

Preserving Yesterday Enriches Tomorrow



Madison County
Historical Society

www.madisonvahistoricalsociety.org

August 2024

HOME TO THE MOUNTAINS

On Sunday September 8, 2024, the Madison County Historical Society invites the public to visit the Memorial and the Mountain Museum in Criglersville. Both are dedicated to the memory of those families who lived in our local mountains before their homesteads became a portion of the Shenandoah National Park.

Families from eight counties of the Virginia mountains were removed from portions of the Blue Ridge from the mid -1920s to mid-1930s to form the Shenandoah National Park. The largest portions of the land were from the county of Madison. As part of the Blue Ridge Heritage project, the Madison County Historical Society was the first to erect a Memorial Chimney, listing the names of the families who were displaced. This memorial along the Old Blue Ridge Turnpike now includes two kiosks on a stone wall with photos and explanations of what took place. The chimney is shaded by a rapidly growing chestnut tree.



The Madison County Historical Society has also created the Mountain Museum at Criglersville in a two story house located behind the Chimney memorial. The museum houses a variety of artifacts, including tools, pictures, quilts, and maps, mostly donated by local residents. The collection is regularly expanding with new acquisitions highlighting what life was like for those who lived on the mountain.



At Sunday's Open House on September 8th, we will have individuals to demonstrate skills of the mountain people including basket making, quilt making, log hewing, spinning and weaving, and perhaps some surprises. The Hurt Hollow Blue Grass Band and the Catch the Chef Food Truck will be present, along with a Model A car for viewing. A special guest this year will be the author of new book, *Rattlesnake Granny*, for a book signing.

The Museum has been open for four years and has some wonderful new additions for visitors to see and enjoy so please join us for this event from noon to four as we Take You Back to the Mountains These People Called Home.

Fall Tea is Approaching

On Wednesday, September 25, 2024, volunteers will again offer attractive bags filled with all ingredients for your personal Tea Party. Some past participants have served the savories and sweets at a table fully decked out with linens and china. Others enjoyed the treats in a more casual atmosphere with little work in the kitchen. The goodies are prepared and donated by our team of volunteers to help all of us support the Madison County Historical Society.

Call Mary Haught at 540-547-3503 or email her at maryhaught@hughes.net to make your reservations. Pick up your tea essentials at the Kemper museum entrance on September 25, between 11:30 and noon. The requested donation remains unchanged: \$30 for each serving.

The Tea Team appreciates your support of the Society and looks forward to seeing you on September 25.

A Note From The President

Newsletter time rolls around very fast these days. We have been so busy with getting things finished for the visit of the Germanna folks that it seems like the last newsletter was just finished yesterday. We are now preparing for our Mountain Skills Day and Open House on September 8, 2024, at the Mountain Museum from noon until 4 PM. There will be a food truck (Catch the Chef) so come hungry and eat while you enjoy the demonstrations that will be available for you to observe. More details about that program appear in the article on the first page of this newsletter.

Thanks to the following for donating money and material for our porch addition at the Mountain Museum: Darren and Morgan McKinney, Warren Chauncey, Everette Weakley, Chad Kelly, and Salvagewrights. The McKinneys donated the labor for enclosing the porch and Salvagewrights of Orange donated the labor to install the logs, chinking, and the floor of our Mountain Kitchen. Other items typical of a mountain kitchen have been donated to turn the space into a special place. We are proud of what we have done and encourage you to visit to see what these volunteers have made possible.

We have had numerous visitors during the months of June and July. Since January 2024, 160 people have visited the Madison Museum at Kemper and 265 the Mountain Museum at Criglersville. It makes volunteers feel really special when they get to show off the results of their efforts to make the museums look appealing to our visitors. Watch our Facebook page for special announcements about when the Arcade will be open. We would love to have you visit and even if you have been before, we hope you will come back as new things are always appearing. If regular hours don't work for you, give us a call and we will set up an appointment.

There is a new Museum in town operated by the Madison County African American Historical Association and located on the south end of town. If you see a vehicle there, please stop in and look it over. They will be happy to show you more Madison County History.

We are always looking for new members and if you are not a member, we would welcome you to our group of history buffs. If you would like to volunteer in some part of our group, we hope you make your wishes known. There is lots to learn about Madison County when you volunteer. I never miss a day without learning something new about our wonderful and unique county and its people.

