



# Gaslight News

The Historical Society of Riverton  
Riverton, New Jersey

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## Plain and Fancy: Colonial Stitchery at March Meeting

The Historical Society of Riverton will meet on **Monday, March 9, 1998 at 8:00 pm** in the Riverton School Media Center. Our speaker for the evening will be Charlotte Froman, her subject: *Stitching through the Generations* - about the education of children during colonial times and the need for them to know how to sew.

The title of Ms. Froman's talk will be "**Plain and Fancy Stitchery in Burlington County**". "Plain" sewing was the practice of making clothing and other necessary household goods from cloth. "Fancy" stitching was the artistic side of the craft which applied to needlework of samplers and other decorative pieces for the home. Charlotte will discuss the continuing history of both of these aspects of the sewing craft in the Burlington County Region. During colonial times, a particular type of needlework was practiced and taught from generation to generation from New England down to Burlington County New Jersey. The program will cover the ways that patterns were brought here from different countries, how they evolved and were blended to meet American needs, and the importance of stitchery in our nation's development, and today.

Mrs. Froman was introduced to stitchery from the age of about 5 or 6, by her grandmother from Lititz Penna., who was a seamstress, as was her greatgrandmother before her. These were prestigious community positions at the time, for the normally home-bound women. Weaving and stitching were necessary arts, as everyone needed their products. Charlotte further developed her stitching hand while training

in a medical field at Phila General Hospital, during the intermittent times between training and while on call.

After moving to New Jersey, Charlotte located a group of women who were as interested in the art of needlework as she. Together they formed a local chapter of the Embroiderer's Guild of America (EGA). The Embroiderer's Guild had come to the United States in approximately 1959, these ten women founded their association in 1969. Since that time, Mrs. Froman has served as President of her EGA chapter, (currently is Vice President), and has served on the National Board of the EGA. Her nearly 30 year association with these groups has earned her the titles of EGA Certified Teacher, Certified Judge, and Master Craftsman.

Charlotte's interest in the historic aspects of needlework comes from her interest in antiques and in the the co-mingling of these decorative art forms. She lectures in our area, and teaches at the Peachfield Plantation. She will soon teach a course in North Carolina about instructing children in stitchery. She advocates teaching inter-generational groups in order to increase current interest and to pass the craft on into the future.

All persons are invited to attend this interesting and informative event. The Riverton School is located at Fifth and Howard Streets, Riverton. Attendees should enter the School through the main doors facing Fifth Street. The school building and meeting room are handicapped accessible. There will be a short refreshment period following the meeting and program.

## Gaslight News

is a production of the Historical Society of Riverton; and is published four times a year.



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The Historical Society of Riverton  
Riverton, New Jersey 08077

## Upcoming Meeting Schedule

May 11, 1998 -

### ANNUAL MEETING:

1. Election of Officers to the Board of Directors.
2. Program: The Underground Railroad in New Jersey.

Please plan to attend this important and informative meeting with your historically minded friends and neighbors.

## New Bench Dedicated to Betty B. Hahle

The Riverton Improvement Association (RIA), for over a year now, has been purchasing and installing historically styled streetscape items in the downtown area of Riverton. The large flowerpots, in-ground landscaping, and replica gaslights are examples of the RIA's beautification efforts. The purchases are all financed by donations given by businesses and by private individuals.

The RIA's most recent installation has been five Victorian-type cast iron and wood slat benches at various public locations along Main Street. One such location is on the small grass lawn in front of the Riverton Public Library.

Robert Thomson, the chairman of the RIA has recently informed us that their directors have voted to dedicate the Library bench to the Historical Society Historian, and officially appointed Borough Historian, Betty B. Hahle. Shortly, a plaque will be added to the library bench stating:

*Dedicated to Betty B. Hahle, Historian.*

The Historical Society applauds this recognition of Betty Hahle's tireless research and documentation of Riverton history. Betty's mission has always been to bring the value of Riverton's history, to the most people, of all ages, in Riverton. This is an appropriately visible location to carry on that mission.

Congratulations to Betty !



## Events of Interest

### Celebrating Women's History Month:

Sunday March 8, 1998: "**Notable Women in the History of Burlington County**". An illustrated Lecture by Joseph M. Laufer, Educator and Public Speaker. In the Corson Poley Center, 454 Lawrence Street, Burlington, NJ 08016. Lecture begins at 4:00 PM. Call Burlington County Historical Society @ (609) 386-4773 for information.

