

Summit Historical Minute

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Summit's Connection to F. Scott Fitzgerald and
The Great Gatsby
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Myrtle Wilson, the "other woman" in F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby is based on a real person by the same name who was involved in a car accident in Summit in 1926.

The accident took place on Springfield Ave & Park Ave. Coincidence? Probably not.

In 2005, author Andrew Gallimore contacted Patricia Meola of the Summit Historical Society for some research assistance for his book, Occupation: Prize Fighter The Freddie Welsh Story. Interesting connections to Summit, the surrounding area and The Great Gatsby were discovered.

Mr. Welsh was born of humble means by the name of Frederick Hall Thomas & reinvented himself as Freddie Welsh when he came to

America to start a new life. The fictional James Gatz, also of modest means, reinvented himself as Jay Gatsby to start a new life.

Mr. Welsh became a wealthy boxing champion hanging out in NYC with a posh crowd. He was charming, well mannered & led a lavish lifestyle just like Jay Gatsby. Freddie Welsh socialized with actors & authors. Eventually he acquired enough money to fulfill his American dream of owning his own health farm which he established in Chatham. F. Scott Fitzgerald, a friend of Welsh's, would spend time with him at his health farm. Fitzgerald came to know of Welsh's humble beginnings, his desire for a new life, his name change, his American dream, to Welsh's downfall & loss of everything & even of his car accident in Summit where Myrtle Wilson was involved.

Freddie Welsh, for the most part, **IS The Great Gatsby**. His life inspired one of the greatest books ever written and some of that inspiration for The Great Gatsby took place right here in Summit.