

# Newsletter

## Orange County Historical Society

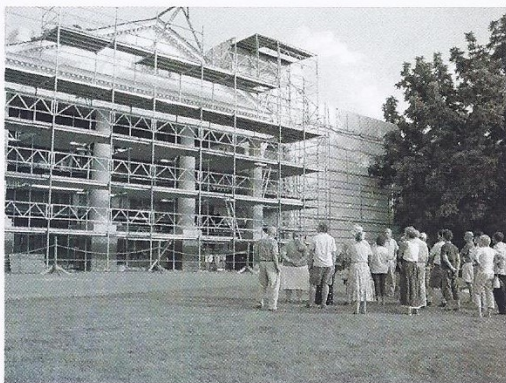
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### Summer Picnicking

Lynne Lewis & Frank S. Walker, Jr.



Lynne Lewis

#### A Peek at the House Under Wraps

On June 27, more than 90 members and guests convened at Montpelier, home of James and Dolley Madison, for the first picnic of the season and the last chance to see the “innards” of the main house. Although we have often visited President Madison’s home, the June event provided the unique opportunity to see the main house before the behind-the-woodwork phase of restoration is complete and the inner structure is once again covered from view.

As one approaches the front of the main house the portico is visible, but the balance of Montpelier is still under the wrapping that has protected it and the artisans working on it from the elements for almost a year.

Four groups were led on fascinating behind-the-scenes tours by Michael Quinn, Executive Director of Montpelier, John Jeanes, Director of Restoration and Ann Miller, Research Historian. These small group tours were enjoyed so much that at 9 p.m. some of us were gently shooing people home. Everyone had a wonderful time, learned a great deal, and was most appreciative of the hospitality shown by the Montpelier staff.

If you weren’t able to attend this event, there is still time to visit Montpelier and see some of what we saw on your own. Montpelier is open seven days a week, from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Admission is charged. The last of the wraps will come off sometime this fall.

#### Locust Hill in Locust Dale

The July 25 picnic meeting attracted almost 100 members and friends of the Society away from their surely more comfortable surroundings into one of the hottest and most humid evenings of the summer. Luring us into the Virginia “stewmidity” was the opportunity to visit and learn about Locust Hill, the residence and farm property of Mike and Betty Long in Locust Dale, Virginia. We were more than compensated for our discomfort. The Longs have spent the last several years sensitively remodeling and restoring the historic house and outbuildings and have developed the farm acreage into a splendid equine facility. They have created one of those jewels of an estate property whose positive influence on a community extends well beyond its boundaries. We who live here are in their debt.

During the presentations, we learned about the history of the property, much of which involves members of the huge Larkin Willis family of Orange and Madison counties. Betty Long is a descendant, and her grandparents had owned Locust Hill before her. She had spent much time on the property as a youngster, and her pride in now being connected with Locust Hill’s heritage was a pleasure to see.

The Longs graciously invited us to walk through virtually every structure on the property, and the time allocated to presentations was accordingly kept short. It was a delightful evening, and everyone had a wonderful time, thanks to our hosts.



Lynne Lewis

## The Wilderness McDonald's

### Unique in All the World

*Frank S. Walker, Jr.*

When Mr. Eddie Williams was planning to build his McDonald's store at the Routes 3 and 20 intersection, he was approached by the National Park Service, the Friends of Wilderness Battlefield, and the Orange County Historical Society. They asked him to consider building something that would be more reflective of the history of its surroundings than the usual "anywhere in America" franchise design. To this day there are no Orange County ordinances requiring that such respect be shown, and Mr. Williams was under no obligation to even hear the requests. But to his credit, he did. The end result was a store whose design and materials produced a look that blends with its surroundings. (By comparison, when the adjoining Sheetz was planned, the same requests were made and flatly refused.)

Some of the interior decor of the Wilderness McDonald's was also created to reflect the Civil War history of the area. There had even been some talk about the possibility of having pictures on the walls depicting local historical scenes, but it was finally decided to wait on that for a while. So, the Wilderness McDonald's opened in November 2001 with a part unique, part "anywhere in America" interior. In 2005 that changed.

