

# Brentsville Neighbors

## Preserving Brentsville's History

August 2011



Welcome Neighbors,

I need your help. The July newsletter was late being delivered to those of you who receive it by mail because of significant printer problems. And to make matters even worse, the hard drive in my computer failed and needed replacement. Fortunately the data on it was saved. You probably noted a lower print quality, particularly on one of the photograph pages. During the past years I typically wear out a printer each eight to ten months. Sadly to say, the printers on today's market are not made for the volume I subject them to and neither are they made to be repaired. The stores will tell you, use it until it breaks then toss it out and buy a new one. On my budget that's hard to do!

I'm asking for your help so that I may continue distributing copies by mail. I can easily send the newsletter electronically to those who have high speed internet--many thanks to those who have made the transition already. All I need is your e-mail address.

For many of you, a printed and mailed copy is necessary and will continue to be distributed this way. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Would you enjoy a step back in time? Why not reserve August 20-21 for "Hard Tack and Coffee" Brentsville Civil War Soldier Camp from 10 a.m. Saturday until 10 a.m. Sunday; ages 16 (with adult) and older only, \$125 per person; reservations required. Prince William County citizens came to Brentsville to learn how to be soldiers in 1861 (150 years ago). These farmers, shopkeepers and laborers brought few skills that would prepare them for life in the army. Step into the past and discover the military

and daily life skills of Civil War soldiers. Activities of this overnight intensive camp include military drills, firing demonstrations, camp life, cooking and building a soldier hut. Meals included.

And in case you missed it in July, there will be another Nature Trail Walk on August 20 starting at 1 p.m.; The cost is \$5 per person, free for children under six. Take a guided tour along the nature trails at Brentsville and learn about plants and animals that live in this part of Virginia.

Oh! One more thing, on August 26-27 there will be a special presentation on Reptiles of Virginia. **This two day event** starts on Friday, Aug. 26, at 7 p.m. with a lecture and concludes on Saturday, Aug. 27, at 8 a.m. with a walking tour. The cost is \$5 per person, free for children under six. Join naturalist and reptile expert Tony Bulmer on Friday evening for a lecture on the native reptiles and amphibians that call Virginia home. Learn why having these guys in your yard and our parks is a good thing. The lecture will be held at Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre and will include guest appearances by some of our local reptilian residents. Saturday morning, join Tony once again for a walking tour of Brentsville Courthouse's nature trail and discover the habitat that these guys call home. Wear comfortable walking shoes, dress for the weather, and bring water. Please no pets. For information on any of these events or to make reservations, **please call 703-365-7895.**

Very best wishes,  
Morgan

### This month:

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### Circulation: 239 - 105 Printed

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# Flashback

## Where WILD Things Live

### Brentsville Notes.

Mrs. T. S. Bradshaw, who has been confined to her bed since last March, has much improved under the careful nursing of Mrs. Swan, widow of the late Methodist minister sent to this circuit. Mrs. Swan is tactful, tender and of untiring energy and is peculiarly fitted for the duties of the sick room.

Mrs. D. H. Oertly, of Washington, with her three children and nurse is the guest of her mother, Mrs. Dr. Bowen.

Mr. W. F. Bowen has returned to his duties as railway postal clerk.

Mr. B. T. H. Hodge and his charming, accomplished wife were the guests of friends in Brentsville on Wednesday.

Our little village feels deeply the loss of our commonwealth's attorney, the late Mr. J. J. Davies; for they have lost a young man faithful in the discharge of duty, kind and considerate of all.

M.

Source: The Manassas Journal, August 20, 1909.

Hark to the latest from Brentsville: Brentsville is ahead in a piscatorial sense at least. One day last week Mr. Miff Keys, while planting corn near Cedar Run heard a noise as though something unusual were disporting itself in the water and upon investigation, caught a fine bass weighing five pounds or more.

Source: The Manassas Journal – Brief Local News – August 6, 1909

### A Few Astounding Grasshopper Facts

When you really think about it there are some pretty astounding grasshopper facts. For instance, not even every type of grasshopper has been seen. There are thought to be between 11,000 and 18,000 different species of grasshoppers. And, grasshopper facts tell us that grasshoppers thrive in all types of habitat. They are so adaptable they inhabit all parts of the world except for the North and South Poles.

