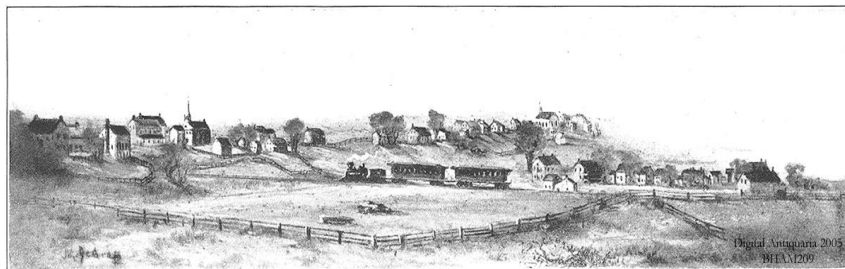


The Madison Historical Society

The Newsletter
November 2012



2012 Wreath Sale at the Hartley Dodge Memorial Building

The Madison Historical Society's annual holiday wreath sale will be held on December 1st from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm at borough hall, the Hartley Dodge Memorial Building. This year's sale will not only feature beautiful wreaths but a large number of table and mantle decorations as well.

Having the wreath sale at the Hartley Dodge Memorial Building will provide the opportunity for borough citizens to view the over 100 historical photographs of Madison that have recently been hung throughout the hall. The images come from the collections of the Madison Historical Society, the Madison Public Library, and the private collection of Nicholas Platt.

Representatives from the Society will be on each floor to answer questions about the photos and there will be short presentations on the subject of Geraldine Dodge's contributions to the borough.

Jazz pianist Jerry Vezza will provide music throughout the afternoon and refreshments will be served.



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Newsletter

Doug Simon

Message From The President

Susan Simon

As the holiday season approaches, the Historical Society has several items available that will make wonderful gifts and decorations for your house. A new addition to our collection is a children's book by Linda J. Barth, titled *Hidden New Jersey* in both hard and soft cover. Other items for the season include two Christmas Ornaments depicting the Luke Miller House and the Sayre House. See page 7 of the newsletter for a complete list of other items for sale.

We are also selling historic pictures of Madison that will make wonderful gifts and will be available at our annual wreath sale. See page 6 for more information.

Speaking of the wreath sale, it will be held on December 1st at the Hartley Dodge Memorial Building. In response to many favorable comments in past years, we will be featuring more table and mantle decorations.

The money that we receive from the wreath sale this year will be going toward the restoration and preservation of the building on the Luke Miller Forge site. The building will ultimately showcase the revolutionary era artifacts found on the property.

We feel very fortunate to have been able to present to you this Fall, two programs that featured the history of the War of 1812. Bill Chemerka spoke on the causes of the conflict and Madison resident, David Hanna, made a wonderful presentation on the war's naval battles.

Meet the Society's Intern Andrea Vacchiano



The Historical Society has been very fortunate this year to have the services of Andrea Vacchiano as a valuable intern. Andrea is a life-long resident of Madison and currently a sophomore at Madison High School with an intense interest in American and local history. She spends several hours each week at the Society's office at the Madison Public Library undertaking several tasks including entering records into the Society's computer data base and helping to file historical documents. For her efforts Andrea receives academic credit at the high school.



Spotlight on History: Christmas in Madison and the Region Over the Years

By Doug Simon

For this issue of the Newsletter, we thought it might be fun to sample how Christmas was practiced and remembered over the years both in Madison and in the general area. In addition to drawing upon a variety of written sources, we are pleased to present Christmas recollections of two citizens who grew up in the borough, Kay Leary and Cathy Coultas.

1779-1780 Christmas at the Morristown Encampment

During the Revolutionary War the holiday season at the Morristown encampment was not characterized by a great deal of noisy, joyful celebrations. Soldiers were preoccupied with building huts to protect them from heavy snowfalls. Indeed, the bitter cold seemed to be the focus of attention. Lieutenant Erkuries Beatty of Hand's Brigade offered this description of his Christmas: "*Camp near Morristown Christmas Day Dec. 25th 79...I am just down from dinner about half Drunk, all dined together upon good roast & boiled, but in a Cold hut, however grog enough will keep out cold for which there is no Desiring, tomorrow we all dine at one with the Colonel, which will be another excellent dinner and I think you may call that fair living, but Ah! I am afraid it won't last many Days...*"¹



