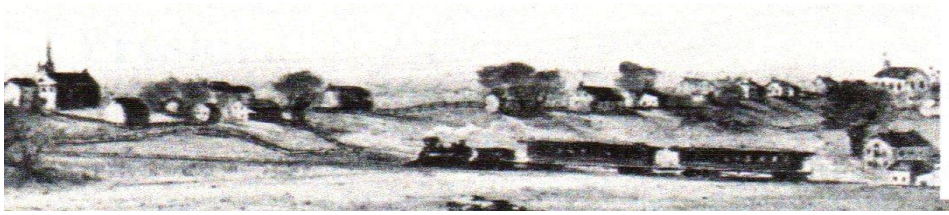


# Madison Historical Society

Madison, N.J

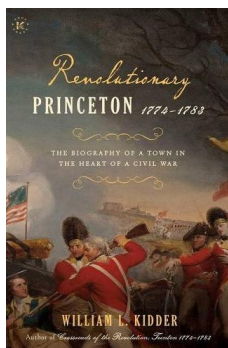
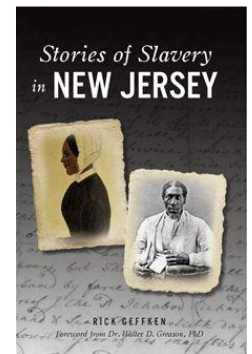


February 2021  
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2020-2021

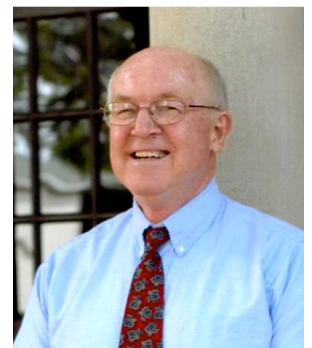
## The Madison Historical Society Presents



**Rick Geffken**  
**“Stories of Slavery in New Jersey**  
**March 16 7:00 pm**  
**Presentation via Zoom**  
**See Below**



**William (Larry) Kidder**  
**“Revolutionary Princeton 1774-1783”**  
**April 20 7:00 pm**  
**Presentation via Zoom**



If you are interested in participating in either or both of these presentations, please contact the Madison Historical Society at [historicalsociety@rosenet.org](mailto:historicalsociety@rosenet.org) or Box 148, Madison, N.J. 07940. We will need your email address to send you an appropriate link to join the Zoom presentation.

Read more about these speakers on page 3

## Historical Society Officers

### President

Susan Simon

### Vice President

*Dave Luber*

### Corresponding Secretary

*Herman Huber*

### Recording Secretary

*Virginia Laughlin*

### Treasurer

*Jim Malcolm*

### Custodian

*Kate Malcolm*

### Historian

*Nikolina Uzicanin*

### Membership Chair

*Judy Seery*

### Museum Chair

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### Trustees

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*Linda Connors*

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*Rebecca Fields*

*Johanna Glazewski*

*Laurie Hagerich*

*Noreen McManus*

*Anne Meyer*

*Judy Seery*

*Doug Simon*

*(Newsletter Editor)*

*Dorothy Pietrowski*

*(Emeritus)*

## Message from President Susan Simon

Unfortunately the pandemic is still with us and the Society will continue using Zoom for our programs this Spring. You can watch and hear the programs on your computer, digital pad or smart phone. Just download the free Zoom app on your device. In the Fall, we had two programs using Zoom. The first was with numismatist Ray Williams and the second with Maestro Dr. Robert Butts. Both were great successes.

The country will be celebrating the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the American Revolution in 2026. With great timing, the Society will have a new book out titled, *Portrait of the Rose City: A History of Madison, New Jersey*, sponsored jointly by the Madison Historical Society and the Madison Public Library. The book will include edited material from the 1985 book, *The Madison Heritage Trail*, in addition to new material covering the 1970s to the present time.

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to the marvelous article by Louise Easton in this issue of the newsletter. Titled, "A Unique Madison Story", it tells us about the intriguing family linkages between some of Madison's current citizens and the early residents of the borough, reaching back to well before the American Revolution.



## Notes on Society Membership

How many people belong to the Society and where do they come from? There are currently 101 memberships representing 142 members. (Remember that some of the memberships are family memberships.) Of the 101 memberships, 80 are from Madison, 14 from other places in New Jersey such as Morristown, Chatham, Basking Ridge, Morris Township and Florham Park. We also have a small smattering of states represented on our rolls – Indiana, Delaware, North Carolina, Florida and Vermont.

