

Orange County Historical Society *Record*

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WITH THE ADVENT of spring, and the melting of the snow (at last), thoughts turn to the great outdoors, and to travel. We have the privilege of living in an area of great beauty, replete with history and with opportunities to visit that history while enjoying the beauty. But we are not the first, nor shall we be the last, to do this. As you will see below, in a brief introduction to this issue of the *Record*, our new Director of Tourism for Orange County tells us that Virginia has been a 'tourist' destination for quite a long while. Following her introduction, two of the many famous visitors to grace our county are featured.

Virginia's Early Visitors

Lynne Lochen, Orange County Tourism Director

When a weary group of Virginia's early visitors set foot on her shores in 1607, they were so grateful to be out of harm's way on the high seas that they immediately erected a wooden cross and thanked God for a safe crossing. It was only then that they began an exploration of their surroundings, and it would be safe to say that what they found did not meet their expectations. After all, their reception was less than cordial. The native people were suspicious at best, the climate was unforgiving, food was scarce, and the accommodations, well, there weren't any. Certainly, it wasn't what the "gentlemen" listed on the passenger list had been led to believe by the Virginia Company back in England. In probably one of the first tourism marketing campaigns, people were led to believe they would arrive here and merely have to scoop up the gold and jewels off the beaches, or maybe they would even find a short-cut to the Orient with all its riches. More ships filled with hopeful visitors would arrive over the next few years only to find similar dismal disappointment.

Even after the Virginia Colony stabilized and began to prosper, it probably wouldn't have seemed like an inviting place for travelers by modern standards. Travel by road was difficult and sometimes impossible. Thankfully, Virginia's abundant creeks, streams, rivers and other waterways became the highways of the time. Accommodations took the form of Taverns, Inns and Ordinaries. To protect the traveler, these colonial "hotels" were strictly regulated by the County courts. Tavern keepers had to post bond to obtain a license and then had to abide by a host of rules including price controls. Typical rules stated that a tavern had to provide food, drink and lodging for a man, his servant, and his horse. When a guest checked in, he would rent bed space which meant precisely that—a space in a bed. Privacy was unknown, and often the guest paid the same amount for his horse to spend the night in the stable as he did for his own space. A far cry from Orange's award-winning hotel and luxurious Bed and Breakfasts!

Today, visitors to Virginia number in the millions and their economic impact is huge. Virginia tourism generated over \$19 billion in revenue and supported over 210,000 jobs for the Commonwealth last year. Unlike the earliest attempts to attract travelers here, today's marketing campaigns highlight what's really here, and visitors' expectations are not only met, they are exceeded. Industry experts repeatedly report that heritage tourism is a strong niche market, and that today's traveler seeks out historic sites as well as natural, scenic beauty. Last year, the Blue Ridge Parkway (not a mall or an amusement park) was the number one attraction in Virginia. This is a wonderful trend for Orange County which sits in the midst of one of the most beautifully scenic, historically significant regions in the state. And, unlike those first visitors, today's travelers will be graciously welcomed and won't be disappointed!



Marines place the Presidential Wreath at James Madison's grave during the commemoration ceremony at Montpelier on March 16, Madison's birthday.

Paul Donohue

The Marquis Comes to Orange County

Frank S. Walker, Jr.

His name was Marie Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier, and he inherited the title of Marquis de Lafayette. Everyone in America, however, knew him as "The Marquis de Lafayette," or "the Marquis," or simply "Lafayette." Later "The General" became another title. Names aside, who was this man, and what was there about Orange County that brought him here initially in 1781 and again in 1824 and 1825?

At age 14 Lafayette joined the French army. He was charming, capable, and well-connected, and he quickly established himself as a highly regarded officer. Soon he and the rest of Europe heard the first rumbles of a war between England and its North American colonies. In those rumbles, Lafayette heard his life's calling: Go serve the cause of freedom.

Lafayette offered his services to Silas Deane, an American agent in Paris, and in December 1776, he agreed to being commissioned a Major General in the American Army. Lafayette thus became the youngest person ever to hold that permanent rank in the history of the American military. (He had turned nineteen barely three months earlier.)

