



Gaslight News

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RIVERTON

Riverton, N.J. 08077

Sept-Oct-Nov 1978

no. 1

Greetings.....

'78/79 Program Dates

We hope that your summer has been a pleasant one, and that now you are looking forward to actively participating in, and enjoying, Historical Society activities. To the right is a list of scheduled general meetings. Circle the dates on your calendar now, so you won't be disappointed by missing any of them. They are held on Monday nights, 8 p.m., at Riverton School, unless otherwise noted. No meetings are scheduled during "bad weather" months, but added if weather permits and interest is indicated.

October 9, 1978

November 27, 1978

March 12, 1979

May 14, 1979

October meeting.....

An old New Era tells of the sighting of the Jersey Devil at 4th and Lippincott, back in 1907. Folklore of the area is fascinating, and we will have an opportunity to hear about the Rancocas Woods Ghost and other legends on October 9, when David C. Munn, Historical Editor of the Archives and History Bureau of New Jersey State Library in Trenton, will be our speaker. You won't want to miss it; why not invite a friend to come, too?

Gaslights.....

In June Riverton's Borough Solicitor testified before a special PUC hearing that Riverton DOES want to retain its gas street lights, and would file a petition to that effect if granted an extension of time in which to do so. An extension until October 27 has now been received, and the petition is expected to be filed "well in advance of the deadline." In lieu of individual Hearings, PUC will accept notarized affidavits of supportive testimonies along with the Petition. The Historic Society of Riverton has prepared such a statement, and has given it, along with statements from William J. McCrea, Architectural Historian of the Office of Historic Preservation in Trenton, and from Keith Betten, Administrator, Burlington County Cultural & Heritage Commission, to Mr. Decou to present with the Borough's Petition. He and Council members have said that these will be most helpful,

and have thanked us for our help in saving the gas lights. The outlook seems favorable, at this point.

note: A lamp post was struck recently (on Elm Ave.) and carried off by Public Service. We have been assured that it will be replaced by the same, or a similar gas light, "as soon as possible." We won't let them "forget"---by now both Public Service and PUC are convinced that Rivertonians care about their gas lights!

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Film.....

In August the Film (3 good reels and 1 deteriorating) was hand delivered to a studio in North Jersey for copying on 16 mm film. It will take several months to get the finished film, after which it will be available for viewing. Eventually, some slides and prints will be made from the old film, also.

This is an expensive undertaking, and we want to thank Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Arnold, whose expertise and generosity have made it possible for us to proceed now, before further deterioration takes place.

Next May a Doll House Show has been scheduled by the Porch Club under the direction of Ruth Schweizer, and the proceeds from it will be given to the Historical Society for the film project. Meanwhile, anyone wishing to make a donation may do so now, as funds will be needed before Spring!

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Incorporation.....

Papers have been filed to incorporate the Historical Society of Riverton as a non-profit organization, and should be final by the beginning of '79. Harry D. Livingston, Esq. waived his fee for his service, and we appreciate his kindness.

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Survey.....

The special summer Workshop on Victorian Architecture was well attended, with about 60 persons present. After this, guidelines were developed, the town "divided" into 24 sections, a member or volunteer assumed responsibility for each section, and then a series of small groups met to go over gathering and recording information for an Architectural Survey. Completion date is set for October 15. We want to have the completed survey bound and then it will be available as a research resource. Information from it will also be used to prepare a form nominating Riverton for inclusion in the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

William McCrea has accepted an invitation from William Hall to discuss Historic Site Registration with the Borough Council here on Thursday, October 12, at 7 p.m., one hour before the regular

Council meeting. The public is invited, and this is an opportunity to ask any questions you may have about it. Plan to be there.

If you would like to help with the survey and weren't asked (however did that happen?), please call 829-6315. There are never too many helpers in a project of this size. Describing a building seems to be the most formidable problem, but all agree that it is interesting work. Keith Betten is interested, and most helpful to us in this.)

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Yesterday.....

With winter coming, take a tip from English Victorian homeowners, who made "Draft Excluders" to make their homes more comfortable. Sew up a long sausage of fabric, stuff it with sawdust, sand, or similar material, and place along the joint between the upper and lower window sash, along the sill, and on the floor in front of a door. Traditionally, the fabric was red; an extra yard of fabric from portieres or draperies could be used, giving a coordinated appearance.

