

Brentsville Neighbors

“Preserving Brentsville’s History”

J u l y 2 0 1 4

Welcome Neighbors,

June was a hectic month but it drew to a close with a very enjoyable day at the courthouse when the Prince William County Firefighters and Police Officers met for a challenge game of slow-pitch softball to raise funds to support the American Red Cross. It is not clear how much money was raised but the games (they played two 7-inning games) were exciting and as fun to watch as they must have been to play. After that the “local boys” took the field for an impromptu game that continued the fun. And, oh yes, the hot dogs and popcorn were both hot and plentiful.

Mary Lou’s article starting on page four brought more than just a little excitement in finding information about the family and even in the mystery of not being able to find details about the event. But I’ll not ruin the story for you so read on and enjoy. She would like to acknowledge Whittaker Jones of Fredericksburg, Virginia, who is a retired administrator at the US Postal Service and who provided her with valuable insight on the history of post cards.

This month on July 12th, please join us for a Brentsville Court and Trades Day/Flea Market from



The combined teams

11 a.m. until 4p.m. Court days were exciting in the 1800s! Come discover what court was like in Brentsville during its days as the fourth county courthouse of Prince William County. Come sit in on a trial and learn about the court proceedings of the 1800s, which differ greatly from today. Historic tradesmen and tradeswomen will be showcasing their skills, as well as modern crafts and jewelry for sale. Table reservations required for participation in Flea Market. There will be an entry fee of \$5 per person, children under six free, and \$10 for table reservation. Please call 703-365-7895 for more information.

Very best wishes,
Kay and Morgan

This month:

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| ➤ Letter From Brentsville | page 2 | ➤ When WAR Came | pages 7 & 8 |
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The members of our family have always been firm believers in magic. We are inclined to Attribute this trait to an inherited scientific cast of mind,—strange though it may seem at first glance; but the scientist must be skeptical, and to really make a success of skepticism it is desirable to neither believe nor disbelieve in anything too strenuously. We, personally, would be much embarrassed if caught making dogmatic statements about the non-existence of Magic just because it has never been isolated under a microscope, split in a cyclotron, or captured on the back stairs by Mrs. Woodyard and deposited in the famous Cox dragnet. At any rate, we have seen too many queer things, (being born and raised within hiking distance of the Capitol,) to even lift an eyebrow over L'affaire Flying Saucer, which was exercising the pens of so many editorial writers last week. For instance, in our own household, not only saucers fly, but also such a diversified assortment of articles as spoons, screw drivers, eyeglasses, buttons, dollar bills, socks, raspberry jam, and teen-aged boys. At least we ASSUME that they fly; the speed and mysteriousness with which they vanish makes it a thoroughly logical assumption. For a long time we tried earnestly to figure out this Now-you-see-it, Now-you-don't business by logic, using, both the deductive and the inductive process of reasoning, and when all else failed we decided it was less of a strain to say matter-of-factly, "Oh, Pixies again," and let it go at that. It was only last week that we were complaining bitterly to Mrs. Muse about the Disappearing-act that the males of the human race seem to be able to put on at will: It is only necessary to say wistfully, "Gill, the trash needs emptying," or "Nick, WHEN are you going to do something about that leaky faucet?", and, unless you have a determined grasp on a leg or arm, they will go up in a puff of smoke and be seen no more—until next meal time. Mrs. M., who aside from being our boss's wife and therefore to be treated with great circumspection, seems to be a lady of considerable experience in these matters, assured me that this is Standard Procedure, not Pixies, and occurs in the best regulated families, which is something we wouldn't know about but were pleased to learn. It made us feel a little less conspicuous. But we wish to urge anyone who might spy a flying saucer to follow the darn thing and see where it goes, because it is just possible that it might lead them to the lair of all the lost collar buttons, keys, can openers, dogs, and other

objects, both animate and inanimate, that make a specialty of vanishing ... as if by Magic!

