



The Mill Racer

Winter, 2017

A Publication of the
Occoquan Historical Society



Get Out of Town!

Early in 2017 we were presented with a donation from Leah Samuels. Her grandmother, Hannah Thompson, was one of the ladies who quilted our bicentennial wall hanging, and has several donated items in the museum.

Leah brought us in several items which included a receipt book from Mt. Pleasant Farm, whose location includes the present Marumscio Plaza site in neighboring Woodbridge. The farm belonging to Leah's grandparents specialized in Jersey dairy cattle. On this page in the upper corners are photos of the farm. On the left is the site with the original farm house. That farm house was replaced by a stone house, pictured above in 1937. If you zoom into the picture on the upper right you can see the stone house.

On the right is a 1922 photo that has been in our collection since the 1970's. Corbin and Mary Thompson owned the farm before Hannah and her husband Egbert purchased it. Mary and her friends, including Occoquan residents Mrs. Douglas Janney and Mrs. C. L. Starkweather, are sitting in front of the original farm house porch.



Group of women gathered at the home of Mrs. Corbin Thompson of Woodbridge (1922).
Front row: Left to right
Mary Thompson, Mrs. Curtis Backus, Lois Barnard Thurman, Mrs. Fred R. Hynson, Mrs. Douglas Janney, Mrs. C. L. Starkweather

Back Row: Miss Rachel Perkins, Mrs. Louise Perkins, Mrs. Fuchs, Mrs. Katharine Barnard, Mrs. Barnard

Nancy Thompson, Hannah's daughter grew up on the Mt. Pleasant Farm. Nancy attended the Occoquan District High School in the 1930's. Nancy's daughter, Leah Samuels, also donated several awards her mother received during high school. Leah's donation included a copy of a poem her mother wrote that shows the love Nancy had for her alma mater.

Occoquan

*Nancy Thompson
Occoquan District High School
Circa 1936*

*Far above the Occoquan's waters,
nestled on the green.*

*There stands the red brick
school house, the old school
we love so well.*

*O endless hours of happiness,
Ever in my mind doth dwell.*

*The gym we love that rocks with mirth.
The football sailing across the turf.
The class rooms bright with
pictures full.*

*Old Occoquan we all love thee.
O see the banners on the wall.*

We boast our glory before them all.

A copy of the poem, the school certificates and Leah's own Occoquan Elementary year books are on loan to Occoquan Elementary for the year. 2017 is the school's 90th anniversary. When the school opened it housed all twelve grades.



From the Farm

The northeast corner of the Mill House showcases items used in earlier days on the farm. The first time I cleaned the museum I remember thinking that never in my imagination did I see a day that I would be vacuuming barbed wire! My interest in the barbed wire ended each time I ventured into that NE corner and survived the journey without being decorated in barbed wire.

My interest has peaked after a visit from James R. Newman, author of *The Point Of It All: Understanding the Designs and Variations in Antique Barbed Fencing*. The book was published in 2016 and Jim mentions a visit to the Mill House and our "Buckthorn" barbed wire, patented by Thomas V. Allis in 1881 and pictured to the right. This section of wire was donated in 1984.



Our coil of barbed wire shown to the right is the "Crandal Zigzag" patented in 1879 by Edward M. Crandal. This piece was donated by Frank Gregory in 1972. Our museum catalog information says this wire came from a farm in western Pennsylvania.



Jim told me these barbed wire designs are associated with sheep farms. The wire was designed so it wouldn't grip the sheep's wool if it brushed up against it.

Jim's book is available through Amazon.com and describes over 2000 antique barbed wires. Jim's visit helped fill in some of the gaps in our collection information!

May 30, 1977

Remembering two fallen comrades

At this time each year, we stop to remember those men who fought and died for their country over the past 200 years. Veterans Organizations all over the United States will hold a memorial service and stop to say silent prayers for our departed comrades in arms. The Veterans of Foreign Wars dedicate their Post Homes and meeting places in honor of their fallen comrades.

But, have you ever wondered who the Posts are named for? In the case of Woodbridge's Post 7916, located in the sleepy town of Occoquan, it was named for two veterans, Hawkins and Reeve.

After World War II was beginning to fade into history, a group of veterans in the Woodbridge, Occoquan and Lorton area gathered to form what is now VFW Post 7916. The official date of mustering in the Post was June 25, 1946, with a local veteran, Mac McGuire as the first commander.

The name chosen for this Post was Hawkins-Reeve after two young men who lost their lives serving their country. Hawkins, born in Maryland, March 21, 1922, moved with his parents to Woodbridge at the age of 6. Hawkins' father was the caretaker for the Rippon Lodge.

Claggett Hartwood Hawkins attended the Occoquan School, still in use on Old Occoquan Road. After graduation from Occoquan School in 1939, he worked at the People's National Bank in Manassas and was employed there until accepted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation for training as an agent.

Claggett Hawkins was employed at the FBI when World War II broke out in 1941, but since he was in training, he was exempt from military service. However, Hawkins and four of his close friends decided to join in the defense of their country, and joined the Naval Reserves.

Hawkins was assigned to preflight training as a pilot and received his initial training in

Lynchburg. On completion of the preflight, Claggett went on to Pensacola, Fla., and received his wings and commission as a Lt. (JG) in the Naval Reserves.

After spending a short furlough with his parents and younger brother Ellis in Woodbridge, Claggett was transferred to the West Coast of California where he joined Composite Squadron 91. He went aboard the jeep carrier Long Island in San Diego and sailed for the Far East.

At Pearl Harbor, the squadron changed carriers and went aboard the U.S.S. Kitikau Bay. From Pearl Harbor, the ship sailed toward the fighting in the Pacific. It was while Claggett Hawkins was on a routine patrol flying a General Motors TBM-3 that he was killed. Claggett returned to his carrier and made two landing attempts, both times being given the "wave-off" signal by the landing signal officer.

On the third pass, Claggett's plane seemed to sink low off the fantail and the landing signal officer again gave the "wave-off" signal, but as Claggett applied power to the engine to go around for another attempt, his plane rolled, inverted and crashed into the sea.

His gunner, an air-crewman named Szpont, escaped from the inverted aircraft and made several attempts to get Claggett out of the wreck but to no avail. The carrier continued on, and the rescue was attempted by an escort cruiser. The aircraft sank within minutes and Claggett never managed to get out. It was believed that Claggett had died instantly in the crash. The date was December 6, 1944, his age, 22.

The other local man to whom the Post is dedicated was born in Lorton, where the MIMSCO Steel Yard is today. Born of an English father and a Virginia mother, Charles Douglas Reeve was raised in the Lorton area and schooled on the same location at the present Lorton Elementary School next to Shirley Highway. Reeve was born Sept. 18,

1918, and after high school attended the Strayer Business College.

Doug Reeve was employed by the Washington Gas Light Company when the war began. In the spring of 1942, he left home to join the U.S. Army Air Corps and was sent to Tullahoma, Tenn., for flight training.

After receiving his commission, Doug was transferred to South Carolina, where he trained in and flew medium bombers. His last furlough was with his parents at their Lorton home during Christmas of 1943. Soon after, Doug left for the West Coast of California and went overseas.

Stationed in the South Pacific, Doug and his co-pilot, Joe Cox, were enroute as passengers, with another pilot and crew chief to an airfield in New Guinea to recover a downed North American B-35 Mitchell bomber, and were flying in extremely bad weather.

The pilot of their aircraft, a Douglas A-20, became disorientated and found himself flying in a valley with clouds hiding the tops of the mountains. Unfortunately, they found themselves in a blind canyon with no escape and the pilot pulled up sharply to miss the mountain top and crashed.

The pilot was killed instantly and Reeve and the co-pilot were burned and injured, but their injuries did not appear to be serious. The crew chief miraculously escaped with minor cuts and bruises. The co-pilot, Joe Cox, dazed and burned, managed to walk down the mountain and was found by some natives who gave him first aid.

Through hand signals, he managed to tell the natives of the crash and after resting a search party was sent out to locate the crash scene. As darkness began to overtake the search party, the natives became concerned for their own safety and turned back leaving Joe Cox alone to continue on. Cox's main concern was

that he knew Reeve was injured and needed help and comfort through the night.

Cox found Reeve just as darkness overtook the jungle and made him as comfortable as possible and looked over his injuries. There didn't appear to be much wrong with Reeve except for a cut on his leg, but he appeared to be in great pain.

It was impossible for Cox to start a fire since the area they were in was swampy, and the co-pilot had been wet several times crossing streams going down the mountain and his matches were wet and useless. Doug Reeve and Joe Cox huddled together all during the long night and by dawn, Doug appeared to be resting comfortably. However, just as morning broke through the trees, Reeve appeared to go into spasms and threw up his arms and tried to speak. Then he lay still. The co-pilot Cox tried to lay his badly burned hands on Reeve's heart to see if he was okay, but the feeling in his hands were gone. He placed his face close to Reeve's mouth and there was no breath. Reeve had died. The time, October 12, 1944. Age 26.

Reeve's body was brought down from the mountains in a blind canyon with no escape and taken back to the military cemetery in New Guinea where it remained until 1948, when it was shipped home and interred at Arlington National Cemetery.

Reeve's only child, Douglas, lives in Spotsylvania County and teaches school in Suitland, Md. His parents, Charles and Mary Reeve, are living in Alexandria.

Clyde W. Gillespie
Past Post Commander

VFW Post 7916 Occoquan, Virginia We Need Your Help!

Commander Chuck Wilson, VFW Post 7916, recently sent us a copy of an article written in 1977 detailing the history of our local VFW. The article was a wonderful discovery, found in storage by Vice Commander Turk Maggi.

The article details the story of two young men Claggett Hawkins and Douglas Reeve, who sacrificed their lives for us during WWII. On June 25, 1946 the VFW Post was mustered in as Hawkins-Reeve in their honor with Mac McGuire as the first Commander.

