



Preserving Yesterday Enriches Tomorrow



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MADISON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 467, Madison, Virginia 22727

May 2005

AMERICAN CHESTNUT - HISTORY AND RESTORATION EFFORTS IN VIRGINIA



American chestnut trees in North Carolina before the blight, circa 1920

Before 1900, the American chestnut tree dominated the deciduous forests of eastern North America. In some parts of the Appalachians it was estimated to comprise 25% of the timber volume.

The chestnut had many valuable properties. Because wood was easily split, easily worked, and highly rot-resistant, it was commonly used for lumber, furniture, and split rail fences, many remnants of which are visible today, after several decades of exposure to the elements. Tannins from the bark and heartwood were the best available for tanning heavy leathers. A consistent production of annual nut crops made the chestnut an important food source for man and wildlife. Even-aged stands at village sites

suggest that chestnuts were planted and cultured by Native Americans.

In 1904 the chestnut blight, caused by a fungus, was first reported in New York. Within 50 years it had spread throughout the natural range of chestnut, killing virtually all American chestnut trees.

Ever since the blight was first discovered, efforts have been undertaken to defeat it. Although success in the past has been limited, recent developments show promise in returning this once magnificent tree to the forest of eastern United States

At the May 15 membership meeting John Scrivani, Research Forester with the Virginia Department of Forestry, will present American Chestnut - History and Restoration Efforts in Virginia. The meeting will be at 2 p.m. in the auditorium of the County Administration Building. Refreshments will be served in the Kemper residence after the meeting

JAYNE BLAIR SPEAKER AT FEBRUARY MEETING

Somewhere on the grounds of Montpelier are buried the remains of ten Confederate soldiers. They lie in an unmarked mass grave on President James Madison's estate, where they were executed for the crime of desertion during the Civil War.

Jayne E. Blair, a senior guide at Montpelier, told the gripping story of the deserters at the Society's February meeting. A full account of this sad chapter in the history of the war is narrated in a book she authored, Tragedy at Montpelier.

The ten soldiers were from the Third North Carolina Regiment. They had fought valiantly in the Battle of Gettysburg, a bloody three-day engagement which left more than 50,000 men killed, wounded or missing. Tired and dejected, they and other members of their brigade decided to go home.

In leaving camp, some of them took weapons, in violation of orders. When the fleeing soldiers encountered a detachment patrolling for deserters, a fire fight followed in which several of them were killed. Also slain was the leader of the patrol, a young officer.

The ten surrendered and were taken prisoner. Later they were tried and convicted on charges of desertion and murder. Because desertions had been increasing in the Confederate army, it was decided to make an example of the ten. The court martial board ordered the condemned men returned to their regiment and executed in front of 4,000 massed troops.

They were tied to posts and shot to death by a firing squad. Their bodies were placed in wooden coffins, face down because they had turned their backs on their comrades. The coffins were placed in the common grave in the woods near Poplar Run, a small tributary of the Rapidan River, not far from Madison's former home.

Jayne Blair, a Navy veteran and former Dallas police officer, said she began her "quest to chase history" after she visited Gettysburg. She toured the Kemper Residence and signed copies of her book at a reception following the meeting.

KEMPER TEA

The Spring Tea held on April 6 was another huge success. A wonderful and delectable selection of savories, tea breads, sweets, fruits and scones were served to a full house. We received our usual "this is the best tea yet" from our loyal "regulars". The next tea, the Fall Tea, will be held sometime in October. 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. Our faithful volunteers who prepared, donated and served the delicious rich fare were Lee Decker, Mary Haught, Anne Hughes, Genevieve McLearen, Heidi Sage, Betty Lynn Yowell, Emma Berry and Rita Cunningham. A special thanks to our scone baker Bob Haught. Also thanks to Bill Scholten who assisted with setting up tables and chairs. Kudos to the Kemper Girls who make this special event possible.

