

Founded 1970

Riverton, NJ 08077

Incorporated 1978



Remember the October 2014 news story about skeletal remains discovered in Riverton during excavation for a swimming pool?

Last January, historian Paul W. Schopp research revealed that this was not the first time that workmen uncovered human remains along Riverton's waterfront.

In Part 2 of this serial article Paul returns to a discussion of the property where workmen discovered the human remains in October 2014 and defines the land's cultural history to gain a better understanding of how the remains might have come to be there.

Digging Up History in Riverton (Pt. 2)

Borough Historian Paul W. Schopp digs deep into the historical record to determine how human remains came to be found here during an excavation for a swimming pool in October 2014

On 23 September 1764, Andrew Anderson Jr. married Elizabeth Toy at Swedes Church in the Southwark District of Philadelphia County. Elizabeth was the daughter of Elias Toy and her siblings included Joseph, Hezekiah, Isaiah, and Elias Toy. Andrew and Elizabeth returned to her native Chester Township to establish their home. Due to a complete lack of recorded deeds, it is unclear whether Andrew had already acquired land along the Delaware River in the Cinnaminson section of Chester Township or whether the couple purchased land there subsequent to their marriage. In a later deed between Isaiah Toy and Benjamin Coxe, the document's verbiage includes the following statement: "Whereas Andrew Anderson Junr. Being seized in fee of certain lands, tenements and premises situate at a place called commonly Cinnaminson in the Township of Chester aforesaid as by reference to the several conveyances to him and those under whom he claimed and will more certainly appear...."

Andrew Anderson Jr. died during the first

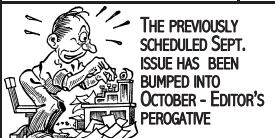
two months of 1787. In his Last Will and Testament, it is readily apparent that the marriage failed to produce any surviving children, so he devised to his wife, Elizabeth, one-half of all his real and personal estate. Andrew devised the remaining moiety, or half ownership, of the estate to his brother's three daughters: Keziah, Catharine and Anna. Furthermore, Andrew's Will contained the following proviso: "I...hereby give unto my said wife Elizabeth the whole use and benefit of the other half part of my said estate to her during her natural life." Andrew then appointed his wife, along with friends Ezekiel Toy and Thomas Stokes Jr., as his executors. Andrew's estate inventory, compiled on 3 March 1787, had a total value of £1781.

Elizabeth Toy Anderson remained a widow less than a year, for on 8 October 1787, she married John Bispham Jr. in Gloucester County. Elizabeth and John returned to Chester Township and resided at the plantation she had shared with Andrew. Elizabeth's

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Witness a transformation as Maggie Worsdale becomes Lady Washington

Seats for this special 7pm Nov. 17 performance are on a "first come" basis



Can a person be over-qualified to be a historical presenter?

For one night only, international performing and recording artist, cabaret and jazz singer, actress, and producer Maggie

Worsdale brings her one-woman show to Riverton Free Library as she *becomes* Martha Dandridge Custis Washington.

The eldest of nine children, Martha Dandridge

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PAUL W. SCHOPP



A student of history for more than 40 years, Paul W. Schopp worked as a professional historian in the Cultural Resource Management field for 27 years. He currently serves as Associate Director of the South Jersey Culture & History Center at Stockton University and is a well-known lecturer and respected authority in New Jersey historical circles. Paul has authored a variety of articles for specialty publications and peer-reviewed journals and a number of books, including 1994's *The Trail of the Blue Comet*, the history of the Central Railroad of New Jersey's Southern Division. With the enthusiastic endorsement of the HSR in March 2014, Riverton Borough Council designated Mr. Schopp as Riverton Borough Historian. Paul lives in Riverton, New Jersey and has a special affinity for Delaware River steamboats, the Camden & Amboy Railroad, and the Rancocas Creek.

Open this *Gaslight News* as a PDF file on rivertonhistory.com and all of the **blue highlighted underlined terms** become links to more content.

President's Message

Greeting HSR Members,
An HSR ARCHIVES & MUSEUM update:

Despite some speedbumps along our way (humidity swelled new doors) we anticipate a December opening of our shared space in the basement of Riverton Free Library.

Some painting, much house-keeping, organizing, and staging remains.

We look forward to welcoming guests during the Library's Candlelight House Tour, scheduled for December 5th.

