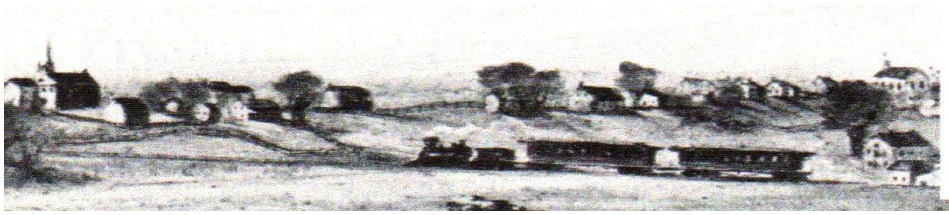


# Madison Historical Society

Madison, N.J



November 2020  
Newsletter 2nd edition  
2020-2021

## Plaque Program Huge Success



One year ago, the Madison Historical Society undertook what was called The Historic House Plaque Project. The project was designed to commemorate homes in the borough built between 1730 and 1900, calling attention to the rich history of Madison. A generous grant from the Madison Elks Club helped to launch the program. The plaques themselves were designed by members of the society and manufactured by Whitehall Products, LLC located in Whitehall, Michigan. While the program is still ongoing, we felt it appropriate to highlight its success after one year in operation.

Based primarily on borough tax records, homes were considered eligible to apply for plaques. Eligibility letters were sent out and an astounding 104 applications were received and the plaques subsequently ordered. While plaques appear on houses all over town, it is not surprising that the greatest concentrations appear on houses on Maple, Ridgedale, and Greenwood avenues, perhaps the most historic residential regions of the borough.



**Kate Malcolm and Virginia Laughlin (Society officers) with Elks Representatives Arthur Cutlo (Madison Elks Exalted Ruler) and Warren Petko (Madison Elks Secretary). The Madison Elks provided a grant to the Historical Society to launch the plaque program.**

Several members of the society worked very hard to make this program a success including Kate Malcolm, Susan Simon, and Noreen McManus. A big thank you to Kathy Rogers for the incredible work she did researching the building record date of every house in Madison and then sorting out the houses built before 12/31/1900. But perhaps the greatest thank you should go to Virginia Laughlin who chaired the entire project.

If homeowners did not receive an eligibility letter from the society but believe that their home should qualify and are interested in obtaining a plaque, please contact us via email at [historicalsociety@rosenet.org](mailto:historicalsociety@rosenet.org). Or drop us a note at P.O Box 148, Madison, 07940. The homeowner's share of the cost is \$50. The remainder is being picked up by the Society.

## Historical Society Officers

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*Herman Huber*

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*Doug Simon*

*Dorothy Pietrowski*

*(Emeritus)*

### Newsletter

*Doug Simon*

## Message from President Susan Simon

Some of us who regularly staff the society's office in the library, have been able to get back into the facility with safety guidelines. We have had to keep our numbers down to two in the office and four if we use the library's Taber room as well. Hopefully in the Spring we will be able to have visitors.

The plaque project has been very successful as noted on page 1 of this newsletter. While you are walking around town, look for the plaques on the older houses and see when they were built.

As of now, our Spring programs that are in the planning stage for March and April, will be virtual. We are not sure what will be happening in May for our Annual Dinner meeting.

Did you see the Madison Coloring Book on the "What is New" page of our website? If you have a child or grandchild that likes to color, you can easily print out the pages and we encourage you to periodically check out our website for up-to-date information including upcoming programs and society projects and activities.

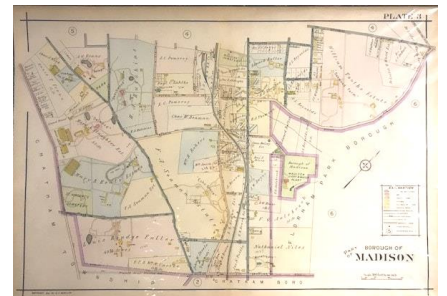
Stay safe, wear a mask and follow social distancing,  
Susan

## MAPS FOR SALE

The Madison Historical Society has several high quality historical maps for sale. All three come from the 1910 Atlas of Morris County by A.H. Mueller. Individual properties are labeled with the name of the circa 1910 owner. All are approximately 22" by 31" in size and are printed on heavy archival paper suitable for framing. The price for each map is \$115 for society members and \$125 for non-members.

