

Bruce Springsteen: His Hometown

Welcome to *Bruce Springsteen: His Hometown*. I hope you enjoy this unique exhibit, which uses the collections of The Bruce Springsteen Archives and Center for American Music at Monmouth University, the Monmouth County Historical Association (MCHA), and Mr. Springsteen himself. If you're a casual Springsteen fan, you're about to learn a lot! I hope that even Bruce's most dedicated fans, though, will enjoy the illustrated look at his life and career that takes place in this gallery. The genealogy explored on the second floor by MCHA Director of Collections Bernadette Rogoff is sure to be new and exciting to virtually everyone.

So how does a professor from Monmouth University in West Long Branch come to be curating an exhibit on Bruce Springsteen in his hometown of Freehold?

The Bruce Springsteen Archives and Center for American Music at Monmouth University has been an invaluable resource for my public history students for years now. Just last Fall, for example, my Museums and Archives class mounted a small Springsteen exhibit at our University library. It was so popular that I approached MCHA in October 2018 about doing a larger exhibition at their facility. This seemed a perfect way to showcase the Springsteen Archives for a larger audience, while celebrating a hometown hero. It was also timely given Freehold Borough's Centennial and Bruce's 70th birthday, both happening in 2019.

Linda Bricker, President of the MCHA Board of Trustees, and Chuck Jones, then MCHA Acting Executive Director, immediately agreed. Eileen Chapman and Bob Santelli at the Springsteen Archives did, too, and have provided invaluable oversight throughout all steps of curating this first floor gallery. While I initially envisioned mounting the exhibit only in the room you are about to enter, MCHA ultimately decided to dedicate the entire Museum to the effort. I am grateful to all who came together to make this exhibit a reality, and hope we have done "The Boss" and his legions of fans proud.

Melissa Ziobro

SPRINGSTEEN: HIS HOMETOWN

FLOOR 1

"My Father's House"

Adele Zerilli and Douglas Springsteen welcomed their first child, Bruce, at a hospital in Long Branch, NJ, in 1949.

They brought him home to Freehold, living at 87 Randolph Street with Douglas's parents. They later moved to 39 1/2 Institute Street, and then 68 South Street. Bruce attended St. Rose of Lima School at Lincoln Place and South Street, followed by Freehold High School at Robertsville Road and Broadway.

Bruce 9/23/49



The Springsteens were a Catholic, Irish-Italian working-class family who worked hard to make ends meet. Bruce's troubled father, music loving mother, and sisters Virginia and Pamela all served as muses for his personal and introspective songwriting. But that would come later. The seeds for that musical career took root when a young Bruce watched Elvis Presley on the Ed Sullivan show...



Top right: Bruce Springsteen Archives. Above: Main Street, Freehold, 1948. Dorn's Classic Images. Below: St. Rose of Lima School, First Grade, 1955. Bruce is seated, third from left. Bruce Springsteen Archives.



*I was born right here on
Randolph Street in Freehold.*

Bruce Springsteen, "Freehold"

“Growin’ Up”

Springsteen joined his first real band, the Castiles, in 1965. By the summer of 1968, that group drifted apart. When Bruce’s parents moved to California in 1969, he too left Freehold. After a brief stay in Bradley Beach, he moved into early manager Carl “Tinker” West’s Challenger surfboard factory near Asbury Park.



After the Castiles, Bruce’s later bands included Earth, Child, Steel Mill, Dr. Zoom and the Sonic Boom, the Bruce Springsteen Band, and most famously, the E Street Band. Known for his blue-collar themes, critics often compared him to Bob Dylan after the release of his first album, *Greetings from Asbury Park, NJ*. But as a *Rolling Stone* article pointed out, “No matter how many critics call you the greatest thing since Elvis or Dylan, you aren’t a superstar unless you sell millions of records.” It took Springsteen some time to do this. Close to being dropped from his label, he instead exploded to stardom with his third album, *Born to Run*, in 1975.

At Monmouth College, 1969. Bruce Springsteen Archives.

This town, my town, would never leave me, and I could never completely leave it, but I would never live in Freehold again.

