



Preserving Yesterday Enriches Tomorrow



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MADISON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 467, Madison, Virginia 22727

May 2007

RAPIDAN RAILROAD TO BE FEATURED AT NEXT MEMBERSHIP MEETING MAY 20, 2007



Everette Weakley in front of his model railroad

Did you know that Madison County once had a railroad? In 1920 the West Virginia Timber Company constructed a railroad which went from Wolfstown to the sawmill in Orange.

Mr. Everette Weakley, lifetime Madison County resident, will speak to us about this railroad system at the next membership meeting which will be held at 2 p.m. on May 20th in the auditorium of the Madison County Administration building.

Mr. Weakley began constructing a model railroad for his grandchildren in the mid 1960's. This stimulated his fascination with model trains and he has been an enthusiast ever since. Everette learned of the Rapidan Railroad and his interest in pursuing its history led him to meticulously and lovingly construct a model of

the West Virginia Timber Company's railroad system which traveled through many properties in Madison as it made its way to the town of Orange.

Even though it existed for only a short period of time, this railroad touched the lives of many county residents and generated numerous interesting anecdotes. This will be an entertaining presentation with lots of local flavor. Refreshments will be served in the Kemper Residence after the program



Frank Walker speaking about Washington's ladies

FRANK WALKER SPEAKS TO SOCIETY

Frank S. Walker, Jr. spoke at the February meeting of the Society. Mr. Walker, a grandson of the co-founder of Woodbury Forest School, was a dairy farmer, practiced law and leads tours of Orange County. He is the author of the book *remembering – A History of Orange*

County Virginia. During the months of February and March Mr. Walker presented 6 lectures based on chapters in this book.

Mr. Walker's topic for this presentation was "George Washington and his other women" – a fitting topic for the month of February which includes not only Washington's Birthday but also Valentine's Day.

The first of these women was Mary Ball Washington. Mary married Augustine Washington at the "old" age of 24 and was married to him for 11 years before he died. She was left a widow of 35 with 5 children. The two oldest, from Augustine's first marriage, had already left home by this time leaving George, at age 11, as the eldest child. It fell to him to become the responsible male of the household. Mary was constantly asking George to do things for her. While Washington was fighting in the French and Indian War with General Braddock she sent a message to him with a list of things he should get for her before his next trip home. She made extensive monetary demands, and when she received no response she petitioned the Virginia legislature to come to her aid. While Washington was leading the army during the Revolution she told him he should stop "meddling in matters not his concern and come home to take care of her". However, Mr. Walker said she did the country a great service when she refused to allow George to join the British Navy. Imagine the Revolution with George Washington as a British sailor.

The second woman in Washington's life was his sister, Betty Washington Lewis. She was married to Lewis Fielding and lived at Kenmore in Fredericksburg. She helped George greatly by convincing her husband to sell a house on the Kenmore property to George. This allowed him to move his mother from Ferry Farm and nearer to her daughter.

Sally Carey Fairfax was the third woman in George's life. He and Sally's husband, George William Fairfax, Jr. were good friends. Upon meeting, Washington and Sally fell in love. She was married; he was not. This is probably the most notorious secret of Washington's life. The two continued to write love letters until his death. However, they maintained proper behavior and there was never any hint of scandal. One of his last letters was written to her in 1797. At the time she was a widow, living in England.

Washington encouraged her to return to America. He said that the moments he shared with her were his happiest.



Society members enjoy chatting with Mr. Walker

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The Annual Membership meeting of the Madison County Historical Society was held on Sunday, February 18, 2007 at 2:00pm. The slate presented by the Nominating Committee was elected unanimously. Maury Hanson, Carole Milks, Jill Schreiner and Jane Volchansky will serve for three year terms. The Board elected the following officers: President – Rita Cunningham; Vice-president – Penn Bowers; Secretary – Maury Hanson; and Treasurer – Bill Scholten.

MEMBERSHIP

The following have become new members of the Society.

