



# SOUTH RIVER HISTORICAL & PRESERVATION NEWS

Number 111, November 2021

## Museum Update

The museum reopened to the public on Sunday, September 5 and continues to be open for monthly museum hours.

Regular event programming is expected to resume in February.

## Time Capsule

The burial of a new time capsule is still being planned.

Details will be announced as they become available.

## Tree Lighting

The Borough's annual tree lighting at the museum is being planned for December 10.

## Museum Hours

The South River Museum is open to the general public from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. on the first Sunday of each month

(second Sunday if the first is a holiday)

**November 7**  
**December 5**  
**January 2, 2022**  
**February 6, 2022**

## President's Message — by Nan Whitehead

On a beautiful Sunday afternoon in September, we finally had the pleasure of celebrating the belated opening of the South River time capsule. We gathered together for the long-awaited and exciting reveal.

The time capsule was buried on November 11, 1970, the final day of South River's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. Most public time capsules get buried in a place where they remain until they are rediscovered and opened. Ours had three different homes during the past 51 years.

The original location was in front of the Borough Hall, now the Criminal Justice Building. Thirty years later, when renovation work on the building began, the time capsule was moved and stored. In November 2013, it was rediscovered and reburied in front of the South River Museum.

South River's first anniversary celebration, or at least the first we know of, took place in 1920 for the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It included three parades, two dances, a concert, athletic events, and the crowning of a queen, all in the span of two days in September. Fifty years later, six November days saw the crowning of a new queen, two parades, multiple concerts, children's events, burial of the time capsule, and more.

1995's 275<sup>th</sup> anniversary was a year-long celebration. Annual events had an anniversary twist and special events were held. Included were a tour of houses of worship, a garden tour, and an anniversary parade. This was the type of celebration I had envisioned for the 300<sup>th</sup> in 2020.

Although the three previous anniversary celebrations were bigger, the 300<sup>th</sup> is memorable in its own way. The 2020 celebration turned into a much smaller celebration that carried over into 2021, but South River has always been a resilient place. In spite of fire, flood, and pandemic, our diverse community has always found ways to live together and celebrate together. We started with the unveiling of the anniversary logo in January 2020. In June 2020, the borough joined with the Society and the Lions Club to unveil a banner commemorating our milestone.

The recent opening of the time capsule revealed many thought provoking items. For instance, a pin cushion was waiting for us. To me it symbolized the factories that had manufactured clothing and handkerchiefs. More than 100 items removed from the capsule are being carefully cataloged and there will soon be an exhibit at the library.

September 26, 2021, will live in my memory, and I hope yours as well, as a day of celebration not only in honor of the borough's founding, but of the people of South River, present and past. Many residents are part of the generations that helped build this historic town and newer residents have chosen to live here, make their own memories, and be part of this community.

**The South River Historical & Preservation Society, Inc. was established in 1988 to preserve South River's past for future generations while furthering interest in and knowledge of the history of the borough. For more information, visit us at: [southriverhistory.org](http://southriverhistory.org) or [www.facebook.com/southriverhistory](http://www.facebook.com/southriverhistory).**

# South River Historical & Preservation News

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

**Editor:** Stephanie Bartz

**Contributors:**

Marilyn Anastasio      Ann Rafano  
Stephanie Bartz      Nan Whitehead

**Mailings & Distribution:**

Joann Smith-Goepfert  
William Goepfert

**To Our Readers:**

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

Readers' contributions to the newsletter are always welcomed. Submissions for the next issue must be received by January 10.

Please advise us if you would prefer to receive your newsletter via email by sending a message to: southriverhistory@gmail.com.

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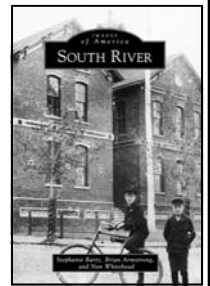
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## SRH&PS GIFT SHOP

**South River (Images of America) Book** – \$21.99

Includes seven chapters with more than 200 photographs and descriptive captions. Pub. June 2015.



**Postcards** – Set of 3,

\$1.00 — Old School Baptist Church, 1894; Main St., 1906; and Frazee Urn & Old School Baptist graveyard.



**Tote Bag Celebrating South River's 300 Year History, 1720-2020** –

\$4.00 — Black with white print [12" x 9" x 4-1/2"].

