



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

(540) 395-5119

November 2017

Jim



Jim Lillard at the Mountain Memorial

MOUNTAIN MEMORIES II

Our speaker at the November 19, 2017 Madison County Historical Society quarterly meeting will be Jim Lillard, a lifelong resident of Madison county. The topic of his presentation will be Mountain Memories II, an updated reprise of his earlier presentation about the families who lived in our local mountains before they became a portion of the Shenandoah National Park. The

presentation will include original family photos as well as photos from the Library of Congress of family homes and farms. Included also will be film clips from 1926 of mail by horseback and the Hoover School with Mrs. Hoover talking to the children.

We have had many presentations on what was in many ways a sad history behind the creation of the Park, the government having used eminent domain to remove a few thousand people from their land for its creation. Jim Lillard, whose family was displaced from the Blue Ridge Mountains, will present a lighter side to the story with his usual interesting and humorous talk about the family life and work ethic of those folks before the creation of the Shenandoah National Park.

This is a story which even today remains deeply embedded in Madison county and surrounding counties involved in the creation of the Park. Madison county was the first to construct a memorial dedicated to those individuals displaced by its creation and Jim Lillard was the principle in its approval and ultimate construction on the grounds of the former Criglersville School. Known as the Blue Ridge Heritage Project other counties have constructed or planned construction of similar memorials.

Jim is retired from the Virginia Department of Transportation as a Bridge Safety Engineer, a twenty-year member of the Sons of the American Revolution, a forty plus year collector and hunter of Civil War relics and a more than twenty year member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

The meeting will be held in the Madison County Administrative Offices auditorium at 3pm Sunday November 19th. Everyone is invited to attend,

and refreshments will follow next door in the Kemper Residence and Museum.



Carole Nash with Belmont Vineyard label

BELMONT VINEYARD

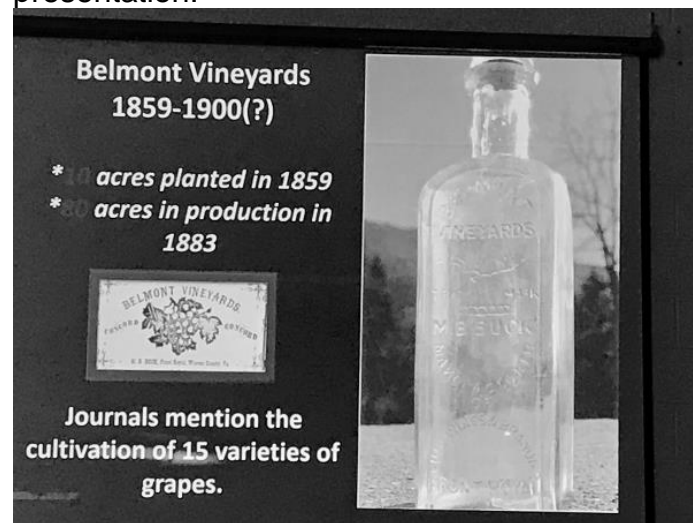
The speaker for the August 20, 2017 quarterly meeting of the Madison County Historical Society was Dr. Carole Nash, a Middle Atlantic archeologist who specializes in Native American studies and human ecology in mountain settings. The topic of her presentation was Belmont, a significant Warren County vineyard and winery with origins prior to the Civil War and located in what is now the Shenandoah National Park. An archeological survey has been conducted on this site since 1999.

In 2015 the Virginia wine industry was a 1.2 billion dollar business. Belmont was a major wine industry in 19th century eastern U.S. located 3 miles from the Front Royal Entrance to what is now SNP and one can see where Belmont was from the Dickey Ridge Visitor Center. The Buck family was a prominent family in Front Royal in the 18th and 19th centuries. In 1847 Marcus Blakemore Buck (1816-1881), grandson of Buck family founders, purchased 2,000 acres where he built Belmont and farmed. He kept a daily diary, of which four volumes exist, containing a treasure of activities, events and a calendar. In 1859 he planted 10 acres of vines and by 1863 had 80 acres of vineyard. He planted many varieties of red grape vines including Fox, Catawba, Norton, Ives, Creveling, Hartford, Cincinnati, and Isabella. He shipped grape slips all over via the railroad and sold through a catalog. He also grew 10 acres of sugar cane. He used slave labor until they left after the Emancipation Proclamation. In

