

Gaslight News

April 2015

Historical Society of Riverton

vol. XXXXV, no. 2 (#160)

Founded 1970

Riverton, NJ 08077

Incorporated 1978

Recipients of the 2015
Daniel Campbell Historical
Preservation Award



* Mr. and Mrs. Robert Boulton
205 Lippincott Avenue



* Mr. and Mrs. Norman Downes
200 Midway



* Mr. and Mrs. Carlos Rogers
501 Fourth Street



* Mr. and Mrs. Sean Schweich
625 Main Street

A much expanded Preservation Awards Night convenes April 16 at the Porch Club

HSR recognizes multiple anniversaries, members' service, and notable preservation projects

The Historical Society of Riverton invites you to attend our *Historical Society of Riverton Preservation Award Night* on April 16, 2015, at 7:00 p.m. at the Riverton Porch Club.

This year's sophomore Preservation Award Night expands on our theme of recognizing homeowners who have completed noteworthy restoration projects to include acknowledging other achievements or milestones consistent with our mission.

We will celebrate anniversaries of four of Riverton's finest organizations, recognize three recipients of the Daniel Campbell Historical Preservation Award, honor service of two long-standing Society Board members and note the achievement of several Riverton School students.

The Society will honor owners of four Borough homes with the Society's 2015 Daniel Campbell Historical Preservation Award for completing projects involving construction, alterations, repairs, or landscaping which are particularly compatible with the Borough's historic, cultural, aesthetic and architectural

heritage for making a "significant contribution to Riverton historic preservation."

The Society will also give a Daniel Campbell Historical Preservation Award to Borough Council, in particular, the Park and Recreation Advisory Committee chaired by Mr. Joseph Creighton for so spectacularly realizing the Memorial Park Grandstand Project.



We will acknowledge the dedicated service of two former Board members, Charlotte Lippincott and Paul Daly.

At least four significant anniversaries of Riverton groups have aligned in 2015. The Porch Club and Riverton Fire Company each mark quasiquicentennials, or 125 year anniversaries, while Riverton School and Riverton Yacht

See **AWARDS** on 2

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It's really happening. HSR archives and museum to open in the RFL basement

Details are still unfolding, but one day soon the Society will be open for business.

Decision makers at the HSR and Riverton Free Library have come to an agreement which will soon allow the Society an enlarged space in the basement of the Library for storage and safe-keeping of documents, photos, and artifacts.

As materials are secured and inventoried, a goal is to open the space to visitors.

A group from the Society will meet in April to

develop a protocol for archival storage and to devise a floor plan.

A Museum Store will eventually sell notecards, books, town banners, DVDs, newsletter back-issues, and other merchandise. We also hope to help people who have asked to buy reproductions of vintage postcards and photos.



- JMc



Recipients of the 2015 Daniel Campbell Historical Preservation Award

Continued...

- * Borough Council for the Grandstand Project
- * Appreciation of Service
- * Charlotte Lippincott - Secty.
- * Paul Daly - Treasurer

Anniversaries

- * Porch Club - 125 years
- * Riverton Fire Co. - 125 years
- * Riverton School - 150 years
- * Riverton Yacht Club - 150 years

Daniel Campbell AIA, is a Past President of the Society and a historic architect widely recognized for his experience in architecture and historic preservation.

AWARDS from 1

Club each celebrate sesquicentennials, or 150 year anniversaries.

Finally, a number of Riverton School fifth grade students who performed particularly well on an assignment with a local history angle will receive recognition. (See related story below.)



With the Society acknowledging all of these persons and organizations, odds are you are removed from *someone* on the agenda by less than six degrees of separation, so come and support them.

And stay for the cake. It will be a big one for a big night.

article and photos - JMC



RIVERTON SCHOOL NOTES



printer's ornament from a New Era newspaper feature



Riverton School website screenshot
<http://www.riverton.k12.nj.us/>

Fifth graders research their hometown

Students gathered facts and made illustrated real estate and travel booklets

Riverton School fifth graders were challenged to design a booklet showcasing their town. With approval from Mary Ellen Eck, school superintendent/principal and fifth grade teachers, Mrs. Walter and Miss Cusumano, they were encouraged to, "Be a travel agent or a real estate agent and tell the world about Riverton."

The booklet includes factual information and also gives each student the opportunity to individualize their booklets by designing a flag or logo giving the flavor of Riverton, adding drawings and photographs, and writing about growing up in Riverton.

