

Card File

Anyone interested in building a file of information about Riverton's founders and other interesting residents may participate in this project. There is a format for recording information, but the researching can be done at the convenience of the individual. Just call 829-6315 to say who you want to research; then, when you have done so, follow a form to record the information, or bring it in to be typed on the file card. Cards will record name, birth-death dates/places; spouse; children, with birth dates, where and when subject lived in Riverton; list of what he did, and where the information was found. A reference list for further information will be included where indicated.

Such a file will grow gradually, and should be a real asset, not only to anyone interested in doing research, but any resident "just interested" in learning a little more about our town.

(No records - only keep own existing work)

Odds 'n Ends

Transcript ..

The tape from December's "Yesterday in Riverton" has been transcribed by Jeanne Hornberger and Betty Hahle. Oral histories should be a bigger part of our program.... so many have such interesting memories to be recorded. Interested in helping?

Gift ..

Mr. and Mrs. Clark Cooper, jr., have donated a "sheller" to the Society. It is in good condition, the gears turn readily (but we're not quite sure just what it was used for), and is an interesting addition to our small collection of local things. Did you know that Mr. Cooper's grandfather was a partner of Mr. Parry, when that Nursery was founded?

Reminders..

A number of membership dues have not yet been received for this year. If you think you may have overlooked yours, check with Nell Layton (829-1306), and bring or send it in promptly. Annual dues of \$2.00 (\$1.00 for seniors) are a real bargain.....

May 12 is the Annual Meeting, when 4 members will be elected to the Board. It is from the Board that officers are chosen, on alternate years. Think now about it... would you like to serve in some capacity? Who would you like to see representing YOU on your Society's Board? Think....suggest....come out and vote.

Survey..with Spring just around the corner, plan to complete any survey work you may have set aside over the winter months. Early Spring, before other activities crowd the calendar, is a fine time to complete this project.

Yesterday.....

Back in 1842, before Riverton was, things were changing rapidly. Emigrants were entering New York at a rate of more than 6000 per week, doubling the rate of the previous year. In 1 week alone 70 passenger vessels, each with an average of 150 passengers, were expected there. Cincinnati was struggling to accommodate an influx of 1000 Germans a week.

A "new and useful work", The U.S. Almanac, had just been published....schools were springing up, and prices were changing....a new Boarding School in Camden offered English education (with needlework) at \$110 per year, which included boarding, plus \$2.00 per quarter for laundry; pupils furnished their own books, stationery, soap, towels, brushes, etc. Tuition at Michigan University was fixed at \$10 for 4 years, with Board extra, 2 shillings a week. St. Louis sold a gallon of whiskey for 13¢, but at Cincinnati it could be had for 10¢ or 11¢.

In Cinnaminson, the new Camden and Amboy railroad rattled through wooded areas and scattered farmland, and Isaah Toy's 2nd son, William, died at the age of 22 years. (Burlington Gazette & NJ Agric. Reg.)

Thirty-five years later, in 1887, Riverton was not only established, but thriving. The new RR station was described in the Mt. Holly Herald as a "good substantial building, free of the gingerbread that makes many other stations look like play houses." Each spring brought dreaded epidemics, and many children died.....Fishing was good, in the Delaware, and Riverton fishermen were doing a thriving business. Good, fresh shad caught here brought the highest market prices, and were said to be of superior flavor. The writer of the column was apparently at a loss to understand that certain feeling Rivertonians have about our town, because he added that he wondered if Riverton's so-called superiority gave the shad any better flavor, that they brought the highest prices, when Philadelphia shad of equally fine flavor could be had for $\frac{1}{4}$ less!

The Baptists had just erected their first Church and in May held their 1st baptism.. apparently attracting many who were curious about the unfamiliar form.."this being the first, it drew a large audience, the house being filled to overflowing."

In 1890 Miss Dorothy Mattis of Riverton married Benjamin Myers, in Camden. Fires were a constant problem in a town of frame houses, and Riverton's Fire Company erected a new alarm bell on the hose house, a gift of Stephen Flannigan, who was prompted to make the gift after a recent fire had consumed a building before the citizens could be made aware of it. Soon after, there was another fire, at 1 a.m., "believed to have been set by the same person who set fire to Jos. M. Roberts" stable and store", and both Riverton and Palmyra companies responded. "Although the barn burned, with the 2 streams of water 3 houses were saved."

Recreation took many forms...."Base Ball" was growing in popularity, and an away game between Bristol (Pa) and Riverton "became so exciting that even the ladies bet on the game". Bicycles and tricycles were increasing in numbers...."the people of Riverton do not allow their children to use their cycles on the Sabbath Day, yet outsiders do"...."interfering with people going to church"...."the smooth gravel walks of the town are well adapted to the cycles, (and)..there are 4 churches in a quarter-mile circle--Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Catholic, and Baptist."

Do you remember those rockers on everyone's front porch? In 1890 J. B. Vansciver Co. advertised ladies' size rockers for \$5.25, and hard wood splint seat and back rockers, large size, for \$1.12. They also offered zinc lined ice chests for \$2.45 and up, and refrigerators with porcelain lined water tanks for \$8.75.

Strawbridge & Clothier offered services from a new Mail-Order department--"upon application we will cheerfully forward, without expense, to any address, samples of the goods desired." And Wanamaker's had fine cambric corset covers for 66c, and extra large heavy damask towels with knotted fringe and pretty borders at 25¢ ea. And a jeweler (Archambault) offered the very popular new solid gold friendship rings at \$1.00.....

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Don't forget the March and April meetings....support your Historical Society with your participation--attendance, suggestions, help, and membership.

BBHahle, ed.