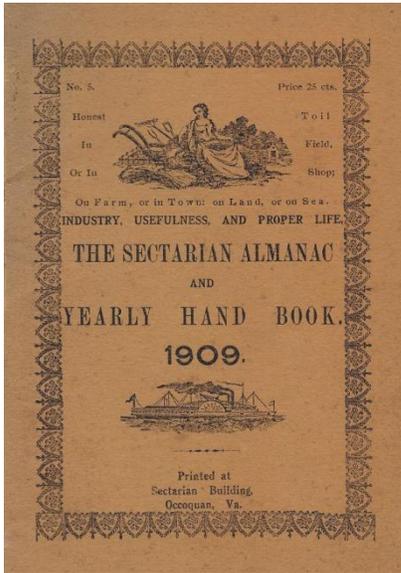


*The Mill Racer*  
 Winter, 2018  
 A Publication of the  
 Occoquan Historical Society

**The Sectarian Almanac and Yearly Handbook**

Dolores Elder

Old elementary school textbooks have always fascinated me as they tell us so much about the way of life and the way people viewed the world in the book's publication year. Almanacs fall in that same category and recently I was mentioning to someone that the Mill House collection contained copies of Elder Smoot's almanacs from 1909 and 1912. Moving into 2018 it might be interesting to see what was happening around town over 100 years ago. Elder William M. Smoot, Occoquan resident, Beulah Baptist Church minister and publisher of the *Sectarian* pamphlet, filled his almanacs with facts on farm and household management, politics and religion. The 1909 and 1912 editions were 25¢ a copy and the cost of publication was supplemented by advertisements. Several of these ads were local but included are law office ads for Manassas, Alexandria and Washington D.C attorneys. Below are some of the ads. The Bank of Occoquan, W.S. Lynn and Mrs. Harry Slack ads are from 1912 and the others from 1909.



**W. S. LYNN,**  
**GENERAL MERCHANDISE.**  
 Lumber, Rail-Road Ties, Cedar Posts, Hoops, Oak  
 and Pine Pilings Furnished at short notice.  
 OCCOQUAN, VA.

**MRS. HARRY SLACK,**  
 DRY GOODS, MILLINERY, AND, NOTIONS.  
 OCCOQUAN, VA.

**THE BANK OF OCCOQUAN, VA.**  
 (INCORPORATED.)  
 Requests your business whether large or small. Courteous and careful attention given to the interests of our customers.  
 The Bank of Occoquan offers you every inducement consistent with sound and conservative banking methods to deal with us. We carry a "Savings Department," where your money earns 3 per cent per annum, if you wish it to remain for any length of time.  
 Your deposits can be sent us easily by mail, as we have already a number of depositors of this character.  
 Safe Deposit Boxes for rent in our Fire Proof Vault, \$100 per year.

**STAGE LINE.**  
 FROM OCCOQUAN TO THE STATION.  
 All trains met. Livery Service at reasonable rates. Orders left at Alton Hotel. Give me a call.  
 W. A. Davis.

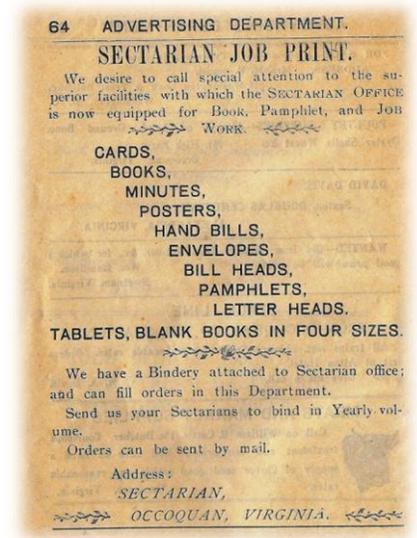
**MEATS AND MARKET SUPPLIES.**  
 Call on William R. Curtis, the Butcher, Courteous treatment and fair prices. Will have on hand a supply of Clover seed; good article and reasonable rates.  
 Occoquan, Virginia.

