

Brentsville Neighbors

Preserving Brentsville's History

December 2013



Welcome Neighbors,

Greetings of the Season and Best Wishes for the New Year!

During the past 12 months we have been blessed with so much support from our friends and neighbors who are constantly reminding us that our simple newsletter is well worth the small effort it takes to get it together. Thank each of you who have supported us in so many ways.

We were recently contacted by Heidi Baumstark, a featured writer for the Bull Run Observer, to let us know that the paper will be featuring a story about our newsletter to celebrate the 100th edition which will be next month. It is scheduled for January 3, 2014, and to be honest, we have no idea what it will contain but we will read it with interest. Thank you, Heidi, for such a nice tribute.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: Bring your children, no matter how "young" for a Visit From Santa at the Brentsville Courthouse on Saturday, December 7th from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. and Sunday, December 8th from noon until 3 p.m. Guests can make old-time holiday decorations and Pomander balls with citrus fruit and cloves for their trees at home. 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 at our Brentsville Courthouse. The program is free but pictures with Santa are \$5.00 for 4X6 or \$10.00 for 8X10.

On Sunday, December 8th, join Historic Faith Ministries at 10:00 a.m. for a celebration of the true meaning of Christmas at the Union Church.

And on Saturday, December 14th the Brentsville Holiday Concerts will be performed by the Brentsville District High School Chorus and Orchestra. Concerts start at 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. and, as always, FREE admission.

Amy Shiflett, Historic Interpreter for the Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre tells us the open-hearth cooking class held on November 16th turned out great. Although it was a small group (5 participants), she said that if we had any more it would have been very tight in the little log farmhouse.

Very best wishes,
Kay and Morgan

This month:

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|--------|
| ➤ Letter From Brentsville | page 2 | ➤ Where WILD Things Live | page 7 |
| ➤ Christmas Past | page 3 | ➤ Survey of a Route | page 8 |
| ➤ Artifacts from the Jail | pages 4 & 5 | ➤ A Sailors Hope | page 9 |
| ➤ When War Came | page 6 | ➤ Reader Feedback | page 9 |



If Sherlock Holmes had been listening in on the party line last Monday what he heard would have sent him scurrying for microscope and handcuffs.

An excerpt from the middle of this peculiar conversation might have sounded something like this: First voice, very businesslike, "Now be sure and bring a big stone crock to carry your HEAD in. Heads are sort of messy to carry about you know." Me, scribbling furiously, "One stone crock. What next?" First voice, "Then there's a little matter of feet and ears. You do want your FEET, don't you?" Me, in alarm, "Oh dear, yes! Would a bushel basket do?" First Voice, thoughtfully, "Yes, I think a bushel basket will be fine. You can also carry a sharp knife, a dishpan, and plenty of black pepper."

Our first hog! Little did I think that such an unromantic object would ever take its place in my memory book along with the first box of candy I ever received, two mangy bananas my husband paid a quarter for six months ago, and a certain Lobster Bisque encountered once in New Orleans. I'll admit I was a little nervous about it, but I bravely squared my shoulders, thought of my pioneering ancestors, and marched off to grind sausage or die nobly in the attempt.

As it turned out, it wasn't too bad; Something like bracing yourself to go to the dentist and then finding out he's not going to murder you after all. In short, to grind sausage, which sounds like an ordeal, you simply ... grind. And grind. Of course you have to CHOP first. After chopping patiently for several hours, Mrs. Woodyard informed us we should have SLICED instead; It seems that long ribbons have a way of feeding themselves through the machine more readily than chunks which have to be poked through, and a finger or so is apt to clog up the works, —always a nuisance, not to mention the high cost of new fingers nowadays.

Along towards four-thirty, wispy smeared with grease, our right arms paralyzed from the shoulder down, and brains awl from trying to figure out what proportion of salt goes into a dishpan of sausage weighing 11 and one quarter

lbs. when the recipe calls for 5 ts. to 4 lbs., not forgetting to deduct 1 and one half lbs. for the pan, we suddenly recalled that the freezing plant, unlike the busy housewife, keeps dignified hours, closing at a specified time, and there were still hams, shoulders and sides of bacon to be dealt with. Hastily we hurled in the last of the sage, not stopping to measure it (that was the best batch of all), galloped out to the meathouse and began furiously rubbing Morton's Sugar Cure into everything in sight. The human brain they say, being an imperfect instrument, can stand just so much strain, and at this point I'm not at all sure but what I sugar-cured a Siamese Cat by mistake.

