



Gaslight News

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RIVERTON

Riverton, N.J. 08077

Founded 1970

Inc. 1978

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Annual Meeting: Monday, May 10, 1993 8 p.m. Media Center, Riverton School
Program: COVERED BRIDGES

.....Anna and James Kester

When a stream crossed the path of a roadway and could not be forded, a bridge had to be constructed over it, if transportation was to continue. Sun, storms, and floods all contributed to a constant need for repairs, and covering them was a means of protecting them from these elements.

Such covered bridges were once easily found throughout New England, particularly, but also in Ohio, Indiana, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. Treasured today for their picturesque quality, few remain--in our state there is just one, in Hunterdon county.

Mr. and Mrs. Kester will present a slide lecture, together with exhibits and paintings, of covered bridges a century old, identifying several designs, methods of construction, and problems of upkeep. Residents of Marlton, N.J., the Kesters are members of several Societies concerned with the preservation of covered bridges; they attend seminars and festivals, adding to their knowledge of covered bridges, and photographing and making paintings of them.

This promises to be another fine program, for which we thank Chairman Frank Wagenknight; he continues to do a fine job, as he has for the past two years. Thank you, Frank!

Elections:

The following slate is offered by the Nomination Committee for election to a 3-year term on the Historical Society's Board of Directors:

- Paul Schopp and Rod Zwirner, for re-election
- Virginia Kline, for election to full term, having completed an unexpired term
- Ruth Schweizer, long-time member of the Society

- Jack Laverty, Chairman
- Nancy Washington
- Art Waters

Four members are elected to the 12-member Board each year, and from the Board, our Officers are elected (by the Board) to serve 2-year terms. This year is the year for election of officers, which will be done at the re-organization Board meeting May 24th.

Additional nominations may be made from the floor, with approval of a nominee.

Committees:

Committee chairmen will also be appointed for 1-year terms at the re-organization meeting, and are not required to be Board members. If you are interested in becoming a chairman, or on serving on a committee, please let one of your Board members know it. To get involved is to better know other members, as well as the workings of the Historical Society, and pays a generous dividend in knowledge and pleasure for the hours involved.

Memberships:

New members welcomed during the 1992/3 year are:

- Mrs. Emma Dare, Cinnaminson
- Dana Frederickson, Riverton
- Mrs. Alice Headman, Palmyra
- Henry Smith, Palmyra
- Life Member, Mrs. George Mattis
- Mr/Mrs. Alan Lilholt, Riverton
- Mrs. Norma Milner, Philadelphia
- Mr. James McGill, Riverton
- Mr/Mrs. Mark Schneider, Riverton

National Preservation Week: May 9 - 15, 1993

This year's theme is "Changing Perceptions: Broadening our View of History and Historic Preservation." It offers this theme as a challenge to historians and preservationists to think more broadly about what is history, and how it is best preserved.

In New Jersey a Conference is planned for Friday, May 14, at Cape May. Governor Florio will present Awards for projects or contributions deemed exceptional in the field of historic preservation. Information may be had by calling 292-2023.

On May 15th there will be a self-guided tour of 15 restored Cape May homes from 1-4 p.m.

In our own town of Riverton, why not renew your appreciation of some of our early architecture by picking up a copy of the Historical Society's self-guided walking tour at the Library or the Victorian Thymes, and enjoy one of these nice Spring days? And why not start now to look into your own home's history? It is not hard to do, and if your house is a century old or especially significant, it could qualify for a Plaque. Interested?

Some Reminders and/or Suggestions:

An interesting paper-back book, Public Art in New Jersey During the Period of the American Renaissance, published by the Museum Council of New Jersey, covers murals, monuments, and architecture we are often unaware of, in our own State.

Bartram's Garden, 54th & Lindbergh Blvd in Phila., will hold its "Plants Legends for Sale" on Saturday, May 1st, 10-4, with tours, demonstrations, children's activities, and plants for sale. Admission, \$4. It really is a most interesting day--some of our members went last year and found it most enjoyable.

Right here at home, on May 15th, the Shade Tree Commission will conduct a riding tour to learn about the many varieties of trees in Riverton. Contact Barry Emens/the Borough Office. Space limited, so sign up early.

Philadelphia's Open House Tours continue through May 16th. Contact Friends of Independence National Historical Park at (215) 928-1188 for times, places, costs.

Sunday, May 23 at 2:30 pm Camden Historical Society will present Tom and Marianne Tucker's folk music program that was snowed out in March. Park Blvd/Euclid Ave, Camden; call 964-3333 if further information is wanted.

Camden's Historical Society has also scheduled a trip on May 27th to North Jersey, to include the Presby Iris Gardens in Upper Montclair, Lunch, and the Morris Museum in Morristown. The Museum has on loan from the Vatican Museum an exhibit of the lost Etruscan Civilization, and their gift shop has some reproductions of items imported from Italy. Cost, \$40.00 ; checks to CCHS, c/o 2004 Maple Ave., Haddon Hgts NJ 08035.

Burlington County Historical Society's next Art History series will be on June 5, "20th Century N.J. Artists." Reservations in advance-386-4773.

And on Wednesdays in July, 12:15 p.m., "Lunch at the Movies"--a popular program.

Preservation Coalition of Greater Philadelphia has 2 more tours of "Treasures-Behind the Scenes"--Burial Grounds of Christ Church and St. Peter's Chapel on Wed. June 9, at 5:30 p.m., and Wharton Esherick Studio and Kahn/Esherick Workshop on Sunday, June 27, 1-3 p.m. Fees, \$10; reservations, info, call (215) 546-0531.