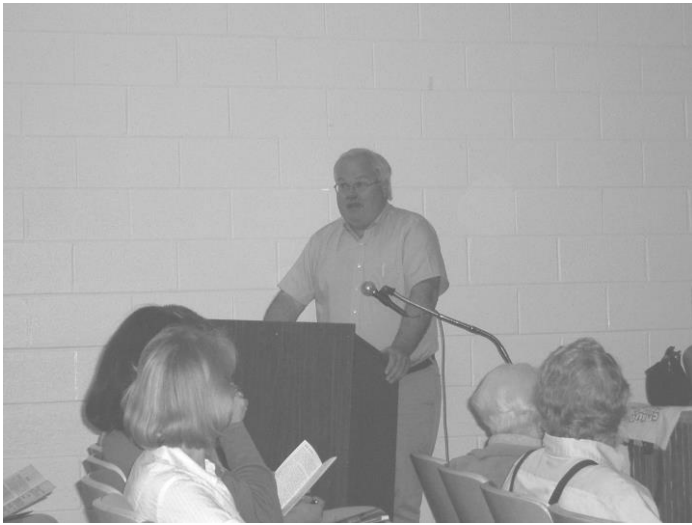
PIEDMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY CONFERENCE



Members gather for opening of conference

The Madison County Historical Society was host on Saturday, April 9th, to the annual conference of the Piedmont Historical Society, an umbrella organization for the historical societies of this part of Virginia. The mission of the Piedmont Historical Society is to encourage the exchange of ideas, programs and solutions to shared problems among its members. Delegations from Albemarle, Amherst, Buckingham, Fluvanna, Goochland, Greene, Henrico, Louisa and Nelson counties participated, with a total attendance of 87 people.

The topic for this year's conference was "Preservation of Historic Objects." The meeting, moderated by Rita Cunningham, president of the Madison County Historical Society, began with a welcome to the delegates by David Jones, Chairman of the Madison County Board of Supervisors (picture, top of next page),



Mary Parke Johnson (below) spoke on preservation of paper and photographs,



Steve Hoffman (below) on preservation of wooden furniture



and Carole Nash (next column) on preservation of Native American artifacts (stone and pottery).



These talks took place in the County auditorium and were followed by lunch in the Kemper Residence.



Delegates then returned to the auditorium where a member of each society presented its recent experiences and accomplishments. The various historical societies' wares were on display.



Finally the group moved to the Arcade where Carole Nash, archaeologist from James Madison University and curator of the Strode Collection of Native American Artifacts, conducted a tour of the collections there

RECEPTION FOR LAWRENCE BEASLEY



President Rita Cuning presents Clore clock to Mr. Beasley

On Monday, March 14th people gathered in the County Auditorium to honor Lawrence Beasley, a long-time county employee. The Historical Society presented Mr. Beasley with a Clore clock to thank him for the many hours of help he has provided to the Society over the years. The Garden Club, the Recycling Committee and the County also made presentations. A luncheon preceded the presentations. A reception, co-hosted by the Historical Society and the Garden Club followed the presentations.

THE ARCADE MUSEUM

How many of us have seen a stereoscope? The Arcade now has one, the gift of Myra Price. Stereo viewers were made in the latter part of the 19th century. The one given to the Arcade Museum collection is a hand-held model in wonderful condition. It is accompanied by 25 stereo cards. The cards show two almost identical pictures mounted on stiff cardboard backing so that, when viewed through a stereoscope, a three-dimensional picture can be seen.

Other acquisitions include bed linens and books. The bed linens are hand woven and were

purchased at an Aylor auction here in Madison County in 1998. Since these linens are so unique (they also have the initials "MT" embroidered on them) some time is being spent trying to determine if they were made in Madison County. So far, the search has turned up nothing. The Arcade Museum owns a woolen blanket (gift of Annie Vee Tull) woven at the woolen mill in Madison owned by her relative.

