



GASLIGHT NEWS

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RIVERTON, INC.

Riverton, N. J. 08077

May - July 1980

No. 4

May meeting ANNUAL MEETING
Monday, May 12 8 p.m. Riverton Public School
"Traditional American Instruments And Their Music"
Mark Jarroll

This will be the last meeting of the current season, and is our Annual meeting. Four members will be elected to the Board. Nominations can be made from the floor, if nominee has agreed to serve if elected.

The program should be a most interesting one. Mr. Jarroll is a very talented young man who has developed a deep interest in early American folk music and in the instruments used to accompany the songs. He has a fine collection of instruments, and will bring a number of them along to talk about and to play, among them an autoharp, Bobro, banjo, Hammered dulcimer, and Appalachian dulcimer. Some of the songs he will sing are unrecorded ballads of the Pine Barrens.

Mr. Jarroll recently completed 4 years as a submariner, and is currently a first year Seminary student. He is gaining a following as he plays classical guitar and his sister Becky plays flute at Mori's 1841 House in Evesham on week-ends.

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Happy Birthday.....to US !!!

Did you know that the Historical Society of Riverton is exactly 10 years old? Mrs. Frank Lockhart (Betty) had written a letter to a local newspaper, inviting anyone interested in forming a Historical Society to meet to discuss it. On June 4th, 1970, 54 persons attended the first meeting, held at The Porch Club, and voted to form such an organization. Lloyd Griscom gave a talk on the area, and enthusiasm was high. Subsequent meetings were arranged, held at different places, a constitution adopted, officers elected. First president was Mrs. Lockhart, followed by Mrs. Lenore Probsting, then Mrs. Marilyn Colozzi, and, currently, Mrs. Betty Hahle.

Some of the Charter members are still actively supporting and enjoying our Historical Society activities, and new members have joined during the past several years. Let's celebrate our Birthday Year by adding to our membership and by participating actively in our Society's work.

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"The Romance of Riverton"

Did you see the film, on April 14th? The Porch Club was filled to capacity, and many memories were evoked as one scene after another unfolded. The film (31 min. running time) is now available to any group wishing to see it, and there is a folder of 8 x 10 prints made from the film, plus accompanying commentary giving something of the background, identities and locations, to go along with it. Contact B. Hahle (829-6315) for particulars. The Historical Society will show it again, date to be determined by interest shown.

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Notes

We have our incorporation papers and NJ certificate as a Non-profit organization, thanks to the generosity of Mr. Harry D. Livingston, who has contributed many, many hours of work to accomplish this for our Historical Society. Many thanks..

Survey sheets are still coming in.....and there are some to be completed...THIS SPRING. Can you help finish up this project?

File of Founders and Early Residents...is getting off to a very slow start. It would be a great resource for students--or for adults--doing research, and is an easy project to become involved in, as it can be done at one's own pace and time. Summer is a good time to do some reading, and searching.....will you help?

Please continue to report out-of-order gas lights to our local police. Our Council is trying to get better maintainance of these lights from Public Service.

We were pleased to learn that the old slate or block curbing and sidewalks still in existance in some places in Riverton will not be replaced with cement, but will remain where they are. We hope that residents will maintain these, and the brick sidewalks that are a part of our town's history and charm, so that they may continue to be both useful and enjoyed for many more years to come.

Lenore Probsting and Louise Vaughn are working on a walking tour for children, a game of "can you find..." various places and objects around Riverton. It should be both fun and informative--not only for children, but also for anyone who wants to know some interesting things that are here.

Events.....

Many events are scheduled for the next few weeks, and all summer long there are many places of interest nearby to visit. Following is a small list for you to consider: (and if you attend seminars or visit other Societies or places, please bring back brochures or information to share with our members).

