



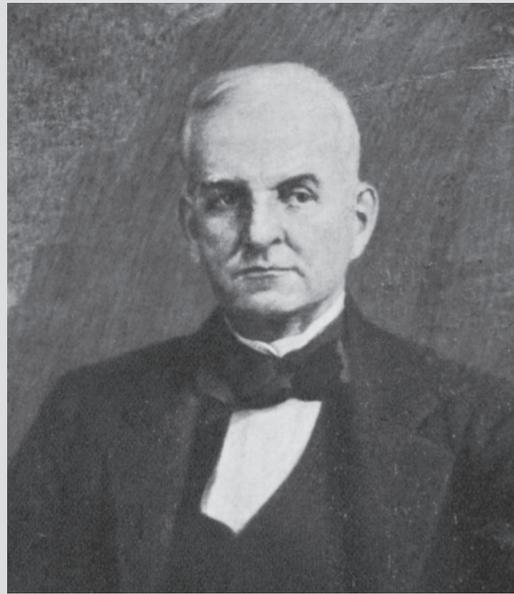
The (Almost) Lahore Railroad Line

Jack Frazer

Orange and Gordonsville are historic Virginia railroad towns, each benefitting from the 1854 Orange & Alexandria Railroad, running from Alexandria to Gordonsville through the Town of Orange.¹ Except for a war, perhaps the crossroads hamlet of Lahore would have become the county's third rail hub.

The Mason family, originally from Troy, New York, moved to Chesterfield County, Virginia, around the turn of the 19th century. Claiborne Rice Mason, the youngest of three children, was born there in 1800. Little has been discovered about his early life other than that he was uneducated, had an incredible work ethic, and was a self-taught civil engineer. In 1827 he started the Mason Syndicate, a company focusing on transportation infrastructure: canal, road, bridge, and railroad construction.²

One of Mason's early rail projects was promoting and building the Louisa Railroad, later known as the Virginia Central Railroad. It was started in 1837, and by 1849 it included 72 miles of track linking Taylorsville (now Doswell), Gordonsville and Charlottesville. It crossed three Virginia counties – Hanover, Louisa and Albemarle – and grazed Orange County at Gordonsville, becoming the first completed section of the later developed Chesapeake & Ohio system. Mason also built an extension of the Orange and Alexandria between Charlottesville and Lynchburg, connecting that line with the Virginia Central at Charlottesville.³



Claiborne Rice Mason. From the portrait reproduced in *Sons of Martha*, by Dixon Merritt.

In 1838 during his early Central Virginia period, Mason married Drusilla Winifred Boxley of Louisa. The couple had three sons: Claiborne Rice, Jr., Horatio Pleasants, and Silas Boxley. The early to mid-19th century was an era of railroad expansion, and he was very successful, accumulating assets in excess of a million dollars, exceptional wealth for that time.

In 1855 Mason moved his family to Augusta County and bought "Wheatlands," a farm near the present village of Swoope. It was one of several area properties purchased to provide winter pasturage for his draft animals (horses and mules) and for the storage of construction equipment. The Virginia Central Railroad was approaching Staunton, and the land purchases were also made with the acquisition

of right-of way a primary goal. He built a house overlooking the anticipated rail line, and his Augusta County transactions became another profitable business venture.⁴

⁴ Ibid. 11-12; Goodwin, Slides 3 and 4.



Route of the Virginia Central Railroad. From https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Virginia_Central_Map_1852_cropped.png (Part of the *Map of the Virginia Central Rail Road showing the connection between tide water Virginia, and the Ohio River at Big Sandy, Guyandotte and Point Pleasant*; made by W. Vaisz Top. Eng., available at the Library of Congress.)

¹ Walker, Frank S., Jr., *Tracks Through Time: A Railfan Tour of Orange County, Virginia*, Internet site: <http://orangecountyva.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1390> as shown on page 1 of the printed brochure.

² Goodwin, Liz, *Mason & Hanger's Timeline: A History of Mason & Hanger*, Internet Site, <https://prezi.com/njv-adphgwjr/mason-hangers-timeline/> Slides 1 & 2; and Lemert, Ann Arnold, *First You Take a Pick and Shovel: The Story of the Mason Companies* (The John Bradford Press, Lexington, KY 1979) 1-5.

