Madison Historical Society

Winter 2017

Historical Happenings

UPCOMING EVENTS

HISTORY BOOK GROUP
Allis-Bushnell House
January 19
7 pm

THE FREDERICK LEE LECTURES
Hubley Hall
First Congregational Church
4 pm

The Decisive Day
January 8
(Snow Date January 15)

Sergeant Stubby
February 12
(Snow Date February 19)

American Field Service Presentation
March 12
(Snow Date March 19)

Remembering the Great War through the Frederick Lee Lectures

The tenth annual Frederick Lee Lectures will be held at the First Congregational Church beginning in January 2017. The three-part series complements the society's exhibition, *Over Here, Over There: Madison in World War I*, which reopens in April 2017 at Lee's Academy on the Green. A companion exhibit created by the Charlotte L. Evarts Memorial Archives is at the Memorial Town Hall.

On January 8 author and military historian Mark Albertson opens the series with his "Decisive Day" presentation. Albertson charts the course of American history from the Louisiana Purchase to the declaration of war by the United States Congress against Germany. The author makes the case that April 6, 1917, is of greater importance than December 6, 1941. Albertson's program will explain how the United States rose to become a superpower in WWI, leaving behind isolationist policies and embracing global dominance.

Winner of the prestigious Children's Book Guild Award for nonfiction literature, author Ann Bausum tells the heartwarming story of Sergeant Stubby at the second lecture on February 12. Stubby, a short brindle bull terrier mutt, served with the 102nd Infantry of the American Expeditionary Forces and was officially a decorated hero of World War I. During his time serving on the front, Stubby earned one wound stripe and three service stripes. His story of bravery, heroism, and loyalty will certainly be of interest to the whole family.

The series closes on March 12 with a dramatic presentation by George King and Jeff Klinger about the American Ambulance Field Service. The all-volunteer field service was comprised of young, college-educated men who felt it was their responsibility to be where the action was and who sought adventure. The program explores the experiences of several members of the service in their own words, using their letters and journals from the front.

The Frederick Lee Lectures are open to the public with a suggested donation of $5. Each presentation begins at 4 pm and is followed by a brief Q & A session. The WWI exhibit at Lee's Academy will open for an hour following each program. Light refreshments will be served. Inquiries can be directed to the MHS office at 203.245.4567 or via email at contact@madison-history.org

The MHS is humbled by the support this educational initiative receives from the community. The Madison Foundation provides generous financial support and the First Congregational Church offers Hubley Hall as the home of the Lectures. We remain grateful to be part of a town that values history and supports local civic organizations.

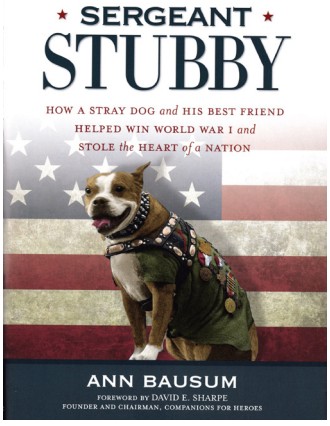


Photo: Powder & Pixel

IT'S OUR 100th BIRTHDAY! LET'S CELEBRATE!

In 2017, the MHS turns 100. As the oldest civic organization in Madison, we are proud of the important role we play in contributing to the present and future vitality of the town. To celebrate our centennial, the MHS is planning many exciting events and activities. In January we will launch a community-wide local distinctiveness project to get residents thinking about what makes Madison special and unique. In July, the MHS will "take over" the town with installations in storefronts along the Post Road and Wall Street. We hope to feature vintage photographs of the downtown as it looked in 1917 and in the following decades. Our festivities culminate in October with a gala at the Madison Beach Hotel.

