



Gaslight News

The Historical Society of Riverton
Riverton, New Jersey

Founded 1970

Incorporated 1978

November 2001 to January 2002

vol. XXXII, no. 2 (#103)

History of Whitesbog at November Meeting

The Historical Society of Riverton will meet on Monday, November 26, 2001 at 7:30 pm in the Riverton Public School Media Center. The subject of the evening's program will be **The History of Whitesbog and the Cranberry Industry.**

The slide presentation, approximately one hour in length, will be encompass how the cranberry industry was begun in the 1850's on the farm, and grew to become the largest cranberry farm in the state in the early 1900's. The talk will also include some information about Elizabeth White and the cultivation of the blueberry from 1916 forward.

We are especially honored to have the program presented by Tom Darlington, who is a descendant of the family that operated Whitesbog. Mr Darlington managed the Whitesbog operation for over 40 years. He is also the inventor of farm equipment that was used to harvest cranberries. More recently, Tom has been a former Pinelands Commissioner for the State of New Jersey's efforts to preserve the Pinelands.

This is a rare opportunity to learn about the history of Whitesbog, including personal anecdotes, from a person who was integral to the operation for nearly half of a century.

All persons, are invited to attend this interesting and informative event. The Riverton School, at Fifth and Howard Streets, Riverton, and the Media Center (Library) are both handicapped accessible. Enter the building through the main doors facing Fifth Street. There will be refreshments following the meeting.



Cranberry Bog Workers Early 20th Century

Riverton Library to Sponsor Candlelight House Tour

The Riverton Library biannual Candlelight House Tour will return this year on Saturday, December 8, with 3 decorated open houses in Riverton, and 2 just across our borders in Cinnaminson and Palmyra. The Riverton houses are 100 Lippincott Avenue, 101 Thomas Avenue, 409 Thomas Avenue, and 305 Highway. The local houses are 1001 Orchard Ave (corner of Orchard and Cherry Lane, Cinna.), and 208 Cinnaminson Avenue, in Palmyra.

The houses will be opened from 5 pm to 10 pm, the Library will be opened during same period, and ticket holders are invited to stop into the Porch Club, (4th and Howard) for refreshments and musical entertainment. Carolers on Main Street will be provided by the Riverton Business Association.

In addition, Victorian Thymes, The New Leaf, The Wheelhouse Art/Photography Gallery (600 Main St. second floor) and Jean Pettine Graphic Design in the former Cinnaminson National Bank (611 Main Street) will be open during the Library house tours. Also, there will be a train exhibit assembled by the South Jersey Gaugers at the Farmers and Mechanics Bank.

Riverton Borough's Holiday Celebration will also take place that evening beginning from 6:00 to 6:15 pm with the lighting of the Christmas Tree in front of the War Memorial at Broad and Main Streets. Santa Claus will be there and then proceed to F & M Bank to hear children's gift wishes.

This is a worthwhile fundraising event for the Library, and a tradition in Riverton, nearly every year. We encourage our members, and all local people to come out, support the Library, visit some historic buildings, and spend a Saturday evening in downtown Riverton to kick-off your holiday season. Tickets for the house tours and Porch Club events are \$12.00 available at the above mentioned businesses and Roger's News in Palmyra.

The Historical Society will have a table of historical displays at the Porch Club to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of Riverton's founding (see page 2, 3, & 4) If not a member, fill out an Historical Society membership application while you view the display!

Gaslight News

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



Daniel T. Campbell, AIA *President & Editor*
Priscilla Taylor, *Contributing Writer*

The Historical Society of Riverton
16 Carriage House Lane
Riverton, New Jersey 08077

Upcoming Meetings

January 28, 2002 - MUSICAL PROGRAM - Songs of the eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries will be brought to us by the sponsorship of the New Jersey Council for the Humanities.

March 11, 2002 - SPRING MEETING - Program to be announced.

May 13, 2002 - ANNUAL MEETING - Election of Officers, Program to be announced.



