concerning the history of the area served by this Society. **The Town Historian is an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Board.**

Explanation: The new term, as adopted by the Society and the Borough of Riverton is Town Historian. The Board felt it is essential and appropriate that the Town Historian be included in its meetings.

Article IV -- Committees

Membership: Maintains accurate records of members; notifies President of new members and of those terminated; **produces mailing list of members for Newsletter editor or when requested by the Board.**

Explanation: Now that the Society's membership is automated into a database, the Chairperson is able to produce its membership list from that database rather than it being the responsibility of the Newsletter editor, as in the previous bylaws.

Awards: The Society's awards, which include *The Daniel Campbell Riverton Preservation Award* and the *Betty B. Hahle Award*. Prepares lists of properties within Riverton that meet or exceed the criteria established for this award for renovation or restoration of a building, structure or site within or outside Riverton's historic district; reviews applications for the award; with Board approval, invites honorees to attend May's Preservation Award meeting, and encourages honorees to participate in presenting the work completed on their project; prepares commendation plaque. Keeps accurate records of all awards made.

Explanation: The Society's awards have been enlarged to include two special awards, honoring two former members of the Society. The May's Annual Meeting is now the opportunity to honor those people or agents, who have restored or renovated a site in Riverton, recognizing the historical value of such work. Included in the Society's annual awards is an award In June to an outstanding 8th grade Riverton Public School student.

Article V -- Authority

The conduct of business will be as normal good sense dictates. Where conflicting views arise, parliamentary practice as outlined in **Roberts Rules of Order, Revised**, will be referred to for guidance in resolving the issue.

Explanation: Formerly listed as Roberts Rules. Revised.

Add your Riverton story to <http://rivertonhistory.com/>, like us on Facebook, and find information on previous and upcoming Society events, past issues of *Gaslight News*, vintage images, a veterans' page, our blog, historic local newspapers, and much more. — JMc, Ed.

Inside this issue: Part 1 of 2 - Town Historian Paul W. Schopp digs into the recent discovery of skeletal remains in Riverton and finds history repeating itself. Also, the Society previews aims for 2015, and urges members to review proposed changes to the Constitution and Bylaws.

Gaslight News

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

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RIVERTON

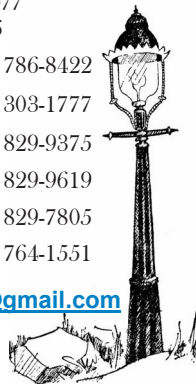
Post Office Box # 112

Riverton, NJ 08077

AREA CODE 856

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

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



VARIOUS AND Sundry Items

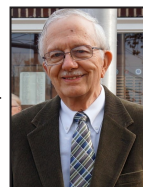
On December 5, HSR members and guests enjoyed a excursion to Winterthur Museum to tour the Historic Dupont Mansion, resplendent in its Holiday décor, and experienced the Costumes of [Downton Abbey Exhibit](#).



My [computer died](#) in November, making this newsletter less fun than usual to layout.

No worries, as HSR files are backed up redundantly. Your dues dollars at work!

In a [Veterans Day Observance](#) in November the Riverton Veterans Affairs Committee added three names to the



Richard B. Frost

Honor Roll: Richard B. Frost-Army, Richard J. Lavery-Air Force, Alan Saville-Army. Your editor learned a new thing that day—[Atomic Veteran](#)—thanks to Richard Frost who is one.



- ✱ vintage photos and postcard images, including a gallery about Camden's Walt Whitman
- ✱ Paul Schopp's expanded commentary on "Summering in Riverton"
- ✱ photos and details about the big "Porch Club" map
- ✱ a link for downloading the Historic Building

Plaque Application

- ✱ update our "About" page
- ✱ **Second Annual Preservation Awards Night**, Thursday, April 16, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.
- ✱ Anniversaries abound in 2015 - [Riverton Yacht Club](#) celebrates 150 years; [The Porch Club](#) marks 125 years; and Cinnaminson School #7, the **first public school** to serve Riverton, was founded 150 years ago.
- ✱ Due to scheduling conflicts the [Riverton Century Bike Ride](#) will not take place this June, but we anticipate its return in 2016
- ✱ We hope to tweak the website a bit. What features would you like to see?

- JMc

