Spring 2018

Madison Historical Society

Historical Happenings

UPCOMING EVENTS

OVER HERE, OVER THERE: MADISON IN WWI
Lee's Academy Exhibition Hall
Saturdays April - November
11 am to 4 pm
Free admission

RICK SPENCER: SONGS AND STORIES OF WWI
Memorial Town Hall
May 6
3 pm
Free admission

MHS ANNUAL MEETING
Memorial Town Hall
Presenters Carol Snow and Bob Gundersen
May 7
7 pm
Refreshments

CT OPEN HOUSE DAY
Allis-Bushnell House
June 9
11 am to 4 pm
Free admission

ANNUAL TOUR OF REMARKABLE HOMES
June 24
11 am to 4 pm
$35 in advance/$40 on day
Tickets at MHS and online

47TH ANNUAL MHS ANTIQUES FAIR
On the Madison Green
August 25
9 am to 4 pm
Admission $5

Rick Spencer Performs Songs of WWI in Free Concert

The Madison Historical Society will host a history-based concert of the songs of World War I with music historian Rick Spencer at Memorial Town Hall on May 6. The performance coincides with the reopening of the Society's award-winning exhibition, ***Over Here, Over There: Madison in World War I***, which tells the compelling stories of the men and women who served at home and at the front.

The popular songs of the Great War era were patriotic and inspiring. Many described tragedy, loss, fear, and hope, though a surprising number were humorous as well. "Music tied the men on the battlefield to their families at home. It united people in their beliefs, and inspired those who left home and family to fight. To listen to the songs of the First World War is to hear the cultural history of the period brought vividly to life," says Spencer.

The program on May 6 will feature the WWI diaries of Dr. Jessie Fisher, a female medic who meticulously recorded her experiences working with the American Red Cross in France. The presentation includes dramatic readings from her diaries, a slideshow of historic images, and songs from the First World War.

Spencer's historic music programs are well-researched concerts with a strong focus on entertainment. He has performed to captivated audiences at historical societies, museums, libraries, and academic institutions from New England to California. The MHS is pleased to welcome him back to Madison for this free event on Sunday, May 6, at 3pm.

World War I Exhibition Reopens for Final Months

Over Here, Over There: Madison in WWI, a collaborative exhibition of the Madison Historical Society and the Charlotte L. Evarts Memorial Archives, reopened to the public on April 7. Mounted in the exhibition hall of Lee's Academy with a companion display in Memorial Town Hall, the exhibit will be open Saturdays from 11- 4 through November or by appointment.

More than four million Americans served in uniform during the Great War. Among them were seventy-two Madison men, of whom eight gave their lives in combat. November 11, 2018, marks the centennial anniversary of the cessation of hostilities between the Allied and Central forces. The armistice took effect at eleven o'clock in the morning—the "eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month" of 1918. To mark this important milestone, the MHS is planning a small armistice commemoration. Look for announcements in the coming months.

Through exhibitions, lectures, and educational activities, the

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HISTORIC PLAQUE PROGRAM NEEDS YOUR EXPERTISE

Are you a retired title searcher with some free time to spare? The Madison Historical Society has a need for someone with your skills to help with our historic plaque program. We believe that Madison's historic structures, including its ruins, remnants, and remaining historic buildings, add to our town's unique character. Historic preservation adds to the quality of life in our New England suburban setting, creating a livable community that is full of charm and aesthetic appeal. Most importantly, preservation of historic structures leaves visible and useful evidence of our town's cultural history. These buildings offer tangible evidence of the stories of our citizens through three and a half centuries.

Madison is important both as an early shoreline settlement, including farms, shipbuilding ventures, and small industries, and as a popular summer resort town. The local architecture reflects these distinct periods in Madison's heritage. For more than four decades, the MHS has offered a Historic Building Plaque Program to owners of all Madison properties that predate 1930. The program seeks to call attention to the historic character of Madison, to recognise the early buildings or the people who built them, and to encourage stewardship for the historic built environment of our community.

To continue to offer this important program, the MHS is seeking a retired or semi-retired title search professional to volunteer their time. We currently have four homes in need of deed research before we can invite the architectural historian to town to do a site visit. Please reach out to our Executive Director Jenny Simpson if you can share your time and expertise to help the MHS continue this critical program.

WWI EXHIBIT REOPENS FOR FINAL RUN

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MHS aims to make visitors aware of how the past shapes our present. ***Over Here, Over There: Madison in WWI*** is free and open to the public. Don't miss your chance to visit this award-winning exhibition before it closes at the end of the year.

MHS ANNUAL MEETING: COLLECTING AND THE ROLE OF THE MUSEUM

The Madison Historical Society was founded more than a century ago with the goal of preserving the past for future generations. But why do we keep stuff and what do we learn from it? Collecting and the role of the museum will be the topic of a presentation at the MHS annual meeting to be held on Monday, May 7, at 7 pm at Memorial Town Hall.