Grasshoppers do have something in common. They don't have any ears at all and they all have five eyes. They are herbivores, who eat only plants. They go through three stages of reproduction. First there are eggs, then nymphs, then adult grasshoppers. You can see grasshoppers wherever there is plenty of food for them, such as in fields and meadows.

One of the strangest grasshopper facts is that they do not have a nose with which to breathe. Instead, they have holes all along the sides of their bodies for breathing. A grasshopper is made up of a head, abdomen, thorax, two pair of wings, six legs that have joints and two antennae. Grasshoppers typically hop when they move but they can jump 20 times the length of their body.

Grasshopper facts tell us that the five eyes of the grasshopper are different. Three are what are called simple eyes and two, compound eyes. If you have ever tried to catch a grasshopper you have seen firsthand how very hard it is. That is because all of these eyes allow a grasshopper to see not only long distances, but also forwards, backwards and sideways.

Grasshoppers are all herbivores but different types of grasshoppers prefer different kinds of plants. They can cause a lot of trouble should swarms of grasshoppers start eating a farmer's crops. They can cause a lot of damage and the crop will sell for less money. Some of the foods grasshoppers really love include corn, oats, rye, cotton, barley, wheat, alfalfa, and clover.

Grasshoppers are unique among insects in that they sing. While their song sounds kind of like a chirp, different species make the noise in different ways. Some grasshoppers rub their wings together and others clatter their wings. The sounds attract male grasshoppers to females for mating.

Grasshoppers are hard to get rid of because they live almost anywhere. Whenever possible, try to control grasshoppers in an organic way. One way is to raise chickens as poultry are good grasshopper eaters.

Source: <http://www.grasshopperfacts.net/>



Brigadier General James Fowler Rusling  
April 14, 1834 - April 1, 1918  
See page 6

## Where WILD things live..



*Melanoplus borealis borealis*  
Grasshopper  
See page 2



Donald & Susan Golladay

(Photos courtesy of  
Catherine Corner)



Counts Family

Back: John Counts, Joe Worsham,  
Minnie & Troy Counts.  
Front: Hazel Counts Worsham, Catherine Corner,  
Howard & Gilbert Counts



Herbert Keys



Troy & Verona at the grave of their father, John Baptist Riley Counts, 1987



Ethel Breeden



Rome Counts



Herbert & Lillie Keys



Ollie Beavers

(Photos courtesy of Catherine Comer)

# A Brentsville Citizen of Note

## James Jenkyn Davies

J. Jenkyn Davies died at his home here Sunday afternoon, August 8, 1909, of dilatation of the heart superinduced by typhoid fever, in his thirty-fourth year. While he had been sick for nearly two weeks, he was never thought to be seriously ill, and but an hour before his death, he remarked that he would be out in two days. The end came as suddenly as the thunderbolt from a clear sky, and cast a pall of gloom over the entire community, which attests to the sincere affection and esteems in which he was held.

He was confined to the house Tuesday, July 27, with what seemed but a mere touch of fever. His condition was at no time regarded as serious, and Thursday, August 5, there was some talk of having him carried to the polls to vote. Saturday his uncle, Judge J. B. T. Thornton, whose affection for him was that of a father, left for several days visit in Caroline county.

Sunday morning he had no fever, and the most confident hopes were expressed of his speedy recovery. His brother in law E. H. Hibbs left the house about one o'clock, leaving him alone with his wife. Hardly had Mr. Hibbs gotten out of sight, when Mr. Davies received the fatal attack. Mrs. Davies phoned to Mr. Davies' family and ran across the street to Dr. Iden's for assistance. Every thing that skill and loving hands could do, or heart-breaking minds conceive was promptly done, but without avail and at half past one the end came.

The distressing intelligence quickly spread through the town, and despite the fact the phones are closed on Sunday, through the country as well, and sad faced groups discussed in awed and solemn tones the passing of one whom each held dear as a personal friend. The brothers and uncles were at once telegraphed to, but Judge Thornton and Senator Thornton could not be reached until Monday.

