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STAGE STORES INC  
Form SC 13G  
January 17, 2003

UNITED STATES  
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20549

SCHEDULE 13G  
UNDER THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934  
(AMENDMENT NO. \_\_\_) \*

Stage Stores, Inc.  
(Name of Issuer)

Shares of Common stock, par value \$.01 per share  
(Title of Class of Securities)

85254C305  
(CUSIP Number)

January 9, 2003  
(Date of Event which Requires Filing of this Statement)

Check the appropriate box to designate the rule pursuant to which this Schedule is filed:

- Rule 13d-1(b)
- Rule 13d-1(c)
- Rule 13d-1(d)

\*The remainder of this cover page shall be filled out for a reporting person's initial filing on this form with respect to the subject class of securities, and for any subsequent amendment containing information which would alter disclosures provided in a prior cover page.

The information required on the remainder of this cover page shall not be deemed to be "filed" for the purpose of Section 18 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 ("Act") or otherwise subject to the liabilities of that section of the Act but shall be subject to all other provisions of the Act (however, see the Notes).

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1 NAMES OF REPORTING PERSONS  
S.S. OR I.R.S. IDENTIFICATION NOS. OF ABOVE PERSONS

Charles H. Witmer

2 CHECK THE APPROPRIATE BOX IF A MEMBER OF A GROUP*	(a) <input type="checkbox"/>
	(b) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

3 SEC USE ONLY

4 CITIZENSHIP OR PLACE OF ORGANIZATION

U.S.A.

5 SOLE VOTING POWER  
9,000

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NUMBER OF SHARES BENEFICIALLY OWNED BY EACH REPORTING PERSON WITH

6	SHARED VOTING POWER
	929,460
7	SOLE DISPOSITIVE POWER
	9,000
8	SHARED DISPOSITIVE POWER
	929,460

9 AGGREGATE AMOUNT BENEFICIALLY OWNED BY EACH REPORTING PERSON  
953,660

10 CHECK BOX IF THE AGGREGATE AMOUNT IN ROW (9) EXCLUDES CERTAIN SHARES\* [ ]

11 PERCENT OF CLASS REPRESENTED BY AMOUNT IN ROW (9)  
5.1%

12 TYPE OF REPORTING PERSON\*  
IN

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1 NAMES OF REPORTING PERSONS  
S.S. OR I.R.S. IDENTIFICATION NOS. OF ABOVE PERSONS

Meryl B. Witmer

2 CHECK THE APPROPRIATE BOX IF A MEMBER OF A GROUP\* (a) [ ]  
(b) [X]

3 SEC USE ONLY

4 CITIZENSHIP OR PLACE OF ORGANIZATION  
U.S.A.

5	SOLE VOTING POWER
	15,200
6	SHARED VOTING POWER
	929,460
7	SOLE DISPOSITIVE POWER
	17,200
8	SHARED DISPOSITIVE POWER
	929,460

9 AGGREGATE AMOUNT BENEFICIALLY OWNED BY EACH REPORTING PERSON  
953,660

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10 CHECK BOX IF THE AGGREGATE AMOUNT IN ROW (9) EXCLUDES CERTAIN SHARES\* [ ]

-----  
11 PERCENT OF CLASS REPRESENTED BY AMOUNT IN ROW (9)

5.1%

-----  
12 TYPE OF REPORTING PERSON\*

IN  
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ITEM 1. NAME OF ISSUER

- (a) Name of Issuer:  
Stage Stores, Inc.
- (b) Address of Issuer's Principal Executive Offices:  
1201 Main Street  
Houston, Texas 77025

ITEM 2. NAME OF PERSON FILING

- (a) Name:  
Charles H. Witmer  
Meryl B. Witmer
- (b) Address of Principal Business Office:  
237 Park Avenue, Suite 800  
New York, New York 10017
- (c) Citizenship:  
Charles H. Witmer and Meryl B. Witmer are United States citizens.
- (d) Title of Class of Securities:  
Shares of Common stock, par value \$.01 per share
- (e) CUSIP Number:  
85254C305

ITEM 3. IF THIS STATEMENT IS FILED PURSUANT TO SS. 240.13D-1(B) OR  
SS.240.13D-2(B) OR (C), CHECK WHETHER THE PERSON FILING IS A:

