

HISTORICAL HAPPENINGS

MHS LAUNCHES HISTORY HAPPY HOUR

The Madison Historical Society is pleased to announce its new adult engagement series, History Happy Hours. Each month, brief history tidbits and beverages will be offered at the historic Allis-Bushnell House or at the Madison Center for History and Culture, located in the newly restored lower level of Lee's Academy on Madison's historic green. These monthly programs, offered on selected Fridays from 6 - 7 PM, will feature adult refreshments and unique explorations of local lore.

The series debuted on March 24 with a short video presentation on Madison native Cornelius Bushnell, famed in part for his role in the creation of the ironclad warship, the USS Monitor. Bushnell left home at age sixteen to join the merchant marines and went on to become president of the Union Pacific Railroad. A persuasive speaker, he changed the course of naval history when he lobbied Congress for funding for a fleet of ironclad ships. Artifacts, artwork, and antiques related to the Bushnell family were also on display.

On April 21 the series welcomes TG Gallagher of the Wine Thief of Madison who will offer a short talk on the history of cider. A handful of years after the English colonizers arrived in Plymouth in 1620, they planted apple trees, and, indeed, most homes had an apple orchard. As clean drinking water was not readily available,



the pressing and fermenting of fresh apple juice made a preferable and safer beverage for consumption. A tasting of hard apple and pear cider will follow the brief presentation.

On May 26 we will welcome MHS member and retired Yale University Art Gallery objects conservator, Carol Snow. In keeping with the happy hour theme, Carol will discuss drinking vessels used to contain beverages or transport liquids. The MHS has a collection of nineteenth-century stoneware jugs and tumblers, some of which are intricately decorated and relate to Madison's history of sailing and shipbuilding.

The MHS is delighted to partner with the Wine Thief of Madison, which is providing the libations for this new monthly series. All adults of legal drinking age are invited to meet fellow history buffs and discover intriguing history tidbits while enjoying an alcoholic refreshment in a historic setting.



Admission at the door is \$10 (\$5 for MHS members). No advance registration is required. Visit www.madisonhistory.org for more information on upcoming events.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE MADISON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Members' Annual Meeting

A Madison Pop Music Time Machine.
Tuesday, May 23 @ 5:30 PM
E.C. Scranton Library

Great Give

May 3 @ 8 AM to May 4 @ 8 PM
Online giving event to raise funds
for the summer internship program.

Connecticut Open House Day

Saturday, June 10, 11AM - 3PM
Madison Center for History and
Culture at The Lee's Academy

2023 MEMBERS' ANNUAL MEETING ON TUESDAY, MAY 23

All are invited to attend our Members' Annual Meeting on Tuesday, May 23, from 5:30 to 7 PM at the Scranton Library. Following a brief business meeting, Rick Spencer and Dawn Indermuehle of Catfeather Productions will offer their presentation, "A Madison Pop Music Time Machine." This program is a musical voyage through American history, using popular songs from the past as a medium to connect to our cultural history.

This musical time-machine program features music from the 1780s through the 1980s. It will explore popular music of the post-colonial and westward expansion eras and songs from minstrel shows, vaudeville, Tin Pan Alley, and the Jazz Age. The raucous sounds of the Rock 'n Roll craze and the music of the modern era will complete the journey.

Please plan to attend this free event featuring a well-researched lecture with a strong focus on entertainment. This original musical program is presented a capella or with accompaniment on guitar or banjo.



SUNDAY CINEMA CLASSICS

On Sunday, May 21, at 10 AM, the MHS will team up with the Madison Cinema to present the first in a series of classic and epic films for movie enthusiasts of all ages. This collaboration offers a unique opportunity for moviegoers to see films that have stood the test of time but are now typically visible only on the small screen.

Going to the movies is an experience that many of us have missed since the start of the pandemic. Much more than simply watching a film on the big screen, the experience is cherished for all of its communal traditions: the popcorn and candy, the jostling for the perfect seat, the camaraderie of sitting together with others in a dark theater and collectively reacting to something on the screen that makes us laugh, cry, or scream with fright.



We will introduce this new series in May with a film that is guaranteed to delight audiences of all ages. After the film, the theater's previous owner, Arnold Gorlick, will offer a brief talk. Known for his special appreciation for unique foreign and domestic art-house films, Gorlick is a film expert and continues to consult with the current owners of the cinema. The series will pick up again in Fall 2023. Films will be shown every month from September to May.

The MHS and cinema owner Bill Dougherty are preparing a slate of enjoyable and informative films that will have a lively appeal for audiences of ages 10 to 110. Please feel free to email us with your film suggestions at publicengagement@madisonhistory.org.

Madison Center for History and Culture Update

The restoration of Lee's Academy's lower level is nearly complete, following three years of delays. After soliciting bids from architects and contractors and developing extensive plans, the MHS's efforts were abruptly interrupted by a global pandemic. Finally, work began in June 2021. In recent months, reclaimed chestnut floors have been installed, sanded, and stained; walls have been painted; and baseboard moldings, soffits, interior trim, and electrical fittings have been completed, bringing us ever closer to the finish line.

