

Brentsville Neighbors



September 22, 2012

Preserving Brentsville's History

September 2012



Welcome Neighbors,

Please note a program change – MARK YOUR CALENDAR – On Saturday, October 13th at 1 PM, please join the Prince William Historic Preservation Foundation, Historic Prince William and the County Historic Preservation Division in the celebration of the restoration of the Brentsville School House. During the past months, a project to restore the interior of the building to its original configuration as a school house has been on-going. You will have the opportunity to learn about this restoration and the history of this structure and similar buildings in the area along with the work of the Preservation Foundation and Historic Prince William. Refreshments will be served.

Once again the School Board Minutes produced a name that may not be familiar to many of us. That certainly was the case with me. So exactly who is Rev. Arthur P. Gray other than chair of the School Board on August 2nd, 1886? My research skills did not turn up much information so I turned to a place where I knew help would be forthcoming and was not disappointed. Don Wilson and his staff at RELIC, Bull Run Library, are well known for assisting everyone who asks on a wide range of information including genealogy and Prince William History. Don was able to compile a very large collection of information (more than I could use in this one

edition) that has been decomposed to the story on page eight. While Rev. Gray may be better known in places other than Brentsville, he certainly was a part of the community here and is gladly recognized for the work he accomplished. Thank you Don for your work on this article.

For the series “To Build a Jail” the plan was to have a single subject in each newsletter until the jail was completed. But I’ve found that the information about the Conestoga Wagon was so interesting that I had to split the chapter into multiple newsletters to do it justice.

Mike Simpson, who you might remember from his first story in the August 2008 (#035) newsletter, has been kind enough to write another story for us about his German roots. His story starts on page six. Don’t forget that if you have access to the Internet, you can find all back issues of the newsletter at www.historicprincewilliam.org/brentsvilleneighbors/index.html. We would certainly like to hear of other life experiences from those of you who have been touched by Brentsville in any way.

Very best wishes,
Kay & Morgan

This month:

➤ Flashback	page 2	➤ Our Heritage	pages 6 & 7
➤ Where Wild Things Live	pages 2 & 9	➤ Rev. A. P. Gray	pages 8 & 9
➤ Snippets	page 3	➤ Reader Feedback	page 9
➤ To Build a Jail	pages 4 & 5		

Flashback

BRENTSVILLE

Mr. William Ramkey held services in the Presbyterian Church Sunday night.

Mrs. Lucy Hartman, who has been visiting relatives in Roanoke, has returned to her home here.

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Baugher, of Elkton, visited relatives here over the weekend.

The Brentsville ball team lost their last game of the season to the Manassas Eagles. The score was 11 to 9.

Mrs. George Sean, of Baltimore, was buried at Valley Church last Sunday. She was a niece of Ray Hedrick.

Rev. Frank Griffith will preach in the Baptist Church on September 21.

Mrs. Tracie Whetzel and Mattie went to Washington Saturday to attend the wedding of Alene Whetzel, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Dave Whetzel, to James Grissett at the Temple Baptist Church. They also attended the reception at his home.

The Sunday evening visitors of Mr. and Mrs. Morgan Breeden were Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Breeden and Sophie Slusher, of Yorkshire, and Herman Ruby, of Washington.

The young peoples' social was held at the home of Joan and Sonny Sheffield Friday night. The next social will be at the home of Carl Beard on October 10.

Sunday visitors of Mr. and Mrs. Ray Hedrick were Mr. and Mrs. Willie Nalls and mother and Mr. and Mrs. Bucky Hedrick and baby, all of Alexandria, and Mr. and Mrs. Eddie Bladen and Elmer Hedrick and family, of Arlington.

Mr. and Mrs. Taylor James and family visited his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Hugh James, on Saturday. They have a new baby girl, Jane Elizabeth, who is six weeks old.

The Sheffields, who have been spending the summer with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ray Hendrick, will move to Alexandria the last of this week.

Mr. and Mrs. Philip James visited his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Hugh James, Tuesday and Wednesday.

Mrs. Troy Counts has returned home after visiting her daughter, Hazel, who lives near Lynchburg.

Source: The Manassas Journal, September 18, 1947.

Where WILD things live...