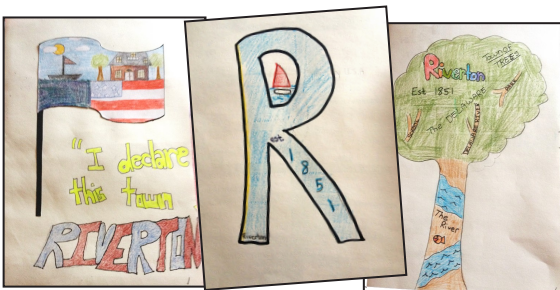
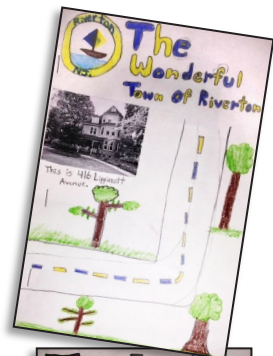
"The small town of Riverton may not compete with other places when it comes to size, but Riverton has a special flair that only exists right here."

"I love Riverton because it's small and peaceful."

"I love Riverton because it is right on the Delaware River and has a beautiful, astonishing view."

"One reason Riverton is such a wonderful place to live is that it is small and everyone knows each other. This means there is no such thing as stranger danger."

"A great thing about Riverton is our small school where everyone is nice to each other. The people who teach here really know the students. I feel safe and comfortable in my school."



Student designed Riverton flags and logos

Using suggested websites the students researched diverse questions about the town from its beginning in 1851, to the organization of the Yacht Club in 1865 and the building of the clubhouse in 1880, to the origin in 1897 of the Annual Children's Flag Parade now called the Fourth of July Parade, and to the opening of Memorial Park in 1931 honoring the men and women who served our country.

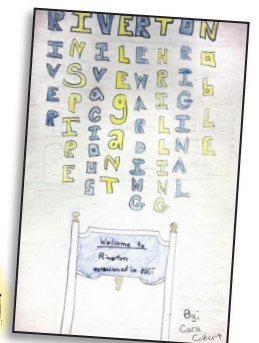
Lastly, to add individuality, the question was posed, "Why do you think Riverton is a good place to live?" Some comments follow:



booklet covers

The Historical Society of Riverton appreciates the work done by the students who completed the assignment. Perhaps they will become our future HSR members!

article and photos - SUSAN DECHNIK



Antique & Collectibles scored a big hit

Our trip to Palmyra's Community Center proved entertaining, informative, and rewarding

Some March Madness of a different kind took place when the Historical Society of Riverton and Palmyra Historical and Cultural Society met on a basketball court March 28.

The jointly sponsored Antique and Collectible Appraisal event was to start at noon, but early bird fans lined up at Palmyra's Community Center to register even before tables and chairs were set up at 11:30 a.m.

Pat Bruner and Cheryl Smekal diligently registered people and collected fees for items throughout most of the period.



All-star veteran personal property appraiser Ron Shaffer last appeared here solo in 2013 when he directed our Antiques & Collectible Appraisal at Riverview Estates.

This time, Master Graduate Gemologist Nick Fratto of Anthony Jewelers, Palmyra, was also on the team to evaluate the fine jewelry possessions that Mr. Shaffer excludes.

We owe a huge thank-you to Mr. Fratto for charitably donating his expertise to our two historical societies.



Rookies Michael Spinelli and Harvey Sklar worked a zone defense strategy; Spinelli held up numbers to indicate the next item up, and Sklar assisted with directing people and displaying

items, enabling Shaffer and Fratto to make the play.

Ron Shaffer's typical verbal opinion of value spiel is part history lesson, part antique repair workshop and tradesperson referral, part stand-up comic routine (but you do have to pay attention), and only part appraisal.

When making a determination on a particular item, he often injects the most arcane facts about social customs, fash-



ion, and news and events of the era from which the item came.

Does your bentwood chair seat need recaning? Or your Chippendale mirror needs a glue block replaced? Who to go to repair an antique clock? He'll know a guy for that.

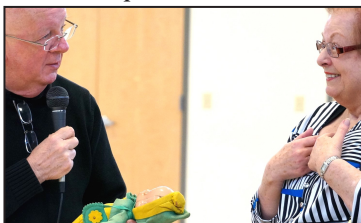
Without notes or checking any source, other than his own half-century experience in monitoring the auction market, he stood and spoke for four hours, delivering the last opinion as fresh as the first.

