

THE SOUTH PARK HISTORIAN

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PRESERVE THE BUFFALO CAMPAIGN

The Historical Society conducted a campaign to save the Game Preserve and buffalo in South Park following the recommendation of Wallace Roberts & Todd to relocate them to Round Hill Park in Elizabeth, PA. Members and friends of the Society circulated petitions throughout the community, and presented over 1,200 signatures to the County Council at a public hearing in the County Courthouse on August 23rd. The Society was represented at the public hearing and spoke on behalf of the people in and around the South Park community. County Councilman Vince Gastgeb reported in the September issue of the Park News that the Game Preserve and buffalo will remain in South Park. We are truly grateful to Mr. Gastgeb as he plans to introduce legislation recognizing the historical significance and authorize the current land at South Park to be acknowledged as usage only for the Game Preserve and buffalo.



We thank everyone who supported our campaign. For the little children seen at the Game Preserve, it is our hope that they will bring their grandchildren to see the buffalo in years to come.

UNITED WE STAND

September 11, 2001, will be a date recorded in history when America and the world realized the true meaning of "one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." The terrorists' attack on the World Trade Center in New York, the Pentagon in Arlington, VA, and the County of Somerset in Pennsylvania brought all of us together as family. Our prayers and sympathy go out to those unfortunate victims and their families. We say thank you to the firemen, policemen, healthcare workers, volunteers, etc., for the work they are doing. As we stand united, God bless our brothers and sisters who need our help, and God



Raffle Tickets Are Still Available

Tickets are still available for the Society's raffle on two terrific prizes. The winning ticket holder will receive two prizes: a 13" Sylvania color television and a Sony AM/FM sound system with CD radio-cassette recorder. The drawing is based on the Sunday, October 7, 2001, Pennsylvania Daily Lottery. The raffle tickets are selling fast at \$1.00 a ticket.

You can still get tickets by calling Paul Kubis at 412-835-6826 or Bob Bastianini at 412-

I WALKED BACK INTO HISTORY

By Jeanne Will

This past June, I was fortunate enough to see first hand the ancient boat that was discovered 125 feet below the city of Dover, England. It was discovered while repairmen were working on lines far beneath the surface.

Realizing they had found something important, work was halted for further investigation, and plans were made to remove it. The boat was so large that it had to be taken up in pieces, each section carefully marked and preserved before it hit the air. It was studied as to the time period, restoration and preservation. After it was determined how it was built, a replica was made for further study. It was built and used in 3500 B.C., which means it is 5,000 years old, long before the Vikings were in England. With handmade axes and tools, they felled a huge tree and split it in half. The largest half was dug out and the remaining half split in two. These were hulled out as well and placed on each side of the half piece to enlarge the width of the boat. Every so many feet, holes were gnawed out for ties to hold them in place. The cracks and holes were filled with moss and clay of some sort to keep the boat from leaking. It must have averaged a thickness of four inches on all sides and bottom. The ropes were made of willow strips wound together. Very strong.



An amazing piece of work with such crude instruments. The boat is now encased in a huge glass or plastic case in the Dover Museum. An addition was made to the Museum to hold the boat.

In Berwick, a tiny village in East Sussex, stands an ancient church built next to a Norman burial mound. In King Edward's time, he decided all men in the country needed to be better soldiers, so he ruled that each Sunday they were to practice archery, the weapon used in those times. He

wanted his men to be the best. Inside this little church is a stone in the wall, next to the font, that was used to sharpen their arrows. The stone is scored with the marks of centuries ago.

Many houses and cottages from the 1100's still stand and are lived in. Also, there are many very charming timber framed houses. As I was preparing to photograph a beautiful one, my friend said, "Don't photograph that one Jean, it is not old, it is only 100 years old. It is very new."



We visited a village of houses, barns, wells, waterwheel, windmill, and old buildings, moved and restored from centuries ago. There, we saw the materials grown, used, and how houses were made of woven branches, then filled in with a mud mixture, smoothed and painted or stained and framed with large beams. The early fences to contain the sheep and cattle were made of woven branches as well. This goes back to before the 1500's. These houses, shops, buildings, etc., can be seen all over England, still in use.

Thatched-roof cottages are still inhabited. Churches and mansions are built of the same stone as was taken from the sea centuries ago. The streets are also paved with the same stone. It is a combination of flint and chalk. The larger pieces were used on the outside, smaller stones filled the center. Walls, forts and fortresses were built of the same combination, all standing except those bombed by the Germans during World War II. Remnants of a church in Coventry remain as a memorial, never restored to what was once a magnificent church.

So many lovely and historical things in this country of ours are already gone, never to be seen again. We must learn to preserve our past. It is so much newer than the rest of the world. We can't go back very far here, but we can learn to keep what is important before it's **'GONE'** by way of a

PROGRAMS



The July program featured guest speaker Buddy Mattes who delivered an exciting program on **“Antique Fire Arms.”** With the assistance of his

son, he displayed several replica of powder rifles. Buddy also showed a replica of 45 gauge powder rifle that was originally produced by McGush of Gastonville around 1815.