Commander Walter J McGuire was a WWI veteran who retired after 24 years in the Army. Commander McGuire's obituary states during WWI he solely captured a German machinegun nest, was awarded the Purple Heart and France's Croix de Guerre Medal (Cross of War created in 1915).

VFW Post 7916 is working to fill in some of the gaps in their history. If you or if you know of anyone who might have newspaper articles, newsletters or oral history related to Post 7916 you can forward them to Commander Wilson at: cdrpost7916@vfwwebmail.com Connect with them also through their web page and Facebook page listed below. www.vfwpost7916.org www.facebook.com/vfwpost7916 You can also contact Dolores at bytheterrapinpond@yahoo.com Thank you!



VFW Post 7916 located at 204 Mill Street
The physical structure was originally the first
OWL Fire Department, shown above.

Heroine

Definition from Merriam-Webster.com: a woman admired or idealized for her courage, outstanding achievements, or noble qualities.

Do you know of someone in Occoquan who fits that definition? I do! However I will only speak of those who have since left us.

Recently a visitor to the museum asked me to write about some of the women who were important to Occoquan history. Quickly the names of Mamie Davis, Rosemary Selecman and Saluka Toliver came to mind. I have written about them in the past but they are interesting enough to reflect on again.

There are other women who may not stand as prominently in our memories but in their own ways helped shape our history. The first person that came to mind was Margaret Harmon Selecman. She and her husband Henry emigrated from Germany. Henry was hired to manage John Ballendine's Occoquan iron furnace and foundry which opened in 1755. Margret and Henry established Rolling Farm on the Occoquan River west of town. What strength it must have taken to travel to the English Colonies, speaking a foreign tongue, a new bride with no family or friends to rely on. Their children and generations following have featured prominently in Occoquan history. Margaret was courageous.

Thinking of the iron industry brought to mind some women we rarely think of. Presley Thornton's estate inventoried 69 slave men, women and children living in Occoquan at his death in 1771.¹ The majority of these residents remain nameless. What courage these women had, never knowing if they would be cruelly separated from children or life's companions. Sold at the whim of an owner, beaten or worse, leased like an object. These women were the most courageous.

¹ Kamoie, Laura Crogan, *Neabsco and Occoquan: The Tayloe Family Iron Plantations, 1730-1830*, Prince William VA, Prince William Historical Commission, 2003, pg. 30

Moving ahead to the Civil War years, what courage it took to live from day to day never knowing if Confederate or Union soldiers had taken up residence or would raid through town. It was reported in the Local News² on November 26th, 1862, several people were arrested in Occoquan. Included among them was John Underwood's mother, Hugh Hammill, Henry Smoot, Samuel Troth and one other unnamed lady. Their combined crime was a salute to the Federal troops that appeared on the north bank of the Occoquan. We may never know who the unnamed woman was but John Underwood's mother, Ann, would have been 58 years old. Ann ran a bakery on her property to help support her family and she raised a child, John, who was a noted abolitionist. Ann was courageous and noble.

Hannah Thompson, already mentioned in this newsletter, didn't reside in town but contributed her talent and lovingly donated to our collection a delicate baby gown, quaint hat pins and a lovely old doll. Hannah's image is among several of the ladies that worked on the quilt.

A November 27, 1974 article from the Potomac News recounted Hannah's then recent trip to Australia to attend the international meeting of the *Associated Country Women of the World*. The ACWW, still in existence, works to reduce poverty among rural women through self-help programs. Hannah was 78 when she traveled to Australia and was 80 years young when she worked on the Occoquan quilt. Hannah had outstanding achievements in her life.



The bicentennial quilt would not have been crafted without the efforts of Milly Lehto. Milly ran the Country Shop at 302 Mill St in

² Local News was a paper established after the Federal government closed the Alexandria Gazette offices.

1976. Here she taught quilting classes, sharing her talent with many aspiring quilters and helped organize the 29 women who created the quilt.

Millie was called several times by the Reagan White House to evaluate quilted gift items according to a November 29, 1984 Washington Post article. She was unofficially known as "Quilt Consultant to the White House" and was invited during the bicentennial to be one of the artisans to display her wares in front of the U.S. Capitol during the July 4, 1976 celebration. These were outstanding achievements for Millie.



Group effort

Making the Historic Occoquan quilt was a large group effort. Some of the women who stitched Occoquan in bright colors are, front row, left to right, Nellie Greene, Billie Davis, Evelyn Lynn and Hannah Thompson; back row, left to right, Nellie Curtis, Sophie Donlin, Nancy Mooney, Doris Greene and Milly Lehto. Not pictured are Celia Lynn, Letty Lynn, Martha Lynn, Mardell Fisher, Mary Anne Phelps, Hazel Peyton, Pat Northcutt, Linda Gray, Marilyn McCann, Jean Naszinger, Jean Randolph, Bobbi Franklin, Myrtle Jennings, Alice McGuire, Sally Souder, Louise Lincoln, Shirley Sullivan, Brenda Sonner and Peg Williams. Mazie Fleming, another of the stitchers, is deceased.

So what do we know about the three ladies first mentioned at the beginning of this article?

Saluka Toliver was one of store keeper, Ogle Harris' children. Born on December 8, 1900 she lived until October 25, 2001. The following resolution passed by the Virginia Legislature on January 9, 2002, best tells us of Saluka's life.

House Joint Resolution No. 52

Whereas, Saluka Beatrice Toliver, the Town of Occoquan's oldest resident, died on October 25, 2001, at the age of 100; and

Whereas, born in Occoquan in 1900, Saluka Toliver was baptized in the Occoquan River in 1914 and was a member of the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church for 87 years; and

Whereas, Saluka Toliver served the Ebenezer Baptist Church as a deaconess, Sunday school teacher and superintendent, and was a member of the Women's Club, the Senior and Inspirational Choirs and the Missionary Society; and

Whereas, Saluka Toliver, served as chairman of the trustee board, as Youth Club coordinator, and as Building Fund coordinator, and became trustee emeritus in 1984; and

Whereas, on November 3, 1990, Saluka Toliver was granted the title "Mother of Ebenezer Baptist Church" by Pastor Lundy; and

Whereas, a witness to the entire 20th century, Saluka Toliver was a valued resource for historians, college students, and town council members who were eager to learn the history from a first-hand source; and

Whereas, in 1996, Saluka Toliver was made an honorary member of Historic Occoquan, and on December 8, 2000, her 100th birthday, Occoquan proclaimed "Saluka Toliver Day" and gave her the keys to the town; now, therefore be it

Resolved by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, that the General Assembly note with great sadness the passing of one of Occoquan's finest citizens and most important resources, Saluka Beatrice Toliver; and, be it

Resolved further, that the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Saluka Beatrice Toliver as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for her memory.

Saluka is an example of courage, outstanding achievements, and noble qualities.

Pictured below: the Harris sisters; Madeline Bell, Artie Harris and Saluka Toliver



Have you sat in the Gazebo in Mamie Davis Park and wondered who Mamie was? Below is a selection from the *Notes on the Life of Mamie Lynn Davis*, written by June Randolph for a previous newsletter.

Mamie Lynn Davis, daughter of William A. Davis and Frances Keys Davis was born on March 14, 1887.

Miss Mamie worked for the Southern Railway Company in Washington D.C. and retired in 1968 after working there 51 years.

After the death of her parents Mamie continued to operate her mother's boarding house in the family home at 202 Commerce Street. Prince William County teachers became her main boarders and the home became known as the "Teacherage". She was always interested in young people and in education. She was given a life membership in the local PTA.

In addition to running the boarding house and commuting to her job in D.C., she was a charter member of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Occoquan, Woodbridge and Lorton Fire Department (OWL) and also belonged to other community organizations.

Beginning in the 1930's she served the Town government variously as Town Clerk, Councilwoman and Treasurer. She was elected Mayor in 1959 and as such she sat as judge in cases brought by the Town Sergeant. For 50 years she served in one capacity or another for the Town of Occoquan.

She died a few weeks before her 100th birthday, leaving to the Town \$100,000 to be used for the Town Hall and park. In appreciation for all she had done for the community, Town officials named the first public park in Occoquan for her. Mamie had outstanding achievements and noble qualities.

Above: Mamie on June 3, 1916, at the access to the iron truss bridge on the north side of the Occoquan River.



Rosemary Selecman, pictured on the right is best remembered for her efforts in changing the designation of the Occoquan to a river from creek. Rosemary, driving up the Shirley Highway (prior to I-95) on her way to work in Washington D.C., noted that when the bridge over the Occoquan was completed as part of the Shirley Highway project the signs that



were put in place said Occoquan Creek. Rosemary felt it was an insult to all the families who for generations had lived and worked on the river. After a three year campaign that began in April 1968, the Board on Geographic names of the U.S. Department of the Interior

approved the use of the name Occoquan River. It seems C.D. Choat, a cartographer, in 1910, mistakenly labeled on a map the word creek rather than river. Previous to that the title river had been used for the Occoquan.

Besides the U.S. Board of Geographic Names Rosemary had correspondence with the Commonwealth of Virginia, the counties adjacent to Prince William, the Washington Star and anyone who could possibly help in her efforts to right this mistake.

On July 14, 1971, Rosemary received a letter from Commissioner Douglas B. Fugate, Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Highways, notifying her that instructions were issued to change all signs on the river crossings from Occoquan Creek to Occoquan River.

Rosemary can be admired for her outstanding achievements.

The number of women not mentioned on these pages that contributed heroically to the development of our community is beyond count. What of all the women who immigrated to this land and planted roots for their families? The ladies that had to survive the raids and turmoil during the Civil War, they can't be forgotten. Remember the ladies that toiled to restore the town after fire and floods. The women, who have served the town in capacities from council member to mayor, remember them. We must thank the ladies who worked so hard to form our historical society and open the doors of our Mill House Museum, almost 50 years ago.