Our gift to the town will be a web-based tour of the public and private structures and monuments in Madison's National Historic District. This place-based digital storytelling program will provide an entertaining audio/visual experience of the properties around the green. Much more than an architecture lesson, it will offer intriguing tales from three centuries of Madison's history. The MHS is grateful to the CT Office of the Arts, the CT State Preservation Office, and Guilford Savings Bank for their generous financial support for this project. We also wish to thank the Charlotte Evarts Memorial Archives and the Scranton Library for its assistance in working with the interns and DHHS students who have worked diligently on this special educational initiative.

Photos: Bob Gundersen

Please look for announcements on upcoming events and activities. We hope you will join us in celebrating our centennial.

APPEALING TO YOUR PHILANTHROPIC SIDE

There is a general misconception in this country that foundations and large corporations are the backbone of nonprofit fundraising. Not so! "Year after year, individuals in the U.S. are responsible, in the main, for contributing the steady 2% of GDP that constitutes giving in this country," says The Annual Report on Giving produced by the Giving USA Foundation.

Donations large and small are the lifeblood of the MHS. Without your help, we cannot continue to offer engaging educational programs, maintain our historic properties, or care for our collection of more than 4,000 treasures from Madison's past.

Please consider supporting the MHS by making a financial contribution.

CANDLES IN THE WINDOWS

As you drive through Madison this winter and enjoy the festive light of candles in the windows of so many of our historic homes, we hope this wintry vision reminds you of the generations of Madison citizens who lived here in years past, shaping our treasured community with their work, their arts, and their civic engagement. We remember Reuben Shailor, crafting toys for the children of the village. We remember Samuel Fiske, polishing his Civil War sermons by firelight. We remember Clarissa Munger and her sisters, artfully recording the beauties of the woodland and the shore with their paintbrushes. At the MHS, we honor all those who contributed to the building of our community. We hope that when you imagine these earlier citizens, you will also consider a generous holiday gift to the MHS. In return, we promise to continue telling important stories that celebrate the unique qualities of life in Madison, our own jewel on the Shoreline.

MAKING HISTORY ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

In November, the MHS hosted special needs students from Guilford High school. A group of twenty students and teachers toured the Allis-Bushnell House and learned about the town's history. This visit was possible because of the accessibility ramp installed last year following an extensive renovation. We were thrilled to share the house and its treasures with the students. We hope to create more opportunities to open the house to all residents and visitors.

THE MHS FAMILY IS GROWING

We are pleased to announce that Astrid Bernard has joined the MHS staff. A long-time teacher and administrator at the Suzuki Music School of Westport, Astrid is a professional flutist and mother of two. Living in Madison for more than ten years, she brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the office manager position.

If you have visited the office in Lee's Academy recently, you may have met Poppy and Delphi, the black lab puppies rescued by our executive director. The canine sisters traveled nearly 1400 miles from Little Rock to Madison and are glad to have found their forever home.

RENOVATIONS AT THE ANNEX

In September, work began on the Annex to repair or replace many of the rotting clapboards that make up the tongue-and-groove exterior siding on the structure. The building, which dates to the mid-nineteenth century, was moved to the complex of outbuildings at the Allis-Bushnell House. It is comprised of three horse sheds that once were near the green and an earlier Lutheran church. The Annex houses the Society's extensive collection of tools and implements of the trade that reflect Madison's past. Gadgets and devices from farming to fishing, weaving to spinning, are all on display in this rustic building dedicated to preserving the artifacts of labor and industry, both within and outside the home.

Thanks to a generous grant from the Summer Hill Foundation, the MHS was able to preserve this important structure from further decay. Many of the sills were replaced or repaired following extensive work on the siding. A new fiberglass door was installed, and the entire building was painted to protect it for many years to come.

Photo: George Cuhaj

Photo: Gulick & Company

A BUSY HOLIDAY SEASON AT THE A-B HOUSE

On December 3, MHS members and friends gathered to celebrate the winter holidays. Nearly ninety guests filled the house to enjoy good food, historic punch, and merriment. The lovely flower arrangements that adorned the rooms were graciously provided by volunteers from the Garden Club of Madison who hosted their own holiday party at the house the previous Thursday. Members of Madison's Republican Town Committee held their holiday celebration at the house on December 12.

