

Brentsville Neighbors



Information About Brentsville
Shared Among Neighbors
March 2008



Welcome Neighbor!

Is it possible that Spring arrived in February this year? On February 7th, the yards around Brentsville were alive with flocks of robins and the crocus were in full bloom. But now there are predictions of snow or freezing rain so perhaps we should be patient just a bit longer. After all, we are told the groundhog saw his shadow predicting more bad weather.

We are adding a short column this month to share with you some of the feedback we have received. All of it will not be there because sometimes it is a phone call. For example, we recently received a call expressing concern over our referring to Joan Payne's classmates as being from Brentsville when clearly most of them lived outside the boundaries of our town. The point is well made but we fully believe it is acceptable to count as our neighbors those outside the original 50 acre plot of land who attended church and other events here. Heck, if we didn't do that, neither Nelson nor Morgan could be counted and that would take all the fun out of putting together our little newsletter.

Ron Turner is sharing with us two of the wanted posters that were distributed in Brentsville during the time of the war. As always, his information is very interesting and directly relevant to our past and we are very happy to have his contributions.

Check out page five for Sue Compton Carter's memories of attending church in Brentsville. She provided us some additional notes that are of interest but were not actually included in her memories. According to Sue, their church in Brentsville began in 1957 and was called the Brentsville Assembly or frequently referred to as the Brentsville Pentecostal Church. Brother Powers led the congregation for approximately one year and then asked Brother McGlothlin to take over. In 1966 or 1967, Sister Anna McGlothlin suggested the name be changed to Brentsville Assembly of God. Brother McGlothlin remained their pastor until the congregation moved to Bristow in 1967 as the Assembly of God Church.

Rob Orrison, the Brentsville Historic Site Manager, has generously given some of his time to tell us more about the restoration process of the log cabin now on the grounds. He is presenting the story in two parts to give us a better understanding of the restoration process as well as some background information on ownership and other aspects of the building.

Happy Easter!

Nelson and Morgan.

- This month: ➤ A Brentsville Building ----- pages 2 & 3
➤ Where Wild Things Live -- pages 4 & 6
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***That Other Building in Brentsville:
The Hall Cabin?
Part One – The Restoration***

Anyone who has visited Brentsville recently has noticed a lot of work being done on the “Hall Cabin.” This building, moved to Brentsville in 2000 from the Braemar area, is getting some much deserved attention. When the building was first brought to Brentsville, it was determined that it would serve as a centerpiece of an interpretative 19th century farmstead. This area would interpret how small farmers in Prince William County lived in the 1800’s. In accordance with this, the building is now undergoing restoration to the mid 1800’s, the time when Brentsville was the county seat and farming was Prince William’s major industry. This work has been funded partly through state historic preservation grants and donations.

The first major aspect of the project was to install a new floor. When the building was moved, it was placed on a new dry laid stone foundation, three feet off the ground. To install a floor to meet modern safety codes, modern concrete piers with a floor joist system was installed in the cabin. This “floating floor” is not attached to the exterior walls of the building to allow for the building and floor to move and change over time independently. Over top this modern floor was placed rough cut pine flooring that was harvested from Rippon Lodge. Using period appropriate cut nails, the floor was laid and will last over a 100 years. There was physical evidence of a partition wall and stairway, so this was reinstalled using materials that were harvested from Brentsville. Also on the interior, a working fireplace and hearth was constructed using a dry laid method to match the foundation.

The most noticeable changes on the building are obviously on the exterior. Even though it has been called a “log cabin”, the building was originally sided with cedar siding. In the 19th century, many people wanted to hide the fact they lived in a log structure, plus the siding would protect the logs. Log buildings were easy and cheap to build and with siding on the exterior the building looks like a more expensive frame house. Beginning in the fall of 2007, work began on siding up the exterior walls and installing cedar siding. Also, at the same time the chimney was constructed. According to oral history and common 19th century building practices, it was determined that a front porch would be constructed. This porch has a stone floor with cedar posts and joists. Again, the stone and cedar were harvested here in Brentsville.

Though most of the work has focused on the building, there have been extensive changes to the

landscape around the house. In December of 2007, the woods around the building were cleared. This will allow for the installation of a vegetable garden and small pasture that will house animals during programs. Future work may involve the construction of a hog pen and small smoke house. All of this will further help in the interpretation of a small 19th century farm.

Future work will involve the installation of fencing for the pasture and vegetable garden. Also, work has recently begun on the second floor of the building to allow for public access. This work involves installing new flooring where the original failed, installing windows, a ceiling and putting up two interior walls. Then staff will begin the research and work of installing proper furniture that reflects an early 19th century modest farm house. All objects will be reproduction so they can be interactive for all visitors. All work is expected to be completed by the end of April.