## About Our Future Speakers

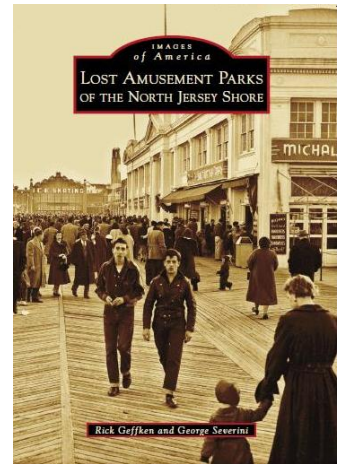
### Rick Geffken



Rick Geffken is a prolific writer and popular speaker on a variety of topics focusing on New Jersey history and had presented historical papers at the New Jersey History & Historic Preservation in 2014 and 2015. Specifically, Rick is the author of the *Hidden History of Monmouth County* with Muriel Smith; *The Story of Shrewsbury Revisited, 1965-2015* with Don Burden; *Highland Beach, Gateway to the Jersey Shore, 1888-1962* with Chris Brenner; and *Lost Amusement Parks of the North Jersey Shore* with George Severini. His latest book, with Monmouth County Clerk Christine Giordano Hanlon, is *To Preserve & Protect, Profiles of people who recorded the history and heritage of Monmouth County, New Jersey*.

Rick has spoken about numerous New Jersey historical topics – *Lost Amusement Parks*; *Quakers & Slavery in NJ*; *NJ's Submarine Inventors: Simon Lake & John Holland*; *The Morris Family of NJ* - at dozens of historical societies and libraries. He is currently a Trustee of the Shrewsbury Historical Society; Past-president and a Trustee of the Jersey Coast Heritage Museum at Sandlass House; and a member of the Monmouth County Historical Association. He also heads up a project called the New Jersey Slavery Records Index under the auspices of Monmouth University of West Long Branch, NJ.

Rick retired from a career with Hewlett-Packard; owned and operated several small businesses; taught secondary school mathematics; and was an Adjunct Professor at Ocean County Community College. A retired U.S. Army officer and Viet Nam veteran, he holds a BS in Economics from St. Peter's University, a Secondary Teaching Certificate from Monmouth University, and an MA in Social Sciences from Montclair State University.



### William (Larry) Kidder

Larry Kidder received his bachelor's and master's degrees from Allegheny College in Meadville, Pennsylvania and is a retired high school history teacher who taught for forty years in both public and private schools, including the Hun School of Princeton.

He served four years of active duty in the U.S. Navy and was assigned to the U.S. Navy Research and Development Unit in Vietnam and then the destroyer USS Brownson. In the 1980's he was the lead researcher and writer for the creation of the Admiral Arleigh Burke National Destroyermen's Museum aboard the USS Joseph P. Kennedy.

His first book, *The Pleasant Valley School Story: A Story of Education and Community in Rural New Jersey*, won the 2013 Scholarship and Artistry Award. He is also the author of *A People Harassed and Exhausted: The Story of a New Jersey Militia Regiment in the American Revolution* and *Farming Pleasant Valley: 250 Years of Life in Rural Hopewell Township, New Jersey*. He served as editor of *Meet Your Revolutionary Neighbors* and in 2017 his latest book, *Crossroads of the Revolution: Trenton 1774-1783* was released and will be the subject of his talk in April.

Larry is a member of the Association for Living History, Farm, and Agricultural Museums, the Washington's Crossing Roundtable of the American Revolution, and the New Jersey Living History Advisory Council. He is also a member of the Advisory Council for Crossroads of the American Revolution and works with Crossroads as volunteer coordinator and editor of its Meet Your Revolutionary Neighbors project.





## Spotlight on History

# A Unique Madison Story

By Louise Easton, Trustee of the Madison Public Library

What are the chances that a baby born in Troy, NY, who was adopted by a couple in Madison, New Jersey, and eventually served as mayor of the town, would learn that one of his ancestors by birth was a founding father of the same town some 200 years ago when it was known as Bottle Hill?

That is the reason former Madison Mayor Gary Ruckelshaus continues to shake his head in disbelief. For 25 years Gary searched hard to find his birth mother but was stymied by a 1940 New Jersey law sealing all adoption records. When that law was repealed in 2014 Gary was first in line to have his files released on January 1, 2017 the day it went into effect.

Within a few weeks New Jersey sent him a copy of his birth records from a Troy, NY hospital. That ended in disappointment when he learned his birth mother was deceased; however, he continued to seek out his living relatives, discovering a half-brother in Seattle, Washington and two first female cousins in California. Soon after Gary was on a plane west to meet his blood relatives and impart on an unknown journey that was to develop into heartwarming relationships, and also connected him with a 1750s ancestor who left an indelible mark on the town he loves so much.

