

Gaslight News

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Historical Society of Riverton

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Mrs. Betty B. Hahle, Riverton Town Historian and former president of the Historical Society of Riverton, leaves a lasting legacy of historical research and preservation successes.

The HSR joins in celebrating the life and many achievements of Mrs. Betty B. Hahle

This true history scholar contributed her skills to virtually every Riverton organization

On Saturday, April 30, 2011, friends, family, community members, and colleagues from all points gathered at historic Christ Church in Riverton to celebrate the life of Mrs. Betty B. Hahle, Riverton Town Historian, former HSR President and editor of its newsletter, and relentless champion of historic preservationist battles, who passed away Sunday April 17, 2011.

Possessed of an encyclopedic knowledge of all things concerning Riverton, Betty recently expressed regret that writing her book on Riverton's history had eluded her. Nevertheless, the body of authoritative historical works that she produced is

prodigious. Renowned for her thoroughly researched articles on historical subjects, she authored Riverton's history for the borough website, wrote the history of the Porch Club, contributed to Riverton School's Riverton Project, consulted on community planning projects, and produced over 100 of her signature newsletter columns for the Historical Society of Riverton's newsletter, the *Gaslight News*.

Her tireless activism in the pursuit of preserving Riverton's heritage has resulted in a number of victories which will stand as her lasting legacy to the town which she so

See **MRS. HAHLE** on 2

Annual Meeting convenes in newly transformed Bank on Main June 9th

In this issue

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF MRS. BETTY B. HAHLE	1
ANNUAL MEETING CONVENES IN BANK ON MAIN JUNE 9TH - GERALD WEAVER	1
NOMINATION COMMITTEE REPORT & PROPOSED BYLAWS	4
MARCH MEETING FASHION TALES - SUSAN DECHNIK	5
A CONCISE HISTORY OF THE BANK AT 604 MAIN ST. - PAUL W. SCHOPP	6



Cinnaminson Bank & Trust Co. c. mid-1930s RPPC courtesy of Mrs. Betty B. Hahle

In Riverton's latest example of "What's old is new again," the Historical Society of Riverton will hold its Annual Meeting at *The Bank on Main*, the new private venue for social and business events, courtesy of the Antonucci Family of Riverton. Re-scheduled from its usual May date in order for the Society to make use of this extraordinary offer, the meeting is now planned for Thursday, June 9, 2011, at 7:30 p.m. Please R.S.V.P. to reserve a seat.

Lawrence Antonucci, Jr. of Antonucci

Ventures, LLC recently transformed the interior of the building which the Philadelphia architectural firm of Davis, Dunlap & Barney of Philadelphia originally constructed in 1928, as the home of Cinnaminson National Bank & Trust Company into an exceptional private event space while preserving its historic exterior and character.

We particularly encourage HSR members to attend this important Annual Meeting

See **ANNUAL MEETING** on 3



The Bank on Main 2011

Mrs. Hahle's passion for researching and preserving Riverton's history is unmatched



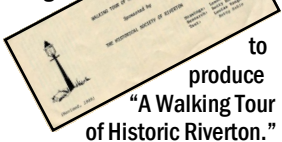
Mrs. Hahle twice rescued *The Romance of Riverton*, a deteriorating 1926 film, first having it transferred to VHS in 1989, then collaborating with a colleague in 2006 to update the production to DVD.



"Clearly, more than any other single person, Mrs. Betty B. Hahle has made our understanding of Riverton history what it is today."

- John McCormick, Ed.

Betty Hahle collaborated with Lenore Probsting and Louise Vaughn



"Gas Lamps stay lit" in large part to Mrs. Hahle's efforts

MRS. HAHLE from 1



Betty B. Hahle, Riverton Town Historian, with Historical Society President Bob Bednarek on May 7, 2007, at Mrs. Hahle's talk, "Groups, Organizations and Corporations of Early Riverton" at Riverton Public School.

adored. In 1978, in concert with borough officials, Mrs. Hahle helped save Riverton's cherished gas streetlamps from oblivion; in 1989, she rescued the fragile vintage film *Romance of Riverton* by preserving it to videotape; and she was one of the main persons responsible for saving rare late 19th and early 20th century *New Era* newspaper issues to microfilm. In 2009, the Burlington Board of Chosen Freeholders recognized both Betty Hahle and a colleague for their work in preserving the *Romance of Riverton* and making it accessible to modern audiences. Perhaps her most gratifying accomplishment was her 20 year-long quest to win for Riverton's historic district a listing on the coveted state Register of Historic Places.

