



# Preserving Yesterday Enriches Tomorrow



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## THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MADISON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mast Head Pictures Courtesy of Tucker Hill

Editor: Jill Schreiner

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**P.O. Box 467, Madison, Virginia 22727**

**August 2003**

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### **MCHS TO MEET AT MEANDER**



The next membership meeting will be held at 2 p.m. on August 17 at the Meander Inn and Plantation. The owners will host a brief tour of the house and grounds, followed by light refreshments.

The Meander Plantation was patented in 1727 by Colonel Joshua Fry, a member of the House of Burgesses and a professor at William and Mary. It was the first plantation settled in Madison County. Peter Jefferson, Thomas Jefferson's father, and Col. Fry surveyed and drew the first map of the State of Virginia, a copy of which currently hangs in the living room of the Inn. Originally named Elam, the manor was enlarged in 1766 by Joshua's son, Henry Fry. Noted visitors during this time included Thomas Jefferson, General Lafayette, and William Wirt. At that time the plantation encompassed more than 300 acres. The property name was changed to Meander in the early 1900's by

owner George Shearer, who maintained it as an estate for his daughters, Judith and Julia, who lived their entire lives there. After the death of the Shearer sisters, the house sat vacant for a few years in the hands of a private development company before being returned to private ownership in the mid 1970's. In 1991 the house was purchased by its present owners, Susanne Thomas and Susie Blanchard, who operate it as an Inn and restaurant.

The Meander Inn is located on the west side of route 15, about one mile north of the intersection of Oak Park Road (route 634).

### **RANDY HUWA GUEST SPEAKER AT QUARTERLY MEETING**

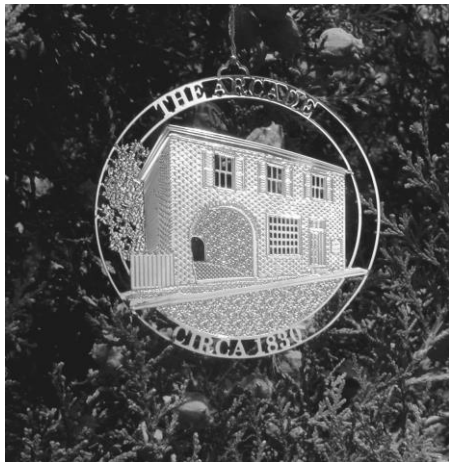
At the June 1 quarterly membership meeting of the Madison County Historical Society Randy Huwa, Montpelier's Director of Communication, presented a slide show and spoke about the 15-month Architectural Investigation at Montpelier. Officials at Montpelier now know a lot more about what the large, pink stucco mansion looked like when James Madison lived there. Subsequent owners made many additions and changes to the home of our fourth president in the 175 years after Madison's death.

Madison built an addition to the central core in 1797 and added two wings to the house after he served as President. One wing was for Dolley's use and the opposite wing for President Madison's mother. ("Our fourth President obviously believed in separation of powers, even

with respect to his own family," Huwa quipped.). More changes and additions were made by eight other owners, including Marion Dupont Scott, whose family was the last to own it before it became a National Trust Historic Site. As a result of the Architectural Investigation, Montpelier officials now know that much of the original structure and its doors, windows and architectural details remain - though not necessarily in the same position Madison had them. The Montpelier staff was joined by experts from Colonial Williamsburg, Mt. Vernon and Poplar Forest. Included in the group was Ann Miller, Historical Society member.

The restoration work is ongoing, and people are encouraged to keep up with developments by regular visits to Montpelier.

### 2004 ORNAMENT



The 2004 ornament features the Arcade. It will be available for sale at Taste of the Mountains. The Courthouse and Kemper ornaments are still available for sale and may be purchased at the Arcade. The cost of each ornament is \$10.00 plus tax (\$10.45 total)

### WELCOME – NEW MEMBERS

The Society is pleased to welcome the following new members:

- Bill and Marise Craig (Family)

### ACQUISITIONS

Claire Jancke - China, 4 cups and saucers and 4 luncheon plates

Marise Craig - Wedgwood Queens Ware - 4 bread and butter and 4 dinner plates

This lovely china will be used at the Teas and other special events.

