



Gaslight News

The Historical Society of Riverton
Riverton, New Jersey

Founded 1970

Incorporated 1978

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"A Riverton Pictorial: Images and Postcards"

The Historical Society of Riverton will meet on Monday January 29th, 2007 at 7:30 pm for a general meeting and program in the Riverton School Media Center at Fifth and Howard Streets. Join us for a program featuring a slideshow of vintage Riverton images.

Our presenter for "**A Riverton Pictorial: Images and Postcards**" is John McCormick, a local educator and board member of the Historical Society of Riverton. John is an avid collector of historic images and postcards of local Burlington County towns.

People move away, old photographs get lost, sold, or thrown away and irreplaceable items from Riverton's past are lost. We invite you to become a part of Riverton history by bringing your old photographs, postcards and newspaper articles to the meeting on January 29th. With your permission we will scan your images that night in the library and return your originals to you immediately. Scanned images will be preserved in the historical society archives. We would like to document as much of Riverton's history as we can to preserve it for future generations. Search your drawers and attics and bring in some things to scan. We hope to see you at the historical society meeting in January.

New Jersey is indebted to John McCormick and others who have shared their images of Riverton in a collection which has become a rich cultural treasure and legacy.

For a web preview:

<http://www.riverton.k12.nj.us/RivProjPostcards.html>



A postcard of the Williams & Wright Building in Riverton at the corner of Main and Broad Streets. Charles A. Wright was President of the Tacony-Palmyra Bridge Company which opened on August 14, 1929.

Inside This Issue

RIVERTON HISTORICAL MARKER
DONATION BY THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF RIVERTON

2007 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE
NEW MEMBERSHIP RATES
LIFE MEMBERSHIPS AVAILABLE

RIVERTON GHOST TOUR
AN ARTICLE BY PAT BRUNKER

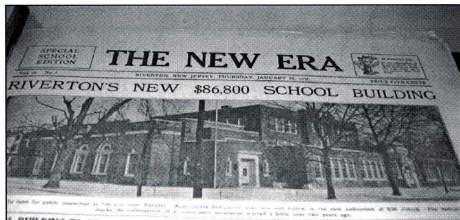
HISTORICAL SOCIETY ARCHIVES
RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS OF ARTIFACTS

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RIVERTON

The Romance of Riverton, The Movie

For many years, the movie, *The Romance of Riverton*, has been available on tape for purchase from the Historical Society. These videos are now on sale for a bargain price of \$5.00, but have recently been reissued by John McCormick, HSR Board member, in DVD format. The DVD has sound - ragtime piano music by Scott Joplin and others to accompany the silent movie. A menu and chapters have been added for easier navigation through the DVD, which will play on home DVD players and computers. The narrative (that accompanies the movie) has recently been updated by Betty Hahle, the original author, and the look of the booklet has been enhanced with new typeface and pictures. It is available for purchase at The New Leaf Gift Shop, Victorian Thymes and at HSR meetings for \$19.95. Betty Hahle has done an incredible job of saving history when there was little interest in doing so. We'd have nothing to put on to DVD now if it were not for her foresight and determination twenty years ago. Here's the story of how that happened.

When the film was first produced, "talkies" were still two years away in 1926 and a nitrate-based film was used for moving pictures. It was unstable, deteriorated unpredictably and often caused projection room fires because of its low combustion point. But their increasing popularity prompted a new form of advertising and early that year Riverton's Chamber of Commerce decided to try it. Edwin Cooper, a resident of Hainesport who was connected with a film company, was engaged to produce and direct a full-length movie about Riverton and its people, to be called *The Romance of Riverton*. The photography was done by John Clemens of New York City using a Bell & Howell camera. The story was to begin with Riverton's early days, trace its growth and development and tell a story through the "trials and tribulations of a young Riverton couple who meet and love and marry, as young people sometimes do, and their adventures in and around Riverton." Included were prominent people and places, Borough officials, the fire company, Riverton and Cinnaminson schools and teachers, local churches, the Rotary Club, the Chamber of Commerce, the railroad station, Library, Post Office, Newspaper Office (The New Era), police department, bus lines, and many "beauty spots" in Riverton and Cinnaminson. There were originally four reels of 1000 feet each on 35 mm nitrate film.