³ Lemert, 7.

See *The Almost Railroad* on page 2.

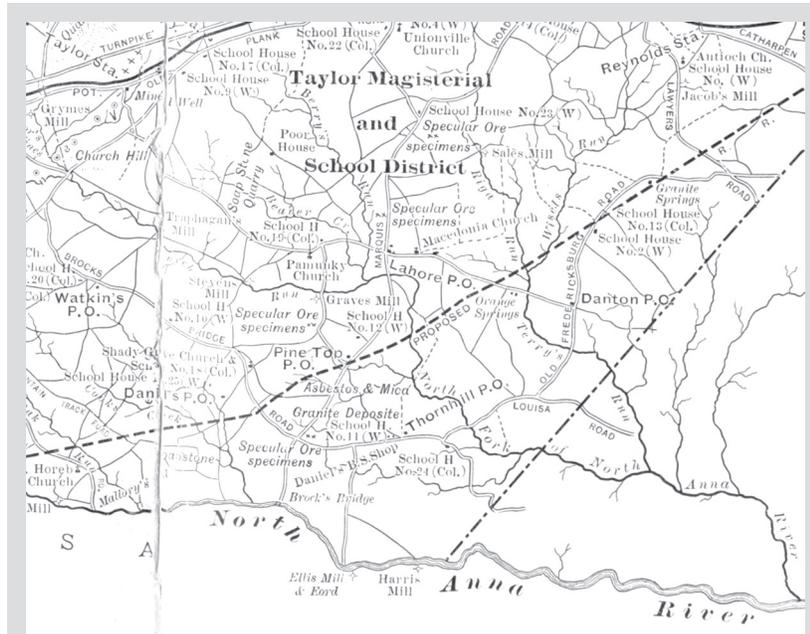
The Almost Railroad (*continued*)

Aged 61 when the Civil War started, Mason joined the Confederacy as chief engineer for General Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson’s army and supervised the construction and repair of railroads, roads and bridges. He turned down a proffered commission of Lt. Colonel preferring to be addressed as “Captain.” His expertise was acknowledged by both Jackson and Lee. The shortage of white workers due to military conscription was his primary challenge, forcing him to lease (from owners) slave labor, identified as “Pioneers,” as the main source of manpower.⁵

Mason was an entrepreneur, always looking for an opportunity to expand his business, even during a time of war. He envisioned a rail line running between Gordonsville and Fredericksburg as both locations were significant rail terminals. The line would have by-passed the Town of Orange and competed with the then unfinished Potomac, Fredericksburg & Piedmont Railroad, designed to provide rail service between Orange and Fredericksburg.

When the plan was conceived remains unknown, but in 1863, Mason purchased approximately 1,300 acres of land at the intersection of Lahore Road and today’s State Highway 522, speculating a rail line would run through it. This would be an effort to repeat the success of his 1855 purchases near Swoope. When the Lahore gamble failed due to the bleak economic conditions following the war, he again used the property as pasturage for draft animals and equipment storage. The house on it later became the residence of his son, Claiborne Rice, Jr.⁶

After the war Mason was almost bankrupt, but his expertise and ambition resulted in a business revival, and he became known as the “Napoleon of Railroads.” Among his many projects were continued work on the Baltimore & Ohio (B&O),



This section of the W.W. Scott 1907 map shows the proposed railroad as the dashed line running through the Pine Top Post Office location.

the Chesapeake & Ohio (C&O), and the Southern Pennsylvania lines.⁷

Mason’s proposed rail route through Orange County was charted as early as 1861 on an update of the Commonwealth of Virginia’s historic Nine Sheet Map, which shows the location of railroads, canals, navigation projects and public institutions. It was also present on a 1907 map in W. W. Scott’s *A History of Orange County, Virginia*. Both show the line traversing Mason’s 1863 purchase of the 1,300 acre Lahore tract. Despite the 46 year

time lapse, no additional information about his project has been found, nor was it further documented in Scott’s history.⁸

After Emancipation, Mason used convict rather than slave labor, especially in the construction of the Chesapeake & Ohio line. John Henry (the subject of the famous folk song of the same name) was a convict from Prince George, Virginia. He was leased by the Virginia Penitentiary at Richmond to the C&O Company and worked on one of Mason’s crews. Rail construction, particularly the blasting of tunnels, was dangerous work; John Henry was reportedly one of those who died during the Lewis Tunnel project on the Virginia–West Virginia state line in the early 1880s.⁹

Claiborne, Sr. died in 1885 in Augusta County, Virginia, and is buried in the Thornrose Cemetery at Staunton. His home at 324 East Beverly Street in that city is listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register.¹⁰

Two sons, Horatio and Silas, expanded their father’s business into one of the nation’s premier architectural, engineering and construction companies. However, they discontinued the

⁷ Lemert, 17-26; Goodwin, Slides 5-9.

