



Jan

# Gaslight News

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RIVERTON, Inc.  
Riverton, N.J. 08077

Feb. - April 1986 vol. xii no. ixl

**Programs:**

Monday, March 3 8 p.m. Music Room, Riverton School  
"A Tale of Three Cities" -- Three Stages of Growth in Philadelphia .....  
John Alvity

Mr. Alvity is the Director of the Atwater Kent Museum in Philadelphia, and will discuss how Philadelphia has grown over the last 300 years. He will show how its development has mirrored the growth of other American cities. Using slides, he will discuss the physical development, the social composition, and how home and workplace have changed.

Janice Renn, Program Chairman

Notice: The planned "Abe Lincoln Visits Riverton" program in March has been cancelled.

**Monday, May 5**

May's program will be about the Statue of Liberty, and more will follow in the next issue of Gaslight News. May is our Annual meeting, at which time elections are held. Four members will be elected to serve on the Board of Directors for 3-year terms. The Nominating Committee will present their slate, and additional nominations may be made from the floor, providing candidates have agreed to serve, if elected.

. . . . .

**Update:**

**Filming Project:**

After a number of delays, the box of newspapers to be preserved on microfilm went to the Archives in Trenton on February 13th, and it will not be long before they will be back again, and the loaned copies can be returned to their owners. The Historical Society has ordered an extra copy of the film for greater availability to local residents. Names of those who contributed by lending newspapers for the project, published in the last issue, should also include Nancy Gorman and Francis Roedig. The final count: New Era, 72 issues, 7 of which are incomplete; 1897-1967  
The Palmyra Record, 33 issues; 1911-1915  
The Palmyra News (and other names) 25 issues; 1924-1960  
51 columns of reprints from Palmyra News, dating from about 1888 into 1950's.

Putting all of these together, we have preserved almost a century of local history. Once again, our thanks to all who have helped.

**Morgan Cemetery:**

Although at this writing, the cemetery still has a very uncared-for appearance, in the Spring work is expected to begin to improve that considerably. We have been told that although not all of the paper-work and formalities have been completed yet, the new owner will be Norman Brewer, of Oaklyn. The Cemetery Board did approve of sale of a strip along Parry Avenue for building lots by a new owner (not Kane), with several conditions, including the sum from sale that is to be placed in a Perpetual Care fund, and a requirement that bids be obtained for cost of work to be done, and those approved by the Cemetery Board before payment. We have expressed our hope to the new owner that the iron fence along Cinnaminson Avenue, now knocked down in

several places by motorists who apparently have trouble on the curve, will be saved. It was erected by Mr. Morgan in 1888, just after the original incorporation as "The Palmyra Cemetery." A load of gravel has already been spread on entry drives, to retard washing of soil out onto the street.

**Walking Tour:**

The updated guide for a walking tour of a section of Riverton along Main Street and the RiverBank has been printed, and will again be available, at a slight charge, at the Library. "Sister" Probsting has done the drawings, Betty Hahle researched the houses, and Louise Vaughn laid it out and prepared camera-ready copy, and had the printing done. With nicer weather just around the corner, renew your acquaintance with some of Riverton's oldest architecture.

**Other Notes:**

Riverton School will have another Open House in March for those who enjoyed the School 75th Birthday Party last November--and those who may have missed it. It will be in the evening, will include expanded video tapes to include interviews of those who attended earlier, the various activities, and a wonderful collection of photographs. Watch the newspapers for time and date--you won't want to miss it.

For the past several years local historian, Lloyd Griscom, has been writing the bi-weekly feature "County Album" in The Burlington County Times, and now has decided to end the series. Lloyd is a popular writer, and his articles will be missed by his fans; he has made us aware of many pieces of Burlington county's history.

In 1965, the year of Riverton Yacht Club's Centennial, the Burlington County Historical Society presented the Club with a bronze plaque recognizing it as the oldest Yacht Club on the Delaware River. It was set in a granite base, and a few years later it was stolen. For some time Club members have been working to have the marker replaced, and by early summer the new plaque should be in place.

Each year the Friends of Independence Park (Philadelphia) selects a New Jersey community for a special tour, and this year they have chosen Riverton. They contacted the Porch Club, and together they will plan a full day of tours of houses, gardens, lunch, etc. On Thursday, May 15th, they will bring some 150 people here from the Philadelphia area. Local people wishing to enjoy a day in Riverton may also purchase tickets for tour and lunch. There will be ample time and publicity about cost, where to get tickets, program, etc., for those interested, from The Porch Club's committee.

