

# *Brentsville Neighbors*

“Preserving Brentsville’s History”

September 2016

Welcome neighbors,

This issue marks another major milestone for our newsletter—issue #132 or the culmination of 11 years without ever missing a month. It was created in October 2005 to pick up where the Friends of the Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre left off—keeping you informed about Brentsville and doing all in our power to preserve the history of this wonderful small town. Our initial plan was to focus on a specific subject—maybe historical, maybe not—and include one or more pictures of interest. We also planned to include a small section to reflect on our past. And we fully understood that we would likely make mistakes but that they would be our own and we would try to fix them as we learned the correct information. And yes, mistakes have been made and hopefully fixed.

As we reflect back over the years it is difficult not to be awed at the amount of information that has been uncovered about Brentsville. There have been a large number of people who have helped champion this cause and who have provided historical information that I would probably never have found. So many people have shared with us their personal stories about living, working or visiting in Brentsville. These first-

hand accounts are priceless since they could not have come from any other source than the individuals who wrote them. And so many of you have shared your pictures of family, friends and events that are an important part of Brentsville’s rich history while others supported us in many different ways. We are very grateful to each and every one of you.

But now we believe this is a good time to bring the journey to an end. So this will be the last issue of our newsletter, at least for now. Does this mean that we will no longer search for information with the hope of preserving Brentsville’s history? Certainly not. There is so much more to be done but for now, we believe that we have increased the awareness of our town and like many of you, we too have learned a lot in the process. It is our hope that some day, some place, a home will be found for the compiled information that will allow others to continue this effort. But for now, we have led the horse to water.

Very best wishes,  
Kay and Morgan

## This month:

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Up until recently we were the somewhat reluctant possessors of two black, bleak, long, gaunt, voracious, lady-cats; which, as any cat-owner knows, practically guarantees a bi-annual kitten crop ranging in number anywhere from six to ten. Or a minimum of twelve, and a maximum of twenty felines per year, and that, as any reasonable person will admit, is an excessively large number of felines. This past Spring the harvest was eight, all coal black with the exception of one who was promptly named Little Grey. Little Grey, we grieve to state, was somewhat slow on the uptake, if not downright sluggish of intellect; we doubt if his I. Q. was more than 1½. He sat about with his mouth half-open and the tip of his tongue protruding in an idiotic manner, which of course MAY have been due to a chronic adenoidal condition, but was more likely the result of being carried around incessantly by Baby, whose method of transporting a cat is to grasp it firmly by the larynx—if no other member such as tail, paw, or ear is available at the moment,—and set off. All of the other kittens soon became aware of this fact of life, and at a very early age learned to scamper under the rose-bush whenever they heard the patter of little feet, but not Grey. He would sit stupidly on the kitchen doorstep with his pink tongue lolling out, simply INVITING persecution.

He got it.

We never quite decided whether it was this that stunted his growth or some obscure psychological factor, but the actuality remains that when the other kittens were half-grown and bouncing around after grasshoppers and fireflies in a very lively fashion, Little Grey was distinctly retarded, both mentally and physically, and continued to sit on the doorstep, solemnly watching their antics. He was even too ignorant to come running for food when you called “Kitty, kitty.”

There arrived a moment when both Mama Cats called a sort of two-woman P.T.A. meeting and decided that the children were old enough to start school. Being immensely superior in educational methods to the human species, who are just now getting around to the Learning-through-Doing system, these sagacious animals simply marched their offspring down to the fencerow that divides the Wolfe’s cornfield from the Bradshaw’s chicken yard, and proceeded to give them a brief course in how to hunt. They started off gradually with a few baby chicks, and the children were apt pupils, —all except Grey; HE wasn’t bright enough to get through the fence. But the rest of them grasped the idea immediately, and Mrs. Bradshaw’s chick

population started to decline with speed and dispatch, as of that moment.

Being tender-hearted, we could not bring ourself to deal personally with this embarrassing situation, so we notified our son who spoke words in the ear of Mr. Bradshaw which in turn resulted in a great deal of mysterious activity involving a feed-sack, one deceased fish, and several lovely big rocks that had been intended for quite another purpose. We will not dwell on this part of the story.