Bruce Springsteen, *Born To Run*

Castile soap
bar in floating
case

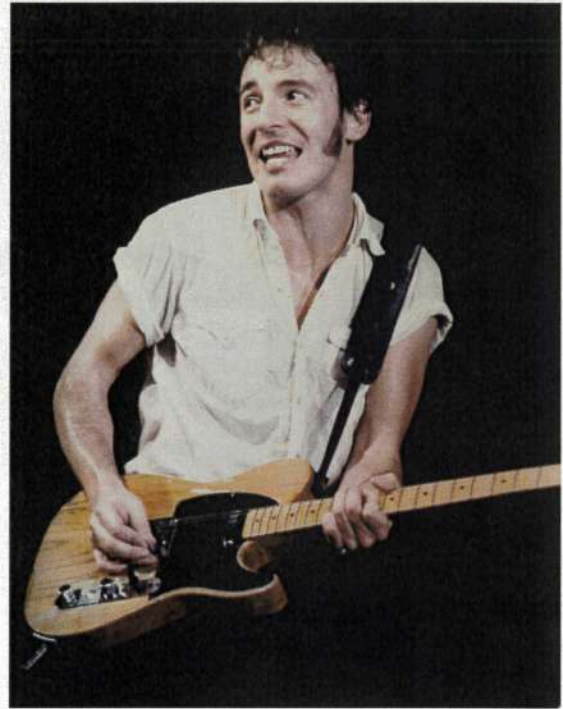
"Glory Days"

I'd fixed it so good I couldn't go back, only forward...I was just going to have to be good enough, as good as I'd promised...

Bruce Springsteen, *Born To Run*

The momentum gained from the release of *Born to Run* almost stalled when litigation with then-manager/producer Mike Appel kept Springsteen out of the studio. After settling the suit in May 1977, Springsteen formalized his relationship with music critic and producer Jon Landau. Landau and Springsteen continue to work together to this day.

To date, Bruce claims 19 studio albums. He has also released scores of compilations, boxed sets, and live shows. For a complete discography, visit <http://brucespringsteen.net/>.



Circa 1980. Bruce Springsteen Archives.

Springsteen's energetic, marathon concerts are legendary. His awards are many. Bruce's personal life, too, has flourished. After a brief marriage to actress Julianne Phillips (1985–1989), Springsteen married E Street bandmate Patti Scialfa in 1991. Bruce and Patti, who also hails from Monmouth County, remain together to this day and have three children: Evan, Jessica, and Sam.

“Prove It All Night”

As Bruce’s popularity in the U.S. skyrocketed, he began to travel the globe. His first brief European tour began at London’s Hammersmith Odeon in November 1975. This show would, in 2006, be released on DVD as *Hammersmith Odeon London ‘75*. Although many of Springsteen’s songs contain Monmouth County references and emphasize traditionally American themes, other relatable messages within his music resonated with international fans: the struggles of the working class, love, loss, family, and more.

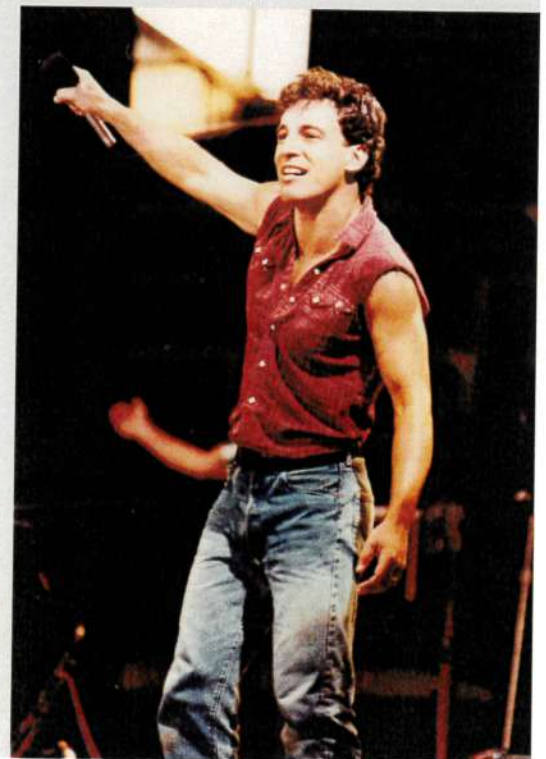
All I know is playing for our fans overseas...continues to be one of the greatest experiences of my life.

