

# Brentsville Neighbors



Information About Brentsville  
Shared Among Neighbors  
December 2008



Welcome Neighbor!

If you lived in Brentsville “way back when,” you without doubt have heard the little rhyme,

*Keys Town,  
Woodyard Street,  
Cooper’s Hotel  
And nothin’ to eat!*

But oh how times have changed since then! There is no longer a single Keys family living in Brentsville. Sure, there are still some descendants, but not with the name Keys. Can anyone find Woodyard Street? How many know the location of Cooper’s Hotel?

Not many children will anticipate an orange in the toe of their stocking; not many presents will be home made; and certainly not many will be hand-me-down items. Will there be a Christmas program in each of the local churches with kids dressed as wise men? Have you had carolers knocking on your door lately? Come to think of it, not everyone in Brentsville will even celebrate Christmas. But that’s Okay because while lack of change kept Brentsville what it was for so many years, now change is making it the still wonderful place it is today.

As some traditions are fading away, others are developing. One of which is the third annual Holiday Open House at the Courthouse Historic Site featuring again this year the beautiful voices of the Brentsville District High School Choir under the direction of Ms. Linda Beville. If you can, please plan on attending this enjoyable event that will be held on December 13, 2008, with presentations in the Union Church at 5:00pm and 6:00pm. Come early. The seats fill very quickly. This is a free event and everyone is welcome.

**Merry Christmas  
and a  
Happy New Year!**

Very best wishes,  
Nelson and Morgan

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## Where W I L D Things Live

*Episyrphus balteatus*, usually called the “Marmelade Fly,” is a relatively small hoverfly that is widespread throughout all continents. Like most other hoverflies it mimics a much more dangerous insect, the solitary wasp, though it is a quite harmless species. The upper side of the abdomen is patterned with orange and black bands.

The Marmelade Fly can be found throughout the year in various habitats, including urban gardens, visiting flowers for pollen and nectar. They often form dense migratory swarms, which may cause panic among people for its resemblance to wasps. It is among the very few species of flies capable of crushing pollen grains and feeding on them. The larva is terrestrial and feeds on aphids.

Hoverflies are probably the most skilful of all insect flyers. They can hang suspended in the air then glide rapidly to one side or forwards or backwards, or move up or down to hang suspended once more. They are two-winged flies belonging to the family Syrphidae. Many visit flowers in large numbers to feed on nectar and in America they are also known as flower flies. They are second only to bees in importance as flower pollinators.

Most hoverflies have a superficial resemblance to wasps and bees, being either marked with black and bright colours in contrasting patterns or covered with a coat of short, dense hairs, also variously patterned. In some cases there is such close resemblance between certain species of hoverflies and the wasps and bees living in the same area that there seems no doubt mimicry is involved.

Most of the two-winged flies are unattractive to us, including as they do the mosquitoes and houseflies. Hoverflies are almost all harmless and many are useful as well as being attractive to look at.

Sources: Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia and Encyclopedia of Insects & Arachnids by Maurice and Robert Burton

## flashback

### BRENTSVILLE

(Mrs. Emma Wolfe, Cor.)

Mr. and Mrs. Phil Spencer, of Washington, spent the past week with her father, Mr. Kenny Bradshaw.

Mr. and Mrs. Joe Keys received word Friday of the death of their infant granddaughter, Patricia Jean Burdette.

Mrs. Nelson Bradshaw has returned from the hospital, where she underwent a minor operation.

Mrs. Newton and daughters, Carol Joyce and Patricia, spent Friday in Washington.

Mr. and Mrs. Grady Shoemaker spent Thanksgiving with his sons, Jim and Ben, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ben Shoemaker.

Mrs. Bessie Huddle and family, of Elkton, spent several days last week with Mrs. Huddle's brother, Mr. James Smith.

Elmer and Buddy Hedrick visited their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ray Hedrick, on Thanksgiving Day.

Week-end guest of Rev. and Mrs. Jesse Bell, was Mr. Bell's brother, Daniel Bell, of Washington.

Mrs. Troy Counts and Mrs. Clyde Bean went to Beaver Dam last week to attend the wedding of their cousin, Miss Durette, to Mr. Carl Sandridge, of Richmond.

Rev. and Mrs. Bell had as Thanksgiving guests Tech. Sgt. Lewis Bell and wife, of Fort Meade, Md.; Mr. Cecil Eggleston and family, of Arlington; and Mrs. Alice Speakes, of Manassas.

Mr. Johnnie Melvin, of Washington, spent Sunday with his grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. John Donovan.

Sunday visitors of Mr. and Mrs. Willard Fogle were his sister, Mrs. Slusher and family, of Manassas, and her brother, Mr. Nick Breeden, of Washington.

Mr. and Mrs. Amos Smith and family were recent visitors of Mr. Kenny Bradshaw.

Mr. Morgan Breeden and Bennie Breeden spent Thanksgiving with their mother, Mrs. Daniel Breeden, of Washington.

Miss Alice Fletcher spent the holidays with her mother, Mrs. Janie Fletcher, of Gainesville.

