

# Brentsville Neighbors

## Preserving Brentsville's History

September 2011



Welcome Neighbors,

Thank you! I asked for your help and you responded. Five of you who were receiving the newsletter via mail have now converted to receive it electronically. While this number doesn't sound large, it does make a big difference. Additionally, one very special neighbor made an anonymous donation of a printer to replace the one that was about to become completely inoperable. Buddy Pearson & Michelle Hylton made contributions of a different kind that will help very much. To each of you, thank you!

A number of things are scheduled at the site during the month. The general membership meeting of Historic Prince William will be held on September 8<sup>th</sup> at the Union Church from 7:30 – 9:00pm. Morgan Breeden will briefly discuss the history of religion in Brentsville. Then, on September 10<sup>th</sup> please join Dennis P. Van Derlaske, Prince William County Historical Commission at 1:00 P. M. for a lively discussion on "Sears, Roebuck & Co., Julius Rosenwald and The Creation of Black Schools in the South." His discussion will address how a retired executive from a major American retailer championed the creation of schools for African-Americans in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century South. This is a free event.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> and the 25<sup>th</sup> you are invited to participate in historical services in the Union Church. On the 11<sup>th</sup> join Rev. John Nuzum of the

Holy Spirit Anglican Church for a historical Protestant Episcopal Eucharist service followed by a Victorian tea, complete with tea sandwiches, cakes, cookies, and Civil War era music. On the 25<sup>th</sup> the service will be provided by Rev. Tom Costa with activities to be determined. These events are absolutely FREE to the public, so bring your friends, family and neighbors for fun and goodies! Contact Joanne@historicfaith.net or 703-927-1492 for more information.

Then on the 17<sup>th</sup> you are invited to join Daniel Breeden for a guided tour along the nature trails at Brentsville and learn about plants and animals that live in this part of Virginia. The tour is at 1:00pm and is \$5 per person, free for children under six. Also on the 17<sup>th</sup> are plans for **Bluegrass at Brentsville**. Enjoy the lively sounds of bluegrass bands on the grounds of Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre while enjoying tastes of local wines and food. Guided tours of the historic buildings will be available throughout the day. 1 p.m. – 5 p.m.; \$10 per person, free for children under six. You may call 703-365-7895 for information on both of these events.

Very best wishes,  
Morgan

### This month:

- Flashback ----- page 2
- Where Wild Things Live --- pages 2,3 & 6
- The Brentsville High School ----- pages 5 & 8

### Circulation: 250 - 100 Printed

- When War Came ----- page 6
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# Flashback

## Where WILD Things Live

### BRENTSVILLE

Rev. Barnett Grimsley, with an assistant, will begin a series of services in the Hatcher Memorial Baptist Church on Sunday evening.

Mr. J. M. Keys, sr., one of our most estimable citizens, came near losing a valuable cow, last Sunday evening. A sound of splashing water was heard, and upon investigation it was found that the cow had broken through the floor of the cistern in the barnyard of Mr. J. M. Woodyard, and but for immediate efforts soon would have been drowned.

Mr. W. B. Washington, of Greenwich, a gentleman of the old school, paid our village a visit on Tuesday. M.

### ICE CREAM FESTIVAL

An all-day festival will be given Monday on the old court-house lawn. Ice cream and other refreshments will be sold on the grounds. Baseball and other amusements will hold sway during the afternoon. Everybody is invited. Come, and bring your friends.

Mr. French Simpson, of Hoadley, is visiting his aunt, Mrs. Thomas Cooksey.

Mr. and Mrs. Vernon E. Lake and their two little daughters, Mary and Dorothy, all of Manassas, visited Mr. and Ms. R. H. Keys, Saturday evening.

Mrs. Susie Stanlius, of Washington, D.C., has been visiting her son-in-law and daughter, Mrs. And Mrs. D. E. Earhart.

Mr. and Mrs. Ervin Spitzer are the proud parents of a baby girl.

Miss Viola Collier and Miss Frances Earhart recently visited Misses Violet Keys and Tracie Spitzer.

Master Ralph Fair, of Alexandria, who has been visiting his aunt, Mrs. Roy Molair, returned to his home, Sunday.

Yellow Tulip.

Source: The Manassas Journal, September 1, 1916

### *Argiope aurantia* black and yellow garden spider

The genus *Argiope* includes rather large and spectacular spiders that have often a strikingly colored abdomen. These are well distributed throughout the world, and most countries in temperate or warmer climates have one or more species, which look similar.

In North America, *Argiope aurantia* is commonly known as the black and yellow garden spider, corn spider, and writing spider, because of the similarity of the web to writing.