Bruce Springsteen, *Born To Run*

Born in the USA
1985 Tokyo Tour concert ticket in floating case

Wembley Stadium, London, 4 July 1985. Paul Adams, photographer. Bruce Springsteen Archives.

Despite the global fame, Springsteen has rarely provided fodder for the gossip columnists. As he notes in his autobiography, “I’d stayed in NJ. I didn’t hang out, I wasn’t a get-your-picture-taken-coming-out-of-the-hippest-nightclub scenester. That...was all the stuff I thought ruined it for my old heroes.”

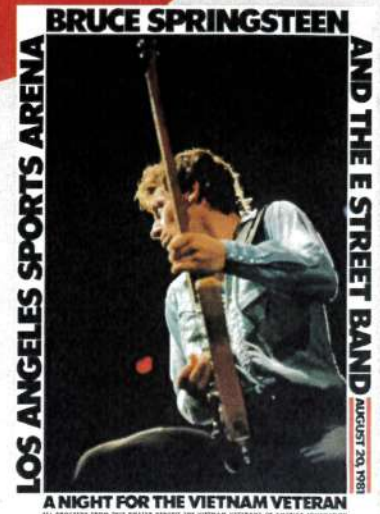


“American Land”

I was never going to be Woody Guthrie—I liked the Pink Cadillac too much—but there was work to be done.

Bruce Springsteen, *Born To Run*

Seeing friends from Freehold head off to Vietnam truly troubled Springsteen. While some early songs like 1973's "Lost in the Flood" reference that war, Springsteen called a 1981 Concert for the Vietnam Veterans of America "the start of putting some piece of what I did to pragmatic political use."



Above: with Tracy Chapman and Sting, Amnesty International Human Rights Now! tour, 22 September 1988. Mark J. Terrill, photographer, Bruce Springsteen Archives. Below: receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom, 22 November 2016. White House photographer.



Springsteen's oft-misinterpreted 1984 song "Born in the U.S.A.," which examines the hardships faced by returning Vietnam veterans, may be the most well-known example of this. Other instances are many. For example, his "Into the Fire," from 2002's *The Rising*, pays tribute to 9/11 responders, while "Death to My Hometown" from 2012's *Wrecking Ball* criticizes the 2008 financial crisis. To date, Bruce has championed countless causes in his music and his altruistic efforts, including veterans, nuclear disarmament, income inequality, and food insecurity. His forays into politics often invite backlash, but Springsteen is unapologetically his own man.

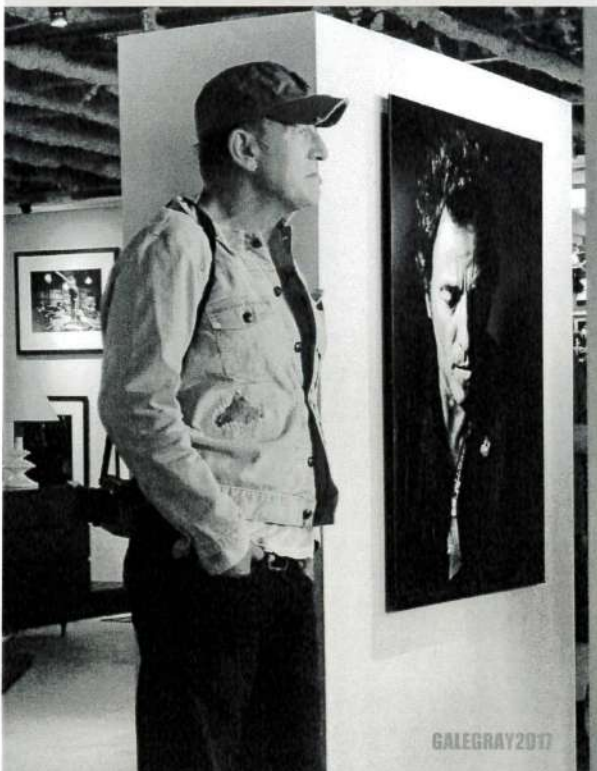
“My Hometown”

Though he lived in California for a time, it was a relatively brief stay and Springsteen once again calls NJ home. He and his wife Patti could live anywhere in the world, yet they chose to raise their children in NJ and currently reside on a Colts Neck farm fifteen minutes from his hometown. The rocker delights locals when they run into him at the gym or eateries—not to mention when he makes impromptu performances at places like the Stone Pony or Wonder Bar in Asbury Park.