If you are interested in the purchase of any of these maps, please contact the Madison Historical Society via email [historical\\_society@rosenet.org](mailto:historical_society@rosenet.org) or drop us a note at P.O. Box 148, Madison, NJ 07940 and we will get back to you.

The society also has a variety of books and other items for sale. Check them out on the society website: [www.madisonnjhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.madisonnjhistoricalsociety.org)





## Spotlight on History

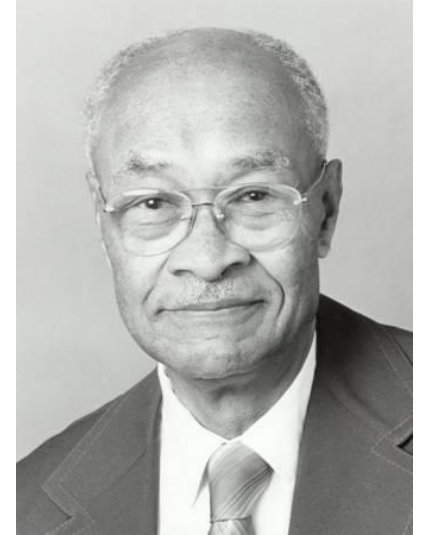
# Madison's Master Theologian and Teacher: Dr. George D. Kelsey

By Herman Huber

*"Racism is so diffused in the atmosphere that those who sincerely will to be healthy are obliged to breathe in a poisonous environment."*<sup>1</sup> Dr. George Kelsey, 1965

*"Obviously, spiritual ideals cannot be brought to full fruition by law. Ultimately, then, democracy is the business of the churches."*<sup>2</sup> Dr. George Kelsey, 1960

What do Martin Luther King, Jr., Christian Existentialist theologian Paul Tillich, Protestant Reformed theologians H. Richard and Reinhold Niebuhr, and Baptist educator and civil rights leader Benjamin E. Mays have in common? These theological and civil rights luminaries were all, at various times, in the orbit of Dr. George D. Kelsey, professor of Christian Ethics in the theological and graduate schools of Drew University from 1951 to 1976. While there, he wrote two seminal books – "Racism and the Christian Understanding of Man" in 1965 and "Social Ethics among Southern Baptists, 1917-1960" in 1973. At his retirement in 1976, he held the Henry Anson Buttz Chair.<sup>3</sup>



Born in 1910 in Columbus, Georgia, he was the valedictorian of his all-Black Cabin Creek High School class. (Many years later he deplored this racist system in which, "The poorest segments of the population had to attend private schools which ... they had to build and maintain." See footnote 8.) Then at Morehouse College he received his bachelor's degree with high honors in 1934. A divinity degree followed at Andover Newton Theological School, again as valedictorian. Finally, 1946 saw him earn his Ph.D. from Yale University. Not to mention post-doctoral studies at Harvard University and the London School of Economics. Along the way, he became an ordained Baptist Minister, and was an executive with the National Council of Churches.<sup>4</sup>

Teaching at Morehouse College, Kelsey gave a young sociology student attending one of his Bible classes, the only "A" grades the student received during his Morehouse years. Kelsey saw something exceptional in him. The student wanted to become a doctor or lawyer. Yet, Kelsey and Benjamin Mays (Morehouse President) helped persuade the young Martin Luther King, Jr. that the ministry would allow him to synthesize his burgeoning socio-political views with Kelsey's social gospel approach and the great truths from the Bible. He saw that King "stood out in class not simply academically, but in the sense that he absorbed Jesus' teachings with his whole being." King never forgot Kelsey's life-altering mentorship.



