

# Preserving Yesterday Enriches Tomorrow



Madison County  
Historical Society

[www.madisonvahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.madisonvahistoricalsociety.org)

February 2025

## The Rise of Madison Wood Preservers

The speaker for the February 16th Madison County Historical Society quarterly meeting will be Bill Price, Chairman of the Board for both Madison Wood Preservers, Inc. and Cardinal Home Center.

Bill will speak to us about the founding of Madison Wood Preservers, Inc. in 1959 and its evolution to its present combined business status, now in its fourth generation of family leadership. Today Madison Wood Preservers is the world's largest single treating plant and has many unique environmental features that continue to be studied by firms all over the world.

Bill is a lifelong resident of Madison County, a graduate of Fork Union Military Academy and holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree and a Bachelor of Science Degree, both from the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. He taught for three years at Madison County High School before beginning full time work at Madison Wood Preservers in 1972. In 1988 Bill started the retail store MWP Supply, Inc. now known as Cardinal Home Center. He is retired from daily involvement in both companies but remains Chairman of the Board of each.

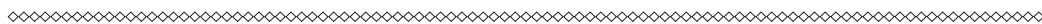
Bill is a Trustee of Hebron Lutheran Church, a Trustee Emeritus of Fork Union Military Academy, and a Trustee Emeritus of the Germanna Community College Educational Foundation.

This general membership meeting will be held at 2pm Sunday, February 16th, 2025, in the Madison County Office Building auditorium. Everyone is invited to attend.

*At this meeting, members of the Society will also elect four members to its Board of Directors. The Board consists of twelve members, each serving staggered three-year terms, so that four memberships expire each year.*

*The current Board members whose terms expire in 2025 are Arlene Aylor, Dennis Coppedge, Max Lacy, and Pam Nelson. All are willing to serve another three-year term if re-elected.*

*In addition to these nominations by the nominating committee, the bylaws specify that a member can run for a seat on the Board by submitting his or her desire in writing prior to the general membership meeting. These can be submitted to a current Board member or mailed to the Society at P.O. Box 467, Madison, VA.*



## Spring is Coming: It's Tea Time

The spring luncheon tea will continue the Drive By format on Wednesday April 9, 2025. You will receive delicious food prepared by our team of chefs and packaged in attractive containers ready for your personal tea party. The requested donation to Madison County Historical Society is still only \$30 for each serving. Start getting your group together and make reservations now or closer to the date. Call 540-547-3503 or email [maryhaught@hughes.net](mailto:maryhaught@hughes.net)

# A Note From The President

Newsletter time again. It will be short this time as both our museums are closed for the winter. I do want to remind everyone that our annual meeting in conjunction with our Quarterly program will be the 3rd Sunday in February. See the details on page one of this newsletter.

Our biggest project since the last newsletter was organizing "Colonial Days" for the 4th grade at Waverly Yowell Elementary School this past November. This event was skipped during Covid, so we are excited about getting back to doing it again. I would like to thank Clyde Jenkins and his crew for demonstrating basket making, the Quilters Guild for showing how quilts were made during those early times, Frances Lacy and Vickie Watts for demonstrating spinning and weaving, and Katie Gigliotti (WYES art teacher) for showing youngsters how paper was made.

Our museums will open again in March. Some of our volunteers are now working on new or rearranged displays for the coming season. Finally, we are always looking for new volunteers. If you think you might be interested, please contact the Museum at Kemper via phone (540-395-5119) or reach out to a Board Member in person, and we will get back to you.

Max Lacy, President  
Madison County Historical Society



Frances Lacy & Vickie Watts



Laura DeBoer, Nan Coppedge,  
Becky Thompson



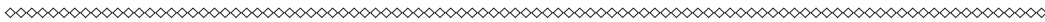
Katie Gigliotti



Clyde Jenkins



Becky Thompson  
with Young Quilters



## From the Editor....

This newsletter plays numerous roles in the life of Historical Society. One is to announce upcoming events; another is to recognize individuals who have played big roles in Madison County history. In this issue, guest writer Michael Noggle discusses the historical evolution of the Commonwealth's Attorney office and lists individuals who have held that position. We will take a closer look at some of these public servants in future issues.