...my hometown was an essential and permanent part of who I was.

Bruce Springsteen, *Born To Run*



Bruce has given back to his hometown in countless ways, for example gifting Freehold a firetruck in the 1990s, or playing a “residents only” show to raise funds for the St. Rose of Lima Parish Center in 1996. Bruce Springsteen’s story starts in Monmouth County, and, based here, that story is still going strong.

Above: unexpected guest appearance with Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes at the Stone Pony. Asbury Park, 6 July 2019. Michael Kravetsky, photographer. Left: at Danny Clinch’s photography studio. Asbury Park, 2017. Gale and Bill Gray, photographers.

My Father's House

1940s

Douglas Springsteen leaves school at 16; works at Karagheusian Rug Mill in Freehold

1940s

Douglas Springsteen serves as a truck driver during WWII

22 February 1948

Adele Zerilli and Douglas Springsteen marry

23 September 1949

Bruce Frederick Joseph Springsteen born

Growin' Up

1965 – 1968

Castiles era

1968 – 1969

Earth years

1969 – 1971

Child/Steel Mill period

Spring 1972

Mike Appel becomes Bruce's manager/producer

9 June 1972

Bruce signs with Columbia records

5 January 1973

1st album, *Greetings from Asbury Park, NJ* released; recorded with E Street Band

Glory Days

June 1984

Vocalist Patti Scialfa joins the E Street Band

Fall 1989

E Street Band disbands; Springsteen living in California

8 June 1991

Springsteen and Scialfa marry

January 1995

E Street Band reunites

15 March 1999

Springsteen inducted into Rock & Roll Hall of Fame

1 February 2009

Springsteen and the E Street Band play Super Bowl XLIII Halftime Show

American Land

22 October 1967

Castiles drummer Bart Haynes dies in Vietnam

Fall 1968

Bruce drafted; fails physical; received deferment

September 1979

Bruce and the E Street Band join other musicians in *No Nukes* concerts

September 1988

Bruce and the E Street Band join the Amnesty International *Human Rights Now!* tour

8 February 2013

MusiCare honors Springsteen as its Person of the Year

Prove It All Night

November 1975

Bruce and the E Street Band play first four overseas shows, to promote *Born to Run*

April 1981

The Band tours overseas for the first time since 1975

1992 – 1993

The *Bruce Springsteen 1992 – 1993 World Tour* is Bruce's first without the E Street Band

2016

Bruce and the E Street Band's *The River 2016 Tour* is top grossing worldwide tour of 2016

My Hometown

January 1994

Springsteen family leaves California for NJ

27 September 2016

Autobiography *Born to Run* released

October 2017

Springsteen on Broadway opens; runs 236 shows

14 June 2019

19th studio album, *Western Stars*, released

29 September 2019

Springsteen: His Hometown opens

SPRINGSTEEN: HIS HOMETOWN

FLOOR 2

His Hometown

Bruce Frederick Springsteen was born on September 23, 1949. Freehold, his hometown and the county seat of Monmouth, New Jersey, boasted businesses and factories. Farmland surrounded the edges of town, with potatoes, apples, and chickens some of the main products.

Along Main Street, law firms, theaters, and clothing shops stood next to diners, hardware stores, and ice cream parlors. Bruce's father and mother, Douglas Springsteen and Adele Zerilli, had grown up in the area, attended the local high school, and married in St. Rose of Lima, the town's Catholic Church. As a young man, Douglas had worked at the A & M Karagheusian Rug Mill. Adele was a successful full-time secretary for a law firm on Main Street, somewhat unusual for a wife and mother at that time.

The world into which Bruce Springsteen was born was still coming to terms with itself four years after the end of World War II. Society was changing. Radio and television were bringing new ideas, new sounds, and new ways into living rooms across the country. Transistor radios and television shows such as the Ed Sullivan Show stirred and inspired a young Bruce Springsteen, opening up a world of possibilities that would take him far.

Even after a career spanning more than five decades, Springsteen continues to return to the streets and sounds of his childhood in his music and lyrics. The ties forged early in life still bind him—and his music—to Freehold, the town of his birth.