The books include one given by Don and Julia Strode written by their daughter, Rebecca. Entitled *BURN THE QUADS: FEED THE BRAINS—Bicycle Rides to Discovery on the Back Roads of Virginia and Maryland.* This book takes one to historic sites (including some in Madison County) and makes one wish to be young enough to take on such a ride. Other books include *FOLK HOUSING IN MIDDLE VIRGINIA* by Henry Glassie and *THE STORY OF VIRGINIA* by Willis-Saunders. These two were obtained from a Mr. Fox from Brightwood. The Arcade Museum, home of the Strode Collection, is also home to an increasing number of children's books on Indian life and archaeology recommended by Carol Nash. These books can be used by groups of students who can walk to the Museum from Waverly Yowell School.

The Arcade welcomes gifts which have historical or genealogical value. And, speaking of genealogy, our Madison County Historical Society has just been awarded a grant of \$3000 from the Virginia Genealogical Society to hire resource persons who can advise us how best to set up our files in the Research Room and how to preserve our holdings. More information and progress reports will be in the next issue of our newsletter.

The Arcade at present has two new displays. John and Linwood Imlay have arranged a very significant showing of their collection of Civil War artifacts. This display is part of the celebration of Heritage Month (April). The other display is in celebration of Garden Week and features our own Madison Garden Club. Plans are to rotate displays frequently so that there is always something new to see.

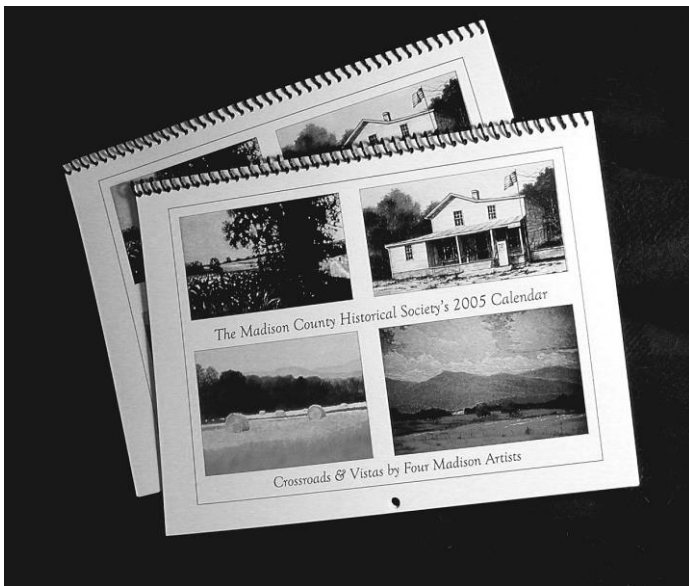
Did you know that the Arcade Museum is now open on Friday as well as Tuesday and Thursday? The hours remain the same: 10 a.m. until 2 p.m.

2005 ORNAMENT



The 2005 ornament features Hebron Lutheran Church. Previous ornaments (the Courthouse for 2002, the Kemper Residence for 2003 and the Arcade for 2004) 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

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.

HELP WANTED

As your new Membership Chair, I appeal for your help in increasing our membership base. Should you know someone who you think would enjoy the Society, give them a call or, better yet, have them fill out and send in a membership application. The amount of time they devote to the Society is up to them. They may wish to support us financially, attend our quarterly meetings, get involved as an Arcade volunteer or a docent at Kemper or even help with the Kemper Teas. We would like having more folks on board to not only further our cause but to enjoy our programs as well as our hospitality.

In the past few months we have had 47 renewals plus 1 new membership -- Penn and Gail Bowers. The Society welcomes them as members. Penn is already an active member of the Board, completing the term of Bob Lovegren who recently moved to Williamsburg

Sincerely,
Gil Queitzsch (672-1397)

THANKS ANN

Ann Ferguson has been a regular contributor to the newsletter for several years. The Board wishes to thank Ann for this service. We will miss her interesting articles. We hope that there are other members who will step up to fill this void. Due to space constraints in this issue, Ann's last contribution will appear at a later date.

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:

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| 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

Madison, Virginia 22727