The Late 1800's Christmas with Grandpa Webb

In an essay titled "Memories of Grandpa Webb" written nearly a half century ago, life-long resident of Madison, Eleanor Sanford Holden Stoddard recalls celebrating Christmas with her grandfather, James Augustus Webb, one of the great benefactors of Madison. Excerpts from that essay follow:

"The supreme memory of childhood was Christmas. It started Christmas Eve, going to the Sunday School entertainment in the big double sleigh wrapped in buffalo robes with bells jingling and the wintry sky studded with stars. There were sheet carols, new each year and rehearsed for several weeks, sometimes a Christmas pageant, sometimes Santa Clause in person, who distributed toys to the toddlers while the older children had a box of candy and an orange. It was sheer delight."

"Then to Grandma Holden's where our beloved Aunt May, with help from Irish Nellie, served a delectable buffet supper. Afterwards we gathered in the back parlor where presents for all were heaped on the piano and distributed with many thanks and kisses."

"Our family tree had been set up in the art room and trimmed at intervals with cherished decorations, packed away each year in timeworn boxes bearing the date when the tree was last dismantled. We strung popcorn for roping before the days of tinsel ornaments. It took a while to gather the family entourage for the big moment. Grandma Webb was at last seated in the place of honor with Kate her personal maid, beside her guarding a light blue Tiffany box containing extra gifts of money for each family member and the servants as well."

1914 What? No Playstation? IPAD?

While some things never change, others are most definitely altered by time. Below are some short letters to Santa Clause written in December of 1914 and published in the *Madison Eagle* of December 25th of that year.

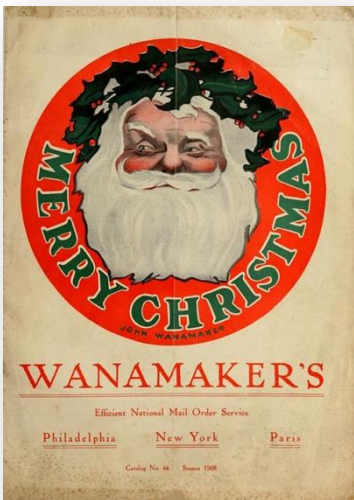
Dear Santa Clause – May I please have a wheel, a pony, a cart and a saddle. With love, John E. Dowsing

Dear Santa Clause – Please bring me a toy weather-vane, a sailor suit and some roller skates. With love. From Francis Rogers

Dear Santa Clause – May I have a desk, a pony, cart, a doll’s house and a doll? With love, Harriet Robbins

Dear Santa Clause – Please send me an automobile, a boat, a toy cannon and a bat. With love, Lane Lovell

1915 Shopping at Wanamaker’s



As a young boy of six years, one of the fondest Christmas memories for William F. Redmond II, was travelling with his mother to New York for a shopping spree at Wanamaker’s department store. Redmond was the nephew of William Franklin Redmond, the former mayor of Madison. As he relates in his memoir, “We would walk down Green Avenue with me all dressed up in my Sunday-best clothes. When we got on the train Mother would let me sit next to the window so I could watch all the construction work going on in the “cut” by Samson Avenue. (It was during this time that the railroad was being elevated.) Also when we got to Maplewood I could see the skaters on the pond there and Christmas trees in people’s yards along the way.”²

Redmond goes on to note that when he and his mother reached Broadway they walked to Eighth Street where the John Wanamaker department store was located and entered through a revolving door that, “...went around and around as people pushed their way into the store.” Once inside, he continues, “...we stood there in awe at all the Christmas lights and decorations. In the center of the first floor was a tall Christmas tree that went up as high as the

second-floor ceiling.” He also remembers that, “... the store had the Gloria Trumpeters, a group of women trumpet players, who stood on the stairway several times a day and played Christmas music on their golden trumpets. It was very impressive.”³

1919 Christmas Without Restrictions

On the heels of WW I, the following excerpts are from an article appearing in the December 19, 1919 *Madison Eagle*:

“This year the celebration both in the churches and outside will be enjoyed by people who have left the turmoil of war far behind and are actually settled down again to the contentment of peace. . . . There are no restrictions now on this and that joy producing article and no stern War Industries Board to say what the kiddies shall have in their stockings and what things are forbid. The only article that Christmas finds scarce this year is sugar. The sweet tooth may not perhaps, be indulged as in pre-war times, but there will be it is said, plenty of good hard candy for those of an age at which a diminishing lump of candy is a cause for regret.”

