

# HISTORICAL & PRESERVATION NEWS

## President's Message by Brian Armstrong

The low temperatures and snow this winter have reminded me of the stories of South River's winters of the past. During the 293 year history of the borough several cold winters have occurred. Fortunately, Jessie Selover's *The History of South River* and the photos by Van Dyke Reid and others have provided stories and images of this frigid past.



The South River was the vital highway for receiving and sending goods during the 1800s and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The brick business, which was a major employer in the town, would shut down during the colder months when bricks were not able to be dried in the sun, and frozen ground made it impossible to mine clay and sand. The section of the river at the foot of Main Street (before the bridge was built) was the location for schooners which were parked at the docks for the winter months because the river was often frozen or filled with ice chunks. Ponds in town created by the clay mining business (Bissett's, Yates, and Dailey's Ponds) served as a source for ice before refrigeration. They were also great places for ice skating.

During the Blizzard of 1888, the storm raged for three days and the borough was cut-off from the rest of the state for a week. Schools and businesses were closed. Temperatures were near zero. The streets were clogged with 20 inches of snow. Second stories of buildings were accessed from the street due to 5 to 15 foot snow drifts caused by 50 mile an hour winds. A tunnel was dug in the ten foot snow drift at Main and Ferry for people to walk through. Food was scarce and people burned furniture for warmth. Telephone and telegraph lines were disabled due to the heavy ice and snow. Those that are tired of this winter and hoping for relief soon will not be comforted by the fact that the 1888 blizzard hit on March 12, 1888.



**Richard K. Meyers**  
**South River History High School Essay Contest**  
 (sponsored by the South River Historical & Preservation Society, Inc.)

2014 marks the second year of the *Richard K. Meyers South River History High School Essay Contest*. The 2013 competition was a great success; two scholarships of \$500 each were awarded. We'll be making awards again this year, one to a student graduating from South River High School, and a second to a South River resident graduating from a school other than SRHS.

To be eligible for the award, a student must submit an essay describing something that took place in South River in his or her lifetime. An event need only be of significance to the student; it need not have been a major event in South River's history.

Further details are available on the website or via email. The submission deadline will be in the early spring, so it's not too soon to start think about submitting an essay. If you're a student or know a student who might qualify, take a look and spread the word! Your history is our history!

[www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~njsrhps/scholarship.html](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~njsrhps/scholarship.html)

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Doris Miller (2008)

## South River Historical & Preservation News

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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 April issue  
must be received by March 15

Please advise us if you would prefer to receive  
your newsletter via email by sending a  
message to [southernriverhistory@gmail.com](mailto:southernriverhistory@gmail.com).

### IN MEMORY OF...

The South River Historical & Preservation Society extends its sympathies to the family of Doris Doeler Booraem, one of the twelve founding trustees of the Society. Born in South River on January 11, 1916, she died on Christmas Day, 2013 at the age of 97.

### Special Acknowledgements

#### CONTRIBUTORS:

Mary Ann & Walter Boyler  
Douglas E. Heine  
Karen & Tom Palumbo  
Alexis & John Stashkevetch

#### IN HONOR OF:

Stephanie Bartz by Donna Green

#### IN MEMORY OF:

Mary Caroline Boden by Caroline Boden Devlin  
William Bruhn by Louis Bruhn

#### CEMETERY FUND:

Linda & Michael Szewczyk

### Membership Renewal Reminder

Check the mailing label on this newsletter to find  
out when your current membership expires.  
Please consider paying your membership dues for  
2014 now.

You can use the membership form supplied in this  
newsletter or print one from the website.  
The SRH&PS appreciates your continued support.

All dues and donations are tax deductible.  
Thank you.

## The History of South River's Landmark Clock – by Peter M. Zawadsky

There is a historically important public clock in South River, New Jersey. It is located on the exterior of the PNC Bank on the corner of Main and Stephen Streets. Erected by the then First National Bank, the clock is entirely unique in design. It was patented and subsequently manufactured by the O.B. McClintock Company, which was headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

In 1901 McClintock founded the American Bank Protection Company which specialized in burglar alarm systems and safe deposit boxes. In 1908 he created, with Freeman L. Loomis, the McClintock-Loomis Company. McClintock was President and Treasurer and Loomis was the Vice-President. The

McClintock-Loomis Company made electrical chime and clock systems. Loomis eventually left the company in 1917 and the company was renamed the O.B. McClintock Company. The McClintock Company ceased its operations in 1950 when Diebold, Inc. purchased it.

