

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic OCCOQUAN HISTORIC DISTRICT (VHLC File #272-12)

and or common N/A

2. Location

street & number Various N/A not for publication

city, town Occoquan N/A vicinity of

state Virginia code 51 county Prince William code 153

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple

street & number N/A

city, town N/A N/A vicinity of state N/A

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Prince William County Courthouse

street & number N/A

city, town Manassas state Virginia 22110

6. Representation in Existing Surveys (2) (See Continuation Sheet

(1) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

title Survey (File #272-12)

has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ nodate 1982 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 221 Governor Street

city, town Richmond state Virginia 23219

7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The Occoquan Historic District is comprised of sixty structures situated on the north bank of the Occoquan River. The buildings are predominantly frame, two-story, residential structures although the earliest examples are constructed of stone or brick. Most of the residential buildings date to the late 19th century and are variations of the builder vernacular type, many characterized by German siding and decorative porches. During recent years many of these buildings have been converted to specialty shops. The major commercial structures date to the early 20th century and line Mill Street. Occoquan's close proximity to Washington DC and its suburbs, its convenient access to Interstate 95, and its picturesque setting on the river, have converted the early milling town to a bustling tourist center.

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Geographically, Occoquan is bounded to the south by the Occoquan River and to the north by wooded bluffs. The streets are laid out in a simple grid pattern that stretches up a slight sloping hill to the north. Five major streets, Mill, Union, Commerce, Washington, and Ellicott, along with sixty structures comprise the district.

The potential value of the site on a river that opens into the Potomac was recognized as early as 1755 by John Ballendine who hoped to establish forges, mills, stores, and dwellings on the site. As early as 1804 Occoquan achieved the status of an official town. A map which survives from that date illustrates a street pattern nearly identical to the present layout. Over thirty structures are noted on the map including a mill and cooper shop. Few buildings constructed during the town's settlement years stand today. The most notable survivor is Rockledge constructed by Ballendine in 1760. The elegant Georgian two-story, stone house with elaborate woodwork rises from a hill overlooking Mill Street and the river. Damaged by fire in 1980, only the exterior walls remain intact. The most widely recognized structure in Occoquan was a flour mill owned by Nathaniel Ellicott. Illustrated in Oliver Evans' The Young Mill-Wright and Miller's Guide, the building was destroyed in 1924. However, the Miller's house or Mill Museum still stands on Mill Street immediately southeast of the mill site. The small, one-story, stone and brick structure above a raised basement covered by a gable roof was erected in the late 18th century or early 19th century. The house is presently occupied by Historic Occoquan, Inc., which uses the building for exhibition space.

Occoquan continued to flourish throughout the 19th century. Both commercial and residential structures remain from the mid-19th century. The ca. 1830 Hammill Hotel, located in the center of the district at the intersection of Commerce and Union streets, is a square, three-story building constructed of five-course American bond brick beneath a hipped roof. Another mid-19th-century building is the Back Stage Dance Supplies Store at 205 Union Street. The main block of the building dates to ca. 1850 and was built as a two-story, frame residence sheathed in German siding surmounted by a gable roof.

Evidence of Occoquan's continued prosperity during the late 19th century survives in the large number of residences that line Commerce and Union streets. Constructed primarily in the builder vernacular tradition, the frame, two-story buildings frequently display German siding and decorative porches. Buildings in the 200 through 300 blocks

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates N/A Builder/Architect N/A