Here are the usual reminders:

- Past issues of this newsletter may be accessed at [www.madisonvahistoricalociety.org](http://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](mailto:madhistory467newsletter@gmail.com) and PO Box 467, Madison, VA 22727.

~~~Judy Mahanes

## Membership Report

During the 4th quarter of 2024, we welcomed the following new member:

Jud Buchanan - Etlan, VA

Many thanks to those who have sent in your 2025 membership renewals. Your continued support is greatly appreciated!

# MADISON COUNTY COMMONWEALTH ATTORNEYS

By

Michael Noggle

In colonial times, the Royal Virginia Governor was the person who typically appointed what was then termed as the King's or Crown's Attorney for each county. After the Revolution, the Virginia Constitutions re-titled these positions as **County's Attorneys for the Commonwealth** (shortened herein to Commonwealth Attorneys). The current Code of Virginia gives the primary duties of an Attorney for the Commonwealth (and their Assistants) in Article 4, Title 15.2-1627.



Under early Virginia Constitutions, what we now call Constitutional officers (treasurer, sheriff, attorney for the commonwealth, clerk of the circuit court, commissioner of revenue) were initially appointed by Gentlemen Justices of the County Courts or the Virginia Governor<sup>1,2</sup>. The 1851 Virginia Constitution mandated these individuals be elected by "public" vote. The Constitutions also dictated, depending upon the office, that the tenures of each of these positions vary from two to six years, with Commonwealth Attorneys being elected for 4-year terms; their tenure changed for a short time post-Civil War. The start of these elected individual's tenure began January 1, 1852, with the voting for these positions on the



Tuesday after the first Monday in November in 1851. If one of these elected individuals resigned their position prior to the next scheduled election, the county court justices and/or judges had the authority to select an interim replacement to serve until the next scheduled election.

Also of interest, per colonial practices and the early Virginia Constitutions, these "public" votes were to be made "viva voce;" i.e., vocally, at the county's election station, at the time and date selected by the Sheriff. This viva voce practice was kept in place until the 1869 Constitution. The viva voce procedure was that when a "qualified" voter showed up at the election station (generally at the County Courthouse) to vote, he went to a designated platform established by

the Sheriff (the Sheriff was responsible for managing the voting process in these early years) and the qualified voter publicly announced for whom he was voting. His vote was to be tallied as a part of the public record and the winner was named once the Sheriff decided it was time to stop the voting process. This process seems a little rife for the likes of manipulation, fraud, or intimidation; fortunately, later Constitutions switched to paper ballots which allowed some privacy.

After the end of the Civil War, the Federal Authorities placed the government of Virginia under the control of the military with Virginia being Military District No. 1. The United States government required that each Confederate (seceded) state (except Tennessee) could not be admitted back into the Union until they prepared new constitutions accepting the 14th and 15th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution.<sup>3</sup> To replace the Virginia (Confederate) Constitution, voters from each County (as qualified under the current U.S. Constitution) had to vote to hold a new Virginia Constitutional Convention, vote on their delegates to that Convention, and then vote to accept the new Virginia Constitution developed and approved during the Convention<sup>4</sup>. This was accomplished in 1869 and President Grant authorized Virginia's re-entering the Union in January 1870, thus ending the Military District's control of Virginia.

Also stated in the 1867 U.S. Congressional Bill was that persons who had taken arms against the United States were prohibited from holding certain government offices<sup>5</sup>. As a result, the current Commonwealth Attorney, Mr. Smoot, who had served in the 4th Virginia Confederate Calvary, was replaced by Mr. D. S. Simms



(Continued on Page 4)

(Continued from Page 3)

who was appointed by the Military District.<sup>6</sup> The first Commonwealth Attorney selected by Madison County voters under the 1869 Virginia Constitution was Mr. Humphreys who was elected in November 1870.<sup>7</sup>

