

Brentsville Neighbors



Information About Brentsville
Shared Among Neighbors
January 2007



Welcome Neighbor,

We wish you all the very best in this year of 2007! For those of us who enjoy the Internet, there are often frustrations over the junk that seems to pile up in the inbox day after day. But sometimes, maybe not often, but sometimes, something good comes along that seems to be worth sharing. This is such an item, sent to me by our neighbor Bill Wade. Unfortunately, space mandated it be shortened some but I hope you get a smile (as we did) from the rest.

I came across this phrase yesterday "FENDER SKIRTS". A term I haven't heard in a long time and thinking about "fender skirts" started me thinking about other words that quietly disappear from our language with hardly a notice like "curb feelers" and "steering knobs." (AKA) suicide knob

Since I'd been thinking of cars, my mind naturally went that direction first. Any kids will probably have to find some elderly person over 50 to explain some of these terms to you.

Remember "Continental kits?" They were rear bumper extenders and spare tire covers that were supposed to make any car as cool as a Lincoln Continental. When did we quit calling them "emergency brakes?" At some point "parking brake" became the proper term. But I miss the hint of drama that went with "emergency brake." I'm sad, too, that almost all the old folks are gone who would call the accelerator the "foot feed." Didn't you ever wait at the street for your daddy to come home, so you could ride the "running board" up to the house?

Here's a phrase I heard all the time in my youth but never anymore - "store-bought." Of course, just about everything is store-bought these days. But once

it was bragging material to have a store-bought dress or a store-bought bag of candy. "Coast to coast" is a phrase that once held all sorts of excitement and now means almost nothing. Now we take the term "world wide" for granted. This floors me. On a smaller scale, "wall-to-wall" was once a magical term in our homes. In the '50s, everyone covered his or her hardwood floors with, wow, wall-to-wall carpeting! Today, everyone replaces their wall-to-wall carpeting with hardwood floors. Go figure.

When's the last time you heard the quaint phrase "in a family way?" It's hard to imagine that the word "pregnant" was once considered a little too graphic, a little too clinical for use in polite company. So we had all that talk about stork visits and "being in a family way" or simply "expecting." Apparently "brassiere" is a word no longer in usage. I said it the other day and my daughter cracked up. I guess it's just "bra" now. "Unmentionables" probably wouldn't be understood at all.

Most of these words go back to the '50s, but here's a pure-'60s word I came across the other day - "rat fink." Ooh, what a nasty put-down! Here's a word I miss - "percolator." That was just a fun word to say. And what was it replaced with? "Coffee maker." How dull. Mr. Coffee, I blame you for this. Food for thought - Was there a telethon that wiped out lumbago? Nobody complains of that anymore. Maybe that's what castor oil cured, because I never hear mothers threatening kids with castor oil anymore. Some words aren't gone, but are definitely on the endangered list. The one that grieves me most is "supper." Now everybody says "dinner." Save a great word. Invite someone to supper. Discuss fender skirts.

Very best wishes,
Nelson and Morgan

This month:

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Featured Brentsville Building

The House Maurice Keys Built

The land on which Maurice Keys built his home was referred to as part of the "Herrick Land" by Joseph B. Reid when he sold the parcel containing 16 acres +/- to Robert Allen Keys for \$160.00 on 29 Nov 1893 (DB42/556-7). Here Robert A. "Target" Keys built his home where he would raise his four sons and a daughter. A picture of this house can be found in the December 2006 Newsletter.

Robert died in 1902 and his wife, Margaret (Cornwell) Keys continued to live there until she and her children sold the property on 26 July 1910 to Martha (McCuen) Molair, wife of Robert Lee Molair for \$225.00 (DB61/459-60). Robert Lee Molair died 26 February 1914 and Martha continued to live there with her three children Josephine, R. Lee and Lillie Molair. Upon Martha's death the children inherited the

property and continued to live there until they sold it (11.5a) to Maurice Keys on 15 April 1945 for the sum of \$2,400.00.

Using lumber from the old "Keys/Molair" house, Maurice built his home in Brentsville adjacent to that of his parents, Robert Hilman and Susan Emma (Beavers) Keys, a prominent Brentsville businessman. Maurice died intestate on March 31, 1962, leaving his widow Hazel V. Keys and his two children, Margaret K. (Keys) Vogel and Stanley M. Keys as his sole heirs at law. On 29 June 1981 the children conveyed their interest to their mother, Hazel (DB617/868-9) who continued to live there for most of the remainder of her life.