Carolyn Elstner, the Ellwood Committee Chair of the Friends, was particularly interested in changing the pictures, and she and Frank Walker of the Society submitted some illustrations for Mr. Williams to consider. Then everybody got busy with other things, and the project slipped to the back burner for a while. Over that time, however, Mr. Williams and his Wilderness store became good friends and supporters of Ellwood, and during the recently-concluded Ellwood Phase I Capital Campaign, Mr. Williams, the Friends, and the Society found themselves back on the subject of the store's pictures.

With Mr. Williams' all-important approval and financial backing, the project moved ahead. The Friends, the Park Service, and the Society provided the illustrations, Mr. Walker wrote the captions, and Ms. Elstner oversaw creation of the framed prints. The end result is a McDonald's which is like no other. On one wall is the steam engine from the Vacluse gold mine. On another is Winslow Homer's *Skirmish in the Wilderness*. On another, Ellwood. One that probably will interest locals a great deal is a Park Service photo taken in the late 1800s looking west into Orange County from the ruins of the Wilderness Tavern. You look along the narrow, rocky, dirt roadbed of the Orange Turnpike and into the hollow where the Wilderness McDonald's now stands. Stop by, see them all, and spread the word: We've got a McDonald's that knows where it is—and where it is, is like no other place in the world.

## OCHS Joins Coalition

*Jack Miller*

Of all local government activities, the Planning and Development function most profoundly affects our lives. How a community plans (or doesn't plan) its land uses shapes its physical and human development. Successfully implemented, a comprehensive plan can define the numbers, age and wealth characteristics of the population of the community; its infrastructure of roads, water and sewers; its public facilities of schools, libraries, and police and fire stations; its mix and aesthetics of commercial and residential structures and agricultural and open spaces; its historical, recreational and cultural attractions; and, gasp, the level of taxes. In short, the planning and development function overarches all government operations.

Orange County is now engaged in updating its Comprehensive Plan of development, a "visioning" guide to its desired evolution over the next 20 years. The county has held a series of meetings to solicit public input and expects to unveil the plan sometime this Fall. This work is being conducted in an environment of sharply mounting development pressure. While the existing comprehensive plan postulates that a 2% population growth rate is sustainable, the actual current rate of growth is double that, driven primarily by current "by-right" rules. Proposals for over 8,000 new units of housing, a 50% increase over the existing housing stock, are now pending and many more developer applications are certain to follow. This explosive growth, of course, flies in the face of the survey where the vast majority of residents responded that they wanted to preserve the rural character of the county.

Moved by our mission to preserve the historical assets of the county, the Board of the Orange County Historical Society has voted to join with many other organizations in a coalition to review and assist in the recasting of the Comprehensive Plan of Development. We also intend to consider the ordinances necessary to implement and undergird the comprehensive plan. This latter need was made painfully clear when our new neighbor, Advance Auto, brushed aside our appeal for aesthetic considerations similar to their facility in Charlottesville, responding that they were not required to do so under our existing ordinances.

The Coalition we joined goes by the title "Orange Growth Solutions". I urge members to visit the website at [www.orangegrowthsolutions.org](http://www.orangegrowthsolutions.org) for news and announcements of important meetings. The coalition encourages questions, comments and recommendations.

## Dr. George Bagby's Visit to Montpelier in 1871

(A Previously Unidentified Bagby Article)

As has been noted in previous newsletters, the 19th-century Virginia writer and humorist Dr. George W. Bagby had a long association with Orange County, including residing at the Litchfield farm near Madison Run in 1868-1870. After he moved to Richmond in mid-1870, Dr. Bagby wrote a series of articles on Virginia life for the Philadelphia-based *Lippincott's Magazine*. In his 1927 biography *Dr. George William Bagby: A Study of Virginian Literature 1850-1880*, author Joseph Leonard King, Jr. identifies the known pieces in this series (which ran intermittently from June 1871 to April 1873), stating that Bagby used the pseudonym "Richard B. Elder" for them. Although the March and May 1872 articles are noted, the one for April 1872 is missing from King's list.

Recently, an April 1872 *Lippincott's Magazine* article describing an unidentified traveler's visit to Montpelier in 1871 was acquired by the Montpelier Foundation as part of its ongoing historical research efforts. Upon reading the article, Montpelier consultant (and Society Research Historian) Ann Miller recognized Dr. Bagby's inimitable style. Although the article was not signed with a full name, the author's initials: "G. W. B.," along with the stylistic "signature" and the information from the King biography, serve to confirm the author's

identity and identify this article as a previously uncredited Bagby work.