Tuesday evening the last solemn rites were performed and the large number of persons who

came to pay the final tribute of respect attested the large place Mr. Davies justly held in the hearts of his fellow citizens. The funeral services at the Trinity Episcopal Church at three o'clock were conducted by Rev. F. L. Robinson, rector of that church, assisted by Rev. W. H. K. Pendleton, of Spartansburg, S. C., and interment took place immediately after in the Manassas Cemetery. The attendance was the largest perhaps at any funeral in the county for many years, and in the throng of mourners were many colored people to whom Mr. Davies had been a faithful friend.

The numerous floral tributes were of the most exquisitely beautiful design, and more that covered the mound which marked the last resting place.

The following were the pall bearers: A. A. Hooff, Walter Shannon, W. N. Lipscomb, J. P. Leachman, W. J. Green and Jos. F. Lewis.

James Jenkyn Davies was the oldest son of the late James J. Davies, one of the best known lawyers and politicians of the county. His mother was a daughter of the late Maj. W. W. Thornton, and a sister of Judge J. B. T. Thornton, Senator Ewell Thornton, Messrs. B. B. Thornton and W. W. Thornton. Through his mother, he was related to Gov. J. Hoge Tyler.

He was born in Brentsville, in Prince William county, February 6, 1876.

He had such educational advantages as were offered by the public schools of the county, but it was his ambition to become a lawyer. As his father dies when he was sixteen years old, leaving a widow and six children of whom Jenkyn was the oldest boy, it seemed for a time as though his ambition would be thwarted. But while never failing in his obligations as a son or a brother, by indomitable energy and perseverance, he overcame obstacles, seemingly insurmountable, and succeeded in attending the College of William and Mary for several years.

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# When WAR Came to Brentsville

## MEN AND THINGS I SAW IN CIVIL WAR DAYS

By James F. Rusling, Brigadier General (by Brevet) United States Volunteers

During this movement to the rear, on October 13, as we neared the Rappahannock, General Meade ordered me to take charge of our immense wagon trains, and hasten their crossing below Rappahannock Station. The consolidated trains of the Army of the Potomac then averaged about fifty miles. I found them all crossing by a single ford, and at once directed new fords to be constructed, by cutting down the banks of the river, etc., and soon had several trains crossing simultaneously and rapidly, and at dusk rode into headquarters near Catlett's Station, and reported our trains practically over. But I was myself thoroughly exhausted, having been in the saddle all day and most of the previous night and day, and after a meager supper was soon sound asleep. In an hour or so, however, along about nine o'clock, an orderly roused me with:

"General Meade's compliments, and he wants to see you immediately."

Reporting to him, he said our trains had gone into park for the night at Brentsville, about ten or twelve miles distant, with orders to move on next day to Fairfax Station, to the rear of Centreville; but that the Confederate cavalry were working round in that direction, and he feared that they might raid or "gobble up" our trains, unless they were started at once for Fairfax, and he wished me to proceed immediately to Brentsville and take charge of affairs there. I hesitated; hinted I was used up, dead-beat with fatigue, etc.; but he cut me short by saying I had managed the trains so well at the Rappahannock that day, that he was going to intrust me with this Brentsville job also. And then he added, by way of parting benediction:

"Good-bye, Rusling! The Rebs are reported off in that direction, and you may bring up in Richmond before I see you again!"

"No, I won't either, General," I rejoined, kindling up (evidently as he intended); "I will go through all right, and put the trains through, too."

He gave me his hand, and smiled gravely down from behind his glasses (I was only a young fellow then, and of moderate stature compared with Meade's), and bade me take what escort I wanted. But I chose only four cavalymen, for secrecy and speed, and was soon in the saddle again and off for Brentsville.

Once out of camp, we abandoned the main road, and struck straight for Brentsville by the byways and plantation roads, depending on an "intelligent contraband" as guide, that I picked up at the first cabin, with a promise of five dollars if he piloted us safe through, or a bullet through his head if he misled or betrayed us.

"All right, massa," he answered, displaying his ivories; "I'll take dat five dollars; fer I was gwine wid you Yankees, anyway!"