Hazel finally sold the property to Peter Cole on 29 June 1981 (DB1153/573-4) who has lived there since that time.

Where W I L D Things Live

Tipulidae oleracea

Crane Flies look like giant mosquitoes, but they aren't. They are flies, same as mosquitoes, but otherwise are very different. They are among the animals which cause the most panic in a bedroom, apart from probably spiders, that is. Attracted by the light, they fly in the window and start to flap against lampshades of the main light or the bedside light...apart from this they do no harm at all. Crane flies are merely large flies. They grow up to 2 1/2 inches long, with a wingspan of three inches. They are grayish-brown and slender. Their legs are super-thin and long. They are usually about twice as long as their bodies. They do not bite or sting. The female lays eggs in the ground, where the larvae feed on vegetation, sometimes causing damage by gnawing at the roots of plants.

These rather leggy flies, sometimes referred to as Daddy Longlegs, have a tendency for the legs

to break off when handled. There are many different species of Crane Flies and they are almost impossible to tell apart. They all live near water. Some species of Crane Fly live in the water for part of their lives. Larger species generally rest with the wings extended: smaller species generally fold their wings flat over the body and often bob up and down on their legs when at rest, hence their alternative name of "bobbing gnats". The female abdomen is pointed for laying eggs into the ground or other materials. Some females are wingless and can be seen on house walls in late autumn. Adults may lap nectar and other fluids but do not feed much. Larvae live mainly as scavengers in the soil or decaying matter, often under water.

Source: www.the-pied-piper.co.uk/th6g.htm
http://www.fcps.edu/StratfordLandingES/Ecology/mpages/crane_fly.htm

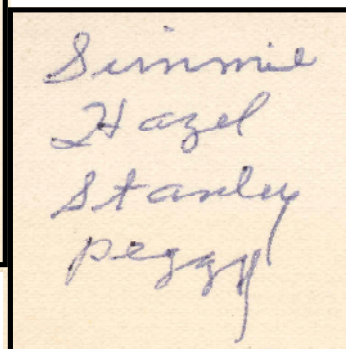
Featured Brentsville Building The home Maurice keys built



Photos below courtesy of Peggy (Keys) Venere



Hazel's handwriting on back



Maurice Keys family – Hazel Virginia (Diehl) Keys, Maurice “Simmie” Rouzie Keys holding daughter Margaret “Peggy” Aliene Keys and Stanley Maurice Keys.



Maurice's parents, Robert Hilman Keys with his wife, Susan Emma (Beavers) Keys on the front porch of their home in Brentsville

Where WILD things live..



Elizabeth Frances (Smith) Chandler



August 28, 2004

**A letter to Gladys Eanes from her cousin
Francis (Smith) Chandler
August 27, 2001**

Dear Gladys,

It was good hearing from you. You are involved in a very interesting project, but I don't know if I can be of much help. When I was growing up we weren't much interested in the past. So what I can recall is things I remember hearing.

Grand-dad moved to Prince Wm. Co. along with a number of other families from the Shenandoah Valley in the late 1800's, I think. I think Aunt Min said she was the only one born in Pr. Wm and that was 1893? They settled on the land that I know as the Spear place. Grand-dad then bought the farm across Cedar Run at the junction of Slate Run. The deed book at the Court House should show this record around that period. The farm house was built in 1905 and they were living in the Ramey house then. I think I recall Dad saying they were living there when Ardena died in 1899. Do not know when they moved into the farm house, but I suppose it was in 1905 as that is the date Dad and Uncle Jim always said when the house was built. As far as mills, Dad went to Snook's Mill on what is Flory Rd. now, just down the road from where Frank and I lived. Mr. Snook lived in Bristow in what was Clem Rollins farm.

I also know that the Court House was used as the Prince William Academy, but don't know the date, but I do know Dad graduated from there.

Also Uncle Jim told me the White house next to what was your home as a child was built with bricks used as ballast on ships from England. The ships came into Dumfries, and bricks brought by horse & wagon.