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The site of a tobacco warehouse as early as 1736, the present town of Occoquan in Prince William County arose in the late colonial period as the focus of the commercial and manufacturing activities of John Ballendine, who erected an iron furnace, forge, and two sawmills at the falls of the Occoquan River prior to 1759. The settlement at Ballendine's "Occoquan Works" emerged after the Revolution as a prosperous flour manufacturing center, which boasted one of the first grist mills in the nation to employ the labor-saving inventions of Oliver Evans. While the silting of the river gradually reduced Occoquan's stature as a major Northern Virginia shipping point, the town continued to thrive as a center of commerce and industry into the 1920s. The district contains a visually interesting collection of mostly vernacular residential and commercial structures dating from the late 19th and early 20th century, preserving a port village image of that period. Although most of the older buildings have succumbed to the ravages of fire and flood, the few individual survivors from the antebellum period or before include three major landmarks: Rockledge, an elegant Georgian house with elaborate woodwork erected by John Ballendine in ca. 1760; the Mill House, a late 18th-century to early 19th-century dwelling associated with the nationally known Occoquan Flour Mill; and the Hammill Hotel, built ca. 1830, which served as the headquarters of General Wade Hampton during the Civil War. A natural stopping place and crossing point for travelers moving north or south between Richmond and the nation's capital since the early 19th century, Occoquan with its marine facilities and restored waterside shops and restaurants remains an important travel destination for Washington area tourists.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The history of the town of Occoquan, which means "at the end of the water," began with the establishment of a tobacco warehouse in 1734 on the north shore of the Occoquan River and the erection of another tobacco warehouse near the site of the present town on the south bank two years later. Throughout the second quarter of the 18th century, petitions for the establishment of a town at this site went unheeded due to political pressure from other parts of Prince William County, and it was not until 1755 that John Ballendine purchased the two tobacco warehouses and 230 acres of land from Valentine Peyton with the intent to build "certain forges, water grist mills, bolting mills, bake houses, saw mills, stores houses and dwellings."¹ Ballendine recognized the site's strategic location at the head of a waterway navigable to the Potomac with a ready source of water power and thus its potential as a prosperous commercial and manufacturing center. By 1759, Archdeacon Burnaby visited the "Occoquan Works" and described the iron furnace, forge, and two sawmills.² It was during Ballendine's tenure at Occoquan that he built Rockledge (National Register 1973, damage by fire 1980), a handsome stone mansion which overlooked his milling operations and which is attributed to William Buckland. It is likely that the stone miller's house (now the Occoquan Museum) dates from this period. After a decade of prosperity, Ballendine fell on bad times and was forced to sell his Occoquan works to John Semple of Charles County, Maryland in 1765. Semple soon abandoned

9. Major Bibliographical References (See Continuation Sheet #11)

Acts of the Assembly (1836-1837). Chapter 290, p. 244.

Chataigne, J., compiler. Alexandria City Directory. Washington, DC: J. Chataigne, 1887-1888.

Evans, Oliver. The Young Mill-Wright and Miller's Guide. Philadelphia, 13th edition, 1850; reprint ed., New York: Arno Press, 1972.

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property 13.25 acres

Quadrangle name Occoquan, Va.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

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3	0	3	4	5	0
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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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3	0	3	2	0	0
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4	2	8	3	7	3	0
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D

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3	0	3	1	7	0
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4	2	8	4	2	6	0
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E

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Verbal boundary description and justification Beginning at a point at Occoquan River wall approximate 340' due W of VA 123 bridge; thence extending approximately 220' SSW to S side of Mill St.; thence approximately 200' SE along said side to W side of creek; thence approximately 280' SW along said side to N side of Commerce St.; thence approximately 150' NW along

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries (See Continuation Sheet #1)

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
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state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

organization Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission date August 1983

street & number 221 Governor Street telephone (804) 786-3144

city or town Richmond state Virginia 23219

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☒ state ☐ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

H. Bryan Mitchell
H. Bryan Mitchell, Executive Director
title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

date AUG 16 1983

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

OCCOQUAN HISTORIC DISTRICT, PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY, VA

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Continuation sheet #1

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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

- (2) Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), HABSI
1959 Federal
Library of Congress
Washington, DC

7. DESCRIPTION--Architectural Analysis

of Commerce Street are examples of this type. Typical of these houses is 202 Commerce Street, a frame, two-story, five-bay building with a gable roof, the facade decorated by a porch consisting of stylized Doric columns and a sawncut balustrade. Dating to the same period is 306 Commerce Street, a frame, two-story, three-bay house with a shed roof fronted by a porch supported on chamfered posts with scroll brackets connected by a sawnwork balustrade. A non-residential building constructed at this time is the Crescent Lodge #3 located at 308 Commerce Street. Built in 1889, the massive, two-story, three-bay building is oriented with its gable end facing the street. A variety of simple un-ornamented buildings also exist in the district including 209 Commerce Street, a two-story, frame house covered in German siding beneath a gable roof, and 304 Commerce Street, another two-story, three-bay building sheathed in weatherboards.

Fire swept down Mill Street in 1916 destroying many of the town's major commercial structures. However, a few residential structures which date to the late 19th century still stand at the west end of the street and have now been converted to shops. Among these is 406 Mill Street, a two-story, five-bay building with a porch consisting of turned posts and a decorative sawncut balustrade. Most of the commercial buildings on the street are simple commercial vernacular structures built after the fire.

The district contains few public buildings. Two churches both dating to the 20th century are located within the boundaries. The Ebenezer Church built in 1924 stands on Washington Street while the Methodist congregation constructed their church at 314 Mill Street in 1926. The simple one-story brick building is embellished with a wide overhanging roof supported by strut brackets.

Thus, each major period of Occoquan's history is represented in its buildings. Well-kept, shaded yards surround many of the residential structures on Washington, Commerce, and Ellicott streets; while the shops and commercial buildings on Mill Street are tightly knit and open directly onto the paved streets. The lawns and decorative details of the residential structures, in contrast with the density of the commercial core, create a unified yet varied combination of buildings and building types within the district.

(SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #2 FOR INVENTORY OF OCCOQUAN HISTORIC DISTRICT)

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7. DESCRIPTION--Inventory (arranged alphabetically by the name of the street)

The following is a listing of the sixty structures located within the Occoquan Historic District. Of these structures, seven are noncontributing to the district, as they do not conform to the rest of the district in style, scale, or materials. Noncontributing structures are indicated by asterisks.

COMMERCE STREET

200 Block

Occoquan H.O. 0272-012

- 272-12-01 202 (Miss Mamie's House): wood frame (weatherboard); 2 stories; gable roof (composition); 5 bays; 1-story, 4-bay porch with stylized Doric posts and scrolled balustrade. Detached house. Builder's vernacular. Ca. late 19th century.
- 272-12-02 204: wood frame (weatherboard); 2 stories; gable roof (composition); 1-story, 3-bay porch, screened. Detached house. Builder's vernacular. Mid- to late 19th century.
- 272-12-03 205: brick (5-course American bond); 2½ stories; hipped (metal sheets); 1 hipped dormer; 2 bays; 1-story, 2-bay porch with squat Doric columns on brick piers, screened (composition roof). Detached house. American 4-square. Ca. 1920.
- 272-12-04 206: wood frame (shingle); 2 stories; gable roof (composition); 3 bays; 1-story, 4-bay porch with west end enclosed (screened). Detached house. Vernacular. Late 19th century.
- 272-12-05 207: vacant lot.
- 272-12-06 208: wood frame (new beaded weatherboard); 2 stories on rased basement; gable roof (composition); 1-story, 3-bay porch (roofless). Detached house. Federal. Mid-19th century.
- 272-12-07 209: wood frame (weatherboard); 2 stories; gable roof (composition); 3 bays. Detached house. Builder's vernacular. Mid- to late 19th century.
- 272-12-08 210: vacant lot (foundation of former house; retaining wall).

300 Block

- 272-12-09 301: (Whistler's Mother, Dream House Miniatures): wood frame (shingle); 2 stories; gable roof (composition); 3 bays; 1-story, 3-bay porch with square panelled posts connected by balustrade. Detached house. Used as commercial (store). Builder's vernacular. Late 19th century.
- 272-12-10 302: brick (stretcher bond); 2 stories; gable and parapet roof with 5-V metal; 4 bays; 1-story, 4-bay porch with thin square posts, hip lean-to roof. Detached duplex. Builder's vernacular. Early 20th century.

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7. DESCRIPTION--Inventory (continued)

COMMERCE STREET (continued)

300 Block (continued)

- 272-12-11 303: (Circa Vintage Clothing): wood frame (aluminum siding); 2 stories; gable roof (pressed tin); 5 bays. Commercial (store). Builder's vernacular. Late 19th century.
- 272-12-12 304: wood frame (weatherboard); 2 stories; gable roof (pressed tin); 3 bays. Detached house. Builder's vernacular. Late 19th century.
- 272-12-13 305: (The Spinnaker): wood frame (shingle, board and batten); 1 story; gable roof (composition); 3 bays. Commercial (store). Builder's contemporary. Ca. 1950s.
- 272-12-14 306: wood frame (aluminum); 2 stories; shed roof (standing seam metal); 3 bays; 1-story, 3-bay porch with chamfered posts, scroll sawn balusters, decorative corner brackets. Detached house. Builder's vernacular. Late 19th century.
- 272-12-15 307: wood frame (weatherboard); 1 story; gable roof (composition); 5 bays. Commercial (store). Cottage Shop. Ca. 1950s-60s.
- 272-12-16 308: (Crescent Lodge #3): wood frame (weatherboard); 2½ stories; gable roof. 3 bays; 1-story, 3-bay porch with modified Doric columns, square baluster rail. Detached house. Builder's vernacular. Ca. 1889.
- 272-12-17 309: wood frame (aluminum siding); 2 stories; gable roof (composition); 1 shed dormer (extending across facade); 3 bays; 1-story, 1-bay porch with shed roof over west bay. Detached house. Colonial Revival. Ca. 1940s.
- 272-12-18 310: wood frame (weatherboard); 1½ stories; intersecting gable roof (pressed tin); 7 bays; 1-story, 4-bay porch lean-to with square posts and balusters. Detached house. Commercial (store). Builder's vernacular. Ca. 1900.
- 272-12-19 312: wood frame (aluminum siding); 2 stories; gable roof (pressed tin); 5 bays; 1-story, 4-bay porch with modified Doric columns, square rail baluster. Detached house. Builder's vernacular. Late 19th century.