If anyone has a special story to share about someone who has made a memorable contribution to Occoquan send the story to Dolores at: bytheterrapinpond@yahoo.com

At The Mill House

Yes, before we know it spring will be here! We need volunteers. As the weather improves the activities that we would like to participate in that are sponsored by Town and the merchants will arise. Our staff is hard pressed to fulfill all these needs. Please contact us at the Mill House. We need your time and talent. Many of these events are related to children's activities. Thank you!

Stop at the museum and see us. We love sharing your Occoquan history. Enjoy our new video display. The newest slide show includes the pictures from the 1972 flood that was a result of hurricane Agnes.

Mill House Museum
PO Box 65, 413 Mill Street, Occoquan, VA 22125
www.occoquanhistoricalsociety.org
703-491-7525
Open Sunday through Saturday 11-4



April, 2017
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The Mill House Collection

The Mill House Museum, only one room big, has cataloged close to 500 items in its collection since the museum opened in 1970. Not all items are on display or still a part of the collection. Some objects were on loan and have been returned to their owners and sadly, some items were stolen in the past.

Certain pieces have been de-accessed, like our woodsy owl. The owl was dearly loved by many, particularly children. Mounted stately on a wood stand at the top of a display cabinet next to the entryway he greeted all our visitors. Over the years it became infested and unsightly and had to be removed to protect other museum items.

A few pieces though significant are not related to Occoquan history and would use so much of our limited display space that they are currently stored. One item is a hand crocheted bed spread. It was made by an Italian lady who worked as a servant for a family in NYC. The family took it as payment for their homesick employee's passage back to Italy. It came to the Mill House as a donation soon after the museum opened.

A large portion of the collection is our wonderful array of photographs. Individually these numerous photos are not framed and hung but now with our video display we can share this section of the collection with slide shows.

On display however are the majority of the objects within our collection. When the museum opened, the curator, Nellie Curtis, and many volunteers, started an index card catalog along with supporting photographs. Over the years when an item was donated to the museum a card was made and so the collection continued.

So what happens to an item that is donated or loaned to the museum today? About five years ago OHS purchased the Past Perfect software program designed for museum collections. Much of the original card catalog data has been transferred to the program. As new items are donated or loaned that information is quickly logged into the program. Each item is assigned its own catalog number. Numbers can tell us what year an item was accessed. So any item added since January first of this year starts with the #2017. Photographs of the newly donated or loaned pieces are taken and added with the physical descriptions to the data base. No matter if a piece is displayed or stored that location



information is also included. If an item is on loan the Past Perfect program can be set to alert us when it is time for the item to be returned to the owner.

In March our most recent item was donated to the museum. During work on the retaining wall along the river at Occoquan Regional Park a small midden pile was uncovered. A nearly perfect ginger beer bottle was among the refuse of an earlier generation. The bottle was assigned #2017-1-9. It was the ninth item added to our collection this year. The #1 in the center of the catalog number refers to the type of item within the collection. The collection contains objects, photographs and a library.



The ginger beer pottery bottle was made between the years 1890-1920 and measures 8.75" tall and is 2.75" wide at the base. The #1 in the center of the Gray/Portobello stamp indicates it was made on day 1 of a 9 day cycle. It was crafted at the Gray pottery in Portobello Scotland, a suburb of Edinburg, located along the Firth of Forth. Shown are photos added to the Past Perfect software entry along with a physical description of the bottle, information about the donor, how the item was discovered and where it is currently located.

Ginger beer was a non-alcoholic beverage. While the 1908 prison construction was occurring, brick kilns being erected soon after, was a ginger beer opened to help quench the thirst of a tired worker on a hot Virginia day and tossed aside into the trash heap? Did someone from the Scottish pottery works come to Virginia and help construct the Lorton prison brick kilns and bring his own supply of tasty drinks from home? Hmmm.....

Any physical donation or loan to the museum generates a certain amount of paperwork. Before an object can be left for consideration as a donation or loan a form needs to be filled out and signed by the potential donor acknowledging the item has been left at the museum. Once accepted, forms have to be filled out and sent to the donor for a signature allowing the release of the item to the museum.

The decision to de-access an item creates another form. The decision to actually remove an item from the museum collection is decided by a vote from the OHS Board. This information can be added to the Past Perfect entry related to that item.

So what item at the museum gets more comments than any other? It has to be the size 4½ woman's shoes. According to public opinion they are the narrowest, pointiest and most uncomfortable looking shoes they have ever seen! Visit the museum and you can decide.



The shoes belonged to Occoquan resident, Gertrude Selecman. The mill house has a copy of a letter written by Gertrude. In the letter she writes, "When I was a child my father's aged sister made her home with us. She was the dearest little body, very bright and vivacious. She seemed never to grow old, and was very pretty even at the advanced age of 76 years. She was petite in figure, weighing only 85 lbs., and wore a child's size shoe number 13."



It seems these Selecman ladies were very tiny. A child size 13 shoe fits a 7 $\frac{3}{8}$ " long foot and an adult woman's size 4.5 shoe fits an 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ " foot. Gertrude must have also had an abundance of patience to lace her shoes for a daily stroll to the general store.

If you ask the curator what her favorite item is it's a combo. The iron bar and blacksmith vise from the 1755 iron furnace is what she will point out. They tell the story of the origins of a town with its first major industry, an iron furnace. Secondly it tells the heritage of a family who knew the value Henry Selecman's blacksmith vise represented. The Mill House Museum doesn't tell a story of things, it tells the many stories of the many people the things belonged to.

Annual Meeting

In May look for an announcement of the annual Occoquan Historical Society membership meeting. Membership dues of \$20 are collected at that time. Details will appear in the May newsletter. See you in June!

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May, 2017
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**Notice of
Annual Membership Meeting**

The Occoquan Historical Society will hold its annual membership meeting at the Bottlestop located at 311 Mill Street in Occoquan. The meeting will convene on Monday, June 19, at 6:30 p.m.

Business will include the election of the Occoquan Historical Society Board for the 2017-2018 year. Those nominated for the Board at the May 11 meeting were; Boyd Alexander, Kim Deal, Jim Drakes, Dolores Elder, Barbara Frank, Earnie Porta, June Randolph and Marge Shafer.

Fundraiser at the Bottlestop!

At 7:30 p.m., following the meeting, stay on and enjoy a relaxing evening with a glass of wine and a small buffet. **Tickets for the June 19 fundraiser are \$50 per person.** While you visit with friends and help support the museum and the numerous OHS projects, view a PowerPoint that includes many of our oldest photographs from the Mill House collection. Several artifacts from the museum will be on display including photos from the 1972 flood that washed away the 1878 iron truss bridge.

Help support our fundraising efforts. We receive \$11,150 annually in combined grants from the Town of Occoquan and Prince William County. Those funds help cover operating expenses such as salaries and utilities.

Over the last 10 years the historical society has funded numerous projects. In 2007 we placed a Civil War Trail marker and a marker interpreting the history of the 1789 merchant's

grain mill at a cost of approximately \$2,500 each.

In 2015 we installed markers on the 1914 carbide bunker, the waterworks gear wheel and the 1805 Occoquan Hotel carriage stone. Those three markers with installation came at a price tag of nearly \$1,000.

There are 14 historical markers in town that were installed by the Town in 2000 and are now in need of restoration. In 2015 OHS adopted the marker adjacent to the museum building and sent it back to the manufacturer for restoration at a cost of almost \$800 with shipping.

The 1800's museum building belongs to the Town of Occoquan. In 2014 OHS paid \$1,780 for the addition of gutters to the building. Prior to this water puddled around the front of the building resulting in the rotting of the front door and wood frame.

Another project OHS completed was replacing the flooring in the museum. The old stained carpet was removed and a laminate floor was laid that can easily be cleaned. This project was another \$1,000

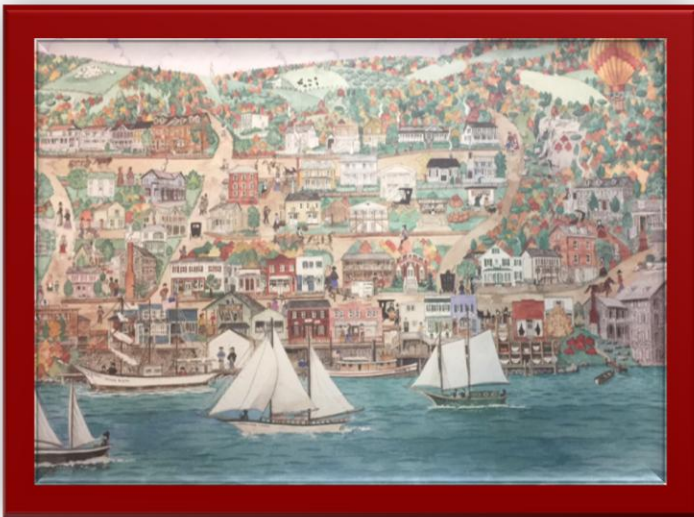
The *Past Perfect* software program was purchased not many years ago to record our collection. We can add descriptive notes, information related to the donor and any pertinent data. The price was about \$900.

In December of 2016 we placed our video display in the museum that allows us to show our collection of historical photos and videos. The computer with a mounting swing arm, software and TV for the display cost about \$1500.

These projects that help preserve and tell our history come at a cost. The projects listed previously totaled close to \$13,000 over the last 10 years.

You can see we rely heavily on the generosity of our membership and the visitors to the Mill House. OHS has been blessed with some wonderful donations over the years. The historical society hopes to continue with these important projects and is beginning the process of getting bids and the permissions to place a historical marker in the vicinity of River Mill Park. This marker will interpret the history of the 1828 cotton mill and the 1755 iron works. Funds raised on June 19 will contribute to the cost of this marker. That cost will be over \$2000.

