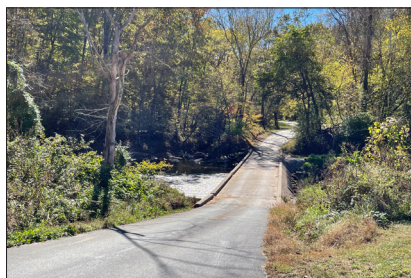


Preserving Yesterday Enriches Tomorrow



Lillard's Ford Road



Oak Park Road

Madison County
Historical Society

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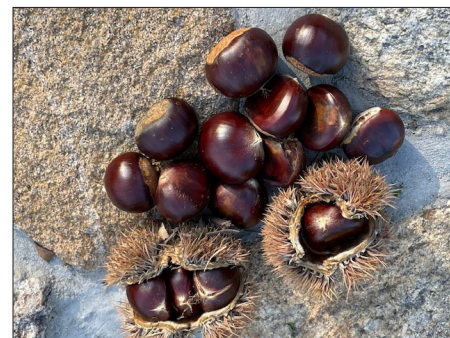
November 2021

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

GUESS WHAT!!!!!! We got our first chestnuts from the trees behind the monument this fall. They were planted in 2016, so we did very well to get a harvest this year. People that ate them said they were very good.

The Mountain Skills Day, held on September 12th at the Mountain Museum at Criglersville, was a great success. Thanks to Clyde Jenkins for bringing his helpers and supplies and showing us how to make authentic mountain baskets. We also thank the Quilters for displaying quilts and showing how they make those tiny stitches, and The Old Rag Soap Company for making soap.

Thanks also go to the Hurt Family for playing their music during the afternoon. They are always a big hit when we have something special going on. We extend special thanks to Graves Mountain Lodge for furnishing the picnic tables where we could enjoy munching on treats from Jerry Smith's Food Truck. It was also nice to have the Smoot Family from next door present to sell their jams, honey, etc. They are so helpful to us on a daily basis by watching over the MMC and grounds.



Chestnuts!!



Laura Smoot
with her
homemade
goodies



Clyde Jenkins, Master Basket Maker



Nan Coppedge and Jim Lillard
admire the beautiful quilt.



Charlotte and Brian Lenhoff

(Continued on Page 2)

(Continued from Page 1)