⁸ Boye, Herman, *1861 map of the State of Virginia, updated, traced, and reduced from the original 1828 Nine Sheet Map of the State* (On file at the Virginia State Library & the United States Library of Congress); Scott, W.W., *A History of Orange County, Virginia*, (Everette Waddy Company, Richmond, VA, 1907) Preface.

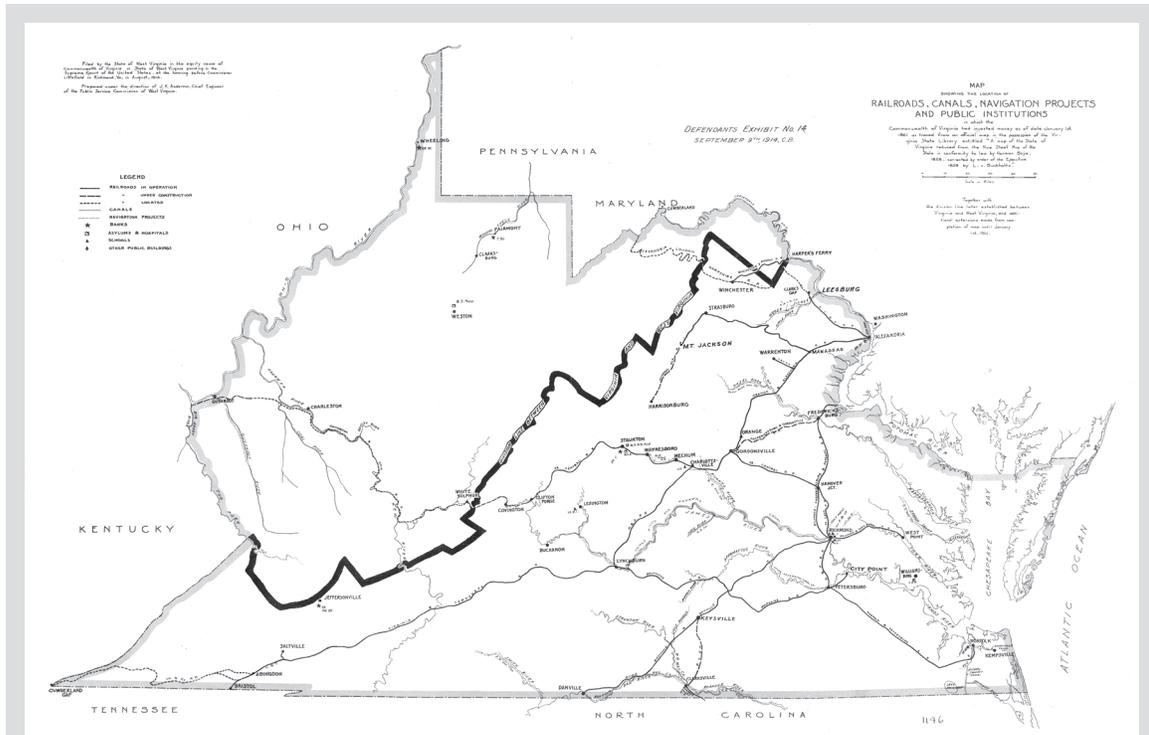
⁹ Holloway, Pippa, *Other Souths: Diversity and Difference in the U.S. South* (The University of Georgia Press, Athens, GA, 2008) 38-66.

¹⁰ Loth, Calder, *The Virginia Landmarks Register* (The University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA, 1999) 507.

⁵ Army, Thomas F., Jr., *Engineering Victory: How Technology Won the Civil War*, (Johns-Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD, 2016) 128; and Lemert, 12-16.

