



# Gaslight News

[rivertonhistory.com](http://rivertonhistory.com)

Historical Society of Riverton

vol. L, no. 1 (#182)

Founded 1970

Riverton, NJ 08077

Incorporated 1978

HAPPY  
NEW YEAR

2020  
HISTORY  
STILL  
MATTERS  
HERE

Please look in your  
mailing envelope or  
online for a 2020  
MEMBERSHIP DUES FORM  
The *Gaslight News*  
is going green and  
paperless!



## In this issue

- ANOTHER BANK AVE.  
MARKER AT 407  
- ROGER PRICHARD 1
- AN EVENING WITH  
ALICE PAUL  
- SUSAN DECHNIK 1
- ACROSS THE MILES  
WITH MRS. COLOZZI  
- JMC 2
- HELEN LIPPINCOTT,  
SUFFRAGE CHAMPION  
- CINDY GORDON 3
- VETS DAY RECAP &  
DAN CAMPBELL  
PRESENTATION - JMC 4

## Our Sub-Committee on Sub-Surface Issues plants another historical marker at 407 Bank

On November 22, 2019, our Sub-Committee on Sub-Surface Issues, or SCSSI, braved a cold wind at sundown to get a marker planted at 407 Bank Avenue.

The SCSSI, of course, consists of HSR Board members, **Bill Brown**, **John Laverty**, and **Roger Prichard**, whose sweat equity continues to pay dividends for those wishing to know more of Riverton's origin story.

This now makes the sixth Riverton historic site for which Roger Prichard has researched its provenance. Built during the spring and summer of 1851, this house is one of ten



A new plaque marks 407 Bank Avenue, one of ten riverbank villas commissioned from architect Samuel Sloan by the founders of Riverton in 1851. PHOTO CREDIT: ROGER PRICHARD

riverbank villas that the founders of Riverton commissioned from architect **Samuel Sloan**.

This marker is the product of distilling 76 pages of meticulously researched information about the home and two of its earliest owners, **Rodman Wharton** and **Edwin Fidler, Jr.**

The first owner was Philadelphia Rodman Wharton, the youngest of those town founders at age 31, and the scion of several notable Philadelphia Quaker families with histories in America dating to the 1600s.

See **MARKERS** on 2

## Alisa Dupuy brought Alice Paul's suffrage struggles to life at the Porch Club Oct. 24



PHOTO CREDIT: SUSAN DECHNIK

The Historical Society of Riverton and The Porch Club of Riverton presented "[An Evening with Alice Paul](#)," New Jersey's suffragist on Thursday, October 24th. Historical re-enactor [Alisa Dupuy](#) portrayed Alice Paul, recounting her life from growing up in Moorestown, New

Jersey as a Quaker, to her time spent in London where she became involved in the suffrage movement.

Jailed many times, Alice Paul took part in a hunger strike and was subjected to forced feedings. Returning to the United States, she continued her work as a tireless activist for women's suffrage.

She organized the famous Washington Parade on March 3, 1913, where thousands of women from all over the United States marched down Pennsylvania Avenue demanding action. It took another seven years for the Nineteenth Amendment to be ratified on August 18, 1920.

- SUSAN DECHNIK



②

## THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF RIVERTON

### Gaslight News

is a publication of  
**THE HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY OF RIVERTON**  
and is published  
four times per year.

Post Office Box # 112  
Riverton, NJ 08077

E-mail/Web:  
[rivertonhistory@gmail.com](mailto:rivertonhistory@gmail.com)  
[rivertonhistory.com/](http://rivertonhistory.com/)

*In case you  
missed it...*

Here is a sampling  
of blog posts that  
appeared on  
[rivertonhistory.com](http://rivertonhistory.com)  
since the last issue.

[Sept 23](#), Suffrage mem-  
orabilia needed for edu-  
cational project

[Oct 30](#), Camden's New-  
ton Avenue - Then & Now

[Nov 11](#), The Cold War Era  
Ballistic Early Warning  
System had local roots  
here

[Nov 13](#), This was one of  
several posts publicizing  
our Historic House Party.  
A recap and photos to  
follow with more details  
about our effort to estab-  
lish cash prizes to en-  
courage student authors to  
use primary sources to  
write about local history.