1867 he opened a distillery and built a wine cellar. After the Civil War the railroad was not working so Marcus began making brandy because he could not ship fruit and made whiskey which was sold in pharmacies. In 1875 the depression came, and the business failed. Having also diversified into land speculation by mistake he sold Belmont in 1878 to his cousin Ashby, for 15 thousand dollars. Marcus died destitute in 1881. Ashby, by 1883 managed to reach a production of 20,000 gallons of sweet red wine, port and some dry red which he sold all over the eastern U.S. and in 1893 won medals at the Chicago World's Fair.

Mrs. Nash informed us that this was the hardest work she has ever done. The site is off the Dickey Ridge Trail, totally overgrown and has grape vines everywhere. They have found the foundations of most buildings and two miles of stone walls still in great shape. Wine cellar foundations remain and were built into the mountain for coolness. They have determined where each variety of grape was planted, and they are definitely not European vines.

It was a fascinating presentation and story, quite well attended. We are grateful to Scott Elliff of Ducard Vineyards, who graced attendees with wine samplings in Kemper following the presentation.



Belmont Vineyard bottle

MEMBERSHIP

We have several new members this quarter.

Jacob & Kasey Richards
Joan Gratto Liebler
Joseph T. Shelton
Brad & Jayne Jackson
Edward DEJ Berry

Pamela Harbourt
Faye Mitchell Lawes
David Brown
Carolyn Barrley

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.madisonvahistoricalociety.org/application.pdf

KEMPER DESCENDENTS WELCOMED TO FALL TEA

The September luncheon tea was a special occasion for several reasons. We began by celebrating the 15th anniversary of these events that bring together friends from the community to support the Historical Society. As planning proceeded, it developed into an opportunity to welcome Kemper family descendants to the home once lived in by Virginia Governor James Lawson Kemper.



Kemper descendants Agnes Kemper Hoyt, John Lynch, his wife Cheryl, along with friends of the Lynch's and Martha Breedon Tables filled the main floor of the Residence as we served guests in the parlor, sunroom and meeting room. Special touches were all around and we offered a toast to guests who generously support these events by attending the teas held in the spring and fall. Many of the guests were regulars, and several asked the date of the spring tea as we said goodbye on the porch. These supporters are what make the teas a major source of financial support for the Society. John Lynch paid his first visit to the home of his great-great grandfather, James Lawson Kemper.

After living in many parts of the country and the world with his military parents, he and his wife have settled in Williamsburg. In an effort to learn more about his ancestors, they joined the Historical Society. After returning home from their visit, he wrote that he was deeply touched by some of the artifacts in the museum and by just being in his ancestor's home.

Agnes Kemper Hoyt read about the tea in the newsletter and made arrangements to attend from her home in Richmond. She is descended from John Kemper, who immigrated in 1714 as part of the original Germanna Colony.

A third descendant, Margie Kemper Farber had planned to come from her home in Florida, but Hurricane Irma damaged her home and she needed to stay close to attend to some repair work. She hopes to join us for the spring tea.

It was a genuine pleasure to have contact with these Kemper family members, and to welcome them into the home of James Lawson and Belle Cave Kemper.

The volunteers that prepare and donate all the food, set the tables with beautiful antique china that has been donated to the Society, serve the food and pour tea and then wash all the dishes and put them away, have earned huge thanks from the Society Board of Directors. Their appreciation goes to Katy Cashman, Pat and Chris Lattin, Maryvonne Longley, Heidi Sage, Bill Scholten, Jill Schreiner, Bob and Mary Haught. For those who like to plan ahead, the spring tea will be held on Wednesday, March 28, 2018. You'll hear more about it closer to the time.



Kemper Special Blend Tea

This tea makes a great holiday gift. If you didn't pick some up at the Fall Tea you can still make a purchase at the Historical Society museum at the

Kemper Residence and the Markets at the fire house on November 18th and December 16th.

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

We have been busy lately with the museum and other projects, and we have some upcoming projects that will need some volunteers.

