

THE SOUTH PARK HISTORIAN

A PUBLICATION OF THE SOUTH PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume 6, Number 3

July 1, 2002

A Message to our Presidents . . .

The definition of president is “one chosen to preside, or chief officer of an organization or society.” The definition of preside is “to exercise guidance or control.” Our outgoing president, Bob Bastianini, exemplified for more than five years the definitions cited. He moved this Society from its inception to where it is today. Words cannot truly express our gratitude for his dedication, commitment and desire to see us achieve our goals. Bob, as you step aside for a well deserved break, we welcome our new president, William Reddy. We extend our hands to him as he presides and guides this Society forward to finalize strategic plans and to continue to carry out our mission.

Salute To Veterans



Local veterans from the VFW Library Memorial Post 6664 joined in the Society’s “*Salute To Veterans*” program. The veterans are (L-R) Gene Frediani, Bob Stoodt, Jerry Jones, Paul Kubis, Bob Bastianini.

The May 21, 2002 program, “*Salute to Veterans*,” was presented by students Quinn Daniels, Kristine and Kim Wurst. The Library VFW opened the meeting with the



The Society’s student members presenting the program were (L-R) Quinn Daniels, Kristine Wurst and Kim Wurst.

“Presentation of Colors” followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem. After an abbreviated business meeting, the students took charge and presented a wonderful program, saluting our veterans. Kim and Kristine Wurst read patriotic poems and reported on their interviews of local veterans. Quinn Daniels reported on an interview of a local veteran and followed up with a history of his grandfather’s war experiences and a slide presentation of the All American fighter plane. A “Thank You, Veterans” poster, made and signed by South Park

Election of Officers

On June 18, 2002, the membership of the South Park Historical Society elected officers for the upcoming year. The members elected are:

Officers:

President	Bill Reddy
Vice-President	Ruth Pope
Secretary	Katie Kratofil
Treasurer	Paul Kubis

Board Members:

Bob Bastianini	Mary Kubis
George Bercik	Joy Marquis
Birdie Snee Crawford	Jo Pelesky
Ed Knaus	Virginia Whitfield
Kathy Knaus	Ted Wilderman
Dolores Kortlandt	Andy Vasko
Mary Kravanja	Rosemarie Zrimsek
Andy Kubis	

Photo Corner



He is so attached to the South Park School District that after retiring from his regular job, he transports the children to and from school every day in the big yellow bus.

This photo is of one of the Historical Society's favorite members. He is also active with the Library VFW Post 6664, Library Volunteer Fire Department, and is the president of AFSCME, Local 2972.

He was born in the Piney Fork area, where his family owned the Piney Fork Beach Swimming Pool. In 1949, he graduated from Snowden Township High School. He and his beautiful wife, Dolores (Blashich) have remained life-long residents of the Library, PA, area.

Have you guessed that this beautiful baby has grown up to be our handsome, energetic out-going president, Bob Bastianini?

Order Your Enjoy Entertainment Book



The Society is selling "ENJOY 2003," an entertainment discount book. The buyer will get "Two-for-One" and "50 % Off" discounts on dining, recreation, theatres, services and travel. The

book sells for \$25.00 and will be available to the buyer in November. In order for this project to be successful, we must have the participation of all active members. Our motto is "Buy One - Sell Two." Start taking orders now before other organizations sell to your friends. Reserve your orders with Paul Kubis at (412) 835-6826.

Please note that the discount coupons are good for local businesses and services in Pittsburgh and suburban areas. Now is the time to buy your holiday gifts early.

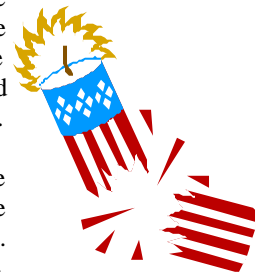
Fourth of July Celebrations

By Virginia Whitfield

Celebration of the Fourth of July in the Pittsburgh region dates back to the early 1800's. Robert Van Atta reported in a recent Pittsburgh Tribune-Review article various ways the Fourth was celebrated in the early 19th Century. One of the biggest celebrations was when President Theodore Roosevelt spoke in Schenley Park in 1902. But in 1801, in Greensburg, women were excluded from main events of their elders. Van Atta also reported that Black Americans held separate celebrations to demonstrate their ability and willingness to be good citizens. Some Catholic groups also observed the Fourth separately, especially in Pittsburgh. Celebrations were transformed with the emergence of partisan politics during the 1820's, but largely disappeared since many considered the holiday as a national unifying festival. Community celebrations began to diminish in the late 1840's as commercialization of the holiday began to appear with early recreation and amusement parks, steamboat excursions and circus performances. Fireworks came in the 1840's, and sports and sporting events became more popular.

