

Orange Oracle

An Occasional Electronic Update from the Orange County Historical Society

History-to-Go



Our next installment is the video documentary, "In the Season: The Edna Lewis Story." This is Phil Audibert's and Ross Hunter's first major collaboration (AHHA Productions). Produced originally in 2012 for the Orange Downtown Alliance Edible Fest, the documentary earned laurels from the Virginia Film Festival later that year.

It tells the story of Edna Lewis, the Grande Dame of Southern Cooking, from her humble beginnings in Free-town, near today's Lahore, to her meteoric rise as a chef and cookbook author (*The Taste of Country Cooking, In Pursuit of Flavor*). Edna Lewis put southern regional cuisine on the international culinary map. To view the documentary, just click on this link:

<http://youtu.be/2eAWbJWNSkM>

By the way, last month's History-to-Go ("Now This...Extras"), which featured the screening of a pre-recorded program followed by a live Q and A via Zoom was a moderate success with about a dozen people participating.

Orange Review Negative Film Collection

By Phil Audibert

A massive collection of 35 millimeter black and white film negatives has been donated to the Historical Society by the *Orange County Review*. The vast majority of these



photographs were taken by former *Review* owner and editor, R. Duff Green. They are organized by publication date



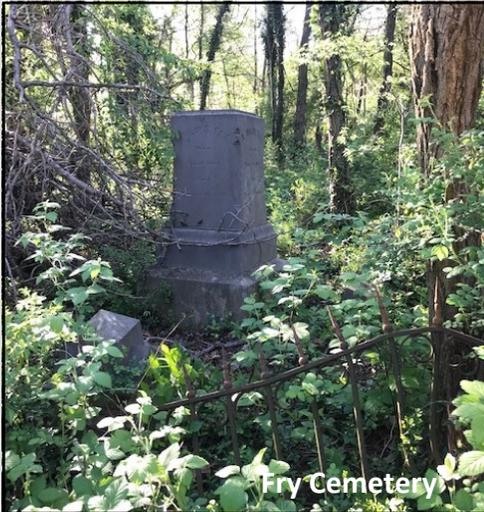
and sometimes by subject. The image at left shows a typical entry, where the subject was handwritten on an envelope. The example shown here (July 24, 1961) dates from exactly 60 years ago. It documents the opening of the new post office and lace factory in Gordonsville.

When I was a cub reporter for the *Orange Review* in the mid-1960s, I remember this filing system well. There are even a few of my photographs in it, including a terrifying shot I took at a KKK rally which appears in the documentary "Someday."

Due to the fragility of film, this invaluable collection is not yet available to the public but will be in the future. Meanwhile, it must be catalogued and digitized by scanning the negatives as positive images, a task that will take months. This collection gives us a fascinating insight into daily life in Orange County from the mid-1950s to the present.

From our mailbox

Editor's Note: A discussion about cemeteries in Orange is generating potential for an article in the fall edition of the Record.



James Luther tells us that "Philip Fry Clerk of the Court, his wife and a couple of his children, one of which was killed at 2nd Manassas are buried here. The cemetery is still in the Fry family. I recently surveyed the land and found one of the corners to the cemetery. I set the missing corners. It is 25 feet square per the 1904 deed."

Ray Ezell writes, "I have previously (archaeologically) surveyed the Fry cemetery and the cemetery adjacent to the high school (Selma) in years past, which amounted to a condition assessment and potential of additional unmarked graves. I know about the Greenfields cemetery (from the curious concrete enclosure with no opening) as well, but have not had the chance to perform a professional survey. By the size of the enclosure (approx 40' X 60'), it has the potential to hold numerous graves."



From the Vault

By Ray Ezell

This month's column highlights this large format photograph of 139 employees of the American Silk Mills in the Town of Orange. The caption indicates that it was taken on August 8, 1936, at a company picnic at Fairview Beach on the Potomac River (King George Co.). The main pier can be seen in the background of the photo, and the group was photographed by Hollywood Studio of Fredericksburg. There are no names recorded for those in this photo, but maybe you know who some of these individuals are?

The American Silk Mills was established in Orange in 1929 adjacent to the West Virginia Timber Company (now American Woodmark) on Madison Road. The nascent Orange County Chamber of Commerce played a significant role in attracting the company to Orange. It began operation with about 150 employees. The dedication ceremony was attended by local, state, and federal dignitaries, including Gov. Harry F. Byrd.

As evidenced by the photograph, the Mills employed mostly young men and women, and the effects of the Great Depression were substantially blunted in Orange due to its presence here.

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 and contributions
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