

HISTORICAL & PRESERVATION NEWS

President's Message by Brian Armstrong



During the preparation for my September discussion on business in South River in 1910, I started using a web site that searches New Brunswick newspapers from 1871 to 1916. Now with the presentation completed, I cannot stop using the web site because it is such an interesting window into the past. I hope to inform others about this resource so they

too can explore the past.

The New Brunswick newspaper stories are indexed and you can search a person's name, date, or key word in the various newspapers in New Brunswick from this era: Daily News Times (1894), Daily Times (1892-1907), NB Times (1907-1916), The Daily Times (1871-1893), and Weekly Times (1896-1900). Be prepared for problems in the index if the scan of the paper had dark spots or drop outs. This is especially common in the earlier papers. Although the index is not perfect, you will usually get an interesting list of articles and notices where the person or topic is mentioned. The newspapers during this era served all of Middlesex

Although many years of great South River history followed, 1910 marked the peak of the borough's manufacturing strength.

County and South River was given a column or two for their news. Occasionally a South River story was of such interest that it is included in the general news section rather than the South River column.

Much of the South River news for this time period is personal gossip stories reporting illnesses, trips out of town, business activities, and parties involving town residents. Don't think for a moment that it represents 100% of the activities from the era. I have checked with known illnesses and events from my family in South River and have come up with no reference to these known occasions where other people have more detailed listing about their activities. This was most likely related to the willingness of the family to discuss their activities and the personal connections of that reporter to the subjects of their stories.

The site is hosted by NewspaperARCHIVE, the "largest historical newspaper database online," and the archive "can be used to gain a local perspective on historical news, to research your family history, or to simply read about a person or event of interest." Try using this web site and you may find yourself revisiting it over and over to learn more about the history of Middlesex County and South River during this time period. The URL is newbrunswick.newspaperarchive.com.

New Acquisitions, April-August, 2010

1. **Military** - Korean War era U.S. Marine Corps uniform, overcoats, duffel bag and related items from the estate of Charles E. Gardner. Donated by Serena Cata.
2. **Brick** - From the G.W. Reynolds brick yard. Donated by Joseph Wolack.
3. **Two milk bottles** - One each from the South River businesses of Joseph Chmura and Ellis Van Hise. Donated by John and JoAnn French.
4. **Two ribbons** - From the 15th Annual Horse Show at the South River Stables. Donated by William Robinson.
5. **Gym uniform** - Issued by South River High School. Donated by Mary Ann Hoffman.
6. **Commemorative piece** - Celebrates "The Living Presidents." Donated by Woodis and Warren Booraem.

continued on page 5

SRH&PS 2010 EXECUTIVE BOARD

OFFICERS

Brian Armstrong
President

Anita Hermstedt
Vice President

Ann Rafano
Secretary

Hank Dziemian
Treasurer

Dick Meyers
Immediate
Past President

TRUSTEES

Stephanie Bartz
JoAnn Devlin

Kathleen Hyland
Candice Lewandoski

Lee Meyers
Rev. Michael Psenechnuk

Gary Petrie
Robert Rafano

Iris Schmitt
Robert Szegeti

Raja Waran
Nan Whitehead

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 -

Membership - Marilyn Anastasio

Newsletter - Dick Meyers

Program - Anita Hermstedt

Publicity - Marilyn Anastasio

Web Site - Stephanie Bartz

HONORARY TRUSTEES

Helen Armstrong (1993)

Warren Booraem (2002)

Woodis Booraem (2002)

Ann Rafano (2003)

Marilyn Anastasio (2005)

Stephanie Bartz (2007)

Dick Meyers (2008)

Doris Miller (2008)

Robert Rafano (2008)

South River Historical & Preservation News

Published five times yearly by the South
River Historical & Preservation Society, Inc.

Editor: Dick Meyers

Associate Editors & Contributors:

Marilyn Anastasio Candice Lewandoski
Stephanie Bartz Ann Rafano

Mailings & Distribution:

Paul & Joann Goepfert Brian Armstrong

To Our Readers:

The *South River Historical & Preservation
News* willingly corrects its factual errors. If
you believe we have made a mistake, please
let us know.

Readers' contributions to the newsletter are
welcomed. Submissions for the February
2011 issue must be received by January 15.

Please advise us if you would prefer to receive
your newsletter via email.

For contact information, please see page 6.