**Acquisitions since last Spring:**

Souvenir Program, Palmyra Old Home Week Celebration, 1834-1953, from Mrs. Alice Costello

Group of Newspapers with historically significant headlines, from Ellen Layton Book, "The Big Wharf", signed by author Mary Biddle Pitler, pub. 1934, from Bill and Louise Evaul

Handbook, 1978-79, Riverton Yacht Club, from Ted Hunn

Yacht Club Centennial Book, 1965, 2 copies: 1 from Ellen Layton; 1 from Morris Leggerman (Philadelphia)

Copy of talk given by Lloyd Griscom for Yacht Club, and Xerox of Clubhouse being restored (apparently copy of a newspaper photo), both with Leggerman book, via Ted Hunn

Photographs and slides of 307 Bank Ave. before razing, by Pastor Charles Jackson, and by B. Hahle

**Reminders:**

Note paper is still available at \$3.50 a box. Contact Ed Gilmore or Board members.

**Dues:** Renewed memberships are due each year in October, and new members are welcome at any time. A few members have overlooked their renewals; if you have, or are not sure, please contact treasurer John Parry at 803 Main St. and get caught up now! With very low dues, and constantly rising costs, having every member pay his or her dues on time is important. As an example of a new cost that had not been anticipated, this year it became necessary to purchase a rider for the school's insurance policy in order for us to con-

tinue to hold our meetings there. It wasn't something anyone wanted, but is one more sign of the times in which we live.

So...membership costs \$2. per person, per year, or \$1 per person for those age 65 or older. Plus \$1 per FAMILY--an assessment to help us meet costs of printing and postage, which also continue to rise.

Did you know, this is the 41st issue of Gaslight News? The first one was a single page, written by Marilyn Colozzi who was elected president, in response to a decision voted on by the Board. The name was chosen from several suggested, and although that first copy is undated, it would seem to have been sent out in December of 1974. At that time the Annual meeting was in November. By-Laws were amended in November of 1977, the Annual Meeting changed to May, and officers' terms extended from one year to two years. The 9th issue of Gaslight News, Dec-1977, was expanded to its present form, with 4 issues mailed (or hand delivered by volunteers) to every member each year, ever since.

Yesterday.....

In March, 1909, young Joe Seel, of Seel Brothers Printing on Cinnaminson Ave., in Palmyra, started a new local weekly paper, The Palmyra Record. His early masthead<sup>5, 15</sup> that he was editor, manager, and publisher, although at some point Frederick Rodgers joined his staff. The paper was 4 pages and seems to have been patterned after the New Jersey Mirror or Mt. Holly Herald, rather than the New Era or the Palmyra News, both of which had been well established many years earlier. It seems to have had much longer columns of "local topics" under headings of Riverton and of Palmyra, with news of social events, comments, etc. It also had a column for Delran and sometimes other area towns, and seemed to carry more news of local church activities than other papers, as well as the usual local and other news issues. Later it, as did other larger papers, carried "women's pages" with patterns, recipes, tips on various methods of doing tasks, both indoors and out, and then on embroidery and various types of needlework. And the usual ads...

The Palmyra Record ended on June 21, 1918, when the entire staff--2 men--went into the Army. Joe Rodgers was killed in the battle of Meuse-Argonne, and later the local American Legion Post was named for him. The paper was not started again after Mr. Seel returned home.

We had been searching, without success, for any remaining copies of this paper, for our filming project. Then the Gilmores found one at a garage sale, purchased it, and loaned it to us. Just last month Mr. Roedig showed up a collection of 32 issues, all in excellent condition, and agreed to let us include them in our project. Following are some notes from these newspapers, from Oct. 1911 through Dec. 1915.....

John B. Watson's Express between Riverton, Palmyra, and Philadelphia, had been started ca. 1880 by a Mr. Heath. Stellman followed Heath, then Carpenter, who sold to Watson the "Old Reliable Express"; wagons run daily, leaving Riverton 7 a.m., and leaving Phila. for Riverton at 3 p.m. O'Neill's Express followed a similar route.

The Field Club of Palmyra and Riverton, organized some years earlier, had many teams--football, baseball, hockey, basketball, each with a special name; and also a bicycle club. Each sport was played in its own season, with basketball beginning in January, with weekly games held at the Lyceum in Riverton. In April, 1911, the Field Club purchased the property of Mrs. Josiah Wallace on Broad St. for a Ball park and Athletic grounds. Later, they added a Mandolin and Guitar Club, and gave concerts at the POSofA Hall in conjunction with the Glee Club, to raise money to pay for musical instruction. Admission was 35¢.

An article in 1911 said that Baltimore, Md., was the first place in which an umbrella was displayed in the USA, back in 1772. It seems a man had purchased one from an Indian ship, and opened it. It frightened horses; children stoned him, and finally the police (a watchman) were called. Accounts of the incident resulted in its adoption!

