

Gaslight News

HSR Annual Meeting Tuesday, May 23, 2017, 6pm.



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Founded 1970

Riverton, NJ 08077

Incorporated 1978

**“ To the Boys
Wearing the US
Uniform**

You will shortly be among us, after making the grandest sacrifice...saving your country...from disaster [and] enslavement by the German Empire. God bless...those of you... returning to us, and may all honors of a grateful nation be bestowed on those whose life's blood sanctifies the fair soil of France... It is truly hoped that the boys on their return will band themselves into an organization...”

(See Charles A. Wright's [entire open letter](http://rivertonhistory.com) on rivertonhistory.com.)

OUR 47TH YEAR



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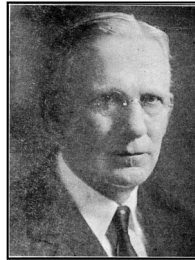
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A GRATEFUL COMMUNITY

**Mrs. Patricia Solin's last of three articles
on Riverton and The Great War**

Welcome Home

In his 1917 open letter to American soldiers in France, published in *The New Era*, April 11, 1919, Charles A. Wright of Riverton expressed gratitude for saving our Nation from disaster and enslavement. He encouraged Riverton's veterans to hold office to ensure "the Grandest County on the face of the Earth will never again be placed in jeopardy and fear of invasion by a mortal enemy," and concludes with a "call for a Caucus of men who wore the uniform..." to meet for the purpose of forming the American Legion.



Charles A. Wright

One Soldier, At Home Again

John Francis Flynn, Army of Occupation, AEF, of 403 Thomas Avenue (US Census), was discharged in the fall of 1919, prior to the cessation of hostilities. In his published poem, "A Soldier's Bed of Roses" (*The New Era*,

Sept. 12, 1919, p2), he tells of his arduous life as a soldier in France. He concludes: "But I've done my bit in the army - And now, thank God, I am free - Altho' I know when the bugles blow, they'll have a call for me."

Flynn was born in Riverton on May 13, 1894. At the time of the draft, aged 23, his occupation was that of a Bulb Seedman (US Census). Back home by age 25, he married at age 28, and worked in a phonograph factory before moving with his family to Philadelphia to run his own cigar and candy store (US Census). He passed on January 5, 1948 (ancestry.com), after seeing the end of the Second World War. Such was the story of so many veterans - home again to family, work, and community.

Honoring Service

Soon after the cessation of hostilities, all our surviving veterans would be home. The sacrifice of these soldiers, nurses, and those on the home front demanded recognition, appreciation, and honor. Riverton residents got to work to create tangible acknowledgements of their service - a grand celebration as well as enduring memorials.

See **GRATEFUL COMMUNITY** on 2

President's Message

Mrs. Phyllis Rodgers recaps HSR's latest efforts and points to next items on the agenda



April's informative and entertaining joint Porch Club/HSR "[Riverton Bicycling: Then and Now](#)" program served as harbinger for the activities to come during [Historic Riverton Bicycle Weekend](#) next month. Cynergy Cycling Club's several organized club morning distance rides ending in Riverton, a **Bicycle Safety Rodeo**, and **Community Ride** start the fun on Saturday, June 10. All the excitement of **The 7th Annual Historic Riverton Criterium** serves as the climax for the weekend as live music, food trucks, and

competitive bicycle athletes come to Main Street on Sunday, June 11.

Criterium organizer **Carlos Rogers** has designated Palmyra's [Bread of Life Food Pantry](#) as main beneficiary this year of event proceeds which has given over \$25,000 to local charities and organizations since its inception in 2011.

Carlos is doing a "Fill the Truck" food drive the day of the race. Bring non-perishable food items to support the Bread of Life Food Pantry.

See more details on rivertonhistory.com and the [HRCriterium Facebook page](#).

The **HSR Annual Meeting** convenes at [Nellie Bly's Olde Tyme Ice Cream Parlour](#), 529

See **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE** on 3

[Transport back to July 1920](#) and read pages of *The New Era* published on July 2 and July 9, 1920.

Also see a scanned copy of the 4-page July 4 Program.



PHOTO CREDIT: Robert Knight
July 5, 1920



See more details about this ring on page 4.



PHOTO CREDIT: Robert Knight
July 5, 1920

GRATEFUL COMMUNITY from 1

Riverton's Parade

To mark Independence Day, the 1920 parade would combine the traditions of previous celebrations with an extravaganza planned by the Parade Citizens Committee which included Gold Star family members John S. Bradley and Miss Mary McGivney.

As the Fourth fell on Sunday that year, Riverton's annual celebration took place on July 5th. The war was over, troops and other service people were back home, and the town wanted to make the day even more extraordinary. The parade included 70 members of the Riverton-Palmyra Company State Militia Reserve,

100 members of the Red Cross of Riverton and Palmyra, the Junior Red Cross, and other relief organizations.

