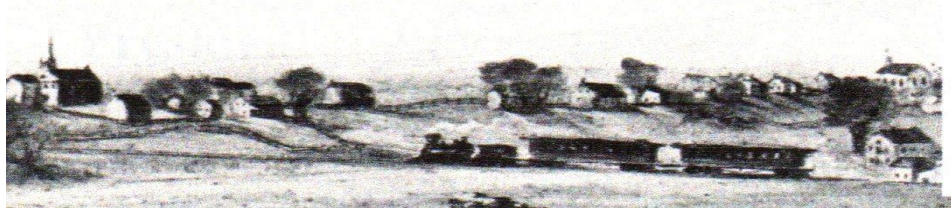


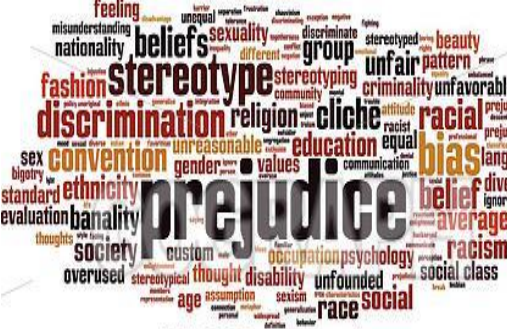
# *Madison Historical Society*

*Madison, N.J*



*February 2022  
Newsletter  
3rd edition 2021-2022*


## **100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Madison Historical Society**




gg103152702 www.gograph.com

**February 17 7:00 pm**  
**On Zoom**  
**The Madison Historical Society and**  
**MARE (Madison Alliance for Racial Equity)**  
**Present**  
**“The Enduring and Evolving Dynamics of Racial Segregation in New Jersey: From Redlining to Mt. Laurel, and Beyond”**  
**With**  
**Dr. Walter D. Greason**

**March 15, 7:00 pm**  
**On Zoom**  
**“Lincoln’s Commanders: Battles Fought and History Made”**  
**Presented by**  
**Robert G. Langford**



**April 19, 7:00 pm**  
**On Zoom**  
**“Before You Can Say Jackie Robinson: Black Baseball in America in the Era of the Color Line”**  
**Presented by**  
**Dr. Lawrence Hogan**  
**and Kevin Kane**



**If you are interested in participating in any or all of these presentations, please contact the Madison Historical Society at [historicalsociety@rosenet.org](mailto:historicalsociety@rosenet.org) or [www.madisonnjhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.madisonnjhistoricalsociety.org). 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

Virginia Laughlin

### Vice President

Dave Luber

### Corresponding Secretary

Herman Huber

### Recording Secretary

Anne Meyer

### Treasurer

Jim Malcolm

### Custodian

Kate Malcolm

### Historian

Nikolina Uzicanin

### Membership Chair

Judy Seery

### Museum Chair

Susan Simon

### Newsletter Editor

Doug Simon

### Trustees

Nancy Adamczyk

Linda Connors

Howard Craig

Robert Dunne

Rebecca Fields

Johanna Glazewski

Laurie Hagerich

Noreen McManus

Susan Simon

Dorothy Pietrowski

(Emeritus)



## Message From President Virginia Laughlin

Welcome to 2022! Did you know that the Historical Society was founded in 1922 by a group of dedicated Madisonians who gathered together to save the original Bottle Hill Tavern? We are celebrating our 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year and have been making plans to mark this exceptional milestone. Stay tuned as the year unfolds and our plans come together.

Despite the inconveniences imposed by Covid, work continues in the office responding to inquiries, archiving historical donations and planning membership programs. Kudos to the dedicated group of volunteers who oversee the day-to-day work of the Society each week.

As an added bonus to our virtual winter membership programs, we are hosting an additional program in conjunction with MARE (Madison Alliance for Racial Equity) on February 17<sup>th</sup>. This newsletter will provide you with the details of all three of our programs scheduled for the next coming months.

As we weather the ‘weather’ and the ‘surge’, stay well!

## About Our Spring Speakers

### Walter D. Greason, Ph.D.



Walter Greason is among the most prominent historians, educators, and urbanists in the United States. He has spent the past 30 years speaking to audiences in dozens of states, on over 100 college and high school campuses, at dozens of professional and academic conferences, and to community groups across the country. His work is available every day on Twitter, [@worldprofessor](https://twitter.com/worldprofessor).

He has also lectured internationally, in the United Kingdom, Canada, and New Zealand, and has trained corporate, government, entertainment, media, law enforcement, military, and medical industry professionals on strategies for dismantling racism in their institutions. Dr. Greason has provided anti-racism training to educators and administrators nationwide.

