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Before the "Knights": Some Early Piedmont Explorations Towards the Blue Ridge Prior to the Spotswood Expedition

Ann L. Miller

The Late 17th Century: Cadwallader Jones, His Marvelous Map, and the "hunters in the Woods"

Cadwallader Jones was a landholder, county official, and Indian trader who had holdings both along the Rappahannock River and in what was then western Stafford (later Fairfax) County. In 1678 he apparently was the leader of a party of Virginia rangers, and by 1679 he was in command of the fort below the falls of the Rappahannock, near the site of modern Fredericksburg. (Rangers, who literally did "range" through the unsettled Piedmont of the time, were small groups of men who patrolled and explored the Virginia frontier.)

A letter written by Jones in early 1682 gives an idea of the extent of his widespread Indian trading network. By a letter dated "February 2, 1681/2" (this date, under the Old Style [Julian] calendar, is February 13, 1682 under the Gregorian calendar used today), Jones asked Lord Baltimore for permission for the bearer of the letter, Thomas Owsley, to trade for Jones "at Nanticoke only, for Roanoke and Peake." Jones explained that "I have an inland trade about four hundred miles from here S.S.W. This year the Indians will need Roanoke and I have a considerable trade with them." (Roanoke and Peake were the shell beads used extensively as trading currency.)[1]

In addition to his trading, at various times in the period 1677-1686, but particularly in summer 1682, Jones ranged through the Great Fork of the Rappahannock and generally through the area between the Rapidan and the Rappahannock and the Blue Ridge Mountains—as well as, on at least one occasion—beyond. In 1682 (and possibly at other times) he was accompanied by John Taliaferro, a son of the Robert Taliaferro whose house Lederer had left from in 1670.[2] Although exact documentation is not known to survive, there is a strong possibility that Cadwallader Jones had married Robert Taliaferro's widow Catherine, and by the early 1680s was John Taliaferro's stepfather as well as his companion in exploration.[3]

The region explored by Cadwallader Jones and John Taliaferro included the area near the Blue Ridge where the two rivers had their origins—what Taliaferro later called "the first Heads or Springs of the Two Branches of Rappahannock." Jones called the area the "Scuvion hills" and the "Vaile called Scuvion" in his subsequent [1699] essay and map detailing their travels.[4]

By 1684 Cadwallader Jones became sheriff of (Old) Rappahannock County, but at the same time was falling into serious financial difficulties. Despite two terms as sheriff (which included the then-lucrative duty of collecting county taxes), Jones's financial woes increased. By the mid-1680s, between what was probably a combination of overextending himself in his Indian trading, poor money management, a fairly lavish lifestyle and expenditures, and increasing debts to creditors (and defaulting on these), he had badly overextended his credit. He fell into insolvency and by the end of the decade he had fled to England. Once there, he exhibited a considerable talent for landing on his feet, and managed to get himself commissioned Governor of the Bahama Islands. He arrived there in June 1690 for what proved to be a stormy tenure.[5]

By late 1698 or early 1699, Jones was back in Virginia. From Yorktown he sent an essay and map detailing his earlier explorations to then-Governor Francis Nicholson. Titled "An Essay Lovissiania and Virginia Improved," the text not only described the areas depicted on the map, but also included some proposals for expanding trade and British influence. Following a not-uncommon printing and writing convention of the era, in

[1] Fairfax Harrison, "Western Explorations in Virginia Between Lederer and Spotswood" *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 30 (1922), pp. 326-327.

[2] Fairfax Harrison, *Landmarks of Old Prince William* (reprt. Baltimore: Gateway Press for the Prince William County Historical Commission, 1987), p. 612. For more information about Lederer, see Part I of this article, "The 17th Century: Smith and Lederer," in Orange County Historical Society *Record*, Vol. 48, No. 1 (Spring 2017), pp. 1-2.

[3] For a detailed examination of the evidence for this marriage, and the Taliaferro family relationships, see Henry G. Taliaferro, "Who Was Catherine, the Wife of Colonel Cadwallader Jones of Virginia?" *The Virginia Genealogist*, Vol. 38, No. 3 (1994), pp. 163-189.

[4] Fairfax Harrison, "Western Explorations in Virginia Between Lederer and Spotswood," pp. 327, 333.

[5] Henry G. Taliaferro, "Who Was Catherine, the Wife of Colonel Cadwallader Jones of Virginia?" pp. 176-184.

See **Before the "Knights"** *on page 2.*

Before the "Knights" *(continued)*

Jones's work, "u" and "v" were both rendered as a "v"; the territory referred to was the great interior section of the continent called Louisiana by the French. (See map on page 3.)

Although crudely drawn, many areas on Jones's map can be identified. The map indicates that they crossed the Blue Ridge (possibly via Chester's Gap) and camped in the Shenandoah Valley. Jones's accompanying essay indicated that they were seeking, like so many others, the Northwest Passage. The information on the more remote areas ("Lovissiana" and the Great Lakes) was apparently taken from other sources. (At least one specific reference, Father Louis Hennepin, a French Franciscan friar who had published several accounts of "Louisiane" and related areas between 1683 and 1698, is cited in Jones's essay and map.) On the map, many of the distances for the outlying areas are greatly compressed: the marginal areas on Jones's map include references to "Illonoise" and Huron Indians, "Lake Illonoise," "Lake Huron," "Lake Erie," "The Lake Erie Falls called Niagara" and other remote Indian tribes and places. In the essay, Jones stated confidently, "From our Cawcasean Mountains [the Blue Ridge], w^{ch} is now to me well Known, Cannot rationally be above one hundred miles into this Lovissiana Country." Along with references to—and approximate locations of—the "Hohio River" and "Meschasipie," was a hopeful notation that a route from the head of the latter led shortly "to Japan & China."[6]

The rivers of the Virginia Tidewater, and their tributary sources from the Piedmont, are all noted and—particularly given the early time period and wilderness nature of the region—are recognizably sited on Jones's map. The "Potomack," "Rappahanock," "mattopony," "Pamunkey," James (various branches), "Appamattocks" and "Occonachy" all appear on the map.