In 1781 a British force was sent to the Virginia Tidewater to tie down the colony's manpower and destroy military supplies. More redcoats soon arrived, and local militias were powerless to stop them. To help deal with the threat, Lafayette and a detachment of infantry were dispatched from New York. In Maryland, he stopped and arranged for a personal loan of £2,000 to buy shoes and hats, and especially linen cloth that local ladies made into summer uniforms. The loan was to be paid after he was old enough to receive an inheritance due him.

After initially stopping the British south of Richmond, the outnumbered Colonials began a slow, strategic retreat towards the Orange/Culpeper/Fredricksburg area, where they had been promised reinforcements. The last week of May 1781 found Lafayette near today's Spotsylvania/Caroline border. On June 3, Lafayette's troops moved into eastern Orange County. In her memoirs, Betty Jones Lacy of Ellwood recounted the family history that Lafayette's men camped overnight on a nearby hill and that Lafayette and his officers were entertained by her father William Jones in the residence then standing on the property.

Cornwallis broke off his pursuit and stopped in Louisa County. He wasn't going to be able to stop Lafayette from being reinforced, and his troops were needed elsewhere. He began withdrawing to the ports in the Williamsburg/Yorktown area.

Lafayette ordered his troops to re-cross the Rapidan into Orange County at Raccoon Ford and bivouac around Rhoadesville for the night of June 8-9, 1781. The effect he created on Rhoadesville is hard to overstate. Rhoadesville residents began calling their settlement "Lafayette," a custom that went on for years. When the narrow gauge railroad running between Orange and Fredericksburg went into operation in the 1870s, the station there was called "Lafayette Station" until 1926. Lafayette also had the road between Rhoadesville and the North Anna widened to permit his men and wagons to move more easily. That road, Route 669, continues to be called the "Marquis Road" to this day.

Lafayette did everything he could to make it appear that he was forcing Cornwallis to retreat, helping to attract both supplies and militia reinforcements to his army. He also messaged the combined Colonial and French armies in New York to come help him bag Cornwallis. At Yorktown on October 21, 1781, they did just that, effectively winning the American Revolution.

As soon as the peace treaties were signed in 1783, Lafayette sailed for France. In the early fall of 1784, however, he made his first return visit to America. While here, he journeyed to Richmond and addressed the Virginia Legislature in November 1784, but nothing has been found to indicate that he made a specific visit to Orange County.¹ He left for France in late December.

Lafayette had returned to France an international hero, but his fortunes, financial and otherwise, declined steadily as the years passed. By the 1820s Lafayette had lost most



1 Lafayette got to see James Madison when the two met at Baltimore in September 1784 and the two then traveled together, mostly in New York state, for almost a month.

Marquis (continued)

of his property and was heavily in debt. He remained America's darling however, and there was talk of having him come visit. Then, in February 1824, American President James Monroe extended an official invitation to Lafayette to come and be the guest of the people of America.

In mid-August Lafayette stepped ashore in New York, accompanied by his son (George Washington Lafayette), a secretary, and a valet. All tolls, coaches, boats, horses, etc., were free to him and his little party. The large gaggle of deputations, delegations, dignitaries, welcoming parties, farewell parties and members of the press that ebbed and flowed around them wherever they went created business that more than offset any costs. The old saying that the world was his oyster applied in spades.

Lafayette initially remained a "captive" of genial northern hosts for several months. He finally headed south to appear at an observance of Cornwallis' Yorktown surrender. After Yorktown, Lafayette worked his way through appearances, receptions, and galas along the Chesapeake Bay and up the James River to Richmond and Petersburg. Along the way, he stopped at Westover, the famous James River plantation mansion built by William Byrd II, and there he was assessed by future Orange County resident Fielding Lewis Marshall:

I do remember being at Westover when La Fayette was the guest there. Then about six years old, I remember sitting on his knee and looking into his face with all the wonder of a little child at this Great Man whose name was in the mouth of all who loved liberty. To my fancy he was not handsome in face; his features were all large, with wrinkles between them, and his ears looked—as they stood out from his head—like good sized oyster shells.²

Finally on November 2, Lafayette left Richmond for much anticipated reunions with his old friends Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. Jefferson then hosted Madison and Lafayette at Monticello for well over a week, and the three old revolutionaries were able to spend precious hours reminiscing and reflecting.