Source: The Manassas Journal, December 5, 1946





NELSON KEYS 1ST BASEMAN  
BRENTSVILLE, VA. WILD CATS  
AT HOME IN BRENTSVILLE, VA  
LATE 1940'S & EARLY 50'S  
SON OF JOE AND ORA KEYS

Where WILD  
things live..



*Episyrphus balteatus*

Marmelade Fly

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SON OF HILMAN & EMMA KEYS



Just after the fall  
DAVID KEYS 2ND BASEMAN  
BRENTSVILLE TEAM  
AT HOME IN BRENTSVILLE  
IN BACK OF HOME & STORE  
Mid to 1900 TO EARLY 1920's

SON OF JOHN T. AND SUSANNA CATHERINE KEYS



(CASH) CASSIUS KEYS PITCHER  
BRENTSVILLE, VA. TEAM  
AT HOME IN BRENTSVILLE  
Mid to Late 1900's to EARLY 1920's





John Nathaniel Owens and his wife, Lydia (Ellyson) Owens



Martha Gertrude Via – schoolteacher at Brentsville during period 1911 – 1917. Mother of Mary Ellyson Owens Flory



Eustace Conway Owens (1895 – 1960) Co. "K" 318<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 80<sup>th</sup> Division. WW-I



(back L-R) John Nathaniel Owens and his son, Eustace Conway Owens. (front) Eustace's two sons, John Nathaniel Owens and Eustace Conway Owens, Jr.



# Mary Owens Flory Remembers Brentsville

I was born in Nokesville in 1925 and grew up there but during those years I spent quite a bit of time in Brentsville because my paternal grandparents lived there. In 1914 John and Lydia Owens came from Owens, Va., in King George County and bought the farm which later became Lois and Eddie Batschelet's. The farm stretched from the bridge to what is now Windy Hill and was bordered on the east by state road 619 and on the west by Cedar Run. The house the Yohn's now own was the only house on the 100 acres. My grandparents had three children, 2 girls and a boy who became my father.

My mother grew up on a farm at Free Union, Va., near Charlottesville. About 1912 she came to Nokesville to attend Hebron Seminary, a Church of the Brethren boarding school. When she finished there she took a job teaching in Brentsville. School was then held in the old courthouse building. Mrs. Mae House Ellis was also a teacher and the two of them boarded in the white house across the road owned at that time by a Mrs. Cooper. In cold weather they had to keep a fire going in the wood stove for heat. They had to go over and get it started each morning before the students arrived. My mom met my dad and they married in 1917. That ended her teaching career as married ladies were not allowed to teach then. Soon after they married my dad was sent to France to fight in World War I. When he came home after the war he got a job as rural carrier in Nokesville and they moved to Nokesville.

My grandfather never owned a car and Dad made many trips to Brentsville to take them places they needed to go.

Hatcher's Memorial is the first church I remember going to. When I was 3 or 4 years old Dad decided we would go to Oakdale Baptist in Greenwich. Every year the different Baptist churches would get together one Sunday at one of the churches for what they called a Sunday School Convention. I remember going to that several times at Hatcher's Memorial.

Dad always kept a row boat on the run just below the house and we would go boating and fishing.

They did not let us swim in the run. It hadn't been long since Lake Jackson dam had been built and it made the run deeper and they said there might be tree stumps under the water. I remember one time my oldest sister and a cousin about her age, 14 or 15, rowed to Lake Jackson. They were gone so long everybody got very worried. They didn't realize they would have to row

against the current coming back and it took them a long time. Needless to say they didn't do that again.

Winters were colder then and ice would freeze thick enough to skate on. I remember skating just above the bridge. At least Mom and Dad skated. They had skates. We kids just slid around on the ice in our shoes.

There was not a bathroom in the house, nor was there running water or electricity. There was an outside toilet which most people had in those

days and there was a well with a hand pump right next to the back porch with a little building around it so you could get water without going outside. There was a meat house, a smoke house, chicken house, a barn and lots of room for my sisters and brother and I to run and play. I remember a large ravine along the run that for some unknown reason we called Old King Cole's grave.

Once when I was there I went with Granddaddy by horse and wagon to Snook's Mill on Flory Road to have some grain ground. We waited while he ground it and took it home with us. We stopped at Mr. Keys' store to get something Grandma needed.

The stone house across the road from Windy Hill belonged to the Nogara family. They lived in Washington, D.C. but came out often on weekends. Mrs. Nogara worked with Eddie Batschelet's father at the Census Bureau and when my grandfather decided to sell the farm after Grandma died, she told Mr. Batschelet about it. He bought it in 1941. Granddaddy stayed with us for a while, then went to live with his daughter in Arlington.

These are just a few of my happy memories I have of Brentsville.



# Brentsville

## A Look Back in History

by  
Ronald Ray Turner

### The Murder of George E. Green

It was Christmas Day 1856 in Brentsville when a wagon driven by Constable B. F. Pattie and two guards arrived at the jail with a family of five people. Among the five were a grandmother, a mother, and three children. Earlier in the day all were charged with the murder of George E. Green. The sheriff fearing for the safety of the prisoners as well as security for the jail had deputized guards to make sure they would stand trial.

