



Gaslight News

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RIVERTON, Inc.

Riverton, N.J. 08077

Founded 1970

Inc. 1978

May - June 1989

vol. xv-4 (#54)

Annual Meeting: Monday, May 8, 1989 8 p.m. Music Room, Riverton School
Program... "Steamboating on the Delaware"

.....Paul Schopp

Waterways provided the preferred travel routes in the past, for both goods and people. Of the many types of boats providing such transportation, the steamboat is the only one considered wholly American in origin, and the Delaware was the river travelled by the earliest, in the late 1700s. Through slides, and anecdotes about steamboats and their service, their captains, and their landings, the story of these vital contributors to our history will be told.

Paul Schopp is a local resident, and a member of our Historical Society, as well as many others. He is a historian with a wealth of information at his finger-tips, especially pertaining to South Jersey's transportation and industry, which he particularly enjoys. Come out and enjoy this part of the river's story...

Elections...Nell Layton, chairman of the Nominating Committee, has announced the following candidates for 3-year terms on the Board of Directors: Nancy Washington and Paul Daly, who have been filling unexpired terms this past year, and Helene Styer and Dan Campbell.

Additional nominations can be made from the floor, providing the nominee is present and agrees, or sends written agreement if absent.

Joan Hartmann, who has served on the Board for many years, has chosen not to run again. She has been an active member, and we thank her for all she has done for our Society.

By-Laws...With this Newsletter, members in good standing have received a copy of the revised By-Laws, as prepared by the Revision Committee and approved by the Board of Directors. Voting will take place at this meeting, and if approved, they will be printed over the summer, for distribution when membership dues are paid next Fall.

Our By-Laws have not been updated since 1977, and we owe a vote of thanks to the committee --Sara Guertler, Elsie Waters, and Barbara Smyth--for doing a trying, but necessary job, and doing it well. They have been reviewed by a Parliamentarian, and found to be both proper and functional for our organization.

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Awards

Our Second Annual Letters, recognizing restoration and/or preservation work on Riverton buildings that has been completed within the past year, and commending their owners for maintaining the ambience in this way, have just been sent to the following people:

- A. Bevan, 102 Penn St.: for new wood shingle roof. This is an important house, designed by arch. Samuel Sloan, for founder Prof. Charles D. Cleveland, 1851.
- R. Ciambello, 400 8th St.: replaced composition shingle roof with wood shingles, as originally used in late Queen Anne style home, built near turn of century.
- B.P.Drumheiser, 306 7th St.: for removing siding and returning to orig. exterior, early post-Victorian house.
- T.C.Cope, 214 Fulton St.: for removing siding and returning to original exterior; "Katie Ruppert's house", built 1889 by Louis Lowden for Ruppert family.
- H.F.Lippincott jr., 424 Linden Ave.; for removing siding and returning to original

exterior--early 20th century house.

S. Corley, 309 Midway: for replacing decayed wood porch with identical one; early post-Victorian house.

H. Bruckno, 701 Thomas Ave.: for replacing decayed wood porch (wrapped to left) with same size wood porch and steps. (original plain posts replaced with earlier era turned posts). House blt. at turn of century for Henry and Bertha Lippincott Parrish, by J.L.Lippincott's builders.

L. Scannapieco, 100 Linden Ave.: for maintaining original style of building while replacing rotted areas, and using old wood (some from 305 Bank Ave.) for repairs. House built c. 1905-10 for Joshua and Anna Biddle Atlee--dtr/s-in-1 of Charles M. Biddle.

Christ Church was given a special recognition/commendation for adding (electrified) lights, similar to Riverton's gas lights, to its complex, enhancing the appearance of the oldest part of Riverton, as well as providing better illumination.

We wish we could single out all the newly painted houses in town, too, for they add so much to each neighborhood; and to restoration projects done before our Awards program began--such as Christ Church's keeping wood shingles on the Parish House, even though of slightly different style, and Cook's house at 8th/Main, with the lovely big porch replaced and upper floors shingled again. And there are others...

Styles in architecture change from time to time, as in just about everything else. The current love affair of everything "Victorian" has spurred appreciation of our older homes--and sometimes an enthusiastic owner rushes to add touches not really appropriate, mistakenly supposing that "gingerbread" added to a post-Victorian American 4-square will make it Victorian, too. These touches, and experiments in paint colors that would surely make our very conservative early Rivertonians wince, can easily be changed, when the trend passes. Far more serious are structural changes, which seem attractive today, but ultimately rob a structure of its identity. So..think it through, seek good advice (the Library has good books, and Riverton's Architectural Review team can help, too), and...enjoy your "old" house. Congratulations, and thanks, to recipients of this year's Award Letters.