On November 15, Lafayette and Madison took their leave of Jefferson and headed for Orange County and Montpelier. Lafayette then became the guest of James and Dolley Madison and Orange County for the next four days. We are told that in 1824 Lafayette went on long walks exploring the Montpelier lands. It was probably then that he went by the cabin of three retired slave women, a grandmother, her daughter, and her granddaughter. Granny Milly was 104; the granddaughter 70. Lafayette was impressed by their relatively comfortable setting, but it did nothing to dampen his lifelong opposition to slavery. It made no difference to him if a master was as benevolent as Madison, it was still wrong.

On November 19, a party arrived at Montpelier to escort Lafayette through Orange County to the Spotsylvania County line, where a similar party would then escort him to Fredericksburg. The 74-year old Madison accompanied Lafayette to Orange on horseback. Arriving at the village, the travelers found themselves processing through a double line of county citizens. The procession was slowed by Lafayette pausing to greet old Revolutionary War veterans, but eventually they arrived before James Barbour, a former Virginia governor, a current United

States senator, and an Orange County planter. Barbour's welcoming address was followed by a speech and the presentation of flowers by a Miss Derby, after which all partook of a lavish banquet. Legend has it that the banquet was held in Peliso, the town residence that innkeeper Paul Verdier had built for himself in 1819. Peliso still stands, and one look at it will convince the viewer that no crowd of the size described could get into that building. Verdier also owned the Orange Hotel, on the site of today's 1859 court house. The hotel was comparatively more spacious, but in any event the group most likely ate outdoors. As had become the custom at banquets honoring Lafayette, the dessert course included 13 toasts, one for each Revolutionary-era colony.

Following the banquet, Madison said his final good-byes to his old friend and started back to Montpelier while Lafayette continued on toward Fredericksburg. It was getting dark by the time Lafayette neared Rhoadesville, and awaiting him was a large group of people carrying torches. There was a brief torchlight procession along a part of the old Marquis Road (described by his secretary Levasseur as nothing more than an overgrown path), then it was time to stop for the night. As much as we know about Lafayette's travels, we don't know where he spent that night. In the morning Lafayette met the Fredericksburg escort party at Wilderness Tavern and his 1824 visit to Orange County was over.

By the summer of 1825, Lafayette's organized, official tour of America was largely over, but it would be several more weeks before a just-built ship, named the *Brandywine*, would be ready to transport him back to France. It was then that Lafayette decided to return to Virginia for final visits to Montpelier and Monticello and to some of the nearby towns. This trip took place between August 6 and August 25, 1825, and involved only a small group traveling virtually unnoticed by the public at large.

With virtually no public coverage of Lafayette's 1825 visit to our area, his itinerary had to be deduced from a variety of sources. His secretary tells us generally that the small party visited Albemarle, Culpeper, Fauquier, Warrenton, and Buckland and that Madison and Monroe joined in a visit to Jefferson at Monticello. Other sources, however, give us some specific events and dates.

On August 15, the party breakfasted with William Jones and others in the entrance hall at Ellwood, the country residence in eastern Orange County that Jones had built on the site of the house visited by Lafayette in 1781. Lafayette then proceeded to Montpelier, where he stayed until August 18.

On August 18, Lafayette journeyed to Monticello, arriving there late in the day. On the 21st, he returned to Montpelier. Either on the way to Monticello or during his return to Montpelier, Lafayette stopped at Nathaniel Gordon's Tavern in Gordonsville. When a group of well-wishers gathered outside, he went out on a porch and spoke with them. We next have a description of Lafayette, accompanied by Madison, leaving Orange on August 22 to attend an afternoon reception at Greenwood, just outside of Culpeper, followed by a banquet later that evening in the town. By August 25 Lafayette was back in Washington, and on September 8, 1825, the *USS Brandywine* sailed for France, taking him home.

On May 20, 1834, this most interesting man and fierce American patriot died. An American flag was raised over his grave, and one has flown there ever since, including during the German occupation of France during World War II. He is gone from life, but for as long as people care to hear about a man's love for his adopted country and about America's struggle for independence, he will live on in memory.