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Do you remember crisp Fall days when persimmons grew high on a tree in what is now the Park? Or gathering nuts that grew on other trees in the area? Nuts are nutritious and were an inexpensive and plentiful source of food for early settlers, and for the Indians long before that. Squaws used meals made from acorns and chestnuts, and nuts were often found buried with their dead. The shells of walnuts, butternuts, and black walnuts, among others, provided colorfast dyes. These, plus chinquapins, hickorynuts, chestnuts, hazelnuts, and a few others, were native to eastern America; English walnuts, filberts, and others were imported. Coconuts were said to be introduced to Florida when a vessel from the Bahamas was wrecked near Jupiter Inlet, nuts washed ashore, were planted by the natives--and thrived. Peanuts, called "groundnuts", were once considered vulgar. German experiments demonstrated their nutritional value by making flour, grits, and biscuits, both regular and "diabetic" from them.

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Memberships are due now: clip and mail slip, with your check, to Mrs. Ellen Layton, Treasurer
630 Linden Avenue, Riverton 08077

Please enclose self addressed/stamped envelope for your membership card, and a receipt if you have included a donation.

NAME: _____ Membership \$ _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ Sr. Cit. ? _____

Donation enclosed for

Film: _____

Other: _____

date: _____ Total enclosed \$ _____

(annual dues, \$2.00

Senior Citizens, \$1.00)

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Golden October days when the W
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Although wild nut trees were abundant, their use for construction depleted them. Transplanting wild trees from the forests was usually not successful, and cultivation to develop hardier trees began in earnest. At the turn of the century this was a business still in its infancy, and literature on planting, grafting, and culture of edible nuts for commercial purposes was limited. In 1897 John R. Parry, of Pamona Nurseries, published a small book called Nuts for Profit: A Treatise on Propagation and Cultivation of Nut-Bearing Trees. It contains a collection of articles by others interested in the production of nuts, including Luther Burbank, as well as essays.

Robert Blight wrote.. "The hustle and bustle of modern life have brushed all the nonsense out of romance, and one rarely hears of a nutting party now--we buy them in the streets, so many for \$4.... I remember the good old-fashioned nutting party in Golden October days, when the Woodland defies the artist with the splendor of its coloring. The merry laugh of the maiden and the youth, the gentle politeness of the youth as he holds down the bough and the coy acceptance of the maiden, as she picks the spoils, the affected fright as the fingers are impaled on the chestnut's spring casing and the more than half-in-earnest solicitatious search is made for the thorn; the dainty way in which the walnut is picked up, lest its bruised rind should stain the "lily-white-hand"--all go to make up a "vision of peace and plenty." But, like some other days, my nutting days are over, and as I sit in the study chair I view the nuts from the naturalist's standpoint and leave to aldermanic and other civic dignitaries the privelege of lingering over the nuts and wine."

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Recent Gifts....

"Nuts for Profit", from which the above material was taken, gift from Mr. and Mrs. John Parry, of Cinnaminson
5 prints of trolleys in Riverton, 1926, from Mr. Elmer V. Fry, Princeton Junction, made by him from the film we are now having preserved, some years ago.
1925 picture of PHS Football team, from Harold Anfenson, Cinnaminson Ave., Palmyra
50th Anniversary Edition, New Era (1889-1939) from Mrs. Harry D. Livingston, Riverton.
(Acme ads offer Asco coffee at 18¢ a pound, apricots, 2 cans for 17¢, bread, 5¢, pork shoulder, 15¢ lb., oysters, select Jersey, 15¢ doz., tea, 1/4 lb-18¢, Crisco, 3 lb-49¢.....!
oops--it was The American Store, not the Acme, back then)

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Coming.....

November's meeting, between Thanksgiving and Christmas, will be a talk on archeological findings from this general area, by John Kresson. Watch the local paper for more details, later.

December is a time for Candlelight House Tours...Riverton Library will hold one; Mrs. Holly's House Tour is Sat., Dec. 9, from 6-10pm