- May 10 South Jersey History Harvest
9 am - 4 pm Mullica Hill Friend's Meeting (at intersection of rtes 45/77 in Gloucester co. Speaker, 11 am: Don Yoder, U of P Folklore and History professor, on The Quaker World of South Jersey. Purpose of day: to begin to catalog and document, and evaluate, available Quaker history in south Jersey. In Spring of 1981 Harrison Township Historical Society will have a 3-month exhibit, "Friendly Legacy" on Cultural influence of Quakers in South Jersey, across from the Meeting House in Mullica Hill. No fee. Inf: 478-4343
- May 10 Burl. Co Cult/Heritage Comm. Historic Preservation Week Workshop 9:30--? Smithville Mansion; 10-12, session of prep. of nomination forms for Nat. Register; lunch, picnic or purchased nearby; afternoon, presentation of Burl. Co Hist Sites Survey--and consideration of ways to supplement and use it as basis for preservation action/planning. Awards presented in evening.
- June 14 Burlington Co. Hist. Soc: Seminar, Folklore for the Local Historian; Quilts and their care. Smithville Mansion; Registration open to all after June 1st. Cost, \$7.25, includes seminar and lunch at the mansion. Speakers, David Cohen on Folklore for Local Historian; Nan Helene Nutnick, Identifying and caring for your Quilts. Inf: 386-4773 or 267-3300, ext 5068.
- 21 June Lumberton Historical Society Walking Tour. Reservations by June 6: \$10., limited to 75 persons, includes lunch at Hedgerow Inn. Inf: 267-4494, Connie Shontz, between 5-7 pm.

Burlington County Historical Society's 3 buildings, Library, and Museum, on High Street, Burlington.

Medford Historical Society's Kirby's Mill. Exhibits and events--watch newspaper.
Camden Co. Historical Society, Park Blvd/Euclid Ave--Museum, Library for research; programs --watch newspapers for dates and topics.

Phila--Park Mansions, many, many center city sites, tours, films;

Buten Museum of Wedgwood in Merion Pa. (664-9069) \$1.00 adm; tour, lecture, shop.

Yesterday

April 16, 1909, was a special date....motion pictures came to our area! Morgan Hall, a large brick building that used to be at Broad/Cinnaminson in Palmyra had 2 regular performances, beginning that date. Enterprising Moving Picture Company of Philadelphia provided the films, for admission of 5¢. Before long Sol Romm opened a theater near his store on the other side of the tracks, at West Broad and Leconey. In 1931 it was remodelled, and opened officially Oct. 8 of that year, a wonder to see: beautifully decorated in gold leaf, in an Egyptian motif, with stage for vaudeville and pit for orchestra. There were 3, sometimes 4, different shows each week, a matinee on Saturday (closed on Sunday, of course), and during the Depression encouraged attendance with give-aways of glass or dishes, eagerly sought after by collectors today. TV and increased mobility caused attendance to decline, and today the theater is gone--Carmen's Catering replaced it.

Railroads came through our area through the foresight and determination of Robert Stevens, Sr., who lived near Hoboken. After years of demonstrating that a steam engine would work and play a great part in land transportation, he and his sons formed a company to build and operate a railroad across the State, and in 1830 they got the charter to do so. The Camden & Amboy railroad connected with steamboats for New York on the Amboy end, and for Philadelphia on the Camden terminal and was completed in 1834. They overcame competition from the Delaware and Raritan Canals by merging with them, and had a monopoly until PRR leased the corporation in 1871 for 999 years. After that any branch roads could be opened only with their permission. It wasn't until December, 1932, that the first direct line from Riverton to Broad Street Station in Philadelphia was possible. It was a 31 minute run, and of such importance to commuters living in Riverton that the New Era published a special edition for the event--and printed it on red (or pink, depending on one's interpretation) paper.

Riverton's 2nd (and last) railroad station was built in 1909, and after the trolleys had been replaced with buses and their tracks removed, the overhang on that side was lopped off to widen the street. It was demolished in 1933.

Enjoy a pleasant summer. The next Gaslight News will reach you in time to remind you of the first Fall meeting in October, when Mrs. Marie Hahn will talk on gravestone rubbings. More about that later.....

Meanwhile, circle May's meeting date, and come, vote for your board members, and bring along a friend to enjoy an evening of song and music.

(BBH, ed)