Jimmy Graves let us have a spot at all three of the Apple Harvest Festival weekends and we really helped our cause. We really spread the word about what really happened to the Mountain people by talking about it and selling almost \$500 worth of books about them. We had over \$100 donated in our jar for the Monument/Cottage Fund and received a very generous donation from "Uncle Dave's Kettle Korn" to be put to use in fixing up the Cottage. I would like to thank all of the volunteers that helped with the Festival. I feel that it was a very worthwhile project for the Society.

We will have a booth at the November and December markets at the fire house. Beppy will need some volunteers for both of those days. The November one is on November 18th and the December one is on December 16th. If you would like to volunteer, please let Beppy know.

With the Greene monument dedicated on October 29th, that will give us 5 of the 8 counties involved in the formation of the Shenandoah National Park. Augusta, Rockingham and Warren remain to be erected. I think Jim Lillard set the wheels turning when he went to work and finished our Madison Monument.

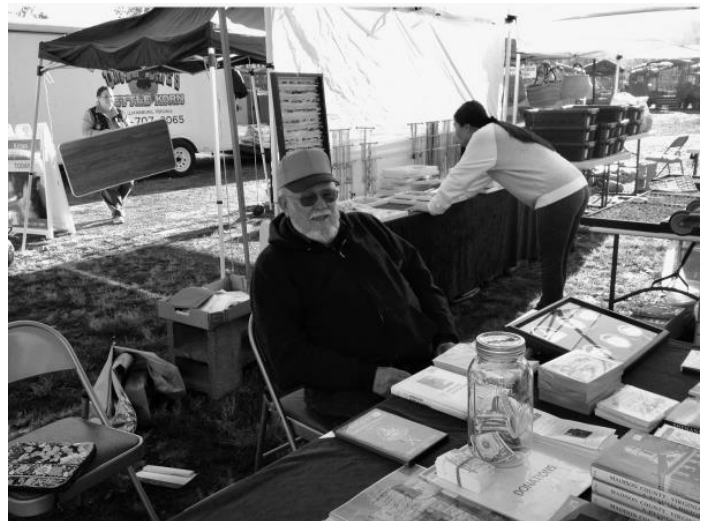
We will be helping with the Colonial Days celebration at Waverly Yowell School on Tuesday November 21, 2017. The program will begin at 9:00am and conclude at noon. All are welcome to stop by to see the different crafts that will be shown to the 4th grade students.

The next big project for us will be the readying of the Cottage at Criglersville for the Madison Mountain Museum to commemorate the families of Madison that were removed from the mountain to form the Shenandoah National Park. We will be looking for donations and volunteers to work on this project. One gentleman from Bumpass (Louisa County) told Judy and I at the festival that he would like to help us with this project. The roof has been painted and our next phase will be making it handicap accessible and replacing and or painting the windows.



Criglersville Cottage

A special thanks to our Board for all of the things that they do to make our museum and society so successful.



Max Lacy at Graves Mountain Apple Festival

A LETTER TO THE BOARD

Dear Museum Volunteers and Society Board Members,

Please join me in sending out a HUGE, HUGE, HUGE thank you to Max for his marathon efforts at the Graves Apple Festival on behalf of the Historical Society and the memorial at Criglersville! I know several of you joined him at times, and Jim brought the land condemnation poster for display. I got there this past Saturday a little after 9:00 AM. Max was already there. I left about 4:20 PM. Max was still there. And that's just one day! Remember the festival ran six hours a day for two days per weekend for three weekends. That comes to 36 hours. Now add at least an hour and a half per day for set up and take down time, and we see that Max spent at least 45 hours at Graves Mountain Lodge.

What did he do? Well, talk, of course. This is Max Lacy we are talking about! He explained to visitors what happened back in the 1930s. He talked about the monument and future plans for the cottage. He accepted donations in the jar. He handed out brochures and business cards for the Society, and he sold lots of Gift Shop items....so many things that inventory may be a bit low this week! Stay tuned for a report on just what sales and donations totaled.

Thanks, Max
Judy Mahanes

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**.

