

# *Brentsville Neighbors*

“Preserving Brentsville’s History”

**A u g u s t      2 0 1 4**

Welcome Neighbors,

There is something you should not miss scheduled for August 9<sup>th</sup>. A Brentsville Movie Night! Back when the courthouse was used as a community center, it was not uncommon for movies to be shown as a fund raiser for the school library or other worthwhile causes. They were mostly projected on the inside wall, were always family oriented, and a small fee was charged. The movie on the 9<sup>th</sup> will not be exactly like that, but ... it will still be family-oriented only this time shown outside and FREE to the public. The show starts at nightfall. You are asked to bring your own chairs and/or blankets. Concessions will be available for purchase. Call 703-365-7895 for more details.

Page four contains information about a school closing ceremony at the Brentsville school on April 30, 1910. I found this fascinating for a number of reasons:

Reason 1) The students – There seems to be about 20 listed. How many did you know? Some from close by included David Keys (5 years old) and his sister, Violet (7); their 1<sup>st</sup> cousin, Minnie Keys (9); Tracie Spitzer (10); Viola Donovan (10); Minnie Smith (16); and the oldest, Lillie Molair (18).

Reason 2) the program – I honestly did not know any of these selections but started looking them up and what a treasure! So much in tune with that time period.

Reason 3) the physical school – I have not found records that identified the grades taught in the

school but believe it was elementary only, probably grades 1 thru 5, although it could have gone as high as the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. But it was a one-room wooden structure and by 1910 was much too small for the number of students. The number was sufficiently large to justify two teachers although most of the time there was only one. The Brentsville District School Board was actively looking for a new location to conduct the school, including negotiations with Dr. W. J. Bell who had recently purchased the jail and courthouse from the Prince William Academy after it moved to Nokesville a short time earlier. These negotiations continued for a number of months until finally the courthouse was purchased in 1912 for \$900, including 2 acres of land, and the building was remodeled to the satisfaction of the State Board of Education. Classes started in October 1910 with two teachers, Miss Ellicott (grades 5-7) and Miss Cooper (grades 1-4).

The process of purchasing the courthouse and converting it into a graded school is very interesting and will be offered as a story in a future edition.

Renovation of the jail continues and we will have a detailed up-date next month. I think you will be pleased with the progress.

Very best wishes,  
Kay and Morgan

## **This month:**

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Somewhere kicking around this wide world, we have a cousin whom we have not seen for many years. I doubt if this situation is strictly original with us; there must be thousands of lost cousins, wandering up and down the face of

the earth, who would not recognize their Aunt's children if they were to rush up and bite them on the ankle. —Not that we anticipate any such eccentric behavior from this particular cousin we were speaking about, as he has turned out to be a very respectable citizen during some twenty-five years hiatus in our acquaintance. He is always referred to, respectfully, as The Brainy Member of the Family; every family has to have it's brainy member, though, alas, they are not invariably held in such esteem as is Cousin Francis. He went in for some branch of science with an unpronounceable name which slightly handicaps us when stray conversations turn kinshipwards, as they are so apt to do on this favored side of Mason & Dixon's Line, so we have been in the habit of inventing a profession for him. It is not always the same profession, but HE doesn't know the difference, and we are always careful to make it sound impressive, without coming right out and vulgarly bragging. Some day, we have promised ourself, we will go and investigate this mythical character and see if he actually has any existence outside of our own, and our Aunt's fevered brains, but in the meanwhile it is very comfortable to build him up as a sort of super-cousin, and we notice in ourself a distinct reluctance to precipitate an encounter that might result not only in disillusion, but in a great horrid conversational vacuum as well.

At any rate, the last time we saw Aunt May, she had a story to tell us about her phenomenal offspring. I will admit that we listened rather indifferently at first, as we also had several stories to tell about OUR phenomenal offspring, and were just marking time until we could bring the discussion around, not too obviously, to a point that would permit us to say in an off-hand manner, "Oh, by the way, did I tell you what Delancy did the other day?" But fortunately she got started first, and persisted, and as there was a long afternoon ahead we bided our time grimly, meanwhile improving mentally on our own anecdote, with a detail here and an adjective there, as is the custom of raconteurs.