Please support the fall tea, details of which appear elsewhere in this newsletter. Teas are our only form of fundraising other than donations and membership fees. The Tea Team furnishes everything, so all monies are donated to us as a gift. We charge no museum admission fees and have no paid personnel on our staff.

As you read this newsletter, please consider writing articles of interest for a future issue. It is always nice to have articles about Madison County places, people, or happenings written by other pens.

Our Mountain Museum, the Chimney Monument, and Kiosks have been erected and maintained to honor those families of Madison County that were displaced in order to build the Shenandoah National Park. Please keep their sacrifice in mind as you visit the Park and Skyline Drive.

Looking forward to your visit to our Museums,
Max Lacy, President



From the Editor....

Many thanks to Pam Nelson for coordinating our "coverage" of restoration efforts at Hebron Church, and many more thanks to Fred Eberle for sharing his description of the damage and proposed repairs. I must constantly remind myself that the affected part of the building was constructed in 1740--without the use of nails or screws. Thank goodness church officials have located a local contractor who knows how to peg buildings back together.

Two younger organizations are celebrating anniversaries this year. The Madison Garden Club is observing its 90th anniversary and Burnt Tree Grange is turning 70. Our next issue will talk about granges. For now, enjoy Mary Haught's review of Garden Club history. We know Mary as the "Tea Lady;" the Garden Club knows her as historian, archivist, and a whole lot more.

Correcting the May issue: The listing of Society Directors inadvertently omitted the name of Nancy Garnett Williams. We do indeed have a full contingent of twelve board members!

