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**Program  
for  
June 28**

*Presentation  
of the restored  
1851 map  
drawn by the  
South River  
resident,  
R. Van Dyke  
Reid*

**Meeting Dates  
for 2000**

**June 28  
September 27  
November 15**

*President's Message*

*by Donna Rafano*

**Look, Listen, and Learn...**

With all the excitement associated with the year 2000 and the new millennium, the South River Historical & Preservation Society continues to focus on the past rather than the future. Three words come to mind... **Look, Listen & Learn.**

**LOOK...** I look at how far the Society has come in just a year. A year ago we began planning the dedication ceremony for the Old School Baptist Church Museum. Today, I see a museum filled with great artifacts and exhibits. Thanks to Ann Smith, whom you'll read about later, we have a doctor's corner. Another recent addition to the museum is a coal/gas fired range donated by Mrs. Helene Schrader. On and around the stove are kitchen items dating back to the early 1920's.

I am excited to announce that soon a Lenape Indian exhibit will be on loan, courtesy of the Middlesex Cultural and Heritage Commission. Please come down and see this great exhibit!

**LISTEN...** I am not originally from South River, therefore I am always interested in listening to stories about our town. At our February meeting, we viewed a videotape made by Fred Goff the demolition of Campbell School. I have never been inside Campbell School but after listening to the wonderful memories and funny stories of the teachers and students who over the years had come to love the school, I too felt a great loss. I asked the person sitting next to me how he felt as we watched the video. He told me he couldn't even drive by the school during the days of its destruction because it was too sad. How does a building make such an impact on us? Thank you, Fred, for sharing this event with us, and for donating your videotape to the Society.

In April, we listened to Mark Nonesteid from the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission, speak to the Society about Thomas Edison. I did not know that Edison started in a Menlo Park laboratory, or that the first electrically lit home was in Middlesex County. Mark, we appreciate your time and efforts and thank you for presenting us with such a fascinating program.

*Continued on page 2*

## *Earl Wenger receives the "Service Above Self Award"*

On Sunday, June 11, the South River - East Brunswick Rotary presented Earl Wenger with its "Service Above Self Award." Mayor Szegeti spoke of Earl Wenger's contributions to the South River Historical Society, the Conklin Methodist Church, and the community as the South River Historian.

Earl's family and friends attended the Rotary brunch at the East Brunswick Chateau. Earl's son, Michael, church friends, and Society friends enjoyed sharing this special occasion with Earl.

If there is anything that needs to be done for the Society, Earl is there. Earl can be found seeding the lawn, sanding a stove, moving HUGE concrete urns, researching information which can take him to New Brunswick, Philadelphia, etc. Whatever the need, Earl gets the job done with perfection. "Earl the Pearl", we are proud of you!



*President continued from page 1.*

**LEARN...** Lastly, I believe that we never stop learning and if we do cease to learn new things then we stop growing. I think that there are MANY untold stories about South River — wonderful experiences or events from the past yet to be shared, an old photograph that perhaps speaks for itself, or an item found in an attic that was a part of a family's history. Please share your experiences with us, send us that wonderful photo or that item from the attic, so that others can learn more about South River's past. I invite you to come to the Old School Baptist Church Museum the first Sunday of every month and **Look, Listen & Learn.** You won't be disappointed!

**"When I want to understand what is happening today  
or try to decide what will happen tomorrow,  
I look back."**

**Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.**

## *Heritage Day - May 6*



Doris Miller, Donna Rafano, and Ann Rafano enjoy meeting South River friends during Heritage Day.

On Saturday, May 6, South River celebrated Heritage Day. The event was staged on Montgomery Street from 12 to 5 p.m.. The Society had a display which included Csatari prints of the Old School Baptist Church, South River memorabilia, and commemorative items for sale. Thank you for stopping and visiting our display.

Other members of the Society who helped were Emily Miller, Rose Mary Freese, Corinne Cebula, Anne Sivess, Iris Schmitt and Earl Wenger.

Although the day was hot, the shade of a tree and wonderful friends made for a delightful day.

## *Membership*

Thank you for sending the Society your membership dues for 2000. Our current membership is 158. If your company makes "matching donations," please send us the form with your donation.

During 1999, we lost some of our dedicated membership. We fondly remember:

**Mrs. Jane Alexander,**

a trustee of the Society and the wife of Dr. Raymond J. Alexander.

**Mrs. Olga Sigle,**

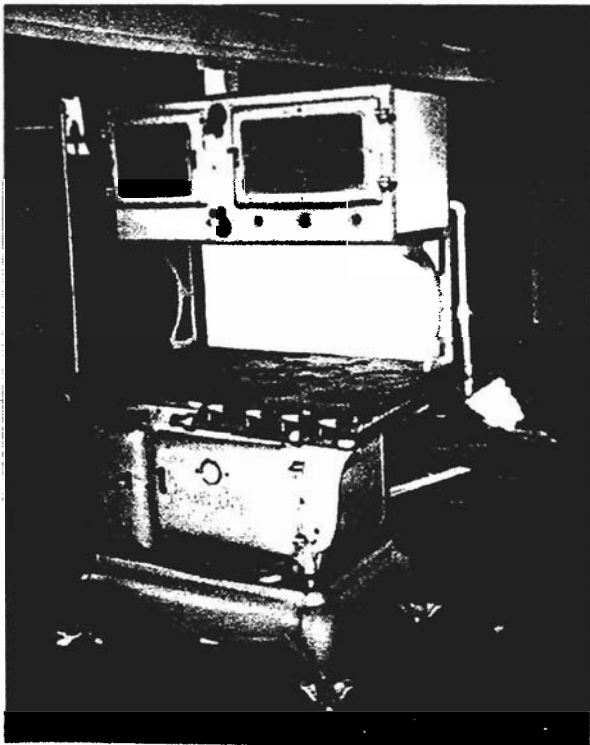
a member of the Society, the Women's Club, and an educator.

