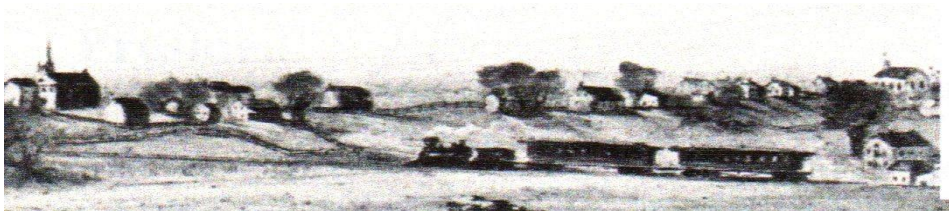


Madison Historical Society

Madison, N.J



February 2020

Newsletter

3rd edition 2019-2020

The Madison Historical Society Presents Two Great Programs



Ray Williams

Columnist, *The Numismatist* (Journal of
the American Numismatic Association)

“To Counterfeit is Death”

March 17 7:00 PM
Chase Room
Madison Public Library



David Hanna

“Americans Who Joined
the Foreign Legion in
1914 to Fight for France
and Civilization”

April 21 7:00 PM
Chase Room
Madison Public Library

Historical Society Officers

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Susan Simon

Vice President

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Corresponding Secretary

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Virginia Laughlin

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Kate Malcolm

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Judy Seery

Doug Simon

Scott Spelker

Dorothy Pietrowski

(Emeritus)

Newsletter

Doug Simon



Message from President Susan Simon

The Madison Historical Society's project for recognizing Madison's old houses, has been very successful. As of now slightly less than 100 plaques have been ordered. With the help of a grant from the Madison Elks, houses that were built before 1901 will have plaques on them with the approximate date they were built. As a town we should all be pleased that so many home owners are interested in designating their house as historical. If you have not put in an application and feel your home should also be recognized, contact the historical society by either coming into the office located in the Madison Public Library, by phone, or email. We can help you with finding out approximately when your house was built. We have many people to thank for all the work they have done to make this a successful endeavor. The lead person has been Virginia Laughlin with help from Kathy Rogers and Kate Malcolm. And a special thank you to Noreen McManus who did an incredible job researching the history of some of the houses. The work all these people have done is extraordinary and we are grateful.

A YouTube video titled "The Bullet Hole of Chateau St. Gerlach" is a documentary about Madison's own Captain Joseph Ryan while he was serving in the U.S. Army during World War II. It is a wonderful story about one of our own and I believe you would enjoy it.



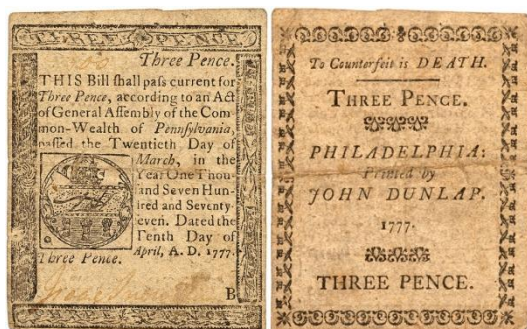
From the Office

The volunteer staff located at the Society headquarters at the Madison Public Library continued to work through the months of September, October and into November on a variety of projects. Twenty-two requests from individuals were processed, mostly for information on Madison homes and families. Currently, the archive staff is working on twelve large projects involving inventorying and cataloging donated items consisting of records, ledgers, photographs, calendars, etc. One interesting gift was the Ruzicka Scrapbook (courtesy of the Cathy Coultas family). The book consists of documents, magazine articles, and photographs from the rose growing firm headed by her grandfather Joseph Ruzicka during the heyday of Madison's rose industry. Another gift is a box of materials from the now defunct Madison branch of the American Red Cross. Additionally, gifts from Alice Glock, the Thursday Morning Club, Susan Gordan, the Eleanor Stoddard estate, Marcia Gordon, Madison High School (Alice Perlaw), David Scinto (Waverly Shoe Store), the Triggs estate, and the Ken and Frances Haynes Collection are being catalogued. Many smaller groups are awaiting processing.