Recent renovations to the interior and exterior of the house and its annex were all part of a larger goal to make the property more accessible to the public. Our aim is to open the house as much as possible, develop interesting programming covering a range of topics, and encourage broader community engagement and involvement among all Madison residents. If you are one of the Madison natives who have never experienced the charm of our historic home, we invite you to visit and learn more of the history of our town.

THE MHS HONORS THE SUMMER HILL FOUNDATION WITH ITS JANE R. KUHL AWARD FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Each year the MHS chooses an individual or group to recognize for their outstanding achievement in the field of historic preservation. This year we honor the Summer Hill Foundation for their commitment to protecting open spaces, preserving land in its natural state and funding renovations and restoration of historically significant buildings.

Founded in 2007, and located in Madison, the Summer Hill Foundation has become a lifeline for many town organizations dedicated to maintaining the historic character of Madison. The new roof and extensive renovations at our Allis-Bushnell House, the recent restoration of the exterior of the Annex on the Allis-Bushnell property, and the Lee's Academy renovations would not have been possible without their generous support. The Madison Historical Society is deeply indebted to the generosity and passion for preservation that the Summer Hill Foundation has exhibited over the past decade.

MHS MONTHLY HISTORY BOOK GROUP

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Books are often available at the Scranton Library: call 203-245-7365 to inquire.

To register, please call 203-245-4567 or e-mail contact@madisonhistory.org. Walk-ins are always welcome!

Meetings occur every third Tuesday at 7:00 PM at the Allis-Bushnell House and are led by Lyle Cubberly, Ph.D. (1lachawk@att.net)

For more information about the books, please go to the Adult Education page at www.madisonhistorical.org

JANUARY 19
SPQR
by Mary Beard

FEBRUARY 16
Salt
by Mark Kurlansky

MARCH 15
1453: The Holy War for Constantinople and the Clash of Islam and the West
by Roger Crowley

APRIL 19
At Home: A Short History of Private Life
by Bill Bryson

MAY 17
Sapiens: A Brief History of Mankind
by Yuval Noah Harari

JUNE 21
Longitude: True Story of the Lone Genius Who Solved the Greatest Scientific Problem of His Time
by Dave Sobel

The Madison Historical Society *presents*

The Frederick Lee Lectures

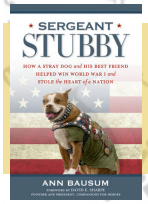
First Congregational Church - Hubley Hall - 27 Meetinghouse Lane, Madison

★A Decisive Day ★ Sergeant Stubby ★ Sirens at the Front Lines

WORLD WAR I

Mark Albertson - A Decisive Day in 1917:
America Becomes a Global Superpower
4 p.m. Sunday, January 8 (snow date January 15)

These lectures are made possible by a grant from The Madison Foundation



Ann Bausum - Sergeant Stubby:
How A Stray Dog and His Best Friend Helped Win World War I and Stole the Heart of a Nation
4 p.m. Sunday, February 12 (snow date February 19)

Support also provided by the First Congregational Church

George King *and* Jeff Klinger - Sirens at the Front Line:
American Ambulance Drivers in the Great War
4 p.m. Sunday, March 12 (snow date March 19)

Adults - $5
MHS members - $4
Students over 10 - $2

For more information:
call 203-245-4567 or visit
madisoncthistorical.org

Madison Historical Society
Founded in 1917
P.O. Box 17
Madison, CT 06443
203-245-4567
www.madisoncthistorical.org

MHS offices are open in the c. 1821 Lee's Academy at 14 Meetinghouse Lane on Wednesday, Thursday & Friday from 9 AM to 1 PM.

For a tour of the MHS c. 1785 National Historic Register property, the Allis-Bushnell House, call 203-245-4567.

The MHS newsletter is published quarterly.

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Post Office Box 17 Madison, Connecticut 06443 203.245.4567

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