Jones also notes the Southwest Mountains in his essay. A site on his map marked "m^{n}. House" locates the Taliaferro plantation "The Mount" or "Taliaferro's Mount" near Port Royal in what is now Caroline County. It was reportedly one of the highest points in the area, and Jones's essay recommended that for public safety, and to spread alarms concerning "any Indians Invadeing Us" a beacon of "Lightwood hors'd upon a pol[e] and fir'd" if set on the "No[rth]most Poynt of those hills that arise from the head of the Pamunkey Branches [i.e., on the Southwest Mountains in Orange County] "would bee well Seen at Esq^{r} Corbyns Plantation two miles from y^{e} Mounte Howse, the like poll at Esq^{r} Corbyn would answer, and the Country have a Speedy and necessary Alarum."[7]

Jones's map refers to the Blue Ridge by different names in different areas. (The map shows "Cawcasus," "Taweasus," "Potomack Mountains," "James River Mountains" and "Occonachie" as a first range, and for a second range "Appelation Mountains but indeed they are but Potomack James River Mountaines").

On his map, Jones's campsites are noted by crosses—with at least one located along the Shenandoah River, an indication that Jones's explorations had extended some distance into the Shenandoah Valley. From the location of the nearby mountain passage shown on the map, it appears likely that Jones reached the Valley via Chester's Gap. The map also shows what may be a second passage through the Blue Ridge, to the south of the first passage, and, from its location relative to the northern tributary of the James River (i.e., the Rivanna), this section of the map may indicate Swift Run Gap. The term "James River Mountains" on Jones's map for a section of the Blue Ridge is particularly interesting because the term survived in the Orange County court records into the early 1740s for the region that is now western Greene County.[8]

In his *Landmarks of Old Prince William*, the early 20th-century historian Fairfax Harrison made perhaps the ultimate judgement on Jones's map in the context of early Virginia exploration: "The more one studies this map, the more one is persuaded that if Spotswood did not have a copy of it in his possession in 1716, he had the tradition of it; and that when he crossed the Blue Ridge he was following in Jones' footsteps, and seeking that worthy's road to the Lakes."[9]

A 1706 deposition by John Taliaferro, made as part of the Fairfax land suits, recalled of the 1682 expedition: "we traviled up the South river [i.e., the Rapidan] till we came to sev^{ll} [several] small mountains & so to the North River [i.e., the Rappahannock]. In our travills we were sev^{ll} times on the North River and went up the South River to the great mountains where we discovered the South River's Springs to head into the Mountains. All our Judgmts was the South river to be the bigest and were inform'd so by all the Indians y^{t} [that] was our Pilotts; and saw an Indian y^{t} made a periauger [canoe] at the mountain and brought her down to the Garison with Skins and venison, where the said Jones Commanded."[10]

Jones's essay touches on aspects of Indian trade as well as an idea that presages later expeditions—that of the participants

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[6] Fairfax Harrison, "Western Explorations in Virginia Between Lederer and Spotswood," pp. 329-333, 336. Harrison notes that estimates of the veracity of Fr. Hennepin's travel accounts vary greatly, with Harrison himself stating that "On all the evidence the worthy father seems to have been a cheerful liar."

[7] Henry Taliaferro, "Who Was Catherine, the Wife of Colonel Cadwallader Jones of Virginia?" p. 174. Fairfax Harrison, "Western Explorations in Virginia Between Lederer and Spotswood," pp. 332-333. The Mount was near the present village of Port Royal.

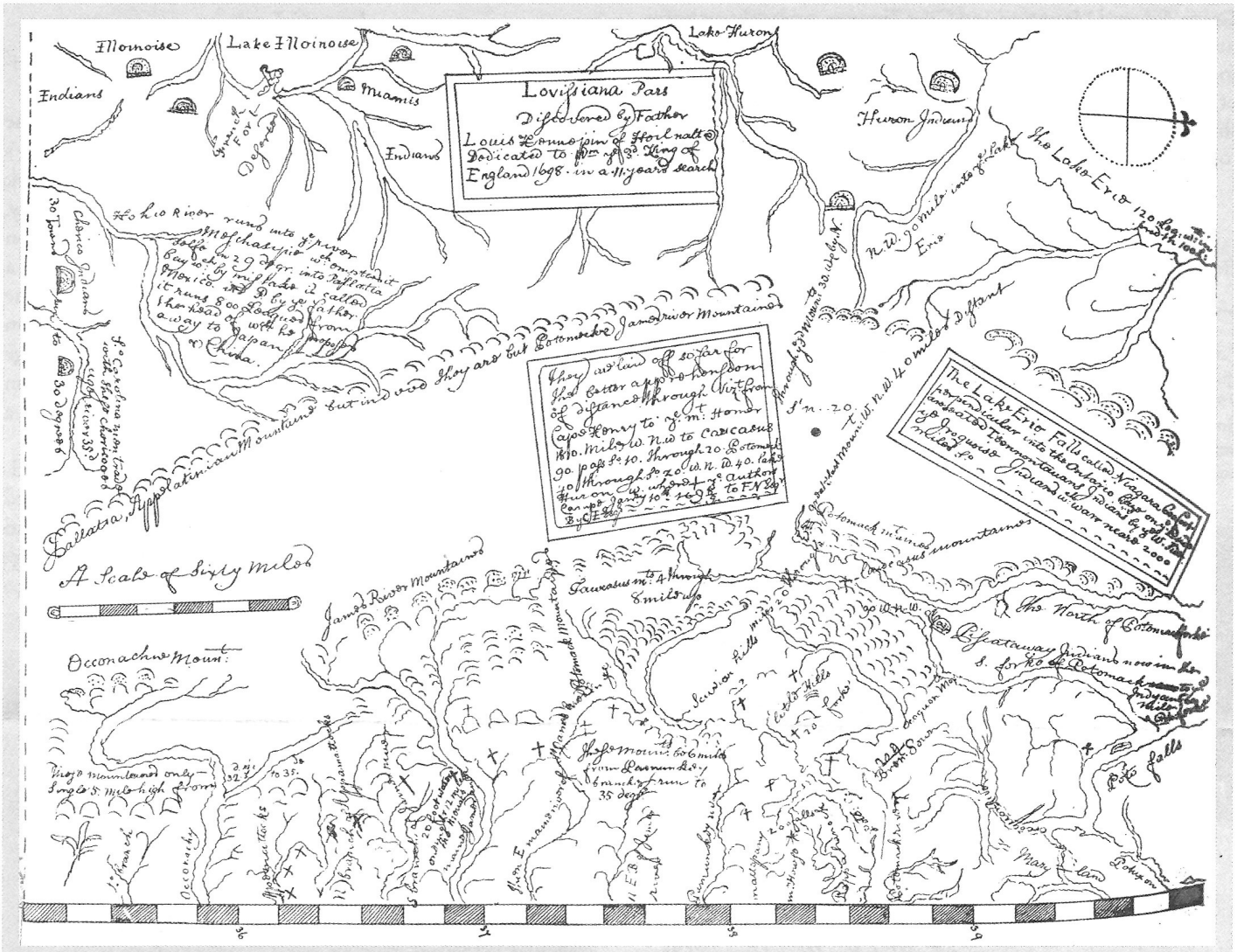
[8] See Orange County Order Book 1, p. 36, 16 Sept. 1735; Orange County Order Book 1, p. 158, 23 April 1737; Orange County Order Book 2, p. 400, 25 June 1741.