1947 Kay Leary Remembers the Big Storm

Kay Leary is Madison's Historian and a life-long resident of the borough. One of her most vivid recollections of the holidays focused on the Great Blizzard of 1947. "It was really bad. My aunt and uncle made it down from Morristown for Christmas dinner and managed to get home, but had to take the train. You just could not drive." It was a record-breaking snowfall that began on Christmas without prediction and brought the northeastern United States to a standstill. The snowstorm was described as the worst blizzard since the great snow of 1888. The storm was not accompanied by high winds, but the snow fell silently and steadily. By the time it stopped on December 26, measurement of the snowfall reached 26.4 inches in Central Park in Manhattan. In some parts of New Jersey measurements between 40 and 50 inches were taken. Kay goes on, "We were supposed to attend a wedding on Staten Island the day after Christmas. We were going to drive, but that was impossible so we took the train and ferry. Thank goodness the wedding was in St. George so we could walk to the ceremony. But we missed the reception that was further inland. I remember on the way to the church, my dad leading the way forging a path and the snow halfway up his suit. He was covered."



Flowers, Flowers, Flowers at Christmas

Cathie Coultas is a life-long resident of Madison and some of her strongest memories of Christmas as a child in the 1940s revolve around her family's connection to the rose business. They lived next to the family's large greenhouse and her mother ran the Ruzicka Flower Shop on the property. Cathy recalls, "Because flowers were so important during the holiday season, my mother was always exhausted and a near wreck. Because she was so busy my brother and I had to help out in numerous ways. I remember one year we were up all night putting together a hedge decoration for the annual holiday Debutante's Ball at the Morris County Country Club." Cathy goes on to note, "One of the strongest memories was of my mother putting up a huge Christmas tree, literally a story and a half tall since we had a high pitched ceiling. And I remember my mother teetering on the ladder and almost falling. Also, like Kay, I remember the great snow storm of 1947. We had a little Dachshund named Pretzel who followed us everywhere. The problem came when because of his size and short legs, he just could not navigate the heavy snow and we had to carve out a trail for him."

1951 Santa Clause Arrives in Madison in a Helicopter!



In December 1951, Santa Clause left his reindeer behind and visited the borough via helicopter landing on Dodge Field.

¹ "Christmas During the 'Hard Winter'" Morristown Muster, Park News: The Official Newsletter of Morristown National Historical Park, Winter 2011/2013

² William F. Redmond, II, *Growing Up in the Rose City*, The Will Redmond Foundation, 1987, p. 137.

¹ *ibid* pp 138-139

Historic Photos Still Available

The Society is selling six extraordinary historical photographs of Madison that can be purchased at the society office at the Madison Public Library and at all the organization's events. Subjects of the photos include the old Bottle Hill Tavern, Bellingham's American House on Waverly Place in 1907, a street scene of the Southwest Corner of Waverly Place in 1880, a picture of the early Borough Offices and Jail (formerly the Presbyterian Sessions House), an early 20th century photo of taxis and drivers waiting at the train station, and a picture called the Spires of Madison with the towers of St. Vincent's, Borough Hall, and the Presbyterian Church. Each photo is printed in sepia on archival paper by Park Lane Studios fully matted and in glassine envelopes. Each 8" x 10" print costs \$30.



Southwest Corner, Waverly Place 1880

Events of Interest in the Area

“HOME SCHOOL DAY: FROM FARMS TO SUBURBS,” November 15, 2012, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm at the Charles Shultz House, 30 North Mountain Ave., Montclair. Sponsored by the Montclair Historical Society. Discover life in the early 20th century when this area was rapidly transforming from farmland to suburbs. At the Charles Shultz House, see firsthand what it was like to grow up in a progressive “Victorian” household and how life changed as technology and transportation took hold. Tours and hands-on activities. \$8 per adult; \$5 per child. 30 North Mountain Avenue, Montclair. Reservations are required. 973-744-1796.

