

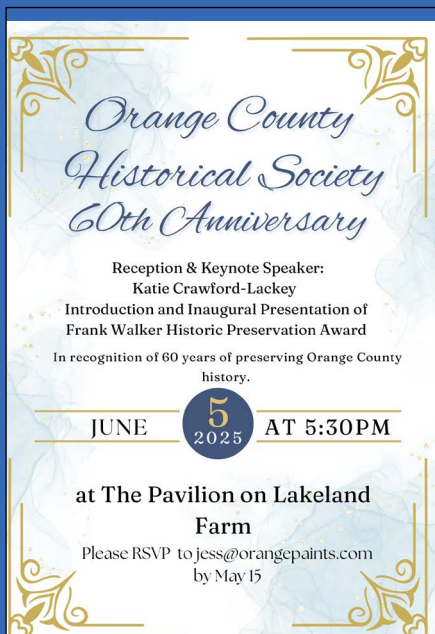
Orange Oracle

An electronic bulletin from the Orange County Historical Society

Historical Society 60th Birthday Party

The Pavillion at Lakeland Farm,
5:30 PM, Thursday, June 5

Join us at The Pavilion on Lakeland Farm (Rt. 15 south of the Town of Orange) for a reception to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Orange County Historical Society. Festivities get underway at 5:30 PM, Thursday, June 5. The keynote speaker will be Katie Crawford-Lackey from Montpelier's Robert H. Smith Center for the Constitution, and we will have the inaugural presentation of the Frank S. Walker, Jr. Historic Preservation Award. RSVP is required. Deadline stretched to May 25th! Email jess@orangepaints.com to reserve your seat!



*(Editor's note: we've already
received 100+ responses)*



PHOTO BY PHIL AUDIBERT

Charters of Freedom Dedication

It took the better part of four and a half years, but the Charters of Freedom installation at the James Madison Museum of Orange County Heritage is now complete. Assisting in the dedication ceremony are, from left to right: former Museum Executive Director Bethany Sullivan, founder of Foundation Forward, Inc. Vance Patterson, Town of Orange Mayor Harrison Cluff, JMM Board President Jessica Thompson, current Museum Executive Director Shanah Mort, Orange County Historical Society President Ray Ezell, Orange Town Planner John Cooley, and performer of the National Anthem Leighton Carter.

The brick installations house brass plaque replicas of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, the

Bill of Rights, and the Civil Rights amendments. This is the 68th installation of its kind in the United States. Non-profit Foundation Forward, Inc. founder Vance Patterson challenged those in attendance to, "bring your child, you grandchild, your niece, nephew or other family member, to your Charters of Freedom... Tell them about their freedoms and rights and how those freedoms and rights give them an advantage over the rest of the world to pursue their passion, to chase their dream, to accomplish their goals and get out of life what they want to get out of life."

The entire proceedings of the Charters of Freedom dedication ceremony can be viewed by clicking on this link: https://youtu.be/M2xqyGQO_0g?si=aB-9luh58WRqpdUM

2025 program schedule

Dates and times are subject to change.

> Sunday, June 22, 4:00 PM

Rocklands Farm Museum (picnic)

Please note that this is a schedule change.

> Sunday July 27, 3:00 PM

History of the Montpelier Hunt Races (picnic)

> Sunday, August 24, 3:00 PM

Virginia Indians in the Piedmont

> Sunday, September 28, 3:00 PM

Germanna Archaeology (picnic)

> Sunday, October 18, 3:00 PM

Dr. John Leland & Virginia's Baptists

> Sunday, November 16, 3:00 PM

Virginia Indian Eel Pots

> No December Program

All programs will be held at the Sandra and William H. Speiden Auditorium, 130 Caroline St., Orange, VA, unless otherwise noted. For programs being held in the auditorium, please be in your seats no later than 2:55 PM. Livestreaming starts promptly at 3:00 PM.

CALM opens



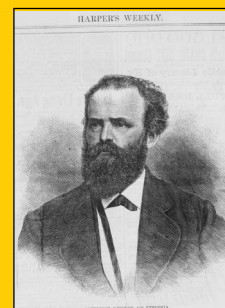
The Community Archaeology Lab at Montpelier (CALM) officially opened the week of May 5-9. In the top photo, members of the Montpelier Descendants Oral History Collaboration Team held a workshop in the space that used to be the Montpelier Supply Company. In the bottom photo, Montpelier's Archaeology Director Matt Reeves told the story of how his department survived a devastating fire a year ago and has now found a new home in the old general store building on Rt. 20.

PHOTOS BY PHIL AUDIBERT

History-to-Go

Gov. General James L. Kemper

Madison County Historian Harold Woodward, Jr., delivered a fascinating talk about the military and political career of Gov. General James L. Kemper. Woodward is the author of *Major General James Lawson Kemper, CSA, The Confederacy's Forgotten Son*. Kemper was an Orange County resident and served as Governor of Virginia from 1874 to 1877. Click here to view the program: <https://youtu.be/A1dasavEbNw?si=1uKT0N0o1uD4FG4z>



Shady Grove Tidy-up

Two former presidents, Ruth Mallory Long (Orange County African American Historical Society) and Lynne G. Lewis (Orange County Historical Society) spent the afternoon of April 28th tidying up the Shady Grove School. Located on the grounds of the Shady Grove Baptist Church, it was a two-room African American schoolhouse, which is marking its 100th anniversary this year. With permission from the church, Ruth and her late husband, George Long, along with Rebecca Coleman and her late husband, Isiah, worked to restore the

building, which received a Virginia Highway Marker in 2008.

