



# **Germanna Road: Three Hundred Year History of Lower Orange County, Virginia, with Particular Attention to the Alexandria Tract and Lak**

*Peter G. Rainey*

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This is a history of the land and the landowners along Germanna Road and connecting roads, from the Rapidan River to Wilderness Run. The chapters that follow provide the history of the lower end of Orange County, especially the Alexandria Tract, with particular attention to the land in and around Lake of the Woods. My brother asked me, "Why should I care about the Alexandria Tract?" My simple answer was, "Because we are descendants of Alexander Spotswood." He got me to thinking about what motivates anyone to write and especially to research and record one's findings for posterity. When the English settler came to Virginia, he brought his law and his library. The concept of land boundaries and personal ownership were foreign until then, as was the concept of written records. The land records, journals and family records of the five generations of Spotswoods, their relatives and neighbors that lived on and near the Lake of the Woods area have been preserved, but their story has not previously been written. Similarly, the modern pioneers that came in the late 1960s and later to form the community of Lake of the Woods should have their story preserved. Of all the places within a few hours of Washington, D.C., why pick the Wilderness to develop a large lake recreational community? The answer to this question cannot be found in any published history of Orange County. Why would families sell their home of generations including the family cemetery? The simple answer of "for the right price" is not the only explanation.

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