



Preserving Yesterday Enriches Tomorrow



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MADISON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 467, Madison, Virginia 22727

August 2005

AUGUST MEETING TO FEATURE TOUR OF MONTPELIER



Montpelier under wraps

The next membership meeting will be held at James Madison's Montpelier at 5:30 p.m. on Sunday, August 21st. The meeting will consist of a tour of the restoration work underway at Montpelier. With restoration, the mansion will be returned in size, structure, form, and furnishings to the home that James and Dolley Madison knew in the 1820s. Restoration includes removing the wings added onto the mansion by the duPont family in the early 1900s, reducing the mansion from its current 55 rooms to the 22-room Madison home of the 1820s. Portions of the home are open to visitors at all times during restoration, providing a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to witness the restoration of the

lifelong home of an early American president and patriot.

The tour will be conducted by Ann Miller, Society member, architectural historian, and consultant to the Montpelier restoration project. Ann will be assisted by the director of restoration John Jeanes. Ann will meet Society members at the temporary parking lot at 5:30 p.m. To get to the parking lot, enter through Montpelier's front gate, proceed through the race field, turn right at the cross road (before entering the oval drive around the front of the house), and take the next left into the temporary parking lot. The tour is free to Society members.

Note that the 5:30 time is a departure from the usual time of 2 p.m. for membership meetings. At 5:30 the temperature should be more comfortable and there will be little or no interference from public tour groups.

MEMBERSHIP

We extend a warm welcome to our latest and newest member, Caroline Watts of Madison. Welcome aboard, Caroline. In the past few months there have been 10 renewals. Thanks to all of you that have been renewing your membership in such a timely manner. I do hope that we can do a bit better in the future in signing up new members. Let's give it a good try!!

DR. JOHN SCRIVANI SPEAKS ABOUT THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT



Dr. Scrivani is introduced by Vice President Bill Scholten

Dr. John Scrivani, a research forester with the Virginia Department of Forestry, spoke to members of the Society regarding the restoration of the American chestnut.

The chestnut at one time was a keystone species of the forest from Maine to Mississippi along the Appalachian ridge. It was a reliable and abundant mast producer making up about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the Appalachian oak forest. It provided food, wood and tannin for the residents of this area.

The chestnut blight is borne on wind, water and animals. It is a fungus that affects the bark which produces a toxin that kills the Cambrian in one season. The fungus will survive on oak trees as well but does not kill them.

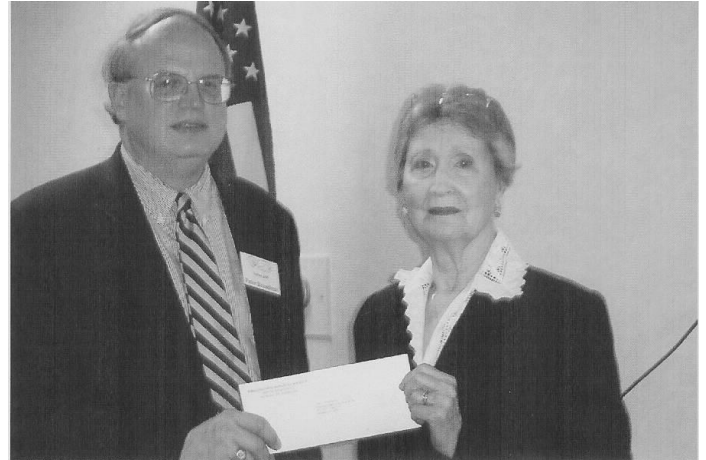
Although most of the trees have been eradicated by the chestnut blight some fair size trees still survive in Madison and are used in the department's breeding program. Thirty-five chestnut trees survive on an acre in Amherst County, The largest of these is known as the Ross tree. It is 38" in diameter and 68' tall and survives on its own in a pasture

The best hope for restoration is a back crossing program. The Chinese chestnut has a high degree of resistance to the chestnut blight. By crossing this tree with one of the remaining American chestnuts a Chinese-American cross is achieved. These trees have an intermediate level of resistance. The next step is to backcross American trees to Chinese-American

hybrids. After three backcrosses, cross-pollination of the backcross population will result in trees that are 15/16 American in genetic makeup but have the high resistance of the Chinese species. The Virginia Department of Forestry is conducting a back-cross breeding program of American and Chinese chestnuts that will lead to a tree that is American in character, with the blight resistance of the Chinese. The Department is also establishing a clone bank at its New Kent Forestry Center in Providence Forge, Virginia. Success in this program is twenty to thirty years away.

A similar program is being conducted by the American Chestnut Foundation. For further information Dr. Scrivani can be reached at 434-977-6555 His email address is scrivani@hq.forestry.state.va.us. The American Chestnut foundation has a web site at www.acf.org.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY RECEIVES GRANT



Jane Volchansky receives grant check from Peter Broadbent, President of the Virginia Genealogical Society

The Virginia Genealogical Society has awarded its 2005 Special Archival Grant to the Madison County Historical Society. Presentation of the award was made by Mr. Peter E. Broadbent, Jr., president of the Virginia Genealogical Society, during a ceremony at their spring conference in Fredericksburg on 23 April 2005. The VGS has developed this award, made to only one recipient per year, "to assist an institution which maintains an archival collection of material of value to researchers of Virginia genealogical

and historical information, by supporting a project to make its archival material more available to researchers...the grant may be used to hire a consultant, or staff, etc. to assist in organizing, arranging, and cataloging manuscripts, photographs, ephemera, and published materials to make the collection more accessible by researchers through cataloging, creating finding aids, internet posting or publication, etc.”