**SPRINGSTEEN: HIS HOMETOWN
ANCESTOR GALLERY**

Ties That Bind

*Well, you know how when you're young
There's such a distance between you and your family
You can't ever see things from the same point of view...
I just hope when I grow up and have my own kids
I'll love 'em and let 'em make up their own minds*

Family Song, recorded 1972, never released

Freehold, Monmouth County, was formally established in 1693. In 1714, the township was chosen to serve as the area's county seat. Many of the region's early settlers had emigrated from the Netherlands, England, and Ireland. Families often settled close to one another, living in the same town within street's of each other's homes.

Among some of the area's earliest residents were families with names like Springsteen, McNicholas, Farrell, and Cashion. The name "Springsteen" is Dutch for a type of stepping stone. And in the early fall of 1949, the Springsteen clan welcomed a new addition to the family tree who would, with profound talent and intense persistence, eventually step from this small New Jersey town into international stardom.

Joost Casperse Springsteen

1638—1695

The name “Springsteen” is Dutch for a type of stepping stone. Young Joost Springsteen, along with brother Johannes and widowed mother Geesie, sailed from the Netherlands and stepped onto the shores of New Amsterdam at the tip of Manhattan island in 1652.

New Amsterdam, founded in 1625 as a trading settlement, had a rough and rowdy reputation and a diverse population. About 2,000 Dutch, English, Spanish, French, African, Scandinavian, and Jewish settlers spoke more than a dozen different languages.

Some came to trade, hoping to make a quick fortune. Others, like Joost Springsteen, came to settle down and start a new life. He married Catherine Laitie in 1663. Their son Casper would be the first Springsteen born in what would one day be the U.S.A. Joost died in 1695 at the age of 58 and was buried in the Flatbush Reformed Dutch Church Cemetery.

John Springsteen

3 June 1759—10 October 1844

During the American Revolution, maturity often came early to those caught up in the conflict. John Springsteen was born in 1759 in Middlesex County, New Jersey, the son of James and Marritje Springsteen. At the Beginning of the Revolution, James and fifteen-year-old John were captured by the British and held on a British prison ship in Raritan Bay. Father and son endured two long weeks, then were paroled.

British forces relied upon aging ships to provide quarters to house prisoners during the entire war. The ships were long past their prime, often rotting and decrepit. More than 11,500 men and boys died aboard these ships by war's end of typhus, smallpox, yellow fever, dysentery, torture, and starvation.

The experience moved John Springsteen to action. Upon his release, he immediately enlisted in the Monmouth Militia, 1st Regiment, in Middletown, Monmouth County, and served as a private for two and a half years.

John married twice, first to Catherine Van Pelt in 1783. The couple had five children before Catherine's death in about 1801. After marrying second wife Elizabeth Bryant in 1805, the couple had three children.

After the war, John made a living as a small farmer. A 1798 Tax record described his property, featuring a tiny 24 x 26 square foot house with seven windows and a detached kitchen on two acres of land, valued at \$350. In 1832, John began receiving a pension from the United States Congress for his wartime service in the amount of \$80 a year.

Alexander Springsteen

1822—1888

Some causes are so worth fighting for that it becomes a simple choice to exchange a comfortable life for one of danger, smoke and battle. Alexander Springsteen was born in 1822 in Atlantic Township (now Colts Neck), New Jersey, the son of William and Sarah Springsteen. He married Harriet Smith in 1850 in Middletown, Monmouth County. The couple had four children. Their first child, daughter Matilda born in 1851, died of whooping cough a year later.

In the summer of 1862, forty-year-old Alexander Springsteen decided to participate in the Civil War, the bloody conflict that threatened to tear the United States to shreds. Alexander enlisted in Company A of the 14th New Jersey Volunteers and survived three years of brutal warfare. He was honorably discharged in June of 1865.

Terms such as PTSD, shell shock, and battle fatigue had yet to enter the military lexicon. Instead, “hysteria” or “melancholia” were words used to describe the long-term effects of the horrors of battle. Although the mental effects of Springsteen’s war years is unknown, post-war records do reveal the debilitating physical effects on his health.