I think it was the word Manassas that fixed my attention on what she was saying, but by that time I had mislaid the name of the lady about whom my Aunt was speaking. I was too far behind by then to catch up, so will have to give you the tale amputated, as it were, of all vital statistics. It seems that Cousin Francis attended a scientific convention where he made the acquaintance of a lady who was originally from Manassas but had married

a Scotch scientist and gone elsewhere to live. In the course of a varied career she had acquired a fascinating assortment of accents which was what impelled my Cousin Francis to inquire — in a scientific way, of course, — as to her origin, and when she answered Manassas, all he could think of to answer was, "Oh, I have a cousin who lives somewhere around there."

The lady immediately responded by asking the name of this alleged relative. Now for fictional purposes let us assume that Cousin Francis is not only absentminded, but also near-sighted; It makes a better story that way. So, peering myopically at the lady of the misplaced name, he exclaimed in some astonishment, as one who has never given the question an instant's thought, "Damned if I know!"

"You don't know your own cousin's name?" inquired the lady from Manassas, also with scientific curiosity. People in Virginia just don't say things like that. "Well," said Cousin Francis, cautiously, "she hasn't lived there very long, and besides she's got a different name now." "I SEE." Said the Lady from Manassas, in a tone of dark suspicion, implying that what she saw was a relative of very doubtful reputation .... Probably a Communist, or worse, a Yankee.

All of which goes to prove the truth of what we meant to point out at the beginning, but somehow never got around to, and this is that if all of the long-lost cousins were laid end to end some very interesting conversations would no doubt ensue. But that we, for one, not EVER intend to risk it.

About sixty five members of Brentsville's younger set enjoyed themselves Sunday at a picnic at Johnny Earhart's place. The celebration was the final get-together of the Vacation Bible School which has just concluded a successful two weeks. Most everybody took a dip in Cedar Run, and everybody filled up on fried chicken, pickles, potato chips, cake and ice cream (Mrs. Whetzel says that the pickles and ice cream were NOT devoured together.)

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kempton are entertaining Mrs. Kempton's Mother who is visiting here from Florida. The family spent Sunday sight-seeing in Washington.

Silas Bean has been stationed at Fort Belvoir.

We are sorry to hear that Mr. Bell has returned to the hospital, but happy to report that Mrs. Ora Keys has come home after an operation and is doing nicely.

And here is a bit of scandal. Your correspondent has deserted her family and run off with another man! It's not as bad as it sounds, however. The other "man" is my little four year old boy, and we've just "run off" for a week's vacation on the Eastern Shore.

Back next week,

Agnes Webster

The Manassas Messenger, August 8, 1947

## Where WILD things live...

### Eastern American Toad *Bufo americanus americanus*

The Eastern American toad is usually some shade of brown, but colors can vary from olive to tan to gray to red and can change depending on the toad's surroundings and age. They are short and broad, from two to around four inches long, and have a wide head and short, muscular legs. A mature female toad is larger than an adult male, and her skin is much rougher in texture, with more pointed dorsal warts. They have chests and throats that are cream or white with spots, although the males' throats will always be darker. Toads have a very warty appearance, and the warts (raised swellings, not "real" warts) protect them from predators by secreting bufotoxin, an unpleasant white substance that is a mild, foul-tasting poison. The large swellings behind the eyes are the paratoid glands, and in Eastern American toads, the paratoid glands do not touch the raised ridges on the back of the head that are called cranial crests. Another identifying factor is that Eastern American toads have only one or two warts in each spot. Other types of toads have more.



Eastern American toads breed in April and May in fresh, shallow water. The female lays gelatinous strings of up to twelve thousand eggs that hatch after about four days. The tadpoles develop rapidly and have become toadlets by June or July.

These toads often stay in one area. They like to be where temperatures are cool and there is loose soil and a food source. Toads have knobs on their back feet that they use to shove dirt aside. It is quite amazing to see them suddenly sink into the soil and disappear. Toads also hibernate underground during winter.

Toads are often called hop toads because they move in short hops instead of in long leaps as frogs do. Toads are great to have in the garden. One toad eats more than three thousand insects per season, using their hands and arms to push the food into their mouths.

