

Newsletter

Orange County Historical Society

Fall 2006

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Wonderful Things

Lynne Lewis

Wonderful things have happened to the exterior of the Historical Society's research center over the spring and summer. A lovely hedge of Blue Boy and Blue Girl hollies (*Ilex x meserveae*) has been planted along the property line with our neighbor, Advance Auto. These hollies make excellent barriers, growing to about 8 to 10 feet tall. They need only occasional pruning of stray branches and are generally care free. Of course there are Blue Boys and Blue Girls as one needs both in order to have berries on the female shrubs. An added bonus is that the berries attract a variety of birds.

Although it took until September to get the planting in, between deer defoliation over the winter at the nursery and drought conditions this summer, it was well worth the wait. The screen of hollies vastly improves the view out our bow window. Enormous thanks are due to Grelen Nursery, Charlie and Mary Lou Seilheimer, and Zan Thomas for making this fine improvement possible.

While we awaited our green screen, several other improvements were made around our building. First, on May 11, four volunteers from the Lake of the Woods chapter of the AARP spent several hours weeding, edging and generally cleaning up the flower beds. Bob and Shirley Pfile and Bill and Rosemary Walker, representing the AARP, removed English ivy from the bricks, weeded, and removed trash. Bob brought his trusty weed-eater and edged all our sidewalks and the portico. As member Paul Donohue (also helping) quipped, "I never knew the walks were so wide." Our sincere appreciation goes to these fine folks, and to member Joe Wascalus who suggested the Historical Society as a volunteer venue.

Once the weeding and edging were done, Board member Jack Miller arrived with his power washer and cleaned the freshly edged walks and portico. Laura Thompson, Executive Director of The Arts Center in Orange and Board member brought several bags of mulch and these were spread on the flower beds. Member Anne Somerville kindly volunteered her horticultural talents and pruned the azaleas and other shrubs around the building.

Many, many thanks to each and every one who made our exterior look wonderful. We have such fine members and friends!



Laura Thompson

At a recent reception, the Orange County Historical Society honored Ted and Carolyn Scott for their generous gift to the Society's endowment. Historian Frank Walker addressed the group about the Scotts' long-term interest in Orange County and its heritage, an interest that began with Ted's boyhood here and continuing with Ted and Carolyn's return in 1977. In their very active retirement, the Scotts' primary joint interests have been the Historical Society, Graham Cemetery, and Montpelier. Society President Lynne Lewis expressed the gratitude of the Society to the Scotts and voiced the hope that others would follow their lead. Pictured from left to right are Carolyn Scott, Ted Scott, Lynne Lewis and Frank Walker.

Finally, the wood trim, including the columns and the pediment of the portico were given a fresh coat of paint. This not only brightens our look, but also helps prolong the life of the wood elements. We hope to have additional painting and upkeep done as finances allow.



Lynne Lewis

Green screen of Blue Boy and Blue Girl hollies donated by Grelen Nursery.

Second Annual Fund Drive Underway

Warren Dunn

The Orange County Historical Society has launched its second annual fund drive, the broadest appeal for financial support in its history. Bernice Walker, coordinator for the drive, says close to 600 letters explaining the need for donations have been sent to individuals and businesses in Orange and those who have visited the Research Center from other states. "This list is long because the need is great," Walker says, pointing out that the appeal is to cover expenses for normal operations and for routine maintenance of the building. "In the future, we may be able to target specific activities," she said, "but our immediate need is simply to help meet day-to-day operating needs and to protect our investment in the building."

Treasurer Jack Miller echoed Walker, saying that stringent cost-containment measures have kept the budget deficit to a minimum this year, but that member services have suffered as a result. "We will use funds from the appeal to reestablish the Newsletter as a quarterly and to inaugurate an aggressive membership solicitation and retention program," he said. Longer-term, Miller and others on the Board have said they hope to be able to hire an Executive Director again in order to provide continuity to the Society.

Of particular concern is the deteriorating condition of the building. According to Everette Tucker, Chair of the Building and Grounds Committee, repairs to the roof will cost upwards of \$5,000. This is on top of recent repairs to stop the worst of the leaks. Tucker also said that the interior of the building needs painting and that the forty-year-old heating and air-conditioning units need replacing.

In the fall of last year, the Society decided to conduct its first general fund drive, primarily among its membership. The response was "gratifying," says Lynne Lewis, President of the Society, and demonstrated that there is a deep well of good will among the membership. "However, given that we serve the entire community, we felt we should broaden the appeal to include those who may not be members but are likely to be supportive of the Society's mission," she said. "Of course, we are hoping those who aren't members will want to join," she said. The mailing list was compiled by members of a special Board committee.

