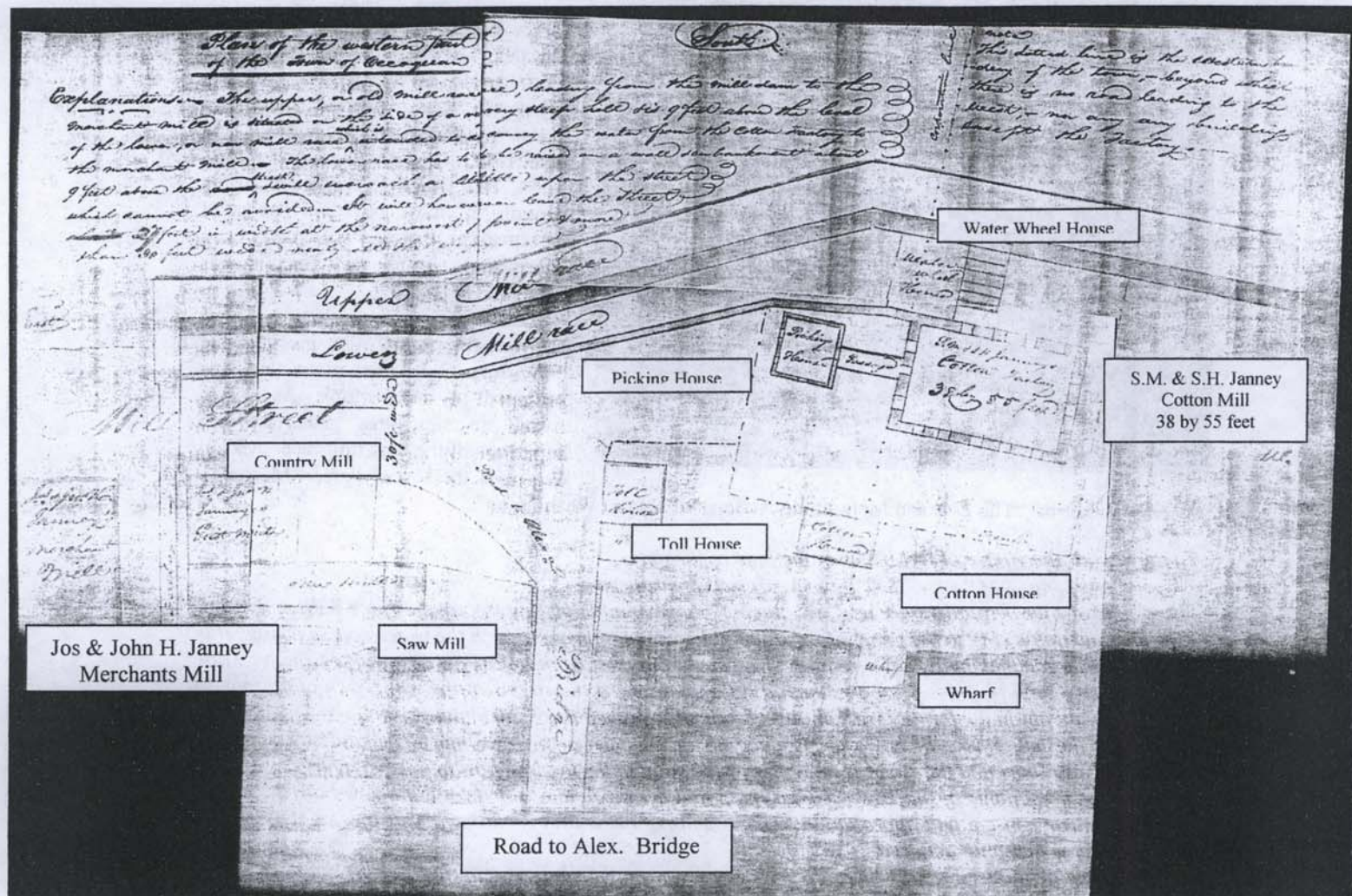


HISTORIC OCCOQUAN INC.

Occoquan Cotton Mill Property in 1828



Plan of the western part of the Town of Occoquan

Explanations- The upper or old mill race leading from the Mill St Merchants Mill is situated on the side of a very steep hill & is 9 feet above the level of the lower or new mill race which is intended to convey the water from the cotton factory to the merchant mill. The lower race has to be raised as a wall & embankment about 9 feet above the street & will encroach a little upon the street which cannot be avoided. It will however leave the street 27 feet in width at the narrowest point & more than 30 feet wide nearly all the way.

