



# Preserving Yesterday Enriches Tomorrow



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## THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MADISON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Jill Schreiner, Editor

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**P.O. Box 467, Madison, Virginia 22727**

**May 2004**

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### INVITATION TO LAW OFFICE OPENING

The Madison County Historical Society requests the honor of your presence to celebrate the restoration of the law office of Governor James Lawson Kemper and Judge Francis Marion McMullan Sunday, May 16, 2004 at 2:00 PM in the County Administration Center, Main Street, Madison, Virginia. A brief ceremony will follow in front of the law office which will then be open for inspection. Refreshments will be served in the main house after the ceremony. Everyone is welcome.

### HISTORY OF THE LAW OFFICE

By Greg Glassner

Kemper was Speaker of the House of Delegates, a Confederate General and Virginia's first post-reconstruction Governor.

The restored law office will provide a valuable glimpse into the life of a respected lawyer during simpler times, according to Dr. Maury Hanson, the Madison County Historical Board member who oversaw the restoration. The simple outbuilding that has stood behind the Kemper Residence since the mid-1800s was used as a law office from 1865 to 1887 by Madison County's most famous son, who served as governor from 1874-78. The original residence and several of its outbuildings were built in the mid-1850s for Thomas Welch. It was then bought by Belfield Cave, whose wife, Cremora Cave, gave it to Kemper, her son-in-law, according to Hanson. Because circular saw

patterns were detected during renovation in some of the law office's original timbers, there is speculation it dates back to 1855 or so. Circular saw beams were available in Gordonsville as early as the 1850s. By 1865, the small frame building housed the one-room office of Kemper and his law partner, Judge Francis Marion McMullan.

After Kemper built a new home on the Rapidan River across from Madison Mills and retired there in 1887, Judge McMullen bought the property. Both men continued to practice law out of the tiny office, however. The office was also used for a time by Judge McMullen's son Charles "Uncle Charlie" McMullen. The junior McMullen later moved his office to the building that now houses the Madison County Eagle. Still later, he moved to Oklahoma.

The main house and its outbuildings stayed in the McMullan-Christian-Compton family until its purchase in 1962 by the University of Virginia. The house and its outbuildings were used for the University's "Madison Extension," a precursor to the community college system.

Classes were held in the main house and in the law office, which also functioned as a college office at one time. Two outbuildings (a detached kitchen and a smokehouse) were razed during the University's construction of the brick classroom building we now know as the County Administration Building. The County acquired the property from the University in 1977. After several years of disuse, a restoration of the Kemper Residence began with participation from

the Sons of Confederate Veterans, the Historical Society, the Madison Garden Club and other groups and individuals.

Restoration of the Law Office began a year ago. Although estimates were much higher, the restoration has been completed at a cost of about \$12,000 because of many hundreds of volunteer hours, Hanson said. The restored building features an open fireplace and an external stairway to the loft, which may have been used as sleeping quarters. An old story about Kemper is that he rarely used the main house after his wife's death and that he slept above his law office.

Hanson has gathered up some original documents of Kemper's and a copy of his law license will hang in the restored office. A reproduction of Kemper's "shingle" will hang outside the door.

"I think this building is going to tell us more about Madison in the 19th Century than the Main House," Hanson said.

### **SPENCER DEJARNETTE PRESENTED PROGRAM AT ANNUAL MEETING**

Spencer DeJarnette presented the program at the Annual Meeting of the Society on February 15. He used the video, "Discovering the First Virginias", to show how an archeological assessment before the widening of Route 3 east of Culpeper led to the discovery of a Jasper mine at the depth of 12 feet below ground level. Native Americans had used this site about 11,000 years ago.

After the film DeJarnette who is a life-long Culpeper/Madison resident, a collector of native-American artifacts, and an employee of VDOT, gave his own observations about this discovery. He had closely followed this archeological study.

### **NEW DIRECTORS ELECTED AT ANNUAL MEETING**

At the Society's Annual Meeting in February the following people were elected to the Board of Directors: Lee Decker, Maury Hanson, Jill Schreiner and Jane Volchansky. Officers of the Society were then elected by the Board. They are: President – Rita Cunningham; Vice-

president – Bill Scholten; Secretary – Emily Williams; and Treasurer – Betty Lynn Yowell.