Upon completion, the house and farmstead will be an invaluable resource and tool in interpreting to the public and schools about daily life in Prince William County in the 1800’s. We welcome everyone out to the farm on May 17th from 11am – 4pm for our Early Farm Skills of Prince William program. This program will involve learning about the skills and animals of average 19th century farmers. Activities include candle dipping, butter making, carding wool, pounding corn and gardening. Also, learn about the restoration work and research that was used to create the farmstead. This program is done in conjunction with the Prince William County Animal Shelter Children’s Educational Farm.

Next month’s article will focus on the research that went behind the restoration work. And we will hope to answer the question, should we really call this the “Hall Cabin”? Physical, documentary and oral history evidence all give clues to this building’s construction and owners. Where was it located and what role did it play in the history of Western Prince William County?

***By Rob Orrison
Site Manager,
Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre***

Featured Brentsville Building The "Hall" Cabin



The restored exterior during a small snow storm



A warm fire makes it feel cozy inside



The cabin before being moved to Brentsville



Installation of the "floating floor"



Howard Churchill graciously allowed us to copy this photograph of the Prince William Academy beside the old St. James Church



Where WILD things live..

Turdus migratorius Linne
The American Robin
(See page 6)



Prince Wm Academy - Bretonville Va
1898

My Memories of Brentsville Church

by
Sue Compton Carter

When I was seven years of age, we attended a church in Hickory Grove, VA. The church caught fire and burned. The church members got permission to use Haymarket Elementary School to hold their services. Due to uncontrollable circumstances, the church discontinued there and the members scattered.

My mother wanted us (she and her children) to have a place to worship. She saw the little church in Brentsville and said; "I wonder if Wayne Powers would be interested in starting a church fellowship there?" She called him to ask if he would be interested and would check into its availability. Reverend Wayne Powers' wife was my father's cousin, so communication was easy, and shortly the little church's doors were open to a new congregation.

I have very fond memories of this little church. It was a place where I met with God as a child. I remember when Reverend Powers left. I loved his preaching and his wife's singing, and I wasn't sure about having someone else as a pastor. However when Reverend McGlothlin took over everything was A-OK. He had a whole flock of children of his own, nine girls and two boys and we became good friends.

I well recall that the church was quite drafty in the winter. It was heated with a tin wood heater and had a long pipe that reached almost to the ceiling and out the side or top of the church.

There was a dear sister who always sat on the front bench right beside the stove. She would keep the draft open until she warmed up, then turn off the draft and everyone in the back would freeze.

Sunday school was quite a challenge I'm sure to the teachers, as there were four classes in one room. The adult class used the front pews on one side. The junior class was on the back pews (that's where I was). On the other side of the church were the little children in the front pews and the teenage class in the back. You really had to listen close to your teacher or you would be listening to the one across the aisle.

I remember when the weather was nice, and Mom would take her class (the little children) out on

the church steps for Sunday school. Looking back, those were blessed days.

Oh yes, I can't forget to tell you about the outhouse. Since there was no indoor plumbing, frequent trips were made to the outhouse. (Of course, us young people used it as an excuse to gather outside to talk.) I remember my mother telling me before we left home to be sure and use the bathroom before we leave because she didn't want me running in and out of church. I didn't get by as easily as some of the others.

When the weather was hot, we would open the windows and fan with funeral fans – I am sure all of Brentsville heard the preaching and singing as we were Pentecostals.

We only lived a couple of miles from the church on what is now called Hooe Road. Dad didn't go to church, so he would drive Mom, my little brother and me to church. He would let us out and go back home until it was time to pick us up.

There was no parking lot, so everyone parked along the side of the road and as the congregation grew, so did the long line of cars, sometimes almost down to the little store in Brentsville.

After church services, while the older people had fellowship, we would go outside and play on the front of the church yard. We would play "King of the Mountain" and "Crack the Whip." I hated being on the end of the whip. I had so much fun. I looked forward to going to church on Sunday morning, Sunday night and Thursday night.

As time went on, the little church grew beyond capacity and a search was on for land to build a new church. In 1967 the congregation relocated to Route 28 in a new brick church. Now, 52 years later, I still think of it a lot, and often dream of the little church in Brentsville.

Sue Compton Carter
The Plains, VA
2-14-2008



Where W I L D Things Live

American Robin

The American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) is a migratory songbird of the thrush family. It is widely distributed throughout North America, wintering south of Canada from Florida to central Mexico and along the Pacific Coast. At one point in time, the bird was killed for its meat, but it is now protected throughout its range in the United States by the Migratory Bird Act. The term 'robin' for this species has been recorded since at least 1703. Most go south by the end of August and begin to return north in February and March.

The Robin's diet generally consists of around 40% beetle grubs, caterpillars, and grasshoppers, and 60% fruits and berries. It forages primarily on the ground and finds worms by sight, not by hearing, pouncing on them and then pulling them up. Nestlings are fed mainly on worms and other soft-bodied animal prey. The Robin is frequently seen running across lawns, picking up earthworms and its running and stopping behavior is a distinguishing characteristic.

