



Gaslight News

The Historical Society of Riverton
Riverton, New Jersey

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Victorian Stereo Viewers at March Meeting

On **Monday, March 11 at 7:30 pm**, in the Riverton Public School Media Center, the Historical Society of Riverton will visit the parlors of the Victorian Era with a program about **Stereoscopic Viewers**. The program, approximately one half hour in length, will be presented by Mr. Ray Holstein, a collector of stereo viewers and their tandem cards. He will detail the physics, history and manufacturing process of the viewers and their photographic cards.

Stereoscopic viewers were equivalent to the television and VCR, which families would own during the the mid 1800's to the early 1900's. The devices provided views of world locations to millions of home viewers, even before halftone printing of photographs was available in books. A horizontal cardboard card with two photographs on it was placed in a "stereoscope" similar to binoculars. The lenses merged the images into a very clear and detailed simulated three dimensional picture of the subject.

These photo cards recorded a wealth of historical locations, which otherwise might have been lost. They also often included extensive descriptions of the locations on the reverse side. To demonstrate the effect of stereo views, all participants at the meeting will be given 3D glasses to view photo slides of 100+ year old stereo view pictures which Mr. Holstein has taken with a special stereo camera. That camera equipment is itself over 50 years old.

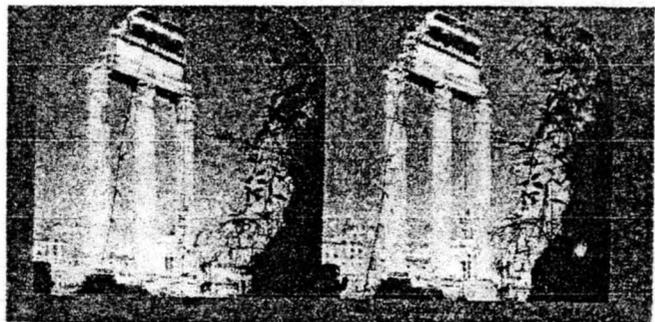
Ray Holstein, of Ardmore, PA, has been collecting stereo views for over 20 years and has amassed a library of approximately 3,000 stereo cards, about half of which are views of old Philadelphia. We will be treated to viewing approximately 120 actual historic stereo views of Philadelphia in their three dimen-

sional format that our forbearers would have seen.

The cards, frequently available at antique shows and some flea markets, are valued according to date and condition. The stereoscope viewing instrument can cost in the hundreds of dollars, and range from handheld models, to tabletop models, to boxes containing rotary viewers, which produced a moving-picture effect by flipping the viewer through several photographs in a row.

Mr. Holstein is the Regional Director of the National Stereoscopic Association which maintains a research library of stereoscopic views at Eastern University in St. Davids, PA, where he had been the curator for 15 years. Attendees at the meeting are encouraged to bring their own stereoscopes, and view cards to the program if they own them.

All persons, are encouraged to attend this informative event. The Riverton School, at Fifth and Howard Streets, Riverton, and the Media Room (Library) are both handicapped accessible. Enter the building through the main doors facing Fifth Street. There will be a short refreshment period following the meeting.



Historical Stereocard View of the Temple of
Castor and Pollux, Rome, Italy

Gaslight News

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Riverton, New Jersey 08077

Welcome to New Members

The Historical Society welcomes the following new
members for the 2002 year:

Cynthia Cammarota
Frank Cioci
Dr. and Mrs. Joseph Daniel
Debra Daly
Rita Donovan
Suzanne Fox
Ruth and Wayne Johnson
Scott Kieserman
Rachel Klabe
Elaine and John Latimer
Deb Lengyel
Alice and Hugh McDonald
Dianne and Rip Pellaton
Kathy and Tim Peters
Teri and Curtis Shinn
Rosemarie Whelan
Kathleen and David Wright

New Life Member: Robert Lundstedt

Thanks all new members and renewing members for
their interest and participation in preserving the
history of Riverton. Please attend our interesting
meetings to hear informative programs, and to meet
your culturally minded neighbors!

Members whose dues still need to be paid for the
2002 year will find a reminder notice in this issue.