Mr. Lewis Bell and his wife were week-end guests of their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Bell. Mrs. Norma Cooksey, Mr. Bell's niece, was also out. Mr. Bell continues about the same.

Mrs. Speaks spent the week-end visiting in Alexandria.

Elmer Hedrick and family were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Hedrick, and Mr. and Mrs. Koombs and their daughter, of Charleston, W. Va., also spent the week-end.

Mr. Frank Griffith will hold services at the Baptist Church on Sunday, the 20th.

Miss Doris Stephens, and Miss Fay Golladay were home from Washington for the week-end.

Mr. Chester Whetzel of Washington visited Mr. and Mrs. Jessie Whetzel.

Mrs. Lillie Keys and Mrs. Gallahan both spent Sunday in Staunton visiting relatives.

Little Jackie Pope's mother and stepfather visited her at the Shoemaker's on Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. Ermine Wade were guests of the Jim Shoemaker's on Sunday.

Barbara Wade is spending the week with Mrs. Myrtle Keys, and Lloyd Keys and May Walters were her guests on Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. Ritchie and son visited her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Irvin Spitzer on Sunday, and Private Sidney Spitzer, accompanied by two friends, was home for the week-end. Shirley Spitzer is spending the week with her sister, Mrs. Ritchie.

The Beards, accompanied by Frederick Whetzel, spent Sunday at Colonial Beach.

Mrs. Potts has been visiting the Corbins.

Mrs. Orebough's grandson, Norman Vaughn, was a visitor over the week-end. He rode out on a bicycle from Washington.

Freddie Wolfe returned home on Sunday, after spending a week with his aunt in Elkton, and George Wolfe was home from Washington for the week-end.

The baseball game on Sunday ended in an eighteen to eight victory for Brentsville; Our success was attributed largely to Mont Bradshaw's distinguished pitching. Next Sunday the Brentsville team plays Haymarket again, and we all hope for better luck this time.

Don't forget that P.T.A. is next week.

Best Regards,
Agnes Webster

1947-07-18 The Manassas Messenger

Where WILD things live...

The Widow Skimmer

Libellula luctuosa

The Widow Skimmer (*Libellula luctuosa*) is one of the group of dragonflies known as King Skimmers. The species name means sorrowful or mournful, perhaps because the wings of both male and female seem to be draped in mourning crepe.

It is a large, attractive dragonfly with uniquely patterned wings, which are dark at the base, white in the middle and glass-like on the tips.

The abdomen and the front of the thorax of the male are white and have a powder-like appearance, whereas the rest of the thorax, eyes and face are dark brown.

The female and juvenile widow skimmer have a dark body with a yellow stripe which extends from the upperside of the thorax to the base of the abdomen, where it splits into two lines. The female has a light brown face, brown eyes and a similar wing pattern to the male, although the wings of the female have a dark smudge at the tip and the base of the wing is paler.

The flight season of the widow skimmer, when the adults are active, can vary between April and November throughout its range. The male widow skimmer defends a large territory, regularly partaking in territorial disputes and chases with other males, as well as with other dragonfly species. Occasionally, a group of males will defend a territory, which has one dominant male who is most likely to mate. Copulation lasts for between 10 and 20 seconds and occurs both in flight and at rest, and is followed by the female

depositing the fertilized eggs into water. While the female deposits the eggs, the male will occasionally guard the female to guarantee the eggs are fertilized by him alone, by ensuring no further copulation occurs with other males. Widow skimmer larvae are aquatic and pass through a number of developmental stages until they finally crawl to the shore and break open the skin, revealing a fully-formed adult.



The diet of the adult widow skimmer consists of small flying insects, which are hunted from an elevated perch. All dragonfly larvae are voracious predators and catch their prey using specialized mouthparts, which extend forward rapidly, grip their aquatic prey and pull it into the larva's mouth.

The widow skimmer is a widespread species which is found throughout most of the United States and Canada, as well as in Mexico.

The widow skimmer commonly inhabits areas surrounding ponds, marshes, lakes, pools and slow streams. Areas with plentiful vegetation are preferred, with the vegetation used as a perch. This species is also common far away from water in open country, meadows and roadsides.