### 2004 CALENDAR



The third annual Madison County Historical Society calendar will be introduced at the Taste of the Mountains Street Fair. This year's theme is "The Picturesque and Historic Barns of Madison County" and these beautiful calendars will feature 14 pen and ink drawings by Madison Co. High School's talented student artists, with an introductory essay by Architectural Historian and former Historical Society Board Member, Ann L. Miller. Copies may be purchased at local businesses in Madison for \$10.00 + tax with the proceeds going toward the important work of the Society. These 2004 calendars are the perfect Christmas present for friends and family. There will be a special on all three calendars of the Society for \$15.00 +tax.

### BOARD CHANGES MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES AND ADDS MEMBERSHIP INCENTIVES

The Society's Board of Directors has deleted the Patron level of membership. The Benefactor level was changed to include those who contribute \$250 or more to the Society.

The Board also modified the incentives of membership. All members will continue to receive the Society's membership card, newsletter, and annual report. In addition, Friends (gifts of \$50 to \$99) will be listed in the Newsletter and Annual Report and will receive a 10 per cent discount on Society products (books, notepaper, playing cards, etc.) Additionally, Partners (gifts of \$100 to \$249) will be listed on a display at the Kemper Residence and will receive a special gift (i.e. a gold finished ornament). , Benefactors (gifts of \$250 or more) will be invited to participate in a recognition party

as guests of the Society as an extra added benefit.

## ARCADE EXHIBITS



Contributed by Linwood Imlay

The uniform pictured has been on display at the Arcade and is a reproduction of the militia uniform worn by The Richardson's Guards of Madison County. Richardson's Guards was formed in 1858 and was named for General William Richardson, Adjutant General of Virginia.

Following John Brown's raid at Harpers Ferry in October of 1859, Richardson's Guards was sent by the Governor of Virginia to stand guard duty at the trial and subsequent hanging of John Brown and his associates. On April 28, 1861 Richardson's Guards was mustered into the Confederate Army as Company A, 7th Virginia Infantry Regiment. James Lawson Kemper became the first commander of the regiment. They were one of the better equipped companies in the army, with modern Springfield rifle muskets and uniforms provided by the residents of Madison County. Company A fought with great distinction beginning with the battle of First Manassas and ending with the surrender at Appomattox. Less than twenty five members of the regiment and only two privates of the original Richardson's Guards were present for the surrender at Appomattox.

To see this and other exhibits visit the Arcade on Tuesday, Thursday or Saturday from 10:00am to 2:00pm.

## TASTE OF THE MOUNTAINS

An original portrait of Governor Kemper will be on display in the parlor of the Residence on August 30th, from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM during the Taste of the Mountains Street Festival. The entire house will be open to the public during this time. Volunteers are needed as docents. Please call Rita Cunningham (948-6542) if you can help for an hour or two. The Society will also have a booth on Main Street where our new Calendars and Ornaments will be sold. Your help will be greatly appreciated.

## NEXT KEMPER TEA

Fall Tea at the Kemper Residence will be held on Wednesday, September 24th, at 12:30 o'clock. This will be the fourth in a series of very successful benefit teas. Seating is available on the main floor and in the English basement which is handicapped accessible. Reservations are required as seating is limited. Make your reservations early by calling Rita Cunningham at 948-6542.



Law Office with new chimney

## LAW OFFICE UPDATE

Restoration of the Kemper law office is proceeding well. The major job, reconstruction of the chimney, is complete. The masonry, of appropriate bond for the period of the law old brick, is in five course American bond, the appropriate bond for the period of the law office.

In addition, the small chimney, built when the original chimney could no longer be used, was itself in very bad shape and was dismantled. The roof at that site has been repaired and flashing installed on the new chimney.

When the masons removed the concrete ramp at the entrance to the law office, the floor joist at that end of the building was found to have areas of damage from moisture and termites. The four lowest courses of siding in that area were modern composition boards and because of their appearance needed to be replaced. Their removal revealed still more damage to the floor joist. Fortunately, however, this damage was spotty and the joist was basically sound, allowing the carpenter to replace just the damaged areas. He also replaced the lower courses of siding.

