



Unison Preservation Society

NEWSLETTER

Working to Protect and Preserve our Historic Countryside

Creekbed on Quaker Lane, Unison, Virginia. Photo courtesy of Dara Bailey.

ISSUE TWO • 2015

• SPRING/SUMMER •

UNISON, VIRGINIA

The Rowdy Quakers of Unison

By Tara Connell

Ah, the peaceful, quiet Quakers of Unison. What a genteel, highbrow legacy for our lovely village. Well ... not so much.

The founding Quakers of Unison were basically a rowdy bunch of troublemakers. "The South Fork Quakers were difficult," confirmed Carolyn Unger in an e-mail. Mrs. Unger is a historian for the Goose Creek Monthly Meeting of the Society of Friends in Lincoln. You can almost hear her sighing. Their "crimes?" Horse racing through the streets. Gambling. Drinking. Marrying outside the faith. DANCING.

Oh. Yawn. Seems like last Friday night. But to many Quakers of the 1700s, this was bad stuff. To understand why, perhaps you will indulge some context. I mean beyond the fact this was the 18th century, Quakers were arguing amongst themselves about the tenets of their faith (drinking? No drinking?) and Unison was pretty much the edge of nowhere.

Where They Came from and Why

Quakers in the early 1700s were on the move. There were settlements throughout Pennsylvania (thank you William Penn), New Jersey and northeastern Maryland. But the population was growing and more land was needed. Families were moving downriver

from the Bucks County area of Pennsylvania and settling in Western Maryland and, finally, northern Virginia.

"The early settlements were all west of what is now Route 15, the Carolina Road, because the soil to the east was much poorer," said Paul Hodge, one of Unison's very own present day Quakers. These families tended to stay close, married within their tight knit community and had large families. Pretty soon, to shorten a couple of generations of Unison history, clumps of Friends all with wives and children that were related to each other, had founded the village and were living close together. Surrounding them was very little but trees, rocks, wildlife, bad roads, Native Americans, disease, death, and very hard work. Which meant, to get to Meetings, weddings, and other functions of the sort, families were traveling up to 40 miles through rather rough territory, according to *Ye Meetg Hous Smal, A Short Account of Friends in Loudoun County Virginia 1732-1980* by Werner and Asa Moore Janney.

This prompted the groups of Quakers as they settled in Fairfax and Loudoun counties to get permission from their home Meetings in Pennsylvania and Baltimore to hold Meetings closer to their homes. Baltimore, by the way, was the yearly

(or supervising) Meeting for all the Quakers in our area and it was of the strict, no drinking/no gambling strain of the faith at the time.

Waterford became the first designated Meeting in Loudoun, then Hamilton and Goose Creek (now Lincoln). South Fork, or Unison, began as the responsibility of Baltimore and the Goose Creek Meeting and stayed that way through most of its history.

It's a bit unclear, but both *Ye Meetg Hous Smal* and a report by Rivanna Archeological Services (RAS) done for a history of the Unison Battlefield, say the first Loudoun County Meeting to mention the South Fork Quakers was in 1745. The South Fork Quakers were granted a Meeting of their own in 1768. That is pretty clear.



Trouble

What also is pretty clear is that South Fork was a pain in the neck for its supervising Meetings—especially the Goose Creek Friends—almost from the beginning.

“Individual South Fork Meeting members were regularly charged with violations of rules of discipline including drinking, quarreling, fighting, and marrying outside of the Quaker faith. In 1787, Thomas Scattergood (a traveling Quaker minister)... commented ‘there appears to be much rawness,’ said RAS.

In *Ye Meetg Hous Smal*, another traveling minister is quoted saying “all they thought about at South Fork was cock fighting and horse racing. The Meeting’s worldliness caused concern, for it seemed its members drank to excess, fought, gambled, and in general were lax morally. Indeed, they were exceedingly lax; one member was disciplined because he ‘steals watermelons.’”

