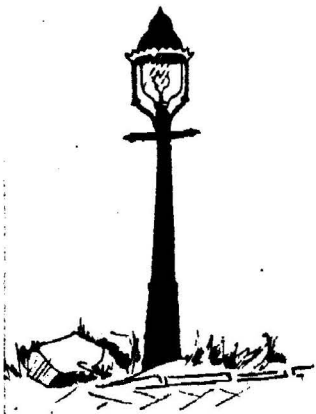


Joan H



Gaslight News

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

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Program:

Monday, October 6

8 p.m.

Riverton School

"Home Movies: Local Scenes, 1920's Through ??"

Projectionist, Carl McAllister

Dean H. LeFavor, M.D. was, among other things, an avid recorder of local events and people through his movie camera, which he carried even on his rounds. Many of his reels of film now belong to Walter Poulson, his long-time friend, who has loaned some of them for this program.

Dr. LeFavor was born in Ohio in 1900, the son of a pharmacist. He and his younger twin brothers all showed early musical talent--they became music teachers, and "Doc LeFavor", as he was affectionately known, never lost his love for music even though medicine took first place in his life. He graduated from Jefferson Medical College in 1924, the year he married Minna Patterson. After interning at Philadelphia General Hospital he came to Palmyra, where he practiced until 1965, when ill health forced his retirement. He died in January, 1973.

Dr. LeFavor was a kind, soft-spoken man with a keen sense of humor, and is probably remembered by residents here as much for his musical talent as his medical practice. While still in Medical School he organized a band that played for various affairs on weekends. Whenever a piano and he were in the same room, chances were good that he would soon be playing it, if only for a moment during a visit to a patient. He could play any melody he heard, and Rotary, Legion, Medical Society, Church meetings, often ended with his impromptu music. During WWII he served for 4 years, in Africa, Italy, and France, and during that time somehow managed to put together an orchestra that played for USO and other events. He served as physician to the Borough of Palmyra for 35 years, consistently seeking to upgrade health care and practices. He recruited and trained 5 young men to become Palmyra's first First Aid Team, initiated immunization programs for school children, and served the community well in many other ways. Jiggs, his heavy-jowled English Bull, often made rounds with Doc LeFavor, and graced his Christmas Cards for many years.

He also became a member of the Organ Guild, and enjoyed playing a piano "duet" to the organ of "Melody Mac". Together, they made a record of their music, which was distributed through local stores around the time of his retirement. Dr. LeFavor left a rare legacy to the people of this community, not only through his medical care, but also through his kindness, his music, and his filmed records. You will not want to miss this program.

Meetings:

Meeting dates for this coming season are as follows: October 6, see above.....Nov.24...
January 12, 1987 (Covered dish supper/program, Christ Episcopal Church Parish House)...
March 2....May 4 (Annual meeting/elections).

Board Meetings are scheduled 1 week prior to General Meetings.

Update:

Welcomed to the Board are the following new members: Edwin Moore, Nancy Seifert, and Eleanor Sklar, who were elected last May to three-year terms on the Board of Directors. Welcome also to Sarah Guertler, who has been appointed to fill the unexpired

term of Janice Renn, who resigned last Spring because of pressure from other commitments.

Nancy Seifert has taken over the duties of Curator from Joan Hartmann, who will fill the year as vice-president, an office left vacant when Bill Baxter decided not to seek re-election last Spring.

The Friday Night at the Movies date in October, announced in the May-July issue of Gaslight News, has been postponed. The office of Program Chairman has been unfilled since Janice Renn's resignation, and the home movies initially planned for the Friday night date were re-scheduled for the October meeting's program, instead. Ed Gilmore has tentatively found a program for May's meeting, and Betty Hahle will find programs for the other three dates.

A Publicity Chairman is also needed. If you can offer some of your time/talents to our Historical Society, please do! If many do a little, not too much is required of anyone.

Morgan Cemetery:

The Cemetery, at this writing, looks worse and more neglected than ever. A series of hearings on the sale of a strip of cemetery land along Parry Avenue has been held by Cinnaminson's Planning Board, the most recent on September 23rd. All requirements have been met by the applicant, use of the land for building is in accordance with their zoning, and it was anticipated that approval would be given. However, some residents petitioned against having any houses built opposite them, finally focusing on a drainage problem that has apparently been existing for 11 years. The township engineer must now look into that problem, and it is hoped that at the October meeting the necessary approval will be granted, the clearing-up and maintenance program begun, and the long-awaited restoration of Morgan Cemetery on its way.

