

HISTORIC Occoquan Virginia

The Occoquan valley was settled by the Dogue Indians who named the area "Occoquan" meaning "at the head of the water" or "at the end of the water". Early in the 1600's Capt. John Smith sailed and explored the Occoquan River.

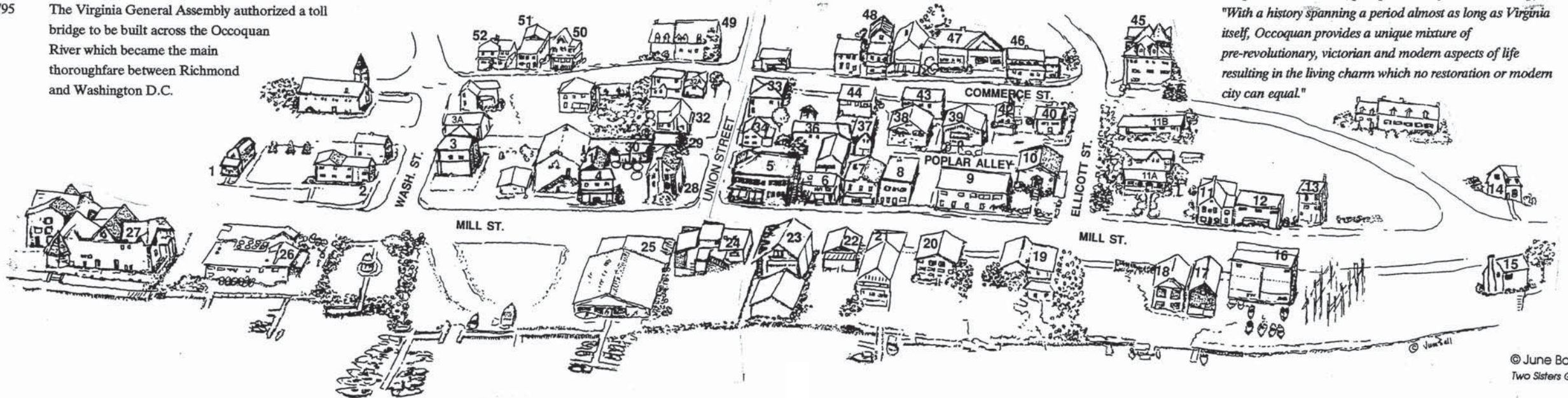
- 1734 Occoquan appears in public records as the Virginia General Assembly directs that a Tobacco Warehouse is to be built on the north side of the Occoquan Creek.
- 1755 Occoquan was noted as a major industrial town with "certain forges, tolling mills, bake houses, saw mills, store houses, and dwellings".
- 1757 The Country Grist Mill was built.
- 1758 Rockledge was built by John Ballendine under architectural supervision of William Buckland, an indentured servant, who also was associated with the construction of George Mason's Gunston Hall.
- 1759 The Merchants' Mill was built (one of the first fully automated grist mills in America). The iron works foundry was in full operation; it is thought that cannon balls and cannon were produced from this forge for the American Revolution.
- 1795 The Virginia General Assembly authorized a toll bridge to be built across the Occoquan River which became the main thoroughfare between Richmond and Washington D.C.

- 1801 Writer John Davis describes Occoquan: "On descending the last hill I was nearly stunned by the noise of two huge mills whose roar without any hyperbolic aggravation is scarcely inferior to that of the great falls of the Potomac, or the cataract of Niagara." According to D'anne Evans, "Davis' description of the noise of the mills was not far off; the thunderous noise Davis wrote of might have been explained by the magnification within the high banks of the swift flowing stream, or he might have been listening to three water wheels and six sets of mill stones going at the same time."
- 1804 The 31 acre tract of Occoquan was laid out with streets and lots and formally named.
- 1805 The Great Southern Mail Route was authorized through Occoquan. During the Civil War, Alexandria and Washington were blockaded and Occoquan was one of the last post offices in which mail could be sent between the north and south.
- 1809 A stage coach line was established by Nathaniel Ellicott of Occoquan to travel between Alexandria and Dumfries.
- 1828 The cotton mill was built (a four story building which operated 1,000 spindles and was one of the first such manufactories in Virginia).
- 1835 Noted by Joseph Martin in his *Gazetteer*: "It (Occoquan) contains about 50 dwelling houses, several mercantile stores, and various mechanics - a cotton manufactory in complete operation and one of the first established in the

- state, now running 1,000 spindles; 1 extensive manufacturing flour mill, grinding in the ordinary season 150 barrels per day with the necessary appendages of grist, saw and plaster mills. Thro' the town runs the Great Mail Route from Washington to the south. This village is in flourishing condition and with confidence looks forward to further improvement...This is the market for many of the most important shad and herring fisheries on the Potomac. The scenery at and near Occoquan has frequently been the theme of praise."
- 1836 A stage coach line was established between Occoquan and Petersburg.
- 1850-60 Occoquan had the first commercial ice storage house in this area. River ice was harvested and stored for shipment in the summer to Washington D.C. (in 1917 reports indicate that ice on the Occoquan River was 26" thick).
- 1860-65 The toll bridge and the cotton mill were burned by Union troops.
- 1861-62 General Wade Hampton of the Confederacy established winter quarters in the Hammil Hotel (206 Union St.).
- 1874 Occoquan became an incorporated town and remains so today.
- 1878 A Pratt Truss Bridge was built where the walking bridge now spans the river.
- 1890's Excursion boats brought Washington residents to Occoquan to enjoy the natural beauty of the river town. Traveling shows and circuses set up at the public wharf located at the end of Washington Street.

