

Newsletter

Orange County Historical Society

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Spring, 2004

"Greenwood:" An Easy Choice, but Thorough Documentation Still a Must for Meeting Tough Requirements of National Register

In recent months, the historic property called "Greenwood" has changed hands. Greenwood is located off Route 20, about two miles west of Orange. Colonel and Mrs. William H. Collier purchased Greenwood in 1973. While in residence at Greenwood, Col. Collier prepared the following description and provenance of the property to meet the requirements for listing the property on the National Register. Col. and Mrs. Collier have sold the property to Ms. Natalie Brown, who intends to maintain the property as a working farm. The Newsletter is grateful to Mr. Joe Rowe for providing a copy of the application and other information concerning Greenwood. The original manuscript contains 57 footnotes, which have been omitted from this presentation.

Greenwood is linked with the history of Orange County from its earliest days of settlement. The house stands on a small portion of 6,500 acres originally patented to John Baylor in 1726, when the area was still part of Spotsylvania County. Baylor was a wealthy planter from King and Queen County and a partner in some of the land enterprises of Alexander Spotswood. Baylor's grant was among the first recorded in what would later become Orange County and although not the largest tract conveyed, was by no means the smallest.

Things can get confusing...



Courtesy: Ben Riller, Winchester, Va.

When we ran across this photograph of Reuben C. Macon, we thought at first that we had found a photo of a past resident of Greenwood. We were encouraged to think so when we read that a Reuben Macon had moved into Greenwood in 1850. Close, but no cigar. That Reuben Macon died in 1853. The Reuben Conway Macon shown above was born in 1839, one year after the Reuben Conway who built Greenwood died, and died at the ripe old age of 88, in 1927. To top it off, he never lived in Greenwood, apparently preferring Orange. At any rate, the only Reuben we want to have to deal with is the one that comes with ~~come~~ ~~ref~~.

There is documentary evidence that he built a house also called Greenwood on this land, but unfortunately its exact location remains unknown. He visited only occasionally, leaving the maintenance of the plantation to an overseer and slaves. Road orders of the time show that he petitioned the county for roads near his plantation and was responsible for their clearing and upkeep. Baylor died in 1782, leaving the property to his son John, Jr. The land continued to be farmed. On "A List of Taxable Property," taken in 1782, there were four white males listed as living on the Baylor land, along with eighty-three slaves, twenty-one horses, and 118 head of cattle. (The census of the same year, however, shows eighty-four African-Americans and no whites residing on Baylor's farm.) The farm possibly did not prosper, as the number of slaves was cut by half in 1788. At his death in 1808, Baylor had sold off approximately 2,000 acres. In the ensuing years, the estate was divided and sold in lots. Greenwood stands on lot number four, purchased by one Thomas Macon in 1812.

Thomas Macon had moved from Hanover County and married Sarah Madison, daughter of James Madison, Sr., in 1790. In marrying Sarah Madison, Macon automatically allied himself with one of the most wealthy and important families in the region.

continues on page 2

Greenwood, continued from page 1

His new brother-in-law, James Madison, Jr., was already exalted (or vilified) as being "Father of the Constitution," and author of the Bill of Rights of the United States. In 1799, the Macons purchased a large estate of over 1,800 acres, and built their home Somerset in 1803. Somerset was a Federal style mansion, one of the most impressive homes in the county. Macon's landholdings grew to over 3,000 acres by 1820, when census records show that he owned sixty-one slaves. He and Sarah had seven children who lived to adulthood. One son died an early death in Florida. Son Catlett Conway Macon and James Madison Macon became county landowners, married well and had large families of their own. (A letter to James Madison from Thomas Macon in 1810 describes the effect of the terrible drought in that summer. Another correspondent of Madison wrote to him in the same vein. Thomas Jefferson, in a letter dated only weeks earlier, informed Madison that the situation at Monticello was "desperate." Jefferson never recovered financially from the drought of 1810; Macon's farm apparently suffered the same fate.) Three other sons remained

at home and never married. Lucy Hartwell Macon, Thomas and Sarah's only daughter, was born in 1794. In 1811, the year President James Madison appointed James Monroe as Secretary of State, Lucy married Reuben Conway.

Reuben Conway, a son of Catlett Conway, was descended from Francis Conway, one of the first settlers of Orange County. His grandaunt, Nelly Conway, married James Madison, Sr. (Reuben and his bride Lucy were therefore cousins, both related to President Madison through Sarah.) Catlett Conway was a prominent member of Orange County society. The Conway family attended church with other leading members of society, namely the Barbours, Madisons, Taylors, Taliaferros, and Scotts. A Captain during the Revolution, Conway also donated (or had impressed) over 2,000 pounds of beef to the Continental Army. In 1777, he was appointed as one of several men to the first bench of justices for the county under Governor Patrick Henry. In 1787, one year before Reuben's birth, Catlett Conway owned twenty-seven slaves and approximately one thousand acres. When he died in 1827, he left

Greenwood Owners	
John Baylor III	1726
John Baylor IV (Land Grant)	1772
Lucy and Reuben Conway & Heirs	1815
(Built Greenwood)	
George G. Hoffman	1900
Paul M. Gibbs	1910
William E. Holladay	1919
Manley W. Carter	1935
Dan Cooper	1938
Nelson Ruffin	1945
Kenneth S. Edwards	1951
Forbes R. Reback	1964
James T. Adams, Jr.	1970
William H. Collier	1973

over 1,200 acres of land to be divided between his four sons. The marriage of Reuben Conway and Lucy Macon therefore united cousins as well as old county families.

