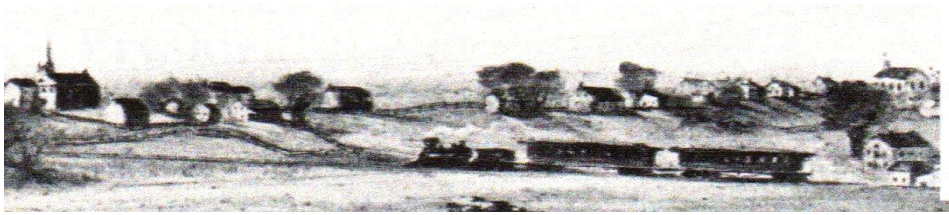


# Madison Historical Society

Madison, N.J



February 2023  
Newsletter  
3<sup>rd</sup> edition 2022-2023

## The Madison Historical Society Presents

March 21, 2023  
7:00 pm

### “Paterson: The First Planned Industrial City”

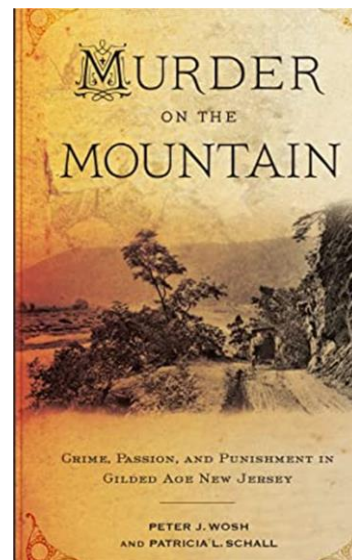
With  
Jack DeStefano  
Director of the  
Paterson Museum



April 18, 2023  
7:00 pm

### “Murder on the Mountain: Crime, Passion, and Punishment in the Gilded Age, New Jersey”

With  
Peter Wosh



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

*Herm Huber*

### Corresponding Secretary

*Johanna Glazewski*

### 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*

*Blair Conley*

*Howard Craig*

*Rebecca Fields*

*Laurie Hagerich*

*Dave Luber*

*Noreen McManus*

*Dorothy Pietrowski*

*(Emeritus)*

*Cathy Coultus*

*(Emeritus)*



## Message From President Virginia Laughlin

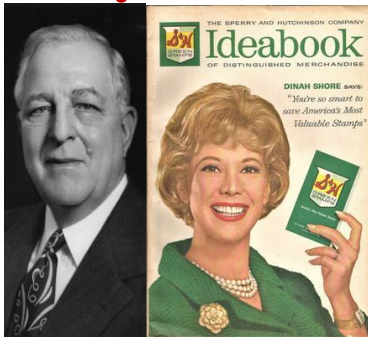
As our Anniversary celebrations come to an end, the Society turns its focus to the work ahead in 2023. Aside from the normal office work of archiving and researching Madison History, we are moving forward with our two major projects, the updating of the *Madison Heritage Trail* and the planning of the Madison History Museum. The updated book will be titled *The Portrait of the Rose City, the History of Madison, New Jersey*. The project is nearing completion and the museum infrastructure and content planning is well underway.

In addition, the Society is planning to begin an Oral History project this year. We would like to record, for posterity, the memories of longtime residents of Madison. Much has changed in Madison over the years but we don't want to forget what came before to make Madison what it is today.

Another smaller project we are starting this year is a 'New Neighbor Letter' to new residents of Madison. Very often, our booth at Bottle Hill Day is their first introduction to the Society. This will become part of our continuing effort to raise public awareness of our organization.

In closing, I would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year!

## Early Did You Knows, 1939



**Did you know....**that our own Fritz J. Beinecke of Green Avenue is the head of the S & H Green Stamps Company.

**Did you know...**that B. Altman & Company and Stern Brothers once kept "swanky teams" and handsome wagons in Madison for the delivery of their wares to the residents of Madison and vicinity.

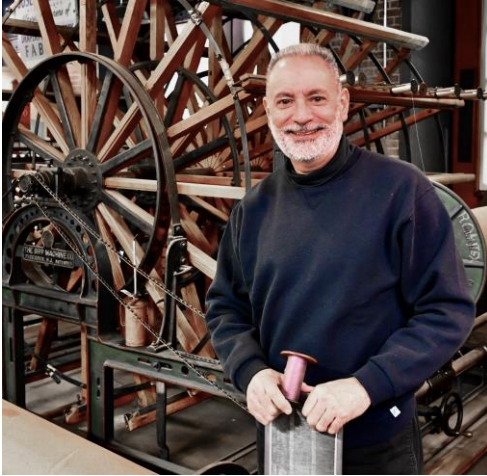


(From: Madison Eagle, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 1939 appearing in CLARYE'S CORNER.