Many of the people and scenes noted by Dr. Bagby are readily identifiable. The "gentleman living in the neighborhood" may be Col. John Willis, Madison's great-nephew, who had a lifelong familiarity with Montpelier. "Mr. Chisholm" the "architect" can be identified as Hugh Chisholm, not an architect as we understand the term today, but the brickmason for the 1809-1812 enlargements to the house. "Beasey" was the Madison's French gardener Beazee. Mr. [Benjamin] Thornton was one of the post-Madison owners of the property. The level back lawn, the temple-form ice house, the terraced garden, and the cemetery are still in place, as is the later bowling alley (probably built by the Carson family). After approaching the house from the rear, and being shown through by then-owner Frank Carson, Dr. Bagby accompanied him on a tour of the grounds, witnessing first the spectacular afternoon vista of the Blue Ridge from the front portico, and finally the always-impressive sunset from the same vantage point.

With the permission of the Montpelier archives, the article is presented below in its entirety.

Ann Miller

### The Home of Madison in 1871

"G. W. B." [George W. Bagby]

*Lippincott's Magazine* vol. 9 (April 1872), p. 473

Not Montpelier, but Montpellier. "What is your authority for that?" I asked a friend. His reply was, "Mr. Madison is the authority for spelling Montpellier with two l's. I have letters of his, written from his home, in which it is so spelt. Also I have letters of Mr. Jefferson addressed to him at Montpellier. The estate was named from the town in the south of France, and if you will examine Murray's *Guide-Book* or the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, you will find it so. The capital of Vermont derives its name from the same place, but the Yankees always spell wrong; and though, if you give them an inch they will generally take an l, they have voluntarily relinquished one in this instance."

Touching the history of Montpellier house, my friend, who was so smart and hard upon the Yankees, could give me no information. Howe's *Historical Collections* contains a wretched engraving of the house, but not a line of letter press in regard to the date of its erection, or anything concerning it. A cursory examination of Rives's *Life of Madison* disclosed no facts, perhaps because Mr. Rives unfortunately did not live to complete his work. The article on Madison in Appletons' *New American Cyclopaedia* does not, of course, touch the subject. All that I have been able to gather about the house was obtained from a gentleman living in the neighborhood, and that, as will be seen, is meagre enough.

In reply to my letter of inquiry, he says: "The original house, comparatively a small one, was built by James Madi-

son, Sr., the father of the President, and was the first brick house erected in the county of Orange. This was the nucleus, to which the present pile was added by Mr. Madison in the first term of his presidency. The architect was a Mr. Chisholm. Who planned the house I never heard, but presume that he and Mr. Madison did. Though finished in very plain style, the cost of the edifice must have been great for that period. Some of the late owners have very much modernized and improved its appearance. Many old buildings, stables, etc. have been removed. The ice-house was made by Mr. Madison, and was the first in the county. The anecdote of the old servant who could not be made to believe that ice could be kept through the summer, and who wagered his master a wild turkey against a drink of iced grog that it could not be so kept, is well known.

"The back lawn was laid out and leveled by the farmhands, I think. At a very late period there was an enclosure of palings in front of and very near the house, and all the change ever made in the front grounds was by the Messers Thornton, who greatly improved them by removing two small elevations. The natural beauty of the grounds superseded artificial efforts. At the time of my earliest recollection a Frenchman named Beasey had charge of the garden. I presume he laid it out. He certainly kept it in superb condition. I have a very distinct recollection of the trained peach

Continued on next page.

### Bagby Visit (continued)

trees and the luscious grapes. No alteration has been made in the garden, except to curtail it on the upper or lawn side, which was originally circular, but now has a boundary parallel to the line of the lower end. This also, I think, was done by old Mr. Beasey, with the aid of detailed farm-hands. The construction of that series of horseshoe terraces which makes the garden must have been a heavy job. The cost of these improvements was probably never known with accuracy, even by Mr. Madison himself.