Source: <http://www.choosingvoluntariness.com/eastern-american-toad-bufo-americanus-americanus/>

# School Days of Yesterday

## PROGRAM AT BRENTSVILLE SCHOOL

With a literary and musical program of high excellence the Brentsville school closed last Saturday night. The year has been successful under the direction of Miss S. L. Garth, the teacher. From the entertainment about \$14 was realized for the Brentsville library. James Wright was master of ceremonies. The following program was rendered:

Welcome	Irene Shenk
Marse is in the Cold, Cold Ground,	
The Ten Little Chickens	Children
A Small Boy	Pete Woodyard
Little Beans	David Keys
The Bird's Song	Marie Stanbus
The Ten little Children Who Went to School	
Keep A Going	Harvey Woodyard
Grandma's Lost Balance	Minnie Keys
May Queen	Three Girls
How Sally Helped	Bessie Baker
Tenting Tonight	Song
Illustrated Story	Two Boys
Arbor Day	Irene Shenk
Welcome to Spring	Tracie Spitzer
What Baby Said	Violet Keys
My Angels	Gladys Wine
North, East, South, West	Four Girls
Our Report	Eight Children
Music	Miss Cooper
How the Quarrel Began	Two Girls
Whistle a Bit	Nettie Hensley
Recitation	Clyde Hedrick
Joe Bragg	Carl Schwartz
Drill Twelve Girls	
Recitation	Lillie Molair
Birdie's Ball	Viola Donovan
The Church Organ	Minnie Smith
Virginia	Song
April Showers	Six Children
Banjo and Organ	
Charge of the Infantry	Four Boys
The Seven Days	Seven Girls
Johnny Sleepy Head	Eugene Wine
Spring poetry	Fred Shenk
Absence Makes the Heart Grow	
Tender	Muriel Arey
Arbor Day	Dialogue
Specially Jim	Minnie Smith
Goodby, Sweet Day	Song

Source: The Manassas Democrat, May 5, 1910

## Massa in the Cold, Cold Ground

Round de meadows am a ringing,  
De darkeys' mournful song.  
While de mocking bird is singing,  
Happy as de day am long;  
Whar de ivy am a creeping  
O'er de grassy mound.  
Dar old massa am a sleeping,  
In de cold, cold ground.

CHORUS—Down in de corn-field,  
Hear dat mournful sound,  
All de darkeys am a weeping—  
Massa's in de cold, cold ground.

When de autumn leaves were falling,  
When de days were cold.  
"Twas hard to hear old massa calling,  
Case he was so weak and old.  
Now de orange tree am blowing,  
On de sandy shore.  
Now de summer days am coming.  
Massa neber calls no more.  
CHORUS

Republican Compiler (Gettysburg, PA) Mar 21, 1853

Grandma's Lost Balance  
By: Sydney Dayre

"What is the matter, grandmother dear?  
Come, let me help you. Sit down here  
And rest, and I'll fan you while you tell  
How it was that you almost fell."  
"I slipped a bit where the walk was wet  
And lost my balance, my little pet!"  
"Lost your balance: Oh, never mind it,  
You sit still and I'll go find it."

Welcome to Spring

Welcome the merry time of Spring,  
March, April, May.  
March so breezy, April show'ry,  
Lovely May so fair and flow'ry;  
Welcome the merry time of Spring,  
Winter's away.



# A Statistical Study of the Prince William Cavalry

by Bill Backus

Perhaps the most well-known Civil War unit that was raised in the Brentsville area was the Prince William Cavalry. Organized in 1859, the unit would serve with distinction for the entire war as part of the 4<sup>th</sup> Virginia Cavalry under General J.E.B. Stuart. In 2011 Joseph Glatthaar conducted a statistical study of the soldiers that served in General Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. Armed with this information, I was curious about how the members of the Prince William Cavalry compared with their comrades in the Army. I compiled a list of soldiers whose Compiled Service Record (CSR) indicated that they served in the Prince William Cavalry at some point during the War and then searched the 1860 Federal Census to find them. Out of the 178 soldiers who had a Compiled Service Record, I was able to find census information for about 87% of them. Soldiers listed as members of the Prince William Cavalry in the Post War Roll of Honor or newspaper accounts, but did not have a Compiled Service Record were left out of this study.