Things hadn’t quieted down by 1820. At a meeting of the Goose Creek Friends that year, five South Fork Quakers were named and shamed for their “improper use of Spiritus Liquors.” They were: William Smith, David Smith, William Piggot, Benjamin Bradfield and Stephen McPherson, said *Ye Meeting Hous Smal*.

By 1829, South Fork was feeling the effects of all this infamy. Membership was dropping precipitously. Visiting



Photos courtesy of Dara Bailey.

minister John Comley noted there were “but few friends there, the meeting was chiefly composed of Methodists and other denominations,” said RAS.

Oh dear.

Consequences

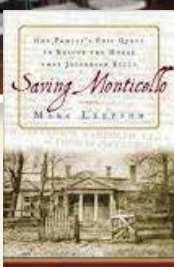
The salad days of rowdy Quakerism in Unison were fairly short-lived. Most of the 10-acres that was bought by the Quakers in 1771 for a Meeting House and graveyard was sold in 1868. The 25’ x 25’ Meeting House that opened

in 1785 was sold in 1916 after spending long years as a papered-over, tumble-down building. It was demolished some time after.

The only remaining trace today of the boisterous South Fork Quakers is their cemetery (shown above). Many of the names that were called out as rowdy or as good, upstanding and peace-loving citizens are there, on the west side of Unison Road as you go south from the village toward, appropriately, Quaker Lane.

It is still the responsibility of the thriving Goose Creek Meeting in Lincoln, and remains to some of the Friends what *Ye Meetg Hous Smal* describes: “a headache for Goose Creek four score and ten years later.” Seems fitting. ■

Lecture Series Kicks Off at the Unison Store



Local author Marc Leepson gave a lecture about his book, *Saving Monticello*, to local residents at the Unison Store on June 14.

The Unison Preservation Society recently launched the first in a series of lectures it plans to hold at the Unison Store/Community Center. The speaker in the first lecture was local resident Marc Leepson, who spoke about his book, *Saving Monticello*. This new lecture series is being organized by Unison resident and UPS Board member, Barbara Riggs. The plan is to hold a regular series of lectures throughout the year on a broad range of topics of interest to the Unison community. As Kim Hart notes in an article about plans for the Community Center on the next page, using the facility for this type of neighborhood event is one of the

top suggestions by community residents. Notices of future events will be mailed to area residents on a regular bases as well as posted on the UPS website unisonva.org.



Marc personally signed copies of his book after the lecture. Photos courtesy of Barbara Riggs.

Unison Store Renovations Update

By Kim Hart

After several months of working closely with Architect Kevin Ruedisueli of Waterford, on Saturday, April 25, the UPS Store Committee (Steve Chase, Tara Connell, Tom Hopkins, Tobin McGregor and Kim Hart) gave an update to a full house of interested neighbors gathered at the store in response to the call for a community meeting.

The meeting began by reviewing a long list of possible uses for the Unison Store in its new incarnation as a Community Center for the village (see sidebar). Current ideas include: community events and fund raisers (such as the continuation of Unison Day); craft and exercise classes (such as the currently very popular yoga and art classes); club or organization meetings; special meetings; and rentals for small parties, weddings, or receptions. Indeed, the center already is being used for small parties and rehearsal dinners.

In order to accommodate a growing list of possible public uses, the Store Committee has recommended that steps be taken to make the store handicap accessible (it is not at the moment) and that a second door be added at the back as a means of egress to meet fire safety

codes. The one bathroom also needs to be enlarged to be wheelchair accessible.

Along with the new back door, the Store Committee is also recommending that a large back porch be added. In addition to providing covered access for the door, the back porch itself can become a useful community space for small gatherings, or a space to be used in conjunction with the Village Green surrounding the store. For example, this can be a larger and more accommodating space for the bands that play at Unison Day.

Architect Ruedisueli provided two handsome renderings to help participants at the community meeting envision proposed changes. As shown in the drawing below, little is changed of the front of the building except that a handicap ramp has been added on the East (or right) side of the building. This ramp has been set behind a small knee wall and plantings so as to reduce the visual impact.