The average orb web is practically invisible, and it is easy to blunder into one and end up covered with a sticky web. The very easily visible pattern of banded silk made by *Argiope* is pure white, and some species make an "X" form, or a zigzag type of web (often with a hollow centre). The spider then aligns one pair of its legs with each of the four lines in the hollow "X," making a complete "X" of white lines with a very eye-catching spider colored bright yellow on a field of black or variegated red white and yellow stripes forming its center. The white patterns are called stabilimentum and reflect UV light. They have been shown to play a role in attracting prey to the web, and possibly to prevent its destruction by large animals. Their centers of their large webs are often just under 1 meter above the ground, so they are too low for anything much larger than a rabbit to walk under. The covertness of the spider and its web thus has been speculated to prevent larger creatures from accidentally

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Believed to be Isaac "Bucky" Golladay  
Courtesy Faye (Golladay) Samsky



"Sissy" Melvin Graduates from BDHS  
Courtesy Edith (Melvin) Turner

## Where WILD things live..



*Argiope aurantia*  
black and yellow garden spider  
See page 2

How come it takes so little time  
for a child who is afraid of the  
dark to become a teenager who  
wants to stay out all night?



# EARHART & RHODES

## REAL ESTATE AND FIRE INSURANCE

NOKESVILLE, VIRGINIA

Whvreas it is contemplated to improve the highway leading from Brentsville to Bristow (in Brentsville Dist), which work will be done largely by private subscription to be suplimented ,in part, by the County of Prince Wm (Said road being in Brentsville Magesterial District, Said County) ,Therefore We, The undersigned, do hereby covenant and agree that we will ,respectively ,pay to J.M.Keys Sr, or whomsoever the subscribers hereto may agree upon, the sums, either in cash or labor ,opposite our respective names, Which said sum ## ,shall be due and payable ,or work to be performed, on or before the first day of Sept 1925, and as to this promise we ,respectively ,waive our homestead exemptions ;

<u>Name</u>	<u>Amount of labor</u>	<u>Cash</u>
10 W Wright		
L. G. Hedrick	12.00 +	
Jim Keys	20.00 +	N. M. Bradshaw 50.00 +
W W Keys	20.00 +	
Jack Keys	20.00 +	
Clark May	20.00 +	
H. M. May	20.00 +	
James Henaley	20.00 +	
H S Lam		25.00 +
E. S. Spitzer		25.00 +
David Keys	20.00 +	
Clayde Wolfe	20.00 +	
Frank Keys	20.00 +	
Spicer Keys	20.00 +	
Ray Malan	10.00 +	
A. J. Hoffman	10.00 +	

Courtesy Linda (Shoemaker) Pyer

# The Brentsville High School

In 1936 Richard Challice Haydon, Division Superintendent of Schools, Prince William Co., Virginia presented his Master's Thesis to the University of Virginia titled "An Administrative Survey of the Public Schools of Prince William County, Virginia." In this document he stated that, "The first accredited public school in Prince William, which was among the first in Virginia, was the Manassas High School. It was opened in September, 1906." But was it really the first? No mention was made in his report of a Brentsville High School. An oversight or something else? Consider the following newspaper accounts to draw your own conclusion.

*July 27, 1906 The Manassas Journal*

## **High School at Brentsville.**

At an early hour on last Monday the Examiner and Inspector of School (5<sup>th</sup> circuit), Mr. Charles G. Maphis, and Dr. H. M. Clarkson, Division Superintendent of Schools made a visit to Brentsville, for the purpose of considering the feasibility of establishing a High School in the village. After thoroughly examining the building and grounds of the Prince William Academy, and conferring with its patrons and with patrons of the Brentsville public school, they determined that it was quite practicable to open a High School at that point, provided the Brentsville District School Board could meet all the requirements of the State Board of Education.

The two officials then met in the afternoon with the district board and a few solid and enthusiastic citizens, who gave assurances of the people being able to raise the sum of \$250.00 as a local subscription, this being the only condition about which there had been any doubt. Two of the district trustees at once led a subscription list in liberal figures, which was followed by other promises, and the appointment of a soliciting committee; and the Superintendent of Schools was requested to confer with the people and the school boards of Coles and Dumfries, which districts had expressed a desire to join in the movement. Whatever funds may be raised in these two districts will be supplemented with an additional fund by the state.