In many of the smaller Virginia counties, during the earlier years, there was not sufficient work or pay<sup>8</sup> to support a full-time Commonwealth Attorney. As a result, many of these Commonwealth Attorneys supplemented their income by also engaging in private legal practice work, and some in separate employment. Mr. Blakey, for example, simultaneously worked as the Commonwealth Attorney for eight years in both Greene and Madison Counties. Looking at their birth dates and the beginning of their Commonwealth Attorney tenure, for some of these Commonwealth Attorneys, their work in this position came near the beginning of their legal career and many apparently used the position to build their professional reputation and subsequent private practice or as a steppingstone to higher office.

The following list of Madison County Commonwealth Attorneys was developed from research of Madison County Court Payroll Records Years 1793 through 1866 (Library of Virginia Microfilm), Madison County Law Order Books Years 1866 through 1924 (Madison County Courthouse), Madison Eagle election results Years 1924 through 1950 (Library of Virginia Microfilm), and personal communication from current Commonwealth Attorney Clarissa Berry for years 1950 to present.

<sup>1</sup> 1776 Virginia Constitution

<sup>2</sup> 1830 Virginia Constitution

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Congressional Bill dated March 2, 1867 (enacted over President Johnson's veto)

<sup>4</sup> Madison County Polling Records for the New Virginia Constitution and Constitutional Convention (Library of Virginia),

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Congressional Bill dated March 2, 1867 (enacted over President Johnson's veto)

<sup>6</sup> 1869 Madison County Law Order Book 1869

<sup>7</sup> As reported in the Alexandria Gazette newspaper, November 15, 1870

<sup>8</sup> Madison County Court Payroll Records (Library of Virginia Microfilm), Years 1793 through 1866

## Madison's Commonwealth's Attorneys

| Term Dates          | Name (Lifespan)                           | After Term                            |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1793-1818           | John Walker(s)<br>(c1737-1821)            | Retirement                            |
| 1819-1825           | Richard Henry Field<br>(1792-1865)        | VA District Court Judge               |
| 1826-1833           | Horace Stringfellow<br>(1799-1883)        | Episcopal Minister                    |
| 1833-1841           | James Twyman Hill<br>(1809-1851)          | Alabama Politician                    |
| 1842-Jan. 1864      | Angus Rucker Blakey<br>(1816-1896)        | Military Service/<br>Private Practice |
| Feb. 1864-1869      | Theophilus Smoot<br>(1823-1891)           | Private Practice                      |
| 1869-1870           | D. S. Simms                               | Unknown                               |
| 1871-1883           | Thomas J. "Jeff" Humphreys<br>(1811-1884) | Retirement                            |
| 1884-1895           | James Hay<br>(1856-1923)                  | US Claims Court Judge                 |
| 1896-Aug. 1898      | Edwin Henry Gibson<br>(1871-1956)         | Private Practice                      |
| Aug. 1898-1907      | James Early Thrift<br>(1872-1951)         | Oklahoma County Judge                 |
| Jan. 1908-Apr. 1908 | George Edward Lewis<br>(1872-1942)        | Medical/Retirement                    |
| Apr. 1908-Jan. 1909 | Charles Francis McMullan<br>(1868-1930)   | Oklahoma Private Practice             |
| Jan. 1909-Jul. 1909 | George Landon Browning<br>(1870-1947)     | VA Appeals Court Judge                |
| Jul. 1909-1939      | Norman Guy Payne<br>(1880-1947)           | Madison Eagle Owner/<br>Editor        |
| 1940-1944           | Eugene Weaver Aylor<br>(1913-1988)        | WWII/Family Business                  |
| 1944-1947           | Raymond Lavillion Jackson<br>(1901-1963)  | Private Practice                      |
| 1948-1951           | Hugh Rudasill Ross<br>(1909-1981)         | Private Practice                      |
| 1952-1963           | Basil Carne Burke, Jr.<br>(1923-2003)     | VA District Court Judge               |
| *1964-1975          | Matthew Williamson Watts<br>(1921-2011)   | Private Practice                      |
| 1976-1983           | Martin Joseph McGetrick                   | Private Practice                      |
| 1984-Mar. 1995      | Caroline Watts<br>(1950-2020)             | Madison Clerk of Court                |
| Apr. 1995-Jan. 1996 | George Stanley Webb, III                  | Private Practice                      |