- Past issues of this newsletter may be accessed at www.madisonvahistoricalociety.org.
- Print subscribers can go to the same site to enlarge photographs.
- For feedback and letters to the editor, our addresses are: madhistory467newsletter@gmail.com and PO Box 467, Madison, VA 22727.

~~~Judy Mahanes

## Membership Report

We welcome the following new members who have joined the Society since our last report:

- Suzanne Lohr Conway--Cape Charles, VA
- James & Suzanne Long--Leon, VA
- Dean Hearl--Woodberry Forest, VA
- Salvagewrights Ltd.--Orange, VA
- Linda Charleton Drain--Baton Rouge, LA

## Museum Hours

Madison Museum at Kemper  
Tuesday, Thursday, Friday  
10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Mountain Museum  
Sunday ~ 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Chimney/Kiosks ~ 24/7

Graves Mill Park ~ 24/7



# Hebron Lutheran Church Plans Repair Project

Hebron Lutheran Church was built in 1740 by German settlers who had served as indentured servants for Governor Spotswood for nearly eight years before moving to land grants along the Robinson River in what is now Madison County. The oldest Lutheran church in the United States still in continuous use by Lutherans, Hebron is also the oldest Lutheran church in the South and one of four surviving churches from colonial Virginia.

Hebron has many different stories to tell. James Madison and James Monroe debated the separation of church and state on the church steps in 1789. The pipe organ, built by David Tannenberg in Lititz, PA, was transported to Madison in 1802 with two wagons pulled by oxen. Originally powered with bellows by young men who often carved their names and the date on the back of the organ until it was updated with electricity, the organ is still used regularly for Sunday services. The plastered ceiling was painted in 1885 by Joseph Oddenino, a native of Turin, Italy.

Today Hebron Church begins a new chapter with an extensive restoration project to repair damage to the historic structure. Fred Eberle, a member of Hebron, has coordinated the repair project, expected to begin in early fall with a cost estimate exceeding \$200,000. Fred has shared the following update:

*In late December 2023, while erecting our Christmas tree in the church, a "gap" was noted where the main beam (tie beam) running North-South in the church Sanctuary ceiling was separating from the wall above the Altar. Several members of the property committee entered the attic in early January to determine the cause of the separation. It had recently snowed, and the team immediately noted that water from the snowmelt was running in the inside of the attic. A chimney is located on the outside wall from where the leak was evident; water was also running down the face of the chimney.*



*Behind the Altar*

*The following week, the roof was dry, and the team climbed to the area of the leak (behind the chimney) to determine the source of the leak. It was determined that the metal roof and flashing at the chimney deteriorated allowing rainwater to enter the structure. The chimney was constructed using "cobble" to match the cemetery wall, but the cobble makes it difficult to install watertight flashing. Also, a "cricket" was not constructed on the roof to divert rainwater/snow melt from behind the chimney. Over time, water laying on the roof in this location caused the roof to fail. This along with the flashing issue, possibly aggravated by the earthquake in 2011, produced a "perfect storm" to allow water to enter the structure.*

*The rainwater caused extensive wood rot on the main beam as well as roof rafters, outriggers, and the sill plate. This probably occurred over the past 20 or so years and only became evident when the beam separated from the wall as noted above. The main beam, outriggers and roof rafters are from the original 1740 construction. Due to the construction of the church and its historic designation, a specialty contractor is required to perform the work.*



*We are fortunate that this area of the country has contractors with experience working on historic structures. We solicited a couple in the area and selected Waters Craftsman I, Inc., located in Huntly, Virginia. Waters Craftsman I (WCI) performed an initial study of the damaged area to better determine ways and means to repair the damage. After completing the study, WCI provided recommendations for repair. This repair will include recoating the roof to include installing a cricket, repairing the rotted timbers in the church, and repairing or removing the chimney.*

*At present, we are working through the contract process and performing limited studies to determine best practices for repair. We anticipate that the work will begin early to mid-September and hopefully complete in time for Advent-Christmas!*

For additional information about Hebron Lutheran Church, go to its website <http://www.hebronlutheranva.com> or the church's Facebook page. Hebron welcomes visitors for worship (Sundays at 10:00 A.M. in the Parish Hall for now) or for tours of its historic building and grounds. Please call the church office (540-948-4381) for information about docent led tours. Availability may be impacted by the restoration project. The church is located at 899 Blankenbaker Road and the mailing address is PO Box 1009, Madison, VA 22727.

# Historic Germanna Visits Madison County

Twenty-nine travelers visited Madison County on Friday, July 19, 2024, as part of Historic Germanna's Second Colony (1717) Heritage Tour. Their first stop was at the Madison County African

American Historical Association's Friendship Lodge and Museum on South Main Street. Tour Leader Cathi Clore Frost then led the group on a walking tour in the center of town. Clerk Leeta Louk welcomed them to the historic courtroom, and Michael and Jonathan Noggle reported on their restoration of several Main Street buildings. The group walked through the Arcade's archway to check out exhibits and the Memorial Garden before boarding their bus for the short trip to the Kemper Residence and then Beth Car Church. The twenty-four participants on the First Colony (1714) Heritage Tour arrived at Beth Car