And this is literally all that I have been able to learn about the home of the fourth President of the United States and one of the principal authors of *The Federalist*—so indifferent are Virginians to all things pertaining to the history of their great men. One would think that everything related to the personal history of a man who labored so earnestly and effectively to give the Constitution that form which, in the eyes of the larger section of the Union, at least, justified the war upon the seceding States, should be treasured with the greatest care, if not by Virginians, then by those who are more concerned than Virginians in whatever pertains to the “nationalization” of the country. Is it remembered that, in a letter addressed to General Washington before the meeting of the Convention of 1787, Madison proposed a scheme of thorough centralization; that he declared himself equally opposed to “the individual independence of the States” and to “the consolidation of the whole into one simple republic,” but was nevertheless in favor of investing Congress with power to exercise “a negative in all cases whatever to the legislative acts of the States as heretofore exercised by the kingly prerogative;” and finally that he went so far as to say that “the right of coercion should be expressly declared”? And is it forgotten that when he took his seat in Congress in April, 1789, he found himself compelled to oppose Alexander Hamilton, and, although he had warmly espoused the adoption of the Constitution, became convinced of the necessity of a strict construction of the powers which it conferred upon the general government; and that the famous resolutions of 1798-’99, offered in the Virginia Assembly by John Taylor of Caroline, “were drawn up by James Madison, but not then a member”?

If these things, on the one hand, are remembered, and those, on the other, are forgotten, what wonder that the American people should long since have ceased to inquire where Madison lived, and to care whether his ashes have or have not decent sepulture!

It was a hot afternoon when I set forth in an ambulance (vehicle of woeful memory, which has supplanted the old family carriage and stick-gig, once so common in Virginia) to visit Montpellier. The way led up hill and down dale through the fertile farms of Orange, and past the still charming homesteads that crown the uplands or nestle in

the secluded valleys of the South-west Mountains. Entering the estate through an old-fashioned gateway, I saw ample fields clothed with the luxuriant after-growth of the harvest. The only indication of our proximity to the renowned homestead was the presence, on a distant hill, of a tall obelisk in the family burying-ground. Here we alighted, and opening the iron gate, threaded our way through the lush periwinkles, not without fear of snakes, to the base of Madison’s monument. This is of granite, as simple as possible in its style, not above fifteen feet high, and bears the following inscription:

MADISON

Born March 16, 1751

Died June 28, 1836

Near it is a much smaller obelisk of marble, marked thus:

DOLLY PAYNE

Wife of James Madison

Born May 20, 1768

Died July 8, 1849

Both are as plain and unpretending stones as the humblest citizens could well have, and the latter (Mrs. Madison’s) seems far from substantial. Around them are other grave-stones of the ordinary pattern, inscribed with the names Marye, Conway, Macon, Willis and Lee—relatives and connections of the Madison family.

I lingered a while in the little brick-walled graveyard. Not a living being was visible. Everything was profoundly still and sad. Being told that the house was near at hand, though no sign of it could be seen, I walked onward, passing on the way a broken-down tobacco-house—itsself a monument of a crop no longer grown in Orange. The terraced garden already alluded to slopes upward from the rear, and so does the lawn adjacent to it, concealing the house perfectly until you are right upon it, when it takes you completely by surprise. Before the crest of the low hill is reached you pass a long, low wooden building, which proves to be a bowling-alley—not Mr. Madison’s, you may be sure, but the work of a later owner. A rod or two beyond the bowling-alley the rear lawn, level as a floor, carpeted thick with green sward and surrounded by tall trees of various foliage and beautiful forms, bursts upon you with truly scenic effect. “What a delightful place,” you exclaim involuntarily, “for archery, croquet, skittles or any kind of open-air sport, or for an afternoon promenade, shaded as it now is, cool and sweet, and oh, so still, so very still, for not a human being is visible and not a sound is heard!” Where are all the people?

Alas! Here are but few people to be seen. The bright and happy groups of homefolk, mingling with visitors from the North and from Europe, which graced this lawn in Mr. Madison’s time, assemble here no more.