**Photographic Reproduction of an 1882 Edward Lange Painting of Klauser's South River**

**Hotel and the Riverfront** – \$15.00 [11" x 17" unframed]

**Medallion Ornament Memorializing the Old School Baptist Church (now South River Museum)** – \$10.00

**Old School Baptist Church Note Cards with Envelopes** – Set of 5, \$2.50; set of 10, \$4.00 — Features an 1894 photograph of the church.

**Lapel Pin** – \$5.00 — Collectible pin commemorating the South River Museum [7/8 inch].

**Note: Prices reflect minimum donations and do not include postage. Please contact us by email or visit our website for additional items and information.**

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 Stephanie Bartz (2007)  
 Doris Miller (2008)  
 Robert C. Rafano (2008)  
 Brian Armstrong (2014)  
 Iris Schmitt (2014)

\* Deceased

### Newsletter Award

2021 marks the fifth consecutive year that the *South River Historical & Preservation News* has been recognized by the League of Historical Societies of New Jersey. The November 2020 issue received second place in the newsletter category of the Kevin M. Hale Publication Awards. First place went to the Boonton Historical Society and Museum and third place to the Historical Society of Bloomfield.

## Time In a Capsule

After a long delay due to the pandemic, the time capsule was finally opened on Sunday, September 26, 2021, just 46 days shy of the 51st anniversary of its burial. It was a revelation in more ways than one.

The body of the time capsule is a six foot long stainless steel tube about seven inches in diameter. It was custom made by Hercules, Incorporated, and was buried on November 11, 1970, the final day of South River's six-day 250th anniversary celebration. Those responsible for filling it and burying it left an inventory of what they put in it, but reading the list didn't prepare us for what we found when it was opened.

The capsule was packed from end to end. Most printed materials were tightly rolled and tied with cord. Some items were hidden within other items and there were additional items that weren't included on the inventory.

Sadly, most of what was recovered from the capsule was water-damaged. Although most items were in plastic bags, water seeped into the unsealed bags and created mold and rust. It also caused some of the paper items to expand to an extent that they were difficult to remove from the capsule. Artifacts were photographed regardless of their condition, but many items had to be discarded.

Of the 50 articles itemized on the list provided by the original time capsule committee, more than 20 were discarded. They were mainly newspapers, magazines, and programs from local events. Also included were a telephone directory, an almanac, a Sears, Roebuck & Company catalog, a roster of South River officials, the Board of Education proposed budget, a cookbook, and a pair of panty hose.

The remaining items are being assessed and cataloged in preparation for physical and digital exhibits. Among them are toys, textiles, official badges, coins, souvenir items from the 200th and 250th anniversaries, a mask used during the 1918 influenza epidemic, letters, rosters from local groups, personal items such as a pair of false eyelashes and a woman's safety razor, and other articles. There are also more than 90 photographs that document anniversary events, church buildings, civic buildings, schools, and some of South River's better known athletes. An audio recording made during some of the 1970 anniversary events is being examined in the hopes that it can be professionally restored and converted to a digital format. Regardless of the water damage, we were left with an amazing collection of artifacts.



One of the anniversary souvenirs recovered from the time capsule. Photograph by Stephanie Bartz.



A view of the opened time capsule before anything was removed. Photograph by Stephanie Bartz.

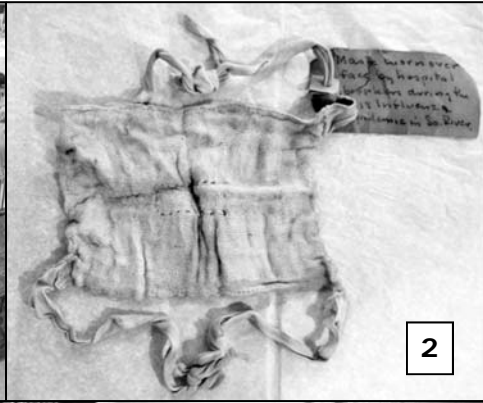
items in the time capsule was a Talking Christie Doll from the Barbie series. Hidden inside the box were a paper towel tube and a plastic bag. Inside the tube were 13 photographs taken during the anniversary celebration and a laminated letter of congratulations from President Richard M. Nixon. The plastic bag contained a handwritten letter dated November 11, 1970, 5:00 pm.

