

Brentsville Neighbors



Information About Brentsville
Shared Among Neighbors



September 2006

Welcome Neighbors,

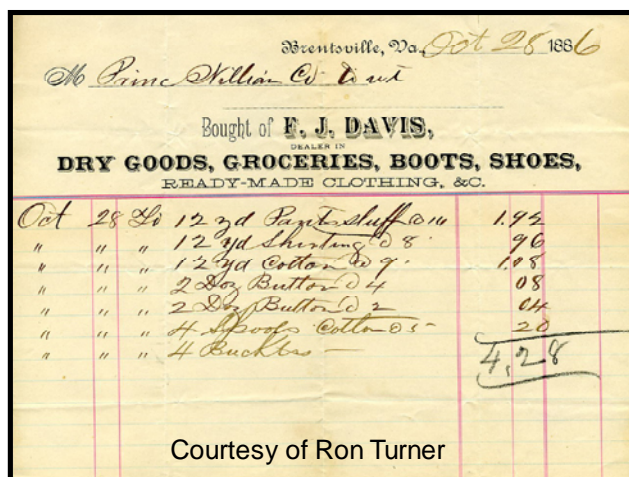
We would be very remiss if the first thing discussed was not the Brentsville Courthouse. It is now completely restored (but not completely furnished) to the 1830's period and what a sight it is! You owe it to yourself to see the inside and opportunity is knocking. The PWC Historic Preservation Division will be hosting an open house on the grounds on Saturday, October 14th from 11 am until 8pm. This should give us all time to make it by for a visit. If you just happen to be there after dark, seeing the courthouse at night makes it even more exciting. The Union Church is almost ready for your special event and the one-room school will soon recapture it's 1930's look and feel. If you like the outdoors, the Tavern Lot (Breedon Lot to many) is now green with grass and looks and feels like a country park. All it needs is your picnic basket. And there are even nature trails being constructed with the help of local Boy Scouts that will take you down by Broad Run and back with an information booklet to help you remember the area better. Close your eyes and take a trip back in time. You can do it in Brentsville!

In June we invited you to write to Nick Webster who was recovering from a stroke. Sadly, he passed away Saturday morning, August 12 at 6:28am. He died

peacefully in his sleep with his daughter Juliet by his side through his final day and moments. He also had last day visits from his son DeLancey, his wife Diana, and their daughter Cynthia. He had turned 94 on July 24th. His death followed complications from congestive heart failure, followed by a stroke in May, and a series of bouts with pneumonia.

Can you feel Summer is almost over already? And can you imagine that this is the 12th edition of the Brentsville Neighbors? It's been quite a year and based on the comments we have received, you enjoy receiving our little newsletter as much as we enjoy putting it together. And in this case, the "we" is everyone who has contributed anything. That list is long and still growing. Our subscription list is now over 100 and we thank you so very much for your interest in Brentsville. If you have not already done so, why not jot down some of your memories or let us copy your pictures – or both! Together we CAN keep Brentsville the wonderful place we all know and love so well.

Nelson and Morgan.



This month:

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Featured Brentsville Building The Ratliff Home

The Featured Home this month is the one that Paul and Bobbie Ratliff lived in during their nine year residence in Brentsville. Located at 12315 Izaak Walton Drive, the home is now the residence of Elsie Bea Fletcher Street. It is described as a 1-1/2 story home that was built in 1948/49 containing six rooms to provide 1,034 square feet of finished living space.

As in the past, this study will start in the 20th century although the property ownership extends back beyond that time. Part (or all) of the property was conveyed to Solomon B. Spitzer and Richard Donovan (prior to 1900) in a partnership by J.P. Leachman and J.B.T. Thornton (DB50/54). Reference is made to "The Brick House" on the Shimer property. On 18 October 1901, Richard Donovan and Agnez I. Donovan of the one part and Solomon B. Spitzer and Mattie M. Spitzer, his wife, of the other part divided their property to end the partnership which consisted of over 231 acres of land plus lots #7 and #8 within the Town of Brentsville. The agreement was that Richard Donovan would receive 1/3 of the property and he chose the land in the bend of Cedar Run containing just over 77 acres. Solomon Spitzer took lots #7 & #8 and the remainder of the land.

