



Preserving Yesterday Enriches Tomorrow



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MADISON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mast Head Pictures Courtesy of Tucker Hill

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P.O. Box 467, Madison, Virginia 22727

November 2003



Members listen to Suzanne Thomas at The Inn at Meander Plantation

MEMBERS VISIT THE INN AT MEANDER PLANTATION

Our members enjoyed the opportunity to tread the same ground as Thomas Jefferson and other historical figures as they visited the Inn at Meander Plantation on Sunday, August 17.

The Inn, described by the *Madison County Eagle* as "one of the country's historical treasures", is situated on an 80-acre plantation, the first to be settled in Madison County. The plantation dates to the 1720s, when it was patented by Col. Joshua Fry, commander of Virginia's colonial militia and a member of the House of Burgesses.

Suzanne Thomas, co-owner of the property with Suzie Blanchard since 1991, gave members a brief summary of the plantation's history. She and Blanchard's daughter, Sandi Allmond, conducted tours of the buildings.

Greg Glassner, managing editor of the *Eagle* and a society board member, made comments about William Wirt, who was in residence at the home while serving as a tutor to 13 children of Fry's son, the Rev. Henry Fry. Wirt, who also had a small law office on the property, later became the longest-serving U.S. Attorney General.

The Inn now is operated as a bed and breakfast, which can accommodate as many as 24 overnight guests in a variety of rooms and suites. The Inn also offers special gourmet dinners and cooking classes. Members had a chance to sample some of the Inn's food offerings during refreshments.

HOFFMAN TO SPEAK

The next membership meeting of the Madison County Historical Society will be held Sunday, November 16 at 2 p.m. in the Auditorium of the Madison County administration building. Steve Hoffman, well known local historian, will talk about early Madison county businesses and stores that no longer exist, such as E.T Krier, Gibbs and Estes, and Caroll Lillard's. Bill heads, calendars, store tokens, advertisements, and other items that Steve has collected over a period of fifty years, will be on display. Following Steve's talk, refreshments will be served in the Kemper residence

2004 ORNAMENT



The Madison County Historical Society selected the Arcade for its 2004 Christmas ornament. You can purchase ornaments at the Arcade and the Library. Cost is \$10.00 plus tax. Previous ornaments (the Courthouse for 2002 and the Kemper Residence for 2003) are also available. For more information call 948-5488

2004 CALENDAR



"The Historic and Picturesque Barns of Madison County, Virginia" (The Madison County Historical Society's 2004 calendar) features pen and ink sketches by the talented art students of Madison County High School. The Calendar is on sale at the Arcade, the Chamber of Commerce, Greystone TV and Appliance (Radio Shack), Handcraft House, Plow and Hearth Country Store, Museum of Culpeper History, the Library, and the Mountain Store in Criglersville.

WELCOME – NEW MEMBERS

The Society is pleased to welcome the following new members:

- Trish and David Crowe (Megin, Erin, Zachary) (Benefactor)
- John H. Imlay (Family)
- Linwood J. Imlay (Single)
- Jean D. Busboso (Friend)

ACQUISITIONS

Martha and Jack Cornwell have donated a forty piece set of Staffordshire china to the Society. The china will be used at our teas and other special events held at the Kemper Residence. Thanks so much Jack and Martha for your continued support



Richmond resident and Madison native, Steven Colvin, with his gift of a Carpenter chicken coop to the Society

Last summer, Madison native Steven A. Colvin donated to the Society a "rod chicken coop" made by William Joseph Carpenter, whose factory was located on Route 29 near Brightwood for many years. Mr. Colvin's great-great grandmother, Sarah Francis Carpenter (1839-1910) was the sister of the Madison manufacturer, who invented this distinctive coop in 1885. The donor, who now lives in Mechanicsville, Virginia, found the distinctive chicken coop in a Fredericksburg antique shop in the summer of 2002 and donated it to the Society in memory of "Uncle W. J." Many thanks to Mr. Colvin for this addition to the Society's collection.



photo courtesy of Emily Williams

THE NEST

Contributed by Emily McMullen Williams

"We did it, Honey." Those were the words spoken by Ms. Maggie's husband at the time back in 1985 when he walked in the door and shared with her that he had just bought the old mill. Ms. Maggie just couldn't believe it. Every penny of the family's savings had been spent on the purchase of the mill with two acres of land surrounding it.

After all, her husband was just going to the auction to see who ended up with it. The word was out that three Northern Virginia attorneys were very interested in owning the mill. When Ms. Maggie got over the shock of being co-owner of the mill, she asked what happened to the three lawyers. They were held up in traffic and got there just after the bidding was over. The auction had started right at the scheduled time. "Now you will have more space for your school. The three lawyers are out of luck", her husband assured her.