The modern electrical appliances installed by UVA have been removed. Bill Scholten, our vice president and chief handyman, has removed the first floor ceiling insulation, revealing a ceiling of painted beams and boards. One section of the ceiling, the area between two beams, is soot-blackened due to a poor connection of the stovepipe that connected to the small, later, chimney. Our plan is to paint the ceiling its original white and leave it exposed.

The work remaining is largely interior: installation of drywall with application of a skim coat, installation of baseboards and mantel, cleaning and lightly refinishing the floor and finally painting. We hope to have this work finished by early fall.

## INTERESTING PROJECTS TO DO

Members can assist the Society and have fun in volunteering to do one of several interesting projects. They include:

1. **MERCHANDISING LIST** – Complete publications list and add other items, which the Society sells. The Orange Historical Society has prepared a leaflet that can serve as a model.
2. **MARKETING PROGRAM** - Develop agreement to be used with authors. Seek out other products that the Society could sell. Determine possibility of mailing items or providing them to merchants for sale.

3. **PAMPHLET** – Prepare a new Madison County Historical Society Pamphlet. Outline the history of the Society. Provide illustrations of past achievements. Present reasons why the Society needs to be supported today.
4. **INVENTORY OF GRAVE SITES** – Join other members in locating and recording gravesites throughout the County.
5. **RAPIDAN RAILROAD** – Research the route the railroad followed from Wolfstown to Orange in 1920-24.
6. **HOST/HOUSTESS** – Serve as a host/hostess at the Arcade and/or the Kemper Residence.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteers are needed for the many activities carried on by the Society. Would you like to join the Kemper Girls? They proudly keep the Residence in museum quality condition and host the benefit teas. Docents are needed for special events, i.e., Taste of the Mountains Street Festival, visits from school children and visiting tourists. Rita Cunningham (948-6542) will be happy to talk to you regarding these opportunities.



This sketch is an example of a mill located on a waterway showing the millwheel and race .

## The Role Mills Played in County History

by Ann Ferguson

Life in the 21st century offers conveniences we take for granted with little thought to how the everyday needs for food, shelter and clothing were met in the past. During the late 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries mills, built along various rivers and tributaries in Madison County, were

an important step towards meeting those needs for residents. The millwheel, turned by the flowing water, powered grinding stones that converted grain to flour, operated saws that transformed tree trunks into board lumber for buildings, and ran machinery that processed raw wool into yarn and fabric. In this article we take a look at one mill site that operated on the banks of the Robinson River.

First a grist mill and later a woolen factory existed at a point on the Robinson River called Port, located on Route 618, two and one-half miles north of Oak Park. The last private owner was Hamilton (Hamp) Berry and it stayed in the Berry family until 1926 when the property was sold for development of the Madison Power Plant.

Research documents show that a grist mill was built by Simeon Utz in 1812, made of hand hewn timbers and weather boarded; it had a fifteen-foot rock wall on its south side. The mill race was about 600 yards long and the front wheel was a steel overshot. In addition to a few small windows and a door leading to the cellar, this mill had a rock chimney and a fireplace and included a small room that was used as an office. The roof was slab and the door hinges and box locks were wooden; floors were wide boards with pegs instead of nails.

In 1849, the mill with seven acres was conveyed to Alexander Swan and in 1867; it again changed hands when it was conveyed to John W. Taylor. Hamp Berry began operating the mill in about 1881 when it was inherited through his wife, Lucy Collins. (Lucy Collins and Hamilton Berry were married in February 1866.)

Investigation of records regarding the factory building at this site leaves some unanswered questions. In 1870, the record shows that a Mr. Larkin operated a woolen mill on the Robinson River that was later owned and operated by Hamp Berry. As John W. Taylor owned the property in 1870, it is possible Mr. Larkin leased land from him for a separate building or that the original mill building was converted for use as a woolen mill.

