

Brentsville Neighbors



Information About Brentsville
Shared Among Neighbors
July 2008



Welcome Neighbor!

In this issue you will notice an emphasis on school – students and teachers. That is because we want you to start thinking about the Brentsville School Reunion to be held again this year on September 6th from 11:00am until 1:00pm. Of course that's the "official" time but we can stay and chat as long as you wish. The reunion is again sponsored by the Prince William Historic Preservation Division with Kay and Morgan Breeden as your hosts. Light finger foods and refreshments will be served. Formal invitations will be sent to all former students but everyone is welcome to join us in lively discussions about the "good old days."

It was great to have members from the Bull Run Library's Brown Bag Travel Club coordinated by Barbara Donley. The group visits one location each year and we were especially pleased to have them choose Brentsville for their destination this year. While they were eating lunch, Morgan provided information on the site and talked about the school. Then the group visited the Hall Cabin, the courthouse and the Union Church. Everyone seemed to enjoy the trip, especially a few who found wild berries growing along the walk to the cabin.

We are particularly pleased to have been contacted by Janice Speakes who has her mother's entire photo and scrap book collection. It has been reported that Mattie (Whetzel) Speakes was quite a collector of information and her books are proving that very true! As of this writing, over 150 new pages have been added to our Brentsville Notebooks and that should be less

than half of what will eventually be added. We are very thankful to Janice for sharing this information with us. You will enjoy the many new pictures on your next visit. All of the pictures on page four of this newsletter are from that collection.

Most families have pictures and clippings stored in scrapbooks of all kinds. Over a year ago we visited with Patsy (Keys) Blake who shared hers. Wouldn't it be great to have all of the Brentsville families' photos and clippings represented in our notebooks to be shared with everyone for years to come?

We failed to also thank Leonard Wright for his surprise donation of two "Brentsville" cups and plates that he found in an auction. They are very much appreciated and will be included in our Brentsville memorabilia.

By the way, Catherine Corner, Janice Speakes and Morgan are attempting to compile a detailed history of the Presbyterian Church. Any articles, programs, clippings or other information you could lend us for this effort is very much appreciated.

Very best wishes,
Nelson and Morgan

This month:

- Where Wild Things Live - pages 2, 3 & 6
- Flashback ----- page 2 & 6
- Remembering Brentsville ----- page 5
- A Look Back in History ----- page 7

Where W I L D Things Live

Dianthus armeria (Deptford Pink) is a species of *Dianthus* ("pink") native to most of Europe, from Portugal north to southern Scotland and southern Finland, and east to Ukraine and the Caucasus.

It is a herbaceous annual or biennial plant growing to 60 cm tall. The leaves are hairy, dark green, slender, up to 5 cm long. The flowers are 8–15 mm diameter, with five petals, bright reddish-pink; they are produced in small clusters at the top of the stems from early to late summer.

The flowers in this group were not named for their color; but for the frilled or pinked, appearance of their petals. The color was later named for the flowers. The name of the Deptford Pink celebrates bygone days when the blossoms blanketed the open fields near Deptford, England – now part of urban London.

A fairly common late spring and summer flower, Deptford pink grows in grassy areas. The flowers are deep brilliant pink, with 5 toothed, white-spotted petals forming a ½" star; 2 to several thin, pointed bracts radiate upward from the lower calyx tube. Flowers in small terminal clusters (but may bloom singly). The leaves are opposite, simple, linear; untoothed, with hairy margins, ½ - 2" long. They can be found in fields, grassy areas, roadsides; a European native widely naturalized in eastern United States and southern Canada.

This plant can be weedy or invasive according to the authoritative sources and it may be known by one or more common names in different places.

(Continued on page 6)

flashback

SCHOOL BOARDS APPOINT TEACHERS

ABLE CORPS OF EDUCATORS

Schools in Brentsville District Will Open After Teachers' Institute in September and Run at Least Seven Months.

School boards of Brentsville, Gainesville and Coles districts have appointed teachers for the coming session. Schools in the Brentsville district will run at least seven months and are to open immediately after the County Teachers' Institute, which is to be held in Manassas about the middle of September.

BRENTSVILLE DISTRICT

The following appointments were made Monday at a meeting of the Brentsville district school board at Nokesville:

Brentsville school – Miss Ella Garth.
Bristow school – Mrs E. G. Nicol.
Nokesville school – Miss Fannie Williss.
Aden school – W. Y. Ellicott, principal;
Miss Nellie Mayhugh.
King's X Roads school – E. S. Hoon.
Woodlawn school – Miss Rena Ellicott.
Greenwich school – J. C. Snider, principal;
Miss Cora E. Mooney, assistant.
Kettle Run school (colored) – Miss Julia H. Pinn.
Brentsville school (colored) – C. M. Waller

GAINESVILLE DISTRICT

Haymarket school – Principal, Prof. J. Luther Kibler; first assistant, Miss Bessie Norman; second assistant, not yet appointed.
Catharpin school – Miss Eleanor Wilkins.
Buckland school – Richard Haydon.
Piney Branch school – Miss Carrie Lee.

