

Orange Oracle

An electronic update from the Orange County Historical Society

The new Germanna

By Kelly Arford-Horne
Germanna Archaeologist/
Site Director

The rich tapestry of Germanna's past encompasses Indigenous peoples, English colonists, German immigrants and their descendants, as well as African and African American communities and more. Therefore, in July, the organization officially changed its name from the Germanna Foundation to Historic Germanna. This name better reflects the organization's commitment to understanding these historic communities, its deepening connections with diverse audiences, and its expanding role as a public history site in Central Virginia.

Accompanying the name change, Historic Germanna revealed a fresh visual identity with a new logo. The updated design features a graphic compass while retaining the organization's iconic script font and pentagon design of Fort Germanna. Historically, a compass guided voyagers to Virginia. Today



that same compass points to the numerous sites and resources under the Historic Germanna umbrella and represents the organization's deepening understanding of a shared history. The compass also calls to mind those individuals and communities who found themselves at a bend in the Rapidan River in the early 18th century. They arrived at Germanna from a variety of

places and when they left, they set off in as many different directions as they came.

Historic Germanna is currently working on multiple projects focused on learning and teaching the history of the people of Orange County. Germanna's archaeologists recently visited Lightfoot Elementary School to demonstrate how artifacts help us learn about people of the past. Germanna also continues to teach the next generation of historians and archaeologists through its internship program and by hosting an archaeological field school in col-

laboration with Virginia Commonwealth University. Other community collaborations include a project with Dr. Ashley Atkins-Spivey from the Pamunkey Indian Nation to gain an Indigenous perspective. Germanna also is pursuing research and working with the community to learn more about people who were enslaved on its properties.



PHOTO AND LOGO GRAPHIC COURTESY HISTORIC GERMANNA
Lightfoot Elementary School students learn about people of the past from Germanna archaeologists.



AV and streaming introduction and training sessions scheduled

The new equipment is in. The auditorium has been renovated. Now, we'd like to show it to you.

Stop by the Research Center on Saturday Sept. 30, from 9 to 10 a.m. for an OPEN HOUSE so we can introduce this magnificent new resource to you.

We hope this introduction will inspire you to become a volunteer to learn how to operate this new equipment. For convenience sake, we've scheduled three training sessions. Please choose which one you'd like to attend and then let us know by clicking on the appropriate link. Eight persons max per session.

> Oct. 6, 1 - 2:30 p.m.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FX8FT9W>

> Oct. 8, 2 - 3:30 p.m.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FX7M82R>

> Oct. 10, 7 - 8:30 p.m.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VQR8YD8>

Your attendance will be confirmed by email and we'll provide you with a "How to" manual in advance. All sessions will be held at the Research Center at 130 Caroline St., Orange. We hope to see you there!

Lend Your Voice: Survey seeks input, feedback on OCHS

We want to know how we can support and engage you at the Orange County Historical Society in 2023 and beyond. Will you please share your thoughts by taking our survey?

You may choose between a short (a few minutes) or longer (13 minute) survey. The long survey is for those interested in providing insight into their historical interests, cultural practices, and suggestions to improve OCHS.

Participation in this survey is voluntary and no questions are required. All responses to this survey will be kept confidential. Your response will not be used for any future solicitation. For those who completed a survey, no need to do so again.

> Click on the OCHS

Long Survey link

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XSOPNVF>

> Click on the OCHS

Short Survey link

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XR9GJOR>

Thank you!

Mark Hoerath, OCHS Outreach
Committee Chairman
mfhoerath@gmail.com

What is your legacy?

Did you know that you can designate the Orange County Historical Society in your will? Yes, your investment in the future of the Society will provide a long-lasting impact, ensuring that our mission is upheld. And it will help educate future generations of Orange County residents. Consult your attorney about including the Society in your estate planning. This can be completed quickly and easily. Charity begins at home but its impact serves our entire community.

2023 programs



> **Sunday, Sept. 24, 3 p.m.**

The History of Bloomsbury with Bethany Sullivan

> 11010 Bloomsbury Road, Orange

What may be Orange County's oldest still-standing dwelling has been opened to the public by appointment only. Don't miss this opportunity. Bring a picnic and a lawn chair. Rain and/or thunder cancels. Watch email or Facebook for details. A make-up date will be scheduled in 2024 if Sunday's program is canceled because of the weather.