Saturday March 14, 1998, 9 AM - 4 PM: "**A Woman's Place: The Role of Women in Historic Preservation in New Jersey**". Masonic Temple, Barrack Street, Trenton, NJ. Free with pre-registration. Fee for luncheon and reception to honor the 1998 Oliphant Award Winner - Pauline S. Miller, Director, Ocean County Cultural and Heritage Commission. Contact Donna Evans, Old Barracks Museum, (609) 777 4040.



Saturday, April 4, 1998: "**Romance, Risk, & Reality**", the 1998 New Jersey Historic Preservation Conference. Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, NJ. \$25 includes conference registration, box lunch and entry to the Old House Fair. Please register by March 27. Call the NJ Historic Preservation Office (609) 984-0543.



Saturday, April 4, 1998, 10 AM - 4 PM: **Old House Restoration Fair**, in conjunction with the NJ Historic Preservation Conference, Vendor Exhibits provide Fair goers with a wide range of restoration products. Contact Preservation NJ @ (732) 442-1100.



# Yesterday

*By Betty B. Hahle*

Some of the addresses given in the 1936 Tillicum are no longer familiar. Among the Seniors graduating from Palmyra High School that year were students from Camden, Cambridge, Delair, Delanco, East Riverton, Five Points, Merchantville, Moorestown, Palmyra, Parry, Riverside, Riverside Park, Riverton, and Wrightsville.

Those towns lying between the Pennsauken and Rancocas Creeks were once a part of Chester, one of the original county townships, incorporated in 1688. As sections grew and separated from it, Chester shrank in size until 1945 when the last remaining section became Maple Shade, and it was no more.

Cinnaminson township separated from Chester in 1860, taking with it numerous smaller communities, and choosing for its own name the old Indian name by which it had been known. The Pennsauken Creek, one of its boundaries, has been called by different names and spellings have varied. Posomoking, Penisauken, Cimissicle, Sinsissicunk, are all variations of the Lenni-Lenape name that identified one of their villages as "a place between the forks". The South branch of the creek was once known as Coles Branch. Other early names for the Pennsauken were Chester river, Cropwell river, and Moore's Creek.

In Cinnaminson was Fork Landing, a boat landing at the junction of the two branches of the Pennsauken Creek, just south of Parry. The name was used in 1820 newspapers, and the 1909 New Era noted that boat houses had been built along the creek's banks at West Palmyra and at Fork Landing, which were used by Philadelphia families during the summer.

Parry was an area south of what is today Rte. 130, and was originally known as North Pennsville when it was laid out in 1855 by Jedediah Strong. The name was changed in 1880 in honor of Judge William Parry, when he got a Post Office for the village that year. Parry's Pamona Nurseries supplied fruit trees for local orchards and trees for new streets, as well as a variety of other nursery stock. He introduced the Kieffer pear and several improved strains of strawberries and blackberries, as well as other plants that were shipped over a wide geographic area. The address he used in his ads was "at 5 Points, near Palmyra."

Five Points is a colloquial name for a junction of

five roads, and there have been several so named in Burlington county. When the turnpike was chartered in 1853/4 it began in Camden and gradually extended northward. A toll booth was erected just above the Pennsauken Creek and began to collect tolls in 1855. When the toll system ended, the small building was purchased and moved to 5 Points, where it was a residence and shoemaker's shop. When Route 25 was improved as Route 130, the little shop disappeared.

Wrightsville was a settlement west of Parry, near the Moorestown boundary. It had been named for Thomas Wright, who sold the first lots there in 1847.

Palmyra on an 1849 map shows a village of five streets in what became known as West Palmyra. An 1891 Directory lists various names by which the area had been known: Brimstone Neck, Rumtown, Jugtown, Hayti, Texas. When the population reached 150, in 1856, a Post Office was established under the name of Palmyra, a name that had appeared in an early Toy deed. Palmyra separated from Cinnaminson as a township in 1894, and in 1923 changed to a borough form of government.

Westfield, a settlement at the cross roads of today's Moorestown/Riverton Road and Rte. 130, is named in records as far back as 1800. Named for the left field of Thomas Lippincott's farm, on which a Meeting House and School had been erected, it had its own Post Office in 1836. It was known as "Cinnaminson Post Office in the Village of Westfield" because there were other settlements also named Westfield within the county. A record in 1834 called the area Westfield Corner.

