

Orange Oracle

An Electronic Update from the Orange County Historical Society

Heirloom Garden Ideas Sept. 30 deadline approaching

OCHS and Rapidan River Master Gardeners are planning an heirloom garden on the Society's grounds for Spring of 2022. And they want your ideas. They're looking for plants that were gathered and/or cultivated for food, medicinal, utilitarian, and decorative qualities and that were and are used by these Orange County residents:

Native Americans

European settlers

African American enslaved persons and freedmen

Post civil war to present day residents

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. Please send suggestions, preferably with historic citation, to Master Gardener, Mark Hoerath: mfhoerath@gmail.com by **Sept. 30**. In the subject line of your email, please put the words "Heirloom Garden."

Orange Oracle Editor:

Phil Audibert

For comments and contributions

contact him at

info@orangecovahist.org

The Orange County Register of Free Blacks

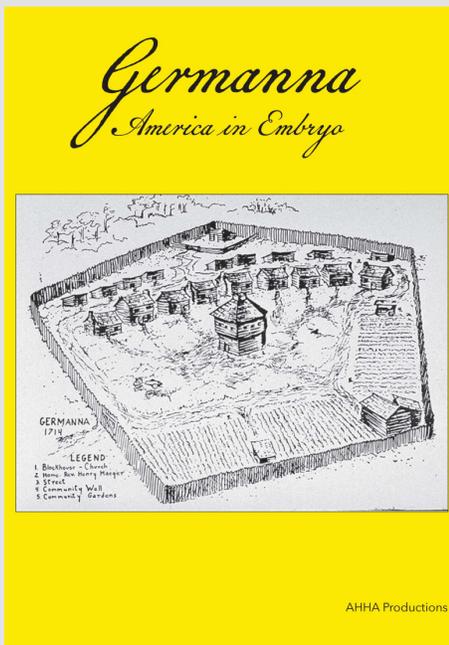
By Ann Miller

A Register of free negroes and mulattoes				Continued		
No	Age	Name	Colour	Height	Mark or scars on face or hands	Whether born free or emancipated
21	about 28 years	Jesse Traylor	Black	5 feet 7 inches	A scar upon the left hand occasioned by a burn	Born free 23
22	12 years	Jessie Traylor son of Jesse Traylor	Black	4 feet 0	A scar upon the right hand and also a scar upon the left side of the chin occasioned by a burn	Born free 23
23	25 years	Abby Mowbray or Bright Mowbray	Bright	5 feet 3 inches	Some freckles on the face a small mole on the nose the right ear and ear near the neck	Born free 24
24	about 13 years	Drury Aaron Abraham	Bright	about 4 3/4 inches	A long scar on the back of the right hand occasioned by a fall upon the wood and a small scar upon the left cheek	Born free 24
25	about 28 years	Bob	Brown	5 feet 10 inches	A very small scar on the forehead the right eye and very small scars on the left hand finger on the side next to the thumb and a small scar on the side of the left finger	Emancipated by the late of James M. Bright President of the Court of Orange 27

Prior to the Civil War, free black persons in Virginia (approximately 10% of the black population) were required to register with the local clerk of the court. Typically, the register noted their name, age, physical description, and whether they were born free or emancipated. While some free blacks did not register, many did, and such registers form a valuable record of an important, and often little known, part of our history. The completeness—and even survival—of these registers varies from county to county.

For Orange County, a partial register of free blacks, covering the mid-1830s to ca. 1850, was identified in the Circuit Court Clerk's office during the 1970s, but the front third of this document was missing, and was not known to survive. Then this Spring, while checking some archival records on early bridges in the Clerk's Office, I had one of those serendipitous findings that gladden a researcher's

History-to-Go



In 1714, under the direction of Lt. Governor Alexander Spotswood, 12 German families established a settlement on the Rapidan River in present day Orange County, Virginia. At the time it was the westernmost outpost of the British colonies in the new world. *Germonna...America in Embryo* tells the story of this remarkable community and its outstanding legacy.

From Alexander Spotswood to the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe; from the beginnings of the iron industry to the Enchanted Castle; from the ongoing archaeological excavation to today's millions of descendants; Germonna is truly America in embryo.

Just click on this link:

<https://youtu.be/cgjnIn4IY0>

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>

heart—I stumbled upon a file that contained the missing front portion of the register.

I have now transcribed and indexed the complete register, covering the years from 1803 to ca. 1850 and including 147 entries, and this will be published by the Historical Society in the near future. The original register pages are very fragile and not available to the public, but through the kindness of the Orange County Circuit Court Clerk's office, photocopies of the register pages will be placed at the Historical Society for the convenience of researchers.

Educators Resource Page added to web site

By Linda Carlton, Education Committee Chair

Partnering with Orange County Public Schools, the Orange County Historical Society has created an Educators Resource page on the Society's website in an attempt to make local history more accessible for history teachers and students in grades 4-12. The Resource page currently has more than 90 articles posted that correspond and support the historical periods required by the Virginia Department of Education. In addition, the Society's Education Committee will research specific items of interest at teachers' requests.

Orange County history is unique; we are the home of two Presidents, five governors, a speaker of the House of Representatives and an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court as well as ordinary citizens. We are the site of Civil and Revolutionary War history, and our courageous citizens have given their lives in multiple foreign wars.

Attaching this local history to national events creates meaning for students and helps them understand the world first encountered in students' own neighborhoods. Lesson planning is time-consuming and the Society is dedicated to supporting teachers' efforts to assimilate local history whenever appropriate. Most importantly, learning local history in conjunction with US history is a "win" for OC students.

Editor's Note— This is a valuable resource for not just teachers, but for anyone interested in our past. Simply go to www.orangecovahist.org and click on "Educator Resources" at the top.