Planning for the burial of a new time capsule began with the premise that the 1970 capsule would be reused. A November 12, 1970, article in *The Home News* stated that it would "last 1,000 years." The opening of the time capsule provided some important lessons though. Given the water damage to the items removed from the capsule, next steps include figuring out how to waterproof the capsule or protect the contents so that they won't be affected if water does seep in. Articles to include in the capsule also need to be identified and collected. While the 1970 capsule included items from a period spanning more than 50 years, consideration is being given to limiting the contents of the new capsule to items that are meaningful for the present rather than the past. Planning is ongoing. We hope to be able to share details soon.

# Time Capsule Gallery



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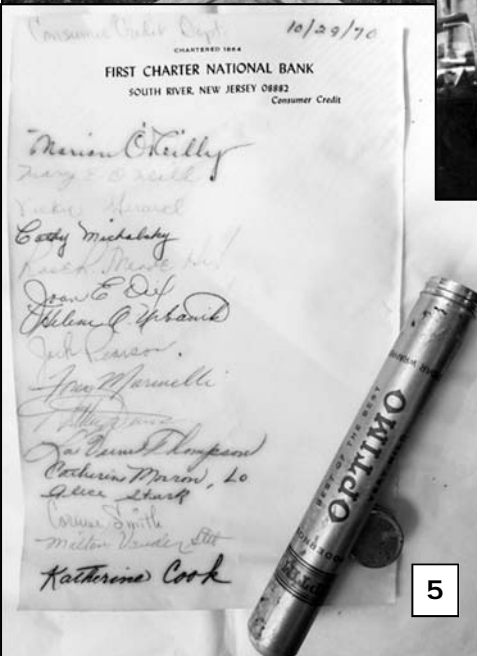
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A sampling of time capsule images.

1. Gary Knoblock and Bob Chando of the South River Department of Public Works raising the time capsule on September 26, 2021. Photograph courtesy of UNESCOtravelers Photography.
2. The oldest item in the capsule, a "mask worn over face by hospital workers during the 1918 influenza epidemic in So. River." The inventory left by the 1970 time capsule committee identifies it as having been worn by Paul A. Schack.
3. Mayor John Krenz removing the first item from the time capsule. Photograph courtesy of UNESCOtravelers Photography.
4. The group that loaded the time capsule in 1970. The note on the back reads, "We're loaded!! The time capsule, that is." Pictured are (front, left to right) Paul A. Schack and Anthony Zambrowski; (back, left to right) Woodis Booraem, William Reichenbach, Amelia S. Applegate, and Rev. Emil Varga.
5. A message in a cigar tube left by the employees of the Consumer Credit Department of the First Charter National Bank.
6. A Captain's badge from the South River Police Department.
7. A toy metal Willys Jeep, the first item removed from the time capsule.
8. Colossus Rex, the Man from Jupiter toy.

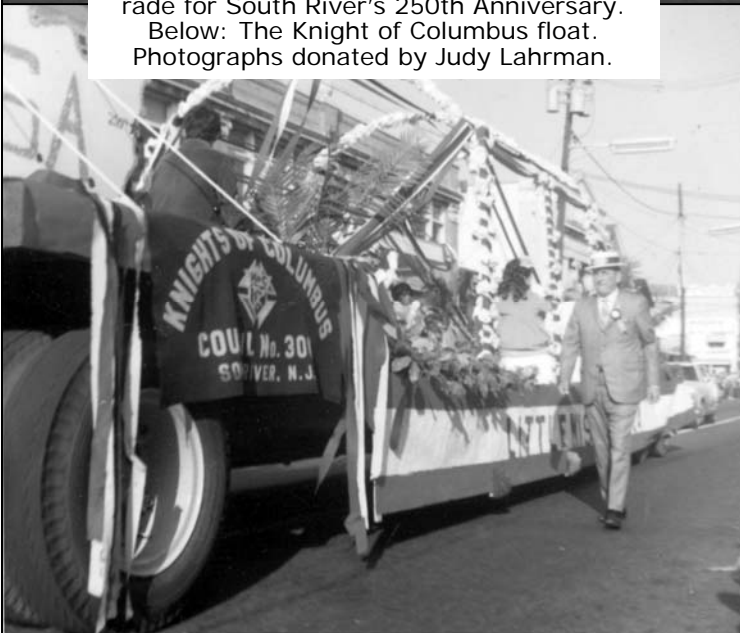
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## New Acquisitions

- 1980 South River High School Varsity jacket. Donated by Barbara Rushworth.
- Nine color photographs from the parade for the celebration of South River's 250th anniversary on November 8, 1970; three color photographs from the Olympic Torch Run on February 4, 1980. Donated by Judy Lahrman.



