

# THE SOUTH PARK HISTORIAN

A PUBLICATION OF THE SOUTH PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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## Message From The President

With the old year behind us, we reflect on another successful year of programs, fundraisers, publications, and historical documentation. Suggestions and ideas became realities due to the Historical Society's officers, board of directors, and members, who made every project a success. As we move into the New Year, I would like to extend best wishes to our members for peace, health and prosperity.

Bob Bastianini  
President

## The Year 2001 In Review

*By Virginia Whitfield*

The year 2001 began by "reminiscing" about growing up in South Park in the 20th Century. For those who joined the Society later in the year, we had great programs each month. In addition to School Days Memories and a Show and Tell, we had wonderful guest speakers who presented histories of covered bridges, automobiles, the town of Gastonville, guns, the Monongahela River and the Allegheny County Police.

Fundraising was of great concern. We continued to sell the Millennium 2001 Calendar. In preparation for the closing of the three elementary schools (Broughton, Library and Stewart) in June, the Society published the **'Then and Now'** handbook, a photo history of South Park. The handbook sells for \$6.00, and we are into our second printing. Another fundraiser was in partnership with the South Park PTA/PTO. We designed a "Keepsake Throw" on which the historic elementary schools were displayed. The throw was sold at the celebration of the closing of the elementary schools on May 7, 8 and 9, the proceeds being shared by the two organizations.

Election of officers was held in June, and the Board began plans for Community Day in September. A committee studied ways we could raise funds in addition to displaying historical artifacts. We were successful financially as well as attracting visitors to our booths.

"Save the Buffalo Campaign": Our greatest accomplishment in 2001 was living up to our commitment to preserve South Park's history. In June, at a public hearing at the Buffalo Inn, we learned that a consulting firm has recommended that the Game Preserve and Buffalo be relocated to Round Hill Park. The Society took this issue to the people by circulating petitions and submitted over 1,300 signatures. We were represented at the public forum of the Committee on Public Works held at the Allegheny County Courthouse on August 23 and spoke on behalf of the people of South Park. It was a successful campaign, as the consulting firm withdrew its recommendation, and Council Member Vince Gastgeb put forth a bill to "protect and keep the Game Preserve and Buffalo in the grounds that it currently occupies in South Park, and to forbid any such movement from this location." The Society is grateful for Mr. Gastgeb's support.

We had a wonderful picnic in September and an exciting Christmas/Holiday Party in December, to which the public was invited. The Society publishes its newsletter, **'The Historian,'** quarterly and writes an article monthly for the Park News. Historical research is ongoing by some very dedicated members, but we need your help.

## Society's Holiday Gathering

By Joy Marquis



### *The Historical Society's Refreshment Committee*

(L-R) Josephine Pelesky, Mary Kubis, Katie Kratofil and Rosemarie Zrimsek

To close out the year, the South Park Historical Society held a joyous Christmas party on December 18th. In the past the party was a covered-dish dinner, but this year the Members and Board voted on a catered dinner. One of the reasons for having a catered dinner was to allow the Refreshment Committee an opportunity to also enjoy the festivities. By the happy faces of the Refreshment Committee (in the photo above), the evening and the dinner, catered by Cyd West, was a complete success. The members of the Society furnished many varieties of desserts, including pies, cakes, cookies and other holiday specialties.



### *The Country Fiddlers*

(L-R) Doris Kerchner, Mike Hollerich, Sr., Ed Gibson, Sr., and Ed Gibson, Jr. in the background

Traditionally, the Society does not hold a meeting at their Christmas party, and this year was no exception. However, President Bob Bastianini did make a few statements and thanked the Board Members for their endeavors and accomplishments for the year. Bob also acknowledged Ruth Pope, Chairperson of the Christmas party, for her work in making the evening a success.