Betty Bailey married Joseph W. Hahle, and they raised three daughters in Riverton. Mrs. Hahle was active in Riverton's Parent Teachers Association, the Palmyra High School Band Parents Association and was a Girl Scout leader. In the early 1970s, Betty became interested in genealogy and local history, favorite hobbies she pursued with a passion. She was a member of the Porch Club of Riverton, holding various chairs there, and in 1989, the group honored her as their Woman of the Year.

The Betty B. Hahle Excellence in History Award is given to an eighth grade student each year at Riverton Public School. Betty Hahle's many decades of historic research and writing as Town Historian and her interest in cultivating the interest of young people in the study of history inspired the award.

Always generous with her expertise, just days before she passed, Betty was dictating notes from her hospital bed to encourage one author on the content of a future *Gaslight News* feature story while supplying an essential fact she recalled from one of her many interviews for the writer of another article.

No one can deny her passion for pursuing Riverton's history or her unwavering commitment to preserving Riverton's character. Clearly, more than any other single person, Mrs. Betty B. Hahle has made our understanding of Riverton history what it is today. By so faithfully documenting Riverton's past with her meticulous investigating and record-keeping, Betty has indeed now assured

her own place in Riverton's history alongside the very founders, merchants, industrialists, and social activists she researched, certain to be quoted and cited for years to come. She was 92.



Mrs. Hahle with local artist Helen Jackson at the 2006 Victorian Day Celebration in Riverton.

HSR

Former Cinnaminson Nat'l Bank truly a grand venue for HSR's Annual Meeting

ANNUAL MEETING from 1

which will include a tribute to our past president and Town Historian Betty B. Hahle who recently passed away, a number of business items requiring action, plus a musical program with the barbershop quartet, *Three Good Men*. Altogether, it is sure to be a memorable gathering of local history enthusiasts. Light refreshments served.

The event is free for Society members, and a nominal charge of \$5 for non-members may be applied to a new annual membership on the evening of the annual meeting. More details follow.

We invite you to share your memories of Betty Hahle and her decades of work in documenting and preserving Riverton's history in our Tribute to Mrs. Betty Hahle.



Artist's conception of *The Bank on Main*, the new private venue for social and business events at 604 Main Street in Riverton, NJ

The bank's original vault remains the focal point of the room and serves to remind us of the many rarely seen treasures in our own Society's archives. It affords us a unique opportunity to exhibit displays of some of the artifacts and photos from the Society's collections. Bring your memories and prepare to reminiscence.

To help set the nostalgic mood, *Three Good Men*, a barbershop quartet associated with the award-winning Cherry Hill Pine Barons Chorus, will entertain us with selections from their large repertoire of four-part a capella harmony songs.



Three Good Men are (l. to r.): Joel (Lead), Bill (Tenor), Steven (Baritone), and Dave (Bass). They come from divergent walks of life: professional photography, engineering, medicine, and sales.

A quartet of *Three Good Men*? Must be a good story there.

In this distinctively American style of music, performers strive to blend four voices together to create a fifth or "phantom" voice, (or as we say, "ring a chord"). See and hear more at <http://mysite.verizon.net/schwartzby/3goodmen/index.html>

The business portion of the annual meeting will present a slate of new or returning directors including Pat Bruncker, Donald Dietz, William McDermott, J. Edward Gilmore, Nancy Hall, John McCormick, Phyllis Rodgers, Mary Lou Smith, Michael Spinelli, and Cheryl Smekal. Proposed bylaw changes are included in this issue for review by members.

Our sincere appreciation to Lawrence Antonucci, Jr. and family for hosting our Annual Meeting at *The Bank on Main*.

Seats for this special event are certain to be in demand. Kindly R.S.V.P. to Gerald Weaber, President 856-786-6961.

- GERALD WEAVER

You can further check out this sophisticated and elegant space for events of all kinds at *The Bank on Main's* website at <http://www.thebankonmain.com/>

With the rise and fall of banking fortunes over the years, a number of different banking institutions have made the imposing edifice at 604 Main Street home, including the most recent tenant, Beneficial Mutual Savings Bank.

But how many more can you name?

Check your memory against the *Concise History of the Bank at 604 Main* on page 6 and an illustrated version on our website blog written by professional historian, Mr. Paul W. Schopp.



