

Next Meeting: JUNE 27th

The program scheduled for June is the presentation of Proud Past, Bright Future: A Virtual Tour of South River created by the South River High School Gifted and Talented Students

Our 2001 Meeting Dates:

JUNE 27th
SEPTEMBER 26th
NOVEMBER 28th

Meetings are held at the Old School Baptist Church Museum and begin at 7 pm.

SRH&PS OFFICERS

Donna Rafano
President

Paul Goepfert
Vice President

Edwin Roginski
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Stephanie Bartz
Secretary

President's Message

by Donna Rafano

Thank you for the great feedback about our last two newsletters. I am glad that everyone has enjoyed them. As you may have noticed, I'm trying to concentrate on a theme for each newsletter. This month, I would like to focus on our Main Street here in South River.

On May 2, Jef Buehler, the Assistant State Coordinator of Main Street New Jersey, presented his

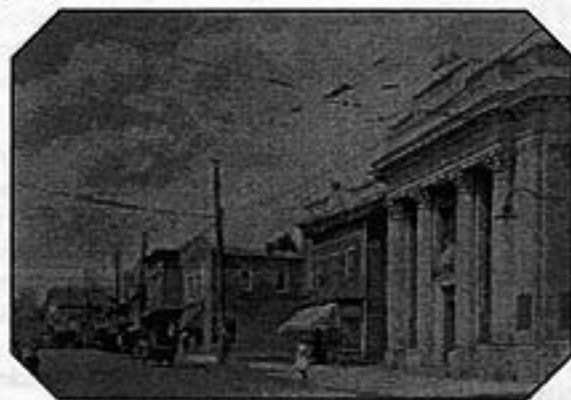
program to a small group of us. "Main Street New Jersey", a division of the NJ Dept. of Community Affairs, assists towns in re-development/revitalization of their downtown communities. Jef spent an afternoon driving around South River and took a good look at our Main Street and the surrounding areas. His comments were very positive and gave many of us hope and encouragement that with some organization we could restore our Main Street back to the bustling downtown it once was.

Some of us have experienced our Main Street during its hay day. On any given Friday or Saturday night, you couldn't find a parking spot and crowds of people could be seen walking up and down

Main Street. Store owners kept their businesses open late on weekend evenings to accommodate the busy community.

I thought that it would be great to re-acquaint ourselves with Main Street.

I've searched for photographs and I've found articles of a past life in our community — all in the hope that we will not forget "the good old days."



Main Street, South River looking to North.

What inspired me to focus on Main Street was the work done by the High School Community Problem Solving (CMPS) students, who as you know have spent the last several months creating a "virtual tour" of South River from 1895 to the

present. I've heard great things about the finished product. The students will share their work with us on June 27th. We will view their web site of the virtual tour. In the very near future, we will post their virtual tour on the Society's web site for everyone to view on the internet.

Please join us on June 27th at 7 pm, as the old (South River) meets the new-age (students) of the internet — **it's going to be historic!**

Visit our web site at:

www.rootsweb.com/~njsrhps/

The Hucksters

An excerpt from "A Homespun Heritage"
by Charlotte Dow-Barber

Published in 1977 as a special Bicentennial feature in
the *Sentinel* and *Spokesman* newspapers

The Boro of South River was once a bustling community which boasted of many business establishments centered on Main and Ferry Streets... shops were small but were presided over by warm, friendly proprietors who took time to socialize with their customers and were eager to accommodate them with their personal attention... On Saturday night, the streets would be crowded with shoppers and stores remained open late for their convenience since quite a few did their buying after the Star Theater's first performance was over.