There are not known to be any specific conservation measures currently in place for this common and widespread dragonfly. The widow skimmer occurs in many protected areas and its population appears to be increasing.

Source: Multiple Internet locations

Look What Came in the Mail – A Postcard Sent to Brentsville Many Years Ago By Mary Lou Van Derlaske

“Hello Their(sic) My Little Man. I guess you are looking for Santa Claus all right...” So begins the message on the back of an antique postcard, postmarked December 11, 1908 that I received on approval as part of a batch of similar cards from one of my postcard dealer friends. On the front is an image of a guardian angel watching over two children as they pick flowers and collect butterflies at the edge of a cliff.

I collect antique postcards. I value their period artwork, as well as the messages on their reverse sides, which often provide significant insight into the history of the time in which they were sent. One of the things that makes collecting antique postcards so interesting is that you never know when the hand written message may tell some story about families and their daily lives.

I continued on to read the address: *“Master Herbie Breeden, Brentsville, Prince William County, Virginia.”* I knew right then and there that I had a “keeper”. In contacting Morgan Breeden, he confirmed that it was addressed to his Uncle Herbert, age 4 at the time, and he immediately embarked on researching it (which is no easy task).

Front of the
postcard
addressed to
Master Breeden.



The Emergence of the Picture Postcard

Commencing in the 1840's, lithographic printing techniques allowed illustrated letterheads and Christmas greeting cards to become popular ways to communicate through the mails with style and flair. During the Civil War, letterheads and envelopes frequently conveyed patriotic images.

In 1861, John Charlton of Philadelphia copyrighted a private postal card. He was unsuccessful in patenting it and sold the copyright to H. L. Lipman also of Philadelphia. He began to market *Lipman's Postal Card* in which one side was used for the address and the other for a message. They contained no picture, however.

In 1869, the Austrian Post Office issued the first government postal card. The idea was rapidly embraced by other European countries. The United States, after first rejecting the idea in 1870, finally adopted it on June 8, 1872. By late 1873, an average of 10 million cards a month were being sold by the Post Office.

These were blank postal cards, and had the requirement that only the address be written on one side. They were originally produced by the Federal Bureau of Engraving and Printing and carried pre-printed postage on the address side. Postal cards were immediately recognized by businesses as effective and economical ways of communicating with customers. They would purchase these cards and print illustrations and/or messages on the other side.

In 1898 privately published postcards were allowed to be sent at the same standard rates as government issued cards. Early private cards were denoted *Post Cards* while government cards were called *Postal Cards*.

(Continued from page 4)

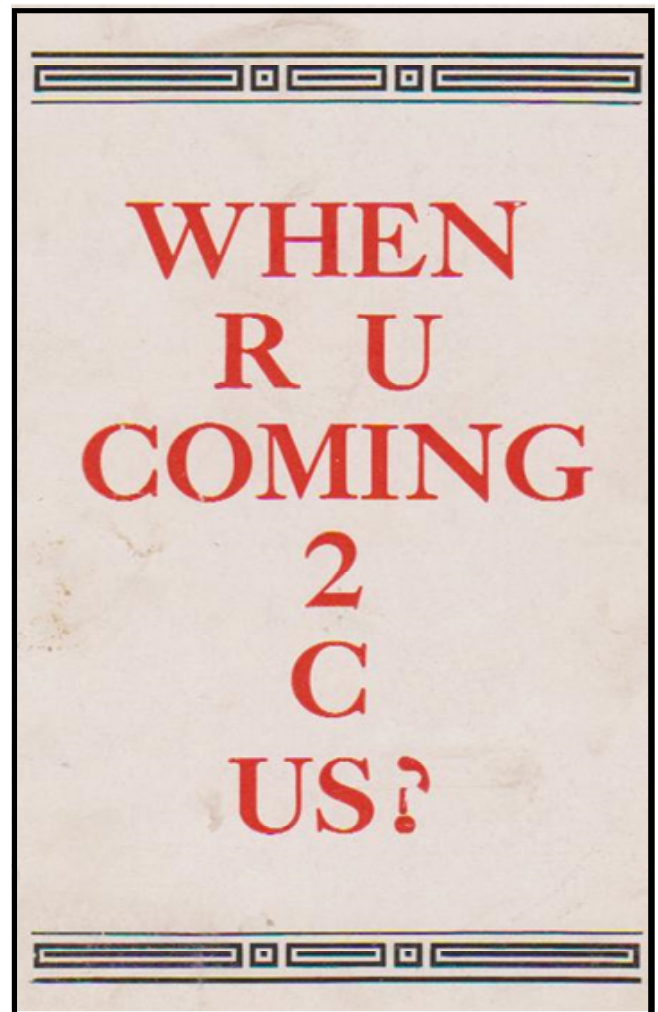
The Rural Free Delivery system, established in 1898, which provided free postal delivery to small towns and rural areas, enabled the rapid adoption of the postcard as an efficient and cheap means of communicating. Printing of “picture post cards” without imprinted postage started a craze with their artful imagery making them immediately sought after and collectible.

