



# GASLIGHT NEWS

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RIVERTON, INC.

Riverton, N. J. 08077

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Aug - Oct 1981

No. 1

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## Program:

Monday, October 5, 1981

8 p.m.

Music Room, Riverton School

"250 Years on the Taylor Homestead"

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Joseph Taylor

A talk illustrated with slides about the Homestead, some of the changes in the river and the land, the methods of farming, stories of the family, and of the small animals and birds that share the site, by Joseph Taylor, of River Side Homestead. The Taylor name has been a familiar one for generations, not only in agriculture, but also in education, birding, and other endeavors. Many have enjoyed reading Gently, Sister, Gently, written by his mother, May Roberts Taylor, a few years ago, and this program will have wide membership interest.

Program dates for the rest of this 1981-82 season are as follows: Monday, November 30 (at Porch Club) End-of-Century program in costume, with narration, by Porch Club Chorus, under direction of Ruth Schweizer); January 11, 1982; March 1; May 3 (Annual Meeting).

More will be said about these meetings in later Newsletters, but make note of dates, and mark your calendars NOW, so you can plan to attend--and bring a friend.

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## Letters:

Last year members were asked to write letters concerning 2 situations that needed attention in our Tri-Borough area: the street gas lamps, and the Morgan Cemetery. As a direct result, all the gas lights in Riverton and Palmyra have been scraped or sand-blasted, repaired, and painted, for first time in many, many years. Globes have been cleaned, and calls from residents about a mantle, etc., are being responded to promptly. Our Society has sent letters of appreciation to both State and local offices for their response to the problem.

Our letters to the Cemetery Board, in cooperation with the project of the Tri-Boro Women's Club have also been responded to. Their investigator visited the cemetery, notified Mr. Kane, and have followed up with further investigations and stronger letters, copies of which are sent to each complainant. Among their findings were "...a mini-jungle with tombstones, rapidly approaching the stage of complete jungle."....and the notation that "numerous monument dies have been hastily reset on their bases without any joining compound.", and goes on to point out the safety hazard of this.

At the present time Mr. Kane has removed to California, and the cemetery is under the management of Tom Weber. The stones have nearly all been re-set; brush and scrub trees are being cut down and will soon all be cleared away, and the road and fence will be attended to next. There are plans under consideration that will make the local cemetery once again the dignified and cared-for place it was intended to be. Our thanks to ALL who cared enough.....

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## Survey:

The survey work moves slowly...a few more houses have been done; some of the photography that is required has been done, with more waiting until foliage is again minimal. Increasingly, prospective buyers of properties in Riverton have been calling to ask the date a house was built--apparently they are being referred to our Society for verification.

#### Film:

It seems a long while ago, now, but last May when "Romance of Riverton" was shown, the room was packed in spite of torrential rains, and donations received amounted to \$72. The money will be used toward the expense of the photographs for the survey.

#### Walking Tour:

Self-guided walking tour was completed last May by Lenore Probsting and Louise Vaughn; The tour is a pleasant one, and keeps within the earliest part of Riverton for easy walking. The guides are at Riverton Library. There is no charge for these, but a donation is appreciated to help meet the cost of having them printed. Subsequent printings will be updated as continuing research gives us better and/or more complete information.

#### Miscellaneous items:

Our Historical Society has now received its permanent tax-free organization status. The incorporation and establishment of status required many hours of work, donated by Harry D. Livingston, over a period of almost 3 years. It is with sadness that we record here his death 27 May, 1981.

Woodward's History of Burlington County, long awaited reprint of his part of the volume first printed in 1883, was received in August, and is at Riverton Library now.

Local Author, Lloyd Griscom, has written a book about the Tri-Boro area called "Tales of Three Towns". It is expected to be available about the end of September, and copies may be obtained at Riverton Library or from the author. His books, based on local history, are most interesting, and this newest one will surely be a popular one--and a very nice gift for the Holidays ahead!

#### Sharing:

Sometime back we received gifts of several old newspapers, not all in good condition. One in particular, an edition covering the San Francisco earthquake, could not be handled, but had valuable information and pictures. This, plus several special editions of the New Era were taken to the County Library, where they will be microfilmed, and then they will be available for research. The papers in good condition will be returned to owner, and the other will be destroyed. If you have newspapers of special interest--copies of the New Era, Palmyra News, or other local papers, and would be willing to share them, contact BBHahle, who will take them to the Library for filming and return them to you. (They are not hurt in the process, but are preserved for much easier use and availability to more researchers. Will you share?

