

Preserving Yesterday Enriches Tomorrow



Madison County
Historical Society

www.madisonvahistoricalociety.org

May 2020

A Note From The President



I hope everyone is safe and following safe practices. This is a time like we have not seen before, but with patience and obedience, we will get through it. Please be advised that our Museum is closed until further notice, and the program scheduled for May 17th has been cancelled. There will be no Kemper rentals until further notice. Our projects have been put on hold as we work our way through this pandemic. With hope and prayers, we hope the next newsletter will deliver better news. Until next time, please take care and be responsible in your actions.

Max Lacy
President
Madison County Historical Society

A Beautiful Spring

This Kieffer Pear tree dates to the early 1900s, if not before. It was certainly around in 1919 to extend spring greetings to its family after the influenza pandemic, and it has been especially beautiful this year as we face the current pandemic. The tree is in frail health today, but it has produced truckloads of pears over the years!



The Tea Scene in 2020

Our spring tea to raise funds for historical society projects was another casualty of Covid-19. The menu was planned, reservations received to full capacity, seating arrangements made, and jars of Kemper tea filled to sell.

But then came Federal and State orders to practice social distancing to avoid spreading the virus. There was no way we could comply with that directive, so it was fairly easy to make the decision to cancel.

Almost everyone who had reserved either gave their payment as a donation or asked to apply it to attendance at the fall tea. We are grateful for those donations.

Now our thoughts are focused on the fall tea, scheduled for Wednesday, September 30. Starting with those who carried their payments over, eleven seats are already reserved. We will announce further plans in the summer issue of the newsletter.

For those who planned to purchase jars of Kemper Tea for gifts or their use at home, we have them available. While the museum is closed, that will not be an outlet, but if you absolutely, positively need a jar (or two!), let Mary Haught know and she will arrange a drop off point. maryhaught@hughes.net or 547-4398.

As a reminder, the volunteers who make the teas possible are:

Katy Cashman, Chris Lattin, Pat Lattin, Maryvonne Longley, Heidi Sage, Bob Haught, Mary Haught, Arlene Aylor, Martha Breeden and Judy Mahanes. Give them an elbow bump when you see them around town!!!

We hope to see you September 30th at the fall tea.

From the Minutes: Early 2020

Historical Society activities may have come to a sudden halt in mid-March, but much was going on in early 2020. Terry Miller gave an excellent presentation at the February 16th membership meeting. Her presentation was preceded by a short business meeting at which Phil Brockman, Janice Carpenter, Sandy Stowe, and Beppy White were reelected to the Board of Directors of the Society. The Board then elected its officers at the monthly meeting in March. Your officers for 2020 are:

President: Max Lacy

Vice-President: Penn Bowers

Recording Secretary: Phil Brockman

Corresponding Secretary: Martha Breeden

Treasurer: Judy Mahanes

Membership Chair: Arlene Aylor

Members: Jean Busboso

Janice Carpenter

Mike Hale

Pam Nelson

Sandy Stowe

Beppy White

Three other individuals also play a big role in our work. Mary Haught coordinates the Kemper Teas and rentals of the Kemper residence. Edward Berry, with his huge reservoir of knowledge about the county, serves as an Advisor to the Board on numerous topics. Katy Cashman has recently stepped into a senior role to maintain the Society website.

Fund-raising for replacement windows at the Mountain Museum at Criglersville was fantastic. Thanks to the generosity of our members and friends, the project is fully funded. The windows have been ordered with delivery and installation tentatively set for April. Who knows what effect the pandemic will have on that schedule!

Under the direction of Curator Beppy White, the Museum opened for the season as scheduled on Tuesday, March 3, 2020. At least a dozen visitors came to see new exhibits and renew friendships. Gift shop sales were brisk. Then came Friday, the thirteenth of March.....when the coronavirus made it necessary for us to close. When we can open again, Katy will post a notice on our website and Martha Breeden will post to the Society's Facebook page.

During January, the Museum welcomed approximated 37 students and parents from the Home-Schooling community and a dozen or so guests at a private party, also attended by volunteers who could conduct tours.