The fund drive takes on particular urgency because of the potential impact of operating deficits on the investment portfolio. The Board has strongly endorsed a policy of not drawing upon the principal of the investment portfolio, but does rely upon

Remember to Renew

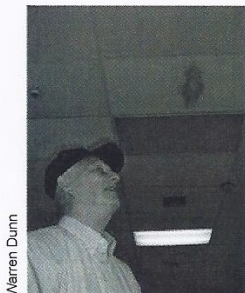
The OCHS membership year is from January through December. Our annual membership levels include:

Individual \$20
 Student (college or high school) \$12.50
 Family \$30
 Sustaining \$100
 Patron \$200
 Sponsor \$300

the earned income to help cover operating expenses. The Board decided last year to conduct annual fund drives to minimize the likelihood of drawing on principal. The Society has also adjusted the portfolio to return a higher rate of investment consistent with prudent risk management, says Treasurer Jack Miller, but the added income will not be realized until 2007. He also lauded Ted and Carolyn Scott for their recent contribution to the investment fund. "Their gift made a significant difference in the value of our portfolio," he said. The Scotts were honored at a reception October 9, at the Research Center.

Walker declined to put a figure on what the appeal might raise, citing the lack of experience in mounting a campaign of this magnitude. "We have never routinely conducted fund-raising appeals," she said, "preferring to rely upon income from our investments, publication sales, and dues to cover our expenses. Most not-for-profit organizations conduct one or two appeals a year. The Historical Society has not had to conduct fund-raisers to cover operational costs in the past; however, the downturn in the market in the early years of this century, the lack of any new publications coming on stream and the rising cost of doing business leaves us with little choice." She also pointed out that the dues have been deliberately kept low and that currently it costs the Society about \$12 for every \$20 collected in dues.

While the Society has always provided many member services that were covered by the dues income, most would agree that its greatest community service is the collection and maintenance of family histories and the archives on Orange County history. Anyone from anywhere can use the collection free of charge. The Board is reluctant to consider charging for research, but the expense associated with maintaining and supervising the collection may force a reconsideration of that policy.



Warren Dunn



Building and Grounds Committee Chair Everette Tucker surveys various features of the Historical Society's infrastructure that require prompt repair or upgrade.

The "Fighting Parson" from Orange, Virginia

Frank S. Walker, Jr., *St. Thomas' Episcopal Church, Orange, Virginia*
 Stacy Harrison, *St. James' Episcopal Church, Leesburg, Virginia*

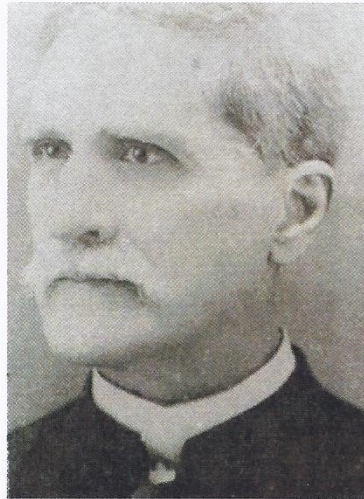
On October 1, 1859, the Reverend Richard Terrell Davis accepted the pulpit call of the Vestry of St. Thomas' Episcopal Church, Orange, Virginia. The childhood home for the 29-year-old

Davis had been Charlottesville, where his father John A. G. Davis¹, professor of law at "The University" and his mother, with family connections to the Monticello Jeffersons, doubtless moved effortlessly through the pre-Civil War Albemarle society. That said, the family had a more regional focus than many. Davis himself had graduated from Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria and had married Louisa Morris Saunders of Leesburg. His older brother, Eugene, resided in Middlesex County.

Richard and Louisa Davis would eventually produce a sizeable family, but that part of their lives brought sorrows as well as joys. One of the tombstones at St. Thomas' identifies "John A. G. Davis, Only Son of Rev. R. T. and Mrs. L. M. Davis." We learn that "Johnnie," as he was known, had been born in 1858 and died January 8, 1862. In her diary entry for that day, local diarist Fanny Page Hume notes that "Nellie went up to stay with Hattie...but she was sent for at Mr. Davis's—Johnnie is ill." In her next day's entry, Fannie reports that Johnnie had died the previous evening.²

When Reverend Davis accepted the call to St. Thomas', war clouds already lay thick over the land. By the time of Johnnie's death, the storm had burst. In her 1861 diary, Fannie Hume had been reporting on war preparations for much of the year, then on July 23, two days after First Manassas, she reports, "Such a horrid sight! A long car [train] loaded with dead and wounded was at the depot, the latter were being carried to the Hospital...Another train came up whilst we were there and our noble President, Jefferson Davis, was on board. All rushed forward to shake hands with him. ...He gave me a most hearty handshake."³ The American Civil War had come to Orange, and the Reverend Richard Davis was not immune to its demands.

