



# Gaslight News

September 2016

Historical Society of Riverton

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Founded 1970

Riverton, NJ 08077

Incorporated 1978



In Oct. 2014, [news services](#) reported that workers found skeletal remains while digging a swimming pool in Riverton.

In [January 2015](#), historian Paul W. Schopp wrote about the human remains discovered in Riverton—past and present.

In [Part Two](#), we learned about the people who resided on the riverbank during the 18th and 19 centuries. Then, [Part Three](#) covered the fishery operations along the Delaware River. In this final installment, Mr. Schopp returns to the individuals who resided here and subsequent land transactions involving the 600 block of Bank Avenue.

## Digging for Some History, Part 4

Historian Paul W. Schopp concludes his series on the mysterious Riverton Bones

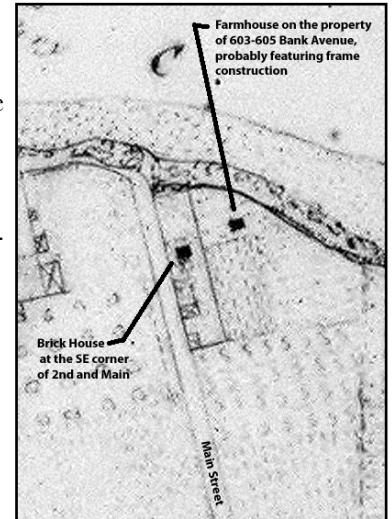
As shown on the John Hills's 1808 map titled, *Plan of Philadelphia and Environs*, and featured in part two, Elizabeth Toy Anderson Bispham resided with her family in a house on the riverfront to the east of Main Street:



Detail, Hills, 1808

The 1843-44 manuscript Coast and Geodetic Survey map of the area that became Riverton provides a much clearer depiction of the riverfront house, along with the production fields, orchards, and other standing buildings associated with Elizabeth's farm:

The frame farmhouse location on the riverbank appears to align with the property now designated as 601 Bank Avenue. As we learned in part two, Isaiah Toy acted as an administrator of Elizabeth



Detail, USC&GS T-series, 1843

Toy Anderson Bispham's estate as a lateral heir. In March 1851, Isaiah Toy conveyed the Bispham farm to Daniel L. Miller Jr. and Rodman Wharton as tenants in common. Subsequent to this acquisition, Wharton died in Riverton on July 20, 1854. His heirs and executors claimed a moiety, or half-interest, in the land, but then sold their

See [DIGGING](#) on 2



## President's Message

Phyllis Rodgers outlines this season's agenda

Greeting HSR Members:

We are planning for the HSR's 2016-17 social season to be another action packed year.

We value our members' input and encourage you to attend our Board & General Planning Meeting, 7pm, Tuesday, Sept. 20 at Riverton Library.

Your help and involvement with the society's events are greatly needed, so please call if you can lend a hand.



Phyllis Rodgers counting kids in the July Fourth Parade

Be sure to save the dates for our special events. This year a number of programs will be co-sponsored by the Riverton Library and the Porch Club. This joint effort will help defray costs and increase our audience base.

Alisa Dupuy returns to Riverton Library 7pm, October 31 as Eliza Blackheart, witch of the Breckenvale Coven. Sure to please adult audiences, she will regale you with the witchcraft history, Halloween traditions, and myths surrounding modern day wiccans. Arrive early as seats in the Library are limited.

Volunteer Keith Betten and Board Member Iris Gaughan continue to catalogue and assess the

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Appointed Riverton Borough Historian in March 2014, Paul W. Schopp has worked as a professional historian in the Cultural Resource field for the past 30 years, specializing in regional history, transportation history, and the history of technology.**

**The former Executive Director of the Camden County Historical Society is now the Assistant Director of the South Jersey Culture & History Center at Stockton University, Galloway, New Jersey.**

**A well known and respected authority in New Jersey historical circles, the sought after speaker has co-authored two books, and many journal articles and monographs.**

“We may never gain any additional information about the exhumed burial, but there is little doubt of the bones’ association with the farm that once occupied this part of the Delaware River shoreline.”