Juvenile Robins and eggs are preyed upon by squirrels, snakes, and some birds, such as Blue Jays, Common Grackles, American Crows, and Common Ravens. Adults are primarily taken by hawks, cats, and larger snakes, although when feeding in flocks, they are able to remain vigilant and watch other flock members for reactions to predators.

It begins to breed shortly after returning to its summer range and is one of the first North American bird species to lay eggs. It normally has two to three broods per season, which lasts from April to July. The nest is about 5" across and is most commonly located 5-15 ft above the ground in a dense bush or in a fork between two tree branches. It is built by the female alone. The outer foundation consists of long coarse grass, twigs, paper, and feathers. This is lined with smeared mud and cushioned with fine grass or other soft materials. A new nest is built for each brood, and in northern areas the first clutch is usually placed in an evergreen tree or shrub while later broods are placed in deciduous trees.

A clutch consists of three to five light blue eggs, and is incubated by the female alone. The eggs hatch after 14 days and chicks leave the nest two weeks later. Even after leaving the nest, the juveniles will follow their parents around and beg food from them. Juveniles become capable of sustained flight two weeks after fledging.

The adult male and female both are active in protecting and feeding the fledged chicks until they learn to forage on their own. The adult Robin gives alarm calls and dive-bombs predators, including domestic cats, dogs and humans that come near the young birds. The cryptically colored young birds perch in bushes or trees for protection from predators. Bird banders have found that only 25% of young Robins survive the first year. The longest known lifespan in the wild of an American Robin is 14 years; the average lifespan is about 2 years.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Robin
From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Feedback



Brentsville Neighbors
Letter to Editor

Kudos to a very deserving person, Morgan, on being the recipient of the Prince William County Volunteer of the Quarter award for October through December 2007. We who live here are so proud of our town and hope this will encourage others to help keep it Beautiful!

Gladys Eanes



2/11/08

Dear Morgan & Nelson,

I have planned to call or write to thank you for the wonderful job you are doing in preserving Brentsville in the past & present, but I just have never gotten around to actually doing it.

It was a special surprise to open this issue of the Brentsville Neighbors & find that our house (& its history) was the featured Brentsville building of the month.

When Eddy looked at the picture his first response was, "we really do need to get that roof painted!" Thank you so much for compiling the history of the house as it relates to Edwin Nelson. We are trying to do our best to preserve this house & we appreciate your ongoing efforts to keep the "free spirit" of Brentsville Neighbors alive & well.

Sincerely,
Roberta for
Eddy & myself

Brentsville

A Look Back in History

by
Ronald Ray Turner

**\$100 Reward
for**

**John Wood - Wanted For Murder
About Twenty-Five Years Old
5 Foot 10 Inches High
Very Stoutly Made and Dark Complexion**

A reward of One Hundred dollars will be paid to any person or persons, who shall apprehend and convey to the Jail of the County of Prince William, in the Town of Brentsville, the above mentioned John Wood. He escaped and went at large on the night of the 20th of December 1861. He is possibly in the company of John W. Park and thought to have joined the Confederate Army.

**\$50 Reward
for**

**John W. Park - Wanted For Stealing
About Twenty-Five to Twenty-Eight Years
Old
5 Foot 10 Inches High
Slender Man with Dark Complexion**

A reward of Fifty dollars will be paid to any person or persons, who shall apprehend and convey to the Jail of the County of Prince William, in the Town of Brentsville, the above mentioned John W. Park. He escaped and went at large on the night of the 20th of December 1861. He is possibly in the company of John Wood and thought to have joined the Confederate Army.

The above postings were distributed to most of the court houses and many taverns in Virginia on or about New Years Day 1862. Both of these men were arrested the same day (30 November 1861) in Prince William County and brought before L. B. Butler, a Justice of the Peace. He charged both and had them conveyed to jail where they were housed until their escape.

The War Between the States was in full swing and the County and Country were in chaos. The only constant seemed to be that the jail was never empty in Brentsville. The condition of the jail during the war is unknown but there is no record of repairs.

Since neither Wood nor Park came to trial, the evidence against them is hard to find. But what is known is that John W. Park was charged with feloniously stealing two boxes of shoes, the property of E. B. Stuart. The residence of Stuart at this time was "Snow Hill" close to the current intersection of Route 15 and Route 234.

The only thing that is known about the case of John Wood other than his personal description is that he was brought before Justice L. B. Butler and charged with the murder of William Tillett.

flashback

Dr. McElroy to Preach.

The Rev. Dr. John Lee Allison, of the Second Presbyterian Church, will preach the sermon in the Presbyterian Church at Brentsville, VA., tomorrow when the Rev. Dr. J. Royal Cooke is installed as pastor. The Rev. Dr. J. W. McElroy, of the University of Virginia, will occupy Dr. Allison's pulpit tomorrow.

Source: The Washington Post; May 18, 1918; pg. 5

**The older we get, the fewer things
seem worth waiting in line for.**

Brentsville Neighbors

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Shared Among Neighbors

IN GOD WE TRUST

**Brentsville Neighbors
c/o Morgan Breeden
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