By examining the clock's glass dial, one can determine which of the two time periods it was manufactured. Clocks bearing the McClintock-Loomis names were made between 1908 and 1917. Clocks bearing only the McClintock name were made after 1917. The exact year of manufacture could usually be found on a label inside the master clock.

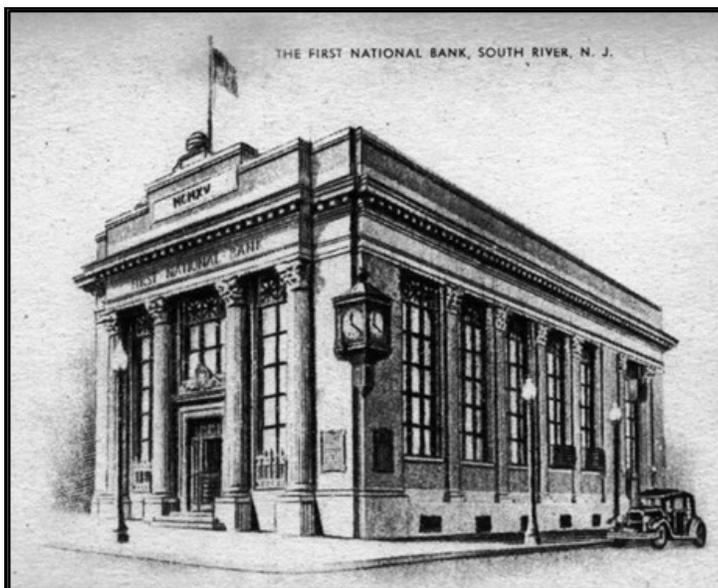
The cost of the clocks varied depending on the number of dials. Adding the complicated chime system significantly increased the price. At the time it was purchased, the South River clock cost at least \$20,000, including the installation.

The initial design patents for the bank clocks are registered in the U.S. Patent Office as Nos. 40,233, 40,234, and 42,758. The clocks were available in two, three, and four dial models and became immensely popular. Thousands of different models were made and still can be seen in towns and cities throughout the country. Although primarily purchased by banks, many clocks were erected on government buildings, schools, or on free-standing pedestals and brackets and used as town clocks.

The clock is actually a "slave clock," meaning that the hands are advanced at one minute intervals by electrical impulse signals from a master clock situated inside the building. The dials were ordinarily made of high quality pearl glass, usually 24 inches in diameter. Some dials incorporated beautiful stained glass in their borders. Most dials were illuminated at night so that the time could be determined throughout the day.

Certain models came with tubular chimes which were housed in a long compartment situated beneath the dials and which were activated by the master clock every fifteen minutes. There were four different chime peals: *Cathedral Peal Westminster* on the quarter hour; *Reveille Peal Whittington* on the hour; *Whittington* on the three quarter hour and *Westminster* on the hour, which was then followed by the striking of the hour.

*Continued on Page 4*



A 1940s era postcard image of the bank with the clock.

## The History of South River's Landmark Clock – *continued from page 3*

The PNC clock's chiming mechanism and housing were removed some time during the past decade due to deterioration. It is not known whether the chime tubes were saved and stored. Restoring the chiming mechanism to function would take extensive reconstruction and may not be possible.



At left: A 1981 view of the clock with the chime assembly [detail from a photo taken by Virginia Martinez]. At right: The clock as it looks in 2014.

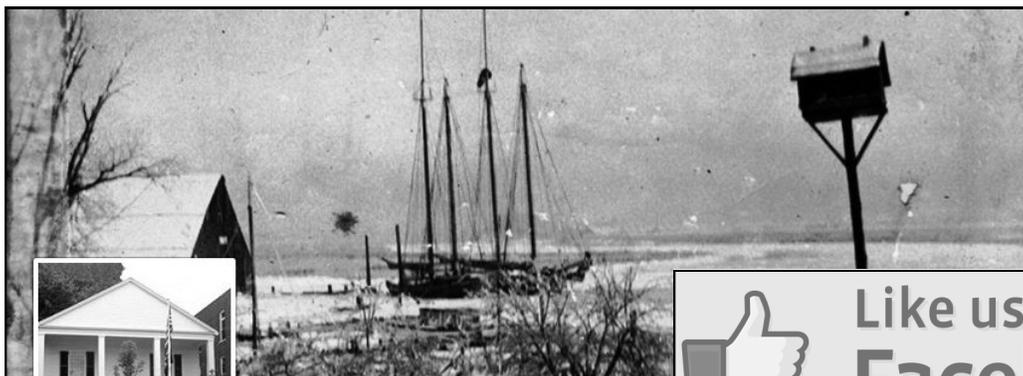
These beautiful clocks are an American original and have no equal. Sadly, many of them have deteriorated beyond repair and have been destroyed. Other clocks have had their original mechanisms and dials replaced with inferior substitutes. It is encouraging to note that there are citizen groups across the country which are dedicated to restoring these clocks to their original state.