The second drawing on the next page, illustrating the proposed new back porch, shows how this porch might be added in a way that compliments and maintains the historic style of the original store.



Current and Proposed Uses for the Unison Store Community Center and Village Green



Community Events and Fund Raisers

- Unison Heritage Day
- Music on the Green/ Jam Session
- Croquet/ Volleyball and other lawn sporting tournaments
- Lectures/ Educational Series
- Art Show/Opening
- Easter Egg Hunt
- Christmas Party and Cookie Swap
- Interpretation of the Unison Battlefield

Regular Craft/ Light Exercise Classes

- Yoga/ Dance/ Music
- Painting/ Photography
- Writing/ Editing
- Gardening
- Needlecrafts

Regular Club or Organization Meetings

- Book/ Garden/ Riding etc. Clubs
- AA/Al-Anon/other
- Men's or Women's Clubs/ Scouts
- UPS Board Meetings

Special Meetings

- Business Meetings and Retreats
- Sales Team Retreats
- Candidate Rallies
- Project Planning Sessions
- Strategy Sessions

Individual Rentals and Catered Events*

- Weddings and Receptions
- Private Dinner Parties
- Picnics/Baby Showers
- Family Reunions
- Thanksgiving (when the house isn't big enough)
- Toddler Movie Parties (rain-outs)

*Note: Facility must be "friendly" to catering provided by off-site providers. No "heavy" cooking on site.



Initial, and very preliminary, cost estimates provided by three local builders suggests that the total budget for this proposed remodeling, including construction, design fees, modest landscaping, and a 10% contingency, will be about \$200,000.

Before fund raising can begin, likely this coming fall, the Store Committee will be meeting with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources over the summer to determine what portion, if any, of these proposed remodeling costs can be reimbursed through the use of Historic Preservation Tax Credits.

If you have comments or ideas, please send them to unisonstore@gmail.com. Also, to find out how to reserve the community center for community meetings and small private functions, send an e-mail to this same address. ■

The above drawing shows a new back porch to allow for expanded use of the building and Village Green.

2015 Unison Heritage Day Saturday, October 31

Please join your friends and neighbors for our annual Unison Heritage Day on Saturday, October 31, from 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. at the Unison Store and Community Center. Bid on over 150 items in the live and silent auctions, enjoy some of the best barbecue in Virginia and fresh oysters on the half shell, and most importantly, come and have some fun! Bring family and guests to enjoy our beautiful countryside and village life and listen to authentic bluegrass music on the store front steps. And don't wait for evening to start Halloween. We'll have prizes for children twelve and under with the best Halloween costumes!



Last year one of the most popular live items was a dinner party for ten (pictured above) prepared by local residents Flora Hillman and Owen Synder and served at the the Unison Store/Community Center with the able assistance of several UPS Board members. Long time Unison resident, Mayo Brown, won the bidding. This spring he and his guests enjoyed an elegant dinner of asparagus soup, salad with smoked duck, local bison ribeye steak, potato puffs au gratin, mango sorbet and much more.

This year the dinner party will be auctioned off once again as well as a unique fly-fishing trip with a gourmet picnic for two on one of Virginia's blue ribbon trout streams, the perfect gift for any occasion. Inside the store you will discover auction items for restaurants, B&B stays, paintings, pottery and jewelry by local artists, gorgeous wine gift baskets, as well as a fabulous Hermes scarf. Last but not least we will auction off a surprise trip that everyone will want to bid on! In year's past we have had trips to Paris, France and Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Richmond Report: Changes to the Land Preservation Tax Credit

By Michael Kane



The winter issue of the UPS newsletter contained an article on possible changes, some of them quite drastic, to the Virginia Land Preservation Tax Credit (LPTC) which essentially allows property owners to give up the development rights to their land in exchange for tax benefits. Mike Kane of the Piedmont Environmental Council updates us on what actually happened on this matter in Richmond this spring. Obviously, this is an issue that directly affects land owners who want to put their property into conservation easement, but it also affects anyone who lives in the Unison neighborhood because it helps preserve the open spaces surrounding us and the lifestyle it affords. The southwest corner of Loudoun County has one of the highest concentrations of land in easement in the United States, but as discussed in previous articles in the UPS newsletter, attitudes among officials at both the state and county levels are changing towards tax benefits associated with open space and land preservation.