ELLICOTT STREET

3200 Block

- 272-12-20 3204: wood frame (weatherboard); 1 story; gable roof (composition); 3 bays; 1-story, 1-bay porch with screened, tapered posts with stonetex piers. Detached house. Bungalow. Ca. 1920s.

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7. DESCRIPTION--Inventory (continued)

MILL STREET

200 Block

- 272-12-21 Boat lot (north side of street).
- 272-12-22 *Game Room (concrete block and brick); (North); flat roof (tar); 4 bays. Commercial (store). Noncontributing structure. Ca. 1960s.
- 272-12-23 *202: (U.S. Post Office): brick (stretcher bond); gable roof (composition); 1 story; 2 bays. Modern commercial. Ca. 1969. Noncontributing structure.
- 272-12-24 204: (VFW, Post 7916): (aluminum siding, enameled steel corrugated on sides); 2½ stories; gambrel roof (composition); 6 bays. Organization headquarters, VFW. Barn construction. Ca. 20th century.
- 272-12-25 206: (Waterfront Antiques): wood frame (weatherboard, random rubble foundation, German siding on sides, beaded on front); gable roof (composition); 2 stories; 3 bays; 1-story, 3-bay porch with shed porch addition. Commercial (store). Vernacular. Ca. late 19th century.
- 272-12-26 Parking lot (southside of street).
- 272-12-27 *brick (stretcher bond); (northside); shed roof (wood shingle composition); 1 story; 2 bays; 1-story, 2-bay porch with shed roof on square posts. Restaurant. Contemporary. Ca. 20th century. (Penny Lane Lounge). Noncontributing structure.
- 272-12-28 *wood frame (weatherboard); flat roof (tar); 1 story; 2 bays; 1-story, 2-bay porch (ironwork). Restaurant. Contemporary. Ca. mid-20th century. (Talk of Town). Noncontributing structure.

300 Block

- 272-12-29 302: wood frame (aluminum siding); 2 stories; gable roof (composition); 7 bays. Commercial (store). Colonial Revival with Italianate influence. Ca. late 19th century.
- 272-12-30 304: wood frame (weatherboard); 1 story; roof (not visible); 4 bays; 1-story, 3-bay porch with squared posts with square balusters, hipped roof (shed) with composition shingles. Commercial (store). Builder's vernacular. Ca. late 19th century.
- 272-12-31 306: brick (stretcher bond); 2 stories; gable roof (standing seam metal); 4 bays. Commercial (store). Commercial vernacular. Ca. late 19th century.
- 272-12-32 308: brick (stretcher bond on front, 6-course American bond on sides); 2 stories; parapet roof (not visible); 4 bays. Commercial (bank). Commercial vernacular. Ca. late 19th century. (United Virginia Bank).

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7. DESCRIPTION--Inventory (continued)

300 Block (continued)

- 272-12-33 309: brick (stretcher bond); 2 stories; shed roof (mansard front); 3 bays. Commercial (office). Contemporary Ca. 1932. (Ervin Engineering Land Office).
- 272-12-34 *310-12: wood frame (board and batten) with brick foundation; 2 stories; gable roof (composition); 10 bays; 2-story, 5-bay porch with squared posts connected on 2nd floor by balustrade. Apartment building. Commercial (store). Commercial vernacular. Ca. 1960s-70s. Noncontributing structure.
- 272-12-35 314: brick (6-course American bond); 1 story; gable roof (composition); 3 bays. Town hall. Eclectic. Ca. 1926.
- 272-12-36 *brick (stretcher bond); (north side); 2 stories; parapet with gable behind roof (composition); 3 bays. Commercial (store). Commercial vernacular. Ca. 20th century. (Antiquary II). Noncontributing structure.
- 272-12-37 Vacant lot. (north side).
- 272-12-38 wood frame (aluminum siding); (north side); 2 stories; shed roof (composition); 2 bays. Commercial (store). (Art gallery). Ca. 20th century.
- 272-12-39 brick (Flemish bond); (north side); 2 stories; parapet roof (composition); 3 bays. Commercial (store). Commercial vernacular. Ca. 19th century. (Sportsman's Gifts).
- 272-12-40 wood frame (aluminum siding); (north side); 2 stories; parapet roof (composition); 3 bays; semi-hexagonal bay window in center-bay porch. Commercial (store). Commercial vernacular. Ca. early 20th century. (Occoquan Gallery).
- 272-12-41 wood frame (aluminum siding); (north side); 1 story, gable roof (composition); 3 bays. Commercial (store). Ca. 1960s. (The Frame Up).
- 272-12-42 wood frame (aluminum siding); (north side); 1 story; flat roof (standing seam metal); 3 bays. Commercial (restaurant). Commercial vernacular. Ca. 20th century. (Blackbeard's Seafood).