About the Speakers

Ray Williams

Ray Williams is a life-long numismatist who started specializing in US Colonial era coins, medals and paper money in 1988. He is co-author of a book entitled *Grading Guide For Early American Copper Coins* and has written numerous articles and columns for the *Colonial Coin Collectors Club Newsletter*, *Penny Wise* (the Newsletter of the Early American Coppers organization), *The Numismatist* (Journal of the American Numismatic Association), and other publications, clubs and Numismatic organizations. Mr. Williams has served as President of the Colonial Coin Collectors Club, the New Jersey Numismatic Society, the Trenton Numismatic Club and Vice President of the Garden State Numismatic Association. He is a fellow of the American



Numismatic Society and the Rittenhouse Society.

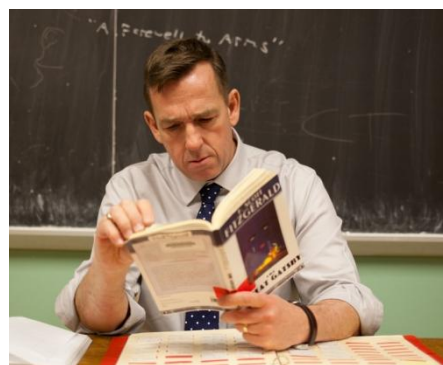
In his talk, Mr. Williams will be describing the economic climate that made paper money necessary, the counterfeiting of bills and the anti-counterfeiting measures taken, the famous colonists involved with paper money, and interesting stories involving some of the money being exhibited. Examples of Continental Currency and 1776 issues of New Jersey bills will be available at the meeting for attendees to see.



David Hanna

David Hanna teaches history at Stuyvesant High School in New York. He is a member of the American Historical Association and has been a featured speaker at the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery in Washington and the Rhinebeck Aerodrome Museum in New York. A Madison resident, Hanna is a recipient of the *New York Times* **Teachers Make a Difference Award**. His talk is based on his latest book, *Rendezvous With Death: Americans Who Joined the Foreign Legion in 1914 to Fight for France and Civilization*. The following description of the book appeared on the Good Reads web site:

“Before America joined World War I, a small group of Americans volunteered for the French Foreign Legion to help defeat the Central Powers. Historian David Hanna profiles seven of these volunteers: a poet, an artist, a boxer, a stunt pilot, a college student, a veteran of the Spanish American War, and an advertising executive. All seven men were united in courage; and some, like poet Alan Seeger, paid the ultimate sacrifice. Before he was killed in battle, Seeger penned the immortal words that inspired this book's title.”



*I've a rendezvous with Death
At midnight in some flaming town,
When Spring trips north again this year,
And I to my pledged word am true,
I shall not fail that rendezvous.*

First Batch of Historical House Plaques Handed Out

On Saturday, November 23, in the Chase Room of the Madison Public Library, a little over 40 historical house plaques were distributed to home owners to recognize houses constructed in the borough on or prior to 1900. The following photographs are of several of the recipients.



Alberta and Donald Marcy



Janae McBride and Nora Drewery



L to R: Herm Huber (Society Corresponding Secretary), Laurie Mindnich and Stephanie Donato



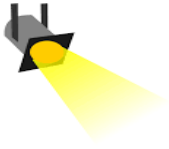
L t R: Tim Smollen, Stacy Smollen, Sandy Kotakowski, Steve Stocker



Society Trustee Doug Simon (Left) with Herman Fickenscher



Kate Malcolm and Virginia Laughlin (Society officers) with Elks Representatives Arthur Cutlo (Madison Elks Exalted Ruler) and Warren Petko (Madison Elks Secretary). The Madison Elks provided a grant to the Historical Society to launch the plaque program.



Mayor of Madison and “Father of the Skyscraper”

- Doug Simon



For two years, 1920-1922, William Aiken Starrett, Jr. served as Mayor of the Borough of Madison. He and his wife Eloise, his daughter Helen Ruth, and his son, David, lived in a five-bedroom Tudor home in the Hill section of Madison.¹ That was one side of Starrett’s life. The other side was his enormous body of work as an architect and builder with his crowning achievement being the construction of the Empire State Building, at the time the tallest building in the world.