### **2004 ORNAMENT**



The Madison County Historical Society selected the Arcade for its 2004 Christmas ornament. You can purchase ornaments at the Arcade and the Library. Cost is \$10.00 plus tax. Previous ornaments (the Courthouse for 2002 and the Kemper Residence for 2003) are also available. For more information call 948-5488

### **2005 ORNAMENT**

The 2005 Ornament will feature the Hebron Lutheran Church. The ornament is now in production and will arrive sometime in June.

### **WELCOME – NEW MEMBERS**

The Society is pleased to welcome the following new members:

- Warren and Carole Dunn (Friend)
- Dr. William F. and Anne Nicol (Family)
- Douglas M. Graves (Single)
- Dreama K. Travis (Single)

## SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP AT ALL TIME HIGH

CATEGORY	NUMBER IN CATEGORY	NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS
Life Members	18	21
Business	4	4
Benefactors	2 *	5
Partners	12 **	20
Friends	16	28
Family	32	55
Single	29	29
Student	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>163</b>

\* one is a Life Member - not included in individual numbers.

\*\* two are Life Members - not included in individual numbers.

### 2004 CALENDAR



“The Historic and Picturesque Barns of Madison County, Virginia” (The Madison County Historical Society’s 2004 calendar) features pen and ink sketches by the talented art students of Madison County High School. The Calendar is on sale at the Arcade, the Chamber of Commerce, Greystone TV and Appliance (Radio Shack), Handcraft House, Plow and Hearth Country Store, Museum of Culpeper History, and the Library

### ARCADE MUSEUM

One hundred years ago, nearly every family saved scraps - scraps of paper, scraps of fabric, and even scraps of string. Scraps of paper with

hand-written information were records of “when” and “where”. Scraps of fabric became quilts. String had many uses and was necessary for packages or anything that had to be “tied”. But from those “scraps” saved by our parents and grandparents, we have a better understanding of what life was like for them. In today’s affluent society, old “scraps” are frequently just tossed into the trash.

Recently, a donor found legal papers signed by General Kemper when he practiced law in Madison. How fortunate for us that someone had the foresight to preserve those papers! Another donor found an old ledger that had been thrown into a landfill. Knowing the historical value, he brought it to the Arcade. It is hoped that more of Madison’s history will be saved as people realize the value of preserving those “scraps” of information.

The Madison County Historical Society is fortunate to be the recipient of these saved “scraps”. And while it will **NOT** be collecting string or fabric scraps, the Arcade is becoming known as the place to protect those items, both print and non print, that may otherwise be tossed out by later generations who do not know what else to do with them.

The Arcade’s collection is growing. Keeping up with the donations now requires more record keeping. Eventually, the collection will need to be catalogued but, for now, accessioning and labeling will be the priorities. Volunteers to assist Jan Harris in doing this include Virginia McGee, Virginia Utz, Jill Schreiner, Lee Decker, Millie Wieser and Jane Volchansky. They will work in the newly designated “Research Room” upstairs in the Arcade as soon as this work area is furnished. A computer is already available and a computer desk and an office desk have been offered. This room will eventually be available to anyone searching for details about Madison County’s history.

Our thanks go to the many people who have contributed printed articles and artifacts to the Historical Society. It is hoped that items will continue to be donated. . Many “scraps” of information, when all put together, can tell a powerful story.

### SPRING TEA

The Spring Tea, held on March 24th, was another huge success. A wonderful and

delectable selection of savories, sweets, fruits, scones and teas were served to a full house. We received our usual "this was the best tea yet" from our loyal "regulars". The next tea, the Fall Tea, is scheduled for September 22nd, at 12:30PM. Seating is available on the main floor and in the English Basement, which is handicapped accessible. Reservations are required - make your plans early as seating is limited. Volunteers who prepared, donated, and served the delicious food are: Mary Haught, Lee Decker, Vi Hilliard, Betty Lynn Yowell, Genevieve McLearn, Jill Schreiner, Anne Hughes, Heidi Sage, Mary Jo Dilling and Rita Cunningham. Thanks to Bill Scholten who assisted with setting up tables and chairs. This series of Tea's has proven to be one of our best fund raisers. Kudos to the Kemper Girls who make this possible