A fashionably dressed couple,
Peterson's 1851

Riverton's 150th Anniversary

2001 is the 150th Anniversary of the Founding of Riverton (see Then and Now, page 3 & 4). Other events which occurred during 1851:

- Godey's Lady's Book reports that ice cream is "one of the necessary luxuries of life."
- Stephen Foster pens "Camptown Races" and "Old Folks at Home" (a.k.a. "Swanee River").
- The U.S. yacht, "America" stuns the sailing world with a victory over Britain's best. Formerly known as the 100-Guinea Cup of the Royal Yacht Squadron, the prize is renamed the America's Cup, in honor of the winner. Queen Victoria, on hearing the Yanks had won, asked a royal attendant who had finished second. "Madam," he said, "there is, alas, no second place."
- 250,000 Irish immigrants arrive in New York City, still fleeing the Potato Famine of 1845.
- The first baseball uniforms are worn.
- A patent is awarded to Isaac Merritt Singer for his Singer sewing machine.
- Temperance societies reach a membership peak. (The founding fathers of Riverton wholly supported temperance and included a non-alcohol clause into the deed forbidding "spirited, vineous, fermented, or other intoxicating liquor" to be manufactured or sold on Riverton property.)
- Slave trading is banned in Washington, DC.
- The nation's longest rail line opens from New York City to Lake Erie.
- The YMCA gets its start in Cleveland, Ohio.



Dillwyn Parrish

Susan Miller Parrish

Resided at 501 Bank Avenue in 1851

Photos of founders here and on page 4 are from the Morris L. Price Collection, Courtesy of Historical Society of Pennsylvania

Then and Now

Happy 150th Anniversary, Riverton! (1851-2001)

One hundred and fifty years ago, Millard Fillmore became President of the United States, replacing Zachary Taylor, who died in office. Uniformed police forces made their first appearance in New York, then Philadelphia and Boston. Young Amelia Bloomer created a scandal by appearing in public wearing "bloomers" (frilled trousers gathered around the ankles) under a short skirt. Charles Dickens published "Bleak House". The State of California is admitted to the Union.

Our country was entering the golden age of the Industrial Revolution. Rapid technical and cultural changes were taking place that forever changed the way people lived. To offset the mechanical feel of the Revolution's scientific and calculated reasoning, our country began to embrace a keen social awareness toward the well being of our fellow Americans.

Poor Wills Almanac for 1851 (printed by Joseph McDowell Company of Philadelphia) espoused the following "Ancient Recipe" for the times - "If any man has wounded thee with injuries, meet him with patience; hasty words rankle the wound, soft language dresses it, forgiveness cures it, and forgetfulness removes the scar."

From 1830 into the 1850s, two social movements permeated our culture and gave us perhaps one of the richest periods of our literary history: the Transcendental Movement believed in basic human goodness and felt that society's ills could be cured if individuals took responsibility for their own self-improvement. Transcendentalists supported social causes of the mid-1800s such as abolition, women's rights, and temperance. The Romantic Movement believed in the importance of the individual imagination and supported experiences that helped shape a person's character. Transcendental writers included Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Henry David Thoreau. Romantic writers included Burlington, NJ native James Fenimore Cooper (Last of the Mohicans, 1823; The Deerslayer, 1840; died 1851), Nathaniel Hawthorne (The Scarlet Letter, 1851), Herman Melville (Moby Dick, 1851), as well as poets Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman (who lived in Camden, NJ from 1873 until his death in 1892).

Many literary journals and news publications made their appearance during this time. The New York Daily News began in 1851, changing its name to the New York Times in 1857. Godey's Lady's Book (1837-1898), edited by Mrs. Sarah

Hale, featured serial stories, poems, color fashion plates, and "proper" etiquette advice to women. This popular woman's magazine had a monthly circulation of 63,000 by 1851 and expanded to more than 200,000. Louis Godey, the magazine's publisher, summered in Riverton for many years and attended Christ Episcopal Church. The church's Tiffany window was donated by the Godey children in memory of their father.

It was during this culturally significant time that Riverton's founders lived their lives. These nine members of the Society of Friends had their homes and businesses in Philadelphia and worshipped and socialized together as friends, business associates, and relatives. They were active in Philadelphia's social services and supported educational, community, and reform issues. At the turn of the 1840s decade, they met frequently to talk about building a community outside Philadelphia to take refuge from the city's stifling summer heat and epidemics.

(The following biographical information is summarized from Betty Hahle's May & September/October 1999 articles in the Gaslight News. Copies of these issues may be ordered through the Society.)

Robert (1814-1902) and **William C.** (1816-1887) **Biddle** owned and operated W.C. & Robert Biddle and Company Hardware, located in the first block of High (now Market) Street in Philadelphia. The brothers married Anna and Rachel Miller, sisters of Daniel L. Miller, Jr., one of the nine founders.

Caleb Clothier (1806-1881) was a bricklayer and also a flour merchant whose business was on 5th Street, just one block north of Market Street, Phila. (Caleb's son Isaac formed the partnership with Justus Strawbridge in 1868, founding the retail business of Strawbridge & Clothier.)

Caleb's half-brother, **James Clothier** (1815-1889), had his grocery in the first block of Market Street - just across the way from the Biddle hardware store.