William A. Starrett, Jr. was born in Lawrence, Kansas in 1877. Early in his life the family moved to Chicago. His father, William A. Starrett Sr. was a minister. His mother, Helen Martha Starrett, was an author of many books and founder of the Starrett School for Girls in Chicago. In his teens Starrett worked in a wholesale grocery house. In 1893, he entered the University of Michigan. But before he could finish, he had to drop out and help his family that was financially strapped. In 1917, Michigan retroactively awarded Starrett his Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering.²

When he was forced to leave the University of Michigan, he almost immediately entered the construction business beginning his career with the George A. Fuller Company in 1898 as an office boy. The Fuller Company billed itself as the largest construction company in the world and was responsible for a number of high profile projects including the Flatiron Building, Penn Station, the Wall Street Exchange, National City Bank and Plaza Hotel, all in New York City.³



William Aiken Starrett

William left the Fuller Company in 1901 joining two of his brothers at the Starrett, Thompson Company, becoming vice-president between 1910 and 1912. One of the major accomplishments of the company was the construction of the Woolworth Building in New York City. In 1913 he sold out his share of the company and joined his brother Goldwin at Starrett & Van Vleck, architects of skyscraper

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department stores. In 1922 he became president of the umbrella Starrett Corporation and held that position for the remainder of his life.⁴

Starrett made a major contribution to the American effort during WWI. Just before the war broke out he entered army training and qualified for the rank of Major in the Engineer Officers' Reserve Corps. He also supervised all U.S. government war construction as Chairman of the Emergency Construction Committee of the Council of National Defense. Eventually he achieved the rank of Full Colonel and was discharged in 1919.⁵

That same year he traveled to Japan to explore setting up a business constructing buildings. He succeeded in the effort but had to overcome four critical problems. First, there was the problem of designing adequate foundations for buildings to withstand earth quakes. Second, was translating drawings from Shaku (the Japanese measurement approximating a foot) and meters to American feet and inches and accurate notations from Japanese to English. Third, there was a formidable problem of transporting materials to the building sites. The materials are heavy and large and Japan's narrow and underdeveloped road system was a challenge. Finally, there was a scaffolding problem. Traditionally a Japanese building would have been erected with the aid of pole scaffolding encased in reed matting. Japanese architects did not want their buildings seen until completed, or that the Emperor should not be offended by seeing an unfinished structure. Under Starrett's leadership, all of these challenges were met and a number of significant structures were built including the Nippon Oil Company Building, the Nippon Yusen Kaisa (Japanese Mail Steamship Co.), Mitsubishi Bank Co and the Crescent Building in Kobe. Perhaps Starrett's greatest contribution to Japan was introducing western steel construction technology to the building of large structures.⁶



Construction on the Empire State Building

In the 1920s and 30s, under William A. Starrett's leadership, the Starrett Brothers companies became known for their large-scale construction projects, particularly skyscrapers. The New York Life Insurance Company Building, the McGraw-Hill Building were two notable examples. But the jewel in the crown of Starrett structures was, of course, the Empire State Building. Work on the building began in the early years of the Great Depression. The project employed upward of 3,400 workers on any single day. Many were immigrants from Europe. Of particular note were hundreds of Mohawk Indian iron workers. The project took twenty months to complete from the first architectural drawings in September of 1929 to the building's opening on May 1, 1931. The final cost was \$40,948,900. Today that would amount to \$691,710,455.⁷

William Aiken Starrett, Jr. passed away on March 26, 1932 at his home in Madison after suffering a series of apoplectic strokes. To this day he is remembered in architectural and construction circles as "Father of the Skyscraper."

¹ Kavid Guhl, NRT Communications, Easter Division "Tudor home built by Empire State Building contractor," <https://www.dailyrecord.com/story/news/2016/02/14/tudor-home-built-empire-state-building-contractor/80279036/>

² "William A. Starrett," Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_A._Starrett

³ Jeffrey W.Cody, "When American Builders Had it Good in Japan: The George A. Fuller Construction Company of the Orient, Ltd." Department of City and Regional Planning, Cornell University. Paper presented at the Construction History Society, London, August 1922, p. 2. See also: STARRETT-LEHIGH BUILDING. Report of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, October 7, 1986; Designation List 186 LP-1295, p. 4.

