

# Orange Oracle

An electronic bulletin from the Orange County Historical Society

## Montpelier's President and CEO Surprise Resignation

"I write this message with a heavy heart as I have unexpected family needs that



PHOTO BY HILARY HOLLADAY, EDITOR OF *BYRD STREET*, A NEW LOCAL ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER. CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE: [HTTPS://BYRDSTREET.SUBSTACK.COM/](https://byrdstreet.substack.com/)

require my full attention, and I have made the difficult decision to step down from the role as President and CEO of The Montpelier Foundation effective November 11, 2024,"

reads the surprise announcement from Eola Dance. "Over

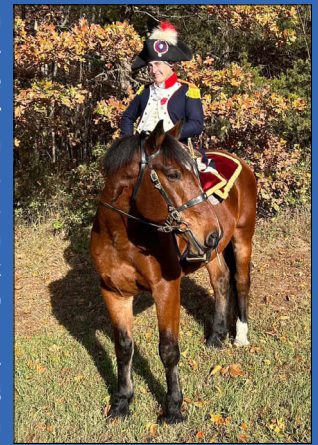
the past 15 months I have had the privilege of leading James Madison's Montpelier in meeting the mission to remember James Madison, preserve the enduring legacy of the US Constitution and "We the People," and memorialize the 300 enslaved people who lived and labored at Montpelier."

In a separate press release the Montpelier Foundation announced that Krista Costello, a 19-year veteran of the organization and current Chief Operating Officer will serve as acting President and CEO. "We are truly grateful

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## Lafayette returns to Orange County

Marquis de Lafayette re-enactor, Mark Schneider, made an appearance at the Montpelier Races on Saturday, Nov. 2, along with the Keswick Hunt Club Hounds. The occasion marks the 200th anniversary



of Lafayette's tour through this area in November of 1824.

*Editor's note: Be on the lookout for the society's fall newsletter, The Record, coming out soon, for a detailed look at the Marquis' 1824 visit to Orange.*

PHOTO COURTESY OF MARIETTA MADDEN AND THE AMERICAN FRIENDS OF LAFAYETTE

## Oral history workshop

Participants in the recent Montpelier Oral History Collaboration Team workshop introduce themselves at the beginning of the group's hands-on seminar on collecting oral histories in the Central Virginia area. Organizers Madlynn Anglin, Rashida Kirton, and Iris Ford were pleased by the turnout to the Montpelier Descendants Committee event.



# New Orange standpipe replaces old

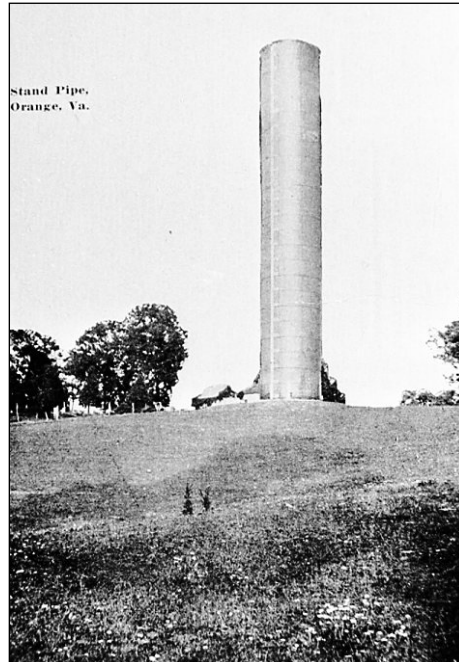
By Ray Ezell

Late last month, the original 1910 Town of Orange standpipe was demolished by a work crew after they installed a new standpipe on Burgess' Hill along South Madison Street. The erection of the new standpipe was begun in late 2023 and culminated with the removal of the adjacent historic water tower.

The original water tower was spawned by the Great Fire of 1908. Mayor Dr. Frank B. Perry and other town leaders decided that the town should install a central water supply housed in a reservoir tank and adjoining standpipe. Because of its elevation, the hill just east of town, partly owned by Mr. W.W. Burgess, was selected for the reservoir location. Also, Burgess' hill had two natural springs that could be used to feed the reservoir.

The steel standpipe plates were fabricated in a mill and shipped to Orange by rail. Upon arrival, they were loaded onto horse-drawn wagons and taken up East Main Street to the worksite. There, the large plates were joined with hot rivets, under the direction of Gen. William Nalle. The lower plates measured about 12 to 14-inches thick and tapered to the top of the pipe. The pipe measured 20-feet in diameter and was 120-feet tall. It held 289,000 gallons of water. It was completed in December of 1910.

Originally, a wood-fired



The standpipe as it looked circa 1910 when it was first constructed and the new standpipe today.

PHOTO BY PHIL AUDIBERT

steam-powered pump was used to fill the standpipe. By 1919, the waterworks had been upgraded to include a gas-powered pump at the standpipe spring with a capacity of 60 gallons per minute and another gas-powered pump in the pumping station with a capacity of 40 gallons per minute.

The town's water supply system was all gravity fed; it totaled about 2½ miles of pipe. It was comprised of 8-inch and 6-inch main lines with 38 two-way fire hydrants. The daily average consumption downtown was 30,000 gallons. About 1919, a pumping station was established on the Rapidan River near Spicer's Mill Road, next to the Woodberry Forest laundry. A 4-inch line was run to Woodberry Forest School at no cost to the school, and an 8-inch line

was run to town.

One last note of interest: Around 1961, a large number of animal carcasses were removed from the standpipe which then had no cover. A cover was installed the same year.

