



South River HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Number 35

APRIL/MAY 2006

President's Message by Dick Meyers

As a child during the early days of television, I was delighted by daytime shows like *Time for Beany*, but I was thrilled by the crime dramas of nighttime radio. In bed, instead of counting sheep, I pulled the covers over my head, lowered my transistor radio's volume 'til it was barely audible, and waited for the taut whodunits like *I Love a Mystery*. I did love mysteries then, still do, and here's one I'm hoping you might help me solve.

It concerns the ancestry of my paternal grandmother, Myrtle Peterson Meyers. Her first and last breaths were of South River air, and the same can be said for her father, her grandfather, and the earliest Peterson ancestor I've yet to find, her great grandfather, Moses Peterson (1799-1875).

In the 1850 census, Moses was one of eight Petersons listed as heads of household in South River, which was then called Washington. The

others were identified as William, Samuel, Jonathan, James, Thomas, James K., and George W.

Through my research, I've discovered that **Moses** was the father of **William**; that **Samuel** was the father of **Jonathan**; and that **James** and **Thomas** were brothers. I could find no additional relationships for either **James K.** or for **George W.**

I feel certain, however, that other ties do exist among these families, and while I've no concrete evidence, the 1850 Census provides fertile grounds for inference:

1. All eight heads of household were born in New Jersey.
2. Men in each family earned their livings from the river, either as boatmen or as ship carpenters.
3. Four children in these families have the same given names as men in the other, **as yet** unrelated Peterson families.

4. Discounting the many residents living in hotels at that time, the 42 members of Peterson households accounted for nearly 10% of the town's population!

I've scoured census reports, wills, and birth, death, marriage, and property records for evidence of further familial relationships, but having drawn a blank, the mystery continues. If you could help me solve it, I would be most grateful.

By the same token, though, if you'd like help in solving your own family history mysteries, providing they've a local flavor, please send us your query for publication in the newsletter's new section, "GQs" (Genealogical Queries). If no one comes forth with an answer, we'll try to find it at the NJ State Archives or at one of the many family history websites- for while I do love a mystery, it's finding the solution that brings satisfaction.



Myrtle Peterson Meyers

SOUTH RIVER HISTORICAL & PRESERVATION SOCIETY MEETINGS

2006 MEETINGS:

JUNE 28

SEPTEMBER 27

**NOVEMBER 15
(Annual Meeting)**

These Wednesday meetings convene at 7:00 p.m. at the South River Museum (formerly known as the Old School Baptist Church/War Memorial Building), located at 64-66 Main Street, South River. The Museum is also open to the general public from 1:30 until 3:30 p.m. on the first Sunday of each month:

July 2	September 3	November 5
August 6	October 1	December 3

For more information, visit us on the Internet at www.rootsweb.com/~njsrhps/

OFFICERS

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Elaine O'Neill

Vice President

Marilyn Anastasio

Secretary

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Marilyn Anastasio

Immediate Past President

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Ann Rafano

Earl Wenger (deceased 2004)

COMMITTEES

Artifacts - Stephanie Bartz

Buildings & Grounds -

Ann and Bob Rafano

Calendar - Doris Miller

Fund Raising - Joann Smith-Goepfert
and Paul Goepfert

Grants - Brian Armstrong

Historic Buildings & Sites -

Ken Roginski

Hospitality - Ann Rafano

Membership - JoAnn Devlin

Newsletter - Dick Meyers

Program - Elaine O'Neill and

Karen Satterthwaite

Publicity - Iris Schmitt

Web Site - Stephanie Bartz

The Appleby Family Reminisces

Surrounded by family members, siblings J. Randolph Appleby III and Kay Appleby Blonsky spent a pleasant Sunday afternoon at the Museum talking about the Appleby family and "the good old days" in South River. Everyone had interesting stories to tell and pictures to share, and the memories flowed like vintage wine. The SRH&PS videotaped the entire afternoon for its archives and extends a warm "Thank you" to Patti Appleby Pirher for her help in organizing the afternoon, and to all family members who attended.

If your family has had long-term South River ties, we would be honored to host a get-together and record the occasion for posterity. Please let us know if you would like to be included in this ongoing project.



Left to right: Aya Zvirbule (family friend), Kathy Ochs Appleby (wife of J. William Appleby [deceased]), Jan Appleby Biehl (niece), Cathy Appleby Heuser (niece), Sharon Appleby Hartnett (niece), Steve Biehl (husband of Jan), Patti Appleby Pirher (niece). Sitting: J. Randolph Appleby III.

Special Acknowledgments:

2006 CONTRIBUTORS:
(from 3/06 to 4/06)

William J. Barge
Jan & Stephen Biehl
Rosalie Golden
Judith G. Smith

LIFE MEMBERS

Stephanie Bartz
Eileen (Kozak) Koltowich
Richard K. Meyers
Edward Price (deceased)
Louis E. Rezem, Sr.
Ann M. Smith

BUSINESS/CORPORATE MEMBERS:

Appleby Insurance Agency, Inc.
Brown & Brown Metro, Inc.
Conklin United Methodist Church
First Reformed Church
Moshe Aaron Yeshiva High School
Polish Army Veterans Association of
America
Ria Mar Bar & Restaurant
South River Italian American Club
South River Moose
South River Women's Club
SS Peter & Paul Russian Orthodox Church
Union Baptist Church
Witty's Discount Liquors, Inc.