#### Acquisitions:

The Parrys have given us a number of items, over the summer:

blueprints of the Homewood Drive area, originally part of the Parry property plat of North Pennsville, undated, but probably dating ca. 1855 when Jedediah Strong laid out his land into a town and gave it that name to correspond to Pennsville on the Camden county side of the creek. In 1880 the land not sold by then was purchased by William Parry, who got for the community a Post Office designated "Parry", and the village became known by that name.

watercolor of home on Taylor's land by Emma M Stow from Franklin P Stow, currently at the GreenLeaf in Moorestown; also notes on his genealogy, and some notes made by Howard Parry on separation of Cinnaminson from Chester in 1860, and their 1st town hall

4 cookbooks (from Corinne Havers, daughter of John and Anita Parry) formerly belonging to Susanna and Beulah Parry. One of these is "The Home Cook Book", put out in 1914 for benefit of The Children's Home (now Cinnaminson Home), with recipes submitted by the Directors and their friends. Esther Sharpless submitted this:  
" ...Snickerdoodle...

2 C sugar;  $\frac{1}{2}$  C butter; 2 well beaten eggs; 1 C milk;  $2\frac{1}{2}$  C flour; 1 tsp bk pwd. Sift cinnamon and sugar over top before baking. Place in long pan about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. thick, and cut in squares."

(note: half the amount is just right for square baking pan, baked at 350° for about 20-25 min. Delicious breakfast cake...keeps well, if you can...)

Our thanks to Corinne Havers also for doing some typing and transcribing the tape from our May meeting (Sailing on the Delaware).

## Yesterday:

Newspapers in the middle of the last century carried a variety of articles. There were stories taken from papers of other cities, articles on royalty or events across the sea, political happenings, oddities, and an assortment of other things. The New Jersey Mirror in April, 1852, ran a story that began.. "A very old history of New Jersey, now before us, under date of 1700 contains the following notice of Burlington county:..". It went on to name the villages, and to describe the area... "Pork is a staple; of which a large quantity is raised for the West India market, and has deservedly gained reputation through all the islands." Beef, mutton, cheese and butter were taken to Phila. markets, it said, and little hemp or flax were raised, "the inhabitants contented with a little (very little in some places) for their own use, have generally reserved their gains on other production, for purchasing their chief supply of those and woollen articles of European manufacture; labour is thought too high to increase it much, and climate is not so favorable as in some other places." Indian settlements were Brotherton and Weekpink, and "of places of worship, the people called Quakers have 15, Episcopalians 2, Baptists 1, Presbyterians 1."

It told of the purchase of lands in 1677 from the Indians for such items as matchcoats, kettles, hose, duffelds, petticoats, lead, powder, knives, combs, scissors, looking-glasses of tinshaw, fish-hooks, red paint, needles, pipes, bells, jews-harps, etc., and observed that the currency had changed somewhat since that time.

The article concluded with a comparason with the present, of the numerous villages, the iron horse instead of foot or horse and rider over poor roads, steamboats where canoes had travelled, and "the richest agricultural district in the state..."

Villages were indeed growing, and noticable among these were many springing up along the river. A new idea was catching on--Building Associations, which enabled many workmen to build homes for themselves, something they could not otherwise have done. In 1852 there were at least 100 such Associations in the larger cities, and efforts were being made to establish one in Rancocas.

Steamboats with low pressure engines were gradually replacing the older ones used on both the river and creeks, and these were bigger and more swift. Iron bridges were seen replacing some of the wooden spans. Social changes were taking place--the government was giving pensions to 1750 widows and orphans of soldiers killed in the Mexican War (or had died of diseases contracted in service). And fashions...in Mt. Holly ladies were seen wearing "short dresses--with skirts considerably abbreviated..." and pantaloons, which gave the wearers a "juvenile appearance, but a delightful one". It was thought the fashion would prevail. And organ grinders "beset" local cities and towns--"foreigners without other income". It was felt that something should be done about them--except that the children enjoyed them so much.