Between the grinding and the chopping I managed to ferret out the following:

Miss Fay Golladay was home from Washington for the week-end.

Mrs. Nelson Bradshaw is home from the hospital in Alexandria, and feeling fine.

Mrs. Orebough is also back after her stay in Washington.

Mr. and Mrs. Raymond McIntosh visited Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Keys on Sunday.

Mr. Ramke preached the Sermon at the Brentsville Presbyterian Church Sunday evening. The subject was "Repentance".

Chester Whetzel spent Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Whetzel.

Mrs. Rosie Bean visited her daughter in Herndon.

Lloyd Keys was back in Brentsville for the week-end.

We are sorry to hear that Mr. Petty is sick, and hope that he will be better soon.

Mr. and Mrs. Ermine Wade spent the week-end with Myrtle Keys.

Mrs. Jim Shoemaker spent Tuesday in Washington struggling with Christmas Shopping. She says that taking the children to see Santa will be a separate expedition.

Best Regards,
Agnes Webster

Source: December 13, 1946 The Manassas Messenger – Letter From Brentsville

Christmas Past

by

J. C. Breeden



Christmas is, hopefully, a glorious time; a time for family and friends to come together.

It could be Christmas songs or Hymns, it made no difference.

As youngsters, for us, that was no exception. We would scan Webster's field looking for the perfect cedar or pine tree. After hours of searching, all would agree, "this is the one".

On Christmas Eve, all would come to Mommy's house. A.V. & Gladys Eanes and their six children, Freddie & Hazel Wolfe and their two children, usually some friends, and of course, Dad & Mom, Morgan & Marye Breeden, and us four boys.

At home, when the tree was in the stand and placed in it's hallowed corner of the room, there was usually a 'hole' somewhere. However, this mattered not. A little twisting and turning or some extra decoration here or there and the hole was gone.



The gifts were given out to all. We would patiently wait until the last gift was distributed and then open them at the same time. What a mess, seemed that paper was knee deep! If you lost a part of a toy or a pair of socks, not to worry, it would be found once all the spent paper was carefully collected.

The one thing I remember most is the special decorations Mommy made. She used canning lids, cut pictures round, placed them front and back in the lids, then hung them all around the tree. I could spend hours looking at those pictures. Each picture held a special memory, each required extra time for reminiscence.

Today, I miss those times. The pictures on the tree, the singing, and togetherness of family and friends.

Also, our uncle Freddie, Fred Wolfe, would come thru the door, not saying a word to anyone, and go straight to the piano. Before long, everyone was gathered around the piano, singing.

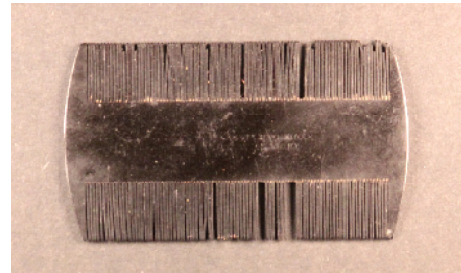
Personal note = If you would like to experience my childhood memories, this Christmas Eve, go to Aunt Gladys Eanes' house. No invitations given, no reservations required.

Merry Christmas and love to all, JC Breeden.

ARTIFACTS FROM THE BRENTSVILLE JAIL



(1) 1751 Coin/necklace



(4) Lice comb



(2) Children's toys-marbles, evil doll baby



(5) Shoe



(3) Women's Décor-Staffordshire dog



(6) Confederate "T" button

Jail Restoration Project Unearths History

By

Michael Riley

Archeology often is credited with providing valuable clues to the “hidden history” of historic sites. The conventional written history of a particular site often only concerns itself with the wealthy male citizens who frequented it, leaving out the women, children, the poor and minority groups who left behind a much less tangible record. Telling this other side of the story is where archeology proves invaluable. By recovering items left by these groups at an archeological site, it is possible to reconstruct a good portion of the day-to-day lives of these underrepresented individuals. This helps us more fully understand the events of the past and how they influence our current society and culture.