The period from roughly the turn-of-the-century to around 1920 was the heyday of picture postcard sending and collecting. Some people kept their postcards in albums to share with other collectors, as correspondence keepsakes or for arm-chair traveling. The subject matter varied from holiday, religious, and everyday life themes to humorous images, jokes and landscape and town views. (Frequently the latter are useful tools in historic preservation research.) Sometimes they were published in sets to encourage more sales.



A typical seasonal greeting illustrated by highly regarded postcard artist Ellen Clapsaddle

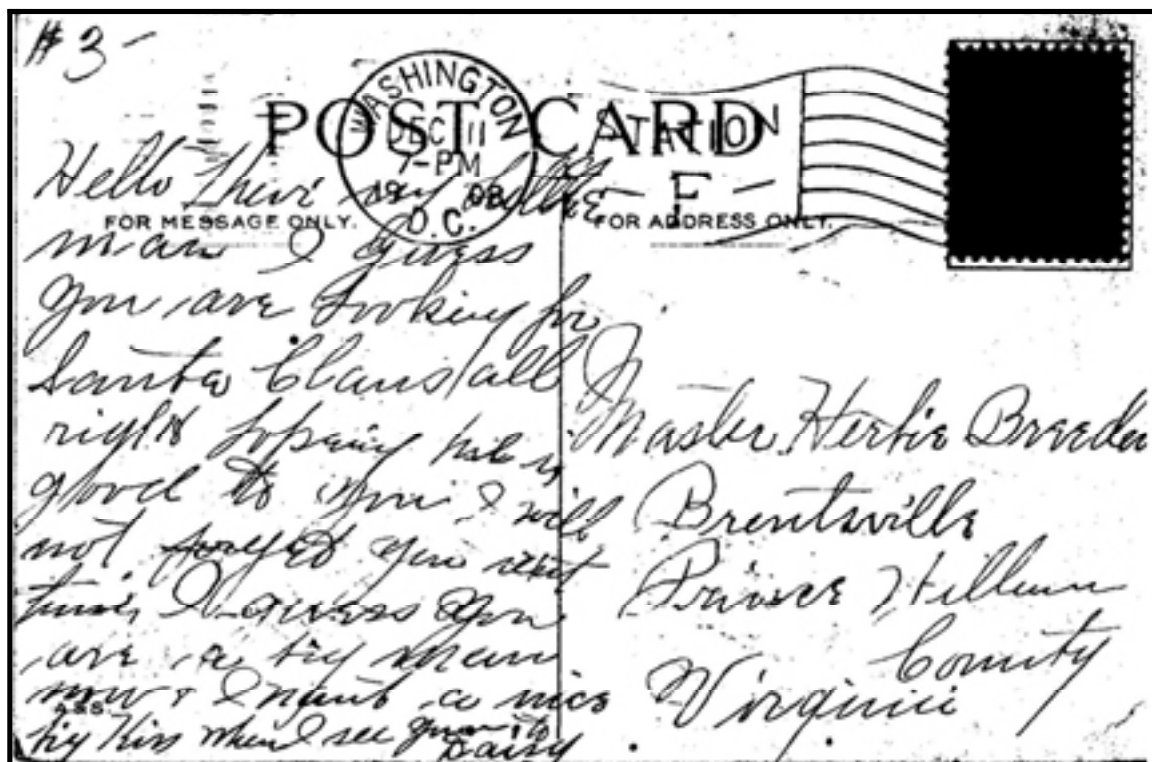
As mail was delivered up to two or three times a day in certain areas, postcards could serve the purpose of rapid communication such as email, texting or instant-messages do today. One could send a postcard in the morning telling someone that you will be meeting them at the train station in the late afternoon or early evening and it would faithfully serve its purpose.