Madison History through the Decades

Compiled by Edward Berry

- 1800 Population 8,322 (including 3,436 Negro slaves)
- 1830 Construction of current Courthouse completed
- 1850 Madison County experienced its worst smallpox epidemic.
- 1870 A Mr. Larkin began operation of a clothing factory on the Robinson River.
- 1890 J. L. Fray and others were responsible for construction of the first telephone line in the County. It ran from Culpeper to Madison.
- 1920 Population 10,125.
- 1930 United Fuel Gas Company laid a natural gas main in the County.
- 1930 There were 212 telephones in service in the county.
- 1940 J. P. Goodall, Emmett Lohr, and Lee S. Blankenbaker were nominated to serve as members of the Madison Selective Service Board.
- 1940 Election: 692 votes for President Franklin Roosevelt, 646 votes for Wendell Wilkie
- 1950 Negro leaders appealed to the County School Board for a consolidated Negro elementary school. Madison Elementary School opened to its first students in fall of 1956.
- 1960 The US 29 by-pass around the Town of Madison opened.

Welcome New Members

Fay T. Utz - Brightwood, VA

Kelly Gentry - Madison, VA

Ray W. Goodall, Sr.- Reva, VA

Awesome Insulation, Reva, VA

Thanks to all members who help preserve our county's history through your support of the Madison County Historical Society. We currently have 194 members.

THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT AND Its effect on people of the Blue Ridge Mountains

By
Maxwell Lacy, Jr.

Chestnut trees were a staple in the lives of the Mountain people; they supplied food for the people and livestock and served as a crop that could be sold for cash to buy supplies. As important as the nuts were, the bark and the lumber were just as important. The bark was sold as tannin to be used for tanning hides into leather, and the lumber was used to build houses, barns, sheds, rail fences, and whatever else was needed. This was the way of life before the Shenandoah National Park was formed; however, the "Blight" had already started to kill the trees.

There was a recommendation that the chestnut trees be harvested for lumber. The West Virginia Lumber Company built a narrow-gauge railroad from Orange to Graves Mill to haul the timber to market. When the harvest was complete, the company moved the railroad back to West Virginia. This was the only railroad that was ever located in Madison County. Imagine, if you can, how hard it was to get this lumber out of the mountain. These trees could reach 100 feet in height and up to 10 feet in diameter. The story is that they were the redwood of the east.

William A. Murrill (assistant director of the New York Botanical Garden) predicted in an article in the New York Times in 1908 that the blight would kill all American Chestnut trees. After much research, he recommended a regimen that included heavy pruning, spraying, and inoculation with small amounts of the fungus. All of this was to no avail. He also said that the trees should be harvested. Mr. Murrill assumed that the blight fungus came to New York on Asian chestnut trees that were shipped to nurseries, and he was right. The fungus entered the tree through a wound on the bark, but it also was transmitted by the wind. Some of the oak and maple trees were also infected by the fungus, but it did not kill them. Even today the fungus is alive in the mountains of the Eastern United States.



When the Skyline Drive was opened, there were groves of pine and a lot of dead chestnut stumps to be seen. The chestnut trees were killed at the rate of over 200,000 trees a day; more than 4 billion died over a period of 50 years. Old-timers say that the mountains were white like snow, in the spring when the chestnut trees were in bloom. Today scientists and botanists are cross pollinating existing trees over and over to produce a tree that can hold its own against the blight. So far, they have created a tree that is 90 % American chestnut and so far, resistant to the blight.

After we dedicated the Blue Ridge Heritage Project chimney at Criglersville, we decided to plant chestnut trees behind it. The trees we chose are "Dunstan Chestnuts". This hybrid variety was started in the early 1950s when James Carpenter of Salem Ohio found a living American chestnut among a grove of dead and dying trees. He inoculated it over a period of four years with the blight spores and mycelia and did not

induce any infection in the tree. He sent budwood to Dr. Robert T Duns, a fellow member of the Northern Nut Growers Association, who grafted it on chestnut root stock. The tree grew well. He then cross pollinated the American grafts with three superior USDA Chinese selections. After they started producing, he crossed them back to both the American and Chinese parent trees. These were the trees that he took to his nursery and planted in a lot that has been blight free and productive for over 50 years. The blight free Dunstan Chestnut is the only chestnut to receive a US plant patent.