Note

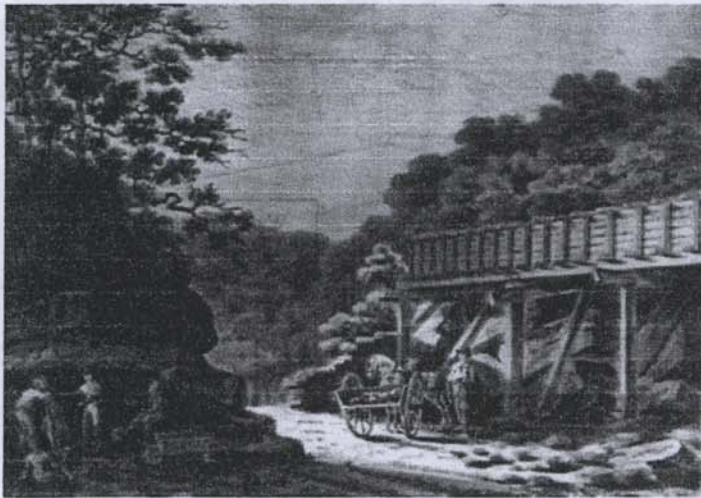
The dotted line is the western boundary of the town-beyond which there is no road leading to the west, nor any buildings except the factory.

Above are the map and explanations included with the petition Samuel M. and Samuel H. Janney, owners of the Occoquan cotton mill, presented to the Virginia Assembly on December 12, 1828. The cotton mill built in 1828 was destroyed by arson in 1862. It stood on the property currently occupied by the water tanks located west of the Town of Occoquan footbridge.

I have labeled some of the indistinct structures for ease in reading. Joseph and John H. Janney owned the country mill as well as the Merchants Mill. In between the picking house and the cotton factory was a passage. The forebay, between the two grist mills is the section of mill race crossing the street to the mill wheel. Interestingly, the sawmill is located on the north side of the country mill. That was probably the most convenient location to share the water wheel power.

The bridge was built by Nathaniel Ellicott in 1797 as a toll bridge and was purchased as such by the Janney's who advertised the grist mills for sale several times through the 1800's along with the profitable toll bridge. The toll house at it's location would allow the toll keeper easy access to travelers.

The original mill race in the map drawing was most likely a wooden race that crossed over Mill Street above ground, allowing for traffic to flow underneath.



On the left is a painting titled, "Termination of a Mile Race on the Occoquan, State of Virginia". It was signed by the artist Luke Robbins and dated 1823. It sold at auction¹ in 2005 for \$4,780. Based on the terrain in the painting it may be the Town of Occoquan mill race. We know from descriptions of the race that it was extensive in length.

Below is the petition that included the above map and explanations that was presented to the Virginia Assembly. Listed are signatures gathered from supporters of the new mill race. Mason Weems is the son of Parson Mason L.

Weems, author of "The Life and Memorable Actions of George Washington".

To the Senate and House of Delegates of the State of Virginia

The petition of S.M. & S.H. Janney respectfully requests-

That your petitioners are now erecting a Cotton Manufactory at Occoquan Prince William County Virginia, and that owing to the peculiar situation of the ground through which the water course passes, it is found necessary in making a race to convey the water from the factory to the Merchants and Country Mills of Joseph and John H. Janney, to encroach a little upon one of the streets of the said Town of Occoquan which was laid out in conformity with an Act of Assembly passed the 5th of January 1804.----- This location of the mill race will however produce no inconvenience to traveling in the said street, as the distance is very short and the street is more than wide enough for the waggons to pass each other.

The inhabitants of the Town of Occoquan and the neighbors in Prince William & Fairfax County have given their consent and approbation to the making of the within mentioned Mill Race as is shown by their signatures hereunto annexed-

Your petitioners would therefore respectfully pray that a Law may be passed, authorizing the location of the said mill race.

*Sam M Janney
Sam H Janney*

We the undersigned Inhabitants of Prince William & Fairfax Counties & neighbors or residents of the Town of Occoquan-hereby certify that we give our consent and approbation to the making of the mill race in the forgoing petition.