George Green was the owner of a 238 acre farm, about 16 miles NW of Brentsville at Haymarket. He was a farmer, school teacher and a slave owner. At the time of his death he was either fifty-three or fifty-four years old.

Nelly age about sixty was the oldest and the most outspoken of the three female and two male prisoners. She was a grandmother as well as the mother of Betsy. Betsy was the mother of the other accused, Jim her oldest son and her twins Elias and Ellen.

On Christmas Eve about 8 o'clock in the evening "one of George Tyler's women" came running to the house saying his neighbor George Green's house was on fire. He got a horse and started toward the burning house. He had only gone a short distance when he came onto Elias, one of the accused. He inquired of Elias, where is Mr. Green? Elias responded that he was in the house. He then asked why he could not get out of the house and the accused answered he didn't know. On arriving at the house he met up with Luther Lynn and "Gusty" Hutchison. Upon seeing the burned body of Mr. Green in the fire and talking among themselves for about an hour, they

decided to go home and come back when it was light.

The next morning around 9 o'clock about 20 people showed at the crime scene and a jury of inquest was formed, with Dr. Ewell acting as Coroner. Members of the inquest agreed to question the slaves separately. Dr. Ewell asked Nelly to tell all she knew about the murder of Mr. Green. "She said they had done it", meaning the five prisoners. Nelly also said that he was a bad master and they were tired of living with him. She said the other four prisoners went into the house and caught him and she hit him with an axe. She then said the deceased got up and ran off out of the house, they pursued him with shovels, axe and sticks till they killed him. After killing him, they dragged him back put him in the house and set fire to it.

George Tyler, one of the inquest jurors, asked Elias how they came to kill their master. He said he was such a bad master they could not live with him and decided to kill him. The four, Betsy, Jim, Ellen and Elias, were to go in and tie him and Nelly was to come in and knock him in the head. Elias said when they went in to the house that Mr. Green was lying down before the fire. All four of them jumped on him and commenced tying him. They got him partially tied and Nelly came in and struck him with the axe. By some means he got loose and got the axe from her and ran out of the house. The five defendants finally caught up with him and after a very violent fight, they were able to overpower and kill him. They then dragged him back and put him in the shed room and set fire to the house.

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Luther Lynn asked Elias & Nelly why they had killed their master. Nelly replied that he would not let them go to meetings, starved them and did not clothe them. Luther later testified in court that he examined the slave living quarters and found in their cabin two pieces of bacon, two spare ribs, some sausage meat, some lard, right smart sugar and coffee, probably twenty pounds of sugar, some molasses and tea. They were also well clothed and in fact he said he never saw a more comfortable Negro house. It was weather boarded and sealed inside, had two beds down stairs and two up stairs. There was also an unusual quantity of wearing apparel hanging up.

Jim was questioned in jail and said they wanted to be sold to another owner. They all agreed to go in the house and confront their master but were afraid to say anything about selling them until they took hold of him. Mr. Green always had his gun convenient where he could put his hand on it. If any noise occurred at night it was his practice to go out and shoot low on the ground. He said it was not convenient for them to get in between where the gun was and Mr. Green. When they subdued and tied him up, they asked him to sell them. Mr. Green replied that he would refuse to sell them and added that they would all be hung for what they had done.

A Court of Oyer and Terminer was convened, for the trial of Nelly, Betsy, James, Elias and Ellen, Negro slaves the property of the late George E. Green. All were charged with having willfully deliberately and with malice aforethought, killed and murdered the said George E. Green, on the night of the 24<sup>th</sup> December 1856. Eppa Hunton Commonwealths Attorney appeared as counsel for the Commonwealth and the Court assigned Charles E. Sinclair Esq. as Counsel for the Prisoner Nelly; Douglass Tyler Esq. as counsel for the prisoner Betsy; Nathaniel

Tyler Esq. as counsel for the prisoner James; J. M. Forbes Esq. as counsel for the prisoner Elias; and John P. Philips Esq. as counsel for the prisoner Ellen. Some of the inquest jurors testified at the trial to tell what was relayed to them and what they saw. They were all cross-examined but no record was found of any of the defendants testifying at the trial. The court after a short deliberation came back with a guilty sentence and all five were to be hung on Friday the Thirteenth of February 1857.

Many letters and petitions were written for and against the pardoning of Elias and Ellen the young twins. The most unusual of these petitions came from a medical student at the University of Virginia who wanted the bodies of all five condemned slaves turned over to the university and would even come to Brentsville to get them. His argument for getting the bodies after the executions seems to be summed up by an excerpt from his letter – “anatomy without subjects for demonstration is fruitless as Geometry without diagrams & this is our case just now.”

The three older slaves, Nelly, Betsy and Jim were executed. Elias and Ellen the young twins were given a reprieve of the death penalty by Governor Wise, because of “their youth and feeble intellect.” Their punishment however was ordered to be “sale and transportation beyond the limits of the United States.”

***Clumsy? Avoid cutting  
yourself while slicing  
vegetables by getting  
someone else to hold them  
while you chop away.***

# *Brentsville Neighbors*

Information About Brentsville  
Shared Among Neighbors

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IN GOD WE TRUST

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