⁶ Miller, Ann L., *Antebellum Orange: The Pre-Civil War Homes, Public Buildings and Historic Sites of Orange County, Virginia*, (Moss Publications, Orange, Virginia, 1988) 169; and Frazer, Jack, *The Pamunkey Neighborhood 1727-2016: The Long History of a Small Place*, (Brandy Lane Publishing, Richmond, VA, 2017) 4-5 and 108-109.

The Almost Railroad (*continued*)



A map from 1914, derived from the Herman Boye 1861 Map Showing Railroads, Canals & Navigation Projects. The dotted line between Gordonsville & Fredericksburg is the proposed rail line. Map courtesy of the Library of Congress.

railroad construction portion of their business after a section of the Cumberland Valley Railroad (later part of the Penn Central line) was completed in 1916.¹¹

The Lahore property was deeded to the third son, Claiborne, Jr.¹² He was born at an undiscovered Virginia location in 1843, probably Louisa County due to his parents' connection there at that time. Like his father, he also served in the Civil War. He, however, was taken prisoner, and incarcerated at a prison in Elmira, New York. After the surrender, he studied medicine in Philadelphia, then returned to Lahore where he practiced as a highly regarded physician for many years, while concurrently farming the property. Apparently, neither he nor his two brothers ever considered reviving their father's railroad dream.¹³

In the introduction to her first cookbook, *A Taste of Country Cooking*, Freetown's esteemed southern chef Edna Lewis wrote that Claiborne, Jr., gave the land upon which that community was founded to formerly enslaved families. The Lewis family was one; the family of Robert Ellis, a coachman for the Masons before Emancipation, was another.¹⁴

Dr. Mason (Claiborne, Jr.) married Mary Moore Woolfolk, a local woman, in 1880. They remodeled and enlarged

the existing house, naming it Cloverdale, though it was locally known as "The Mason Place." Cloverdale is featured in *Antebellum Orange: The Pre-Civil War Homes, Public Buildings and Historic Sites of Orange County, Virginia*. The house and much of the land remained in the Mason family until 1951.¹⁵ The house subsequently fell into disrepair and was razed by more recent owners.

In 1907 Harry B. Hanger joined the company that was then known as Mason and Hoge, and it reorganized as Mason and Hanger, taking on major projects including New York City's Lincoln Tunnel, Washington State's Grand Coulee Dam, the United States' first atomic energy plant in Iowa, and the Nevada Nuclear Weapons Test site, also the first of its kind. Based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, it is the oldest operating, and one of the most prestigious architectural, engineering and construction companies in the United States.¹⁶

The proposed Gordonsville-Fredericksburg railroad remains a historical footnote with no rail right-of-way purchased, or track laid. As Duff Green wryly observed in an *Orange County Review* article about a failed 1921 oil drilling operation on Pamunkey Creek, "the cows are still eating the grass at Lahore." In the meantime on the nearby Cloverdale-Mason Place property, the same is true today.¹⁷

¹¹ Goodwin, Slides 9 and 13; Lemert, 21 and 34.

¹² Miller, 169.

¹³ Frazer, 108-109.

¹⁴ Lewis, Edna, *A Taste of Country Cooking* (Knopf Publishing; New York, NY, 1976) xiii; (introduction).

¹⁵ Miller, 169; Frazer, 108-109.

¹⁶ Lemert, 27-246; Goodwin, Slides 10-51.

¹⁷ Green, Robert Duff, *Orange County Review*, "It happened, but not recently" (Orange, VA, May 15, 2014) and Frazer, 134.

In Case You Missed It

Lynne G. Lewis



The Historical Society enjoyed a lovely July evening at Monteith, the home of the Passarellos.

The traditional “May meeting in June” featured the story of Margarten, a small town in the southernmost portion of The Netherlands. On September 29, 2018, the Margarten Men’s Choir performed for the citizens of Orange. The Choir was in the United States to mark the 74th anniversary of Operation Market Garden, which took place in Holland in the fall of 1944. The casualties from that operation, and from subsequent efforts to end World War II, were interred at the Netherlands American Cemetery and Memorial, a cemetery that honors more than 8,000 fallen American soldiers. Through a touching video provided by the choir, we learned the story of this remarkable town’s involvement with Operation Market Garden and the cemetery – a relationship that endures to this day. Every single soldier interred at the cemetery was adopted by someone in Margraten, even the unknown soldiers. The care of these graves is taken quite seriously and families keep the markers clean and clear, bring flowers, and in many cases have reached out to the American families of the fallen, establishing enduring relationships. This care is often passed down from generation to generation. What makes this such a remarkable situation is that it is the only American cemetery in Europe to be treated in this manner. In a remarkable turn of events, we learned on the eve of the program that one of Orange County’s own, King Dean of Barboursville, is buried in the Netherlands American Cemetery (see the story of Dean on page 6).

