



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

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August 2017



Carole Nash at work

DR. CAROLE NASH TO SPEAK

Dr. Carole Nash, a Middle Atlantic archeologist who specializes in Native American studies and human ecology in mountain settings will speak at the August 20, 2017 meeting of the Madison County Historical Society. The topic of her talk will be Belmont Vineyard in Shenandoah National Park.

The study of early-history vineyards and wine making in the Blue Ridge has been restricted to small-scale operations associated with individual homesteads. In fact, current popular reconstructions of the Virginia wine industry focus on the limited success of production vineyards until the late 20th century. However, recent historical research and archeological survey in Shenandoah National Park have led to the rediscovery of Belmont, a significant Warren County, Virginia vineyard and winery with origins

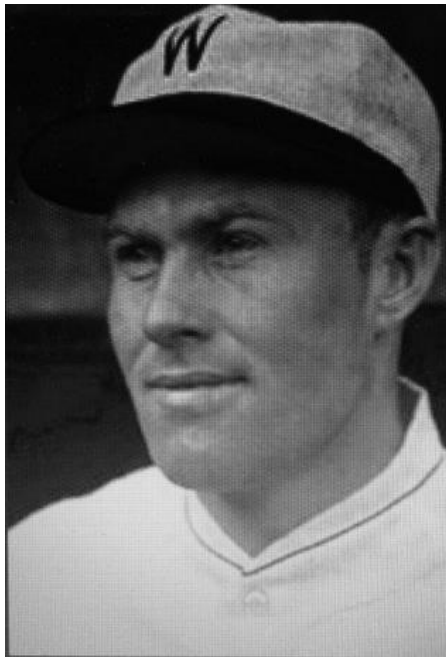
prior to the Civil War. By 1890 this business was producing and shipping thousands of gallons of wine and brandy across the eastern United States. Belmont was established by farmer Marcus Buck in 1848 on tracts of Blue Ridge land now within the National Park and was a mixed livestock, grain, and fruit operation. Its development slowed by the Civil War, Belmont's vineyards recovered and ultimately encompassed 100 acres of the 800-acre farm. Since 2011, archeological survey funded by the National Park Service has located remains of the manor house, dependencies, extensive road and stone wall networks, and two three story wine cellars constructed into the mountain.

Dr. Nash is an Associate Professor in the Department of Integrated Science and Technology at James Madison University.

The meeting will be held in the Madison County Administration Offices auditorium at 3pm Sunday August 20th. Everyone is invited to attend. Refreshments will follow the meeting in the Kemper Residence and Museum next door and there will be a sampling of wines from DuCard vineyards.

NEW MUSEUM PHONE NUMBER

With the move of the Society Museum to the Kemper House, the Society Museum has a new phone number. It is **540-395-5119**.



Ollie Tucker

OLIVER DINWIDDIE TUCKER TOPIC OF MAY MEETING

The speaker for the May 21, 2017 quarterly meeting of the Madison County Historical Society was Mr. Robert (Bob) Lookabill and the topic of his presentation was the story of one of Madison County's singular baseball players, Oliver Dinwiddie Tucker.

Bob, a retired Navy Reserve Captain is also a huge fan of the game of baseball. Having inquired about the mausoleum in a family cemetery on State Route 230 near Radiant, he found that it was "the grave of O.D. Tucker who played major league baseball." He researched "Ollie" Tucker as he was known to his fans, and discovered that Ollie was born in Radiant in January of 1902, had played both minor and major league ball and though his major league career was rather short having never found his niche there, he amassed an amazing career in the minor leagues. He was inducted into the Buffalo Bison Baseball Hall of Fame in 1986 and the International League Baseball Hall of Fame in 2008. Ollie was signed by the New York Yankees at the age of 19 but never actually played in the majors for them although there are pictures of him in a Yankee uniform. He could not translate his all-star quality minor league numbers into a big-league career. He was a career .335 hitter for his minor league career, hitting 237 home runs. He was beloved in Buffalo and the pay was better for the International League than in the Majors as a bench warmer.

Bob told us much more about Ollie's baseball career but also spoke about what he accomplished here in Madison. Health problems plagued him during his career. He died in Radiant at the unseemly age of 38.