I mounted him behind one of the Cavalymen, and though the night was pitch dark we reached Brentsville safely before midnight. Here we found the teams ungeared and everybody fast asleep; but soon had the trains on the road again and off briskly for Fairfax Station. With the trains thus well in motion, and their corps quartermasters well instructed, I threw myself on the ground by a flickering camp fire, and went heavily to sleep, and slept till after sunrise of a superb October morning, and, then waking up, found our vast trains still rolling on and on. I breakfasted with

(Continued on page 9)

# Brentsville

## A Look Back in History

by

Ronald Ray Turner

### Jesse Fouks

The Alexandria Gazette stated, "There was perpetrated in this community, on the evening of the 3<sup>d</sup> day of December, 1874, a deed which has no parallel in the annals of crime, no counterpart anywhere in the entire category of savage brutality." The article continued by noting that the Herndon were victims of an ignorant, cowardly, passionate, brutal and malignant assassin. Could Jesse Fouks get a fair trial from a jury pool that was given a barrage of this style of writing?

It was just before dark on December 3, 1874, when Jeremiah Herndon returned to his home from Bristow Station. He lived with his wife Sinah and a young house servant named Addison Russell. Jesse Fouks, who also lived and worked for the Herndon family as a farm worker, came into the house and started complaining about a piece of meat that he said was his. Jeremiah picked up an ax and threatened to hit Fouks. The argument then became so intense that Mrs. Herndon pushed Jesse out the door. Jesse said, "It would not take me long to kill you old wretches." Nothing other than suppositions are known about what happened from this point until the next morning.

It was just about sun up the next day when Summerfield Herndon came to work at his father's farm, as he did every day. As he approached the house and entered the yard, he discovered bloody foot prints leading to the front door. The first thing he saw upon entering the house was his mother covered with blood and lying on the bed. He started screaming for his father; however, with no answer, he searched the house. It was during this search that he found the dead body of little Addison Russell. His father was not in the house but was discovered by one of the neighbors, John Alexander, about 400 yards away, barefooted, bleeding with head and face cuts. Herndon was confused and bewildered; he said he had been wandering all night and didn't know who had done this to him. On returning to the house, however, he began telling the story of his quarrel with Jesse Fouks. It was at this time the suspicion of guilt changed from his son Summerfield to Fouks. The strained relationship between the parents and the son was in evidence during the deathbed interrogation. When asked where her son Summer was last night, she replied, "I do not know but if he was here you know he would not help us." During this questioning, both Jeremiah

and his wife were asked if they had been attacked by Fouks, and both said they didn't know.

When the coroner's inquest ended, Jesse was arrested and taken to jail. At this point the only evidence against him was that all three of the dead appeared to have been killed with an ax. Just before he died, Jeremiah was reported to have remembered that Jesse was the person who attacked him. There were gold coins missing from the house and bloody fingerprints on the money box. The assumption was the prints belonged to the accused.

The same information given at the coroner's inquest was introduced to the grand jury and then at the trial. The Commonwealth's Attorney George W. Larkin made a passionate plea for the death penalty. As expected by all, Fouks was found guilty and sentenced to be hung the 19<sup>th</sup> day of March 1875 between 10 A.M. and 2 P.M.

The defense attorney for Fouks was Brentsville born James E. Williams, a Confederate Army Captain, son of the former clerk of court and son-in-law of County Court Judge Aylett Nicol. After the guilty verdict and execution sentence, Williams was in the process of filing an appeal when Fouks confessed. His lawyer didn't live to witness the execution because on or about February 27 James Williams was found dead just outside Brentsville. His death and the strange circumstances surrounding it only added fuel to the many conspiracy believers. The death was officially listed as "death through intemperance and exposure."

Jesse was in jail, awaiting his sentence, when he made an escape from his cell to an adjacent passageway, where there was nothing to prevent the escape except an unlocked iron grated door. The jailor's wife saw him flee in the direction that his sister lived at the Orear property. The jailor and others gave chase and eventually found him hiding in a straw rick about five miles from Brentsville. On being recaptured, Fouks declared again that he didn't commit the crime but that he knew who did. He told the jailor and others that "a colored man by the name of Willis Tebbs" was the person who killed the Herndons and Addison Russell. According to records, a warrant was issued for Tebbs; however, before the warrant could be served, Fouks recanted his story and confessed that he committed the crimes.

