

# Orange Oracle

An electronic bulletin from the Orange County Historical Society

## A year-end message from the Society president

By Ray Ezell

### Membership Renewal

By now you should have received the 2025 membership renewal form in your mailbox. Please take a moment to fill it out and renew your Society membership by returning the completed form with your payment to our office at 130 Caroline St., Orange, VA 22960. Or you can visit our website to renew by credit card at <https://www.orange-covahist.org/membership>. And you are most welcome to make a general contribution to our operating budget. Your support is essential for us to fulfill our mission to the community.

### Year End Summary

As I look back on our accomplishments during 2024, I am grateful for your support and thankful for our ability to continue to offer interesting programming and to provide a venue for conducting historical research. Here are the highlights of our successes of the past year:

- Redesigned the Society

Orange County HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
1734

website with increased functionality

- Received a significant grant from the Virginia Museum of History and Culture to conduct research on the pre-Civil War free Black population of Orange County

- Substantially increased the number of historic *Orange County Review* negatives cataloged (a collection of about 15,000)

- Conducted a history bus tour for new county schoolteachers and added historical online resources for teachers to use

- Reached an agreement with the James Madison Museum to collaborate on artifact and document collections shared between our organizations

- Conducted a successful fundraising campaign for gutter and roof repair

Finally, I want to extend to society members and the community as a whole—Best wishes for a safe and happy holiday season.

## Edna Lewis Classic Cookbook Voted Top 25 by *New York Times*

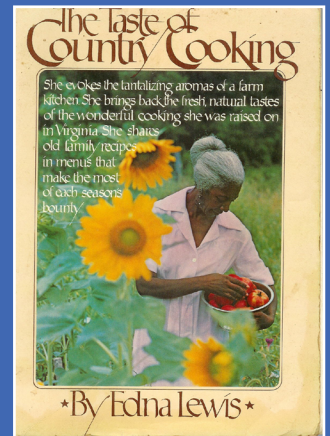
Orange's own native daughter, Edna Lewis, has been honored yet again; *The Taste of Country Cooking* has been named one of "The 25 Most Influential Cookbooks

From the Last 100 Years" by the *New York Times*.

"Chefs, writers, editors and a bookseller gathered to debate — and decide — which

titles have most changed the way we cook and eat," reads the newspaper's November 11 article. And it should be noted that although the cookbooks were not ranked, hers popped up first for discussion by the panel.

Lewis' *The Taste of Country Cooking*, first published in 1978, is widely regarded as the first cookbook to put American Southern cuisine on the international culinary map. Lewis was born and raised in Freetown, a freedman's village in Orange County, Virginia. Earlier this year, a historical marker honoring her and her contribution to the culinary arts was erected near her birthplace.



## 2024-25 program schedule

*Dates and times are subject to change.*

Attendees to auditorium programs, please note: Live streaming starts precisely at 3 pm. Please be in your seats no later than 2:55.

### > No December Program

### > Sunday, Jan. 26, 3 p.m. Society Annual Business Meeting/Mine Run Campaign of 1863

Presentation by Greg Mertz on the significance of the late November-early December, 1863, Battle of Mine Run, in Orange County. Recently, Greg Mertz concluded a 40-year career working as a historian and interpreter for the National Park Service in Gettysburg, PA and Fredericksburg, VA. He has authored the book *'Attack Them at Daylight and Whip Them': The Battle of Shiloh*, April 6-7, 1862. In retirement, Greg conducts tours for Battlefield Tours of Virginia and serves on the boards of Friends of Wilderness Battlefield, the Brandy Station Foundation, and the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table.

### > No February Program

### > Sunday March 30, 3 p.m. Prelude to Yorktown

1781: Lafayette vs. Cornwallis in Virginia

### > Sunday April 27, 3 p.m. Military and Political Career of Gov. General James L. Kemper

### > Sunday, May 11, 3 p.m. Religious Liberty in the Virginia Piedmont

### > Sunday, June 29, 5 p.m. Picnic at the Rocklands Farm Museum

### > Sunday July 27, 3 p.m. History of the Montpelier Hunt Races (picnic)

### > Sunday, Aug. 24, 3 p.m. Virginia Indians in the Piedmont

### > Sunday, Sept. 28, 3 p.m. Germanna Archaeology (picnic)

### > Sunday, Oct. 18, 3 p.m. Dr. John Leland & Virginia's Baptists

### > Sunday, Nov. 16, 3 p.m. Virginia Indian Eel Pots

### > No December Program

*All programs will be held at the Sandra and William H. Speiden Auditorium, 130 Caroline St., Orange, unless otherwise noted.*

## Christmas Gift Idea: OCHS Publications *Fannie Page Hume Diary* for free!



A window display at the research center shows a sample of the publications that would make excellent Christmas gifts this holiday season. DVDs are in short supply and, because of technological advances, will not be replaced.



As you can see, we have a few extra copies of Fannie Hume's 1862 diary. This fascinating glimpse into everyday life in 1862 Orange Courthouse makes for a great Christmas gift. And they are free! Pick yours up at the Research Center, 130 Caroline St., Orange, VA, 1-5 PM, weekdays.

## Membership

Interested in Orange County history? Become a member of the historical society. Visit [www.orangecovahist.org](http://www.orangecovahist.org).