It is not clear where Reuben and Lucy lived in the first years of their marriage, as Reuben held no land, but by 1820 they were living at Greenwood. Thomas Macon had purchased two tracts of Baylor land of 430 and 314 acres respectively, in 1813 and 1816, and deeded them to Lucy at the same time. The land tax records of 1820 show that buildings valued at \$1,125 stood on the 430 acre tract. Greenwood was therefore constructed between 1818 and 1820, a fact confirmed by architectural elements found in the house. Census records show that the Conways held thirty-six slaves in 1820. Reuben also held land "on the Conway River" totaling 390 acres. Neighboring land was owned by his brothers John and Catlett Jr. This land was sold in 1819, but Reuben purchased 360 acres on the Conway River from Thomas Macon in 1820. Court records demonstrate that Reuben was often required to act as administrator for the county in estate matters, and acted as



Greenwood was built between 1818-1820.

witness for many of his neighbor's wills. It seems the Conways were an integral part of Orange County society; in fact, Greenwood has been referred to as the Macon family "haven". Unfortunately, however, the Conways never had children.

The community of Orange County in the early nineteenth century was still very small, very closely knit through intermarriage. It is interesting to speculate how having an internationally known figure such as ex-President Madison living in the neighborhood affected this provincial district. The Madisons regularly entertained "citizens great and distinguished foreign visitors." That Reuben was close to James Madison is shown by the fact that he served as a pallbearer at Madison's funeral in 1836. Indeed, he was buried in the Madison family cemetery when he died in 1838.

Reuben Conway left his estate to his "beloved wife Lucy." The inventory taken after his death shows Reuben to have been a relatively well-to-do farmer, having a well furnished household, a large amount of farm equipment, a carriage, many livestock, and twenty-

nine slaves. The inventory also shows that the wing addition of Greenwood had not yet been built.

When the 1840 census was taken, Lucy lived alone. At this time, she owned twenty-nine slaves and had sold Reuben's Conway River acreage. In 1843, she had extended her household to include Mary Roberta Macon, age 9, who was a daughter of her brother Catlett Conway Macon. The child died in that year, and is buried at Greenwood.

Thomas Macon had died the same year as Reuben, leaving his wife Sarah and three sons, Ambrose, Reuben, and Henry, residing at Somerset. Macon died intestate, and heavily in debt. In 1840 Sarah and her three sons were still living at the family home, but Somerset was sold to Ebenezer Goss in 1842. The Macons rented Somerset from the new owner and continued to farm the land. It is likely that Sarah was moved from Somerset to her daughter's residence when she became ill, for she died of a stroke at Greenwood in 1843. She left her estate to Reuben and directed him to clothe, feed and shelter his two brothers after her death. The inventory taken after her death included

a large amount of furniture, luxury items, farm equipment, produce and livestock.

The 1850 census lists the Macon brothers as residing together, probably still at Somerset. However, shortly after 1850, Reuben and Ambrose moved into Greenwood with their widowed sister. In 1850, Lucy Conway owned forty slaves, twenty of which were children, and her personal property was valued at \$15,600. Thomas Macon, her thirty-three year old nephew, son of James Madison Macon, was living at Greenwood, as was a 15-year-old cousin (her mother's sister's grandson) named James Buck. The land tax records show that higher taxes were assessed on Greenwood in 1850, pointing to the wing addition being constructed at this time. This fact is borne out by the Greek Revival-style mantels and window surrounds in the wing. Certainly, with at least four adults and a child living in the house, more room would be needed. Interestingly, Lucy's fifty-two-year-old brother Ambrose is listed in the 1850 census as being a carpenter by profession. Viewing the timber frame of this wing addition, with its hand-hewn members, summer beam, and joinery, one might surmise that Ambrose designed the structure, using the earlier methods of construction he learned as a young man. Henry purchased a very small piece of land and apparently lived separately from his family. Reuben and Ambrose died at Greenwood in 1853 and 1856; Henry died seven months after Reuben. Reuben's will directed that his twenty-five slaves be emancipated, his property be sold, and the proceeds used to transport these ex-slaves to Liberia. His uncle, James Madison was one of the founders of the American Colonization Society and had worked ardently on its behalf until his death. In fact, he left a large endowment to the Society in his will. Possibly Madison's convictions had influenced Reuben's



Lucy and Reuben Conway built Greenwood.

determination to free his slaves. He left nothing to his family except small annuities to his brothers, and Lucy Conway procured some of the family silver from the estate sale. In 1860, Lucy appeared to be at her most prosperous. Her real estate was valued at \$2,800 and her personal estate at \$15,637. She owned fifty-two slaves, of which only eight males and nine females were of working age; the rest were children. Comparatively, one of the very richest folks in the county at the time was Benjamin Barbour, whose real estate was valued at \$140,000 and personal property at \$112,300. Catlett Conway Macon had moved to Richmond, although he still had real estate dealings in Orange County.

