



Gaslight News

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rivertonhistory.com

September 2017

Historical Society of Riverton

vol. XXXXVII, no. 5 (#172)

Founded 1970

Riverton, NJ 08077

Incorporated 1978

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Mary Louise Bianco-Smith and Ken Smith have been researching information on Clothiers, Ogdens, and other previous occupants of their historic home for several years.

Here, the couple writes about a two-day series of events that they scheduled for visiting Ogden descendants. It culminated in showing a mockup of a planned historic marker that illustrates much of the Riverton history witnessed by their home.

Ogden descendants visit Bank Avenue home of Riverton founder Caleb Clothier

Mary Louise Bianco-Smith and Ken Smith, current owners of 503 Bank Avenue, host an Ogden Reunion and work with the Society to erect a historical marker.

About six years ago, Perot Nevin, Jr. the great-grandson of Edward H. Ogden and Sarah Morris Perot Ogden, visited our home, 503 Bank Avenue, with his children, **Greta Nevin Wright, Peter Perot Nevin, III** and another sister. They came from Texas, Nevada, and California, as it was on Perot's bucket list to visit the former home of his great-grandparents. Perot has since passed, and we have remained friends with Greta (Ogden's great-great granddaughter). Last year, Greta mentioned to me that she would like to bring her family to visit Riverton.

Since 2005, we have been researching information on Caleb Clothier, the Ogdens, and others who have lived here. Our major motivation is to educate our five grandchildren and others to value history and to provide them with a legacy to always treasure.

Earlier this year, we submitted our application to HSR for a historic interpretive sign, and thought it would be nice to host a celebration

of the lifelong accomplishments and contributions to Riverton of Edward H. and Sarah Morris Perot Ogden along with the unveiling of the historic marker. When discussing that the Ogden descendants were planning to visit, many members of the Riverton community wanted to participate.

Thus, on Saturday, July 29 and Sunday, July 30, 2017, Greta, her husband Rodney, and their son, Roddy, and their grandchildren, Shelby, Chase, Carson and Caden along with Greta's twin brother, Perot Nevin, III and his wife, Caryn came to Riverton.



On Saturday, we arranged a full schedule of events for the Ogden family. First, we visited the home

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Changing of the Guard

Former mayor Bill Brown now heads the Historical Society of Riverton



William C. Brown Jr.

President **Bill Brown** now directs the Society's sixteen member Board as it strives to create an awareness of our heritage, to discover, restore, and preserve local objects and landmarks, and to continue to expand our knowledge of the history of the area.

Here, Bill demonstrates his hands-on approach to management by helping to erect the new historical marker in front of the Bank Avenue home of **Ken and Mary Louise Smith**.

Mr. Brown takes the helm of the Society as it begins its 47th year. See his **President's Message** on page 3.



Bill Brown (center), Roger Prichard (L) and John Laverty (R) set up the permanent historical marker that highlights the story of the home's origin and its notable owners.

8/19/2017



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THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RIVERTON

“In honor of this rich history, we are calling the house “1851 Riverbank Manor” as we feel that this reflects the home’s over-all provenance. We are dedicated to serving as custodians of the history of this home...”
Mary Louise and Ken Smith



DeVries home, 308 Main St.



Riverton Library, 306 Main St.



Riverton Country Club c1912



RYC, opening day 2015

The Smiths planned a full schedule of events centered around places with a history connected to Edward and Sarah Ogden

CLOTHIER HOME from 1

of Janice and Dennis DeVries, which was the former home of Gertrude Sailor Daniels, Greta’s grandmother, who was the daughter-in-law of Harriet Ogden Nevin and granddaughter-in-law of Edward and Sarah Ogden. The DeVries were so kind as to give Greta a birthday card written to her grandmother, which they found behind a radiator during renovations.

Next, we visited the Riverton Library, which Sarah Ogden donated in memory of her husband, Edward. Kim Paulsen and Sue Bye gave a tour and discussed the programs offered. Another stop was the Porch Club at which Sarah Ogden served as second president.

Riverton Country Club hosted the family at a buffet luncheon with the golfers who played in the 5th Annual Edward H. Ogden Golf Tournament. Ogden was a founder and first president of the RCC. Tradition holds that the winners don the Ogden beard. The family joined in by wearing the beards. Kevin Duffy, RCC golf pro, presented the family members with the RCC History Book.

Saturday evening concluded at the Riverton Yacht Club BBQ Autism fundraiser for “Yard, Work and More” hosted by the Mariners.

Kent Steinriede, vice commodore, presented the family with a burgee flag and a beautiful watercolor of the club of which Ogden was a founder and commodore.

Back in Texas, Perot is a member of a band and he joined in the festivities by playing guitar and singing “A Pirate Looks at 40.”

On Sunday, Calvary Presbyterian Church hosted the Ogden descendants at their 10:00 AM service followed by a luncheon prepared by the congregation.

Immediately following, we welcomed the descendants and other guests to our home at 503 Bank Avenue. Ken and I dressed as Edward and Sarah Ogden in 1860’s period clothing.



