

Orange Oracle

An Electronic Update from the Orange County Historical Society

Merry Christmas Happy New Year

We wanted to take a minute to thank you for everything you have done to help us through another challenging year and to wish you and yours a most happy holiday season. About a month ago, you received an Historical Society membership renewal letter. This was sent earlier than usual, in lieu of our usual fund raising missive that requests support for special projects. We felt that when specific fundraising goals appear, we will contact you for help, rather than add to the usual pleas that fill your mailbox this time of year. Instead, we ask that you consider renewing your membership at a higher level. We also ask that you consider becoming a volunteer. Finally, we would be pleased if you would help encourage potential new members by providing the name and email address of friends/ relatives/ acquaintances so we can put them on our *Oracle* mailing list. Send those suggestions to: ocvahistorical1965@gmail.com Thank you.

Annual Meeting Slated for Jan 30

Mark your calendar for 2 pm, Sunday Jan. 30 for our annual meeting. You'll have a choice to attend either in person at the research center on Caroline Street or via Zoom. Following the presentation of annual reports and the installation of new Board members, attendees will view a surprise program either from their home or the Society auditorium.



Your Money at Work

By Patrick Colby

Maintenance and interior improvements are currently underway at OCHS. These include repairs to the wooden front columns and additional bookcases in the research area.

The columns, apparently original to the building (1970s), rested on single-course brick bases; low enough to make them susceptible to splashed rain and snow, causing decay to both the trim and the columns themselves. Previous repairs failed and decay continued. The columns have been temporarily removed to permit raising the brick bases. Columns will be shortened about 12" and the decayed wooden decorative trim pieces will be replaced with composite substitutes. The target is to complete work by year end 2021.

To increase our book shelving capacity and availability for use by visitors, we plan to install four additional custom bookcases matching the style and finish of the originals. These will roughly double the amount of shelf capacity for our reference materials. One case will be located on the wall facing Caroline Street, one on the wall opposite, and

History-to-Go

**A Candle in a Candy Store
A Film Celebrating 100+ Years of
Service by the Gordonsville
Volunteer Fire Company**



Shortly after midnight, just a few minutes into the New Year of 1916, a lantern or candle that had been left burning in a confectionary shop ignited a fire that eventually claimed most buildings on Main Street Gordonsville southeast of the railroad overpass.

That disaster spawned the Gordonsville Volunteer Fire Company. Organized on April 1st 1916, GVFC is possibly the oldest rural volunteer fire department in the state. Since then, this all-volunteer service organization has responded to thousands of calls for help. It has also enjoyed the unerring support of the community that it serves. But, as it enters its second century, GVFC faces mounting challenges.

Phil Audibert and Ross Hunter (AHHA Productions) interviewed six veteran fire fighters and pored over hundreds of photographs, clippings, and even vintage 8 millimeter film to tell the story of this remarkable community resource. To view, just click here:

<https://youtu.be/xxirXZx8d2Q>

one on each side of the south bay window. Attention will be given to finishes to minimize risk to stored books, as well as protecting cases near the window from heat and sunlight. A carpenter has been selected and final specifications are being concluded. Completion is anticipated in the first quarter of 2022.

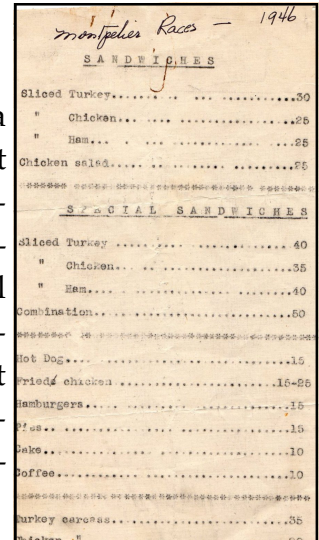
From the Vault

By Ray Ezell

This month’s column focuses on a small scrap of paper from our vault containing a handwritten note indicating it is associated with the Montpelier Hunt Races in 1946. The small sheet of paper contains an unpretentious sandwich menu, no doubt served by some unknown food vendor at the races hosted on the Montpelier grounds that year.

As a frequent critic of Orange County’s lack of adequate restaurant selection, I was particularly interested in this item. In addition to the sandwiches, some even called out as “special sandwiches,” the menu also contains other food typical of fairs and carnivals including: fried chicken (\$0.15-\$0.25), hamburgers (\$0.15), and (hand-fried) pies (\$0.15). The pricing was just right too. Two interesting items at the bottom of the menu are turkey and chicken carcasses, which could easily be turned into broth for soups by their buyers back in their home kitchens. Unfortunately our records do not indicate who donated this piece of ephemera or when it was received into our collection.

In 1929 under the leadership of owner Marion duPont Scott, Montpelier began hosting races that were open to the public. A few years later the event was renamed the Montpelier Hunt Races. In 1946, the winner of the Mile Flat Race was Sea Defense, one of Scott’s horses. The Montpelier Hunt Races continue to be a highlight of the county’s social scene today.



**Interested in Orange County history? Become a Society Member! Want to help?
Become a volunteer! Click here- <https://www.orangecovahist.org/about-us.html>**