The question of a High School at the village of Brentsville is thus practically settled. A high school of the grade proposed necessitates the employment of a principal and of, at least, two teachers for the elementary department. For the former position the name of a well-known gentleman is under consideration. I believe it only depends upon his acceptance. To one of the latter the board has elected Miss Ella Garth, late principal of the Brentsville public school, the second assistant's place to be filled at a future date.

H.M.C.

*September 7, 1906 The Manassas Journal*

## **The Brentsville High School**

The Brentsville high school is an assured fact. The term of 8 months will begin at 9 a. m. on Monday, Sept. 17, 1906, as will all the other schools of the district.

The principal elect, who will have general charge is, Prof. A. P. Kelly (present address Tazewell, Va.) The principal of the graded department, who is in charge of the primary department, is Miss Ella W. Garth of Brentsville, Va. Miss Nellie L. Duffey of Middleburg, Va., will be assistant to Miss Garth and will have charge of the musical department.

All of these teachers are experienced and successful. Prof. Kelley was introduced to me by State Inspector Chas. P. Maphis and comes with the highest recommendations from many institutions where he has served, and with the names of several prominent individuals that were known by members of the board, especially in the neighboring county of Clarke, where he had charge of the Berryville high school.

Miss Garth needs no introduction to the school world of Prince William county. The Brentsville board have for several terms accounted her one of the best of our very efficient corps of teachers.

Miss Duffey, I gather from reliable sources, is a young lady of considerable executive efficiency; a good degree of general information; quite an accomplished musician—a teacher of this her specialty of high grade, and judging from the character of the correspondence I have had with her—the neat, lady like handwriting, the well set phrases, the finished, yet simple and natural style and the whole tone and poise of her mind have impressed me and I want to say that I think the Brentsville school board have done themselves a credit and the public a service in securing such a corps of teachers for the enterprise, and it remains for the patrons to do that part in furnishing the pupils.

The service comes free as I understand it to all patrons of the district. There must needs be, I suppose, a small charge in the musical department, and possibly in

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When WAR Came  
to  
Brentsville

[SEPTEMBER 27,1862.]

Major General GEORGE B. McCLELLAN:

I communicated the following, for your information:

HEADQUARTERS ELEVENTH CORPS,

Fairfax Court-House, September 27,1862-8 p.m. (Received 10.20 p.m.)

Major-General BANKS,  
Commanding Defenses at Washington:

My scouts report that there is no force of the rebels either at Aldie or Thoroughfare Gap or Gainesville, with the exception of small cavalry pickets; the scouts having entered these places by driving in the enemy's pickets. It is evident that the enemy has sent all his available forces toward Paris or Ashby's Gap. All the sick, wounded, and stragglers are sent to Culpeper. The arms reported to be at Gainesville have been removed from there five days ago in three railroad cars toward Front Royal. Warrenton is reported to be occupied by 2,000 men, many of them sick and wounded. The scouts sent to Warrenton and Warrenton Junction have not returned. Shall send report when they return. General Stahel, with the 600 cavalry sent to me, has left Centreville, this morning for Brentsville, and another cavalry force has gone to Gainesville. Colonel McLean has not sent a report since he left Bristoe. I will have one tomorrow morning.

F. SIGEL,  
Major-General.

N.P. BANKS,  
Major-General, Commanding.

destroying the web and possibly crushing the spider underfoot.

Other studies suggest that the stabilimenta may actually lead predators to the spider. As *Argiope* sit in the centre of their web during the day, they have developed several responses to predators, such as dropping off the web, retreating to the periphery of the web, or even rapidly pumping the web in bursts of up to 30 seconds. It is sometimes called sewing machine spider (because of the zigzag stitch in her web }.

The male spider is much smaller than the female, and unassumingly marked. When it is time to mate, he spins a companion web alongside the female's. After mating, the female lays her eggs, placing her egg sac into the web. The sac contains between 400 and 1400 eggs. These eggs hatch in autumn, but the spiderlings overwinter in the sac and emerge during the spring. The egg sac is composed of multiple layers of silk and protects its contents from damage; however, many species of insects have been observed to parasitize the egg sacs.

Like almost all other spiders, *Argiope* are harmless to humans. Like most garden spiders they eat insects, and they are capable of consuming prey up to twice their size. They might bite if grabbed, but other than for defense they do not attack large animals.

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Always be yourself. Because  
the people that matter, don't  
mind. And the ones who mind,  
don't matter.