It appears that Davis may have initially sought to resign his post at St. Thomas'; however, the arrangement that developed over time was one of an authorized leave of absence. Davis' intent had been to ride as Chaplain to the "Orange Rangers," a locally-recruited cavalry unit. The Orange Rangers, however, soon became Company "I" of the 6th Virginia Cavalry, the "Little Fork Rangers,"



Richard Terrell Davis as he appeared after the Civil War.

and Davis found himself serving as a regimental Chaplain.⁴ The 6th served in Virginia for almost the entire war, and as a Chaplain, Davis was not strictly confined to camp. He was back in Orange often, sometimes to recuperate from illness, but whenever he could, he preached at St. Thomas'. Fanny Hume particularly recalled Sunday, May 11, 1862: "Mr. Davis gave us a fine sermon from the text, 'And He shall come to judge the world.'...The first time I have been to church since it was used as a hospital—it is still very dirty, though it has been repeatedly cleaned."⁵

The 1863 Diocesan Convention starkly revealed the toll of the war on the Episcopal Church in Virginia. Only 35 lay delegates appeared, and of the 120 listed clergy members, only 49 answered the roll call. Reverend Davis was not among them. The report for St. Thomas' Church shows the Reverend John L. Hansborough serving as rector "in the absence of Rev. R. T. Davis, presently Chaplain, 6th Va. Cavalry." St. Thomas', incidentally, reported 78 members (down from 92 in 1862), 5 baptisms, 4 marriages, and 14 funerals.⁶

Reverend Davis was anything but a "summer soldier." He and his assistants labored diligently to serve the spiritual needs of their command. When General Lee and his army, including the 6th, spent the winter of 1863-64 in Orange County, a regimental historian reported that "Chaplain Davis initiated the construction of a log chapel under the watchful eye of architect Frank N. Wheat of Company D. The regiment produced both a singing class and a Christian Association."⁷ Davis of course was also serving at nearby St. Thomas' and helping at the Gordonsville Receiving Hospital when he could. The army experienced yet another Great Revival during that winter, and the interpretation of conversion experiences and the conducting of numerous baptisms added to an already-large work load.

See *Fighting Parson* on page 4.

1 John A. G. Davis died in November 1840 from a gunshot wound inflicted by a University of Virginia student. Davis' death was the impetus for the establishment of UVa's honor system.

2 Grymes, J. Randolph, Jr., ed., *The Fanny Hume Diary of 1862; A Year in Wartime Orange, Virginia*, Orange VA, Orange County Historical Society, Inc., 1994, p37.

3 Cortada, James W., ed., *1861 Diary of Miss Fanny Page Hume*, Orange VA, The Orange County Historical Society, Inc, 1983, p50.

4 See generally, Musick, Michael P., *6th Virginia Cavalry*, Lynchburg VA, H. E. Howard, 1990. Brother Eugene, who had been a Captain in the 2nd Va. Cavalry, resigned his commission and joined Company D of the 6th as an enlisted man. Like Richard, he survived the war.

5 Grymes, *Hume Diary*, p93.

6 See "Journal of the Sixty-Eighth Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia," held at St. Paul's, Richmond, May 20-22, 1863. The Journal has been published online by the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and is the property of that institution. Reverend Hansborough eventually became the full-time rector of St. Thomas', serving from 1870 to 1908, longer than any other rector to date.