(Continued on page 9)

He afterward taught school for several years, and in this way gained sufficient money to enable him to complete the law course at the University of Virginia. In 1898 he successfully passed the state bar examination and was admitted to practice his chosen profession of the law.

That fondness for politics, which made his father such a power in the county, early manifested itself in the son. Long before he was out of his twenties, he was admitted to the councils of state and national leaders, and his advice and influence were eagerly sought in many hard fought campaigns.

His influence was due in no small degree to his ability to get close to his people, and the affectionate regard in which he was held may well be illustrated by the fact that nearly everyone who knew him from the governor of the commonwealth to the humblest citizen addressed him familiarly as "Jenks." Even the colored people, to whom he was a faithful friend, called him, "Mr. Jenks." Indeed, some people did not know him by any other name.

When the Legislature of 1902-3-4 created the office of tax examiner, Mr. Davies was appointed by the Governor to that office in this county, though the Supreme Court afterwards declared the act unconstitutional, and Mr. Davies never qualified.

In 1900 he was elected attorney for the town of Manassas, which position he held until he resigned several years later.

When The Peoples National Bank of Manassas was organized he was one of the charter members and one of the first directors, and the success of that institution was due in no small measure to his untiring efforts in its behalf.

When Mr. W. H. W. Moran sold his interest in The Manassas Journal Publishing Company, Mr. Davies became one of the largest stockholders and one of its directors, and if his voice was one of the most potent in the Director meetings, it was not because of the stock which he held, but because his associates had such confidence in his judgment.

Upon the resignation of Judge Thornton as attorney for the railroads in this county, the firm of which Mr. Davies was the senior member was appointed counsel for the Southern, the C. & O. and the Washington and Southern railroads.

When Judge Thornton resigned the office of Commonwealth attorney for Prince William county, Mr. Davies announced himself a candidate for that office, and was elected in the general election in the fall of 1907. His administration was an unusually successful one, and in his death, the county loses one of her most faithful and efficient officers.

In 1901 Mr. Davies, in the first popular election ever held in this county for that purpose, was elected a member of the county Democratic committee, and was afterwards elected Secretary of that body, which position he held at the time of his death.

Shortly after his admission to the bar, he was appointed by Judge C. E. Nicol one of the Master Commissioners for the Circuit Court of Prince William county.

Just one year ago, he married Miss Harriet Green, second daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Allen H. Green, and no picture of domestic bliss was more perfect than that of Mr. Davies and his shy, sweet bride, who in one short year has been widowed.

Mr. Davies was a careful painstaking lawyer, and while he paid more attention, perhaps, to criminal practice, than to the civil branch of the law, in every case in which his services were retained, his clients could feel that he would give every detail his most careful attention.

About two years ago, he formed a law partnership with his brother, H. Thornton Davies under the name of Davies and Davies, and the firm enjoyed a large and lucrative practice. He was not only frequently employed in cases in the adjoining counties, but was a member of the bar of the Supreme Court of Appeals of the state and of the bar of the District of Columbia.

He was a devoted husband, a dutiful son, an affectionate brother, and a faithful friend. His death leaves a wide gap, not only in his family circle, but in the county which will not easily be filled.

To the crushed young wife, whose orange blossoms have scarcely withered, to his stricken mother, to the bereaved family, the hearts of the whole community have gone out in the sad hour of their common bereavement.

His fellow citizens with one voice can say, "He was my friend, faithful and just to me."

Source: The Manassas Journal, August 13, 1909



(Continued from page 6)

some officers on a cup of coffee, hard-tack, and fried pork, and then smoked a pipe and lounged on the porch of the Brentsville tavern (its proprietor, of course, in the Confederate service) until the last train was well on its way, and then, mounting my horse, started for Centreville.