# Brentsville

## A Look Back in History

by

Ronald Ray Turner

### The Dennis McCarty Story

How unbelievable it was to find that the owner of the Aldie, Virginia farm called "Newington", slave owner, and distant cousin of George Washington, had been locked up in the Brentsville jail. As unlikely as this may sound, Dennis McCarty, 52 years of age, did, indeed, occupy a cell in 1826. Late in the evening of December 23, 1824, McCarty had murdered his brother-in-law James F. Beatty. The murder had taken place at the home of Robert Patton, near Aldie in Loudoun County, where a group of local men had gathered for a turkey shooting match.

For reasons unknown, Dennis McCarty, not one of the men enjoying the day at Patton's house, went to the door and ordered everyone out. He announced that it was his house and he would not allow gambling. It is unclear if McCarty actually had thought the house belonged to him. Some people suspected he had been drinking, but no one believed he was drunk. Patton, addressing McCarty, said no one was gambling, and since the house belonged to him, everyone could stay. Others told McCarty he should leave, which only increased his anger. At this point, McCarty turned his attention to James Beatty and complained about how bad Beatty smelled. Not being able to provoke anyone into a fight, McCarty went outside and continued the threats. He finally left but returned two hours later and continued his rants. This time, however, he went over to Beatty and stabbed him multiple times with what was described as a dirk-knife. The defenseless Beatty died immediately. With witnesses stunned, including two of McCarty's sons, McCarty fled the county and state to hide in Maryland.

After being on the run for seven days, McCarty decided to give himself up and return to Loudoun County. By this time though, many people had already made up their minds that he was guilty. According to court records, he was indicted by the Grand Jury on Jan 10, 1825. Whether he was given bail or confined in jail is not stated, but the case was not docketed for trial until

July of 1826. It was during the questioning of prospective witnesses that it became apparent that a change of venue would be necessary. One of the questions, perhaps the most telling of McCarty's character, was, "Have not reports that the prisoner has heretofore been in the habit of treating his wife with great cruelty and brutality been generally and extensively circulated throughout the County of Loudoun?" The change of venue was granted July 31, 1826, and the case was sent to Prince William County.

It would seem that having the case moved to Brentsville was good for McCarty. There, he appeared to have as many people for him as against. This definitely would not have been the sentiment if the case had been brought to trial in Loudoun County. He was sentenced to only five years in the State Penitentiary at Richmond. Immediately after the trial, petitions were signed by bystanders, urging the governor to either overturn the verdict or pardon McCarty.

The jury in open court also recommended mercy for the prisoner. Later, several of the jurors went so far as to say they thought the verdict should have been justifiable homicide but were pressured by other jurors for a guilty verdict. This situation would be more shocking if it were not for the fact that this reaction was common after trials, not the exception. In addition, it should be noted that the petitions for pardon contained the signatures of the sheriff, county clerk, six members of the bar, and all the leading citizens of Brentsville.

This writer found nothing in the governor's executive papers that McCarty was granted a pardon. He died in 1829. His will was dated December 26, 1824, three days after he had killed James Beatty. He apparently wrote the will while he was on the run in Maryland as he didn't turn himself in until January 1, 1825.

I would like to thank Thom Jenkins the great, great, great grandson of Dennis McCarty for sharing research.

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some other ways. Of course we have to defer to the general requirements in asking and accepting state aid. The district superintendent and the state inspector both have a say; but I am sure I am not far out of the way in saying to the patrons of the district, and of any other district in the county who cooperates with us, that it all is virtually a free school for your children. To other parties there will be a charge, reasonable and fair, and I can speak for the Brentsville board in saying that it will in this inception of the untried undertaking be smaller than the smallest. We are ready to help if you help us make the enterprise a success.

I infer from what I can gather from my correspondence with Mr. Kelly that he will not get to Brentsville until the last moment.

On all these questions, and I admit they are vital ones, such as age limit in high school grade, and charges to those over age in the district, and all parties outside of the district, I will have to ask you to take my word that the effort of this board will be to safeguard the patrons of the enterprise and to make the cost as near a free school basis as the law will allow.

Respectfully and cordially,  
A. B. Carrington.

*December 7, 1906 The Manassas Journal*

### **The Brentsville High School.**

Manassas, Va., Dec. 3, 1906.

Dear Mr. Moran;—I have just returned from the school conference in Richmond, and am taking great pleasure in saying through your valuable paper, to the Brentsville district school people that I have the assurance from the authorities that our high school enterprise at Brentsville village shall have the state financial aid for the current term.

Mr. Maphis, state inspector, and Dr. Clarkson were with me in the interview with the state superintendent and your readers will know where to place 99¾ hundredths of a credit for the success.

For my one quarter of a mite of influence in the matter. I am feeling well repaid for the trip to Richmond.

That was the primary reason for my going and when a man gets what he is after he ought to be satisfied.