> **Sunday, Oct. 15, 3 p.m.**

Descendants of Enslaved Laborers of UVA

A special joint meeting of OCHS and OCAHS to be presented by Dr. Shelley Viola Murphy, the Descendants of Enslaved Laborers of UVA Project Researcher. This program will be held in our newly renovated auditorium!

> **Sunday, Oct. 29, 3 p.m.**

Preservation Virginia (formerly APVA) Revolving Loan Fund with Gordon Lohr

Meet at the newly renovated OCHS Sandra Speiden auditorium at 130 Caroline St., Orange, VA. A dedication of the new auditorium will precede the program at 2 p.m.

> **Sunday, Nov. 19, 3 p.m.**

Berry Hill

> Location TBA

OCHS scanning event

The Historical Society is hosting a document scanning day! Join us at the Research Center at 130 Caroline St., Orange, on Saturday, October 21, from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. to get digital copies made of your historical documents.

This event is designed to meet two goals: first, we want to provide you with a digital copy of your document(s) so they are safe and cannot be damaged. The second goal is to benefit the collection of the Historical Society. We are asking that each scanned document be added to the digital research collections that we keep.

This will greatly increase our materials collections and help us continue to be the repository of Orange County history. This event is free and open to anyone to attend. Any documents are welcome.

Scanning event volunteers needed

We need at least three volunteers to help with this event; two as greeters to help traffic flow and one with a laptop and scanner. Contact Volunteer Coordinator May Saxton at maysaxton@gmail.com.

Outreach effort



PHOTO COURTESY PATRICK COLBY

Orange County Historical Society volunteers, Mike Saxton, Patrick Colby and May Saxton staff the organization's booth at the Orange Street Festival Sept. 9.

Virginia Slave Housing Project: a local look

By Phil Audibert

Our ears pricked up when we were filming at Woodley and Douglas Sanford, Steve's first cousin, started the program off with a presentation about the Virginia Slave Housing Project. He is a co-director of this Virginia Department of Historic Resources effort to document still-standing slave quarters and kitchens across the Commonwealth.

As of 2021, there were 27 confirmed structures in Orange County that are "slave-related," Douglas Sanford said.



PHOTO COURTESY DOUGLAS SANFORD

A slave house at Sharswood Plantation in Pittsylvania County that was featured on "60 Minutes" with Douglas Sanford.

Those 27 buildings represent a scant 2.3% of 1,176 "slave houses" listed in the 1860 census.

The reason my ears pricked up is that the house I've called home ever since 1974 is, according to the late

William H. B. Thomas, a typical slave duplex. So, we may now have at least 28 confirmed slave houses in Orange County — probably more!

Douglas Sanford can be reached at dsanford@umw.edu.

Frank Walker's new book: *Rural Virginia Reflections*

Orange County's historian emeritus, Frank Walker, has a new book coming out. It's entitled *Rural Virginia Reflections*, a collection of vignettes about farm life from 1930-



1980 at the Walker family farm, "Rosni," where Frank was born and raised. Copies will be available by subscription only for \$25.00. Subscription forms may be obtained at the Historical Society's Research Center or via email (info@orangecovahist.org). The subscription opportunity closes November 1, 2023. Place your orders as soon as possible, as there will be only one printing.

History-to-Go

Woodley

So far this summer season, OCHS is undefeated when it comes to program cancellation due to weather. The score is OCHS 4 - Thunderstorms 0. The most recent historical society program to claim victory over the elements was "A History of Woodley," presented by owner Steve Sanford. Sanford's family can trace its connection to this 1793 property to the 1850s. The program also included a talk by Sanford's first cousin, Douglas, about the Virginia Slave Housing Project. To view the entire program go to this link: <https://youtu.be/KM1dmVl-huus?si=veDF2nzZY7zoe08e>



Membership

Interested in Orange County history? Become a member of the Historical Society. Visit <https://www.orangecovahist.org/about-us.html>.