The evening's special attraction was music furnished by Mike Hollerich and his Country Fiddlers. The group consisted of Mike Hollerich on fiddle, Ed Gibson on guitar, Doris Kerchner on bass, Frank Hollerich on harmonica, and Ed Gibson, Jr., on guitar. A special treat this year was Corey Woods, an extremely talented 14-year-old banjo player. The group entertained the holiday revelers with familiar country songs, comedy stints, and a few songs from their latest tapes and CDs. Members and guests tapped their toes, sang along and danced to the lively tunes. A true delight of the gathering was the old songs played on the harmonica by 87-year-old Frank Hollerich. Another treat this year was a solo accordion performance by Leno Bastianini.

Again this year, the Society's Christmas party was a tremendous success due to the contributions of the people involved.

## Mark Your Calendar

The South Park Historical Society meets on the **third Tuesday** of each month at **7:30 p.m.**, in the **Library Fire Hall**, 6581 Library Road, Library, PA.

**January 15, 2002**  
**February 19, 2002**  
**March 19, 2002**  
**April 16, 2002**  
**May 21, 2002**  
**June 18, 2002**

**July 16, 2002**  
**August 20, 2002**  
**September 17, 2002**  
**October 15, 2002**  
**November 19, 2002**  
**December 17, 2002**

Historical Society Board Members meet on the Tuesday before the general membership meeting at 7:00 PM in the Library Fire Hall.

## Next Meeting and Program

The next meeting of the South Park Historical Society is on January 15th and the program will be on the History of Steamboats with guest speakers John Cuddy and Clarence Gomer. They will have model-sized steamboats to illustrate their presentation.

## ROADS, STREETS and HIGHWAYS

*By Jeanne Will*

Did you ever wonder how roads came about? Did you ever try to visualize the country when there were no roads and trees were huge and never ending?

When the only inhabitants were animals, the small ones made their way to the streams to drink. They made little paths which were then used by larger animals who followed, thus making the paths more pronounced. The deer followed the same paths, making them even larger. The buffalo followed the deer. They all needed to drink! The Indians followed the deer and buffalo trails not only to find water, but also for food and clothing. The paths usually led to and followed the streams and rivers.

Then the white men came and followed those same trails even though they were still not very noticeable. These men learned to track also for food and water. They found it easier to follow a broken trail than to beat down a new one. The woods were very thick, and there were acres and acres of all kinds of trees. The Indians used some trees to build huts and long buildings, but did not have the means to take down large trees. Therefore, saplings (2 to 3 inches in diameter) were used.

As the country became more inhabited and the trappers and hunters ventured westward, the trails became easier to follow. The "wild west" was right here in western Pennsylvania. Only trappers and hunters had been this far. A few settlers were trying to make homes here. Next soldiers came to conquer more land. They were the first road builders.

The armies that came west had Indian guides and usually hunter/trappers to help supply them with food. They followed the trails that the Indians had used for many years but they had to widen these to at least 16 ft. Trees, shrubs and rocks had to be removed. Bridges had to be built and swamps had to be crossed. Why? you ask. Because the cannon wheels were 16 ft. wide and room was needed to get them through. So, the soldiers not only had to carry rifles and ammunition, but they also had to cut, dig, build, haul, and work every day on the long hard journey to battle. This was how it was done on Nemacolin's Trail which later became known as the National Highway, and Rt. 40.

A highway was not called "high" way because it was long, high, or up, but because it was an important road. In Great Britain, the main streets are called "high" streets in the towns and cities, even though they are low, short, or curved. And so, the naming was carried on here by Britains.

As the land developed and people arrived, traveling was easier along a stream or river. There was usually a level place along the stream due to land being washed away over time by the flooding that occurred. The paths were turned into lanes and then into roads. The farmer's lanes between properties became roads. There are "river roads" in every county. Some examples are River Road (from South Side to Hayes), Saw Mill Run (Route 51), Lick Run (now Cochrun Mill Road), Brush Run Road (in Bethel Park), Streets Run, etc. I am sure you can think of a lot more. Roads named for landowners include Wallace Rd., Wilson Rd., Stewart Rd., Stoltz Rd., Seibold Rd., McConkey Rd., and many more.