During the hearing it was apparent that there is much confusion about what the N.J. Cemetery Board is, or is not: some thought it could "take over" the cemetery; others thought it could pay outstanding bills.

The N.J. Cemetery Board is not funded--its only paid members are the Executive Director, the secretary, and a part-time clerk. The others serve without pay. They receive and review matters regarding cemeteries throughout the State of N.J., and where there are complaints of irregularities may, on acquiring sufficient evidence, bring an owner or manager in for a Hearing in their Chambers. If this fails to correct the situation, they may vote to go to court. Cemetery law is a specialized one, and the field of experts is limited. Yet although the Cemetery Board is very knowledgeable and must prepare the case to be presented, they are not permitted to present the case themselves--it is done by whichever lawyer the State office designates at the time. When Mr. Kane appeared before Judge Wells last November, the Judge opened by saying he had never before heard a case pertaining to a cemetery, and was not familiar with any other judge who had.

The Cemetery Board can, under certain circumstances, rule certain conditions, which are binding. This strip of land at Morgan, for example, is to be sold to a third party, and the money specifically used for restoration/maintenance--none of it can go to Kane, present owner, or to Brewer, expected new owner, whose purchase hinges on this sale to provide funds for the needed work there. Brewer plans to get the cemetery in good shape, then expand the field for additional burial spaces. If the anticipated approval of sale is denied, the N.J. Cemetery Board will then go back to court, and a court-appointed receiver will take over the cemetery, ultimately limiting burial space to what is now so used, and selling off all the rest of the land in order to not only cover restoration/maintenance, but also legal fees entailed in that kind of resolution.

Walking Tour:

The Walking Tour folders, printed after updating last Spring, were quickly depleted. They were distributed by the Porch Club to those attending the Friends of Independence Park House Tour in May, and by the APR to those attending the Porch Party Lunches in June. More are being printed, and should soon be available at the Library and Victorian Thymes again.

Some thoughts:

Isn't it nice to see the many improvements to properties throughout Riverton, since a year ago? Porches have been repaired, houses painted, restoration work done or begun...there are bright spots all over, and not limited to any one section. It does seem a bit strange to see so much blue paint, these days, where until a very few years ago the color was rarely, if ever seen. Riverton was conservative, and most often painted homes buff with brown, dark green, or barn red trim; or white with similar trim. Shutters were usually dark gray, dark green, or black. But blue is a trend of the times, as are the decks and higher, tighter fences that are appearing. A little while ago the most frequently seen change was aluminum siding; before that, it was "modernizing" windows and doors, or removing porches. And so it goes.

Today renovation experts point out the danger of applying siding over wood--minor problems grow undetected, and major repairs to the structure become necessary, all too often. The U.S.Dept. of the Interior has issued a "preservation brief" titled "Aluminum and Vinyl Siding on Historic Buildings" on this danger.

Preservation has several forms: Restoration, which means accurately recovering the form and detail of a structure as it appeared at a particular period of time. It may require removal of a later addition that does not belong in the period being restored, or replacing some of the original work.

Rehabilitation, which returns a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, making more efficient contemporary use of a building. It may be historically adaptive, when the best details are kept, but some modern "creature comforts", like plumbing/heating, are added; or adaptive, using the space as most practical, i.e. making apartments in a very large building.

Reconstruction, which reproduces, by new construction, the exact form and detail of an earlier structure. It is costly, for a layman.

Laws this year make local enforcement of locally designated historical area regulations binding. We are fortunate to have some "historical district" designation, plus a clause that includes buildings erected up to 1914. It is to be hoped that the date for protection will be moved up to the onset of WWII, before the bungalows and American 4-square plan houses here have undergone so many "modernizations" that they, too, are lost to us. Anyone doing outside work requiring a building permit must present their plans before the Architectural Review Board of the Planning Board, to determine if it is in keeping with the style/period of the structure. There is some confusion because of the name--often spoken of as the Historical Revue Board, people have thought the group meant the Historical Society. In the future, they will use simply "Architectural Review Committee" when referring to that advisory group, and that should end the confusion.

For those contemplating any form of preservation of their homes, many good books and leaflets are available, at local and county Libraries, and in bookstores. The American Association for State & Local History has many helpful leaflets, some of which are:

Do's & Don'ts for Restoring Brick and Stone #081

Nail Chronology as an aid to Dating Old Buildings #048

Before Restoration begins: Keeping Your Historic House Intact #067

8 Most Common Mistakes in Restoring Houses--and How to Avoid them #118

Wood Deterioration--Causes, Detection, Prevention #077

Paint Colors: Research & Restoration #015

These may be purchased, prepaid plus \$1.50 handling, from AASLH Press/ Order Dept./ 172 Second Avenue, North Suite 102/ Nashville, TN 37201, @ \$2. each. There is also a Preservation Series Packet, #505, at \$5.00, that contains all of these, plus a few others, including notes on wallpapers and gardens. (Members get a slight reduction--if interested in ordering, contact your News editor)

DUES....