Virginia McGhee
Virginia Utz
Doris J. and E.A. MacEwan

We are happy to have you with us and hope you have a rewarding membership experience

MANAHOAC CONFERENCE

As part of the state's celebration of the four hundredth anniversary of the 1607 Jamestown settlement, "America's 400th Anniversary," the Madison County Historical Society agreed to serve as coordinator/director of the county's participation in the "Virginia 2007 Community Program." The Historical Society's primary contribution will be a conference on the

Manahoac Indians of Madison County. Due to funding problems, this conference had to be postponed and we hope it will take place in September or October.



Tucker Hill made this monotype of the summer clouds over Graves Mill (in this early print, the image is reversed) in July 1989

HISTORICAL SOCIETY TO CO-SPONSOR EXHIBIT

For 20 years the Madison County printmaker and Historical Society board member, Tucker Hill, has been making his one-of-a-kind monotype prints of the Piedmont's mountains, valleys, and its crossroads communities, carefully recording the fragile rural environment as it evolves and changes. Join the Madison County Historical Society, the Piedmont Environmental Council, and the Blue Ridge Foothills Conservancy in viewing in an informal exhibition of his prints on Friday, May 11, 2007, from 5 to 8 p.m. in the historic and evocative setting of Graves Chapel, in Graves Mill, Virginia, an official Jamestown 2007 community. To reach the chapel, follow Route 662 north from Wolfstown on Route 230.

ACQUISITIONS

The Society is delighted to announce the acquisition of the proofs of the beautiful and genealogically valuable book, *MADISON COUNTY HOMES*. The author, Vee Dove Tull, made the presentation recently and the volunteers are happily placing all photographs and negatives in appropriate acid-free sleeves. The Society thanks Mrs. Tull and Mrs. J. C.

Price who recently gave a black wool shawl which had been in her family for some time. Nell Berry donated her mother's wedding shoes and Emily Williams donated clothes and shoes worn by the McMullen girls when they were small. We welcome and appreciate their contributions

AT THE ARCADE

Have you visited the Arcade lately? If you have, you have seen some changes. The Strode Exhibit room and the stairwell have been stripped of the wallpaper and a new coat of paint applied. Some rearranging of furniture downstairs has freed up space and improved the general appearance of the room. A matching grant from the Virginia Genealogical Society provided funds for a wall-hung display case which contains information for our visitors. (The same grant provided funds for steel shelving to store our holdings at the Kemper Residence.)

Our genealogical project, Family Files, still needs input from our members and friends. If your family is not represented in Family Files, you might want to contribute even the simplest genealogy of your family. Our volunteers (who periodically clip articles from *The Madison Eagle*) supply obituaries and other information which is copied on acid-free paper and filed with the family information. However, these obituaries are recent and do not always meet the need for someone looking for their ancestors. Please consider taking time to see that your family is represented in Family Files.

Some recent exhibits have been "Wash Days of Yesterday", an exhibit calling attention to the fact that we did not always have automatic washers, dryers, irons, etc. Another exhibit featured old shoes, some of which were discovered in walls of old buildings, reflecting the English custom of putting a shoe in the wall for good luck. (Our shoes were found in the walls of Miss Pattie's House when repair was being done there.) Currently we have an exhibit containing the Clay genealogy, the Arrington papers, a Congressional Medal of Honor winner from Madison, and the recently published book on Radiant. Our permanent exhibit, Everette Weakley's exhibit of the "Only Train Through Madison", is one which continues to fascinate youngsters and oldsters alike. And since we are part of "Jamestown 2007", there is information on the celebration of that event. Beply White

puts a lot of energy into creating the exhibits. Come by to visit and see the changes!!

Museum for \$11.00 plus tax. For more information call 948-5488

ARCADE DISPLAYS

This past winter has been a time of cleaning, painting, organizing and refurbishing at the Arcade. The work on a new exhibit of the early history of Madison County is progressing.

The Black History display is still up and features Clinton Greaves, a decorated Buffalo Soldier (born in Madison) and Angus Arrington, a servant to Gen. James L. Kemper during the Civil War (who has many family members living in Madison). There are books on this display by Leontyne Clay Peck (The Silver Children) and Harold G. Wright (Radiant)

There is a wonderful permanent exhibit of the Rapidan Rail Road which ran from Orange to Graves Mill with spur lines up Garth Run, Big Kinsey and the Rapidan and Staunton Rivers. Many thanks to Everette Weakley, Virginia McGhee, Doug Graves, Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence McDaniel, Mr. & Mrs. Ed Jaenke and others for contributing to this exhibit.