This is especially true of the Brentsville Jail Project. Over the last year contract archeologists from Michael Baker and county staff have excavated tons of concrete and earth from the ground floor of the Brentsville Jail to determine the historic floor plan of the building and create a two foot clearance between the floor joists and ground to alleviate moisture and rising damp. This process unearthed thousands of artifacts dating from the 18th century to present day. A representative sampling of these artifacts illustrates the value of archeology in discovering a more complete history of the jail building and the people who lived and worked there throughout the past eight generations.

(1) 1751 Coin/necklace: This Spanish Eight Real was recovered from the builder’s trench on the inside of one of the jail cells. It was punched for use as jewelry at some very early date. The coin is almost worn smooth by its wearer. The Reale was the first world currency, as it was used in Europe, Africa, Asia and North America. It has the letter M stamped on the face which denotes its minting location as Mexico City. The massive silver mines operated by the Empire of Spain made this the most stable currency until the mid-nineteenth century. It was legal US coinage until 1857 and is the model for the US dollar. This particular coin was likely owned by the ditchers or masons who constructed the building in 1821-22. These occupations were often filled by skilled enslaved workers who were owned or rented by the builder, James Driscoll.

(2) Children’s toys-marbles, evil doll baby. These children’s items all date to the second half of the nineteenth century. The small doll was known as a “Penny Doll” and were marketed in graduated sizes, costing one penny per doll. The jailer often had a family who sometimes resided on site. These toys were recovered in the jailor’s office.

(3) Women’s Décor-Staffordshire dog. Also from the middle nineteenth century, this Staffordshire dog was sold as part of a set. A rather expensive item, these were made of porcelain and hand painted in Great Britain. This decorative item was recovered from the hallway of the structure. It may have been lost by a student lodging in the jail which had been converted to a dormitory by Isacc Newton Harvey Beahm, who operated the Prince William Academy from 1895-1905 in the former county courthouse.

(4) Lice comb. This small hard rubber item was one of the first items made by Goodyear Rubber Company who popularized the process of vulcanization of India rubber by the 1850’s. These small combs were used to remove the nits of lice during an infestation. This item may have been used by an inmate of the jail, but were also a common necessity for American soldiers during the Civil War.

(5) Shoe. This shoe was found in the rear of the center hallway under the stairs. It is of “straight-last” construction and lacks a tongue, which is typical of footwear manufactured for slaves in Virginia as well as jail-issued boots. The 10 inch –thick layer of concrete and gravel encapsulated this item, which allowed for its survival.

(6) Confederate “I” button. The Block letter on this button denotes the infantry branch of service. The tin back on this locally- made example indicates a late-war manufacture date. This button may have been deposited by a prisoner of war who was incarcerated in the jail.

These are but a few of the many items found. They will be on display in the jail when it is opened to the public. But the story does not end here. There are yet a number of additional areas to be excavated and in them we hope to discover many more items. Look for additional stories in the near future.

When WAR Came to Brentsville

WASHINGTON, December 10, 1861.

YOUR EXCELLENCY: I inclose the paper you left with me, filled as you requested.* In arriving at the numbers given I have left the minimum number in garrison and observation.

Information received recently leads me to believe that the enemy could meet us in front with equal forces nearly, and I have now my mind actively turned toward another plan of campaign that I do not think at all anticipated by the enemy nor by many of our own people.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

GEO. B. McCLELLAN,
Major-General.

[Inclosure.]

If it were determined to make a forward movement of the Army of the Potomac without awaiting further increase of numbers of better drill and discipline, how long would it require to actually get in motion?

If bridge trains ready by December 15, probably 25.

After leaving all that would be necessary, how many troops could join the movement from southwest of the river?
Seventy-one thousand.

How many from northeast of it?
Thirty-three thousand.

Suppose, then, that of those southwest of the river 50,000 move forward and menace the enemy at Centreville. The

remainder of the movable force on that side move rapidly to the crossing of the Occoquan by the road from Alexandria to Richmond, there to be joined by the whole movable force from northeast of the river, having landed from the Potomac, just below the mouth of the Occoquan, moved by land up the south side of that stream to the crossing point named, then the whole move together by the road thence to Brentsville and beyond to the railroad just south of its crossing of Broad Run, a strong detachment of cavalry having gone rapidly ahead to destroy the railroad bridges south and north of the points.

If the crossing of the Occoquan by those from above be resisted, those landing from the Potomac below to take the resisting force of the enemy in rear, or, if the landing from the Potomac be resisted, those crossing the Occoquan from above to take that resisting force in the rear. Both points will probably not be successfully resisted at the same time.