Ms. Maggie, at the time, was running a school on Shelby Road in Wolftown. She had been licensed by the state to operate a school for infants to age twelve, but had focused on ages two and one half to five. She recalls her first teaching experience in a public school in Pennsylvania in 1965 with 40 students and no aides.

Ms. Maggie Lower's school in the heart of Wolftown, in what is now the Curiosity Shoppe, continued several more years while the mill was being made livable. And what work it was! It seemed like there was tons of debris. Pigeon and starling skeletons and snake skins were numerous. After getting that cleaned up, the

next step was finding a home for all the mill machinery. Airlie, the conference center north of Warrenton, agreed to take all the mechanical working parts to use in the mill on its property. A millwright was hired and it took three weeks to disassemble the parts. The old mill wheel could not be moved and it is still in its original location which is now located under the present day deck.

Probably the most vital part of the reconstruction job was replacing the four story support columns. This time they would be planted in concrete. Without this work the mill would have not survived the 1995 flood with its 17 feet of water rushing through.

Making the mill a home as well as a school was the initial plan once Ms. Maggie got used to the notion that the mill was in their possession. It has been a tremendous job and consumed every waking hour day in and day out.

As the school named "The Nest" closes down, Ms. Maggie will be starting a new phase of her life as the kindergarten teacher at the Grymes School in Orange. Her son and his family plan to continue to maintain the mill as their residence.

ARCADE EXHIBITS

Two exhibits are presently at the Arcade. The Train exhibit which includes the toy train of Mr. Weakley is still on display. A new exhibit on the History of the Madison County Schools will be on display in various forms for most of next year. Come to the Arcade and see if you can identify yourself or others in the many photographs included in this exhibit. The Arcade is open from 10:00am to 2:00pm on Tuesday and Thursday.

FALL TEA

The fourth in a series of Benefit Teas was held at the Kemper Residence on September 24th. A wonderful and delectable selection of savories, sweets, fruits, scones and teas were served to another full house. Many of our guests are "regulars" who have attended past teas. Some comments were "this was the best tea". We were pleased to use our new Staffordshire china donated by Jack and Martha Cornwell. The next tea, The Winter Tea, is scheduled for January 28th, at 12:30PM. Seating is available on the main floor and in the English Basement, which is handicapped accessible. Reservations are

required - make your plans early. Volunteers who prepared, donated and served the delicious food are: Mary Haught, Vi Hilliard, Betty Lynn Yowell, Genevieve McLearn, Jill Schreiner, Anne Hughes, Heidi Sage, Mary Jo Dilling and Rita Cunningham. Our appreciation is extended to Bill Scholten who assisted with setting up tables and chairs. Also thanks to the following who loaned silverware and tea pots - Genevieve McLearn, Vi Hilliard, Heidi Sage, Pat Fray and Rita Cunningham.

TASTE OF THE MOUNTAINS

The Annual Taste of the Mountains Street Festival was very special this year. We were pleased to have on loan for the day an original oil portrait of General James Lawson Kemper. An oval portrait of Belle Kemper was also on display in addition to other family artifacts. Thanks to Kemper family descendants for making this special exhibit possible. The following volunteers were docents at the Kemper Residence, the Arcade and at our booth on the street.

Jack and Martha Cornwell	Betty Lynn Yowell
Jan Harris	Emily Williams
Bill Scholten	Lee Decker
Bob Cunningham	Anne Hughes
Bob and Judy Lovegren	Millie Wiesner
Rebecca Rumppler	Bob Tierney
Tucker Hill and Mollie	Mary Haught
Norma Jackson	Rita Cunningham

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/HOESSESS** – 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.

WANTED

The Madison County Historical Society needs the following:

- **Filing cabinet:** one that can be locked for protection of documents
- **Document display case:** a small, glass-covered case, either freestanding or for desk top use.

If you would be willing to donate either or both of these items please let the Historical Society know at 948-5488. Thank you

MEMORIES OF REPTON MILL

By Ann M. Ferguson

The Virginia Historical Inventory Survey of Madison County Mills, compiled in 1937, identified Repton Mill as one of the few mills of the 21 known to have existed in the county that was still standing, having five stories and with the original floor plan and equipment. The survey went on to note that the mill, located on Beautiful Run, is a square building, 40 x 40, with a lean-to, 25 windows and four doors. The mill was built by Robert C. Carter in 1806 on an eleven acre tract, inherited from the Reubin

Beal estate; Mr. Carter was married to Reubin Beal's only daughter. Over the next almost one hundred years, the mill changed hands numerous times until it was purchased by M. L. Lohr in 1905. The Lohr family remains owner of the property to the present day.