**Paul W. Schopp**

## DIGGING from 1

moiety to Miller in September 1856. Miller now owned the entire parcel and began selling off building lots from it for those seeking to erect homes in Riverton or just invest in real estate there.

In June 1857, Miller sold to John Fallon for \$8,500 what constitutes present-day 603 Bank Avenue. The conveyance included “All that certain lot or piece of land and the buildings and improvements thereon erected ....” Fallon, an attorney at law, remained tenured in the premises for less than a year before selling it to Jannette W. Campbell, wife of Quintin Campbell Jr., for \$7,000, a loss of \$1,500. The vignette map of Riverton from the 1859 Parry, Sykes and Earl *New Map of Burlington County* depicts the Quintin Campbell house as well as a dwelling that Daniel L. Miller Jr. owned on the property between Cinnaminson and Howard streets north of Second Street:



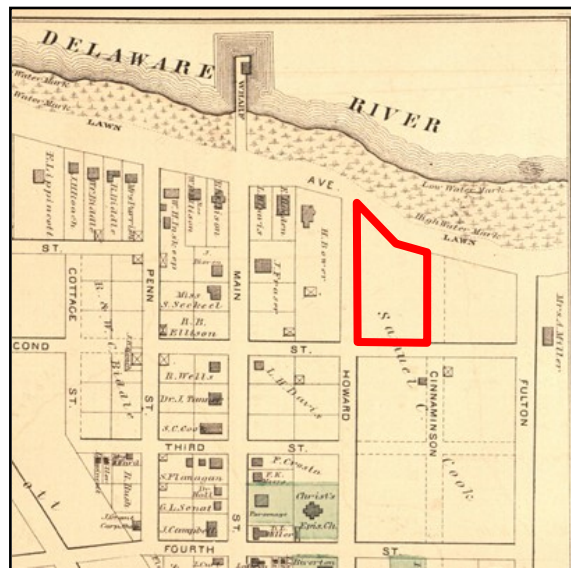
Detail, Parry, Sykes and Earl, 1859

The location of Daniel L. Miller Jr.’s house appears to match to site of the eighteenth-century farmhouse shown on the Coast and Geodetic Survey map.

Quintin Campbell Jr. died in Riverton during October 1858 and left his property to his wife, Jannette. In April 1861, the widow Campbell, of Philadelphia, sold the house and lot to “Elizabeth Cook, wife of Samuel C. Cook,” also of Philadelphia, for \$6,000. The deed contains the usual wording of “... all and singular the buildings and other improvement ....”

Meanwhile, in August 1860, Thomas Ridgway won a judgment against his son, Thomas E. Ridgway; his son-in-law, Daniel L. Miller Jr.; the Riverton Improvement Company; Jannette W. Campbell; Charles Lennig; Christopher Fallon; John Fallon; the Mechanics Bank of

Burlington; Liscomb R. Titus; James V. Sparkman; and James T. Truslow for defaulting on a number of mortgages that Ridgway held after loaning money to Thomas E. Ridgway, Miller, and the Riverton Improvement Company. The other people named as defendants had purchased land from the primary defendants. The Court of Chancery issued a writ to the Burlington County Sheriff to attach the lands covered by the mortgages. The lands included the lots between the Delaware River and Second Street and between Howard and Cinnaminson streets. Despite naming Jannette Campbell in his suit, Ridgway excepted her property from the deed when the Burlington County Sheriff conveyed the remainder of the land to Thomas Ridgway, since he submitted the highest bid in December 1860. In June 1861, Thomas Ridgway conveyed to Elizabeth S. Cook the lot adjoining to the west of the lot formerly belonging to Jannette W. Campbell. Unlike the Campbell-Cook deed, that mentioned a house, the Ridgway-Cook deed describes the land simply as a lot with no mention of buildings, suggesting that the dwelling belonging to Daniel L. Miller Jr. had been removed from the premises. The former Campbell house disappeared from its lot subsequent to the Miller house. Both dwellings had disappeared from their respective waterfront lots between Howard Street and the paper extension of Cinnaminson Street by 1877:



Detail, Hopkins, 1877

But what happened to the houses?

