

HISTORICAL & PRESERVATION

News

Number 22

NEXT MEETING:

February 26th
at 7 p.m.

This month's program will feature a presentation by Joe Butewicz of the New Jersey Antique Bottle Club. Joe, a South River resident, will speak about artifacts recently dug up in New Brunswick near the Burnett Street /Parking Deck Housing projects.

Please join us on Feb. 26th at the Old School Baptist Church Museum (War Memorial Building), 64-66 Main Street in South River.

2003 Meeting Dates:

APRIL 23

JUNE 25

SEPTEMBER 24

NOVEMBER 19

SRH&PS Officers**Marilyn Anastasio**

President

Donna Rafano

Vice President

Hank Dziemian

Treasurer

Stephanie Bartz

Secretary

President's Message*by Marilyn Anastasio*

Your membership is important to us. It forms the solid foundation upon which the South River Historical & Preservation Society, Inc. survives and thrives.

Your support and the support of the Mayor and Council sustains our mission to preserve the history of South River for ours and future generations.

We know you'll appreciate the progress we are making at the Old School Baptist

Church Museum and we welcome your frequent visits and input.

Our focus this year is cataloguing our precious possessions. Over the years our collections of books, papers, photographs, and objects have grown considerably, hence the need to engage in effectively archiving our acquisitions. With the recent purchase of a computer and program, the SRH&PS, Inc. can tackle this feat.

**John Francis Fitzpatrick
(1898 — 1979)***A man who dedicated his life to his community.*

Editors Note: Special thanks to Louise Fitzpatrick for the generous donation of her father's personal papers and memorabilia covering a time period from 1912 through 1960's. This collection is a wonderful addition to our museum and we thank her. Enjoy this snapshot of John Fitzpatrick's life.

Born: July 5, 1898

8 Elizabeth Street, South River, NJ

Died: Age 81 on October 20, 1979 at home. Interment — Holy Cross Cemetery, Cranbury Road, East Brunswick, NJ

PARENTS—

Mother: Julia Ellen Mitchell born in Sayreville — daughter of Christopher Mitchell & Catherine Mullin who had emigrated from Ireland. Julia was a housekeeper for the Whitehead family (now Maliszewski Funeral Home).

Father: Stephen Fitzpatrick from Englishtown or Jamesburg unsure — no family to reference. Died when John was only 3 years old. Stephen was the Whitehead's gardener.



John Fitzpatrick shown with his daughter Louise (left) and wife Bettina (right) at his testimonial dinner September 1965.

SIBLINGS—**Sister: Nora Fitzpatrick Van Arsdale**

Born: 1888 Died: 1959

Sister: Teresa Fitzpatrick Godwin

Born: 1893 Died: 1969

FAMILY—**Wife: Bettina Galassi**

Born: 12/10/04 Died: 2/15/95

Bettina was from Perth Amboy. John and Bettina were married in St. Mary's Church, New Brunswick on December 28, 1939. Upon their marriage, they moved to 11 Virginia Street in South River.

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November 20th Annual Meeting Highlights—

Show and Tell has become a tradition.

Once again it was great to get together for a good old-fashioned cover dish supper, friendly conversation, and an evening of sharing. More than thirty members attended our Annual Meeting in November. Officers of the SRH&PS, Inc. for 2003 are: Marilyn Anastasio, President; Donna Rafano, Vice President; Stephanie Bartz, Secretary; and Hank Dziemian, Treasurer. Newly elected trustees for 2003-2005 are Paul Goepfert, Paul Migut, Ann Rafano, and Karen Satterthwaite. The evening's official business concluded with special guest Earl Wenger being presented with a Lifetime Membership Award and being made an Honorary Trustee in recognition of and appreciation for his dedication and service to the Society.

Featured in the Show and Tell portion of the evening were:

Doris Miller – A 1910 Christmas calendar plate from Whiteman and Jentz. A collection of lead Christmas figurines bought at Bakers 5 & 10. A pair of opera glasses.

William Goepfert – A collection of caps including a WWII march cap, a Canadian buffalo cap (circa 1956), a WWI army cap, a Vietnam era Boonie hat, a Korean War cap (circa 1952), a WWII U.S. light khaki cap, a WWII helmet liner, a WWI flying cap, a modern Boy Scout hat, and an older style Boy Scout cap (circa 1977).