Fourth of July celebrations in the early 20th Century had changed considerably from that historical period. Those separate celebrations became a thing of the past, but some things remained constant - family get-togethers, and a trip to the swimming pool. There was no Dairy Queen, but there was homemade ice cream, iced tea, lemonade, and of course homemade root beer. Don't forget the corn roasts and the singing of patriotic songs. The children were given little fire crackers and sparklers for after dark entertainment.

Today, everyone has a car, which enables them to visit two or three get-togethers in one day. We have backyard bar-b-cues, patio cookouts, professional art shows, sporting events and fireworks. Our celebrations might last for two or three days when we combine the Fourth with the weekend. The highways are much busier, and we have many more accidents. But we are cognizant of the safety warnings - fasten the seatbelts, slow down, be careful with the fireworks. **HAVE A HAPPY & SAFE CELEBRATION!**



THE TOWN OF CURRY

And Dr. Joseph Curry

Research by Norman Schwotzer, 1995

The Village of Curry, now known as Broughton, acquired its name from the family of Dr. Joseph Curry. Dr. Curry was born in 1778 in Chester County, Pennsylvania, and was educated as a physician. His parents were Moses and Sarah Moore Curry. Dr. Curry's brothers were Samuel, David, Moses, Robert, John, Ezekiel, and Hiram.

About 1804, he came to Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, and for about 60 years practiced medicine, covering a circuit of many miles. He married Jane Finley, daughter of John and Margaret Finley. Dr. Curry died in 1862, and his wife died in 1875 at the age of 84. Their children were John Finley Curry, Joseph Moore Curry, Sarah Cris Curry, Margaret Curry, Mary Jane Curry, Susan Curry, Isabelle Curry, and William E. Curry.

On December 27, 1820, Dr. Joseph Curry purchased from John and Margaret Finley about 181 acres in Mifflin Township, (now part of Baldwin Borough and South Park Township), Allegheny County, PA. It was part of land Patented to William Fry on October 12, 1785. The Patent land was called "Fry's Choice." Fry sold the land to Casper Metz (or Maits) on August 14, 1786, and he sold the land to John Finley on August 7, 1793. This land had a Grist Mill, a mill race, and dam situate in Peters Creek (Lick Run), commonly called "Fry's Mill." The mill was renamed Curry's Mill. The mill race was about 1,650 feet in length, and ended at Brownsville Road, at about the present intersection of Brownsville and Curry Roads. The land was said to be on the waters of Peters Creek, it should have said a tributary of Peters Creek, and a correction was made in Volume 345, page 475, by stating, "once called Peters Creek, now called Lick Run." The name "Lick" probably came from the land patent of John Wallace. Wallace named his Patent "The Lick." His land bordered the land of William Fry, and the creek ran through the Wallace property. The deed to Joseph Curry is in Volume 29, page 376.

On November 17, 1882, by deed recorded in volume 461 page 95, Mrs. Elvira A. Curry, Joseph Alfred Curry, Jane Eliza Curry, John Finley Curry and Nathan M. Curry for \$50, gave a 765 foot right-of-way to the Pittsburgh Southern Railway Company. Then on September 29, 1883, for one dollar, they concluded an agreement with the Railway that the company "shall establish upon the ground hereby granted an accommodation passenger station at which all accommodation passenger trains at any time run or operated by the Railway, over and upon the road, shall stop for the purpose of taking on and letting off passengers, and that the said station be known as "Curry."

On November 19, 1883, Joseph M. Curry sold to the Pittsburgh Southern Railway Co. (later known as the Pittsburgh Wheeling Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railway Company), two parcels of land for the price of \$900.00. The first was for one acre and 39 perches that included the old race. The other parcel was for a strip 60 feet in width at the grade of the railroad, being 30 feet on either side of the center line of said railroad, and extending a distance of 2,060 feet, and containing an area at the grade of said railroad of 2.84 acres together with such additional width as may be necessary to make the said strip 60 feet in width at the grade of said railroad." The deed to this property is in deed book Volume 473, page 692.