It was several days later that one of the Whetzel boys, Thomas, we believe it was, commented on the dearth of cats in our back yard. It was even possible to step outside and hang up a dishtowel without treading on a squalling black kitten. Thos. had been peering under the rose bush, and he now got to his feet, brushed off his hands, and announced with sad finality, “ALL gone.”

All, that is, but Little Grey; HE is still sitting on the kitchen doorstep, with the tip of his tongue between his teeth and an idiotic smile on his face.

We think there is a moral hidden somewhere in this tale, but are not sure just what, so will merely say “if you want to live to a ripe old age don’t be too clever, and stay out of feed sacks.”

Brentsville has gone so social in the past week that we can hardly stand the killing pace: On Thursday afternoon the Home Demonstration Club met at the Courthouse, and after everyone had sufficiently admired the new paint and plaster there was heated discussion as to ways and means of maintaining its present state of beauty. It was decided to dump the problem onto the broad shoulders of the School Board, and get them to draw up a set of rules and regulations to be posted in some conspicuous place. Following this, elections were held, and the same officers were re-elected to serve for the coming year.

On Thursday night was the P.T.A. Teacher’s Reception, and on Friday there was a baby shower, given by Fay Golladay for Mrs. Ben Shoemaker, and attended by practically every female in town. Quantities of lovely presents were examined enviously by the ladies, who predicted that if the baby turns out to be quintuplets there will STILL be enough blankets and castile soap to take care of the situation.

Mr. and Mrs. John Cox entertained on Sunday afternoon at their home, Moor Green. Among those present were Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Scott, of Culpeper, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Kincheloe, Mr. and Mrs. Vincent, of Herndon, and others.

Mr. Dougherty, who has spent most of the summer with Mr. and Mrs. Boyd Beard, left on Friday for his home in Philadelphia.

Yours,

Agnes Webster

Source: The Manassas Messenger, September 9, 1947

# Where WILD things live...

## Gryllus pennsylvanicus

### Fall Field Cricket

The fall field cricket is widespread across much of North America and can be found even into parts of northern Mexico. It tends to be absent in most of the southwestern United States including southern California. Within its range this field cricket will burrow into soil in fields and forest edges. Individuals inhabit grassy disturbed areas and are often found around areas of human habitation.



Like most other crickets, females are attracted to male calling song and are attracted to higher calling effort at least when population density is low. In an elegant series of field experiments, it was shown that females were more attracted to calling songs

Adults reach 0.6–1.0 in and the coloration ranges from dark black to dark brown, although some specimens show a slight reddish tint. The black antennae tend to be longer than the body span of the species. The cerci are longer than the head and prothorax, and the wings do not extend past the cerci.

During the breeding season, the number of adult females captured in pitfall traps peaks approximately two weeks after the peak in the number of adult males captured, which seems to indicate protandry. Breeding in some areas also coincides with the seed rain from certain agricultural weeds, possibly providing females with food resources to increase their fecundity. Males call from the mouths of burrows or cracks in the ground into which they escape when scared. Calling males are separated from each other by approximately 25 to 34 ft in the field, likely making it costly for females to sample large numbers of potential mates. The male calling song consists of short chirps – roughly two to three per second – each consisting of three to five pulses (each a single closure of the male forewings or tegmina).

produced by older males than that of younger males. Males found paired with females in the field were also older than unpaired calling males from nearby. However, in the earlier experiment higher calling effort explained a small, but statistically significant proportion of the variance in female attraction, raising the possibility that the apparent preference of females for the songs of older males might be due to differences in calling effort between older and younger males.

Adults are mostly active during night when the males sing to attract females. Females will then lay their eggs by injecting their ovipositor into soil. A single female will lay around 50 eggs at a time and can lay well over 400 eggs in her life span. Eggs laid in the late summer and fall seasons will overwinter and hatch the following spring. There is one generation per year. Sometimes as winter approaches adults will find their way into houses where they will try to overwinter.

*G. pennsylvanicus* is omnivorous and has been shown to be a significant predator of both seeds and invertebrates. The broad diet of these crickets, coupled with seasonal variation in the availability of different types of prey (plant or animal) could exert substantial diversifying selection on cricket life histories.