- (a) [ ] Broker or dealer registered under Section 15 of the Act.
- (b) [ ] Bank as defined in section 3(a)(6) of the Act.
- (c) [ ] Insurance company as defined in section 3(a)(19) of the Act.
- (d) [ ] Investment company registered under section 8 of the  
Investment Company Act of 1940.
- (e) [ ] An investment adviser in accordance  
with ss.240.13(d)-1(b)(1)(ii)(E).
- (f) [ ] An employee benefit plan or endowment fund in accordance  
with ss.240.13d-1(b)(1)(ii)(F).
- (g) [ ] A parent holding company or control person in accordance  
with ss.240.13d-1(b)(ii)(G)
- (h) [ ] A savings association as defined in Section 3(b) of the  
Federal Deposit Insurance Act (12 U.S.C. 1813).
- (i) [ ] A church plan that is excluded from the definition of an

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investment company under section 3(c)(14) of the Investment Company Act of 1940.

(j)  Group, in accordance with ss. 240.13d-1(b)(1)(ii)(J).

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ITEM 4. OWNERSHIP.

- (a) Amount Beneficially Owned:
  - Charles H. Witmer 953,660 shares
  - Meryl B. Witmer 953,660 shares
  
- (b) Percent of Class:
  - Charles H. Witmer 5.1%
  - Meryl B. Witmer 5.1%
  
- (c) Number of shares as to which the person has:
  - (i) sole power to vote or to direct the vote:
    - Charles H. Witmer 9,000 shares
    - Meryl B. Witmer 15,200 shares
  
  - (ii) shared power to vote or to direct the vote:
    - Charles H. Witmer 929,460 shares
    - Meryl B. Witmer 929,460 shares
  
  - (iii) sole power to dispose or to direct the disposition of:
    - Charles H. Witmer 9,000 shares
    - Meryl B. Witmer 15,200 shares
  
  - (iv) shared power to dispose or to direct the disposition of:
    - Charles H. Witmer 929,460 shares
    - Meryl B. Witmer 929,460 shares

ITEM 5. OWNERSHIP OF FIVE PERCENT OR LESS OF A CLASS

If this statement is being filed to report the fact that as of the date hereof the reporting person has ceased to be the beneficial owner of more than five percent of the class of securities, check the following:

ITEM 6. OWNERSHIP OF MORE THAN FIVE PERCENT ON BEHALF OF ANOTHER PERSON

Not Applicable

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ITEM 7. IDENTIFICATION AND CLASSIFICATION OF THE SUBSIDIARY WHICH ACQUIRED THE SECURITY BEING REPORTED ON BY THE PARENT HOLDING COMPANY

Not Applicable

ITEM 8. IDENTIFICATION AND CLASSIFICATION OF MEMBER OF THE GROUP

Not Applicable

ITEM 9. NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION OF GROUP

Not Applicable

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ITEM 10. CERTIFICATION

The following certification shall be included if the statement is filed pursuant to ss.240.13d-1(c):

By signing below I certify that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the securities referred to above were not acquired and are not held for the purpose of or with the effect of changing or influencing the control of the issuer of the securities and were not acquired and are not held in connection with or as a participant in any transaction having that purpose or effect.

EXHIBITS

EXHIBIT 1 Joint Filing Agreement dated January 17, 2003 between Charles H. Witmer and Meryl B. Witmer.

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SIGNATURES

After reasonable inquiry and to the best of my knowledge and belief, I certify that the information set forth in this statement is true, complete and correct.

Dated: January 17, 2003 /s/ Charles H. Witmer \* ----- Charles H. Witmer

Dated: January 17, 2003 /s/ Meryl B. Witmer \* ----- Meryl B. Witmer

\* The reporting persons hereby disclaim beneficial ownership over the shares reported on this 13G to the extent of their pecuniary interest therein.

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EXHIBIT 1

JOINT FILING STATEMENT

STATEMENT PURSUANT TO RULE 13D-1(K) (1)

The undersigned hereby consent and agree to file a joint statement on Schedule 13G under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, with respect to shares of common stock of Stage Stores, Inc. beneficially owned by them, together with any or all amendments thereto, when and if appropriate. The parties hereto further consent and agree to file this Statement Pursuant to Rule 13d-1(k) (1) (iii) as an exhibit to Schedule 13G, thereby incorporating the same into such Schedule 13G.

Dated: January 17, 2003 /s/ Charles H. Witmer -----

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Charles H. Witmer

Dated: January 17, 2003

/s/ Meryl B. Witmer

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Meryl B. Witmer