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Society is seeking volunteers to help the organization in several ways. Activities and projects include:

1. KEMPER GIRLS – They proudly keep the Residence in museum quality condition and host the benefit teas.
2. MARKETING – Seek out other products that the Society could sell. Develop agreement to be used with authors. Study the feasibility of mailing items or providing them to merchants for sale.
3. PAMPHLET – Prepare a new Madison County Historical Society pamphlet with the history and accomplishments of the organization and why businesses and individuals should join.
4. GRAVE SITES – Join other members in locating and recording gravesites in the County.
5. RAPIDAN RAILROAD – Research the route the line followed from Wolfstown to Orange in 1920-24.
6. HOST/HOSTESS – Serve as a host/hostess at the Arcade Museum and/or the Kemper Residence. Help at the Taste of the Mountains Street Festival.

Rita Cunningham (540-948-6542) will be happy to talk to you regarding these opportunities.



The core of the Residence is the 1793 Madison home. Additions and alterations have included a recent stabilization of this more than 200 year-old home.

## WOODBERRY FOREST - A MADISON COUNTY TREASURE

By Ann M. Ferguson

**The Early Years** - It is likely that the first children schooled at Woodberry Forest were the ten children of William and Frances Madison. William, brother of James Madison of Montpelier, married Frances Throckmorton in 1783. In his early years he took lessons from his oldest brother James and we can suppose that the Madisons instructed their oldest children who, then, taught their younger brothers and sisters. Home schooling in the 18th and 19th centuries was more the norm than the exception.

Madison family legend holds that the "Residence," the frame home built by William and Frances in 1793 was designed by Thomas Jefferson. The close friendship between James Madison and Thomas Jefferson is well known; also William Madison studied law under Mr. Jefferson. A 1793 letter from James Madison to his friend refers to plans for the home and states they were "much approved and will be adopted by my brother." Reference to the home as the Residence first appeared in William Madison's will. Today it is home to the Head Master of Woodberry Forest School.

**The Walker Family Arrives** - Robert Walker was born in 1840 at "Rosni" in Madison County to John Scott and Susan Stringfellow Walker. His father was a strong believer in the Union and the outbreak of the Civil War created a problem for young Robert who wanted to fight for the Confederacy. Eventually, with his father's permission, he joined the Army and served with valor in Mosby's Rangers achieving the rank of Captain.

At war's end "Captain Bob" returned to Rosni and spent seven years restoring the farm from the neglect it suffered during the war years. In the early 1870s, John Scott Walker gave the deed to Woodberry Forest, a 250 acre farm purchased from the Madison family, to his son, Bob, and his daughter, Sallie.

In 1874 Captain Bob brought his bride, Anne Carter Goss (called Miss Nannie), to Woodberry Forest where six sons were born to them. They soon realized they would have to find good schooling for their children and an assortment of alternatives were tried. First Sallie Walker, who lived with her brother and his wife, took full responsibility for instruction of her nephew, John Carter. It was then that Anne Walker began to teach the younger boys often with an infant on her lap and a lesson book propped before her as she tested them on their numbers and spelling. A new solution came about when Mrs. Walker brought her unmarried sister Lottie home to teach the boys. This lasted almost two years, but when young men arrived to court Lottie school work was set aside. An answer had to be found to assure lessons were a priority to prepare the boys for the future.

**A School is Founded** - Perhaps the actual beginning of Woodberry Forest as a school can be traced to September 1887 when Miss Bessie Grinnan of "Brampton," the property adjoining Woodberry Forest, came to teach the four oldest boys bringing along Georgia, her younger sister, as a student. A school room in the house was assigned to Miss Bessie where she taught for two years. Illness forced her to give up this work and in 1889, the Walkers hired J. Thompson Brown, a 19 year-old teacher, who began the school year with eight students. This first class included the four oldest Walkers, Georgia Grinnan, Willie Brown (the teacher's younger brother), Lewis Williams of Orange and Vivian Slaughter, grandson of the Walkers' family

doctor. Mr. Brown was assigned the Marye Cottage, a Madison era building behind the Residence set up as a dormitory with classrooms.

