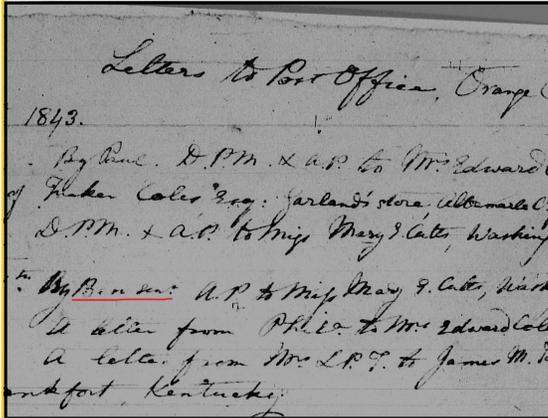


# Orange Oracle

An Occasional Electronic Update from the Orange County Historical Society



## From our mailbox

OCHS Board member, Hilarie Hicks writes, "In my role as Senior Research Historian at Montpelier, I work on Montpelier's Naming Project, where we've listed the 300 known names of people who were enslaved at Montpelier. I'm in the process of writing biographies for each of them, which are linked to the Naming Project page. Some are short, like the bio for Abby, since we don't know much more about her than her shoe size in 1787. Others are more in-depth, like the bio for Benjamin McDaniel, whom we can trace through many documents, including a slave pass written by Dolley Madison, county court records, Freedmen's Bureau records, and the oral history traditions of his descendants. So far there are just over 40 biographies posted, and we add about 3 more each month."

## History-to-Go

Our next installment is the video documentary, *Gordonsville...A Strong Fabric*. Produced in 2013 by our local video

## Heirloom Garden for Research Center

*We want your ideas!*

By Gail DeBlass, Mark Hoerath,  
Mike Saxton, OCHS Volunteers



OCHS and Rapidan River Master

Gardeners are planning an heirloom garden on the Society's grounds for Spring of 2022. The heirloom garden will contain plants representing Orange County's horticultural history and will be interpreted to visitors via signage, printed materials and/or a phone app.

**What's representative of Orange County horticultural history?**

Plants that were gathered and/or cultivated for food, medicinal, utilitarian, and decorative qualities. Plants that were and are used by the following Orange County residents:

*Native Americans*

*European settlers*

*African American enslaved persons and freedmen*

*Post civil war to present day residents*

**Practical Limitations of the Garden**

Space is limited and selected plants need to be low or no maintenance. They should favor perennial native plants and not annuals. Crops such as corn or tobacco, although historically significant, are high maintenance and may not find their way into the garden.

**Who Decides What's In the Garden?**

Please send plant ideas for the OCHS Heirloom Garden. We desire inclusive outreach to the community and then consensus on what gets planted. Ultimately, OCHS will decide what will be included in the garden.

Each plant idea needs to include a citation of why the

documentary team, Phil Audibert and Ross Hunter, it tells the story of the town of Gordonsville from its beginnings as a tavern in 1813 to its birthday celebration 200 years later. To access History-to-Go just click on this link:

<https://youtu.be/gkEHCyoSofQ>

## Picnic! Maplewood Cemetery, Aug. 30

In the 19th century, before public parks became common, cemeteries were favorite picnic spots—so on the 30th we will be continuing an old tradition.

Directions: From the Gordonsville traffic circle, take Rt. 33 west approximately 3/4 mile. Maplewood Cemetery is on the right (north) side. Turn in at Maplewood Drive. Someone will be posted to direct you to the picnic site. Please bring your own chairs and a picnic dinner to enjoy before the program (which will start at approximately 6:30 p.m.).

In case of rain, the picnic will be postponed to a later date.

When parking your vehicle, please keep the roads open so others can get through, and please be sure to pick up any trash that may be left behind.

## Become a Society Member

We want to reach out to anyone interested in Orange County history. To become a member of OCHS. Just click here...

<https://www.orangecovahist.org/about-us.html>

**Orange Oracle Editor:  
Phil Audibert**

**For comments and contributions  
contact him at  
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plant was/is important to Orange County residents. Be as specific as possible in your citation.

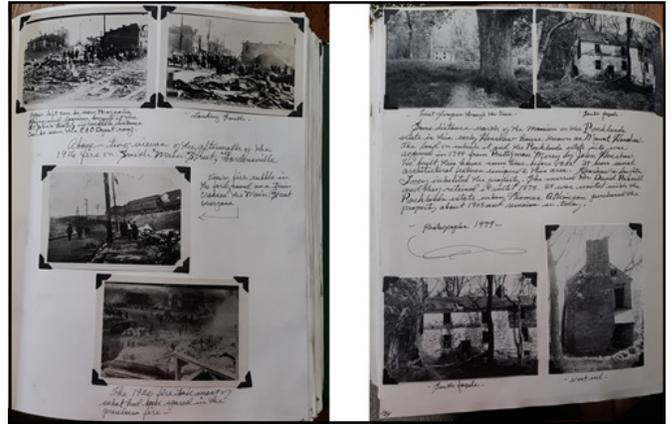
Example: Arrowwood Viburnum – used by Mid-Atlantic Native Americans for arrow shafts. *The Brother Gardeners*, pg 92, Wulf, Alfred Knopf 2010.

Questions? Comments? Suggestions? Email your ideas to:

## From the Vault

By Ray Ezell

This month's column highlights three large scrapbooks compiled and donated



to the Society by Ferol O. Briggs, Jr. in 2000. Containing information and photos from a span of about 50 years, these volumes provide an outstanding (and not insignificant) survey of notable (some forgotten) Orange County buildings and sites.

A number of the buildings documented in these volumes have now been demolished, but many are still standing. They not only contain exterior views of many of Orange County's most architecturally significant properties (and some of their dependencies), but they also provide interior views that illuminate many craftsmanship details that would be difficult to obtain today.

Beyond the inclusion of the grand estates of the county, these volumes also contain long forgotten views of the aftermath of the two great fires that struck the Towns of Orange and Gordonsville in the early twentieth century. The image above illustrates just a sample of the pictorial information contained in these irreplaceable volumes.

A resident of Gordonsville, Ferol Briggs served in the U.S. Army during the Korean Conflict and was retired from the University of Virginia School of Architecture, where he served as librarian and curator of the Architecture School's pictorial materials.