

Brentsville Neighbors

Preserving Brentsville's History

December 2011



Welcome Neighbors,

Well, here we are at the end of the year again and as always, I can only wonder where the time went! I suppose the best thing about keeping this busy is watching the time fly by.

There are three special events taking place at the Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre this year and unfortunately I didn't have room for all the flyers. But the good thing is you can experience two of them with just one trip. Since all of the information about one is on page eight, I'll not repeat the information here.

In December of 1862, artist Thomas Nast made one of the first known illustrations of Santa Claus. Santa was shown giving gifts to soldiers in the field at Fredericksburg, Virginia, during the

American Civil War. This year, Santa will dust off that old suit he wore back then and make an appearance in Brentsville on December 17th from 1 – 7 p.m. and again on the 18th from noon until 3 p.m. Pictures with Santa will be available for a small charge and guests can make old-time holiday decorations and Pomander balls with citrus fruit and cloves for their trees at home.

On Sunday (the 18th) join Historic Faith Ministries at 10:00 a.m. for a celebration of the true meaning of Christmas at the Union Church.

In this special time of the year we wish you peace, joy and love.

Merry Christmas

Happy Hanukkah

Happy New Year

Morgan

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Flashback

Christmas pageants bring back memories

By Betty Gutschmidt
Potomac News Special Writer

The sets are readied, costumes fitted, lines rehearsed. You wonder how the audience will receive your attempts to bring them a few minutes of entertainment.

It's Christmas and everyone is busier than ever with plans to celebrate with people from the office, friends at school and relatives in other towns.

Your list of things to do seems to grow every day.

Somewhere in all the rush, you see a little boy's smiling face and you hear the familiar strains of *Silent Night* as it can only be sung by children's voices.

So you catch your breath and listen, trying to capture a little piece to hold on to.

"And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn." Luke 2:7

The church is warm and this is only play acting. You say a little prayer that your child will remember his lines.

"And the angel said to them, 'Be not afraid, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.'" Luke 2:10,11

Familiar faces in unfamiliar costumes say their lines with slight hesitation.

Wise men, shepherds and angels gather around the three figures who are the center of attention while everyone joins in *Joy To The World*. The first Christmas is over for this year.

The audience reclaims sleepy actors and the clean-up crew takes over. Driving home is quieter than usual.

Source: Potomac News

Where WILD Things Live

Rabbit Tobacco

Gnaphalium obtusifolium

By Darryl Patton (abridged)

To the wild plant enthusiast, the seasons are similar to man's life; spring is the time of new birth and childhood. Life begins to stir from the earth and flowers spring forth in a glorious array of colors. Later, as the earth matures and summer brings heat and dryness, life seems to settle back into patiently waiting for the heat of summer to pass. Finally, as the days begin to cool and rains to return, a change occurs..... Nature seems to spring back to life as the plants of Fall begin to shake off the Dog Days and show off their blossoms of reds, whites and yellows.

As I cruise the hills and hollows I can see, standing like a silent sentinel in the haze, the unmistakable stalks of Life Everlasting, the Rabbit Tobacco beckoning me to stop and inhale their aromatic leaves full of energy and power.

If there is any one plant that represents the change of seasons from summer to fall, it is Rabbit Tobacco. Around the middle of August, it is hard to miss the silvery-green leaves of this plant dotting the hillsides of the Deep South. All the way through winter, even with snow on the ground, it appears tall and alive seeming to gain strength as the seasons change.

Rabbit Tobacco, and its many similar cousins, is a wide ranging plant found from Texas on east and from Canada to Florida. Unless you are west of Texas and Oklahoma, odds are that you will be able to find some form of Rabbit Tobacco mixed in with Summer Boneset, Goldenrod and Asters. Known as a pioneering plant, Rabbit Tobacco loves to invade dry slopes and hills where it will reach as high as three feet tall in some locations.

Rabbit Tobacco is one of those plants which fall into what I call the "folklore" category. This means that they are not used very much today and there has not been a
(Continued on page 9)



Renee Schockley as Mary and Mark Hedges as Joseph. Photo By Betty Gutschmidt

Where WILD things live..



Gnaphalium obtusifolium
Rabbit Tobacco



Jail Restoration: These photos (taken on 10-28-2011) show (L) wall timbers numbered to identify location for accurate replacement during renovation process. The photo on the right shows where mortise joints were placed to line the cells with heavy timbers to keep prisoners from "digging out." The mortise and tenon joint has been used for thousands of years by wood workers around the world to join pieces of wood, mainly when the adjoining pieces connect at an angle of 90°. In its basic form it is both simple and strong. Although there are many joint variations, the basic mortise and tenon comprises two components: the mortise hole and the tenon. The tenon, formed on the end of a member generally referred to as a rail, is inserted into a square or rectangular hole cut into the corresponding member. The tenon is cut to fit the mortise hole exactly and usually has shoulders that seat when the joint fully enters the mortise hole. The joint may be glued, pinned, or wedged to lock it in place.