² Marshall, Fielding Lewis and Marshall, Maria Newton, ed., *Recollections and Reflections of Fielding Lewis Marshall*, Mr. Marshall's writings compiled, edited and privately published in limited edition by his daughter in 1911, p.15. In 1882, he moved to what is now known as the Ballard-Marshall house on East Main Street in Orange, and for a time he served as the Superintendent of Schools for Orange County.

President Hayes Visits Orange, 1878

Ann Miller

IN THE SUMMER of 1878, the Board of Trustees (later known as the Town Council) of Orange learned that President Rutherford B. Hayes, a great admirer of James Madison, was contemplating a visit to Madison's life-long home, Montpelier. Seizing the political moment, the Trustees passed and sent the President a resolution inviting him to Orange.

On the morning of October 9, President Hayes, accompanied by his wife Lucy, Attorney General Charles Devens, Interior Secretary Carl Schurz, and others, took the 6:30 train from Washington, arriving in Orange four hours later. At various stops along the way the presidential party had been joined by others, including Colonel John S. Mosby, and shortly before the train arrived in Orange a local delegation—including two of Madison's great nephews, Colonel John Willis and John M. Chapman—boarded the train as well. (In addition to being a member of the family, Chapman, whose residence is today's Holladay House in Orange, was also President of the town's Board of Trustees, a position analogous to Mayor of the town.) After making a brief speech in honor of Madison and the Constitution, Hayes's party and the other guests entered a carriage for the ride to Montpelier. President Hayes left a personal description of the trip to Orange and to Montpelier in his diary, paying particular attention to the large trees around the house and the neglected condition of Madison's former property:

October 10, 1878.--Yesterday went with Lucy, General Devens, General Schurz, and Mr. Rogers to Montpelier, the residence of Madison. We left the depot about 6:30 A. M., after an early breakfast at the Home, and reached Orange Court House, eighty miles, about half-past ten A. M. At eleven we started in carriages for Montpelier, about five miles distant. On the cars we were joined by Colonel John S. Mosby, who had charge of the party, his sister, Miss Mosby, Captain Chapman, his brother, Mr. Mosby, and by Mr. Hill, a senator of Maryland, Prince George's County. At Alexandria, by Lewis Mackenzie, postmaster, Mr. Payne and his son, the clerk of court, and Miss -; at Fairfax by ex-Lieutenant-Governor Thomas ("Judge"), Mr. Brook, senator of Loudon and Fairfax, and others. Before reaching Orange Court House a committee of trustees, Mr. Chapman, Edward C. Marshall, son of



Mrs. Rutherford B. (Lucy Webb) Hayes and President Rutherford B. Hayes. From the Brady-Handy Photograph Collection at Library of Congress.

Chief Justice Marshall, Colonel Willis, a nephew of Madison, and others.

A crowd of people met us at Orange and there was speaking. Our train of carriages on a fair Virginia road reached the mansion in an hour. It was a satisfaction to find so admirable a place. The house large, with piazza and tall large pillars like, somewhat, Arlington, on an elevation with perhaps fifty acres of lawn in

front, and a noble view of the Blue Ridge. The great trees were very interesting to me.

A white oak near the grave twenty-one feet in circumference! A chestnut on right flank of lawn thirty-seven feet in circumference. A black walnut, right of house, fifteen feet. A poplar (tulip) eighteen feet. The oak and chestnut were low and apple-tree shaped; the poplars and walnuts, of which there were many, tall and beautiful. The place is not well kept up and is for sale cheap. Forty thousand dollars certainly would buy it with eleven hundred acres, and probably thirty thousand dollars. A great lack of enterprise, thrift, and comfort in that region, but the people were many of them well informed and generally, perhaps universally, friendly and well-disposed to newcomers.

A Mr. Brasee, of Baltimore, has bought and finely improved an estate this side of Montpelier eight miles, at Rapidan. His elegant barouche and four with driver were at our service and took us to Montpelier. On the piazza we were welcomed with hearty hand-shaking by the present owner Mr. Carson, and by a carefully prepared speech by Colonel Willis. An interesting and enjoyable day.¹

¹ Diary and Letters of Rutherford B. Hayes. Diary Volume 03, Chapter 36, Page 503. <http://www.ohiohistory.org/online/doc/hayes/Volume03/Chapter36/October101878.txt> Accessed March 1, 2010.