A 1914 postcard with an image that could easily pass for a modern day text message

Today, collectors value cards with certain themes, holidays, printing techniques and artists, many of whom have become quite famous for their artwork. The messages on them, however, should never be ignored. This is what makes the postcard addressed to “Master Herbie Breeden” particularly interesting.

(Continued from page 5)



The Postcard to Herbie

The full text of the postcard reads as follows:

"Hello Their my Little man. I guess you are looking for Santa Claus all right. Hoping he is good to you. I will not forget you next time. I guess you are a big man now. I want a nice big Kiss when I see you. Daisy."

Was this a Christmas Card? Could it have been one of a batch of cards being mailed during the holiday season? The image, however, does not convey a Christmas message as Christmas postcards usually did.

Who was Daisy? It is not definitively known whether she was a relative or friend of the Breeden family.

The card was mailed from Station F in Washington, D.C. During the period from 1904 through 1916, Station F was located at 1413 Park Road, NW which places it at the corner of 14th Street in the Columbia Heights neighborhood. So, Daisy likely either lived or worked in that general area.

"I will not forget you next time." Was she close enough to have sent him a gift previously and had forgotten to or forgotten she had? Did she just forget

to send him a greeting in the past? At age 4, would he have known anyway?

How did this particular postcard find its way into the hands of an antique postcard dealer in Alexandria, Virginia?

These are all questions that frequently make the interpretation of the messages on old postcards so interesting. They are not private messages in sealed envelopes. They are open for everyone to see, even 100 years later. Researching messages like this may take time, but they can end up yielding insight into family connections not previously known.

Other messages can give us a better understanding of the trials of life that people had to deal with in those times. I have read about concerns regarding the family cow being ill and not knowing how to cope if she died. Frequently common illnesses in a world where medicine was less sophisticated were addressed with uncertainty and insecurity. And, of course, different mores of the times are displayed, such as the writer who stated that his sister was getting *"..fat as a house.."*, hardly a sensitive thing to say in today's world.

Here's hoping we find out more about the connection between Master Breeden and Daisy from a time when much personal communication was conveyed by the gentle art of the picture postcard.

When WAR Came to Brentsville

Last month in the article "The Iron Brigade at Brentsville" by Bill Backus he made reference to a letter written by Timothy Webster of the 24th Michigan. As promised then, this is a full transcript of that letter which has also been provided by Bill.

"This transcription was copied from the original document and is representative of all spelling, punctuation, and grammar as written by the creator. The original document is housed in the Pearce Civil War Collection, Pearce Collections Museum, Navarro College, Corsicana, Texas. <http://www.pearcecollections.us>"

Accession No. 1999.160.140

TO Webster 7th Ambulance Corps
First Army Corps first division first brigade
Washington DC