ADVERTISING DEPARTMENT. 81  
 The Sectarian,  
 A Monthly Old School,  
 Predestinarian Baptist  
 Magazine.  
 SUBSCRIPTION \$2.00 PER YEAR.  
 ADDRESS, SECTARIAN,  
 OCCOQUAN, VA.

**POULTRY SUPPLIES—Always on hand. Ground Bone,  
 Oyster Shells, Wheat &c. Mt. High Farm,  
 Occoquan, Virginia.**

The 1909 almanac edition is #5 so Elder Smoot began publishing them in 1905. Smoot was a prolific writer. The museum collection has a copy of an 1890 (No.1) Sectarian and following this section, in Lorraine Musseleman's memories, she relates helping with the booklet as a young girl in the 1930's.

Smoot lived his life in Occoquan from his birth on February 11, 1848 and passing on August 12, 1938. He married Susie at age 49, a woman 5 years younger than he. His family was one of financial means. In the 1860 census his father listed real estate valued at \$1,000 and his personal estate at \$4,000. In the 1930 census Elder Smoot listed real estate valued at \$5,000. William Middleton Smoot is buried at the Bacon Race Church Cemetery.



These are a few of the entries from the 1909 Sectarian Almanac I found interesting.

### Editorial Notes

#### Page 4:

The Sectarian Almanac undoubtedly reaches a field not covered by any other publication. It comes to the homes of a people not influenced by the superficial thought of modern life; hence we desire that it should be worthy of the attention of such a people.

We wish that we could offer our readers some hope of improvement in modern conditions; but are at a loss to see where we can find hope of such improvement. This has been termed a "commercial age", which, to say the least, is a mild name for the "love of money", which seems to characterize almost every avenue of modern life. ....The reign of lawlessness in high and low places continues. Corruption abounds, and the overwhelming majority of the people seem to care but little for such conditions, providing an ample supply of money is come-at-able.....

### Farm Notes

#### Page 13:

The value of farm lands in the United States in 1906 was estimated at \$7,000,000,000.

### Good Housekeeping

#### Page 33:

To banish moths, apply gasoline in a stream from the can all around the outside of the carpet next to the wall. It is a thorough destroyer and will not injure the most delicate fabric: the odor quickly disappears if the windows are left open. Always bear in mind this must be applied in a cool room, and never where there is a light or fire.

#### Page 34:

Dandelion Wine. Pick 1 gal. dandelion stems and blossoms, wash, put in a crock and pour over them 1 gal. boiling water. Let stand 3 days. Put in a porcelain kettle and boil 15 minutes with the peel of 1 lemon and 2 oranges. Strain through a cloth and add the juice of lemon and oranges, also 3 lbs. white sugar. When milk warm add three fourths cup yeast, and if this does not make a gallon, add enough water to make it. Cover with a cloth and let stand 3 weeks to ferment, then strain again and stand 1 week, after which draw off, bottle and seal and keep in a cool place. In 6 weeks it is ready to use.

## Virginia

### Page 37:

From an editorial: Prohibition is not only an attack upon personal liberty, which all good government is supposed to safe guard, but it is in downright opposition to the teaching of Scripture; a remedy infinitely worse than the disease it proposes to cure.

### Automobile Law:

It shall be unlawful for any person or persons to run, or cause to be run, automobiles, locomobiles or other such vehicles or carriages which has for its motive power and is propelled by steam, electricity, gasoline or any other power other than animal power, and motor bicycles and tricycles along or across any public road or highway, or any avenue, street or alley of any city in the state of Virginia, at a greater speed than fifteen miles per hour.

### Page 39:

The Free Lance of Fredericksburg reports the receipt of a ripe bunch of raspberries, the second crop of the season. We can equal that on Mt. High with a second crop of blackberries from the same bush.