During the Civil War, Greenwood was untouched, although Lucy Conway lost a nephew, Edgar Macon, at the First Battle of Manassas. A young cousin visited Greenwood in the winter of 1863, and wrote of his stay:

"... during the winter of 1863, I obtained leave of absence from Captain McCarthy for two or three days; my object being to visit a cousin, Mrs. Lucy

Conway, who resided at Greenwood, a delightful old county residence, near Orange Court House. I deemed this a good time to utilize my relationships; her home was a famous "Mecca" of general hospitality, and good living. ... I left camp during the day and arrived at my destination in the evening, receiving a most cordial welcome (from his cousin) ... who was at the time entertaining General Wilcox and several other Confederate officers, and, although but a mere Private ... I received as much attention and consideration as any present ... I decided to prolong my visit for a whole week."

The 1870 census records show that Lucy's nephew Thomas Macon, her nephew Edgar's widow Jane and their nine-year-old son, Edgar, and three African-American servants lived with her. Her property was valued at \$16,000 and personal property at \$900. When she died in 1871 at age seventy-nine, she left her clothing to Jane, and some family silver to Edgar. She was buried in the Madison family cemetery. The property of Greenwood was divided

after Lucy Conway's death amongst various nieces and nephews. Thomas N. Macon lived at Greenwood until his death, and the property was sold out of the family in 1900 to George Hoffman. In 1938, the property was divided and sold in two parcels, with the house passing through six different owners until 1970, when James Adams purchased both parcels. Colonel and Mrs. William Collier purchased the property in 1973.

Greenwood's significance, beyond association with President Madison's kin and the Macon and Conway families' place in Orange County society, lies in its architectural fame. When Greenwood was constructed, it was one of the first half-dozen or so I-style houses constructed in the area. A study of Ann L. Miller's authoritative publication on the standing structures of Orange County, "Antebellum Orange: The Pre-Civil War Homes, Public Buildings and Historical Sites of Orange County, Virginia," shows that among the early houses of Orange County, Greenwood, along with a very few others, employed the I-style house form decades before the style became common in Orange County. Other structures employing the atypical I house plan include Ridgefield, built in the late eighteenth century by Jonathan Cowherd; Weston, built by Dr. Charles Beale in 1820; Annadale, constructed in the late eighteenth century by John Taylor Hamilton, and Annadale, built in 1805 by Reuben Boston.

The majority of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century homes in Orange County were 1½ story frame or log dwellings that were enlarged over the years. A number of these employed a hall and parlor plan, while others had only one room on each level. Many of Orange County's landowners first lived in such houses. A typical home of the era was the Old Bell House, built by Robert Kendall circa 1800, a



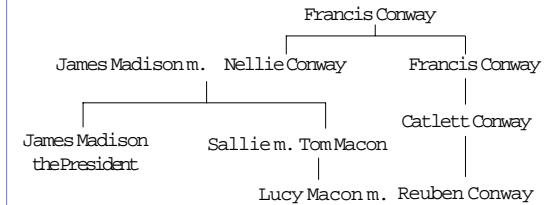
Greenwood has been home to eleven different families since 1815.

"log-bodied, hall and parlor plan home, with gable roof and stone end chimneys. A story and half high, it measures twenty-eight by sixteen feet."

There were very few mansions of the first order in Orange County in the early nineteenth century. Somerset, Thomas Macon's estate, was one; Barboursville, designed by Thomas Jefferson, was the most elegant, and expensive; Montpelier, the next highest in value, was worth only half as much. Another was Frascati, built for Philip Barbour by John Perry, who had previously worked for Jefferson at Monticello and the University of Virginia. Generally, though, the most prosperous farmers in Orange County avoided the vast expenditure required in building such homes and preferred comparatively modest dwellings.

The I house form became quite popular near mid-century, replacing the earlier hall-and-parlor design. Indeed, today the landscape of Orange County is dotted with many Greek Revival-style I houses built during this time. Some examples are Mount Pamunkey (1859); Glenmore (1857); Center Hill (1850), and Green Meadows (1850). Greenwood's form was virtually unique in the county in the first quarter of the century. □

The family chart below shows two important relationships: First it indicates that Lucy Macon was a niece of President James Madison; second, it shows that Lucy and her husband Reuben were second cousins.