Christmas in Brentsville with the Eanes Family

Courtesy of Earl Parker

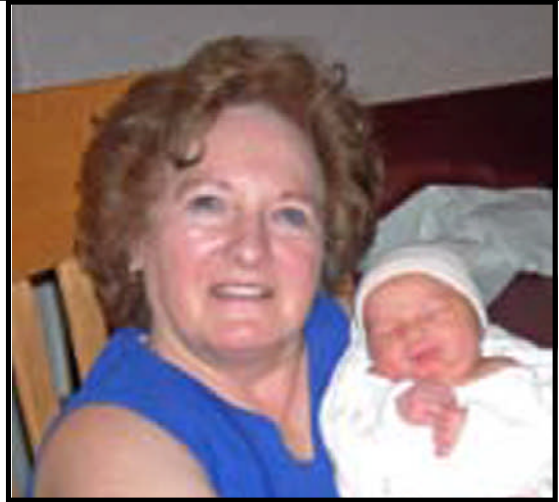
Sisters Remember Christmas in Brentsville



One of My Favorite Christmas Memories
By Ruth (Bean) Dotson

When my sister, Dorothy, and I were young we were always anxious for Christmas to come. Mama was very busy, she would work at school and also do the farm work before and afterwards. We helped her as much as we could, but sometimes we got to do other things; like getting ready for Christmas. We would clean the house and then we got to go find the perfect tree. This was the most fun part of Christmas, other than making the annual fruitcake, but that is another story.

We would walk over the property looking for the perfect tree. We would see a good looking tree, go to it, then say "Oh, look at that one." We would go all over the fields. Sometimes we would even go on Grandma's property. Or we would go in our field across the road, which connected to Uncle Troy's property. One time we saw a beautiful holly tree on his property, right across the line fence. It was full of berries – at the top of the tree. I said "I can climb up and get some". So I did. It wasn't bad going up, I got a few sprigs of holly with the berries, and then it was time to climb down. Oh, how the tips of the leaves stuck me. I learned my lesson – climbing a holly tree isn't bad, it's just coming down that is painful.



And One of Mine
By Dorothy (Bean) Furrow

Christmas is always a very special time of year; it doesn't matter how much money a family has. There is always a special gift one wants. When we were young Mother being a single parent living on a farm with the only income being proceeds from her selling livestock and other items farmers sold was not able to afford luxuries at Christmas. We had an older brother, Charles who would often take up the slack and help Mother,

I recall one Christmas when he and his wife Pat wanted to know what my sister, Ruthie, and I wanted for Christmas. Ruthie wanted a coloring book and crayons and I wanted a bathrobe. Charles and Pat came to the house an evening or two before Christmas and brought our gifts. I recall I was really sick but even that didn't damper my spirits with my thrill of receiving that beautiful rose colored chenille bathrobe and, yes, Ruthie got her coloring book and crayons!

W h e n W A R C a m e
to
B r e n t s v i l l e

DECEMBER 21-23, 1862. Scout to Catlett's Station and Brentsville, VA.
Report of Brigadier General William W. Averel, U. S. Volunteers.

HDQRS. FIRST CAV. Brigadier,
CENTER GRAND DIVISION,
December 23, 1862-11.30 a.m.

COLONEL: I have the honor to report that Privates Blaisdell and McGua, Fourth Pennsylvania Cavalry, have just returned from a scout to Catlett's Station, Greenwich, Bristoe, and Brentsville, and report as follows, viz:

Left our picket line 4 a.m. Sunday; arrived at Bristersburg Stone Church 1 p.m. same day, where we saw some stragglers from Hampton's Legion, who were going toward Warrenton Junction; followed them to within a mile of the Junction; then went across the fields and woods to Catlett's. Found there that the railroad had not been used recently; had been no cavalry there since last Monday a week ago. Went to Greenwich about dark; roads did not seem to have been much used; staid in the woods until 3 a.m. yesterday; could see no camp fires; went through the town, which is small, perhaps a dozen houses; one large house of a dirty red color; saw no rebel soldiers. Went by the road to Bristoe, 5 or 6 miles distant. Crossed the Manassas Gap Railroad, which had not been used recently. Arrived at Bristoe about 11 a.m. yesterday. A boy told us that 11 of our soldiers had been there the day before. We left Bristoe