A little above Westfield was Asbury, where the Asbury Methodist Church and Cemetery are still active.

Riverton, between Palmyra and the Pompeston Creek along the Delaware River was settled in 1851 as a planned summer community, and has always had the same name. It separated from Cinnaminson as a borough in December 1893, by popular vote.

The Pompeston Creek, Riverton's upper boundary was once a mill stream. It rises in Moorestown and empties into the Delaware at Riverton. In 1849 there were three sawmills located on two ponds within its course, and in 1876 two of them were still in operation. In 1762 the creek's name was spelled Pumphossey, an Indian name meaning "a mirey place". It has also been called Pompus Creek, and Walter's Creek. For more than seventy years the

Henry A. Dreer Nurseries had large lily ponds in Riverton's section of the creek, and before the present Park was developed, summer programs for local children were held in that area, and included swimming (at high tide) and crafts using the fine white clay that was found along the banks. Years ago there were several small streams coming from the Pompeston. One, Jack's Run, still flows not far below Riverton's boundary with Cinnaminson. Another, now gone, once ran irregularly along 4th Street, turning toward the river where the Presbyterian Church is now. The creek's course was altered by dredging early in this century.

Above the Creek is East Riverton, largely developed by realtor Charles Price, with the expectation that it would, when developed, become a part of Riverton. However, in 1913 voters rejected the proposal, and so East Riverton has remained a part of Cinnaminson. Early in this century, the Riverton Gun Club had its grounds along the riverfront there. For many years, until the 1940's, the Dreer Nurseries had trial gardens along both sides of River Road, well up into Delran.

When Delran separated from Cinnaminson in 1880, it took more than half of that township with it. The name was suggested by Judge Parry, and is derived from the names of two of its boundaries: the Delaware River and the Rancocas Creek.

Plum Point was a jut of land above Swedes Run, and was noted in a deed in 1680. It has disappeared, lost when a large riverfront area was dredged for the Dredge Harbor Yacht Basin.

Riverside Park was a section of homes northwest of Riverside, toward the river. Riverside, extending up to the Rancocas Creek, began as a small area by the railroad known as Goat town. In 1859 the area had grown, and was known as Progress. In 1869 it became officially Riverside. It separated from Delran as a township in 1890. Many of its early settlers were of German origin, and for years churches of several denominations offered services in that language.

Bridgeboro is a settlement on the west bank of the Rancocas creek, near Rte. 130. It formed in 1748 when the Burlington Pike was laid out, and was called Ancocas Ferry. The first bridge across the creek at that point was in 1792, and the area became known as Toll Bridge. In 1832 a covered bridge was erected in its place, which was used until 1927. During the steamboat era, Bridgeboro was a port of call. Earlier, c. 1849, it was called Bridgeborough.

Chesterville was the name for a small group of houses at the Moorestown boundary of Bridgeboro. In 1882 a grist mill was located on what was later called Boundary Creek.

Fairview is along Rte. 130, about a mile west of Bridgeboro. It is noted as such on an 1849 map. There was a turnpike toll gate in Fairview. The Divinity Episcopal Church along Rte. 130 is in what was formerly Fairview.

Most of the information for this column was found in Dr. Henry H. Bisbee's book, *Sign Posts: Place Names in History of Burlington County, N.J.*, published in 1971. The book is not only informative and factual, but is fascinating to read. It makes an excellent companion, one to enjoy for a few moments or a long rainy afternoon..... March 1998

## Did you Know?

Did you know that New Jersey has an educational, informative, and highly active statewide non-profit organization for owners of older or historic homes, or just historically interested people? Yes it does, and it is called Preservation New Jersey!

PNJ publishes an excellent quarterly newsletter, and sponsors seminars and workshops throughout the state and throughout the year. Through the PNJ Bookstore, you may purchase books especially selected for the care and decoration of older and historic buildings, as well as a wide range of publications about historic preservation.

PNJ can carry a lot of clout when advocating historic preservation issues to the legislative branches of New Jersey government. The influence of an organization like PNJ is largely measured by New Jersey officials based upon the size of the group's membership. Fortunately, Preservation New Jersey's membership categories are tailored to fit your budget, business, family size or age.

For more information about joining this worthwhile organization you can call or write:

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