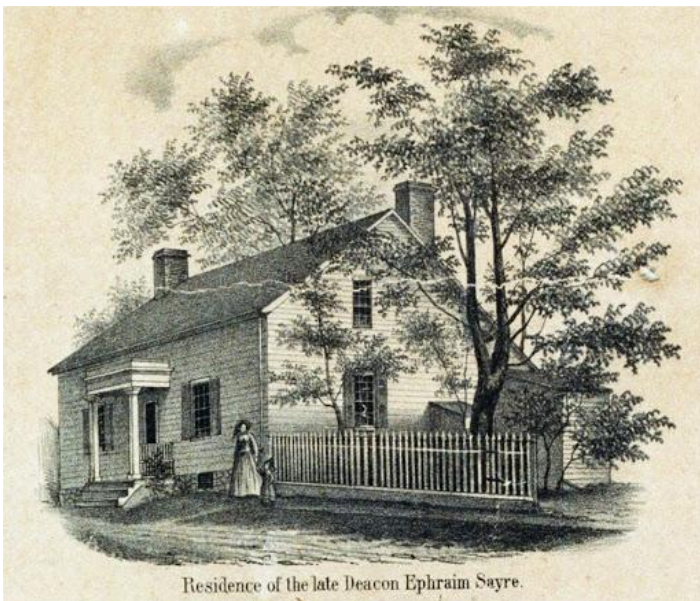
The saga began during a casual telephone conversation when Gary mentioned to his cousin, Carol Patterson Fisher in San Diego, California that he was serving on a committee to review *The Madison Heritage Trail*, a history book published in 1986, and now being updated to include the past fifty years of history. "I mentioned to Carol that we were formerly called Bottle Hill," he said, "and she immediately recalled that in her family ancestry research she came across the unusual town name."

Literally gasping with anticipation, she replied "I think we have a relative from there." She was correct, already knowing that their ancestry included direct descendents to Alonzo Horton, the person who pushed the community of San Diego beyond its old historic district and is now considered to be "the father of San Diego." The name Horton was also prominent in Bottle Hill, NJ. Carol said in a phone interview. The family tree extended from Long Island, to New York State, and Wisconsin before arriving in California. She immediately forwarded a copy to Gary.

Their spontaneous elation sped cross country. "No one would have ever known anything about the linkage without the knowledge and memory of this magnificent woman, my cousin Carol Patterson Fisher, some three thousand miles away who was but a stranger to me three years ago," Gary said with disbelief. Carol

was equally joyful, saying she felt "the connection with Gary from the minute he got off the plane from New Jersey."

The link between the cousins is a very prominent man whose story encompasses two pages in the Madison history book, Rev. Azariah Horton, the pastor called to serve as the first permanent minister of the local Presbyterian Church. The Yale graduate arrived in Bottle Hill in 1751, after laboring among both Indian and white congregations in Long Island, before he accepted the new ministry in Bottle Hill, NJ. Horton was persuaded to move to New Jersey by his uncle James Burnet, one of the earliest local settlers, according to Mrs. Fisher's research.



Residence of the late Deacon Ephraim Sayre.

Rev. Horton continued to serve in that capacity for almost 25 years and was regarded as a ‘venerable father’ to the church and the community. Perhaps more than anyone, he gave the village a conscience, the historians noted in the book. Indeed, he did. After retiring from the ministry at age 62, Rev. Horton became an unsung hero of the Revolutionary War. Witnessing the daily misery of both troops and civilians suffering injuries and an incursion of smallpox, Horton was quoted as saying he, “could not sit by and watch people dying.” He toiled selflessly among both civilians and soldiers, exposing himself to the disease. He soon contracted smallpox and died on March 27, 1777.

The book committee on which Ruckelshaus serves alongside members of the Madison Historical Society and editor of the 1985 book, Dr. Frank Esposito is adding a contemporary affect with concentrated reportage of the last fifty years. It continues Madison’s path from a natural wonderland of forest and water to a 21<sup>st</sup> Century suburban community that was recently voted the top place to live in New Jersey.

Ruckelshaus, who served as mayor from 1996-1999 has lived in Madison his entire life, leaving only to go to Oglethorpe University in Atlanta, Georgia. He remained active in local causes early in his business career, serving as President of the Jaycees, Board of Trustees, Madison Area YMCA, Madison Public Library Trustee, and recently the Madison Eagle Christmas Fund and Madison Housing Authority, where he is presently a commissioner. His early active years with the Madison Republican Party led to him serving as a Borough Councilman for nine years before being elected mayor.

Rev. Horton’s ministry in Bottle Hill was a result of a recommendation from his great uncle Aaron Burnet, one of the first settlers in Bottle Hill. The family’s long heritage line extends to tenth-generation James Burnet IV, who currently serves in Madison Borough’s government as Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Administrator. The early Burnets spread out in numbers and areas over the years, purchasing property in what is now the downtown business district, and extending its large family holdings further eastward and north to Florham Park.

In a recent search, Carol Fisher also discovered a direct link between the Burnet and Horton families. Azariah Horton was the son of Jonathan Horton, while Elizabeth Burnet, daughter of the first Burnet in Bottle Hill, Aaron Burnet, married Barnabas Horton.