WOODROW WILSON CENTENNIAL WALKING TOUR, November 10, 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm. Princeton Historical Society. Celebrate the 100th anniversary of Woodrow Wilson's election as President of the United States with a walking tour of places in the community that were a part of Wilson's life as a student, faculty member and President of the University. The tour guide will use these buildings and houses as focal points in a narrative on the influences of Wilson's early life and education that shaped his character, ambitions and goals for his time as President of the United States. \$7 adults; \$4 children. To register, call (609) 921-6748 x102, or email eve@princetonhistory.org.



“CONCERT: AMERICAN IMPRESSIONS,” November 18, 2012, 3:00 pm.

Voorhees Hall including Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers University, 17 Hamilton St., New Brunswick, N.J. In conjunction with the exhibition “Prints by Mary Cassatt: In the Company of Women,” pianist Rosanne Vita Nahass explores the work of American composers Amy Beach and Charles Tomlinson Griffes, contemporaries of Cassatt who, like her, were influenced by their interactions in European culture. Tickets: \$15 nonmembers, \$10 museum members, and \$5 for Rutgers faculty, staff, and students. Tickets are sold on the day of the concert on a first-come, first-serve basis beginning at 12:30 pm. The ticket price for nonmembers does not include museum admission. Additional information can be obtained at: <http://www.zimmerlimuseum.rutgers.edu/programs-events/lectures-performances#Concerts>



MADISON HISTORICAL SOCIETY – ITEMS FOR SALE

Books:

<u>CIVIL WAR JOURNAL OF PRIVATE HEYWARD EMMELL</u> , edited by Jim Malcolm		\$55.00
<u>GERALDINE Rockefeller Dodge</u> by Barbara J. Minick	Hardcover	\$20.00
	Paper	\$10.00
<u>HIDDEN NEW JERSEY</u> by Linda J. Barth, Illustrations by Hazel Mitchell	Hardcover	\$17.95
	Paper	\$ 8.95
<u>BOTTLE HILL AND MADISON</u> by William Parkhurst Tuttle		\$30.00
<u>FROM HERE TO HEAVEN</u> by Thomas Sapio		\$14.50
<u>GROWING UP IN THE ROSE CITY</u> by William F. Redmond, II		\$10.00
<u>IMAGES OF AMERICA – MADISON</u> by John T. Cunningham		\$20.00
<u>IMAGES OF AMERICA – CHATHAM TOWNSHIP</u> by John T. Cunningham		\$20.00
<u>MEMORIES ENTWINED WITH ROSES</u> by Ruth Churchill		\$15.00
<u>ST. VINCENT MARTYR PARISH, 200 YEARS OF FAITH</u> by Michael P. Riccards		\$25.00
<u>THE UNCERTAIN REVOLUTION</u> by John T. Cunningham		\$26.95
<u>CROSSROADS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION: A GUIDE TO NEW JERSEY'S AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY WAR SITES</u>		\$ 5.00
<u>NEW JERSEY GOES TO WAR: BIOGRAPHIES OF 150 NEW JERSEYANS CAUGHT UP IN THE STRUGGLE OF THE CIVIL WAR</u> edited by Joseph G. Bilby		\$20.00
<u>LINCOLN'S WHITE HOUSE SECRETARY: THE ADVENTUROUS LIFE OF WILLIAM O. STODDARD</u> edited by Harold Holzer		\$39.95

Maps:

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

Miscellaneous:

2012 Madison Calendar by Joseph Mezzacca, Jr.	\$5.00
Postcards of Historic Madison	\$1.00 each or Set of 4 \$3.75
Rose City Tote Bag	\$12.00
Hartley Dodge Memorial Anniversary Note Cards (Pack of 4)	\$ 3.00
Christmas Ornament: Historic Sayre House	\$10.00
Christmas Ornament: Luke Miller House	\$10.00
	(2 for \$15.00)
Madison Historical Society Note Pad with Pen	\$ 2.50
2008, 2009 Madison Photos on Calendar	\$ 1.00

Madison Historical Society DVD's \$10.00 each

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

The Madison Historical Society

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 148, Madison, 07940. Office located
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appointment.

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