



VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION

File no. 272-3
Negative no(s). 5169

SURVEY FORM

Historic name Ellicott's Mill Ruins	Common name <i>AKA BALLENDINE'S MILL, Occoquan Mills</i>
County/Town/City Occoquan	
Street address or route number Mill St., Occoquan, Va.	
USGS Quad Occoquan	Date or period c1755
Original owner John Ballendine?	Architect/builder/craftsmen
Original use Mill	
Present owner Fairfax County Water Authority	Source of name
Present owner address 8560 Arlington Blvd. Merrifield, Va. 22116	Source of date Published histories, early photograph. Stories
Present use Not in use.	Foundation and wall const'n Stone foundation.
Acreage Unknown (included in larger parcel)	Roof type

State condition of structure and environs Only a few piers and some iron rods remain. Site is badly eroded and littered with trash.

State potential threats to structure Neglect, vandalism, relic-hunters.

Note any archaeological interest This is an archeological site.

Should be investigated for possible register potential? yes no

Architectural description (Note significant features of plan, structural system and interior and exterior decoration, taking care to point out aspects not visible or clear from photographs. Explain nature and period of all alterations and additions. List any outbuildings and their approximate ages, cemeteries, etc.)

The ruins of the mill can be seen at the water's edge on the southwest bank of the Occoquan River, northeast of the pedestrian bridge that spans the river on the west end of town. The mill burned in 1924, and for many years the burned-out stone shell stood. In 1972, a flood destroyed all but the presently-existing remains, which consist of the east corner and part of the northeast wall of the foundation. A set of concrete steps lead from the mill house part-way down to the river bank where rubble and debris collected over the years, the fallen stones from earlier structures and the presently-existing mill ruins can be found. One or more footings or abutments for a former bridge which crossed the Occoquan at this point may also be evident, just upstream from the mill site. Hidden beneath the debris may also be the foundation of a smaller mill which sat beside the merchant mill. Known as the Country Mill, it burned in 1890.

According to published photographs, the mill was a large 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ -story, stone, brick and frame structure on a high stone basement. Its gable roof was pierced by dormers. A boxy structure, five or six bays across by three bays deep, the mill sat perpendicular to the mill house (the only remaining structure from the mill complex) and projected out into the Occoquan. The mill race which allegedly served several mills on Mill Street, was destroyed in the 1950s by the Alexandria Water Co. for installation of its water storage tanks.

See survey sheet for Mill House Museum 272-2 for additional information.

Interior inspected? N/A

Historical significance (Chain of title; individuals, families, events, etc., associated with the property.)

The origins of this mill date to the mid-18th century, when John Ballendine, an entrepreneur and industrialist, established on the site of the present town of Occoquan a mill, storehouse and residence. Further upstream, Ballendine built an ironworks, other mills, and baking ovens, with the financial assistance of John Tayloe and Presley Thornton, whose ironworks on the Neabsco were already well established. In 1762, owing to continuing financial difficulties, Ballendine lost his milling enterprises and his imposing stone residence, Rockledge, to his creditor John Semple, of Charles County, Md. In 1800, the merchant mill was owned by Nathaniel Ellicott. It was during Ellicott's ownership of the mill that the town of Occoquan was laid out. The mill, which had facilities for grinding corn and plaster (for fertilizer), as well as for sawing and dressing lumber, in 1835, had a daily capacity to produce 150 barrels of flour. The mill at Occoquan became a model for Northern Virginia. Flour was loaded from the mill directly onto ships on the Occoquan, and from there transported to markets, including Alexandria, the Carolinas and the West Indies. In 1804, the mill was operated by Elisha and Abijah Janney, who also had an interest in the cotton mill that was later built in Occoquan. Beginning in the early decades of the 19th century, the Occoquan began to silt up, thus making river transportation to the mills difficult, and finally impossible. The flour mill was operating until 1924, when it was destroyed by fire. For many years, the burned-out ruins of the mill stood, but a major flood and subsequent construction nearby have all but erased the last traces of the mill.

(continued next page)

CONTINUATION SHEET
ELLCOTT'S MILL RUINS

Historical Significance (continued)

The Miller's House, the only remaining structure from the large complex, is owned by the Fairfax County Water Authority and leased to Historic Occoquan, Inc., a non-profit educational corporation which operates a historical museum in the building.

Publication Sources (continued)

"Mill House Becomes a Museum," in Manassas Journal-Messenger, 14 Aug 1969.
W.P.A., Writers Program, Prince William, The Story of Its People and Its Places (c1941), pp.79-80.