Palmyra had gotten its own Post Office the year before. In August, 1851, the NJM said it had been established "in the flourishing little town of Palmyra, formerly called Texas, lying on the bank of the Delaware about 9 miles above Camden." Isiah Toy, esq. was Post Master. The fare from Mt. Holly to Phila. was 25¢; and in Mass. the Society of Shakers had devised and patented a method of grinding pumpkins into flour so that "the pumpkin pie, the peculiar institution of New England" could be enjoyed in all seasons.

By 1865 Riverton wanted its own school district, and this was accomplished by incorporating Riverton School District # 7 in September of that year. Its boundaries were from n/w corner of Elias Morgan's farm on the Delaware up to Cinnaminson School house, across in straight line to F. Hunter's land on Union Landing Road, then down to the river and along it to place of beginning. It had 3 elected trustees: Jonathan Rogers, Henry P Hay DD LL and Obediah Hubbs.

Expansion and growth of villages gave rise to a new trend, one that has had significant perhaps greater than anticipated--the village map. These appeared periodically. An ad would appear in local papers giving the name of village to be so recorded, the date of expected publication; interest was stimulated with hearing that the map would show the Post Office, Businesses, and the homes and names of Prominant Residents. The final lure was that by subscribing in advance and paying the fee (usually \$5.00) one could be assured of seeing one's own name among those Prominant Residents!

These maps, many of which have survived to the present day, are an invaluable help in

research, whether for genealogy or geography. But there are some pitfalls to watch for: they were often undated; a name sought but not found does not necessarily mean that he was not living there—he may not have had the price of a map to guarantee inclusion; and finding a name does not always indicate ownership—he may have been renting, but wanted to see his name on the map because he was making his home—or his business—there.

A case in point is the various maps of early Riverton, each thought to be the "original" one, but each having some variation from the others. By searching land records one can find dates, descriptions, and names of owners, and by comparing all of them in a given area, such as the Riverbank section, the time in which it could have been made can be reasonably established.

By this method, the earliest, probably between April 1851 and early 1852, would be the one showing residents-owners of the 9 properties to be: (beginning with 2nd house above Main) Caleb Clothier, Dillwyn Parrish, R Wharton, D L Miller jr, Boarding House, W D Parrish, Robt. Biddle, W C Biddle, and Prof. Chas. D Cleveland.

The Library's map, for unknown reason, has reversed lot numbers, but the order remains the same, with the exception of Cleveland's, where J Miller McKim is found. Since Cleveland retained ownership of his property until 1856, when he sold it to Jos. Roach, it would appear that McKim, a close associate of Cleveland's in the Abolition movement, was living in his friend's home for a period. There does not seem to be a recorded deed in McKim's name to any property in Riverton. This map, then, would seem to have been made shortly after the one described above, but before June of 1852, when Caleb Clothier sold his property to James Willis (who 11 years later sold it to Sarah Ogden).

By 1860 four of the original eight homes of founders on the Bank had changed hands, and as they occurred, their dates help to date other existing maps of the area.

BBH, ed.

For Your Reference:

Historical Society of Riverton Officers, Directors, and Chairmen:

Pres., Betty Hahle; V-Pres., William Baxter; Sec., Louise Vaughn; Treas., Ellen Layton.

Directors: Nancy Hall; John Parry; Harold Zayotti; Joan Hartmann; Lenore Probsting; Alice Myers; Carolyn Mortgu; Donna Tarkington.

Programs: Lenore Probsting, Donna Tarkington. Publicity: Carolyn Mortgu

Curator: Joan Hartmann Newsletter: Betty Hahle Newsletter distribution: Nancy Hall

Mailing Address: Historical Society of Riverton, 405 Midway, Riverton 08077.

Please note address, particularly other than local members: new mailman on route has advised that he has been sending Society's mail otherwise addressed to Dead Letter Office all summer. (Card has been on file in P.O. for 4 years, but he didn't know it...)

DUES FOR 1981/82 ARE NOW PAYABLE: \$2 per person, per year; \$1 for senior citizens.

KEEP YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN GOOD STANDING.....AND INVITE OTHERS TO JOIN US

Mrs. Joan Hartmann  
708 Linden Ave.  
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