South River Businesses in 1910

South River was a growing and thriving community in the early 1900's with a population just shy of five thousand. The borough was recognized as a place where affordable wages and hard workers were the norm, along with convenient mass transportation, including railroad and trolley service.

Industry developed along the river and rails. Free land offers attracted companies to build factories. In his presentation at the SRH&PS September meeting, Mr. Armstrong detailed the growth of South River's industries - including the clay/brick, garment, embroidery, and ship building industries - whose products were bought and sold not only locally but also in other states and countries.

South River was a bustling borough. It had something for everyone: service industries as well as trades to support the townspeople. These included livery stables, bakeries, hotels, drugstores, blacksmiths, upholsterers, barbers, florists, butchers, cobblers, cigar and tobacco shops, clothing stores, furniture and dry goods shops, general stores, jewelers, painters, theaters, etc. South River had its own doctors, dentists, and undertakers, too.

Signs of the times: pensions for retirees; lavatories, showers, cottages for workers; immigration; labor issues (efficiency, unionization, wages, equal rights/ pay for women, etc.); small companies were bought up, conglomerates were formed.

The informative presentation was enhanced by Mr. Armstrong's referencing national and world news of the day, relating colorful, humorous anecdotes, and coordinating a complementary slide show.

2010 Members of the South River Historical & Preservation Society, Inc.

"The loftier the building, the deeper its foundation must be laid." Thomas Kempis

Martin Adler	Anita & William Hermstedt	Dolores & Edwin Roginski
Alice & Anthony Agnone	Mary Ann Hoffman	Jeanmarie Ruch
Thomas Anastasio Family	Kathleen Hyland	John M. Rudy
Brian O. Armstrong	Eileen Hyland-Rosen	Rutgers Library
Ann & Anthony Aschettino	Hilda Kadela	Janet L. Satterthwaite
Alberta B. Bargloski	Carol Kadi	Karen & Richard Satterthwaite
Alfred J. Bauman, Jr.	Helen Konopacki	Iris & Walter Schmitt
Charles G. Benn	Walter C. Koziatek	Albert M. Seaman Family
Katherine Bitow	John M. Krenznel	Joanne Senko
Mary Ann & Walter Boyler	Marion Kutawski	Steven Senko*
Karen Bradford	Joyce Lakatos	Lois Servon
Christine Brasno	Julia Lehocki	Stephen J. Seuling
Louise Bruhn	Candice Lewandoski	Carol Sherwin
Wilbur L. Bryan	Elizabeth Litarowich	Charles Sicknick & Family
John Budzin	Arthur Londensky Family	Elaine Sicknick
Dot Canino	Alfred & Shirley Losiewicz	June Sicknick Whetstone
Corinne S. Cebula*	Alda Maltez	Nina Silwanowicz
Lorraine Chevalier	Kenneth T. Martin	Judith G. Smith
McDonald	Gayle Martinez	M. Alma Smith
Matthew Cinnirella	Betty J. Matyas	Joann Smith-Goepfert
Barbara B. Cline	Maureen McCallion	Gloria & Kenneth Smutko
Davia Cohn	William J. McIlvaine	Dorothy "Dottie" Sowchuk
Cruz Family	Karyn & Paul Migut	Alexis & John Stashkevetch
Susan & Joseph Csatari	Lydia Mrozek	Jill & Steven Sullivan
Cseh Family	Mary Nemeth	Barbara Szarka Lindsay
Frank Czapkowski	Lorraine Nisonoff	Robert Szegeti Family
JoAnn Devlin	Ruth Nole	Irene & Michael Szoke
Carol A. DeVoe	Judy Olcsvay	Joseph C. Tausta
Joan E. Dincuff Family	Elaine & Peter O'Neill	Mary & Edward Timko
Thomas F. Dominiecki	Marley & John O'Neill, Jr.	Cynthia & Eugene Urbanik
Hank Dziemian	Gregory Palaski & Family	Emily Varga Comella Family
Eleanor R. Eppinger	Kathryn M. Paprota	Thomas Comella, Sr.
Rosemary Erickson	Barbara Petersen	Eliane & Emiel Verloove
George Feaster Family	Gary V. Petrie	Raja Waran
Christine Fowler	Michael Pfister	Mae H. & John E. Weck
Marie Gardner	Cidalia Pisco Family	Barbara Westergaard
Myles R. Garrigan	Helen & Edward R. Plank	Nan Whitehead
Pat & Charles Gawarkiewicz	Carol Prato-Mileaf	Janice Whitehead Chase
James W. Genecki	Carol E. Presnal	Diane Whitehead
Paul Goepfert	Michael Psenechnuk	Himmelberger
William Goepfert	Jennie & Brian Racek	Anna Wolan Cygan
Roger M. Golden	Amy & Zac Rafano	Walter B. Woronowicz
Rosalie Golden	Christopher Rafano Family	Sandra Zajac
Loretta Gostkowski	Robert & Juliet Rafano	Dorothy P. Zaleske
Donna Green	Walterene Ratcliffe	Lynn & Joseph Zawadsky
Maureen Handy	JoAnn & Anthony Razzano	Jean & Joseph Zimmerman
Terry Hann	Walter F. & Edna Rice	Edward Zukowski Family
Monica & Norman	Irene "Debby" Richter	
Harder, Jr. Family	Wendy D. Richter	
Douglas E. Heine		

