Researching Your Riverton Home

A Presentation for the Historical Society of Riverton
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Outline

• Purpose of Presentation
• Brief Early History of Riverton
• Suggested Protocol
• How to Apply for a HSR Plaque
Purpose of Presentation

To introduce basic researching techniques and local resources that can help reveal the history and ancestors of their Riverton home.
Brief Early History of Riverton

Detail of Otlev & Whiteford Map of Burlington County, 1849
Early Historic Dates

- Established in 1851 with summer mansions for the founders, and others, built along Bank Ave. and Main St.. Farmland surrounds much of the town – See the Porch Club’s.
- 1851-1865: Few stores, no post office. Summer homes and rooming houses were built for part time residents.
  - 1852: Riverton Improvement Co. established
  - 1855: First church built
  - Civil War – 1861 to 1865
- 1865-1880:
  - 1868: Builder, Joel Grant of Riverton got the bid to build the town hall in Cinnaminson
  - 1871: First US Post Office
  - 1873: Dreer’s Nursery
  - 1875: Lippincott Ave. surveyed for development – First addition to the village
- 1880-1910:
  - 1880: oil streetlamps installed
  - 1886: The Lyceum
  - 1890: Riverton Free Library, Porch Club, Fire Company
  - 1892: First public sewage system initiated on Main St.
  - 1893: Riverton withdraws from Cinnaminson Twp. to become a municipality
  - 1894: Riverton elects first mayor
  - 1900: Street names and house numbers standardized; Riverton Country Club
  - 1907: Cinnaminson Bank & Trust
  - 1908: First Welsbach gas streetlamp
  - 1910: First brick school building
  - ~1910: Development extends to land on other side of the railroad track, and widens throughout town
Suggested Protocol

› Start with the Deed to Your Property.
Definition: a legal document that is signed and delivered, especially one regarding the ownership of property or legal rights. See also title deed.  
*Oxford Dictionary of English*, 2010

Do you already have access to the deed of the property? You can trace ownership for a limited number of previous owners through the deed.
What Information Do I Need?

- Names of the Grantors, or giving up property
- Names of the Grantees, or those receiving property
- Date of the Deed
- Sale Price
- Property lines can change from owner-to-owner, so documenting that information can important, too.
- Instrument number (if available)
- Date Deed is registered (most likely different from the date of sale)
- Book/Page
- Block/Lot
- More than a few Riverton homes have been moved to new locations, creating a special challenge for the researcher
No Deed?

Use the searchable, online database at the Burlington County Public Records Electronic Search System (PRESS)
Searching Further Back

- Exhausted the PRESS online site?
- Go to the old, original deed books!
- Burlington County Clerk’s Office
  County Government Office
  49 Rancocas/Mt. Holly Rd.
  Mt. Holly, NJ 08060  directions

Note: Visitors can only access the Deed Office and Deed Archives by entering the new front entrance on 49 Rancocas/Mt. Holly Road (photo at left) and successfully passing through Security. You will need to park across the street in the lot. Some lots have a two-hour limit, so take care where you park.
Finding Your House’s Roots

- Architectural Style
- Maps
- United States Census
- Historic Newspapers & Other Resources
What style is your home? Victorian, Italianate, Gothic Revival, Stick Style, Second Empire, Colonial, or another one?

Make a list of its qualities and unique characteristics.

Image thanks to Old House Web
More Resources

- See if your home is listed in Bill Washington's book: *Historic Riverton: Notable Architecture, People and Events, 1776-1930* available at the Library or for sale by the Society
- Find hundreds of structures listed in Riverton’s 1999 National Register for Historic Places Registration Form available online
Details of Two Early Maps

1859


1860

“Gold Standard” 1890 Bird’s Eye View
Sanborn Insurance Maps

Among the oldest of the fire insurance mapping companies in the US, the Sanborn Insurance company, created over a million maps of US cities and towns from 1867-1970.

Princeton University’s archive of online maps for Riverton include:
1895, 1896, 1900, 1905, 1911, 1919
Dr. Alex. Marcy, Jr., has announced his final decision that he will not be the Democratic candidate for Senator from Burlington county, for personal reasons, which he says he may give out later.

Two More Sources

1926 The Romance of Riverton

1929 Manning’s Riverton Classified Business Directory

Burlington County Historical Society has a selection of business directories at the Corson Poley Center 454 Lawrence St. Burlington, NJ.
Resources

Maps

Slide 4 - Otley & Whiteford Map of Burlington County, 1849. West Jersey History Project
http://www.westjerseyhistory.org/maps/coun tymaps/burlingtonco1849.shtml

Slide 5 – Plan of the New Town of Riverton N.J.; Beautifully situated on the River Delaware, Eight miles above Philad.. Undated (early) lithography plan, c. 1851. Can be viewed at the Porch Club, or online at:
http://focus.nps.gov/pdfhost/docs/NRHP/T ext/99000271.pdf


Slide 16 -- Riverton, 1890 – HSR website. Copies also available for purchase from the Riverton Free Library.

Slide References

Slides 4 & 26 -- National Register for Historic Places. Riverton, NJ.
http://focus.nps.gov/pdfhost/docs/NRHP/T ext/99000271.pdf

Slides 9 & 10 -- Burlington County Public Records Electronic Search System (PRESS)
http://press.co.burlington.nj.us:Press:clerk:Cl erkHome.aspx%3Fop=basic

<https://familysearch.org/>

http://rivertonhistory.com/historical-local- newspapers/

http://rivertonhistory.com/store/
Resources


Schopp, Paul W., Riverton Borough Historian


Once you have completed the research on your home, you can submit an application to the HSR Board. Contact Bill Brown or Bill McDermott for further information.