

Brentsville Neighbors



Information About Brentsville
Shared Among Neighbors
September 2009



Welcome Neighbors,

Can you believe it—this issue represents the 48th newsletter and brings to close four years of Brentsville memories. Thank each of you who have made this possible. But we're not finished yet!

All former students, their families and guests are reminded that the annual School Reunion will take place on the 12th of this month from 11:00am until 1:00pm in the school. Light finger foods, cake and punch will be served. All former students should have received a personal invitation. If you did not, please let us know as soon as possible so we may correct the distribution list.

Please also keep in mind the other events planned for the courthouse grounds. The Prince William Farm Tour on Saturday and Sunday, September 26th & 27th from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. each day. We have been told that there will be ice cream made during the event that is reportedly delicious beyond description. We'll need to try some to make sure. Also on October 3rd and 4th from 11 a.m. until 5 p.m. each day there will be World War II living historians discussing and showing how life for the American soldier really was in Europe and Japan. A must see! These events at the site are

FREE. Please call 703-365-7895 for more information.

The cabin garden is quite a success! We have harvested a number of different veggies and have more late summer varieties starting to grow. The corn got to be at least 11 feet tall! Now the raccoons have found just how good it is and have knocked down many of the stalks to get at the ears. Vandals chose to take five of the largest dipper gourds. Unfortunately they were cut while still green and it is unlikely they will do anything more than rot. The good news is there are still others growing so we may yet harvest some for use in the cabin.

Particular thanks go out to Ms. Charlene Carey, Mrs. Helen Newland Hammond's daughter, who has so graciously donated a number of her mother's school documents to be added to the notebooks of Brentsville memories. We are so happy to have this information. And very special thanks also to Clyde Breeden for his continued support. We appreciate you both very much!

Very best wishes,
Nelson & Morgan

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Where W I L D Things Live

Imperial moth

Eacles imperialis (Drury, 1773)

Family: Wild Silk Moths (*Saturniidae*)

Subfamily: Royal Moths (*Citheroniinae*)

Identification: Females are larger than males. Upperside is yellow with pinkish brown to purple-brown patches, bands, and cell spots, and tiny brown spots scattered overall. Males have larger patches on the forewings than females.

Life history: Adults emerge before sunrise and mate after midnight the next day. Females lay eggs at dusk singly or in groups of 2-5 on both surfaces of host plant leaves. The eggs hatch in about 2 weeks, and the caterpillars are solitary feeders. Pupation takes place in underground burrows.

Flight: One brood; in the north from June-August, in the south from April-October.

Wing span: 3 1/8 - 6 7/8 inches (8 - 17.4 cm).

Caterpillar hosts: Conifers and deciduous trees and shrubs including pine, oak, box elder, maples, sweet gum, and sassafras.

Adult food: Adults do not feed.

Habitat: Deciduous and evergreen forests.

Range: Maine west to eastern Nebraska, south to the Florida Keys and central Texas. Subspecies *pini* occurs across the northern Great Lakes basin and the northern third of Michigan's Lower Peninsula.

Conservation: Not usually required.

NatureServe Global Status: G5 - Demonstrably secure globally, though it may be quite rare in parts of its range, especially at the periphery.

Management needs: None reported.

Source: <http://facweb.furman.edu/~snyderjohn/leplist/saturniidae.htm#sat>

flashback

BRENTSVILLE

(Mrs. Emma Wolfe, Cor.)

Mr. Joe McGhee, of Richmond Theological Seminary, preached at the Presbyterian Church Sunday night.

A surprise birthday party was held in honor of Mr. Joe Keys at his home Saturday night.

Pfc. Newton, who is stationed at Bolling Field, spent the week-end with his family here.

Mr. and Mrs. Bill Payne spent Sunday with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Payne, of Manassas.

The young people of the Union Church had Mr. Joe McGhee as their leader Sunday night.

Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Hedrick and family, of Arlington, visited his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ray Hedrick, this week-end.

Miss Alice Fletcher spent the week-end with her mother, Mrs. Janie Fletcher, of Gainesville.

Miss Mary Lou Lipscomb, who is working in Washington, visited here.

Mr. Chester Whetzel, of Washington, visited relatives here Sunday.

Nicholas Webster, who directs motion pictures for the U. S. Department of Agriculture, left last week for Texas, where he is making a picture about cotton.

Source: The Manassas Journal, September 26, 1946.

Where WILD things live..