*Continued on next page.*

**Bagby Visit (continued)**

Wondering much at the unbroken stillness and the absence of people, black or white, I moved onward to the back door. Mounting the steps of the porch, the floor of which betrayed in its untidiness the lack of female supervision, I plied the knocker again and again to no purpose. Tired of waiting, I cautiously opened the door, and found myself in a passage adorned with a magnificent pair of antlers and some fine old prints, such as the "Death of Montgomery," the "Surrender of the Garrison at Gibraltar," etc. While I was examining these prints, a young gentleman wearing an expression of the deepest melancholy approached.

"Where is your father?" I ventured to ask.

"My father is dead," said he in tones of deepest sadness, "but I will call my uncle."

So he did, and Mr. Carson, a whole-souled Irishman, who now owns the place, soon made his appearance and invited me into the parlor. This room is adorned with a handsome portrait of Madison, painted a few years ago in Philadelphia, some landscapes, a piano, marble centre-table, etc. I was not left long to inspect the parlor, for Mr. Carson was all enthusiasm to show me a new force-pump and to display its power. Accordingly, he hurried me to the door opening upon the front portico, and there, to my amazement, burst upon us a panorama which for beauty and extent is scarcely surpassed in all Virginia. The front lawn extending some two hundred yards to a large gate and hedge, disclosed beyond the hedge ample fields set thick in clover and enclosed with a semicircle of dark green woods, beyond which, at a distance of ten miles or more, stretched the mighty wall of the Blue Ridge Mountains literally athwart the whole horizon. Grand and expansive as the scene was, it was chiefly remarkable for the absence of human habitations. The forest appeared to be unbroken to the very base of the mountains. Clearings and dwellings there doubtless were in that vast expanse, but they were hidden by the golden haze. Montpelier looked forth upon this wide area of natural beauty solitary and alone, as might some castle of mediaeval times upon a baron's broad domains. A more impressive sight is seldom seen.

Mr. Carson forced me away from this splendid spectacle to witness the working of his new pump. Then I must see the gigantic chestnut trees, one of which was thirty, and another forty, feet in diameter; and not far away he led me to a hill overlooking a little dell carpeted with tenderest grass and shaded by nearly a hundred beautiful walnut trees—where fairies might dance and revel. Then to his garden, where we feasted on grapes, pears and figs, and then back to the portico to see the sun go down in glory behind the purple battlements of the Ridge, the sky all amber and orange, and the landscape fading, melting, glooming down through all the tints of the spectrum.

The picture of Montpelier House in Howe's *Historical Collections* is, as I have said before, simply execrable. The façade, though it does not rival Upper Brandon with its noble front of two hundred and forty feet on the James River, nor tower aloft like the castellated homes of the Bruces in Halifax county, is nevertheless sufficiently imposing for the residence of a President, and fits well into the magnificent landscape which it commands. The view from Monticello is no doubt more extensive and picturesque, but the soft beauty of the scenery around Montpelier can hardly be excelled. The contrast between the rear and front lawns is most extraordinary, and enhances the beauty of both. Behind the house you are secluded from the world in nooks and levels of greenery: in front the world bursts upon you in startling grandeur, but it is still the work of Nature, for the works of men's hands are scarcely visible. I know nothing like it, nothing quite equal to it. The house is built for the ages. There are seventy-two acres in the lawns. What a place for a student! What a home for a man of wealth and taste! What a summer resort it would make! for there is no healthier region probably in the world. What a site for a female college or a select school for boys!

Such were my inward exclamations as I turned to take a last lingering look. Strange that this exceedingly beautiful place is almost unknown! Tourists scarcely ever visit it. Thousands pass near to it on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, but not one in a thousand stops to take a look at it. James Madison is dead, and the work of his hands, the things that he established, or thought he did—this house and the Constitution of the United States—are forgotten quite. The boys and girls of the neighboring village come here sometimes to pass a summer holiday, and that is all. Virginians will not so much as make a pilgrimage from an adjoining county to look upon the home and grave of Madison. And Montpelier, like Upper Brandon and so many other grand old Virginia homesteads, is in the market. Sooner or later they will all go. Up with the hammer! Down with the homes and tombs of our mighty dead! 'Twas ever thus. "The fashion of this world passeth away."