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There were many farming and household tips in the almanac. Though interesting, the tips probably don't apply to daily life for most of us in northern Virginia. If your fowl or pigs have lice, send me an email, I might have the answer! *Dolores*

## Old School Baptist Church

Originally Published in the Historic Occoquan Newsletter, April 2004

*June Randolph*

Coming into Town on Occoquan Road there is a pile of stones on the left side across from east Locust Street (formerly Locust Lane). The stones are from the foundation wall of the Beulah Baptist Church and were made into a small monument marking the original location of the church. In the late 1950's or early 1960's the building was in such a deplorable state that it was burned in an OWL Fire Department exercise.

The small monument had to be moved several yards to its present site when the Hollows townhouses were built. There is a plaque affixed reading, "Site of Former Beulah Baptist Church". Elder W.M. Smoot headed this Old School Baptist Church and he lived on Tanyard Hill Road.

Elder Smoot printed pamphlets on his press in Occoquan. He was director of the Bank of Occoquan. He preferred calling his Church "meeting house". The reason it became so dilapidated was his insistence when he died (1938) that no one else be allowed to preach in the church because he planned to return one day. Without a preacher, members dropped out and no one took care of the building.

Adjacent to the monument is a small cemetery surrounded by a wrought iron fence. The first burial there was in 1905; the last was in 1961. Family names found there are Lynn, Selecman, Cole, Grimes, Hixson, Barbee and Reid.

Other Old School Baptist or "Smootite" Churches were at Bacon Race on Davis Ford Road and in Quantico. Both have been destroyed<sup>1</sup>.

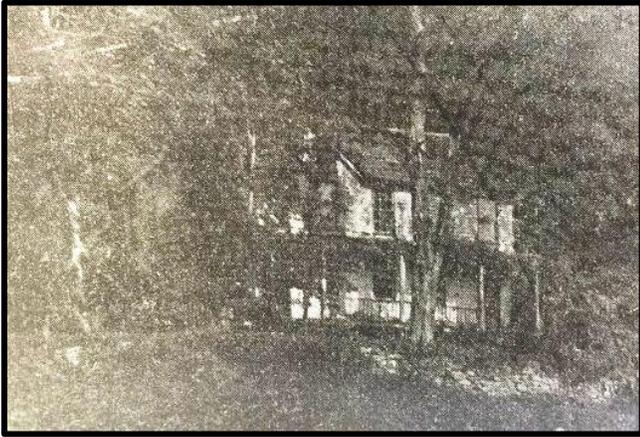
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<sup>1</sup> Bacon Race Church collapsed at 3 a.m. Christmas morning 1987

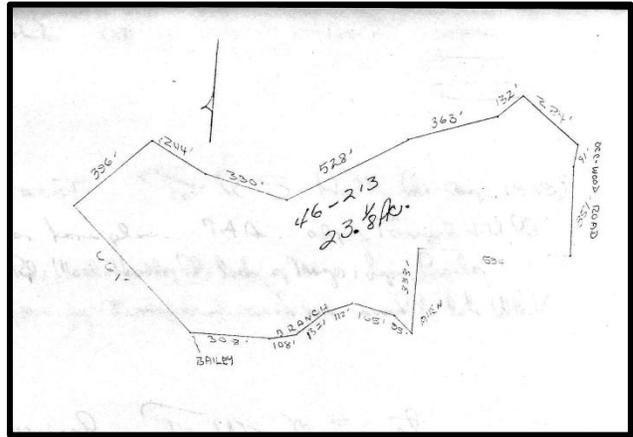
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Also in April 2004, Lorraine Musselman wrote about her experience with Elder Smoot; ...“I would visit Mrs. Hixson almost every day. She was an "Old-School" Baptist and she set type for a magazine called the "The Sectarian" which was a collection of letters from the members of Elder Smoot's church<sup>2</sup>. When I was a very small child, Mrs. Hixson and I would walk through the woods past where Pat Lynn<sup>3</sup> lives now almost to where Mt. High Street is now to Elder Smoot's house where the printing press was kept in a shed. I "helped" her set the type for the magazine. When Elder Smoot died, the undertaker took the printing press as part of the funeral expenses. It was stored under the funeral home on Mill Street until Hurricane Agnes swept it down the river in 1972.”