A Nomination Committee Report and Proposed Bylaw Changes submitted

The committee led by Vice President Phyllis Rodgers with members Mabel Kloos and Susan Dechnik forwarded the following nominations to fill two, one year terms and a single three year term to the board of directors effective June 1st, 2011:

Three Year Term:

Donald Dietz

Three Year Term Renewal of Existing Directors:

Nancy Hall,

John McCormick

Phyllis Rodgers

One Year Term:

Pat Brunker

Cheryl Smekal

Three Year Term for Expanded 16 Member Board (pending passage of proposed bylaw changes):

William McDermott

J. Edward Gilmore

Mary Lou Smith

Michael Spinelli

Nominations for officers of the board of directors for a two year term include:

President - Gerald Weaber

Vice President - Phyllis Rodgers

Secretary - Charlotte Lippincott

Treasurer - Paul Daly

Recommendations for changes to the By Laws of the Historical Society of Riverton: Please consult the web site for the current organization bylaws at <http://rivertonhistory.com>

At the board meeting on April 14, 2011, the following recommendations were passed by a quorum of members.

Motion: recommend the following changes to the by laws for consideration by the membership at the annual meeting in May 2011. Moved: Waters, E.; Seconded: Rodgers, P. PASSED

Article II. Meetings: Section 5.

Existing language: "A quorum shall consist of six members."

New language: ... "A quorum shall consist of eight members."

Rationale: The increase in the number for a quorum should increase as the maximum size of the board is increased from 12 to 16 members. A quorum represents fifty percent of the total number of board members to enable the board to take action on business.

Article III. Membership: No changes

Article III. Duties of Officers & Directors: Section 1. President

Existing language: "Expenditures by the President of any sum beyond \$50.00 requires board approval before action."

New language: The only change recommended is to the amount from \$50 to \$150

Rationale: To enable board business to be conducted in an efficient manner while limiting the maximum expenditure required without board approval.

Article III. Vice President, Section 2.

Existing language: "Vice President may serve as program chairperson."

New language: "The 2nd Vice President may serve as program chairperson and the 3rd Vice President may serve as the membership chairperson."

Rationale: The 2nd and 3rd Vice President positions are added to recognize the responsibilities associated with the leadership of the program and membership committees.

Article IV. Annual Meeting, Section 2. No changes recommended.

Article V. Directors and Officers, Section 1.

Existing language: "The Board of Directors of this Society shall consist of twelve members..."

New language: "The Board of Directors of this Society shall not exceed sixteen members..."

Rationale: To enable the Society to attract more board members to assume committee

leadership positions to conduct the business of the organization.

Article V. Directors and Officers, Section 2.

Existing language: "The officers of this Society shall be: President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, and shall be elected by and from the board of directors at the Board's Re-Organization meeting in May, following the annual meeting. Terms for Officers shall be two years, or until their successors are elected."

New language: "The officers of this Society shall be: President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, 3rd Vice President, Secretary and

Treasurer, and..."

Rationale: The 2nd and 3rd Vice President positions are added to recognize the responsibilities associated with the leadership of the program and membership committees.

Use of Language: Consider changing the term *Chairman* to *Chairperson* wherever the term appears in the bylaws.

The Board submits the above information for member consideration so that action may be taken at the Annual Meeting at 7:30 p.m. on June 9, 2010, at *The Bank on Main*, 604 Main Street, Riverton, NJ.



Ms. Kate Butler sports a vintage pheasant hat—made of the entire pheasant!

Fashion tales from March meeting

What can a purse tell about history or a hat about the man who wore it? Ms. Kate Butler of Decotique.com and Mr. Greg Cristiano, proprietor of Tear-drop Memories.com, brought their eclectic

assortment of heirlooms and collectibles to the March HSR meeting to show us. They shared their extensive knowledge of antique apparel in the informative program, "Ladies and Gentlemen's Accessories of the Past Victorian, Edwardian, and Depression Eras."

Ms. Butler's collection included antique purses, millinery, footwear, and vanity collectibles. From handbags to hats, and everything in between, including a Victorian-era bathing costume, Kate served up a richly illustrated account of how familiar objects changed through the centuries.

Greg Cristiano, Ms. Butler's co-presenter for the male portion of the fashion discussion, spoke authoritatively about mourning attire, mourning mementos, and men's clothing items and accessories. Among other things, he brought a 19th century undertaker's hat, a full-length black bearskin coat, and several unusual decorative mourning items constructed from the hair of the deceased loved one.

In the interactive part of the program the pair invited audience members to have vintage fashion items which they had brought evaluated. Often, the article came with a story connecting it to the owner's relative, to which the presenters then added expert knowledge about the function and history of the piece.