Many residents of South River can recall when the PNC clock was fully operational. The quarterly chimes pealed daily between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. The clock dials were illuminated at dusk, allowing people to determine the time twenty-four hours a day.

I recently learned that the PNC corporation has shown an interest in restoring the clock to its time-keeping function. However, it is not known whether the chiming mechanism is salvageable. It will be a great day for South River when this unique and historically important clock serves as the timekeeper for all who pass by it.

**Reference:** West, Jim. "Notes on O.B. McClintock Clocks." *NAWCC Bulletin*. Volume 36/2, No. 289, April 1994, p. 15.

**Acknowledgements:** The author wishes to thank Philip N. Perillo and Sharon Lee Perillo for their assistance in preparing this manuscript.



### South River Historical & Preservation Society

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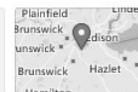
History Museum  
The SRH&PS is an all volunteer organization dedicated to preserving South River's past for future generations.



Photos

530

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Map



Events



Like us on  
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# 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

**2014 Meetings: February 26 April 23 June 25 September 17 November 19**

February 26th: *The Raritan River Rail Road from South Amboy to New Brunswick*: Al Baumann, Past President of The Sayreville Historical Society and member of the Raritan River Rail Road Historical Society (as well as other railroad history groups), will present a slide tour of the RRRR.

The meeting will convene at 7:00 p.m. at the South River Museum — Old School Baptist Church, 64-66 Main Street, South River. Refreshments will be served.

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): **March 2 April 6 May 4 June 1 July 6**

## 2014 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): \_\_\_\_\_

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

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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  
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[All dues and contributions are tax-deductible.]

My company has a matching gift program.

Company name: \_\_\_\_\_

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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  
(please enter number in family) \_\_\_\_\_

Business/Corporate \$25.00

Lifetime - Individual \$250.00

## New Acquisitions, November 2013 – January 2014

- Photo from the SRHS class of 1959 trip to Washington DC. Donated by Joan Greenwood.
- Four digital photos of the reburying of the time capsule, November 8, 2013. Donated by William Goepfert.
- Two framed portraits of Ambrose Klauser (b. 12/6/1839 – d. 6/17/1905). Donated by Woodis and Warren Booraem.
- Framed portrait of Charles Whitehead (b. 1912 – d. 1984). Donated by Nan Whitehead.
- Ashtray from South River Trust Company, 1915-1930; ice pick from A.W. Bissett, "Pure ice for particular people"; "brick" enameled on two sides and engraved with a portrait, images of two buildings, and the legend "National Commercial Bank and Trust Company." Donated by David B. Rinkens.
- Apothecary jar from the 50th Anniversary of the Sayreville Lions Club/South River Lions Club, 1936-1986. Donated by Karen Scott.



Undated portrait of Ambrose Klauser.

## Seeking Information

Did you know that the majority of the homes on Herman Street were built in the late 1800s for the workers in the factory that's located there?

The Society is interested in gathering information on the factory and the homes. Photos, documentation, stories... we're interested in whatever you have to share.

Please contact us or stop by the museum when we're open. Contact information is printed on the back page of this newsletter.

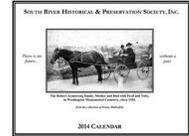


## SRH&PS GIFT SHOP

### 2014 SRH&PS

**Calendar** - \$8.00

Previous years also available - \$6.00



### Old School Baptist Church print by Joseph Csatari - \$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 200<sup>th</sup> 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).



### Commemorative Book Celebrating South River's 275<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 1720-1995 - \$10.00

Over 90 pages of text & photos.

### Wooden Plaque of the Old School Baptist Church - \$10.00

Made from timber from the original portico columns.

### 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.*



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Email: **SouthRiverHistory@gmail.com**  
Website: **<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~njsrhps/>**  
Visit our Museum: **See Calendar (insert)**

## A night to remember... November 20, 2013

The  
South River  
Historical & Preservation Society, Inc.  
would like to extend special thanks to all those who have made  
both tangible and intangible contributions to the Society since  
its inception in 1988. It's been a fabulous 25+ years of  
preserving and sharing South River history.

We look forward to many more!

