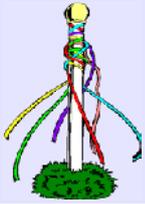


# Brentsville Neighbors



Information About Brentsville  
Shared Among Neighbors

May 2010



Welcome neighbors,

How does one think of May without also thinking of Mother's Day? Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, describes it as this: "An annual holiday that recognizes mothers, motherhood and maternal bonds in general, as well as the positive contributions that they make to society. In the United States, it is celebrated on the second Sunday in May." It goes on to explain that in 1868 Ann Jarvis created a committee to establish a "Mother's Friendship Day" whose purpose was "to reunite families that had been divided during the Civil War", and she wanted to expand it into an annual memorial for mothers, but she died in 1905 before the celebration became popular. Her daughter, Anna Marie Jarvis, continued the effort and finally, on May 9, 1914, President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation declaring the first national Mother's Day, as a day for American citizens to show the flag in honor of those mothers whose sons had died in war.

The Manassas Journal printed an obituary on February 24, 1911, for Mrs. Betty Nelson, wife of Captain Edwin Nelson, formerly of Brentsville, that just about says it all. *"When death enters and takes from a home a father, sister or brother, the grief is great, but when it deprives it of a mother's love and a mother's care, the burden of grief seems beyond the power of endurance. There is no love, on earth, like a mother's love nor a name so sweet or means so much, as that of mother. When the voice of her who nestled us so tenderly to her bosom and taught us to lisp our simple prayers, is silent in death, our most cherished hopes and earth's greatest charm, for a time, can not be reconciled to the irreparable loss."*

Very best wishes,  
Nelson and Morgan

## Reader Feedback

I enjoy reading your newsletter every month. Save yourself some postage and just e-mail me an electronic copy. I can open a pdf copy easily. Thank you so much.

Charlene Carey

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Which "Brentsville" is on Facebook? I had three come up and didn't see any that had a link to Facebook.

By the way, I thoroughly enjoy every issue you send out. On my travels around Brentsville, I try to imagine the places and people that are talked about.

Thanks,

Leon Kowalewski

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I look forward to and enjoy every month's issue of Brentsville Neighbors. Thanks so much to you and Nelson.

Frances Duckett

(And thank YOU, Frances, for your kind support!)

## This month:

- Where wild Things Live - pages 2 & 3
- Flashback ----- page 2
- Remembering Mama----- page 5

## Circulation: 182 - 61 Electronic

- A Letter from Brentsville ---- pages 6 & 9
- When War Came ----- pages 7 & 8

# FLASHBACK

## BRENTSVILLE

(Mrs. Emma Wolfe, Cor.)

Mr. and Mrs. Johnnie Counts spent Sunday evening with Mr. and Mrs. Morgan Breeden.

Mr. and Mrs. Hugh James, of Washington, spent the week-end at their home here.

Mrs. Ray Hedrick has been quite ill but is improving.

Kay Burdette, of Washington, spent sometime with her grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Keys.

Mr. Nicholas Webster left last week on a California trip.

Mrs. C. W. Wolfe attended the 35<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Woman's Auxiliary of Potomac Presbytery at Culpeper on May 1 and 2.

Mrs. Jessie Whetzel visited Washington friends last Tuesday.

Mr. and Mrs. Norman Griffith, of Manassas, visited friends here Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. Johnny Richey and son, Larry, spent the week-end with Irvin Spitzer and family.

Mr. Johnnie Melvin left last Friday to join the AAF.

Pvt. Sidney Spitzer is spending sometime with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Irvin Spitzer. He was accompanied by T-5 Johnnie Peters.

Rev. Jesse Bell continues quite ill at his home here.

Mrs. Gray, of Alexandria, was the guest Monday of her sister, Mrs. Nelson Bradshaw.

Mr. Chester Whetzel, of Washington, spent Sunday with his uncle, Mr. Jess Whetzel.

Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Bradshaw and family visited friends in Washington and Alexandria Sunday.

Source: The Manassas Journal, May 8, 1947

## Where W I L D Things Live

### Viola rafinesquii Greene Wild Pansy

Commonly known as the American field pansy or wild pansy, and sometimes called Johnny-jump-up, this annual plant in the violet family is found throughout much of North America. There is some debate as to whether the plant is native to North America or if it was introduced from the Old World, but it is now generally thought to have originated in the New World. It is common in disturbed habitats, but is also found in fields and open woods on substrates ranging from sandy soil to clay to limestone.

