

## Next Meeting: FEBRUARY 21

The program scheduled features **Mark Di Ionno**, author of "A Guide to New Jersey's Revolutionary War Trail for Families and History Buffs."

Copies of Mr. Di Ionno book will be available for signing.

## Our 2001 Meeting Dates:

FEBRUARY 21

APRIL 25

JUNE 27

SEPTEMBER 26

NOVEMBER 28

## SRH&PS OFFICERS

**Donna Rafano**  
President

**Paul Goepfert**  
Vice President

**Edwin Roginski**  
Treasurer

**Stephanie Bartz**  
Secretary

## President's Message

by *Donna Rafano*

As I enter my second term as president, all I can think about is how much there is to do!

Our focus this year continues to be the Old School Baptist Church Museum. We are beginning the huge task of organizing our growing inventory of artifacts. Thanks to the guidance of CAPES, a program funded by the New Jersey Historical Commission, we are in the early stages of cataloguing all our collections. This project is overwhelming and will take months, maybe years, to complete. Anyone interested in helping in this endeavor, please contact Bob Rafano at 254-3141.

For those of you who missed our Annual Meeting in November, we shared a delicious pot-luck dinner while enjoying a show-and-tell program. Some of the highlights of the evening were: original newspapers and clippings from the FDR era, a thermometer from Cost's Liquor Store, a carriage foot warmer, vintage opera glasses, a book formerly belonging to Governor Hoffman, stationery from Gottfredson Bro. Bakery and an Austrian Army identification book. Good food and great stories. We all enjoyed it.

## Special Thanks for going above and beyond. . .

The South River Historical and Preservation Society would like to take a moment to acknowledge three members of our Executive Board. In recent months they have donated many hours and worked very hard for our Society.

We would like to thank **Marilyn Anastasio** and **Candice Lewandoski** for their vision and for the many hours dedicated to developing, writing and applying for two education grants. Their efforts paid off when we received the first grant last fall from the Middlesex County Cultural & Heritage Commission. And most recently, the South

Another highlight of the evening was the introduction of Pat Carney and our newest Society members from the South River High School: Swavek Dziuba, Mara Hansen, Meghan Singagliese and Artur Virginas (missing were Paul Framheim, Jennifer Krempecki, Catarina Pedreiro, Katie Roselli, Megan Sassaman and Paul Zelanko). Together they will be working on an historic project based on South River. We are extremely excited about this project, and welcome them to the Society. I know GREAT things will result from their efforts. You will read more about this later in the newsletter.

As you can see, we are making changes in our newsletter. We have a new look! In each issue we hope to share a small piece of South River's history, highlight an architectural building or site and provide you with useful historical references.

We have some great programs planned for this year. Beginning this month with author Mark Di Ionno, followed by our April program featuring the history the South River Police and Fire Departments. I hope you will join us!

River Board of Education in conjunction with the SRH&PS received a grant from Verizon. Thank you, ladies, for all your great work.

We would also like to thank **Kenny Roginski** for his historical work. He is chairman of the newly formed Preservation Committee. Kenny's expertise is in vintage home restoration and preservation. The Society has received \$100 from his employer, Dow Jones, for Kenny's 40+ hours of dedicated time, educating others on the importance of preserving great buildings and houses. Thanks, Kenny!

## South River High School Students have taken on a Virtual Project.

The South River School District in collaboration with the South River Historic & Preservation Society, Inc. was awarded a \$4600 grant from Verizon to preserve and promote the history of South River.

The South River High School Community Problem Solving Team under the direction of Patricia Carney, the faculty advisor, is now in the process of creating a virtual reality walking tour and an "on foot" walking tour of South River.

The South River Historical & Preservation Society, Inc. is in possession of an 1851 map of the borough, drawn by R. Van Dyke Reid. (The 1851 map

itself has been restored through grant money and is now a permanent display in the Old School Baptist Church Museum which is run by the historical society.)

The high school students plan to use the 1851 map, photos of South River from 1895 to 1905, along with photos and videotapes of the borough today to compare "then" and "now" and simulate a virtual reality "tour" of South River. The students will include interviews with senior citizens and current residents of the borough to add dimension to the project. The completed project will be accessed through the South River

School District and South River Historical Society's web sites.