“So, Gary is first cousin, eight times removed to the Hortons, and Jim is a grand nephew eight times removed. I cannot connect a relationship between Gary and Jim,” she wrote, “except that they are distantly related.”

One descendent, Matthias Lindsley Burnet was president of the Bottle Hill Temperance Society and cast the deciding vote to change the borough’s name from Bottle Hill to Madison. Matthias also served as Madison’s first Postmaster. There are more than a dozen stories about the Burnet family in the history book, including the 20th century patriarch, James Burnet III, who ran a successful hardware business in their building at 60 Main St. until he retired and moved south. The Burnet family played a prominent role in the borough’s Bicentennial Celebration in 1976, where James Burnet III was featured in the local newspaper, *The Madison Eagle* displaying his great-great-grandfather’s desk when the post office was run from his Main Street home.

While the unfolding of Ruckelshaus’ story might encourage more people to dig into their ancestry, another Madison family is celebrating its unique connection to the very first settler, Barnabas Carter, a gent from Elizabethtown whose feisty father, Samuel Carter founded that community in 1664 and was prominent in the resistance against the English proprietary laws that threatened their land ownership.



Left to right: Jim Burnet, Gary Ruckelshaus, and Roberta Dunne

Roberta Dunne, a native Madisonian, learned through her son Robert, who was tracing the family genealogy that she, Roberta Mitchell Dunne, was not only a direct descendent of Barnabas Carter, but her lineage through her mother's family connected to other notable early settlers: the Burroughs, the Forces and directly to Moses and John Dehart, one of whom was a physician, and the latter lauded for saving residents from a flooding of Spring Garden Brook. Dorothy DeHart, Roberta's mother, married Jack Mitchell a pro golfer and son of the John R. Mitchell Rosegrowers. That makes Roberta a sixth generation DeHart. But it was Edward DeHart, the first captain of the Madison Fire Department, who stands out to the Dunne family, as both of Roberta's sons, Jack and Robert served in the Fire Department. Robert has recently published a history of the Madison Fire Department, and proudly lists he and his brother as seventh generation of the DeHart family, their children, eighth generation.

The complete story of these descendants and their ancestors will appear in the new history book, *Portrait of the Rose city; A History of Madison New Jersey* to be published in 2022. In the meantime, several residents, encouraged by Gary's story, are researching their own ancestors.



## From the Office

### *The Red Cross Files*

By Linda Connors

The Crossroads chapter of the American Red Cross, Summit, N.J., donated records of the Madison chapter (later the Madison-Chatham chapter and the Southeast Morris chapter) that it had retained following the closing of the operation in Madison. The collection consists primarily of scrapbooks with newspaper clippings from local papers reporting Red Cross activities. The earliest is labeled 1940s, the most recent 1990s. Generally the scrapbooks do not include committee minutes or any in-depth information about its projects and accomplishments.

Nonetheless, the collection does contain some intriguing treasures: a collection of *The Junior Red Cross Journal* from 1934 to January 1941 and a 5 page mimeographed document, "Development and Growth of the American Junior Red Cross" issued by the American Red Cross in December 1940.

The collection of materials from the 1940s is particularly informative and valuable. Beginning in 1922 and continuing at least into 1942, volunteers produced Braille books for the Library of Congress project, Books for the Adult Blind. Titles were selected by the Library of Congress. The Red Cross trained volunteers in transcribing Braille texts and managed a cadre of volunteers who performed all the tasks from transcription to final book production and shipment. From October 1941 through January 1942, some 95 volunteers produced 918 books (5 titles), a total of 20,219 pages. Almost all of the volunteers were Madison residents.

The local chapter was particularly active during the 1940s. Classes and programs on such topics as nutrition and accident prevention were offered. A disaster relief committee and a Camp Kilmer committee were formed. Among other activities that committee organized volunteers to sew clothing for the refugees at Camp Kilmer.

As it must have done in 1945, one document presents a sobering illustration of the impact of World War 2 on Madison. Titled, *Lists of Service Men and Women, Madison, N.J.*, it was published in support of the 1945 Red Cross War Fund. Filling an entire newspaper page with column after column of names, thousands of names, printed in small type, the graphic impact on the reader is profound. Madison was still a small town in 1945 with a population of about 8,000. A third or more of the population was in the armed services.

## 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	<b>2 for \$15.00</b>	\$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

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| * 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:** Closed due to covid pandemic.

**Office Phone:** 973-377-0722 x8

**Contact:** President Susan Simon, 973-822-2377

**Web:** [www.madisonjhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.madisonjhistoricalsociety.org)

**Email:** [historicalsociety@rosenet.org](mailto:historicalsociety@rosenet.org)