The parcel in this study was inherited by Ervin S. Spitzer from his father, Solomon. Ervin S. Spitzer and his wife, Annie L. Spitzer are shown as having sold the ½ acre lot to S.S. Spitzer, their son, on 21 May 1946 (DB119/470). However, here there may be a missing record (or one not yet found) because on 25 July 1957, R. Lee Molair sold the property to Morgan H. Breeden and Olive M. Breeden, his wife, citing DB119/470 as the source of ownership (DB218/53). Lee Molair built the house on this property during 1948/9 after which A.V. and Gladys Eanes rented their home from him at the time their first child, Ardena Marye, was born. They lived here for just under a year. Several other families rented the property during the Molair ownership.

A year after Morgan & Marye Breeden purchased the home, Paul and Bobbie Ratliff moved to town and made this their home for the next nine years. Morgan died on 3 December 1967 and Marye assumed sole ownership of the property. She finally sold it to Gerald A. Snyder and Opal A. Snyder, his wife, on 6 August 1971 (DB595/571) who lived there until they sold it to James C. Monk on 11 August 1978 (DB1013/611). Mr. Monk held the property for only a few months and sold it on 1 November 1978 to Jesse R. Fletcher and Elsie B. Fletcher, his wife (DB1035/346).

Flashback

Do you remember what happened in Brentsville between 1958 and 1967? We thought it would be interesting to remember a range of events rather than just one and since this is the time during which the Ratliff family lived in Brentsville, why not use that range of dates? The stories are abridged.

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The Ratliff Home in Brentsville



A.V. Eanes on the front porch, 1949



Gladys & A.V. Eanes with newborn daughter, Ardena Marye, August 1949

Pictures from Bobbie Ratliff



Paul Ratliff



Homer Pearson on holding Rocky about February 1960



Martin, Vernon & Rocky in the Brentsville Superette



The Ratliff Children

Where WILD things live..



Eastern Cottontail
Sylvilagus floridanus



Computer-generated art by Bobbie Ratliff

Ratliff Family Life in Brentsville, VA

Paul Ratliff and his wife Bobbie, with six (6) children are looking for a house to rent; and most people know that it's a question for parents with children to rent their home. This is August, 1958, and we have about 3 weeks until school started to re-locate.

But, we were in luck by meeting our future Landlord, Morgan and his wife Marie (Wolfe) Breeden; to look at a house they had recently purchased; that was next door to them located in Brentsville, VA. Paul had become employed with Houston and Wood Construction Company, building homes in Manassas Park, Manassas, VA. They now were ready to go to a new location. These two (2) people were very generous and helpful to us for the nine (9) years that we rented from them, and lived in Brentsville. The Breeden's had four (4) sons: C.W., Morgan Earle, Jennings, and Daniel – youngest. The county of Prince William had planned the road we lived on into some improvement measures; and asked each household to contribute twenty-five dollars \$25.00 toward the project. In doing so, the neighborhood took on new meaning. The school bus would pick up the children; stopping in front of the house—as it was a designated stop. The BRISTOW Post Office also designated a rural mail delivery with a mailbox at the road in front of the house. This was two (2) great improvements we had never experienced.

There was a vacant lot between the house we lived in and the Breeden's house that was a "playground" for evenings; and Sunday baseball games, umpired by: Marie's own sister, Gladys Eanes, who had children to take part in the games. There was one rule made by The Breeden's: "Children must not climb the Japanese Cherry trees, or break limbs off loaded with bloom." Okayed by all to get to play!