*Michael Cleary
Jos. Janney
Thomas
Mason L. Weems
Jos. Foster
John Morgan
Peyton Reid
W.R. Selecman
William Selecman
Saml H. Fisher
James B. Blys
Peter Thimmon
Jos. M. Skinner
Jos. Reeves
Daniel C. Lee
Warhburn Arrington*

*Gaylor Arrington
John H Jackson
Thompson W. Brotett
Sanford Beach
Hancock Lee
B Haislip
Henry Selecman
Wm Maddox
Isacerdi Cox
John A Copeland
H Wood
William Beach
John Woodyard
Wm Lindsay
John D. Mills
James Peter?*

*John Bryant
Thomas
John Selecman
James Douran
George Selecman
John Underwood
Wm. B. Lynn*

Occoquan Cotton Mill Ruins



¹ Shannon's Fine Art Auctioneers, Milford, CT.

HISTORIC OCCOQUAN INC.

Volume IV No. 3
 September 2006

Notes from August

- ♪ 867 guests visited the Mill House Museum in August!
- ♪ Sales in August were \$229
- ♪ August donations were \$172

The Occoquan Cotton Mill Owners Through Time

By Dolores Elder

Samuel M. Janney with his cousin Samuel H. Janney built the Occoquan Cotton Mill on land that had been purchased from Joseph Janney Jr. and John H. Janney on June 30th, 1828. Samuel M. in his letters to family and friends admitted he did not have the talent or desire to be a mill operator and the business was sold to the Occoquan Manufacturing Corporation of whom Joseph Janney Jr. was the President.

The deed for the sale of the Cotton Mill from Samuel M. and Samuel H. Janney to the Occoquan Manufacturing Company was recorded in land records on July 27th, 1837. Joseph Janney Jr.'s repurchase of the property, which now included a huge cotton mill, may have been done as a favor to his relatives. Joseph lived in Occoquan and owned the Merchants Grist Mill at the time.

Ownership of two mills may have been an overwhelming challenge. Joseph Janney, President of

the Occoquan Manufacturing Company ran advertisements of the cotton mill for sale or rent in the Alexandria Gazette in 1840 and 1842.

Then came the following ad on page 3 of the Alexandria Gazette, December 1st, 1843. *Public sale- By virtue of a deed of trust of the 22nd of July, 1841, from the Occoquan Manufacturing Company to me, for certain purposes there in named, I shall proceed on Monday, the 4th of December next, at 12 o'clock in front of the Mayor's Office, in the town of Alexandria, to sell at public auction, to the highest bidder, certain property, in the said deed, described as a lot of ground, or MILL SEAT, situated in the town of Occoquan and county of Prince William, Va., and bounded as follows: beginning at a mark on a rock near the side of Occoquan river 35 1/2 feet above the abutment of the Bridge: thence in a straight line N, 76°, W, 160 feet to another marked rock, thence 23°, W, 93 feet to the race wall in a descending direction to a mark made thereon; thence 23 1/2°, E; 104 feet to the beginning, with the right of using and applying to the works created or to be created thereon, the whole force of water power of said river with a fall of nine feet; and with the use of the head race and the dam of the Mill of Joseph and John H. Janney, and with the rights and privileges; and subject to the restrictions specified in a deed from the said Joseph and John H. Janney, to Samuel M. and Samuel H. Janney, of the 20th June, 1838, recorded in Prince William County, Va., Liber. No. 11 folio 453 together with a Cotton factory, erected by the said*

Samuel M. and Samuel H. Janney, on the seat above described, built of stone and covered with slate, 50 feet by 33 feet in the clear, and four stories high; besides the Picking Houses and Cotton House-the said factory containing 1088 spindles, 4 Twine Machines, 27 carding-Engines, 3 Drawing frames, # Speeders, 1 Looper, 1 Spreader and 1 Willow, Also the Looms, Spooling, Beaming, and Sizing apparatus, the Washing House, and all and every the utensils and apparatus belonging to the said factory.

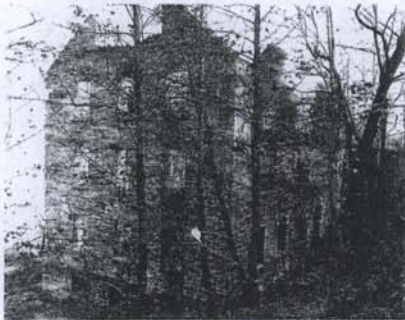
Terms of Sale: One fourth of the purchase money in cash. The residue in three equal instalments of one, two, and three years, with interest from the day of sale. The deferred payments to be secured by a Deed of Trust on the property, and the same to be resold at the risk and expense of the purchaser, at the expiration of ten days, in default of payment of either of the deferred instalments, or of the cash payment aforesaid.