Grapevine beetle
Pelidnota punctata (Linnaeus, 1758)

The **grapevine beetle**, also known as **Spotted June Beetle**, is a member of the Scarab beetle family. Grapevine beetles are common in the north and central United States and Eastern Canada, but do relatively little damage to their host plants. The beetles fly at a fast speed, usually in a curving flight.

The adult beetle is approximately 1 inch long, but can reach 1.2 inches occasionally, off-yellow or auburn red, with three black spots running down each side. Fine black lines divide the edges of its elytra. The Grapevine Beetle is a variable species—so much so that T.L. Casey named ten species and subspecies in 1915, names that were later merged back into *Pelidnota punctata*.

Their color, shape, spots, and behavior sometimes lead them to be misidentified as a giant ladybug. While both are beetles, the grapevine beetle is of a distinct family.

The beetle lives, like many beetles, in forests, thickets, and woods, and is mostly seen during the summer. Active flyers, these beetles are

(Continued on page 9)



Snippets from the County School Board Minutes



The annual meeting of the County School Board was held at Brentsville, Aug. 2nd, 1886. Rev. A. P. Gray presiding.

The meeting opened with prayer. Roll was called and the following trustees noted present: Messrs. G. M. Ratcliffe, Jno. M. Payne, Jno. H. Dayne, Jno. S. Powell, James M. Barbee, C. M. Copin, Mark Thomas, Nathaniel House, Jno. A. Brawner, C. A. Heineken, T. M. Buckley and W. A. Lynn. Those absent were Messrs. Thos. E. Gossom, Wm. Metzger, Leland Lynn, R. W. Merchant, W. W. Thornton, J. T. Leachman and W. H Brown.

Minutes of last two meetings were read and approved.

C. A. Heineken was unanimously elected vice president and R. E. Thornton Secretary for the ensuing year.

The chair appointed Messrs. Jno. A. Brawner, Jno. M. Payne and R. E. Thornton a committee of three to settle with the County Treasurer and Clerks of the district school boards.

On motion, the 4th of July was placed on the list of legal holidays decided upon by the Board at the last annual meeting for which teachers are entitled to pay without teaching.

A bill of eight dollars was presented by the Clerk for services and ordered to be paid.

An appropriation of five dollars was made to the Superintendent for stationery &c.

Motion was made by Mr. Barbee to allow the county Treasurer a commission of two percent for disbursing the State School funds. To this Mr. Heineken offered an amendment to allow one percent instead of two. Motion, as amended by Mr. Heineken, was carried.

On motion the meeting adjourned.

[signed] Arthur P. Gray
Chairman

[signed] R. E. Thornton,
Clerk

To Build a Jail

By Morgan Breeden

Part 3 - Logistics



Last month we speculated that as much as 85 tons of sandstone blocks would be needed for the foundation of the jail. Thinking ahead we can also speculate that many tons of lumber will have to be moved to the site as well as many tons of raw materials from which bricks will be made. So now the problem is logistics – how to move all of this raw material from the source to the desired location over dirt roads that were at times more mud than dirt and always a challenge.

The backbone of the early logistical system was the Conestoga wagon, named for the Pennsylvania Dutch township in Lancaster county where they were invented. Wagon transport was dependable and solid, but slow and expensive. By 1820, freight rates on a wagon were one dollar per 100 pounds per 100 miles. Considering there was around 170,000 pounds of sandstone to be moved, that would represent quite a few trips even though the distance was short.

Above is an undated photo of a Conestoga wagon. They were hand built with oak and cost \$250. The bed was 16 feet long, four feet wide and four feet high. The sloping front and rear were to keep things from spilling out on steep grades. Also seen here is a team of Conestoga horses, which were bred specifically for wagon duty. Mostly black in color, they stood about five feet high at the shoulder and were stocky, tough and easy to handle. Good Conestoga horses went for about \$200 each. They are now extinct.

The name “Conestoga” has been applied to an early Indian group, to a river, to a valley, to a trail and road, to a manor, and to a now-extinct breed of horses. All of these are identified with Pennsylvania’s Lancaster County, known as “the nation’s breadbasket.” It was across the rich farmlands of that county and on the road connecting Lancaster with Philadelphia that the massive four-wheeled wagons, generally drawn by four to six Conestoga horses, first appeared.