Martin Adler – A model of a 1930 Packard.

Joann Smith-Goepfert – Two Half and Half Tobacco tins.

Iris Schmitt – A 130 - 150 year old mug from Germany/ Bavaria that was

used in Albert Schmitt's barbershop on Whitehead Ave.

Donna Rafano – A 1927 book entitled "*The Etiquette of Letter Writing.*" An 1892 book entitled "*Apgar's Trees of the Northern US.*"

Stephanie Bartz – A 1937 prescription bottle from Dr. Dieker. A notepad from Bartz's Garage on Jackson St. (circa 1925.)

Marilyn Anastasio – The collection of items recovered by Bill Hermstedt when Bissett's Pond was dredged. (Identified at a previous meeting as having come from Dailey's Pond.) The highlight of the night's items of Show & Tell was a dress made for Marilyn 30 years ago by Doris Wenger and now given to Earl Wenger for his grandchildren.

In Memory of

The Executive Board and members of the South River Historical & Preservation Society extend their sincere sympathy to the family of
Audrey Appleby
who passed away in January.

Membership

A special thank you to our 2003 Corporate Sponsor:

APPLEBY INSURANCE AGENCY, INC.
FIRST SAVINGS BANK
LAFFIN CHEVROLET SALES
SOUTH RIVER APPLIANCE, INC.
THE RIA MAR RESTAURANT

Museum Information

Old School Baptist Church Museum

The museum is open on the first Sunday of every month from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Volunteers are needed.

The Society would like to thank all its contributors for their generous donations. Please remember to include your name, address and phone number on any item that you donate, so we can properly identify the object when displayed in the museum.

2003 Calendars

The 2003 South River calendars are **still** on sale, but quantities are limited. Calendars are available at the museum (first Sunday of each month) and at Rafano and Wood Law Office at 129 Main Street, Main Street Florist at 181 Main Street, the Borough Clerk's Office (entrance on Washington Street) or by calling the museum at 732-613-3078. The calendar are \$6.00 each.

For more information about the South River Historical & Preservation Society visit our website at:

www.rootsweb.com/~njsrhps/. For more information call 732-613-3078.

2003 Membership

To become a member please contact Candice Lewandoski, 60 Hillside Avenue, South River, NJ 08882.

For more information call 732-613-3078. See our membership application enclosed.

John F. Fitzpatrick

(continued from page 1)

FAMILY—

Upon their marriage, they moved to 11 Virginia Street in South River.

Children: One daughter — **Louise**
Born: 5/24/42

Currently residing in Villanova, PA. She is the Dean of Nursing at Villanova University.

A BRIEF LOOK BACK AT HIS LIFE—

John attended South River Public Schools. As a boy he worked at Price's grocery store and drove a horse-drawn coal wagon to help his widowed mother. He graduated from South River High School in 1917, where he had been captain of the basketball team. He attended the University of Illinois and Rutgers summer school

for physical education teacher training while employed at South River High School part-time. He was employed full time at SRHS from 1921-1969 — 48 years.

DEDICATED YEARS AT SOUTH RIVER HIGH SCHOOL—

- **Physical Education Teacher** — Girls and Boys
- **Basketball Coach** — Girls Basketball — 25 seasons
Boys Basketball — 44 seasons



South River Girls Basketball Team. By the looks of the the hair style — this photo was taken sometime during the 1920's!

- **Baseball Coach** — 35 seasons
- **Track Coach** — 30 seasons
- **Athletic Director** (23 years)

John Fitzpatrick had many championship teams and was known for raising funds in the 1950's to take the baseball team to Florida for spring training.

POLITICAL LIFE—

Originally, Fitzpatrick was mentored by Mayor William Allgair, Sr. and was elected Councilman, and later Mayor, for several terms on the Democratic ticket. He was a councilman for 10 years, and served as Mayor for three terms — 1936-1943 then again from 1950-1953. He was well known for help he gave to South River families during the Depression years.

SERVICE TO MIDDLESEX COUNTY—

Fitzpatrick served on the Middlesex County Tax Board (appointed by Governors Meyner and Hughes).

