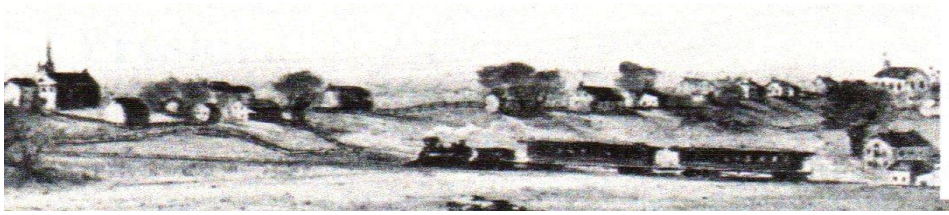


Madison Historical Society

Madison, N.J



November 2016
Newsletter
2nd edition 2016-2017

The Anniversary of America's Entry Into World War I



On April 2, 1917 President Woodrow Wilson went before Congress asking for a declaration of War against Germany. Thus began America's military participation in World War I. In remembrance of that momentous event, the Madison Historical Society Newsletter begins a two part series on America and Madison in WW I. We begin with a discussion of the years just preceding America's entry into the war, 1914-1916. In this edition our focus will be on the country as a whole and then shift to what was going on in Madison itself. In the next edition, February 2017, we will focus on Madison's contributions and sacrifices in the war itself.

- Doug Simon

Part 1

America and Madison Prior to World War I *America*

During the years immediately preceding America's entry into WW I, the country tried mightily to avoid getting entangled in the morass of European politics. The notion of American exceptionalism was popular; we were different. Why get involved in European self-destruction?

The debate as to whether to enter the war became increasingly bitter as we moved closer to intervention. German Americans asserted that it was merely an effort to save the British Empire. Irish Americans were deeply opposed to any alliance with Great Britain. Citizens in the western part of the country felt the East Coast businesses were promoting the war for economic gain and many unionist and socialist believed America should stay out of European capitalist struggles. Isolationism and neutrality were popular ideas.¹ President Woodrow Wilson's policies were consistent with these views. For two and one half years he kept the economy on a peacetime basis and made few preparations for war by largely keeping America's army small.

In May 1915 an event took place that began to shift American opinion and started the country down the path to an eventual declaration of war – the German submarine sinking of the British passenger liner, the Lusitania, on its return voyage to England from New York.



The Sinking of the Lusitania

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Message from President Linda Connors

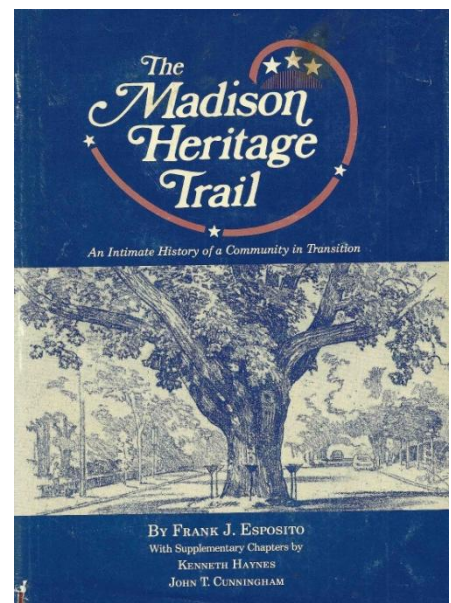
The Madison Historical Society recently received a donation of Gordon Family Papers from Susan Gordon, daughter of Sam Gordon who was for some 60 years a merchant in Madison. Marcia Gordon-Brous, Susan's sister, previously donated papers related to the business. Gordon began in 1941 with a grocery and liquor store at 17 Central Avenue. The grocery flourished into the 1970's when the ever-expanding appliance business pushed out the grocery operation. Eventually the business moved to Prospect Street and finally closed in 2004.

Sam Gordon was the son of Romanian immigrants in Kearny N.J. but his story is rooted in his achievements and success in Madison where he and his wife, Millie, moved in 1940. The Gordons were active members of the community and raised two daughters who spent their entire childhood in Madison. The papers donated by Susan Gordon include photographs of family gatherings and anniversaries, letters, some of Susan's school papers, graduation memorabilia and Peace Corps material. Their lives growing up were not at all atypical.

Sam Gordon and his business were a large part of the life of Madison for many years and the materials donated by his daughters provide a wonderful record of Madison in the second half of the 20th century. Much of Madison history has been lost and continues to be lost, sometimes through our own indifference. We assume the materials are too commonplace to be important—we all have family photographs—but taken together they provide a record of our past, a record that should not exist only in our memories. It is our common past that has shaped the community we live in today.