New Web Site Nears Completion

After what seems like an eternity, the new website of the Society is nearing completion, thanks to the good efforts of Bryan Wright and our contract webmaster Jim Yurasits. Below is the first page of the new site. Each of the portrait images along the top point the viewer to additional pages that will eventually contain a great deal more information about the Society, including an electronic version of the Newsletter. The most sweeping change is that we have added a Shopping Cart capability so that viewers can purchase books via this site, using credit. The site

is accessible by using email. Just type in orangeovahist.org and the site should pop up. Going in through a search engine is going to take some time, because of the dozens of links that were established for the old site. However, keywords have been supplied to the major search engines and it will only be a matter of time before the new site is widely recognized. Please go in and browse the new site and let us know what you think. By the way, the first person to identify all the portraits on the site will get a year's free membership.

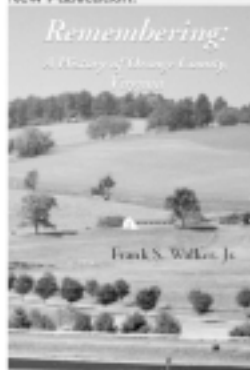
"..of course, the ultimate benefit of a Web Site is to be able to access the files of our Society electronically from anywhere in the U. S.."

— from a discussion by the OCHS Board of Directors in March

The Orange County Historical Society



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New Publications



The Orange County Historical Society, Inc. is a research, archival, and educational organization, dedicated to the discovery, preservation, and dissemination of the history of Orange County, Virginia, of its people, and the surrounding area. The Society's reference library contains over 2,000 volumes, and there are over 1,300 files with information on families, historic buildings, events and sites, plus a map and photograph collection.

In addition to its bi-monthly newsletter, the Society pursues an active publication program, involving books as well as pamphlets. Regular membership meetings include presentations on subjects of interest to the membership and are generally held on the last Monday of each month (excluding February and December). Members also receive special rates on book sales, copying fees, etc. To become a member please check our [dues schedule](#).

Upcoming Events

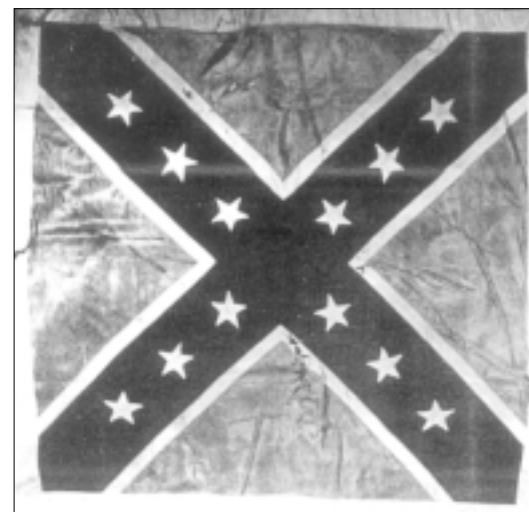
Donations

"Rally 'Round the Flag, Boys [and Girls], Rally 'Round the Flag."

By Frank S. Walker, Jr.¹

In its December 2003 newsletter, the Flag Conservation Program section of the Museum of the Confederacy announced that it was preparing to conserve the flag of the 13th Virginia Infantry Regiment to a condition where it can be mounted and exhibited. The 13th was the Civil War regiment most closely associated with Orange County since three of its companies (the Montpelier Guard, the Gordonsville Grays, and the Barboursville Guard) had been county militia units prior to their going into Confederate service. The 13th also had regional connections in that it contained two companies from Culpeper County and one from Louisa.

The title for this article is more than the opening lines of an old song. It recites a basic practice observed by military combat units for most of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Offensive tactics of that period in particular emphasized the striking power of large masses of soldiers, and the most basic way of keeping them massed in the midst of the confusion and disorientation of battle was to train them to look for their unit's flag and to continually position themselves relative to it. If the unit had become disorganized during a fight, the cry would go up for its members to "rally 'round the flag." Color bearers were expected to be in the advance of a unit's movements, and on occasion such



Battle flag of the 13th Virginia, made by A.P. Hill's wife.

persons exerted a greater influence over how the unit performed in battle than its officers. To be asked to carry the colors meant that you were being recognized as possessing great courage and a deep sense of duty. It also meant that the primary targets for sharpshooters on both sides included not only senior officers, but also color bearers. At Gettysburg, the 26th North Carolina lost thirteen color bearers in a single day's fighting.

As things turned out, the 13th Virginia had more than one flag. The first was lost to the enemy in the October 1864 battle at Cedar Creek, and the regiment then received its second one later that same year. While the museum now has both flags, it is the second flag for which the more extensive conservation is planned. The damaged and deteriorated condition of

the first flag may have it beyond anything but the most basic conservation efforts, and focusing on the second flag simply makes more sense.²

Both flags were of the same design and were reported to have been made by Dolly Morgan Hill, the wife of Ambrose Powell Hill of Culpeper, the regiment's first commander. They were made of silk and were comparatively simple items, having a blue cross of St. Andrew on a red background with white stars on the bars of the cross. They were therefore of the standard issue pattern which was adopted as the battle flag

of the Army of Northern Virginia and which is often referred to today as "the Confederate flag."³ They possessed none of the fanciful embroidery that adorned even company flags from the prewar era, some of which had been made by Tiffany of New York. Company flags, however, as well as state flags carried at the company level, were soon ordered off the battle field. Not only did they contribute to a confusion of flags in the field, allowing them to be carried meant that too many of the South's bravest and best were busy waving flags at times when their services with a rifle were sorely needed.⁴