However, a great many commodities were purchased without going shopping, thanks to the several hucksters who made their rounds in the neighborhood. Folks took them for granted but, on thinking back, I recall them and we identified them by what they sold. For instance, there was the fruit and vegetable peddler, a Mr. Wolf. Regardless of the weather, he always wore a long, black coat and carried his money in an old sock. His produce was loaded in a carry-all wagon pulled by a big brown horse. The animal was quite jaunty in his floppy straw hat and

sported a contraption of fringed leather straps intended to ward off the flies in summer. The man spoke little English and no matter how much the housewife would buy, he'd always ask, "Vot else?", so everyone called him "Old Votelse."

Once a month, the Watkins man came toting two large black suitcases, selling a wide variety of household products and remedies which he would spread out on the dining room floor for our inspection.

On Wednesday and Friday mornings we could expect the fishmonger to arrive with his cart full of seafood, tooting on a brass horn to alert the housewives. The ladies would stand on the sidewalk holding their tin pans while the fish dealer scaled and cleaned the cod or flounder. His conveyance was somewhat odoriferous and attracted a lot of flies, I recall.

Then there was a giant of a man who sold only bottles of vanilla. We kids called him Van (short for vanilla).



The residence of Henry Herrmann on Main Street in 1894.

Nowadays when we discover a dent or small hole in one of our cooking pans, it is discarded immediately and replaced by a new one. Not so back when old "Potsie" plied his trade of mending cooking pots. The lady of the house would put aside the damaged utensils until such time as Potsie would visit the neighborhood and fix them "good as new" for a mere ten or fifteen cents.

The grinder man announced his arrival by ringing a bell and shouting, "Scissors, Knives to grind." He had a two-wheel pushcart on which was mounted a grinding wheel run by a foot pedal. Upon hearing the bell, women hastily gathered up all the dull-edged scissors and knives, and watched the little man sharpen them as the sparks flew off his wheel. Often he'd let us kids put our hands in the sparks.



Jacob Levinson's store on Main Street June 29, 1900.



Joel C. Perry's store on Main Street November 12, 1894.

Hucksters *continued*



Main Street looking west from Reid Street July 12, 1895.

Who could forget the taret man with the fuzzy white beard and slightly pointed ears. We called him "Tabby" not only because of his feline resemblance but also because he came around selling taborets. Now unless you are considerably along in years, you probably wouldn't know that they were very small three or four legged tables or stools which stood in the corner of the living room and held the rubber plant or boston fern. They were made of bamboo or thin white birch.

Several times a year we heard a loud, sing-song voice calling, "Umbrellas to mend." Damaged bumbershoots and

sun parasols were never thrown out; instead, they were put behind the kitchen door to await the visit of the umbrella man who would fix broken spokes or replace a lost handle. An umbrella then lasted almost a lifetime.

Come to think of it, there were very few things relegated to the trash cans because of the several men who traveled around with horse and wagon collecting rags, bottles, scrap metal and bones (used in making fertilizer). They would alert folks to their arrival by clanking a string of cowbells strung across the back of the wagon. Children had their own little corner of

the woodshed where they stored their trash gleanings, awaiting the coming of the junkman. This was one way of getting a bit of spending money. Then we would waste no time getting over to Peanut Sadie's shop on Main Street (corner of Stephen) where we would trade our earnings for a bag of freshly roasted peanuts or chestnuts while we sat on the porch of her little store and listened to Sadie's parrot crying "hello, dearie" to the passers-by.

There probably aren't many residents left who would remember old Mrs. Tagmeier, the Aluminum Lady. She was the perfect figure of a Dickens character: an old lady enveloped in a voluminous coat and wearing a velvet hat with battered rose atop. She sold aluminum combs, powder boxes, soap dishes, handkerchief boxes, hatpin holders, tea strainers, etc. She was always good for an hour's visit during which time she'd try to high pressure the lady of the house into buying an aluminum contraption to hold men's celluloid collars or a hair receiver (a receptacle for loose hair combings).

They were all unforgettable characters, these peddlers. They not only offered a large assortment of wares for the housewives' convenience, they also added color and excitement to our lives.



Home of R.F Fountain on Main Street May 8, 1895.