Hayes (*continued*)

Not surprisingly, the press was on hand for the occasion. The correspondent for the *Richmond Dispatch* reported that "quite a respectable crowd" turned out in Orange to greet Hayes, whom he characterized as "a bluff, burly, plain man, straightforward and well-meaning," and noted that the barouche provided by Mr. Bresee for the ride to Montpelier was "lined with brilliant red satin and drawn by four handsome bays" and boasted a coachman in blue and white livery.

However, an opposing view had been voiced by the editor of the local *Gordonsville Gazette*, who was—to put it mildly—not a Hayes supporter: "Tomorrow the greatest fraud of the age, Mr. Hayes, will visit Montpelier, the former home of the illustrious Madison, and there weep over his grave. We fully expect to hear of Madison's crumbling bones turning over in their grave when the weeping commences."

Following the tour, President Hayes and his party returned to town, where they were treated to dinner in what the *Richmond Dispatch* called "true Democratic style" before returning to Washington on the evening train. E. M. Coleman, the proprietor of the Virginia Hotel, presented his bill to the town Trustees, who promptly approved the payment. The account, \$26 "For entertainment of President Hayes and party," and the record of the payment can still be found in the Town Minutes.²

² A description of Hayes's visit to Orange, along with various contemporary sources, is given in William H. B. Thomas, *Orange, Virginia: Story of a Courthouse Town* (Verona, Virginia: McClure Printing Company, Inc., 1972, pp. 50-52).

Lecture Series at Grymes a Hit!

The 5th annual Winter Seminar Series by Frank S. Walker, Jr., was held at Grymes Memorial School in Orange this year and was a wonderful success. We could not have asked for a more gracious host or a better venue, and the weekly participants were treated to the always fine lectures by Mr. Walker. We would especially like to thank Ms. Penny Work, Head of School at Grymes, for her invaluable assistance with the projection equipment. This year we had the benefit of co-hosts for four lectures: the Orange County Department of Tourism, the James Madison Museum, the Exchange Hotel Civil War Museum, and the Orange County Chamber of Commerce. Their help was greatly appreciated.

Correction

The Steam & Gas Show photograph on page 5 of the previous issue was taken by Bryan Wright.

2009 Annual Fund Donors

More than \$7,000 was received during the Society's Annual Fund Drive. Your Board is deeply grateful to the members and friends of the Society for their continuing support of its programs, publications, and heritage-based services to members and the general public. The 2009 drive sought funds to assist with operations, building maintenance and the purchase of a digital projector. The projector debuted on Monday, March 29, at our monthly program meeting and is a wonderful addition.

We look forward to a prosperous 2010 and we thank you all so very much.

Carol Couch

The Baer Foundation

Tom and Carol Bailey

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In memory of Rear Admiral John C. Barrow

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Elsie P. Jarvis

Bill Jones

Miss Sylvia L. Jones

Patricia Laland

Winter Programs

Lynne Lewis

Annual Membership Meeting

The Annual Membership Meeting of the Orange County Historical Society was held at the Research Center on Sunday, January 24, 2010, at 2:00 p.m. Approximately 50 people were in attendance.

A brief business meeting was held, and President Carol Couch announced that Frank Walker will be appearing on television this coming April 1, at 8:30 p.m., on a program entitled "Inside, Out." It will be broadcast on WHTJ 41.2, Cable 7, Comcast 265 and Dish 41. She also thanked John Faulconer for kindly bringing his fine postcard collection, which was on display at the back of the auditorium.

It was noted that an audit had been conducted in early 2009, and that all was in order. In other good news, the Society applied for, and was granted, property tax-exempt status by both the Town and County of Orange. Our membership has grown to nearly 450, thanks to the good work of the Membership Committee.

Nominating Committee Report: Joyce Clark, as chair of the Nominating Committee, presented the nominations to the Board of Directors for a three year term (January 2010 to January 2013): C. Thomas Chapman (2nd term), Clara Colby, John Tranver Graham and Lynne G. Lewis. A motion was made to elect said members to the Board; the motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned and was immediately followed by the special program:

Honoring Ann L. Miller, 30 Years of Service as Research Historian

Carol Couch introduced the day's program by saying how delighted the Society was to be honoring Ms. Miller and how privileged we are to have someone of Ann's caliber on our staff. She then called upon Mr. Atwell Somerville, who had originally hired Ms. Miller, to say a few words.