[Nov 15](#), A descendant  
and I collaborate across  
the miles to research a  
Dreer employee

[Nov 19](#), Large screen TV  
on sale at Schwering's -  
back in 1948

[Nov 22](#), Just posted - 24  
Ocean City, Riverside,  
Riverton postcard scans

[Nov 25](#), Birch Street,  
West of 9th St., Camden,  
NJ - Then & Now

**We welcome readers'  
comments and  
submissions**

### MARKERS from 1

Rodman  
lived here  
just a  
couple of  
summers,  
dying of  
cholera  
in this  
house  
in the  
summer  
of 1854.



L-R: Roger Prichard and John Laverty, two-thirds of the sign installation crew  
PHOTO CREDIT: ROGER PRICHARD

(His brother **Joseph Wharton** later founded the **Wharton School of Business** at the **University of Pennsylvania**.)

Rodman Wharton's widow, **Susanna Dillwyn Parrish Wharton**, never remarried and devoted her long life to supporting many causes including Native Americans, alcoholism as a medical issue, immigrants, and founding the Children's Aid Society.

At age 81, she joined other leaders in a national call against growing attacks on African-American communities by white mobs. They chose to call themselves the **National Associa-**

**tion for the Advancement of Colored People, or NAACP.**

After his death, the house changed hands several times until **Edwin, Jr. and Nannie Fidler** bought it in 1882. Edwin was the son of Philadelphia's popular mayor of the same name who managed the family's successful rope and cordage works in Bridesburg.

Other markers at [Riverton Steamboat Landing](#), [Riverton Public School](#), and at [309](#), [311](#), and [503 Bank Avenue](#) illuminate the story of Riverton's founding and early development.

A generous [\\$4,000 donation](#) from **Carlos Rogers'** [Historic Riverton Criterium](#) in 2016 continues to fund the current marker program.

See [407 Bank Avenue's latest marker](#), annotated with sources for the most important claims, plus the complete [73-page history of the house](#) and its early owners on our website.

A sign at 106 Penn (formerly on the riverbank and home of two illustrious abolitionists) is next on this ambitious agenda.

- ROGER PRICHARD



## Across the miles with founding member and former president, Mrs. Marilyn Colozzi

Now on the shoulders of giants, the HSR owes much to Mrs. Colozzi and other charter members

In mid-December **Carl Colozzi**, a former Riverton School student of mine, telephoned from his home in North Carolina and asked if we could send him a newsletter for his mother in return for a donation. Considering that **Mrs. Marilyn Colozzi** is a past president of this organization and the originator and first editor of the *Gaslight News*, it was the very least we could do!

The Colozzi family lived at 623 Elm Terrace and moved down to Greensboro, NC in 1979, after Carl's 6th grade year when his father, an industrial engineer, relocated to accept a supervisory position with the US Postal Service.

Following up with Carl by email, he spoke with his mother who described how she became involved with the Historical Society. Marilyn Colozzi knew **Frank Lockhart**, the mayor at the time, and his wife **Betty**. Frank wanted to start up a group interested in the

town's history. She went to a meeting, and the Society started from that.

Having grown up in Palmyra and Riverton, she was always interested in the town's rich history. Her grandfather, **John O'Neill**, tended the railroad crossing at Broad and Main, and her father, **Edward O'Neill**, was raised, for a while, at the railroad crossing station, near where the Riverton War Memorial stands today.



Edward O'Neill, father of Marilyn O'Neill Colozzi, plays at Broad & Main crossing, 1917. Note roof of old station below crossing sign.  
PHOTO CREDIT: Colozzi Family Album





"Votes for Women"  
7/8" black on yellow celluloid button, with Sommer Badge Manufacturing Co., Newark, New Jersey backmark, c1915

As the 19th Amendment turns 100, we who value history would do well to instill in another generation an appreciation for the activists and reformers whose struggle secured women's right to vote.