in time for lunch. Both groups traveled to the Mountain Museum at Criglersville and then to Revalation Vineyards. On Sunday, many Historic Germanna members returned to Hebron Lutheran Church for worship, a report on the water damage in the historic church, and a fried chicken Sunday dinner.



*Hebron's Parish Hall ready for Sunday worship*



*Mesha Jones, Nancy Garnett Williams, and Dorothy Arrington Davis ready to welcome visitors to MCAAHA museum.*



*Cathi Frost and Warren Heist with the Clore travel chest*



*Beppy White*



*Troy Coppage speaking at Beth Car Church*



*Clerk Leeta Louk, in rear, telling stories about the Courthouse*



*Germanna Group at Revalation Vineyards*



# Madison Garden Club Turns 90

By

Mary W. Haught

Twenty five long-time Madison County ladies who enjoyed gardening, gathered on June 24, 1934, to exchange plants from their gardens and to share plant information. As an outgrowth of that gathering, they agreed to form an official garden club to promote their mutual interest. The club affiliated with the Shenandoah District, Virginia Federation of Garden clubs, South Atlantic Region and National Garden Clubs. Members have held official positions in each of those organizations.

Early presidents are a catalogue of Madison County families. Mrs. Elvin Graves, Sr. was the first president, and she was followed by Mrs. Rufus W. Clore, Mrs. Oscar Smith, Mrs. Robert S. Graves, Mrs. O. F Carpenter, and Mrs. Joseph B. Fray. (Until 20 years ago, members were identified in official records under their husbands' names.) Early presidents who followed include Yowells, more Graves, Blankenbaker, Price, and McLearn, among others.



*Freedom Flag Garden  
Photograph Courtesy of Fay Utz*

The charter members chose "Highway Beautification" as their first project, and that emphasis on enhancing the beauty of our community has continued through the years. Early activities included landscaping around town buildings, including the Rescue Squad, Library and War Memorial Building. More recently, they created two gardens at the High School. In 2006, members created a patriotic garden, featuring red, white and blue flowers. In recent years, it has been transformed into a pollinator garden. At the entrance to the high school members created the Freedom Flag Garden which includes the pole flying the United States flag. The project included adding two additional poles, one for the Virginia State flag and another for the Madison County flag. The garden honors "all those who serve to protect our freedoms: past and present military personnel, all first responders, firefighters, police and rescue squad members." Many in the County helped finance the garden by purchasing bricks to honor individuals.



*Germanna visitors leaving the Arcade*

Members of the Garden Club have had a long association with the Historical Society. Perhaps the largest project undertaken was creating a garden behind the Arcade. In 1986, when the building was restored, Garden Club members coordinated laying the brick patio, and planting both perennials and annual flowers. With continuing care by garden club members, that space is open to the public as the Arcade Memorial Garden. Another big project was furnishing the parlor when the Historical Society acquired the Kemper Residence in 1992 and restored it to be in keeping with the 1870s, when future Virginia Governor James Lawson Kemper and his family lived there.

Other cooperative projects included a house tour, "Fifteen Chimneys," in 2002, when several historic homes were opened for tours honoring Governor Kemper's birthday. Homes included were the Eliza Banks House on South Main Street, Mt. Air in Aroda, St. Clair near Somerset, and the Colvin Home place and Ashland, both near Shelby.

Over the past 90 years, Club members have expanded their knowledge of plants, and shared that knowledge by conducting classes open to the public. They sponsor awards for adult and children's horticulture entries at the County Fair. Plant sales and flower shows have offered other opportunities to share knowledge.

From their original focus on community beautification in 1991, Club members expanded their sights to include active leadership in starting Madison County's emphasis on recycling. Their participation continues today.

Congratulations to the Madison Garden Club for 90 years of service to the community.



*Pollinator Garden at High School  
Photograph Courtesy of Fay Utz*

# Milk, Pepsi-Cola, and Baling Hay

By

Kathleen Hoffman

Frank Stringfellow Walker Jr. of Orange, 88 years old, holder of a law degree (and several others), noted Orange County historian, speaker and author, sang quietly, accurately and on-key:

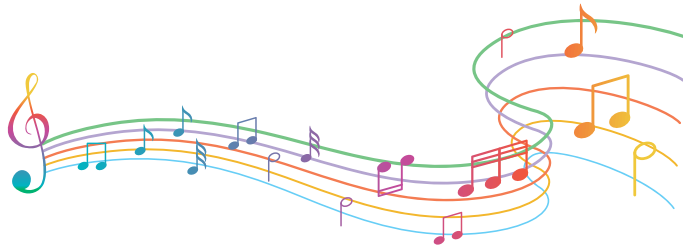
*Pepsi-Cola hits the spot*

*12 full ounces,*

*That's a lot.*

*Twice as much for a nickel too.*

*Pepsi-Cola is the drink for you.*



Walker was speaking to the Madison County Historical Society in the county Board of Supervisors meeting room. This little jingle, probably familiar only to older members of the audience, was part of the explanation of what happened to farming, notably dairy farming, in this area over several decades in the 20th century, part of the ever-changing agricultural landscape. Among Walker's many distinguished careers, he was a successful dairy farmer at Rosni in Madison County, his birthplace, off Rt. 230 a little way from the Orange County line.

Dairy farming in particular was a way of life in Madison, and for years a very profitable way - there were over 60 dairies at one time, and now there are only two. Farming was Walker's life too for many years, and he has written a book about it, *Rural Virginia Reflections - Sketches of Life and Work on a Farm in the Northern Piedmont of Virginia, ca. 1930 - 1980*. It's one of several he has done, and he drew a full house to hear all about farming in Madison. Rosni was just part of the farmland that the Walker family worked over the years.

The thing was, the speaker explained, that this area had a built-in market for all the milk it could produce, in the days before good refrigeration. Farmers could get their milk to Washington, D.C., Baltimore, and Richmond efficiently enough to keep it from spoiling before it reached consumers. Consumers used a lot of milk, and this serendipitous situation lasted into the 1940s.