For 38 years John Fitzpatrick was the Executive Director of Middlesex County's Camp for Underprivileged Children: Kiddie Keep Well Camp — Roosevelt Park, Edison, NJ where he also worked summers as Camp Director. *(continued on page 4)*



South River's first basketball team organized by Fitzpatrick in 1916. John Fitzpatrick is standing at the top of the pyramid.

John F. Fitzpatrick *(continued from page 3)*

OTHER COMMUNITY AND CIVIC ACTIVITIES—

- Original organizer of Field Days for the South River School System and Recreation Council
- Original organizer of the South River Soap Box Derby
- Member, South River Building and Loan Association
- Director, Central Jersey Savings and Loan Association
- Lay Advisory Board Member at St. Peter's Medical Center
- Member, of NJ & Middlesex County Coaches Association
- Member, State Physical Education Association
- Board of Directors, South River War Memorial Library
- Member, South River Knights of Columbus
- Member, South River Lions Club
- Member, Corpus Christi Parish, South River



Above: John Fitzpatrick receiving a plaque for his years of service at South River High School. (Half time program September 25, 1965)

Left center: 1940 South River Lions Club Dinner. (If you recognize anyone in this photo, let us know.)

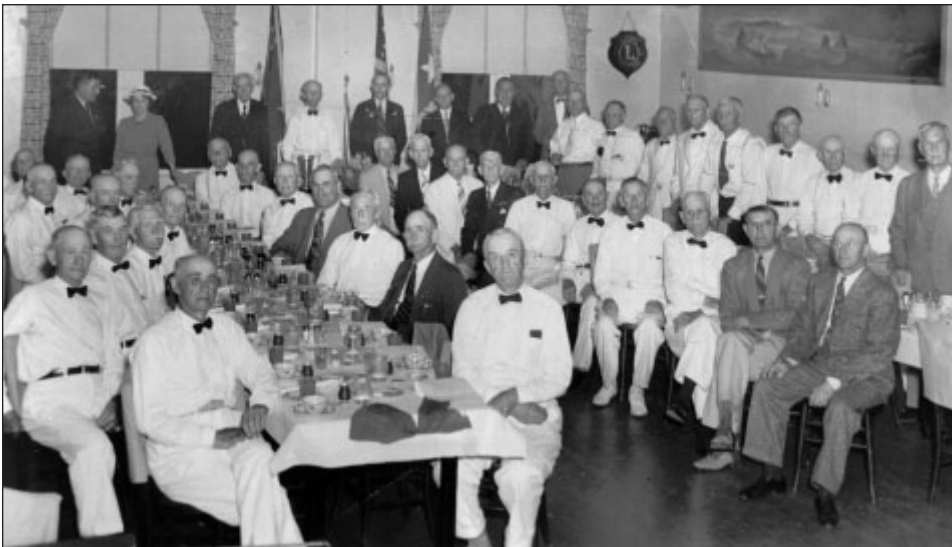
Left bottom: 1949 South River Baseball Team (Central Jersey Group III Champs) Players shown include:

First row: Tom Higgins, John Prominski, Bob Wagner, Ed Sarna, Leon Korygoski, Marty Mgoough, and Bill Stout.

Second row: Couch Fitzpatrick, Charles Kababik, Don Schwenderman, Tony Razzano, Ken Supp, Bill Pioqneq, and Coach Lucas.

Third row: Gene Wiecek, Rich Bagamary, Milt Koleph, Cas Borowski, John Casero, and Bob Bell.

Below: Fitzpatrick shown at train station with baseball players enroute to Miami Florida. Shown are South River baseball player Bob Wagner, Coach Fitzpatrick, porter, players Bill Pioqneq and Ed Sarna. Coach "Fitz" — always wearing a different hat!