Dr. George Kelsey with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mrs. Leola Kelsey

Less than a decade later, on the occasion of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Kelsey wrote to King, "Congratulations on the great leadership which you are providing our deprived people in Montgomery. I have always been proud of you as one of my students and as a friend. You surely can imagine my present feelings." In King's letter accompanying his draft manuscript on the Montgomery Boycott, he beseeched Kelsey for guidance. He took his advice to "stress Christianity as the motivating force behind the Montgomery protest," adopting a sentence Kelsey wrote in the margins: "Christ furnished the spirit and motivation, while Gandhi furnished the method."<sup>5</sup>

Following a guest lecture and leading a seminar course at Drew University in 1950, he was invited to join the faculty as an associate professor of Christian Ethics (full professor by 1957). He never looked back. Dr. Charles Courtney, who was on the Drew faculty for 40 years in Kelsey's department, developed a deep fondness for the gracious and elder professor. In October 1992, at the unveiling of a portrait of Kelsey in Seminary Hall (one of only three "great teachers" so honored over 40 years), Courtney introduced the painting by pointing out one of Kelsey's characteristic virtues – "circumspection." "Many times in faculty meetings some colleague would run ahead with some proposal or critique. George would then quietly ask, 'Yes, but did you think of this and then of that?'" So venerated was Kelsey, that Courtney did not use the term "Black" in his presence until Kelsey did, and that took a few years.<sup>6</sup>

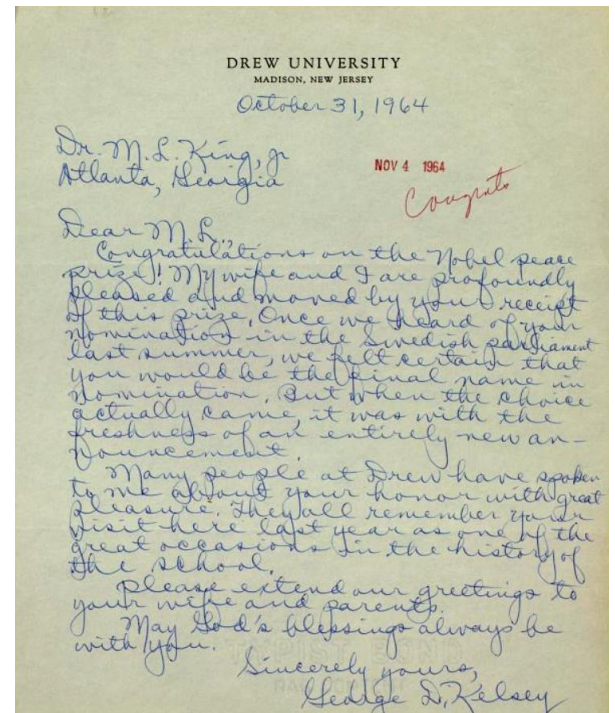
In his youth and young adulthood in the South, and even after being hired by Drew University, he knew the humiliating experience of discrimination and labeled it as apartheid. In preparation for the move to Madison, and before meeting the realtor, a list of highly desirable homes was suggested that he was sure to love. However, upon meeting the realtor, whose mouth must have dropped to the floor upon seeing the new clients, the couple was immediately steered to a different and more "compatible section" of Madison.<sup>7</sup> He certainly had this episode on his mind in a lecture to the United Methodist Church in Madison when he said, "The six-figure black... when he wishes to buy the home of his choice in the suburbs knows that racism is alive in America."<sup>8</sup> The Kelseys lived at 5 Cedar St. in Madison until their deaths.

Leola Hanks and George Kelsey met when young and quickly fell in love. They wed in 1930 and had a long and beautiful relationship. She was noted for creating the highly regarded Drew campus garden. Three children were born to the couple, two boys and a girl. One of their sons, a successful banker at Chase, tragically succumbed in his 30s. They had four grandchildren. After his retirement and until her death in 1984, he took complete care of his ailing Leola.

In 1979, Kelsey was honored by delivering the convening prayer at the 96<sup>th</sup> Congress of the U.S. Senate. Towards the end of his life, he was lovingly cared for by his former student and colleague, Dr. Don Jones. Kelsey suffered the ravages of Alzheimer's disease. It was noted by a caretaker, Tomra Vecere, that he loved to listen to religious hymns even as he was robbed of his memory. He died at the King James Care Center in Chatham Township on April 3, 1996. He was 85 years old.<sup>9, 10</sup>