- Phyllis Rodgers



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second marriage also failed to produce any children, suggesting she suffered from infertility. Previously married to Hannah Mullen from 1773 until her death, John Bispham brought up to five children into Elizabeth's household: Elizabeth, Ann, Joseph M., William and James, although the last two named sons may have already died. The first map that depicts the Bispham farm is John Hills's Plan of the City of Philadelphia and Environs, published in 1808:

Note the presence of a landing at the end of today's Main Street and what appears to be a corresponding landing across the river in Pennsylvania for possible unlicensed ferryage. The fishery labeled on this map down-river from Main Street belonged to Caleb Atkinson and William Evans, who established it during 1793. Despite the lack a label on this 1808 map, Andrew Anderson Jr. also owned a fishery, situated in front of his plantation, and it, too, began operations sometime prior to his death in early 1787.

John Bispham died intestate (without a Last Will and Testament) on 9 April 1812:

DIED, on the 9th instant, at his late residence, JOHN BISPHAM, Esq of Cinniminon, Chester township, Burlington county, in the sixty fourth year of his age—he has been for many years an active useful member of society, he has filled several public and private offices of honour and trust: in all of which he acquitted himself with fidelity, with credit to himself and honour to his connections—he was a kind husband, an affectionate father, a sincere friend—he lived, respected by all who knew him: and died, much lamented by a large circle of acquaintance, and a numerous connection of friends

Poulson's American Daily Advertiser, 29 Apr 1812, p.3

His estate inventory, taken on 23 April 1812

by John Toy and Isaac Fenimore, had a total value of \$2038.11. It included a "market boat, anchor, and chain" valued at \$6.00 and a "black boy Lot, a slave," valued at \$50, indicating the presence of slavery on the Anderson/Bispham farm. John Bispham's son, Joseph M. Bispham served as the court-appointed estate administrator for his father's estate.

Elizabeth Toy Anderson Bispham prepared her Last Will and Testament on 23 November 1812, but the document was not filed

until 21 April 1815, so when she died is unknown. Furthermore, her Will failed to be proved in probate. In her Will, she devised her moiety in the plantation to her nieces, Eliza, Maria, and Abigail Hodgson. Elizabeth then

devised her half-interest in "my fishery on the Delaware River" to her nephew, Elias Toy. She then appointed her friend, Isaac Fenimore, and nephew, Hezekiah Toy, as executors. Since her Will was not accepted into probate, some confusion and lawsuits ensued over the plantation and fishery. Joseph M. Bispham, acting as administrator of his father's intestate probate proceedings, apparently claimed ownership, but so did Isaiah Toy, who acting as a lateral heir to Elizabeth's estate, sold her moiety in the fishery.

In the next installment of this article, the fishery, with all of its attendant problems, will be discussed, including charges of assault & battery; illegal fishing; and legal action ranging from ownership to trespassing. One New Jersey Supreme Court case file even provides an accounting of the fish caught during one of the illegal fishing episodes and the sheer volume of fish will stagger you.



As America's first First Lady, Maggie Worsdale relates stories of other First Ladies with wit & humor

MARTHA from 1

married at age eighteen to the wealthy and handsome Daniel Parke Custis, some twenty years her senior. Widowed suddenly at age 27 in 1757, Martha later married Colonel George Washington January 6, 1759.

Later, as the wife of President George Washington, America's original First Lady took on the responsibility of arranging major social events and parties for the presidential home in New York, thus setting precedents and standards for future First Ladies to come.

As described in Ms. Worsdale's press kit:

Martha Washington lived in the shadow of her husband's greatness. However, she emerged as the most famous woman of her time. In the words of her obituary, to the foremost man of his times Martha Washington was truly a "worthy partner".

Just as Martha Washington can be credited in the shaping of the role of First Lady, actress Maggie Worsdale can be credited in breathing new life into Martha Washington.

When [Traveling Literary Theater](#) created its production starring [MARTHA WASHINGTON](#), the theater company thought "outside the box". This Martha has developed a bit of chutzpah over the



Beautifully costumed, Maggie Worsdale delivers a charming performance loaded with interesting historical tales and little known facts in a uniquely entertaining manner.

years. Lady Washington shares a bit about herself in each lecture. All of the stories and facts are true but not well known unless you are a true historian.

Actress and singer Maggie Worsdale adds her own personality to the role of Martha while keeping that measure of elegance and poise that one would expect of George's wife.

Martha recounts stories about her eight years as the lady of the land and shares quite a few tales about many other first ladies. With anecdotes, stories and personal accounts, Maggie Worsdale's Martha Washington shares on her journey through the lives of the most prominent and influential women in American history - The First Ladies.

During this one hour presentation, Martha Washington highlights stories and facts about the other FIRST LADIES who have graced this nation. Humorous, lively, and poignant, Martha Washington is sure to entertain, teach, and inspire with this First Class Historical Journey.