Lynn, Martha and H.H. Douglas, "Occoquan, Prince William County, Va.," in Echoes of History, Jan 1971.

Harrison, Fairfax, Landmarks of Old Prince William (c1924), p.155.

Martin Josen, Comprehensive Description of Virginia and the District of Columbia (1835).

Sources and bibliography

Published sources (Books, articles, etc., with bibliographic data.)

H.A.B.S., Virginia Catalog (c1976), p.185.

Ratcliffe, R.J., This Was Prince William (c1978), pp.30,31,94,95. (continued next page)

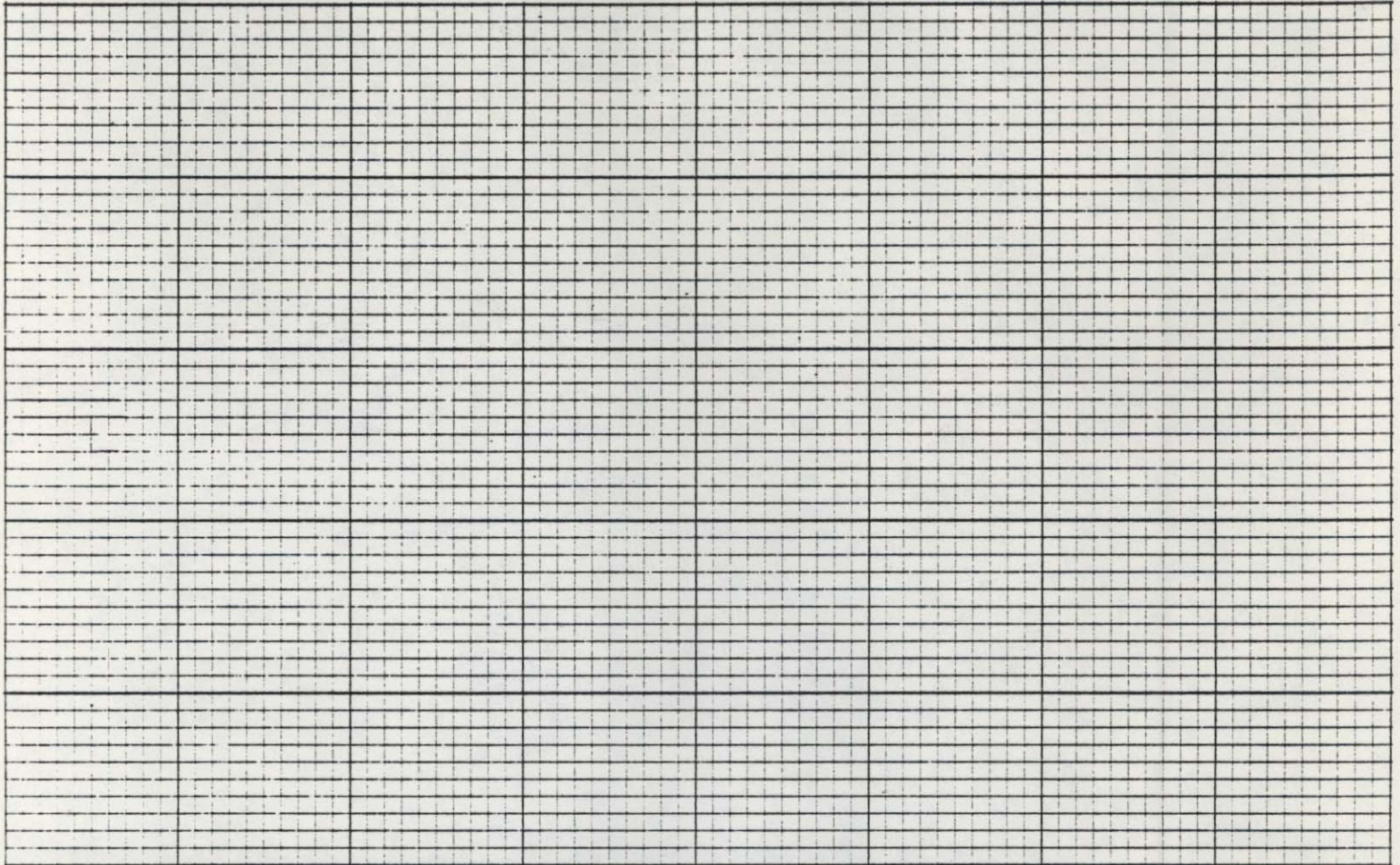
Primary sources (Manuscript documentary or graphic materials; give location.)