⁴ "William A. Starrett," Wikipedia.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Cody, "When American builders Had it Good in Japan" pp. 3-10

⁷ Scott Christianson; Interactive by Chris Heller, "When the Empire State building Was Just an Architect's Sketch, How One of the World's Most Famous Skyscrapers Was Built", SMITHSONIAN.COM, November 10, 2015.

MADISON HISTORICAL SOCIETY – ITEMS FOR SALE

Books:

BOTTLE HILL AND MADISON by William Parkhurst Tuttle	\$30.00
CARING FOR YOUR HISTORIC HOUSE by Heritage Preservation & NPS	\$15.00
CIVIL WAR JOURNAL OF PRIVATE HEYWARD EMMELL by Jim Malcolm	\$20.00
COLLEGE OF SAINT ELIZABETH by Sister Mary Ellen Gleason, et al.	\$20.00
CROSSROADS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION: A Guide to New Jersey's American Revolutionary War Sites	\$ 5.00
DREW UNIVERSITY by John T Cunningham & Regina Deverio	\$20.00
GOLDEN AGE OF DOG SHOWS, Morris & Essex Kennel Club	\$40.00
HIDDEN NEW JERSEY by Linda Barth -	Soft= \$ 8.95 / Hard =\$17.95
HISTORY OF INVENTING IN NEW JERSEY by Linda Barth	\$20.00
IMAGES OF AMERICA –	\$20.00
CHATHAM & CHATHAM TOWNSHIP by John T. Cunningham	
CRAFTSMAN FARM by Heather V. Stivison	
FLORHAM PARK by John T. Cunningham	
MADISON by John T. Cunningham	
MANSIONS OF MORRIS COUNTY by John Rae	
MORRISTOWN by Joan M. Williams	
SUMMIT by Patricia E. Meola	
LINCOLN'S WHITE HOUSE SECRETARY edited by Harold Holzer	\$39.95
MADISON, THE ROSE CITY: A NEW SPRINGTIME ed. Woody Kerkeslager	\$20.00
MEMORIES ENTWINED WITH ROSES by Ruth Churchill	\$15.00
POSTCARD HISTORY SERIES: Morristown by Bonnie Lynn-Nadzeika	\$20.00
NEW JERSEY GOES TO WAR: Biographies of 150 New Jerseyans Caught Up in the Civil War edited by Joseph G. Bilby	\$20.00
ST. VINCENT MARTYR PARISH, 200 YEARS OF HISTORY by Michael P. Riccards	\$25.00
THE UNCERTAIN REVOLUTION by John T. Cunningham	\$27.00

Maps:

1910 ATLAS OF MORRIS COUNTY by A.H. Mueller	Members \$115 each
MADISON PLATES 3, 4, 5: Approximate size 22" x 31"	Non Members \$125 each

Miscellaneous:

Christmas Ornament: Historic Sayre House or Luke Miller House	2 for \$15.00	\$10.00
Note Cards: Hartley Dodge Memorial (Pack of 4)		\$ 3.00
Photo Prints: Historic Madison, 7 different views		\$30.00
Postcards: Historic Madison	\$1.00 each or Set of 4 for \$ 3.75	
Tote Bag: Rose City		\$10.00

Madison Historical Society DVD's \$10.00 each

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|------------------------------|---|
| * Black Church History | * Transportation |
| * Italian History in Madison | * Vietnam Oral History Project (with booklet) |
| * History of Roses | * The War Years, On the Home Front 1940-1955 |

USED BOOKS: VARIOUS TITLES, ALSO FOR SALE AT DISCOUNTED PRICES.

The Madison Historical Society

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 148, Madison, 07940. Office located in the
Local History Center of the Madison Library

Office Hours: Tuesday, 10:30 am to 3:30 pm and by appointment.

Office Phone: 973-377-0722 x8

Contact: President Susan Simon, 973-822-2377

Web: www.madisonjhistoricalsociety.org

Email: historicalsociety@rosenet.org