[9] Fairfax Harrison, *Landmarks of Old Prince William*, p. 612.

[10] Fairfax Harrison, *Landmarks of Old Prince William*, p. 28. The purpose of the suit was to try to determine which of the branches of the river (i.e., the Rappahannock or the Rapidan) was the larger stream, and therefore the boundary of the Fairfax Proprietary.

See **Before the "Knights"** *on page 3.*

Before the "Knights" *(continued)*



Cadwallader Jones's map. Source: Fairfax Harrison, "Western Explorations in Virginia Between Lederer and Spotswood" *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 30 (1922).

("Gentlemen adventurers") in exploration financing the operation by buying shares, and then profiting from future trading activities. He noted: "I humbly Conceive Ten adventurers wth thirty pounds a Share would answer to Know the Certaintie whither our mountaines be passsable: that dun, there is no doubt but the Trade wou'd be Secured." Jones then continues that additional "adventurers" could be added, at higher costs per share (with payments to reimburse the "first adventur^{rs}") as things proceeded (i.e., towards the Northwest Passage).

Cadwallader Jones apparently died soon after presenting his Essay and map to Governor Nicholson. Although his idea of a process involving private financing to encourage westward expeditions was not put into law during Jones's lifetime, a subsequent statute (1705) did allow for such a procedure. This will be noted in more detail in the next part of this series.

The "hunters in the Woods" (Late 17th Century/Early 18th Century)

Other early explorations in the Piedmont were made by those who left neither essays nor maps—and in most cases, whose names do not survive. In addition to specific explorations such as the journeys by Lederer and Jones, the late 17th-century and early 18th-century Piedmont apparently saw numerous, although ill-documented, forays by Europeans. These men were not only explorers, rangers, and Indian traders, but also included hunters skilled in wilderness survival. Many of the hunters apparently made multiple trips through the Piedmont, and became quite familiar with the region. In another deposition, made in September 1706 as part of the Fairfax land suits, three hunters, Thomas

See **Before the "Knights"** *on page 4.*

Before the "Knights" *(continued)*

Gregg, Edward Mountjoy, and Giles Traverse, probably spoke for numbers of their contemporaries when they noted: ". . .we have for these several years been hunters in the Woods above the falls of Rappahannock River [and] have frequently travelled up both the Northern and Southern branches or Main Streams above the fork of the said River."[11]

Next Newsletter:

Part III: James Taylor and John Baylor Plan an Expedition, 1705

[11] The quote is taken from Hunter Branson McKay, Jr., ed., *Fairfax Land Suits* (Belmont, Mass., pvt. print. for the author, 1951), p. 1670; quoted in Eugene M. Scheel, *Culpeper: A Virginia County's History Through 1920* (Culpeper, Va.: Green Publishers, Inc. for the Culpeper Historical Society, 1982), p. 14. Gregg, Mountjoy, and Traverse also worked with the surveying party trying to determine the Fairfax proprietary boundary; see McKay, *Fairfax Land Suits*, pp. 1669-1670, and Scheel, *Culpeper*, p. 16.

Historical Society Newsletters Indexed!

Jayne Blair has done it again! She recently announced that she had finished making an index for all our Historical Society newsletters – from Volume 1, No. 1 (1971) to Vol. 48, No. 1 (2017). The index has been put in a notebook and placed on our research assistant's desk. Should you wish to see it, just ask Jayne, Jean McGann or Ruth Mallory Long. To quote Jayne, "Yea!!"

Upcoming Programs

On November 27, we will look back at downtown Orange through the years – via postcards. *Wish You Were Here* will illustrate the evolution of Main Street and surrounding areas within the Town of Orange.

Our Annual Meeting in January, to be held at the American Legion Hall in Orange, will include a brief presentation about support activities of Orange County citizens during World War I.

Germanna Foundation Conference

On July 15, Jayne Blair, Ann Miller and Lynne Lewis participated in the 60th annual Germanna Foundation Conference and Reunion. This year's event marked the 300th anniversary of the Second Germanna Colony. The three staffed a table in the Vendors Hall and as a result sold quite a number of our publications, saw many old friends, and made several new ones.