Captain and Mrs. Walker treated their young boarding students as members of the family including a nightly visit by Mrs. Walker to be sure the youngsters were snug in their beds. Captain Bob held daily family prayers for the class and all boys joined him on Sundays for a trip to St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Orange. In the second year six more boys joined the student body and by the third year there were 24 students at Woodberry Forest. To handle the expanded class, a two-story house was built across from Marye Cottage with classrooms on the first floor and bedrooms above.

By 1896 school enrollment reached 53 students with three teachers and the first "Woodberry Forest High School" catalogue was issued. Tuition was \$255 covering "board, fuel, laundry, lights and mending." Course work included English, Physics, Mathematics, Latin, Greek, French and German. Parents of prospective students were advised in the catalogue that the school was ". . .select and limited. As there are few, of course more attention can be devoted to each student and his character can be the better studied. We do not desire boys who do not have sound morals and studious habit. . ."

In 1897 J. Thompson Brown announced that he was leaving for another situation. A number of students left with Mr. Brown facing the Walkers with a serious problem. The school had made good progress as its enrollment increased each year, but they needed someone willing to replace this first and popular teacher. They asked their oldest son, John Carter, recently graduated from the University of Virginia, to set aside his plans to study law while Woodberry Forest School was returned to a solid footing. Carter agreed and Captain Bob recognized his son's sacrifice by naming him "Head Master" in the 1897 catalogue.

**Expansion Begins** - The following year, the Walkers took the school to a higher level when they announced they would construct a four-story building to accommodate the growing institution. Using funds from a \$30,000 mortgage on their property, work commenced and the Main Building (now known as the Walker Building) was ready for occupancy by

fifty-five boys and five masters in February 1899. In five years the Walker Building was at capacity and a series of wings were added to provide space for additional students and teachers and for indoor athletic facilities.

**A Test of Faith** - The Walkers' endeavor became a project filled with many challenges. A new demand arose in 1904 that tested the faith of the two oldest sons when Captain Bob announced his intention to build a road and a bridge over the Rapidan River. The roadway then used to reach Madison Mills was longer than the one the Captain proposed and it was often made impassable by weather.

J. Carter and Joe Walker argued that there was no money to be had for the project. Their father responded: "when . . . faced with a decision . . . I have taken my problem to my Creator in prayer. I have done that in this instance . . ." Recognizing there was little left to say, still his sons observed that while the Lord had plenty of money, if He failed to mete it out, "we shall have to come up with it." Captain Bob answered with: "What you young men lack is . . . faith in Almighty God."

The road work continued into 1906 and Captain Bob was at the job site when Joseph Bryan, an acquaintance, stopped to inquire about the project. After learning that a bridge would be needed to complete the road and that the Captain was "hopeful" he would find the needed funds, Mr. Bryan said he would send a check. A few days later with a \$3500 check in hand, Captain Walker approached his son Joe with these words: "Son, here's your check; now where's your faith?"

**End of an Era** - It was on March 14, 1914 that Captain Bob died from complications after suffering a chill during a late January ice harvesting. Masters from the school paid their respect to the founder of Woodberry Forest School when they kept watch at St. Thomas Episcopal Church during the night his body was reposed there.

**The Work Continues** - J. Carter Walker continued the work of his parents and stayed on as Head Master of Woodberry Forest through a distinguished career until his retirement in 1948. He is described as a man who showed a unique understanding of the challenge of shaping the young boys entrusted to his care. Often quoted

as saying that "Honor is a matter of education," Mr. Walker took a boy's word of honor and tendered his own with absolute trust. It is significant that he did not require a written contract from any member of the faculty as he believed a gentleman's agreement sufficed on both sides.

It was not until his later years that J. Carter Walker took time for diversions such as golf and fishing, but movies never made his list of activities. A story that highlights his unfamiliarity with Hollywood regards Miss Nina Grinnan from Brampton, who telephoned to say that two students were riding her calves and must be punished. Mr. Walker agreed to take action and asked for the boys' names. Miss Grinnan replied that they said they were Clark Gable and Gary Cooper. Mr. Walker immediately replied that there was a mistake as he had no students with those names.