Annual Meeting for 2002

Our annual meeting for the 2002 year will be held on
Monday, May 13 at 7:30 pm in the Riverton School
Media Center (Library). The program is scheduled to
be about historical wooden boats, a subject very appli-
cable to Riverton's history!

Then and Now

Are you intrigued by your family's past and won-
dered where to find more information on your
ancestors? Just last fall on a weekend visit to the
library at the Burlington County Historical Society I
learned how some of the streets in Riverton earned
their names. In 1676 the Good Ship Kent sailed
from England up the Delaware River with Quaker
families bound for Burlington, New Jersey. Some of
the family names included Parry, Thomas,
Lippincott and Taylor. The streets of Riverton
derived their names from descendants of the Good
Ship Kent.

Members of the historical society often ask for
suggestions on finding local sources of historical
information. Part one of our series on historical
research will provide our readers with a resource list
of public and private collections you can visit in the
greater Philadelphia area to begin your research.
Part two of our series will offer tips on historical and
genealogical research using your computer to
search the World Wide Web.

The internet can be a good place to start your
search for information on your extended family, an
historical event, or a famous person from Riverton.
Last year my cousin led me on an adventure that
uncovered over a hundred pages of Interior and War
Department documents that described in great
detail the life and death of my great, great grandfa-
ther and his service in both the Army and the Navy
during the Great War of the Rebellion 1861-65.

The first reference to my great, great grandfa-
ther who we affectionately called, Old George, was
found with ease by using a search engine on the
internet to find the regimental history. Although
only Old George's name appeared on the volunteer
muster rolls, it was a valuable starting point to
begin research into government documents that
might reveal more detailed information on his mili-
tary career, place of birth, home addresses, next of
kin, educational background and a even a physical
description.

Where does one begin a search for documents
from the last century? While the internet offers a vir-
tual treasure trove of information on genealogical research
only a small number of historical and governmental

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records are available in electronic databases. In my quest for information on Old George I turned to Dr. Liam Riordan at the University of Maine for advice on sources of public and private records research about people and events in the Delaware Valley.

Dr. Riordan was a Reese Fellow with the American Antiquarian Society for his study entitled, "Newspapers and the Local Meaning of the Nation in the Delaware Valley." He had visited archives, libraries and state repositories that held historical records related to life in the Delaware Valley. Excerpts from Dr. Riordan's correspondence share his recommendations for members of the Historical Society of Riverton interested in tracing their own ancestors or the history of Riverton from colonial times to the present day in New Jersey:

Here are some general research tips:

- Always call the source of the public or private collection prior to your visit to their library.
- It is best to do as much preliminary background work as you can on the historical event, family or individual that is the subject of your search using resources available to you at local libraries and the internet.

Here are some locations for your historical and genealogical research:

Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP): Given our proximity to Philadelphia, probably the richest materials can be found at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. If you go armed with lists of key family names as well as those of local churches, you will begin a long and ultimately rewarding journey into the extraordinary riches of that collection. The library is open to members and the public for a fee and is closed Sundays, Mondays, and major holidays.

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1300 Locust Street Philadelphia, PA 19107 (215) 732-6200

The New Jersey State Archive (NJSA): Located in Trenton the NJSA will also have key historical material, mostly government documents. You should be able to find local tax lists and with a little luck some county court records. As you move into the mid-19th century and beyond, the holdings of the NJSA get stronger and stronger. While you are there, it's quite convenient to drop into the New Jersey State Library which holds extensive published secondary material, especially family, local, and state histories. The State Archives is the official repository for all New Jersey colonial and state

government records of enduring historical value. It is open to the public Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.,

The New Jersey State Archive, State of New Jersey, Joseph R. Klett, Chief of Archives, 225 West State Street-Level 2 Department of State Building, P.O. Box 307 Trenton, NJ 08625-0307 (609) 292-6260 for general information.

The Special Collections and University Archives, Archibald S. Alexander Library of Rutgers University aggressively purchased a great number of New Jersey family papers that came onto the market in the 1970s and 1980s. It is a well-organized and carefully catalogued collection.