The Saturday Historical and Genealogical Conference was held at Germanna Community College Daniel Technology Center in Culpeper. Presentations focused on recent research projects, including an update on the summer's archaeology project searching for Fort Germanna.

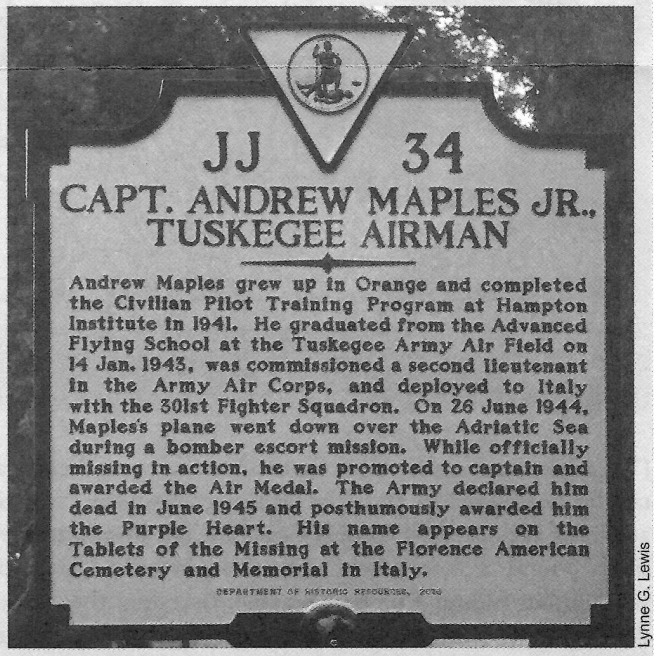
Season of the Signs

Lynne G. Lewis

It seems like there has been a sudden blossoming of historical highway markers in our area.

The first marker to be unveiled this year was the one dedicated to Captain Andrew Maples, Jr., Orange County's own Tuskegee Airman. On Saturday, June 24, at Taylor Park in Orange, about 100 people attended a lovely ceremony. The Orange Community Band played, the American Legion trooped the colors, and many speakers spoke, including a Tuskegee historian who came all the way from Alabama. The dedication ended with everyone walking to the sign's location for an unveiling, and then there was a flyover with two vintage World War II airplanes. The planes flew over twice, once in tandem and once doing a "missing man" formation. It was a very well done, meaningful ceremony.

Many members of the Maples family were present, including two of his sisters. Mrs. Jane Ware of Orange spearheaded the sign project and ceremony. Without her perseverance and dedication to the project, this important addition to Orange County's historical highway markers would not have come to fruition.



The Maples historic highway marker, located on the corner of S. Madison Road and W. Church Street.

On September 30, a highway marker in honor of Oliver Dinwiddie Tucker was dedicated in Radiant, Virginia, within sight of Mr. Tucker's mausoleum. You may recall that in the Fall 2016 issue of the *Record*, there was an article delineating Mr. Tucker's many accomplishments as a Major, Minor and

See **Signs** *on page 5.*

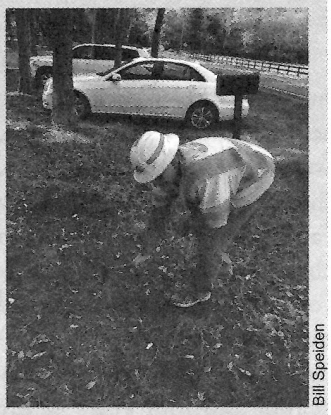
Signs *(continued)*

International League baseball player, as an important personage in Madison County, and as an Orange County business owner. Robert Lookabill, who authored that piece, went on to successfully shepherd the application for a marker through the process. The event was well-attended by family, friends, and baseball fans.

Lynne G. Lewis

Frank and Bernice Walker look on as the Oliver Dinwiddie Tucker highway marker is unveiled. Friends and numerous relatives of Mr. Tucker attended the dedication. Mr. Tucker's white mausoleum can be seen in the far upper right.

The most recent highway marker project, sponsored by the Orange County Historical Society and spearheaded by board member Bill Speiden, was initiated to call attention to the Madison-Barbour Rural Historic District, which encompasses 32,520 acres of western Orange County and is the largest contiguous historic district in the Commonwealth. The Historical Society received notice on September 22nd that the two markers we requested were approved.



Bill Speiden

Eddie Estes, from the Culpeper District Traffic Engineering Division, marks the location for the Madison-Barbour Rural Historic District marker beside Route 33.

On Monday afternoon, October 16, Speiden along with Board members Lynne Lewis, Linda Carlton, and Hilarie Hicks met with Eddie Estes, the Senior Engineer Technician from the Culpeper District Traffic Engineering Division, to obtain approval for the two locations chosen for the signs. One marker will be placed on Route 20 in the vicinity of the train station at Montpelier and one on Route 33 about two miles west of the Gordonsville traffic circle. We plan to hold a Spring 2018 dedication of the two markers and hope many of you will be able to attend.

Madison-Barbour Rural Historic District Highway Markers

The two Madison-Barbour Rural Historic District markers sponsored by the Historical Society this year will have slightly different text, which allows us to include a little more information than we could otherwise.

Marker near the Montpelier Train Station

Madison-Barbour Rural Historic District

This rural historic district encompasses 50 square miles of the Piedmont. Native Americans lived here for more than 12,000 years before settlers of European descent, drawn to the fertile soil, arrived early in the 1700s. Several notable houses, including Montpelier and Barboursville, were built by the mid-1800s. Communities such as Tibbstown were established by emancipated African Americans, and Somerset emerged to serve local farmers. The architectural styles of the district's more than 700 buildings range from Georgian to Colonial Revival to simple vernacular, reflecting a broad socioeconomic spectrum. Old Blue Run Baptist Church (ca. 1769) is the oldest of several churches.