Plaques..with a new supply of plaques finally here, 3 applications have been approved:

Powell's, 625 Main St.: built 1881/2, for Patrick & Catharine (Kate) Jordan, who were employed by Ezra Lippincott at 303 Bank Ave. You may recall that Tim and Dawn received Award Letters and also County Awards last year for their restoration of this house.

Ragomo's, 416 Lippincott Ave.; built 1890/1, a Queen Anne style Victorian, with stone 1st floor, fish-scale shingled upper stories, and polygonal 3½ story tower at right corner of the building. Porch wraps to left, has grouped turned posts and spindlework trim. Original slate and tin roofing has been replaced, but otherwise exterior is basically unchanged.

The Porch Club, 4th & Howard Sts.: built in 1909 by Louis Lowden from plans of arch. Robeson Lee Perot of Phila., and enlarged by making large open porch across front a part of the clubroom and adding present entry from 4th St. in 1931. Approved both for building, one of few built expressly for a Women's Club in N.J., and for the many contributions the Club has made to the community since its founding in 1890.

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Our Historical Society has purchased 2 light standards that once graced Riverton Station, in the first decade of this century. When they are restored to top condition, they will be presented to the Borough. The men on our Board are working on this project, headed by Rick Wark.

Update

Morgan Cemetery...under the care of new owner Norman Brewer (Oaklyn address), the cemetery looks no better than it did under Mr. Kane's supervision. Although houses have been built along Parry Ave. at the rear, a provision that enabled funds to be established for perpetual care, the lovely old wrought iron fence was sold and not replaced, more broken stones and graffiti are throughout the cemetery, trash cans

are overflowing and inaccessible through weeds, and Christmas decorations had not been removed by Easter. A letter has been sent to Wm. Ingling, Executive Director of the N.J. Cemetery Board, calling these things to his attention.

Romance of Riverton..While showing the film to Riverton's PTA recently, the projector damaged the sprocket holes on a section of it. This will be repaired by the same company that transferred the 1926 movie from its original deteriorating film to the present safe film. At the same time, the two misplaced segments will be spliced into their proper sequences.

Historic Nomination..has reached a stalemate, as we have been advised that our Borough Council does not plan to sponsor it. They have discussed placing the question on next Fall's ballot. This is not a recommended step to take, for several reasons--one being that voters are too often intimidated by persistent false rumors concerning control of one's property, instead of taking time to learn the facts. Not only does it cost to place a question, and limited explanation, on the ballot, but the result is not binding; furthermore, action decided upon by one group can be overturned by Resolution by another, after elections.

The National Register is a small town's best--often only--ally in avoiding publicly funded projects that could adversely affect it. Think for a moment about county-owned streets...new bridges...redirected traffic routes...river dredging/silt deposits...A Council is charged with looking after the best interests of its citizens and its community: doesn't Riverton's heritage fall within that charge?

Riverton's significance lies in 2 areas: its planned inception, and its neighborhoods that depict over a century of American architectural progress. A statement recognizing this significance is long overdue on our town's records, and the lack of one was a factor that contributed to the loss of the Sloan-designed Biddle house, a few years ago. Only LOCAL laws control property use within a community, and a number of simple steps could be taken now, before it is too late. "Historic buildings" should include all that are 50 years old, in keeping with National guidelines, so that some measure of encouragement for preservation and maintenance to our many fine buildings can be established. We should protect the remaining brick and slate sidewalks that remain, and enforce Ordinances that cover maintenance of them. And the prevailing streetscape in Riverton should be defined and protected--lawn, sidewalk, grass strip, curb, street--to prevent more black-topped front lawn parking and bricked or stony front yard areas.

How do you feel about these things? Why not let our Borough Council members know?

Miscellany

Notepaper, 15 triple fold sheets per packet, half with steamboat Columbia and half with the old Riverton station, at \$3.50 at Library, Victorian Thymes, or Board members.

Trip: Tri-Boro Women's Club is sponsoring a bus-trip to Salem County's Open House in Fenwick's Colony on Saturday, May 6th. More than 35 historic buildings will be open, and there is an optional train ride (extra cost). Cost, for bus and entry fee, \$20. Call Betty Mills, 829-6842 for information and reservations.

Herb, Perennial & Pantry Sale, at Haddonfield Historical Society 343 Kings Hwy East, on Thursday, April 27th, 10-4:30 p.m.

Riverton Business Association Spring event, Saturday April 29, is a Buy A Flower Campaign to benefit the island beautification project--check out details with Jeanne Wark at her Beauty Salon, 526 Main (786-2137).