His 1880 pension application noted that Alexander was 5’11, weighed 150 pounds, and had light hair, blue eyes, and a ruddy complexion. Springsteen described how he had contracted lung and kidney disease during his years as a soldier, preventing him from working as a farm laborer. Alexander Springsteen died in June of 1888 at the age of sixty-six, of kidney and bladder complications resulting in paralysis.

John “Champ” McNicholas

1875—10 December 1916

John McNicholas was born in Baltimore, Maryland, the son of Irish immigrants Richard McNicholas and Anna Sullivan. Prior to 1830, less than 5,000 Irish residents immigrated to the United States annually. During and after the Great Famine of 1845—1849, more than half a million Irish men, women and children came to America every year.

By 1895, the McNicholas family had moved to Freehold. John married Jennie Farrell on 17 March 1897. Their first child, daughter Jane, was born in 1898. In July of 1898, John enlisted in the 3rd Regiment New Jersey National Guard Volunteers during the Spanish American War. He was honorably discharged less than a year later. In addition to raising a family and working as a laborer, John was active in local politics.

After his return, John and Jennie had two more girls. John worked as a housepainter in Freehold. The couple lived first at 115 Randolph Street, then later at 87 Randolph Street. John was eventually diagnosed with stomach ulcers and underwent abdominal surgery in St. Francis Hospital in Trenton in November 1916. He languished in the hospital for more than a month, dying on 10 December 1916 at the age of 42. He was buried in St. Rose of Lima Cemetery in Freehold.

Jane Farrell McNicholas

18 December 1875—1961

Dark-eyed, dark-haired Jane “Jennie” Farrell posed elegantly for a photographer at Scott’s Photographic Studio in Freehold, New Jersey in early 1897. She gazes out from her image, serene and confident. Jennie was about twenty-one at the time her portrait was taken, quite possibly to commemorate her upcoming marriage to John McNicholas.

Jennie was the daughter of Patrick Farrell (1834—1894) and Ann Garrity (1838—1923). Both her parents were born in Ireland and immigrated to the United States in the early 1850s, most likely to escape the starvation and economic collapse following the Great Famine of 1845—1849.

Jennie and John McNicholas had three daughters: Jane, named after her mother, was born in 1897; Alice, born in 1899; and Anna Maria, born in 1904. At some point after her marriage, Jennie and her husband moved into her parents’ home at 87 Randolph Street.

John McNicholas died of stomach cancer in 1916. Jennie never remarried. She died in 1961 at the age of 86.

Alice Farrell McNicholas

1899—1965

Alice Farrell was the second daughter of Jennie Farrell (1875—1961) and John “Champ” McNicholas (1875—1916). Her older sister Jane married David Demarest Cashion in 1918. Alice married 21-year-old mechanic and electrician Frederick Springsteen in 1921.

Alice and Fred Springsteen remained in the Freehold area, moving into Alice’s family home on Randolph Street. The couple had two children, daughter Virginia born in 1921, and son Douglas born in 1924. Tragedy descended upon the family on 13 April 1927, when a truck struck and killed five-year-old Virginia as she rode her tricycle on a local street.

Alice seemed unable to process the loss of her little girl. Her overwhelming grief made it impossible for her to care for her two-year-old son. Frederick also seemed unable to cope with his own sorrow and his wife’s devastation. Alice’s sister Jane Cashion moved the toddler in with her. Douglas lived in the Cashion family home for three years, within sight of his parents’ house.

Alice kept a framed photograph of Virginia hanging in the house. The loss echoed through the family for decades. Frederick Springsteen died in 1962. Alice lived three more years and died in 1965 after a long illness.

**SPRINGSTEEN: HIS HOMETOWN
FAMILY GALLERY**

Bruce Springsteen's biggest fan has always been his mother Adele. Born on 4 May 1925 to Italian immigrants Anthony and Adela Zerilli, Adele graduated from Freehold High School in 1943. Her friend Ann Cashion introduced her to Ann's cousin, Douglas Springsteen. Douglas was quickly smitten with the vivacious brunette. Adele worked as a legal secretary for Lawyers Title Inc. on Main Street in Freehold for many years. As the major breadwinner in the family, Adele Springsteen's steady job and reliable paycheck offset husband Douglas's uneven employment history.