400 Block

- 272-12-43 401: vacant lot. (Boat storage).
- 272-12-44 400-402: brick (stretcher bond); 2½ stories; hipped roof (composition); 1 hipped dormer; 2 bays; 1-story, 4-bay porch with wrap-around Doric columns and bracketed cornice. Detached house. American 4-Square. Ca. 1920s.

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7. DESCRIPTION--Inventory (continued)

400 Block (continued)

- 272-12-45 403 (Lyric Theatre): wood frame (weatherboard); 1 story; parapet roof with gable behind (composition); 3 bays; 1-story, 3-bay porch with metal posts supporting low hipped roof. Commercial (store). Commercial vernacular. Ca. early 20th century. (The Corner Shop).
- 272-12-46 404: wood frame (weatherboard); 2½ stories; gable roof (composition) with shed on west end; 4 bays. Commercial (store). Commercial vernacular. Ca. late 19th century.
- 272-12-47 405: brick (stretcher bond); 1 story; parapet roof; 3 bays. Commercial (store). Commercial vernacular. Ca. 1920.
- 272-12-48 406: wood frame (aluminum siding, German); 2 stories; gable roof (composition); 5 bays; 1-story, 3-bay porch with turned posts and decorative scroll sawn rail. Commercial. Vernacular. Ca. mid-19th century. (Ferryman's House).
- 272-12-49 *enameled steel; (north side); (Dry dock boat storage). Ca. 1970s-80s. Noncontributing structure.
- 272-12-50 408: vacant lot.
- 272-12-51 (Miller's House): (west end of Mill Street) stone (coursed ashlar); 1 story; gable roof (composition); 3 bays. Museum. Vernacular. Ca. late 18th to early 19th century.
- 272-12-52 → restaurant bldg next to Talk of the Town
POPLAR ALLEY

200 Block

- 272-12-53 wood frame (German siding); 2 stories; gable roof (strips); 5 bays. Commercial (store). Vernacular. Ca. 1918. (Village Americana).

300 Block

- 272-12-54 302: concrete block; 2 stories; gable roof (composition); 2 bays. Apartment. (Part of Hammill Hotel).

WASHINGTON STREET

200 Block

- 272-12-55 200: vacant lot.
- 272-12-56 202: wood frame (bricktex siding); 2 stories; gable roof (composition); 3 bays. Detached house. Builder's cottage vernacular. Ca. late 19th century.

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7. DESCRIPTION--Inventory (continued)

WASHINGTON STREET (continued)

200 Block (continued)

- 272-12-57 203: wood frame (asbestos shingles); 2 stories; gable roof (composition); 2 bays; 1-story, 1-bay porch with square posts with lamb's tongue chamfer, screened porch, and hipped roof. Detached house. Worker's cottage vernacular. Ca. late 19th century.
- 272-12-58 204: wood frame (asbestos shingles); 2 stories; gable roof (composition); 2 bays; 1-story, 2-bay porch with lean-to (asbestos shingle roof). Commercial (store). Commercial vernacular. Ca. turn of the century.
- 272-12-59 205: wood frame (aluminum siding); 2 stories; gable roof (composition); 2 bays; 1-story, 2-bay porch supported by square posts with lamb's tongue chamfer, screened porch and hipped roof. Detached house. Worker's cottage vernacular. Ca. late 19th century.
- 272-12-60 206: wood frame (German siding); 2½ stories; gable roof (composition); 4 bays; 1-story, 3-bay porch with Doric columns connected by square rail bannister. Detached house. Builder's Colonial Revival influence. Ca. late 19th century.
- 272-12-61 207: wood frame (aluminum siding); 2 stories; gable roof (standing seam metal); 2 bays; 1-story, 2-bay porch with hipped roof and screened. Detached house. Worker vernacular. Ca. late 19th century.
- 272-12-62 209: concrete block (rusticated); 1½ stories on raised basement; gable roof (composition); 2 bays. Church. Builder's vernacular with bungalow influence. Rebuilt 1924. (Ebenezer Baptist Church).

UNION STREET

200 Block

- 272-12-63 201: wood frame (aluminum siding); 2 stories; hipped roof (standing seam metal); 3 bays; 1-story, 3-bay porch with stylized Doric columns, square balusters, and hipped roof. Commercial (store). American 4-square. Ca. late 19th century. (Ice Cream & Fudge Shop).
- 272-12-64 202: wood frame (south--German siding, north--aluminum siding); 2 stories; gable roof (composition); 4 bays; 1-story, 1-bay porch with pediment supported by square wooden columns. Apartment building. Commercial. Builder's vernacular. Ca. late 19th century.