- 1910 The Bank of Occoquan was established. The District of Columbia Workhouse (Lorton Prison) was established. The first prisoners were brought by train and walked through town to tents on the workhouse property across the river. Prisoners were put to work constructing permanent buildings, thus the name "workhouse"
- 1916 A major fire swept Occoquan and destroyed much of the town including the town jail, stables, Methodist Church and Alton Hotel. The nearest fire department in Alexandria took 43 minutes to arrive. In 1916, 43 minutes was a speedy trip from Alexandria.
- 1921 The Occoquan Light & Power Co. was formed and provided electricity to 28 units in the town.
- 1924 The Merchants Mill was burned by an accidental fire from the power company next door. (The Miller's office was not destroyed and now houses the Mill House Museum.)
- 1929 Route 1 was rerouted to its present location and Occoquan was no longer astride the main North/South route.
- 1938 The O.W.L Volunteer Fire Dept was established (Occoquan, Woodbridge, Lorton).
- 1972 Hurricane Agnes flooded the town, destroying many of the buildings along the river's edge.
- 1972-74 Occoquan began to rebuild as the town you enjoy today.

To quote Robert Lehto, past president of Historic Occoquan: "With a history spanning a period almost as long as Virginia itself, Occoquan provides a unique mixture of pre-revolutionary, victorian and modern aspects of life resulting in the living charm which no restoration or modern city can equal."