Camp Near Lees Berg on [rack]road June
18th 1863

My Dear Wife & Children I intend to write to ya before this time. I recived yours of the 8th and was glad to hear that you had recived the money also the likeness I got yours while on the march and I hav not had time to write before. there is some big move now again on with ower army and the rebbells are ~~are~~ both under rappid movement we hav fell back from the rapanhanock and the rebs has come acrost with a verry large force. you spoke of going to your uncles and wished to know what I thought about it I think you aught to know my mind in regards to all such things, it is my wishes to hav you do just what you like to do or whatever you would engoy the best as far as your means will permit you dont think I would be displeased at any thing that you done for your own pleasure and comfort as long as I am absent from you and

cannot do eny thing my self for you onely to send my money and wish you well so you must chose for you self. I am pleased to hear of eny thing that you do to add to your comfort. perhaps it would be the best thing you could do to go out there and make a good visit if you go giv them all my kindest regards. the weather is verry dry and hot there is a good maney that falls with the sun stroke, on the marches we hav to pick up hundreds and carry them on. buy the what the thing looks now I think we will clean out the rebs this summer afectualy, you may think ths is [gwear] mate paper but I thought it would do verry well as it did not cost me any thing we come through a desisted village there was a large court ~~h~~ house and some other publick buildings it was a county seat all the reckords and documents of the county for a hundread years was left behind ower boys volunteerly destroyed them this paper was out of one of the books. I presume you hav written to me since th eone of the 9 but they hav not given us any mail for a week past it is at ower hear quarters they hav not had time to overhall it on the march they hav now got two ambulance loaded down with it I dont know whether I shall get a chance to

send this or not. it is not I am sleepy and dull I cannot hardly collect my sences enough to write. Jerry has not answered my letter yet perhaps he is newly afended at me. there is a peer crasy felloe here with us he has stuck about to me since I commensed this leter and keeps bothering me he is verry insane he is onely about 20 years oald he is from wisconsin. there was a man that was shot for disersion while on the march I saw his grve but I did not wish to see him shot his grave was dug and he nelt on his coffin at first there was twelve guns all loaded with ball but one there was 3 balls took an affect but did not kill him there was 2 more balls through him when he soon seessed to liv. he had deserted three or four times. when I think of home I feel as if I should like to drop in and see all the changes round town but I want to see the end of this thing before I come home. it has just commensed thundering it is verry hard it is verry difficult to tell whether its thunder or canonadeing. giv my best wishes to mrs soper let me know how mr soper gets along and I should like to hear about the little ones write all about the news in genereal let me know how Brintlers folds is giv them my best respects. how is the vegetable market this spring I hav had some strawberries and some cherries severel times let me know what kind of weather you hav had down there this spring we hav not had any rain since the big fight. let me know what you hav done callies grave and how it looks up there. who livs in Mrs Cords house had there been any improvements about the prison yards since I left.

Now I will write a fiew lines to the children. Wall Charley you mah tells me she has bought you a drum why dont you write to me all about it I should like to know if it

is a good one and I should like to know if you learn to drum any since I left home. I heard you was agoing to a picknic did you hav a good time I suppose you are an extra good boy now you aught to be for that nice drum I hope I shall hear that you do evrey thing to pleas mah that you can I was sorry to hear that you had been sick now Charley remember and be good boy learn as fast as you can perhaps I will come home this fall and then I can tell how fast you hav improved

A Word to Emma

Mah said you was pleased with the likeness it is not a verry ~~orr~~ nice one but you can remember it is your pah and think he wants you to always try and be a good girl learn fast mind mah and your teacher the first time you are toald to do any thing ~~the~~ in all careers I think it wont be long before I can come home and then I can let you hav a better likenes if I find you hav always been a good girl since I left home tell me if you get a nice picture in the other side

I will now bring this to a close for this time buy wishing you all health happyness and friends through all your life and when done here be prepared to meet where charity is no more

I am trewly your affectionate Husband and Father

TO Webster

[top of page]

T.O. Webster Washington D.C.
Ambulance ~~eor~~ corps 24 mich
1st Corps 1st division

PRINCE WILLIAM

PRINCE WILLIAM was established by the Legislature in 1730, and formed from a portion of Stafford and King George counties. It is bounded N. and N. E. by Bull Run, and Occoquan river, which separate it from Loudoun and Fairfax,—E. by the Potomac, separating it from Charles county Maryland,—S. by Stafford,—S. W. and W. by Fauquier. Its mean length is $30\frac{3}{4}$ miles, mean breadth 12; and its area 370 square miles. It extends in lat. from $38^{\circ} 30'$ to $38^{\circ} 55'$ N. and in long. from $0^{\circ} 15'$ to $0^{\circ} 45'$ W. of W. C.