We will be reprinting some interesting articles from past newsletters beginning with this story about General/Governor Kemper's wife Belle Cave Kemper. It was written by Ann Ferguson and first appeared in the November 2002 copy of the Historical Society newsletter.



THE LADY OF THE KEMPER HOUSE

By Ann Ferguson

Cremora (Belle) Conway Cave became the

bride of James Lawson Kemper on July 4, 1853 at Madison Courthouse. The historical record is sparse regarding her background, but by stitching available facts to the time in which she lived, we can draw a pattern of her life.

James Lawson Kemper must have been a dashing figure to young Belle Cave when he first paid her court. Photographs show a broad-shouldered man with dark hair and penetrating dark eyes. When he asked for her hand in marriage, he was a respected lawyer with an office in Madison Courthouse and he owned 20 acres of land and a town lot with a house. He had an interest in politics and in November 1853 was elected to the Virginia House of Delegate.

Belle is described as slight of figure with dark hair and a friendly, vivacious personality. At the time of their marriage she was sixteen years old and her husband was 30. An only daughter with three brothers, Belle's family held a position of importance in Madison County. Her father, Belfield Cave, was Clerk of the Superior Court, a post he held for 37 years. The young couple moved to the house on the town lot that James owned, located on Main Street in front of the Beth Car Church

In those early years, Belle and James made several visits to Virginia's mineral springs to vacation and for health reasons. By 1860, Belle was the busy mother of a son, Meade and two daughters, Frances and Florence. Her husband supported his growing family through an expanding law practice and continued his duties in Richmond in the House of Delegates; he was re-elected in 1855, 1857 and 1859. Virginia seceded from the Union in May 1861 and joined the Confederate States of America. Soon after, James Lawson Kemper was commissioned a Captain in the Confederate Army. These dramatic events closed a chapter on the gentle phase of Belle's life with her husband.

Belle was 24 years old when faced with the challenge of raising three young children without the daily support and comfort of her husband. She had no sisters to call on for help, but it is likely that her Mother became her mainstay. As the years passed, shortages became more acute for even basic items. All able-bodied men were called to the Army, the best horses and mules were taken for use by

the troops and the planting of crops fell to those least able to plow, plant and harvest for the best return. Much of the food produced went to feed Confederate troops or was taken or destroyed in Union raids. The civilian population made do with what was left. Eventually blockades stopped the flow of certain items so that coffee, tea, dress goods and even sewing needles and writing paper were unavailable or, if found, very expensive. Belle surely spent each day concerned for her children's welfare as her family lived with the threat of Union raids. Their lives were punctuated with the sound of marching troops, both Confederate and Union, who crossed Madison County first on the attack and then in retreat.

At night Belle's final thoughts before sleep would have been filled with concern for her husband. Was he well; was a battle imminent in which he would be wounded? (James Lawson Kemper was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General in 1862 and led his troops in many actions on the field of battle.) She also must have shared her Mother's concern for the safety of her brother, Benjamin, serving with the 2nd Virginia Cavalry.

It was in July 1863 on the Battlefield at Gettysburg that Belle's worst fears were realized. General Kemper suffered a wound described as mortal and reports were circulated that he had died. General Lee sent condolences to Belle and all southern newspapers lamented the loss of this Confederate hero.

Belle refused to accept the news of her husband's death as fact. She stayed firm in the belief that he had survived. In early September she was informed that he was a prisoner, first held at a makeshift hospital in Gettysburg and then moved to Fort McHenry in Maryland. Belle did not wait for action by the military and traveled to Richmond to plead her case before the Commissioner of Prisoner Exchange. Soon she was informed that General Kemper would be exchanged for a Brig. General Graham.

The General was warmly welcomed on his return to Madison, but his arrival was saddened by news that his daughter, Frances Merriweather, had died in July, at the time he lay close to death in Gettysburg. This grateful wife and grieving mother spent many weeks nursing her wounded

and pain-ridden husband. She was rewarded for her efforts by his return to health, although he would walk with a limp, aided by a cane, for the rest of his life.