Valerie Still

At the celebration event, Lisa Fox, Burlington County Historical Society Executive Director, displayed copies of the New Jersey Abolitionist Society Collection with information dating to the 1700’s. Education Director, Jeff Macechak, portraying Caleb Clothier, spoke about the Quakers. Valerie Still, descendent of William Still (“The Father of the Underground Railroad”), spoke of the importance of history and how imparting the lessons of the past will help future generations better understand today’s world.

Thanks to singer, Dave McGrath and Diana Dohrmann, Director of Music & Choir of Calvary Presbyterian Church several period songs were featured including “Down to the River to Pray.”

Riverton Mayor, the Honorable Susanne Cairns, gave remarks and presented a proclamation to us. Other presenters were HSR president and former mayor, Bill Brown; RCC trustee Tom Barton; RYC vice commodore, Kent Steinriede; Porch Club president, Phyllis Rodgers; and Riverton Library board member, Sue Bye. There was also an art exhibit by Lee Blackburn, MA, PAFA, Trenton, NJ.

Toward the end of the event, we unveiled a mockup of the historic marker that will be placed outside our home. This was followed by light refreshments and tours of the basement museum and gardens. (The permanent marker was installed August 19.)

Greta and Perot Nevin each said the event far exceeded their expectations and were thrilled that their family was able to see firsthand the legacy of their ancestors.



Dave McGrath sings “Down to the River to Pray”

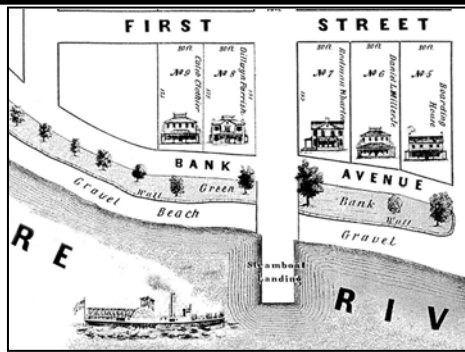


L-R. Bill Brown, Suzanne Cairns, Ken Smith

Ken and I are truly blessed to live in this historic home. We are also gratified to see how the Borough of Riverton, the HSR and our neighbors have encouraged us in our efforts to explore the history of our home. It shows that people are interested in history and Ken and I are also so pleased that Riverton has received such positive publicity on the front pages of the Burlington County Times and Courier-Post newspapers and [6abc Action News](#).

In addition to being named the Caleb Clothier house, other owners have called it the Fish House, the River House and Rive Gauche. The Fish House is labeled on a map of the Camden and Amboy Railway and Connections.

In honor of this rich history, we are calling the house "1851 Riverbank Manor" as we feel that this reflects the home's overall provenance. We are dedicated to serving as custodians of the history of this



Plan of the New Town of Riverton
map detail, c1851



Basement tour during Ogden Event - Valerie
Still holding William Still book

home, thus we have formed a non-profit, Riverbank Manor Legacy, to educate others especially schoolchildren about its forebears.

We will be continuing our research on other prominent owners of our home. Recently, we learned that in 1931, owners Claude and Elizabeth Anderson had the architecture of the home redesigned to mimic Mount Vernon. It is recorded that Anderson had the gravestone of an ancestor, Colonel John Anderson, relocated to this property. Colonel Anderson was Acting Governor of NJ in 1736 and President of His Majesty's Council. There is certainly more research to be done.

We do want to send a special "Thank you" to **Colin Cattell**, a Riverton resident and Palmyra High School senior, for his ongoing assistance and production of the event's video.

- MARY LOUISE BIANCO-SMITH AND KEN SMITH



The Smiths will host our first meeting of the 2017-2018 season on **Tuesday, September 26, 2017, at 7pm** in their home located at 503 Bank Avenue. Originally constructed for Caleb Clothier, one of Riverton's original founders, the Samuel Sloan designed Italianate Villa is an architectural work rich in Riverton lore and history.

Mary Louise and Ken will present a Living History presentation on the first owner **Caleb Clothier** and the first Mayor, **Edward Ogden, and his wife Sarah** with tour of basement. **RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED.** Limited to first 30 registrants. Please RSVP by September 15 to Mary Louise at 609-304-5987 or email 1851riverbankmanor@comcast.net.

President's Message

New head of the Society, William C. Brown looks ahead

This season the Historical Society will sponsor more presentations and activities meant to create an awareness of local history and strive to preserve it. Please continue to support the HSR with your membership. Lend your voice to the collaboration to expand our knowledge of the history of the area at a meeting or at rivertonhistory.com.

On **Thursday, November 16 at 7pm**, historical interpreter Neill Hartley portrays Woodrow Wilson and others at Riverton Library in **Woodrow Wilson and the Great War**, a captivating one-man show set in the turbulent days leading up to World War I.