(Continued on page 6)



The Bull Run Regional Library visits Brentsville
June 26, 2008
Photo by R. Orrison

Where WILD
things live..



Dianthus armeria L.
Deptford pink
(See page 2)



Miss Tracey Spitzer, school teacher, Coles District
Photo courtesy of Janice Speakes



Miss Tracey Spitzer and her
students. School is not identified.
Photo courtesy of Janice Speakes



Mattie Whetzel



Miss Buckley

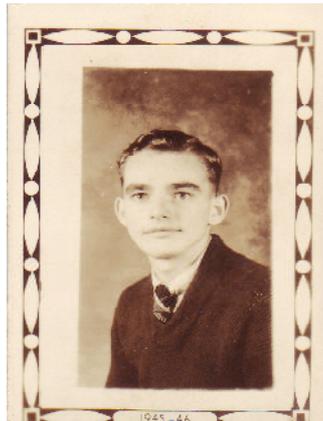
All photos on this page
courtesy of Janice
Speakes.



Aliene Nolley



Edith Melvin



Frederick Whetzel



Gill Machen



Gladys Wolfe



Ira Whetzel



Joyce Keys



Leona Wright



Lois Hedrick



Thomas Whetzel



Vada Mae Stultz



Virginia Snyder

Elaine (Spittle) Yankey Remembers Brentsville With a Smile

When thinking about sites for water sports, Brentsville does not immediately spring to mind. However, when I was growing up, “going to Brentsville,” meant swimming, boating, and water skiing for our family.

In the summer, after attending Sunday School and worship services at Greenwich Presbyterian Church, Mamma would pack a picnic basket while Daddy connected the boat and trailer to our family car and we would go to Birdie Keys’ for an afternoon of fun. Mr. Keys had a beautiful property with long frontage on Cedar Run, just above the bridge on Route 619. As I recall, the run was about 7-8 feet deep there. Mr. Keys had two floating docks from which we could dive, and on the edge of the property, there was a small inlet that provided a place to launch the boat.

Mr. Keys’ house was at the top of a hill in a grove of trees, and between the trees and along the run was a wide expanse of grass that he kept mowed and trimmed (almost manicured). Near the run, the land was flat with a few large hardwood trees on the bank. Across from Mr. Keys’ was a pasture occupied only by cattle. His property was an ideal place to spread a picnic, lounge in the sun or shade, play ball, play tag, or just run to the top of the hill and roll down.

Cedar Run, of course, runs directly into Lake Jackson, so we could ski from Brentsville to Lake Jackson Dam and back to Brentsville without having to stop. Since Cedar Run rapidly decreased in depth from Mr. Keys’ dock as you go upstream, other boaters rarely ventured past the Rt. 619 bridge, so swimming at Mr. Keys’ was virtually unimpeded by other folks.

The most embarrassing incident of my life occurred during one of our idyllic boating trips at Brentsville. My father had purchased a pair of water skis designed for acrobatic performances

and being able to stand on them was an enviable accomplishment I had mastered. There was a young man I wanted to impress and my father had invited him to go boating with us. I had a stylish new bathing suit with lots of ruffles, a sort of bustle, etc., and I could not wait to show-off on those special skis. Being first in the water, I got the first ski ride while the young man rode in the boat as “spotter.” I was furious when, the moment I stood up on those skis, Daddy stopped the boat and I sank. Only when I tried to remove the skis from my feet did I realize that when I had stood up, my stylish bathing suit had filled with water, the neck strap broke, and I stood on the skis with my bathing suit around my ankles!

Although I have always lived in Greenwich, Brentsville holds many fond memories for me. Brentsville Presbyterian Church was in a parish with Greenwich, and we shared a minister for many years. The two churches held a lot of joint events and I got to know members of the Brentsville congregation. Of course, living in Brentsville Magisterial District, I attended elementary and high school in Nokesville, along with residents of Brentsville. Many of my close friends were from Brentsville, and I have fond memories of visiting in their homes, especially my girlfriend, Linda Shoemaker. Our 4-H club met in the Brentsville Courthouse, and we held many dances and social events there. It was a real treat to attend parties at Delancy Webster’s grand home, “The White House.”

It is with great pleasure that I view the renovation of the Brentsville Courthouse complex. I am so pleased with the efforts to maintain the historical appearance and feel of the village of Brentsville. Driving through there is like a trip back in time.



Cultivation and uses

It is widely grown as an ornamental plant in gardens. Populations have been introduced to and have become naturalized in New Zealand and much of North America. Deptford Pink is also sometimes called **mountain pink**, but this may refer to several different species.

Sources of information:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dianthus_armeria

North American Wildlife – Wildflowers – A Readers Digest Book

An Illustrated Guide to Eastern Woodland Wildflowers and Trees, Melanie Choukas-Bradley

Continued from page 2 column 2)

Hickory Grove school – Miss May Leachman.
Gainesville school – Miss Kate Willcoxon.
Macrae (colored) school – Miss Georgetta Hughes.

COLES DISTRICT

School No. 1 – Mrs. Nettie Wright.
School No. 2 – Miss Ruth Smith.
School No. 3 – Miss Gertrude Seaton.
School No. 4 – Miss Clara Lamb.
School No. 5 – Miss Margaret Robinson.
School No. 6 – Miss Emma Weber.
School No. 7 – Miss Cross.