An article in the Richmond Times Dispatch in 1959 quoted Mrs. James E. Ford (nee Ella Berry) daughter of Hamp Berry, as she recounted her memories of her father's woolen mill. Mrs. Ford said that she and her seven brothers and sisters were the labor force in the

mill: "We made material, men's clothes, yarn, linsey and blankets for my hope chest." (A few days before the story was published in the Richmond newspaper, Mr. and Mrs. Ford celebrated their 64th wedding anniversary). Mrs. Ford said that farmers sheared wool from their sheep and brought it to her father's mill to be made into goods for their family's needs until the next shearing time. Hamp Berry would buy all of the surplus wool and use it to fashion stock that he then would sell as he traveled around to a variety of court day markets.

Some housewives preferred to have the wool converted to yarn that they would spin at home while others chose to have material from which they made clothes. Mrs. Ford said linsey was an important material processed in her family's mill—a rough, loosely-woven fabric, she said it was made into checked patterns that people used for children's clothes. One of Mrs. Ford's sisters was an expert tailor who made clothes for men including a special suit for a Culpeper man. He owned an angora sheep and Ella Ford's mother, Lucy Collins Berry, 75 years-old at the time, wove the material for the suit.

The hope chest blankets made at the mill on the Robinson were white with colored stripes woven into the borders; hand bound with yarn. "I fluffed them by hand and I climbed up and down the frame they were fastened to, combing the fluff out of the yarn with a special card," Mrs. Ford said with pride.

Five blankets made at the Berry family woolen mill were recently donated to the Madison County Historical Society by Vee Tull. The blankets, showing a few decorative touches - stripes and large squares will be displayed at the Kemper Residence during the Taste of the Mountain Festival on Saturday, August 30th. Another connection is a picture of the family mill displayed on the second floor at Kemper. This interesting item has been placed on loan to the Society by Nell Berry.

Grist and saw mills were vital to the local economy in the early days of the County. Grist mills made it possible for farmers to convert their grain to flour for home use and sale and sawmills meant homes, businesses and outbuildings could be constructed more easily than the hand-hewn process used until then. The later advent of woolen mills was a boon to housewives who were able to make assorted

household items and a greater variety of clothing for their families with much less effort than the spinning and weaving process previously required.

Mills served another purpose important to the society of Madison County. Each mill became a gathering place for nearby residents - it was a place to catch up on the news and delivery of mail was often arranged at a mill site (Mail was distributed at the Berry family mill twice each week according to available documents).

The Virginia Historical Inventory Survey of Madison County Mills, Compiled and Edited with Additional Research by Charles L. Perdue, Jr. and Nancy J. Martin-Perdue, (1937) lists 22 mills in the County. Repton's Mill is listed as the only mill that remained in its original condition. Some of the mills described in the survey have been dismantled and others have fallen under their own weight as nature has taken its toll. At some sites, the largest millstones can be seen resting in the water's depth - a silent reminder of the days long ago when the churning millwheel provided power to meet the needs of the people of Madison County

(Thanks to Jan Harris, Curator of the Arcade, for providing archival files that helped this article along its way).



Contributed by Linwood Imlay

## **Ceremony Held Honoring the Birthday of Major General James Lawson Kemper**

On June 11 2003 members of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, Kemper-Fry-Strother Camp 19 of Madison held their 15th Annual Ceremony honoring the birthday of James Lawson Kemper. The ceremony was held at "Walnut Hills" the former home of James Lawson Kemper. The event was well attended by members of the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV), the United Daughters of the

Confederacy (UDC), Company A, 7th Virginia Infantry Regiment and guests, including Mrs. Mary Jackson and her daughter, Kemper Jackson who are direct descendants of James Lawson Kemper. Welcoming remarks were presented by Mr. Harold R. Woodward, Jr., Commander of the Confederate Veterans. The invocation and benediction were given by SCV member Mr. George Bryson. Guest speaker was Mrs. Sam Lougheed, President, Virginia Division, UDC who gave a captivating talk on "Lee and Jackson". Wreaths were placed on the grave of James Lawson Kemper by the SCV, UDC and Mr. Tex Wells, followed by a rifle salute present by Company A, 7th Virginia Infantry Regiment commanded by Captain William J. Graham, III.