Marker between Gordonsville & Barboursville

Madison-Barbour Rural Historic District

The Madison-Barbour Rural Historic District, encompassing 32,520 acres of the Piedmont, has been inhabited for more than 12,000 years and contains almost 200 identified prehistoric archaeological sites. Nearby was the likely location of Stegara, a ca. 1600 Siouan-speaking Manahoac village on the Rapidan River. The rich soil that drew colonists by the 1720s is well suited for diversified agriculture, including grains, vineyards, livestock, and forestry. This land, and the free and enslaved laborers who cultivated it, fostered the prosperity of families such as the Madisons and Barbours, who contributed state and national leaders to the fledgling United States.

William Randolph Clatterbuck

Paul Carter

William Randolph Clatterbuck, son of Herbert Earl Clatterbuck and Freta Mae Wash, was born on September 6, 1923, in Barboursville, Virginia. The family home was located on the old Route 20 near the railroad tracks. It has since burned down. Billy (as he was known) had seven years of elementary school and four years at the James Barbour High School, graduating in 1941 – the last high school class in Barboursville. At that time, there was no eighth grade.

William R. Clatterbuck. Photo courtesy of Charlie Clatterbuck.

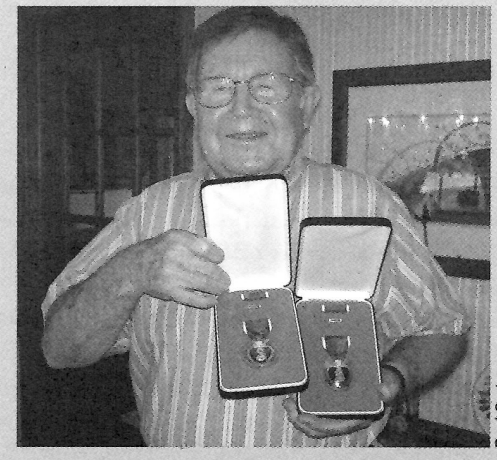
In his teen years, he spent most of his time earning money for the family by cutting pulpwood. It was a tough job for a young man, but he was always known to be a perfectionist. Every cut had to be perfect – even for pulpwood. He then served six months at a CCC camp in Stanley, Virginia, working on the Skyline Drive. All the money he made there was sent back to his parents. Billy decided to return to Orange County and took a job at Snead and Company riveting on no less than the pontoon boats that Snead was known for throughout World War II.

Billy was drafted into the Army on February 23, 1943. He had two other brothers who served in the military, but he was the only one drafted. He had his basic training at Camp Wheeler, Georgia, until May 14, 1943. He was promoted to Private First Class on December 5, 1943, and landed in Casablanca, Africa, as a member of the 9th Infantry Division. The 9th Division was subsequently sent to Sicily and then to Italy. While in Italy, Billy contracted malaria and had only recovered for one week before he was sent to England in December 1943 to be a part of the D-Day invasion in Normandy on June 6, 1944. By this time the 9th Division was known as a seasoned outfit, ready to take on the invasion without hesitation. While in France he was wounded and eventually died of his wounds on Sunday, June 18, 1944.

It wasn't until August 1944 that the family got word that Billy had died. There had been no letters from Billy since the D-Day invasion at Normandy. A worker from Virginia Power just happened to be in the telegraph office when the wire came in and he brought it to the family.

After the war a soldier named Smith, a friend of Billy's from Louisa County, came to see the family and told them that Billy had died of a friendly fire incident in which the 8th Air Force had mistakenly dropped bombs on U.S. troops and killed 1,000 soldiers, a very significant incident. This author began to investigate the history from the 8th Air Force and 9th Division and found that no such bombing took place. There is record of a friendly fire accident that occurred on July 25, 1944, in France, in which 350 soldiers were killed, but no incidents on June 18, 1944. For 70 years the family believed this friendly fire incident and only after all this time did it prove to be false.

In September 1944, the family received a letter from a friend of Billy's who had borrowed two dollars from him before the D-Day invasion. It read: For the past year I have had the honor of knowing and servicing in the army with your son. I am writing this short note with the hopes that everything is going along fine in the home front and this note find you and your family in the best of health. I am enclosing two dollars with the hopes that you will accept it because I loaned it from your son shortly before the invasion of France. Please accept this money.



Charlie Clatterbuck, Billy's brother, holding the two purple hearts that were finally awarded to Billy.

See **Clatterbuck** *on page 7.*

Clatterbuck *(continued)*

It was signed M. C. Anderson. Later the family found out that Mr. Anderson was practically illiterate and had someone else write the letter for him. This certainly was the greatest generation.

Billy's remains were buried in the Normandy American Cemetery in Colleville-sur-Mer, France. The cemetery is located on a bluff overlooking Omaha Beach and the English Channel and covers 172 acres, where 9,387 soldiers are buried and 1,557 are listed as Missing in Action. After the war ended, the family had the option of bringing his remains back to Orange, but declined. They knew at that time soldiers were buried in mass graves, and it would not be certain that the remains received would be Billy's.

Billy received two Purple Hearts, the Combat Infantryman Badge, the European/African Medal, a Good Conduct Medal, a World War II Medal, and the Bronze Star. The family never received any of these medals until many years afterwards when they pressured the U.S. Army to provide them.

In Case You Missed It: Program Updates

Lynne G. Lewis

Over the past several months we have had some fine programs and fun picnics. In April, Terry Barkley, author of *Eve's Wail*, discussed his book about the 1745 trial and execution of Eve, an enslaved woman. Among the topics discussed were the laws and criminal punishments of the era, and Mr. Barkley's search for the site of Eve's execution.

On June 5, Carolyn Jones Elstner entertained our members and guests with the story of Ellwood through its more than two centuries of existence. Carolyn, along with her co-author, Katherine Porter Clark, wrote *Dear Old Ellwood*, recounting the stories of those who called Ellwood home and the events that help to make up the life of this historic landmark on the Orange-Spotsylvania county line.