(Continued on page 5)

Skilled workers were needed to build these wagons. And around 1770, Lancaster included among its craftsmen five wheelwrights, thirteen blacksmiths, seven turners, and twenty woodworkers.

Aside from the use of a saw and a turning lathe, everything about the Conestoga wagon was crafted with hand tools. Its bed, sloping upward from the middle, was usually fashioned out of white oak for the frame and poplar for the boards. Flooring and side boards were a half-inch to five-eighths of an inch thick; if the wagon was to be used for carrying ore at an iron furnace, the boards would be cut even thicker. Many parts of the wagon bed were braced with iron and handmade rivets secured the boards to the frame. Although there was little uniformity in its dimensions, the wagon bed generally measured sixteen feet in length, four feet in width, and four feet in depth. A dip toward the center took the weight of the load off the end gates in case the cargo shifted as the wagon made its way up and down hilly country. The end gates were held in position by a chain and staple that allowed the gate to be dropped for loading and unloading.

The front wheels of the wagon stood about three and a half feet high, and the rear wheels varied between four and four and a half feet. One test of a good wagon was its axles and hubs, and the wheelwright was quite exacting in their fabrication. Axles and crossbeams were made from tough hickory wood and the hubs from black or sour gum, a fibrous wood with a high resistance to splitting. Rough roads made it essential that axles, hubs, and wheel spokes be sturdily built. For passage through muddy spots and crossing streams, the iron tire rim required a broad surface. Widths varied from two to six inches, but experience proved a four-inch rim most satisfactory. Iron rims were

usually made of two pieces of iron a half-inch thick, bent to the exact size of the wheel and welded at both joints. Fitting the iron rim over the wooden wheel was quite an undertaking—a blacksmith's job that called for dexterity and an exact sense of heat judgment. A fire was built around the iron rim, and when the rim was thought to be sufficiently hot it was lifted by means of tongs, placed around the wooden wheel, and hammered into position. Cold water was then poured over the hot iron to shrink it to a tight fit. If the iron was too hot it might burn the wheel, if not hot enough there was danger of a poor fit, and if cooled too suddenly the rim could split.

Numerous products from the blacksmith's shop went into the wagon's construction. Stay chains made of hand-forged links held end gates in place; the tool box on the left side of the wagon just back of the lazy board was ornately hinged. An axe rested in a decorated socket, and the wagon tongue (or pole) and feed box were both strengthened and beautified by fancy ironwork. Brake shafts, linchpins, hooks, staples, and latches were other metal accouterments.

In a time when the dollar commanded far more labor and material than it does today, it took four people—the wheelwright and blacksmith and their helpers—doing several weeks of continuous work to complete the wagon and its sundry articles of equipment. A finished wagon, approximately twenty-six feet long, eleven feet high, weighing between three thousand and thirty-five hundred pounds, and capable of holding five hogsheads or thirty barrels of flour, cost the equivalent of about \$250—an incredibly low figure by today's standards.

(Part III will be continued next month)

Our German-American Heritage

By Michael Simpson



(The author lived in Brentsville from 1962 until 1969 when he left to enter the U. S. Naval Academy in Annapolis. He now lives in Hamburg, Germany.)

Like many Americans (about 20 per cent of us), I proudly claim predominantly German roots in my family tree. As a teenager growing up in Brentsville, I never gave much thought to this heritage. As an adult, and especially now that I live in Hamburg, Germany, I have become more aware of how much my own history, as well as America's, has been influenced by German traditions and cultural traits.

Although the first Germans arrived in Jamestown in 1608, my ancestors came quite a bit later. In the 19th century, both sets of my maternal great grandparents emigrated from Germany to America. My grandmother, born in Bremen, Germany, arrived as a two-year-old with her parents in about 1890, while my grandfather was born in the U.S. after his parents emigrated in the 1860's.



Both families were part of the great wave of European emigrants between 1850 and 1938.

For more than five million of these soon-to-be Americans, Hamburg was their gateway to the new world. Another two million emigrated through the port of Bremerhaven. Shipping companies, such as HAPAG (in German, the **H**amburg **A**merikanische **P**aketfahrd **A**ktien **G**esellschaft; in English, the Hamburg – American Line) organized



the passage, health checks, and ticketing for these emigrants. The General Director of HAPAG, Albert Ballin, had large emigration halls built in 1901 to house these emigrants. These halls became known as the “port of dreams.”