CONTRIBUTIONS IN MEMORY OF: (from 3/06 to 4/06)

Curtis S. Booraem
by Alberta B. Bargloski

Ted Kadela
by Hilda Kadela

February, April Programs Well Received

Archivist Catherine Stearns Medich made the trek from the New Jersey State Archives in Trenton to present "Tracing Your Immigrant Ancestors" at our February meeting. While her talk could serve as a primer for conducting genealogical research in New Jersey, it primarily focused on resources available to those interested in tracing their post-Civil War immigrant ancestors. Ms. Medich supplemented a fast-paced PowerPoint presentation with two extensive handouts, one detailing sources available to researchers at the Archives, and a second focusing on case histories. For anyone who missed the program, both handouts may be viewed at the South River Museum.



Rabbi Nathan Langer

After the possible closing of Temple Anshe Emeth in South River became a matter of public record, it was decided to invite Rabbi Nathan Langer (left) to address our membership at the April meeting. In addition to a fascinating lecture recounting the congregation's nearly ninety years in South River and more than fifty years in its present location, Rabbi Langer graciously took us on a tour of the synagogue. Rabbi Langer's extensive knowledge and quick wit made it a memorable night for all who attended.

This & That

- Long-time SRH&PS member Candice Lewandoski recently hosted a group of "Tigers" at the Museum. After presenting a brief history of the building, Candice took Troop Leader Cidalia Pisco and her troop on the grand tour, enabling them to examine the Museum's many exhibits.
- Helping to mark South River's annual Government Day on May 26, SRH&PS members Kathy Bitow, Pat Gawarkiewicz, Doris Miller, and Dick Meyers guided the Borough's 3rd-graders on tours of the Museum and the OSBC Cemetery.
- Representatives of the SRH&PS participated in South River's annual Memorial Day Parade on May 29, and the Museum hosted an open house immediately afterward.
- **URGENT:** If you have a picture of (or know anything about) a parachute factory that had been in South River, possibly on Raritan Avenue, please call the Museum at 732-613-3078.
- South River's first Cruise Night of 2006 will take place on Thursday, July 20, beginning at 6:00 p.m. The South River Museum will extend its hospitality to revelers until 9:00 p.m.

GQs*

If you are in need of genealogical information on a family with South River roots or if you've specifics on any of the following, please contact us.

Don Heyer, Florida: Seeks burial information on aunts, Ida (d. 1897) & Elise (d. 1905) **ZELLWEGER**. They lived on Washington St., and their father, Conrad, a Swiss embroiderer, may have worked for Herrmann-Aukman Co.

Stanislaw Cieslukowski, Poland: Seeks any information on relative John **MAZOWSKI**, whose name appears on our WWI Memorial.

***Genealogical Queries**

SRH&PS GIFT SHOP

Commemorative 200th Anniversary Old School Baptist Church Ornament (South River Museum) - \$10.00

Wooden Plaque of the Old School Baptist Church (made from timber from the original portico columns) - \$10.00

Old School Baptist Church Note Cards with Envelopes (features an early photo of the OSBC) Set of 5 cards - \$2.50; Set of 10 cards - \$4.00

2006 SRH&PS Calendar (previous years also available) - \$6.00

Old School Baptist Church print by Joseph Csatari (numbered limited edition print 13" x 15 3/4", unframed, includes brief biography of the artist and history of the Old School Baptist Church building) - \$25.00



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

64-66 Main Street
P.O. Box 446
South River, New Jersey 08882

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

And The Name Of Our Newsletter Is...?

Unfortunately, it appears that the periodical you now hold in your hands is having an identity crisis!

The newsletter of the South River Historical & Preservation Society has gone by three names, and each has had its share of detractors. First, the publication was called the *Washington Village News*, but it was argued, "South River was called Willettstown and South River Landing before being renamed Washington, so why not the *Willettstown News* or the *South River Landing News*?" Next, it became the *South River Historical & Preservation Society News*, and there was just one often-voiced criticism: "That is a **long** title!" Most recently, it's been published as the *South River Historical Society News*, but a number of readers have pointed out the obvious: "South River Historical Society isn't the organization's name!" One even suggested borrowing from the town's journalistic past and calling our modest effort the *South River Review*, which graced the masthead of a newspaper serving the borough at the dawn of the 20th-century.

Choices, choices, choices! Your editor, he admits, is stymied, so it's being left to you, the SRH&PS membership, to decide just what your newsletter should be called. You might choose from among the previously mentioned names, or you might invoke your muse and give birth to a brand new one.

Whatever your preference, please let us know by phone or mail or by dropping in at the Museum during our next open house on Sunday, July 2. In the newsletter's next issue, we'll present the choices and ask you to vote for your favorite.