Imperial moth

Eacles imperialis (Drury, 1773)

See page 2



The Joe Keys Family

Back L-R: Nelson, Raymond, Joe, Ora and Douglas

Front L-R: Lirginia and Louise



Easter Sunday, 1953

Back: Joe and Ora Keys (holding Joe Braden)

Front: Kay Burdette, Cheryl and Bo Counts



Rob Orrison talks with the TAPS investigators

Photos this page are from the TV show, "Ghost Hunters," as they were shown on air.



Morgan Breeden and Georgia Meadows talk about their experiences

The "Ghost Hunters" episode, "Inhuman Entity" can be viewed on-line at http://www.syfy.com/rewind/index.php?sid=32855&_source=Syfy_Global_Nav

Brentsville in the Summer

by
Kay Breeden

Here we are in September already—summer is over, it's time to return to school, there's a marked coolness in the evenings once the sun has set and crispness in the early morning air. Autumn is definitely on its way leading us to think of pumpkins, harvest festivals, weekend trips to see the spectacle of color along the Skyline Drive and the busy months leading up to the coming holiday season. Summer seems to be shorter than I remember from my childhood years in Brentsville. School was over then during the first week of June. I walked down the aisle of what is now Nokesville Elementary School and took my place with my fellow graduates on Friday the 7th and then walked up the aisle of Oak Dale Baptist Church for my wedding ceremony on Monday, June 10th – the year was 1963.

Visiting my grandparents, Joe and Ora Keys, during the summer was always a treat for me, an only child. My cousins, Bo and Cheryl Counts, Catherine Corner's children, stayed with Nannie and Granddaddy and were like my non-existent siblings. We always had a good time together, even if it was only doing our chores. We gathered eggs every day and sometimes the hens would peck us as we searched the nest. We helped Nannie with the laundry which was done once a week and hung out on the long wires strung between T-shaped poles in the lot. The washing machine was a wringer type in the basement, so we had to carry the baskets of wet clothes up the steps and out to be hung up. Nannie had a clothespin bag sewn of fabric to look like a small dress that you hung on a wire hanger. She made one for me after I was married and I believe gave one to all the women in the family. We helped to weed and work the garden and spent countless hours helping to pick the vegetables when they were ready to harvest and preparing them for either freezing or canning. The rock ledge in the basement was always full of canning jars containing everything from jellies and pickles to green beans, tomatoes, beets, corn, vegetable soup

and even meats such as sausage patties and pork tenderloin. Sometimes Granddaddy would send us to the store for his chewing tobacco, either Beech Nut or Red Man, and would give us extra money for an ice cream cone or penny candy. The ice cream cones cost a nickel and were hand-dipped by whoever was working that day, usually either Violet (Keys) Shoemaker or Libby Keys.

Brentsville during that time was a family town for those of us in the Keys clan. I always used some of my money to buy atomic fireballs—my favorite penny candy.

Summer in Brentsville also meant swimming, either at the log on Broad Run near Ben and Dean Shoemaker's house or at the sandbar where Glen and Juanita Kent lived on Brentsville Road, identifiable because their stucco house was painted pink. I didn't really learn to swim then because the water was not that deep, but it was a fun way to cool off on hot summer days. Aunt Dinny and Uncle Shorty Braden would take us to the Kent's along with their two oldest children, Joey and Peanut. One year, Nannie bought matching red satin bathing suits for Cheryl and me at Silco in Manassas. We were so thrilled with them until they got wet and dripped red dye all over us. Nannie and my mother had made us matching pink dresses with round collars embroidered with flowers for Easter one year, so we didn't mind dressing alike. Our birthdays were special too—Cheryl's on the 18th, Bo's on the 19th and mine on the 20th of October, so we got to have one big party to celebrate together.

The real highlight of summer was the fair, at that time running from opening on Monday to closing on Saturday, just six days to enjoy all the activities. Since Prince William County was a rural farming area back then, there were a lot more animals entered for showing and judging than now. Nannie always entered her canned goods, garments she had sewn and handiwork she had done to compete for the ribbons and prize money to be awarded. She was always well-rewarded for her

efforts. I loved looking through the ribbons she had amassed over the years, then later I was able to win some for my own efforts in sewing and needlework. My real joy now is my ability to transform some skeins of yarn into a baby blanket for a new mother or an afghan for someone special. This was a gift from my Grandmother who taught me how to sew, crochet and embroider. The knitting I enjoy now I worked out on my own after being inspired by Anna Ruth keys, my Great-Uncle Cash's wife. Anna Ruth was visiting my grandmother one year and was knitting a lovely red sweater, apparently teaching herself as she went along. I finally said to myself surely I can do it too if Anna Ruth could teach herself. I have now made numerous knitted items including a recently completed cable afghan. Next year I am definitely going to enter some of my work and try again to win some blue ribbons.