The three trees that the Historical Society planted in early 2016 are doing well. One of them even had a chestnut burr on it last fall. We hope that they will produce in the next two or three years. The trees will grow to a height of 40 to 60 feet with a spread of about 30 feet. The nuts will be larger than the American chestnut. We are excited to be able to include these trees as part of our remembrance of an earlier time in Madison County history.

(Parts of this article were taken from an article written by Nicholas Lund, former senior manager of the landscape conservation program.)



The William Terrill King's Grant

by Dewey Lillard and Doug Graves

Part II

Part I of this article appeared in the January 2020 edition of this newsletter. That article discussed the mechanics of early land grants and the circumstances whereby the actual William Terrill parchment grant came to our attention. In this article, we will discuss people who lived and worked on the land.

The Terrill Grant was issued on Oct. 3, 1734 in Spotsylvania County. It consisted of 600 acres of land lying on the North side of Garth's Run against a mountain bluff. On the tithable list of 1739, William Terrill is listed as "Wm. Terrill's Quarter, 2 tithables." The notion of "Quarter" indicates that Terrill had this land as an investment and probably had a tenant or overseer living on the land, with slaves helping to seat that land. A

short way down into Graves Mill, Adam Banks bought a 250-acre grant in 1739; his improvements, including a house built by John Simpson and Thomas Stanton of 15 ft. square and a fenced in fruit orchard, were recorded in 1743.

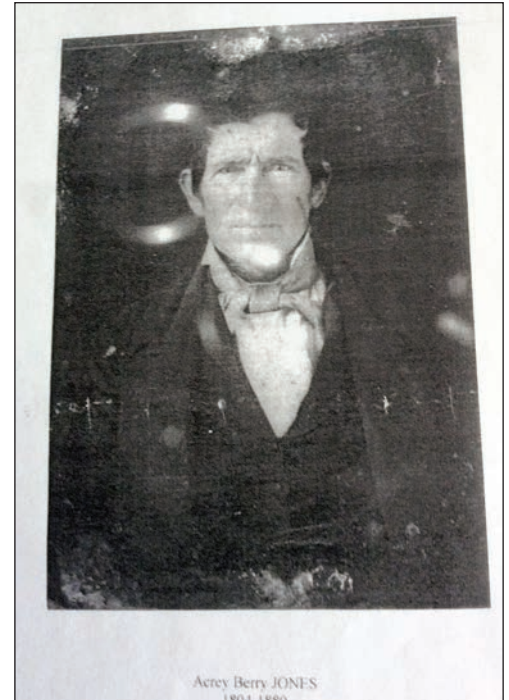


Acrey B. Jones Home
Later, the "Collins Place"

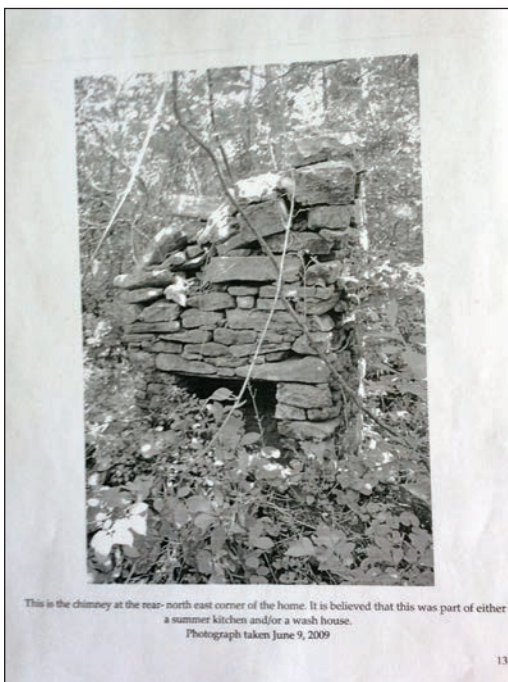
Doug Graves, a resident of Graves Mill and direct descendant of Captain Thomas Graves, plays an important part in the discovery of the information in this article. He has researched his Graves family, including when Thomas Graves first appeared in this area. In 1760, "late comer" Thomas Graves came into the valley and began buying up land all around the Graves Mill settlement. He and Joseph Eddins purchased the Terrill Grant and the David Jones Grant, upon which the Graves's Mill still stands today.