Memorial Day 2014

Along with **Bob Smyth**, a particular focus of mine for several years has been recognizing US veterans. We acknowledged in a May Memorial Day Observance the service of two Riverton members of the Armed Forces who

served during wartime by adding their names to the Riverton War Memorial Honor Roll. They are:

Major Donald R. Martin, US Army Air Force and later, US Air Force, flew 30 bombing missions starting with D-Day. He served from 1943-1946 and received the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Staff Sergeant Mario P. Leone, US Army Air Force and later, US Air Force, served in World War II and Korea as Airplane & Engine Mechanic Specialist repairing B-24's & B-29's. He received the WWII Victory Medal, Army Occupation Medal, and Asiatic Pacific Medal.

Riverton's Veterans Affairs Committee seeks to add more names this coming **Veterans Day November 11, 2017**. We are also interested in obtaining old military uniforms, medals, and military equipment.

Please contact me, Bill Brown, at 858-303-8513, or JYD9168@verizon.net.

Warm regards,
Bill Brown



rivertonhistory.com web posts summer recap

Keep informed between newsletters

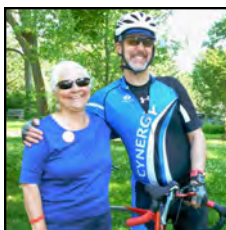
HSR website posts this summer highlighted the bicycling events of this past June, shared some old baseball news from *The New Era*, invited the public to a PowerPoint on the history of Calvary Presbyterian Church, linked to July Fourth Parade photos, and went along for an Ogden Family Reunion at the Bank Avenue home of Mary Louise and Ken Smith.

[Glory Days in Riverton](#) told about

Riverton's Historic Weekend of Cycling June 10-11, which included early morning races directed by **Cynergy Cycling Club**, and an afternoon **Bike Safety Rodeo** and **Community Bike Ride** on Saturday, climaxing with Sunday's **Historic Riverton Criterium**.

Look for the [June 2017 Special Bicycle Weekend Edition of The Gaslight News](#) included in this mailing which

reports on the bike events' link to Riverton's late 19th century bicycling legacy.

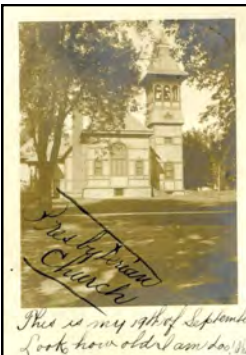


Iris Gaughan and Cynergy's Matt Morse organized Saturday's activities PHOTO BY SUSAN DECHNIK

A July 8 post tracing Riverton's devotion to baseball invited readers to submit more old Riverton/Palmyra baseball mementos and sports team photos.

A poignant comment by website visitor [Ed Shoemaker](#) introduced a post of over forty July Fourth Parade photos by **Gary Weart**.

A June 28 post headline announced "[Riverton's Glorious Fourth - It never gets old](#)" and urged readers to submit their own photos of past celebrations.



We dug out an old postcard and a October 6, 1949 article in *The New Era* to help publicize a July 9 program on the history of [Calvary Presbyterian Church](#).

On Sunday, July 30, 2017, the Smiths hosted a [reunion](#) at their historic Bank Avenue home for Ogden descendants. Originally built for founder Caleb Clothier, 503 Bank Avenue was later home to first mayor Edward H. Ogden. See more details on the festivities in this issue's feature article. - JMC



July 4, 1950 - Cousins Bill McDermott (left) & Phil Santamarie (right); Bill McDermott, Sr. pulls Jim McDermott in stroller on Bank Ave.

An engaged membership helps our knowledge of Riverton history grow. Join the conversation at rivertonhistory.com, find information regarding events, past issues of *Gaslight News*, membership information, hundreds of vintage images, and much more.

Readers: The commentary by Mary Louise and Ken Smith illustrates the rich history of a Bank Avenue home known as the Clothier House. New President Bill Brown has a message.

Real photo of John A. Warner at Riverton Yacht Club, a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Robert Morris



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THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RIVERTON

Post Office Box # 112

Riverton, NJ 08077

E-mail/Web: rivertonhistory@gmail.com
rivertonhistory.com



Thank-You Notes

The HSR gratefully acknowledges several generous gifts

Bob and Peggy Morris gave a number of items of historical interest to the Society last Spring including an original **Mary Biddle Fidler** manuscript for the novel *Kid*, a leather fire bucket



HMG McIlvain bed-spread dated 1873



Dollhouse

marked J, Alger (dated 1872), a handmade bed cover given HMG McIlvain dated 1873, a RYC Constitution and By-Laws dated 1899, and a real photo of the John A. Warner at the RYC. Mr. Morris is a grandson of Riverton author Mary Biddle Fidler.

Up from Carolina for a visit to the old homestead, **Carl Colozzi**, gave us a framed aerial photograph dated July 1923.

Alice Fluckiger stopped by on her way from Connecticut to the Jersey Shore and dropped off a magnificently detailed dollhouse—a replica of her childhood home at 806 Main.



Carl Colozzi returned Bicycle Weekend