We moved to Brentsville with six (6) children; and added two (2) more while still living there. Marie Breeden named both the children. First was Rocky Boyd, using my own maiden name; and Rennis Paul, the last chance at using

my dear husband's name. you see my family doctor that delivered both my sons, had arranged for me to have my tubes tied: "Eight is Enough!" Plus Paul had been diagnosed with a throat cancer; and was to become unemployed by Houston and Wood Construction Co. building nice big homes in Dale City, VA, and Pimmit Hills of Woodbridge, VA.



The couple on the other side of our home was Homer and Dorothy (Foster) Pearson. They too are the parents of four (4) children: Homer L. Jr., Mary, Sam and Charles, who was nicknamed Buddy or Bud. The two were also very considerate and helpful to us with the large family. The Ratliff's had twice as many children as the Breeden's and Pearson's; which was cause for alarm when first meeting us I'm sure! But they quickly take us under their wing; and are the negotiable, encouraging kind of neighbors that are never forgotten. Mrs. Pearson wins mine and the children's attention to go with her to "Hatcher's Memorial Baptist Church," in Brentsville. We attend Sunday school; and the regular services. Summers were the time for Bible

School; we attended also. Mary (Pearson) Pumphrey and I have kept in touch over the years, and Mary, with her family; have visited me here in Buchanan County on Little Fox Creek, VA.

When we moved to Brentsville; the local grocery store was operated by: Violet Shoemaker; but exchanged hands to Katherine Counts during the time we were living there. The older children of ours were watching "American Bandstand," on TV, and bought Potato chips with a (45) record attached to the side of the bag; so they collected many of their favorite "Rock & Roll" records this way; to listen to while munching on chips! Judy, the next to oldest; loved to dance to the music while Lois and Gale would watch. Vernon, the oldest of the Ratliff clan, built a pigeon coop or house with an automatic feeder; which was very artistic and well-done by a 14-year-old. We thought that the Carpentry trade of his Dad's would rub off on him; but it was Rocky who mastered a building contractor

01-05-1958 Kenrick Montague Bradshaw of Brentsville, husband of the late Mary K. Bradshaw and father of Mrs. Virginia E. Spencer, Murray W. Bradshaw, B.N. Bradshaw, and Kenrick Bradshaw Jr. died in Purcellville, VA

02-11-1958 Ruthe Alice Abner, sister of Mrs. Charles B. Ellicott, Sr., Brentsville died at NIH, Washington, DC

07-12-1960 Suddenly, July 9, 1960, in Charles Town, W. Va., Osborn Barton (Bo) Counts, beloved son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Corner of Manassas died. He also is survived by one sister, Cheryl Nadine Counts, and the maternal grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Troy Counts.

11-12-1960 A new chapter in PWC's dispute over adoption of a compulsory school attendance law has placed the County's official tie-breaker on the spot again. The matter must be decided by C.A. Sinclair. Voting against it were representatives from Brentsville, Coles and Gainesville.

09-19-1962 Rebecca Ann Carter of Brentsville, wife of the late John Henry Carter and mother of Melvin L. Carter and Oscar R. Carter of Brentsville (and others) died at the Fairfax Hospital.

12-23-1962 The sets are readied, costumes fitted, lines rehearsed. You wonder how the audience will receive your attempts to bring them a few minutes of entertainment. It's Christmas and everyone is busier than ever with plans to celebrate with people from the office, friends at school and relatives in other towns.

09-11-1963 Benjamin Wynnett Wolfe died at home in Brentsville. He lived (and died) in the home sometimes referred to as the "Bauder House" but better known as the Wolfe Home.

11-12-1963 George M. Brown of Brentsville died at Fairfax Hospital.

08-19-1964 Melvin Leonard "Sparky" Carter, brother of Oscar Randolph Carter and Mrs. Louise A. Baumbach, both of Brentsville, was killed by a reckless driver near his home in Brentsville while walking along the road.

10-03-1964 Sammy Payne, 12, of Brentsville, was shot in the chest Thursday night as he was leaving the woods after hunting with two friends.