Palmyra Business Association will be holding a "Downtown Day" on Saturday, June 3, from 10 a.m. to ??? (no flea markets).

Arts & Crafts, and Flea Market Saturday, May 20 (rain date, 21st), from 9 to 3, will be held at Ryerss Library and Museum, at Burholme Park, Cottman & Central Aves. Phila. Super Crafts--and if you've never been to the Museum, it's well worth the 25 min. ride across the bridge, and out rte 73. The Italianate Villa, on a hill, that was once the Ryerss family home, is a part of Phila.'s Park System now, and is free. It houses some lavishly furnished Victorian rooms, and collections of canes, Toby mugs, miniatures, Indian artifacts, and much more.

Workshops: Free, at Phila. Arch. Salvage Warehouse, 1214 N. 26th St (at Girard Ave.)
April 29: Setting rehab priorities (planning order of work and maintenance)
May 13: Landscaping vintage homes (pruning, species, common problems by trees/vines)
May 20: Dealing with contractors, contracts, and architects (panel discussion)
PASL was created in 1987 as service of Phila. Historic Preservation Corp., & is partially funded by a grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts; "the area's only non-profit resource for reusable materials for home restoration projects." info, 236-9339.
Calligraphy projects lettered by Gayle Kirkpatrick, 3003 Harbour Drive, 829-8296.

Yesterday.....

Spring and early summer are busy seasons...not only for recreational activities, but endless problems and projects to be coped with, as young towns were growing...

In April, ~~1920~~, Palmyra National Bank organized..opened in August...closed during the Depression. A school for children of migrant workers was set up in Riverton, under the direction of women for Home Missions. Children were bused in from area farms to day nursery care for the smallest and graded studies for the older ones.

After lunch, there was supervised play.

With hot weather coming, an ice box was becoming a necessity. VanSciver's offered them for from \$2.45 up, with a fine piece going at just \$17.50. E.H.Pan-coast got the contract to build a large 2-story building for Joe Roberts at the site of his burned-out store. On the 4th of July, the Firemen's parade was held, led by a band, but there was a discouraging show of flags, a matter of concern to those who remembered the great displays of the past. Yachting was being spoken of as a failure--the fine yachts that once graced the river were gone--baseballs and bats, and bicycles, seemed to have become "all absorbing amusements".



Things must have been looking up a short time later, for in 1892 the 4th began with races at the Y.C. in the morning, by yachts, rowboats and canoes, followed by baseball and cricket matches in the afternoon, and fireworks in the evening. The fireworks were provided "at the expense and trouble of private individuals", but "all folks attended, as they were exhibited at a public place." Then in August the Y.C. held a Venetian Carnival, with other clubs participating, of beautifully lighted crafts--yachts, launches, skiffs, rowboats, and canoes. It lasted from 8:30 to 10 p.m.

That same year arguments concerning separating Palmyra and Riverton from Cinnaminson were going strong--and were so passionately defended that the editor of the Palmyra newspaper was accused of printing inflammatory articles said to be written by the New Era's editor--until threatened with legal action, after which the articles ceased. But feelings ran high--should each separate individually, or should they become one new town? When Rivertonians expressed a preference for remaining Riverton, an irate reporter wrote that Palmyra planned to "take everything from the Pennsauken Creek to Thomas Avenue, and leave Riverton out in the cold"...Meanwhile, Palmyra was busily laying crushed blue limestone sidewalks throughout the town.

In the Spring of 1909 the Presbyterian church was building its parsonage fund, and Mrs. Charles Mills organized the production of the popular operetta, Princess Bonnie, by Willard Spencer. It was staged at the Lyceum, the author was present, and Mrs. Mills herself sang the title role. The Spanish Dance was apparently a high spot in the production, as danced by the Misses Teeple, Hecker, Brooksbank, Marcy, Unstead, and Daniels, and the show was considered a great success.

1909 was also a significant year for the Porch Club, for in May they took possession of their new Clubhouse, "in time to hold their Annual Meeting in the main room, an assembly room big enough for dances and receptions, and a porch roomy enough for summer use." That same year, throughout the summer, the Board of Education held meetings to resolve the crowded school situation. A lot at 5th & Howard was purchased, and Charles Peddle was engaged to design a modern brick building for 400 children. The total cost was expected not to go over \$38,000--for lot, architect, construction, and furnishing. The following year the school was opened, and the Board abolished Riverton's 2-year High School program, and those students have ever since attended Palmyra High. bhh

Have a happy and safe summer!!!