The 13th initially saw combat with "Stonewall" Jackson when it participated in his Spring 1862 Valley Campaign. It then went with Jackson to join Robert E. Lee and his Army of Northern Virginia and fought in all of

Courtesy: Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Va.

that army's battles for the next two years. Dolly Hill's flag flew proudly in Maryland in 1862 and Pennsylvania in 1863, becoming more stained and tattered over time, but always leading the 13th into combat and rallying its survivors afterwards. The Spring of 1864 began with the Battle of the Wilderness, and the 13th and its flag occupied defensive earthworks in Orange County near the present Lake of the Woods community. Orange County's soldiers were thus fighting in the defense of Orange County's soil.

By mid-1864 the Confederate army was entrenched at Petersburg, and the 13th was a part of the force detached and sent to the Valley to deal with the enemy presence there. The Confederates initially enjoyed great success, and the flag of the 13th traced a triumphant sweep through the Valley and an advance on the city of Washington that came to an exhausted halt at its outer defenses. From that point on, however, things went from bad to worse. Defeat followed defeat, and finally, at the Battle of Cedar Creek in October 1864, the Confederate Valley force was broken and swept from the field with irreparable losses. One of the losses was the flag of the 13th. In 1905 the U.S. Congress directed the War Department to return its stockpile of captured Confederate flags to their respective states. The original flag of the 13th was among the some 250 turned over to the Commonwealth of Virginia, which then turned them over to the Museum of the Confederacy. With its receipt of those flags, the museum initiated its Flag Conservation Program.⁵

After Cedar Creek, the 13th Virginia, once proudly boasting a strength of 550 fighting men, was now down to less than 100 beleaguered souls. It was also flag-less, but it was not without friends. Dolly Hill's husband had long ago risen from the command

of that regiment and was now in fact a Lieutenant General in command of the Third Corps of Lee's army. The 13th was not even a part of her husband's corps, but Mrs. Hill remembered it with affection. In December 1864 the surviving members of the 13th were presented with a new flag made by her. The white silk portion of the flag was reputed to have been cut from her wedding dress, and considering the times, that may well have been so. It was under that flag that the sixty-some remaining members of the regiment surrendered at Appomattox—but they did not surrender the flag. In 1892 that flag was given to the Ladies of the Confederate Museum by Thomas Crittendon, whose Civil War career had begun as the commander of "B" Company (the Culpeper Minute Men) of the 13th and had ended with him in command of the regiment. In 1896, the Ladies of the Confederate Museum organization became the Museum of the Confederacy.

The Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond houses the largest single collection of Confederate flags in the world. Its 500-plus flags represent over one-third of all such flags known to exist. The collection occupies a special area within the museum, custom built for that purpose, and is managed by a special section of the museum staff with its own curator. The Flag Conservation Program section pursues an active and sophisticated flag conservation program, and within the context of overall museum operations, this section publishes its own newsletter and conducts appeals to secure needed conservation funds.

As a rule, the flags which are received are 140-plus years old, are dirty and stained, and are folded in some manner. Textile conservators assess the condition of the flag material (usually very fragile) and secure drawings and photographs of the item

as received. A careful vacuuming yields dust and other particles which are analyzed to see if anything can be learned which will help in later conservation efforts. If it can be easily and safely done, the flag is exposed to enough humidity to relax the fibers and allow it to be unfolded. If something has been detected to indicate that the material has a unique and active deterioration problem, that problem is dealt with. Beyond that, a flag must await its specifically funded conservation program to pay for the massive amount of detailed and painstaking labor required to conserve it sufficiently to allow it to be mounted and exhibited.

The Flag Conservation Program estimate of the cost to conserve the second flag of the 13th Virginia Infantry Regiment to a condition which will allow it to be mounted and exhibited is \$12,775, and an appeal has gone out seeking that sum. To paraphrase that old song, it is time for the "boys"—and this time also, the girls—to "Rally 'Round the Flag" one last time. Individuals and organizations making contributions should specify that they are for the conservation of the flag of the 13th Virginia, and they should be sent to the Museum of the Confederacy, 1201 East Clay Street, Richmond VA 23219-1615. □

¹The writer is indebted to Rebecca A. Rose, Curator of the museum's flag collection, for the valuable and detailed information she kindly and patiently provided him. For more on the 13th Virginia, see: Riggs, David S., *The 13th Virginia Infantry*, Lynchburg VA, H. E. Howard, Inc., 1988.

²Note that focus is on varying degrees of "conservation," meaning stabilizing flags in their present condition and preserving them from further

deterioration. It makes no sense to "restore" the flags, that is, return them to a usable condition.

