

Honoring Their Sacrifice



North Platte for World War I

WAS A CITY OF IMMIGRANT NATURAL BORN

The men and women who lived in the people of the Big River community in the first half of the 20th century were a mix of many different ethnicities. They were born in many different countries and had many different languages. They were all here for the same reason: to build a better life for themselves and their families. They were all here for the same reason: to build a better life for themselves and their families.

WAS PEOPLE BEHIND THEIR

During the World War I, the people of the Big River community were all here for the same reason: to build a better life for themselves and their families. They were all here for the same reason: to build a better life for themselves and their families.



Immigrants in the World War I



World War I

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Immigrants in the World War I

August 2021

A group of people are gathered on the wooden porch of a white building with a white metal roof. The building has a sign that reads "Mountain Museum At Grigiersville". Several people are holding blue ribbons that say "GRAND OPENING". One person is holding a pair of scissors, ready to cut the ribbon. The scene is outdoors with a clear blue sky and some clouds.

A Note From The President

Just as we thought things were getting back to near normal, we are faced with a variant to the covid virus. I hope that a lot of folks have gotten vaccinated by now, but if you haven't, we hope you will consider getting one now that things have changed. It might be a good idea to wear a mask when you are indoors to protect yourself and others. Most of all, be careful.

The Madison Museum has been open for several months, but we have not had many visitors as of yet. Most of this has been caused by the uncertainty of the parking around Kemper due to the work zone. We are now able to park around the circle, so that should make it easier for visitors to get to the Museum. The new carpet is supposed to get put down starting on Aug. 17th. We will be able to take tours to the upper floors when that is finished and the Tea Team has a chance to clean away a pandemic's worth of dust, spider webs, and dead bugs. We hope to start the project at the back door as soon as all of the construction at the County Office Building is completed and the people working there are moved in.

On June 27, we had our dedication and grand opening at the Mountain Museum at Criglersville (MMC). It sure was an honor to have Essie Nicholson cut the ribbon, as she was a teenager when her family was removed from the area that is Shenandoah National Park today. We had a large crowd and were thrilled to see so many people attend. We had no way to record an accurate count, but we estimated a crowd of at least 200. Since the Opening, the MMC has been open on Sunday afternoons from 1 to 4 PM with a lot of visitors. Starting with the *Madison County Eagle* and *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, we had great publicity in numerous newspapers and also on Channels 19 and 29 in Charlottesville. Thanks go to all of our volunteers for their enthusiasm and hard work in turning an abandoned school building into a Museum! It has been a most rewarding pandemic project!

We would like to thank those who made Dedication Day so special:

- The Hurt Family for furnishing the music for our Grand Opening.
- Graves Mountain Lodge for fixing the refreshments and also bringing the picnic tables for us to use out front.
- Our own volunteers for their hard work to get ready for the day and see that things ran smoothly during the day.
- And heartfelt thanks to the local families who steadfastly support our Mountain Museum with their attendance and donations of pictures and items for our displays.

Donations have been pouring in since the Grand Opening so there are lots of new things at the MMC for people to see. We are always excited to see you. Drop by on a Sunday afternoon or call for an appointment. Leave a message at 540-395-5119 or email the Society. We will return your call or message to set up a time for you to visit. We are also making plans to add Saturday hours during the Graves Mountain Apple Festival in October. Doing this will require more volunteers so please let me know if you would like to "hang out" for an hour or so (or all day) as we welcome visitors to MMC.

Max Lacy
President, Madison County Historical Society

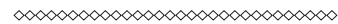
From the Editors....

In all his thanking people for donations and work at MMC, Max Lacy neglected the MOST IMPORTANT person, one Maxwell Lacy, jr. from Oak Park, VA! It is our firm belief that the Mountain Museum at Criglersville would not exist today were it not for Max's vision, determination, fund-raising prowess, and power to persuade the rest of us to get to work!! Thank you, Max. Thanks also go to photographer Pat Mingee from Manquin, VA for the photographs on page 3 and to Kathleen Hoffman for contributing the interior photographs accompanying the Odd Fellows article.

Apologies to new member Melinda O'Neal whose name was listed incorrectly in the May newsletter.