During the early years of the fair, many activities were done under large tents. Nannie was a member of the Home Demonstration Club sponsored through the Cooperative Extension Service. The members all helped staff a food concession selling hamburgers, hotdogs and drinks which was operated under one of the tents. They donated proceeds from this toward improvements that were made at the fair over the years including the construction of the second home arts building and the food booth located outside the first building with picnic table seating. One year during a torrential downpour, Uncle Shorty's friend, Chuck Neidar, kept flipping burgers and selling the refreshments while everyone was slogging around the grounds in the mud. One thing we could always count on was rain during fair week. Back in these days there were fewer rides on the midway but they did have some tents with variety shows and one with the hoochy-cooch girls. They would come out on the stage in front and strut their stuff, showing off some legs, and then they'd go back behind the curtains. The men would buy their tickets and disappear into the tent, and then a light would come on in front and remain lit while the show was going on. One of the attractions was a large barrel with a motorcycle rider who would go around and around gaining speed and climbing the walls of the barrel until he got up to the top. I got in free to see this, I guess because I was flirting

with the rider while he was out front hyping the show. My favorite ride was the Ferris Wheel. I think I could have sat there riding up and over with the wind in my hair for ever. It's amazing that my fear of heights didn't interfere with my enjoyment back then. Today I'm uncomfortable when suspended above the ground on the Big Wheel or the tram cars at Bush Gardens.

My Grandfather always enjoyed the shows they had at the grandstand back then. One night was designated Bluegrass and we got to listen to the likes of Jim and Jesse and the Osborne Brothers. Another night was more contemporary music meaning rock n' roll. The year the big Saturday night show was Ernest Tubb and his Texas Troubadours, I was thrilled. He was one of my favorite country artists. Sure enough, it rained. They left the stage and covered the speakers and equipment and I stood around and waited. Just as they were coming out to try again to get the show under way, it poured even harder. We finally left without ever seeing the performance. What a disappointment! Granddaddy always attended the night they had the wrestling show, again with some big-name stars like the Graham Brothers and Chief Thunderheart.

After the excitement of the fair, we still had several weeks left of our summer vacation since school didn't start again until after Labor Day. Labor Day weekend was the last hurrah for us. Uncle Shorty would arrange the charter and the whole family would travel in the wee hours of the morning over to Chesapeake Beach, Maryland, to board the boat and go out into the bay for a day of fishing. Nannie would take fried chicken, potato salad, watermelon and such to provide a feast for us during the day. We would sometimes have a chance to swim in the pool there at the marina before coming home. Once back in Brentsville everyone would pitch in to help clean the fish that were brought back and we'd have, what else, fried fish for supper. This was a long day for us kids but a special family experience that we would always remember and cherish. I suppose that's why Brentsville is home for me – all the family members and stories they've shared and all the happy times I can bring to mind as the rhythm of our lives continues.

Brentsville

A Look Back in History

by

Ronald Ray Turner

Slave Mary

“Slave Mary was sentenced by the Court of Prince William to suffer death for arson.” That sentence, when found at the local court archives, was the beginning of my search to find out who Mary was and what recorded material was available about her. As luck would have it, enough information was found to give the following account of her life.

Mary was born in Prince William County in the year 1802. She was born into slavery and was considered the property of Thomas Fitzhugh. Not much is known about Thomas Fitzhugh other than he was a single man who lived alone with upwards of three dozen slaves. Thomas hired out many of his slaves and that often included Mary. At a very young age, she was sent out on short contracts as a house servant to many of the local people in the Dumfries area. This continued until she was sold to Mrs. Jane Baylor when Mary was about 10 years old. For the first time, she lived with a family, considered to be in the upper echelon of the community. She was with the Baylor family and considered their only house servant, until July 26, 1819, the day she was accused of arson.

Early in the afternoon on the twenty-sixth, Georgianna, the eleven year old daughter of Jane Baylor, was playing in the yard when she saw smoke coming from one of the rooms on the second floor of her house. She started shouting fire and with that her mother went running to the house to find the fire. They were met in the house by Mary, and the three of them quickly put out the fire.

In a deposition given by Georgianna, she stated that she had seen Mary in the house at various times that day and was the only person in the house at the time of the fire. None of the other slaves were ever in the residence.