(See Continuation Sheet #8)

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7. DESCRIPTION -- Inventory (continued)

UNION STREET (continued)

200 Block

272-12-65 203: wood frame (German Siding); 2 stories; gable roof (pressed tin); 4 bays; 1-story, 4-bay porch with stylized Doric columns and hipped roof. Commercial (store). Builder's Vernacular. Late-19th century. (Village Americana Furniture)

272-12-66 204: bricktex; 2 stories; gable roof (composition); 5 bays; 1-story, 3-bay porch with center peak gable hipped and chamfered posts. Detached house. Builder's Vernacular. Late-19th century.

272-12-67 205 (Back Stage Dance Supply): wood frame; 2 stories; gable roof (pressed tin); 5 bays; 1-story, 3-bay porch with hipped roof supported by squared wood columns. Commercial (store). Vernacular. 1850-70.

272-12-68 206 (Hammill Hotel): brick (5-course American; 3 stories; hipped roof (composition); 4 bays. Apartment building. Commercial. 2nd quarter of 19th century.

8. SIGNIFICANCE--Historical Background

the iron forge in order to concentrate on the more lucrative merchant flour mills. Little else is known of Occoquan during the remainder of the 18th century except that a toll bridge carrying the main road from Richmond to Washington was authorized by the General Assembly in 1795.

By 1800, Rockledge, along with the milling operations, had passed into the hands of Nathaniel Ellicott, a Maryland Quaker. It was his brother, Thomas, an associate of Oliver Evans, who designed the large flour mill at Occoquan incorporating Evans' improvements described in The Young Mill-Wright and Miller's Guide, (1795). Plate XXII in Evans' book shows Ellicott's plan for the Mill at Occoquan, with Ellicott's caption, "This is a mill of my planning, and draughting, now in actual practice, built on the Occoquam (sic) River in Virginia..." This mill stood in Occoquan and was in full operation until its destruction by fire in 1924. Old photographs of the ruins of the mill show the general design of Ellicott's building. The ruins are barely visible to the northeast of the stone miller's house.

Accompanying Nathaniel Ellicott to Occoquan was the English novelist, John Davis, who served the neighborhood as a schoolmaster. In 1801 he wrote: "the richness of the adjacent country and the healthfulness of the climate, induced the Proprietor to project the plan of a city and invite strangers to build in it; but his visions were never realized and Occoquan consists only of a house built on a rock,⁴ three others on the river side and half a dozen log huts scattered at some distance." Three years later, however, Occoquan gained the status of a formal town and it flourished as a commercial and industrial center for the next thirty years. That Occoquan was early a natural stopping place for travelers

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8. SIGNIFICANCE--Historical Background

between the nation's capital and Richmond is evidenced by a report from William C. Williams to the governor of the Commonwealth on the siege of Washington, written in 1814 while he was "stopped at Occoquan."⁵ During this same period Joseph Janney and others built one of the state's first major cotton mills at Occoquan. Although large cotton mills were common in New England during the first half of the 19th century, few large cotton manufacturing enterprises existed then in the south and in Virginia, where capital for such ventures was scarce. It can be surmised that the profitable Occoquan flour mill, also owned by the Janney family, provided the source of funds necessary to underwrite the cotton manufacturing venture. Describing Occoquan in 1836, Joseph Martin in his Gazetteer stated: "The town contains about 50 dwelling houses, several mercantile stores and various mechanics, a cotton manufactory in complete operation...an extensive manufacturing flour mill...with appendages of grist, saw, and plaster mills. A handsome and permanent bridge is erected across the river at this place..."⁶ Among the surviving structures which date from the antebellum period are a portion of the Back Stage Dance Supplies building at 205 Union Street (ca. 1850) and the southern structure of Blackbeard's Restaurant at 302 Mill Street (ca. 1860). The house at 406 Mill Street, known as "The Ferryman's House," probably dates from the mid-19th century and served as residence for the man who operated the Occoquan ferry at the eastern end of the district, just below the present VA Route 123.

Architectural evidence suggests that one of Occoquan's most prominent landmarks, the Old Hammill Hotel, at the corner of Union and Commerce streets, dates from the 1830s, although tradition affirms that William Selecman built it in 1804. The hotel achieved fame in the Civil War as the headquarters for Confederate General Wade Hampton during several skirmishes with Union troops in the area. Union forces were able to fire upon Occoquan from an elevated camp across the river on the Fairfax side and succeeded in destroying the Janney's cotton mill.