# Lafayette's whirlwind tour

Two hundred years ago, in mid-November of 1824, the Marquis de Lafayette made a whirlwind tour of this area, celebrating his Campaign of 1781. Just last month, the American Friends of Lafayette commemorated that same tour. And it too was whirlwind, with stops over a four-day period at Monticello, Montpelier and Orange, among several other places. To see the American Friends of Lafayette collection of photographs of the local commemorative tour, click on this link: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1KPS0cOQmSfrtm-Vc-1nHoghIt87HOwDqr?usp=sharing>

In the top photo, Phil Audibert gave tour-goers a glimpse of what the Town of Orange may have looked like when Lafayette came here in 1824. Speaking from the 1858 courthouse steps, Audibert pointed out that a sit-down banquet for Lafayette and 200 guests may well have occurred on this site, where the old Orange Hotel was located.

In the bottom photo, John Maass, PhD, author of the book *The Road to Yorktown - Jefferson, Lafayette and the British Invasion of Virginia*, gave a talk about Lafayette's 1781 campaign in Central Virginia prior to the siege of Yorktown. At that time, Lafayette marched through Orange County, following what was later named the Marquis Road, on his way to Yorktown.



## Board briefs

### Anniversaries being discussed

#### OCHS 60th

Next year, the Orange County Historical Society turns 60 years old. President Ray Ezell has suggested a half-day program of academic presentations from

the Virginia Forum for Humanities either in May or October. Ray pointed out the need for a general theme and suggested that Germana and Montpelier also participate.

#### Virginia 250th

And, for the Virginia 250th (October 2026), Jennifer Conley is suggesting that Liberty University's Standing for Freedom Project be approached to organize

a presentation or dramatic production about religious freedom to be performed at the High School. Jennifer will follow this up.

## December 2024—Call for Volunteers

Our heartfelt thanks to all our volunteers (including OCHS Board Members) who have given many hours of their time to help out in various capacities during 2024. Be on the lookout for additional volunteer opportunities in the New Year!

### History-to-Go

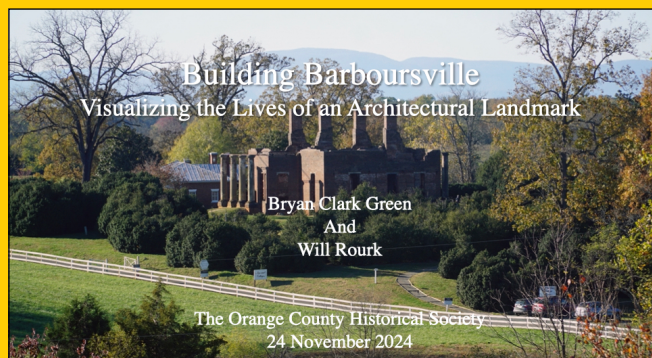
#### Lafayette's 1781 Virginia Campaign

John R. Maass



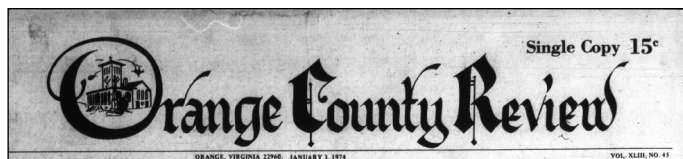
#### Lafayette's 1781 Virginia Campaign

John Maas, Historian at the National Museum of the U.S. Army, describes the various comings and goings of Lafayette and his army during the summer of 1781. That campaign eventually led to the victory over Cornwallis at Yorktown. To view, click here: [https://youtu.be/hX-xf-ZgLOE?si=6\\_hwnI9UUy-s70A0C](https://youtu.be/hX-xf-ZgLOE?si=6_hwnI9UUy-s70A0C)



#### Implications of Recent 3-D Scanning of the Barbooursville Ruins

Using the latest technology, Dr. Bryan Green and Will Rourke take us on a fascinating architectural journey through the Jefferson-designed Barbour family mansion that now lies in ruins. To view the program in its entirety, click here: <https://youtu.be/5L0m9sPitpA?si=qnRRn9OaWzR3Myxx>



### 50 years ago:

#### Page 1 of the *Orange County Review*

##### Dec. 5, 1974

That bellwether lawsuit against the Board of Supervisors regarding the denial of a conditional use permit for a mobile home park was decided by the judge in four minutes. "The county was neither arbitrary nor capricious in refusing to grant the conditional use permit," reads the article.

##### Dec. 12, 1974

A door-to-door survey of the Town of Orange confirms suspicions that the population of the Town of Orange has declined by 138 people since the 1970 census. Councilmen voiced concerns about tax revenue, the lack of multifamily dwellings, and the recently adopted comprehensive plan's goals and objectives.

##### Dec. 19, 1974

Sheriff G.I. Johnson and a deputy came under physical attack from some family members of a man they were trying to arrest, prompting the officers to issue a rarely used distress call, which was later rescinded. Eventually the suspect was taken into custody and three family members were charged, one of them for using a rake to dent Sheriff Johnson's cruiser. In other news, applications for Aid to Dependent Children and Food Stamps are on the rise in Orange County.

##### Dec. 26, 1974

The county gets a Christmas present. Jaquelin E. Taylor [former husband of the recently deceased Helen Marie Taylor], gave the county 914 acres off of Rt. 612 in hopes it "can be developed for the benefit of all the people of Orange County and especially to increase their recreational life and pleasure in future years."

### Montpelier Winter Hours

- Open Thursday-Sunday through Dec. 15
- Open Dec. 26-29
- Open Jan. 18-20, Martin Luther King, Jr. Weekend
- Open Feb. 15-17, Presidents Day Weekend
- Reopen March 13, Thursday-Monday

As always, we recommend that you check their [web-site](#) for the most up-to-date hours of operation.