Scan of the New Era newspaper from January 30th, 1936 announcing the completion of the new Riverton School at a cost of \$86,800. Scenes of the old Riverton School can be viewed in "The Romance of Riverton" now available on DVD. Historical Society of Riverton archives.

A New Year Message from the President



The Historical Society of Riverton would like to wish everyone a happy and healthy new year. We look forward to 2007 with great anticipation as we build on the successes of 2006. In addition to our varied programs, we look forward to enhancing our participation and support for Victorian Day on June 2nd, the 2007 House Tour, as well as improving upon our Halloween Ghost Tour. (Look and listen for new ghost stories and an entirely new tour route. We're also going to add a number of trolley runs to accommodate the demand.) I'd like to thank the entire HSR Board for their tireless efforts and as always, I greatly appreciate the support and suggestions of our members.

BOB BEDNAREK, PRESIDENT
HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RIVERTON
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The **HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RIVERTON APPRECIATES ITS MEMBERSHIP** and gratefully acknowledges the efforts of volunteers in 2006 special events: Bob Bednarek, Pat & Richard Brunker for leading the *October Ghost Tour* and historic preservation zoning initiative, Paul Daly, John Farr, Betty Hahle as historian, Rob Hoag for the *Pedaling Through History* program, Aggie and Bob Kennedy for establishing a fund for historic programs, Bert Landsman, Charlotte Lippincott, John McCormick for his DVD production of *The Romance of Riverton*, Michael Robinson. **Ghost Tour** volunteers and contributors included Bob Bednarek, Pat & Richard Brunker, Jason Cioci for use of space at Riverton Health & Fitness, Georgie Ackers, Paul Daly, Carla Drumheiser, JoAnn DiNoia, Erica Eschler, Jeannie & Jim Francis for use of the fog machine, Aggie & Bob Kennedy, Hannah & Rob Hoag, John McCormick and Gerald Weaber. **Garden Tour** appreciation goes to Pat Brunker, Priscilla Taylor and Father Wrede at the Episcopal Church for use of their Parrish House. **Victorian Day** thanks goes out to organizers Phyllis & Bryan Rodgers, Sue Bye and Bob Moccia for use of their Broad Street property by the HSR as a museum, , Nancy & Bill Washington and Elsie Waters for use of their historic family items and artifacts displayed on June 17th, 2006.

2006 Riverton Ghost Tour



Historical Society board members portray Riverton Ghost Tour characters from left to right- Priscilla Taylor, Rob Hoag & Bob Kennedy as pirates, and President Bob Bednarek. JoAnn DeNoia was seen with a crystal ball.

Send your ghost story ideas to Pat Brunker for the 2007 Ghost Tour.

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RIVERTON



Riverton Ghost Tour

On October 28, 2006, the first annual Riverton Ghost Tour was sponsored by the Historical Society. The trolley ride included a tour of the Historic District area between Broad Street and the river. For many years, there have been ghost stories told in Riverton. When we first announced we were going to do a ghost tour, people started telling us ghost stories. Their ghost stories could be true, if you believe in ghosts. Be assured that the architectural history described on the tour was factual.

Featured on the tour was the original location of Christ Episcopal Church and its cemetery; the Lyceum; the location where the Jersey Devil was sighted in 1907 as reported in "The New Era" (the local newspaper); the home of a witch; Blackbeard the Pirate; the Biddle mansion; Carriage House Lane, the Riverton Library, Christ Episcopal Church, The Porch Club, and Riverton School. Ghosts were seen in all these locations. The tour was a huge success. If you have a ghost story about your house or a public place in town, please share it with Pat Brunker, 856-630-5356 or pate-brunker@comcast.net. We'd love to include your story in next year's Riverton Ghost Tour.



Historical Marker for Riverton

The Historical Society has donated an historical marker to Riverton. The marker will be located at the new gazebo area next to Zena's Patisserie, facing Broad Street, to introduce visitors to the founding history of Riverton. We are proud to be able to make this donation to our town.