The flowers are variable in size, the pale bluish-lavender to creamy-white petals up to .4 inches long. They bloom during April and May and are common locally in dry pastures, banks, or open woods, in every county of the state, frequently appearing in open places in well defined patches as if sown.

Many thanks to Ms. Jeannie Couch for the use of her photo on page three and for this identification information.

Ron Turner saw this in the New York Times and thought you would enjoy. It must have been a slow news day in New York.

New York Times, May 30, 1886

A Virginia Snake Story

Mr. James H. Warder, of Nokesville, Prince William County, Va., contributes the following snake story to the Manassas Gazette: "My wife's old turkey hen was sitting beside the garden fence on 13 eggs. About a week ago a large black snake came along and ate the turkey, curled himself on the eggs, and staid there until they hatched out, and then ate the whole brood at once. I tell you he was some snake."



Amanda Breeden



Angie Visger



Bessie Shoemaker

Where **WILD**  
things live..



*Viola rafinesquii* Greene  
*Wild Pansy*



Bobbie Ratliff

A few mothers  
from  
Brentsville



Four generations: Louise Bell, Kay Breeden, Martha Breeden and Aurora & Alanna Breeden



Florida Donovan



Hazel Stephens



Gladys Eanes



Lucy Hartman



Helen Keys



Marye Breeden



Mattie Speakes



Jackie Braden



Connie Hollins



Dorothy Pearson



Cathy White and Hazel Wolfe

# Remembering Mama

Kay Breeden

Mama was not born in Brentsville but her early formative years were spent growing up there – in the rural small-town environment where you knew all your neighbors, many of the inhabitants were family members, the community worked together to make life better for everyone and you had help available in times of distress and need. I like to think it is still that kind of town today.

The house owned by Joe and Ora Keys was originally a two over two, two rooms upstairs over two downstairs, but Granddaddy added on to the rear making it four over four to provide space for a family that eventually included five children. Mama was given the name Ora Louise when she arrived on Christmas Eve in 1924. She later decided Ora didn't suit her and had it legally changed to Mary Louise and then in her adult life became known as Mary Lou, like the Ricky Nelson song that was popular in the fifties. Mama attended the one-room school in Brentsville for grades one through five along with her brothers and many cousins and the other local children. She always spoke with fond remembrance of Miss Woodhouse, the Brentsville teacher. I think she was a good student although I don't have any of her report cards. She enjoyed reading and was always proud that she received high marks in penmanship. Once upon a time, legible handwriting was a requirement in school. Mama was like a mother hen with her younger brothers looking out for them at school and taking charge at home when Nannie was not there. She especially recounted the times she took up for Nelson, usually against that scoundrel Cookie Wolfe, Morgan's uncle. As young men, Nelson, Cookie and another local friend, Silas Bean, would join the U. S. Army and help defend our country during World War II, no longer fighting each other but the enemy forces.

Mama's schooling continued in Nokesville and then she transferred to Osbourn in Manassas because they offered classes she wanted to take that weren't available at B.D.H.S. Unfortunately the war interrupted her studies as it did with many young people throughout the country. The boys went to serve in the military and Mama went to work to help out with finances at home. She was able to live with Thelma Wade, Uncle Hilman Keys' daughter, and her husband Ermine near Washington and get a job in the district. She worked for Chestnut Farms Dairy and also for the IRS for a time. Thelma and Ermine made space available for a number of young Brentsville relatives trying to get