about noon for Brentsville, which is 3 or 4 miles off. Went by the road. There appeared to have been no more than small country travel upon it. A man near Brentsville, named Allen Housens, told us that Hampton's Legion camped near there on Saturday night, and that he had 30 wagons and about 50 prisoners, which they had captured from Sigel's forces at Dumfries. We then went toward Dumfries to within 12 miles, struck the Telegraph road 5 miles north of Stafford Court-House, and General Sigel's pickets at Aquia Creek, about 10 o'clock last night. Hampton probably crossed the Rappahannock or went to Warrenton early on Sunday.

I have sent two men to Warrenton to see what is there.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

WM. W. AVERELL,
Brigadier-General of Volunteers,
Commanding.

Lieutenant Colonel JOS. DICKINSON,
Assistant Adjutant-General.

Boys Will Be Boys

by
Morgan Breeden

While volunteering in the Manassas Courthouse archives I recently came across a document that caught my attention and aroused a great deal of curiosity. Now they say that curiosity killed the cat, and perhaps rightly so, but not being a cat this particular case seemed to beg my attention.

According to the document dated June 20, 1900, the following took place:

Whereas W. W. Kincheloe (School Trustee of Brentsville School district) has this day made complaint and information on oath before me W. W. Rice a Justice of the said county that George Shafer, Jno Shafer, Sam Shafer and Charles Shafer on the ninth day of March 1900 in the said county and in the said school district did willfully and maliciously injure and deface by turning over a certain building in the said county in the said school district located at Brentsville in said county the same building being public property & commonly known as a water closet and intended for the use of the public school at the said place.

These are, therefore, in the name of the Commonwealth of Va. To command you forthwith to apprehend and bring before me or some other justice of the said county the bodies of the said Geo W. Shafer, Jno Shafer, Sam Shafer and Charles Shafer to answer the said complaint and to be farther dealt with according to law.

Three days later the four boys were brought before W.W. Rice, Justice of the Peace, and he ruled that “each pay a fine of \$1.00 & \$5.10 costs.”

Now turning over an outhouse was a prank performed by many boys during that time. I dare say it happened for as long as these buildings continued to be used for that purpose so it would seem this is a simple case of boys being boys. That being the case, why would someone of W.W. Kincheloe’s position file charges and have these boys arrested and fined for this action?

As a bit of background, on 28 March 1895, Valentine Shaffer and his wife Delilah purchased the old McNeil farm located about one mile northwest of Brentsville on the north side of the Brentsville-Bristoe Road containing 168 acres of land situated between the farms of William H. Gaines to the west; Redmon Foster on the east; and Broad Run to the north. In his household were six children, Febe (18), George (13), John (11), Samuel (10), Charles (7) and Fannie (2). Mr. &

Mrs. Shaffer and all of their children were born in Pennsylvania.

Wildman Wallace Kincheloe was born and raised in Brentsville where he died on March 15, 1902, at the age of 63 years. During the war he was a member of the Prince William Partisan Rangers under the command of Capt. William G. Brawner (see Brentsville Neighbors #63, December 2010) who eventually served with Mosby toward the end of the war. Kincheloe was believed to be present when Brawner was killed on June 11, 1863. After the war he became the first PWC treasurer which he filled until 1891 when he voluntarily resigned.

Back to the question—why would four boys ranging in age from 12 to 18 be arrested and fined for turning over the school outhouse? After all, not many 18-year-old kids had a dollar much less a 12-year-old who may still be going to school. Several thoughts seem to be developing. Was there someone **inside** the outhouse when it was turned over that was hurt in the process? Nothing in the records gives an answer either way. Had the local boys been picking on the Shaffer boys because, being Yankees, they talked funny and may have even bragged a bit about kicking butt in the war? Were these kids habitual trouble makers in the Brentsville School where they attended? Was Kincheloe overly sensitive about the presence of Pennsylvania citizens because their soldiers had been in Brentsville many times during the war and had caused unknown damage during their occupation? Mr. Valentine Shaffer would most likely have been too young to have served but his father certainly wasn’t. Was Kincheloe still suffering from PTSD (unknown to them at that time) from his war years and the loss of many of his friends to the Yankee soldiers, including Capt. Brawner? Or was he, as the school trustee, simply doing his job as required by law?

I’ve been unable to find answers to any of these questions. But I remain very curious!

