

Mill House Monthly

February, 2015

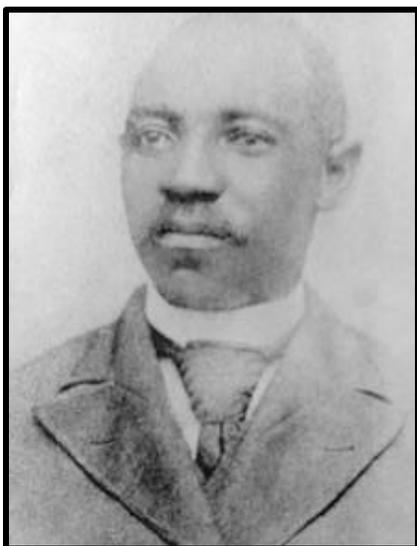
122 Years of Service

*Joyce Webster, Historian for Ebenezer Church
Originally printed in the Historical Society newsletter,
February 2005*

Ebenezer is the first landmark seen as you enter the quaint little town of Occoquan. Built 20 years after Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation freeing the slaves, the church dates back to the era just following the Civil War. The cornerstone reads "1883 rebuilt 1924" [following a disastrous fire].

It was founded by an ex-slave -- the Rev. Lewis H. Bailey -- who had vision, faith, hope, love and determination to do service for God and his fellow man. On the first Sunday in March 1883 the church was established, and on the first Sunday in May of that same year the cornerstone was laid marking the birth of Ebenezer Baptist, the area's first black congregation church.

One hundred twenty-two years later we still are honored and privileged to continue building on the foundation of our founders, Rev. Lewis H. Bailey and the unselfish devotion and labor of many others who gave and are still giving untiringly and are fully committed to God and humankind.



Rev. Lewis H. Bailey

Ogle T. Harris

*By Daughters Madeline Bell and Saluka Toliver
Program Presented to Historic Occoquan Inc., May 22, 1979*

Ogle T. Harris was born December 25, 1878. As a very young man he went to work on a tug boat called Tull, as first mate. In time he became the cook. One day they were short on rations. So he made a stew, of fat back, bacon, onions, potatoes, they liked it and asked what it was, he said, "long boat stew."

He always liked strawberries. With his first pay he bought a crate of strawberries. His mother fixed them different ways, some with heavy cream. Right then he said he would make ice cream. On Saturdays when he came home he would make ice cream. 15 gallons at a time in a big freezer, which had a turn table and a big wheel to turn until the ice cream was frozen. He would pack that in ice and make the next batch and so on until he had as much as



needed. Flavors were chocolate, vanilla, strawberry and peach. He also sold lemonade and home-made cakes on Sundays in the summer kitchen of two rooms. This building was between the home and store. Near as I

remember he opened the store in 1912, it was a general store, he sold beef, lamb and pork.

He died in 1949. His wife's name was Lottie. He had 8 children, Saluka, Arthur, Ogle, Rebecca, Raymond, Harman, Artie and Madeline. After he died Arthur and Saluka ran the store. And after Arthur died his wife Doris ran it.

Ogles Store

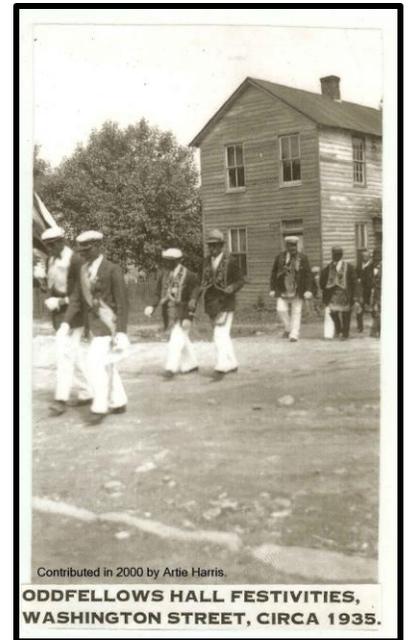
By Martha Roberts Originally printed in the February 2005
Occoquan Historical Society Newsletter

On display at the museum is an 8x10 photograph of Ogle Harris and his son Arthur standing inside their store, a dimly lit, homey place crowded with meats, vegetables, canned goods, fishing supplies and penny candy. Black History Month reminds us that one of Occoquan's most popular merchants was the son of slaves. "Ogle's Store" had a pickle barrel and a deep, gurgling soda machine with cold cokes in 8 oz. bottles along with root beers and orange and grape Nehi. Saluka Toliver, Ogle's daughter, remembered in her 1999 oral history¹ that in the early days a crackling wood stove warmed the store, and customers -- black and white -- would congregate there on cold winter afternoons. In the 50's a large bench sat next to the front door, providing a place to rest and watch Washington Street.