started in their careers. They were wonderful people. It was while working in Washington that Mama met James Burdette, my father. It must have been one of those "love at first sight" kind of things. Anyway, they were married December 16, 1944 and Mama lived with my grandparents, Ralph and Susan Burdette, in Kensington, Maryland because my father was in the U. S. Navy serving on ships in both the North and South Atlantic during the war. After the war my dad worked for the McArdle Printing Company in Georgetown and my parents lived for a time on Quarles Street, then moved into an apartment just off South Capitol Street in Southwest D.C. Aunt Pat and Uncle Miles had left it to move back to Kensington and help care for Granddaddy Ralph who was ill and died September 1, 1950. That was the year I started school at Patterson Elementary just two blocks from our apartment. Mama didn't work then so I walked home for lunch every day and she would have a clean dress for me to wear back to school for the rest of the day. I was a tomboy and ran around the blacktop at recess so I constantly had scraped knees from falling. The teacher finally insisted I wear pants under my dress to protect them. Our upstairs neighbor was a Metropolitan police officer so I think we felt safe even though my dad worked at night. I would be in bed when he came home from work and then he would be gone when I arrived home from school. My Mother and I spent lots of time together so perhaps that's why I learned to read at such a young age. I did well in school and my teacher let me help her with grading papers and other tasks such as collecting the milk money and passing out the milk and graham crackers for our snack time. We always had a rest time during the school day and the teacher would play music from "The Nutcracker" to help us relax. That remains one of my favorites today. I can't remember my teacher's name but my special friend was the school principal Mrs. Bergen.

Forrester Street where we lived was a very steep hill going down to cross South Capitol and in the winter it was covered with ice that made driving difficult. Mama put adhesive tape on the bottom of my boots to give some traction as I walked up and down the hill. I had a few friends in the area but played especially with Bookertee, the grandson of the custodian for our apartment complex. One night there was a big ruckus in the custodian's basement apartment next door. Someone was stabbed but my parents didn't elaborate on the details so I never found out any more about it.

(Continued next month)

## A Letter from Brentsville

On March 15, 2010, Elaine Yankey sent us a note saying “Thought this would be of interest to you.” Attached was a copy of a post-Civil War letter that John Lassiter, PWC Planning Office, had sent to members of the Historic Commission. We are not exactly sure how he got it but it seems that Pat Demuth included it in a note with the comment “We came across a letter from Prince William Co. VA that we thought you may like to see. It is in the archives in the Nobles County Historical Society, (Minnesota).” Well, Elaine, you were right, it is of great interest to us. Thank you! Following is a transcript of this letter:

Provost Marshal Office  
Prince William Co Va  
Brentsville Va Dec 4 1865

Lieut S. W. Campbell  
A. A. A. Gen.

Lieut:

I have the honor to inform you that there are no orders on file in this office from Head Quarters Dist of N.E. Va. Neither was there any instructions left for me by the last Commander, and I have a large number of persons to see me to day in reference to the question of freedmen.

There is one case that I apprehend some trouble from about fifteen miles from here. One Hampton Cole (colored) bought a farm of sixteen acres for fifteen dollars per acre, previous to the war and has paid one Hundred and Forty Dollars on it and built a house; but during the war he went to Alexandria and was employed by the Government. About six weeks ago he came back and found one Andrew Fenton occupying the premises, and he wished to have him moved and he (F) said that he would. Cole came back last Friday and Fenton refused to move, and threatened to shoot Cole if he came on the land.

I have sent a notice to Fenton to vacate the premises in two days, if he does not I shall have to use force.

I wish to have some blank Contracts sent me as soon as possible and some Blank Amnesty Oaths and some Certificates. Also Some monthly Returns. I should like to have a Contract filled. I have had need of the Blanks to day, except the Monthly Returns. I expected to receive some instructions to day in reference to the purchases of fuel.

I find the duties here are not light as represented to me. There have been cases enough presented to day to occupy a fortnight and in which I shall have to travel from Thoroughfare Gap to Occoquan.

Very Respectfully  
Your Obed Servt  
P. H. Andrews  
2 Lieut 11 Me Vols  
Provost Marshal  
Comdg Prince William Co

So, who is this P. H. Andrews now serving in Brentsville following the war? From what we can gather via the internet, Lieutenant Philip H. Andrews entered service as private in a newly formed Co. B, The Eleventh Maine Infantry Volunteers. He was promoted to Corporal on September 26, 1862 (at Yorktown) and to Sergeant on July 24, 1864 (following First Deep Bottom). On August 14, 1864, at 2<sup>nd</sup> Deep Bottom, Virginia, [also known as Fussell's Mill (particularly in the South), New Market Road, Bailey's Creek, Charles City Road, or White's Tavern was fought August 14–20 1864, at Deep Bottom in Henrico County, Virginia, during the Richmond-Petersburg Campaign (Siege of Petersburg)] he was excused from duty on account of

(Continued on page 9)