The Prince William Cavalry was, not surprisingly, Virginian in composition. The vast majority (87%) of soldiers were born in Virginia or Maryland. However a sizable minority (10%) were born in the Northern states such as New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Massachusetts. The rest (3%) were either born in the Deep South or Great Britain. While Prince William County fielded the majority of the soldiers serving in the Prince William Cavalry, only 79% of the troopers resided in Prince William County prior to the war. The counties

immediately adjacent to Prince William provided 13% of the troopers. The rest of the troopers came from either Central Virginia or surprisingly from what is now West Virginia. From the CSRs it appears that these West Virginians were administratively attached to the unit, and never actually served with it in the field. A surprisingly large number of Prince William County residents continued to enlist in the Prince William Cavalry after 1862 when the county was occupied by Federal forces.

The Prince William Cavalry was also very young in age. The majority (69%) were 24 years or younger in 1860. Soldiers in their 40s were almost absent (1%) in the Prince William Cavalry though they made up 7% of Lee's cavalry as a whole. Not surprisingly, since most of the troopers were young and just starting off in life, the personal wealth of many troopers was low. The vast majority of troopers (78%) had a combined personal wealth valued from \$0-\$400 (adjusted to inflation today that would be \$0-\$10,000). On the other end of the personal wealth spectrum, only 8% of Prince William troopers had a combined personal wealth greater than \$4,000, compared to the 17% of Lee's cavalry as a whole. However since the majority of troopers were still living at home or as part of someone's household, when looking into combined household wealth, only a small number of troopers (8%) were living in a household valued from \$0-400. Instead a large majority (68%) were living in a household with combined wealth over \$4,000, compared to 58% of Lee's cavalry as a whole. With many troopers residing

# A Brentsville Citizen of Note

## WHO'S WHO IN FINANCE AND BANKING

A BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY  
OF CONTEMPORARIES

1920-1922

EDITED BY  
JOHN WILLIAM LEONARD

Weedon, Austin Ogilvie

Attorney-at-law, banker; b. Brentsville, Va., Sept. 9, 1859; s. of Robert and Lucie A. (Ogilvie) Weedon; of English-Scotch ancestry, maternal ancestors from Scotland, settling in Fredericksburg, Va., and paternal ancestry Irish and English, also settling in Fredericksburg, Va.; ed. High school and read law under E. E. Meredith; M. C., 8<sup>th</sup> District of Virginia; m. Brentsville, Va., Nov., 1893, Elizabeth Nelson; children: Horace Austin, Elizabeth. Atty.-at-law; commissioner in chancery; held various offices in Fauquier Co., Va.; chmn. Democratic Comm.; Mayor of the town of Warrenton, Va.; pres. And dir. Peoples' National Bank, Warrenton, Va.; financial trus. School system, District no. 3, Fauquier County, Va., more than twenty years; treas. And dir. Warrenton Horse Show assn. Active in political and business circles. Canvassed county for sale of War Savings Stamps and Liberty Bonds; active in Red Cross work; gave entire time for two months on questionnaires for draft. Trus. for churches of three denominations, holding title for their real estate.

# When WAR Came to Brentsville

FALMOUTH, VA., August 29, 1862 - 1 p. m.

Major General H. W. HALLECK, General-in-Chief, and  
Major General GEORGE B. McCLELLAN, Alexandria:

The following is just received from advance pickets:

BARNETT'S FORD - 10 a. m.

I sent party out last night 4 miles on the railroad from Rappahannock toward Brandy Station. No force to be seen there. Captain McIntyre this morning picketed the road toward Morgansburg, with instructions to scout in that direction. Heavy firing this morning, apparently in the direction of Brentsville and being at this hour toward Warrenton. We will keep you informed.

THOS. C. DEVIN,  
Colonel.

Your telegram just received.

A. E. BURNSIDE,  
Major-General.



Major General Thomas C. Devin: Born in New York City on December 10, 1822. Prior to the Civil War, Devin was a housepainter and an officer in the New York State Militia. Prior to the outbreak of the war, he held the rank of lieutenant. Commissioned colonel of the 6th New York Cavalry on November 18, 1861, Devin performed well, and achieved brigade command during the Antietam Campaign. After observing Devin with his troopers, Brig. Gen. John Buford commented, "I can't teach Col. Devin anything about cavalry tactics; he knows more than I do."