Included in your fundraiser price is a ticket for the raffle of Helen Jean Smith's beautiful, framed, signed and numbered 383/500 *Autumn in Occoquan* print shown below.



Enter the silent auction for a chance to own a **P. Buckley Moss** print of our museum titled, *The Little Stone House* or a framed print of a photograph from the museum's collection.

Visit www.occoquanhistoricalsociety.org to purchase fundraiser tickets. We hope to see many of you on the 19th. If you are unable to attend, dues can be paid and donations made at our web site. **Yearly dues are \$20** per family. Checks can be made to the Occoquan Historical Society and mailed to the same at PO Box 65, Occoquan, Virginia 22125.

We can't be here without your continued support. Thank you all!

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July, 2017
A Publication of the Ocquan Historical Society



Good bye to our Stewart. October 11, 1932-June 26, 2017

With great memories but sad hearts we say goodbye to Stewart Christiano. Stewart could be found at the Mill House on Sundays. If ever he was absent, everyone wanted to know where he was! A lifelong educator, Stewart's favorite lesson was instructing young and old about the history of milling and particularly that of the Ocquan Merchant's Mill. The pictures above show the hand turned grain mill he used to demonstrate the milling process. Stewart's was a life of service that included the army, a history instructor while at UVA, a local school assistant principal, PWC Park Authority Board member and chairman, and a volunteer with youth recreational groups. Stewart also served on our Ocquan Historical Society Board. He won't be forgotten.

Occoquan Historical Society Annual Membership Meeting & Fund Raiser June 19, 2017

The Occoquan Historical Society thanks everyone who attended our successful fundraiser. Although we were visited with rain earlier in the day the evening was a pleasant one. The Bottle Stop Wine Bar was a perfect venue for the annual membership meeting at 6:30 and the fundraiser that followed at 7:30. The OHS Board for the next year was elected and positions on the Board will be elected at the next monthly meeting. The 2017-2018 Board consists of Boyd Alexander, Kim Deal, Jim Drakes, Dolores Elder, Bobbie Frank, Earnie Porta, Marge Shaffer and June Randolph.

A thank you is extended also to those who supported us even if time and distance didn't allow you to join us. If you haven't had the opportunity yet to send in your membership dues here is a gentle reminder and a big thank you in advance. **Dues are \$20 per family and can be paid on our web site www.occoquanhistoricalsociety.org or a check made to the Occoquan Historical Society and mailed to the same at: PO Box 65, Occoquan, VA 22125.**



Above: Pictures from the June 19, 2017 fundraiser



Young Eli, pictured here, is sporting one of our historical society ball caps. His grandmother thought it was perfect to keep the sun off his face while they strolled through *River Mill Park*. Our museum store stocks ball caps, coffee mugs, glass retro milk bottles, ornaments, children's toys, postcards, key chains, magnets, walking tours and many local history books including *Images of Occoquan*. Next time you need a gift for someone or a treat for yourself, stop at the Mill House!

Mill House Collection

Once used together while dressing, pictured here are two items that are often admired in the museum. The button hook was donated in 1972 by Mrs. Ariella Eike and had been used by her grandmother. The button hook was used to grasp the shank of the button and pull it through the button hole. Designs have changed but button hooks are still sold today. The button closure shoes dating from circa 1895, were purchased at Leary's Lumber & General Store which had been located at 302 Mill Street. They were given to the museum as a loan in 1981 by Kathleen Ward Way. They are marked Peters Shoe CO., Diamond Brand, St. Louis. The trademark for the Diamond Brand was registered on January 4, 1892. The shoes are in such good condition they probably weren't worn to play tag, hide and seek or kick the can!



Music on Mill

The Town of Occoquan is having a free concert series in River Mill Park, from 6p.m.-8p.m. on the first Fridays and third Saturdays of the month starting July 7 and continuing through September 16. Check www.occoquanva.gov for details.

Mill House Museum
PO Box 65, 413 Mill Street, Occoquan, VA 22125
www.occoquanhistoricalsociety.org
703-491-7525
Open Sunday through Saturday 11-4



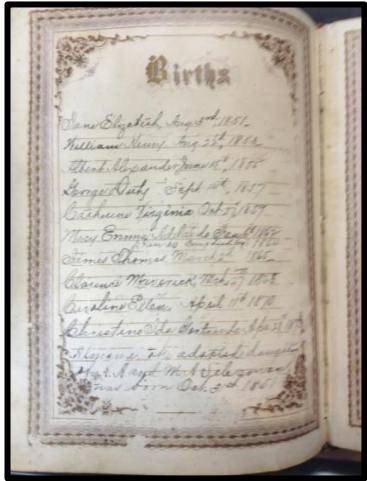
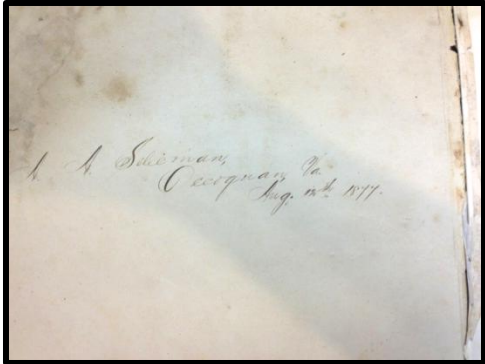
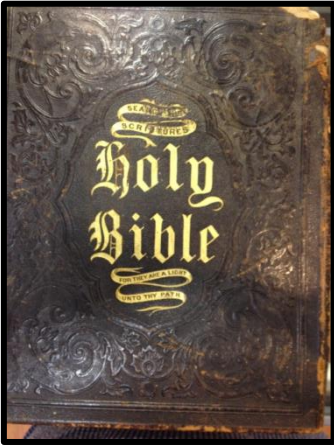
The Mill Racer
Summer, 2017
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What's New?

The U.S. Census Bureau recently featured the Mill House Museum on their web site and Facebook page. The Facebook link is <https://www.facebook.com/uscensusbureau/> The website link is; https://www.census.gov/history/www/reference/datamuseums/occoquan_mill_house_museum.html

Like any institution involved in historical research we use census data. Sharon Tosi Lacey, PhD, is the Chief Historian, History Branch, Public Information Office at the U.S. Census Bureau. She visited the Mill House several months ago. Realizing the Occoquan history we share here and our use of census data is what brought Dr. Lacey to include us on the web site so more people can discover and enjoy our museum.

A few summers ago the 1873 family bible belonging to the Albert A. Selecman family was donated to the museum. Census records helped to make sense of the names and information contained on the various pages of birth, death and wedding entries. It's especially helpful in families where first names are used through several generations. This information helped fill in some gaps in the family history.



Pictured on the left is the Mamie Davis family hair album page. Mamie Davis was a lifelong Occoquan resident born on March 14, 1887 and passed away on February 24, 1987. Just like a picture album a hair album was kept to remember family and friends. At the top of the cross design is the name Delia Lynn. Through census records we identified Delia as Mamie's GG maternal grandmother. Delia lived from 1807-1882. Two of her son's W.M. Lynn and Melton Lynn served in the CSA Virginia 4th Cavalry, Co. A. Mamie's mother's lock of hair is the second from the right, on the lower corner, F.V. Keys.

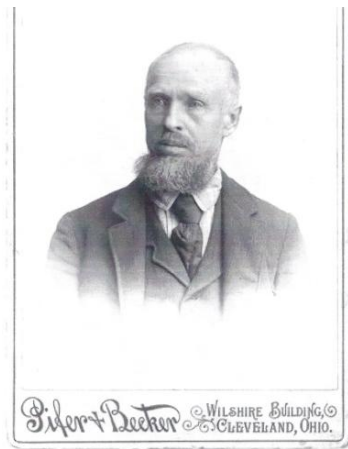
The following article about the tombstone in our museum collection used census data. Thank you to the U.S. Census Bureau!

Mill House Collection



Here Lies a Good Old Soul
Killed by Some Cruel Wrong.
F.H. 54 Years
C.N. 42. W.A.C.O.
1893

The tombstone on display in the Mill House is a major source of curiosity for our visitors. The stone was unearthed by workmen who were excavating for a bulkhead along the Occoquan River. It was in June, 1979, that the Prince William Marina donated it to the Museum. The location where it was found, behind 201 Mill Street, is where the Carousel Restaurant opened in July 1979. Later 201 would be home to Sea Sea & Co. Restaurant and currently the home of Madigan's Waterfront. The stone was carved for Frederick Gottlieb Hurlebaus, visiting Occoquan from Cuyahoga Co., Ohio. Visiting is a loose term for his time spent in the area as you will see.



Frederick G. Hurlebaus

Had A Coffin Ready, Alexandria Gazette, August 16, 1893

Some interesting facts have been discovered connected with the suicide of Frederick Hurlbus at Woodbridge last Friday. The suicide as heretofore stated was committed because Mrs. Arnold would not elope with Hurlbus. It appears that Hurlbus had made in Occoquan a plain coffin box, and also a tombstone made in this city with the following inscription: "Here lies a good old soul, killed by some cruel wrong. C.N. 42, W.A.C.O., F.H. 54". This is interpreted to read, "Cecelia Nien, age 42, Wabash Avenue, Columbus, Ohio, Frederick Hurlbus, age 54." This is a sequel to the marriage that took place in the Pension Office about a year ago, the parties having become acquainted through correspondence, and meeting by engagement in the Pension Office, the ceremony was there performed. Hurlbus lies buried in the spot selected by him, and the stone has been put over his grave as he desired, and in a position where the lady who rejected him can see it from her doorway.

Let's read on!