The audience was filled with friends and relatives of the Tucker family including a niece and two great nieces who shared personal memories and even a scrapbook with excerpts of Ollie. One niece recalled going along with Dinwiddie and her father (Nimrod Early) to Richmond to "lobby" for electricity (REA) for the area.

At the end of the presentation one audience member made sure that the group knew there was another Madison Major Leaguer, Carl Yowell. Carl was born in Madison in 1902, went to Woodberry Forest School and signed with the Cleveland Indians at the age of 21 and saw action with them in 1924 and 1925. His career was cut short by injury.

Madison County produced a disproportionate number of promising baseball players over the years – including Walter Mayo Yowell, Billy Mitchell, Jimmy Kite, Ernest Utz and Bob Hoffman- "the boys of summer" as they are remembered.

MEMBERSHIP

We have several new members this quarter.

Mike & Joyce Hale
Eileen L. Smith
Paul Dickinson
Robert Lookabill
Joan Fishback Weaver
Sandra Morris
Carolyn Barrley
Pat Thomas
George Blaine
Margie Kemper Farber

Welcome to the Society. Remember that Society membership is a wonderful gift any time of the year. A copy of the Society membership application can be obtained at the following link:
www.madisonvahistoricalsociety.org/application.pdf



Max Lacy listens as Robert Hardaway, great grandson of Francis and Virginia Ann McMullen, reminisces about spending summers at the "Kemper" property back in the 1930s

SPECIAL VISITORS AT KEMPER

Back in June, the Museum welcomed a special visitor, Robert Hardaway from Sierra Madre, CA. While on assignment in Charlottesville, Mr. Hardaway made a trip to Madison to check out the property where he spent summer vacations back in the 1930s. He is a great grandson of Francis Marion and Virginia Ann McMullen, who purchased the Kemper estate from James Lawson Kemper. Judge McMullen practiced law in the Law Office on the property, and Virginia McMullen established a college preparatory school for women in the main house. The next owner was their daughter Anna E. McMullen Christian. She and her family used the house during the summers. Her husband W. Asbury Christian was a Methodist minister, educator, and author. One of their daughters married Robert Hardaway and visited Madison with their son, also named Robert. Our visitor told the Museum Volunteers that the room across the hall from the Parlor was his grandfather's room, where he read the Bible, studied, and worked on his writing.

Mr. Hardaway told Max Lacy about a plank walkway between the main house and the outhouse, located where the County Administration building is today. He also mentioned being warned to watch out for snakes when playing with friends in the front yard, and he remembered a big swing on the porch just to the right of the front door.

Edith Christian Compton (Mr. Hardaway's aunt) owned the property from 1952 until 1962 and continued the practice of using the house during

the summer. Mrs. Compton sold the property to the Joint Board of Control, University of Virginia, for us as an Extension Center for UVA. The careful listener may still hear old timers refer to the residence as the "extension". Although we refer to it today as the Kemper Residence, Mr. Hardaway's visit and stories remind us that the house remained in the McMullen/Christian/Compton family for seventy-six years. The Cave/Kemper family lived there twenty-one years.

Ownership dates:

- 1868—1886: James Lawson Kemper
- 1886—1905/6: Judge Francis Marion McMullen and his wife Virginia Ann
- 1906—1952: Anna E. McMullen Christian
- 1952—1962: Edith Christian Compton
- 1962—1977: The Joint Board of Control, University of Virginia
- 1977—present: County of Madison



Children of Don Strobe

Some other interesting visitors to our museum this summer were two of Don Strobe's children, a son Dan and his wife Debby and a daughter Donna. It was fun getting a chance to meet and talk to them.