*Deceased

Continued next page

“2010 Members...” *continued from previous page*

Life Members

Paul Barszczewski
Stephanie Bartz
Louise Fitzpatrick
Eileen (Kozak) Koltowich
Richard Meyers*
Kenneth Roginski
Ann M. Smith

Business Members

Conklin United Methodist
Church
Cybrtrayi
First Reformed Church of
South River
Green Construction, Inc.
Italian American Club
Portuguese Fisherman
Ria Mar
Stephen Tabori, DMD
The Gentle Groomer

Honorary Trustees

Marilyn Anastasio
Helen Armstrong
Woodis M. Booraem
Warren K. Booraem
Richard Meyers*
Doris Miller
Ann C. Rafano
Robert C. Rafano

Company Needed Handkerchief to Wipe Its Brow

As the nineteenth century was drawing to a close, South River had already gained attention for its industries. Unfortunately, however, the attention was not always of a positive nature, as revealed in a June 2, 1893 article in *The New York Times*.

The article reported on hearings in New York held by the Senate Committee on Immigration to determine if “labor laws were violated” by businesses bringing immigrants into the country to work for them, and one of the firms under investigation was the handkerchief maker Hermann, Aukam & Company of South River.

Among those testifying before the Committee was a Brooklynite named John Fairband who, the article said, believed that up to 50% of the employees in that factory were “imported,” and he pointed out that they were paid only “\$7 to \$9 a week for working ten or twelve hours a day,” in contrast to embroiderers in New York working eight-hour days and making \$21 per week.

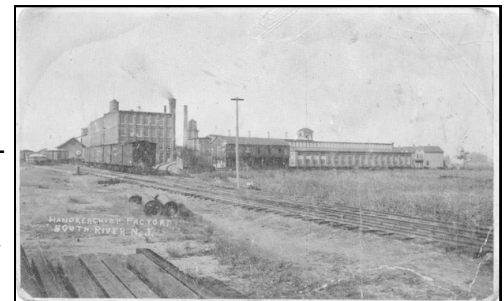
When a Committee member asked why the workers didn’t go to New York instead, Fairband was quoted as saying, “They are ignorant. They were hurried from Ellis Island to a train in Jersey City by the agents of this company, and they know nothing of the condition of laboring men anywhere outside of South River.”

The article also included testimony from two employees of the company who had been recruited in Switzerland, and both said that before leaving for the United States, they were obligated to sign contracts requiring that they work for the South River company; they also said that upon disembarking from the ship in New York, they had indeed, been met by an agent of the company and brought directly to South River. According to the *Times*, one of the men added that “he was better off in his own country than he was in South River working for Herman, Aukam & Co.”

It was reported that Fairband said he believed New Jersey’s State Labor Inspector was working in league with the company, and that must have been the “Aha!” moment for one Committee member, Sen. Redfield Proctor of Vermont, who inquired of Fairband the Labor Inspector’s political leanings.

When Fairband was said to have answered that he wasn’t sure, Sen. Proctor, a Republican, homed in on his point: “He is a Democrat, appointed by a Democratic Governor, isn’t he?”

“I suppose so,” was Fairband’s less than enthusiastic response.

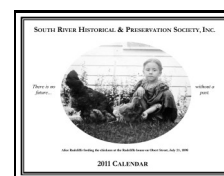


Hermann, Aukam & Co., ca. 1900. From the postcard collection of Stephanie Bartz.