**A Family Joins Together** - J. Carter Walker was joined in his work at Woodberry Forest by three of his brothers: Joe Goss took on a variety of projects around the campus and became known as a reliable "trouble shooter," John Scott was Athletic Director in the early years, later a teacher, and Frank Stringfellow served as President of the Woodberry Forest corporation that was formed in 1926. The wives of the Walker men left their own indelible mark on the history of the school. Beginning with the motherly care Miss Nannie gave to incoming boys in the first years, through the 1950s, the Woodberry Walker ladies set a standard for hospitality that continues today.

The contributions of the Walker family to the education of young men over the past 115 years have been significant. They brought commitment, sacrifice and faith in God to their efforts beginning in the late 19th century, saw the realization of their vision come to fulfillment in the 20th century and in the 21st century Woodberry Forest School continues to be a treasured site in Madison County.

(This article is based on information from Woodberry Forest: A Venture in Faith, Elizabeth Copeland Norfleet, The Georgian Press, Inc. 1955).

## FOR SALE AT THE ARCADE

ITEM	PRICE	TAX
Walking Tour of Madison County *	\$2.00	\$0.09
Madison County Almanac 1907*	4.50	0.20
Madison County Directory 1896*	4.50	0.20
Bicentennial Plate*	2.00	0.09
2002 Madison County Calendar*	2.00	0.09
2003 Madison County Calendar*	5.00	0.23
2004 Madison County Calendar*	10.00	0.45
2002 Ornament – Court House*	10.00	0.45
2003 Ornament – Kemper Residence*	10.00	0.45
2004 Ornament – Arcade*	10.00	0.45
1776 Map Culpeper, Madison, Rappahannock*	10.00	0.45
Note Cards*	3.50	0.16
Note Cards – Photos by Martha Cornwell*	1.25	0.06
Playing Cards – Court House*	3.50	0.16
Sheet Music – Madison Song*	1.25	0.06
<u>Madison County, Virginia: A Revised History</u>	10.00	0.45
<u>Madison County Land Grants 1722-1865</u>	25.00	1.13
By Dewey Lillard		
<u>Defender of the Valley</u> By Harold Woodward	25.00	1.13
<u>Confederate Bowie Knives</u> By Harold Woodward	5.00	0.23
<u>For Home and Honor (Madison County War Between the States, 1861-1865)</u>	18.95	0.85
<u>Hebron Lutheran Church History</u> (hard copy)	22.50	0.00
<u>Hebron Lutheran Church – Brief History</u> (paperback)	3.00	0.00
<u>Hebron Lutheran Church Organ</u> (paperback)	1.50	0.00
Hebron Lutheran Church Plate	16.72	0.00
Hebron Lutheran Church Postcards(church interior)	0.30	0.00
<u>Shenandoah National Park Undying Past</u>		
_By Darwin Lambert	17.71	Included

All items with an \* following are subject to a 10% discount for members at the Friend, Partner, and Benefactor membership levels.

### Free Items:

- Arcade Leaflet
- Bicentennial Brochure
- Kemper Residence Leaflet
- Madison County Brochure

Also available by calling the Commissioner of Revenue at 948-4421

Madison County Homes: Pre-Civil War for \$50.00 plus \$2.25 Tax

The Madison County Historical Society is a non-profit organization founded and operated for the perpetuation and preservation of Madison County heritage and traditions. The mission of the Society is to record, preserve, and stimulate interest in the history of Madison County, its families, occupations and way of life.

Membership is for one year with renewals due on the anniversary date of membership. Membership and other contributions to the Society are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. Types of Membership:

Benefactor	\$250 and above	Business	\$50
Partner	\$100 to \$249	Family	\$20
Friend	\$50 to \$99	Single	\$10
		Student	\$5

Membership applications are available at the Arcade and the Kemper Residence. For more information call the Society Office at 540-948-5488 and leave your name, telephone number, and address. We will send you a membership application or return your call to answer your questions. You may wish to call the Membership Chair at 540-923-4973 or e-mail him at [boblove@nexet.net](mailto:boblove@nexet.net).



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