It's that time again. To renew your membership, or to join as a new member, fill in the form below and bring to a meeting, or send to treasurer John Parry, 803 Main St.

NAME:

NEW:

RENEW:

Address:

Phone:

check amount: regular: \$2 _____

Sr. Cit: \$1 _____

In Addition, there is an assessment of \$1 per FAMILY, to help with printing/mailling:

Yesterday....

Yesterday's newspaper columns of local news make delightful reading--they carried not only social events, but bits about the weather, crops, buildings, and here and there a bit of philosophy or a personal comment crept in, too. They paint with words a picture of a time gone by...as in 1886 when a columnist wrote that if one climbed up the hill to William Morgan's residence one could see Riverton, embowered in foliage, Palmyra, a pretty picture itself, and the Delaware river, winding a silver thread for quite a distance. And far away could be seen the spire of Germantown, and the new Public Building of Philadelphia, looking like a giant among an army of pygmies."

Nearer to the end of the century the turnpike from Westfield to Bridgeboro was being surveyed, prior to being turned over to the state as a free road. Bicycling was popular--Dr. Samuel Clover and Horace Smith rode their bikes to Atlantic City, one Tuesday in 1897, and home again, the next day. It is hard to picture Riverton as a very small, rural village in this century, yet a photograph of the new Porch Club in 1910 shows cows placidly grazing in a field next door. And fields of corn and cabbages were grown at either end of town. Indeed, all through the Depression years few homes were without a large back-yard vegetable garden, and many also had coops of chickens or pigeons.

Notes about schools were always to be found in Fall columns. In 1888 the writer recommended that Palmyra get a bell for its schoolhouse, which would render double service in case of emergency. A decade later he wrote "it's all right for girls to go to school and learn about biology, geology, philosophy etc., but they need also to learn at home cookology, washology, repairology, and kindred branches. That year Riverton school opened on September 12, with Miss Ida Harris as principal, Miss Clara Stimes teaching secondary grades, Miss Mary E Willey and Miss Rebecca Thomas, primary, and Miss Edith Hemphill, Kindergarden. An additional heater had been installed in the big school, and a ceiling installed in the K to allow easier heating. (Did you know that the K building was the original Catholic Chapel? and that when it was no longer needed by the public school it was sold again, and moved up to 609 Main St., where it is today?)

In 1906 there was a move to close the Kindergarten class at Riverton, but it was defeated with a 4-3 vote by Board members. Some felt that paying \$50 a month for a teacher--who put in only 3 hours daily--and paying \$22 a month rent for the Porch Club building (orig. Parish House, moved to 609 Main St before the Chapel joined it) plus \$8 a month for supplies, was too much for an average of 12 children attending.

In 1929 Palmyra had 6 new teachers: in HS--James P Hughes, Clinton Gardner, and Marian Jules; in Primary, Gladys Booth, Elizabeth Toy, and Muriel Burgman. The last three mentioned were all graduates of PHS. And in December of that year a PHS Band was organized, under the direction of Heuton-Knecht, of Philadelphia. 25 boys were listed as members, including George B. Clover, Jacob Beitz, Lawrence Bradshaw, Ralph Dages, Dominick Cardea, H. Bauers, Carl McAllister, George Chambers, and Russ Rivers. January, 1929, saw the founding of the Women's Club of Palmyra, with 30 women present who became charter members. Mrs. Roland Dunn, the dentist's wife, was elected pres.

Other changes were noted, too. The football season in 1910 opened with new rules: each quarter was 10 minutes, with a 3 minute rest period between. Score: Pal-6;Riverside-1. In 1915 Dreer's held its annual Flower Show at the Riverton Greenhouse for 1 week. There was a big celebration in Palmyra in September, 1917--Broad St. had a new cement pavement, and Public Service had laid concrete blocks between the trolley tracks at the Cinnaminson Ave. crossing. A parade was held to open the fine, new street, when a new electrically-operated traffic sign would be put into operation. Mayor Wimer asked all owners of trucks and autos to join the parade, after which there was a band concert, and then speakers. In 1924 a semaphore was erected at the intersection to direct increasing traffic, and a petition was presented by Broad St. merchants to widen the street in anticipation of further increases, with completion of the Delaware River Bridge.