#### References:

1. Kelsey, George. 1965. *Racism and the Christian Understanding of Man*, Charles Scribner's Sons, p. 175.
2. Kelsey, George. 1960. Law, Morals, and American Protestantism. In *Drew Gateway*, vol. xxx.2, pg. 100.
3. [Aaregistry.org/story/dr-george-kelsey-was-a-great-theologian/](http://Aaregistry.org/story/dr-george-kelsey-was-a-great-theologian/)
4. [Kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/Kelsey-george-dennis-sale](http://Kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/Kelsey-george-dennis-sale).
5. [uknow.drew.edu/confluence/display/DrewHistory/George+Kelsey](http://uknow.drew.edu/confluence/display/DrewHistory/George+Kelsey).
6. Interview with Dr. Charles Courtney, October 7, 2020.
7. Trulear, Harold Dean, Ed., Donald Jones in *The Pastor Scholar. Unsung Hero: The Legacy of George D. Kelsey*. Andover Newton Theological School, undated.
8. Madison Eagle, April 30, 1987. *Peculiar status of Blacks in America*. P. 19.
9. [NYTimes.com/1996/04/15/nyregion/dr-george-kelsey-baptist-minister-85](http://NYTimes.com/1996/04/15/nyregion/dr-george-kelsey-baptist-minister-85)
10. Madison Eagle, April 11, 1996. *Rev. George Kelsey, 25-year Drew Professor*.



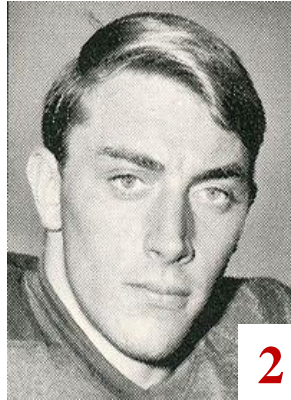
Note from Dr. Kelsey to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on his Nobel Peace Prize

*Do you know these famous Madisonians and what they are noted for? (Answers can be found on page 6)*



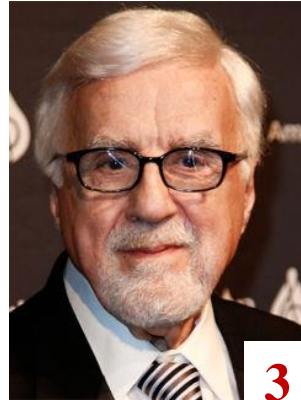
**1**

Clue: Wrote Russian Winter



**2**

Clue: Perhaps Madison's greatest athlete



**3**

Clue: Foundation bears his name



**4**

Clue: Great at putting things in focus



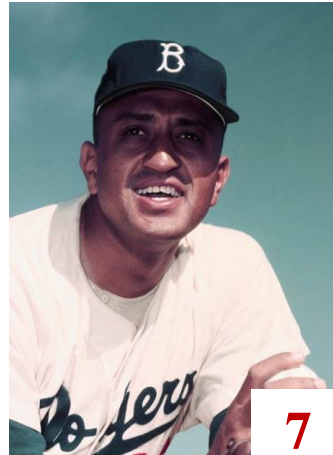
**5**

Clue: Good for a laugh



**6**

Clue: Skilled with a scalpel.



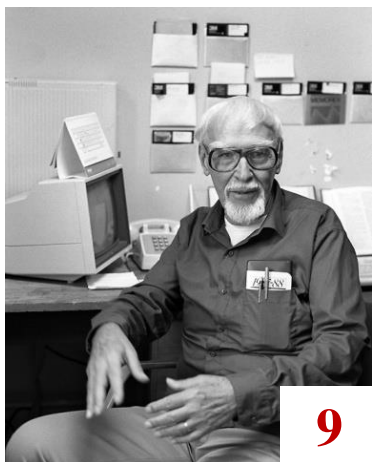
**7**

Clue: On the mound



**8**

Clue: Frontline heroine.



**9**

Clue: Good with words



**10**

Clue: Sky is the limit



**11**

Clue: A magnificent first



**12**

Clue: Abe's right hand man

## Answers to the Famous Madisonians Quiz:

1. **Daphne Kalotay.** Author, *Russian Winter, Sight Readings, Blue House.*
2. **Peter Jilleba.** All-Star Athlete. Named Greatest Athlete in Morris County History. Played under Bear Bryant at Alabama.
3. **Tony Martell.** American music executive and philanthropist. Founder of the Martell Foundation.
4. **Robert Adams.** Renown Photographer. Author of *American West.*
5. **Janeane Garofalo:** Actor and comedian.
6. **Lewis Sayre.** Considered the Founding Father of Orthopedic Surgery in the United States.
7. **Don Newcombe:** Brooklyn Dodger Hall of Famer, First Cy Young Award winner.
8. **Amabel Scharff Roberts.** The first nurse from the U.S. to die in France during WW I.
9. **Robert L. Chapman:** Author of *The Dictionary of American Slang* and editor of *Roget's Thesaurus.*
10. **William A. Starett:** Builder of the Empire State Building and known as Father of the Skyscraper..
11. **Betty Baumgartner.** First female mayor of Madison, 1980-1987.
12. **William O. Stoddard:** Third Secretary to Abraham Lincoln and Lincoln biographer