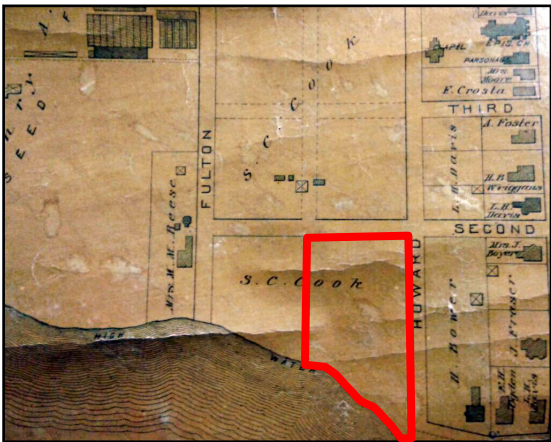
No documentation exists to explain how and why the houses disappeared from the



riverbank, but some deductive reasoning, ala Sherlock Holmes, might reveal the circumstances associated with this mystery. Since Daniel L. Miller Jr. owned the dwelling closest to Howard Street, it is entirely logical that he relocated this house to Fulton Street near the Delaware River. The only home depicted on Fulton in the above 1877 map detail is labeled "Mrs. A. Miller," Daniel's widow, Anna Pancoast Ridgway Miller. Daniel died in Riverton during April 1871. This house moved to become 201 Fulton Street when Walter Woolman had a new Arts and Crafts style home built on the riverbank in 1910.

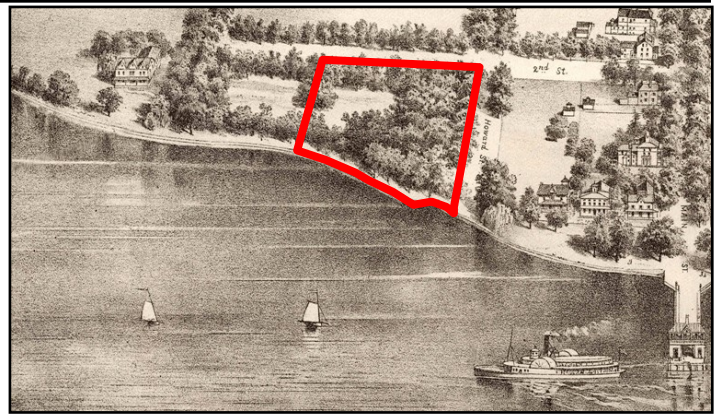
It is unclear what happened to the former Campbell house—perhaps it burned down—but, like the Miller house, it was probably moved to another building lot within Riverton. It is also possible that the former Campbell house was the original eighteenth-century farmhouse and the Cooks simply demolished it.

The 1886 map of Palmyra and Riverton show the lots empty, along with the former Miller house along Fulton, then the property of Mrs. M.M. Reese:



Palmyra and Riverton Map, 1886

Otto Koehler's 1890 bird's eye view of Riverton depicts the empty lots surrounded by trees as well as the former Miller house along Fulton Street:



Detail, Koehler, 1890

The lot that constitutes 601 Bank Avenue, which formerly held the Daniel L. Miller Jr. dwelling, was not built upon again until January 1903, when the Cooks sold the parcel to Frederick W. Radell, who contracted to have a home constructed facing the Delaware River. In 1965, the Somervell family had the Radell house demolished and constructed a new dwelling on the foundation based on the plans of architect R.A. Yarnell. The Somervells did retain the carriage house constructed concomitantly with the Radell dwelling. Likewise on the same day and year, the Cooks conveyed the lot now known as 603 Bank Avenue to George L. Ridley, who constructed the house and garage that are extant today on the property.

By the time Radell and Ridley constructed their respective houses, there was little thought given to the landowners that occupied the land there in the eighteenth century, but those who dwelt here then came to the forefront with the discovery of the human remains in 2014. We may never gain any additional information about the exhumed burial, but there is little doubt of the bones' association with the farm that once occupied this part of the Delaware River shoreline.

- ARTICLE AND IMAGES BY PAUL W. SCHOPP



## MESSAGE from 1

HSR archives. Visit our **Museum for a Day** in the Library basement Saturday, Dec. 3 during the RFL sponsored **Candlelight House Tour**. If you have any Riverton memorabilia/artifacts or old military uniforms to donate or loan, please call.