ACCOLADES FLORIST
308-B POPLAR ALLEY
703-492-9732 MAP # 38

COLONIAL BOOKS & GIFTS
402 MILL ST.
703-969-6430 MAP #11A

IDABEL UPHOLSTERY
206 UNION ST.
703-780-7720 MAP #33

NABRO CHOCOLATES
309 MILL ST.
MAP #21

PRESERVATION STATION
204 UNION ST.
571-572-2207 MAP #34

SO BOHEMIAN
310 MILL ST.
703-490-1192 MAP #9

WILLOW STREET DÉCOR
203 WASHINGTON ST.
703-497-2070 MAP #2

ART A LA CARTE GALLERY
310 MILL ST.
703-496-9540 MAP #9

COTTAGE AT OCCOQUAN
313 MILL ST.
703-494-2128 MAP #19

IRISH COLLECTION
125 MILL ST.
703-492-9283 MAP #27

NOLA ROSE REVISITED
301 COMMERCE ST. C
504-975-0015 MAP #44

PRO-ACTIVE WELLNESS
CONCEPTS
310 MILL ST.
703-919-3989 MAP #9

SOARING SPIRIT YOGA
308 POPLAR ALLEY
703-499-9114 MAP #38

YARN CLOUD
204 WASHINGTON ST.
703-763-3285 MAP#3

ARTAVILLE PERSIAN RUGS
407 MILL ST.
703-494-4439 MAP # 16

DANSK DAY SPA
SCANDINAVIAN EXPERIENCE
214 COMMERCE ST.
703-492-1991 MAP #49

JERRY'S OCCOQUAN JEWELERS
REPAIR-DESIGN-APPRAISALS
306 MILL ST.
703-494-2904 MAP #7

OCCOQUAN INN
FINE FOOD AND DINING
301 MILL ST.
703-494-0579 MAP # 24

PUZZLE PALOOZA
403 MILL ST
703-494-0579 MAP #18

SPINAWEB
305 COMMERCE ST.
703-491-7422 MAP #39

ARTISTS' UNDERTAKING
309 MILL ST.
703-494-0584 MAP #21

DETAILS OF OCCOQUAN
FABULOUS BOUTIQUE
206 MILL ST
703-494-4959 MAP #4

JOY OF BEING
125 MILL ST.
703-490-4720 MAP #27

OCCOQUAN VAPOR SHOP
304 MILL ST.
571-572-3994 MAP # 6

QUINN'S GOLDSMITH
199 UNION ST.
703-494-1662 MAP #28

SPIRAL CREATIONS
304 MILL ST.
571-494-1581 MAP #6

ATTIC TREASURES
203 WASHINGTON ST.
703-490-1536 MAP # 2

DIAPERCAKE BEAR
312 POPLAR ALLEY
MAP #39

LABELLA BRIDAL
CONSIGNMENT BOUTIQUE
313 MILL ST.
703-494-2929 MAP #19

OFF THE BEADING PATH
310 MILL ST.
703-492-2323 MAP # 9

RED ART & DESIGN
125 MILL ST.
703-490-1056 MAP #27

T.G. HAIR FX
307 COMMERCE ST.
703-491-3941 MAP #42

TASTEFULLY YOURS GOURMET
406 MILL ST.
703-499-8809 MAP #12

BLOOMIN IRIS
201 UNION ST.
703-492-6646 MAP #30

ELEMENTS
313 MILL ST.
703-490-8697 MAP #19

LISA JULIA PHOTOGRAPHY
304 MILL ST.
703-580-8755 MAP #6

PAINT YOUR HEART OUT
125 MILL ST.
703-492-7223 MAP #27

RIVERSHORE CHARTER
TOWN DOCK
703-498-4348

13 MAGICKAL MOONS
407 MILL ST.
703-492-2211 MAP #16

BLUE ARBOR CAFÉ
201 UNION ST.
703-494-1317 MAP #30

FETCH PET BAKERY
305 MILL ST.
703-491-8686 MAP #23

LOFT GALLERY, THE
313 MIL ST.
703-490-1117 MAP #19

PATRIOT SCUBA
305 MILL ST.
703-490-1175 MAP #23

RIVERSIDE COFFEE SHOP
201 UNION ST.
703-494-4005 MAP #29

TOUCH OF GOLD
202 WASHINGTON ST.
703-490-4544 MAP #3

BOTTLE STOP
311 MILL ST.
703-494-1622 MAP #20

GIFTS 4 ALL
125 MILL ST.
336-549-8907 MAP #27

MJ'S ICE CREAM N' MORE
DRINKS, SANDWICHES,
305 MILL ST.
703-490-5052 MAP #23

PEONY LANE
301 COMMERCE ST. C
571-213-3755 MAP #44

ROCKLEDGE CATERING
416 MILL ST.
703-615-8565 MAP #13

TRUE LOVE FOREVER TATTOO
201 UNION ST.
703-490-3658 MAP #29

BRAMBLES
307 MILL ST.
703-492-0401 MAP #22

GLORY BE
305 MILL ST.
703-490-1441 MAP #23

MADIGAN'S WATERFRONT
201 MILL ST.
703-494-6373 MAP #26

PERSONALLY YOURS
HOME & SEASONAL
DÉCOR, GIFTS
308 MILL ST.
703-494-8683 MAP #8

SECRET GARDEN CAFÉ
404 MILL ST.
703-494-2848 MAP #11

TOWN HALL OF OCCOQUAN
314 MILL ST.
703-491-1918 MAP #10

CENTER STAGE
125 MILL ST.
703-981-9551 MAP #27

GOLDEN GOOSE, THE
YEAR ROUND CHRISTMAS SHOP
302 MILL ST.
703-494-4964 MAP #5

MILL HOUSE MUSEUM
413 MILL ST.
703-491-7525 MAP #15

PIN CURLS
311 MILL ST.
571-408-9488 MAP #20

SECRET JEWELRY GARDEN, THE
308E POPLAR ALLEY
703-499-9911 MAP # 38

UNION STREET GUITAR WORKS
205 UNION ST.
703-731-9785 MAP #32A

COCK & BOWL
302 POPLAR ALLEY
703-494-1180 MAP #36

HAIR STUDIO 14
125 MILL ST.
703-492-1461 MAP #27

MILL STREET STUDIO
ART GALLERY & CLASSES
416 MILL ST.
703-615-8565 MAP #13

PINK BICYCLE TEA ROOM
303 COMMERCE ST.
703-491-5216 MAP #43

SERENDIPITY OF OCCOQUAN
125 MILL ST.
703-491-7936 MAP #27

VANECH STUDIO
125 MILL ST.
703-598-1036 MAP #27

COFFEE HOUSE OF OCCOQUAN
202 COMMERCE ST.
703-492-8976 MAP #52

HAWTHORNE HOUSE
FINE PAPER & INVITATIONS
404 MILL ST.
703-491-5775 MAP #11

MOM'S APPLE PIE
126-A COMMERCE ST.
703-497-7437 MAP #53

POLKA DOT DIVAS
405 MILL ST.
703-910-7059 MAP #17

SINCERELY YOURS STAINED GLASS
CLASSES-REPAIRS-CUSTOM
214 COMMERCE ST.
703-490-0827 MAP #49

VILLAGE AMERICANA
203 UNION ST.
703-491-5712 MAP #32

VISITOR CENTER
200 MILL ST.
703-491-4045 MAP #1

Directions to
Historic
Occoquan:
I-95 Exit 160 and
follow signs to
Historic Occoquan
or
Rte 123 south, cross the
Occoquan River to an
immediate right to
Historic
Occoquan

Historic Occoquan
is listed
on the National
Register of
Historic Places
and is a
Virginia Historic
District