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

# A Visit with Buddy

By Morgan Breeden

When I was growing up in Brentsville we lived on Donovan Road (later named Izaak Walton Drive) two homes past that of Homer Lee Pearson, Sr., his wife, Dorothy, and their four children, Homer Lee Jr. (known as H.L.), Mary, David Samuel (known as Sammy) and Charles Howard (known as Buddy) Pearson. And as it were, the Pearson children and the Breeden children were very close in age so it was only natural that as we grew up together we became very good friends. Sammy and Buddy were a bit younger than I so we didn't interact as much as they did with my younger brothers



As the years passed I joined the navy and left the area and the Pearson family moved away so we didn't keep in close contact. I was aware that H.L. passed away but was not able to attend his service. Much later Mary came to visit Brentsville and I met her and Sammy at a courthouse event. We talked about old times and promised to keep in touch. They received my newsletter and would frequently send notes about something and Mary contributed with stories in April 2007 and November 2011. And then suddenly on January 11, 2013, Sammy passed away. As the years passed Mary would frequently let me know that Buddy's health was failing and each time it seemed the situation was more sobering. Finally in January, 2015, Mary told me that the outlook was grim and she arranged for me to visit with Buddy at his home in Midland, Virginia. Buddy was in critical condition with lung cancer and complications of diabetes and now under the care of Hospice. But he was willing to talk with an old friend and have the conversation recorded. We chatted for almost two hours and while it is unrealistic to have all of it transcribed here, I wish to summarize most of it and include some of the actual conversation to show what a man he really was. I'll present his comments in *italics* to set it apart from my own.

On January 30, 2015, I visited with Buddy in his home to talk about his memories of Brentsville and just about anything that came to mind. Upon my arrival, Buddy indicated that it was OK to smoke if I wanted.

*I've been smoking 50 years plus. I like*

*smoking. So I decided to give it another whirl. I had quit and I can't see any difference in my breathing and stuff so no big deal.*

We talked a little about when I started smoking and when I stopped and why.

*Am I worried about this thing I have? No. Because I believe in God and I believe in the Bible and when the Lord calls you, you had better be ready because it's your time and you ain't got anything to say about it. So I haven't freaked out and done all this sort of thing because I know that. And will I miss my family? You betcha! And will they miss me? I'm sure they will but there's nothing you can do about it. It is what it is. So the best thing you can do is make the best of it.*

We talked about this a little and Mary (who was sitting with us) reminded us that we use to sneak down in the woods and roll our cigarettes to smoke them. We talked about smoking grapevine and such. Some talk about chewing tobacco and getting sick.

*Remember when we had all the boys from southwest Virginia move into town, the Blankenship's? Well, J.W. and us were down at the run swimming and he gave H.L. a plug of tobacco and I don't know how old H.L. was, he couldn't have been more than 10 or 12 years old, and he chewed that tobacco and I remember him crawling home. That's a long ways! And he crawled through an area that had been burned and when he got home he was more black than he was white from that soot and boy he was sick. That stuff would put it on ya!*

*I remember Mr. Mauck that use to live behind us, he had two boys, and he rolled that Bull Durham... had a little cloth bag that had tobacco in it and his papers and he showed us how to do it and we went to Mr. Mauck's so we could smoke a rolled cigarette – that was almost the same thing as going up to the store and buying a pack but that was pretty good tobacco. Pretty good.*

*I remember Dan and Sam and I – Sam and I started and we probably got Daniel into it – we'd go over to Webster's pond and we would go up to the store and I think you could buy a pack of cigarettes for 18 or 20 cents and we'd get Newport because they were mint. There was an old log laying there beside the pond that had a hollow in it. And that's where we would hide our cigarettes and we would hide them up there so the next day we would go down and smoke another one. I remember Dad at night on his way to be bedroom, we had sofas with real wide wooden arms on it, and he'd lay his cigarettes there and maybe his watch – a pocket watch – and change there before he went to the bedroom for some reason. He just got in a habit of doing that and Sam and I would go in (he smoked Camels – short Camels) Sam and I would shake them down – Sam would get two and I'd get two because usually that time of night his routine he'd almost have a full pack every night and we got started doing that. And then Mom smoked Salem's and she had a drawer in the kitchen and she'd be sitting talking to somebody and she was kind of fidgety anyhow and she'd end up putting the wrong end in her mouth and lighting the filter. But she wouldn't throw that cigarette away – she'd put it down in that drawer. So we kept that cleaned out.*