Finally, thanks to those of you who responded to my plea for stories about your experience with county schools! Keep them coming!

Our addresses are **madhistory467newsletter@gmail.com** for electronic submissions and PO Box 467, Madison, VA 22727 if you prefer to send paper.
JGM



Reader Reactions

"I, too, remember George Lohr's school bus. It had a two-sided bench seat that ran down the middle. He picked me and neighbors Margaret and Linda Morrell up for the full 0.6-mile ride to school. When there were rabid foxes in the area, Mrs. Morrell waited at the bus stop with a rifle to protect us! Can you imagine that now??" **Phil Brockman**, Orange, VA (really Radiant)

"Reading about the closing of Radiant School brought back memories of my introduction to high school. We students who graduated seventh grade in the spring of 1948 arrived at Madison County High School that fall as Freshmen. (Some of us had finished seventh grade at the shop building at Criglersville High School and the old CCC camp.) Most of us chose the academic program so we took Algebra 1 and Latin I and earned high school credits. At the end of this freshman year in spring 1949, the principal called us to a meeting in the gym for a big announcement. He told us that we had not been freshmen all year, but that we had been eighth graders!! Our protests that we had already earned enough high school credits to be sophomores fell on deaf ears. We had been the county's first eighth grade without ever knowing it! The Class of 1951 got their high school diplomas after going to school for eleven years. We, the Class of 1952, had to go for twelve years." **Joyce Gentry**, Madison, VA

Mountain Museum at Criglersville

Grand Opening

June 28, 2021



MADISON FRIENDSHIP LODGE#2121



The old building that sits at 700 South Main Street in Madison has had surprisingly many lives. The white two-story structure has been a dance hall, pool room, auto body shop and maybe a taxi stand. But before all that, it was built to be, and remained for years, the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows (GUOOF) of Madison, Madison Friendship Lodge #2121.

The lodge was founded in 1880, by a group of local African-American men who were formerly enslaved. It was to follow in the long-established footsteps of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) organization first established in the U.S. in 1819 in Baltimore, Maryland – based on the even older English order. Why the change from the “Independent Order” to Grand United? The IOOF as then constituted barred African-American men from membership, even while espousing the “Triple Links” Odd Fellows motto of Friendship, Love and Truth.

Non-political and non-sectarian, the various orders were known for helping people in their communities and their purposes were certainly above reproach. But when a free African-American sailor in New York, Peter Ogden, wanted to join the IOOF, he was not accepted, nor was he allowed a charter to start his own group.

Undeterred, he obtained a GUOOF charter directly from England.

So on March 8, 1880, eleven African-American men in Madison received their charter from England, enabling them to Create the Odd Fellows Friendship Lodge 2121. The charter members were William N. Gordon, M.F. Weaver, Miner Jackson, James Gordon, Henry V. Porter, William M. Reaves, Abram Johnson, Buck Walker, Alfred Weaver, Benjamin Gray and Benjamin James. Meeting at Antioch Baptist Church, they were considered people who wanted to do right for the town and county. The group quickly became a draw for African-American men who wanted to be leaders for their community. By the end of 1880, the regular standing membership had grown to 38.

The organization lasted until about 1947, when the lodge was disbanded. A total of 156 members had by then passed through its doors.

At first, members had to go to the Culpeper Odd Fellows hall to be initiated, hitching up horses and buggies to make the trip. Eventually, they transitioned to the Madison building.

How do we know much of this? The old building gave up its secrets some time ago to a new owner, a woman who has devoted incredible amounts of time and energy to preserving names, pictures, paraphernalia like an initiation ball, history and even the eleven chairs found in the attic that may have provided seating at the very first meeting. She is Nancy Garnett-Williams, a Madison native who feels it was predetermined that she should own the building.

Garnett-Williams and various volunteers, many of them nieces, have compiled stores of information about the past of the county's black families



that is probably unavailable anywhere else, at least in such volume and in one place. Madison African-American marriage licenses have been entered into computerized files, the purpose of that very heavy wooden initiation ball has been determined (yes, it was used for the acceptance of new members), minutes have been mined and transcribed, and a large segment of the materials have been turned over to the University of Virginia for preservation.