Dr. Greason is the author of six books, including his two latest, *Industrial Segregation* and *Cities Imagined: The African Diaspora in Media and History* (both Kendall-Hunt Publishers). Other books include *Suburban Erasure: How Suburbanization Ended the Civil Rights Movement in New Jersey* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press); *The Path to Freedom: Black Families in New Jersey* (The History Press); *The Land Speaks* (Oxford University Press), *The Encyclopedia of Black Comics* (Fulcrum); *The American Economy* (Kendall-Hunt Publishers); and *Planning Future Cities* (Kendall-Hunt Publishers).

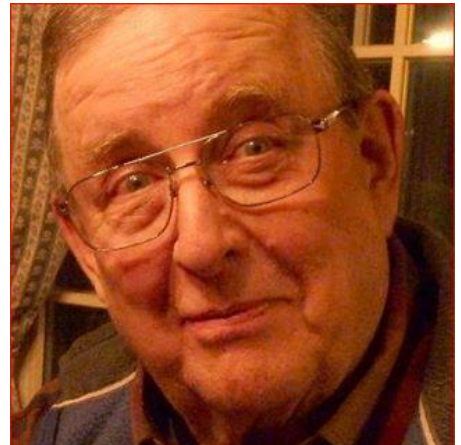
Named one of “Today’s Black History Makers” by *The Philadelphia Daily News*, Dr. Greason has written more than one hundred additional academic articles and essays. His work has appeared on Huffington Post, National Public Radio, and The Atlantic among other popular, professional and scholarly journals.

From 2007-2012, Dr. Greason was an advisor to Building One America, the coalition that designed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (2009). He also serves as the President of the T. Thomas Fortune Foundation, an organization that saved the National Historic Landmark dedicated to the leading, militant journalist of the nineteenth century and advances his legacy today.

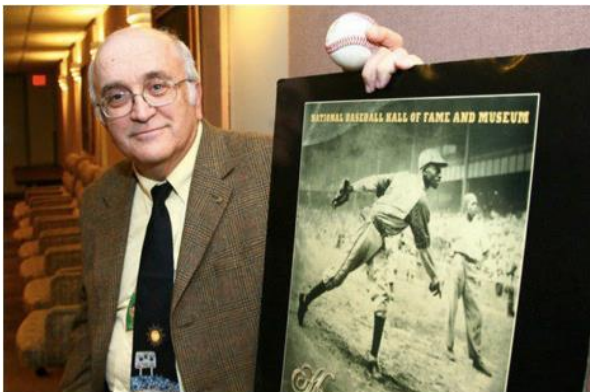
## Robert Langford

Robert Langford, while born in NYC, is an area native having been raised from an early age in Chatham, NJ. A graduate of Chatham High School, he holds a Liberal Arts degree in English from Fairleigh Dickinson University. His 50-year business sales career includes the Daily Record, Dow Jones’ The Wall Street Journal, Metromedia, Progressive Grocer Publications, Coastal Communications, Bedrock Publications, and Gordon Publications. He is a member of Sigma Phi Epsilon National Fraternity.

Bob served 2 years active duty and 4 years reserve duty in the US Army. He volunteered for many years for the American Red Cross. He is on the Executive Committee of the Lincoln Group of NY as well as a member of the Lincoln Forum. He is a member of the American Legion Post 43 in Florham Park where he is the Chairperson for its NJ Boys State Committee and currently serves as Morris County Adjutant as well as one of the Vice Commanders of the Morris County American Legion.



## Dr. Lawrence Hogan



Dr. Lawrence Hogan is Professor Emeritus of History from Union County College in New Jersey, author of *The Forgotten History of African American Baseball*, and principal author and editor of *Shades of Glory* published by National Geographic, as well as several other books on the history of Blacks in America. He is Executive Director of the documentary *Before You Can Say Jackie Robinson: Black Baseball in America in the Era of the Color Line*. His exhibit on the history of Black baseball has been shown at sites throughout the country. His manuscript *Harlem’s First Citizen: John Howard Johnson, A Priest, and his People, in the Harlem that was their Home* has been accepted for publication by Syracuse University Press.



“Historian Larry Hogan basks in baseball’s shadowed fields. He is a national treasure. And with *The Forgotten History of African American Baseball*, he culminates decades of inspired investigation, and, best of all for readers, great tales too long untold. My cap is off to him.”