We chatted a little about Mrs. Pearson smoking (never in public!) and the conversation moved on to dipping herring, cleaning and salting them down and then eating them come winter. Of course we talked about Mrs. Pearson making fried cornbread and how good that was...

When asked what it was about Brentsville that sticks out most in his mind, Buddy thought a bit and said:

*I don't know. It was just a great place to be raised. You didn't have to lock your doors. Everybody knew everybody because it was such a small place. I told Dottie a bunch of times and we never did it but I said we ought to go to Brentsville and buy a house and raise these kids because I know what kind of kids they'll be if they come from Brentsville. It's a great little place!*

*And I'm sure it still is. It was just a good place to be raised. We had water all the way around us, Cedar Run, Broad Run, Slate Run, Kettle Run – you almost couldn't get out of that little place without crossing a bridge. It was kinda isolated. Nice little place to be raised I thought.*

We talked about how playing out of doors was the only option then as opposed to now. Going out to explore the woods and finding fun things to do.

*Do you remember Pete Dickens? Daniel and Sam and I use to go over there and he use to have a wooden boat – pretty good size boat – and he would pull it up in his yard and flip it upside down to keep it from raining in it and we'd go borrow his boat during the day while he was at work and we would paddle that thing—we have paddled it all the way around to Bradley Forest Bridge. But the reason we did it, we wanted to start a little business. When that bridge got knocked down that time... Well Daniel and Sam and I thought we could get people to pay us to get them across the creek. But where would they go when they got across the creek? They'd have to walk, right? But of course Lucasville Road was still open so they could go around that way. But, yea we rowed that boat all the way around there.*

Did you ever get caught?

*No, I think he knew about it but we didn't do it any harm so I don't think he minded.*

We talked about military service, his and mine. He in the army and me in the navy.

*I was an engineer. I was trained in asphalt and concrete construction. Equipment operator and when I was overseas I was stationed in Germany and was only there a short time. And they sent me down to France on temporary duty. We were resurfacing runways on our airbases over there with asphalt and I ran parts of the asphalt plant at different times down there but mostly was pug mill operator but anyhow that was some dirty filthy work. The air police left us alone. We would cut the sleeves out of our fatigues, work clothes, and that asphalt plant operates at like 300 degrees so it was hot. And you would do anything for relief. And I mean it was dirty, dusty because it had a drying unit on it that would dry the units out before they made asphalt out of it. I've had dust start forming on my cheeks and you had to get it off before you could see. That's how dirty that thing was. But I learned something.*

*But when I first joined the army we went to Fort Holabird, MD because I was regular army. I joined the army, they didn't draft me. I was over*

there for a week doing a battery of tests. They sent us into the place and wouldn't let us out. When I left there it was on a train, after dark. But I'll never forget it. An old Master Sergeant there, we had to sit down with him and decide what you wanted to sign up for. And at the time, I guess computers were first coming out and I said I'd like to learn communications, computers, that sort of stuff. And he said, well Pearson, the last job in that field was just taken by your buddy because I joined with Sam's wife's brother. And he said your buddy just got that last job. And he said do you like to travel? And I said, oh yea. I'd never been out of Brentsville. I think I went to Georgia one time when I was a kid and that was it. I was leaving Brentsville and get past Manassas and it was foreign land. But anyhow, he said alright, I'm going to put you down for Europe unassigned. And all through boot camp I sweated that thing. I just knew they were going to put me in the infantry or artillery. You know the guys that go out in a tent for half a year. But luckily they sent me to a real good unit over there. It was called a construction support company. We had all the big equipment like the rock crushers, bull dozers, cranes, asphalt plants, the big equipment and when somebody in our group needed some of that equipment our company would assign that equipment and an operator to that other outfit to support them. You know, if they needed a bull dozer and didn't have one they would call us up I guess and have one sent out but that's what we were doing down there. We were supporting a whole company of men with the asphalt plant. And that company of men was laying the asphalt and doing all the other stuff along with putting the asphalt down and that's how I got into that.

