



Preserving Yesterday Enriches Tomorrow



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MADISON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

[http:// www.madisonvahistoricalsociety.org/](http://www.madisonvahistoricalsociety.org/)

P.O. Box 467, Madison, Virginia 22727

August 2014

AMERICAN CHESTNUT TOPIC OF AUGUST 17, 2014 MEETING



American chestnut tree around 1900

Our speaker for the August 17th quarterly meeting will be Mr. John Scrivani, research Forester with the Virginia Department of Forestry. The topic of his presentation will be "American Chestnut- History and Restoration Efforts in Virginia". Mr. Scrivani last spoke to the Society on the same subject in May of 2005 and this will be an update on the subject of restoration efforts on this magnificent tree.

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 its 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 many 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 the chestnut, killing virtually all American chestnut trees.

Ever since the blight was 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 forests of the eastern United States.

The meeting will be held in the County administrative offices auditorium at 2:00pm Sunday August 17th. Everyone is invited to attend and refreshments will be provided in the Kemper residence next door following the presentation.

HOOVER DAY



Original Hoover lectern

Back in August of 1929, Madison County made the headlines of the New York Times, and sounds of the day were broadcast via NBC radio. Native Madisonians, aging baby boomers now, were not present, of course, but they have heard their elders speak of the day all their lives. Attendance estimates, ranging from 5,000 to 10,000 people, make this the biggest event ever in Madison County. So what happened on Saturday, August 17, 1929?

- President Herbert Hoover and his wife Lou arrived at the county fairgrounds via automobile from their fishing camp on the upper Rapidan.
- A C-41 Army blimp flew over the area and deposited Virginia Governor Harry F. Byrd and the Mayor of Richmond.
- The Richmond Light Infantry Blues with their band formed honor guards and played "Hail to the Chief".
- Confederate veterans, in uniform, attended and were recognized.
- Twenty-five pots of chicken, beef, and soup were stewed over log fires on the edge of the grounds.
- President Hoover made a speech.

Madison County invites all who wish to see a re-enactment of some of these events (no Brunswick stew, alas, but the Parks and Recreation people will have a concession stand) and hear the speech to attend the 2014 edition of Hoover Day on Saturday, August 16, 2014. The event will be held at Hoover Ridge, beginning at 10:00 AM. (Rain location: Young Farmers Grounds) The keynote speaker will be George Nash, a foremost Hoover biographer. Representatives of the National Park Service will be present to organize tours of Hoover Camp on a first come, first serve basis. Local dignitaries will re-enact events from the original Hoover Day. The actual lectern from which President Hoover spoke will move from its current home in the Arcade Museum to Hoover Ridge for this special event. By studying a panoramic photograph taken at the 1929 event, county officials hope to locate this year's re-enactment as close to the original site as possible.

MENNONITE HISTORY



Elmer V. Miller Jr.

Our speaker for the May 18th quarterly meeting was Mr. Elmer V. Miller, Jr. who spoke to us generally about the history of the Mennonites and specifically about the history of the Mennonite Community in Madison County which began in 1957.

Mr. Miller told us about how a group of Anabaptists broke from the Protestant and Catholic ranks in 1525 in Switzerland and in 1526 a former Dutch Catholic priest, Menno Simons, joined their ranks, rose to a leadership position and the church eventually became called Mennonites after him. To avoid persecution, Swiss German Mennonites emigrated to the United States in the 18th and 19th centuries settling first in Pennsylvania and then moving to the Midwest states.

Generally once a Mennonite Community settles in an area, eventually some of them are sent to form a new community in another place. At periodic times groups of perhaps five families are sent to other areas to establish new communities and they draw lots to determine who will go (It is an honor to be chosen) and they are not sent to areas within thirty miles of another Mennonite Community which already exists. They either have skills which they take with them or acquire skills or work in the new community.

Mr. Miller told us that the Mennonites are generally home schooled and do not or are not encouraged to attend college. We are all familiar with their wonderful assets to our

community, the Mountain View Nursing Home being one primary example.

Church leaders are come from the ranks as they are called by faith to become pastors of the Mennonite Church.

It was a very interesting and informative presentation of our Mennonite Community and the substantial part it plays in Madison County.

ARCADE NEWS



When local Veterinarian Dr. Matt Graves retired and closed his office earlier this year he offered to lend the Historical Society some items for display at the museum. We accepted the loan of a beautiful 'bow front' china cabinet filled with an extensive collection of medical paraphernalia. The first step was to photograph and pack up all items in boxes for transport. Kavanaugh White, Max Lacy and Charles Carter moved everything to the Arcade. Sandy Stowe cleaned and touched up the cabinet and then went through the boxes. She chose many interesting bottles and boxes to refill the cabinet. Most have self-explanatory labels such as Lydia Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, Louse Killer's Honey and Tar Compound for cough and cold, Dr. Kilmer's Female Compound, Dar-Ling-Oil for sore feet and many more. There were too many items for the glass front cabinet so we had to empty another case to hold them. They really must be seen to be appreciated.

We are so appreciative of Dr. Graves' generosity in lending us this interesting collection.



Some of the toys on exhibit

We also have a new collection on display of children's play things. Many thanks to Ruth Penn and Judy Mahanes for lending these items.