Today, a great museum occupies the space where those emigration halls stood. It is called BallinStadt, in honor of Albert Ballin, and dedicated to the five million emigrants who passed through this port on their way to America and fulfilling their dreams of better lives.

Occupying seven acres of Veddel Island, and consisting of three large halls (replicas of the original

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)



“Port of Dreams”), the BallinStadt Museum presents a vast exhibition about the backgrounds of the emigrants, their passage by ship to America, arrival at Ellis Island, and final destinations. If you cannot come to Hamburg to experience BallinStadt “live,” you can learn more and even take a virtual tour at the web site: <http://www.ballinstadt.net>.

Much closer to Brentsville, there is another good museum highlighting German immigration to the United States and German-Americans’ contributions to our history. In Washington, D.C., you can visit the German-American Heritage Museum of the USA. This art and multimedia museum, which opened in 2010, contains both permanent exhibits about German immigration and migration across the United States, as well as smaller, temporary exhibitions.

*[Interestingly, a current temporary exhibit is closely related to Brentsville and the Civil War — **The Civil War Seen through the Eyes of German-American Caricaturists: Thomas Nast and Adalbert Volck**. These two illustrators viewed the war from opposite sides; Nast worked for Harper’s Weekly (a northern paper) while Volck was a southern sympathizer and spy for the Confederacy. This exhibit continues through September 30th.]*



The German-American Heritage museum is located just opposite the Verizon Center at 719 6th Street NW, Washington, D.C. It is easily reached by Metro.

You can find a great deal more information about both the permanent and temporary exhibits at: <http://gahmusa.org/gahm/gahm.html>

Both of these museums, either in person or through their web sites, offer a wealth of information, pictures, and artifacts that bring the past to life. The BallinStadt Museum has also partnered with www.ancestry.de, and offers free assistance to anybody researching his or her own family emigration history.

Hamburg, Germany, and even Washington, D.C., may seem far removed from Brentsville, but as I have learned more about my own family and American history through these two museums, I have realized that the distance is not so great after all.

(Note: Photos courtesy of Michael Simpson)

Rev. Arthur Powell Gray

Minister of the Brentsville St. James Church

Arthur Powell Gray was born in 1853, the son of Judge William H. Gray, of Leesburg, and Ellen Douglas (Powell) Gray, of "Glengollen," Loudoun County where he seemed to have lived his childhood. By 1870 he appears in the census as A. P. Gray, age 17, mw, b. Va., a cadet at the Va. Mil. Inst., Lexington, Rockbridge County, Va. Upon completion of school at VMI he may have gone to Alexandria, Va., where he studied to become an Episcopal minister. Again, the census of 1880 shows him as age 26, a minister (Episc.) and boarding with the family of William T. Smith in the Village of Manassas, Va.

The Rev. Arthur Powell Gray was rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church (Gainesville) from 1881 to 1888. "Mr. [John] Ambler was succeeded by Rev. Arthur Powell Gray, a very young and very popular man. At the beginning of his pastorate a small house in Haymarket was improved in various ways for a Rectory. He married not long after this [1881] Wilhemina Radford, a most attractive woman, as much liked as himself. [She was a daughter of the late Captain and Mrs. Winston Radford, of near Forest, and was educated at a private school in Lynchburg where she was well known.] In their time the new Rectory became a center of hospitality, and continued till the present larger one was built. No one benefitted by this more than those in outlying parts of the Parish and to take the train from the rectory, or stay overnight there on the way home, became a recognized pleasure. Mr. Gray took much interest not only in his pastoral duties but in public affairs. It was in his time that the village of Haymarket was incorporated and Mr. Gray became the first Mayor. [sic, he was actually second after Mr. Hulfish] There was also some improvement in the church buildings. The vestibule at St. Paul's,

hitherto an open porch, was enclosed, and "Ewell's Chapel" was bought, repaired and improved to be finally consecrated as Grace Episcopal Chapel-of-Ease, by Bishop Alfred Randolph. Mr. Gray had charge of this work, and encouraged and helped in every possible way."