Post script: Valentine Shaffer died without a will and his farm became the property of his children, all of whom were married at the time and all but Samuel had moved to other locations. On November 5, 1929, the children and their spouses transferred ownership to Sam and his wife Terah who continued to live there until the end of December, 1943, when they sold it to Herbert and Addie Weaver.



Christmas at Historic Brentsville



December 17, 2011

Site Open from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Concerts at 5 p.m. & 6 p.m.

Free

During the winter of 1861, Prince William County was home to nearly 70,000 soldiers who spent Christmas here instead of in their homes. Step back 150 years to see how soldiers and civilians celebrated Christmas time during the Civil War. Walk through camps by candlelight and interact with the soldiers and learn about Christmas customs of the past.



Then, join in caroling and enjoy a musical performance by Brentsville District High School's Chorus and Orchestra in the beautiful and historic Union Church.

Finish the evening by a roaring bonfire with hot cider and cookies.

Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre
12229 Bristow Road, Brentsville, VA 20136
(703) 365-7895



Prince William County Department of Public Works
Historic Preservation Division
www.pwcgov.org/historicsites historicpreservation@pwcgov.org



lot of research conducted on them compared to other medicinal plants. This is a shame, since few other native plants can compare themselves to what I consider a veritable medicine chest growing on the side of the road. Other than as an illicit smoke behind the barn for generations of country children and occasionally finding use as a sinus treatment, it has fallen out of use.

The primary healing chemicals found in Rabbit Tobacco are called "Tepenes" and have demonstrated an ability to positively affect cancer (cytotoxic) and viral infections (viricides) such as the common cold and influenza. There are also chemicals known as sterols and saponins which demonstrate healing effects upon the human body.

These chemicals are soluble in water as well as alcohol; the mode of action differing upon which manner you choose to extract the medicinal properties. Either way, it does not take a lot to positively impact health. A spoonful of the dried leaves in an infusion of hot water reduces the length of any viral infection while, at the same time, soothing the irritating cough and expelling mucous built up in the lungs.

Close to home in the southern Appalachians, the Cherokee used the leaves in sweat baths, as a sedative for sleepless nights due to nervous complaints, colds and as a local pain reliever for muscle cramps and arthritic pains (Chiltowski, 1975). The Creeks of the Muskogee nation used Rabbit Tobacco for many of the same uses and for the mumps, vomiting and as a psychological aid (BAE Annual Report). Other Indian tribes representing the entire East Coast employed Rabbit Tobacco for similar uses, with the Rappahannock smoking the leaves in a pipe for asthma.

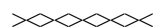
Nature has many wonderful gifts to give us with the passing of each season. Spring offers cleansing tonics to bring us to life after a long Winter, Summer offers a bounty of fruits and vegetables and Fall prepares us for the rigors of the Winter to come. Rabbit Tobacco is just one of many healthful herbs available for the sharp forager of plants.

Source: <http://thesouthernherbalist.com/rabbit-tobacco-0>

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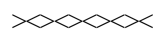
It was a pleasure to meet you at the annual meeting [of The Prince William Historic Preservation Foundation]. Your work preserving Brentsville's history and the story of its citizens is very impressive. It's easy to see your high level of dedication, and that your heart is indeed in Brentsville.

FrannMarie Jacinto



I so enjoyed your recent article on the history of the St. James' Episcopal Church silver. I was christened and baptized at Trinity Episcopal Church and I never knew about the silver legacy. The service is so beautiful that I wonder why the altar guild does not use it. Further, I believe that my paternal grandmother, Edmonia Taylor Sinclair, wrote most, if not all, of the church brochure which I have entrusted to you. Since Daddy (Arthur Williams Sinclair, II,) had no sons or grandchildren, I have enjoyed sharing my memories and some personal items with you so that your readers can learn more about him and his devotion to Brentsville. I miss him every day and I appreciate what you are doing to help keep his memory alive.

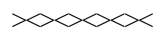
Thank you,
Catherine M. Sinclair



I received my Brentsville Newsletter with the story written by Mary (Pearson) Pumphrey and I could relate to her memories of Hatcher's Memorial Church in Brentsville. For God saved a (wretch like me) while attending the Old Stone Building! The Good Book is (Wind Beneath Our Wings) when we're down too low to raise our head.

Thank you, for continuing to mail my copy of the Newsletter—forever grateful to you!

Neighborly Bobbie Ratliff



The Newsletter is wonderful - lots of good information - something interesting for everyone - plus very well done in format - thanks for sharing.

Barbara Zelek

Brentsville Neighbors

Preserving Brentsville's History

Contact us on:
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IN GOD WE TRUST

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