Adele grew up with a love of music and dancing, which she passed along to her son. She rented him his first guitar and signed him up for music lessons. Later, she took out a short-term loan to purchase Bruce's first electric guitar. Both came from local Freehold music stores. She created scrapbooks filled with clippings of her son's musical accomplishments. Her hard work, dedication to family, and strength kept things going even through the toughest times.

I think that with all the problems we had in our lives, God has rewarded me...It's terrible to brag. But I can brag because I'm the mother, right? It's hard to believe he's my son.



Top right: Adele Zerilli in her Freehold High School 1943 senior yearbook picture, Monmouth County Historical Association
Above: Adele Springsteen and son Bruce enjoy a moment on stage together, Bruce Springsteen Archives
Right: a smiling Adele Zerilli circa 1935, Bruce Springsteen Archives/Alison Walden/the Starace Family

Douglas Springsteen was born in 1924 in Freehold, NJ. He was one of two children of Frederick "Fred" Springsteen and Alice McNicholas. His older sister Virginia died in 1927 at the age of five in a tragic accident, when a truck struck her as she rode her bicycle on a local street.

Alice was grief-stricken and her husband was unable to cope with his wife's depression. Two-year-old Douglas was sent to live with his aunt Jane Cashion and her family for several years, just up the block from his parents' home.

After attending Freehold High School, Douglas worked for the A & M Karagheusian Rug Mill. In 1943, he entered the Army and served as a truck driver overseas. In 1948, Douglas married Adele Zerilli. The couple welcomed their first child, Bruce Frederick Springsteen, on 23 September 1949.



Through much of his life, Douglas Springsteen grappled with depression and what may have been bipolar disorder. In 1969, Douglas, Adele, and their youngest child Pamela moved to California for a fresh start. He found work as a bus driver at the San Francisco Airport. Douglas Springsteen passed away on 26 April 1998 at the age of 73.



Top right: Douglas Springsteen circa 1942. Courtesy of Glenn Cashion.

Above: Douglas at M & Q Plastics Company, Courtesy of Evans Photography Studio, 2011.

Father and son had a difficult relationship throughout Bruce's growing up. As both men grew older, a measure of acceptance and understanding developed. After his father's death, Bruce Springsteen wrote "I feel lucky to have been so close to my Dad as I became a man and a father myself."



The Freehold of Springsteen's childhood was a microcosm of small-town life in 1950s America. It was not uncommon for extended families to reside within shouting distance of each other's homes. While local industry and Main Street shops brought a sense of community, racial conflict and factory closings would soon bring troubled times.



Three generations of Springsteens crowded into 87 Randolph Street when Bruce was just a toddler. The dominant force in the household was Alice McNicholas Springsteen, Bruce's grandmother. To her grandson's benefit and misfortune, he was in some respects a replacement for her lost daughter, Virginia.

Swiftly taking control of Bruce's upbringing, Alice imposed few rules on her grandson. A rude awakening was barreling towards him as he approached school age when he would enter a place defined by rules. Springsteen's mother, Adele, finally intervened by insisting the family move. Though they took up residence at 39 1/2 Institute Street, just four blocks from his grandparents' dilapidated house, Randolph Street remained Bruce's true home. He would return to it time and time again throughout his childhood, and later through his music.



Top left: Bruce Springsteen in his third grade school picture.

Above: A family gathering in 1961. Bruce's grandmother Alice Springsteen is at far left, with his grandfather Fred Springsteen next to her in suspenders and white shirt. Bruce's parents, Douglas and Adele, are in the back row, third and second from the right. Bruce himself is stretched out on the floor, head resting on his hand, in a white shirt and black pants.

Left: Bruce Springsteen around 1951. Photographs courtesy of Glenn Cashion

Throughout his musical career, Bruce Springsteen has returned again and again to his childhood and his early Catholic upbringing. His lyrics often touch on themes of sin, faith and redemption. Though Springsteen seems to have a conflicted relationship with the Catholic faith of his youth, in 1996 he played a benefit concert for St. Rose of Lima's school scholarship fund. As Bruce himself has said, "Once you're a Catholic, there's no getting out."



Above: Adele and Douglas Springsteen with youngest daughter Pamela at her First Communion, posing on the front steps of St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church, courtesy of Glenn Cashion

Top Right: A postcard image of the original St. Rose of Lima Church building, circa 1900, courtesy of Glenn Cashion

St. Rose was quite literally a cornerstone for the family. John Fitzgibbon, first husband of Bruce's great-great-great grandmother Ann Garrity, laid the foundation stone for the church in 1881. Bruce's parents were married at St. Rose's altar, and Bruce and his younger sisters Virginia and Pamela were all baptized in the church.