There were quite a few families from the Valley who move to Pr. Wm. For what reason I don't know. Cleveland Flory's mother's family moved to Effingham. Don't know if he can give you any information. Also Robert Beahm's family was another. Robert has written a book on the history of Nokesville. Maybe he can give you some information. I think the Valley View Church and Cemetery were started, or at least used by the many people from the Valley—thus the name. I know my Great-Great Grandmother, Lucinda—(Granny's mother Lawson is buried there? (1899 I seem to recall but do not have the family history handy) It is on the stone in the cemetery.

I know Aunt Min used to say she was the only "Tuckey-Ho." Where that name came from or what it meant I don't know, but it referred to those who moved east of the Blue Ridge, I think.

Uncle Jim told me that when the track of land that the farm was part of—used to be called the "Horse Shoe Bend Field" since Cedar Run made a horseshoe around it. I know you know the farm was sold to the Va. El. Power Co. in 1928(?) when the dam was built at Lake Jackson. Instead of building bridges as exits to the farm. Because Uncle Jim owned the Ramey place, he bought the farm back with the provision he would make his own way out of the farm via the Ramey track. Then when the depression hit in 1929, Dad was laid off and due to his age and economy, he bought the farm from Uncle Jim and he and Mom moved there. When Worldwar II, because of gas shortage etc., we persuaded Mom and Dad to come back to Balto. where they still owned a home where Leels, Rosalie and I were living. Dad's health was declining and we couldn't drive down each week to check on them and they didn't have a phone. Then when Frank and I were married in 1945, he wanted a place in the country. So the farm was vacant and Dad offered it to use. But Frank said he would accept the offer if we could buy it, for he wanted to make changes without asking permission each time. So we bought it in 1947 and sold it to Clifford Mayhew in 1961.

I hope you can guess at what I have scribbled. These old almost 94 year old arthritic fingers don't work too well. If there is anything of any interest, let me know and I'd try to make it clearer.

If I recall any thing more that might be of interest, I'll mail it to you. I no longer drive so go very little these days, as my health isn't that great either.

Did spend the week of Aug 12th with Jim (Ann's son) and Bobbie in Cheltenham, MD. They took me down to the fair on the 13th. I enjoyed seeing some of my friends. I miss them so much, for I spent more than half my life in that area. The neighborhood is strictly residential, and I know no one as we have nothing in common. When I could drive, it was O.K. but now I get very lonesome. The family couldn't be better to me, but their life style is so different than mine. But I count my blessings each night.

Give my love to the family. If any of you get to Baltimore, please stop by.

With love,
Frances

Citizens at War.

The story of Brentsville's Civil War

Continued from last month...

It is apparent that by the time of the Battle of 1st Bull Run in July 1861 just a few miles away, the impact of constant reconnaissance by both sides was already having an effect. Robert Carter, one of four brothers who served for the Union, was a member of a U.S. Regular Army Company in the Third U.S. Infantry. He related that on 16 July 1861... "Reached Fairfax about 12 O'clock; found it occupied by Miles' Brigade and a portion of Heintzleman's. Volunteers conducted themselves in a shocking manner; broke open stores and scattered the contents in the streets; killed all the pigs and poultry they could find; robbed the bee-hives; dug all the new potatoes they could get from the gardens; broke open houses; stole the sweet meats etc." (10)

Shortly after, on Aug. 2 CH Thompson of the 7th Va. wrote to his Aunt from near the Manassas Battlefield, following a skirmish in the weeks after the battle. Thompson talks of the goods scattered by the Union soldiers in the fields after the battle. Besides the usual rifles, canteens knapsacks etc there were "...silk dresses, patterned bonnets and underskirts, found marked to the wives of the men in New York, as trophies gotten from the 'rebels' as they term us. These things were stolen from private homes in Alexandria and Fairfax C.H. ...they killed the stock, burned houses, destroyed furniture of the people as they advanced." (11)

Following the battle at Manassas the Hampton Legion from South Carolina was detailed to the area. It was from their camp at Brentsville that James B. Griffin of Hampton's Legion wrote a letter to his wife dated 3 August 1861.