³The Army of Northern Virginia's battle flag was not, however, one of the three versions of the Confederate National Flag adopted by the Confederate Congress.

⁴In a December 2003 letter, Ms. Rose (See Footnote 1) reported that the museum also had two company level flags from the 13th Virginia. The flag of Company "A" (the Montpelier Guard) has been mounted and will be on display in the museum's Confederate Nation exhibit through December 2004. The Company "B" flag (the Culpeper Minute Men) is in a very fragile condition and will require extensive

conservation. An ornately decorated silk flag which bears the wording "Gordonsville Grays" was put up for sale by an artifacts auction house during the winter of 2002-03. It brought \$97,750.00. ⁵The museum's collection now includes flags from Arkansas, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi and Missouri, as its conservation work has attracted numerous private donations.

Civil War Tour of Orange County



Orange County, in collaboration with The National Park Service, is commemorating the 140th anniversary of Lee and Grant's 1864 Campaign.

On Saturday, June 26th, between 9AM and 5PM, Frank Walker will conduct a tour of St. Thomas' Episcopal Church in Orange, the McGowan Winter Camp Site at Montpelier, the Civil War Museum in Gordonsville, Gemanna Ford, the Ellwood Manor and the Wilderness Battlefield. Lunch will be served at the Somerset Golf Course, a historic Civil War site. The bus departs at 9AM from the Orange County Visitors Bureau, 122 E. Main. Cost per person, including lunch, is \$45. Reservations are required by no later than June 1. Tickets may be purchased by mail or picked up at the Orange County Visitors Bureau. Make checks payable to Orange County Department of Tourism. For more information, call 540-672-1653.

Bagby's two good friends: Jud Browning and Jud Brownin

Second of Two Articles

by Ann Miller

Dr. George Bagby (1828 - 1883), who resided for several years at Litchfield in Orange County, was one of the most popular Southern humorists of his generation. Although not widely read today (his dialect stories in particular are not "politically correct"), Dr. Bagby created some memorable stories and character sketches.

One of Dr. Bagby's special Orange County friends was Gustavus Judson ("Jud") Browning. Born in Rappahannock County in 1830, G. Judson Browning came to Orange in the late 1850s. He was a captain in the 6th Virginia Cavalry during the Civil War and organized the "Orange Rangers" division. Following the war he served in the Virginia House of Delegates for the 1866-67 session. In 1867, he married Sally Thomas, daughter of Dr. Robert Thomas, a local physician and farmer who owned "Oakley," a few miles west of the town of Orange. After Dr. Thomas's death in 1872, the Brownings inherited "Oakley," which remained in the Browning family until 1914. Jud and Sally Thomas Browning had four sons, all of whom remained in the community: Robert Dabney carried on the family farming operations; G. Judson, Jr., became a prominent merchant in the town of Orange; Alexander Thomas was Judge of the 9th Judicial Circuit Court; and John William served as Deputy Clerk, and later Clerk, of the Circuit Court of Orange County.

Family documents and a surviving photograph depict Jud Browning as a conservative, church-going family man. His family and friends also remembered him as a man with a wonderful sense of

humor. Perhaps to tease Jud for his serious side, perhaps in tribute to a treasured friend who could make even a professional humorist laugh, Dr. Bagby created the character of a plain-talking, hard-drinking country bumpkin named Jud Brownin and made him the hero of several of his stories.

The two friends died a little over a year apart, both late casualties of the Civil War. George Bagby finally succumbed in November, 1883 after years of poor health, worsened by wartime hardships. Jud Browning died in April, 1885, never having completely recovered from the wounds he received during the war.

Dr. Bagby immortalized his friend Jud Browning in two stories: "Jud Brownin's Account of Rubenstein's Playing" and "Fray Devilo". In both stories, Jud Brownin has similar adventures: loose in the big city of New



Gustavus Johnson Browning, better known as Jud Brownin, with wife Sally (Thomas) Browning.

York, the rowdy, feisty Jud attends several musical performances. Unsophisticated but hardly unappreciative of the cultural events unfolding before his eyes and ears, diamond-in-the-rough Jud gets into the spirit of the evening—aided by a slight overindulgence in alcoholic beverages.

In "Rubenstein's Playing," (which Dr. Bagby called his most popular work) Jud attends a concert given by the Russian pianist Anton Rubenstein (as Jud's enthusiasm for the performer grows, he nicknames him, "Ruben," then "Rube" and finally "Ruby"). In "Fray Devilo," Jud takes on the world of grand opera.

Jud gives vocal approval to his liking of the music: whether standing on his chair to shout encouragement to Rubenstein or loudly warning the stage heroine of "Fray Devilo" of approaching danger, his exuberance leads to confrontations with the highbrow (and Yankee) audience. Jud is a familiar and enduring character—the country boy who doesn't knuckle under to the highfalutin' ways of the big city. And Jud is unbowed—after heading back home to Orange, Virginia and telling the boys in town all about his adventures, he's last seen riding out of town, singing excerpts from the opera.