Garnett-Williams admits that “predetermination” didn’t mean that becoming the owner of the building with the interesting past was easy. No one had any idea how to contact the current deed-holders, although the structure clearly belonged to a national order of Odd Fellows. She finally tracked down the home office in Philadelphia, and officials came down to carry out the details of an official sale.



Garnett-Williams holding wooden initiation ball

The new owner grew up in Madison, lived in various cities including Washington, D.C., and New York, and then returned, after an education that ranged from Germanna Community College to Johns Hopkins University. Returning home seemed the right thing to do. She began a successful medical supply business with her husband, Paul, but her heart was with another activity, the acquisition of African-American historical memorabilia. “There was something about it that I loved,” she recalls. Her father had attended St. Emma Military Academy for Boys in Powhatan County, a boarding school for black and Native American students, and a visit she and her daughter made there sent her more firmly down the path of research and preservation. (Her daughter is Tina Gordon, a successful movie writer and director whose credits include *Drumline*, *Little* and *Peeples*, starring Kerry Washington.)

As she began acquiring materials, Garnett-Williams found that her genealogical interests did not stop with her own family. “Other people’s families become mine through research,” she found, and the lost history of anyone is in a sense a loss to everyone.



After purchasing the Odd Fellows building in 2003, she began spending whole days working there. The farther she has gone with it the more productive it has turned out to be. It really is something of a historical treasure trove, from a copy of the original charter from England, minutes dating from 1880, and even the original gavel. The old podium is still there, big enough to allow several officers to sit behind it. A corresponding women’s group, the House of Ruth, also left behind a smaller podium and records.

Odd Fellows were powerfully connected to the community. The men stepped in as a brotherhood to help out widows, orphans and the sick, supporting children, paying for funerals when needed, and even providing insurance to black people. They raised money for Gordon’s Cemetery at Antioch, holding dances and other activities to fund it. The lodge was social fellowship, community organization center, and support group all in one.

One focus of fund-raising efforts was the building. After an organizing gathering at Antioch on February 24, 1917, they bought the 700 Main Street lot from Luther and Sally Mallory. As they were able to accumulate funds, and no doubt with a lot of the labor coming from members like Benjamin Rowe, a well-known plumber in town, the building rose. As it now stands, the structure is

different from the days of its original use mostly upstairs, where renters made the large meeting space into rooms over the years. The ceiling and floors are original, although the large windows did have to be replaced.

Downstairs, it is a look into a group that drew many black leaders in the community, with a tightly-structured brotherhood that thrived on ritual. Men gathered downstairs to be social at the onset of their evenings, but eventually would move upstairs for official meetings, with transcribed proceedings carefully preserved in the minutes.

To be admitted, a member had to present himself at a still existing peephole in the door at the foot of a steep staircase, and then identify himself with a secret password before the door was opened. Vestments, still preserved in many cases, were worn, and structures were carefully adhered to.

It was of course a fraught time in the history of the south. The eleven original members had been in the Civil War, some on the side of the Confederacy, initially as teamsters or cooks, but there were one or two who had been soldiers fighting on the Union side. Demonstrating why these men were in need of support from their peers is the matter of Confederate pensions - white men received \$100, while blacks had to make do with \$25. So the Odd Fellows sought to provide each other brotherhood, and through cooperation and unity, make their lives better in response to unfair wages and being shut out of many resources and systems.



photos are available and on display. The long-ago daily accumulation of business transaction receipts, cancelled checks and letters are also available.

Visitors are welcomed by appointment. To visit, call (540) 948-9095 or email nancygarnett9@gmail.com.



Poles used by Odd Fellows in ceremonial processions

Garnett-Williams has delved into the history of the group to determine a great deal about them. She discovered, for instance, that local member W.L. Price was at one time a national officer.

