



Hartmann

GASLIGHT NEWS

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RIVERTON, INC.

Riverton, N. J. 08077

Dec - Feb 1978/79

No. 2

November meeting.....

Monday, November 27 8 p.m. Riverton Porch Club
"Colonial Kitchen Capers" with Dorothea Connolly

After Thanksgiving, and before the Christmas season is upon us, come out and enjoy a very special program with Dorothea Connolly.

Mrs. Connolly is a historian, cook, lecturer--and a humorist! She comes in period costume and brings a large number of tools and utensils from her own collection (she has asked for 4 tables to display them); she is a spinner and weaver, and will demonstrate spinning.

Mrs. Connolly was featured on NJPTV's "Fireside Kitchen" series, and has headed many historic and craft programs (i.e. Flemington's Liberty Village). The response of those who have heard her is an immediate "oh, you'll really enjoy her! She's great!"

Please note that this meeting will be held at the Porch Club. Also, to meet the cost of bringing this special program to our members, we must ask a donation of \$2.00. However, for members in good standing, it will be \$1.00. Refreshments will be served.

This program is being jointly sponsored by our Historical Society, and the American Home Departments of Porch Club and Tri-Boro Women's Club.

COME -- BRING A FRIEND --(or SEVERAL!)
Enjoy a delightful program
Support your Society's efforts...

Gaslights They're safe!

The Borough has received notice from PUC that their petition and affidavits have been reviewed and the recommendation is that the exemption be granted to Riverton. The minimal amount of natural gas needed to keep them burning, as opposed to the exorbitant cost of converting to electricity, plus their historical value, swung the decision. The affidavits were from our Society, from William J. McCrea of the State Dept. of Historic Preservation, and Keith Betten, Burlington Co. Cultural & Hericage Commission. In part, Mr. Betten wrote:

"Riverton is more than merely an area with a heavy concentration of Victorian structures, however. It has managed somehow to retain the essence of small town turn-of-the-century America - and this in the midst of both suburban sprawl and urban decay. The gas lights which line the streets of Riverton contribute in no small way to the town's Victorian ambiance. By day, they function as humanly-scaled picturesque street furniture, and by night they provide a glow which is to many synonymous with the very life of Riverton. To remove them and to replace them with modern lighting fixtures would irreversably damage the entire character of this exceptionally well preserved and maintained American village."

Incorporation

The Historical Society of Riverton is now "inc." Papers have been filed for tax-exempt status, and are expected to be approved shortly.

Our thanks to Harry Livingston for the many hours he has spent in filling out and filing the endless forms necessary to accomplish this for our Society.

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Film

Nothing new on the film, to date. Harold Zayotti is heading a committee seeking donations to help pay for its preservation. A Doll House Show, to be held in May, will cover a major portion of the cost, --but not all of it. We would like to also have some slides and prints made from it.

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Survey

The Survey started back in August is gradually being completed. It will require additional months to add more information and/or improve descriptions where indicated, but eventually we will have a valuable record of Riverton, and how it grew.

Many interesting bits of information are turning up, and many of our residents are becoming more interested in researching their own houses.

Did you know...part of the Thomas property was previously Morgan land? ... not so long ago cows lumbered across the narrow dirt Main Street to drink and graze by the creek? ... Linden Ave. and Elm Terrace were once First and Second Avenues? ...

Before the Yacht Club building was erected on the Pier, the Club had a building on Bank Avenue where vacationers could spend a week or two.....

Does anyone know who Professor Cleveland was? He was apparently so well known that mention of him didn't require identification, in the 1800s. He lived near Broad and Main Streets....

William McCrea, who had planned to attend October's Borough Council meeting to discuss Historic Site Registration, had an unavoidable last-minute change in plans, but is expected to arrange an alternate date.

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New

A subscription to Old House Journal, purchased by Riverton Historical Society, is at the Library, for the convenience and enjoyment of all our residents as well as members. There is also a catalog of suppliers of "old house" materials.