The Donald Strobe Collection, a gift to the Madison Historical Society in 2004, includes several thousand Native American artifacts ranging in age from ca. 13,000 to 400 years old. Mr. Strobe, a retired US Forest Service employee, was an avid outdoorsman with a great interest in Native cultures. Asking

permission of local landowners, he walked plowed fields and collected an extensive sample of surface artifacts from thirty sites in Madison County. The real contribution of the collection is Mr. Strode's meticulous documentation, which provides site provenience for 90% of the objects. The Strode Collection is comprised primarily of stone objects, as these tend to survive in our temperate climate. In addition, Mr. Strode collected pottery sherds from some of the sites. Prior to his work, only three pottery-bearing sites were known for the county, now, we have information on twenty such sites. Pottery was first made by Native people in the Virginia Piedmont around 3000 years ago and is a marker of a more sedentary, horticultural way of life



BLUE RIDGE TURNPIKE SIGN DEDICATION

The "Dedication" of the Blue Ridge Turnpike road marker was held at Criglersville, VA on Saturday June 17th at 12:00 noon. Max Lacy, President of the Madison County Historical Society which funded the marker, welcomed all. Dr. Jennifer Loux from the Virginia Department of Historical Resources was in attendance for the "unveiling". She stated that this program offers a unique visible way to educate the public. The program relies on groups to apply and pay for the markers.

The Blue Ridge Turnpike's 56-mile route was completed in 1853 and cost \$176,000 to build. This route linked the Shenandoah Valley from the vicinity of New Market to the railhead in Gordonsville.

Madison Co. Historical Society member (and VDOT historian) Ann Miller spoke briefly about the historical background of the turnpike, noting that she first heard about, and became interested in, the history of the turnpike back in the 1970's. Beginning with 18th century predecessor roads, she traced the history of the route. Her presentation touched on the building and use of the turnpike in the 1840s and '50s to provide access to the railroad at Gordonsville, the turnpike's use during the Civil War (it was a popular route of Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson's), the post-War period (when the turnpike became a county road), and the alteration of the old route into modern Routes 670 and 231 during the 1930's and later.

Historical tidbits included mention of the different kinds of traffic that could be encountered on the route (such as the famous turkey drives that trotted along it), and the difficulties posed by the hairpin switchbacks of the old turnpike. Ms. Miller also noted the importance of local knowledge in documenting early roads, and particularly acknowledged the valuable information that she received from Dr. Matt Graves, Dewey Lillard, Harold Woodward, and Bill Gimbel over the years.

Kristie Kendall, who is with the Piedmont Environmental Council and the Blue Ridge Heritage Board, wrote the text for the sign.

This Historical Marker is located on "The Old Blue Ridge Turnpike" from Route 231 to Route 646 at the site of the Blue Ridge Heritage Monument which was built to honor the Madison County families who were displaced from their homes and land to form the Shenandoah National Park.



Beply White and Jim Lillard unveil the new sign.



Sign unveiled

FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY TEA, SEPTEMBER 27, 2017

This fall marks fifteen years of benefit teas that help support the Madison County Historical Society. Former MCHS president, Rita Cunningham, created the concept and the plan, and she presided over the teas during the first several years before she and her husband moved away from Madison.

By following her plan, we have continued the teas, and during these 15 years, the semi-annual teas have become a much-anticipated Madison tradition. During that time, our loyal tea-goers have contributed significant funding for Historical Society projects. All food is prepared and contributed by our group of volunteers, so your \$25 donation goes directly to the MCHS.

Plan now to attend the Anniversary Luncheon Tea at 12:30 p.m. on September 27, 2017, at the historic Kemper Residence on Main Street in Madison.

Reservations are now being received. Due to building restrictions, seating is limited, so reservations are necessary. Call 547-4398 and leave a message with your name, telephone number and the number in your party. We'll call you back to confirm your reservation. If you prefer, email your request to

maryhaught@hughes.net. We will confirm your request for seating. As usual, we welcome individuals as well as groups of four or six. We look forward to observing this anniversary date and beginning another year of service to support our local historical society.



Germanna conference attendees view the new museum

300TH ANNIVERSARY GERMANNA CELEBRATION

The Germanna Foundation's 300th Celebration of the 1717 colony's arrival toured Madison County on July 14th. Four buses of "Germanna descendants" toured the Museum and the Kemper Residence and then visited Beth Car Baptist Church and Hebron Lutheran Church. The group enjoyed the scenery of the Hebron Valley and Criglersville with a delicious lunch stop at Graves Mountain Lodge in Syria.



Visitors tour the Kemper House

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
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AUGUST 2017