EDGAR SNOWDEN,
 nov 16-dtd Trustee

In a letter written to his daughter, William Perry stated that he and his bother David Perry arrived in Occoquan in 1837 to work in the Cotton Mill. William related that David leased and managed the mill. (This coincides with the date Joseph Janney Jr. purchased the mill from his kinsmen Samuel M. and Samuel H. Janney.) William Perry left Occoquan in 1843 the year David Perry and Thomas Ford signed a Deed of Trust for the cotton mill on December 6th. These two men advertised the mill for sale in June of 1847.

Francis Hanna was the last owner of the cotton mill. The

mill was destroyed by arson in May of 1862. Hanna had lived in Occoquan for several years and operated a store connected to his residence at 313 Mill Street before the Cotton Mill came up for sale in 1847.



Ruins of the Occoquan Cotton Mill

Inside the Museum

By Martha Roberts

This will be the last installment of Helen Davis' diary. It picks up in 1917 when Helen is 25. She is still living in her mother's home - her sister Mamie now lives and works in Washington, D.C. and drives her "automobile" to Occoquan for weekends. Her mother takes in boarders to help make ends meet.

July 23, 1917

It has rained almost every day for the past two or three weeks. Mamie was home yesterday. There was a wedding at the colored church Saturday evening. The contracting parties were Phil Williams and Mary Cole. Quite a lot of white people went to the wedding. I was among the numbers.

October 29, 1919

It has been over a year since I have written in this book. Quite a lot of things have happened in that time. The World War has closed. Three of my girlfriends have gotten married. I am reading a book, Betty Zane by Zane Gray. Mother is making me a dress.

November 11, 1919

I have been making a gingham apron for mother this afternoon. I didn't get it done. We have some more

transients tonight. Two men
and a little boy.

November 21, 1919

Yesterday was Thanksgiving Day. Mamie and Miss Simon came down Wednesday evening. Night before last ninety-five soldiers spent the night in Occoquan. Two of them stayed here. Lieutenant Roth and Sergeant Siker, Sickles or something like that. He told us to call him Johnny. They were going from Camp Lee to Baltimore. Mamie, Miss Simon, the two boys and I played cards Wednesday evening.

December 10, 1919

Ardy has gone to Washington today so I have helped mother to wipe the breakfast and dinner dishes and set the table for dinner. [Ed. note: "Ardy" is Artie Harris who just celebrated her 104th birthday and still lives in Occoquan. Before she moved to New York as a young woman, Artie was employed by the Davis family.] Mother went to Washington shopping last Saturday. Christmas Eve is just two weeks from today.

December 17, 1919

I have just gotten over a crying spell. I fell down and I get so discouraged for I do try to stand up. I said I wished somebody would put me to sleep so that I would never wake up. I went to the movies last night. They were very good.

December 18, 1919

I am going over to the schoolhouse with Mary this afternoon while she trims the Christmas tree. Today is the coldest day we've had. It is about 11:30 and only 20 degrees on the back porch.

October 27, 1920

I went to the movies last night. The picture was Charles Ray in Bill Henry. I enjoyed it. I have been addressing Halloween post cards tonight.

March 11, 1921

Well! Warren G. Harding was inaugurated March 4. It was the simplest inauguration that has ever taken place. Mr. Harding said that he wanted a quiet inauguration. Mother just told me she saw in the paper that the expenses of the inauguration amounted to \$1,500. Usually it costs \$50,000. Some saving, I'll say.

April 13, 1921

Papa was paralyzed. I went right away for the doctor and he said it was a blood clot on the brain. He was conscious and knew people part of the time until the next afternoon about five o'clock when he became worse. He died Friday evening about nine o'clock. Papa's funeral was preached at the house by Mr. Smoot Sunday afternoon, April 17th.

June 10, 1921

Sunday the 29th of May a tablet was unveiled at Pohick Church in honor of the boys who were killed in the World War from that Parish.

President Harding made an address and afterward held a reception. I shook hands with him. In fact we all did.

December 30, 1921

I have been staying in Washington with Mamie since the thirteenth of August. I am taking chiropractic treatments. Mamie gives me the treatments herself though she has me under the care of another doctor. He gives me a treatment every two weeks. I like living in Washington.

Jan. 31, 1922

Washington, D.C.

I must tell you diary dear of the big snowstorm we had here last week. It began to snow about 4:30 Friday afternoon (Jan. 27) and continued until sometime way late Saturday night. The papers placed the snowfall at from 24 to 26 inches, the greatest snowstorm that has visited Washington since the blizzard of 1879. The