"It is known that in July 1877 the Rev. William W. Walker was assigned as missionary of the Piedmont Convocation with responsibility for the Manassas, Brentsville, Clifton, and Centreville areas, a task he undertook for but a year. His replacement was the newly ordained Arthur P. Gray, who took up residence in Manassas in July 1879." During the 1880s Rev. Gray wrote about the conditions of the Brentsville and Manassas churches. "In order to devote full time to the Manassas and Haymarket churches, Mr. Gray resigned, in March 1881, his charge of Clifton and Centreville, retaining Dettingen, but residing at Haymarket."

"Rev. A. P. Gray was sworn in as mayor of Haymarket on 19 July 1883. He stepped down as mayor on 3 Sept. 1883 and was sworn in as a councilman. On 26 Oct. 1883 Rev. A. P. Gray moved that a board of Trustees be elected to whom and their Successors shall be deeded the proposed School building ... Board to be composed of three members to be elected annually by the citizens of the town. ... balloting resulted in the election of G. A. Hulfish, A. P. Gray & C. E. Jordan. On 2 Nov. 1883 one of the council (Dr. Clarkson) resigns the office on account of inability to attend regularly, and Rev. A. P. Gray is elected to fill the position. [Minutes of Haymarket Town Council, which are lost after this date.]" And of course, in August, 1886, he presided over the County School Board.

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

Rev. Gray seemed to move quite frequently. Records show he was in Lewisburg, W.Va. in 1889; Amherst County, Va., during 1900; Cople, Westmoreland County, Va., during 1910; and Totaro, Brunswick County, Va., during 1920.

Monacan Indians established one settlement near Lynchburg, VA in the late 1700s and a second settlement on Bear Mountain in the 1800s. Reverend Arthur Gray built an Episcopal mission on Bear Mountain in 1907 and brought a new religion and schools to the Monacans. And in 1908, Rev. Gray proposed to build a chapel near “the center of the territory occupied by the tribe.” At this time, Rev. Gray was conducting one service each month at the log cabin schoolhouse. He stated, “These Indian people are increasing rapidly, and one could almost say that they are making a separate nation.” [The Monacan Indians near Lynchburg, VA]

The News of Lynchburg, VA reported on Wednesday, 21 Dec 1921, that The Rev. Arthur Powell Gray, a retired clergyman of the Episcopal church, died Sunday night at the home of his daughter, Mrs. R. B. Tyler, Lawrenceville, at the age of 68 years. He had been paralyzed about six weeks previously.

Primary Sources:

- <http://eservice.pwccgov.org/library/digitalLibrary/PDF/Gainesville-Haymarket%20Book%20Transcript.pdf>
- *St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Haymarket, Virginia: 150th Anniversary, August 1984*, p. 11-12.
- L. Van Loan Naisawald, *Trinity Episcopal Church 1872-1972 ...* (1972), p. 4-5
- <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=60835219>
- <http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=jnorvell&id=P12834>
- <http://www.monacannation.com/history.shtml>
- http://www.locohistory.org/Amherst/schools_bearmountain.shtml

F e e d b a c k

I'm just now reading the July newsletter, which came while we were traveling. Another great issue — I really like your “speculative history” approach on the building of the jail.

Mike Simpson
Germany

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I enjoyed reading the August edition of the Brentsville Neighbors. I like the “Flashback” section. At first I didn’t notice that these were flashbacks from 1945; I figured they were modern-day happenings written in a nostalgic way from simpler times. The Jail piece was also very informative.

Victor Rook

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This is an excellent newsletter, Morgan....very informative and diverse. Please keep me on your email list. Thank you for all you do and God Bless America.

Dave Goetz
Warrenton

(Continued from page 2)

commonly attracted to lights at night. It is also seen in vineyards and gardens.

The adult beetle eats the leaves and fruit of grapevines, both wild and cultivated, although it is not normally a major pest of vineyards.

Beetle eggs are laid in rotten wood, tree stumps, or on soil near the host plant, where they hatch into larvae. Larvae then dig their way into the soil, where they feed on rotted wood. *Pupal chambers* are built shallowly underground. The adults emerge in July.

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Brentsville Neighbors

Preserving Brentsville's History

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IN GOD WE TRUST