Our first summer picnic, on June 26, took place in the lovely setting of Oak Grove Farm, the home of Suzanne "Heidi" McMurran. There our members were treated to the excellent music of the group Evergreen Shade, playing authentic tunes from the 19th century. While they were listening and enjoying their picnic suppers, the wonderful smells of food cooking over an open fire wafted across the lawn. A very informative overview of open hearth cooking and food preservation was presented, and afterwards picnickers could sample the food, including a delicious stew and delightful peach pie.

Historical Society members and friends met at Taylor Park in Orange to attend our July picnic and learn more about Capt. Andrew Maples, Jr., Tuskegee Airman. Board members presented a biography of Capt. Maples. The final portion, relating his military career, was presented by Dick Durphy, veteran of the U. S. Air Force. This was followed by Jane Ware telling the story of how the marker came into being and the role that many played in bringing it to fruition, although Mrs. Ware was too modest to mention that she was instrumental in this endeavor. Many then walked to the adjoining marker site and were surprised to learn that the Maples family home had been located just a short distance from that spot.

The final picnic of the season was held on August 28 at the home of John Tranver and Rose Graham and featured a selection of Tranver's extensive railroad memorabilia collection. He explained several of the more unusual or unfamiliar items and invited the members to view his exhibit and ask questions. It was a most pleasant and informative way to end our summer season.

On September 25, the historical documentary *Someday* was presented to a standing-room-only crowd at the Historical Society's Research Center. Produced by Phil Audibert and Ross Hunter (AHHA Productions), *Someday* tells the story of school integration in Orange County, beginning with the creation of the first African-American schools in the late 19th century to full integration in the later 20th century – a journey of almost 100 years. Framed around the question of "why" – why did school desegregation in Orange County go as smoothly as it did – students, parents, teachers, school administrators, and county officials were interviewed to learn their perspective on this process. This admirably crafted work was deeply appreciated by all in attendance. Copies of the DVD are available for purchase at the Research Center and at The Arts Center In Orange.

Evergreen Shade plays for the picnickers at Oak Grove in June.

The Fredericksburg and Wilderness Telephone Company

Patrick Sullivan

THE FREDERICKSBURG AND Wilderness Telephone Company had its beginnings in the vision of two unlikely collaborators—a Scottish immigrant and a country doctor who lived in the Wilderness of Spotsylvania County. The company they helped incorporate in 1908 survived as a family-run enterprise for almost sixty years.

Mungo William Thorburn, ca 1880.

Mungo William Thorburn was born in Selkirk, Scotland, on October 4, 1857. In 1878, he immigrated with his family to Canada. Thorburn remained there for about eight years and then, having tired of the harsh winters, he returned to Scotland. But soon he made the transatlantic voyage again, this time to America. He settled for a time in Pennsylvania where he worked as a groom. He first married an Ontarian woman, Emma Louise Tremain, on January 20, 1890. They lived in New Castle, Delaware, where Emma was delivered of a stillborn son in February 1891. She died six weeks later.

Thorburn next married Mary Douglas in Delaware on April 25, 1892. The Thorburns had two daughters, Katherine (born 1893) and Isabella (born 1896). Mary Douglas Thorburn died in Baltimore County, Maryland, shortly after the birth of their second daughter.

By this time, Thorburn had made the acquaintance of a gentleman from Spotsylvania, who gave him "glowing accounts of this part of the country." Thorburn moved to Spotsylvania with his two daughters in 1896. On April 6 of that year, he bought a 185-acre farm at the intersection of Old Plank and Catharpin roads. This place, called "Clifton," had been the home of Xanthus Xuthus Chartters until his death in 1893. For many years, X. X. Chartters had been active in the Grange movement, first in Spotsylvania and then on the executive board of the National Grange. On the corner of his property still stood the building where Chartters conducted the organization's meetings. Thorburn later converted the building to a purpose suited to the needs of his growing family. It became the Grange School, attended by his children, the children of Arthur Lynn Johnson (who lived just across Catharpin Road) and a few others. (See photo on page 8.) Thorburn's mother, widowed since 1884, came to Spotsylvania from Canada and helped to care for her son's family until her death in 1909.

Once settled in Spotsylvania, Thorburn set to work making improvements to his derelict farm. He installed drainage systems in each of his fields as they came into corn rotation. During his first years at Clifton, Thorburn was obliged to buy feed for his stock. But by 1900, crop production had improved to the point that he was feeding his own stock, and was selling surplus alfalfa, clover hay and other produce from his farm.

In a ceremony held at "Mount Pleasant," the home of the bride's mother in Spotsylvania, Mungo William Thorburn married Abbie Moore Morrison on May 10, 1904. The Thorburns would have three sons together. The second of these, Thomas Emond "Tom" Thorburn, was born on August 1, 1908.

The energy and dedication shown by Thorburn in improving his farm was also evident in his participation in the civic life of his adopted community. He was an active member of Tabernacle Methodist Church for more than 40 years. He served as a commissioner on the Spotsylvania Board of Public Roads. He helped establish the Farmers Creamery in Fredericksburg and served on its board of directors. He was also instrumental in the building of Chancellor High School in 1912.

Mungo William Thorburn with a woman who may be Mary Douglas, his second wife.

See **F & W Telephone** *on page 9.*

F & W Telephone *(continued)*

But Thorburn is perhaps best remembered as one of the primary founders of a new phone company in 1908. By that time, the Spotsylvania Telephone Company was already in operation, but it was a direct line from Fredericksburg to Spotsylvania Court House. However, there was no phone service on Old Plank Road, where Thorburn lived, nor on the Turnpike (modern Route 3). His recognition of the desirability of establishing phone service to his section of the county neatly dovetailed with that of Dr. William Armistead Gordon, whose family seat, "Greenwood," lay in the Wilderness. Gordon had for some time wished to have a phone connection to Fredericksburg in order to better serve his patients.