7. Banking - booklet, *President's Annual Report, The First National Bank of South River, January 14, 1958*; two checkbooks, First National Bank South River, NJ; checkbook, South River Trust Company. **Businesses** - coin purse, Sajnoga's Beer Garden, 192 Whitehead Ave.; receipt, Honig's Stationers, 58 Main St., Nov. 8, 1955. **Churches and Related Groups** - raffle ticket, St. Peter & Paul Society, April 19, 1931; booklet, *Pamiętnik Trzydziestolecia Parafji Matki Boskiej Ostrobramskiej w South River, NJ, 1903-1933* (St. Mary's Parish 30 year celebration); two booklets, *Jubileuszowy Pamiętnik z Okazji Dwudziesto-Piętej Rocznicy... 1933* (25th anniversary banquet of the St. Peter & Paul Society, January 1, 1933); booklet, *Pamiętnik Poswięcenia Sztandarow Polskiego I Amerykańskiego ... 1913-1936* (program from the 23rd anniversary of group 517 of the PRCUA); booklet, *Pamiętnik Trzydziestopięciu lecia Parafji Matki Boskiej Ostrobramskiej w South River, NJ, Rok 1903-1938* (St. Mary's Parish 35 year celebration); booklet, *Constitution of the St. Mary's Catholic Club, South River, NJ* [no date]; booklet of raffle tickets, St. Joseph's Society, July 12, 1942; booklet, *Parishioners' Handbook*, St. Mary's Church, South River, NJ. Sept. 1956; two books, *Golden Jubilee Anniversary of Right Reverend Monsignor Maximilian Wujek, Pastor of St. Mary's Church, South River, New Jersey. 1912-1962*. **Pulaski Civic League** - leaflet, *Zadania Ligi Pulaskiego* (Pulaski Civic League) [no date]; letter, Pulaski Civic League of Middlesex County New Jersey [circa 1940s]; four pieces of stationery, Pulaski Civic League of Middlesex County. **White Eagle Democratic Club** - minutes, White Eagle Democratic Club, October 7, 1940; ledger, records of the White Eagle (Białego Orła) Democratic Club, 1940-1943; five pieces of stationery, White Eagle Democratic Club; booklet, *Constitution*, White Eagle Democratic Club, South River, NJ [amended March 15, 1942]; letter with envelope, from Stephen Mordes to the White Eagle Democratic Club [no date]; manuscript, list of officers for the White Eagle (Białego Orła) Club [no date]. **South River Taxpayers' Association** - ledger, records of the South River Taxpayers' Association covering 1935 to 1961; 24 studs, South River Taxpayers' Association, 1935; two pieces of stationery, South River Taxpayers' Association, 1930s. **Death Benefit Society** - booklet of raffle tickets, Death Benefit Society of South River, NJ, January 3, 1943; booklet, *Pamiętnik Towarzystwa kasy Pośmiertny*, May 5, 1946 (Death Benefit Society Banquet Program); **Other Organizations** - two tickets, *Zabawę Karciana* (card party), March 19, 1940, Polish National Home, Jackson Street; letter, Polish Union of the United States of North America, 1956. **Miscellaneous** - ink blotter, For continued good government... Theofil T. Kadela and Robert G. Eastman, 1958; ink blotter, For action---not promises... Frank Grabowski, Walter (Bill) Schack, Carl Chando [no date]; petition, a request by residents of Prentice Ave. to Borough Council for oiling of street [no date]; schedule, South River Fire Alarm Schedule [no date]; booklet, *Your Police Department and You: Reference Booklet of Police Information* [no date]; patch, South River Board of Education; newsletter, *The South River Golden Newsletter*, circa 1985. Donated by Patricia Mioduszewski.

2011 SRH&PS Calendar - \$8.00

Previous years also available - \$6.00



Old School Baptist Church print by Joseph Csartari - \$25.00

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.

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

Old School Baptist Church Postcard - Set of 3 postcards, \$1.00

Features an 1894 photo of the OSBC (now the South River Museum).



Old School Baptist Church Note Cards with Envelopes - Set of 5 cards, \$2.50; set of 10 cards, \$4.00
Features an early photo of the OSBC.

SRH&PS Hat - \$5.00

Blue with white lettering and a picture of the Old School Baptist Church.

