

Turn of the Century Orange Main Street Postcards

From the Postcard collection of historian Lynne Lewis in a slideshow presentation entitled *Wish You Were Here*.¹



Main Street, looking East

The picture was taken in 1908 at approximately the corner of Caroline and Main streets (where the three-way stop signs are today). Note that the third building on the left is the Trinity Methodist Church.

¹ Lynne Lewis, "Wish You Were Here," Orange County Historical Society Presentation, November 27, 2017.



Main Street, looking East between 1900-1908

Looking east from the Orange Court House, built in 1858-59, which sits today at the corner of Main Street and Madison Road. The railroad tracks would be located down Main in the distance.



Main Street between 1906 and 1908

At the end of Main Street on the left is the tall roof of Dr. F. B. Perry's house at the corner of Main and May-Fray Streets. Dr. Perry was Mayor of Orange from 1895 to 1917. Also at the end of Main Street on the right is the white steeple of the Baptist church (before a new one was built at its present-day location).

From Duff Green in "It happened, but not recently":

"Little is known about the origin of the Orange Hotel which is seen at far left in this picture post card. I do know, however, that the photo was taken between 1906 and 1909. The 1906 date is confirmed because there were no picture post cards before that year; the U.S. Postal Service began its penny post card program in 1906 and the cards immediately became popular throughout the country. Ricketts Drug Store owner Lawrence S. Ricketts...hired a photographer to shoot dozens of scenes throughout the town and county and each had the name of his drug store on the front and back...I also know that the above photo could not have been taken after 1909, because the great fire of Orange took place on November 8, 1908 resulting in the removal of the hotel building. It just so happened that the blaze began in the second floor apartment above Ricketts pharmacy when Civil War veteran Col Towles Terrill fell asleep with a tobacco pipe in his mouth. He escaped the fire by the skin of his teeth and later admitted that he had caused the worst disaster in the history of Orange. The Coleman Hotel had put the Orange

Hotel out of business, so Ricketts bought the empty building on the corner opposite the courthouse. The pharmacist sold the Orange Hotel to men in Madison County who cut the structure into pieces, hauled them to Madison, put them back together and converted the building into a private residence...Ricketts began construction of his new drug store in 1909 on the site where the hotel had been. The burned-out Ricketts Drug Store was located on Railroad Avenue which was the highest priced real estate in town at the time. Ricketts had no idea that his new store would be located on what would later become the most valuable corner in town, called 'Ricketts Corner' instead of 'Courthouse Corner.'²



² Green, Duff. "It happened, but not recently." *Orange County Review*, date and page number unknown.

Main Street after the Great Fire of November 8, 1908, which burned most of Railroad Avenue, the commercial center of Orange at that time.



After the Great Fire of Orange this picture was taken just west of the Orange Courthouse and shows the intersection of Main Street and Madison Road.

Madison Road, Date Unknown
Postcard published by L.S. Ricketts, Druggists



This photograph was taken from the area of the Courthouse near today's Main Street and Madison Road intersection looking towards Culpeper.