A photo from around 1908 of a teacher and group of students of the "Grange Hall" School east of Johnson's Corner and south of Route 610, in the Chancellor District of Spotsylvania County. They have been identified as

1. Mary Lillian Eastburn (Mason), teacher
2. Conrad Arthur Johnson
3. Velma Grey Johnson (Jennings)
4. Marshall Jefferson Powell
5. Ralph Marquess Johnson
6. Catherine Wilson Thorburn (Hilldrup)
7. Motrum Madison Musselman
8. Ramonia Russell (Powell)
9. Myrtle Rebecca Musselman (Craig)
10. Elmer Levi Musselman
11. Lena Baker Powell (McGhee)
12. James William Thorburn (age 3)
13. Hazel Annie Johnson (Tiffany)
14. Elva Lenore Johnson (Newton)
15. Isabel Douglas Thorburn (Carter)

Hazel Johnson was the switchboard operator for F & W from 1910 until 1950.

In 1908, six men assembled in the Fredericksburg law office of Judge A. T. Embrey in order to sign articles of incorporation, thereby creating the Fredericksburg and Wilderness Telephone Company. These six men were: Thomas Fell Morrison, George J. Fletcher, Robert A. Jennings, Henry Francis Etches, John Yates Downman and Mungo William Thorburn. Thomas Fell Morrison was elected as president of the company and served until 1916. Thorburn was named as secretary and treasurer.

Work began at once to provide for the infrastructure of the new phone system. In the September 8, 1908 edition of *The Free Lance*, Thorburn advertised for the delivery of 480 telephone poles "of either cedar or chestnut, 20 or 22 feet long ... Poles are to be delivered along the Turnpike Road, 150 from Fredericksburg to Five Mile Fork, 150 from Five Mile Fork to Chancellorsville, and 180 from Chancellorsville to the Wilderness ... Bidders, on delivery, will be required to deliver on the roads where the poles will be set 60 yards apart."

A line was also built on Old Plank Road, and Thorburn's house was the first to have a phone installed. A line was then extended to the second customer of F & W, Dr. William A. Gordon, who served as second president of the corporation, 1917-1924. M. W. Thorburn served as president thereafter until his death in 1940. The following year his son, Tom, was elected as president, a position he held for the next 25 years.

In 1910, a switchboard was installed in the home of Arthur Lynn Johnson. Johnson's daughter, Hazel, began work as the switchboard operator while still in her teens, and continued to do so until the system was converted to dial service in 1950.

In 1915, a toll trunk line was established to Fredericksburg; calls to town were ten cents each. As time went on, additional lines were installed on several roads in the vicinity. Each road had a single line to the switchboard. Customers on each road shared the same party line, some lines having as many as 25 parties. At its farthest extent, F & W provided service into eastern Orange County. Among its customers were neighbors of Dr. Gordon: Leo and Blanche Jones of Ellwood.

Alonzo Pemberton, Sr., became manager of F & W in 1911 and served until 1945, when he was succeeded by his son, Alonzo, Jr., (known to locals as "Bill" Pemberton). Alonzo Sr., was married to Bessie Eastburn Morrison, a sister of Thorburn's wife, Abbie. Thus, the primary figures in the second generation of company stakeholders—Tom Thorburn and Bill Pemberton—were first cousins.

Stockholder dividends were declared in 1911 and were declared every year until 1947, when F & W was unable to pay a dividend for the first time in 36 years. The company unsuccessfully offered itself for sale for $1,500 to the Tidewater Telephone Company and the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company. Reorganized in 1948, the F & W's list of directors and major shareholders expanded to include Marion C. Thorburn (Tom's wife), Gordon Hilldrup, Orville C. Zechiel, Louis C. Mitchell and Frances Pemberton (Bill's wife) as well as Tom Thorburn, Bill Pemberton and John Orrock.

See **F & W Telephone** *on page 10.*

F & W Telephone *(continued)*

An attempt was made in 1948 to convert to a dial system, but the company was unable to raise sufficient capital to finance the upgrade, despite a letter writing effort and even knocking on the doors of subscribers. Enough money was raised to avert bankruptcy, but just barely.

Just when F & W's prospects looked bleakest, the federal government announced a new program that seemed tailor-made to help the struggling company survive. The Rural Electrification Administration (REA), created during the Depression to help provide electrical service to farmers, announced that it would be offering loans at two percent interest to local telephone companies wishing to convert to dial service.

Even before the government could print the loan forms, F & W submitted its application for funding. According to an article written for the May 9, 2001 edition of T*he Free Lance-Star*, "Tom Thorburn recalled that, at one point, he rode a milk truck into Washington to get REA officials to sign a document. Meeting the customary stall, he said he would sit on their office's front steps until they signed it." Tom got his form signed.

On April 11, 1950, the Fredericksburg and Wilderness Telephone Company received a check for $55,000. Thanks to the efforts of Tom Thorburn and others, it was the first time a telephone company in the United States received a check from the REA for the purpose of upgrading to dial service. At the time F & W "cut over" to dial service, there were 165 subscribers, and soon the company would add 130 more. The first resident in the county to get the new service was Eugene Dickinson.

The first telephone call placed using the new service was made to Eugene Dickinson by President Harry Truman at 4:00 p. m. on September 20, 1950. The President spoke with Dickinson and his wife, Bernice. They exchanged pleasantries, discussed Dickinson's dairy business and talked about what it was like to be on a party line with 25 other users. That same day was declared "REA Telephone Day" at the Fredericksburg Agricultural Fair. Claude Wickard, REA administrator, spoke before a large crowd at the fair, and presented a citation to Tom Thorburn for his work in obtaining the loan.Truman's conversation with the Dickinsons was broadcast over loudspeakers. The Marine Corps band added to the pomp of the festivities.