Their holdings include numerous original letters and documents by noted Americans and foreigners, early New Jersey town records, original manuscripts, diaries from 1746 to 1986, books printed before 1500, seventeenth-century tracts promoting settlements in New Jersey and elsewhere, first and signed editions of many famous literary works, historical maps and newspapers, early prints and photographs, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century almanacs, and museum objects. It is open to the public Monday - Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. year round. Saturday, 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. during the academic year.

Special Collections and University Archives, Archibald S. Alexander Library Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey 169 College Avenue New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901-1163 Phone: 732/932-7851 Fax: 732/932-1101

The New Jersey Historical Society is worth checking since one never can predict the path of how historical material gets preserved. However, their strongest holdings are usually in East Jersey / Northern New Jersey materials. Library Hours Tuesday to Saturday 12 noon to 5 p.m.

Contact: 52 Park Place Newark, NJ 07102 Phone: 973-596-8500 Fax: 973-596-6957

Haverford College Quaker and Special Collections, Magill Library maintains records of many of the monthly meetings that are part of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, particularly those of the Orthodox meetings. In many cases they have records on microfilm; in others they have the original documents themselves. They also have published family histories and an extensive manuscript collection that includes letters and diaries of many

prominent Quaker families. Library hours are Monday through Friday, 9:00-12:30 and 1:30-4:30. Library closes at 4:00 during school vacations and holidays. You should call or send an e-mail inquiry about your specific request prior to your visit.

Special Collections, Haverford College Library, 370 Lancaster Avenue Haverford, PA 19041, Phone: 610-896-1161 Email: genealog@haverford.edu

Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College and the Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore College. Both have excellent staffs that will be enormously helpful. Because of the schism that divided the Society of Friends in the 19th century, prominent Philadelphia Quakers mostly left their material to Haverford College collection, while more rural New Jersey Quakers, who tended to be Hicksites, maintained ties with Friends at Swarthmore. The library is open to the public Monday-Friday 8:30-4:30; Saturday 10:00-1:00; closed during College vacations; Closed on Sundays, New Year's Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving weekend, Christmas week.

Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College in the McCabe Library. Call for directions and conditions of library use 610-328-8497.

The Library Company of Philadelphia also is worth a trip. This splendid archive specializes in pre-1900 American imprints (published books). They have a card catalogue of their holdings by place of publication that might be especially useful to members of the Historical Society of Riverton. A quick scan of it would reveal if any printers were active in New Jersey and what sort of books they printed.

The Library Company of Philadelphia 13th and Locust Street, (between Broad Street and 13th Street next to The Historical Society of Pennsylvania) Library hours in the Reading Room and Exhibition Gallery: 9:00 a.m. - 4:45 p.m. weekdays; Print Room: by appointment only. The Library is closed on national holidays. General Information: (215) 546-3181; Reading Room: (215) 546-2456; Print Room: (215) 546-8229; Fax: (215) 546-5167 E-mail: refdept@librarycompany.org

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) maintains regional repositories in Philadelphia for Pennsylvania related records and in New York for New Jersey records. Records include government

records, census data and selected genealogical information. Individual household census records do not survive from New Jersey until 1830, but starting then, the census can give researchers a clear sense of household structure, age of family members, as well as the ethnic and racial composition of a community. Better yet, the census categories get increasingly detailed and more informative over time.

NARA Center City (genealogical records) 900 Market Street Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107-4292, Phone: 215 597-3000 E-mail: philadelphia.archives@nara.gov Fax: 215-597-2303

NARA Northeast Phila. (no genealogical records) 14700 Townsend Road, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19154-1096 Phone: 215-671-9027 E-mail: center@phil-frc.nara.gov Fax: 215-671-0273

NARA Northeast Region 201 Varick Street New York, NY 10014-4811 Telephone: 212-337-1300 E-mail: newyork.archives@nara.gov,

Web: <http://www.nara.gov/regional/newyork.html> Fax: 212-337-1306



Mrs. Myers and Mrs. Fidler in a carriage on Bank Avenue, Riverton, NJ circa 1900
Courtesy of the Free Library of Riverton

Our second feature on historical and genealogical research will appear in a later issue of your Gaslight News. Please send us an e-mail at: Riverton@altavista.com. attention Gerald Weaber to ask questions and to recommend research tips and archival collections to your fellow Historical Society members.

Gerald Weaber, Contributing Writer