Max Lacy, President

~~~Arlene Aylor, Membership Chair



# Achsah, Uno, and Postal Tidbits

By

Maxwell Lacy, Jr.

After the Society received the desk of the first Postmaster at Achsah, I was asked to write an article about the desk and the man behind the desk. The desk was signed by John W. Fry in 1889 which was before he became the Postmaster. We can assume that he had a hand in the making of this piece of furniture and that it was used in the Post Office at Old Pratts where Fannie Fry (his wife?) was the Postmaster from 1893 to 1897. Mr. Fry operated the store that housed the Post Office. He also started a school at Old Pratts in 1888 according to his daughter, Miss Anna Fry, who went to school there for 2 years. The last session at the school was held in 1905 which is also the year the Achsah Post Office was opened on April 7th. A Madison Eagle article written by Margaret G Jones in 1976 reports a few interesting things about the school. Mr. Fry felt that the teachers were under paid, so he furnished them board by letting them live with him for half of the school year. Mr. and Mrs. Medford Bowman furnished the teachers' board for the rest of the session. We must also note that Medford Bowman was the Postmaster at Pratts from 1889 until 1893 when Fannie Fry became the Postmaster. Who came next? Medford Bowman followed Fannie Fry as Postmaster in 1897.



John Fry's Desk



Between Pratts and Rochelle on Route 231

To understand this revolving door, we must remember that prior to 1971, the Post Office was a Department of the U. S. Government and Postmasters were political appointees. When the party in the White House changed, it most likely meant that the Postmaster holding office at the time would be replaced by a person of the ruling party. This explains why the history of individual Post Offices shows many Postmasters who held office on non-consecutive dates. Most of the time the Office didn't move to a new location, and the new Postmaster just worked in the same place that the former worked. It should be noted that most of the offices were in General Stores during these years. The Postmasters were allowed to sell subscriptions to newspapers and magazines and were paid a percentage of the cost of those subscriptions. A lot of times the Postmaster

operated the store with help from the family. You have to remember that in the early days transportation was mostly limited to horse or horse and buggy. Post Offices were close to each other. Trading at the store and transacting business at the Post Office could be accomplished at one stop in a single trip.

Back to the desk at the Achsah Post Office: Mr. Fry was the Postmaster there from 1905 until 1925. I always heard that this office was named after a member of the Fry family named Achsah, but according to Mr. Claude Yowell's *A History of Madison County, Virginia*, it was named by the Post Office Department. It was common in that era for the Postmaster to send a selection of three names from which the Post Office Department would choose the official name for the new office. A lot of offices were named after the family of the 1st Postmaster. Some were named for the area in which they were located. Mrs. Fry and one of her daughters had Achsah in their names so it is highly likely that Mr. Fry included that name on the list of three he sent to the Post Office Department. The original Achsah office was located in the Fry home, and I am fairly certain that the Post Office remained in that home until 1935 when it moved to the store where the Achsah sign is now located. The Fry family was a very prominent family during that period of time and some of Mr. Fry's ten children lived in that house for many years after the office moved to the store. The home has recently been sold, so the Fry family has no connection there now.



First home of Achsah Post Office

Here is the list of all those who have been Postmaster of Achsah, by year of appointment.

John W. Fry (1905)

Edwin Benton (1925)

Harry W. Fry (1927)

George W. Cash (1935)

Kenneth E. Cash (1936)

J. Douglas Cash (1939)

Mary Ford Marshall (1941)

Mary Marshall was Postmaster when the Office was in the store building that still stands near the intersection of Twymans Mill Road and John Tucker Road. Achsah, with Zip Code 22708, remained open until Mrs. Marshall retired in 1963. At that time, it became a Rural Branch of Madison until it was discontinued for good in 1977.

### UNO VIRGINIA

The Uno Post Office was officially opened on May 10, 1893, with Jesse Whitlock as the first Postmaster. How it got its name is very interesting, so the story goes. Prior to the Civil War, the village was known as "Kingdom Come," and there was a stillhouse or saloon that stood on the spot where the store that housed the Post Office was built. When one neighbor would ask another where he was going, he would say "over to oh well you know." I have a feeling that "you know" was on the list of three possible names sent to The Post Office Department for it to choose from. The Department likely selected "you know" and then shortened the name to UNO. Following Jesse Whitlock as Postmaster were William A Carpenter, Robert M Woolfolk, John G Woolfolk, Horace Weaver, and Carl Tappy.

Horace Weaver served as Postmaster from September 7, 1915, until Carl Tappy was appointed in 1947. He started in his home and moved to the store across the street in 1920. He said he could rent cheaper (\$25 a month for land, house, and store) than own, but he finally bought the property in the 1940s. In 1946, a story broke in the Richmond papers and the New York Herald-Tribune that the United Nations Organization wanted to move its headquarters to Uno Virginia. The Associated press picked up the story and soon it was in the papers all across the country. Mr. Weaver became a very famous person as he did coast to coast radio interviews. He took it all in stride by saying the folks in Uno dismissed the matter as "a lot of talk that won't amount to much." The stories even suggested that a larger Post Office be built to accommodate mail that would only have to be addressed UNO USA to get delivered. One of the papers even sent a map showing that Madison, Orange, and Gordonsville were equidistant. To that Mr. Weaver replied, "Seems like we're 10 miles from most everywhere". In his radio interview, he stated that he didn't think anything would come of it, but if they want to bring that UNO here, we can accommodate them.



