



Gaslight News ^{File Copy}

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RIVERTON
Riverton, N.J. 08077

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Program:

Monday, November 28, 1988 8 p.m. Music Room, Riverton School
"Traditional Basketry"

..... Billie Dorris

Mrs. Dorris will give a talk about the weaving of baskets and their usage, from those of native Indians to modern days. Included will be Shaker, Nantucket, and Appalachian types. Various types and styles of weaving and materials will be discussed, and there will be examples on display. The care of baskets, both old and new, will be included in the presentation.

Billie Dorris is a native-born Floridian, but has lived in many places during her husband's twenty years of service in the Air Force. She has lived in Moores-town for about three and a half years.

Monday, January 23, 1989 8 p.m. Music Room, Riverton School
"Railroads of Burlington County"

..... Frank Kozempel

This first program in the new year will be a narrated slide program covering early local railroads, including the Camden & Amboy line, that ran through our area in 1834. It will also include some branch lines, including one from Mt. Holly to Pemberton.

Mr. Kozempel's interest was developed at an early age, since his father was employed by Baldwin Locomotives. His interest never slackened, and he is not only an accomplished speaker, but active in many organizations focusing on railroads. He is at present the Historian for the West Jersey Chapter of National Railways Historical Society, and also serves as one of its vice-presidents. He is a resident of Cinnaminson.

Please note these dates TODAY on your calendar--November's is the Monday after Thanksgiving, before the Holiday season is quite upon us, and baskets will be a timely subject. January's meeting will be BEFORE your next Newsletter, so be sure to mark the date now--you won't want to miss it.

Update:

The Game of Riverton, N.J. will be found under Christmas trees in many places this year, from all appearances. The first 300 games sold quickly, and a second order was placed for an additional 200 games. That shipment--the final one--is expected to arrive at the end of this month. More than half of those games have been ordered, so if you have not yet gotten yours, or plan to give one as a gift, reserve yours now. Call 829-1207 or 829-6315, and you will be notified when they arrive, and where to pick up the games.

About 150 persons attended the Romance of Riverton film show in October. Many had not seen it before, and all seemed to enjoy it. Also shown were some slides of ferry boats and aerial views of Riverton from the same era, and slides taken of the Evans building fire in July 1979. A few years ago some home movies taken by Don Donovan, of Fulton Street, were given to the Historical Society, but had not been seen before. They were edited, and two 6-minute reels were shown, as well--one of the construction of Sacred Heart Church, and one of Fourth of July, 1965, from Parade through fireworks, the year the Yacht Club celebrated its 100th birthday.

Our thanks to Joan Hartmann, who loaned her slides of the fire, and to Paul Schopp, who helped edit, and spliced, the Donovan films, and also donated reels for them.

We have been asked to give local history programs to Riverton School's students. In December the Romance of Riverton film will be shown for students in grades 4-8, and a short talk given. In January there will be a program for grades K-3. The Children's Walking Tour outline has been updated for use in conjunction with these programs. Learning about the community in which they live will give children a greater awareness of our heritage, and pride in their home town--a good basis for developing good citizenship.

Plaques have been approved for two more houses, and should be in place by the first week in December.

.... 406 Main Street, home of Mr. & Mrs. Barry Solin, popularly known as "The Marcy House", will note that it was built circa 1865, and was the home of Dr. Alexander Marcy, Jr. Dr. Marcy purchased it in 1887, and for a short time both he and his father had their offices there. Before very long, however, his office moved next door, to 408, where medical offices have been, ever since. Dr. Marcy and his wife were active in many Riverton projects--she in encouraging reading and musical activities among children and elderly people, and he was an officer of The Lyceum, and, in 1907, one of the founders of Cinnaminson Bank & Trust. He owned several rental properties, the usual practice for wealthy men of his day. Marjorie Marcy, their daughter, grew up at 406 Main, became a member of the U.S.Hockey Team at the Olympics, and married Gardener Crowell. The Crowells continued to live at the same address, thus the house was in the hands of one family for over 90 years.

... 301 Main Street, home of Mr. & Mrs. Michael Hayes, is one of the earliest homes in Riverton, of one of its earliest families. Francis Crosta's deed was dated January 1852, and the Crosta children were among the earliest--if not THE earliest--to be born in the new village of Riverton. Crosta had a store in his home, for general merchandise, for some years. Much later, in 1932, Ed Merrill designed the first "Duster" at the same address. He and his son built it on the second floor, and the present owners have a photo of it being taken out the 2nd story window for its launching at the Yacht Club. In 1946 the Yacht Club had the first National Duster Class Regatta.

Our Historical Society's collections are being surveyed to determine what materials are needed to store them properly, and how best to make them available for research. Now that we finally have some funds to work with, we can take better care of the things entrusted to us. Now we would like to remind readers that when looking over boxes of old papers or photographs, those you may not want to keep should not be discarded, but offered to our collection. If you have old photos of Riverton, but do want to keep them, please consider lending them to us to have copies made for the collection, so that future Rivertonians, wondering how it used to be, will find a good visual record here.

Further information regarding Grant Applications for Consultant services when preparing a nomination for Riverton to be included in the State and National Registers of Historic Places has been received, and plans are being made to get on with this very long-term project. A number of decisions have to be made, a time frame worked out, and then the preliminary work can proceed again.

Reminders:

Library House Tour, December 10th. At the Library and at the Porch Club the Library's Calendars, with Riverton scenes done by both professional and amateur artists, will be on sale, for \$8. Our Game of Riverton N.J. will also be on sale, for \$12.

The Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony will be on Sunday, December 4th--in time to add to the spirit of the House Tour festivities. See local papers for time.

Note paper is still available, for \$3.50, at Victorian Thymes, the Library, or from

Louise Vaughn or Betty Hahle. It makes a nice gift--and don't forget to replenish your own supply, too.

If you haven't yet sent in your dues with the form from last Gaslight News, send in your check now to treasurer John Parry, 803 Main St. Membership is \$3 per individual, \$5 for a husband/wife, or \$2 each for Seniors. Your membership brings quarterly issues of Gaslight News and 5 regular programs each year, as well as special events. Don't let your membership expire. New members welcomed at any time.

One more reminder to mark the dates of the next 2 meetings: November 28, and January 23.

Yesterday...

The Pierce Business School in Philadelphia was founded in 1865 by Thomas May Pierce, in the Record Building at 917-19 Chestnut Street. It took pride in ~~the~~ thorough training of its students, and deplored the changing curricula of public schools. In March, 1896, in the Mt. Holly Herald, under the heading of "Words and Their Uses", the following paragraph appeared:

" A few years since etymology was dropped from course of studies of Philadelphia public schools, and quite a number of parents, remembering the benefit they had derived from the studies, requested the action taken.

"The class books on etymology serve a broad purpose as (they are) usually prepared to take the place of spelling books and dictionary; also supply those who can't take time to study Greek and Latin, that knowledge of English derived words necessary to use them with discrimination. At Pierce school in Philadelphia this branch is taught in the Shorthand department that those trained as stenographic clerks may be the better prepared to take and transcribe dictated matter."

In Riverton, in 1901, a Natural History Society was formed in Christ Episcopal Parish House, with Rev. Sheppard elected president. That same year the first trolleys ran through Riverton.

Over the ensuing years many changes took place. Towns grew, times dictated new trends, and some old landmarks disappeared. In December of 1935 one of Palmyra's oldest buildings was torn down, to make room for two modern stores, on Broad Street. Behind the store fronts were living quarters, with kitchen and dining room on the first floor, and living room, bedrooms, and bath on the second floor. Mrs. Emma Reynolds was in charge of the building, and James Turcott, former mayor, her general manager. A Collingswood contractor handled the building, and hired George Bonsall to do the plumbing, and Earle Harder, the electrical work.

The old building had been erected in 1885/6, shortly after the Morgan tract opened. Warren P. Miller, a member of a family of building contractors, who built many of Palmyra's houses, built it for his own home. Very soon, however, he built a new residence at Broad and Garfield, and sold the first one. It had several owners, one of whom was a man named Craig, from Merchantville, who had an ice cream store there for several years. Then it became the Wimer building.

George N. Wimer began his real estate and insurance business in 1905, in partnership with another, but after two years bought out his partner, and continued his own office until selling it to W. Rex McCrossen in January, 1925. Wimer had offices in both Camden and Palmyra, and for a time the Camden office was the only one there specializing in farm and suburban real estate. George Wimer was not only a successful business man, but was involved in community service, as well. He was a Post Master, organizer of POSof A and president of it, was active in YMCA, and was the Mayor of Palmyra, to name a few of his accomplishments. On the occasion of his 75th birthday, in 1941, the Mt. Holly Herald ran a front-page article, with his picture. He was still working, as county clerk, rising at 6 am daily and arriving at his office promptly at 9. He was described as a very modest man, with rosy cheeks that matched the red tie that he always wore, until it had become his hall-mark; a man whose spryness belied his age.

The building that replaced the old Wimer building was taken by L. G. Rogers' United

Cigar Store, on the west side; Anthony Jewelers is on the east side.

Another Broad Street shop was the Beitz Food Market, at 115 E. Broad. It had opened on March 9, 1924, as "E. Bernhardt Beitz, Delicatessin". Mrs. Beitz made her own potato salad, and baked her own hams. Later on, she gave her recipe for the hams to the Burke meat packers, and they baked the hams for her. In 1932 she added home-made donuts to the good things offered in the Beitz store. Soon after that, the store modernized, dropping the floor to street level, eliminating the 5 steps that had to be climbed to enter the Delicatessin. It was enlarged several times after that, and improved with the times, adding freezers and a dairy case in 1961. Something was lost, with the passing of stores like Beitz Delicatessin....

Other changes came about, too. In 1941 Cinnaminson Bank & Trust ran ads each week to acquaint readers with various banking procedures. At this particular time, the concept of checking accounts was new, and strange to most people. The articles dealt with the general use of checks, how to write and endorse them, and stressed the economy, both in terms of cost (10¢ per check, as compared to recently increased money order costs) and time saved over paying bills with cash, in person.

Movies were popular--especially "Open Air", or Drive-In theaters, an invention of Dick Hollingshead. Shows were changed three times each week, and the price of admission was 25¢ per car--no matter how many were in it.

And there were carnivals...Each November the Riverton Firemen's Carnival was held, on the lot at Broad and Thomas, above the railroad, with games of skill, games of chance, cotton candy, candied apples...fun for all.....

The 1909 Christmas Issue of The New Era printed this verse...

A Christmas Tree.

The whole world is a Christmas tree.
And stars its many candles be.
Oh! sing a carol joyfully
The year's great feast is keeping.

Blessings, joy, and peace to all, throughout the coming Holidays.....

(bbh,ed.)