It was in late February 1864, that the Kemper's home was laid waste by Union raiders. A contingent, led by George Armstrong Custer, marched to Charlottesville from Culpeper. Their intent was to create a diversion while Union soldiers freed prisoners from Richmond's Libby Prison. The raiders were turned back and on the way north burned everything in their path, churches, businesses and the homes of confederate officers. At the time, the General was with his brigade in winter camp near Richmond. Belle and her children, now including James, Jr., had taken refuge in Halifax, Virginia, living with the General's sister, Sarah. While his disability prevented a return to active service, General Kemper was put in charge of Virginia's reserve forces where he served until the war's end.

In 1865, the General brought his family back to Madison where they lived with Belle's parents until he could restore his financial position and arrange for a permanent home. Eventually, the General purchased five acres with an existing house on Main Street from his mother-in-law.

A return to a home of her own must have filled Belle Kemper with delight. Her new home was handsome with assorted outbuildings to support domestic needs. The nation was at peace, her husband had resumed his law practice, with a promising political career ahead and he was there to give her loving support in raising their children. In her early 30s Belle had two more children, Lucy and Jessie. Perhaps the Kemper family now enjoyed a time of gentle contentment looking forward to a promising future.

It appears the experiences of the war, her husband's brush with death and the loss of her first-born daughter had taken their toll on this young woman and her health began to fail in the late 1860s. She developed a severe eye infection. Although specialists in Richmond were consulted, no cure was found. Within the next two years she was blind.

In January of 1870 Belle fell seriously ill. She appeared to improve for a time, but by late summer she was again stricken with the added complication of a pregnancy. Her seventh child, Reginald Heber Johns, was born on September 8. This last childbirth broke Belle Kemper's fragile

hold on life and one month later, on October 8, 1870 she died in the second floor bedroom of the family home.

James Lawson Kemper was inconsolable over his wife's death. He took up residence in his law office on the grounds of his home, using the space as a sleeping room. Belle was the only woman he had ever loved. On December 28, 1870, in a letter to Belle's Mother, he wrote: "...She more than filled [my] ideal in everything-grew brighter-from every trial-and proved to be gold in the crucible..."

Following his term as Governor of Virginia, James Lawson Kemper purchased a property in Orange County; he named the home Walnut Hills. His greatest joy for his remaining years was in the children Belle Kemper gave to him. James Lawson Kemper died in 1895; he never remarried.

(This article is based on information from The Confederacy's Forgotten Son, by Harold R. Woodward, Jr.)

PART ONE

INTERESTING FACTS TAKEN FROM PREVIOUS ARTICLES BY ANN FERGUSEN AND A TIMELINE FOUND IN REVISED MADISON HISTORY.

In 1792 the Virginia Assembly adopted legislation to create Madison County from a portion of Culpeper County, effective on May 1, 1793.

1794—The first county court was held at the home of John Yager, Jr. Stocks were built in the county jail.

Six permits were granted to build mills.

1797—Alexander Hunton bought the land on which the Hunton Hotel was built.

1800—The population was 8,322

1801—The first post office was established in the county called Madison Courthouse.

1805—A whipping post was erected in a public lot.

1808—Cotton was grown in Madison for home use.

1810—James City was named the second post office in Madison County.

1822—Pepperbox threshing machines were being made at the Aaron Lacy Shop.

1823—James Kemper was born. Beth Car Baptist Church was organized.

1824—Only 139 votes cast in the Presidential election and Madison went for Crawford.

1830—The present brick courthouse was completed at a cost of \$2750.00. Moses Clore began making chairs.

1834—The first 'poor house' was built for the county.

1835—Sermons at Hebron Lutheran Church changed completely to English.

1838—Thomas Aylor made coffins for \$2.

1845—Tobacco, hemp, flax and wheat were the principal farm crops.

1848—There were 50 houses in Madison County. Labor was .25 a day.

1849—There was a great smallpox epidemic in the county which continued to rage into 1850.

1861—Albert W. Clatterbuck was killed on July 21-the first casualty of the Civil War from Madison County.

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 Kemper Residence and Museum, and on-line at the Society's web page - www.madisonvahistoricalociety.org. (Click on "ABOUT US", and then on "application"). For more information, call the Society Office at 540 395-5119. Please leave a message if no one answers. We will return your call. You can also email us at madisonvahistory@gmail.com

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