The South River high school students enrolled in the Community Problem Solving Team and their advisor are members of the society. Their participation, in fact, connects the two entities - the South River School District and the South River Historical & Preservation Society. Ownership in the project guarantees interest of the stakeholders (the high school students, the Board of Education members, and the society) and will "turnkey" across the grade levels (siblings and friends) as well as throughout families in and out of South River.

## Recent Donations

► Thanks to **Dick Glickman** for his donations to the society. The framed photo of his father's 1926 HS Class trip to Washington, correspondence from the Class of '25, and the 1928 Oriflame Yearbook are now part of the society's permanent collection.

► Special thanks to **Girl Scout Troop No. 1169** who took part in hosting a tour of the OSBC Museum for senior citizens on November 19, 2000. The girls did a great job and the senior citizens enjoyed themselves. After the tour Maggie Cseh presented President Donna Rafano with the 1903-1953 St. Mary's 50th Golden Jubilee Yearbook. On behalf of the troop Ashlee Geesey donated a photograph of her great, great grandfather Fred Betzler and one of his coal bags. The photo dates back to the 1930's.

► **Eleanore Eppinger** generously donated several boxes of items ranging from hand made dresses and aprons to photographs and cameras

## November 15th Annual Meeting Highlights



▲ After dinner, members gathered to share their treasures during the "Show and Tell" portion of the meeting.

◀ Stephanie Bartz, our secretary, shows the book which formerly belonged to Governor Hoffman.

## South River's Flu Epidemic, 1918

An excerpt from Jessie Selover's "History of South River"

It is a true saying: "Necessity is the mother of invention": Paraphrased. "South River is equal to any emergency, that might occur within it's borders." This fact was proved in October 1918 when a flu epidemic broke out in the borough and Sayreville; also in the towns of Old Bridge, East Brunswick and Dunham's Corner.

At the beginning of the epidemic, patients were treated at their homes by family physicians. Many were admitted to St. Peter's and Middlesex Hospitals in New Brunswick; also to South Amboy and Perth Amboy hospitals. Flu patients were cared for until the wards were overcrowded with home patients. The task of medicating South River and Sayreville patients then became a problem for the Boards of Health of the twin boroughs.

Members of the two Boards of Health at joint meetings discussed the emergency and the urgent need of handling it professionally...

The vacant factory on Water Street, formerly occupied by Mendel and Luneppe Embroidery Co., containing six commodious lofts, was rented by the Boards of Health and converted into an emergency hospital. The Eastern Division of the American Red Cross was notified of the critical flu condition. Inspectors were sent to ascertain to what extent its humanitarian service could be used.

Within a few hours the emergency hospital was laid out in wards, two rooms being assigned for children, two rooms for men and two rooms for women patients. An order for needed equipment was telephoned to the Red Cross Headquarters in New York

and before the inspectors had returned to their office the articles were on their way to South River.

The hospital was supervised by Red Cross physicians and nurses, who had volunteered their services to help if needed. Within two days after the first patient had been admitted over two hundred seriously ill patients were receiving medical treatment that they had been unable to receive from their family physicians who were busy 24 hours a day treating as many as it was physically possible for them to handle. During the period the hospital was maintained eight persons died and two babies were born. Over eight hundred patients were treated at the hospital...

Beside the nurses who were sent by the Red Cross, helpers and nurses assistants including men and women were recruited from the borough. They were divided into three groups: ward workers who made beds and kept the wards clean; the second group worked in the kitchen and prepared special diets ordered by the doctors; the third group assisted the nurses in giving the medicines, taking pulses and temperatures. The men helpers did the heavy work on each shift and helped nurses in the men's ward.

The strictest sanitary precautions were taken to prevent the flu from spreading among the helpers. Disinfectants were freely used and each helper and nurse wore over the nose and mouth a bandage saturated with disinfectant...