FIRST LADIES according to Martha Washington

WHEN: Tuesday, November 17, 2015 at 7 p.m.

WHERE: [Riverton Free Library](#), 306 Main Street, Riverton, NJ 08077

“As an actress portraying Martha Washington, one must know all about George Washington...”

Customizing this Martha Washington lecture series has taken two years of research followed by decisions, edits, memorization, rehearsals, costume design and fittings, and finally the endless search for the perfect wig. It has all come together beautifully and has been received so well.

[The lecture is] ...well researched, scripted to add both education and entertainment, and each lecture has a bit of my own personality woven into the presentation.

As a trained actress who has been earning a living for the past 25 years in the field of "entertainment", portraying Martha Washington has been nothing short of pure bliss. She was quite a lady who enjoyed quite a life. I'm honored to don the colonial cap and gown of Martha Washington.”



contains publicity content, photos, and images from marthawashington.com



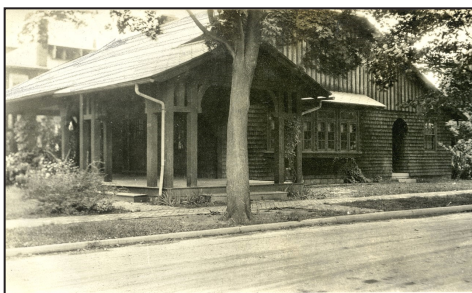


WE GET LETTERS!
Well, emails mostly and occasional telephone calls.

Sometimes a person needs an answer to a question, and sometimes they just get in touch to drop something in my lap.

Let me illustrate.

Do you recognize this Riverton landmark in its younger days?



The façade of this iconic [clubhouse](#) looks different today.

The original photo from which this scan was taken is from a family photo album belonging to Mr. and Mrs.

William Steel. When Bill phoned me this summer it was to give a number of vintage clothing items and antiques to the Society.



[Seaplane](#) in Delaware, RYC in background, circa 1920

Being allowed to scan his family photo album loaded with scenes of Riverton back in the day was just an added bonus.

One of the more intriguing requests for information we received this summer came from Kenneth Frank who wrote a book, [Ecology of Center City, Philadelphia](#), due out in print later this year. Incredibly, he allows the entire book to be

downloaded free of charge.

He wanted to know if someone could direct him to the location of [Dreer's Nursery](#). He wrote:

My interest in visiting land of the former Dreer Nursery is the upcoming centennial of the discovery of the Japanese beetle in the Dreer Nursery in 1916.

Oh, great! That's how history remembers Riverton.

Well, my wife and I met Frank and his wife, Susan, in July, at the peak of the beetle's annual emergence, and we gave them a tour of Riverton's scenic spots, including [National Casein](#), the former Dreer grounds.

[Ken](#) plans to include a chapter about the Japanese beetle in a future Volume 2.

- JMC

[1 MB Japanese beetle](#)



Popilia japonica IMAGE CREDIT: JOEMACGOWN.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 Paul W. Schopp's 2nd installment of his serial article, "Digging Up History in Riverton," get a preview of Maggie Worsdale's Nov. 17 performance as Martha Washington, and see what's been going on at rivertonhistory.com.

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Riverton, NJ 08077

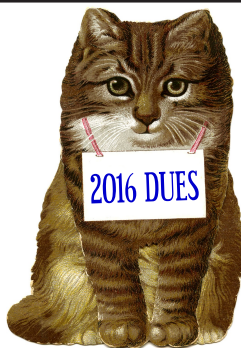
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THE NEXT ISSUE will include a dues reminder and form so that members may remit payment for their 2016 dues.

FYI

Member dues are actually for the *calendar* year. Dues for 2016 should be paid by December 31, 2015.

As a courtesy, checks received during the past three months will be applied toward 2016 dues.

Members receive the *Gaslight News*, the HSR newsletter, four times per year, which announces general membership meetings, contains articles of local historical interest, and brings news of upcoming HSR sponsored programs and events.

WHEN THE DELAWARE RIVER BRIDGE, now the Ben Franklin Bridge, opened with much fanfare July 1, 1926, thousands of people crossed it on foot immediately following the official ceremonies. Automobile toll was 25¢; 15¢ for a horse and rider.



[Delaware River Bridge/ Benjamin Franklin Bridge](#) is a new category on the [IMAGES](#) page of our website where you can find about 30 images related to that span.

In addition, find a feature article, , "[A Small Metal Object Links Father and Son to an Event and Ignites a Passion for History](#)," by Harlan B. Radford, Jr.

- JMC