- John Thorn, Official Historian of Major League Baseball

## Kevin Kane



Kevin Kane has made the better part of his living as a writer, musician and playwright. His Negro League version of *Casey at the Bat*, called “Breaking the Line with the Mudville Nine” was written for and first performed at the Cooperstown Baseball Hall of Fame, where he presented a program of readings with NPR essayist/sports writer Frank DeFord, who read the original *Casey*, and then introduced Kevin. Since then, Kevin has done readings of his poem at New York City’s 92nd Street Y, at the Society for American Baseball Research’s national conference and at many libraries, historical societies and colleges in New Jersey and New York. This poem has received close to 4,000 listens on Youtube. His historical/narrative song, *Frederick Douglass - A Slave Man and Free*, sung by gospel singer Joyce Dee has had thousands of listens on Youtube. His play, *A Love of the Game*, developed from this short story of his of the same title, was first developed at the O’Neill National Playwrights Conference where he had worked previously as an actor. He has had many plays produced in New York City and in regional theaters, performs often as a singer/songwriter, was a performance representative

for August Wilson, taught theater for ten years at Wagner College on Staten Island, and has received several significant grants for his writing, for both play writing and nonfiction, including one from the New York Foundation for the Arts. He is now teaching music and performance arts at the Paul Lawrence Dunbar public school in the Bronx

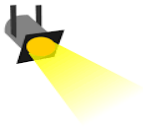
## ORIGINS OF THE MADISON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



**Madison House in 1922 just prior to being moved to a new site on Main St. and renamed Bottle Hill Tavern**

With 2022 the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Madison Historical society, we thought it appropriate to offer a brief account of its origins. The Society was founded in 1922 by a group of very civic-minded citizens committed to saving one of the most historic structures in Madison, Madison House, that stood on the corner of Main St. and Waverly Place where the Chase Bank now stands. In 1819, Colonel Stephen D. Hunting of the Morris County Militia purchased the original site of the tavern and an inn or tavern was erected on the site and known through the years as the “Waverly House” and the “Madison House.” It long served as a stop for Paulus Hook, Newark, Springfield, Chatham, and Bottle Hill to Morristown. In 1825 the Marquis de Lafayette visited the Tavern. Lafayette was a French

military officer who served under George Washington in the Continental Army and was wounded at the Battle of Brandywine. During the French Revolution he served as a leader of the Garde Nationale. In 1922 the First National Bank purchased the site for a new building and intended to tear down the old tavern. Led by Mrs. Calvin Anderson, Mrs. Anderson Case, Mrs. Fitzhugh C. Speer, Lloyd W. Smith, and Arthur W. Bутtenheim, a successful fundraising effort was completed to pay for the cost of moving the Tavern to a location further down Main Street. After the move took place in 1923, it was renamed “Bottle Hill Tavern” and became the home for the Historical Society until the late 1940s when the Society moved to the Madison Public Library that now houses the Museum of Early Trades and Crafts. In the late 1950s the historical collection of the Society was for a time homeless and had to be dispersed. Some items went into storage, many were put on permanent loan in local museums and some returned to their donors. Meetings were held in the YMCA. Currently the Historical Society is housed in a room at the Madison Public Library which opened in 1969.



## Spotlight on History

# The Burnets of Madison: Ten Generations and Going Strong

By Herman Huber



Jim burnet with inscribed powder horn.

It's likely that very few families can claim to be 10<sup>th</sup> generation Madisonians and related to some of Bottle Hill's earliest European settlers. But one family can.

They have ancestors who fought in the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, helped found the Presbyterian Church in Madison, and donated the land to build the Madison Academy. They can also claim direct lineage from the first postmaster of Madison, the man who cast the deciding vote to change Bottle Hill's name to Madison. Another ancestor owned a popular hardware store on Main St. that was once the oldest business in Madison. Descendants of this remarkable clan live in a home on property held in the family (with a brief interruption) since 1752.<sup>1</sup>

Jim Burnet IV, the Assistant Madison Borough Administrator and Chief Financial Officer, is the man whose family has this unique lineage. Thomas Burnet (Jim's 8<sup>th</sup> great-grandfather) was the first to arrive in this country. Born in Braintree, England, he lived in Southampton, Long Island until his death in 1684. His son, Aaron Burnet Sr. arrived in Madison at the age of 92, died at the age of 99, and was the first of more than 20 Burnets to be buried in Bottle Hill/Hillside Cemetery. Indeed, members of the Burnet family have lived within five miles of Madison since 1747, the year of Aaron Sr.'s arrival.<sup>2</sup>

Aaron Sr. had a son, Aaron Jr., who ran a fulling mill not far from what is today's aptly named Burnet Rd. Perhaps Aaron Jr.'s greatest impact on Madison was helping to found the Presbyterian Church in 1747 (still in existence and now on Green Avenue), in what was then the village of Bottle Hill in the Township of South Hanover.<sup>3</sup>