Graves ran this mill along with a hemp mill and a blacksmith shop. No deed was found to determine where Thomas Graves got the Terrill or Jones lands until Doug went to the Virginia State Library and found in their files, a deed from John Buckner and Samuel Buckner to Joseph Eddins and Thomas Graves. Dated October 8, 1759, it conveyed two properties that their father, Capt. Thomas Buckner, decd., owned at his death. Later, Graves took ownership of the Jones tract and Eddins the Terrill tract. Graves continued to purchase land in the mountains around the settlement and owned thousands of acres at his death between May 28, 1809 and March 22, 1810.

Now enters another series of events that pull all this history together. Doug Graves received a letter from a descendant of Acrey B. Jones, who once lived on the "Bluff". In his letter, Bill Jones (living in Los Angeles, California) states that his line goes back to Acrey. He gives a description of the house and a deed in 1859 when Acrey owned the land. Also, a picture was included taken in 1924 by Charles Jones when he came East to see the homeplace. Doug investigated the deeds and materials in the Madison Clerk's Office. He was especially interested in those concerning the formation of the Shenandoah National Park and the lands that would be included in it. There is a survey of each plot of land with information about who owned it, what was built on it, and what value it was assessed. From that information, Doug was able to find the exact plot of land where the house stood. He also knew that Mr. Lewis Shifflett of Wolfstown once lived at the site. He and Mr. Shifflett traveled to the house site and Shifflett confirmed that it was the same place that he remembered. Doug and Dewey Lillard then went to the site to measure the road to scale on a topo map and compare it with the deed lines; it was an exact match! We will not mention all the previous owners that this parcel of land has had, but suffice it to say there were "many".



Acrey Berry JONES
1804-1880

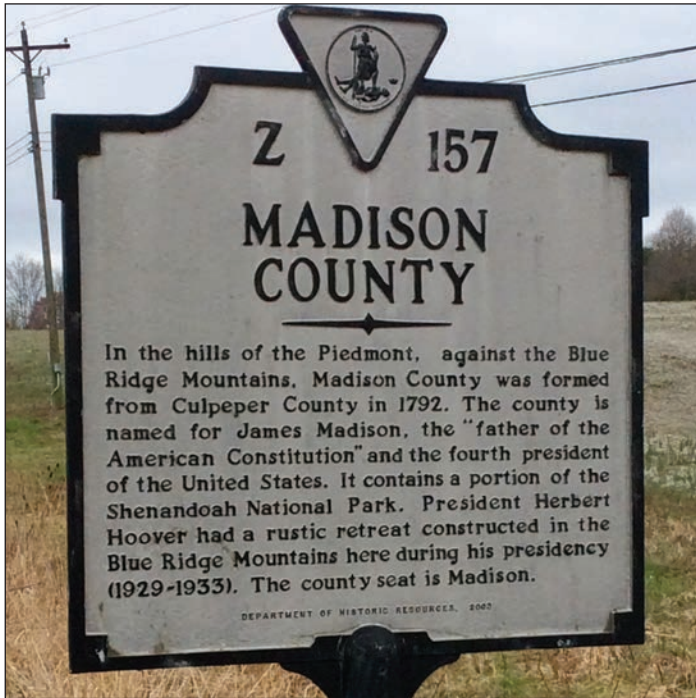


This is the chimney at the rear-north east corner of the home. It is believed that this was part of either a summer kitchen and/or a wash house.
Photograph taken June 9, 2009