After fighting well during the 1863 campaigns, Devin went on to command a division under Maj. Gen. Philip Sheridan during the 1864 Shenandoah Valley Campaign. As a reward for his outstanding performances during 1863 and the first half of 1864, he received a brevet to brigadier general of volunteers in August 1864. Devin was promoted to brigadier general of volunteers on March 15, 1863, with said commission to date from the October 1863 Battle of Cedar Creek. Late in the war, Ulysses S. Grant commented that, excepting Maj. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan, Devin was the best cavalry officer in the Union service. At the end of the war, he was brevetted to major general of volunteers, and was appointed lieutenant colonel of the 8th U.S. Cavalry in 1866. In 1877, he was promoted to colonel of the 3rd U.S. Cavalry. He died in New York City on April 4, 1878. Of all, Devin and Wesley Merritt probably gained the most from their service under John Buford. Devin was known as either "Old War Horse" or "Buford's Hard Hitter."

**This is the only time you will see this phenomenon in your life.**

### August 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

August, 2014, will have 5 Fridays, 5 Saturdays and 5 Sundays.

**This happens only once every 823 years.**

The Chinese call it “Silver pockets full”



### The Purcell Cemetery in Brentsville

Stones removed and covered with brush to hide them from view are now located and will be restored to their proper place as close as can be determined. But who were the Purcell's and what was their role in Brentsville?

We'll try to answer those questions next month.



with a wealthy household prior to the war, it's not surprising that 51% of Prince William Cavalry troopers were residing in a slaveholding household, which is slightly less than the average for the rest of Lee's Cavalry (54%).

Compared to the rest of Lee's Cavalry, a trooper in the Prince William Cavalry was more likely to be a casualty of war. 8% of Prince William troopers were killed and 13% wounded during the war, compared to 4.7% and 14.7% respectively for the rest of Lee's cavalry force. Both the Prince William Cavalry and Lee's cavalry as a whole had the same amount of death by disease (7%). 8% of Prince William Troopers were discharged for disability compared to the cavalry average of 2%. The greatest disparity between the Prince William Cavalry and the rest of Lee's cavalry was the percentage of captured; 45% of Prince William troopers were captured compared to the cavalry average of 15%. One of the reasons for this unusually high percentage was the fact that members of the Prince William Cavalry were routinely detailed as scouts behind Federal lines or were ordered into federally occupied Prince William County to obtain new weapons and mounts.

By looking into the census records for the troopers that served in the Prince William Cavalry, a picture begins to emerge. The average trooper was young and personally poor but lived in a wealthy household and thus had a higher standard of living. Detailed to dangerous assignments, service in the Prince William Cavalry was more hazardous to one's health than the rest of Lee's cavalry. The soldiers who returned home after the war thus could be proud of their military service.

## This & That

***St. James' church, Dettingen parish, Prince William county.***—J. Towles, Rector.—Communicants, added 7, died 1—total 53; Baptisms, adults, white 2, infants, white 3, colored 2; Marriage 1, between free persons of color; Funerals 2. The project of building a suitable place of worship is again agitated in this parish.

During the past summer and autumn the Rector preached regularly every 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday at Dumfries, Quantico church, Dettingen parish, and every fourth Wednesday at Aquia church, Overwharton parish, Stafford county. Congregations generally small; sometimes large. Communicants very few in number. Quantico church 3, Aquia church 4.

He has performed a few services in the new parish of Cedar Run, Fauquier county. Communicants 6; Baptism 1; Marriage 1; Funeral 1. It is hoped that the new church will be ready for consecration at the next visitation of the Bishop, and that this small, but zealous and deserving congregation will be soon supplied with a services of a devoted and efficient pastor.

Source: Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia, held in Monumental Church, Richmond, Virginia, on the 17<sup>th</sup> of May, 1843.

## I WAS RAISED!

I didn't just grow up. I was taught to speak when I enter a room. Say please and thank you, to have respect for my elders and to get up off my lazy butt and let the elder in the room have my chair. Say "yes sir" and "no sir," lend a helping hand to those in need. Hold the door for the person behind me, say "excuse me" when it's needed and to love people for *who they are* and not for *what I can get from them*. I was also taught to treat people the way I want to be treated.

Thank you Mom and Dad!

# Brentsville Neighbors

## “Preserving Brentsville’s History”

Contact us on:

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All back issues on:

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

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**IN GOD WE TRUST**