Est. 1851

Riverton New Jersey

Riverton was established by ten wealthy Philadelphia merchants in 1851. They bought a large riverside section of Joseph Lippincott's farm, selected sites for their summer homes and divided the rest into lots to be sold. The founders hired noted architect Samuel Sloan to lay out the town, making Riverton the first totally planned residential sub-division in the country. It has the oldest yacht club on the Delaware River still in use today and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Historical Society of Riverton

The Historical Society also donated two Riverton flags to be displayed in the gazebo area.

New Additions to the Archives

Trish and Geno Mori recently donated a calendar from the Riverton Laundry. The date is unknown as the calendar part has been removed, but the top portion of the calendar has a lovely nude female figure on it. Judy Codella donated to the clothing archives her Mother, Frances Jones', wedding dress from 1931 and a lovely picture of her Mother wearing the dress on her wedding day. Thank you all.

The paper archives in the Library basement were recently used by Sacred Heart Church in their research for a book they are writing about the church and The Knights of Columbus. The archives are available to the public but you must be accompanied by a member of the Board of the Historical Society.

THEN AND NOW...

The completed movie was previewed at the Broadway Palace by the Chamber of Commerce and designated others, then shown at the Riverton School Auditorium on May 6, 7, and 8th of 1924. Admission was by advance ticket sales for the two shows each day. The venture was considered a "huge success". The film was next shown at the Mount Holly Fair and at the South Jersey Exposition in Camden. No further mention of the movie was found in newspapers after the initial airings, but it was shown from time to time at the Broadway Palace and at some other gatherings. When sound projectors replaced those used for silent movies, film scraps were added to make the leaders the required longer length. Eventually, the film lay forgotten in the Broadway's projection booth. When it closed, Mr. Keys, the manager, gave it to Joe Stow, who kept it in his barn for many years.

Betty Hahle, then President of the HSR, persuaded Joe Stow to give the to the Historical Society. When the HSR decided to have tapes made to sell, they had to find someone able to handle the fragile - and highly flammable - film, four large tin containers of it. It could not be sent through mail or regular shipping because of the danger. The HSR had no funds and couldn't manage special shipping charges. For a while they were at a standstill. Then Betty decided to take a chance. She carried the films in her car and drove alone to the labs at the end of the NJ Turnpike where a technician met her car and hurried the film, container by container, into a refrigerated room where it would not spontaneously burn. With help from Rotary and Porch Club donations, what remained of the badly deteriorated film was recorded on 16 mm safety film, from which the tape and now DVD was produced.

This film was thus saved from oblivion and is now going through another change in technology so that future generations can continue to enjoy it. The really hard work of historical preservation has already been done by Betty Hahle, Dan Campbell, and the others who contributed their memories to *The Romance of Riverton*.



Stereo slides of the Riverton Borough Council on January 1st, 1920 in a formal borough government photograph and an informal photograph without their hats.
Images courtesy of Elsie Waters, board member Historical Society of Riverton.

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Robert Bednarek, President
Priscilla Taylor, Vice President
Nancy Washington, Secretary
Paul Daly, Treasurer; Pat Bruner,
Publicity; Gerald Weaber Jr., *Editor*

**THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF RIVERTON**

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Historical Society

P.O.

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MEMBERSHIP AND CHANGE OF ADDRESS FORM

Join the Historical Society of Riverton.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

E-MAIL & TELEPHONE _____

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RIVERTON

POST OFFICE BOX 112 RIVERTON, NEW JERSEY 08077

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

HOUSEHOLD \$15.00

CHANGE OF ADDRESS NOTICE

SENIOR \$10.00

NEW MEMBER

LIFE \$150*

Please note changes to membership categories, dues and renewal dates listed below:

Membership categories and new dues rates-

Household \$15, Senior \$10 and Life Member \$150.

All dues are payable by January 1st for the new year 2007.

*New Life Memberships will only be available in 2007- the best bargain in town!

Please make your checks payable to the Historical Society of Riverton.