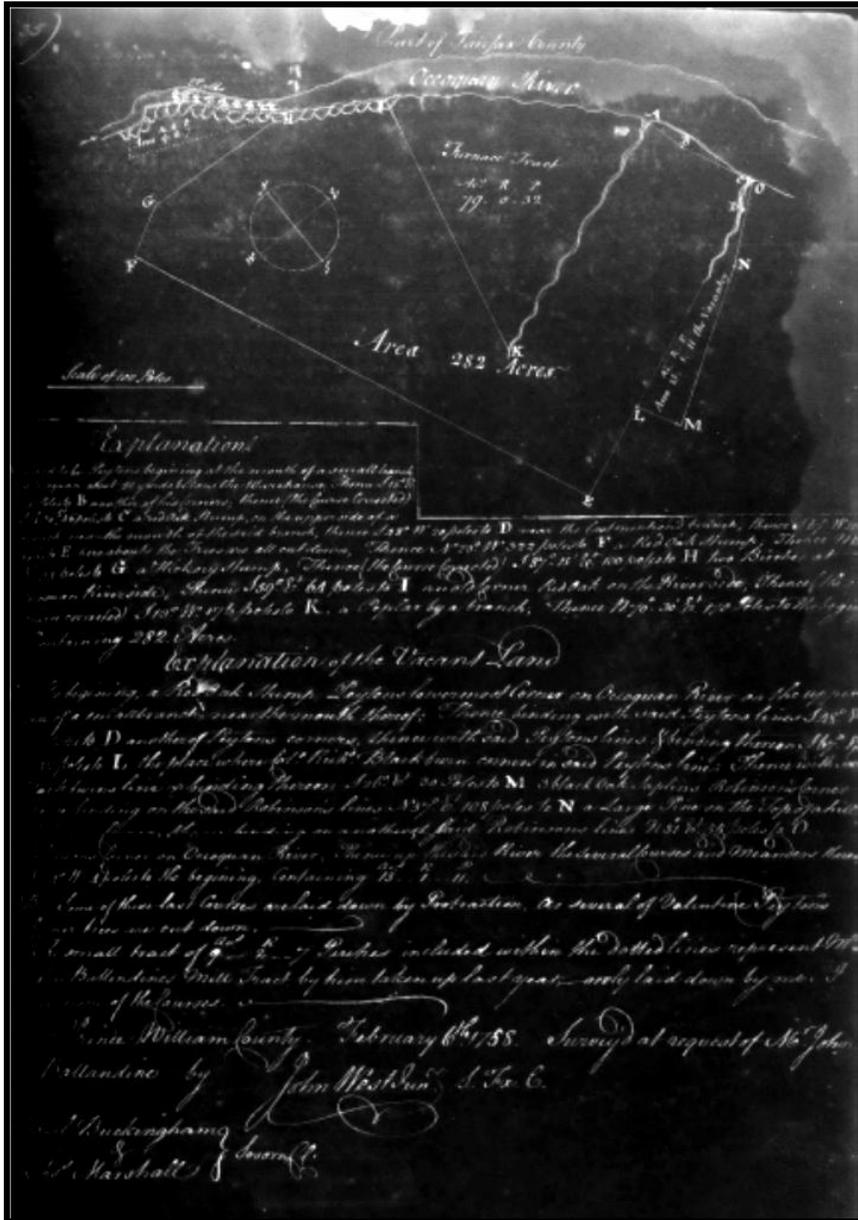


The Mill Racer

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

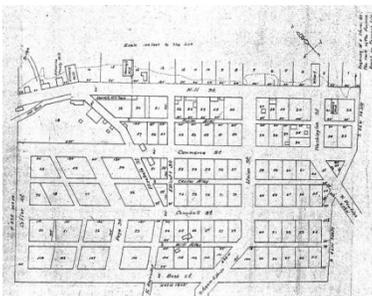
Transcribing these early surveys can be difficult and hopefully the majority of what I transcribed is accurate. For anyone looking at one for the first time, here are a few explanations:

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..."

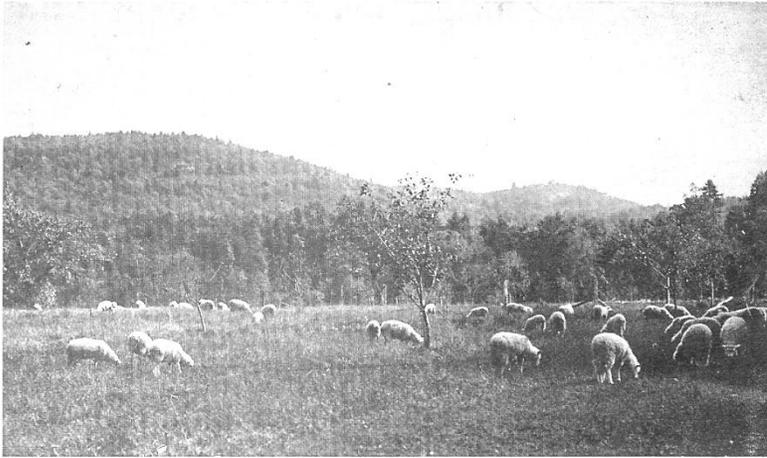
Tobacco was the major crop in the early years of Prince William County as it was in much of Virginia. The economy revolved around tobacco. Tobacco could only be transported by ship in legally inspected and stamped hogsheads. Ship captains would be charged large fees for illegal transportation and the 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 Lawrence
 James Estess
 Dorothy Armstrong
 Jim McAntear
 Bertha Gordon
 Lois Davis
 Lillian Hixson
 "Beck"
 Robert F. Mooney
 Egbert W. Sharron
 William Bourne (Stolt)
 Nellie Hixson
 Margaret Hines
 E. L. 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
PO Box 65, 413 Mill Street, Occoquan, VA 22125
www.occoquanhistoricalsociety.org
703-491-7525
Open Sunday through Saturday 11-4