Thursday, Nov. 17 presenter **Trish Cambers** brings **Olde Christmas** to Riverton Library at 7pm.

**Preservation Awards Night**, February 16, 2017, will recognize student achievements and homeowners for contributions to historic preservation.

Thursday, March 23, 2017, at 7pm, **Kate Butler** presents **The Golden Age of Silent Film** at the RFL. More details later about activities in April and May.

Cycling in Riverton will be at its best this spring with the **Historic Riverton Century** on June 11 and the **Historic Riverton Cri-**

**terium** June 12. The HSR sponsored Century will include a history infused **Community Ride** through the streets of Riverton. Volunteers needed!!

A special THANK YOU goes to **Carlos Rogers** for his \$4,000 **Criterion donation** to the HSR! This will greatly help the Society's many endeavors towards preserving Riverton's history.

Be sure to keep reading the *Gaslight News* and visit **rivertonhistory.com** for more details of upcoming events.

Best to all,  
Phyllis Rodgers  
856-786-8422.



L-R. John McCormick, Carlos Rogers, Phyllis Rodgers

# While You Were Out

**Editor John McCormick and IT Professional Michael Solin teamed up to hit the reset button for rivertonhistory.com**

Since the last edition of the *Gaslight News* in May, past and present posts on the [rivertonhistory.com](http://rivertonhistory.com) website continued to invite engagement from local history enthusiasts, teachers building websites, genealogy researchers and the simply curious, seeking to know more about Millside Farms, Welsbach gas streetlamps, employees of Dreer's, and the provenance of an antique organ. Other requests asked for photos of long-gone places like Klipple's Bakery, The Sharon Shop, and Palmyra's bowling alley at 529 Morgan Ave.

If *only* we had all that. But, if you do, let us know.

With more participation by the public we hope to become greater resource for local history.

Perhaps someone reading this can help fill in another piece of the puzzle that is Riverton history. Can anyone help with photos, stories, letters, artifacts, or news clippings from those Rivertonians of World War I, particularly [Riverton's WWI Gold Star Boys](#)?

Other post topics include:

- 19th Century Girl Power

- Community Ride not Riverton's first cavalcade of cycles
- Annie Londonderry's Legacy
- Several updates on developments with the Historic Riverton Century and Historic Riverton Criterium
- Riverton's Fourth of July
- Summertime evokes memories of Burlco's Camp Lenape
- Dig This—Another Riverton History Mystery
- Riverton Fire Engines, Past and Present
- Riverton's WWI Gold Star Boys



Mary Vandy identified the driver as her uncle, Earnest "Ernie" Bishop and the other man is Jesse Perkins.

[Larger photo](#)

Meanwhile, in the background this summer, volunteer

Michael Solin, implemented a new WordPress template for our website. Please visit and contribute to the conversation if you can.

- JMC



**Our website has a new look.** Visit the dynamic HSR website at [rivertonhistory.com/](http://rivertonhistory.com/) for information regarding events, past issues of *Gaslight News*, membership information, links to Riverton School's Riverton Project, slide shows of vintage images, and more.

Readers: Find inside the 4th and last installment of Paul Schopp's *Digging for Some History*. HSR President Phyllis Rodgers outlines plans for the 2016-2017 season, and Editor John McCormick invites you to see the refreshed website at [rivertonhistory.com](http://rivertonhistory.com).



[Fulton St., Riverton, NJ c1912](#), one of several new finds since last season.



The background for our refreshed website is derived from a reproduction of lithographer Otto Koehler's 1890 Bird's Eye View of Riverton that Phyllis Rodgers hand-colored.



It invites you to explore further our richly historic borough as well as other river towns and Jersey Shore communities. Reader comments, feedback, and their contributions of images and information continue to grow the website.

Other new features include larger print, a simplified menu, and an aid to locating old posts. Social media buttons and a search box complete the package.

Find old local newspapers—*The New Era*, *The Palmyra Record*, *The Riverton Journal*, *The Weekly News (Palmyra)*—going back to 1880. The archive is not continuous, and several gaps in the record exist that would doubtless illuminate even more hometown history and information on past Rivertonians.

Surely there are still old photos, printed material, and information waiting to be found and shared here.

## Gaslight News

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