7 Musick, *6th Va.*, p52.

Fighting Parson (continued)

At some point Davis received the oft-used sobriquet of "Fighting Parson," but he did not lay down his Bible and pick up a weapon as most bearers of that title did. He remained true to his calling and to the needs of both his civilian and his military congregations. This is not to say that he waited in the rear when danger lay ahead. Probably his defining moment came on April 24, 1863, when the 6th had to ford the rain-swollen Potomac River. A regimental historian reported, "The 6th Cavalry was the lead regiment, and it watched in horror as Pvt. William Evans of Company F was swept to his death. At this juncture, Chaplain Davis rode boldly out into the middle of the rushing river and stationed himself there, earnestly praying for the safe passage of the troops until every man was over. The Cleric's behavior inspired all who saw it, and won him admiring mention in the reports of the brigade commander."⁸ Indeed, in his after-action report to General Lee, brigade commander William F. "Grumble" Jones noted that, "The conduct of the Rev. Mr. Davis, chaplain of the Sixth Virginia Cavalry, was here conspicuously good. His example in courage and his abiding faith in Providence won the admiration of all."⁹

On another occasion, the 6th was participating in a pre-dawn raid on a Union camp. As the men moved forward, an officer spotted a rider in the darkness lagging behind. Using the flat of his saber, the officer delivered the customary thwack between the shoulder blades of the supposed slacker - only to discover that it was Chaplain Davis! Although a noncombatant, Davis was going to be near his men when the fight started.

When General Lee and his army were cornered at Appomattox, the 6th Virginia broke out and remained at large in the countryside for a time. Davis, however, surrendered with the rest of the army on April 9, 1865, and he returned to Orange and St. Thomas'. Unfortunately, neither the church nor the community could provide support for his services. Local tradition holds that St. Thomas' "paid" Reverend Davis in hay, firewood, and vegetables, but the needs of a growing family called for vastly more than that.

St. Thomas' corporate recollection is that Reverend Davis resigned its pulpit in December 1866, and it is known that he was not appointed Rector of St. James' Episcopal Church, Leesburg, Virginia, until May 14, 1868. What he and the family did in the interim isn't known, but it was likely a struggle for them as it was for so many at that time in Virginia. Leesburg was both Louisa Davis' old home town and a community that had been participating in the Federal economy since 1863. Things were going to be better.

In Leesburg, and at St. James', the Davises completed and raised their family.¹⁰ Daughter Elizabeth became the church organist. Mother Louisa and daughters Alice and Louisa were founding members of the church's chapter of the King's Daughters. Daughters Caroline and Lucy are not noted as having special duties—which usually means they wound up doing everything else around the church. Sadly, of the two boys born after the death of Johnnie, one died in infancy, and the other died in his early 20s.

8 *Ibid.*, p31.

9 U.S. War Dept., *The War of the Rebellion, A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Washington D.C., U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1880-1901, ar 39, p116. Report of Brig. Gen. Jones, dated 26 May 1863.

10 The assistance and information of co-author Stacy Harrison was most helpful throughout this work, and an unpublished manuscript prepared by her became indispensable from this point forward. A special thanks is gratefully noted—FSW, Jr.

Reverend Davis presided over his growing church and was instrumental in getting the congregation to begin planning for the new, larger church that was built just a few years after his death. He was also the leader of the Chi Chapter of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew. He did not forget his war years, however, and he was an active member of the Clinton Hatcher Camp of the United Confederate Veterans from the time of its formation until near his death.

In 1877, Washington and Lee College awarded the Reverend Richard Terrell Davis an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree.¹¹ In that same year, suffering from ill health and dealing with the pending death of a son, Reverend Davis tendered his resignation to the vestry. The vestry declined to accept it, but did agree to secure some assistance for him in the discharge of his duties. By then, Davis was not only serving the parishioners of St. James', but was also assisting where needed with Christ Church, Lucketts, a mission church he had helped to establish. He also served when needed at Belmont Church on nearby Belmont Plantation.

Reverend Davis continued to be burdened by poor health, but he also continued to serve his congregations as best he could. He died on May 3, 1892, still on duty as rector of St. James'. Historian Elizabeth Worsley wrote of him, "As a Christian he was patient, brave, gentle, courteous and given to hospitality. He was lavish in his affections in service and in gifts. As rector of this church he was a minister detached from pleasure, superior to the love of gain, of a nature too lofty for pride, and undisturbed by ambitious longings. His delight was in where his duty led, or fixed him, and his faithfulness in all was grand. We thank God for the gift of such a Pastor."¹²

11 Musick, *6th Va.*, p109.

12 Worsley, Elizabeth, *Old St. James Episcopal Church, Leesburg VA*, Leesburg VA, Washington Print, 1901, p44.

HELP! HELP! HELP!