Between Rochelle and the River on Route 231

Mr. Weaver's son Robert said there was an icehouse on the property where he used to make home brew. Fulton Carpenter (blacksmith) would wave across the road on a hot day and come over to get a drink. He always put a saw under his arm before coming over to pretend (I guess) that he was going to do some work. Robert claimed that keeping the PO in the family wasn't so hard to do in those days. When the administration changed party, the man could be a Democrat and his wife a Republican. The H C Weaver store was an important link in communication as it housed the first telephone in the area. Mr. Weaver was also a funeral director who sold caskets there at the store. He had a supply upstairs selling \$5, \$10, or \$15 and the pallbearers would bring them down.

After his appointment on June 1, 1947, Carl Tappy remained Postmaster in that same store building





until he moved the Office into his home in 1959. It remained there until he retired December 31, 1967. He got a notice two weeks prior to his retirement that the office would close when he retired, and the mail would move to Rochelle.

I have a collection of postmarks from most of the Offices in Madison County. One from Uno is quite interesting. The office moved in 1959, but the official last day was December 31, 1967. That was a key day for people who collect last day issues. In the request for the Uno postmark that I have, Mr. Tappy was asked

for some history of the office; he replied that there was no time for history today as he had been very busy with requests for last day postmarks.

The Historical Society recently had the good fortune to acquire a Uno Post Office sign from Mr. Tappy's daughter Dora Jane and her husband Jim Cortada. This sign has to have been used at his home because Zip Codes did not come into use until July 1, 1963. The zip code for Uno VA was 22745 and the post office had an add on of 9998, which is the add on for all Post Offices or Postmasters. 9999 is for General Delivery. This is a good place to explain the significance of digits in the Zip Code system still in use today. The first digit is 0 thru 9 and goes from Northeast to the far West. The next two digits pinpoint the population concentrations and the sectional centers accessible via common transportation networks. The final two digits designate small post offices or postal zones in larger zoned cities. In 1983 the 4-digit add on was implemented. The first two digits locate the general area and the last two pinpoint the exact location of the address. Zip Codes could then be used to sort mail for carrier routes and by each post office box section in an office.

### THOSE FINAL TIDBITS

Here are more bits of information about Madison County Post Offices: There have been forty-four offices in the county although not all were ever in operation at the same time. Some of the offices had several names over the years. For example Rochelle was originally called Bouton's Tan Yard, then Jacksonville, and finally Rochelle. Brightwood was another with an unusual name: Dulinsville, the family name of the first Postmaster. Wolftown was originally called Rapid Ann Meeting House, then Rapid Ann and finally Wolftown. Shelby started out as Glory. Mount Carmel became Decapolis during the first year that it was open. Leon was opened as James City after the James family (not Jesse) in 1810 and became Leon in 1840. Desert opened in 1892 and became Parites in 1893. One of the more interesting names came from a store advertisement. Mr. Seward Tanner had a store, and his ad was "you have tried the rest now try me." The name picked for the Post Office was TRY ME. There were three offices that were in what is now Shenandoah National Park: Old Rag, Rocklin, and Nethers.



One of the more interesting stories that I have been told involves a carrier that hauled the mail on horseback. He had a habit of drinking, sometimes a little too much, and when he got drunk, he would fall off the horse. The horse would lie down beside him until he was sober enough to get back on. Then the horse would take him on home.

It has been interesting doing the research for this article. I suspect that most of the other small villages in Madison County also have some very interesting stories. Let us know if you have information that would make for a good article in a future newsletter. If you have questions about another office in the county, I shall be glad to share what I know about that as well.

*Editor's Note: The origin of the word "Achsah" appears to be Biblical. Achsah was the daughter of Caleb and is mentioned in five verses of the Old Testament (Joshua 15:16-17, Judges 1: 12-13, 1 Chronicles 2:49).*

# SNP Digitization Project Update

The project to digitize Park condemnation records in Madison County is well under way. Before digitization, the only documents readily available to the public are Deed Books in the Madison County Clerk's Office. These books give title and ownership information and surveyor descriptions. Other files (appraisals, records from the condemnation cases, and other specific information about individual properties) have been stored in boxes here in Madison and in Richmond for years. Few people knew what these boxes contained or how to navigate through them. All of this began to change earlier this year when the Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC) partnered with the Madison County Historical Society and Clerk of the Circuit Court Leeta Louk to digitize and organize these records. Kristie Kendall, Historic Preservation Coordinator for PEC, is supervising the entire process. When the project is completed, deed records, court proceedings, and condemnation case files will be accessible and searchable via an on-line database maintained by James Madison University. Madison's records will join those of Rockingham and Rappahannock Counties that have been digitized so far.

On July 13, 2021, Madison native Victoria Garnett set up shop in a conference room at the Clerk's office to sort, organize, scan, and file the papers in all those boxes. Here is what Victoria says about the work: "I am a Digitization Specialist Intern with the Piedmont Environmental Council and working at the Madison County Courthouse. At the courthouse, I have digitized legal documents pertaining to the condemnation of private property in the early 1930s in order to create the Shenandoah National Park. This has been a wonderful and eye-opening experience. As of October 25th, I have completed digitizing the collection of legal documents and all together I have digitized 3,140 documents."