Got a Wife by Advertising, Washington Post, December 7, 1892

*George W. Arnold, a veteran of the War, and Cecilia Nein, a spinster from Cleveland, meet in the Pension Office and are married in the presence of two thousand clerks, who gave a great cheer of congratulations and approval of the act.******

One year ago George W Arnold, a war veteran of Woodbridge, Va., advertised in a Western paper for a wife. Yesterday Mr. Arnold stood in the grand corridor of the Pension Office¹ beside Miss Cecelia Nein of Cleveland, and they were pronounced man and wife, while a cheer broke forth from the largest audience which ever witnessed a wedding in Washington. So much for the value of advertising.

Until the two met in the corridor of the Pension Office yesterday morning they had never seen each other. Miss Nein answered the advertisement from her home in Cleveland and her letters struck Mr. Arnold as more business-like and conveying a ring of greater sincerity than any other of the applicants for his bed and board. Consequently, he replied with ardor, tempered with business, and finally photographs were exchanged. At length some two months ago, an agreement was made, by the terms of which two were to meet in Washington and become one. Mr. Arnold is a pensioner, and is accustomed to visit Washington quarterly to draw his reward for having fought and bled, and he determined to kill two birds with one stone. He was familiar with Gen. Raum's building, and, consequently, that was made the trysting place. When the Virginia veteran arrived to the city yesterday morning he was dressed in his best. He hied himself forthwith to the courthouse and

¹ The Pension Office was erected between 1882 and 1887 as a memorial and a place to serve the veteran soldiers, sailors and marines from the Civil War. It is at F Street between 4th & 5th Streets NW. Today it is the National Building Museum.

procured a marriage license. About noon some of the pension clerks noticed a tall, thin, bearded Virginia farmer with a G.A.R. button on his coat nervously pacing about the fountain in the center of the building. Soon a lady who had seen about 40 years and who wore a dark blue traveling dress and was a well formed brunette, entered at the north door and walked rapidly over to the fountain. She met the Virginia Farmer there, and for several seconds they seemed to be trying to stare each other out of countenance, the lady gazing earnestly and the man rather deprecatingly, as though he felt a trifle sheepish. The lady was the first to break the silence.

"Are you Mr. Arnold?" she asked.

"This is Miss Nein, I reckon," the farmer replied.

Then the two strolled around the wide corridor twice, carrying on a subdued conversation. Finally they stopped a colored messenger.

"Can you tell me where to find a minister?" asked Mr. Arnold.

The colored man took in the situation at a glance and entered into the spirit of the occasion.

"You want to be married?" he said, and Mr. Arnold assented. "There is a minister right here. You won't have to go a step." He summoned Rev. W. H. Black who is a Methodist preacher, but is employed in the bureau. The reverend gentleman came forth from his office, the license was exhibited, and brief explanations followed. Meantime the messenger had dropped a hint and the news was spreading. A crowd gathered about the little group and peered over the shoulders of the nearest. A quiet wedding had been intended, so they stopped between the two cases of patent files. But a quiet wedding was out of the question, for the report spread like wildfire. Clerks dropped their pens and ran out to the two rows of galleries encircling the main floor. When the last words were pronounced a great cheer went up from 2,000 spectators. A finer arena could not have been provided for the display. The clerks pressed around the bride and groom to shake hands and offer congratulations. Mr. Arnold quietly presented \$3 to the clergyman and led his bride away. The excitement upstairs in the galleries did not subside for some time and many rumors of its cause were afloat. One was to the effect that a clerk had inherited a million dollars and was to leave without resigning, and many thought a fight had occurred. By the time the ladies had subsided into composure, Mr. Arnold was well on his way to Woodbridge with his bride. He said he had never seen her before, but was well satisfied with his bargain.

Later in the day Commissioner Raum summoned Rev. Mr. Black to his room to know why he had stirred such a commotion in the bureau. When the minister explained that he had no premonition of any such commotion the incident was dismissed with a laugh.

An article about our tombstone written by Martha Roberts for the October, 2007, OHS newsletter, gave us a rendition of an oral history passed on by descendants of George Arnold. At the time we believed Frederick had met a local lady during the Civil War and had returned for her. Martha's article piqued the interest of Allie Guidry who connected to the Hurlebaus family through Ancestry.com. Allie's wonderful research turned up the Washington Post article, Frederick's portrait and the following family information. The Hurlebaus descendants also had an article from the August 15, 1893 Manassas Gazette. This tattered clipping said Frederick had stayed at Edward Hammill's *Commercial Hotel* at 206 Union Street. While in Occoquan he continually harassed the Arnolds to the point he was arrested for lunacy and spent time in the Brentsville Jail. Frederick was pronounced sane by the Court and upon his release he told Cecelia he would go back to Ohio and even purchased a train ticket that was never used. We know of course what followed was his suicide on the Arnold's farm with a Smith & Wesson.

Another piece of information I recently found through Ancestry.com was Frederick had taken out a marriage license in Cuyahoga County, Ohio on September 10, 1892, for he and Cecelia Nein. It was signed by the county deputy clerk, H.A. Schwab. The license was never used and seems to indicate Frederick was pursuing Cecelia for quite some time.

The first article titled "Had a Coffin Ready" was posted on Ancestry.com on January 29, 2017. Some of the facts differ from the Washington Post article. The Post says Cecelia was from Cleveland and not Columbus. Hurlebaus' name was misspelled in the Gazette article also.

So just who was Cecelia Nein? Was she a "spinster lady" as the Post said or had she been married? The 1870 census lists a Cazilia Nein, age 25 and her husband John, age 28. They have two children aged five and three. An 1873 city directory has them living at 108 Wade Ave. in Cleveland Ohio. In the 1880 census Cazilia is now spelled Cecelia and the family includes two more children. John Nein died in October, 1891. Cecelia's youngest child was 18 when her father passed away. It could be Cecelia was ready for a change in her life and answered the ad posted by George W. Arnold. A fresh start and escape from Frederick Hurlebaus may be what she hoped for. That Frederick followed Cecelia here a year after her marriage to George points to what frame of mind he was in and lunacy might be a good description.

The line on Frederick's tombstone, C.N. 42 W.A.C.O. was never deciphered here at the museum. The Alexandria Gazette article says it means; Cecelia Nein, age 42, Wabash Ave. Columbus Ohio. Census information would indicate Cecelia was 48 when Frederick took his own life. The city directory gives an address of 108 Wade Ave. Cleveland Ohio. If Frederick was unsure of Cecelia's age, C.N. 42 W.A.C.O. could indeed have been her name and last address in Cleveland, Ohio.

Frederick had lost his wife, Elizabeth Hurlebaus. She is buried at the Crow Road Cemetery, Litchfield, Medina County, Ohio. Elizabeth died on April 28, 1891 at the age of 48. How does it happen that Frederick used the line C.N. 42 W.A.C.O. on his wife's stone two years before he added it to his own? If the line refers to Cecelia and her address could Elizabeth's death be attributed to something other than natural causes?

How did the tombstone end up in the Occoquan? We have said over the years that it washed there after Hurricane Agnes in 1972. Another answer may be Cecelia told George to hitch up the horses, put the stone in the wagon, drive down Washington Street, circle the wagon around, open the wagon bed and chuck it in the river! This story will continue when we find out the cause of death for Elizabeth Hurlebaus and John Nein.

Thank you for all the recent donations and membership renewals. The \$20 yearly fee can be paid online at www.occoquanhistoricalsociety.org. A check made to the Occoquan Historical Society for \$20 can be mailed to: PO Box 65, 413 Mill Street, Occoquan, VA 22125.

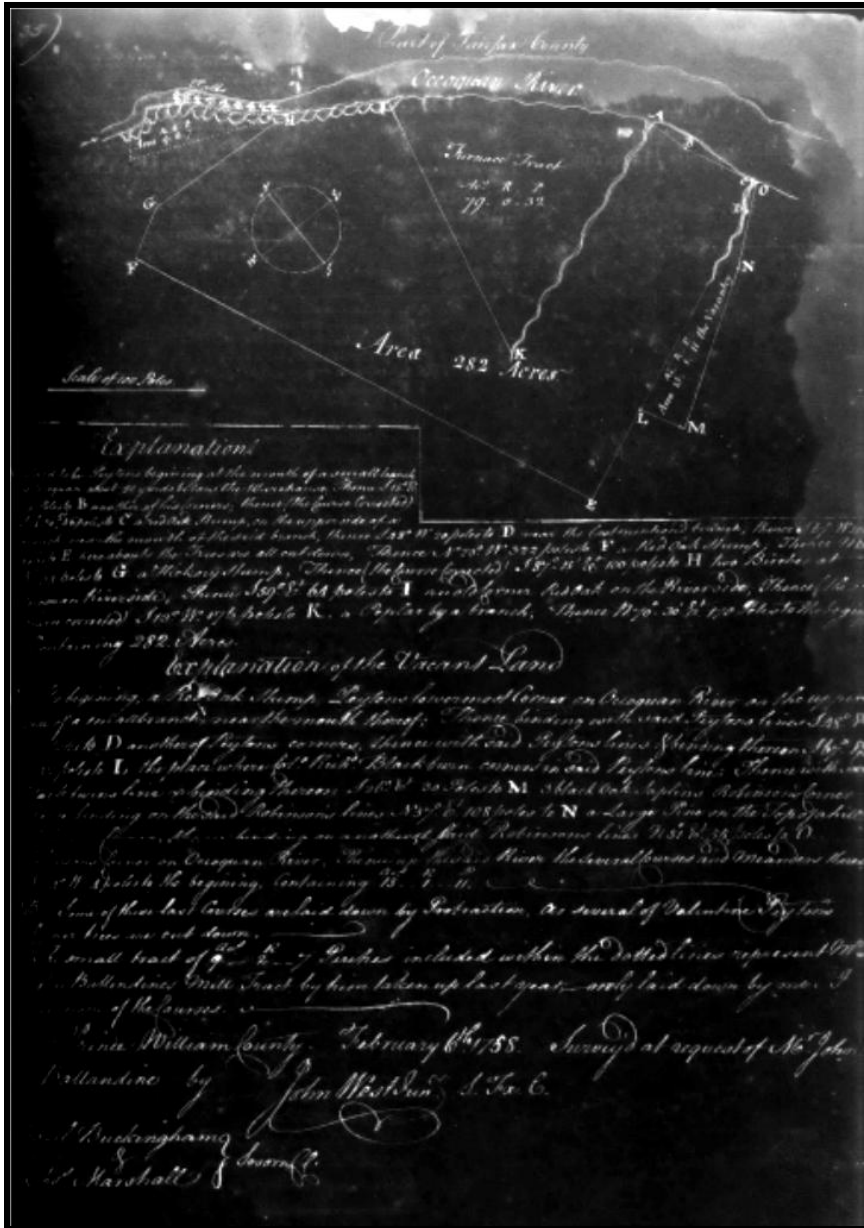
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The Mill Racer

Fall 2017

A Publication of the Occoquan Historical Society



Fairfax County Survey Record Book March 17, 1742-, Page 71 A Survey Requested by John Ballendine of John Westin.