Despite the extensive silting of the river that precluded Occoquan's service as a deepwater port, the town continued as an important commercial center during the period following the Civil War. The Janney's flour mill continued to thrive, with wheat delivered to the mill by flat-bottomed barges pulled by tug boats. Hammill's continued to be the hotel listed as the town's prime hostelry or boarding house in directories for Prince William in the 1880s. Lynn's Wharf, located at the eastern end of the district on Mill Street, was the site for loading railroad ties and large logs for shipment down the Potomac. Sometimes, according to one oral account, the large logs were bound together and floated down the river. A tannery was located at the top of the hill on Union Street, which by the early 20th century was known as Tanyard Hill. Local directories referred to Occoquan as an "important village" with numerous "merchants" and a saloon. A notable building dating from the postbellum period is the Odd Fellows Hall at 308 Commerce Street, constructed in 1889. The lower floor of the hall served as a schoolroom with a stage that occasionally was used for theatre or opera by stage troupes stopping over at Occoquan en route from Washington to Richmond. The Hall was a meeting place for a number of local social organizations as well as for congregations making plans to build their own church structures. 404 Mill Street (The Golden Goose) is another important late 19th-century structure. It was owned by Mr. Hammill, the hotel operator, and housed Occoquan's first drugstore. Also dating from the late 1880s was an excellent metal truss bridge that carried the Old Telegraph Road across the Occoquan. Unfortunately, this bridge was washed

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8. SIGNIFICANCE--Historical Background

away in the floods of Hurricane Agnes in 1972. Several commercial structures along Mill Street (304, 308, 404, and 406), together with the residences at 202, 204, 209, 301, 303, 304, 306, 312, ^{Commerce Street} all date from the late 19th century, as do the simple builder vernacular houses located on Washington Street near Ebenezer Church. The original Ebenezer Church structure was erected in 1883, the first black-built church in Prince William County. The building burned in 1923 and the present sanctuary was erected the following year. Houses dating from the late 19th century which have now been converted for commercial use include the large structures along Union Street (201, 202, 203, and 204).

Following the destruction of a number of the commercial establishments along Mill Street in a large fire in 1916, the street was rebuilt; now as then, it remains the commercial center of Occoquan. Although Occoquan during the early years of the 20th century attracted some trade from Washington tourists who visited the town by excursion boats, Occoquan lost its last major industry with the destruction of the Janney Flour Mill in 1924. With the opening of Route 1 in 1928, the town no longer stood astride the major north-south travel route and its demise seemed assured. By the 1970s, however, Occoquan drew new life as an active marina within view of Interstate 95, and as a growing tourist attraction with boutiques, antiques stores, and restaurants. The town's merchants are anxious to promote Occoquan as an historic town and have undertaken several efforts toward rehabilitation of its more notable buildings. Occoquan today, is in many ways akin to the Occoquan of the late 19th century--an important commercial village along a major north-south travel route on a picturesque navigable waterway.

MTP

¹Fairfax Harrison, Landmarks of Old Prince William (Richmond: privately printed, Old Dominion Press, 1924), p. 428.

²Ibid.

³Oliver Evans, The Young Mill-Wright and Miller's Guide (reprint ed. New York: Arno Press, 1972), p. 295.

⁴Harrison, Landmarks of Old Prince William, p. 429.

⁵H.W. Flourney, ed., Calendar of Virginia State Papers, Vol. 8 (Richmond, 1890), p. 379

⁶Joseph Martin, ed., A New and Comprehensive Gazetteer of Virginia and D.C. (Charlottesville, 1835), p. 275.

⁷Cataigne's Alexandria Directory (1887, 1888), p. 226.

⁸Tom Nelson, An Interview with James Woodrow Taylor (Manassas, 1982), p. 42.