Following the ceremony a birthday cake and refreshments were served in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Isaac W. Jeanes, II, current owners of Walnut Hills.

James Lawson Kemper was born on June 11, 1823 at Mountain Prospect, near Leon (James City), graduated from Washington College in Lexington, Virginia in 1842 and became a lawyer. He served as a captain of volunteers during the Mexican War. After the Mexican War he practiced law in Madison; he served as President of the Board of Visitors of the Virginia Military Institute; was legal counsel for the Blue Ridge Turnpike Company and was a three term member of the Virginia House of Delegates, where he served as chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs and Speaker of the House. He was promoted to Major General during the War Between the States, during which time he was severely wound in "Pickett's Charge" at Gettysburg.

After the War he returned to Madison to practice law and moved into the current "Kemper House" on Main Street in Madison. In 1874 he was elected Governor of Virginia and upon completion of his term returned to Madison to practice law. In 1886 he moved his family to "Walnut Hills", the home he had built on the Rapidan River in Orange County. He never fully recovered from his wounds and spent the last several years of his life as an invalid. He died April 7, 1895 and was buried at his beloved home, "Walnut Hills".



## FOR SALE AT THE ARCADE

ITEM	PRICE	TAX
Walking Tour of Madison County	\$2.00	\$0.09
Madison County Almanac 1907	4.50	0.20
Madison County Directory 1896	4.50	0.20
<u>Madison County, Virginia: A Revised History</u>	10.00	0.45
<u>Madison County Land Grants 1722-1865</u> By Dewey Lillard	25.00	1.13
Bicentennial Plate	2.00	0.09
2002 Madison County Calendar	2.00	0.09
2003 Madison County Calendar	5.00	0.23
2004 Madison County Calendar	10.00	0.45
2002 Ornament – Court House	10.00	0.45
2003 Ornament – Kemper Residence	10.00	0.45
2004 Ornament – Arcade	10.00	0.45
1776 Map Culpeper, Madison, Rappahannock	10.00	0.45
Note Cards	3.50	0.16
Note Cards – Photos by Martha Cornwell	1.25	0.06
Playing Cards – Court House	3.50	0.16
Sheet Music – Madison Song	1.25	0.06
<u>Adopted Son</u> By Greg Glassner	12.00	0.54
<u>Defender of the Valley</u> By Harold Woodward	25.00	1.13
<u>Confederate Bowie Knives</u> By Harold Woodward	5.00	0.23
<u>For Home and Honor (Madison County War Between the States, 1861-1865)</u>	18.95	0.85
<u>Hebron Lutheran Church History</u> (hard copy)	22.50	0.00
<u>Hebron Lutheran Church – Brief History</u> (paperback)	3.00	0.00
<u>Hebron Lutheran Church Organ</u> (paperback)	1.50	0.00
Hebron Lutheran Church Plate	16.72	0.00
Hebron Lutheran Church Postcards(church interior)	0.30	0.00
<u>Shenandoah National Park Undying Past</u> By Darwin Lambert	17.71	Included

Free Items:

- Arcade Leaflet
- Bicentennial Brochure
- Kemper Residence Leaflet
- Madison County Brochure

Also available by calling the Commissioner of Revenue at 948-4421

Madison County Homes: Pre-Civil War for \$50.00 plus \$2.25 Tax



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.

Membership is for one year with renewals due on the anniversary date of membership. Membership and other contributions to the Society are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. Types of Membership:

Benefactor	\$250 and above	Business	\$50
Partner	\$100 to \$249	Family	\$20
Friend	\$50 to \$99	Single	\$10
		Student	\$5

Membership applications are available at the Arcade and the Kemper Residence. For more information call the Society Office at 540-948-5488 and leave your name, telephone number, and address. We will send you a membership application or return your call to answer your questions. You may wish to call the Membership Chair at 540-923-4973 or e-mail him at [boblove@nexet.net](mailto:boblove@nexet.net).



Madison County Historical Society  
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