When I got out of the army I went to work for the state of Virginia as a VDOT inspector for about a year. The job started off at \$1.67 or \$1.76, I forget which, per hour back then. Of course Dottie worked in an office and we would put our money together and the \$80 a month rent wasn't too bad but it didn't take me long to decide that I needed a better job so I went to work for Eastern Airlines and I stayed at Eastern for five and a half years, I think, and then went into construction. So they were right. I was best at construction.

We talked a bit about the perks of working for the airlines.

They'd always put us in first class. You

would wear your logo with Eastern and they knew you were an employee. And when you bought your tickets too. It was nice. I'll never forget it, we were married about a year and we had never gone on a honeymoon. Could not afford one. We got married in Hatchers Church in Brentsville and we were living in Dumfries at the time and I think we rode down to Stafford and found the first motel on the road and that was our honeymoon. We came back the next day and went to work on Monday morning. But I wanted to take her on a honeymoon so Bermuda came up and we decided to go to Bermuda and Mary's husband took us to Baltimore airport to catch the flight. Well, we were sitting in a gate house and they had already loaded all the passengers and the attendant said we have space available so let's load you up so we can get this airplane out of here. We started out of the gate house and Dottie locked up on me. She looked out the window and saw the airplane, how big it was, and of course you were loading from inside the building on the jet way and she said I can't get on that thing. I said what do you mean you can't get on that thing? She said I just can't I'm just scared. I said babe we've been planning this trip a long time. Don't do this to me. She said, I'll tell you what, you go on without me and have a good time. I'm going back home. I said Lord, what am I going to do? So I slipped my arm around her, tightened it around her and said you're going with me. And when we got up on the airplane I was going to let her sit first by the window and she said no, you get by the window. I don't want to look out there. Before we got to Bermuda, she had moved to the window and taken two rolls of film in the camera of the clouds and such. It was pretty.

And we talked about different places each of us had visited on vacation.

Dottie [Bud's wife] and I haven't done a lot of traveling. We got into the habit of going to Nag's Head when her father was still living. He had trailers and motor homes and we did too but we got in the habit of going down there because it was so nice in the summer. And then we got in the habit of going to Gatlinburg, Tenn. Over in the Smokey Mountains. And that's where we went on the last few vacations that we took.

And we talked about taking cruises to different places and the things we saw there and that when you were in Brentsville, only the rich people did that and there just weren't that many rich people!

We talked about people in Brentsville, Blackie Gallahan, Walter Flory, and some of the things we did for extra cash as kids. How butchering time was a community event with many families pitching in to get things done more efficiently. We talked about Alice and Lester Keys and their children. Sidney Spitzer and the Ratliff's, Gladys and A.V. Eanes, and others. We talked about Fairs Rock, the island on Broad Run, the old schools in Brentsville. We talked about some of the guns we owned and how we were allowed to go out into the woods at a very young age without worry. And he took a moment to mention one of his medical issues in a most open and frank way.

*They ended up having to take my toes off because of gangrene. Lack of circulation because of diabetes. They put in a by-pass using a type of plastic tube so they wouldn't have to take my foot off. I can't walk - don't have any meat left but it's ok - I'm doing fine.*

But we didn't dwell on that because there were stories to tell about Shorty Braden running down to the Cedar Run Bridge and diving off like one big kid. Stories about fishing in Broad Run. Stories about going sledding in the winter. And we talked about his current home.