Day One: Kristsie Kendall,  
Victoria Garnett & Leeta Louk

You read that right: 3,140 documents!!

## Visit the Madison Museum at Kemper

Yes, the Society still operates a museum in the town of Madison. The response to the Mountain Museum has been overwhelming. We treasure your support and admit to a bit of pride in what we have accomplished at Criglersville. However, we are also proud of the Madison Museum at the Kemper Residence and thankful for those who established this museum at the Arcade many years ago and have lovingly supported it ever since. Curator Beppy White has planned exhibits for years, and she supervised the move of the Museum into the Kemper Basement in 2017.

The County's construction project next door to Kemper is finally finished. The big dumpster and "Keep Out" signs are gone. Parking is back to normal. Volunteers will open the Muesum from 10:00 to 2:00 every Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday until we take a winter break from late December through February. Here are a few good reasons for you to visit:



Everette Weakley and  
Polly Durham Bare

Photo courtesy of Phyllis Poluito

Look at permanent exhibits: the model Railroad, Hoover Day photographs and artifacts, local memorabilia on loan from Steve Grayson, native American artifacts, Dr. Taliaferro's foot-operate dental drill, to list a few.

Grab a chair and visit with the volunteers on duty.

Shop at the Gift Shop.

Admire the new carpet in the large meeting room.

Ask questions about local history to see how fast we can (or cannot) find information.

Check out the new Post Office acquisitions that are housed in the Law Office.

Have a high school reunion and get your picture in this newsletter!

Back in September, Jean Busboso brought her sister Polly Durham Bare (and Polly's daughter and son-in-law) to the Museum. Their plans just to "look around" went out the window when Polly came face to face with regular visitor Everette Weakley. Polly and Everette were classmates at Madison High School, and they had not seen each other since graduation! What a reunion!



## Tea Report



Mary Haught & Esma Owens delivering Tea Bags

With Covid still a concern, the Tea Team again offered a carry out tea in September. Thanks to support of Society members and friends, it was successful in spite of rain that came just at pick-up time. The Society is grateful for the culinary skills of the dedicated team that also keeps the Kemper Residence clean and ready to receive visitors. Katy Cashman is one of the chefs who also directed her research skills to locating a source for proper containers to package the food. All boxes are recyclable or compostable, and their cost is donated, as are all ingredients for the delicious food served. Other dedicated volunteers are Arlene Aylor, Martha Breeden, Mary Haught, Chris and Pat Lattin, Maryvonne Longley and Heidi Sage.

At the time of this newsletter, it's anyone's guess whether it will be deemed appropriate in the spring to go back to the tradition of serving tea inside the Kemper Residence. If the decision is to offer another carry out, please consider supporting the Society by picking up all the ingredients for your own tea party. You will find them attractively presented in a colorful bag. All you need to do is heat the warm items and serve them to your guests.

One of our regular attendees has set her table at home and hosted five guests for a luncheon tea without doing any cooking! And in the process, she supports the Madison County Historical Society.

A big thank you goes to the volunteers who provide this major source of income for the Society, and to the friends who have supported the project for the past 19 years.



## It's Time to Shop!

Falling leaves and cooling temperatures remind us that the Gift Giving season is fast approaching! We invite you to visit the Gift Shop at the Madison Museum at Kemper to purchase gifts for folks on your holiday lists, or to just treat yourself! Browse through notecards with a uniquely Madison flavor. Some feature watercolors painted by local artist Frances Lacy; others highlight the County's scenic vistas, flowers, churches, and official buildings through the eye of photographer Pat Mingee. We also continue to offer gift jars of the famous "Kemper Tea" and gold Christmas ornaments, in seven designs: Courthouse, Arcade, Kemper Residence, Village of Rochelle, and Piedmont, Hebron, and Chestnut Grove Churches.



The Shop stocks more than twenty books covering the formation of SNP, stories of families who lived on the mountain, and other topics of interest to people here in the County. *Ask for Nothing* by Maxine Weaver Crane was recently reprinted so we now have plenty of copies of that title available. Also check out the relatively new *Greater Culpeper Memories, a Pictorial History of the Early Years*. We received copies of this book just before Covid caused us to close the museum. Do not be turned off by the title; this book contains many historical photographs from Madison County, along with interesting scenes from Culpeper, Orange, and Fauquier. Shopping in the Gift Shop is a wonderful way for you to support local authors and the Historical Society at the same time!

Finally, if you or anyone you know owns a copy of the Scheel Map of Madison County, you need an index, available at the gift shop in CD and print formats. The maps themselves can be obtained at the Madison Library; however, we sell another Scheel map that shows the local area in 1776.

The Gift Shop is open during regular Museum hours: 10:00–2:00 on Tuesdays, Thursday, and Fridays. We accept checks and cash but do not process credit or debit cards. Friday, December 17th is the last day the Museum will be open before closing for its Winter Break. Some items are also available at the Mountain Museum at Criglersville.

Madison County Historical Society  
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Madison, VA 22727  
540-395-5119

Address 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](http://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](mailto:madisonvahistory@gmail.com).

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