

Brentsville Neighbors



Information About Brentsville
Shared Among Neighbors
October 2008



Welcome Neighbor!

September was a busy month in Brentsville. Tropical Storm Hanna came sweeping through Prince William just in time to wash out our One-Room School Reunion. But it didn't succeed! In spite of the heavy rains and strong winds we still had eight brave students battle the elements to share memories in their old school. In addition to them, there were nine family members and friends also on hand to enjoy the day.

The 2008 Prince William Farm Tour was also a great success. The weather forecast was for rain on Saturday but it was a beautiful day. They called for nice weather on Sunday and it rained most of the time. Go figure! But again, the weather had little or no impact on the number of visitors during this weekend. Saturday brought 302 visitors to the site specifically for the farm tour plus another 72 who attended a wedding in the Union Church. The parking lot was full!

Sunday visitors included two Cub Scout troops and many individuals interested in learning more about the site. Despite the rain there were 172 visitors logged on this day as well. Together, we were so pleased to see almost 550 visitors to the site during this two day event.

Now we are looking forward to Haunted Brentsville on Saturday, October 25th from 5 – 9:00pm. There will be tours every 30

minutes. Experience the fear and drama of a farm being used as a hospital after a bloody battle. See the tragedy of a soldier burial after battle. Observe the DC Metro Area Ghost Watchers conducting a ghost investigation on the haunted Brentsville Jail. Not recommended for children under six. Admission is \$5.00 per person.

We also invite you to note the information on page six concerning the 145th anniversary event at Bristow. This event will “spill over” into Brentsville on both Saturday and Sunday and we invite you to stop by and visit with the re-enactors. They are happy to talk about their roles and you will find them a wealth of information.

We wish to express our sincere appreciation to Ms. Michelle Hylton for allowing us to copy her wonderful family scrapbooks. Look for her pictures in our Brentsville notebooks. Thank you Missy!

Very best wishes,
Nelson and Morgan

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Where W I L D Things Live

Coragyps Atratus **American Black Vulture**

The **American Black Vulture** is a bird in the New World vulture family whose range extends from the southeastern United States to South America. Although a common and widespread species, it has a somewhat more restricted distribution than its compatriot, the Turkey Vulture, which breeds well into Canada and south to Tierra del Fuego. Despite the similar name and appearance, these species are unrelated. It inhabits relatively open areas which provide scattered forests or shrublands.

The American Black Vulture is a scavenger and feeds on carrion, but will also eat eggs or kill newborn animals. It is the only species of New World vulture which preys on cattle. It occasionally harasses cows which are giving birth, but primarily preys on new-born calves. In its first few weeks, a calf will allow vultures to approach it. The vultures swarm the calf in a group, then peck at the calf's eyes, or at the nose or the tongue. The calf then goes into shock and is killed by the vultures. In areas populated by humans, it also feeds at garbage dumps. It finds its meals either by using its keen eyesight or by following other vultures, which possess a keen sense of smell. Lacking a syrinx—the vocal organ of birds—its only vocalizations are grunts or low hisses.

This Vulture is a very large bird of prey, measuring 25.5 inches in length, with a 5 ft wingspan and a weight of 4.5-6 lb. Its plumage is mainly glossy black. The head and neck are featherless and the skin is dark gray and wrinkled. The iris of the eye is brown and has a single incomplete row of eyelashes on the upper lid and two rows on the lower lid. The legs are grayish white, while the two front toes of the foot are long and have small webs at their bases. The feet are flat, relatively weak, and are poorly adapted to grasping; the talons are also not designed for grasping, as they are relatively blunt. The wings are broad but relatively short. The bases of the primary feathers are white, producing

(Continued on page 6)

flashback

BRENTSVILLE

Mr. William Ramkey preached his last vacation sermon Sunday night. He will return to Richmond to continue his studies at the Theological Seminary.

Pvt. Johnny Melvin, who has completed his basic training, is enjoying his furlough visiting his many friends and his grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Donovan.

Mr. John Chandler, of West Virginia, is visiting his nephew and niece, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Chandler.

Mr. and Mrs. Minor Baker, of Baltimore, were recent visitors of their uncle, Mr. Ray Hedrick. They were accompanied by friends, Mr. and Mrs. McGowan. Other visitors of the Hedricks were Mrs. Bessie Ofenbacher, of Halethorp, Md.; Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Hedrick and family and Mr. "Buckie" Hedrick, of Arlington.

Mr. and Mrs. John Donovan had as their Sunday visitor Mrs. Donovan's stepmother, of Vienna.

We are very sorry that Mrs. James has been on the sick list.

Mr. William Brown, who had a stroke, is improving rapidly and is able to walk around.

Although still confined to bed, Rev. Jesse Bell is much improved.

Mr. and Mrs. Bill Golliday had as their Sunday visitors Mrs. Golliday's brothers, Paul and Raymond Rush, and their families, of Winchester.

Mrs. Newton received a letter from her husband, Cpl. T. L. Newton, who is doing missionary work in Japan, telling of the great need of missionary work and relief in that country.