I don't often participate in my religion, but I know somewhere... deep inside...I'm still on the team.

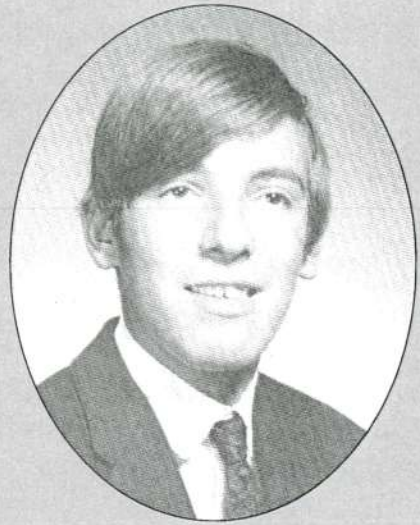
Bruce Springsteen, *Born to Run*

A rock 'n' roll awakening came to Bruce Springsteen in the most unexpected way. The Ed Sullivan Show was a live television vaudeville holdover beamed into homes every Sunday evening. The show had something for everyone, all of it G-rated, until Elvis Presley.

Presley's appearance in 1956, and The Beatles in 1964, would open a world of possibilities to a young man who felt stifled by the expectations of his father, teachers, and peers. These guitar-wielding gods didn't live by the rules, much as Bruce hadn't at 87 Randolph Street. He finally found his place in the world.



By the end of the decade, Freehold had changed dramatically along with the rest of America. Factory jobs were going south, and racial conflict and war protests roiled the country. Change also came to the Springsteen household. Bruce's parents and sister Pamela left for California. Virginia got pregnant and married, and Bruce set out for Asbury Park, the heart of the Jersey Shore music scene. Driving out of Freehold, with dreams of rock 'n' roll stardom in his head, Bruce believed he was finally free of his hometown and the torments of his youth.



As Bruce entered his teen years, music became all-consuming. By high school, he was either playing or listening to records, up to ten hours a day. In 1965, Bruce joined the Castiles, his first "real" band, where he played lead guitar. A single-minded devotion to his craft set him apart from his musical peers.



Top: Bruce Springsteen's 1967 High School yearbook picture, Bruce Springsteen Archives
Above: Freehold High School circa 1950, Monmouth County Historical Association
Left: The Castiles circa 1967 with (from left to right) George Theiss, Vinny Maniello, Bruce Springsteen in white pants, Paul Popkin, and Curt Fluhr, Courtesy of Diana Theiss

In the early morning hours of a chilly February day in 1969, Bruce Springsteen climbed the stairs to the Upstage Club and asked if he could play his guitar. The club, known for its after-hours jam sessions, was a proving ground for Asbury Park's emerging musicians. It was here that Springsteen met most of the musicians who would later become the E Street Band. Springsteen, and various iterations of his band, would develop a large and dedicated following.

★ UPSTAGE CLUB
 NO BOOZE
 • Music All Night, Week Ends

• TONIGHT ...
 ★ **SUNDANCE BLUES BAND**
 • GARRY TALLENT • VINNY LOPEZ
 • STEVE VAN ZANDT
 • BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN
 • SOUTH SIDE JOHNNY LYON
on Harp.
(Sat. and Sun. at The Student Prince)

702 COOKMAN AVE.
ASBURY PARK (Above Thom McAn Shoes)
Open from 10 P.M. Straight Thru To 5 A.M.



Asbury Park, founded in 1871 as a seaside resort, became a storied music destination long before Bruce Springsteen arrived. The city, much like the rest of America, was racially segregated. A vibrant African American community established itself on the city's west side.

The cultural center was Springwood Avenue where clubs featured gospel, jazz, and rhythm and blues bands. Music flowing from these clubs influenced a generation of young musicians in the late 1960s. Among them were eventual E Street Band members David Sancious, Garry Tallent, and Clarence Clemons.

Above: Asbury Park Beach, courtesy of the Monmouth County Historical Association
 Left: Advertisement for the Upstage Club, Asbury Park Press