Other sentimental comments were cut short by a lamentable discovery: one of the ambulance mules had eaten up half the rope which served as a rein. Here was a pickle indeed—darkness already come, steep rocky hills to descend, and no reins. But with a Virginia farmer's readiness, Mr. Carson soon produced a side of upper leather and a sharp knife: the rein was spliced, and for the next hour I was too busy jumping out to open the interminable succession of Virginia plantation gates to think or care whether James Madison ever had a home.

## Litchfield Update

As was noted in Ann Miller's article, Dr. George Bagby lived at Litchfield from 1868 to 1870. Recently, there was an article on Litchfield written by Jeff Poole, Managing Editor of the *Orange County Review*. It was published in the *Review* July 7, 2005, and just in case you missed it, and with Mr. Poole's kind permission, excerpts from that article are presented here.

*Lynne Lewis*

### Old House Gets New Home

*Jeff Poole*

Most people wouldn't know where to find the old Litchfield house unless they knew where to look. Hidden among a grove of mature trees stands the skeleton of a once stately 19th century home, long forgotten locally.

Even naked, the home is impressive—two full stories over an English basement, thick, locally cut timbers carefully notched and pegged.

Orange County's hills are rich with old, historic homes. Among them, though, Litchfield is unique. If for no other reason, than this home is being carefully dismantled, board by board, and reassembled elsewhere in the county.

Craig Jacobs operates Salvagewrights, a local company that specializes in carefully disassembling historic structures and reconstructing them in new locations.

Litchfield is on a tract purchased by the county when it created the Thomas E. Lee Industrial Park 10 years ago. During the following decade, the home's future has been in doubt.

"We worked to find a suitable user in the industrial park, but once St. Gabriel was told the state would not honor the tax incentives, the IDA allowed the firm to return the property," Orange County Economic Development Coordinator Stan Livengood said.

The IDA then entertained a potential buyer who planned to remove the house from the park and renovate it as a spa. That deal fell through.

"When we had the hurricane [Isabel] come through, we realized we needed to do something before the house fell down on its own," Livengood added.

The IDA put the home up for auction to the highest bidder willing to restore the historic home. Only three bids were received, with the highest, \$12,575, coming from Somerset residents Andrew and Audrey Hutchinson.

"A local family interested in protecting the community's historical foundations came forward with the best plan and the winning offer," Livengood added.

The Litchfield property was once a portion of the Montpelier plantation, according to Ann Miller's definitive local work of historical homes and properties [*Antebellum Orange*, now out of print but being revised and readied for reprinting in late 2005].



"The Litchfield house is a two-story frame dwelling, two rooms deep on either side of a central hall. The full basement formerly contained the dining room and wine cellar," Miller writes. "The original portion is the south portion of the house, probably built by William Cole soon after he acquired the tract (1818)."

After it was acquired by the Lee family in 1850, Litchfield was enlarged, with a north parlor and Italianate woodwork and a curving stair in the central hall. Later, an octagonal library was added to the rear of the house, Miller reports.

A private girls school operated in Litchfield during the Civil War years, Miller adds.

Jacobs is fascinated by the history he uncovers in old structures.

"I have a passion for old buildings - the techniques and the materials," he said. "All that stuff has a story. That's part of being from Virginia."

Jacobs and his crew are carefully dismantling the home, board by board. Each piece (except the clapboard siding and roof sheathing) are numbered and stored so they can be refitted accurately when the structure is reassembled.

"There is good joinery and they used good materials," Jacobs noted. "All the materials came from close by. I like their ability to work with what they had."

"I wouldn't want to say how long it's going to take going back up," he said.

"I'm very proud my firm was selected to assist this project," Jacobs said. "We are committed to protecting the nation's heritage and the craftsmanship that is represented in these magnificent structures. Best yet, I'm working on relocating a house in the community I grew up in. The whole project leaves me with a very satisfying feeling."

## Lord Fairfax, the #1 All-time Virginia Realtor

Frank S. Walker, Jr.

As more and more of the acres around us are carved into lots and sold, we see occasional pronouncements by various real estate organizations that someone had been a "top producer" in the recent past. While his/her total sales volume may not be stated, we may safely assume a multi-million dollar figure. All such people, however, stand a distant second to the man who owned and sold more Virginia land than they could dream of. In 1745, Thomas Fairfax, the Sixth Baron of Cameron, held title to 5,282,000 acres, and except for the few hundred thousand acres he gave away, he sold virtually all that land before his death in 1781. Now that's top producing!