August's program was presented by local historian, Gilbert Balliard, who spoke on the **“History of Gastonville.”** Members and guests learned that

Gastonville was one of Washington County's largest and most important towns. Gilbert talked about the Curry house and its use in the Underground Railroad, John Cox and Cox's Fort, the Gaston family, and other interesting historical facts of Gastonville.

Many members and guests brought items to **“Show and Tell,”** our ever-popular program that was presented in September. As usual, the program was fun and interesting. Some of the highlights of the meeting were items from: Dick Gaetano, who illustrated several rare historical items, Josephine Pelesky told about a painting of the bridge over Piney Fork Creek, Tom Campbell demonstrated an antique tube bender, and Joy Marquis talked about a school book containing the name of Carolyn Grubesky, dated 1955. The book was also stamped with Thomas Fidago's name. Three records recorded by the Snowden High School Band in the early 1960's were the items that Andy Vasko illustrated. Andy donated the records for the

Society's archives. Virginia Whitfield talked about New York's World Trade Center Towers and illustrated her talk with photographs that she had taken of the towers. Fire arms historian, Jim Crawford, brought a special item for the program. Jim illustrated his original McGush powder rifle and also told of Sam McGush's start in Gastonville, PA, in 1815. Jim Fisher spoke about his book, **“I Can't Believe It Has Happened To Me,”** which is in the South Park Library for review.

Members Have A Picnic

The Historical Society held a picnic on Sunday, September 23rd at the Mineral Beach Picnic Grove. About fifty people attended the festive event that included in addition to the delicious catered dinner by Cyd West, games, horseshoes, and friendly conversations.

Congratulations to President Bob Bastianini, Treasurer Paul Kubis, and all of the members that made the picnic a huge success. A special “thank you” to Willis Abel for his support.

BECOME A MEMBER

Membership benefits in the South Park Historical Society includes the quarterly newsletter, discounts to special events, interesting programs, and help with historical and family searches. 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.

FUTURE MEETINGS

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.

Mark your calendar:

- October 16 - “History of the Monongahela River”
- November 20 - “History of Allegheny County's Parks”
- December 18 - Historical Society's Christmas Party

In Memory

Sophie Thomal

Sophie Pryzbylski Thomal, wife of the late Stanley Thomal, died on September 1, 2001. She was a dear friend of the Historical Society and helped with historical information on Broughton and Bruceston. Many remember Sophie from Daniels', where she worked for over 35 years. She will be missed by everyone who knew her.

Alan Trax

Alan Trax, another friend of the Historical Society, died on September 5, 2001, at the age of 94. Alan was born on Easter Sunday, 1907, in a log cabin on the original homestead in Library, PA. He was married to Antoinette Mautz, and they celebrated their 50th anniversary in 1995, a month before she died.

Mr. Trax, along with his father and two of his three brothers, started the Trax family business in 1956. The farm grew from a roadside market in the 1950s to the 630-acre farm and market it is today.

Ed Strimlan

Long-time resident of Library, Ed Strimlan died on August 14, 2001, at the age of 73. He leaves his wife, Beverly Sidell Strimlan, and two sons, Edward A. and Dan. Ed was the former Police Chief of South Park Township, PA, and a life member and Chief of the Library Volunteer Fire Company. He was also an employee of Trax Farms for 63 years. Ed helped the Historical Society with history of Library, PA, and he will be greatly missed.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S NEW WEBSITE

The Society has an internet website, thanks to Brian and Mickey Fletcher. Our website features our mission, contact information, "Did You Know" page, the Historical Society's brochure, and information on our "**Then and Now**" handbook. Parts of the site are still "Under Construction" and more information will be added as it becomes available.

The internet address for our new website is:

<http://www.southparkhistoricalsociety.com>

Members are asked to contribute articles, family genealogy, and other information for our new website. Please contact Jeanne Will at 412-653-1770 or e-mail her at willy@usaor.com.

COMMUNITY DAY WAS A GREAT SUCCESS

The theme of the Historical Society's booth at South Park Township's Community Day on September 22, 2001, was remembering the "**Fabulous Fifties.**" The decorating committee, headed by Ruth and Howard Pope, and assisted by Larry and Rose Smith, arranged and decorated the tables and booth. A display of almost fifty pictures depicted fun activities and school students of 1950 through 1959.

Congratulations to Resources Committee Chairman, Rose Smith, for the enormous task of organizing and collecting items for the Community Day raffle. Rose collected over a hundred gift items from local merchants.

Parade Chairman, Kathy Knaus, had a large participation in the Community Day Parade. The Society's parade participants, dressed in 1950's costumes, included Board member Andy Vasko dressed as Ed Sullivan.

HISTORICAL FACTS

March 27, 1928 - The Liberty Bridge was opened to the public.

September 7, 1937 - John L. Lewis, President of the United Mine Workers Union, addressed a crowd of 250,000 at the closing day of the Fifth Annual Allegheny County Fair in South Park.

September 5, 1938 - More than 100,000 members of labor unions heard Pennsylvania Governor George H. Earle make a Labor Day address at the South Park County Fair.