Ogle Harris' family actually lived in the 4-room building that later became the store before their larger home was built at Washington and Commerce Streets. Saluka said her father's business began with ice cream which he made in a huge hand-cranked machine and sold at the Odd Fellows Hall next to the church². When they moved to the larger home her father turned the little building into a store. The ice cream business expanded to groceries and Ogle Harris & Sons became a thriving enterprise patronized by citizens of Occoquan and all around the area. Unlike the other food stores in town, Ogle's accepted charge

accounts. No Visa cards back then -- the figures were carefully kept in a spiral bound notebook by Ogle and his sons, Arthur and Norman. After Ogle's death Arthur ran the store with his wife Doris and sister Saluka.

Ogle Harris & Sons grocery was an Occoquan institution from about 1910 until 1972 when Hurricane Agnes damaged the building. It opened just during summers for awhile after the storm before closing down completely. Arthur, his wife Doris, Norman and Saluka have all passed away now and the little building has hosted many shops, none of them involving food. What fun it would be to go back to the time of the photo and visit Occoquan as it was in Ogle's day with chickens pecking in the back yard and produce offered from bushel baskets on the porch.



A. P. A. 171-2-26-17-100

Merchants' Application for a State License

STATE OF VIRGINIA--1917 **3**

License tax must be paid the Treasurer of this county (or city) or his deputy, and to no one else; it must never be paid to the Commissioner of the Revenue or his deputy. Where a license is granted to an individual agent of the person owning the company or firm, and where the license is granted to a corporation, the license shall specify whether such corporation is domestic (that is, chartered under the laws of this State) or foreign, and if foreign, the date of the authority to transact business in this State issued the corporation by the State Corporation Commission. See sections 511 and 512 of the Code, Tax Laws.

This application must be made out in duplicate, the colored sheet to be used as the original and to be filed in the office of the Commissioner; the white sheet to be used as the duplicate to be delivered to the applicant and constitute his license, which license, however, is granted subject to increase or decrease in the license tax upon the review of report of purchases required by law.

Prince William County (or CITY) Sept 7th 1917

NAME OF APPLICANT
Ogle Harris

If an individual, use this line _____
If a firm or unincorporated company, use this line _____ Give names of each member.

If a corporation, use this line _____
State whether the corporation is Domestic (that is, chartered under the laws of this State), or Foreign (that is, chartered under the laws of another State or Country), and if foreign, give date of authority to do business in this State issued the corporation by the State Corporation Commission.

Nature of business, **MERCHANT** Conffection Amount of purchases, \$ 1000.00

Define place or house where business is to be conducted In Occoquan

Amount of tax prescribed by law as ascertained by Commissioner of the Revenue
None Dollars and X X cents (8 500)
but subject to an increase or decrease in the license tax upon the review of report of purchases required by law.

For period beginning Sept 7th 1918, and expiring April 30th 1917

Applicant for License.

¹ On videotape at the Mill House Museum

² Photo of Odd Fellows Hall also displayed at the museum

Saluka Beatrice (Harris) Toliver



Harris sisters: Madeline, Artie & Saluka

Saluka Toliver was born on December 8, 1900 and passed away on October 25, 2001. Saluka was so beloved by her family, church and community, the Virginia Legislature passed the following resolution on January 9, 2002.

House Joint Resolution No. 52

WHEREAS, Saluka Beatrice Toliver, the Town of Occoquan's oldest resident, died on October 25, 2001, at the age of 100; and

WHEREAS, born in Occoquan in 1900, Saluka Toliver was baptized in the Occoquan River in 1914 and was a member of the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church for 87 years; and

WHEREAS, Saluka Toliver served the Ebenezer Baptist Church as a Deaconess, Sunday school teacher and superintendent, and was a member of the Women's Club, the Senior and Inspiration Choirs and the Missionary Society; and

WHEREAS, Saluka Toliver, served as chairman of the trustee board, as Youth Club coordinator, and as Building Fund coordinator, and became trustee emeritus in 1984; and

WHEREAS, on November 3, 1990, Saluka Toliver was granted the title "Mother of Ebenezer Baptist Church" by Pastor Lundy; and

WHEREAS, a witness to the entire 20th century, Saluka Toliver was a valued resource for historians, college students, and town council members who

were eager to learn the history of Occoquan from a first-hand source; and

WHEREAS, in 1996, Saluka Toliver was made and honorary member of Historic Occoquan, and on December 8, 2000, her 100th birthday, Occoquan proclaimed "Saluka Toliver Day" and gave her the keys to the town; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, that the General Assembly note with great sadness the passing of one of Occoquan's finest citizens and most important resources, Saluka Beatrice Toliver; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, that the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Saluka Beatrice Toliver as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for her memory.

The above articles honor just a few of the many invaluable residents and contributors to the development of the Occoquan community.

On Wednesday evening, February 11, Boy Scout



Pack 136, Den 4, visited the Mill House Museum. This great group of boys learned about Occoquan history and we look forward to a return visit!

Occoquan Historical Society
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