How Lord Fairfax acquired and managed his acres is a story worth telling. It begins across the Atlantic and initially involves King Charles and the Culpepers, not the Fairfaxes.

Charles I was King of England when civil war erupted in 1642. On one side were Oliver Cromwell and his commoner Roundheads; on the other were Charles and his royalist Cavaliers. The Queen, Henrietta Maria, did not wait to learn the outcome. She was a French Catholic, a combination that offended Roundheads and Cavaliers alike. She may have also suspected that Charles' "leadership" would eventually doom his supporters. In any event, she took their young son and fled to France.

As the exiled heir apparent to the throne, young Charles was protected and financed by various royalists, seven of whom gradually became an inner circle of close companions, that included Lord John Culpeper and his brother. Meanwhile things went from bad to worse for Charles' father in England. Father Charles had abandoned his throne to seek the protection of family in Scotland. The lame-duck king evidently failed to endear himself to his kinsmen, for they soon turned him over to Cromwell and his Parliament who beheaded him in 1649.

Young Charles's protectors claimed the throne of England for their ward, but they did not yet have support to press that claim. Charles, possibly feeling more threatened, sought to bind the circle of seven to him more closely. He granted them all the land in the Virginia colony between the Potomac and Rappahannock rivers, all the way to their "headsprings." It was at the time a meaningless, empty gift because Charles didn't have the power and authority to make it.

Most of the seven thought little of Charles' gesture and continued to focus on being ready to secure power, wealth and revenge when England tired of the Roundhead rule and called for their king. The Culpepers, however, thought it might be worth something, and by the time their Charles became Charles II of England, the Culpepers owned all of the outstanding shares of that grant. Then, much to the surprise of many, the new King officially confirmed his earlier gift.

The grant, known as the "Northern Neck Proprietary," involved an unknown amount of land. It remained unexplored wilderness for most of the 17th century; then things began to happen.

By the late 1600s, the leaders of the Virginia colony began to realize that if allowed to stand, the Proprietary would take almost 25% of the colony's land east of the Allegheny Mountains out of their control. They began quietly working to defeat the grant. Meanwhile, in England the Fairfax family was by marriage and inheritance acquiring the Culpeper ownership of the Proprietary. With

the death of Lady Margaret Culpeper in 1710, merchantable title finally vested in a single person, Thomas Fairfax, Sixth Baron of Cameron. Since the Fifth Baron had virtually bankrupted the family, Lord Fairfax' plan for his Virginia lands was clear: sell them as quickly as possible.

Fairfax initially got Robert "King" Carter to be his Virginia agent. After Carter's death in 1732, he persuaded William Fairfax, an older cousin living in Massachusetts, to move to the Proprietary and attend to its affairs. William's report to Thomas on the tangled mess of finances and titles left behind by Carter, plus the now-open hostility of the colonial government to the Proprietary soon had Thomas on a ship to Virginia. He arrived in 1735, and in time the Fairfaxes built "Belvoir," a residence/Proprietary headquarters on the banks of the Potomac.

It soon became clear that the disagreements between Lord Fairfax and the colonial government were not going to be resolved outside of court, and the necessary lawsuit was filed. Both sides prepared maps of what they thought were the boundaries of the Proprietary. A significant issue in dispute was the western boundary. The colony's position was that even if King Charles' grant was upheld, the search for "headsprings" should not include the Rapidan River and its tributaries. Lord Fairfax argued for the Rapidan as his southern boundary, with the western boundary beginning at its headsprings. The suit began its slow trek through the legal system and eventually arrived in the Court of King George II for resolution. Finally, in 1745, the Privy Council issued an opinion favorable to Fairfax, and the King confirmed it by decree. Thomas Lord Fairfax did indeed own 5,282,000 acres of Virginia land. One disappointed petitioner grumbled that they could call it a "neck" if they wanted to, but to him it appeared that Fairfax had gotten the head and shoulders as well.

In 1746, per the King's decree, Fairfax arranged for the location and survey of the western boundary of his lands. That endeavor brought him into contact with a young apprentice surveyor named George Washington, and despite a 29-year age difference the two became strong friends. A portion of the "Fairfax Line" that was surveyed (N46°W) can be seen on maps of Virginia today. It is the boundary between Shenandoah and Rockingham counties and the northern boundary of that part of Rockingham County jutting into West Virginia.