## *Editor's Note:*

*That's good to know! Also, see the Spring 2016 (Vol. 47, No. 1) issue of our newsletter, "The Record," for a good article by the late R. E. Lee, who used to play in the overflow from the pipe! Available to Members at <https://www.orangecovahist.org/archive-research-newsletters>.*

## Membership

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



## Board briefs

### **From the minutes of the October meeting of the OCHS Board of Directors**

#### **OCHS 60th Anniversary**

The Orange County Historical Society turns 60 years old in 2025. Various ideas are being considered for celebrating this historic event, including a series of videotaped interviews with founding and long-standing members. Also, an event, either in early May or early October that might coincide with an event at Montpelier, is being considered.

#### **Board Nominees for the 2025-2028 Term**

May Saxton, the society's current Volunteer Coordinator, replacing husband Mike whose second term is ending.

Jess Walters Thompson, finishing the term of a vacated seat.

Mark Hoerath, returning for his second term.

President Ray Ezell has indicated he is willing to serve a second term as President if chosen by the Board at the Annual Meeting, January 26.

#### **Gutter repair**

The Board approved the expenditure of \$3,980 to repair the gutters at the Research Center. Buildings and Grounds Committee Chairperson, Patrick Colby, says the work will start soon. Most of the money for this project was raised by private donations.

## **2024 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.**

#### **> Sunday, Nov. 24, 2 p.m.**

#### **Implications of Recent 3-D Scanning of the Barboursville Ruin**

Bryan Clark Green, Ph.D. and Will Rourk, 3D specialist with the University of Virginia Library, will

detail the results of laser scanning of the ruins of the Barboursville mansion and its adjoining landscape. Meet at the Sandra and William H. Speiden Auditorium, 130 Caroline St., Orange, VA. **Please note the 2 p.m. start time for this program.**

#### **> No December Program**

#### **> Sunday, Jan. 26, 3 p.m.**

Annual Business Meeting following the Battle of Mine Run program. Meet at the Sandra and William H. Speiden Auditorium, 130 Caroline St., Orange, VA.

#### **> No February Program**

## **Tentative 2025 programs**

#### **March**

Prelude to Yorktown 1781 — Lafayette vs. Cornwallis in Virginia

#### **April**

Career of Gov. General James L. Kemper

#### **May**

Religious Liberty

#### **June**

Rocklands Farm Museum (picnic)

#### **July**

History of the Montpelier Hunt Races (picnic)

#### **August**

Virginia Indians in the Piedmont

#### **September**

Germanna Archaeology (picnic)

#### **October**

John Leland & Virginia Baptists

#### **November**

Virginia Indian Eel Pots

## **History-to-Go**

### **The Pipe**

Bill Speiden talks about his late wife, Sandra's 17-year effort to return a ceremonial pipe to the descendants of its rightful owner, Sitting Bull. Click here to view the program: [https://youtu.be/dPtEuFD4Phk?si=ZCtzGdsipedyy\\_Pn](https://youtu.be/dPtEuFD4Phk?si=ZCtzGdsipedyy_Pn)

## **The Pipe**

**Featuring: Sitting Bull, General Rosser, Lt. Colonel Custer, Ron His-Horse-Is-Thunder, and Sandra Speiden. x Bill Speiden**





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# Orange County Review

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## 50 years ago: Page 1 of the *Orange County Review*

### Nov. 7, 1974

The 7th Congressional District election was razor close in Orange County with Republican J. Kenneth Robinson winning re-election over challenger, George Gilliam. The difference at Gordonsville precinct was only three votes in favor of Robinson. District-wide, however, Robinson garnered 52.4% of the vote. In other election news, voters in Orange County struck down the proposed Sunday closing (Blue) law.

### Nov. 14, 1974

The Orange Industrial Park is

born. Owned by the Town, the Council's Economic Development Committee recommended applying for an FHA grant to install a rail siding and extend the nearby Rapidan Service Authority Orange-to-Gordonsville pipeline, making the 181-acre property more attractive to prospective clients.

### Nov. 21, 1974

County tax bills totaling more than \$2 million were mailed out this week. Sixty four percent of that bill came from the real estate levy. The biggest taxpayer in the county was Transco Gas Pipeline, followed by the telephone (C and P) and

power (VEPCO) companies at the time.

### Nov. 28, 1974

The Byrum vs. Board of Supervisors civil suit trial finally got underway. Mr. and Mrs. Barney Byrum sued the Supervisors because they denied, on a 3-2 vote, a conditional use permit for a 15-unit mobile home park in a 279-acre wooded tract. The case has been at the center of the continued "growth vs. no growth" controversy that has gripped the county for more than a year with some of the players, on both sides of the issue, testifying.

## Montpelier *continued from page 1*

for everything Eola has done for the Foundation," continues the press release, adding "the Board will soon begin the process of identifying a permanent successor, confident that Montpelier's mission and vision will continue to thrive under Krista's leadership in the interim."

Dance later announced in her "A Year in Retrospect" report, "In 2027, The Montpelier Foundation (TMF) and Montpelier Descendant Committee (MDC) will actualize the vision for a

memorial to the enslaved, a future place of pilgrimage for people of all walks of life, committed to ethical storytelling and equity in commemoration. Made possible by the generosity of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and the Mellon Foundation, the staff, partners, and community have drawn upon the Rubric for Descendant Engagement as a host of scholars, artists, and leaders committed with us in telling a full and complete history of the making of America."

## Call for volunteers

Is there a volunteer job/project that you would like to do for the Orange County Historical Society? A job that you haven't seen in our monthly "Call for Volunteers"? Please let us know your ideas and thoughts! Email Volunteer Coordinator May Saxton at [OCHistVolunteers@gmail.com](mailto:OCHistVolunteers@gmail.com).

## Oracle items

Do you have a news item for the Oracle? Send your stuff to: [Phlodbear@aol.com](mailto:Phlodbear@aol.com). Deadline for the next issue is Dec. 14.