Historical Society and Library Agree on Joint Book Project

The Madison Historical Society and the Madison Public Library have agreed to a joint project to produce a new edition of Dr. Frank J. Esposito's *The Madison Heritage Trail: An Intimate History of a Community in Transition*. The book was originally published in 1985 by the Madison Bicentennial Heritage Committee and for years has stood as the definitive history of Madison. Both the library board as well as the board of trustees of the historical society have agreed that after thirty-one years it is time for the book to be updated. The original author, Frank Esposito, is very enthusiastic about the project and has already laid out a blueprint for the new edition. There will be three new chapters covering the 1970s, the 1990s and the 2000s. John Cunningham had already provided a chapter dealing with the 1980s. It is hoped the publication of the book will roughly coincide with the opening of the Museum of Madison History, a project that the society has been working on in cooperation with the borough government.



Continued from page 1



Press Publishing Company

SOME PROMISE!

April 1917

The Zimmerman Telegram promised U.S. land in exchange for Mexico's support of Germany in the war.

In early 1917 Germany resumed all out submarine warfare. Every commercial ship headed toward Britain was a potential target. What had happened was that the United States decided that as a neutral nation it was in the national interest to continue trade with all sides. Great Britain's strategy was to impose a blockade on Germany. The British blockade resulted in the tripling of U.S. trade with England and France. It was this that prompted the German submarine warfare against Americans at sea.²

One more event hastened the shift in American public opinion. This was the Zimmerman Telegram. In January of 1917, British cryptographers deciphered a telegram from German Foreign Minister Arthur Zimmerman to the German Minister to Mexico offering United States territory to Mexico in return for joining the German cause. The territory Germany offered consisted of the lands Mexico had lost in the Mexican-American War of 1846-1847.³ The Mexican government rejected the offer but the reaction in the United States was swift. The telegram was made public in February of 1917 and in April Wilson went before a special session of Congress to request a declaration of war against Germany.³

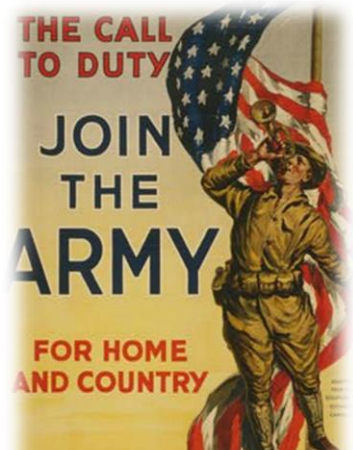
Madison

Like most of the country, during the first two years of the war, 1914-1915, citizens of Madison did not appear to have any great interest in America getting militarily involved in the conflict. Within the borough the more important "national" issue seemed to focus on women's suffrage. There was significant support for Wilson's Peace Proclamation of Thanksgiving of 1914 that among other things called on Americans to help relieve the suffering of those at war in Europe. Indeed, the citizens of the borough had already begun to mobilize a relief effort. In early October 1914 plans got underway in the borough for a mass meeting in the form of a Peace Service at the James Assembly Hall. Local churches suspended their evening services so as not to conflict with the meeting. Mayor Benyew E. Philhower was to preside over the meeting called in support of Wilson's Peace proclamation.⁴ Toward the end of October Madison's Red Cross chapter held a benefit concert that raised \$177.07 to be used to, "...alleviate the sufferings of European humanity" as a result of the war. One of the features of the evening was the comedic performance of one John Palmer who did impersonations of shop girls, Germans and other characters.⁵ We also note that at least one citizen of Madison, Hans Volker, a butler in the household of J.M. Young, returned to Germany to serve in his country's army.⁶ Further in 1914 there were a number of guest speakers in town relaying their experiences traveling in Europe during the first year of the war. They included President Ezra Squier Tipple of the Drew Theological Seminary and war correspondent Dr. Peter MacQueen.⁷ If anything, interest in the war lessened during 1915 although there were some relief efforts and war correspondents like Newark's Edward F. Collins, made appearances.⁸



As the war grew closer in late 1916 and early 1917, the work of the National Women's Peace Party increased, including in Madison.