Recent Donations

The South River Historical & Preservation Society would like to thank the following people for their generous donations over the past few months. They are as follows:

- Mrs. Suzanne Buffalino — a decoupage 1909 newspaper advertisement for maternity clothes
- Ed & Stephanie Bartz — a Dell computer with CD-Rom drive and speakers.
- Mr. William Hermstedt — items gathered when Bissett's Pond was dredged, the exhibit is on loan)
- Mrs. Ann Smith — report cards, letters, newspaper clippings, and other items relating to Dr. Smith's education.
- Environmental Data Resources, Inc. — fifteen Sanborn fire insurance maps that span the years from 1892 to 1949
- Ms. Veronica Bara — beaded overdress from the 1920s
- Mrs. June Whetstone — photo of parents and grandparents in front of the former German Presbyterian Church, circa 1917
- Mrs. Ann Byron — a collection of receipts, letters, maps, other materials from local area businesses, and additional items of historical interest (48 items in total)
- Mrs. Judith Muschla — South River Middle School class books for the years 1977-1978, 1978-1979, 1979-1980, 1980-1981, 1981-1982, and 1982-1983
- Ms. Louise Fitzpatrick — an extensive collection of photos, papers, and other items from John F. Fitzpatrick
- Ms. Fran Sanchez — nine family photographs with explanatory text, and a scanned copy of an advertisement for Allgair's Milk
- Mr. Chester Zdrodowski — shirt from the Lion's Club Tail Twisters, Lion's International drum, scrapbook of newspaper clippings, cape from the boys' band organized by the Polish National Home, photo of SRHS Phys. Ed. Marching Group circa 1947
- Helen Appleby — photo of "Main Street looking North", undated but includes the trolley
- Joan Czapkowski — collection of historical newspapers
- Anonymous — "History of South River", several Sentinel newspapers, 1931 SRHS diploma
- Anonymous — 16mm film of St. Mary's 1954 Golden Anniversary and other church events
- Michael Ondre — 1980 SRHS yearbook and track letters
- Sayreville Historical Society - photo of the American Hotel

CASH DONATIONS

Ms. Alexis Stashkevetch
Margaret & Donald Calnan
Betsy and Norman Triznadel
Mr. Chester Zdrodowski
Mrs. Dorothy Zaleski
Ann & Louis Gambo
Barbara & Mel Petersen
Miss Judith G. Smith
Mrs. Barbara Szarka Lindsay
Laffin Chevrolet Sales
Mr. & Mrs. Anthony Agnone
Walter & Mary Zarski
Mr. Edward W. Price
Ria Mar Restaurant
Ms. Katherine Bitow
Mr. & Mrs. Curtis Booraem
First Savings Bank
Eleanor Eppinger



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

2003 APPLICATION FORM

Please check one: New Renewal Gift (from _____)

Please print your name clearly as it should appear on membership listing:

Name: (Mr., Mrs. Ms.) _____

Address: _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip Code** _____

Phone: (____) _____

Additional contribution (optional) \$ _____

Total amount enclosed: \$ _____ Cash Check (Please make check payable to "SRH&PS, Inc.")

Send your application and dues payment to: **Candice Lewandoski**
60 Hillside Avenue
South River, NJ 08882

My company has a matching gift program. My company: _____
My company's address: _____

As a tax-exempt corporation, the SRH&PS, Inc. is eligible to receive matching gifts. If your employer participates in such a program, please send matching gift forms with your membership donation. The Society's fiscal year is January 1 to December 31.

- I'd like information about volunteering at the Old School Baptist Church Museum
- I suggest you send a copy of this application to: _____

ANNUAL DUE CATEGORIES

- Adults*** \$5.00
- Students** \$1.00
- Family*** \$15.00
- Business/Corporate** \$25.00
- Lifetime (Individual)** \$250.00

* For multiple memberships, please list additional names on back of this form

Or apply by e-mail: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~njsrhps/apply.htm>



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

64-66 Main Street
P.O. Box 545
South River, New Jersey 08882

Visit our website at: www.rootsweb.com/~njsrhps/

A Salute to the Heroes

High Flight

by John Gillespie Magee (1922-1941)

Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of earth,
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings...

And while with silent lifting mind I've trod
The high, untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand and touched the face of God.



Magee was a U.S. born pilot with the Royal Canadian Air Force. .
Above are the first and last lines of the sonnet that he wrote in 1941.
Magee died while on a bombing mission over Germany.

This verse was quoted by President Ronald Reagan following the Challenger space shuttle disaster in 1986.

**We repeat it again as we salute our fallen heroes of Space Shuttle
Columbia who were lost February 1, 2003.**