*One of the reasons we moved here was because the old place outgrew us-we had 13 1/2 acres down there - Spotsylvania County, that's where we raised our family, we lived there 27 years. I built a big old barn down there and we started off with 2 acres and I kept buying property as it came up for sale and we ended up with 13 1/2 and we had horses and stuff so I built that big old barn there and added on to the house three times I think. I had a thousand foot garage on that house but this property has been in my family since 1901. My grandfather bought the farm down here. So when my grandmother died the farm was sold and my dad took the property rather than the money and there was also 25 acres across the road way over in the woods over there that he owned and H.L. and all the rest of us, there were 6 of us including a half brother and half sister by my mom's first marriage, and we were paying taxes on it and so I just asked the rest of them if they wanted to sell it to keep it together so they sold it to me and now there's 7.6 acres here on the corner and that's how much I have. but I kinda wanted to keep it in the family and my kids were grown and married so we came up here and built the house.*

We talked about Raymond Spittle and how his family had asked Sam to preach his funeral.

*I asked Sam to preach my funeral [but he died first] I found a nice young man I asked and he's going to be doing my funeral. I sit here everyday kinda bored trying to get all this stuff set up for my wife. I've already got my pallbearers and it's hard to do but I've talked her and my two kids into going down to the funeral home in Fredericksburg (she called a couple and settled on that one) and got all the prices, all that stuff, and I want to really make preplans like that.*

*Well I'm lucky I guess. I'm going to be buried at Quantico military so I think they furnish all that and I don't care one way or another and I told Dottie that option when you sit down and get these prices because they'll try to sell you everything.*

We talked about all of the options that funeral homes offer and the good, the bad and the ugly pertaining to that.

*I wasn't interested in all that and I told Dottie that we're lucky that we can do it now because if I died today and you went down there tomorrow you would be in grief and they take advantage of that. So I told her not to get a limousine from the funeral home to the cemetery. Why would you do that? You have a car sitting in the parking lot. What's the deal that you ride up there in a limousine or if you ride up there in your own car? My son has a Cadillac that'll hold 5 people. I told her you can ride up with Gus, it will hold 5 people. A flower truck-three or four hundred bucks; the limousine to go to the cemetery-five or six hundred dollars so I told her you don't need all that. I said visitation night-don't have one. They charge you big bucks for that. If my friends want to come they can come to the funeral and they have the casket open because we're having a church service. So I said these things, they are not bad but you don't need all that.*

And we talked a bit more about funerals and how expensive they can be if that's what you want. Until finally, Buddy was starting to get tired and I knew it was time to go home so we said our good-bye's each knowing that it would probably be for the last time.

On May 25, 2015, Buddy went to be with his maker. Content that he had lived a good life and happy that the burden of the final arrangements would not be left for the last moment.

Rest in Peace my friend.

# A Letter From Brentsville

I have been fortunate enough to obtain a third original letter written by W. W. Thornton. This one was written in 1846 to his uncle in Kentucky as transcribed by Ron Turner.

Brentsville, April 29th 46:

Dear Taylor

I received your letter a few days since & seat myself for the purpose of answering it as I intend there shall be no failure on my part in keeping up a correspondence between us if you had not written when you did. I intended writing in a few days. I wish also to write to Uncle Jno: but do not know where to direct my letter. You must let me know in your answer to this.

According to promise Pa & myself should have met you in Washington but Pa was quite sick at this time we were bent on the trip. I should have enjoyed myself very much nothing would have given me more pleasure. I have received a letter from Virginia Taster since you left abusing me very much for not coming on last winter. At this appointed time I promised to introduce her to my KY Uncles. I have never heard whether or not you got acquainted with her or not. Ma received a letter from Miss Mary Conway a few days since our relations & acquaintances are generally well. We expect several up here this summer to spend some time with us. I intend going down in a few days time to carry a mare down papa gave grandmama & to bring up some medicine from Fredericksburg for my father. You are mistaken about my falling in love down there of course if I had been little smitten with Tener I should have yielded to my uncle with pleasure. He promised to let me know how he got along after I left but I have not heard a word from him. I hope he does not judge me so hard as suppose me a rival.

