

Mill House Monthly

January, 2015

Collection Additions

The end of 2014 and the beginning of 2015 brought us several new additions to the Mill House. These unique items span the years from 1834 to 1951.

Leah Samuels brought us several items that had been passed on through her family. Leah's mother, Nancy Thompson, had attended Occoquan District High School in 1940. Among Nancy's memorabilia were two machine embroidered *Occoquan Indian* jacket patches and two miniature Occoquan District High School felt pennants. Leah also donated her Uncle Winter Lockett's 1951 graduation announcement from Occoquan District High School.



Built in 1927, the building at 12915 Occoquan Road was home to elementary and high school students. The school colors were orange and maroon. "Indian Echoes", the first year book, was published in 1940. Up to 1927 Occoquan elementary students attended the school once located at 310 Commerce Street in Occoquan. High school level students traveled to Manassas, Alexandria or even farther for their higher education. Occoquan District High School students moved to the new Gar-Field High built in 1953. That original Gar-Field structure is now the Ferlazzo Government Building. The current Gar-Field school was built in 1972 at 14000 Smoketown Rd.

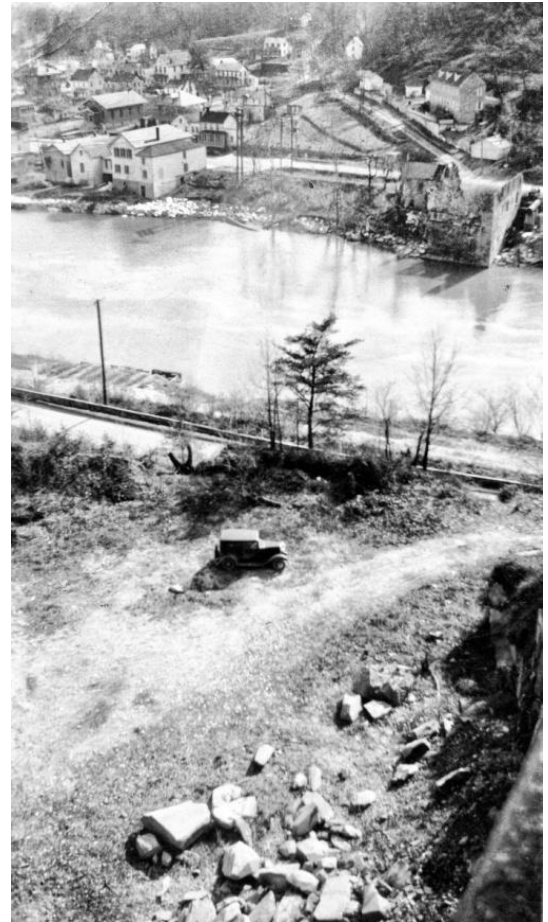
Nancy Thompson and her family owned a large dairy farm in the area of Marumsc Plaza on Route 1 in Woodbridge. Nancy's mother Hannah had donated several items to the museum and stitched a square on the 1976 Occoquan Bicentennial Quilt. Donating to the Mill House Museum is a family tradition!



The white ceramic 1950's era kitty-cat coin bank pictured above once belonged to Hannah Thompson. The bank was also donated to the museum by Leah Samuels.

View of the Merchant's Mill Ruins

Among a group of photographs donated to the Mill House by Martha Roberts is the picture on the right. It shows a portion of the river that includes the Occoquan Merchants Mill taken after the 1924 mill fire. Our collection has not contained this particular view taken from the Fairfax side of the Occoquan River so soon after the fire. We can see that quite a bit of the stone walls are still standing. On the extreme right side of the photo, next to the mill, we can see the iron conduit that brought the water from the mill race to the wood sluice.



New on Display in the Mill House

On the lower right is a graphic of three separate receipts from the Janney Mill and store. The transactions were with Wm. Haywood Foote of Fairfax County. These original receipts were donated by John Ravinski in 1998. The translation follows;

Occoquan Sept 16th 1834

Hayward Foote
 Sold J & JH Janney
 S. 49 Bu & 6# Wheat, weighing 58 pounds per
 Measured bushel @ 95¢.....\$46.64

Also 39 bu & 58 wheat, weighing 58 pounds
 per measured bushel @ 95¢ ... \$37.97
 \$84.61