The lecture proved to be a fun and engaging way to relate to history and show how changing fashions and personal items can tell a fascinating story.

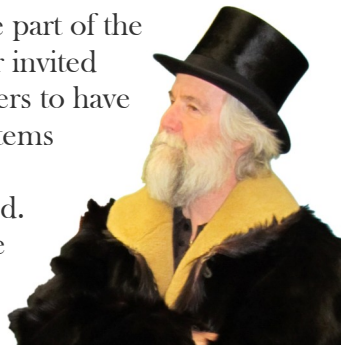
- Mrs. Susan Dechnik, HSR Board Member

For more of Mrs. Dechnik's photos and a short video clip from the presentation, go to

<http://rivertonhistory.com/2011/04/fashion-tales-come-to-the-march-23-2011-hsr-meeting/>



Mrs. Susan Dechnik, HSR Board member, and Mr. Gerald Weaber, HSR President, study the finer points of ladies' Victorian swimwear



left - Mr. Greg Cristiano channels a stylish 19th century undertaker wearing a bearskin coat and top hat.



vintage shoes



one-of-a-kind purse made of chain and Civil War era coins



Mr. Cristiano displays a pipe and two purses

A Concise History of the Bank at 604 Main St.

The Cinnaminson National Bank of Riverton incorporated in the fall of 1906 and acquired a lot on the east side of Main Street in November 1906. The new banking firm immediately began erecting the brick building and frame wagon sheds on the lot located between Freddie's Shoe Repair and the former Riverton Post Office. In 1928, the Cinnaminson National Bank received permission to offer Trust services to its customers. As a result of this action, the bank reincorporated as the Cinnaminson Bank & Trust Company and then constructed a new building at 604 Main Street. The bank retained the architectural design services of Davis, Dunlap & Barney of Philadelphia. This partnership dissolved in circa 1928, so the bank building in Riverton can be numbered among the firm's last commissions.

The Cinnaminson Bank & Trust Company continued to operate under that name until at least 1966, with a branch in Palmyra and in Cinnaminson, when it may have changed its name to Garden State Bank. In the late 1960s Camden Trust Company requested permission

to merge the Cinnaminson Bank & Trust Company into itself. In 1969, Camden Trust restyled itself as The Bank of New Jersey. The following year, The Bank of New Jersey did receive permission to proceed with the merger and the Cinnaminson Bank and Trust Company/Garden State Bank entered the realm of banking history. In 1982, Princeton Bank received permission to merge The Bank of New Jersey into itself with Princeton Bank being the successor firm. Chemical Bank New Jersey and Princeton Bank merged in 1990. Chemical Bank New Jersey became part of PNC Bank New Jersey in 1995 and the Riverton Bank operated as a PNC Bank for just over a year. In the second-half of 1996, Farmers & Mechanics Bank took over operations at 604 Main Street, although it is unclear whether they owned or leased the building. Farmers & Mechanics merged into Beneficial Savings Bank of Philadelphia in July 2007. In a cost-cutting move, Beneficial closed its Riverton branch and the building remained empty until The Bank on Main acquired the former bank for a catering hall.

- PAUL W. SCHOPP



Visit the growing HSR website at <http://rivertonhistory.com/> for information regarding events, past issues of *Gaslight News*, membership information, links to Riverton School's Riverton Project, slide shows of vintage images, video clips, our blog, and more.

Readers: Find inside our tribute to former HSR president Mrs. Betty B. Hahle, a recap of Kate Butler's March presentation, and an outline of the June Annual Meeting to take place in the former Cinnaminson Nat'l Bank.

Gaslight News

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Glimpses of Palmyra and Riverton c.1930

In 1989, Matt Gideon, a 40 year Palmyra firehouse veteran, arranged for home movies of the late Dr. Dean LeFavor, a Palmyra family physician, to be transferred to DVD.

The two DVDs which resulted were called *Glimpses of Palmyra and Riverton* and included over a hundred video clips of everyday life including period vehicles of all types, steam passenger and freight trains, train stations, parades, and local icons such as the Riverton Yacht Club and the now gone Broadway movie marquee in Palmyra.

Matt has asked for our help in collecting photos, newspaper articles, programs, memorabilia, etc. for his newest history project - a detailed history of both the Palmyra and Riverton Fire departments from the founding of each up through about 1920. See our website for more details. <http://rivertonhistory.com/> Kindly contact him through the HSR website or mailing address at left.

- JMc



Palmyra's Independence Fire Co. No. 1
20th anniversary in 1907