



# Gaslight News

The Historical Society of Riverton  
Riverton, New Jersey

Founded 1970

Incorporated 1978

September-October 2006

vol.XXXVI, no. 6 (#123 )

## “Pedaling Through History”

The Historical Society of Riverton will meet on Monday October 2nd, 2006 at 7:30 pm for a general meeting and program in the Riverton School gymnasium at Fifth and Howard Streets. Join us for a program featuring a slideshow on the history of American bicycles with a display of early bicycles and memorabilia.

Our presenter for “**Pedaling Through History**” is Dave Gray who is an avid cyclist with decades of experience riding, researching, collecting and restoring bicycles. Dave is a member of *The Wheelmen*, an international, non-profit organization dedicated to keeping alive the heritage of American cycling, promoting the restoration and riding of early cycles, from 1918 or earlier, as well as encouraging cycling as part of modern living. Members are intent on learning lost skills, retelling lost stories, researching and writing of the golden era of cycling.

During the Victorian Era, the bicycle improved the quality of life in many ways. It gave everyone the freedom to travel beyond the confines of one’s hometown. Join us for this interesting speaker at our first general meeting for the 2007 Historical Society program year.

*“New Jersey is home to the United States Bicycling Hall of Fame. For over five decades Somerville, New Jersey has been the host to bicycling’s Kentucky Derby known as the Tour of Somerville.”*  
U.S. Bicycling Hall of Fame



Three turn of the century leisure activities—marathon running, riding in a horse & buggy and bicycling.

Courtesy of the Chicago Historical Society - *Chicago Daily News* negative collection. 1907 photograph of the Illinois Athletic Club Marathon Race with runner Alex Thibeaudeau in Chicago.

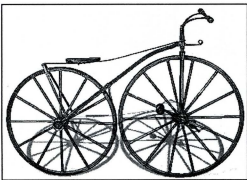
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OCTOBER 26TH 7:00 - 9:00PM.

**GHOST TOUR OF RIVERTON**  
SATURDAY OCTOBER 28TH  
7:00PM-8:00PM-9:00PM  
HOSTED BY THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
OF RIVERTON

# THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RIVERTON



Wood Brothers Boneshaker circa 1860s.

♦ ♦ ♦  
Dave Gray, right, with a variety of High Wheelers at Riverton's Victorian Day 2006.



## ***A Quick History of Bicycles***

### **The Walking Machine**

In 1817 Baron von Drais invented a walking machine that would help him get around the royal gardens faster: two same-size in-line wheels, the front one steer able, mounted in a frame which you straddled. The device was propelled by pushing your feet against the ground, thus rolling yourself and the device forward in a sort of gliding walk. The machine became known as the Draisienne or hobby horse.

### **The Velocipede or Boneshaker**

The next appearance of a two-wheeled riding machine was in 1865, when pedals were applied directly to the front wheel. This machine was known as the velocipede ("fast foot"), but was popularly known as the bone shaker, since it was also made entirely of wood, then later with metal tires, and the combination of these with the cobblestone roads of the day made for an extremely uncomfortable ride.

### **The High Wheel Bicycle**

In 1870 the first all metal machine appeared. (Previous to this metallurgy was not advanced enough to provide metal which was strong enough to make small, light parts) The pedals were still attached directly to the front wheel with no freewheeling mechanism. Solid rubber tires and the long spokes of the large front wheel provided a much smoother ride than its predecessor. The front wheels became larger and larger as makers realized that the larger the wheel, the farther you could travel with one rotation of the pedals. You would purchase a wheel as large as your leg length would allow. This machine was the first one to be called a bicycle ("two wheel"). These bicycles enjoyed a great popularity among young men of means (they cost an average worker six month's pay), with the hey-day being the decade of the 1880s.

*A Quick History of Bicycles* courtesy of the *Pedaling History Bicycle Museum*  
3943 North Buffalo Road Orchard Park, NY 14127-1841  
Consider a visit to the bicycle museum on your next trip to Niagara Falls.

## THEN AND NOW...

### Riverton's First Annual Victorian Day on June 17th, 2006

Last summer Renee R. Janowicz of *The Courier-Post* described **Riverton's First Annual Victorian Day** "the June 17th festival pays homage to the town's beginnings, with costumed musicians and knowledgeable historians promenading along Main Street...a highlight of the fair is a \$1 per person guided trolley tour through the oldest section of Riverton...Victorian Day is the brainchild of Phyllis Rodgers, a Riverton resident for nearly fifty years. She said the small borough—most of which is listed on both the state and national registers of historic places—has a special charm worthy of a day to honor it." The Historical Society salutes the *Riverton Business and Civic Association*, the *New Leaf* and other generous sponsors for producing an extraordinary event and a fun day for all.



Phyllis Rodgers (right), *The New Leaf*, coordinating events.  
Narrated trolley tours visited the historic sections of town.  
Horse drawn carriage rides carried riders from Broad Street to the Delaware River.



Town Historian Betty Hahle (right) with local artist Helen Williams-Jackson.  
Bey Ruff, local author and artist, (center) signs copies of her book *Ruff Copy* in which she recalls tales of Riverton and her grandfather's legacy as a founder of the Tacony-Palmyra Ferry Company.

# Gaslight News

Is a production of the Historical Society of Riverton, and is published four times per year.



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## TROLLEY GHOST TOURS IN RIVERTON

SATURDAY OCTOBER 28TH, 2006

### THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RIVERTON

Join us for Trolley Ghost Tours that start and end at the *Riverton Health & Fitness Center* at Main and Broad Street on the ground floor on the hour at 7:00pm, 8:00pm & 9:00pm.

Timed tickets are available for purchase at *The New Leaf*, *Victorian Thymes* and *The Riverton Library* and on October 2nd at the *Historical Society* general meeting.

Adult tickets are \$10 with a \$2.00 discount for members.

Children age twelve and younger are \$5.00.

*The Ghost Tour program may not be suitable for young children.*

Join us for refreshments, a history display and a special preview and sale of the video  
***'The Romance of Riverton'***

For more information visit the Historical Society web site at [www.gaslightnews.homestead.com](http://www.gaslightnews.homestead.com)

## Calvary's Focus on Preservation

You are invited to a program featuring an introduction to the preservation planning process, the historic significance of **Calvary Presbyterian Church** and local riverfront community churches.

The program on the historic preservation process will be presented by both

**Westfield Architects and Preservation Consultants**  
and Glenn Caponis of the **New Jersey Historic Trust.**



Thursday October 26th, 2006

7:00—9:00pm

**Calvary Presbyterian Church**

4th Street and Lippincott Avenue Riverton, New Jersey

Call 856-829-0783 for information.

Guided tour and light refreshments.