# When WAR Came to Brentsville

## HISTORY OF THE PRINCE WILLIAM CAVALRY

### Part Three

By Mrs. Margaret Williams Barbour and Miss Laura Lion

Reference to the list of dead given with this will show that the Cavalry did not escape losses either in battle or by disease. Thirty names are recorded there, a large portion to the number listed, which never exceeded one hundred, and several of these never served more than one year. Of the number now living, but one man bears the visible sight of that mighty struggle—in the crutch instead of the sabre—private John W. Fewell—now of Meridian, Miss, — lost a leg in the battle of Five Forks, the day before Richmond fell and we think was the only one of the company maimed. He spent several months in the Federal Hospital in Petersburg where he was most kindly treated. B.D. Merchant and several others had long experience in Federal prisons where they did not fare so well; three, Thos. S. Shirley, William Stone, and J.P. Monroe died there, the latter quite early in the war at Mt. Lookout. Sam Davis and John Arundel were murdered in Dumfries by two negroes they had captured near Alexandria and were taking back to Richmond. They were sleeping in an old house and the supposition is that whoever was on guard went to sleep, and the negroes knocked them in the head with an axe they had to cut wood for a fire. The negroes took their arms and made their escape to Washington where they were made heroes of; and it was reported that Congress voted them a medal for their deed.

The original rollcall of the Cavalry was lost and the one given below is a copy of the last roll call Company A—Fourth Va. Cavalry.

Lieut. B.D. Merchant.	Capt. L.A. Davis	Lieut. A.T. Lynn.
Sargt. P.T. Wedon.	Lieut. Robt. Weedon.	Sargt. R.H. Colvin.
Cor. A. Norman.	Sargt. J.T. Williams.	Cor. Amos Benson
	Cor. R.H. Haslip.	

	Privates	
Brawner C.H.	Bridwell H.	Bruffy ——
Blackwell W.S.	Clark E.J.T.	Cushing R.B.
Colvin C.C.	Colvin G.M.	Cross J.P.
Cross H.J.	Carter Henry	Claggett H.J.
Dunnington C.A.	Deats C.S.	Deats J.H.
Donehoe C.E.	Davis J.W.	Davis R.M.
Greyham J.M.	Grayham C.A.	Hooe G.G.
Davis Joe.	Davis C.E.	Evans Maurice.
Fewell J.W.	Tuschsel A.H.	Guy N.B.
Gaines J.P.		

	Other enlisted	
George W.S.	Holland H.	Holland R.
Herendon G.M.	Herendon J.H.	Herendon H.
Horton M.W.	Horton R.E.	Holmes F.W.
Holmes M.J.	Holmes L.	Hamett J.L.
Hulfish J.	King R.	Case A.
Keys C.	Larkin J.E.	Lynn J.H.
Lynn A.A.	Lynn H.F.	Lynn J.C.
Lynn W.M.	Lynn J.A.	Lynn Milton.

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

Mitchell J.P.	Macrea R.B.L.	Marsteller L.A.
Marsteller Y.R.	Manuel J.R.	Minor J.G.
Merchant Frank.	Lambert C.H.	Nutt G.W.
Omera M.L.	Powell J.S.	Pridmore B.L.
Pridmore B.C.	Pridmore J.B.	Selecman G.A.
Selecman T.H.	Selecman George	Selecman Red.
Shepard R.H.	Shepherd Joe.	Smith C.P.
Smith C.B.	Sinclair J.L.	Sinclair J.M.
Simms W.M.	Sisson Samuel	Shirley J.M.
Shirley J.R.	Taylor J.G.	Tyler Dugglas
Tolsen J.N.	Washington W.T.	Weir E.V.
Weedon G.M.	Weedon M.B.	Weedon C.H.A.
Wilkins W.H.	Wheat J.F.	Jewell Robt.
Thornton Thomas.	Payne J.S.	Clark J.F.
Finch M.	Dewey W.H.	Lynn Benj.
Williams W.F.	Williams Jas. E.	Williams J. Taylor.

