

Historic Occoquan



Historic Occoquan Inc., chartered by the State of Virginia, is dedicated to the research, restoration and preservation of our historical heritage.

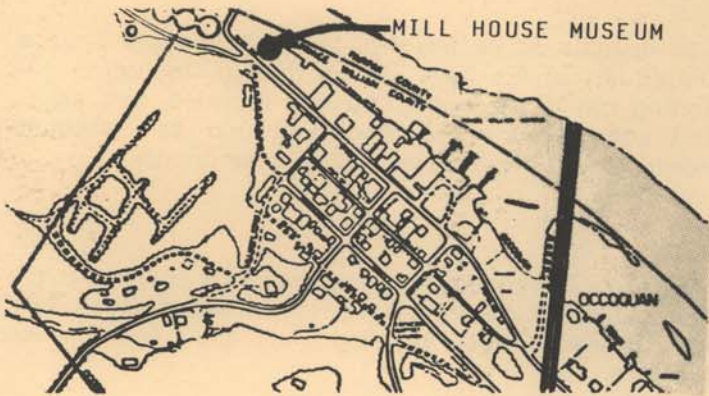
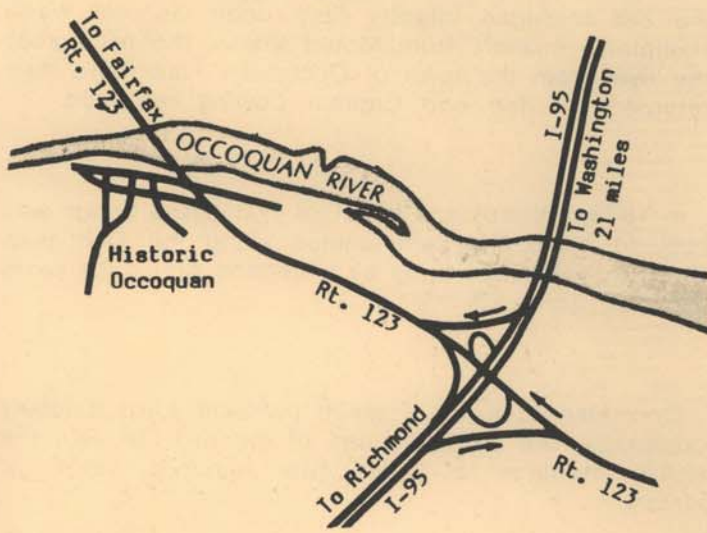
The Mill House Museum, the only remaining part of an 18th Century grist mill, not only serves the public as a museum, but also is the home of Historic Occoquan, Inc.

MUSEUM OPEN

Weekends: April through October
 Daily except Monday: June through September
 Tuesday through Saturday 11:00-4:00
 Sunday 1:00-5:00

MILL STREET OCCOQUAN, VIRGINIA

1 Mile West of I-95
 Take Va. Route 123 to Entrance to Occoquan



HISTORIC OCCOQUAN

Additional details may be obtained by completing and mailing the form below.

**MAIL TO: HISTORIC OCCOQUAN, INC.
 P.O. BOX 65
 OCCOQUAN, VIRGINIA 22125**

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

BUSINESS ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE: HOME _____

OFFICE _____

OCOQUAN VIRGINIA

"At the end of the Water"

Occoquan, which comes from the Dogue Indian language and means "At the end of the water," was first identified as the site of a town in 1734. At that time, the General Assembly directed that a public tobacco warehouse be built on the north side of the river.

Situated at the head of the tidewater and the foot of the Piedmont region, Occoquan occupied a natural location for water-borne commerce. Later, other industries, flour mills, and a cotton mill, were established in this small, but thriving, 18th century industrial community.

Rockledge, a stone house, was built in 1758 by John Ballendine under the architectural supervision of William Buckland. Ballendine, who had vision but lacked good fortune, lost his mills and his all-stone home, Rockledge, to his financial backers. By the turn of the century, ownership of Rockledge and the Occoquan mills had passed to Nathaniel Ellicott, of Ellicott City, Maryland.

Ellicott's grist mill is believed to have been the birth of automation with machinery for the transfer of grain from the holds of the ships, through the mill, to storage bins for the meal and flour.

The Revolutionary War with England and the silting of the river put an end to the sea-borne trade, and with the decline in shipping, the port was no longer economically self-sustaining and fell into disuse.

A toll bridge was built in 1795 across the Occoquan River over which ran the main road from Washington to Richmond, passing through the town of Occoquan. The three-story, red brick building (on the corner of the Union and Commerce Street, and now the Beachwood Apartments) was a popular hotel of the times. The War between the States (1861-1865) saw General Wade Hampton taking the hotel as his headquarters. Some authorities describe an incident in which a Union gunboat steamed up the river and fired a few shots into the town. Finding their efforts ignored, the Union seaman turned and went back down the River.

On February 3, 1863, Captain Lowing and 78 men of the 3rd Michigan Infantry fired upon General Wade Hampton's soldiers from Mount Vision, the hill across the river from the town of Occoquan. Hampton's men returned the fire and Captain Lowing retreated.

In 1878, a sturdy and beautiful Pratt Truss bridge was built to serve the communities along the Occoquan River. It was swept away by Hurricane Agnes 94 years later on June 22, 1972.

Occoquan today is a quiet, pleasant town uniquely combining the conveniences of modern life with the visible heritage of over two hundred years of history.

In addition to its historical interest and significance, Occoquan offers year-round fishing, including the herring run in the spring, boating facilities, arts, crafts, and antique shops. In Occoquan and its immediate vicinity are several outstanding restaurants.

Historic Occoquan, Inc. expresses its thanks to the Fairfax County Water Authority for its generosity in making available the building for the Mill House Museum.

We are able to continue our work through the support of our membership and the general public. Historic Occoquan, Inc. invites you to become a member and to assist in the effort to preserve the heritage.

In August 1983, the Occoquan Historic District, consisting of the land shown on the 1804 plat located in the Mill House Museum, was named to the Virginia Historic Landmark Register and nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. A plaque on a rock in front of the Town Hall gives official recognition of the place of Occoquan in Virginia History.