War relief activities continued in Madison during 1916 such as the Loantaka Camp Fire Girls gathering clothes for children in Europe orphaned by the war.⁹ But it was also the year that the first hints of battle lines on America's policy on the war began to emerge within the borough with proponents of peace through neutrality on one side and the first hints of support for military action under rubric of "American preparedness" on the other. In May a reception was held in the YMCA building in honor of Miss Elizabeth A. Allan, chair of the New Jersey division of the National Women's Peace Party. The party was committed to the following ideas: (1) The immediate calling of convention of neutral nations in the interest of early peace. (2) Limitation of arms and the nationalization of their manufacture, (3) Organized opposition to militarization in our own country, (4) Education of youth in the ideals of peace, (5) Democratic control of foreign policies.¹⁰ The following month at a banquet of the Men's Club of the Presbyterian Church, Commander E. N. Jessup of the U.S. Navy spoke on "Preparedness and Pacifism." He noted how unprepared the U.S. was for possible invasion and our inability to resist an invading army. At present, he said, "There is nothing to interpose between New York City and the enemy. The Atlantic coast is not world defended." He went on to attack the pacifist by stating, "The pacifist idea is wrong because it is based on giving up instead of holding what the United States has." He further stated that he did not believe in pacifism because it is based on cowardice.¹¹ The year 1916 also saw increasing calls within the borough for patriotism. September saw action underway for the Liberty Bond Drive.¹²



With war came the call for service.

In early 1917, as America moved closer to war, so too did the Borough of Madison. During the first week in March, plans were put in motion for the creation of The Madison Home Defense League in order to muster resources, "...whether it be in peace or war."¹³ In late March, all male citizens of Madison were encouraged to attend a meeting in James Hall for the purpose of organizing a rifle club as part of the plans of Madison's Home Defense League. The meeting called for the formation of a military company and to start drilling immediately. This action was entirely separate from any official government military service.¹⁴ On the 30th of March, William O. Stoddard, a former secretary for Abraham Lincoln and now a resident of Madison, called on the citizens of the borough to plant beans and potatoes to help feed the allies. He noted that much of the land in the borough lay idle and that citizens should grow potatoes and, "...help democracy vanquish tyranny and shame in the form of the most vicious autocracy the world has ever known."¹⁵ That same day a short editorial appeared in the *Madison Eagle* that openly challenged the work of the Women's Peace Party and

other pacifist organizations. "You cannot arbitrate with a mad dog which has you by the tail," the column noted.¹⁶ The borough movement toward war was drawing close. On April 02, 1917, President Woodrow Wilson called on Congress to declare war on Germany. America and Madison were now in the war.

¹ "A War Against All Nations," *The First World War Story*, Classic Stories, BBC History Magazine, pp. 74-75.

² "America in the First World War," *U.S. History*, UShistory.org.

³ "The Zimmerman Telegram," National Archives, U.S. National Archives and Records Administration. Archives.gov 2016.

Probably the foremost book on the incident is Barbara Tuchman's, *The Zimmerman Telegram*, New York: Random House, 1985.

⁴ "Peace Service on Sunday Evening," *Madison Eagle*, October 2, 1914, p. 1.

⁵ "Benefit Concert for Red Cross," *Madison Eagle*, October 2, 1914, p. 1.

⁶ "Naval Reservist Reaches Germany," *Madison Eagle*, October 30, 1914, p. 4

⁷ "Dr. MacQueen Speaks of Europe's Battlefields," *Madison Eagle*, October 23, 1914, p. 1 and "President Tittle Tells of War Experiences," *Madison Eagle*, November 6, 1914, p. 2.

⁸ "Edward F. Collins Lectures on War," *Madison Eagle*, February 19, 1915, p. 1.

⁹ "Camp Fire Girls to Aid War Orphans," *Madison Eagle*, March 1, 1916, p. 1

¹⁰ "Many Attend Reception to Organize National Women's Peace Party," *Madison Eagle*, May 26, 1916, p. 1.

¹¹ "United States Must Prepare," *Madison Eagle*, June 2, 1916, p. 1.

¹² "Fighting Fourth Liberty Loan Campaign Is Going Through With a Regular Whoop," *Madison Eagle*, March 2, 1917, p. 1.

¹³ "A Patriotic Appeal to All Citizens," *Madison Eagle*, March 2, 1917, p. 1.

¹⁴ "Military Company and Rifle Company Formed at Meeting in James Hall," *Madison Eagle*, March 30, 2017, p. 1.

¹⁵ "Plant Beans and Be Patriotic Says William O. Stoddard Jr.," *Madison Eagle*, March 30, 2017, p. 1.

¹⁶ "Isn't Pacifism Passivism?" *Madison Eagle*, March 30, 2017, p. 4.