Among items for sale were bedlinens, direct from Mill, with free delivery in Palmyra & Riverton, from N.J. Bailey, 1008 Parry Ave.; Utica sheets, 72x90, 65¢--81x90, 75¢, and

bolster cases, 17¢. Mohawk brand, each 5¢ less. In 1914 an ad for Haines grocery store in Camden offered a special: an order of 59 different items (each listed) and a free glass pickle dish for \$10.75. Included were 25 lbs. sugar, 3 cans Campbell's baked beans, laundry soap, corn flakes (6¢), and much, much more. And Holts closed their oyster house on Main Street for the winter and went to Florida.

David H. Wright was speaking wherever possible, advocating a free bridge across the Delaware river, to connect NJ and Pa., and some groups were beginning to support the plan. There was also a movement for a bridge between Burlington and Bristol. Gov. Fielder signed a Bill creating a Commission to prepare preliminary plans for it, to honor the memory of John Woolman, pioneer Friend missionary, who lived in Burlington.

By January, 1914, the Elite Moving Picture Parlor had been initiated at POSofA Hall, and showed "the good refined class of pictures that...seem to be appreciated and are well patronized by old and young alike". Shows were at 8 p.m. except Saturday, which was at 7<sup>30</sup>, and a matinee at 3 p.m., and cost 10¢. None on Sunday, of course. One Sat. in April the showing was: By Radiums Rays, 2 reels; Universal Ik Gets a Goat; The Loyalty of a Savage, 3 reels.

Palmyra High School had moved to its own building from Berkeley Hall in 1910, and the 1st issue of its newspaper (The Palmyrian) was Feb. 1st, 1914. An Alumni Assoc. had been formed in Feb. 1908, with Everett Wiggins pres. and Helen Sawyer, vice-pres. Although by this time houses were numbered, many older homes still used special names instead of the assigned number. Dr. Mills' was "The Twin Pines", and N. Meyer Fidler called his home "Graystone".

Among tips given to the ladies, were these, for relieving household drudgery: a 10¢ brush will scrub potatoes in 3 min. instead of 10 min. of swishing them; save steps from pantry to stove when frying doughnuts by placing cake board of uncooked doughnuts on shelf above range above pot of fat; canvas gloves worn when blackening stove will save 10 min. scrubbing time; remove ashes from kitchen range before scrubbing the floor--otherwise "nasty smootches" where ashes spill will have to be done again.

A recipe for "rhubarb cream": 12-15 sticks rhubarb, cut into small pieces; grated peel of a lemon, 2 cloves, piece of cinnamon; sweeten to taste. cook slowly until reduced to a marmalade, then strain, add to it a pint of cream, beat well.

The Rex 5 & 10 in Palmyra by the post office was sold, and reopened as 5-10-25¢ store in March. For Easter candies they offered cream eggs, 5¢; baskets, 5¢ and 10¢; rabbits, 2/5¢; chickens, 4/5¢.

Vaudeville, Minstrels, Musicals, Debates, Stereoptican shows were all popular ways of raising money by Sunday School classes, schools, clubs, etc. Mrs. Beatrice Flint Collin, of Riverton, was a popular contralto, and gave recitals in Philadelphia. Harold Bauder, a local singer from Palmyra, managed the Field Club's Glee Club.

Palmyra withdrew the privilege of public dumping of ashes in the streets when some took advantage and also dumped papers, cans and other rubbish, too. Privet hedge was introduced, and advocated as an attractive replacement for the old wooden fences with with so many owners outlined their properties.

J.S.Collins was giving away free riding whips, and sold Flexible Flyer sleds. Evans' had a new 5-ton wagon. Mayor E. H. Flagg was given a dinner in Camden (Tall Cedars) attended by, among others, Ogden Mattis, Dan Clifton, Wm. Lynch, Louis Corner, L. Loudon. New handicaps for local golfers Fred Brown, Arthur Hall, G.P.Thomas, A. Earnshaw, JCWFrismuth jr., L W Collins, JSCoale, W.H.Lippincott, C.C.Fidler, W.A. Wright, J.S.Thomas, E.S.Parry, A.R.Gausler, C.C.Miller, and others, were listed, for the Atlantic City Golf Tournament. A Ladies' team won over Old York Road Club, in Jenkintown Pa., included Mrs. T.W.Reath, Mrs. H. Biddle, Mrs. C. Biddle jr; Miss M. Lippincott, Miss Creswell.

And the Cinnaminson Electric Light & Power Co. could now supply 24-hour, or all-day current, "making it possible to use the many electric appliances so useful in the home".