Dillwyn Parrish (1809-1886) was a druggist and managed the family's Parrish Drug Store at the S. W. corner of 8th and Mulberry (now Arch) Street, Phila.

Dillwyn's brother, **William D. Parrish** (1815-1863), owned a paper warehouse located on 5th Street, Phila. in the same block as Caleb Clothier's business. William married Elizabeth W. Miller, another sister of Daniel L. Miller, Jr.

Daniel L. Miller, Jr. (1820-1871) listed his occupation as merchant in "McElroy's Philadelphia Directory for 1850." He had an office in the first block of Front Street, just south of Market Street and married Anna Pancoast Ridgway.

Rodman Wharton (1820-1854), was a mer-

chant dealing in linseed oil, lead, and other materials. Rodman had his office in the second block of Front Street, Phila. just south of Market. He married Susan D. Parrish, sister of Dillwyn and William D. Parrish.

Chalkley Gillingham was an accountant who also had an office in the second block of Front Street, just south of Market.

Professor C. D. Cleveland (1802-1869) ran Charles Dwight Cleveland's School for Young Ladies (established 1834) in the ninth block of Clinton Street.

It isn't known exactly how these men came to know and purchase land from Joseph Lippincott of Chester Township (Cinnaminson), New Jersey, to begin their community of Riverton. It may have been through their families and acquaintances of the New Jersey Society of Friends -- Joseph Lippincott attended Quaker meetings at Westfield. The Parrish's maternal grandfather, John Cox (1754-1847), built the homestead Oxmead, in Burlington. The Clothiers were a prominent Quaker family in Burlington for more than a century as well.

The enterprising founders hired Samuel Sloan, a young Philadelphia architect coming into prominence of his own, to design and build a new village encompassing what they envisioned to be their summer homes. They had a fervent desire to escape the bustling activities of mercantile Philadelphia and the ever increasing fatal diseases such as cholera that were striking crowded industrial cities. They were in search of a "change of air [that] would be salutary" (as Dillwyn Parrish described Riverton in a June 1856 letter to his Aunt Deborah Wright), and settled upon this land along the Delaware River.

The Founders' Riverton Homes, built 1851

The New Jersey Mirror reported in February 1851 that plans for the villas in Riverton were costing \$2,000 apiece. Today, of the remaining founders' homes, only the exterior of Professor Charles D. Cleveland's former residence remains as it was built in 1851.

503 Bank Avenue - Caleb Clothier. Large Italianate villa, hipped roof. A cupola was removed from roof, now used as a bathhouse in the garden. Front columns and other changes made during the 1930s.

501 Bank Avenue - Dillwyn Parrish. Italianate style villa. The property has undergone numerous renovations.

407 Bank Avenue - Rodman Wharton. Large, modified Queen Anne style, of masonry and clapboard, now aluminum sided. Some porches have been enclosed.

405 Bank Avenue - Daniel L. Miller, Jr. Home

was demolished in the 1930s and a contemporary home is now on the site.

311 Bank Avenue - William D. Parrish. Gothic revival style; double leaf central front door; extended center front section, with second and third floor porches added later. Floor length windows facing river.

309 Bank Avenue - Robert Biddle. Similar in design to 311 Bank Avenue, with added portecochere. Paired windows across front, and round-top windows with hoodmolds in gable ends.

307 Bank Avenue (site of Baptist Home property) - William C. Biddle. Home was demolished in 1985.

305 Bank Avenue (moved to 102 Penn Street) - Professor Charles D. Cleveland. Gothic revival style; steep gabled roof and dormers; label molds (over windows); shingled exterior.

Founders James Clothier and Chalkley Gillingham did not build in Riverton, although early maps indicate sites for them. Both already had homes in the area.

Built in 1853

101 Main Street - designed by architect Samuel Sloan for James Clothier, but built and purchased by Caleb Clothier for his family. Large Italianate style frame villa. Four-story square tower with balconies and roundhead windows. Main porch currently undergoing restoration.

Then and Now: Our town's founders lived their early Riverton years without electricity or telephones, which arrived later in the 19th century. They were without televisions, radios, microwaves, computers, quick and convenient transportation, and switch on lighting. Before iceboxes were invented, foods were preserved by drying, salting, and smoking. Lighting was provided by candles or by oil (either whale or lard) and later gas lamps. The home was the woman's domain, and she cared for her husband and an average household of about 4-5 children. She did all her chores by hand, without the help of modern appliances and conveniences. Do you think the good old days seem so good after all?



Rodman Wharton



Susan Wharton

Resided at 407 Bank Avenue in 1851