Source: The Manassas Journal, June, 1947

2008 Farm Tour attracts many visitors



Where WILD things live..



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Coragyps Atratus

American Black Vulture

(Photo by Fred Wolfe)

See page 2



A wedding at the Union Church, Saturday, September 27th.



Students who attended the 2008 Brentsville One-Room School Reunion
(L-R) Raymond Fogle, Mildred (Fogle) McIntosh, Gladys (Wolfe) Eanes,
Frances (Keys) Duckett, John "Freddy" Wolfe, Catherine (Counts) Corner,
Leonard Wright and Nelson Keys



Students, family and friends who braved Tropical Storm
Hanna to attend the 2008 Reunion

Delores Counts Remembers Brentsville

When I think of Brentsville it brings back wonderful memories. I was an only child of adopted parents, born in New Orleans, LA. I met and married Howard Counts in New Orleans in 1944. He was the son of Troy and Minnie Counts who had a farm between the Bean and Cox families. I had never been on a farm. Howard was in the Coast Guard at the time, as it was during WWII.

I lived with the Counts' until after the war. My learning experiences were just beginning. Since I had lived in the French Quarter, I had access to fresh vegetables, fruit, meat and bakery goods. So, a garden and canning and baking was new to me. Oh! What an enlightening that was!

The Counts had five children--John, who was in the Army; Hazel, married and living in Lynchburg; Howard, Catherine and Gilbert. Catherine, who was only a few months older than I helped me get acquainted with family and friends.

I used to visit the Bean's; Mrs. Clyde Bean was Mr. Counts' sister. Also I was a constant visitor of Joe and Ora Keys. These families had siblings my age. Joe Keys was Mrs. Counts' brother. The Golladay family was also a frequent visiting place. To this day, I have very dear friends from these great families.

My brother-in-law, Gilbert, taught me how to milk a cow. My first lesson was to stand at the barn door while he squirted milk in my face. All in the learning. Mrs. Counts taught me to bake and can. I could cook Creole and Italian style but just country! I had some learning to do.



Aunt Ora taught me how to get the most out of a piece of material in the sewing line. I loved and admired these people. Aunt Verona taught me crochet.

A debt of gratitude I owed these ladies. After the war ended and the siblings of these families grew and married we all stayed close and visited.

Howard had a best friend, Stewart Bradford, and believe it or not, his wife and I are still best friends.

We moved to Florida in 1964. I had three children and one deceased. Howard (son) bought our home property and built on it. He still lives there. Michel, who was the baby and two at the time, used to get the croup real bad. Dr.

Jamison, head and lung specialist, told us to move to Florida that the iodine in the salt sea air would be good for her. So off we went with Jan, my middle son and baby. I did not want to move to Florida. I loved Brentsville and its people. To me it was family and friends.

We lived in Flagler County 35 years. Howard passed away September 1985 and I stayed in Florida until Jan and his family moved to Tennessee. I now reside in a lovely apartment over my daughter and son-in-law's home. I am happy and content here but I still love Brentsville. It was really home to me.

Money will buy a fine dog, but
only kindness will make him
wag his tail.

a white patch on the underside of the wing's edge, which is visible in flight. The tail is short and square, barely reaching past the edge of the folded wings.

It soars high while searching for food, holding its wings horizontally when gliding. It flaps in short bursts which are followed by short periods of gliding. Its flight is less efficient than that of other vultures, as the wings are not as long, forming a smaller sail surface. In comparison with the Turkey Vulture, the American Black Vulture flaps its wings more frequently during flight. It is known to regurgitate when approached or disturbed, which assists in predator deterrence and taking flight by decreasing its takeoff weight. It is gregarious, and roosts in large groups. In areas where their ranges overlap, it will roost on the bare branches of dead trees with groups of Turkey Vultures. It generally forages in groups; a flock of Black Vultures can easily drive a Turkey Vulture, which is generally solitary while foraging, from a carcass. Like the Turkey Vulture, this vulture is often seen standing in a spread-winged stance. The stance is believed to serve multiple functions: drying the wings, warming the body, and baking off bacteria.

The American Black Vulture lays its eggs on the ground in a wooded area, a hollow log, or some other cavity, seldom more than 10 ft above the ground. While it generally does not use any nesting materials, it may decorate the area around the nest with bits of brightly-colored plastic, shards of glass, or metal items such as bottle caps. Clutch size is generally two eggs, though this can vary from one to three. The egg is oval and on average measures 3 by 2 in. The smooth, gray-green, bluish, or white shell is variably blotched or spotted with lavender or pale brown around the larger end. Both parents incubate the eggs, which hatch after 28 to 41 days. Upon hatching, the young are covered with white down. Both parents feed the nestlings, regurgitating food at the nest site. The young remain in the nest for two months, and after 75 to 80 days they are able to fly skillfully.

In the United States, the vulture receives legal protection under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. It is illegal to take, kill, or possess American Black Vultures and violation of the law is punishable by a fine of up to US\$15,000 and imprisonment of up to six months.