Announcements

SRH&PS Archiving Committee

will meet on Saturday July 28th with Carla Tobias from CAPES to begin the archiving and cataloging process at the Museum. We are still looking for volunteers to help with this enormous project. anyone interested please contact Ann Rafano at 254-3141.

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

Web site Visitors

A recent report tells us that there were 266 visitors to our web site between January 7, 2001 and may 31, 2001.

For more information about the South River Historical & Preservation Society visit our web site at: www.rootsweb.com/~njsrhps/

The SRH&P Society salutes the South River High School Community Problem Solving Students

The South River Historical & Preservation Society would like to thank the CMPS students and Mrs. Pat Carney for their many hours of hard work in the research and development of "Proud Past, Bright Future; South River Across Time, 1895 - 2001", a virtual tour/website. This project has been funded through a grant received from Verizon. We appreciate their dedication and contribution to the Society and to the South River community. We thank them all for their GREAT work! Many of the students will be graduating — and we wish them well in their future endeavors.



ARTUR VIRGINAS

Artur is an excellent student. He has been involved in Community Problem Solving for the past three years. His knowledge of computers has been an

asset to the team. Artur will be graduating in the top ten percent of his class and will be attending college in Massachusetts in the fall, where he will major in computer science.



KATIE ROSELLI

Katie is an all around student involved in various activities. She was voted October Student of the Month. She has been involved with Community Problem

Solving for the past three years, acting as our own personal recorder for a time. She will be attending the University of Richmond in the fall, where she will also be a member of the cheering squad.



PAUL FRAMHEIN

Paul is the other Junior member of the South River Community Problem Solvers. He takes honors courses and maintains good grades. Paul is also

involved in the soccer, wrestling and track teams and other school activities, such as the National Honor Society. He has contributed to the CMPS team with his extensive knowledge of technology.



CATARINA PEDREIRO

Catarina was voted April Student of the Month and is in the top ten percent of her class as well. She is involved in school activities,

including Mock Trial, National Honor Society and the Community Problem Solvers. She has been involved with Community Problem Solvers for the past three years.



MARA HANSEN

Mara is one of the newest members of the Community Problem Solving Team. She participated in the Mock Trial Team, is the feature editor for the school

newspaper, and teaches a CCD class at St. Mary's on Jackson Street. She was voted May Student of the Month and will be attending Rutgers University this fall on a full scholarship, majoring in American Studies.



PAULA ZELANKO

A good student and gifted artist, Paula was voted January Student of the Month and May Artist of the Month. She has been a member of various activities at school

some of which include yearbook and the varsity tennis team. Paula has contributed to the CMPS team for the past two years. She will be studying food science at the University of Maryland in the fall.



JENNIFER KREMPECKI

The valedictorian of the class of 2001, Jennifer has been involved in numerous activities during her high school career, and was voted

September Student of the Month. She has been involved with CMPS for three years also acting as our recorder/secretary. Jennifer will be attending Loyola College majoring in Elementary Education and minoring in Special Education.



MEGHAN SINGAGLIESE

A gifted and talented artistic student, Meghan holds a part-time job and maintains good grades, as well as participating in

other extracurricular activities, such as the tennis team. She has been involved with Community Problem Solving for the past three years and will be attending Penn State in the fall.



RAHUL SHAH

Rahul is one of the two Juniors on the Community Problem Solving team this year. It is his first year and he has been working hard to contribute, particularly

by utilizing his computer skills. Rahul is a member of the varsity soccer team at our high school. He is an all around student who receives good grades and always has a friendly smile on his face.

A Special Dedication



SWAVEK DZIUBA

Swavek works a part-time job, is a member of the varsity tennis team, and is able to maintain good grades, while contributing to the Community

Problem Solvers for the past three years. For that, he was voted March Student of the Month. In the fall, he will be attending the University of Connecticut, majoring in pre-med.