New Souvenir card at Parade, July 4th!

.... National Historic Preservation Week: May 14-20....

Insert To #54 May 1989

Constitution: Article I Name...unchanged
Article II Purpose...unchanged
Article III Membership

Membership is open to all who are interested in the purpose and functions of this organization, under the following categories:

1. General Membership
2. Senior Citizen
3. Honorary Life Member

(explanation: originally had 5 categories, with varying fees (now covered under Membership section) and a non-discrimination clause not appropriately included here, and covered elsewhere)

Article IV Annual Meeting

1. The Annual Meeting shall be the last scheduled meeting in May.
2. The Fiscal year shall be from June 1st to May 31st.

(explanation: clarified time of Annual meeting, and stated fiscal year)

Article V Directors and Officers

Section 1. The Board of Directors of this Society shall consist of 12 members, four of whom shall be elected each year ~~at the Annual Meeting~~, to serve a ~~two-year term~~. (explanation: unchanged; possible re-election of an officer during 3rd yr. covered by other sections, i.e. Brd filling vacancies, and serving until

Section 2. The Officers of this Society shall be: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer, and shall be elected by and from the Board of Directors at the Board's Reorganization meeting in May, following the Annual ~~Board~~ Meeting. Terms of office for officers shall be 2 years, or until their successors are elected.

(explanation: Curator and Historian should not be "officers", but ARE Directors; terms, "until successors..etc" added to cover possibility of any problem filling an office at designated time.)

Section 3. The Board of Directors shall have the power to fill any vacancy within its own body. (explanation: re-worded, to cover ANY Board vacancy need)

Section 4. Unchanged (re. Brd. conducting the society's business, etc.)

Article VI Election of Officers and Directors

Section 1. In March a Nominating Committee, consisting of 3 members in good standing, shall be appointed by the President, with approval of the Board of Dir.

(Explanation: reworded for clarity; added, after "members, "in good standing")

Section 2. The Nominating Committee shall present a slate of 4 candidates for election to the Board of Directors to membership 2 weeks before the Annual Meeting. (explanation: same concept, reworded; changed term "officers" to "candidates to Board of Dir", since that is what is done...)

Section 3. Nominations from the floor may be made at the Annual Meeting, provided the nominee is present, or has agreed in writing, to accept the nomination. (explanation: slight rewording--exactly same concept)

Section 4. Election of Directors shall take place at the Annual Meeting. Newly elected Directors assume their duties at beginning of fiscal year.

(explanation: term, Directors, instead of "officers"; clarified beg. of term)

Section 5. Members of the Society who are in good standing are entitled to vote. (explanation: dropped "18 yrs of age or over" from wording)

Article VII Dissolution of Assets unchanged

Article VIII Amendments

Section 1. unchanged

Section 2. An affirmative vote of the majority of all members present and voting shall be required for adoption of an amendment. If it has been approved by the Board of Directors, a simple majority of members present and voting is

sufficient for adopting the amendment or amendments. If it has been disapproved by the Board of Directors, a 2/3 majority vote by members present and voting shall be required.

(explanation: phrase "membership present" changed to "Members present and voting")

BY-LAWS

Article I Membership and Dues

Section 1. deleted--already covered elsewhere..refers to who may join

Section 1. Dues and fees for membership in this Society are established by the Board of Directors, with approval by the general membership.

Section 2. Dues of this Society shall be payable to the Treasurer on or before November 1st of each year.

Section 3. If dues have not been paid by February 1st, membership will be considered terminated.

Section 4. Honorary Membership, conferred by the Board of Directors, exempts those members from paying dues, but includes all privileges and rights of membership except voting or holding office.

(explanation: there were formerly 7 categories of membership--not followed for years; this (sec. 1) allows dues to change by simple format instead of requiring change in By-Laws, and also clarifies what Honorary Membership is (sec 4)

Article II Meetings

Section 1. General Meetings: a minimum of 4 shall be held each fiscal year, and shall be open to the public.

(explanation--former minimum was 2; we held 5--spec. 4 covers unexpected canceling of a program for any reason, that year)

Section 2. Special meetings may be called by the President, or by 6 mem

(explanation: "membership" deleted before "meetings")

Section 3. General meetings of this Society shall be announced through its newsletter; special meetings by notification from the Board of Directors.

SEC 4: Senior Citizen is one who has reached 65 yrs of age.

(explanation--former minimum was 2; we hold 5--spec. 4 covers unexpected canceling of a program for any reason, that year)

Section 2. Special meetings may be called by the President, or by 6 members.