A newspaper article from the *Hill Top Record* for March 27, 1931, reported: **CENTURY OLD GRAVES FOUND IN BROUGHTON** - While excavating for a gasoline station in Broughton, a Joseph F. Shevelan, owner, brought to light several graves which are believed to be over one hundred years old. As far as can be learned from older residents of the community, the property at the time of the burials belonged to Joseph Finley who is buried nearby, a tomb stone marking his grave, (corner of Broughton and Linhart Roads). As the newly discovered graves are some distance from that of Finley, it is believed by those who can recall hearing their ancestors speak of the families, that the graves are those of Negro slaves employed by the Finley family."

Note: John Finley is not in the Census of 1790 for this area. The Census of 1800 lists John Finley, Esquire, with a household of six white males; five white females; "one other free white persons, except Indians not taxed"; and no slaves.

In Memory

Anna Connor

Local historian, author and lecturer Anna Connor, wife of the late John Connor, died on May 6, 2002 at the age of 78. Anna's most lasting legacy was her involvement in the preservation of the Oliver Miller Homestead. In 1987, Anna received the Good Neighbor Award from the Bethel Chamber of Commerce for her continuing service with the Oliver Miller Homestead. Anna co-authored two books with her daughter, Laura Zajdel. Their first book, "Corncraft," is a how-to book about cornhusk crafts. Their second book was, "1794 - Janie Miller's Whiskey Rebellion Saga." In 2001, Anna presented a riveting program to the South Park Historical Society. Dressed in period costume, she related how the women of the Miller Homestead performed their chores, and of the perils of that time.

She is survived by her children Laura Connor Zajdel, Lawrence Thomas Connor, John Robert Connor and Amy Connor Kegel. A Memorial Service was held on May 13, 2002, at Bethel Presbyterian Church.

All of the members of the South Park Historical Society are deeply saddened by Anna's passing.

Cecelia Kulik Bendel

On June 10, 2002, Cecelia Bendel of Snowden, and a good friend of the South Park Historical Society, died. She was the wife of the late William Bendel, mother of William Terry Bendel, Carol L. Bendel, Richard A. Bendel, and Cynthia Pellegrino, and sister of Dorothy Ambrose, Andrew Kulik, Jr., and the late Jane Legeza. A Mass of Christian burial was held in Nativity Church.

"Cil", as she was known to her friends, supported and donated many photos and information regarding the Snowden area to the Historical Society. She will be greatly missed by family and friends.

John J. Vasko

On June 2, 2002, John Vasko died at the age of 82. John, the husband of the late Yvonne Vasko, lived in Munhall, formerly in Frederick, MD, and Paris, France. He was an

Andrew and Anna Vasko; father of Barbara Griffiths of London, England; brother of Martha Sloan of Munhall, Joseph Vasko of West Mifflin, Andrew Vasko of South Park, and Raymond Vasko of Munhall. Interment was private.

Our deepest condolences are extended to our friend and Board Member, Andy Vasko.

Army Veteran of WWII. John was the son of the late

MEMBERSHIP

As many alumni return to the area for their class reunion, we hope family and friends will tell them about the Historical Society. We have members from New Jersey to Alaska, and they enjoy reading our newsletter, which is published quarterly. From time to time they send us photos and keepsakes for our archives.

The South Park Historical Society welcomes new members. Membership fees are: \$10.00 for individual; \$15.00 family; \$5.00 Senior Members (65 or older); \$5.00 student membership. Please send your check (with name, address and telephone number) to The South Park Historical Society, P.O. Box 555, South Park, PA, 15129.

TIME AND LOCATION

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.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Mark your calendar:

July 16 - A program on the "*Life of Early Coal Miners*" will be presented by Leonard Marraccini.

Trivia Fact

Can you guess what the top 5 patriotic sites to celebrate the Fourth of July were in 1998? Answer: (1) Independence Hall, Philadelphia (2) Washington, D.C. and its monuments (3) Cruising past the Statue of Liberty (4) Walking Boston's Freedom Trail (5) Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia (Source: *Buffalo News*, 28 June 1998).