Above: The banner at the opening of the parade for South River's 250th Anniversary.  
Below: The Knight of Columbus float. Photographs donated by Judy Lahrman.



- "Report of the South River High School, 1915-16"; *The Tell Tale*, SRHS, April 1918; programs from the 1946 dedication of the World War II memorial tablet, the 1961 dedication of the South River High School, and the 1972 dedication of the Old School Bell; Academic Achiever and Good Work Award ribbons from Campbell School; 2000 Street Index Map; report and bulletin related to the 2003 school referendum. Donated by the South River School District.

## Special Acknowledgements

### CONTRIBUTIONS

#### In Memory of:

Daniel & Evelyn Golden  
by Roger M. & Joanie Golden  
Albert Krempecki  
by Stella Gumino  
Alexander & Nellie Lach  
by Alfreda Lach Monahan  
The Loveland Family  
by Ruth Nole

### In Memoriam

The South River Historical & Preservation Society extends its sincere sympathies to the family and friends of Walter F. Rice, a long-time member of the society. He died on September 28, 2021.

### Time to Join or Renew!

If you haven't yet joined, please consider sending in your dues to become a member of the South River Historical & Preservation Society. We have a variety of dues categories. You can choose the one that best fits your situation.

Gift memberships are also available. They're the perfect option if you have family members or friends who have a connection to South River.

If you're already a member, please check the mailing label on this newsletter or contact us by email at [southernriverhistory@gmail.com](mailto:southernriverhistory@gmail.com) to find out when your membership expires. We rely on your continued support to fulfill our mission of preserving and promoting South River's rich history.

A special thank you to everyone who has stayed with us or joined us while we navigated the pandemic and tried to come up with new ways to share South River history while keeping you and our volunteers safe. We couldn't have done it without your generosity and engagement.

You can renew or register a new membership using the form included in this newsletter. Membership forms can also be downloaded from the website.

We appreciate your support. All dues and donations are tax deductible.

Thank you!



## A New Catalog for a New Decade

2020 marked the beginning of an important change for the South River Historical & Preservation Society and the South River Museum. In November, the executive board voted to test a new cloud-based cataloging system to replace our locally installed software. The hope was that it would simplify the work of cataloging, make the system more readily accessible, and allow us to create digital exhibits.

After several months of testing, the decision was made. CatalogIt replaced PastPerfect as our collection management tool. The almost 11,000 items that were cataloged in the old program were ported over to the new system. Time was spent establishing standard vocabularies for things like personal names, organization names, and shelving locations at the museum. Issues related to the record transfer were cleaned up along with record errors that became apparent when viewed in the new environment.

We now have a modern system that allows us to work wherever we are. Perhaps more importantly, it allows us to easily create digital exhibits that showcase the items in the museum collections.

The first three digital exhibits were published in October 2021. They highlight items from each of South River's previous anniversary celebrations. The fourth exhibit will showcase the items retrieved from the 1970 time capsule that was opened in September 2021.

Although exhibits like the one for the time capsule will be complete once all of the items in that collection have been cataloged, others are expected to continue to grow. As we acquire new artifacts that fit existing exhibits, those artifacts will be added to the display. The "New Acquisitions" section of this newsletter lists nine color photographs from the parade for the celebration of South River's 250th anniversary. Once cataloged, those photographs will automatically be added to the "250th Anniversary of South River: 1970" exhibit.

Digital exhibits extend our reach, not only by making our collections accessible when the museum is closed, but by providing access for those who are unable to visit the South River Museum. They also complement the physical displays at the museum and other locations.

Digital exhibits can be accessed via the link on our website or directly at: [hub.catalogit.app/4635](http://hub.catalogit.app/4635).



### 200th Anniversary of South River: 1920

57 Items

Photograph, Object/Artifact, Archive

Photographs and memorabilia from the two-day celebration of South River's 200th anniversary, September 24 - 25, 1920.



### 250th Anniversary of South River: 1970

29 Items

Object/Artifact, Publication, Photograph

Photographs and memorabilia from the six-day celebration for South River's 250th anniversary, November 6 - 11, 1970.



### 275th Anniversary of South River: 1995

14 Items

Archive, Object/Artifact, Publication

Photographs and memorabilia from the year-long celebration of South River's 275th anniversary in 1995.

Introductory images for the society's first three digital exhibits.



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South River, New Jersey 08882

South River Historical & Preservation Society, Inc.