| Feb. 1996-1999      | S. Braxton "Colt" Puryear                 | Private Practice                      |
| 2000-Jan. 2015      | George Stanley Webb, III                  | Retirement                            |
| Feb. – Dec. 2015    | James Scott Reid                          | Private Practice                      |
| 2016-2025+          | Clarissa Thornton Berry                   | Current                               |

\*Also received a prior 2-month interim appointment

## Visit Graves Mill

The Historical Society invites everyone to check out the Graves Mill Historical Park as they travel around Madison County in 2025. The park is located at 52 Bluff Mountain Road right next to Graves Chapel in the village of Graves Mill. It was established under the supervision of Douglas Graves as an official Virginia Cultural Historic Site, part of the Jamestown 2007 Community Program to recognize the 400th anniversary of our country.

Specifically, this park honors folks who lived and worked in Graves Mill over the years. The area was settled by Thomas Graves after he received a land grant of 106 acres in 1768. As the years passed, some members of the family moved to Syria where one family established Graves Mountain Lodge. The Graves Mill Park features a monument listing names of people born or raised in Graves Mill and a small statue of a Confederate soldier with information about men from Graves Mill who served during the Civil War. There is also a replica of the original Post Office with mail slots, oil lamp, broom, and duster. This Post Office was established in 1828 as GRAVES, renamed GRAVES' MILL in 1841 and GRAVES MILL in 1894. The first Postmaster was Asam Graves. Thomas Graves became Postmaster in 1841.



The Graves Mill area suffered catastrophic damage during the Flood of June 1995. Although the flood carried the whole building, including the safe, downstream, the safe was later recovered with everything inside intact. Postal service was suspended immediately after the flood and not resumed until December 1995 when the Post Office reopened in Graves Chapel. Mail service moved to Wolfstown in 2001 when Postmaster Ruth Lillard retired. The Graves Mill Post Office officially closed in 2010.

In 2022, Douglas Graves moved from the area and deeded the park to the Madison County Historical Society. It is open year-round for self-guided tours.

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## Hunton House & Hotel

The Hunton House was built about 1802 by Alexander Hunton as a family home. He had bought the lot in town from William Carpenter in 1799. The home consisted of three stories, three rooms wide and one room deep. There were no porches on the front at first. In 1849 a Hunton relative Benjamin Carpenter bought the home, added the porches, and opened a hotel. A two-story full width porch was added on the back and a summer kitchen was built behind the south end of the home. It was connected to the house by the porch. When Benjamin Carpenter died and his estate settled, Edward Hunton acquired the hotel.

After Madison's devastating fire in 1919, owner Sarah Hunton Hall had a large addition added to the back. It consisted of three stories with a large dining room on the ground floor, several bedrooms, baths, and a library on the second floor and 12 rooms and one bath on the third floor for a total of 30 rooms. The summer kitchen was attached to the dining room by the carving room. Food was cooked in the kitchen and brought into the carving room to be prepared before serving the guests. Indoor plumbing and electric lights were installed in the early 1900s making this one of the first in Madison to have these conveniences. Water was pumped from a spring located down the hill to a water tower on the south side of the hotel. The tower fed the hotel by gravity flow but was barely taller than the third floor so pressure was not too good up there. Each room had a corner sink with a towel rack, an iron bed, and a dresser. The bathroom at the end of the hall on the third floor had a toilet and a bathtub. In the late 1930s, the town put in its own water and sewer lines and about a week later condemned all the wells in town forcing people to use the town water system. This did not sit well with Sally Hall, then running the hotel, but the old water tank was drained and the waterline removed. The hotel did not connect to the new sewer system at that time. It used a pit in the back, which was hidden by a fence and trees and kept well limed. The health inspectors could never find it and tried for years to force Sally Hall to connect to the town system. Eventually she did.