Following our business meeting, board trustees Carol Snow and Bob Gundersen will give a brief presentation on how a museum decides what to collect. Are you a collector? In this informative talk you'll discover why people are fascinated with objects from our past and how these artifacts are relevant to our experiences today. Don't miss the opportunity to hear Snow, Deputy Chief Conservator at the Yale University Art Gallery, and Gundersen, MHS Collections Chair, discuss why we collect and what museums might collect fifty years from now. Light refreshments will be served following the presentation.

MHS TO DONATE *MADISON TREASURES* TO LIBRARIANS

The weather gods conspired against us this winter. This was evident in two failed attempts by board trustees to organize a ceremony to present town librarians with our centennial publication, *Madison Treasures.* On January 30 and again on March 9, the book committee planned to hold an event at the Allis-Bushnell House to present the publication to the librarians of the public schools, the Country School, Our Lady of Mercy, the Grove School, and the E.C. Scranton Memorial Library. Unfortunately, both programs were postponed due to inclement weather. The event has been rescheduled for May 15. We hope there is a zero-percent chance of snow.

MHS TO RECEIVE GIFT OF MILLSTONE

In late February Joe Oslander, a lifelong Rockland resident and founding member of the Rockland Preserve, contacted the MHS to ask if we were interested in a donation of a four-foot millstone located at 752 Summer Hill Road. Millstones date from the neolithic era and were used in grist mills for grinding wheat or other grains. The location of this stone on Summer Hill Road next to the Hammonasset Lake presented a bit of a mystery as millstones require flowing water to turn. The Regional Water Authority has owned the property since 1957 when it was purchased to protect the public water supply. Renters and RWA employees have lived in the house, which is believed to date from the 1940s and was originally built by Clifford Dudley.

The last RWA employee to live in the house confirmed that the stone has been in place since at least 1984 when he took up residence there. Similar stones were set into the Lake Menunkatuck Dam in Guilford and were removed in 1998 when work was done on that structure. "I wish we knew where it was used," said MHS collections chair Bob Gundersen. "It would be wonderful to know that it was part of the Hammonasset Dam, but this stone looks too small for use there." Nonetheless the MHS is happy to preserve this fascinating piece of history. The stone will be transported from the property to the Allis-Bushnell House later this spring.

14TH ANNUAL CONNECTICUT OPEN HOUSE DAY

In support of the fourteenth annual Connecticut Open House Day on Saturday, June 9, the Madison Historical Society will offer tours of its 1785 Allis-Bushnell House. Museums, historical societies, and cultural institutions offer free admission in this statewide event. This is a great way for residents to discover the art, history, and culture of our state.

The Allis-Bushnell House will be open from 11- 4. Stop by to check out such newest acquisitions as the Gilbert Munger landscape. Copies of our centennial publication, *Madison Treasures*, and the Madison A- Z poster will be available for purchase. Light refreshments will be served.

TOUR OF REMARKABLE HOMES

The sixth annual Tour of Remarkable Homes will be held on Sunday, June 24, from 11 to 4.
We are still in the planning stages, but we have already secured four exciting properties for visitors to tour. One of the gems of the tour will be a 1744 Cape Cod-style house in North Madison. This is our first venture north of the Route 80 circle, but the trip will be worth the effort. This traditional New England home painted in classic barn red sits on nearly five acres of land and features a guest house, an in-ground pool, and a barn for the owners' two miniature horses. Look for more announcements on the Tour in the coming weeks.

If you would like to volunteer as a docent at one of the properties, please contact the office at (203) 245-4567 or via email at contact@madisonhistory.org.

This 1744 Cape Cod-style house in North Madison will be featured on the sixth annual Tour of Remarkable Homes.

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

MAY 15

A Passion for Nature:
The Life of John Muir
Donald Worster

JUNE 19

Wellington: The Iron Duke
Richard Holmes

JULY 17

Thomas Jefferson and the Tripoli Pirates:
The Forgotten War that Changed American History
Brian Kilmeade and Don Yaeger

AUGUST 21

The Aztecs: The Rise and Fall of an Empire
Serge Gruinski

SEPTEMBER 18

Germany: Memories of a Nation
Neil MacGregor

Music historian **Rick Spencer** performs music composed during the "Great War." To listen to the songs of World War I is to hear the cultural history of the period brought vividly to life.

Sunday, May 6

3pm Lecture and Concert
Memorial Town Hall
Free Admission

Music from the WAR to End all WARS

Visit the award-winning exhibit ***Over Here, Over There: Madison in World War I***, Saturdays, April through November from 11 am to 4 pm.

Made possible by a generous grant from Connecticut Humanities

the MADISON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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