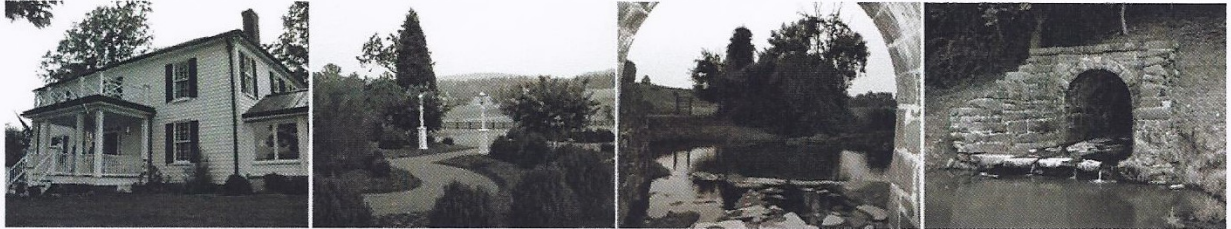
The Society is attempting to help Glenda A. Wise Morgan locate the interment site of her father, army Sergeant Earl Edwin Wise. Sergeant Wise was killed in the Korean War, with the family receiving notice of his death on October 26, 1951. His remains were initially interred in a military cemetery in Korea, but later, possibly around 1955, they were removed, and re-interred in a cemetery that Mrs. Morgan was told was in Orange County, Virginia.

Mrs. Morgan was still a young girl at the time her father's remains came to Virginia, and while her grandmother and step-grandfather, Mary and Oscar Batton, took her to visit the grave, she has no memory of where that was. She does remember it being in a small church cemetery, and she was told then that it was in Orange County. Her recent research indicates that the site is in a St. James' Cemetery in the county, but we are learning that no cemetery by that name is thought to exist in Orange County, so perhaps it is actually in an adjoining county.

Mrs. Morgan lives out of state, and traveling is not easy for her. If you have information or suggestions, please call the Society, 540-672-5366, or Frank Walker, 540-672-4167. Many thanks.

Picnic Season!

Lynne Lewis, Frank Walker, & Ann Miller



Oakley: manor house, view from garden, northern view from Fat Nancy culvert, northern end of Fat Nancy culvert.

It was a time of lawn chairs and portable tables, picnic baskets, and perhaps some new recipes – yes, it was a fine season of Orange County Historical Society Summer Picnics!

This year got off to a slightly soggy start, with a second rescheduling of our visit to Oakley. As you might recall, we tried our first-ever September (2005) picnic and were rained out. And while a very nice time was had at the Research Center, with an excellent talk by Duff Green, Ridge and DeLane Porter were kind enough to ask us to try again. And, it rained again, moving the June picnic to July 10!

It was well worth the wait. Picnic-goers were treated to fine weather and a talk on the Wreck at Fat Nancy Trestle, given by Frank Walker. The Porters were most gracious and allowed our members to tour their beautiful home.

The more adventurous members walked through a lovely pasture to the creek and the area that was the site of the Fat Nancy railroad trestle. The trestle was replaced in 1888 by a wonderful stone culvert, and since the water level was low, a few of us made a transit of the culvert – what fun!

All in all, Oakley and the Porters provided a delightful venue for the first picnic of 2006 and we had to shoo the last of the more than 80 attendees home as darkness fell.

Later in the month, on July 31, Randy and Michelle Williams hosted our July picnic at Tetley, the first time we have visited that beautiful site. Despite rumblings and grumbings from the sky, the weather held and everyone enjoyed their view of the house while dining and listening to a talk about the history of Tetley by Ann Miller.

The Williamses most kindly opened the first floor for members to tour, and to admire the wonderful wallpaper in the dining room, painted by former owner and noted artist Adolph Sehring. Many also strolled through the beautiful gardens and visited the historic outbuildings. Everyone had a wonderful evening.

August 28th saw the wrap-up of our picnic season, with a fantastic visit to Greenway, near Monrovia. Owners and hosts Toni and Terry Yates went beyond the normal picnic graciousness by not

only providing a beautiful setting but by sheltering our members from a sudden rainstorm.

When it began to rain midway through dinnertime, the Yateses threw open their doors and invited one and all to finish their dinners inside. Not only did the attendees have a dry meal, but also were able to see the fine work that Toni and Terry have done on their historic home.