#### List of Dead

Capt. P.D. Williams	Killed at Raccoon Ford.
Lisa George Colvin	Died of Disease.
J.T. Arundel	Killed at Dumfries.
L. Tridwell	Died of Disease.
Thomas Cushing	Killed near Warrenton.
C.L.Cushing	Killed at Appomattox.
Wm. H. Cockerell	Killed at Raccoon Ford.
E.A.Deats	Killed at Aldie
S.S.T.Davis	Killed at Dumfries
T.P.Ellicotte	Killed at Travillian Sta.
Henry Evans	Died of disease
A.A.George	Died of disease
L.Lynn	Died of disease
J.H.Lee	Killed in Fairfax.
J.P.Monroe	Died in Prison.
T.P.Marders	Killed at White Chimneys
W.S.Moore	Killed at Spottsylvania
H.Nelson	Killed at Jack Shop.
W.S.Robinson	Died of disease.
W.H. Selecman	Killed at Jacks Shop.
Thos. S. Shirley	Died in prison
Wm. Stone	Died in prison
R.C.Towles	Killed at Travilyan Sta.
James Towles	Killed at Spottsylvania C.H.
T.A.Williams	Killed at Spottsylvania C.H.
M.Finegan	Died of disease
D.C.Norman	Died of disease
John T. Williams	Died of disease

Many thanks to Howard Churchill for making a copy of the original document available.

(Continued from page 6)

an abscess on his right hand but hearing that an advance was ordered, he joined his company at the front where he was soon severely wounded in his right foot. On April 17, 1865 he was again promoted to Second Lieutenant of Co. K, 11<sup>th</sup> Maine Infantry Volunteers. He later served as Recorder of a Military Commission and on other special duty in the summer of 1865. When the regiment was ordered to the N. E. District of Virginia he was assigned to duty as Provost Marshal and Assistant Superintendent of Freedmen for Prince William County, Va., stationed in Brentsville, the county seat, until December 17, 1865, when he was detailed as Acting Adjutant of the regiment, which position he filled until he mustered out with an honorable discharge as second lieutenant on February 2, 1866. He had been commissioned as First Lieutenant and Regimental Quartermaster, on October 30, 1865, but not mustered.

At some point after his discharge, Philip moved to and became a resident of Genesee, State of Michigan where he applied for three months pay for military service during the late Civil War in compliance with senate bill No. 9501 dated March 3, 1909. His claim was rejected and he filed a suit (Philip H. Andrews v. The United States). The courts conclusion was that "Upon the foregoing findings of fact the court concludes that the claim herein is neither a legal nor an equitable one against the United States, and any amount that may be appropriated in payment of the demand rests in the bounty of Congress." Filed November 16, 1914. The final outcome of this action is unknown.

And what about the question of "freedmen?" After the Civil War, the South was placed into a period of "Reconstruction" to rebuild its land, economy, and social structure. To help in the Reconstruction, Congress established the Freedmen's Bureau on March 3, 1865 placing it under the jurisdiction of the War Department. The Bureau was designed to provide aid to 4,000,000 newly freed slaves in their transition from slavery to freedom. This included helping them find new homes and employment, improving educational opportunities, and providing health facilities. It could be considered the first federal welfare agency. One of the primary functions of the Bureau was to address the day-to-day problems of the freedmen and destitute whites. Numerous requests were received for aid in finding clothing, food, jobs, homes, and care for orphans and the aged. The Bureau had notable success in the education and health areas creating over 4,000 schools and 100 hospitals, but it was unable to establish lasting civil rights for African Americans.

(Source: <http://va400.org/teach/viewlesson.php?id=6&db=1&n=home>)

Another tour was with my uncle Eustace Conway (afterwards judge) in his buggy, to attend courts in Staffords, Prince William (Brentsville), and Fairfax. The presidential contest between Lewis Cass (Democrat) and General Zachary Taylor (Whig) was in full blast, and at Brentsville I heard speeches from several political orators of Virginia. After its morning session the court adjourned till next day; at two a bell was rung, and a crowd assembled in the grove, where arrangements had been made to give a hearing to Congressman Pendleton; but the Democrats would not let their opponents have it all their own way, and had secured the attendance of Hon. John S. Barbour, Sr., the most famous orator in Virginia. The debate was opened by two able Warrenton lawyers—Payne (Democrat), and Chilton (Whig). Chilton was the Virginia nobleman who volunteered to act eleven years later as counsel for John Brown after the raid at Harper's Ferry.

Source: AUTOBIOGRAPHY  
MEMORIES AND EXPERIENCES  
OF  
Moncure Daniel Conway  
Volume I (1904)

# *Brentsville Neighbors*

Information About Brentsville  
Shared Among Neighbors

Contact us on:  
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IN GOD WE TRUST

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