Jane Volchansky, a board member of the Historical Society and the archivist and research coordinator for the Society’s Arcade Museum, applied for this grant in order to develop a retrieval system for the multifaceted collection at the Arcade. In her application Jane explained that “for the past twenty-three years the Arcade Museum has been the repository for anything relating to Madison County history that would fit into the building. There are archival records of all holdings. The problem, however, is the lack of a retrieval system... As we grow, and as we get more questions about the history of Madison County and its people, we need help in developing a retrieval system that will link all the many different types of holdings and make them readily available for study or examination.”

The grant amount, \$3,000, will be used to hire consultants who will develop the retrieval system and also will train the Arcade volunteers in the use of the system. The volunteers, currently numbering 15, staff the Arcade every Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 10 am to 2pm and by appointment Jane pointed out that these volunteers “include two retired professional librarians, several retired teachers, a retired attorney, a retired government secretary, a retired book binder, a retired sailor, an archeologist and several housewives (who never retire).”

The Historical Society is especially anxious to increase its genealogical archives of Madison County families and would greatly appreciate the donation of any family papers and photographs or copies of such items. Even the most ordinary documents (personal letters, sales slips, tax notices/receipts, titling statements, legal papers, school reports) are valuable records of family and county history. Anyone interested in donating family documents or in helping with the work at the Arcade is encouraged to contact the Madison County Historical Society at 948-5488

or to come by the Arcade during the hours mentioned above.

DRIVING TOUR OF THE HEBRON VALLEY

A driving tour of the Hebron Valley emphasizing land patents and the Germanna Settlement of Madison county will be sponsored by the Society. Steve Hoffman, local county historian, will be our guide. The tour is scheduled for Sunday, September 18, 2005 and will leave the Kemper Residence at 2:00PM, It is expected to last 2.5 – 3 hours. Reservations will be required. The cost will be \$10.00/person. For more information please call Rita Cunningham at 948-6542,

KEMPER TEA

The next tea, the Fall Tea, will be held Wednesday, October 26, 2005 at 12:30PM. Cost of the tea is \$18.00. 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. Call Rita Cunningham at (540)948-6542.

KEMPER SERVANTS’ QUARTERS BRACED



Carole Nash, Bill Feldman and Sam Lanford

The old servants’ quarters at the Kemper Residence has been slowly settling for many

years. The building, which is contemporary with the main house or perhaps somewhat earlier, is a log cabin with frame siding. Most of the logs have been so severely weakened by termites and powder post beetles that the structure may not withstand another year's storms and ice.

The Historical Society had an architectural assessment of the building several years ago. Because of the advanced degree of deterioration of the logs it was felt that the only way to restore the building was to dismember it, saving the siding, moldings and any other intact elements, and then to rebuild it using sound logs. The estimated price for restoration was \$50,000. The Historical Society has applied for grant support for this work but so far has been unsuccessful in obtaining funds. Therefore, to keep the building from further settling and from possible storm damage, the Society felt internal bracing would at least preserve the structure as it is until funds can be obtained for restoration.

On July 23rd restoration carpenters, Bill Feldman and Sam Lanford, installed the bracing. To place the braces from the ground to the roof joists some of the already deteriorating floor boards had to be removed. This exposed the underlying earthen floor for the first time in many years. Carole Nash, an archaeologist on the staff of James Madison University, felt the opportunity should be used to examine the upper layers of the earthen floor for artifacts which might not only help date the building but also confirm its early history and function. Accordingly as the floor boards were removed Bill Scholten, vice president of the Society, scooped up the loose upper layers of soil and Carole sifted them.

Despite the heat of the day, this proved a worthwhile undertaking as the soil contained artifacts confirming the mid-19th century occupation and allowing a glimpse into the everyday life of the occupants. These artifacts include whiteware and ironstone ceramics, square cut (machined) nails, buttons (glass, bone, brass), glass beads, pane glass (cylinder blown sheet), and whitewashed daub (chinking). A sizeable amount of animal bone (cow, chicken, and pig), a porcelain door knob, and coal clinkers were also recovered. Most importantly, the removal of the loose soil, which had accumulated to a depth of one foot in some areas, exposed what appears to be an intact

earthen floor flecked with charcoal and mortar. Perhaps dating to the time of the occupation of the enslaved inhabitants, this floor will be a source of great historical interest when the building is rehabilitated. We look forward to further archaeological investigations here.