Aaron Burnet Jr. died in about 1771, but not before passing the torch to his son, Matthias, who lived near Whippany and whose role during the Revolutionary War was that of blacksmith, Morris County Justice of the Peace, and most dangerously, he signed the document committing Hanover Township to the revolution. Not surprisingly, his son, Matthias Jr. fought bravely in the Revolutionary War with the Morris Militia, and his richly inscribed powder horn, dated August 1775, proudly remains in the Burnet family home. By 1918, the Madison Eagle proclaimed, "Every American War Has Seen a Burnet Fighting."<sup>3a</sup>

Next came Matthias Lindsley Burnet, who owned a wheelwright shop at Main St. and Central Ave. and lived there also. Not to be outdone by his father, he became the second postmaster of Bottle Hill/first of Madison (1830-1841), appointed by US President Martin Van Buren.<sup>4, 4a</sup> Townspeople came by the house to check their mail, and like the aforementioned powder horn, his official Postmaster's desk stands in an honored place in the Burnet home. The well-preserved mahogany desk has 24 cubbyholes, 3 drawers, and a secret compartment. Even more significant perhaps and certainly longer-lasting, as president of Bottle Hill's Temperance Society and understandably unhappy with the connotation of "Bottle Hill" (no matter what the actual origin of the name), he cast the deciding vote in 1834 renaming the village "Madison."<sup>5</sup>

A generation later, Henry Roderick Burnet married Ann Dennett in 1853, but tragedy struck when she died within the year, leaving him with a one-week-old daughter.<sup>5a</sup> While dealing with his profound sorrow, he took a tack towards



accomplishments different from his forebears. He became a highly respected metallurgist who “...made the first type metal to print from ever used on a cylinder press ...and had the rebellion not broken out, would have undoubtedly made a fortune in the enterprise.”<sup>5b</sup> In 1873, he retired and became the gentleman

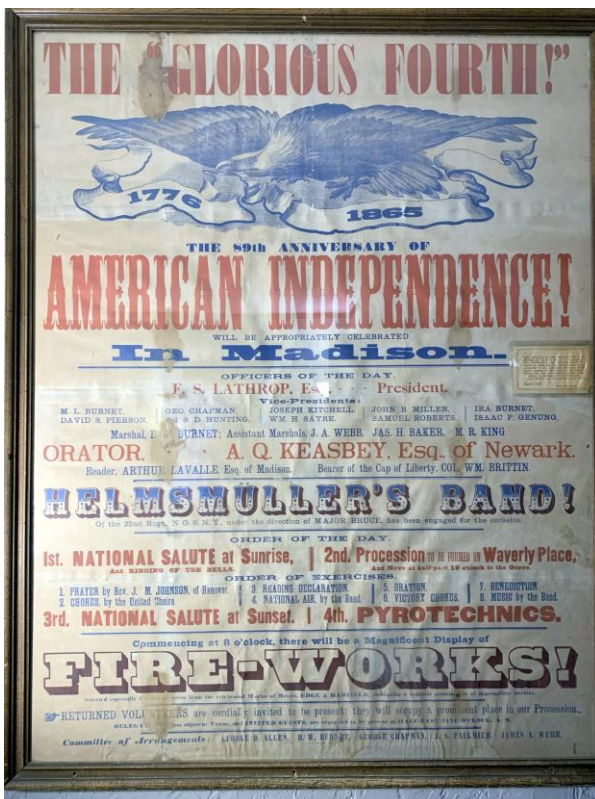
farmer of his father’s estate. Fifteen years later, content and ever inventive even in his farming career, he passed away.

At the corner of Central Ave. and Main St., Henry’s son, James E. Burnet Sr. and sister Mabel Burnet Apgar, built the impressive Renaissance Revival style Burnet Building in 1897; it still stands on the site of the wheelwright shop and old post office. Ninety-three years later, it was honored by being named a Contributing Structure in the Madison Civic & Commercial Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>6</sup>

For the next 31 years, James E. Burnet Sr. ran a very successful hardware business in his building. Known all around town, and apparently an excellent schmoozer, he enjoyed telling and listening to stories. As William Redmond II tells it in his autobiography, in the early 1900s, “[My] Father would go ...and tend to his banking business before he crossed over Main Street to see Jim Burnet in the hardware store. Mr. Burnet and Father would sit by the desk in the little office at the rear of the store and smoke their cigars while they hashed over the latest gossip in town. Mr. Burnet was the Fire Chief at that time and his raincoat hung on a hook on the wall, his boots right there by his desk so he could jump into them and run if the fire whistle sounded. He’d meet the [horse-drawn] fire engine as it came up Central Ave. from the fire house.”<sup>7</sup>