It has been a tight-budget year in Richmond, and Governor Terry McAuliffe signed into law several important changes to the Virginia Land Preservation Tax Credit (LPTC), in March. The LPTC is an incentive program that is widely regarded as the most successful program in the nation for spurring the preservation of private lands through conservation easements. The changes are designed to limit the impact of the program on the state budget.

The new law retains key elements of the LPTC program, most notably, the ability of a conservation easement donor to claim credits up to 40 percent of the value of the easement and the ability to transfer or sell the credits to another Virginia taxpayer.

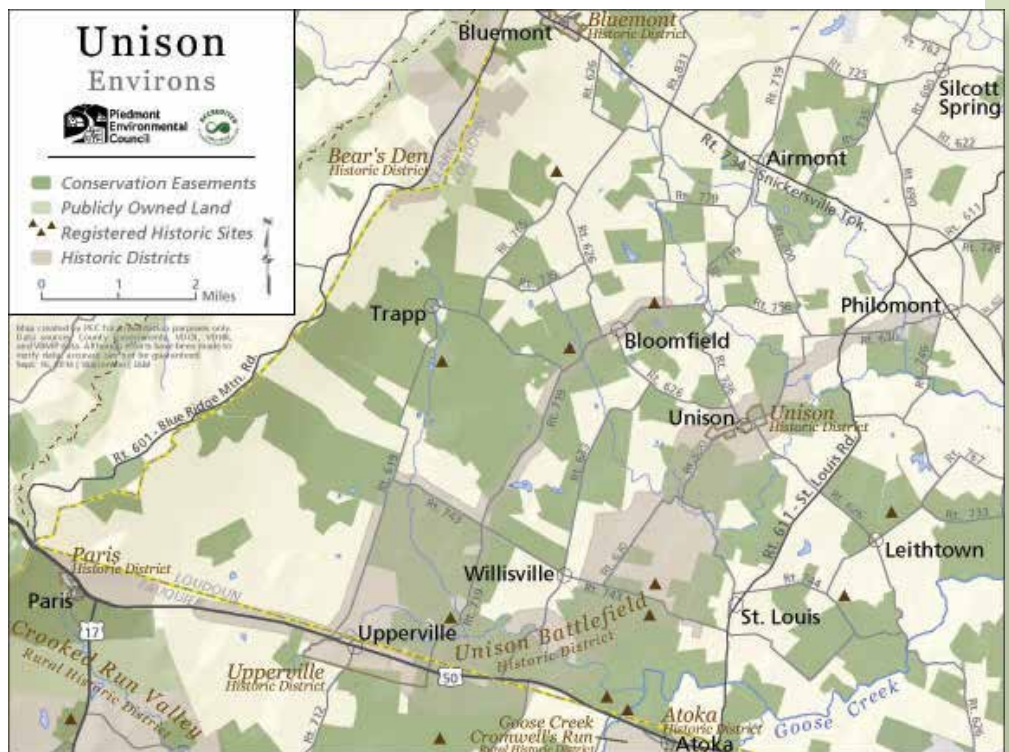
But, a significant change under the new law limits the amount of tax credits that can be used by an individual taxpayer in any one year. While a taxpayer could use up to \$100,000 (\$200,000 per married couple) to offset Virginia income taxes owed in 2014, the new law limits a taxpayer to using \$20,000 (\$40,000 per married couple) in 2015 and 2016. Then, beginning in 2017, a taxpayer may use up to \$50,000 (\$100,000 per married couple) per year to offset Virginia income taxes owed.

