

Mill House Monthly

September, 2014

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Welcome to the first edition of the *Mill House Monthly*. Like the editions of the *Mill Racer*, look for information related to the history of Occoquan, yesteryears, and today! The monthly edition will appear in months when the *Mill Racer* is not published. Look for the "Ask the Curator" column, happenings around Occoquan and whatever comes to the curator's mind! Please send in your questions to; curator@occoquanhistoricalsociety.org Dolores

Ask the Curator

There was a nice response to "Ask the Curator." Here are some of the questions and related answers;

Dear Curator,

I love visiting you and hearing details about the many interesting objects you care for at the Occoquan Museum. Recently the many glass bottles captured my interest. Some have alcoholic names in the glass like rum etc...what is their origin? Did Occoquan have a brewery? What is the significance of that tiny blue bottle? A toy? An expensive ingredient?

Thank you for loving your job so much and for sharing that love of history with us. Marge

Hi Marge,

The cobalt blue poison bottle was donated in 1976 by Mr. & Mrs. Billy Holt. Bottles that contained toxic substances were commonly distinct colors and shapes so as not to be accidentally ingested. Cobalt blue and the triangular shape were often used for these bottles. Cleaning, garden weed and pest control substances were often mixed by homeowners. Our bottle is approximately 1.5" tall at the shoulder and the neck is .5"



Our etched glass rum decanter was donated by Mamie Davis (March 14, 1887-Feb. 24, 1987). According to the collection notes it was used in an Occoquan taproom before prohibition.

The similarly designed port and sherry decanters are from the Woodbridge taproom owned by T. Powell Davis (December 4, 1881-November 30, 1955).



I have not found evidence of a brewery in Occoquan. Ship logs show deliveries of beer to and the return of bottles from the ordinaries.

From Kay,

When did the Confederates occupy Occoquan?

Hi Kay,

My first thought was May 23, 1861 when Virginians voted to accept the articles of secession to April 9, 1865 when General Robert E. Lee surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox. The northern Virginia area was constantly in turmoil during the war.

After the battle of First Manassas until the Confederate troop withdrawal to the Rappahannock in early March 1862 is when the area saw the largest concentration of CSA troops. We know troops trained in Occoquan from official reports of the February 3, 1862 exchange of fire across the Occoquan River between the Confederate and Union troops.

Two major Confederate raids occurred in Occoquan in 1862. The first led by Gen. Wade Hampton on December 18 and the second on December 27 that went into Fairfax the next day was led by Gen. J.E.B. Stuart.

Water Tank Removal

Work is moving along with the removal of the water containment tanks on the west end of Mill Street. The photos below show the partial razing.



Top photo: Moving equipment into position
Center photo: Mother and tot watching the removal of the tanks
Below: Work continues at a good pace



Cotton Plants

The container cotton plants are filled with bolls. By the end of September the earliest developed bolls should begin to open. It is a long process from planting to “look at the cotton”. The ground temperature needs to be 60 degrees for the seeds to germinate. After about 60 days of growth the plants will flower and produce bolls. Then it is another 24-40 days for the fibers to develop and the boll to open. It appears that the heat reflected from the stone museum walls help the plant growth. Seeds planted in other sites that receive full sun haven’t had growth comparable to these.

Museum Gutters

Our Mill House Museum sign has been removed and will be re-hung in a new position. This is in preparation for gutters to be installed on the building. The electrical wires and meter box will be moved to the east side of the building. The work should be completed this fall.

Children’s Writing Clinic, October 25

Children can join local author Jamie Long for this OHS sponsored event. Students will develop a character and story line in this fun 90 minute class. Details at:

www.occoquanhistoricalsociety.org

Don’t forget to order a 2015 calendar at www.occoquanhistoricalsociety.org An easy \$14 PayPal payment will get a calendar in the mail. Pick one up at the Mill House, 11-4 daily.