Mrs. Baylor stated at the trial that she questioned Mary about the fire and she steadfastly denied she had anything to do with it. It was after many denials that she told Mary if she would just confess and tell the truth about the fire no punishment would be given to her. At this time Mary reluctantly said she had started the fire but would not tell more. At this point Mrs. Baylor had one of her older male slaves take Mary, along with a note, to the house of her brother

William A. G Dade. The note explained that Mary had attempted to burn the house, and she didn't know what to do about it but didn't want Mary at the house anymore.

Dade told Mary to stay in one of his slave quarters until this all got sorted out. This she did for three days, unrestrained, and made no attempt to escape. At the end of three days and after seeking the advice of others, Dade took Mary to a magistrate and she was charged with arson. During the trial, William Dade said that at some point, in the days between the time of the arson and charges, he questioned Mary as to why she set the fire. According to Dade, she stated that she thought if the house burned down, the family would move back to Dumfries. She also stated she didn't like the country and was much happier when she lived in town. It was also stated that Mrs. Baylor had been considering moving back to Dumfries for some time.

At the trial Mrs. Baylor and her brother William both testified as to the good character of the defendant and they did not want her punished more than the minimum. But under Virginia law at that time, the only punishment for this crime was death and, indeed, that was to be the sentence. In a letter written to the governor, many men of the town signed a letter pleading for mercy, as no one wanted to see her put to death. This letter was signed by Jane A. A. Baylor (the mistress of the Slave), Wm. A. G. Dade (a witness at the trial), Philip Hanna (the attorney for the Commonwealth), Phil D. Dawe (clerk of the court), Peyton Norvill (deputy sheriff and the arresting officer), and the following magistrates: Jno Gibson Jr., Barnaby Cannon, J. Lawson, John W. Tyler and John Macrae.

James Patton Preston, the Governor of Virginia, granting the request of the Dumfries residents changed the sentence to transportation outside the limits of the United States. He also ordered her to the state penitentiary in Richmond to await sale. She was at the penitentiary for about six months before being sold along with 16 others to a buyer at auction. It is not know what happened to Mary but she probably was either sent to a plantation in the Deep South or to one of the islands. In either case, the only thing certain is her life only got worse.

When WAR Came to Brentsville

Catlett's Station.
Aug 8 '63.

Dear Father,

You see that after all we did not stay at Brentsville. The very night after I wrote you, orders came to move the next morning and we came back to this place. By a nearer road however, so that we got here before the sun reached its full power. We found then that we had gone four or five miles out of our way on Saturday and our suffering then might have been in a great measure avoided if they had taken us the nearest road.

The whole march to Brentsville was a blunder of somebody's, and some one is responsible for a good deal of sickness, if not death. I have not felt very well this week but am better now. An eruption came out all over me that has been decidedly uncomfortable.

Since we have been here we have had orders to move once and got as far as taking down our tents when the order was countermanded. We have a very comfortable tent, bunks made, and can keep quite cool if we do not have to go out into the sun. Most of the reg. has been on picket for two days so we have had no drills.

The evening of the 6th Services were held at Brigade headquarters. Apart from that the day passed as usual. I suppose you had quite a celebration at home.

Your letter of the 3rd I received night before last, the money and stamps all right. We were paid on Tuesday so I did not need the money just now, but will keep it as my expenses will be much larger now. The allotment \$40.00 you will probably receive before long and can use it to pay for my uniform. I thought it would hardly be safe to have the sword come by express and remain in Washington till I could send for it, but I find it is done. I thought [I] asked you however to send it to Henry's care, and thinking you would do so wrote yesterday to one of the officers who is in Washington, asking him to call on Henry and get it. So I hope you did send it to Henry.

If you should not have sent it before this it will do just as well; send by express directed to me and marked "not to be delivered except on receipt". Send the receipt to me and I could send it to Washington by some one and get the sword. I suppose I shall have to get a sash, although it is not very often that I shall absolutely need one. Most of the officers have too a revolver, but some say they would not buy one. I am not particular

myself. One might be very useful at times and I might not fire it for a year.

I don't know, as I said in my last letter, any other way to get at the size of the clothes I want than from those I left at home or my measure at the tailors if you can get it. I do not think I have changed much in size during the year. [I] probably weigh about the same now as a year ago, our march having taken off the spare flesh I had, though I do not think I am thinner than last year, Mr Damon to the contrary notwithstanding. He saw me when I was tired and dirty, and I think deserves credit for recognizing me at all. If we stay here a month I hope to fat up a little.

I forgot to send you the Col's congratulations on my promotion as he desired me to.