A second notable change to the program is the new law lowers the total number of credits that can be claimed per year from \$100 million to \$75 million.

The importance of how the LPTC program provides a meaningful incentive for land conservation in our area cannot be understated. Since the LPTC was created in 2000, the total acreage in the Goose Creek watershed that was permanently protected by conservation easements has more than doubled. Today, more than 88,000 acres—or about 36 percent—of all land in the watershed is conserved. State-

wide, landowners have used the LPTC to conserve over 540,000 acres, since 2000.

To keep up to date on legislation, funding and other public policy issues related to land conservation in our region, sign up for PEC's e-mail alerts or *The Piedmont News Email* at PECVA.org. Contact Michael Kane at 703-371-4373 to learn more about how you or someone you know can conserve their land. ■



Green areas on this map of Unison indicate land in conservation easement.



Unison Preservation Society Newsletter

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How to Support the Unison Preservation Society (UPS):

UPS depends upon contributions from people living in our community who want to preserve our historic village and the countryside surrounding it. Since the UPS is a not-for-profit 501 (c) (3) corporation registered in Virginia, all contributions are tax deductible. Contributions should be made to the Unison Preservation Society and sent to the post office box listed above.

How to Reserve the Unison Store/Community Center

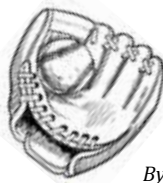
The UPS Community Center is available for small functions such as family reunions, meetings of local groups, classes and other events. To find out more about how to reserve the Center, please e-mail unisonstore@gmail.com.

Ideas for Newsletter Articles:

We are particularly interested in gathering material about Unison for future UPS newsletters. If you have ideas for newsletter stories, please e-mail us at unisonpreservsoc@unisonva.org.

Newsletter Design:

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By Mitch Diamond

The National Pastime Comes to Unison—and then Goes

Baseball first came to Unison and Loudoun County in the 1860s as returning soldiers from the Civil War brought home the game they had first played in camp. It rapidly became popular, and by 1869 when the new Leesburg team played Hamilton (in Hamilton), it was reported in the local papers in detail.

The game adopted its more familiar rules and equipment and became more organized too. An official Loudoun League was established in 1914 and by 1920 it included Leesburg, Purcellville, Round Hill, Lovettsville, Hillsboro, Aldie, Middleburg, Bluemont and Waterford. Newspapers reported each game in detail and noted that hundreds of fans showed up to watch the best local teams play.

Unison fielded its own league team for the first time in 1947, which included members from at least two long-time Unison families—the Crauns and Furr. Two from the former and four from the latter were on the team. They practiced and played on a diamond near the intersection of Bloomfield Road and Unison Road. Baseball was a big deal at the time.

The *Loudoun Times Mirror* had extensive write-ups of each game. For example, in 1949, the paper reported that 800 people turned out for a game between Middleburg and Unison under the lights in a new stadium in Purcellville. This was an impressive turnout for a baseball game considering that total population of Loudoun County then was just over 20,000. Unison lost 1-0.



Above: An early photo of Unison's baseball team.

The *Times* didn't use first names in the article, but a Craun was pitching for Unison. "It was a heart-breaking game for Craun to lose," according to the paper, "as he pitched a fine game, time after time stopping Middleburg's heaviest hitters." Most likely this was Bobbie Craun, who was a star pitcher for Unison. The Craun farm is just east of Unison on Foxcroft Road.

The Unison team had several successful seasons, but by the mid fifties it was not doing well and by 1957 the Unison team was gone and its best players joined other area teams. And not many years later, organized baseball, other than junior league play, vanished from Loudoun. ■



Music on the Green

August 30 at 4:00 p.m.

Chamber Music by Jason Labrador



Bring blankets, chairs, children, dogs, food and drink, and enjoy a summer afternoon among friends and neighbors on our Village Green next to the Unison Store.

Donations gratefully accepted. Please be generous. Your contributions help support these programs. Thank you!

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