01-06-1966 Spicer Sterling Keys Jr. of Brentsville, son of Anne R. and Spicer S. Keys Sr. died in the UVA Hospital, Charlottesville.

01-11-1966 Dorothy Foster Pearson, beloved wife of the late Homer Pearson died at the Alexandria Hospital. Funeral services will be held from the Hatcher's Memorial Baptist Church.

04-02-1967 Returning to his post on the School Board is Mr. T. Clay Wood, Brentsville

07-12-1967 Unofficial results: Clerk of the Circuit Court: Leda S. Thomas; Commonwealth's Attorney: Paul B. Ebert; Treasurer: C.N. Kincheloe; Revenue Commissioner: Thelma M. Hensley; Sheriff: Ralph G. Shumate; Supervisor, Brentsville District: O.J. Fitzwater.

12-22-1967 A majority of the PWC Supervisors refused today to endorse a proposed five-year recreation and parks program for the County, voicing alarm at the cost. Proposed was development of 36 existing and planned school playground parks, a Bull Run Regional Park and a 100-acre park near Brentsville.

Source: The Washington Post & The Potomac News

Where WILD Things Live

Eastern Cottontail:

Sylvilagus floridanus

Habitat: Edges of open fields and meadows, areas of dense high grass, in wood thickets, along fence rows, forest edges, and the borders of marshy areas.

Weight: 1.8-2.95 pounds.

Length: 14.8-18.0 inches.

Food: In summer, cottontails feed almost entirely on tender grasses and herbs; crops such as peas, beans, and lettuce are also eaten. In winter, bark, twigs, and buds of shrubs and young trees are eaten. Rabbits will also re-ingest their own fecal pellets, increasing their level of vitamins and minerals.

Identification: Eastern Cottontails are the best-known and most widely distributed rabbit of North America. It has big eyes, long ears and a short, fluffy tail that resembles a cotton ball, thus the name. Their hind legs are longer than their front legs with hind feet that are significantly larger than the front feet. The upper body is usually reddish brown with the underparts white, including the underside of the tail. There is a rusty colored patch on the nape of the neck and often a white spot on the forehead. During winter they are typically more grey than brown.

Reproduction: The cottontail is a prolific breeder. Although females are capable of breeding during their first year, most have their first litters during their second summer. During mating season, males often fight with each other. The male and female also perform a kind of mating "dance." The male will chase the female. Eventually the female will stop and face the male and box at him with her front paws. At some point, one of them will leap straight up in the air and then the other one will jump up in the air too. Breeding occurs from March through early fall. Females scratch out a slight depression in the ground in an area of dense grass for concealment. The nest is lined with fur from her chest and dry grass. The gestation period is about 28 days. There are usually two to four litters per year with about three to eight young per litter. The female may mate again just hours after giving birth. Young rabbits are born blind, naked, and helpless but grow rapidly, leaving the nest after only two to three weeks. The mother feeds the young twice a day. They are weaned and totally independent at four to five weeks. On the average, 15% of the young will survive their first year. Adults are usually solitary by nature except when a female is caring for its young.

Interesting Facts: Cottontail rabbits are active all year long, foraging mainly at night. During the day they remain concealed in dense brush, protected from predators and harsh weather. In times of extreme weather conditions or to escape predators, rabbits will readily utilize an abandoned woodchuck burrow for protection. It will sometimes stand on its hind feet to watch for predators like foxes, weasels, eagles and hawks. A rabbit's home range varies greatly with the quality of habitat, but

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instead. All the family would load up in the old Station Wagon to go to Pitt's Drive-In Theater to see an ELVIS movie; or something else playing, if we favored the movie. On our way from the theater, we stopped for ice cream at TAST-E-FREEZE; and listened to the roar of cars racing at "Old Dominion Speedway" behind Ralph Cornwell's TEXACO. Dennis Colbert of Bradley Forest was the local sheriff. He was also owner of a store.