Although our first picnic of the year had to be cancelled because of a walloping thunderstorm, we plan to go to Maplewood Cemetery in 2020. However, the inadvertent theme of “Gordonsville” for picnics continued, where the July and August picnics were a special treat in terms of both venue and weather.

July 29th at Monteith saw high temperatures but a lovely, cooling breeze in the shade of some magnificent old trees. Ann Miller provided information on the architecture of the house, while Carla Passarello engaged the picnickers with her stories of her family’s experiences with the house and grounds since moving

there five years ago. Guests were invited to tour the property and the first floor of the home, especially to admire the faux-grained mantelpiece in the parlor.

Then, on a mild evening – for August – we moved down the road a piece, to Springfields, home of Gail Babnew and Joel Silverman. The long and distinguished history of Springfields can be traced from occupation of the land by Native Americans, through the 20th century, and now into the 21st century. The present-day land was part of the massive Nicholas Meriwether grant of the early 1700s. The current house, replacing the burned 1791 house, was built in 1895 and is a fine example of the Greek Revival style. Ms. Babnew provided a thorough and entertaining history of the home, following which the Historical Society members toured the many wonderful features, including the stabilized remains of a tower that once served as a storehouse and a church (not at the same time), the smokehouse where many of the artifacts found while tending the grounds are displayed, and the cemetery. The beautiful main floor of the house was also available for viewing.

At the end of September we were back indoors, celebrating America’s pastime – baseball. Jackie Howell, yoga instructor, award-winning author of “The Baseball Bloggers,” and baseball fan extraordinaire, had the audience laughing, cheering, and singing “Take Me Out to the Ballgame” as she related the story of three major league players from the early 20th century who had connections to Orange County. Together, they played only 160 games in the major leagues, but each one had his own story, ranging from the amusing to the sad. As promised, peanuts, popcorn and Cracker Jack were served! If you would like to sample and enjoy

See In Case You Missed It on page 5.

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In Case You Missed It (*continued*)



The Greek Revival house and rustic tower at Springfields.

Ms. Howell's blog, it can be found at www.thebaseballbloggers.com. And when you get to the proper page, click on the link (just below the top picture) for "The Virginia-Born Project," to find the stories of the three ball players Ms. Howell told us about.

In anticipation of Halloween, the October program was devoted to Superstitions, Charms & Luck. We acknowledged the season by taking a look at various superstitions, charms and other traditional beliefs for both good and bad luck. Ann Miller related the story of Orange County's only known witchcraft accusation, which seemed to be more of a dispute between two neighbor women. The case was in court for a number of years, until it finally just seems to have petered out. Ann also discussed the art of dows-

ing, and demonstrated the principal using two wire hangers that Paul Carter and John Tranver Graham hastily fashioned for the purpose. Many audience members related their experiences with both wooden divining rods and the metal rods, most agreeing that the technique does indeed work.

Lynne Lewis shared a number of food/kitchen related charms and superstitions. While almost everyone knows about throwing spilled salt over one's left shoulder, and many know about the significance of dropped utensils (a knife means a man is coming to visit; a fork means a woman visitor; and a spoon indicates a child), there were some that were new to everyone. A favorite was the superstition that after breaking an egg, one must crush the ends of the shell, lest a witch use the shell as a boat and cause havoc on the high seas. In that regard, it was news to most everyone (except one unfortunate who swears from experience that it's true) that bananas should never be taken aboard a boat. Should you do so, you will catch no fish and the seas will become turbulent.

It was an evening thoroughly enjoyed by all present.

The Pamunkey Neighborhood

Jack Frazer authored the book, *The Pamunkey Neighborhood: 1727-2016: The Long History of a Small Place*, that relates a fuller history of the area discussed in his article that headlines this issue of the *Record*. If you are interested in learning more, copies are available via the Macedonia Christian Church. All proceeds from the sales go to support the church.