On the left is a survey dated February 6, 1758, of an area along the Occoquan River that includes the site of the first major Occoquan industry, the 1755 Ballendine iron furnace and the furnace tract where the tobacco warehouse was located.

The tobacco warehouse is on the south bank of the Occoquan River near a small stream, Ballywhack Branch, just to the east of the present town dock and Mamie Davis Park. The 9 acre iron furnace area is on the upper left of the survey, also on the south side of the Occoquan River.

From the Survey:

Explanations

A Said to be Peyton's beginning at the mouth of a small branch of Occoquan about 50 yards below the Warehouse. Hence S 15° E 24 Poles to **B** another of his corners; thence (the Course corrected) S 24° 30' E 46 poles to **C** a red oak stump, on the upper side of a branch near the mouth of the said branch, hence S 48° W 20 poles to **D** near the last

mentioned branch, thence S 6° W 208 poles to **E** here abouts the Trees are all cut down. Thence N 23° W 322 poles to **F** a Red Oak Stump; Thence N 61° E 35 poles to **G** a Hickory Stump, Thence (the Course corrected) S 87° 15' E 100 poles to **H** two birches at Occoquan Riverside, Thence S 59° E 64 poles to **I** an old Corner Red Oak on the Riverside, Thence (The course corrected) S 13° W 176 poles to **K** a Poplar by a branch, Thence N 70° 30' E 170 poles to the beginning containing 282 acres.

Explanations of the Vacant Land

C. The beginning, a Red Oak Stump, Peyton's lowermost corner on Occoquan River on the upper side of a small branch, near the mouth there of; Thence binding with said Peyton's lines S 48° W 20 poles to **D** another of Peyton's corners, thence with said Peyton's lines & binding thereon S 67° W 142 poles to **L** the place where Col. Rich Blackburn in said Peyton's line: Thence with said Blackburn's line & binding thereon S 26° E 30 poles to **M** 3 black Oak saplings Robinson's Corner Thence binding

on the said Robinsons lines N57° 108 poles to **N** a large pine on the top of a hill Robinsons' Corner, Thence binding on another said Robinsons lines N51° E 55 poles to **O** Robinsons' Corner on Occoquan River, Thence up the said River the Several Courses and Meanders there of N24° W 4 poles to the beginning, Containing 15 (acres) 1(rod) 11(poles)

NB. Some of these last Courses are laid down by Protraction, as several of Valentine Peyton's corner trees are cut down.

The small tract of 9 (acres) 2 (rods) 7 Perches included within the dotted lines represent M. John Ballendine's Mill Tract by him taken up last year only laid down by me: I run none of the courses.

Prince William County February 6th 1758. Survey'd at request of M. John Ballendine

John Westin S.Fx C.

Basil Buckingham & Thos Marshall } Sworn

Transcribing these early surveys can be difficult and hopefully the majority of what I transcribed is accurate. For anyone looking at one for the first time, here are a few explanations:

1. The length of a rod or perch is 16.5' or 5.5 yards.
2. Protraction: The lines weren't run or measured in the field, but the lengths laid out on paper.
3. NB are initials for the Latin words Nota Bene that translates as note well.

This survey is quite interesting in what it shows us. The warehouse on the survey sits 150 feet from the bank of the Occoquan River. In today's street layout that would place it on the south side of Mill Street, in the 200 block. This would later be the site of the coopers shop shown on the 1804 Occoquan Plat. The warehouse was at a convenient site to load ships at the historic town dock and to unload wagons rolling into town on Washington Street. Later as the location of the cooper shop, that convenience for shipping any variety of goods would continue.

Information from Hening's *Statutes at Large* tells us a warehouse was established at the copper-mine landing in Prince William County upon the Occoquan in 1734. Permission was repealed in 1744 for the warehouse on the south bank of the river and reestablished in 1748. The 1748 Hening's Statutes, Chapter XXXIV states, "That public warehouses for inspection of tobacco, pursuant to this act, shall be kept at several places herein mentioned: that is to say... In the county of Fairfax; at Occoquan, and Peyton's, in Prince-William county, under one inspection..."

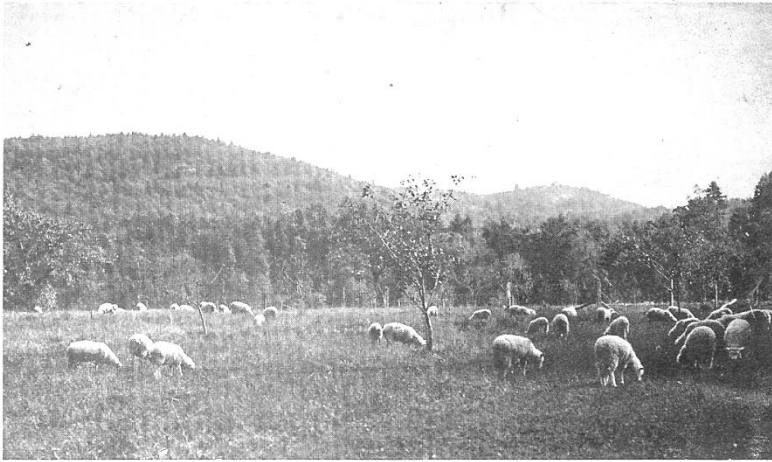
Tobacco was the major crop in the early years of Prince William County as it was in much of Virginia. The economy revolved around tobacco. Tobacco could only be transported by ship in legally inspected and stamped hogsheads. Ship captains would be charged large fees for illegal transportation and the tobacco confiscated. An exception was tobacco could be transported by boat if it was being delivered to a warehouse to pay levies, debts or other duties. During 1732 fees to the county clerks, constables, coroners and sheriffs were paid in pounds of tobacco. Here is a sampling of fees; to the clerk of the court for a wedding or ordinary license, the cost was 50 pounds of tobacco. The sheriff received 20 pounds of tobacco for a ducking but only 10 for placing someone in the stocks. The coroner received 133 pounds for an inquisition, to be paid from the deceased person's estate and if the estate couldn't cover the fee, the county would. In 1732 the inspectors in Prince William County were paid 30-40 pounds annually depending on their warehouse location.



On the left is a copy of the Town of Occoquan 1804 plat. The coopers shop and wharf are shown on the right side of the plat. Ballendine's iron furnace would have fallen into disuse by 1804 but was located just above the current River Mill Park.

Meadow Cemetery

The Relic Room at the Bull Run Library in Manassas recently received a question about the location of the Meadow Cemetery. A Manassas Journal article from December 3, 1915, said Virginia Duty was buried at the Meadow Cemetery yet there is no listing of that cemetery in records. Research conducted by the Relic staff found Virginia's death certificate listed burial in Occoquan.



Greetings from OCCOQUAN, Va.

The postcard pictured at the left shows the text "Greeting from Occoquan, Va." The card is on display in the Mill House Museum. The picture, taken from the south side of the Occoquan River shows sheep grazing in a meadow and the silhouette of the hill side at Occoquan Regional Park on the north bank of the river. Oral history from several sources tells us local residents referred to that area as

the meadows, hence the name Meadow Cemetery.

The WPA report #294, created by Susan Morton in 1937, refers to it as the old cemetery. The familiar name of the Meadows passed into history as the cemetery fell into disuse and the area was developed in the 1950's. Surrounded by private property and bordered by Poplar Lane, Riverview Lane and Route 123, the cemetery was forgotten until Carol Rymes took interest in the project. Carol's double great grandmother, Catherine Charlotte Caldwell Davis, was buried in the Meadow Cemetery in 1872. (See Mill Racer, Summer, 2012.) Carol and family paid to have the area surveyed and cleared, Boy Scouts put in a path to the cemetery and now BSA 1396 will once again clear the Meadow Cemetery later in October.



The picture on the left shows the east end of Occoquan and the area that includes the Meadows cemetery or Occoquan Burying Ground.

Virginia Duty's obituary follows and mentions other members of her family that are also interred at the Meadow cemetery.

From the Manassas Journal, December 3, 1915 page 5.

Transcribed and compiled by Morgan Breeden volunteer at the Relic, Bull Run Library, Manassas Virginia

A Tribute of Love Death of Miss Virginia Duty Removes Old Resident of County

The passing away of Miss Virginia Duty at Occoquan, Va., on Thursday morning, November 18th, removed from the community the eldest and one of the most beloved and highly esteemed citizens of the village, where she had lived for nearly eighty-five years, and where, from her earliest girlhood, she had wielded an unwavering and highly effectual influence for good.

Being of an excellent moral character, she devoutly embraced the Christian faith and was unceasing in her performance of its good works, as taught by Jesus Christ in his Holy Word.

Within her home circle, among her nephews, nieces and other relatives and friends, she will be sadly missed.