... He [Rubenstein] lit into them keys... he give 'em no rest, day nor night; he set every livin' joint in me a-goin, and not bein' able to stand it no longer, I jumpt spang onto my seat, and jest holler'd:



Could it be that the view from the Gothic Library in Litchfield inspired Dr. Bagby's stories about Orange County?

GO IT MY RUBE!

Every blame man, woman and child in the house rize on me and shouted, "Put him, out! Put him out!"

"Put your great-grandmother's scizzly grey greenish cat into the middle of next month!" I says. "Teh me if you dare! I paid my money, and you just come a-nigh me."

With that, some several p'licen n'n up, and I had to simmer down. But I would have fit any fool that laid hands on me, for I was bound to hear Ruby out ardie...

—"Jud Brownin" in Jud Brownin's Account of Rubenstein's Playing

Excerpts from several letters written by the flesh and blood G. Judson Browning as he neared the end of his life show a much different character and mindset than the fictional Jud. The second letter was written at a time

—Gustavus Judson Browning letter to his sister, Sarah Miller (undated)

I have been confined to my room nearly ever since I returned from the Springs and doubt if ever I [will] get out again. I have been a great sufferer... yet I can't say that I regret it, as it has caused me to think less of the things in this world and more of my future state and it may be that my afflictions may prove an ever-lasting blessing to me I hope that my sins have been forgiven and I may meet you all in a purer & better world.

—Gustavus Judson Browning letter to his sister, Sarah Miller, October 25th 1883

that Judson Browning would have known not just of his own approaching mortality, but of the last illness and imminent death of his long-time friend, George Bagby.

Life, that indescribable indefinable something which Philosophers and Sages of all time have been endeavoring to analyze and define. The prime cause none have yet been able to determine. How the inhalation of air causes the heart to beat, the blood to circulate, the mind to think and every organ to do its allotted work!... How the brain does its wonderful work is more than the learned can tell. The mind grows dizzy in contemplating the wonder of its own working. Life, what are thou, for what dost thou exist, why dost thou live?

... Reason would teach... that there is an Omnipotent power governing & guiding celestial bodies as they sweep through space... that earth and the affairs of earth are governed by something more than chance...

Correction: The list of works by Dr. George Bagby that appeared in the last issue of the Newsletter should have indicated that those were his works set in Orange County and not a complete enumeration of his works. □

Since Last We Talked...

200 Attend Walker Reception



Chuck Mason, left, and Frank Walker chat during the reception March 29 at which more than 200 members and prospective members paid tribute to the author of *Remembering: A History of Orange County, Virginia*. "Thirty-one books were sold during the reception.



Marty Caldwell, left, one of the Society's most faithful volunteers, talks with Peg Hamon, who led the effort to raise funds to offset the cost of printing the book. Thus far, 404 copies of the book have been sold. Orange County High School purchased 46 books for students and the Society donated ten more.



Walker compares notes with fellow history buff Bill Speiden, who is participating in the festivities surrounding the anniversary of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. It's a safe bet that at some point in the conversation, the subject of bovine care up.



Rebecca Coleman, right, talks with member Kate Longstreet. Rebecca is the President of the Orange County African-American Historical Society and a member of the Orange County Historical Society's Board of Directors.

Since Last We Talked...

Library of Virginia to Help With Grant

In January, the Orange County Historical Society and the Orange County African American Historical Society jointly submitted an application for a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC). The grant was to assist the Societies compile, catalog, and preserve the family histories and business records of Orange County, with a particular emphasis on collecting family histories of the county's African-American families. This month, the Library of Virginia, which must "endorse" the application, contacted the Society and offered assistance in redrafting the application so it more closely conforms to the NHPRC's objectives and requirements, with the intent of resubmitting it for the October round of funding. In his letter to the Society, Conley Edwards, the State Coordinator for the Library, wrote that it would be his hope that a "model program could be developed, aspects of which could be adopted by other historical society in the state and across the nation. The Boards of the two Societies have passed resolutions expressing appreciation and an eagerness to work with the Library.

In My Opinion

The Society does not take positions on controversial issues, largely because the diverse nature of the membership means there are so many differing points of view that it would be impossible to have a "position" that faithfully reflects the wishes of the membership. However, that does not mean that individual members don't have opinions that should be heard. After all, the membership is made up of leading citizens of the community, many of whom have lived here all their lives, and who might welcome a forum in which issues concerning historic preservation are addressed from a personal perspective. So, assuming we actually get some interest, we will be offering a place in the Newsletter where any member can express any opinion relevant to an issue that affects the mission of the Society. If you want to express an opinion, call me and we'll set some rules. I think it could be useful, interesting, entertaining, and provocative. At least that's my opinion.

—Warren Dunn,
Executive Director

Trying to Save Graves Mill



Doug Graves, of the Madison family by the same name, is seeking funding to restore Graves Mill in Madison County. Graves has prepared the documentation necessary to be considered for the National Register. The photo above shows the mill during the 1930s, while the photo at the right shows some of the deterioration that has set in. Graves says that consulting carpenters have told him the mill is restorable and that some of the carpentry could date as far back as 1760. One of the most interesting features of the mill is the large wheel with wooden cogs, shown at the top of the right bottom photo.