Cost \$25 + shipping and handling of \$5

Payable to:

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We Need Your Email Address!

As most of you have noticed, the Historical Society has begun emailing notices of programs and events. If you haven't already done so, please give us the email address you would like to use for your notices. We assure you, you will not receive endless emails. Our intent is to use the system for program and special event notifications and cancellations and changes to same. Postings will continue on the web site, as appropriate, and if you do not use email, please contact our office (540-672-5366) and we will make alternate arrangements.

If you have already given us your email address but haven't been receiving the emails, please let us know.

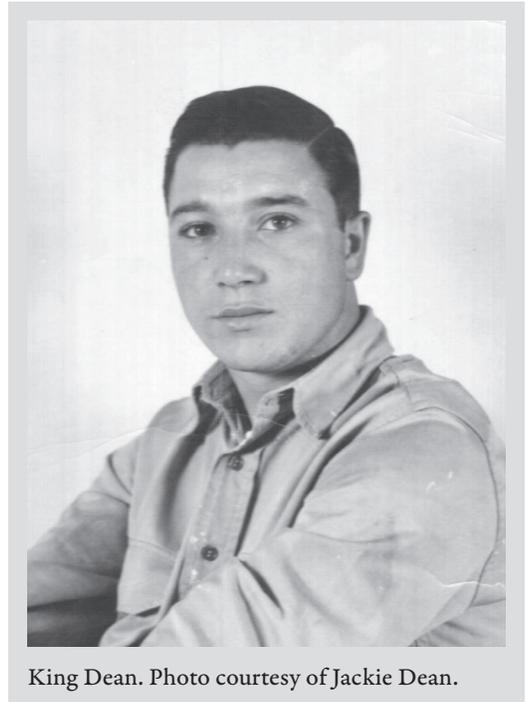
Second Lieutenant King Jackson Dean

Paul Carter

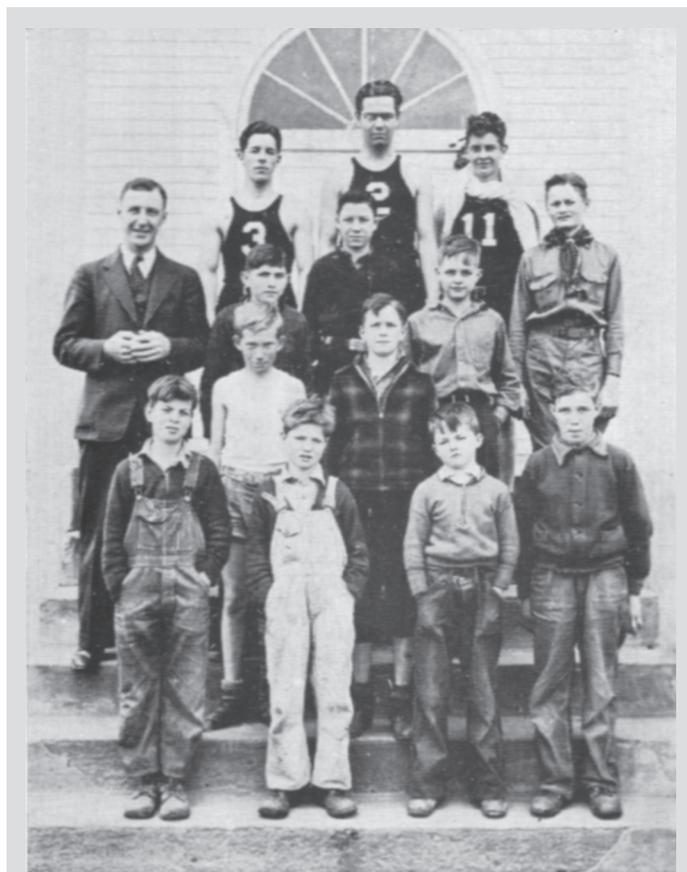
Second Lt. King Jackson Dean, son of Charles E. Dean and Rosa Haney Dean, was born 12 March 1923 in Barboursville, Virginia. King was the youngest of eight children. His last name has been known to be written with an “e” on the end in many of his military documents, but the family confirmed that no “e” should be attached. King’s father died of appendicitis when his mother was seven months pregnant with King. After his father passed away, Rosa’s father-in-law insisted that the family move in with him. It turned out to be not a good situation, and when she moved out, she removed the “e” from the family name. They lived in Charlottesville near the old Lane High School. From there King went to McGuffey Elementary School. Eventually Rosa moved the family back to Barboursville.