The deceased had lived all her life in the village of Occoquan, Va., where she was born and reared and where her ancestors lived for generations before. O She was a sister of the sainted Mrs. Mary A. Selecman, widely known for her Christian grace and charity, and a twin sister of Capt. Henry F. Duty, whose memory will ever be revered for his deeds of valor. She was also a sister of the beloved James Duty. They were members of a family widely known for its Christian piety.

Miss Virginia Duty made her home with her brother, the late Capt. Henry F. Duty, whose daughter, Miss Janie Duty, she reared from infancy and loved as her own child.

This consecrated Christian lady descended of the puritan faith, whose character embodied most unusual strength and tenderness, filled a place within her home and in the community which few but she could have filled.

Moral strength and tenderness, controlled by excellent judgment are her strongest qualifications and these she daily exercised in the performance of duty, meekly and loyally serving her God and ministering unto her fellow creatures.

Her mission was to love and to serve and to faithfully perform her duty as she saw it. Was there illness or death, she was there to minister and comfort-even when enfeebled by her eighty old years of age.

There was no house too lowly for her to enter. Her Christian grace made no distinction of class, creed or color in the hour of sorrow. Yet, with unswerving loyalty to God, she whole-heartedly espoused the cause of good and censured wrong, irrespective of the wrong doer, for, with impartial discrimination, her righteousness knew no compromise.

Miss Virginia Duty was the daughter of Jane Epps Duty and Davis Duty, son of Andrew Woodbury Duty and a great-grandson of Asa Davis, whose family settled near Boston, Mass., as early as 1583, and who was a prominent representative of his state in 1777, 1779, 1793 and 1794, and from 1800 to 1808.

Asa Davis performed with distinction military service in the Revolutionary war, and was with Capt. Samuel Greely's company that marched at the time of the Lexington alarm April 19, 1776. He was in Capt. James Ford's company June and July, 1777, also in Lieutenant Brown's company to Saratoga September, 1777, at Burgoyne's surrender. The Asa Davis homestead is still standing in good condition and is occupied by members of his family.

Miss Virginia Duty's mother, Jane Epps Duty was descended from the Dorrs, who were among the first English to settle in Prince William County.

Jane Epps Duty's father, John I. Hedges, was a major in the American Army in the War of 1812 against England.

Thus, embued by the traits of her ancestors and sustained by Christian grace, Miss Virginia Duty's beautiful character will ever be revered by those who knew and loved her.

For some time prior to her death, the deceased had been much enfeebled but seemed to suffer little in the end, but just passed away as the result of her feeble age.

Her funeral services were conducted by the Rev. Mr. Bibings at the M.E. Church at Occoquan, Va., of which she had been a member since early girlhood. Her remains were laid to rest in the Meadow Cemetery beside her parents and brothers, amidst bowers of beautiful flowers which she loved so well.

She early espoused the cause of Christ and remained faithful unto the end.
"Her's is a starry crown! In the last day many will rise up and call her blessed!"

Photograph Donation

During September and October Elizabeth Cooper donated approximately 65 family photographs to the Mill House Museum. Many of the pictures were inherited from her aunt, Doris Bubb, a long time Occoquan resident. There is a variety of Occoquan scenes in the set.

Donated in a second group are photos from the Occoquan High School class of 1935 which includes Elizabeth's mother, Sara Bubb. Another picture shows Sara relaxing on the Occoquan River rocks and yet another with three of her friends (One is Margret Selecman Sheppard) on the iron truss bridge.

Elizabeth shared with me that her great-grandfather, Joseph Plaskett, helped build the abutments for the Occoquan iron truss bridge in 1878. This is intriguing as one of the photographs Elizabeth brought to us shows a very old scene of the bridge.

Following is a little history of the iron truss bridge taken from an Alexandria Gazette article and Henrietta Selecman's diary.

Alexandria Gazette, January 21, 1878

The masonry for the proposed bridge connecting Fairfax and Prince William Counties at Occoquan has been commenced, and is being pushed forward with vigor. It is not expected the bridge will be ready for travel before next summer.

The Diary of Henrietta Selecman

May 11, 1878

The iron bridge came on the steamer Potomac to Occoquan

June 13

Finish building the bridge across Occoquan creek

June 14

Inspected the bridge

The bridge collapsed during Hurricane Agnes on June 22, 1972. What we refer to as the footbridge was a one lane traffic bridge until the first Route 123 bridge was constructed.



Left to right: Sara Bubb Cooper, Ocoquan Iron Truss Bridge circa 1880, Sara Bubb and friends 1935



Property of George K. Cooper

*Landraill Belmont, Jr.
 E. Francis Sawlance
 James Estroff
 Dorothy Armstrong
 Jim McAntear
 Bertha Gordon
 Lois Davis
 Lillian Hixson
 Beer
 Robert F. Mooney
 Egbert W. Sharron
 William Bourne (Stolt)
 Nellie Hixson
 Margaret Hines
 Elv. Arington
 Elizabeth McKee Vaughan*

In the class picture above the first person in row two is Principal Elizabeth Vaughan Sara Bubb is next, second from the left.

The student names are listed on the back of the picture, but not in order. We aren't sure who's who so if anyone can match a face to a name please let the Mill House know!

The first Alumni Homecoming at Ocoquan District High was held on May 16 & 17, 1941. The following information on the class of 1935 was compiled by the Homecoming Committee.

Dorothy Armstrong is married to Alton Taylor and they have a four year old daughter, Edna Mae. They are living in Woodbridge, VA.

George Arrington is living in Woodbridge, VA. He was employed at the D.C. Penal Institution for a short time and is now at Indian Head Naval Powder factory.

Wallace Bourne, after graduation, was employed at the Nation Wide Grocery Store in Quantico. He bought the former owner out and is now a successful business man. He continues to play basket ball for which he was noted at school.

Sara Bubb, Woodbridge, VA, completed a comptometry course at Washington Comptometer* School and has been employed at the office of the Sanitary Grocery Company for the last four years.

Lois Davis, now married to Jimmie Norton, lives at 1317 W. 42 St., in Baltimore, MD. She is a telephone operator in that city.

Bertha Gordon married Norman Wyatt and they have one child. They are living in Minnieville.

Margaret Hines is married to Lieutenant Crouch, who is now stationed at the Marine base, San Diego, CA.

Nellie Hinton lives in Washington, D.C. and works at the Social Security Building.

Launderville Lodoux attended the medical school at Maryland Univ. He had to stop when his father was transferred to China.

Charlotte Lovelace lives in Washington and is employed as a private secretary there.

Robert Mooney is married and living in Florida.

Pearl Liming (No information available)

Jim McInteer went to Randolph Macon and later transferred to V.P.I.* He won honors at both schools. After graduation he went to work in his line of study which is Conservation. He is now located at V.P.I where he is doing graduate work.

Egbert Thompson graduated from V.P.I. and is now working on his father's farm in Woodbridge, VA.

*Comptometer, key driven mechanical calculator.

*V.P.I., Virginia Polytechnic Institute.

Notes

The Occoquan Historical Society Board met at 6:30 p.m., on Thursday, October 12 at the Mill House. Officers were elected and are as follows.

President Marge Shaffer

Vice President Kim Deal

Treasurer Earnie Porta

Secretary Dolores Elder

Also on the OHS Board are Boyd Alexander, Jim Drakes, Bobbie Frank and June Randolph.

The Mill House Museum was open during the annual Occoquan Arts & Crafts show on September 23 & 24. The museum hosted nearly 750 visitors on the weekend. The hand grain mill donated by the family of Stewart Christiano was set up outside for the children (and some adults) to operate. Grinding grain into flour helps the children understand our mill history and they can follow up with a short milling video inside the museum. It was a great weekend for all of us!

It's never too late to pay your 2017 dues. Thank you all who have paid the annual family fee of \$20. Dues and donations can be mailed or paid on line at www.occoquanhistoricalsociety.org We are creeping up to the end of 2017 and it would be a good time to think about a donation to OHS.

Mill House Museum
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Mill House Monthly
December, 2017
A Publication of the Occoquan Historical Society

December 8, 1831

Following are excerpts from the 1831 sale of a parcel of land in Occoquan from members of the Janney family to a group of Alexandria gentleman. Shown in red, that piece of land as described, is half of lot 55 on the 1804 plat and the site of a Presbyterian Church at that early date. Later this structure would be described as a Methodist Church in deeds.

...This indenture made this 8th day of December in the year 1831 between Joseph Janney Junior, John H. Janney and Margaret T. Janney his wife of the

Town of Alexandria in the District of Columbia of the one part and William C. Walton, Robert Jamison, Aaron D. Harmon and Edward A. May of said town and district of the other part.

Beginning at a point on the South side of Commerce Street at the distance of 120 feet from Union Street: thence down Commerce Street thirty feet, thence with a line parallel to Union Street fifty feet, thence with a line parallel to Commerce Street thirty feet, and thence with a line parallel to Union Street fifty feet to the beginning being the same lot on which is erected the Presbyterian Meeting House;....Church once located at 308 Commerce Street.

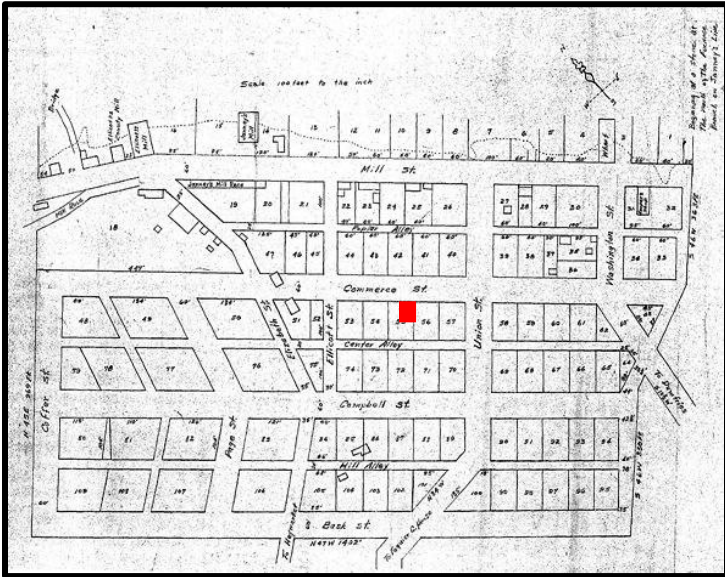


So what did four men from Alexandria want with a lot next to a Presbyterian Church in Occoquan? William C. Walton, the first name listed on the deed as purchasing the property was a Pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church in Alexandria Virginia. Following are excerpts from the "Memoir of William C. Walton, late Pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church in Alexandria, D.C. and of the Free Church in Hartford, Conn.", written in 1837, Joshua N. Danforth and found on archive.org.