The force in front of Centreville, if pressed too hardly, should fight back lowly into the intrenchments behind them.

Armed vessels and transportation should remain at the Potomac landing to cover a possible retreat.

[Indorsement.]

Memoranda of the President on campaign of Potomac without date, but about December 1, 1861; and letter of General McClellan dated December 10, 1861.



George Brinton McClellan (December 3, 1826 – October 29, 1885) was a major general during the American Civil War and the Democratic presidential nominee in 1864, who later served as Governor of New Jersey. He organized the famous Army of the Potomac and served briefly (November 1861 to March 1862) as the general-in-chief of the Union Army. Early in the war, McClellan played an important role in raising a well-trained and organized army for the Union. Although McClellan was meticulous in his planning and preparations, these characteristics may have hampered his ability to challenge aggressive opponents in a fast-moving battlefield environment. He chronically overestimated the strength of enemy units and was reluctant to apply principles of mass, frequently leaving large portions of his army unengaged at decisive points.

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Where WILD things live...
Virginia Ground Cherry
Physalis virginiana

Virginia ground-cherry is a widespread native plant which is considered weedy in some parts of its range. Its yellow-orange fruits, produced in late August, are edible, but all other parts of the plant are toxic, typical of many plants in the nightshade family (Solanaceae). It is a rhizomatous perennial from a deeply buried stem base. Each base usually supports one to six slightly hairy stems that are forked with ascending branches. Some plants are about 8-12 inches tall. The pale green leaves are alternate, lance-shaped, and about two to three inches long, with half inch petioles. Each stem bears about a dozen greenish-white flowers in the upper leaf axils. Flowers are about a half inch long and droop down on thin pedicels. In fruit, a flower base (calyx) inflates into a large, five-angled, bladder-like structure. Inside is a half inch diameter, juicy berry full of yellow seeds.

Look for Virginia ground cherry from early July to October. Most plants will be found in slightly moister sites, especially in sandy soils. More plants seem to grow where grazing is light or moderate. American Indians relished the fruits, which were eaten raw or made into sauces. Virginia ground cherry is a member of the nightshade family (Solanaceae) which contains about 3,000 species, widely distributed, but most numerous in tropical



America. The family includes Chinese lanterns, bittersweet, pepper, petunia, potato, and tobacco, to name a few. Some members, like henbane and deadly nightshade, are poisonous. The genus Physalis (Greek for “a bladder” from the inflated calyx) contains about 100 species worldwide. The specific name virginiana means “Virginian” in botanical Latin.

Virginia ground cherry was first described for science by Philip Miller (1691-1771), famous British gardener and author of The Gardener’s Dictionary (1731) which went through eight editions.

Source: Various Internet locations

SURVEY OF A ROUTE FOR A TURNPIKE ROAD FROM WARRENTON TO OCCOQUAN, IN THE COUNTY OF PRINCE WILLIAM.

BY P. SCALES.

After closing the survey of the Occoquan river in the month of May, our labors were directed to the completion of the survey for the road, commencing at the town of Occoquan. Having made Brentsville a fixed point in the survey, it became necessary to investigate the intervening country; and from a thorough examination, it was believed we could do nothing better in the selection of ground for easy grades and diminution of distance, than to adopt in some places, revise and straighten in others, the present travelled road to Brentsville. Distance 17 miles 15.94 chains.

After passing about one-fourth of a mile west of Brentsville, the survey pursues for 9 miles a direct course towards Warrenton, over a very gently undulating country, passing through the property of the commonwealth, known as the Bristoe estate, and approaches the Cedar run near Mr. M' Cormack's; then crossing the creek at a favorable bridge site, the line rises upon high ground to avoid the northern windings of the run and other objectionable features along its banks. It again drops into the valley of Cedar run upon a favorable bearing, and crossing the run at two other points upon small bridge sites of about 36 feet span, pursuing the valley on the west side of the stream to station 663, in the turnpike road leading to Alexandria, and pursuing the same to station 670, at the courthouse in the town of Warrenton. Distance from Brentsville 16 miles 73.07 chains, and total distance of the survey 34 miles 9.01 chains.