MRS. PATRICIA CARNEY

Mrs. Carney has been teaching history at South River High School for the past 31 years. She has been an advisor to three

CMPS teams; her first during the 1989-1990 school year, during 1998-2000, and her third team from the 2000-2001 school year. She has been involved in CMPS, Future Problem Solving, and Mock Trial, and was voted Teacher of the Year for 1987-1988 and 1999-2000.

*Proud Past,
Bright Future:
South River
Across Time*

1895-2001



Old School Right Club - High School

Presented by the 2001
South River High School
Community Problem
Solvers

Historical Society News

April 21st Meeting Highlights

For those of you who missed our meeting in April, it was a great learning experience. Tom Karaniewsky shared his knowledge of the South River Police Dept and gave us a guided tour through the historic Police Station. Councilman Tele Koukourdelis gave us an update on the present Police Station renovations and former Police Chief Frank Eib shared some great stories about his South River "police days." One of his comments was how much technology has changed

to improve the police officer's job in aiding the public. A great comparison was the call boxes versus the radio and cell phones. Following the chief, Paul Migut and Charlie Matts gave us a brief history of the South River Fire Dept. and demonstrated the high-tech equipment used in fire fighting today. One example they brought was an infrared camera which they use to find victims in a smoke-filled building. We were all amazed at what we saw.

And finally for those who remained we showed a video tape of created by the Spiritsearchers, who conducted a paranormal investigation of the Police Station last fall. The Spiritsearchers donated the video tape to the Society. Anyone interested in viewing it, please contact the Society at the museum.

All in all it was a great meeting. Thank you everyone for your contributions and participation.

Recent Donations

Mrs. Emily Pulda Miller donated her wedding dress from 1938.

Allgair's milk bottle cap donated by Mr. Charles Matts II

Video and investigation report on the South River Police Station donated by Spiritsearchers

Belrusan Artists Abroad booklet donated by the Byelorussian American Community

Souvenir Program, Eighth Annual

Convention, NJ State First Aid Council, Oct. 17, 1943 held in South River, NJ - donated by Michael Ayers Woodis and Warren Booraem donated the book "The Story of the War of 1898"

Correction: We apologize for misspelling Mr. Gregory P. Palaski.

Donations Welcome Please let us know if you have any "South River" items that you would like to donate or lend to the Historical Society.

Welcome New Members

Jason Brasno

Tele Koukourdelis

Maria Koukourdelis

For more information about becoming a member of the South River Historical & Preservation Society, please call Woodis Booraem at 257-0365.



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

129 Main Street,
South River, New Jersey 08882

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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.
For more information call 732-613-3078.*

Main Street, South River Facts...

- At the beginning of the nineteenth century, there were only five houses in Willettstown (South River). The first one, of course, was built by Samuel Willett between Main and Jackson Streets facing the river. By 1823, the number of houses increased to ten.
- The growth seemed to stem from the shipping industry that developed in South River. During the War of 1812, great quantities of goods were shipped for the government on sailboats. Several docks were in use and a store on Main Street was operated by Roden Wood and Elias Doughty to serve both the residents and the boatmen. Vincent Barkelew apparently purchased this store later, for in 1823, his was the only store in town.
- It was the natural resources, however, that gave the South River its important prosperity. Samuel Whitehead, who made his fortune raising fruit, established the clay and sand industry. These products were shipped to eastern markets for many years. From this beginning, the pottery, brick and tile industries developed.
- From 1825 to 1860, much pottery was made in South River. A street off Main Street called Pottery Lane still exists. The first brickyard was established by John Griggs in 1850. A map published in 1865 by a man named Lloyd, however, shows only one brickyard. This was Pettit's, later known as Miller's, named after its superintendent, Joseph Miller. Other brickyards were established later by James Bissett, Samuel Yates, the South River Brick Company and the American Enameled Brick and Tile Company. These gave employment to many and helped the town to prosper. Actually, at one time, South River was referred to as "Bricktown."