I struck the railroad again at Bristoe about noon, and with my little escort (minus the “contraband,” whom I had turned over to the trains as a teamster—no doubt he made a good one) was jogging leisurely along toward Manassas, but had not got a mile away from Bristoe before I heard brisk firing back there, and found the Confederates under A. P. Hill had swooped in just to my rear, and would certainly have “gobbled” me up had I been only a few minutes later. It was a narrow escape—a rather “close call,” as old soldiers say—but an escape, nevertheless. As it was, they ran into the Second Corps, and struck it heavily. But Warren handled them so roughly, and showed such good generalship by posting his men in a railroad cut and some old earthworks there, that they were soon glad to withdraw, with a severe loss both in killed and wounded.

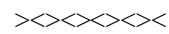
Of course, I was cut off and could not reach Warren, and so I rode on to headquarters at Centreville and reported to Meade that same afternoon. He seemed glad, and congratulated me on my safe return, and I was glad to find my tent pitched, and to get a good “square meal” and a night’s unbroken rest again. This was on October 14, 1863. The Comte de Paris, in his admirable History of the Civil War in America (the best yet written), Vol. III, pages 777, 778, in speaking of our trains here, says: “They were retarded and not able to reach Brentsville (October 15), and were thus greatly exposed.” But he is mistaken, as our last wagon left Brentsville before noon of the fourteenth, and rolled into Fairfax Station safe and sound before nightfall, as above stated. Meade’s order, “The trains will move to the vicinity of Brentsville,” is dated October 13, 1 P. M. (War Records, Vol. XXIX, part II, page 305), and that same night I rode to Brentsville and hastened thence to Fairfax Station as above stated.

(Pages 74 – 77)

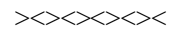
## Feedback

Just once I wish you would have a boring newsletter – as it is, I always know it will be interesting so as soon as it hits my computer, I find that I have to stop what I am doing to read it. Another great issue – loved to read the soldiers accounts. Wish we could hear more about 1<sup>st</sup> Bull Run from the southern side. And I also enjoyed the story of the jailor. You gentlemen do great work! Keep it coming – now back to my gardening before it gets any hotter.

Jan Cunard

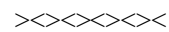


Thanks for the newsletters. We love reading them!  
Tracy, Jeff and Mike Thompson



Really enjoyed the history articles about the war and the experiences of the men. The county history of Dumfries was indeed worth reading. Keep up the good work.

John McMichael



I just got around to reading the July newsletter. I especially enjoy reading the first-hand stories from the past. Thank you for your hard work and commitment to the community of Brentsville.

Charlotte Bear



(Continued from page 7)

According to published reports, there were upwards of 1000 people in Brentsville to witness the hanging. The county, still probably embarrassed by the Clarke-Fewell debacle, wanted to make sure nothing went wrong, especially with all the newspapermen present. They hired 16 colored guards and 17 white guards to be present at the hanging. The colored guards included: Jesse Mitchell, F. M. Stokes, Charles Coleman, William Lomax, Edmund Foster, Burk Mitchell, John Gamett, Oscar Powell, John Olyer, Joseph Stokes, Howson Pinn Jr., George Primm, Oliver Hinton, and John Butler. The white guards included: Benjamin Cole, John G. Taylor, Jackson Payne, John Keys Jr., Mathew Woodyard, John Y. Roseberry, George B. Jones, John T. Goodwin, Cyrus Warring, Robert Molair, John D. Davis, Wilbur Rogers, James Weeks, Newton Woodyard, George Woodyard and Wallace Hixson.

The following is a list of payments made by the county with regard to the Jesse Fouks’ hanging. The cost of the hanging was \$67.63 cents. Of this amount, the hangman received \$5.00; the coffin cost \$4.00; building the scaffold, \$12.00; a shroud for Jesse, \$4.00; digging the grave and taking Fouks to grave, \$2.50; making clothing and rope for the hanging, \$6.13; plank to cover coffin, \$1.00; 16 colored guards at the hanging, \$16.00; and 17 white guards at the hanging, \$17.00.

# **Brentsville Neighbors**

## **Preserving Brentsville's History**

Contact us on:  
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**IN GOD WE TRUST**

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