

Mill House Monthly September 2015

"Fall Bounty at the Bottle Stop" Fundraiser for the Occoquan Historical Society Tuesday, September 29, 2015 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

Join us for a pleasant evening of food, wine, and fellowship at the Bottle Stop Wine Bar & Shop in Occoquan. Proprietors Kim and Emil Wigode have put together a special fall bounty menu for us. Selected items from the Mill House Museum collection will be on display and each attendee will receive a free raffle ticket to win a prize from the Museum shop. This is a fundraiser for the Occoquan Historical Society and all net proceeds will support the museum and Society's mission.

The ticket price is \$50 per person and will entitle the holder to two drinks (wine, craft beer, or soft drinks) and the following fall bounty buffet:



*Virginia Rappahannock Oysters
on the Half Shell
Local Artisan Cheese &
Charcuterie- Firefly Black & Blue
(MD), Oak Springs Sage Derby
(VA), Olli Salame (VA)
Tomato Bisque Shooters
Portobello Mushroom Crostini*

Space is limited so purchase your tickets early. You may do so online at www.occoquanhistoricalsociety.org using a credit card or PayPal. Or you may send a check in the appropriate amount made out to the "Occoquan Historical Society" to P.O. Box 65, Occoquan, VA 22125. If purchasing by mail, please be sure to include your name and the name of any guests, as well as a telephone number or email address so you can receive a confirmation. No tickets will be mailed. Advances purchasers will simply

check in at the event. A limited number of tickets may be available for purchase at the event.

Join us for a relaxing evening in support of the Occoquan Historical Society!

A Peek Beneath the Bricks



Recently the town conducted some major repairs on a section of sidewalk in front of 304 Mill Street. Tree roots had buckled the sidewalk to a point where it was no longer safe for pedestrians.

The tree was taken out and during the process of removing the top layer of bricks and the under lying cement there was a discovery! The above picture taken on August 10, 2015 shows an older layer of bricks. This layer was approximately six inches below the upper sidewalk. The few older bricks that were revealed were laid in a herringbone pattern.

Repairs needed to continue. The site was documented with photographs and the bricks carefully removed. Occoquan Town Manager, Kirstyn Jovanovich, contacted the Prince

William County archeologist, Justin Patton. On August 12 Justin came to Occoquan and examined the old bricks. Justin told Kirstyn the brick pictured below is handmade and could very well date from the 1700's. The bricks appear to be from various time periods.



Justin said they may have been pulled up from other sites and reused in the section in front of 304 Mill along with newer bricks.

One of the Occoquan oral history stories that has been passed on through the years tells us brick used in some of the oldest building foundations came in from England as ballast in the ships. If only bricks could talk! With Justin's help they have told us some of their story.

Minton Donation

I never met Occoquan resident Mamie Davis, but from what I have learned about her she was a lady with a generous heart. That generosity has filtered down through the people that were lucky enough to know her.

Recently Dave McMaster III and his brother Patrick donated to the Mill House Museum 120 pieces of Minton Faisan Transfer Ware, circa 1880.

Now, for the story. In a practice begun by her mother, Mamie Davis rented out rooms at her 202 Commerce Street home to local teachers. Two of those teachers, David McMaster Jr. and Alice Vivian Davis (no relation to Mamie) met and fell in love! That love culminated in a wedding at the Pohick Church in Fairfax



County on June 12, 1955. The reception followed at Mamie's home.

As a wedding gift Mamie presented the couple with the Minton dish set that belonged to her mother. Mamie must have kept at least one piece. When the Mill House opened in 1970 she donated a piece of the same pattern and we have had it on display ever since.

David and Alice McMasters Jr. retired from teaching after many years in Prince William

and Fairfax Counties. David in later years worked as a docent at the Mill House.

Below are two of the pieces donated by the McMaster family.



The McMasters knew their parents would be happy to have the dish set return to Occoquan and we are excited to have received it!



The Best for Last

During the month of August I was blessed to have Alexis Bull as a volunteer at the Mill House. Alexis helped catalog the Minton donation as well as entering a large amount of data from our card catalog to our software program. I couldn't have accomplished all that work myself in the same time frame. Alexis hopes to major in history and museum studies when she heads off to college next year. Thank you Alexis for all your talent and help! *Dolores*

Below: Alexis at work in the Mill House



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