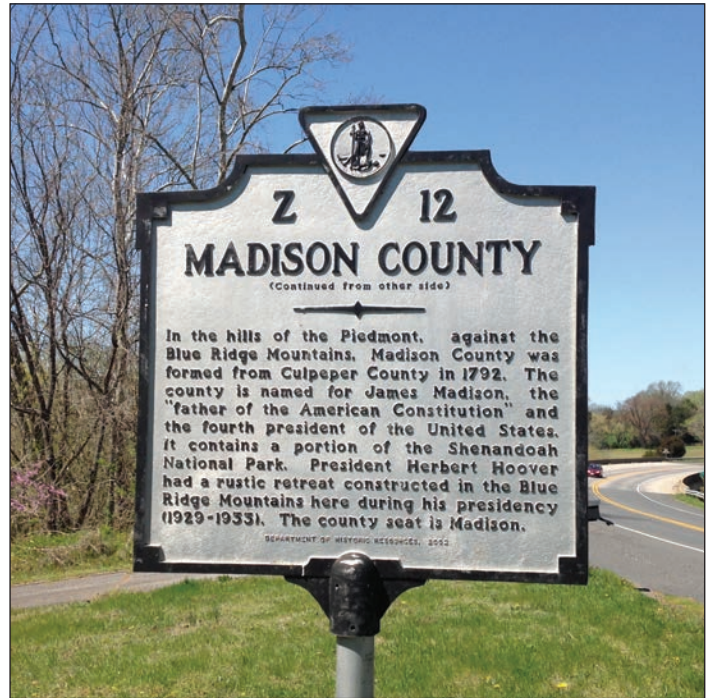
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Finally, one wonders Why in the world did William Terrill buy this land? It is a rocky place with little space to build a house, find a spring, and plant a garden. The woods were thick with old growth forest, fearsome beasts abounded, and it was hundreds of miles from civilization in 1734! What prospects did he have to improve the land enough to sell it at a profit? Who would want such a place isolated from other settlers down in the valley? What is left of the house site appears very old and along with the picture seems to date to at least the mid-1700s. The original log cabin home probably rotted down and could have been the one called "log wash house with loft" in the inventory done by the Park in 1930. Regardless, there was little land (only two other sites) that could be cleared to grow crops on: one called "Goodall's" offered space for an orchard, and the other was a house site on the Western side of the grant. We can only guess that the Terrills were Scottish; many families who came from Scotland or Ireland preferred land in the valleys of the mountains of Virginia because it reminded them of the "Glens" in their old homeland. Knowing the history of this one small place connects us back to a time lost and gives us an insight into what it was like during the settlement of Our Piece of God's Green Earth.