Another step that brought the complete mastery of the epidemic was the organization of a committee of adult residents of South River and Sayreville. Divided into



small groups they were assigned certain streets in the towns and made house-to-house canvas for the names of family members who had the flu or were ill and under the care of their family physician.

The borough wide canvass for flu patients brought to the attention of the Boards of Health several untreated cases in bad shape...

Bakers and peddlers, who supplied customers in outlying districts, reported whole families who had been ill and without food or medicine for days. Each report was investigated at once. In many instances families of from three to eight persons were brought to the hospital day and night. As soon as a report had been received an ambulance or a dray filled with straw and blankets was dispatched to the home.

The motto of the hospital was, "They must get well". Orders were: "Give each patient the best treatment," and where the slightest neglect was discovered the unfavorable condition was reported to the office and the condition was corrected immediately.

At the beginning of the fourth week patients were discharged by the score until within a few days, the hospital was empty and the terrible epidemic had been mastered.

## Announcements

### Donations Welcome

Please let us know if you have any "South River" items which you would like to donate or loan to the Society. If you have pictures which you think we would like, we will make copies of the pictures and return the originals to you.

### Freehold Vintage Homeowners Association

February 25, Sunday at 7 p.m. at the Grace Lutheran Church, Freehold (corner of W. Main and Rt. 33). OPEN

TO ALL! For homeowners who love the charm of preserved old houses and those who would like to learn more about properly restoring their home or like to share experiences with others.

### Visit the Old School Baptist Church Museum

Come and visit the Old School Baptist Church Museum. The museum is open on the first Sunday of every month from 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm. Come and share your past with us. All visitors are wel-

come. Volunteers are need.

If you are interested in becoming a docent at the museum, please contact Donna Rafano at (732) 254-7322 or call the Museum at (732) 613-3078.

For more information about the South River Historical & Preservation Society visit our website at: [www.rootsweb.com/~njsrhps/](http://www.rootsweb.com/~njsrhps/)

For more information about becoming a member of the SRH&PS please call **Woodis Booraem** at (732) 257-0365.



**South River  
Historical & Preservation Society, Inc.**

129 Main Street,  
South River, New Jersey 08882

*“History is a ship carrying living memories to the future.”*

*—Stephen Spender*

## **Look on the Internet For More Historical Information**

**The Middlesex County Cultural and  
Heritage Commission**

[www.cultureheritage.org](http://www.cultureheritage.org)

**The New Jersey Historic Trust**

[www.njht.org](http://www.njht.org)

**The New Jersey State Archives:**

[www.state.nj.us/state/darm/darm.html](http://www.state.nj.us/state/darm/darm.html)

**The New Jersey Historical Commission**

[www.newjerseyhistory.org](http://www.newjerseyhistory.org)

**The National Parks Service Register  
of Historic Places**

[www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel](http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel)

**Links with New Jersey signers of the Declaration  
of Independence**

<http://pirate.shu.edu/~luriemax>

**Ellis Island Restoration Projects**

<http://www.ellisland.org>

**Endangered New Jersey Historic Sites**

[www.preservationnj.org](http://www.preservationnj.org)

**The American Association of State and  
Local History**

[www.aaslh.org](http://www.aaslh.org)

**Search for Your Ancestors**

[www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)

**New Jersey Roots Web**

[www.rootsweb.com/~websites/newjersey.html](http://www.rootsweb.com/~websites/newjersey.html)

**Barnegat Historical Society**

[www.barnegathistoricalsoc.com](http://www.barnegathistoricalsoc.com)

**Monmouth County Archives**

[www.visitmonmouth.com/archives](http://www.visitmonmouth.com/archives)

**Bergen County Historical Society**

[www.carroll.com/bchs](http://www.carroll.com/bchs)

**Hunterdon County Cultural &  
Heritage Commission**

[www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/history.htm](http://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/history.htm)

**Public Affairs Research Research Institute**

[www.nj.com/pari](http://www.nj.com/pari)

**Research Libraries Information Network**

[lcweb.loc.gov/coll/nucmc/nucmc.htmlpdates](http://lcweb.loc.gov/coll/nucmc/nucmc.htmlpdates)