As interest grew in the Proprietary lands in the Valley of Virginia, Fairfax decided to move there. In 1749 he got George Washington to survey off a tract near today's Winchester, and on it he built an unpretentious home called "Greenway Court." To mark the turn-off to Greenway Court from the main road, Fairfax had a post set in the ground and painted white. Today's settlement of White Post grew up at that intersection. As he had done at Belvoir, Fairfax continued to sell land to anyone with cash or good credit.

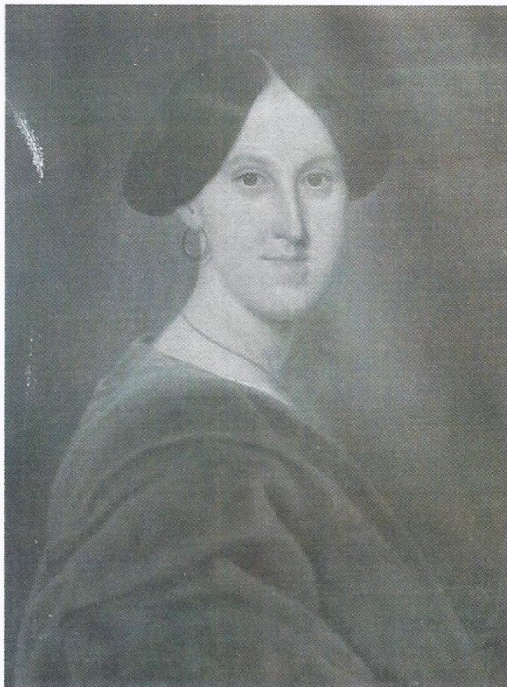
In the years that followed, tensions between England and its American colonies finally exploded into open rebellion. As an English Lord with relatives and properties in the home country, Fairfax dared not show support for the revolution. For those same reasons, he was also the object of some suspicion and occasional harassment from Virginia's government. Lord Fairfax, however, got

See Fairfax on page 8.

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## Mystery Lady in the Archives



Lynne Lewis

Can you help us identify this lovely lady? She is thought to have been painted in the mid-19th century by John Toole (1815-1860), an itinerant portrait painter who was active in Virginia and West Virginia from the late 1830s until his death. Irish-born, he and his siblings emigrated to America in 1827, coming to live with an aunt and uncle in Charlottesville. If you are interested, a more detailed biography of this apparently self-taught artist can be found at [www.nga.gov/cgi-bin/pbio?30700](http://www.nga.gov/cgi-bin/pbio?30700) (a website of the National Gallery of Art). Many long-time County residents have seen our portrait, but to date, no one knows who she might be.

## OCHS Executive Director Warren Dunn Resigns

Lynne Lewis

It is with great regret that the Historical Society announces that as of July 2005, Warren Dunn resigned his position as Executive Director. In the two years that Warren was with the Historical Society, his accomplishments were many and varied. He will be sorely missed. Pressing personal business, however, has precluded his staying.

One of Warren's most notable accomplishments is the newly improved newsletter, which we will continue, following his good example. Among the equally important, but perhaps less-visible contributions to the Society are a better awareness of the role a historical society can and should play within a community and a vastly improved office organization. His tireless energy and enthusiasm for new projects was most appreciated.

We are pleased to tell you, though, that Warren will stay involved with the Society, on a volunteer basis. We look forward to working with him in this new capacity.

## Fairfax (continued)

along well with his neighbors and had established a reputation as a fair and honest businessman. His friends, George Washington included, spoke for the now-elderly Lord, and he weathered out the revolution at Greenway Court.

Fairfax survived long enough to learn of Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown in October 1781, but he did not live out the year. He died at age 88, unmarried and childless, having devoted almost all of his adult life to the Proprietary and to the rescue of his family's fortunes. Following his death, most of what was left of the Proprietary reverted to the Commonwealth, and the story of Lord Fairfax and his lands began to fade. It should never be forgotten, however, that in the world of real estate sales Lord Fairfax remains unchallenged as Virginia's #1 all-time "top producer."