**Burnet Post Master's Desk**



**1865 Poster of the 89th American Independence Celebration**

As a youth, James E. Burnet Sr. played baseball in his spare time for the Madison Athletic Club. He later became the borough’s Road Superintendent during the arrival of the automobile. He retired in 1928 and passed away in 1933. The Madison Eagle affectionately headlined, “Old Timer Expires at His Home....”<sup>8</sup>

James Sr.’s son, James E. Burnet Jr. inherited and ran the hardware store (with his brother Richard for several years) until his death in 1955. James Jr. built a home on Woodcliff Drive in 1932, and trimmed the home with beautiful black walnut wood cut down by his father during road building operations. The Firestone Library at Princeton University also has this same wood in it, obtained from the Burnet family. Jim IV and his family still live in that home.

Then came along James E. Burnet III, who after his father’s death, owned and operated the J. E. Burnet Sons, Inc. Hardware store for 28 years until 1985, at which time the 89 year-long legacy ended. A well-known banker and president of the Madison Volunteer Ambulance Corps, he retired after having run 1,000 ambulance calls. His wife, Barbara, was a prolific author of material about Madison and its Presbyterian Church, and meticulously researched the Burnet family’s genealogy back to early England and Scotland.

Their son, James Burnet IV, now continues the very long tradition of important service and involvement with Madison. In addition to his positions within the borough government, he began the popular

“May Day in Madison” beautification and clean up program in 1998. He was the Main Street Executive Director and it was his efforts that brought the Farmer’s Market into the business district on Waverly Place. After his father’s hardware store closed, he and his wife Sara operated the Art By Design business in the same place until 2005. During a public borough meeting, Lisa Ellis, then president of the Board of Education, offered this assessment: “*Jim Burnet is one of the best things that has ever happened to Madison. Since Day One, he has used his intelligence, passion and seemingly endless skill set to help transform the way Madison does business.*”<sup>9</sup>

In 1899, historian Helen Brittin wrote, “*For the most part, the Burnets occupy the post of honor known as quiet private citizens.*”<sup>10</sup> Because they have lived in one place for so long, it was relatively easy for the Burnets to trace their family roots. It turns out they are descended from Robert “The Bruce,” King of Scotland, and from Edward I, King of England. Their ancestors lived in a Scottish castle (Crathes Castle in Aberdeenshire) and had their own coat of arms. But Jim Burnet and family are most proud of the positive impact they have had here in Madison, as quiet private citizens.

Fair to say, that while these latest Burnets are not kings, don’t live in a castle, don’t wear kilts with a coat of arms, don’t name villages, or found churches, their pride of lineage powerfully and quietly drives them to lead and do good. For sure, Robert “The Bruce” and Edward I are looking down (or up) with pride.

1. Interview with Jim Burnet IV, November 30, 2021.
2. The Burnet Family. *PowerPoint Presentation to Madison Historical Society*. Jim Burnet, IV, November 20, 2008. Based on research by Barbara Burnet Parker.
3. Presbyterian Church of Madison. Our History. <http://www.pcmadison.org/about-us/our-history/>. Retrieved December 24, 2021.
- 3a. Every American War Has Seen A Burnet Fighting. *Madison Eagle*, August 9, 1918
4. Council: Building Consensus. *Madison Eagle*, August 26, 2010.
- 4a. The Oldest Piece of Land Under Continuous Family Ownership. *Madison Eagle*. July 1, 1976.
5. Esposito, Frank. ( 1985) *The Madison Heritage Trail*. Madison Bicentennial Heritage Committee, p.178.
- 5a. Obituary. *Madison Eagle*. January 13, 1888.
- 5b. Henry R. Burnet. *Madison Eagle*. March 28, 1885.
6. Madison Historic Civil and Commercial District. *National Register of Historic Places*. US Department of the Interior. October 1989.
7. Redmond II, William F. *Growing Up in The Rose City*. Will Redmond Foundation, 1987, pp. 15-16.
8. James E. Burnet Is Dead. *The Madison Eagle*. April 21, 1933.
9. Council: Building Consensus. *Madison Eagle*. August 26, 2010.
10. Brittin, Helen. (1899) *Biographical and Genealogical History of Morris County New Jersey*, Vol. 1. Lewis Publishing Company. p. 15.

## The Madison Historical Society

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

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

**Office Hours:** Due to covid, appointments are required when the office is  
open on Thursdays. Masks are required.

**Contact:** President Virginia Laughlin, 973-593-4875

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

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