I find I have a much easier time now. I miss Willie a good deal, though I see him every day more or less. He has not been promoted yet, though I think he will be when there are vacancies among the sergeants. The Lieut. thought some of putting him in my place, but prefers I think Spurr, who has tented with us all winter and is a very nice fellow. If the Lieut. should make him orderly, however, I think it will make trouble, for all the non-commissioned officers would think themselves, and with some reason too, disgraced. Willie's chance to get a sergeant's place is good and he deserves it too, for he has been very faithful in his duties.

My pay will be \$105.00 a month with \$2.50 out for tax. From this I shall have to pay five percent for the band unless some new arrangement is made. Many of the officers think this is too much to pay and talk of making some new agreement.

My food will probably cost from \$15.00 to 20.00 a month. Capt. Walker says he does not mean to have it cost more than \$3.00 a week, but it seems to in spite of all he can do. I shall hope to save \$50.00 or 60.00 dollars a month, but can tell better after a little experience.

I am very sorry to hear that mother is still suffering with her breast. I had hoped she was well before this. I received her letter and if I am not mistaken answered it. Has she not received one from me since she wrote?

The first division of our corps has gone on the cars somewhere. Some say to North, some to South Carolina, while others think they are to guard the railroad between Manassas Junction and Alexandria. There is a rumor also that we are to go

(Continued from page 8)

as soon as transports are ready, but this is probably imagined, I hope so at least, for I do not fancy going where it is any hotter than it is here, and August and September, I suppose, are as bad months as any at the South.

I should not object to take a trip down that way the first of October and spend the winter there, but to go now I don't care. I do not think there is much danger of it anyway.

We do not hear any more fighting across the river, and trust also we shall not have to go that way at present. At one time we thought there would be a general engagement there and perhaps another campaign immediately. I have seen no account in the papers yet of Monday and Tuesday's fighting. Several hundred prisoners went by here on their way to Washington however. The report was that the rebels did not show much fight.

Are many of the drafted men in W. C. going, or are they all getting exempted? Has Uncle Charley made up his mind about going yet? James Marshall, Willie hears, is coming. We were glad to hear he was drafted, for he might have come a year ago as well as not.

You have never mentioned who was Superintendent of the Sabbath school. How is that prospering this summer? Where are Mr Horton's folks this summer? I did not see John's name among those who had parts on commencement day. I believe I have asked questions enough, so will stop.

I hope you are not having as warm weather as we are, but see by the paper you sent that it is warmish. I enjoy my shirts very much and feel like a new being now that I have got rid of lice and have clean clothes once more.

Much love to all,

Accept much from your son,
Joseph.
Co.E.

Source:

THE CIVIL WAR LETTERS
OF
JOSEPH PERRIN BURRAGE
AND
WILLIAM ALLEN BURRAGE

THE THIRTY-THIRD MASSACHUSETTS
VOLUNTEERS
IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA, 1862-1863

TRANSCRIBED AND ANNOTATED BY STUDENTS AT VIRGINIA
TECH
2008

Reader Feedback

Yet another fascinating issue! Brentsville wasn't that big. How in the world do you keep finding new people to write about "the way it used to be!!!?"

Elaine Yankey

Thanks very much for sending the Brentsville newsletter. I enjoyed it, especially the letter home during the war from Mass soldier. And I appreciate the warm hospitality you showed to Rocky (the dog) and I this week on your very informative interpretations of Brents Town history! We hope to see you again, Lord willing. Blessings,

Steve Childress

Yet another great issue. Thanks to all of you who contribute to this great flashback in time.

Jan Cunard

I want to say a great big THANK YOU for putting me on the newsletter e-mail list. Both Tony and I have really enjoyed reading them.

Georgia Meadows

49th Virginia Infantry

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The Brentsville Neighbors Newsletter is a gem. Every community should have a Morgan and a Nelson! Thanks to the readers who keep sending in such great old photos, and especially to the many people whose memories make such nostalgic reading! Keep it up!

DeLancey Webster

Van Nuys, California

I very much liked Janice's article on her mother. I knew Mattie all of her life and this was a very nice tribute to her.

Gladys Eanes

Thanks for the invitation to the school reunion in September but I regret I will not be able to be there. It would be great to see some of my old friends and neighbors, especially Leonard Wright. Please give them all my regards.

Thanks also for the heads-up on the "Ghost Hunters" episode. I remember when Mr. and Mrs. Hedrick lived in the old jail. They had it looking pretty good but it was still a little spooky, especially when they would tell us some of the stories about it.

Receiving the "Brentsville Neighbors" every month is something I always look forward to. It really brings back good memories.

Nelson Bradshaw

Brentsville Neighbors

Information About Brentsville
Shared Among Neighbors

Contact us on:
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IN GOD WE TRUST

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