Then things started to happen - the first was the development of more and less expensive choices to drink, including Coke and Pepsi. Also, non-dairy substitutes, such as Oleo, came into the market. People didn't use as much milk, and then came advances in mobile refrigeration. Milk came into the once-exclusive Virginia market from everywhere. And all this was before the production per cow drastically increased, requiring fewer cows, and finally the dairy buyout in the 80s.



*Frank and Bernice Walker*

Also, the population was making a general shift to those urban areas, where the jobs entailed shorter hours, better pay, and time out of the hot sun. The end of World War I accelerated this trend.

Soft drinks, which indeed cost just a nickel for years, were just one of the reasons that farming is more a matter of reflections now than a reality with most of the population heading for barns and fields to milk or hook up balers in the early mornings, as was once the situation in Madison and Orange. Walker spent part of his talk remembering the people he shared the barn with in those times, people that he remembered as hard-working and capable. "I wish we had made enough money to pay them what they were worth," he said.

The speaker was quiet and matter of fact as he detailed what had happened to change his life. His eyesight is failing, and his wife, Bernice, was there to prompt him, acting as the notes he can't read. "You wrote *Reflections* for the family and for a way of life that has almost disappeared," she said, sending him in that direction.

The Walker family has a very long history of farming. "By the time they got to Orange they were farmers, working land east of Route 15 along the Southwest Mountains," the speaker said. Soon they started acquiring land on the Madison side of the Rapidan along Rt. 230, a short way from the turn off of Rt. 15. There's a "long straight stretch known as Walkers' Bottom," he explained. "It is the best corn land" about anywhere. Another nearby farm the family worked was Hilton. Walker's great-great grandfather built it and was there farming in the 1800s. Meanwhile, Walker recalled from the depths of an obviously splendid memory, that ancestor started buying the land that became Rosni in the early 1800s. The Walker at Hilton installed his son Joseph to farm it, but Joseph was killed by lightning in 1825, and John Scott Walker (the speaker's great-grandfather) took it on. When he died Frank Walker Sr. took it over.

Eventually there were three farms combined, which Frank Jr. managed from 1960 to 1979. Rosni, the most famous of the estates, was sold to an Englishman, and later to Kim and Chris Johnson, who also bought back fields that had been sold off. The Johnsons, along with their daughter Bethany and her husband Bradley Seale were present, and Walker took time to thank them. "They are people with a sense of property and history, and we're happy for Rosni," Walker said. Still, it was the end of an era. "I was the last Walker to leave the land."

The history of agriculture here of course goes back well before the Walkers, starting with the Native American tribes. But after Europeans began taking over, a crown grant of more than five million acres covering the whole area had been made to Thomas Fairfax, but the colonial government inevitably fought the title. Eventually the acreage was distributed to Americans - 3,000 acres went to James Madison Sr., father of the president. His son Francis ended up owner of part of it, but he was land-poor, meaning that was the sum of his wealth. He distributed it to his children, "and then the Walkers moved in."

The home of the Walker family since 1805, the house at Rosni was believed to have been built about 1800, according to Vee Dove's *Madison County Homes*. It was a yellow frame house and was the home of the fourth generation of Walkers in Piedmont Virginia, and several succeeding ones. It no longer stands. Frank Walker said it was disassembled and is stored in a barn on the estate, the project of an owner and rebuilder who plan to reconstruct it in Northern Virginia. Rebuilding, Walker explained, is an art, requiring great care and skill, as well as science and engineering, to actually reproduce an old house.



Photograph Courtesy of Vee Dove

While Walkers farmed at Rosni, the house oversaw the hard work of many good people. Walker listed some, like Sid Reddish of Achsah, who rebuilt the Madison Mills dam after Hurricane Hazel took it out in 1954; Robert Dulany, born in New Jersey, who rehabilitated government housing projects before coming to Madison; and Lurtie Breeden, who ended up here after he was displaced by the development of Shenandoah National Park. A number of park refugees worked at Rosni over the years.

In those days, Walker said that for mountain people, Stanardsville was a major trade center, and "Charlottesville was New York City." A small story about Lurtie Breeden illustrated these attitudes. "We were baling hay, and Lurtie was packing it on the wagon." The front end of the baler was sprung, and a new bolt was installed as needed. Then the new one sheared off. Lurtie handed the crew a bolt he had bought. "That will fix it, he said firmly. "It came from Stanardsville." Much to his pride and satisfaction, the bolt held. "We weren't about to tell him we had just fixed the problem that was shearing the bolts," the speaker recalled.

Between bouts in the hayfield, Walker earned a Bachelor of Science degree in agronomy from Virginia Tech, a master's in business from the Darden School at the University of Virginia, and then a law degree from the University of Virginia, according to his introduction by Penn Bowers of the Historical Society. He was the manager at Rosni Farms from 1960 until 1979. From 1981 until 1994 he practiced law in Orange and was founder and lead guide of Tourguide Ltd. from 1994 until 2015.

Must have been some great tours



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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.