Source: ~~The Masses~~ Democrat, July 6, 1911

Bub was telling Jake, ‘I just bought a new hearing aid. It cost me four thousand dollars, but it’s state of the art. It’s perfect.’

‘Really,’ answered Jake. ‘What kind is it?’

‘Twelve thirty.’

Culpeper

A Virginia County’s History Through 1920

Eugene M. Scheel

The Culpeper Historical Society

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Printed by green publishers, Inc.

Orange, VA

Pages 270-1 AFTER THE CIVIL WAR (in part)

In the summer of 1872 would-be teachers took classes at a teachers’ institute at Culpeper Court House. **Ezra Bauder** might have headed the class, for that fall he became principal of the county’s second graded school, at Brandy. During the first term there were five grades, fifty-two pupils, and two teachers. The term was ten months. In the summer of 1874 the Catalpa board rented the Methodist Church for ten dollars and held a teachers’ institute there. In the fall of 1875 graded schools opened at Mitchell’s, Raccoon Ford, and, reportedly, Stevensburg.¹⁰

By the Centennial, all was not well with the school system. Enrollment had not increased appreciably since 1871, **Ezra Bauder** had left Brandy’s graded school and was headmaster at the village’s Wheatley Academy, and in 1875 county school commissioners did not hold regular meetings. There was also a new superintendent, Jeffersonton’s John A. Holtzman, a former Little Fork Ranger with a strong interest in Civil War history.

<http://www.culpeperschools.org/history/pcivilwar/>

Brentsville

A Look Back in History
by
Ronald Ray Turner

Eliza Barnes & Elizabeth Sewell

This may not be the only case of this type fought out in the courts of Prince William County, although it is the only one this author has seen. The case is listed in the records with the unassuming title of “Barnes & Sewell vs Champe Terry.” Most of the documentation is missing including the outcome. The records for this case were perhaps destroyed during the Civil War, as were many of the “loose papers” in the clerk’s office at Brentsville. The few pages remaining however will substantiate this story.

Eliza Ann Barnes & Elizabeth Sewell were born Free Persons of Color to mothers who were also free and all had lived their entire lives in Maryland. As unlikely as either of the young women could have imagined, both found themselves incarcerated in the small town of Brentsville, Virginia.

Eliza upon giving a deposition stated she was born in St. Mary’s County, Maryland, the daughter of Mary Barnes and granddaughter of Patience Barnes. Patience, although born into slavery, was given her freedom around the year 1805 by Colonel Barnes of St. Mary’s County. According to Eliza, she was raised by a Mrs. Polly Dorsey also of St. Mary’s until the year 1832. At that time she was left in Baltimore to live with her aunt Susan Hundy. She was employed as a domestic before a shopkeeper near the bridge on Pratt Street gave her a job as a cook on a fishing boat.

This was considered a very good job as she was assigned to an old established fisherman by the name of Squire Norris. Squire was much respected for his skills on the Potomac.

At the end of the fishing season Eliza was traveling through Washington City on her way back to Baltimore when she was arrested by a constable by the name of Thomas Barnett or Barry. She was committed to jail by a Justice, where she remained until the morning she and Elizabeth were taken out in chains.

Elizabeth Sewell, the other Negro girl arrested, states that she was born free in the city

of Baltimore and raised on Federal Hill. Her mother was set free by Nathaniel Chew of West River, Maryland. She was hired as a cook for Mr. Norris who owned a fishing company on the Potomac River. She was arrested by the same constable as Eliza and close to the same time while traveling through Washington City. Elizabeth added that a third Free Negro by the name of Nancy Jones occupied a cell with them and was expected to be sold within a few days.

There appears to have been some collusion between the constable, jailor, and the jailor’s brother because the sale of the women took place inside the jail at the break of daylight with only a few people present including the jailor William Ball, his brother James Ball of Prince William County, Enoch Smallwood, and Evan G. Jeffries.

Although the chain of ownership or the sequence of transactions is not clear there is no doubt that Enoch Smallwood, Evan Jeffries, Champe Terry, and the two Ball brothers were all involved in this scam.

Also in the testimony we find that at some point William Cockrell came upon James Ball with the two women chained together at their feet. Cockrell began to question Ball about the women and without receiving a satisfactory answer, asked the women who they were and where were they going. They told Cockrell that they were Free Women that had been sold as Slaves for only jail fees and that they were being taken to Georgia. Cockrell then enlisted the help of Mr. Farrow who obtained a warrant and took possession of the women over the strong objections of James Ball. They were first taken to Dumfries then on to Brentsville.

As stated before, the outcome is not known but on August 3, 1835 Barnes and Sewell were granted “leave to file a petition to sue Champe Terry in forma paupers.” And the next day a motion was made in court by Champe Terry to have Negroes delivered to him upon the payment of all costs. Outcome unknown.

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IN GOD WE TRUST

**Brentsville Neighbors
c/o Morgan Breeden
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Nokesville, VA 20181**