A good dusting and sweeping, along with some polish on the student desks, readied the preserved building for a visit from a former Orange County High School teacher. Jeanne Strauchon taught world geography and was Ruth Long's 9th-grade teacher. Ms. Strauchon, who now resides in Minneapolis, was accompanied by former OCHS guidance counselor Ann Leahy and a friend from northern Virginia. Ruth provided her guests with the history of the school.



PHOTOS BY LYNNE LEWIS

Pictured at top, the Shady Grove School. Bottom photo: Ruth Mallory Long "tidying up."

Second call for volunteers!

Short term local schools project

We need several volunteers who are willing to dig into our school files and organize them. So many of our members have firsthand knowledge of the history of our local schools. Please, please, take this opportunity on this short-term project to share your knowledge and become more involved with your Society! If you are interested, email Volunteer Coordinator May Saxton at OCHistVolunteers@gmail.com.

Speaking of Volunteers...

(We reprint a recent Letter to the Editor of *Byrd Street*)

Locally (and I suspect everywhere) we have a critical shortage of volunteers. I base this statement on personal experience. I have been a volunteer at the Orange County Visitor's Center in the train station since 2010. During our pre-pandemic heyday we had a roster of 34 individuals who would man the desk at the Visitor's Center and keep the doors open seven days a week. Now we have maybe a half dozen. If it weren't for our paid part-time Volunteer Coordinator, we would be closed to the public more days than not.

Why is this happening? Most, if not all, of the 34 volunteers we used to have either died, moved away, or became too infirm to

fill a three-hour shift. Nobody under the age of 60 has replaced them. I suspect that in other more crucial sectors, such as fire and rescue, increasingly rigorous training and certification requirements have also thinned volunteer ranks.

But mainly, we are spread out too thin; too busy with our own lives to care. There are notable exceptions, but because of the pandemic and technology, we have become a selfish society of phone-staring people who won't make time to help others.

Concerning the cuts happening in Washington now, we're going to need volunteers more than ever.

—Phil Audibert

Historic Germanna Receives Governor's Environmental Excellence Award

Historic Germanna is honored to receive a Governor's Environmental Excellence Award, presented by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). The Silver recognition in the Land Conservation category recognizes the permanent conservation of the Siegen Forest.

In 2023, 163 acres of historically significant land, including the Germanna Ford area along the Rapidan River, were placed under an open space easement with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR). This milestone ensures long-term protection of the site's cultural and environmental value, while enhancing public access through the revitalized Germanna Ford Public Boat Launch.

This achievement was made possible through the invaluable support of our key partners, including: Virginia DHR, Friends of the Rappahannock, AmeriCorps, the Piedmont Environmental Council, American Battlefield Trust, Virginia Land Conservation Fund, American Battlefield Protection Program, Boy Scouts of America, and the Old Rag Master Naturalists.

Membership

Interested in Orange County history? Become a member of the historical society. Visit www.orange-covahist.org.



60 years ago: Page 1 of the *Orange County Review*

Editor's Note: For the past year or so, we've brought you a digest of important news items from our local weekly newspaper from 50 years ago. But, because this year marks the 60th anniversary of the Orange County Historical Society, we've decided to look at the 1965 editions of the Review.

May 6, 1965

The Richmond Symphony was to perform at the high school auditorium tonight, a first for our community. Also, Benny Sedwick broke the discus record at the high school, and a huge cockfighting raid in Culpeper netted numerous unnamed Orange County citizens.

May 13, 1965

A portrait of Gov. General James Lawson Kemper was unveiled at the courthouse. Kemper, a Civil War General who was wounded in Pickett's charge and later became Governor of Virginia, built and lived at Walnut Hills, four miles north of the Town of Orange. Ironically, our Historical Society program of just a few weeks ago was about Kemper and his legacy. (*See History-to-Go on page 2.*)

May 20, 1965

The headline reads "Berserk Student Steals Car Here." We just had to look at that one! "An 18-year-old University of Virginia student is out on \$1,500 bond after being charged on five counts here last week. Police said the student went berserk after being arrested early Thursday morning following a car chase down Rte. 20." Sadly, another traffic incident made the front page this week: A tractor, driving on Rt. 231 at 8:30 in the evening, was struck by two cars resulting in several injuries. This was and still is every farmer's nightmare.

May 27, 1965

The big news this week is that the family patriarch and editor and publisher of the Orange Review, James W. Green, died at age 74. With roots going back as far as General Washington's staff at Valley Forge and a grandfather who marched with Kemper's Brigade at Gettysburg, Green was a passionate student of local history. He was survived by four sons and two daughters, all of whom worked for the family newspaper, the *Orange Review*. That local weekly newspaper "has not missed an issue in 34 years," reads the front-page obituary.