Off 5 Bul Salt @ 50¢ 2.5
 5 bunches No. 7 Cotton @ 1.30 6.5

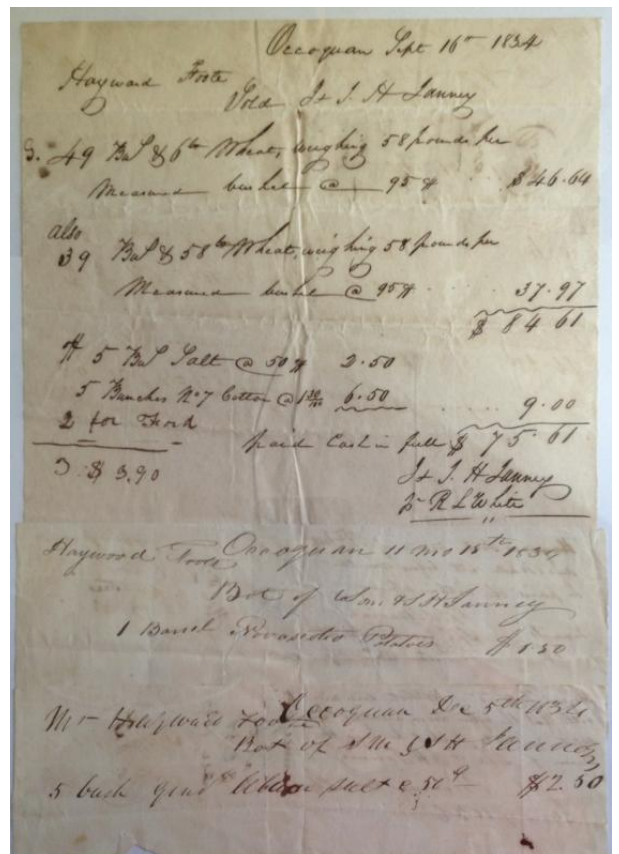
2 for Ford
 3 \$3.90 Paid Cash in Full \$75.61
 J & JH Janney
 R L White

Haywood Foote Occoquan 11 MO 15th 1834

Bot of SM & SH Janney
 1 Barrel Novascotia Potatoes \$1.50

Wm Haywood Foote Occoquan Dec 5th 1834

Bot of SM & SH Janney
 5 bush grnd Cellar salt @ 50¢ \$2.50



Update on 308 Commerce Street

In the Summer 2014 edition of the *Mill Racer*, we featured a picture and article about a previously unidentified building in Occoquan. Excerpts from an undated news article provided us the following information and led us to the conclusion that this was the first Methodist Church building;

With devout Christian Spirit but small membership the first Methodist Church was built in Occoquan, VA previous to the year 1847.

When the church was no longer in condition for use it was abandoned, Albert A. Selecman could not stand seeing the land upon which it was built descrated, so he bought the land and his tax receipts are still in the possession of one of his near descendents.

Attempting to piece together the history of the 308 Commerce Street property led us to a December 8, 1831 deed. Within the deed it states;**the same lot on which is erected the Presbyterian Meeting House.....**

Now we are looking at the church being constructed originally as a Presbyterian Meeting House. From the pages of the *Installed Clergy at the Old Presbyterian Meeting House from 1772-Present*, the biography of Elias Harrison states he formed a Church at Occoquan during his time of service at the Old Presbyterian Meeting House in Alexandria. His assignment in Alexandria began in 1820. The Presbyterian minutes of April 21-23, 1835 tell us that Elias Harrison and John C. Smith served the congregation of Occoquan. Elias himself served the congregation on the third Sabbath of every month. Again in 1836 the minutes say Elias was assigned the second Sabbath of the month to serve Occoquan. In Meeting minutes of the Potomac Division in 1867 it once more tells us a circuit rider was serving the people of Occoquan.*

A December 20, 1867 deed for the 308 Commerce Street property lists Albert Selecman as one of the signers. The deed was between H.H. Selecman and John T. Pettet, trustees of the Laurel Division of the Sons of Temperance of the first part and John M. Pettet, Thomas L. Selecman, Albert Selecman, W.T. Duty and R. Price of the second part. The deed in part says....*In trust always to permit the same to be occupied and used for the purpose of religious worship and Sunday schools by the people of all orthodox denominations residing in and near Occoquan aforesaid and for no other use or purpose.* ... The December 1831 deed didn't lead us back to a previous deed. More research is needed in the old deed records.

Inquiries to the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia will hopefully provide some answers.

*Information from the Presbyterian minutes was provided by Dr. Don Dahman, historian at the Presbyterian Meeting House in Alexandria.



Picture above, 308 Commerce Street, prior to the 1889 construction of the Odd Fellows Hall.

Mill House Museum
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www.occquanhistoricalsociety.org
703-491-7525
Daily 11a.m. - 4p.m.