While he was at James Barbour High School, King was active in athletics, concentrating on boxing and baseball. James Barbour High School was located just west of the intersection of Routes 20 and 33. While most of the school building was lost to fire, today’s Four County Players occupies the remaining auditorium/cafeteria building. The stage would be roped off and other high schools would be invited to come and box. King never lost a match. He was taller than most boys his age, had a muscular build, and was left-handed. In the summer he played baseball for the Gordonsville Town Teamers.

Feeling the need to join the military after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 and the United States entry in World War II, he



King Dean. Photo courtesy of Jackie Dean.



King Dean shown with the boxing team in a James Barbour High School yearbook. King is in the center of the second row from the top. Photo courtesy of John Colvin.

enlisted in the Army Air Corps on 22 December 1941 in Richmond, Virginia. Since this was during his senior year at Barbour High, the school officially gave him a diploma of graduation. He did his basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia, and then was sent to Duncan Air Field, San Antonio, Texas, for further training. He spent 18 months in the South Pacific with the 13th Army Air Force rising to the rank of First Sergeant. This rank is quite a feat for someone so young. In present day and times it probably would take a soldier 12 to 15 years to acquire this rank. The Army recognized the leadership ability in this young man, and when he returned to the States, he was sent to Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning.

King reluctantly married his girlfriend, Florence Duke of Gordonsville, on 26 August 1944 at Harmony Church, Fort Benning, GA. The ceremony was performed by an army chaplain. Because he knew that as soon as he graduated from OCS he would be sent back to the war, it was only after much persistence from Florence that he got married. They spent his furlough at the home of Florence’s parents in Gordonsville before he left for his new duty station at Camp Pickett, VA

King arrived in Germany in December 1944 as a Second Lieutenant platoon leader of K Company, 3rd Battalion, 335th Infantry Regiment, 84th Division. After only four months in country, he was killed in action on 7 April 1945. His platoon was ambushed while trying to outflank a German unit that was defending Eisbergen from capture. The day before, K Company had crossed the Weser River during the Central Europe Cam-

See King Dean on page 7.

King Dean (*continued*)



King Dean in his army uniform. Photo courtesy of Jackie Dean.

paign and was pressuring the Germans. Eight of King's men were also killed and several were wounded in the same incident.

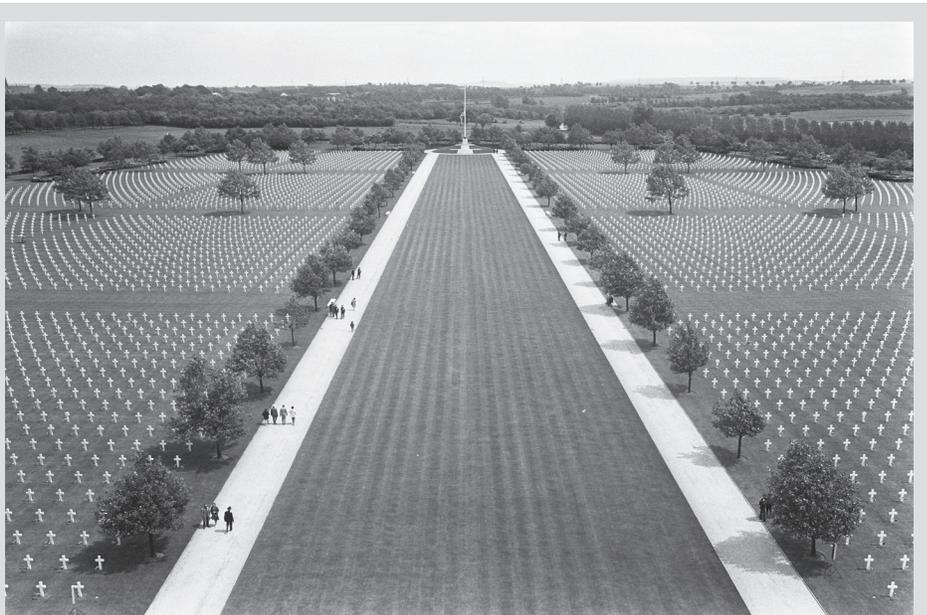
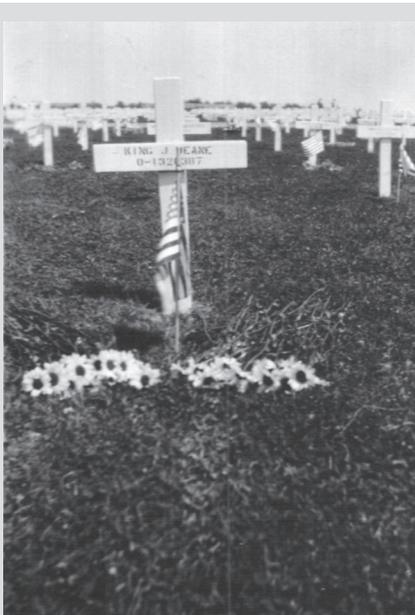
He was buried in a temporary plot with a simple wooden cross with only his name and serial number at the Netherlands American Cemetery at Margraten, Netherlands, and was finally moved to a permanent plot with a stone cross at Margraten