Lapel Pin - \$5.00

Collectible pin commemorating the South River Museum - Old School Baptist Church [size- 7/8 inch]



Note: Prices do not include postage. Please visit our website (see back page) for additional items.

IN MEMORY OF...

The South River Historical & Preservation Society extends its sympathies to the family of long-time member and former Trustee Corinne Cebula who passed away on Oct. 29, 2010.



P.O. Box 446
South River, New Jersey 08882

NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

PERMIT NO. 589
SOUTH RIVER, NJ
08882

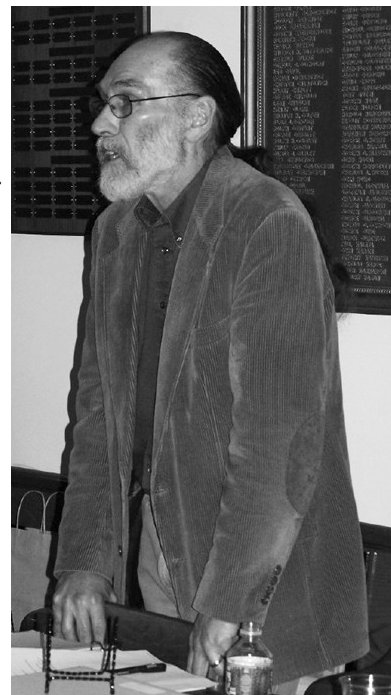
South River Historical & Preservation Society, Inc.

Write to us: **See mailing address, above**
Phone us: **732-613-3078**
Email us: **SouthRiverHistory@gmail.com**
Visit our Website: **<http://www.rootsweb.com/~njsrhps/>**
Visit our Museum: **See Calendar (insert)**

In Memoriam

The SRH&PS suffered a devastating loss on October 22nd with the death of Dick Meyers, Editor of the newsletter and former President of the Society. A life member and member of the Executive Board since 2004, Dick was one of the most active members of the Society, involved in everything from daily operations to special projects and long term planning.

Although happiest when working behind the scenes with the museum collections, writing pieces for the newsletter, or answering genealogy queries, Dick was always willing to pitch in wherever help was needed. He could be found at the museum for most Sunday openings and was a regular at twice monthly work nights. He was a 2008 recipient of the Frazee Award for outstanding service to the Society.



The article on page 4 is Dick's last contribution to the newsletter. His understated humor, attention to detail, reliability, and dedication will be missed at the museum and especially by those of us who were privileged enough to have worked with Dick and called him a friend. This final newsletter of 2010 is dedicated to his memory.

Old School Baptist Church Cemetery Conservation Program Donation Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, ZIP Code: _____

Phone (Optional): _____

Email (Optional): _____

Amount of donation: _____

Please make checks payable to the South River Historical & Preservation Society, Inc. and send them with the form to: SRH&PS, Inc.

P.O. Box 446

South River, NJ 08882

(If you would like to make a memorial donation, please add the information to the back of the form.)

South River Historical & Preservation Society Calendar

2010 and 2011 Meetings: November 17 February 23 April 27 June 22

November 17, Annual Meeting: Dan Sivilich, President of the Battlefield Restoration & Archaeological Volunteer Organization (BRAVO), will provide a short presentation about the organization and its' work in preserving and interpreting New Jersey's past. — Attendees are also invited to bring a bit of history to the yearly "Show and Tell" session. A light dinner will be served. — The meeting will convene at 7:00 p.m. at the South River Museum — Old School Baptist Church, 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 (second Sunday if the first is a holiday):

December 5 January 9 February 6

2011 SRH&PS Membership Application Form

Please check one: New Renewal Gift (from _____)

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

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: (____) _____ E-mail: _____

Check here and include a stamped, self-addressed envelope to receive a membership card.

Check here and include your email above if you would like to receive your newsletter via email.

I would like to donate an additional amount of \$ _____ (Gifts will be recognized in our newsletter)

The gift is: in honor of in memory of: _____

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

Send your application and dues payment to: SRH&PS Membership
P.O. Box 446
South River, NJ 08882

[All dues and contributions are tax-deductible.]

My company has a matching gift program.

Company name: _____

Company 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.

ANNUAL DUES CATEGORIES

Please check one:

Adult \$10.00

Student \$5.00

Family/Couple \$15.00

Business/Corporate \$25.00

Lifetime - Individual 250.00