So the building is now a local information source. The site offers a computer with internet access for those doing research, and the owner is there to help them as needed. There is an impressive library of books that she has accumulated, mostly about African-Americans in U.S. history. Many



In Memoriam Robert B Hardaway, jr. (1927–2021)

We pause a moment in this issue to remember a gentleman who was a boyhood visitor in the house now known as the Kemper Residence back when it was owned by descendants of the McMullen family. Robert Hardaway is a great grandson of Francis



Robert and William Hardaway

Marion and Virginia Ann McMullen, who purchased the estate from James Lawson Kemper. Their daughter Anna, Robert's grandmother, married W. Asbury Christian, an educator, author, and Methodist minister. The Christians used the residence as a summer home. A frequent visitor was their Grandson Robert, who has shared with us many stories about summers in Madison back in the 1930s. During a visit in 2017, Mr. Hardaway described 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 a front yard, then mostly grown up with bushes. He recalled that there was a big swing on the porch just to the right of the front door. During an earlier visit, Robert and his brother reminisced about watching Miss Norma Cave, in big hat and white gloves, arrive via a narrow concrete walkway for her daily four o'clock tea and knowing the parlor would be off limits for what seemed like hours while their grandmother and Miss Cave chatted.

Robert Hardaway was born in Richmond and grew up in Blackstone. He attended UNC at Chapel Hill, served in the Navy, and earned a BS degree in Commerce from the University of Virginia in 1949. He began a long career in finance in Richmond before settling in South Pasadena, California. As a member of the Chartered Financial Analyst Society (CFA), Hardaway made summer trips to Charlottesville for over thirty years to grade CFA exams. On one of these visits, he used a day off to "visit" great grandpa's portrait in the Madison County Courthouse. Alas, it was not there! Fortunately, the portrait was quickly located and ownership of it transferred from the Court to the Madison County Historical Society. Mr. Hardaway funded refurbishment of the painting and Emily McMullen Williams presided over its unveiling in the Kemper residence in May 2018. Judge McMullen now presides over the large meeting room in the Residence. Thank you, Robert Hardaway. RIP

Editor's Note: Edith Christian Compton (Mr. Hardaway's aunt) owned the property from 1952 until 1962 and continued the practice of using the house as a summer residence. Mrs. Compton sold the property to the Joint Board of Control, University of Virginia, for use as an Extension Center for UVa. Today, we refer to the house as the Kemper Residence, but Mr. Hardaway's 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. JGM

Kemper Tea Returns September 22

Society volunteers who provide a delicious tea menu are anxious to again offer this event to supporters. After a "Covid interlude" for the sake of everyone's health, the group has scheduled an updated version of this popular event for Wednesday, September 22nd.

The menu is the same as what would be served in the Kemper Residence, only in containers to take away and enjoy wherever you wish. All items will be cooked, but some are best heated before they are served, so they will be in containers that can go in an oven. The rest are



good at room temperature. The same popular tea served in the Kemper Residence will be included in the containers. The only difference is guests must do their own brewing! The circle in front of the Kemper Residence is open once again, so we ask that you drive by the front entrance between noon and 12:30 on September 22nd, and we will deliver your bag to your car. Or you may park and walk over to the Museum entrance on the lower level to pick up your goodies.

Reservations will be accepted when you receive this newsletter. You may email your request to maryhaught@hughes.net or call 540-547-4398 and leave a message. The charge is \$30 per person. As usual, gift jars of Kemper Tea will be available at \$5 per jar. With a pre-order it can be included in the bag with your food.

As always, the volunteers who prepare the food donate all their expenses, so your entire check is a donation to Madison County Historical Society.

We look forward to hearing from you and seeing many of you on September 22.

Membership Report

We offer a special welcome to our most recent new members.

Margaret and Wayne Durrer - Rochelle, VA

Warren F. Chauncey - Virginia Beach, VA

Joe Goodall - Madison, VA

Gary W. Jones - Pratts, VA

Kathleen Hoffman - Reva, VA

Carol Madison - Arlington, VA

Sarah O'Connor - Harrisonburg, VA

Adrienne Riley - Philadelphia, PA

Cathryn Ross - Madison, VA

Jack & Victoria Sperry - Barboursville, VA

C. Rives Wetsel - Locust Dale, VA

Membership Dues are the largest source of funding for the Society, and we thank all of you who renew promptly each winter. If a year or more has passed since you renewed, it is not too late to send in dues in order to remain on our active mailing list. Also, continue to keep us informed of any changes in your address by mailing the Society at PO Box 467, Madison, VA 22727 or emailing mchsfinance@gmail.com.

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Address Service Requested



www.madisonvahistoricalsociety.org
madisonvahistory@gmail.com

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.