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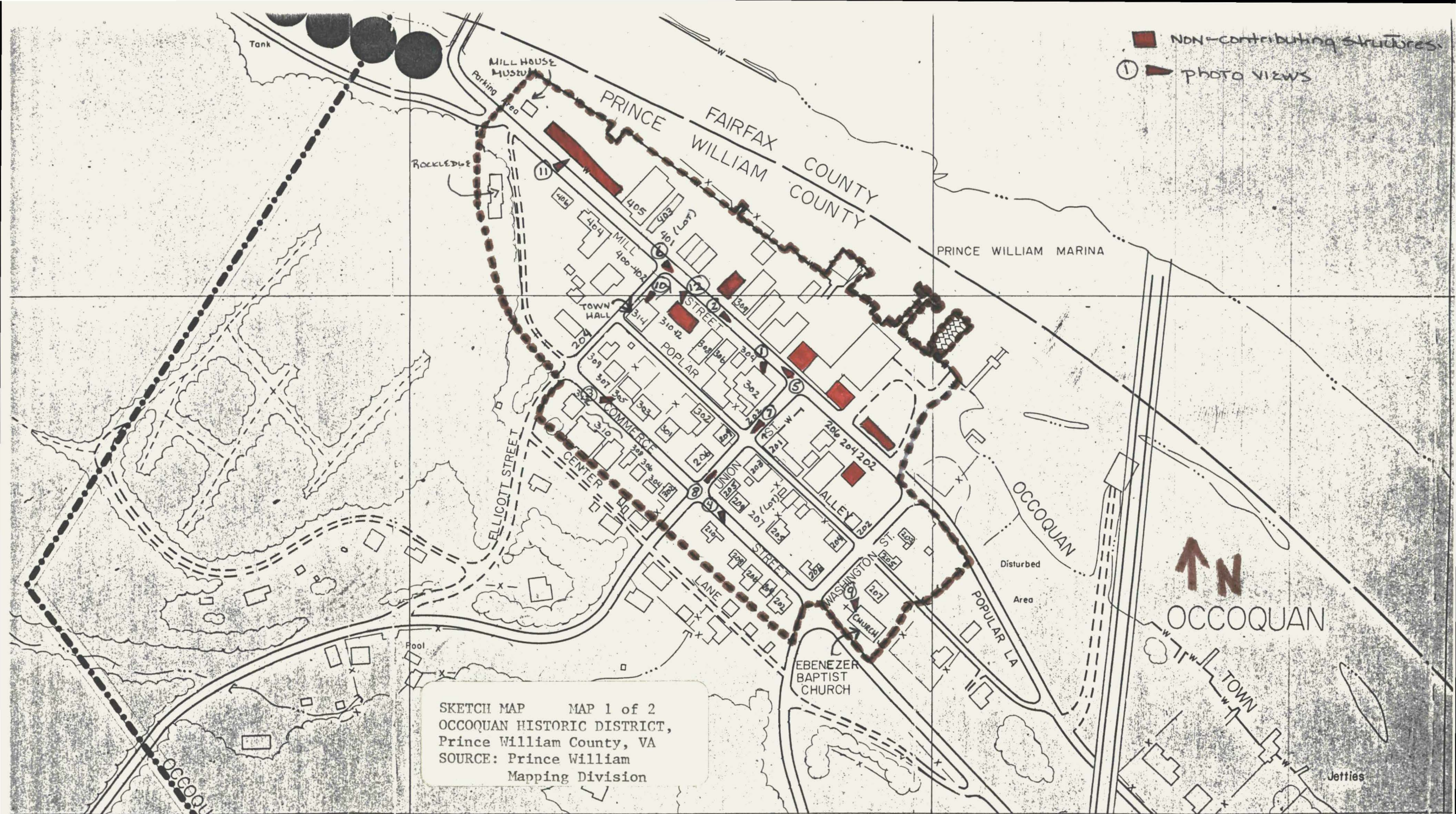
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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA--Verbal Boundary Description and Boundary Justification

said side to E side of Washington St.; thence approximately 40' WSW across intersection with Commerce St. to W side of Washington St.; thence about 70' S along said side to rear property lines of properties on S side of Commerce St.; thence approximately 650' NW along said rear lines to E side of Ellicott St.; thence about 80' NE along said side to a point approximately 50' SW of middle of intersection with Commerce St.; thence approximately 570' NNW, curving, roughly paralleling Commerce St. extension, and encompassing Rockledge, to a point on S side of road to water tanks, approximately 50' W of Mill St.; thence approximately 140' NNE to Occoquan River wall; thence following said wall approximately 1680' SE along S side of said river, encompassing wharves, and continuing SE to point of origin. Boundary Justification: The boundaries of the Occoquan Historic District have been drawn to include most of the original town lots (1804) on which stand dwellings and small commercial structures. The northeastern boundary follows the Occoquan River and includes the wharves which have traditionally been a part of Occoquan's waterfront; the southeastern boundary has been drawn to follow the small creek that empties into the Occoquan River and to include the late 19th- and early 20th-century dwellings and the church which front on Washington Street; the southwestern boundary has been drawn to include the late 19th-century residences which front on Commerce Street and to exclude noncontributing 20th-century residences; the northwestern boundary has been drawn to include Rockledge, the earliest residence in the area, as well as the mill house museum. The western boundary is bordered by heavy woods and undergrowth and is not developed at this time.

NDN-contributing structures
 ① photo views



SKETCH MAP MAP 1 of 2
 OCCOQUAN HISTORIC DISTRICT,
 Prince William County, VA
 SOURCE: Prince William
 Mapping Division

Scale 1" = 200'
 200 0 200 400 600 800 FEET

MATCH SHEET