### From the Office

By Johanna Glazewski

One of the many tasks of volunteers working in historical society's office is to inventory, log-in, and assess various donated items. In 2001, the Madison Historical Society received a collection focused on the Thursday Morning Club through Mary-Ann Holden. It includes a variety of materials from the beginning to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including items such as annual reports, committee records, photographs and newspaper clippings, architectural drawings for the Rose Wing addition, legal papers, and citations recognizing the club's contributions to Madison's and New Jersey's civic development. These provide valuable information on the commitment and achievements of the club's members and leadership.

One such document is a May 3, 1965 report by Alice Rankin (Chairman of The Madison Settlement Board of Directors), "A Review of Welfare and Recreation Programs Undertaken by TMC since April 26, 1906." In 1906 Mrs. W.R. Blake said, "You think we are a lecture club, [but] if you stop to think you can find many things in Madison in need of improvement and Madison women, and especially those of TMC, can accomplish anything they undertake". She then moved that the club organize and in response to a request from the town fathers formed a Town Improvement Committee. And so the women began – cleaned streets and the railroad station, worked on children's activities, hired a nurse, raised money to start the Settlement House which served so many.

During the Cold War, the story of the Settlement House was sent out by Voice of America to countries behind the Iron Curtain. A 1953 letter from the General Federation of Women's Clubs states that it believed the TMC was the only women's club in the US to own and operate a Settlement House. In 1955 the TMC was cited among the top 200 women's organizations in the country for its public services.

In 1920, Mrs. Alexander Cash bequeathed 1/8 of her estate so the club could build a permanent building for the Settlement House. In 1957 TMC voted to change the name to The Madison Community House since that better showed that it was meant to benefit everyone wanting to take advantage of its work.

A wonderful record of those first 50 years an organization that still is thriving for the benefit of the Madison community!!!

## Virtual Programs a First for Historical Society

On September 15 and October 20 of this year, the Madison Historical Society presented its first ever virtual guest lectures. Using Zoom, Ray Williams, noted New Jersey numismatist, presented a talk on currency used during the American Revolution. Roughly a month later, Dr. Robert Butts presented a program on “The History of the Baroque Orchestra of New Jersey”. Both programs proved popular with both society members and guests alike, drawing participants in numbers comparable to live attendance at similar programs at the Madison Library.

## Follows-Up From Ray Williams

Following his talk on September 5<sup>th</sup> talk, numismatist, Ray Williams, sent a communiqué to the Madison Historical Society, relaying a story he was not able to fit into his lecture on Revolutionary War currency. It reads as follows:



“Here are the fronts of the four denominations and just one of the backs. I explained how \$1/6 was equal to one shilling, so these bills would have been worth one, two, three and four shilling respectively. I only provided one back as they are all the same except for the denomination. I explained that these designs were provided by Ben Franklin and were again used of the very first coin authorized by the Continental Congress – the Fugio copper of 1787. There is a story I didn’t share about them.

After the battle of Trenton and Princeton, Washington’s Army encamped in Morristown January of 1777 thru May. When the Army was departing, it received pay from the Continental Congress (\$524,000). The paymaster was General William Palfrey, who was formerly a clerk for John Hancock. Palfrey wrote to Elbridge Gerry at the Continental Congress with a complaint about the payroll. I have the exact quotes from the communication, but to summarize it, the quantity of small denomination bills was so great that its weight and size were burdensome and security was a problem. This was especially true for an army constantly on the move. Whether or not he received larger denomination bills in the future, I don’t know but suspect he did.

Thank you again for allowing me to share my hobby fun and thank you to all that took off an hour of their time to attend.”

Ray Williams