Around 1930 Fanny Taylor came to work at the hotel with her son Amos. He grew up in the hotel and later became its caretaker. After the deaths of all the women who ran the hotel, Tom Hall was left in charge of running it alone. He was cranky and not a fan of people, so he closed the hotel and destroyed all registers and records. The small front room served as a Trailways bus station for some years but that closed in 1953. The building then resumed its role as a private residence before remaining vacant for at least fifteen years. The property was sold in late 2024.

# From Jamestown to Syria: Graves Mountain Farm and Lodges

By

Kathleen Hoffman

Hospitality is in the genes of the Graves family of Madison County. From running an ordinary in 1852 on the Blue Ridge Turnpike for people crossing the Blue Ridge Mountains, to hosting large and popular festivals centered around apples or music, the Graves have always said pretty much “y’all come.” The family that operates Graves Mountain Farm and Lodges at the foot of the mountains near Syria apparently never said no, we don’t want people here to enjoy our beautiful surroundings, but rather maybe they can just stay a bit while they’re here. Farming is also a feature of DNA for the family, but they can apparently do both with great success.

The family dates way back in Virginia history, according to The Graves Family History, posted on the operation’s website. Lynn Graves, one of the two brothers who now mostly head up the family operation, addressed the Madison Historical Society at a capacity gathering in November in the county Board of Supervisors auditorium. Capt. Thomas Graves (1580 - 1635) came to Virginia in 1608, according to his descendant. The family history notes that his ship, the “Margaret and Mary,” was making the second supply trip to Jamestown, something that probably wasn’t an in-demand task for sailors facing that long journey on what must have been fairly flimsy conveyances. In 1619, he was known to have settled here, farming in the Smythefield Hundred. That was not a success; the Native Americans understandably took back the land, and



Thomas Graves left, only to return to the New World later to establish a home on the Eastern Shore. During his time in the Tidewater area, Graves was in the Virginia Assembly at Jamestown and later sat in the House of Burgesses in later colonial capital Williamsburg, the online history notes.

The Eastern Shore was a more permanent home for the family. Most of Thomas’s children stayed there, according to the speaker, but John Graves, a 5th generation descendant, came to Madison. Then John Graves’ son Pascal Graves became one of the builders/contractors for the Blue Ridge Turnpike. He built an inn there for people making the arduous trip across the Blue Ridge, Lynn Graves said. It was early in the 1860s when Paschal’s son James Madison Graves moved to the homeplace, called Mountain View, built in the late 1700s. He was there during the Civil War, and family lore has it that when Confederate soldiers passed through on the run, James Madison Graves helped them. The union was always on the hunt for him, and he was in fact arrested by the federal government just before the end of the war. Since there didn’t seem to be much point after the Confederacy surrendered, he was paroled.

Mountain View welcomed guests from 1929 to 1954, but an unfortunate halt was called after the then matriarch Kate Graves was diagnosed with cancer. Later the farming part of the operation was put into high gear by Lynn’s grandfather, Elvin who started Graves Brothers with his brothers Matt and Robert. In its heyday, there were about 800 cows, along with quite a few sheep. But a harbinger of things to come was 500 acres of apples and peaches. The fruit was sent to Gordonsville or even New Market to be put on the train.

Still, when young Jimmy Graves, now semi-retired, began thinking about the place’s future, he looked back to hospitality. The Graves family history notes that he has a B.S. in agricultural economics from Virginia Tech. After he and Rachel, who became Lynn’s parents, were married, he wrote out plans for



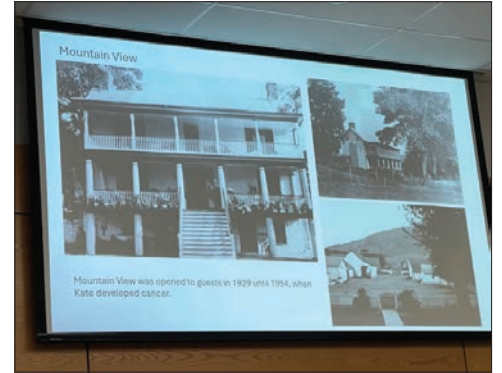
*Lynn, Owner & Manager of Graves Mountain Farm and Lodges*

(Continued from Page 6)

such a business, not surprisingly on a napkin. His father said firmly that it wouldn't work, but Jimmy kept considering the idea. Finally, his father agreed to try the plan, and a lodge was built - but the older Graves insisted it be constructed so that it could be converted into a barn. Work started on the lodge in 1964; there was a sawmill on the place, so the lodge really was a homegrown venture.