Very easy grades are obtained upon this line, no where allowing slopes exceeding 3 degrees 30 minutes, except in the turnpike as we approach Warrenton, where a grade of 5 degrees 30 minutes is submitted to for 11.75 chains. It may be supposed favorable ground would have been obtained for the formation of the road without a capping of stone, but the examination provided otherwise. Between Occoquan and Brentsville, the ground is better adapted

for a dirt road than the western end of the line, where the soil from its spongy nature is too weak to support the heavy agricultural products in their transit to market, and the scarcity of road mettle to M' Adamize it, would swell the expense of its construction to an extent, perhaps, beyond its realized benefit.

And it remains to be ascertained whether it would not be more beneficial to accommodate the transportation of the products of the country upon a rail-road from Warrenton, down the valley of Cedar run to Harrison's ford, and then pass over to the Potomac by the valley of the Chopawamsic. This idea, however, is only elicited from the inspection of the map, and not from an examination of the country.

As the board have not advised that the estimate should be drawn out for this improvement, no tabular statement of its costs is submitted, nor is it thought they would be wanting: nevertheless, the survey has been so executed, that they may, if required, be subsequently prepared. However, the scarcity of material to mettle the road is such, that the cost will be materially influenced by the distance necessarily encountered in its transportation; and it is believed the aggregate estimates of the improvement will not fall short of \$110,955 for road and bridges, the dimensions being 22 feet carriage way and 60 feet vista; metted 12 feet wide and 1 foot thick, with paved gutters, or catch waters, and stone culverts.

Respectfully submitted,

P. SCALES.

Source: Seventeenth, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Annual Reports of the Board of Public Works, to the General Assembly of Virginia; Vol. VII, 1835

Note: The map Peter Scales created from this survey and the one of the Occoquan River from last month can be seen in RELIC.

A SAILORS HOPE

BY EDWARD WHEELER JR.
U.S. COAST GUARD

Every evening as the sun goes down
way off there in the west,
As the shadows start to creepin' and the
ocean seems at rest,
After night mess is all over and the mail
is sorted right,
In my solitude, I wonder why you do not
write?
I've been prayin' for a letter and my
heart is achin' so,
And the awful word "forgotten" seems
to haunt me where I go;
My spirilts then are downcast, comes a
tighttenin' in my throat,
Every time the mail is passed out, and
you fail to write a note,
Each "reveille" as I awake I feel today
there'll be one sure,
Then I arise elated; my every woe is
cured,
But night brings disappointment, and
every one the same,
The daily mail comes in all-right, but I
never hear my name.
I try to understand the fact; you toil from
morn 'till night,
Your chores at home are many, you
have little time to write;
Yet somehow, that don't help so much,
I live in hopes that's true,
And without that hope to lean upon, I
don't know what I'd do,
So when next you've got a moment after
all your work is done,
'Fore the neighbors come acalling 'fore
another chore's begun;
Won'tcha sit right down and write me?
even just a lone "Hello"?
For a letter to a sailor is the greatest
lift I know...

F e e d b a c k

I just could not believe the "ARTWORK" and article of me in your November Brentsville Neighbors. I always enjoyed doing many activities and find it very hard now not to be able to do. My age has a way of slowing you down.

I am so appreciative of the article and just wonder if you may have a couple extra copies as I would love to send one to Dr. Regan and wife, especially about the turkeys as they have so many portraits and sculptures of turkeys in their home.

Kindly accept the small donation – even if for only postage to continue the Brentsville Neighbors as it is a real tribute.

I will always admire this article and still find it unbelievable.

A neighbor
Peggy Mauck

><<><><

I always look forward for – and enjoy the "Brentsville Neighbors" Newsletter. We really appreciate all the work you put in it each month.

Hope the enclosed stamps will help a little bit.

Have a wonderful Thanksgiving and may God richly bless.

Sincerely,
Virginia Carrico

><<><><

Hope you and Kay have a wonderful day celebrating with family and friends. The newsletter is one of the things I'm grateful for --- thank you both.

Best wishes,
Mike Simpson
(from Namibia this year)

Brentsville Neighbors

Preserving Brentsville's History

Contact us on:

morganbreeden@aol.com

All back issues on:

<http://www.historicprincewilliam.org/brentsvilleneighbors/index.html>

IN GOD WE TRUST

**Brentsville Neighbors
c/o Morgan Breeden
9721 Windy Hill Drive
Nokesville, VA 20181**