Future Programs On America and WW I

The Madison Historical Society is proud to announce two programs in the Spring season offered in recognition the 100th anniversary of America's entrance and participation in World War I.



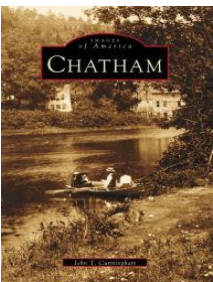
**March 21, 2017, Chase Room -
Dr. James Carter, Chair,
Department of History, Drew
University speaking on **American
Entry into WW I.****

**May 18, 2017, Annual Dinner Meeting,
Rod's at the Madison Hotel. Dr. Perry
Leavel, Drew Professor Emeritus in
History speaking on **Woodrow Wilson
and the Treaty of Versailles.****

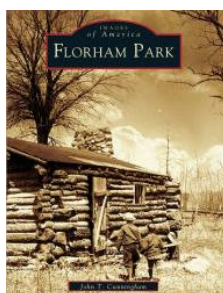


New Books Available

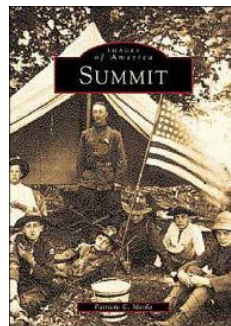
Madison Historical Society has added five Arcadia Press volumes to the array of books available for sale:



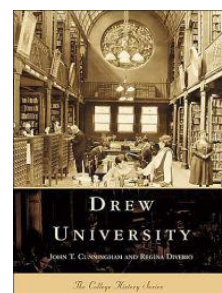
Chatham
By John T.
Cunningham



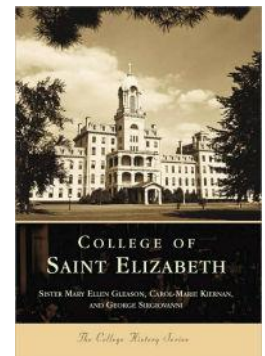
Florham Park
by John T. Cunningham



Summit
by John T.
Cunningham



Drew University
By John T.
Cunningham
And Regina Diverio



**College of Saint
Elizabeth**
by Sister Mary Ellen
Gleason

Events of Interest

Thanksgiving Harvest Home & Armistice Observance,

November 13, 2016, 12:00 PM - 4:00 PM. FOSTERFIELDS

LIVING HISTORICAL FARM, Experience historic holiday

traditions, pitch in with autumn chores on the Farm, and meet all the resident animals. At 1 p.m., all U.S. military personnel and veterans are honored in a special program focusing on the contributions of women. Cost: \$8 per adult, \$7 per senior (65+), \$6 per child age 4 - 16, and \$4 per child age 2 & 3. FREE for children under age 2. U.S. military personnel, past and present, are admitted FREE. Contact: 973.326.7645



Armistice Day 1918

2016 New Jersey Forum, "Changing Attitudes Towards Preserving History and the Environment: A Forum Inspired by the National Park Service Centennial,"

November 18-19, 2016, College of Saint Elizabeth, Convent Station, N.J.. Keynote speaker is Pulitzer Prize Winning Author Dan Fagin. November 18 Tour Reception and talk at the Morristown National Historical Park \$30. November 19, Forum at the College of Saint Elizabeth \$45. November 18 and 19, Tour, reception, talk, and conference \$65. For more complete information on this event go to: http://nj.gov/state/historical/dos_his_2016-nj-forum.html



Washington at Jacob Arnold's Tavern, Morristown, 1777



Jersey Spirits: Prohibition from Flappers to Bootleggers, On view through December 11, 2016, Morris Museum. Hours: 11:00 AM – 5:00 PM Tuesday – Saturday and 12:00 PM – 5:00 PM Sunday. Step back in time to a period of flappers and suffragists, bootleggers and leaders of the temperance movement. Jersey Spirits is an exhibition about the tumultuous Prohibition era in the Garden State. Experience the battle between the Wets and the Dries through fashions of the Roaring 20's, authentic barware and flasks, historic photographs and more.

MADISON HISTORICAL SOCIETY – ITEMS FOR SALE

Books:

ALWAYS WITH US	\$15.00
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
GROWING UP IN THE ROSE CITY by William F. Redmond, II	\$10.00
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
MEMORIES ENTWINED WITH ROSES by Ruth Churchill	\$15.00
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:

Calendars, Madison: 2008, 2009, 2012 by Joseph Mezzacca, Jr.	\$ 1.00
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

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

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

The Madison Historical Society

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Local History Center of the Madison Library

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