Mr. Somerville noted that at the time Ann applied for a job, the Society really didn't have the funds for a position, but that she might find some employment by helping with genealogy requests that were always coming to the Society. And the rest is history. Ann has done just about everything for the Society, from arranging and giving programs, to parking cars at the picnics, to helping various and sundry people with their research questions.

Her most important contributions, however, have been her publications for the Society, *Antebellum Orange* and *The Short Life and Strange Death of Ambrose Madison*, as well as her work on over a dozen volumes of Virginia Road Orders, including the two volumes on Orange County roads. Mr. Somerville said he was proud to know Ann and has the greatest respect for her abilities as an accurate, sound researcher and a good writer.

Others rose to give their thanks and praise, including Frank Walker, who thanked Ann for all her good work and hoped she would be working with the Society for another 20 or 30 years. Bill Scholten, President of the Madison County Historical Society,

spoke of Ann's important and fine research and advice in helping them restore the Kemper House and its dependencies. Michael Quinn, President of the James Madison's Montpelier Foundation, spoke of her important work on behalf of Montpelier, from the early days when she did the first Historic Structure Report, to her return as a consultant during the restoration of the mansion.

Mr. Somerville made a final encomium, noting that Orange County as a whole has benefitted from Ann's presence and research, and that our county has a finer appreciation of history thanks to Ann. Ms. Couch closed the meeting by adding final thanks, and the membership rose to give Ms. Miller a standing ovation.

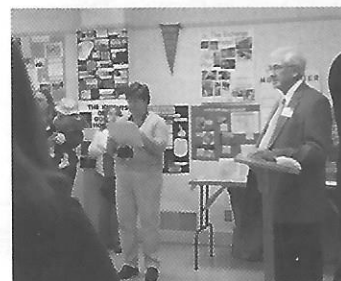
Orange History Day

It might have been cool and rainy outside, but the presence of more than 150 people, including at least 50 4th-graders, along with their parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts and uncles, warmed the interior of the Research Center on Monday, March 15. The occasion was the second annual Orange History Day, and the Research Center was bedecked with over 75 posters created by these delightful young scholars. These posters, which met all the criteria outlined by the teachers, were judged the "blue ribbon winners" from among all those submitted.

Lou Thompson, member of the Orange County School Board, welcomed students and teachers from the Orange, Lightfoot, Locust Grove and Gordon Barbour Elementary Schools. The new superintendent of schools, Dr. Robert P. Grimesey, Jr., joined the crowd and noted how pleased he was to see such a wonderful display. Each student was called forward by name, to receive a certificate and a Commonwealth of Virginia lapel pin.

The student posters covered a marvelous range of topics, from John Smith to the Orange Airport, with many stops between. One student actually built a replica of Fort Germanna, while another constructed the Orange Plank Road from toothpicks. The hard work and display of learning that these students showed was truly impressive.

Special thanks go to Carol Hunter (Academic Gifted Coordinator) and Carol Couch (Board member, Historical Society). Between them they organized and coordinated the event and even saw to it that participants were treated to lemonade and snacks. Their dedicated efforts made the evening a resounding success.



Lynne Lewis

Teacher Sharon Mohrmann and school board member Lou Thompson recognizing students for their Orange History Day projects.

Donors (*continued*)

Mr. & Mrs. Keith (Betty) Larson

Mrs. John F. Leahy

Lynne G. Lewis & Paul J. Donohue

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In memory of Sylvia Jennings Alexander

March 20, 1915 - Oct. 8, 2009

F. Beale Wilhoit

Mrs. Mildred A. Williams

Please Join Us!

We invite you to join the Orange County Historical Society. Please provide your name and mailing information as you wish it to appear in our records and select the appropriate dues level. Mail the completed form, along with a check payable to The Orange County Historical Society (OCHS), to 130 Caroline Street, Orange, VA 22960.