And as our meetings season ends, a reminder to look for our ad in the 4th of July program Book, and our hand-outs along the Parade route...and our table with notepaper, "Romance of Riverton" tapes, and tour guides at the Park.

Yesterday...

If you had been walking, or riding your bicycle out Main Street toward route 25 in the early years of this century, on a fine Spring day, you would soon have found yourself enjoying the fragrance of the apple blossoms blooming on either side of the road. Throughout the area were orchards of fruits--apple, peach, pear, cherry, as well as fields of strawberries, blackberries, corn, and tomatoes. The South Jersey History, published in 1923, said the county would eventually become "almost one entire market garden and

fruit farm." It noted the various canning industries that had developed, which increased the demand for peaches, tomatoes, peas, lima beans, and beets, as well.

Early morning sounds began with roosters crowing, since most families, large or small, kept a few chickens; and horses, plus a few cows and goats were also in residence here, well into the twenties.

A Spring fog, in 1900, caught the steamboat Trenton unawares, and it had to tie up overnight at the Bridesberg pier. Among the passengers who were delayed in returning home were those bound for Riverton who had attended the Farmer's Picnic at Washington Park.

In April, 1904, Riverton's first banking house opened: Riverton Savings Bank. Within a year it had deposits of nearly \$10,000 and offered 3% interest. In 1907 the Cinnaminson Bank & Trust opened, and the Savings Bank called their depositors to collect their money and turn in their books, and re-open accounts with the new bank's savings department. That same year the Bank erected its own building, on Main Street, and by 1923 had a capital stock of \$100,000. In June, 1926, it opened a new bank building, diagonally across from the original one, where it remains today. Throughout the Depression it remained solid. Later there were mergers and changes of ownership, and today the same building is a branch of Chemical Bank.

In the Spring of 1905 Charles Woolston was rebuilding and enlarging his carriage factory along 7th street. By May 113 ft. of the long building facing 7th, behind his home at the corner of Main, were under cover, and included the blacksmith and wheelwright shops. Yet to be completed were the varnish, paint, and trim rooms, and the wares room. Lumber and wagon sheds were behind the long building.

In 1920 Woolston sold his carriage business to devote his time to selling trucks. He rented out the buildings, and then, just a year later, fire again destroyed them. Before long, the factory buildings were razed, and residential development was opened up.

In the summer of 1906 Marshall William Quigley purchased a building lot on the Ball Grounds, and had contractors Shaner & Miller build his new home there--608 Thomas Avenue.

In April, 1908, the YMCA building (on Broad, between Garfield/Maple) was facing foreclosure of a \$2000 mortgage. A year later the Acme Tea Company rented the building and opened its new store there.

That same year (1909) the Cinnaminson National Bank, which had taken title to much of Sam Rudderow's properties, leased the building at 609 Main St. to the Government for a Post Office, at \$700 rent per annum, for 10 years. That building, the former C.E. Sunday School/Parish building, had been rented by Porch Club for several years, until the Bank asked them to forfeit their lease in response to the Government's request. They complied, and decided to build their own Clubhouse, but in the interim, rented a room over Adolph's cigar store. This small store, facing Broad on an angle of Broad/Howard, and sometimes numbered 527 Main St., was listed in 1895 as a grocery, in 1900 as Adolph's cigar and tobacco shop; and then Adolph added a soda counter. According to local newspapers, John Adolph sold the shop to "Wilkins" about 1909-1910, who rented it to Theobald Schneider, of Riverside, who added newspapers and pool. The shop at 527 Main was razed to make way for the erection of the Williams/Wright brick building, in 1923.

In May, 1910, E. McDonald's milk house on Cinnaminson Street was offered at sheriff's sale. Location??? Census records and Insurance plats locate widow McDonald living at 705 Cinnaminson Street, but no evidence of a "milk house" is shown. Cinnaminson^{SMCC-F} was developed from 8th to the railroad, and for 1 block below the railroad.

In the Spring of 1912 the Presbyterian church was erecting a Manse, reported to cost "not more than \$6500." Today the building is used by Emergency Services....

In 1923 Public Service set fares for its buses at 5¢ per zone. A new bus cost \$10,000, and a driver was paid 65¢ an hour. In 1947 they raised fares for the first time, by 2¢ per zone, explaining that the cost per bus had risen to \$15,000, and 300 were replaced each year. Drivers were paid \$1.80 per hour. Buses ran every half hour, and patrons, used to the every-twenty-minute schedule of trolleys, complained.

In June, 1936, Smith's store, on Main Street, was taking orders for a book written by Philip Rigg, son of a former Rector of Christ Episcopal Church, called "Southern Crossing."

May, 1941, we celebrated "I Am An American" Day, with parades, speeches, special events. Palmyra had a movie made, by a Lancaster, Pa. company, of the day's events, of schools, churches, various activities in town--and some in Riverton--and some residents may remember being in it, or seeing it. But what has happened to the film? It has been traced to Palmyra's PTA, but then lost. Might a reader have a clue as to where it is now?

By the Spring of 1950 the old dump on the Dreer property above the Park had been replaced by a fine, new building, Cedar Lane Manor. In May apartments with two bedrooms, and including heat and light, were offered for just \$82.00 per month.

Spring, always a time of new things, whether plants and flowers, new buildings, new beginnings through graduations, marriages, is also a time to be busy with end-of-the-season activities of clubs, schools, etc. And the softness of Spring is soon turned into summer, with its own special vacations and fun, as well as heat... to be enjoyed, so we may return, refreshed and eager to participate in the next year's opportunities.

Enjoy Spring.. Have a good summer! See you again in the Fall...

bbh, ed.