A glimpse of the years when this substantial building was a bustling center of activity for residents of Madison County can be seen through the memories of people who knew the building as part of their every day life.

Woody Lohr was born in 1916 and his recollections of the mill began in the 1920s when he was about seven years old. His Uncle Luther (M.L. Lohr) was the miller then and Woody and his parents would travel by buggy for Sunday afternoon visits to the house on the property believed to be well over 100 years old. The house still stands and its size and design make it evident that this was a "grand old lady" in its time; a decorative wrought iron fence can still be seen to the rear of the home. It was used as a residence until 1990 when fire damage made it unsafe as a dwelling. The ice cream served at the end of lunch was a highlight of the Sunday visit for Woody Lohr. No doubt this special treat was the result of a lot of hand cranking. Another memory he shared was the trips he and his brothers would make to the mill on Saturday nights to enjoy a shower under the water from the spillway. As he got older, he was sent to the mill to get a supply of flour and cornmeal, a trip of almost six miles. From time to time his Uncle would ask why he passed another mill near Good Hope to travel the extra distance to Repton Mill. Woody always gave the same answer: "I don't know, I was just told I was to come here."

James Hale lived about a mile away from the mill and his earliest recollections begin in the 1930s when he was a boy of six or seven. His father would lift him onto the saddle of a horse and then he would place two bags, tied together, hanging from the neck of the horse; one bag contained corn and the other wheat. James Hale recalls he made a careful trip to be sure his cargo didn't slip off and it would take about 20 minutes to get to the mill. While M.L. Lohr went about the task of grinding the raw material, he told young Jimmy to just stay out of the way. Jimmy Hale used the opportunity to teach

himself to swim in the millrace, an activity he never discussed with his parents. The Hale family owned an automobile at the time, but the trip to the mill on horseback was a way to keep a youngster busy while his father and older brothers went about man's work.

James Hale recounted a tragic event in his family's history connected with the mill site. A store was located across from Repton Mill, operated by Mike Hale, his uncle, who also served as the postmaster for Pratt's. In the early 1920s, Beautiful Run was swollen with floodwaters and Mike Hale saw his seven year-old daughter with a playmate being swept towards the bridge in the fast running current. He jumped into the water, holding onto the underside of the plank top wooden bridge hoping to catch the children. The churning water caused him to lose his grip and he was swept away and drowned. The girls survived and Mildred Hale went on to serve as a nurse in World War II.

Russell Lohr was born in 1927 and he remembers Repton Mill when it was operated by his Great Uncle Luther (M.L.) Lohr. He reminisced about the amazement he felt when the waterwheel would turn the gears, cogs, and wheels inside the mill to operate the grinding stones. Some families would bring their entire harvest of wheat and corn to the mill, storing a large part of it on one of the upper floors and taking one hundred pound bags of flour and meal at a time for household use. (The corn and wheat would be lifted to the upper floors on a pulley, belt-type device.) His older brother, Belvin, worked for their great uncle, driving a Chevrolet truck to make deliveries of the mill products on a route that went as far as Syria and Orange.

In response to a question on the various uses made of the flour and meal, Russell recounted his mother's daily morning chore when she baked 100 biscuits for the family's breakfast. There were ten children in his home and at the end of the meal not one biscuit was left. One use he recalled for the cornmeal happened at hog killing time. Russell's wife, Janet, offered the following recipe: Using the pork broth, add cornmeal until the mixture reaches a thick consistency. Pour the product into loaf pans and set in a cool place. When formed, cut into

slices and deep fry until it is crispy on both sides. The more familiar name for this is scrapple, but in the Lohr home it was called "panhaus," a German word that loosely translates to "housebread."

Russell talked about the byproducts from the corn and wheat that were saleable products. From the wheat, bran was left that was used as cow feed and from the corn, a product called "husks" was mixed with other ingredients and served as livestock feed.

Repton Mill ceased to operate sometime in the late 1940s. In 1806, the year it was constructed, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark were making the return journey from their exploration of the lands to the western boundaries of the United States. The mill stood on the banks of Beautiful Run during the days of the War of 1812 and the Civil War. It was there when horses and wagons brought the corn and wheat for grinding and it saw the day when cars and trucks would pull in to have the raw products ground or to buy some from the miller. Our country put a man on the moon during the history of Repton Mill and in the year 2000 another century turned. The mill still stands

today with the signs of the passing years marking its walls. Now it serves as a storehouse for memories of days gone by in Madison County.



Repton Mill has stood on the banks of Beautiful Run for almost 200 years.

My thanks to James Hale and Woody and Russell Lohr for sharing their memories of Repton Mill and to Vivian and Randolph Lohr for allowing me the opportunity to visit the mill property

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.



Madison County Historical Society
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