Your acquaintances in this section are well. I saw Miss Jill & Miss Tip a few evenings since they requested me when I wrote to you to give their very very best respects to you both. Miss Tip said she had received a paper from one of you. I do not recollect which & intend sending one in return. Mr. & Mrs. Alexander & Miss Jane also send their respects to you & say they would be pleased to see you at St. Leonard's this summer. Miss Till has just left here, she spent about a week with us. Aunt Ann & sister are at this time in Fairfax on a visit. I heard from them today. They are quite well except Dr. Jones whose health is very bad. I also heard from Bert she is also well. It is now 9 o'clock & papa is sent for to see a patient about ten miles distant he has gone to be ——(torn) disliked going very much however he is about starting & has a great deal of practice as much as he can attend to. We have quite a promising crop of wheat which appears to cheer the old man very much & if he gets the clerkship we shall do better here after as that will be an additional income of about 2 thousand. Pa is quite sanguine from present prospects. I sincerely hope he may as it will be fine situation for me.

We have good many tea parties about Brentsville but no dancing. I have not been to but one dance since I left Caroline & that has been some time since. I have been so busy on my little farm. I do not attend their tea parties although I have had an invitation to every one. I generally get home late & am so tired bed is the first place I think of & I am off again by times in the morning in truth I scarcely ever go up the street unless on business.

Mr. Jasper and several others told me whenever I wrote to you or Uncle Jno they wish to be remembered in the warmest manner to both of you. It is now 11 o'clock & I am very sleepy & as I cannot think of any more news I will close my letter by a request that you burn this letter immediately after reading. It is written with a very indifferent pen & I had not a knife to make a better one. I will do better next time. I remain your affectionate nephew.

W. W. Thornton

With so many people mentioned in the letter, I thought it would be nice to know more about who they are (or who we think they are) so I turned to Lynn Churchill who graciously did research to obtain the following:

**Letter from W. W. Thornton to his uncle, Reuben "Taylor" Thornton, Newport, KY, dated 1846**

The following information contains a description of who, I believe, are the people mentioned in the letter.

**Uncle Jno** - John Minor Thornton, another brother of Reuben Taylor Thornton, Newport, KY

**Pa/papa** - James Bankhead Taylor Thornton

**Virginia Taster** - friend of W. W. Thornton (William Willis Thornton), but no idea where she lives

**Ma** - Louisiana Elizabeth "Locien" Ratcliffe

**Miss Mary Conway** - friend who later married Edmund Taylor Thornton (2nd wife), JBTT's brother

**Grandmama** - Mary Todd Taylor Thornton

**Tener** - friend of W. W. Thornton, possibly girlfriend for a short time

**Miss Jill & Miss Tip** - acquaintances of W. W., who had met Reuben Taylor Thornton

**Mr. & Mrs. Alexander & Miss Jane** - acquaintances of W. W., who had met Reuben Taylor Thornton

**Miss Till** - acquaintance of W. W. Thornton

**Aunt Ann & sister** - W. W.'s aunt (could it be Lucy Ann Williams?) and possibly one of W.W.'s sisters?

**Dr. Jones** - possibly related to Aunt Ann & sister above, but unsure

**Bert** - she is acquaintance of W. W. Thornton

**Mr. Jasper** - acquaintance of W. W. Thornton, and had met family in Newport, KY

Peter Thornton of "Rose Hill" in Caroline County and Mary Todd Taylor married and had the following children:

1. Lucy Ann Thornton, who married Robert Williams from Prince William County
2. James Bankhead Taylor Thornton of "Hunter's Hill" in Caroline County, married Louisiana Elizabeth Ratcliffe, both living in Prince William County; one of his children was William Willis Thornton
3. Edmund Taylor Thornton of "Hunter's Hill" in Caroline County married twice - first to Charlotte Conway, and second to her sister, Mary Conway
4. Hubbard Thornton was unmarried
5. Reuben Taylor Thornton, born in Caroline County, was unmarried and lived in Newport, KY
6. John Minor Thornton married Mary KcKenney in Newport, KY
7. Mildred Thornton married Ranceelaer Latham of CANADA
8. Eliza Thornton married Mr. Goodloe
9. Sarah Todd Thornton married her cousin, Thomas Griffin Thornton, and lived in Newport, KY
10. Bettie Thornton married George Conway
11. Julia Thornton was unmarried
12. Alice Thornton was unmarried

# **Brentsville Neighbors**

## **“Preserving Brentsville’s History”**

Contact us on:

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All back issues on:

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

**IN GOD WE TRUST**

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