Aerial photographs (copies) of Riverton and Palmyra, c. 1922, have been given the Society by Mr. and Mrs. Elliott Richardson.

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Yesterday

A gentleman was a member of the landed gentry; descended from an aristocratic family, whose income was obtained by the rental of his lands.... a goodman was a respected and substantial member of the community who ranked below a gentleman, but above a freeman, on the social scale...and his wife was a goodwife, or "goody"... After the 9th century, women who spun were called spinsters...

Families ate--and enjoyed--pyes..happenas..mincemeat..misickquatash..soppits..berry slump..comforts..fritters..switchel..

(recipes for these, and more, in Dorothea Connolly's cook book, available at November 27th meeting)

Do you remember the trolleys that followed the railroad tracks through Riverton? Nostalgic....well, consider this: in July, 1907, the New Era reported "a day that was a hoodoo for trolleys." All in one day, a trolley ran off the tracks at Delair and stayed in the woods all day. Another tried to dive off the trestle at West Palmyra, and "came near enough to give palpitations of the head." Then a third trolley "came to grief when the temporary bridge over Cooper's creek gave way and dumped car and passengers

into the water."

(No one was hurt in any of these mishaps--but travel by trolley could be an adventure!)

And how about this...from a notice in 1909 that the county board was giving exams for certification of teachers...

for 3rd grade certification: arithmetic, geography, penmanship, orthography, grammar, and reading. Also theory and practice, school law, U.S. History, civics, elementary composition, and temperance physiology.

for 2nd grade: elementary algebra, bookkeeping, physiology.

for 1st grade: some of above, plus plane geometry, physics, and general history.

Special certificates: various languages, drawing, music, and inventional geometry.

Phew!!!

REMINDER: Membership dues are our only budget for paper, postage, Newsletters, programs and other Society expenditures. If you have forgotten to get them in by now, please send your \$2.00 for membership 1978/79 season to Mrs. Ellen Layton, 630 Linden Avenue, Riverton 08077. With increased membership, we could do more; if each member could find one new member.....

Have you even been asked "Why bother with the past? What good is an old building...reminders of the past...?"

The involvement of searching out and gradually understanding more about what has gone before brings a deeper appreciation of what we have today, and provides an opportunity to better plan for tomorrow....

For your holidays ahead, some "old" recipes (only moderately updated...)

Honeyed Apple Rings...

Heat together in deep skillet 2 C honey, 1 C vinegar, 1 tsp cinnamon, 1 tsp salt; core, but don't peel apples cut into 1/2 inch thick slices. Cook a few at a time, until transparent, and keep warm until served.

Pounded Jersey Biscuits...

6 C flour, 1 C lard, 1 tsp salt, 1 C water..mix well lard and salt in flour, add the water; turn out dough on pieboard and pound with a flatiron edge until entirely mixed and will pull with a snap. Mold with fingers and bake.

How about a Christmas Shopping stew...

2 lbs lean chuck, cubed; 1 C chopped celery, 1 lg. can tomatoes, 3 onions sliced thinly, 4 carrots sliced, a 4-oz can water chestnuts sliced, 1 1/2 T sugar, 4 T minute tapioca, and 1/2 C wine (optional). Put all in Dutch oven and bake at 225° for 5 hours. Need not be stirred. Serve with rice or noodles--or in bowls, as is.

Or a mulled punch...(for 20)..

1 gallon cider, 1/2 lb brown sugar; 4 or 5 sticks cinnamon; fist of cloves; 2 lemons sliced. Simmer for 1 1/2 hours. When serving, pour 1 oz rum in cup, then add hot cider punch. Good "with or without"

MERRY CHRISTMAS

HAPPY NEW YEAR

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Monday, November 27 8 pm Meeting at Riverton Porch Club: Dorothea Connolly and "Colonial Kitchen Capers"
- Saturday, December 9 Library House Tour
- Sunday, December 17 7 p.m. Tree Lighting, at Memorial Site, Main St.