**Mrs. Marie M. Kahler,**

a member of the Society, daughter of the third Mayor and Postmaster of South River, Joseph Mark and Postmaster, Clara Mark.

## *Old School Baptist Church Museum News*

Thanks to the generosity of our member **Ann Smith**, wife of the late Dr. John Albert Smith, the Society proudly announces a doctor's exhibit is on display at the museum. There are many interesting items which include two wooden examining tables, an examining chair, a back-lighted box to view x-rays, a doctor's bag with medical instruments, an autoclave, diplomas and several medical books.



A new exhibit at the museum is a range donated to the society by **Helene Schrader**, who purchased a house on Roosevelt Street and found the stove in the basement.

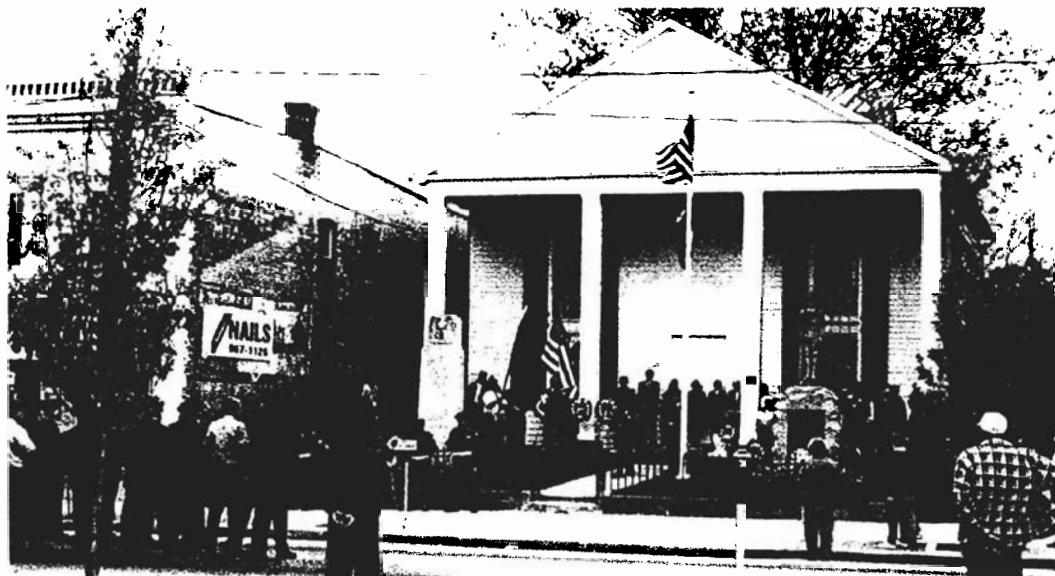
The current museum display exhibits a coal/gas fired range. Its heating surface has 4 pot positions over the coal firebox and 4 over gas burners. There is a main oven adjacent to the coal fire box and 2 smaller overhead gas fired ovens. A unique feature links it to South River's past. There is a 2" X 7" indent in the narrow apron just beneath the main oven door. It contains a cast iron name plate with the name "S. DAVIDOVIST, SOUTH RIVER, NJ". Woodis Booraem says there was a Davidovitz Furniture Store on Ferry Street at one time.

### **Photographs of South River Needed:**

We are always looking for "new" old photographs of South River for our calendar. If you think you might have a unique picture, please call *Doris Miller* at 254-0729.

## *Memorial Day Ceremony - May 29 "Lest we Forget"*

The local veterans, police, fire fighters, and residents remembered those who died for our country in a reverent service which culminated at the Old School Baptist Church. After visiting each of the cemeteries in South River, all joined in the final ceremony which included comments by Mayor Szegeti, a 21 gun salute, and the placing of flowers by the memorials.



## *Museum News*

Historical Society trustee, Eliane Verloove, and secretary, Stefanie Bartz, volunteered their time to help sort photographs and file archival materials.



**SOUTH RIVER  
HISTORICAL & PRESERVATION  
SOCIETY, INC.**

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NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
BULK RATE  
U.S. POSTAGE  
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PERMIT NO. 82  
SOUTH RIVER, NJ  
08882

**Next Meeting**

**Wednesday, June 28 at 7:00 p.m. at the Old School Baptist Church, Main Street, SR**

*June 28 Meeting - R. VanDyke Reid Map*

Please join us on June 28 for the presentation of the restored map which was made by R. VanDyke Reid, a South River resident. In 1851, while at Rutgers University, he made the map for one of his college classes.



Earl Wenger and Ann Rafano examine  
a copy of the R. VanDyke Reid Map.

Harold Armstrong, who donated half of the money for the restoration of the map, has been invited to attend the meeting. VanDyke Reid was Harold Armstrong's relative.

One hundred forty-nine years after the map was made, it will have a permanent place in the museum.

Please join us and see the restored map.

Refreshments will be served.