The Orange County Historical Society is a non-profit organization. Your membership fees are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Name: _____

(If business/organization member, name of business or organization)

Street: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Membership Status: ☐ New ☐ Renewal ☐ Address, Name, etc. Update

Would you be willing to receive meeting notices via email in lieu of a postcard? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Membership Level: Society dues are for the period of January 1 - December 31, 2010.

☐ Annual Individual Member: \$20☐ Annual Student Member (High School or College): \$12.50☐ Annual Family Member: \$30☐ Annual Sustaining Member: \$100☐ Annual Patron Member: \$200☐ Annual Sponsor Member: \$300

Publication for Sale

Members receive a 10% discount on all publications.

& *Orange, Virginia: Story of a Courthouse Town*, by William H.B. Thomas

A brief history of the Town of Orange from 1749 (the date of the relocating of the county's court house to the crossroads settlement which became known as "Orange Court House") to the early 20th century. An engaging and entertaining historian, the late Bill Thomas contributed significantly to the historical knowledge of this region, with this very readable book being just one example.

\$5.95 (softcover, 89 pp.)

For additional publications, be sure to see our website, www.orangecovahist.org, or drop by our Research Center (130 Caroline Street, Orange, VA) for a complete list.

Orange County Historical Society
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Upcoming Programs & Picnics

Lynne Lewis & Carol Couch

At 7:00 p.m., on June 7, 2010 (also fondly known as "The May Meeting in June") there will be a very special program, dedicating the grave marker for "Banjo" Sam Sweeney at Graham Cemetery. Did you know that Graham Cemetery has a headstone honoring this famous musician? You don't know him? Well, he was famous 150 years ago. He and his brothers popularized the five-string banjo and made it into the major instrument it is today. Sam died in Orange in 1864, from a fatal disease he contracted while serving as Jeb Stuart's favorite banjo player. Our program will celebrate "Banjo" Sam with a presentation by Stuart Vogt, former National Park historian, and lots of banjo music provided by professional musicians who have agreed to play to honor him. The program will probably run about 40 minutes, so please bring a chair if you don't like to sit in the grass. In the event of rain the program will be held at the Research Center.

As you know, one of the special benefits of being a member of the Orange County Historical Society is our summer picnics. These delightful evenings take place throughout the county, and indeed sometimes beyond our present-day county lines. Although the picnics are for members only, we would encourage you to bring a non-member guest from time to time. There is no better way to introduce someone to us, and a growing membership keeps our Society strong.

Our April 26 program will feature Lynne Lochen, Director of Tourism for Orange County. Lynne, who has a degree in history, will describe her job and elaborate on the impact that tourism has and can have on our county. Please join us for this most interesting presentation.

On June 28, our summer picnic season begins, and for the first one we will be the guests of the Madison County Historical Society. The picnic will be held on the grounds of

the Kemper House in Madison, Virginia, and will feature the newly restored slave quarters. The quarters had been used for storage for many years and had deteriorated. With the help of a successful fundraising campaign and a private grant, restoration began in 2007. Our own Ann Miller provided her expertise and advice on the project and OCHS member Joe Wayner oversaw the project. We hope you will plan to attend and hear the story of this wonderful restoration.

The July 26 picnic will be held at Spotswood Park in Lake of the Woods. Nearby was the site of "Orange Grove," the home of John Spotswood. Spotswood Park is dedicated to Captain John Spotswood, born circa 1748. He was the grandson of royal Lieutenant Governor Alexander Spotswood and served in the American Revolution as a member of the Continental Army 10th Virginia regiment. He retired on February 12, 1781, and died post-1800. Married to Sarah (Sallie) Rowsie on September 19, 1771, they established their home at "Orange Grove" on part of his grandfather's original Germanna tract. Their descendants lived on this land well into the 20th century. Pete Rainey, local historian, will present the program. Mr. Rainey has asked whether any of our members are Spotswood descendants, and if so, would you please share that information with us so we can pass it on to him.

Please Don't Forget . . .

To renew your membership! Did you know that membership dues make up almost 20% of our annual income (another 20% coming from the kindness of our annual fund drive donors)? You can see why your membership is so important to us, and if you haven't yet had the chance to renew, please do take a moment to do so. Thank you!