The New Era proclaimed that it was "Riverton's biggest Fourth" with 792 children in line, sixty decorated baby coaches, velocipedes, 'kiddie kars,' and seventy ex-service men. It estimated that five-thousand men, women and children witnessed yacht races, aquatic events, a band concert, a speed boat race, and fireworks on the pier. The crowd enjoyed patriotic speeches, an invocation, and songs performed by the Episcopal and Presbyterian Church choirs. A hydroplane put on a show on the Delaware

River and gave rides to some attendees prior to fireworks at night. ("Fourth of July Program," *The New Era*, July 2, 1920, p2, & "Fourth of July Celebration of the Citizens of Riverton N.J. 1920," *The New Era*, Riverton, NJ pp1-4).

Mayor William E. Bennett and Holmes Gravatt of Camden

made their addresses, along with the Rever-

ends John Rigg and N. P. Stahl, who also marched in the parade.

Among the speakers was veteran and Riverton resident, [Lieutenant Colonel Franklin D'Olier](#), a recipient of the French Cross of Legion of Honor as well as the Distinguished Service Cross.

He spoke "with great earnestness of the winning of the war, not just by the men in uniform, alone, but by the whole people." While those in the service "were only doing what any of you would have done, . . . it was the men at home buying bonds, the women and girls in the Red Cross work, the National Defense work . . . that, each doing their bit,... won the war."

In appreciation for their service, the town awarded veterans gold rings. Amanda Faunce, who served as a nurse for the entire duration of the war overseas, also received a ring. ("Ring for Ex-Service Men." *The New Era*, July 2, 1920, p2)

Transitioning Home

Before the war, Princeton graduate Franklin D'Olier was president of Franklin D'Olier & Co., a prosperous Philadelphia textile firm, but lived here in Riverton at 2 Park Avenue. ("Plan to Greet D'Olier," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 12, 1919, p9, & US Census). Upon his return, he became the American Legion's first National Commander.

Memorial Park

In early 1919, Riverton residents considered multiple options which would be "as a suitable



Mayor William E. Bennett July 5, 1920 PHOTO: Robert Knight



Lt.Col. Franklin D'Olier July 5, 1920 PHOTO: Robert Knight



memorial in honor of those who served the Country from the Borough of Riverton during the World War.” Ideas included “fountain, sewage disposal plant (very unpopular), park, hospital, monument, athletic field, nurses’ home, community house, athletic field, etc.” (“In Days of Yore,” *The New Era*, 1939 Anniversary Issue)

On January 8, 1920, a resolution was approved and a committee formed, who “agreed on a community park as the memorial.”

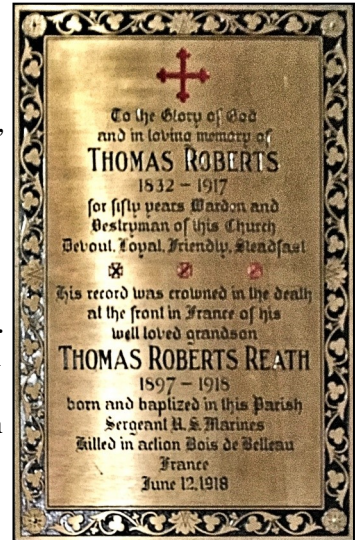
It would “be used as a baseball ground, football field and athletic field, from land purchased from a part of the Dreer Tract lying South of the railroad and bordering on Pompeston Creek.” The park was dedicated on July 4, 1931, with a celebration promised to be “the most elaborate in history.” (“Riverton Plans Biggest Fourth in its History,” *The New Era*, Special Memorial Park Edition, July 2, 1931, p1)

J.W. Faust of the National Recreation Association in New York City, wrote in *The New Era* of what the park meant to him: The park commemorates “...the memory of those who

gave their lives to their county’s service in the World War, but also (it is dedicated) it to the happiness and health of the boys and girls, all citizens of the community.” He ends: “We rejoice with you at this dedication, and we mourn with you over the sacrifices this park memorializes.” (“Commends Playground Feature,” *The New Era*, Special Memorial Park Edition, July 2, 1931, p.11.)

Personal Memorials

Local roads were named after European battles, and the American Legion was named after a Riverton fallen soldier, James A. Bradley. Residents planted a living memorial of six trees at Riverton Public School on Arbor Day in 1919, one for each of the Gold Star Riverton casualties. (“Trees Planned for Riverton Fallen,” *The New Era*, April 18, 1919) A bronze plaque in Christ Memorial Church memorializes Thomas Roberts Reath.



Thomas Roberts Reath Memorial plaque inside Christ Church

The generation of World War I soldiers has long passed, but we must not forget the service and sacrifice of those who have helped preserve our freedom.



MRS. PATRICIA SMITH SOLIN



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE from 1

Main Street, on Tuesday, May 23 at 6pm. After some necessary business HSR members will enjoy complimentary pizza and an ice cream sundae. No cost for members, but we would like a head count so please RSVP to me at 856-786-8422 or partea@comcast.net.