Occoquan river rises in Loudoun, Fairfax, and Fauquier counties, traverses and drains the upper part of Prince William. It is an important tributary of the Potomac, and falls into that river 25 ms. below W. C. and nearly opposite to Indian Point. Its principal branches are Bull Run, Broad Run and Cedar Run. *Bull Run* from its source to its mouth, is the dividing line between the counties of Fairfax and Prince William. It joins the Occoquan about 7 miles above the town of Occoquan, and 14 miles from the Potomac river. *Broad Run* has its source in Fauquier County, and after passing through the chain of the Bull Run mountain, at the pass of Thoroughfare, and by the town of Buckland, joins the Cedar Run about a mile below Brentsville, the *county town* of Prince William. *Cedar Run* rises in Fauquier county, and passing near Warrenton, joins Broad Run near Brentsville. These streams, and indeed many of their branches, afford fine seats for manufacturing establishments. At the junction of Broad and Cedar, the river receives the name of Occoquan. Its general direction towards the Potomac is S. E.—and its length about 25 ms. At 18 ms. from the junction it meets the tides at the town of Occoquan. Here it reaches the hills, which are the boundary of the Potomac valley, and down them the river is precipitated about 72 feet, in the distance of one and a half miles. In these hills is the chain of rocks which crosses all the rivers of Lower Virginia at the head of tide water. The action of the water in the course of ages, has washed the earth from the channel, and the rocks lie in its bed in every rude variety of position. The banks of the river here present every where jutting rocks, and sometimes great precipices. The pine finds sustenance among the crevices and gives a relief and a grace to scenery that would otherwise be savage. Immediately below the town of Occoquan the banks subside into a plain; and at two miles, the ancient town of Colchester is passed. Five miles below Colchester a junction is effected with the Potomac, between High and Freestone Points. At its mouth the Occoquan is five miles wide; at the head of the tide, it is about 75 yards; here however it is hemmed in by the hills, and as the volume of its waters is very great, in floods it is very deep, (viz, from 12 to 20 feet.) Below the town of Colchester it suddenly widens to two or three miles. The earth and rubbish brought down by the floods are deposited, and at such times the navigation is obstructed for vessels drawing more than 5 feet water. There is however nothing which opposes serious obstacles to clearing the bar, whenever the wants of the people inhabiting the country drained by its waters shall require it. The subject has already attracted some attention, and the navigation of the river and its important branch Cedar run, which it has been proposed to effect, above the tide by the lock and dam system, has been the occasion of some proceedings in the legislature.

Population in 1810, 11,311—1820, 9,419--1880, 9,320. Prince William belongs to the sixth judicial circuit and third district. Tax paid in 1838, *2697 07—in 1834 on lots \$183 15—on land, 1772 65--1737 slaves, \$434 25--2383 horses, \$142 98—5 studs, \$48 00--27 coaches, \$59 50—15 carryalls, \$15 00--16 gigs, \$12 95. Total, \$2668 48. Expended in educating poor children in 1832, \$500 18—in 1833, \$565 32.

Source: A New and Comprehensive GAZETTEER OF VIRGINIA, and the DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA. Published by Joseph Martin, 1835.

Brentsville Neighbors

“Preserving Brentsville’s History”

Contact us on:

morganbreeden@aol.com

All back issues on:

<http://www.historicprincewilliam.org/brentsvilleneighbors/index.html>

**Brentsville Neighbors
c/o Morgan Breeden
9721 Windy Hill Drive
Nokesville, VA 20181**

IN GOD WE TRUST