**B. Altman delivery wagon**

## About our Speakers

### *Jack DeStefano*



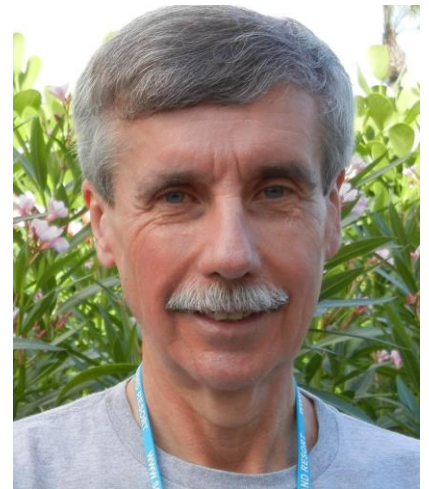
How many of us have driven through Paterson, NJ, seen the Great Falls, an old factory or two, and thought, time to move on? If so, you are in for an eye-opening tour of this historic city and its long and remarkable and colorful history! How? - by signing up to enjoy Giacomo DeStefano's PowerPoint lecture to the Madison Historical Society entitled, "Paterson NJ - The First Planned Industrial City in the USA." It will take place of Tuesday March 21, 2023, at 7pm via Zoom.

A frequent and sought-after lecturer, Mr. DeStefano will explore the city's history from the creation of the land, approximately 250 million years ago, the first inhabitants (Paleo-Indians through Lenape), the Early European Settlements, the Revolutionary War, the establishment of the Society for Useful Manufactures, and the major industries that made Paterson world renowned: silk, locomotives, and airplane engine production. Giacomo DeStefano has been directing the operations of the Paterson Museum since 1989. He began his public service as a page at the Paterson Free Public Library and left the Library to work as the weekend attendant at the Paterson Museum. Upon graduation from William Paterson College with a B.A in History in 1987, he was appointed the Curator of History. Today, Mr. DeStefano is gradually reworking all of the exhibitions in the main gallery, in preparation for the Museum's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2025.

### *Peter Wosh*

Interested in learning all about an 1879 dastardly crime in West Orange, that was the talk of the nation? A crime that resulted in the last execution of a female by the State of NJ? If so, sign up to hear Dr. Peter J. Wosh present a lecture to the Madison Historical Society on his recent book, "*Murder on the Mountain: Crime, Passion, and Punishment in Gilded Age New Jersey.*" He will be giving the lecture via Zoom on Tuesday, April 18, 2023 at 7pm.

Dr. Peter J. Wosh directed the Archives/Public History graduate education program in the history department at New York University from 1994-2016. He previously served as archivist at both the American Bible Society in New York (1984-1994) and Seton Hall University in South Orange (1978-1984). In addition to *Murder on the Mountain*, Peter's previous books include *Waldo Gifford Leland and the Origins of the American Archival Profession*, *Covenant House: Journey of a Faith-Based Charity*, and *Spreading the Word: The Bible Business in Nineteenth-Century America*. He currently serves as editor of the Archival Fundamentals Series III, published by the Society of American Archivists. He recently wrote a compelling and disturbing story, featured on the front page of the Richmond Times-Dispatch, of the connection between Virginia Commonwealth University and Slavery.







## *Spotlight on History*

# **Harold Bутtenheim and the Centennial of Zoning in Madison 1922-2022**

**by Janet W. Foster**

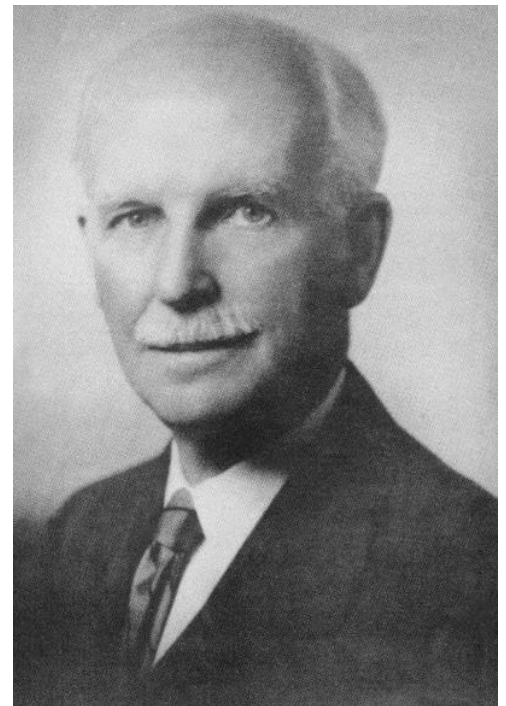
Madison entered the 20<sup>th</sup> century without having any heavy industry; the rose industry which gave the town its nickname of “The Rose City” was more like large-scale gardening than the activity of factory complexes found in many northern New Jersey towns. Rose-growing took place in greenhouses scattered all over the Borough; most on land that was part of the great estates. Only after about 1890 did the greenhouses become stand-alone businesses. The affluent residents of “Millionaires Mile” which ran between Morristown and Madison had large estates measured in multiple acres. Borough residents who lived in more modest houses on the smaller lots in the center of town benefitted from the open space buffer these estates created.