"We are camped on the bank of Broad Run - a large, muddy ugly stream. Our drinking water is scarce and very bad. Can't get any clear water to wash in or to drink. I hope we will be moved from here soon. This is a very poor country. And there have been so many troops about here that the resources of the country are well nigh exhausted. We have a good deal of sickness in camp already, mostly measles." (12)

Sickness was widespread, and throughout the war Brentsville residents nursed many of the soldiers. This was particularly true of the larger plantation houses, such as the Cockrell and Foster's. The illnesses often took weeks to recover from, (if at all) and many of the sick found it preferable to stay in a nice warm house with good food and company. One letter sent home to South Carolina by a member of the Hampton Legion dated 9 September 1861 was headed "Measles Lodge" which in reality was the home of the Cockrell family.

"... I hardly know how I shall get along with the fat pork and hard biscuits, after staying here and living on the fat of the land for four weeks... the people are exceedingly kind and I have all the attention I need. ... The long expected paymaster made his appearance... That will be sufficient to pay Mr. Cockrell and have a little balance for pocket money. Mr. Cockrell charges me twenty dollars - eighteen for myself and two for horse, which was very reasonable considering the scarcity and high price of provisions. The family were very kind indeed and I lingered there as long as possible." (13)

Another case was E. Prioleau Henderson of the 2nd South Carolina Cavalry who took ill from typhoid fever, probably from drinking the muddy

Continued from page 6

water of Bull Run. He, along with his brother who was designated to nurse him, their Negro servant and three horses were all cared for by Mrs. Foster and her two nieces at the Foster Plantation near Brentsville. The husband of one of the nieces was in the 4th Virginia Cavalry. (14) Sometime after the war E. Prioleau Henderson wrote a book on his war experiences through the eyes of his horse "Arab". "Oh! Those Virginia people who bore the brunt of the war, how hospitable and kind you were to the Confederate soldiers, man and horse ... I don't believe a Virginian ever refused a Southern soldier a meal or victuals, or his horse a feed of corn and hay." (15)

After a long winter Joseph E. Johnston withdrew the Confederate forces from Prince William County to provide greater protection for Richmond. Union commander George B. McClellan now embarked on the so-called Peninsular Campaign. However President Lincoln insisted on maintaining a force around Washington as protection and the lack of rebel presence in the area soon spelt bad news for the people of Brentsville. Confederate Major General Theophilus H. Holmes reported to Robert E. Lee in Richmond on the 15th of March - "There appears no doubt that Hooker's Division has crossed the river at Evansport and that a column of 5,000 or 6,000 have reached Brentsville from the direction of Manassas..." (16)

This was the first long-term Union occupation of the area. Levi Fritz of Co. A, 53rd Pennsylvania tells us - "On Monday March 24th several companies of our regiment, and a detachment of the Illinois cavalry, under command of Lieut. Col. McMichael, were sent out on a reconnoitering excursion. They proceeded up the railroad to Broad Run, crossing which, they went down the stream as far as Brentsville, the county seat of Prince

William County... At Brentsville Col. McMichael raised the national colors of the 53rd over the Court House amid the cheers of the men." (17)

Another was Henry Matrau of the 6th Wisconsin, (Iron Brigade). "Camp beyond Manassas, April 10, 1862. " ... We had got pretty desperately hungry and the consequence was the confiscation of a good many pigs, poultry, sheep, calves, turkeys etc belonging to good loyal rebs. We charged into a drove of about 100 sheep and the bullets whistled pretty smartly for a while." (18)

Whilst rarely mentioned by the Union soldiers, these forays into enemy country were particularly severe on any citizens showing Confederate sympathies. Here are some comments by Brigadier General Marsena Patrick, Brigade Commander, First Division, Army of the Potomac. 15 April 1862. Camp Wadsworth, near Bristoe. "I am punishing two men of the 20th for stealing, plundering, & marauding." (19)

Continued next month

flashback

1915 04-30-1915 The Manassas Journal – Death of Frances Molair

Molair, Frances - 30 Apr 1915 M.J. –

At 5:30 this morning death came to Mrs. Frances Molair, widow of John Molair, on her old home place near Brentsville. Mrs. Molair, who was 82 years old, has been in poor health for several years.

She leaves two sons, Roy and Edward, both of Brentsville, and four daughters, Mrs. A. J. Hockman, Mrs. James Cooper, and Misses Nannie and Maggie, all of near Brentsville.

Funeral services will be held at the home Sunday at 1 p. m. and interment will be in the family burying ground on the place.

A special "Thank You" to Joyce (Keys) Smith -- we very much appreciate your support!

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Information About Brentsville
Shared Among Neighbors

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