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Above: Smoot Homestead in Occoquan VA



Above: Hand drawn plat copied from records at the Prince William County Courthouse

### William M. Smoot Property

Donated to the Mill House collection is the hand drawn plat pictured above made by a volunteer while conducting research. The plat accompanies the survey measurements and descriptions given below for the William M. Smoot property. The Smoot homestead photo above is from the museum collection.

103-107 W. M. Smoot

To R. S. Hall (21, Aug, 1939) Known as home place, 74 acres adjoining Tanyard Hill Rd, Woodbridge-Occoquan Rd, Wood-Hoadly Road, lands of Mezer, Lynn, Bailey. Being residence of Janney & Underwood land owned by late Wm. M. Smoot

46-213 Oliver Underwood to William M. Smoot 23 1/8 acres

Beginning at A post west of Occoquan and Woodbridge Rd to

N50.15 W 4.31 chains (284') to B

S49.15 W (132') 2 chains to C then

S 73.45 W 5.5 chains (363') to D

S61.45 W 8 chains (528') to E

N 73.45 W passing through spring (330') 5 chain to F. Stake about 60 links from spring.

N 59.30 W 3.7 chains (244') to G

S 48.15 W 6 chains (396) to H (308')

S 43.45 E 10.02 chains (661)' to I

Corner Bailey S87.45 E 4.67 chains (308') to J

To forks on branch N 80E 1.64 chains (108')

N50.15 E 2 chains (132')

N 70.45 E 1.7 chains (112')

<sup>2</sup> The cemetery and marker for the Beulah Baptist Church are located on the west side of Washington Street

<sup>3</sup> 407 Union Street

S 75.15 E 2.5 chains (165') to  
S 45 E 1.44 chains (95') to L  
Corner Allen formerly tannery  
N 3.15 E 5.06 chains ( 333)' to M  
E 9 chains (594') to N on west Occ-Wood Rd.  
N ½ E 5.32 chains (351')  
N 10.15 E 1.39 chains ( 91')  
23 1/8 acres

Notes: A chain is 66'. 10 chains in a furlong. 80 chains in a statute mile. An acre is 10 square chains.

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## Margaret (Peg) Williams

Historic Prince William recently received 8 hand written journals that belonged to Margaret Williams. One of the journals dated from September 3, 1979 through June 30, 1981 was loaned to the Mill House to read through and see if there was information relative to Occoquan and Prince William County history.

Surprisingly in the last entry on June 30, 1981, Peg writes she had attended the annual Occoquan historical society meeting held at Mamie Davis Park. She there agreed to serve as director of the historical society. Peg Williams served as president for Historic Occoquan Inc. (now The Occoquan Historical Society) in 1981-1982 and again in 1985-1987.

Describing a long hike through the Lake Ridge community consumed the first four pages of Peg's hand written diary. Reading through the entry you can tell the love Peg had for nature and her concern for what development was doing to the land and all of the creatures that depended on it for survival. During the hike she came across what must be the Selecman family Rolling Farm cemetery now on the Westminster property off of Clipper Drive.

Margaret is buried at the Pohick Episcopal Church Cemetery in Fairfax County. She was born on August 18, 1916 and passed on September 3, 1995.

### Excerpts from Margaret (Peg) Williams Diary

**Sept. 3, 1979:** First day of autumn, appropriate to begin new journal. After rain since Thursday night (having a postponement of the Pohick Church Fair yesterday) the sun came out about 11:a.m. today, which is about this the time Fall arrived. It's been beautiful the rest of the day, a light breeze to push away the few high clouds. So I went for a walk in the woods for 3 hours, 2:00-5:00, with Benn's dog Viva.

Started through blackberry field, along drainage pond, down the stream toward pump station, climbing hill to explore a great cleared area and saw a few new houses being built. En route to the cleared area surprised two does. They stood and looked at me, the larger one pawing ground a couple times; when Viva moved they flashed the white tail and departed; in the same area a few minutes later I saw the smaller one again. Where trees have been removed and earth bulldozed the workers planted grass so there's a lot of park like places, ideal for deer, with water near. I'd seen several tracks made since last night's rain probably from the two I saw.