New Jersey suburbanites a century ago were just as preoccupied with their property values as we are today. The citizens of Madison wanted quiet enjoyment of their suburban oasis. By 1920, the population of Madison had grown to some 5,500 people, an increase of 18% during the decade from 1910-1920. New housing was inserted into land between older, larger houses, and whole neighborhoods were developed on what had only recently been farmland, woodlots, and orchards. Concerns about what was built and how it was built were widespread in town.

But Madisonians did more than worry. In a bold move, the Borough adopted zoning in 1922, well ahead of many other communities, and before it was ruled constitutional by the US Supreme Court in 1926. And it should be no surprise that Madison was an early adopter of land use regulation because of one resident: Harold S. Bутtenheim. Mr. Bутtenheim, for whom a room at the local YMCA is named, was a leading author, speaker, and supporter of urban planning, and he lived his adult life in Madison. He had personal and professional connections to the creators of early zoning legislation in New York City, and he was a fervent crusader for improving the life of communities through enacting legislation to protect the health, safety, and welfare of all its citizens.

Harold Sinley Bутtenheim (1876-1961), was born in Brooklyn, NY, one of seven boys (and one girl) in the family. He had only a public-school education, but he was born at the right place at the right time to learn, think and act upon ideas about municipal improvement. He and his brother Edgar founded *The American City Magazine* in New York City in 1911 and Harold served as the editor through 1955. *The American City* both formed the idea of urban planning as a profession and guided the new practitioners with articles about how to improve cities and suburbs. Zoning, building codes, parking requirements, public recreational facilities, street trees, speed limits – in short, all the concerns of municipalities relating to land use - occupied the pages of the magazine.

Harold may have loved the city and writing about solving the problems of urban places, but he found his one true love in Margaret



**Harold Bутtenheim**

Stoddard, a resident of Madison. They married in 1906 in the Webb Chapel of the Presbyterian Church of Madison and remained devoted partners in the improvement of their community until her untimely death at age 47 after a long illness. Harold turned his energies to local Progressive causes. He was critical in establishing a local zoning ordinance in 1922 and serving as the Zoning Board's first Chairman for 33 years; encouraging creation of a Planning Board in 1955 and then serving as its first Chairman for 5 years; and doing significant fundraising on behalf of the Madison YMCA in the late 1950s preparatory to their construction of the facility on Keep Street.

In his first speech after taking office as mayor in January 1922, Edward Merikle (1883-1951) proposed that Madison investigate zoning for the town. Of course, he turned to the resident expert, Harold Bittenheim, for help in making the idea a reality. The supporters of land use regulation used the phrase "Zoning is protection against the improper and selfish use" of neighboring property that could diminish one's property value or utility. Zoning was defined as "the application of common sense and fairness to the public for the reasonable enforcement of rights" to fresh air and open space, and avoidance of noxious uses that would generate sounds, odors or noise that could be detrimental.

Mayor Merikle did do some important homework before launching the study – he is reported to have consulted with Geraldine R. Dodge, whose country house "Giralda" stood on the west side of Madison, and William Starrett, a resident, former mayor of Madison, and head of the Starrett Brothers construction company. Both agreed that zoning would be a good idea.

On July 26, 1922, *The Madison Eagle* reported that "a meeting on a tentative zoning ordinance [was] held at "James Hall". This was the public assembly room on the upper floor of the James Building, which at that time was owned by the Borough of Madison. The meeting was organized by Mayor Edward Merikle, and he introduced "H.S. Bittenheim chairman of the commission exploring this" as *The Madison Eagle* reported. The question to be discussed at the meeting would be "... whether Madison should be allowed to become an industrial community, or whether it should be kept residential; whether maximum height of a building should be three stories or four stories."

The first version of Madison's zoning ordinance identified land use "zones" for single family houses, multi-family dwellings, and businesses, and *none* for industrial use. There was no zone to account for parkland or open space. A large map showing the zones was prepared; it remains in possession of the Borough Engineering Department.

In the written zoning ordinance that accompanied the map, there were differing front, rear and side-yard setbacks prescribed for buildings within each zone, but the general idea was to create consistent front yard setbacks along a street and maintain side yards wide enough to permit light and air to reach all sides of a residence. Residences were not to exceed two-and-a-half stories.