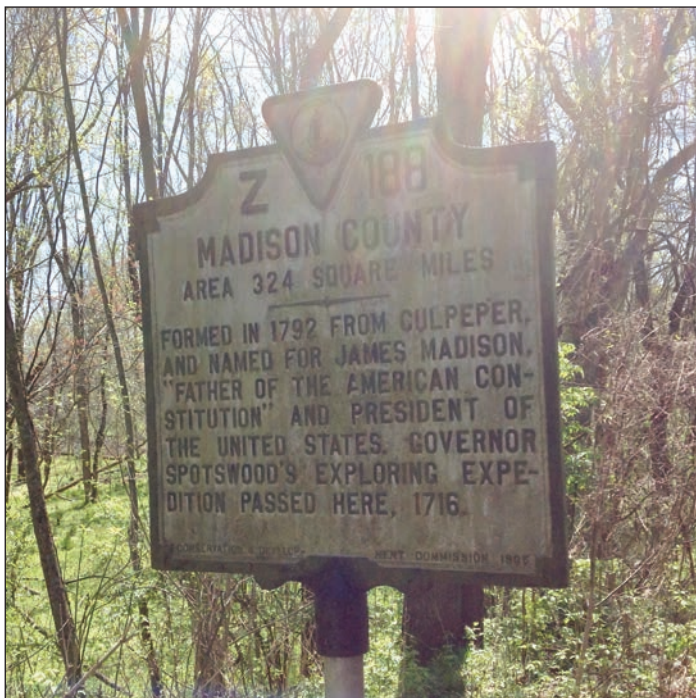
HISTORY ALONG THE ROADSIDE



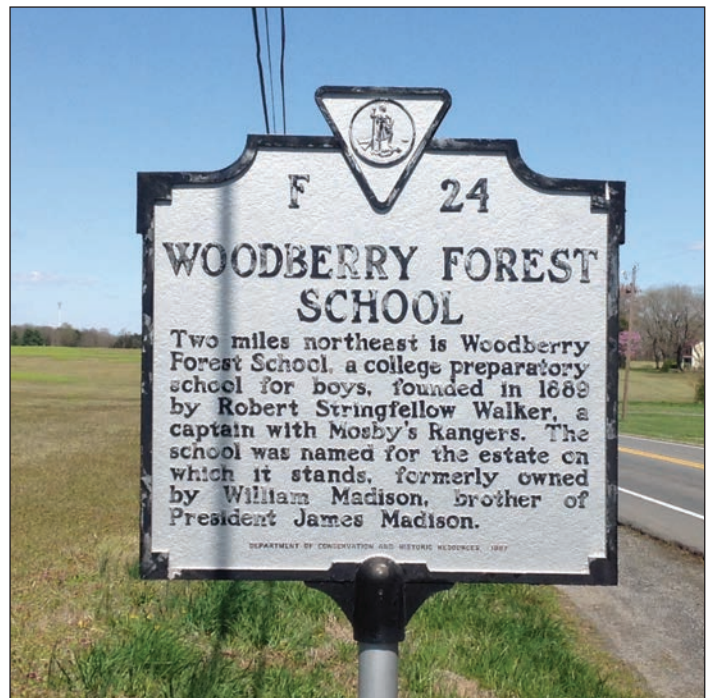
US 29
Entering Madison from Culpeper
&
Entering Madison from Greene



US 15
Looking toward Madison from Orange
County at Madison Mills



US 15
Entering Madison from Culpeper



US 15 at Tanners Road

Terry Miller: *African Americans and the Vote–1867*

The speaker for the February 16th, 2020, Madison County Historical Society Quarterly meeting was Ms. Terry Miller. Ms. Miller is the founding curator of the John J. Wright Museum of Educational and Cultural History in Spotsylvania, Virginia, the Lawrence E. Graves Museum of Dunbar History in Washington, D.C., and the Carver 4-County Museum in Culpeper, Virginia.

Ms. Miller has extensive education and a broad range of knowledge, particularly as it pertains to African Americans and specifically in our region. In February 2018 she set up a two-week display at the Madison County Library entitled “From There to Here” showing and discussing Modern Meaning in Madison’s African American History.

The topic of Ms. Miller’s presentation was “The Power of Ownership” and involved her research for an exhibit which she set up entitled “African Americans and the Vote- 1867”. Her research began with the story of records from 1867 which show that 567 black men from Madison were registered voters in four magisterial districts. Most of these men had few possessions (97 percent were former slaves) and died intestate. “Things” were sold at auction with proceeds going to children if any. The main thing they could do was to choose to vote so they registered and voted. Many of their names remain Madison names today.



In 1867 Virginia was under military rule and Virginia would not accept the 14th amendment that freed the slaves and made them citizens. Before Virginia could return a delegation to Congress, they had to accept the 14th amendment. They did so by having a state constitutional convention in 1868-9. Radical Congressional Reconstruction legislation also required suffrage for black men.

Ms. Miller is researching lists from four Counties; Madison, Culpeper, Rappahannock, and Orange: hence the Carver-4 Museum.

The American Freedman’s Society was made up of missionaries, etc. who were abolitionists, fighting slavery which resulted in the 13th and 14th amendments. They taught blacks to read, founded schools, newspapers and raised money.

An interesting discussion followed the presentation with an extended question and answer period.

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Return Service Requested



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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 and donations, major sources of income for the Society, are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law. Membership application forms are available at the Museum and on-line at www.madisonvahistoricalsociety.org. (Click "About Us" and scroll down the page.) Memberships run for one calendar year and include the following categories:

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

For more information about any of our activities, call the Society Office at 540-395-5119. Leave a message if no one answers so we may return your call. Our email address is madisonvahistory@gmail.com.

Our physical address is 412 N Main Street in the town of Madison.