A special thank you to Ren Levally and Linda Yurinak for all the time they spent improving our main computer. It all works well now and we really appreciate the time you spent. Linda, we also love the new printer

300TH ANNIVERSARY OF FIRST COLONY



Pictured is our own Pat Lattin wearing period dress as she waits to greet the members of the Germanna Reunion. Three bus loads (totaling about 170, including 34 people from Germany and the rest from Aroda to Hawaii) came to Madison on July 18th to see where some of their ancestors had lived after coming to America in 1714. This was the 300th Anniversary of the first

colony. After touring the Kemper Residence and outbuildings (law office and slave cabin) the buses took them to the Madison Fire Hall for a BBQ dinner. From dinner they went to Hebron Lutheran church for talks and a special organ playing.

On Saturday Reunion members attended lectures at Germanna College's Daniel Center in Culpeper. They included a talk by Kristie Kendall who traced ownership of several of the Germanna homesteads in Madison County. Historical Society volunteers manned a vendor table at this event to sell books, CD's, cards and shirts.

On Sunday morning many of the visitors attended church at Hebron Lutheran and Little Fork Episcopal in Culpeper.



Beppy White and Sandy Stowe staff the Society's table at the Germanna Vendor Hall in Culpeper Saturday, July 19. Linda Yurinak supervised the table later in the day.



Board Members Beppy White, Pat Lattin (as a Confederate widow), Max Lacy, and Sandy Stowe wait at the Kemper Mansion on Friday, July 18, to greet the three Germanna Foundation tour busses. The 175 visitors included over thirty Germans from the Deutsch-Amerkanische Gessellschaft, Siegerland-Wittgenstein, along with Americans from all over the country, Hawaii to Madison, VA.

FALL TEA AT KEMPER ON OCTOBER 1



The volunteers who prepare and serve food for the semi-annual fund raising teas at the Kemper Residence are beginning plans for the menu to be served at the Fall Tea on Wednesday, October 1, at 12:30 p.m.

The past several teas have been booked to capacity, so we are giving special consideration to members of MCHS. Historical Society members will have the first opportunity to make their reservations.

Starting Monday, August 18, our members may make their reservations by leaving a message at 547-4398. We will call you back with a confirmation. Reservations will open to the public on Monday, September 1.

"We are holding the line on the price", says Mary Haught, who coordinates arrangements with husband, Bob.

"We have made no price adjustments in several years," she said, "so once again, you will be served a generous luncheon tea for only \$20." That entire amount is a contribution to the Historical Society, since all food is prepared and donated by dedicated volunteers.

Plan now to get a group together and enjoy lunch in our historic Kemper Residence. And call early to be sure you can get a reservation.

MEMBERSHIP

We would like to welcome the following new members to the Society since the last newsletter:

Nannette Crowdus
Meredith Lobello

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

BLUE RIDGE HERITAGE PROJECT

The newly formed Blue Ridge Heritage Project is exploring ways to recognize the people who were displaced when land was acquired to form Shenandoah National Park. The group hopes to see memorials created in each of the eight counties (Albemarle, Augusta, Greene, Madison, Page, Rappahannock, Rockingham, and Warren) where land was taken.

The Project is led by Bill Henry of Greene County. The Board of Directors includes Bill Henry, along with Roy Dye, Ann Dye, and Kristie Kendall. Madison's Jim Lillard and Kit Johnston are members of the Advisory Council for the Project. They hosted a meeting on Sunday, June 29, 2014 in the County Auditorium to give local people the opportunity to learn more about the project and offer suggestions about a memorial within Madison County.

At the meeting, Bill Henry discussed two purposes that he sees for the project. One is to

honor the people and the sacrifices they made when displaced in the 1930s; another is to promote tourism in the counties today. To that end, he hopes to create committees within each county to plan memorials and organize participation by Tourism Offices and Chambers of Commerce.

Jim Lillard showed the group a list of 118 surnames of Madison County landowners who were displaced by the formation of SNP. Jim is seeking input from descendants, other relatives, and friends of these displaced people for planning a suitable memorial to these families in Madison County. Everyone emphasized that any memorials created by this project will be located outside the Park. The creation of a mobile exhibit that can be moved from place to place was suggested as a way to extend the reach of the project beyond the site of the permanent marker.

To move forward, the Project needs volunteers with time and ideas, and it needs money. Contact Jim Lillard at 540-547-3774 or Kit Johnston at 540-547-2317 with your questions, concerns, and offers to help. Watch the *Madison Eagle* for more coverage of the project. The Madison County Historical Society has voted to receive and hold tax-deductible contributions in a special fund for the Project. Make checks payable to the Madison County Historical Society with Blue Ridge Memorial Project on the memo line and mail to the following address:

Madison County Historical Society
For Blue Ridge Memorial
P. O. Box 467
Madison, VA 22727

MADISON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY ON FACEBOOK

The Society now has a presence on Facebook. We post information and events on Facebook whenever possible. Please "like" us on Facebook when you get a chance. The web address for the page is:

www.facebook.com/madisonvahistoricalsociety

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.

Memberships expire at the end of the calendar year. Membership and other contributions to the Society are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. Types of Membership:

Sustainer.....	\$500 or more	Business	\$50
Benefactor	\$250 to \$499	Family	\$30
Partner	\$100 to \$249	Single	\$20
Friend	\$50 to \$99	Student	\$5

Membership applications are available at the Arcade and the Kemper Residence, and on-line at the Society's web page - www.madisonvahistoricalsociety.org. (Click on "ABOUT US", and then on "application"). For more information call the Society Office at 540-948-5488. Please leave a message if no one answers. We will return your call. You can also email us at madisonhistory@verizon.net.

Madison County Historical Society

P.O. Box 467
Madison, Virginia
22727



August 2014