

# Orange Oracle

An electronic update from the Orange County Historical Society

## Editor's note: Oracle's new look

We start the New Year with a slightly new look for the Society's electronic newsletter, the *Orange Oracle*. Former *Orange Review* Editor, Jeff Poole, has offered his layout and design skills for this publication, thereby freeing up Phil Audibert to concentrate on content. So, let's give Jeff a warm welcome and please keep sending news items and photos of interest to [phlodbear@aol.com](mailto:phlodbear@aol.com).

## Don't forget to renew your membership!

It's time to renew your annual membership. Please return your membership renewal form or call the Society office and renew over the phone at (540) 672-5366, Monday through Friday, 1-5 p.m. Also, the biannual research newsletter, the *Record*, recently was mailed to all members in good standing. If folks did not get theirs, they can call the office to confirm their membership and get a replacement newsletter. Thank you for your ongoing support.

## Annual meeting scheduled Sunday, Jan. 29, 3 p.m. at Orange Baptist Church

Because the auditorium at the Research Center on Caroline Street is undergoing renovations, this year's annual meeting will be held in the Pine Room of Orange Baptist Church at 3 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 29. (The church is located at 123 West Main St., Orange. Enter the church through the door facing the former Bank of America building.) Following the presentation of the Society's annual report and the election of new board members, attendees will be invited to watch "Memories Greatest Hits, Part II." This is Phil Audibert's second compilation of favorite passages from the "Memories" oral history project. Part I, presented to the Society in 2019, can be viewed by going to [www.orangecovahist.org](http://www.orangecovahist.org) and clicking on History-to-Go.

## New board members fill unexpired terms

Two new members have recently taken seats on the Board of Directors, to fill out the unexpired terms of Ashley Abruzzo and Richard Floyd. They are Jessica Cifizzari and James Luther.

Jessica Cifizzari is an Orange County native who currently owns Paint It Orange, located on Caroline Street. She has served as the President of the James Madison Museum of Orange County Heritage for the past four years. She is familiar with the many needs of the community and is actively involved in supporting projects that benefit both community members and local businesses. Jess has two children who both go to public schools in Orange.



James Luther began James Luther, P.C., a land surveying business in Orange, in 2003. He first started surveying in 1986. With local history being a natural part of his job, he enjoys learning all he can about the properties he surveys. James has been married to his wife, Rene, for 28 years. Together, they have adopted several retired racing greyhounds. In his spare time, he enjoys listening to and playing music, and visiting family. He has volunteered to become the Society's new treasurer.



## Bloomsbury opens to the public

What is generally believed to be the oldest intact dwelling in Orange County (circa 1722), will soon be open to the public for guided private tours. The James Madison Memorial Foundation is pleased to announce a partnership with The Helen Marie Taylor Trust for the exclusive rights to offer ticketed tours of historic Bloomsbury.



*Photo courtesy the James Madison Memorial Foundation*  
**Pictured is the Taylor Great Room at Bloomsbury.**

Museum director Bethany Sullivan will conduct the tours on Sundays and Mondays. All tours must be booked in advance. Tickets cost \$24 for adults, \$10 for youths, and \$12 for seniors. All proceeds will benefit the James Madison Museum. You can

book a tour by calling (540) 672-1776, during regular business hours, Tuesday-Saturday.

Bloomsbury originally was built by Col. James Taylor II, who patented the land where it stands in 1722. Plans are in the works to scientifically date the structure. In the late 18th century and throughout the 19th century, the house was owned by others, most notably the Quarles and Jerdone families. It came back to the Taylor family in 1964 and was painstakingly restored.

“There are so many things that are very unique,” says Sullivan about the architecture of the house. These features include a minstrel’s gallery, a winding staircase, and numerous purpose-built storage spaces. An architectural tour of the house will be made available soon. Furnishings are all pre-Civil War.

There are plans to install placards and story boards on the grounds at Bloomsbury with outdoor music and art programs as the weather warms.

### 2023: Call for volunteers

Would you be willing to learn how to operate audio-visual equipment for Historical Society programs? If you are interested and/or have any questions, please email Volunteer Coordinator, May Saxton, at [OCHistVolunteers@gmail.com](mailto:OCHistVolunteers@gmail.com).



### Little Petersburg Cemetery update

Patrick Colby tells us considerable progress has been made cleaning up the Little Petersburg cemetery, thanks to a group of dedicated volunteers—the Gregory Monroe Trust and the Monroe family. Old appliances, metal junk, and trash around the Galilean Fisherman’s Lodge have been hauled away along with an unsightly dump at a corner of the property off Little Skyline Drive. With the help of professionals, many trees have been cut and chipped, and Little Petersburg Lane has been made passable.

There’s still a lot of work to do, especially around the grave sites where weeds and vines need to be cleared. And, more research into the early history of the site needs to be done. The cleanup will be re-scheduled as soon as weather allows. To volunteer, call (732) 266-4219 or email [patrick.jcolby@gmail.com](mailto:patrick.jcolby@gmail.com).



*Photos by Phil Audibert*  
**Pictured above are Patrick Colby (orange jacket) and James Bruce Monroe (green jacket).**