See photo of ruins [?] taken in 1959 and in possession of Library of Congress.

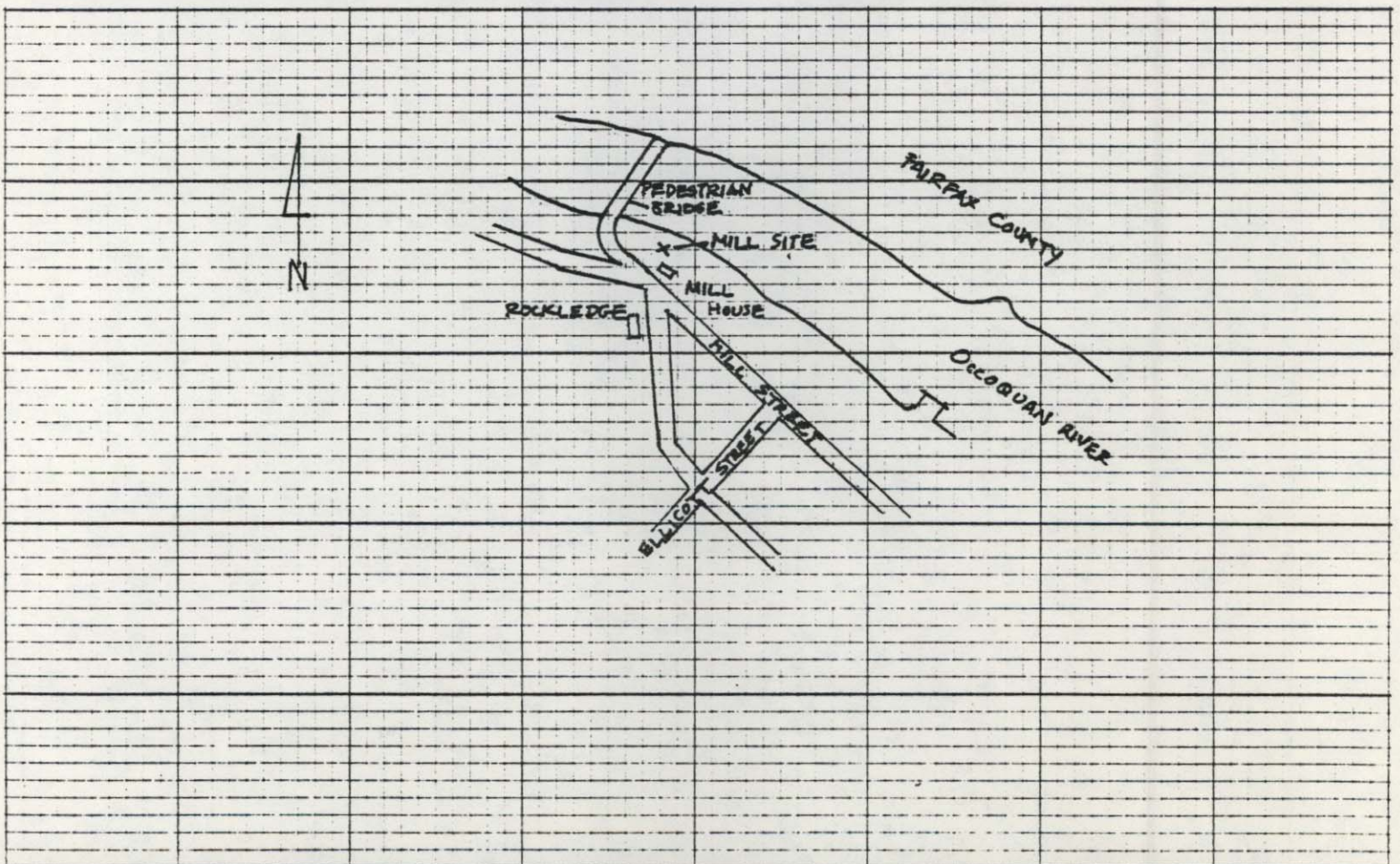
Museum owns material relating to mill, mill house and Occoquan history.

Names and addresses of persons interviewed

Plan (Indicate locations of rooms, doorways, windows, alterations, etc.)



Site plan (Locate and identify outbuildings, dependencies and significant topographical features.)





9 MI TO INTERSTATE 495
D.C. LINE 20 MI.

(FORT BELVOIR)
5561 11 NW

Occoquan R.

*ELICOTT'S
MILL
RUINS 272-3*