The Society’s youngest member, [Colin Cattell](#), has achieved a great honor. His entry in the National Society of the [Colonial Dames of America’s Congressional Essay Contest](#) won the Palmyra High School junior a trip to Washington, DC in June.



PHOTO CREDIT:
[Palmyra Sun](#)

Current events bear out that the essay topic, “Why was the division of power between the President and Senate to nominate and confirm a Supreme Court Justice created by our founding fathers?” is of critical importance.

Colin’s passion for history and politics will serve him well through seven days in our nation’s capital as he hears lectures on government, meets with legislators, and visits the

National Mall, Mount Vernon, the Pentagon, memorials and monuments.

We lament the loss of [Hunter Barn](#) that stood behind the former Riverton Garden Center located on Route 130 and Taylors Lane, Cinnaminson, N.J. As HSR member **William McDermott** wrote in a January 2017 letter to Wawa Corporation owners, “The barn is the last standing stone barn in Burlington County’s agricultural past. It is a testament to the county’s farming and dairy tradition.”

However, we look forward to making good use of money donated to us by [Carlos Rogers](#) to display several interpretive historical marker signs throughout town with the object of helping to encourage the public’s understanding of Riverton Borough’s past. Through our collections, exhibits, presentations, newsletter, and website, The Historical Society of Riverton discovers, preserves, and tells Riverton’s stories. Join the conversation at [rivertonhistory.com](#).

Your support through your membership and donations is critical to continuing the Society’s mission, and we thank you!

- MRS. PHYLLIS RODGERS





Show and Tell

Barbara Stavelly Clauser shares WWI family mementoes

In March, Mrs. Barbara Stavelly Clauser of Delran contacted me with an offer to let me photograph some items and scan a few old family photos. Coincidentally, they relate to the series of World War I articles seen here.



The words "RIVERTON, NJ," and "THE HOME TOWN TRIBUTE TO ONE OF ITS OWN" surround "World War." on Emerson Wolfsburg's signet ring, one of a hundred awarded.



Addressed to Miss Lillie Morey, Riverton, NJ, the message side of the above postcard reads: *Everything OK at present. We are on*



Community Hut certificate dated July 4, 1918

ed the Community Hut at Christ Church Parish House.

On the "Home Front" in the March 2017 *Gaslight News* described the entertainments and amusements offered at the Hut.



Embroidered fabric: A HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO MY DEAR MOTHER

Mrs. Clauser kindly allowed me to photograph a World War I signet ring that Riverton awarded to ancestor Emerson Wolfsburg and the above postcard he sent home.

A later photo portrait of Emerson Wolfsburg in his civvies may explain the ring's eroded appearance — he must have worn it proudly always.



Postcard from Emerson Wolfsburg



Emerson Wolfsburg wears his ring in this undated photo portrait

Southern patrol at Reedy Island. Reedy Island is a small island in the channel of the Delaware River near its mouth in the state of Delaware.

As this certificate attests, at some point, Emerson attend-

An embroidered fabric mailing, this time from William Wolfsburg, addressed to Mrs. Mary Wolfsburg, dated November 13, 1918, reads:

Somewhere in France

My Dear Mother

I do hope to be with you some day as it will take 36 days more to see if peace is really certain.

From your True Son

William

An announcement of the July 5, 1920 ring presentation ceremony appearing in *The New Era*, July 2, 1920 shows the brothers' names listed among the hundred persons eligible.

Emerson Wolfsburg
Wm. J. Wolfsburg

How many families remain today which can count ancestors among that distinguished list? See the [entire list](#) on rivertonhistory.com.

This paper poppy, one of many given by veterans to shoppers leaving Delran Shop-Rite last week, entreats us to "WEAR IT PROUDLY" as we remember all Americans who gave their lives in all wars.



Each Memorial Day members of [American Legion Post 146 of Riverside](#) and the [Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3020 of Delran](#) serve as honor guard, bearing colors, playing taps, and providing the rifle salute in a ritual which we observe on this day of remembrance.

The **Riverton Military & Veterans Affairs Committee**, established December 2012 and consisting of former mayor **William Brown** and **Robert E. Smyth**, informs us that two names will be added to the Riverton War Memorial Honor Roll on Sunday, May 28 at 10am.

MAJOR DONALD R. MARTIN, BOMBER PILOT WWII, USAAF
S/SGT. MARIO LEONE, AIRCRAFT MECHANIC, WWII, USAAF

Come out and recognize your neighbors' service; honor them and all who have helped preserve our American way of life.

- JMc



Readers: Find inside *A Grateful Community*, the last of three articles by Pat Solin about Riverton's role in World War I, **HSR President Phyllis Rodgers' Message**, and **Barbara Stavelly Clauser's WWI family mementoes**.

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