In 1904, Helen Lippincott called for the formation of a Suffrage Section at the Porch Club, but her involvement in the cause developed years before. Her belief in the equality of persons, arose from the Friends' core conviction that all people are equal in the eyes of God.



Alisa Dupuy channels Mt. Laurel native, suffragist Alice Paul, at Oct. HSR meeting  
PHOTO CREDIT: SUSAN DECHNIK

## Riverton's Helen Lippincott, suffrage champion

Treasurer of NJ Women's Suffrage Assn; founder of Suffrage Section of Riverton Porch Club; delegate, life member, and executive comm. member of Nat'l Women's Suffrage Assn; delegate to Congress of International Women's Suffrage Alliance

Helen S. Lippincott was born on April 27, 1863, in Riverton, New Jersey, the daughter of **Anna Sutton** (1840-1890) and **Ezra Lippincott** (1936-1906). Helen Lippincott never married and lived in the house that her father built for her at 107 Lippincott her whole life.

Lippincott's father, Ezra, was a prominent merchant in Riverton. The family belonged to the local Friends Meeting. In 1916 Ezra Lippincott built a home for his daughter, at 107 Lippincott Avenue, where she lived for the rest of her life. Her sister, **Hetty Coale Lippincott**, six years her junior, was also active in the suffrage movement, as were other members of the Lippincott family.

New Jersey was very active in the woman suffrage movement at the turn of the twentieth century. The New Jersey Women's Suffrage Association was organized in 1867, one of the first in the country. **Mrs. Florence Howe Hall**, a daughter of **Mrs. Julia Ward Howe**, was president from 1893 until 1900, and Helen Lippincott served as treasurer of the organization for five years.

Many suffragists came from Riverton. The town had a large Quaker population and there were close ties between the Quakers and the suffrage movement. Local historical society records note a likely association between Riverton women and noted suffragist **Alice Paul**, who came from neighboring Moorestown and was also an active Quaker. The records show that many Riverton

"clubwomen" were involved in the women's suffrage movement. They report that Helen Lippincott was a charter member of the Riverton Porch Club, a non-profit organization founded in 1890 for the purpose of inspiring, encouraging, educating and bettering its membership. A socially and civically engaged group, The Porch Club was one of the country's first organized women's clubs. In 1904, Helen Lippincott called for the formation of a Suffrage Section, or department,

at the Porch Club. The suffrage section was eventually renamed as the Riverton Suffrage League.

In the next few decades, Helen Lippincott continued her suffrage activities at the local, state, and international levels. She also served as a delegate to the 1912 National Convention of the Women's Suffrage Association. At the forty-third meeting of the group, she was listed as a delegate and life member, and at the 1914 meeting she was made a member of the executive committee.

The New Jersey Woman Suffrage Association grew rapidly with Helen Lippincott as an active member. Its membership grew from 2,200 in 1912 to more than 6,000 a year later.

In August 1913, Helen Lippincott took part in a demonstration in Washington, arranged by the National Congressional Committee, at which petitions were presented to the Senate asking for the immediate submission of the Federal (suffrage) Amendment.

At the annual convention held in Newark in November 1913, she joined the organization's board as second vice-president.

Helen Lippincott was one of 12 delegates from the United States listed in the program for the eighth congress of the International Women's Suffrage Alliance, an assemblage of women from 31 countries who met in Geneva in June 1920. The conference was led by **Carrie Chapman Catt** and was the first such conference to be held after World War I and after the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1919.

Helen Lippincott's passport application in March of 1920 indicated her reason for traveling was to visit the women's conference in Geneva, followed by a stay in London for a Friends' Conference. She sailed from New York on May 19.

Helen Lippincott died in December 1955, at the age of 92. She was buried at Westfield Friends burial grounds in Cinnaminson, New Jersey, a town neighboring Riverton.

- CINDY GORDON, PLAINSBORO, NEW JERSEY



This article appeared online in the [Biographical Database of NAWSA Suffragists](#) Errors in original corrected by Pat Bruner and Nancy Hall



## Colozzi from 2

In addition to taking on the responsibilities of writing the *Gaslight News*, Mrs. Colozzi served as Society President 1974-1977. She helped research homes of folks who wanted historic plaques, a project given impetus by the nation's Bicentennial in 1976.