2007 ORNAMENT

The 2007 Ornament featuring the Chestnut Grove Baptist Church is now available. You may purchase this Ornament as well as previous ornaments (The Court House, Kemper Residence, Arcade, Hebron Lutheran Church, and Piedmont Episcopal Church) at the Arcade



Front and obverse view of key chain

MADISON KEY CHAIN

Among the items available for sale in the communities supporting the Jamestown 2007 festivities is a key chain with the 2007 Jamestown logo on one side and "The Legacies of Jamestown: Representative Government, Rule of Law, Free Enterprise" on the other. The Historical Society decided to offer this item for sale at the Arcade, but to replace the Legacies of Jamestown with the Madison County Courthouse. The company distributing the items for America's 400th Anniversary was happy to work with us. Accordingly, Tucker Hill took a photograph of the courthouse. This was sent to the design studio in South Carolina where an artist rendered the likeness into a form that could be used to construct a die. That work was approved by the Historical Society and one hundred key chains were cast. These are available at the Arcade for \$10 each, mementos not only of America's 400th Anniversary but also of Madison County.

KEMPER TEA

The Spring Tea was held on March 28th at the Kemper Residence with many of our repeat guests and a sprinkling of new friends. The menu featured the always delicious assortment of savories, sweets, fruits and scones. Our

special Kemper House Tea was served with rave reviews.



Display of ornaments and Kemper House Tea for sale at the Spring tea

A wonderful exhibit of vintage shoes, hats and other garments was a highlight of the afternoon. Special thanks to our hostesses, Mary Haught, Beppy White, Jill Schreiner, Anne Hughes, Pam Krause, Kay Reiss, Heidi Sage, Rita Cunningham, Genevieve McLearn and Betty Lynn Yowell, for all the marvelous food.



Exhibit as seen at Tea

LOCAL JAMESTOWN CELEBRATION EVENTS

[Madison 2007 Community Programs](#)

[Historical Society:](#)

1. [Conference on the Manahoac Indians of piedmont Virginia, Sept/Oct](#)

4-2. [Exhibits at the Arcade:](#)

- [The Madison Train Line, Jan-Dec](#)
[The Early History of Madison Co. \(will be permanent with additions or changes from time to time\)](#)
- [Madison Black History, Feb-May](#)
- [Germanna Heritage display \(June-Aug\)](#)

[Piedmont Episcopal Church: The Service of Holy Communion from the 1559 Book of Common Prayer, October 28 at 10 AM.](#)

[Chamber of Commerce:](#)

1. [Madison Firemen's Parade, July 17. This event marks the opening of the Madison County Fair, July 17-21.](#)
2. [14th Annual Taste of the Mountains Street Festival, Sept 1](#)
3. [Christmas Parade, December 1](#)

[Madison Garden Club: Dedication of a Patriotic Garden at the Madison County High School, Memorial Day, May 28](#)

[Hartland Choir: A Festival of 17th Century Hymns \(time and location to be announced\)](#)

HANDYMAN WANTED

If you like to work with wood and would like a project, we may have one for you. Some years ago one of our members gave us parts of a spinning wheel which had been stored in a barn for some time. We would like to display the spinning wheel, but can't because it lacks legs and some other parts. If you are interested, the project can be seen at the Arcade on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Ask the volunteer on duty to show you the spinning wheel or call Jane Volchansky at 540-923-4584

YOUR PERSONAL ARCHIVAL BOXES

For those of you who have family Bibles or other books that you'd like to preserve, we are ordering board for custom made archival boxes which will be available at the Arcade Museum. You will need to bring the Bible or book so that measurements can be taken. Acid-free board and acid-free paper will be used and costs will be determined by size of box. Acid-free tissue can also be purchased. Take advantage of this offer which may not be available again

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

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