The program, presented by Ann Miller and Toni Yates, included a brief history of the Greenway house and farm, which for many years was a Brockman family home. The Greenway house has three distinct parts. The oldest part of the house is the story and a half section that now forms the central portion (the present kitchen and dining room) of the residence. Said to date to the 18th century, it was moved to its present site in the second quarter of the 19th century (county tax records date the move to ca. 1845; some members of the Brockman family cite 1838 as the year of the move). As was common in houses of this vintage, this early section of the house was built on a hall-and-parlor plan (two rooms on the main floor). The building was set on a stone foundation at its new site, and the interior woodwork, including the stair, was remodeled around the time of the move. Within a few years of the move, the two story addition was added. This portion of the house is set on a raised stone English basement, which held the dining room. On the main level, which has noteworthy Greek Revival woodwork, are a stairhall (with a beautiful winding stair) and a parlor. Behind the house is the old kitchen, which has recently been stabilized by Terry and Toni Yates. Unusually steep “ladder stairs” give access to the kitchen loft and to the attic of the two story section of the house.

In the 1990s a new wing, containing a family room area and a master suite, was added to the house. The Yateses, who acquired Greenway a little over a year ago, are stabilizing and restoring the older portions of the house. They and their children are obviously enjoying this fine old Orange County property. Many thanks to them for their hospitality, and for making the evening so much fun.

Tetley: manor house, slave quarter, ice house, side garden.



Lynne Lewis

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Sad News: The Passing of Two Icons of Orange's History

It is with great sadness that the Orange County Historical Society notes the passing of Sandra Speiden, a long-time member, former Board member, and frequent program presenter. Sandra, of Somerset/Liberty Mills, died on February 3, 2006, within hours of apparently successful surgery.

Sandra was a staunch supporter of the Society, and along with her husband Bill, made a number of very popular presentations to our membership. Many of you will recall last year's very moving talk on her return of a sacred artifact to Sitting Bull's family and the Lakota Sioux tribe. For this act of kindness and generosity, she received one of the highest forms of recognition awarded by the Lakota Indians of South Dakota.

Sandra was appointed by the governor of Virginia to serve on the State Board of Historic Resources. She served on the board of the Piedmont Environmental Council, where she was honored with lifetime member emeritus status in recognition of her efforts to establish a moratorium on uranium mining in the state of Virginia. She received the Governor's Award for Environmental Preservation Excellence for her efforts to preserve the 11,000-year-old Paleo-Indian "Thunderbird" site in Warren County. Sandra and Bill operated Hampstead Farm as a working dairy farm all their active lives, having retired just a few years ago. Hampstead was where the first Paleo-Indian artifact in Orange County was discovered, and it was through her efforts that the entire area was incorporated into the larger Hampstead Archaeological District, part of the National Register of Historic Places.

Her work on the Rapidan Mound resulted in the publication of *Occasional Papers #4: The Rapidan Mound Revisited*, with Sandra as one of the co-authors.

A further sadness came with the news that on February 16, Edna Lewis, 89, famed cook and cookbook author, died in Decatur, Georgia. Ms. Lewis was born and grew up in Freetown, probably the best known of the Freedman's Villages in Orange County. Edna was a granddaughter of an emancipated slave who helped start that small farming community. At age 16 she moved to New York City, and in 1948 she became a chef at the Cafe Nicholson. In

the 1950s and 1960s her reputation as a chef spread, and by 1972 she had published her first cookbook, *The Edna Lewis Cookbook*. Her best known work is probably *The Taste of Country Cooking* (1976). In 1999 her long, illustrious, and groundbreaking career was capped by her designation as a Grande Dame by Les Dames d'Escoffier, an organization of female culinary professionals from around the world.

Seminars on Orange County History

Lynne Lewis

For six Saturdays in February and March, Frank S. Walker, Jr., noted author and distinguished Town Crier (among many other skills) presented a series of one-hour talks on the history of Orange County, using *Remembering: A History of Orange County* as the textbook for his talks.

The topics ranged from the opening session "Beginnings for a County and a Court House Town" through Spotswood, Madison, and the Civil War and Reconstruction, and ended with "The Commerce of a County." The lectures were very well attended and each talk was followed by an excellent question and answer period.

New member Carla Wascalus kindly videotaped five of the six lectures, and these have been broadcast on Lake of the Woods public service cable TV, Channel 17. The station gave us copies of the tapes, and another new member, Bob Pfile, transferred them to DVD, very handsomely packaged. We are looking into the possibility of reproducing the DVDs, and renting or selling them.

We were delighted to see many newcomers to our area attending, and they can testify to the fact that this, in conjunction with Frank's book, was an excellent way to learn about their new home county.

Many thanks go out to all those who helped with these delightful Saturday mornings: to our own staff and board members, to Carla Wascalus, Bob Pfile and of course, to Frank Walker, who made it all possible.