Source: Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Anniversary Event Planned for Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park

In Mid October, the rolling fields of Bristoe Station will once again come alive with the sound of musket fire and other martial activity as the Prince William County Historic Preservation Division hosts the 145th Anniversary re-enactment of the Battle of Bristoe Station. This event will take place at the recently opened Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park located off Bristow Road (Route 619) on 10th Alabama Lane.

For those living near Bristoe Station, do not be surprised if on Saturday morning you see soldiers of the II Corps Federal and North Carolinians of the Confederate Third Corps marching to battle. The two opposing forces will approach the battlefield using similar routes to those used by Confederate and Union Forces in 1863. They will collide in battle at about 3:00 PM on Saturday, October 11th. There will be activities on site prior to the arrival of these re-enactor armies beginning at 10:00 AM on Saturday. Visitors are encouraged to explore areas occupied by the sutlers, civilians who served as merchants to the armies, and participate in a guided tour of the battlefield. Come see displays and presentations that show how the roles of volunteer "citizen soldiers" have changed from 1863 until today. The daytime activities will conclude at 5:00 PM. Visitors are encouraged to make a donation to the battlefield and \$5.00 a car load is recommended. Civilian living historians will occupy the Haislip-Hall house at Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre and a Federal Cavalry detachment will be encamped on the grounds on Saturday evening and Sunday.

On Saturday night guided torch light tours of the battlefield will be given by reservation only. Tours will be held on the hour and half hour beginning at 7:00 PM. The final tour of the evening will step off at 8:30 PM. The cost to attend the tours is \$3.00 for adults and \$2.00 for children ages 6 to 15. Children 5 and younger are free. Please wear comfortable shoes, appropriate attire for the weather and be prepared to walk $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile.

Sunday, October 12th the grounds will open to the public at 10:00 am. A ceremony will be held commemorating the deeds of the soldiers of both armies whose actions transformed forever this rural countryside into hallowed ground followed by a demonstration of martial music by the men of the Liberty Rifles Drum and Fife Corps at 11:00. A Civil War military demonstration will be held at noon. A guided tour of the Battlefield will be held at 1:00 and the programs will be concluded at 3:00 PM.

For more information about the event or to reserve space on a candle light tour, contact Site Manager David M. Bornat Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park, (703) 257-5243, or online at dborn@pwcgov.org.

Brentsville

A Look Back in History
by
Ronald Ray Turner

Reuben Abel & Wm. Sinclair

The year was 1863. The war was already two years old, and the county of Prince William was within enemy lines. As difficult as everyday life was, the friends, family and neighbors of two inmates in the state penitentiary were doing everything they could to get them pardoned. Life at the prison didn't change much during the war. It was still a place light on correction and heavy on punishment.

During an argument on August 25, 1860, Reuben Abel drew a knife, stabbed and mortally wounded Thomas Luther Abel. John Groves, James Sutherland and R. W. Wheat witnessed the fight. All agreed that Reuben Abel was the aggressor and killed an unarmed man.

Reuben was in the county jail from the night of the killing until October 8, 1860, when he was led to the bar in the custody of the jailor only to have his case postponed. This scenario would be repeated throughout the next year at least 5 times. The absence of Eppa Hunton, the Commonwealth Attorney, with no replacement being available caused most of the delay. In the October Court term of 1861, he was again led to the bar in the custody of the sheriff. At this time with only a small jury pool the following jurors were selected to hear the case: John Sullivan, Thomas J. Simpson, James H. Moore, William Florance, Minor Fairfax, William H. Butler, John H. Purcell, Robert C. Weir and James Florance. After hearing the evidence the jury agreed that Reuben was not guilty of murder but was sentenced to three years in the penitentiary for voluntary manslaughter.

William Sinclair the other Prince William County inmate in the penitentiary had been there since his murder conviction in May 1858.

In October 1862 Edmund Berkeley, a major in the 8th Virginia, wrote the first of two letters, trying to gain the release of Sinclair. "I am lying here wounded near home & am harassed daily by hearing of raids made by squads of Yankees picking up our sick & wounded men through this county. They took one of our sick Lieutenants out of a bed at my house some 2 weeks ago & forced him off on horseback & he dropped from his horse & died before they had gotten 20 miles. If I could get a proper man to make up a party in these mountains I could put a stop to it completely." Berkeley went on to say that Sinclair was a very determined man and a splendid rifle shot, who could raise other mountain men to follow him. The governor took no action; therefore, in March 1863 Edmund Berkeley wrote a second letter in support of Sinclair. Berkeley pleaded his case by stating again that Sinclair is a stout able bodied man, a good rifle shot and would make a good soldier to fight his country's enemies.

In answer to the pardon of Reuben Abel, Governor Letcher wrote the following: "The prisoner is upwards of sixty years of age, badly ruptured, infirm and in ill health, and a charge upon the institution. Since his confinement his conduct as a prisoner has been good. He has four sons in our army who have proved themselves good soldiers, and who now ask for the pardon of their father. In consideration of the good conduct of the sons, the age and infirmity of the father I direct that he be discharged."

In the case of William Sinclair the only response was DENIED.

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IN GOD WE TRUST

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