Commercial buildings could be built to the street front, but they could not exceed three stories tall, and their height could not exceed twice the distance between the street façade and the center line of the street. This was a direct borrowing from the New York City zoning law of 1916, which did not put an absolute cap on building height but required setbacks from the building front at heights determined by the width of the street itself. There were also some zoning rules distinct to a Borough where there were many wealthy residents with servants; for instance, there were rules about the placement of garages, and notably, about when a garage could contain living quarters for a chauffeur.

The public meeting presenting the proposed zoning ordinance generated little controversy, or at least none covered in the local newspaper. The Borough Council met to discuss and vote on the proposed zoning resolution on September 11, 1922. According to *The Madison Eagle*, there was not one public comment against it, and the Council approved it unanimously. *The Eagle* went on to offer this editorial comment: "In putting zoning into effect in Madison the council has taken a step in accord with the most modern ideas of progressive municipal legislation."

The zoning ordinance has been regularly updated, amended, and enlarged since 1922, but the intent – to preserve a suburban character to Madison – has been largely upheld. This century-old Progressive legislation had a significant influence on the town we know today.

## The 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Continues

After a flurry of events noted in previous newsletters, mid to late November of 2022 brought on additional events celebrating the Madison Historical Society's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary.



Madison Mayor Bob Conley and Society President Ginnie Laughlin

### Proclamation from the Borough

On November 14<sup>th</sup>, Mayor William Conley, on behalf of the entire Borough Council, presented an official proclamation recognizing the century of service provided by the Society preserving the rich history of Madison. The proclamation included recognition of the saving of the Bottle Hill Tavern in 1922 that provided the impetus for the founding of the Society and the more recent accomplishments including the efforts to establish a History of Madison Museum at the Hartley Dodge Memorial, updating the *Madison Heritage Trail* book, the Society's Plaque Program recognizing houses built before 1900, and the oral history project.

### The Party

On November 7<sup>th</sup>, officers and several former officers of the Madison Historical Society Board, met in the Madison Library's Chase room for a party celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Society.



Left to right: Dorothy Pietrowski, Susan Simon, Linda Connors, Ginnie Laughlin, and Cathie Coultas



From left to right: Doug Simon, Anne Meyer, Nikolina Uzicanin, Dave Lubner, Ginnie Laughlin, Kate Malcolm, Jim Malcolm

### The Christmas Parade

In response to a generous offer by Carmine Toto, seven members of the historical society marched in Madison's annual Christmas parade held on November 25<sup>th</sup>. Carmine had suggested hanging two of the Society's banners that celebrated the organization's hundredth anniversary on the sides of the float upon which Mrs. Clause rode. A grand time was had by all.



## Recognition by the State of New Jersey

On January 9<sup>th</sup>, at the first Madison Borough Council meeting of the year, the Historical Society was presented with a New Jersey State Joint Legislative Resolution by State Senator Anthony Bucco to honor our 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The proclamation, unanimously voted upon by the Senate and General Assembly, “recognizes the Society upon this auspicious occasion and salutes the Madison Historical Society upon the milestone” and “extends sincere best wishes for continued success”.



**Nikolina Uzicanin, Noreen McManus, Anne Meyer, Mayor William Conley, Society President Ginnie Laughlin, State Senator Tony Bucco, Linda Connors, Kate Malcolm, Jim Malcolm**

## Coultas Honored With Emeritus Title



Long-time member and former president of the Madison Historical Society, Cathie Coultas, will be joining Dorothy Pietrowski as only the second person honored with Emeritus status with the Society. The honor was voted on by the Society board on November 14, 2022 and a formal presentation of the award will be made at an event as yet to be announced.

Cathie served as president of the Society and with the help of a few volunteers, “...held the society together” during a particularly difficult time. She also was for years, along with Margaret Weisgerber, instrumental in conducting programs on Madison history in the borough’s elementary schools and for over a decade was the leading figure in organizing the Society’s wreath sales during the Christmas season.

Of course, this honor is not the only one bestowed on Cathie Coultas. She was recently honored by Mayor William Conley with the “Mayor’s Hero Legacy Award” for her years of volunteer service to the Borough of Madison. For decades she has worked in various roles advancing the beauty of the borough including serving on the first master plan committee in 1977 that envisioned a new recreational use for Memorial Park property off Rosedale Avenue. She also served on the Parks Advisory Committee, the Madison Garden Club, Friends of Madison Shade Trees, Madison Arts and Culture Alliance and Madison Rotary.

The Madison Historical Society as well as the entire Borough of Madison is eternally grateful for Cathie’s service and marvelous leadership.