Nick, in contrast, discreetly conveyed his deliberations to his clients without a microphone. It is probably best, considering he is in a gym full of on-lookers, and some people have literally brought in the family jewels for a valuation.



Meanwhile, Riverton Coach Phyllis Rodgers and Palmyra Coach Jim May observed what they had put into motion from the sidelines.

After Ron Shaffer announced his analysis for a particularly high value item Harvey roused a round of applause from the spectators.



Ron's authoritative yet affable manner tends to satisfy the hopeful inquirer even when the outcome is disappointing.

Our concession stand operator, Pat Solin, gave away free water and pretzels and sold two souvenir mugs.



Susan Dechnik doubled as team photographer and numbers runner — to indicate the order of the people waiting in line, that is.

The final scoreboard showed at least 85 players brought 175 items, giving both societies the victory and netting each a profitable day after expenses.

Thank you to everyone who helped make the event a huge success.

- article by JMC; photos by SD & JMC



So, Riverton School... didn't it just have a hundredth birthday recently?



Yes, in 2010, the community celebrated the construction of the current brick school building, built in 1910.

What then, does this 150th anniversary celebrate, you ask.

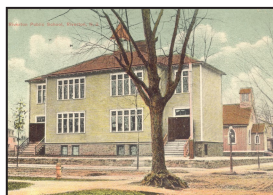


1822 Brick School
IMAGE CREDIT: ED GILMORE

A one-room brick school building erected in 1822 on a lane of the old Toy Plantation, which later became Elm Avenue, served needs of Palmyra, Cinnaminson, and Riverton for more than forty years. In addition, then, as now, many students from here attended the [Friends School at Westfield](#) established in 1788. (But that is another chapter in Riverton history.)

This 150th observance actually marks the construction date in 1865 of the first school-house in what is now Riverton (known then as School District No. 7, Cinnaminson Township).

The frame building at the corner of 4th and Howard Streets had no central heating system and no indoor sanitation facilities. Cost of construction: \$800.



Riverton School, 1892
IMAGE CREDIT: MICHAEL ROBINSON

In 1892, contractors Grant & Lowden erected a larger frame building containing six rooms and known as Building No. 1. Cost - \$4,400 plus \$500 for a heating plant and \$175 for a dry closet system.

1910 Rising enrollment called for the construction of new brick school building with eleven classrooms. Cost: \$38,800.



Riverton School, May 4, 1880
IMAGE CREDIT: PAUL W. SCHOPP

Additions in 1935, 1955, 1973 and numerous improvements since, including a new central heating and air-conditioning system for the entire school, upgrading of the gym, and landscaping have kept Riverton School current with the needs of educating students into the 21st century.

Imagine what a student of 1865 would think of Riverton School today?

(Incidentally, note that six generous people contributed images needed to tell this small story.)

- JMc



Riverton School, 1910
IMAGE CREDIT: BETTY HAHLE



Riverton School, c. 1935
IMAGE CREDIT: MARTY CARHART



Riverton School
IMAGE CREDIT: SUSAN DECHNIK

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 about the expanded Preservation Awards Night April 16, and the exciting potential of our new space in the Library. Learn of the 5th Grade town history research project, get the results of the Antiques & Appraisal Event, and review 150 years of Riverton School history.

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THIS 1896 PHOTO OF A SNOW HOUSE with the Yacht Club as a backdrop was in the [most visited HSR blog post](#) ever.

Over 800 Facebook views is about as viral as we have ever gotten.

I found the cabinet card during a foray into our archives this winter. A caption card names all of the kids - maybe there is an ancestor from your family tree in that snow.

More treasure awaits you at riverton.com and more is in store when we open our space in the basement of the Library to visitors.

- JMc

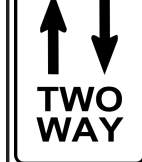


PART 2 OF PAUL W. SCHOPP'S "DIGGING UP HISTORY" WILL BE CONTINUED IN THE SEPTEMBER 2015 ISSUE. WE REGRET THE INCONVENIENCE.

We can only offer more web content, provide programs, and maintain an archive to the extent that it is sustainable by the membership.

More members = more stuff.

If you are a member, please recruit another.



Help make rivertonhistory.com a two way conversation by contributing your story.

- JMc