THE ARCADE MUSEUM

The heat of summer has affected summer attendance at the Museum but exciting things are going on anyway. Lee Decker has made a schedule which allows for a change in at least one exhibit area each month. Faye Harris has donated a printer/copier/scanner which will be used on the ground floor for those visitors who want a paper copy of information they have found at the Museum. Pedigree charts have been obtained and are on sale for those genealogists who want to organize their family information. A computer and printer upstairs in the Research Room are there thanks to Sandy Stowe who graciously loaned them to us. We have had several inquiries about families who once lived in the county. This has sent us scrambling and wishing that more families would donate copies of their family information to the Museum.

One of the most exciting things is finding a consultant team to help us find better ways to organize store and retrieve the articles in our possession. Edward Gaynor, who is Assistant Director of the Special Collections section of the University of Virginia Library, and his colleague, Ellen Welch, an archivist, have agreed to work with us in our attempts to better utilize and preserve our holdings. They will spend several days at the Museum examining the collection and our storage facilities and then come up with recommendations for a cataloging system for retrieval purposes as well as proper storage for textiles, leather, etc. Your Madison County Historical Society Board of Directors met with Mr. Gaynor and Ms. Welch in June and they were unanimous in the selection of this team. We extend our thanks to the Virginia Genealogical Society whose grant has made all this possible.

Thanks to our many volunteers, we added on all-year opening on Fridays. This began in April and is going well. This is our third summer to be

open on Saturdays. We have had over 100 guests so far this year. If you would like to be part of this enthusiastic group, call Rita Cunningham (948-6542) or Emily Williams (825-7503).

ACQUISITIONS

Mrs. Barbara MacDonald of Melbourne, Florida, has donated a bible of the Jackson family who lived in Uno. The bible features a beautiful Certificate of Marriage of Joab C. Jackson, Madison, and Roberta B. Pettit, Fauquier County, October 30, 1872 at Repton. An extensive list of births and deaths is also included, In addition Mrs. MacDonald donated bills of sales, greeting cards, correspondence and her grandmother's wedding ring. The Society values this wonderful gift and it will provide valuable information for our family files.

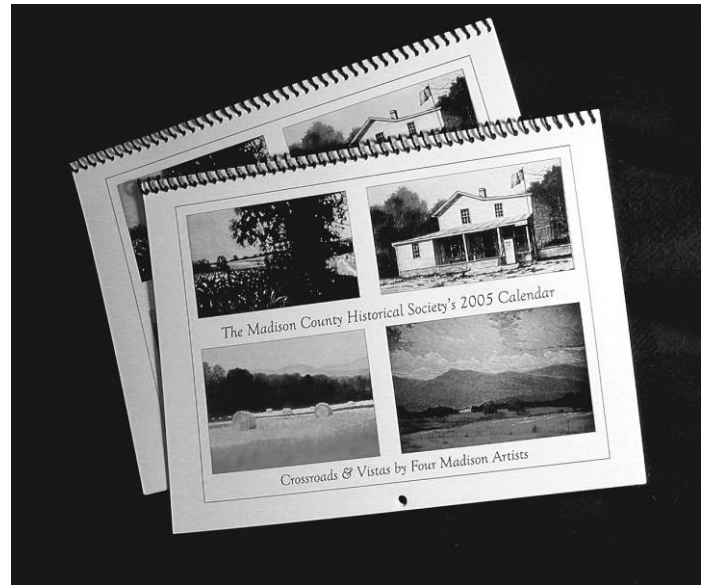
2006 ORNAMENT

The 2006 ornament will feature the Piedmont Episcopal Church and will be available at the Taste of the Mountains Street Festival. It will cost \$11.00 plus tax. This slight increase in price is due to an increase in manufacturing costs to the Society. Previous ornaments (the Courthouse for 2002, the Kemper Residence for 2003, the Arcade for 2004 and Hebron Lutheran Church for 2005) are also available. You can purchase ornaments at the Arcade and the Library. Cost is \$10.00 plus tax. For more information call 948-5488

GRAVES HELP

Research is being conducted on the Graves Mill Grist Mill. Anyone with information and/or old photographs is asked to contact Doug Graves at (540)948-3306 or Dugmill@aol.com

2005 CALENDAR



Art Work by Lou Mesa, Margaret Novak,
Lawrence Altaffer and Tucker Hill

As with its three predecessors, the Society's fourth annual Calendar was introduced to the public at the Taste of the Mountains Street Festival. The 2005 Calendar features four of Madison's best known professional artists who work in very different media, and for the first time, the paintings and prints for each month are reproduced in full color.

Each artist contributed three works to the Calendar, the proceeds of which go to the work of the Society. They are on sale for 10.00 plus tax at many local businesses including The Hand Craft Shop and Greystone, as well as the Arcade.

The Society thanks these four artists for making their art available for reproduction in its 2005 calendar.

GENEALOGICAL SEARCH CORNER

CLAY: A member is searching for more information on the Henry Clay family. Henry Clay was a slave owned by the Chapman family in the Banco-Criglersville area. One of Henry's descendants was Raymond Clay who ran a blacksmith shop in Criglersville in the early part of the 20th century. Anyone having information about the Chapmans during the late 1800's or about the Clays should contact Leontyne Clay Peck at leontynepeck@yahoo.com or call the Arcade Museum at (540) 948-5488

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.

Madison County Historical Society

P.O. Box 467

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