Matt Kenny directed the production of the wooden signs for an Eagle Scout badge project. Dues back then... \$2.00.



Lee Hill,  
lamplighter, 1938  
PHOTO CREDIT: Mary Flanagan

Mrs. Colozzi was instrumental with the Society's campaign to save the gas streetlamps during the seventies when PSE&G wanted to remove them.

She and other Society members met with the power company and convinced it to relent by stressing to them the importance of gaslamps with the town's historical identity.

She recalls Lee Hill, the lamplighter from East Riverton who boarded dogs. He lit each individual lamp at night and returned each morning to extinguish them.

Learning of Mrs. Colozzi's interest in receiving a current newsletter, I wondered what mention of her and her family might be found in our online newsletters and old hometown newspaper collection.

The image of a 1922 *New Era* clipping shown at right is one of a few dozen such files mentioning Mrs. Colozzi or her relatives that I found and sent to her. Marilyn's son, Carl, relayed her reaction, "Oh, wow! I cannot thank you enough for this information."

## Appreciation

John O'Neil desires to express his thanks to those who signed his petition to the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, requesting his retention as crossing watchman at Riverton. Advertisement.

John O'Neil, retained as watchman,  
*The New Era*, Jan 20, 1922, p2

The Society is grateful for the pioneering work of Marilyn Colozzi, Betty Lockhart, Betty Hahle, Lenore Probsting, Mary Jane Wittmeyer, Toby Hunn, Barbara Smyth, Ruth Schmiere, Elsie Waters, and others of that formative first decade.

They laid the foundation for what the Historical Society of Riverton is able to achieve today.

*Who among those reading this can commit to continuing this noble endeavor?*

- JMc



## Veterans Day observed Nov. 11

On Monday, November 11, 2019, Veterans and Auxiliary Supporters from **Riverside's VFW Post 3020** served as Honor Guard for Riverton's Veterans Day ceremony at the Riverton War Memorial on Main Street.



The names of the following Riverton servicemen were added to the Honor Roll displayed there:

Jerome Gasiorowski USN  
Bernard J. Swiderek US Army  
Gerard E. Hendricks USCG  
Scott D. Mayes USN  
J.L. Yearly US Army

See the complete story on the [Riverton Veterans](#) page of our website at [rivertonhistory.com](http://rivertonhistory.com) - JMc



## Before and After - Discoveries in Historic Preservation at RFL, Mar 26

Dan Campbell shares his 30+ years experience in architecture and historic preservation

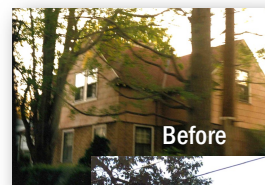


Daniel Campbell, AIA  
PHOTO CREDIT: DAN CAMPBELL

WHEN: March 26 at 7pm  
WHERE: Riverton Library  
[Daniel Campbell, AIA](#) is a widely recognized multi-state licensed architect whose specialty is the restoration and preservation of historic architecture. He is also a past HSR president and former *Gaslight News* editor.

During his eighteen years in Riverton Mr. Campbell restored and rehabilitated his residence at [16 Carriage House Lane](#), while designing four new residences.

Together with Riverton's **Walter Croft, AIA** and others, he was part of the [Riverton Steamboat Landing Foundation](#)



16 Carriage House Lane  
PHOTO CREDIT: Dan Campbell

Project Team that completed the [Riverton Yacht Club](#) 3-phased restoration, which includes period-designed doors, original colors through paint analysis, and restoration of the second floor Directors Room to c.1880 appearance and accessibility. The project won a [2001 NJ State Historic Preservation Project Award](#).

In 1999, after several years of careful and exhaustive research by Society members and the Borough led by **Daniel Campbell, Keith Betten**, and **Betty Hahle**, the National Register of Historic Places designated [Riverton Historic District](#).

Mr. Campbell's 40-slide PowerPoint incorporates many detailed drawings and photos of projects he has executed over his career in PA, NJ (including Riverton), DE, MD, & SC.

- JMc