Followed the sewer line road around Beaver Dam Creek. The road branches in several places but kept to the main one, along bank which would make a lovely waterside drive if they finish working back there. The road followed along the Occoquan, around bays made by many streams flowing into the river, but I turned up the old road from the point where Beaver Dam joins Occoquan and at top of hill found the old mills burying ground. I'd not seen in several years; easily identified by the deep bed of myrtle which is fast covering the simple pieces of rock forming head and foot stones; a few have initials and dates scratched on them but difficult to read in the shade there. The one tombstone with formal engraving of name and date (weather worn so I couldn't read it) had been removed from its base and left at head of old grave, but whatever remains were there have been removed and only a deep hole remains. At one other stone there was only a hole. Has family removed bodies to another place, or have ghouls dug them up?

Continued on up that wood to top of ridge, turned left and followed road that would have taken me down to river again but went through woods, downhill to another large feeder stream where much work has been done to carry the sewer line on trestle over the stream. A large culvert has been placed to carry the stream under a man-made embankment on to the river, but everywhere in the woods where earth has been disturbed there is tremendous erosion and siltation, clay and sand bars in streambeds and in woods where streams have overflowed. They've been sowing grass and there are good stands where former work has been completed, but the heavy rains of this week's end have played havoc with the loose earth, and the lovely woods. It is good to see streamlets still undisturbed, water falling over mossy roots and rocks, ferns and wildflowers along the banks, but how much longer will they escape the bulldozer, or being covered with silt from work upstream?

Followed the sewer line toward Bridge Road until came on another mammoth clearing, earth banked higher, which led me to a road that came out on Mohican Road at Promontory subdivision. Then followed unpaved very muddy, in one place under deep water, Cotton Mill Drive to Hedges Run Drive, thence out to Old Bridge and home.

The undisturbed woods are such a contrast to the destruction worked on other sections of the forest, leaving new earth to erode and carry sand and clay into the reservoir, how come the Water Authority or State Water Control Board don't make them stop? Glad I don't drink water from the reservoir!

In an open space back in woods nearer river a hawk was soaring, so beautiful against the blue sky his wings wide spread, soaring and gliding with scarcely any flapping. Heard a pileated woodpecker, and titmice and chickadees. Saw one lady slipper plant along the way. Many kinds of goldenrod still blooming in open areas, found a "blue stem goldenrod", purple headed sneezeweed, green headed coneflower (the leaf isn't exactly as depicted in Field Guide) and, I believe, a rattlesnake-root, specifically 'white lettuce.'

Was very tired but glad I kept following around the next bend or up next hill. Want to go back and finish the route along the river, I suppose to Hooes Run. It was lovely in some of the grass covered glens and no doubt they intend to heal all the raw places, but such devastation is a painful sight to see.

**June 30, 1981**

From high of 89°, humidity 43%, late afternoon cool breeze dropped us to 78°, ideal for annual meeting of Historic Occoquan, a picnic in Occoquan's Mamie Davis Park, at which I agreed to serve as Director if not made president or secretary!

First day in Pohick Church office, 9-12, filling in for Pat Greene, on vacation month of July. Bank and grocery store en-route home.

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### Links

Information on the Town Of Occoquan can be found at [www.occoquanva.gov](http://www.occoquanva.gov) If you live in the town or just curious about current events the web site contains the most recent newsletter and archives of past editions. Check the web site for listings of future events and information about Mamie Davis and River Mill Parks!

Historic Prince William at [www.historicprincewilliam.org](http://www.historicprincewilliam.org) is filled with local history and pictures.

Visit Prince William Historic Preservation Foundation at [www.preservepw.org](http://www.preservepw.org) and read about the Brentsville Jail and the many other historic properties in PWC.

Mill House Museum  
PO Box 65, 413 Mill Street, Occoquan, VA 22125  
[www.occoquanhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.occoquanhistoricalsociety.org)  
703-491-7525  
Open Sunday through Saturday 11-4