Page 173: March 1828...

A new convert to the faith moved with his family to Occoquan and started a Sunday school in his home. Within a few weeks enough people were so that a congregation was formed.

Page 197: November 25, 1829...William C. Walton wrote from Alexandria a letter to his nephew. ...However before I left home, brother R. and Mr. returned from Occoquan, a village sixteen miles from here, where brother M. resides, and gave me such an account of the state of things at that place, that when I got to Baltimore and saw Mr. L. there, I concluded to return and visit Occoquan. I believe it was of the Lord. I found a number of people anxious to hear, and somewhat concerned about their spiritual condition. They crowded our meetings, and at the close of the last, which was last Sabbath, I proposed that all who were determined immediately to seek salvation, should express that



determination by going down upon their knees. Instantly there was a sinking to the floor all around to the number of twenty-five or thirty persons! Since that time I understand that six or seven have obtained a hope; others have been laughed out of their concern. But still the work is going on, and, I hop', will go on; though it meets with violent opposition. A minister there, by a little imprudence, might soon bring himself something like the fate of Stephen. Brother M. has a Sabbath School there of upwards of forty scholars. In this school the excitement commenced.....

The brother thus useful at Occoquan, the place of his abode, was once an infidel, and through the agency of Walton was snatched from the grasp of the enemy, and by the Spirit of the Lord transformed into a brave soldier of the cross...

Page 204: January, 1830.... Walton visited Occoquan, preached to the little church, addressed them on the subject of temperance, and **purchased a lot for the use of the Sabbath School, and public worship.**

Page 209: September 6, 1830.... yesterday according to appointment, I went to Occoquan, and last night preached in our new building for the first time. It was full, and the people were very attentive, some wept....I feel a sort of parental fondness for the building. I exceedingly rejoice in the accomplishment of such an object. The Lord has built the home, and therefore we have not labored in vain."

Page 210: September, 1830..... Rev. Walton held a series of meetings at his favorite Occoquan, taking with him, as assistants in the work, a number of his church members, and worshipping in the woods, because no house could contain the people.

From the history of the Old Presbyterian Meeting House in Alexandria, VA, we learn that Rev. Dr. Elias Harrison was ordained in 1817 and served the community until 1863. According to the Meeting House history, during his years of service he was instrumental in organizing several new congregations, one being in Occoquan. Many accounts are given of Harrison as a tireless abolitionist, working to fight slavery even after Alexandria was once restored to Virginia in 1847, where it was illegal to even utter against slavery. In 1818 the Presbyterian Church declared that slavery was a sin and it was the duty of all Christians to work for the abolishment of slavery.

Reverends Harrison and Walton must have crossed paths with their work in the Presbyterian community. This early Presbyterian Church community in Occoquan along with the Quaker presence helps set the stage for Occoquan being a core of abolitionists prior to the Civil War and the staging of the Lincoln Liberty Pole in 1860. The 55 votes Abraham Lincoln received from the Occoquan district were his only votes in Prince William County in the 1860 election. The strong influence of men like Reverends Walton and Harrison helped form a base for the freedom of all people. Local residents John Underwood and Samuel M Janney both faced trials for their stance against slavery. Providence thankfully brought these people to Occoquan to stand for what was right.

Notes: From 1801-1846 Alexandria was part of the District of Columbia and called Alexandria County.

Our Mill House Museum Docents

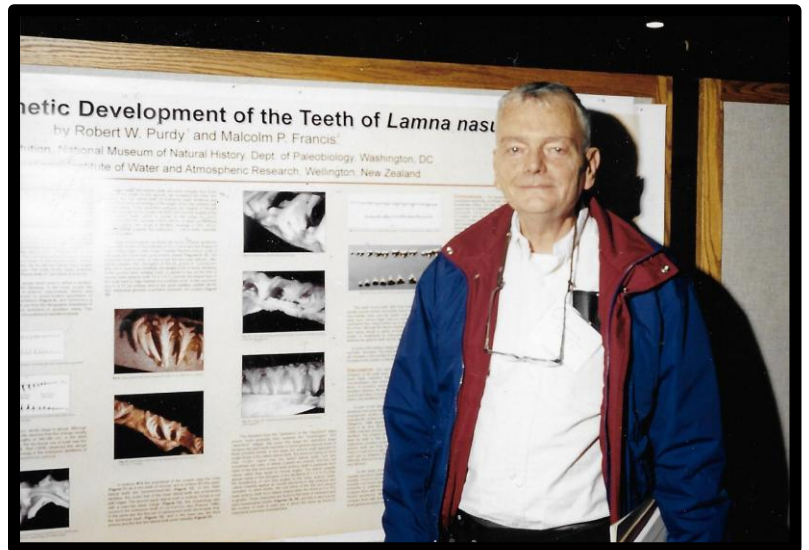
It's that time of year to reflect on what we have accomplished over the past 12 months. At the Mill House our accomplishments are in a big part the result of the staff who shared their love of Occoquan history with our visitors.



That love of history and the many different avenues it represents is a theme that follows our museum interpreters when they walk out of the doorway at 413 Mill Street. Following are short descriptions of what we spend our "free" time on.

Anna Marie McCloskey shared this with us. *As the "Matriarch" of a large family...I enjoy the togetherness and special doings all year long. I also love to paint in oils that I give away to family and friends. I recently sold 5 paintings through a designer which was a big surprise. My life is a simple one that I share with my sweet shelter dog "Daisy".* On the left is Anna Marie, back row, fourth from the left, along with her family. Anna Marie rotates days at the museum but can be found on some Tuesdays, Wednesdays and whenever we give her a call!

On the right is Robert (Bob) W. Purdy posing next to a poster detailing the development and variations in mackerel shark teeth at the meeting of the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology in Bozeman, MT, October 4, 2001. A longer version of this study was published in a peer reviewed journal about five years later. It was cited as the first paper to trace the development of shark teeth from embryo to adult. Bob is retired from the Smithsonian and is a fossil fish specialist. Bob can usually be found at the Mill House on Wednesday unless he is out on a dig!





On Tuesdays, look for Joe Neville on duty at the museum. You might also find him on the road at Spring Training in Fort Myers, Florida, as in the picture on the left. Research relating to German Americans and the outbreak of World War I occupies much of his time. Joe's research has resulted in the delivery of several papers at the annual symposia of the Society for German-American Studies.



Crystal Alavez, on the far right, is standing with a friend on a bridge over the site of the Boston Tea Party. Crystal told us; *I love visiting historical sites, but it's even more fun with friends. Above all, I love spending time with friends and family. Whether it's hiking or watching a movie.* Crystal came to us as a volunteer, generously donating her talents. Crystal can be counted on to help out at special events and fill in at the museum as her time allows.

Saturday usually finds Rhonda Williams at the Mill House where she enjoys meeting our visitors and sharing our Occoquan history. A historian through and through she is the keeper of her family's genealogy and a member of the DAR. Gunston Hall, the home of George Mason, is lucky to have Rhonda as a house interpreter several days a week. Spare time is not in her vocabulary but tending her garden and particularly herbs adds some relaxation to her busy week.

Dace Krastkalns told us; *I love to travel. I have been to Europe and Canada several times and have visited 40 out of the 50 states (even Hawaii and Alaska). When traveling I make a point of finding historic houses, museums and places of interest to explore. I enjoy cooking and have taken gourmet classes in Charleston, New Hampshire, Georgia, New Mexico and of course Virginia. As a die hard "foodie" I have a collection of over 600 cookbooks. I also enjoy reading both fiction and nonfiction. Books take me to places I would never be able to visit. As Cicero said - "A room without books is like a body without a soul."* We start our week with Sunday and Dace at the museum.



Dolores Elder enjoys traveling to historic sites such as Louisbourg, Nova Scotia and the light house on the left. Historic research, reading, crafts, baking, early morning walks, family, friends and her favorite roll as Grammy are all great ways to spend the day. Stop in at the museum on Monday, Thursday or Friday to say hi.

Meadow Cemetery/occoquan Burial Ground

Leading BSA troop 1396 as part of his Eagle project, Jordan Blake and his fellow scouts cleared the area of Meadow Cemetery/occoquan Burial Ground on Saturday, November 25. The scouts constructed a beautiful handrail along the steps that were built during a previous Eagle project. The land was cleared and debris removed from the cemetery site. Below are a few photos from the Meadow Cemetery. Thank you Jordan and BSA 1396!



Historical Marker Restoration

The Occoquan Historical Society is assisting the Town of Occoquan with a historical marker restoration program. Attached with the newsletter is a letter written by our OHS Board president, Marge Shaffer. One person has stepped forward to “adopt” for restoration the marker that stands in front of Town Hall.

This is a wonderful way to help preserve our history and beautify the town at the same time. Think of joining with neighbors, friends or within a civic group to adopt one of the markers. Details are included in Marge’s letter. Thank you!

As we end 2017 thank you to everyone who has supported us in spirit, with donations to our collection and of course financially. We wouldn’t be here without all of you! *Dolores*

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