Since Last We Talked...

Litchfield Saved



Audrey Hutchison, who, with her husband Andy, has purchased Litchfield, is surrounded by a forest of true 4" x 4" studs used to support the walls of Litchfield. Note the diagonal braces integrated into the studs, which stabilize the walls. The couple plans to disassemble the house and re-erect it on their property in the county.



Ann Miller, the Society's consulting Architectural Historian, examines a piece of newspaper dated 1854 that was found between the studs at Litchfield. Debris deposited over the decades by "critters" was packed as solid as R-45 insulation and probably served about the same purpose. The elegant house, although suffering from neglect, is sound.



The Society ran the above advertisement in the Orange County Review to test whether it would be worth it to promote "Remembering: A History of Orange County, Virginia" through newspaper advertising. The test was inconclusive because in the two days after the ad, we sold almost exactly the number of books required to pay for the ad itself. However, a number of people told us they saw the ad, so the exposure was probably worth it.

Since Last We Talked...

Two Document Evaluations Underway

Experts are currently evaluating two document collections for the Society to determine what should be kept and what can be disposed of safely. Documents found in the attic of the Virginia National Bank have been scrutinized by Mary Parke Johnson, a professional conservationist, while experts from the Rappahannock Railroad Association are reviewing Southern Railway System documents found in the old Orange County Review building. Motive behind the two projects is to determine whether the documents would be of use to researchers interested in the social and economic history of the county.

Walker to Appear on Public Access Channel 13 Telethon

Frank Walker will appear Sunday, May 16, in an 8-minute segment of Channel 13's Telethon, to talk about the mission of the Orange County Historical Society, during which we expect he might mention his book. He is scheduled to appear just after 4:30pm. Channel 13 is available only in parts of Orange County.

Membership Growing at Brisk Clip

Paid memberships (other than Lifetime) stand at 227, a 3-year high for this time of year. Twenty new members have joined since January I and 80 lapsed members have renewed. There is a pool of 508 (including Lifetime and Honorary members) people who have belonged to the Society at some time in the last five years. We are presently contacting all on that list who have let their membership lapse for whatever reason.



Whatever Happened to the Paintings of George Frankenstein?

At the April 26 member meeting, Dr. Stephen Cushman, Mayo Distinguished Teaching Professor in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Virginia, presented a fascinating and highly personal view of the Civil War, with an emphasis on the Battle of the Wilderness. We'll have a fuller report in our next newsletter, but we would like to share one part of his presentation with you now. Dr. Cushman has recently become interested in the paintings of George Frankenstein, a professional artist from Cincinnati with a mysterious record of service in the Union Army during the Civil War. Frankenstein was hired to paint battlefield scenes after the war and by 1880 had produced 150 paintings, which were sold at auction in New York City. Of the 33 known paintings, 24 are owned by the Park Service, of which eight are of the Fredericksburg Battlefield and three are of the Wilderness. Dr. Cushman showed those three at the meeting and one, Todd's Tavern, is shown above. Dr. Cushman notes that the amount of undergrowth and vegetation shown in the three paintings suggests that the extent of the forest fires generally attributed to the Battle of the Wilderness is most likely exaggerated. If anyone knows the whereabouts of any of Frankenstein's other paintings, please contact the Society. While Frankenstein painted with oils, the colors are very subtle and soft, almost watercolorish in effect.

Newsletter

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With this issue, the Newsletter begins a period of experimentation with style and content. Our purpose is quite simple: to produce a substantive and enjoyable newsletter that will appeal not just to our members living in Orange County, who can attend most of our regular meetings, but also to those many members, now numbering over 50, who live outside the immediate area. Their primary contact with the Society is the Newsletter and we want to make sure they value it enough to keep their membership current. We can't promise you that we will stay with this particular format; that will depend upon what we hear from you, the membership, wherever you live.

The improved graphics and expanded coverage of this issue of the Newsletter was made possible by a generous gift from Mr. and Mrs. Alan L. Potter of Palm City, Florida. Member donations make it possible for us to continue our efforts to produce a better and better Newsletter.

-Warren Dunn, Executive Director

Can Anyone Help Identify These Headstones?

Ms. Clare Dove of Vienna, VA, is asking our help in identifying the cemetery containing these fieldstone headstones, which are on their property, known as Greenhill Farm on State Route 614, Governor Almond Road. There are at least 19 headstones in the cemetery and each has only three or less initials chiseled into some of them. The initials on the stone on the right could be "POD" and on the other "FRD". She is curious as to whether there is any record of this cemetery and speculates that the cemetery might be a slave cemetery, or one holding victims of the Civil War, or an epidemic or famine. Can anyone help her? Contact her at 9605 Clarks Crossing Road, Vienna, VA 22182, or let us know and we'll get hold of her.