Earlier this month, Youth Education Chair Maryanne Harmuth, in coordination with



Madison Public Schools and the Deacon John Grave Foundation, welcomed second-grade students to the green for the first school tour since 2019. Retired teacher and MHS volunteer Fred Muser transformed Lee's

Academy into a nineteenth-century classroom, where he regaled students with tales of the harsh punishments and strict teaching practices from days of yore. He then led a lesson on penmanship and writing in cursive for eager students. The MHS is delighted to see the return of these young learners, who were excited to discover local history lessons during this school outing.



COSTUME IN DETAIL: A HISTORICAL FASHION NEWSLETTER

The Madison Historical Society has long had a vibrant internship program that attracts impressive students from across the Shoreline. One such student is Clare Barnett, a junior at Branford High School.

Clare has a keen interest in historical fashion and initially volunteered to work with MHS intern Tori Timmins—a research fellow and costume designer who spent more than a year at the MHS examining, cataloging, and making patterns from the clothing in its collection. Since the summer of 2021, Clare has gained valuable hands-on experience and honed her skills as an accomplished researcher, archivist, seamstress, and pattern maker.

A talented visual artist as well as a committed volunteer, Clare has produced several drawings and watercolors of important dresses from the extensive collection of gowns dating from the mid-eighteenth century. Examples of her work can be seen on our Flickr page. For our Summer Festival on the green, Clare produced a full-size photo cut-out board featuring a man and woman in early 1900s bathing costumes. She also ran a plein-air painting station for children at this event.



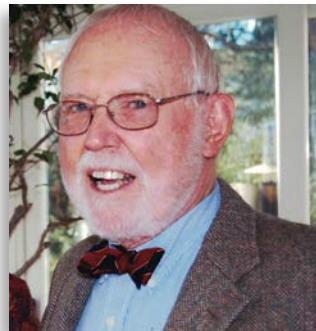
Never one to rest on her laurels, Clare played a major role in dressing reenactors in 1920s-style clothing for the Society's 2022 Holiday Lantern Tour—an annual living history program that tells stories of key people and events from Madison's past.

Nearly two years after beginning her association with the MHS, Clare is now adding another feather to her cap. Earlier this year, on her own initiative, she began to produce a themed newsletter called "Costume in Detail." This online publication draws attention to the impressive garment collection preserved at the Allis-Bushnell House. Click the Learn tab on the MHS website and select Costume in Detail Newsletter from the dropdown menu to download the latest issue. In each one, Clare offers her original research on the fashions she has examined at the Allis-Bushnell House, and she explores the reasons certain items of clothing have survived for centuries.

This important endeavor, driven by Clare's passion for the topic, raises awareness of our textile collection, which includes more than 1100 objects. We applaud Clare's efforts to help us preserve these fragile cultural resources.

IN MEMORIAM: FREDERICK ("FRED") PARKS MURPHY

The MHS joins the Murphy family in celebrating the life of Frederick Parks Murphy, who passed away in March after a brief illness. Born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Fred was in the class of 1947 at Harvard College and later worked at Pratt Read Pianoworks in Ivoryton and at Yale University. He served on the Town of Madison's Board of Finance and was an essential board member of the Charlotte L. Everts Memorial Archives. Most importantly, for 67 years he was the beloved husband of Pauline Cairns Murphy—and he was a past president of the Madison Historical Society and its longest-serving trustee. Fred's commitment to the Society and to its mission was unwavering. In recent years, he self-described his board role as the "Loyal Opposition." All MHS trustees could count on his sharp intelligence, vast memory, and keen wit. He did not hesitate to share his insights and opinions, and all of us appreciated his candor and guidance. We will greatly miss him, and we offer our condolences to Pauline and all of the Murphy family.



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 office@madisonhistory.org. Walk-ins are always welcome!

Meetings are every third Tuesday at 7 PM in person at the Allis-Bushnell House and via Zoom. They are led by Lucy Van Liew. (ljstewartvanliew@gmail.com)

For more information about the books, visit the History Book Group page under our Learn tab. www.madisonhistory.org.

APRIL 18

Animal Vegetable Junk
by Mark Bittman

MAY 16

Krakatoa: The Day the World Exploded, August 27, 1883
by Simon Winchester

JUNE 20

The Graves are Walking: The Irish Famine
by John Kelly

JULY 18

The House of Kennedy
by James Patterson with Cynthia Fagen

AUGUST 22

Land: How the Hunger for Ownership Shaped the Modern World
by Simon Winchester

SEPTEMBER 19

The Swamp
by Michael Grunwald

OCTOBER 17

Paper
by Mark Kurlansky

NOVEMBER 21

Great Hurricane 1938
by Cherie Burns

Join us...HISTORY HAPPY HOUR



Discover new and interesting history nuggets while enjoying an adult refreshment each month at HISTORY HAPPY HOURS.

A short talk on the history of cider in America by TJ Gallagher of The Wine Thief of Madison will be followed by a tasting of apple and pear ciders.

Mingle with like-minded folks seeking to deepen their understanding of local lore in a fun, relaxed atmosphere.

Friday, April 21, from 6 - 7 PM
Allis-Bushnell House Museum
853 Boston Post Road
\$10 / \$5 Members

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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 Allis-Bushnell House,
the MHS c. 1785 National Historic
Register property, call
203-245-4567.*

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