Party lines continued to exist for many years after the four-digit dial service replaced the old wall-mounted crank phones, but the number of customers on each line steadily decreased. While this was undoubtedly a boon for all (the ten-cent toll charge for calls to Fredericksburg also became a thing of the past), some people missed listening in on their friends' conversations, or being listened to. One housewife said she could tell who was listening in by the sound of the clocks in her friends' kitchens. After the removal of the old wall phones, some customers were confronted with vivid patches of wallpaper that had not seen the light of day for forty years.

In 1952, F & W installed an experimental system developed by General Electric which made possible the transmission of phone calls by radio waves. The Alsop community of Spotsylvania had been deemed too distant to build lines to, so those families were the beneficiaries of that program. A special building equipped with a radio receiver was built at Five Mile Fork to receive calls.

The four-digit telephone numbers were later upgraded with the STerling (prefix 786) and HUnter (prefix 489) exchanges. The author's sister still has the Sterling telephone number assigned to our parents in 1961.

By 1965, the Fredericksburg and Wilderness Telephone Company, which during the 1940s could not attract a buyer, found itself in the enviable position of being courted by the Continental Telephone Company. When F & W sold out to Continental in March 1966, it had 1,168 subscribers.

Author's note: During the historic conversion of F & W to dial service in 1950, the REA documented this period of transition by taking a large number of photographs. A selection from these pictures appears in my article written for Spotsylvania Memory in 2013. These photographs can be viewed online at http://spotsylvaniamemory.blogspot.com/2013/01/the-fredericksburg-wilderness-telephone.html.

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See **F & W Telephone** *on page 11.*

F & W Telephone *(continued)*

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In Memoriam: Judson Morgan ("Bugs") Gardner

Ann L. Miller

We note with sadness the passing of one of the long-time members and supporters of the Orange County Historical Society, Judson M. Gardner, familiarly known to all by his nickname of "Bugs." After graduating from Orange County High School in 1942, Bugs worked for Snead & Company in Orange and later Allied Aviation in Baltimore before reporting for military service. He received his wings in 1944 and served as a glider pilot and transport pilot in the Army Air Corps. After the war, he began engineering studies at William and Mary before transferring to the University of Virginia, where he completed his architecture degree in 1953.

He formed a partnership with J. Russell Bailey, and their architectural firm, Bailey and Gardner (subsequently Bailey, Gardner and Gillum), was in business in the town of Orange for nearly 50 years. The firm specialized in the design of libraries as well as other public buildings. Bugs's July 27, 2017 *Orange County Review* obituary notes that the firm "designed or assisted with construction of more than 200 public and university libraries stretching across the eastern half of the United States and including Puerto Rico. The firm also worked on a host of schools, office buildings, churches, nursing homes, courthouses, historic structures and residences primarily in central Virginia."

Among these commissions, Bugs also was the architect for the conversion and enlargement of the garage on Brooking Street into the Historical Society's Research Center. He was a Board member and past president of the Society and some of our long-time members will recall his presentation at the July 1997 summer picnic at Lochiel near Gordonsville, giving a program on the local homes of the Cameron family, from an architect's viewpoint.

Like many of his generation, Bugs believed in community service and in supporting civic endeavors. In addition to his support and service to the Historical Society, he was a 50-year member and past president of the Orange Rotary Club, a trustee and elder of the Orange Presbyterian Church, a past chairman of the Orange County Republican Party and the Orange County Electoral Board, a past president of the Orange County Chamber of Commerce, a director of the Orange County Economic Development Commission, and a trustee of the Gordonsville Medical Aid Fund, among service to other organizations.

He was truly an outstanding member of the Orange community and will be missed. We extend our condolences to his family and many friends.

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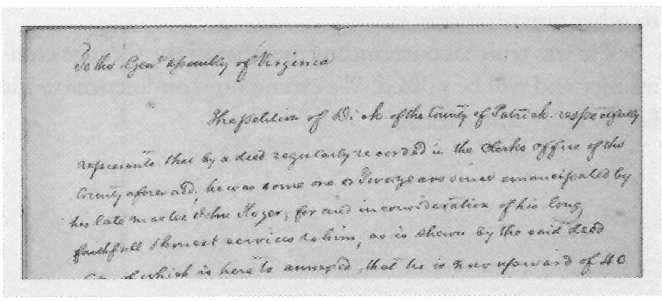
Making History: Transcribe

Clara Colby

The crowdsourced Transcribe project of the Library of Virginia provides a great way to volunteer even when you don't want to go out and about. If you have an internet connection, you can help transcribe or review transcriptions of many documents in the Library's digital collections. Documents range from colonial papers to county records to family papers. You can find out more about this project on the Making History: Transcribe web site at *http://www.virginiamemory.com/transcribe/*.

The image below shows part of a document in the current transcription queue. In the early 19th century the Virginia legislature passed a law that required any person freed from slavery in Virginia after 1806 to leave the Commonwealth unless granted permission to remain. This documnt is an 1837 petition filed on behalf of a man named Dick, who had been emancipated in 1835, asking the Virginia General Assumbly for permission to remain in Virginia. Part of the petition's argument is that Dick

> is now upward of 40 years of age; has a wife and several Children,, slaves,, [sic] residing in the County of Franklin in this state to whom he is attached by all the ties which bind a Husband to his wife and a father to his Children; that a seperation from them would deprive him of the little happiness which is alloted to him in this world of sorrows and vicissitudes


To the Gen[l] Assembly of Virginia

The petition of Dick of the County of Patrick respectfully represents that by a deed regularly recorded in the Clerks office of the County aforesaid, he was borne no Slave and was emancipated by his late master John Hoyer, for and in consideration of his long faithfull & honest services to him, as is shewn by the said deed

Please Join Us!

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.

The Orange County Historical Society is a non-profit organization. Your membership fees are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Name: _____
(If business/organization member, name of business or organization)

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City: _____

State: _____ **Zip:** _____

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Email: _____

Membership Status: ☐ New ☐ Renewal ☐ Address, name, etc. update

Would you be willing to receive meeting notices via email in lieu of a postcard? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Membership Level: Society dues are for the period of January 1 - December 31.

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