where his body still lies. Margraten Cemetery is unique in that local Dutch families adopted a grave plot (or plots) to care for, and that 'duty' is often passed down from generation to generation. The Dutch in Margraten and the surrounding area have kept the memory of World War II alive and feel indebted to the Americans for freeing them from the Germans. It was shortly before our June 5, 2019 Historical Society program about the Margraten cemetery that we learned that a County soldier was buried there. [For details on the program, see page 4.]

King Dean was posthumously awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action. His other awards were two Purple Hearts and a Combat Infantryman's Badge. A memorial service was held at Barboursville Baptist Church where Florence was awarded his medals. She later moved to Charlottesville and remarried. King never changed his military life insurance beneficiary to his new bride. When he died his mother was still listed. She selected the lifetime payout option and received \$75 per month for the rest of her life. She lived until she was 98. That monthly check was a reminder of the death of her loving son. She grieved every day for him and had the opportunity to visit and place flowers on his grave at Margraten.

While King was in Germany he also had a brother, Newton, in the Navy and a brother, Charles, in the Pacific with the First Marine Division. Both brothers survived the war.

Special thanks are owed to several people who helped with this article and the accompanying illustrations. King Dean's nephew, Jackie Dean, and his niece, Paddie Valentine provided much of the information about King. Pictures were provided by Charlie Clatterbuck, Jackie Dean and John Colvin.



The photo at left shows King Dean's temporary grave at Margraten, Netherlands. Photo courtesy of Jackie Dean. The photo at right shows the Netherlands American Cemetery at Margraten on Memorial Day, May 30, 1969. Photo by Eric Koch / Anefo, courtesy of the Dutch National Archives (<https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/fotocollectie/ab6c1246-d0b4-102d-bcf8-003048976d84>).

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The County of Illinois

A correspondent sends us a clipping from a Chicago paper which appeared under the heading, "Dates to Remember" in the history of Chicago. It read as follows:

December 9, 1778. The Legislature of the State of Virginia created the "County of Illinois in the State of Virginia," which included the future city of Chicago, as well as a part of Wisconsin and Michigan and the entire states of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois.

Not included in the note above is the fact that the area originally set and described was in Orange County, Virginia.

In 2018, an eagle-eyed Ross Hunter, while doing some unrelated research, unearthed this clipping from the October 7, 1949 issue of *The Orange Review*. As Frank Walker noted, it's interesting that the Illinois territory wasn't formed until almost the end of the Revolution. He added that Lawrence Washington (1718-1752), older half-brother of George Washington, was one of the charter founders of the Ohio Company of Virginia back in the 1740s, so development in that region had to be well underway before the Revolution. The British had a titular "governor" (Lt. Governor Henry Hamilton) out there. He was captured at Vincennes (Indiana) by George Rogers Clark.

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We invite you to join the Orange County Historical Society. Please provide your name and contact information as you wish it to appear in our records and select the appropriate dues level. Mail the completed form, along with your dues payment to The Orange County Historical Society (OCHS), to 130 Caroline Street, Orange, VA 22960.

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