(explanation: "membership" deleted before "meetings")

Section 3. General meetings of this Society shall be announced through its Newsletter; special meetings by notification from the Board of Directors.

(explanation: formerly called for mailed notices--written prior to our having a newsletter, and when postage was much lower in cost)

Section 4. A quorum at a general or special meeting shall consist of at least 10 members in good standing. (explanation: word change: "general" instead of "membership"; add "special")

Section 5. The Board of Directors shall meet prior to each scheduled general meeting, or a special meeting, and in May, following the Annual Meeting, for re-organization. (explanation: defines when Board meets, instead of having no set plan) A quorum shall consist of 6 Board members.

Section 6. Removal of an elected Director must have a two-thirds vote of the Board of Directors; said Director to then be notified in writing of the Board's action.

(explanation: in the past, a Director who failed to attend 3 meetings was automatically removed, but there was no process by which a director could be removed for non-performance of duties. This should cover such needs...)

Section 7. Chairmen of Committees may attend meetings of the Board of Directors, but do not have the right to vote at the meeting.

Section 8. Unchanged (resignations)

Article III Duties of Officers and Directors

Section 1. President: The President shall serve as chief executive officer, preside at all meetings, enforce strict observance of the Constitution and By-Laws; shall countersign all checks drawn by the Treasurer for disbursement of funds; may call special meetings when deemed necessary, and serve as an ex-officio member of all committees except the Nominating committee. Expenditures by the President of any sum beyond \$50.00 requires Board approval before action.

(explanation: exempts pres. from Nominating committee, which was not done in original By-Laws; sets cap on spending, which was added Dec. 1977)

Proposed Revision of By-Laws, page 3)

Section 2. Vice President: unchanged.

Section 3. Secretary: The Secretary shall keep accurate records of all ~~xxxxxx~~ business and actions taken at all meetings of the Society, and handle such correspondence as directed by the Board of Directors.

(explanation: originally, a secretary and corresponding secretary were called for--but have not been functioning for over 10 yrs. Should the organization later need 2 offices, an amendment would permit adding a 2nd secretary at that time)

Section 4. Treasurer: The Treasurer shall be responsible for the safe-keeping of the Society's funds, shall maintain proper financial records, and, with the President, sign all checks drawn on the Society's accounts; shall be responsible for the safe keeping of legal documents, as directed by the Board; shall present the Society's books for auditing each year prior to the Annual Meeting.

(explanation: separates positions of Treasurer and Membership Chairman into separate categories, instead of requiring one person to do both. Also designates who keeps such papers as incorporation papers, tax forms, etc.)

Section 5. Curator: Shall collect, catalog, and store articles acquired by the Society, exercising reasonable care for their safe-keeping. All donations become the property of the Society, and are to be acknowledged as such. Items on loan must be so stipulated, in writing, by person making the loan and by Curator accepting same.

(explanation: re-worded for clarity; no change in policy) note also: Curator and Historian are Directors, not Officers.

Section 6. Historian (unchanged)

Section 7. (orig. section 8--delete, redundant)

Section 8. Immediate Past President shall be an ex-officio member of the Board of Directors for 1 year, following end of term.

(explanation: formerly sec. 9; specifies length of ex-officio term)

Article IV Committees

Programs: Arranges suitable programs for regular meetings, and for any special meetings, if appropriate.

Membership: Maintains accurate records of members; notifies President of new members and of those terminated. Notify Newsletter chairman of correct addresses for mailing list.

Publicity: Prepares newspaper releases prior to general meetings, special meetings or events, or other activities of the Society.

Plaques: Keeps a supply of plaques on hand; accepts and reviews applications for Plaques, notify Board of approvals; have lettering done; keeps an accurate list of those awarded or rejected.

Awards: Prepares lists of properties within town that have completed preservation or restoration work during the year; with Board Approval, send each such owner a Letter of Recognition with Society's Seal, in late April. Keep accurate records of all awards made.

Hospitality: Greet and introduce guests and members at meetings; plan for refreshments, when included.

Ways & Means: Plan fund-raising activities for the Society.

Section 2. Committees may be added or dissolved as deemed advisable, with Board approval. Committee chairmen may be appointed from the Board of Directors, but members of same may be from the general membership. Terms are for 1 year.

(explanation: Plaques and Awards are committees added since original By-Laws were adopted; Hospitality and Refreshments are combined into 1; provision included for adding or dissolving temporary or new committees added)

Article V Authority

(explanation: unchanged, except name of authority from General Henry M. Roberts rules, to Roberts Rules, Revised.)

Article VI Amendments

(these are the same as those for Amendments, under Constitution; unchanged, except for "membership" to "members present and voting")