Actually, the business had come cautiously to life in the spring of 1965 with a couple of cabins, mostly used by the Boy Scouts. Jimmy Graves didn't like gas as fuel, so he put in wood stoves, continuing the theme of self-sufficiency. But, according to Lynn Graves, it became apparent that the cabins grew too overheated quickly. An interesting sidelight on the cabins is that during the Watergate scandal against President Richard M. Nixon, prosecutor Archibald Cox hid documents in the lower cabin. The Graves didn't know this until they read it in the news in 1975, Lynn said.

Once the lodge/possible barn was constructed, things picked up steam. There were quite a few buildings in existence, and one by one they were converted into updated places to stay. One had been a school, another a tenant house purchased in 1924 from the Aylor family. More dining space was needed, so the lodge was expanded. In the 1960s, Lynn said, the going rate was \$8 a day for lodging and three meals. Buildings called Blackwood and Greenwood went up in 1970. The Peon Palace had been intended to house people who worked for the lodge and farm, but in the mid-80s it was made available for visitors. And then came renovation of the Kite House - the Kites had built a mill on the Rose River.



Mountain View

Poplar Lodge, with 17 rooms, opened in 2008, and it has had the most varied history of any of the buildings. It was at times a nudist camp, a Christian religious retreat, and a Hindu retreat. Honeysuckle Cottage, originally built in 1894, was added to the rental property very recently. A primitive campground, open year-round, has also added to the available places to savor the surroundings.

The Graves were always ready to move on a new idea. The very popular Fourth of July fireworks and the Apple Harvest Festival were begun in 1969, and both have expanded. The Festival of Music started in 1993. Opportunities kept coming. The cannery was built in 1980. Community canneries were not unusual in the past, but as home canning decreased the one in Criglersville was up for sale, so the Graves bought it. The farm and lodges have increasingly provided employment for Madison people - the top count is about 80 at one time, the speaker said, of course partly seasonal.



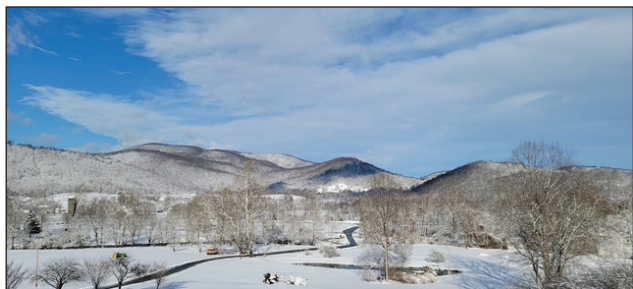
There have been changes besides the growth of spaces for visitors to stay. For many years after it began, the lodge kept the serving of dinners firmly in the family style. People sat lined up along large tables, filling in the seats as they arrived. There was a nightly menu, and everyone was served alike. Once, Lynn says, a senator sat in the wrong place, willfully starting a new table for his party when there was space left elsewhere. Lynn's grandfather, as firm as he had once been about

not having a big hospitality business, told him to move, and eventually the senator did. People could eat as much as they wanted - the directive was "Take what you want, but eat what you take."

After the covid pandemic, though, it seemed people no longer wanted to sit in such proximity to those they didn't know. Now there are tables intended for two, or for four or more, and a more full-service menu. But the family atmosphere has remained, according to the speaker. Family operation also continues, with new generations hosting visitors to the edges of the Blue Ridge. Grandchildren and great-grandchildren carry on traditions and offer comfort and hospitality year-round.

Madison County Historical Society  
P. O. Box 467  
Madison, VA 22727  
540-395-5119

Address Service Requested



[www.madisonvahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.madisonvahistoricalsociety.org)  
[madisonvahistory@gmail.com](mailto: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 Museums and on-line at <http://www.madisonvahistoricalsociety.org>. (Click "About" and scroll down the page.)

For more information about any of our activities, or to schedule a museum visit outside of normal hours, call the Society's office at 540-395-5119. Leave a message if no one answers so we may return your call.

### *VISIT OUR MUSEUMS*

#### **Madison Museum and the Kemper Residence**

412 N Main Street  
Open Tuesday, Thursday, Friday  
10:00 AM to 2:00 PM  
(Closed mid-December - March 1st)

#### **Mountain Museum at Criglersville**

1128 Old Blue Ridge Turnpike  
Open Sunday, 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM  
*Memorial chimney and kiosks  
open all the time.*

#### **Graves Mill Park**

52 Bluff Mountain Road  
Open all the time.

#### **Arcade**

124 N Main Street  
Open by special announcement.