Mailing address: See above  
Email: [SouthRiverHistory@gmail.com](mailto:SouthRiverHistory@gmail.com)  
Website: <http://southriverhistory.org>  
Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/southriverhistory>  
YouTube: <https://bit.ly/3fNTJCF>  
Phone: 732-613-3078 [Messages only]

## The Battle of Bennett's Island

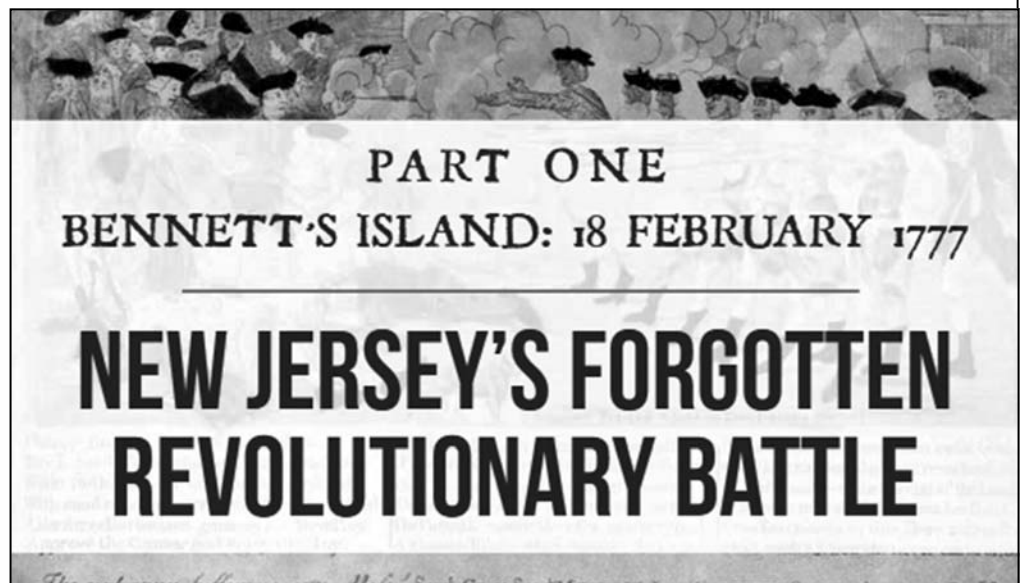
Bennett's Island is the largely forgotten site of a 1777 Revolutionary War battle. The island, known alternately as Clancy's Island, Whitehead Island, and by other names, lies along the Raritan River in East Brunswick near what is now the Edgeboro landfill. Although not part of South River, its proximity to South River's northern border gives the location and the battle an element of local interest.

Information about the battle of Bennett's Island is available in a two-part article in the Spring and Fall 2019 issues of *The Loyalist Gazette* accessible at: [bit.ly/3AuEfh8](http://bit.ly/3AuEfh8). An earlier article,

"The Battle of Bennett's Island: The New Jersey Site Rediscovered" appeared in the *Journal of the American Revolution* accessible at: [bit.ly/3AtkoPn](http://bit.ly/3AtkoPn).

The Patrons of the Heritage and Battle of Bennett's Island is a small group working to gain official recognition for the site. They hope to see part of the island preserved for access to visitors. Historical signage would be added to explain the significance of the site.

For more information contact Cindy Peterson at: [cindypete6@yahoo.com](mailto:cindypete6@yahoo.com).



The title bar from the article in the Spring 2019 issue of *The Loyalist Gazette*.



# 2022 SRH&PS Membership Application Form

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

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(please enter number in family) \_\_\_\_\_
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- Lifetime - Individual \$250.00
- Business Patron (Life) \$250.00

I would like to make an additional donation:

- \$ \_\_\_\_\_  in honor of  in memory of: \_\_\_\_\_
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Scholarship Fund
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Old School Baptist Church Cemetery Conservation Program
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Doughboy/Monument Maintenance Fund
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ General Fund

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

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

All dues and donations are tax-deductible.  
Donations will be recognized in our newsletter.

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Company name/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 a matching gift form with your membership donation and form. The Society's fiscal year is January 1 to December 31.

# SRH&PS Donation Form

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- \$ \_\_\_\_\_  in honor of  in memory of: \_\_\_\_\_
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Scholarship Fund
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Old School Baptist Church Cemetery Conservation Program
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Doughboy/Monument Maintenance Fund
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ General Fund

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

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