My children learned that the members of Isaac Walton League went to their Lodge; located on the road near where we lived, to practice with Bows and Arrows, but didn't gather the stray arrows when they left. This was an opportunity for the two oldest sons to go and hunt for the stray arrows to collect for themselves, and became interested in owning a bow to shoot them with—this item was to be bought though!

Another biggie of interest to the children was: going to the Log or Cedar Run to swim. They're young and dared to get in deep water; plus the boys were jumping off the top of the steel bridge over Cedar Run, and diving into the water; when men wouldn't dare to do it. Older guys were the spectators sitting on the bank or swimming; and to watch. All the children learned to swim at an early age; and had this mission accomplished; before I knew of it. There was a long driveway between the Breeden's and the house we lived in; with a gate that is chained and locked=**PRIVATE PROPERTY**=owned by Kenny Keys. But to walk this lane, was a cliff with a rope swing for swimmer to prep up on jumping, before trying the Cedar Run bridge. I was naïve to the children's romp in the deep water as my job kept me home with housework and meals to prepare for the family at day's end. Around the dinner table unraveled the stories of getting hurt; near drowning; or even worse—getting thrown in deep water—and told to swim or to drown! I secretly

thought that I'd find time to go along and see the SHOW. And I did!

In 1967, we moved from our home of nine (9) years almost to the day. We got to hills of Buchanan County in August; to get ready for a new school all over again. This time it's the same school that Paul and I graduated from: Council High School, Council, VA. The younger ones attended Council Elementary school. Thus all eight (8) of the Ratliff children graduated from Council High School too! Paul died in May 1971; and Rennis Paul was killed in a car wreck February 1987; and Gale lost her battle with breast cancer in June 1998. Numerous of memories linger of the nine (9) years that the family lived in Brentsville. Avis, our third child got to play football at Brentsville District High School; Judy was a Majorette. Martin was a loafer and played with several of the neighborhood boys. He speaks fondly of them.

Thanks to Mary (Pearson) Pumphrey for giving me the information on Brentsville aiming for the Court House renovation to be finished; and also possibly a "Tourist or Visitor Guide" with information brochures or a person to tell of places to visit. But, among the items collected for HISTORY of BRENTSVILLE a BOOK to look at the pictures and read what people wrote of their adventure while living in BRENTSVILLE. This should be very interesting!

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generally averages about three acres for females and eight acres for males.

Cottontails have very keen sight and hearing. When danger is sensed, the animal will usually freeze in place until the danger has passed, but they will flush readily if approached too closely. Rabbits normally move slowly in short hops or jumps, but when frightened they can achieve speeds up to 18 miles per hour over a short distance and can leap distances of between 10 and 15 feet. They often zig-zag to confuse a pursuing predator. Although they do not take to the water often, rabbits are good swimmers. They will thump the ground with their hind feet regularly, probably as a means of communication. When playing, breeding, or fighting they often make low purring, growling, or grunting sounds. If captured by a predator, the animal may produce a loud, shrill scream.

Because of its high productivity rate, the cottontail rabbit is an important link in the food chain and a principle prey item for many

species. It is also a popular game species throughout its range. Depending on its availability, the cottontail can be considered a buffer prey species, meaning if rabbit numbers are high, predators will concentrate on them, thus reducing the pressure on other prey species.

HISTORY

Despite their speed and skill in evading their enemies, cottontails are taken in large numbers by foxes, bobcats, several species of hawks and owls, and large snakes. The Eastern Cottontail rabbit is also the most widely hunted game animal in the eastern United States. Domestic dogs and cats catch and kill many cottontails, especially the young. Although cottontail populations fluctuate widely from place to place and from year to year, healthy populations can usually be maintained as long as there is suitable habitat.

Source: <http://dep.state.ct.us/burnatr/wildlife/factshts/ctntail.htm> and other internet locations.

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