It is now up to the people to send in all their children and the teachers there to so conduct that enterprise this term that there shall be no question as to another term at Brentsville.

It can be made and will be made a success if these all will do their part.

I think I can speak for the three teachers.

Your good people speak and act for yourselves.

We had a glorious meeting in Richmond—wish all the teachers, trustees and supervisors of our county could have attended.

Very cordially,  
A. B. Carrington.

*November 2, 1906 The Manassas Journal*

### **School teachers for the 1906-07 school year (in part)**

#### Brentsville District

Brentsville Mr. A.B. Kelly (principal overall), Miss Ella W. Garth (principal elementary) & Miss Nellie S. Duffey (assistant to Miss Garth and music)

#### Manassas District

Manassas Mrs. M. S. Moffett, Miss A. Selina Taylor, Miss Stella E. Waters, Miss Lizzie J. Larkin, Miss Mildred J. Leachman, Mrs. Fannie B. Metz, Miss Eugenia H. Osbourn, Miss Grace B. Moran & Miss Sarah E. Johnson

H.M. Clarkson, Div. Supt. Of Schools



Morgan Breeden briefing members of the "Prince William County During the Civil War Bus Tour" August 13th  
Photo courtesy of Rob Orrison



# F e e d b a c k

I found the June 2011 edition of your wonderful newsletter, "Brentsville Neighbors," via the Prince William County genealogy blog. I am particularly interested in one item mentioned on the first page of your June edition, the notebook entitled, "49th Regiment Virginia Volunteer Infantry, C.S.A., The Men." My great great grandfather was Sgt. Isham J. Hedges, who served in Co B of the 49th. My heart almost stopped when I read your excerpt from the 1917 Manassas Journal which highlighted the letters of surviving Civil War vets. The letter from James R. Pearson was very interesting to me, because he served with my great great grandfather in Co B. From reading his first hand account, I was able to have a general idea of what it was like for my ancestor in the war. Thank you so much for including this. I am very interested in PW County history and have been doing some reading and researching over the last few years. I am so thankful and appreciative to folks like you who care about our county's amazing history and take the time to help others learn about it.

Sincerely, Rhonda Atkinson

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Thanks for adding me to your Brentsville Neighbors Newsletter mailing list. I truly enjoy local history and appreciate the obvious effort that you take to make certain that the newsletter contains valuable and interesting articles.

Jeri Brooks

><<<<<<<

My electronic copy came through loud and clear. My family looks forward to these coming in every month. I find that "Brentsville Neighbors" makes great reading for those "quiet hours" when you can reflect on the depth of the local history of this area. Thanks for your efforts over the years in publishing it.

Dennis Van Derlaske

><<<<<<<

Thanks for writing the monthly newsletter. I loved seeing the June issue about my dad and our house.

I was just looking through the August edition and noticed an error in the identification of one of the photos. The photo identified as Ethel

Burke Breeden is actually Ethel's mother, Mamie Mae Ledman Burke Cooper (1891-1974).

Thanks again and keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

Elaine Visger Dennison

Tallahassee, FL

><<<<<<<

You always do such a great job of keeping me up with my family's history! Thank you for your devotion on reporting on my dad's precious past! I know he appreciates it so much! Keep up the awesome work!

Tammie (Whetzel) Coe

(Casper Whetzel's daughter)

><<<<<<<

It would be interesting to use modern day techniques to solve the Herndon murder mystery. If the money box could be located today, a finger print dusting could solve the mystery of who the real murderer was. I can't help but wonder what happened to that money box.

Jan Cunard

><<<<<<<

I so enjoy the Brentsville Newsletter. Receiving it via email makes it easy to file so I can go back and read older issues without searching for my collection. Mother immensely looked forward to the arrival of each one and saved each copy so I have all of those also. As the memories arrive so do the smiles. I'm told smiling makes one have age lines; I must have millions! Thanks!

Dorothy (Bean) Furrow

><<<<<<<

First of all, thank you for sending the newsletter each month. Dottie and I enjoy getting it each month. It brings back good memories.

When I read about Farrahs Rock, the log at Broad Run, and Shoemakers Store it brings it all back.

It has been about fifty years since I lived there. The last time I drove through, it has not changed very much, and that is good.

Thanks again,

Bud & Dottie Pearson

# **Brentsville Neighbors**

## **Preserving Brentsville's History**

Contact us on:  
[morganbreeden@aol.com](mailto:morganbreeden@aol.com)

**IN GOD WE TRUST**

**Brentsville Neighbors  
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