The dirt paths became dirt roads. Some roads became planked in well traveled places and tolls were charged to pay for them. The road to Butler was planked from the North Side. Part of Brownsville Rd. from Carrick to Mt. Oliver was planked. Wooden sidewalks were built. Think of the thousands of trees that were cut for this use. The streets in well inhabited parts of towns were paved with cobble or river stones. People complained of the noise the animal's hooves made on them. They were not easy to walk on. Sewage was dumped into the gutters to drain down the streets. In this part of the country, after the coal mines existed, "red dog" was used to keep the roads from being total mud when it rained. Many cars would be buried up to the hub caps due to rain. Stone was used where it was available. Finally, MacAdam invented macadamizing and we can now travel over the roads, streets, and highways with ease. (Of course, Henry Ford helped).

# In Memory

## James C. Humes

Jim Humes, of Castle Shannon, passed on Wednesday, August 22, 2001. His wife, Mary E. Humes, and their children, Kathy Lester of Mt. Lebanon, Joyce Adams of South Fayette Twp., and Tracy Dickson of Castle Shannon survive him. Also surviving are his grandchildren Jason, Megan, Alexis, Justin, Adria and Austin; and great-grandchildren Alyson, Quin, Tyler and Seth. Services were held at the Laughlin Memorial Chapel, Castle Shannon, PA. A Mass of Christian burial was offered at St. Anne Church on Saturday, August 25 at 10:00 a.m.

Jim played the accordion professionally for about 35 years and taught piano and the accordion privately. He also instructed at Volkwein's Music Store on Liberty Avenue. As part of a trio, he performed at downtown restaurants and nightclubs. His versatility enabled him to play all kinds of music, depending on the occasion. Jim was employed by the U. S. Postal Service.

Jim was an active member of the Historical Society and an avid researcher. He generously donated copies of photographs and important information on the Humes, Handel and Fagan families.

He will be greatly missed by all of the members and his friends of the Historical Society.

## Louis W. Kravanja

Our dear friend and member, Louis W. Kravanja, aged 77, passed away on Monday, October 8, 2001. He is survived by his wife of 47 years, Mary (Radan) Kravanja and his children, Jeanne (Tom) Eason of Rochester, NY and William L. Kravanja; and grandchildren Maggie, Sarah and Emily Eason. He was the brother of the late Mary Zupancic. He retired after 44 years of employment from LTV Steel Corporation.

Lou was a Charter Member of the Library VFW Post 6664, helping to establish the Post after his return from his service in Europe during World War II. He served two terms as Commander of the Post and was a member of Tri-state Chapter 34th Infantry Division Association. He was also a member of St. Joan of Arc Church, S.O.A.R., Library Golden Agers, S.N.P.J. Lodge 386,

Library E&E Home, Past Secretary of Workingman's Beneficial Union of Pittsburgh, and the South Park Historical Society.

Viewing was from the David J. Henney Funeral Home in Library, PA, and a Funeral Mass was celebrated on Friday, October 12th at St. Joan of Arc Church in Library. Interment was in the Finleyville Cemetery.

Everyone who had the privilege of knowing him loved Lou, and he will be greatly missed.

### Important Meeting

**A business meeting is planned for the February 19th meeting of the Historical Society. Every member is urged to attend and participate in the business and planning for the Society's upcoming year.**

### New Members

The South Park Historical Society extends a warm welcome to our newest members:

Stacey Bugle	Courtney Coleman
Gemma Pantanella	Dana Riether
Bruce Shiring	Christie Wahlen
Jamie Wolf	

### We Need Your Help

Every member in the Historical Society is special. We have not heard from some of you in a long, long time, but we have kept you on our mailing list. Because of the escalating cost of postage and printing, we now find it necessary to look at our roster. Please advise if you are no longer interested in being a member of the Society. If you have not paid your dues and wish to continue your membership, please contact Paul Kubis at 412-835-6826 or write to him as soon as possible at the following address.

South Park Historical Society  
P.O. Box 555  
South Park, PA 15129

**We really do need your help in this matter.**