

Brentsville Neighbors

“Preserving Brentsville’s History”

May 2016

Welcome neighbors,

After my rant about Brentsville being located in Bristow (with which many of you agree, I’m happy to add) I could not help but notice that one more thing from Brentsville is now in Bristow – the rail fence which was around the pasture lot. But fear not! I’ve been assured that a new 3-rail fence is being installed to make the lot more secure for those who may bring animals for Farm Day and other special events. The fence around the garden plot is also missing but again, for good reason. It was starting to rot and become unstable so a scout project will replace that shortly.

May is Preservation Month! And in keeping with that there are two events you may wish to attend. First, on May 7 & 8 in honor of Mother’s Day all historic sites will be offering free tours for mothers and children under 6. Also on May 7 is the Brentsville Court and Trades Day from 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. and it’s Free for everyone! Court days were exciting in the 1800s! Discover what court was like in Brentsville during its days as the fourth county courthouse of Prince William County. Come sit in on a trial and learn about the court proceedings of the 1800s, which differ greatly from today. Historic tradesmen and tradeswomen will be showcasing their skills. Get a sneak peak of the 1820s jail, currently under restoration. For these and other events, please call 703-365-7895 for information.

Do you remember celebrating May Day as a youngster? May Day marks the halfway point between the first day of spring and the summer solstice. It dates back to the days of the Romans and involved many pagan rituals and ancient customs which were slowly phased out with the arrival of Christianity. Festivals, dances, and rituals related to agriculture and fertility were practiced by many Germanic and European countries. Did you ever dance around a Maypole? A tall pole with garlands of flowers and ribbons. Weaving in and out to form a braided effect and then reversing the dance to get the original configuration? Not so easy, was it?

May 5th is also the National Day of Prayer, an annual holiday that serves to encourage Americans to pray and meditate. In 1775 the Continental Congress allocated a time for prayer in forming a new nation. Over the years, there have been calls for a day of prayer, including from President Abraham Lincoln in 1863. On April 17, 1952, President Harry Truman signed a bill proclaiming the National Day of Prayer into law in the United States. President Reagan amended the law in 1988, designating the first Thursday of May each year as the National Day of Prayer.

Very best wishes,
Kay and Morgan

This month:

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| ➤ Letter From Brentsville | page 2 | ➤ Search for Richard Donovan | pages 5 - 7 |
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No sooner does my husband assert that he is leaving home on a business trip, than the ominous clouds of coming catastrophes start to gather on the horizon, biding their time until the bus is safely out of sight to break over my unprotected head. This time it rained, not cats and dogs, but something much more spectacular: A strange man,—at midnight! Not that most men aren't strange at midnight, but ... I digress ...

Sometime after eleven o'clock, on the evening of the sad departure, I went downstairs to make sure all lights and animals were out, and to prop a chair under the knob of the kitchen door. Not dreaming that anyone would actually try to break in, but sometimes the wind blows it open. One of the numerous items down on our list of things to be sure and get was lock (or key) for Ktch. Door, but somehow in the last-minute scramble it was over-looked.

Half an hour later, in the act of closing the "Ghoul of Murder Manor," a delightful piece of literature with which I had been lulling myself to sleep, I heard a muffled crash and a stumbling, scuffling, sound from below decks. On going cautiously down to investigate, I found my chair knocked over and the door swinging wide; not a breath of wind stirred. For a second I strained my ears in the country silence; amongst the chirp of crickets and the mournful cry of the whippoorwill, I caught a sort of creak from the little room above the kitchen. Flying back upstairs, I roused my son; "The house is full of burglars!" I told him, with what I considered admirable nonchalance,—if not the strictest accuracy, "Get up!"

Gill did not argue, for once, but fetched his B.B. gun and Commando knife. I took the shillelagh that hangs by my bed and armed to the teeth with this interesting assortment of fearsome weapons, the two of us marched boldly downstairs. We listened at the foot of the narrow back steps, and then tiptoed up them, saying "Shhhh." To each other in tones to alarm the bravest burglar. The first sight that met my astonished eyes was a big pair of perfectly unfamiliar feet, dangling limply over the end of the bed. "What'll we do?" I whispered. Gill cocked his gun and drew a bead on the recumbent figure. "See who it is," he motioned me. Gill had patronized a Western movie, of the variety known as Shoot-em-up-Charlie, that very afternoon so he was thoroughly familiar with the proper procedure in these cases. "Just be sure you point that thing at HIM, and not at ME." I muttered, gingerly prodding the body with the end of the shillelagh. Apparently rigor mortis had not yet set in, for it made a noise and turned its head. "Good grief," I exclaimed, in relief, "Look who it is!"

Gill squinted over the gunsights and slowly lowered his shootin' iron: "He must have gotten in the wrong house by mistake."

"Well," I announced, "the main thing is to get him into the RIGHT one, by INTENTION,— Now, let me see"

"Telephone." Said my son, laconically.

"OF COURSE!"

Bosom swelling with fond maternal pride, I acted on this brilliant suggestion; fortunately, the corpus delicti had a stout brother who was equal to dealing with the emergency, but I have since wondered if he will ever realize how close he came to the embarrassing predicament of surviving a War, only to be shot full of B.B.s, knifed in the back, and banged on the head with a shillelagh by a nervous female?

Incidentally, I MUST do something about that shillelagh; for the benefit of anyone who is unfamiliar with this handy little bludgeon, truncheon, or cudgel (sic), I will explain that this particular one was picked up in Ireland, or maybe it was South Boston, many years ago by some atavistic member of the family, and is made of stout oak, the handle being polished to a lustrous sheen by the loving grip of many a St. Patrick's Day enthusiast. It is the most perfectly balanced weapon I have ever seen, and the temptation to use it, once it is in the hand, is almost irresistible. —I add this data for the edification of any burglars who might happen to read this column, so that in the event of accidents they would not be able to claim that they didn't know it was loaded!

The most excitement in Brentsville last week was furnished by the bulldozer which was excavating what we suspect is an atomic-bomb shelter for the Shoemakers'. Every able-bodied citizen was out watching the procedure on Saturday, and very impressive it was. Mr. Shoemaker's daughter, Mrs. Lloyd Henderson, was a visitor on Sunday.

Mrs. Philip Spencer visited the Bradshaws on Sunday. Young Master Spencer, who is one of the cuter babies, accompanied his mother, and was much admired by the local ladies.

Everyone will be sorry to hear that Mr. Petty, whom we still consider of Brentsville, had been quite ill. He is just home from Washington, and is feeling strong enough to sit up and complain about the weather, which we took as a good sign.

The Rev. Jesse Bell has been critically ill at his home. He is now reported as slightly better.

Regards,

Agnes Webster

Source: The Manassas Messenger, May 16, 1947

Where WILD things live...

Lithobates sylvaticus

Wood frog - The frog with the robbers mask

The wood frog (*Lithobates sylvaticus* or *Rana sylvatica*) has a broad distribution over North America. It has garnered attention by biologists over the last century because of its freeze tolerance, relatively great degree of terrestriality (for a ranid [any of a large family of long-legged frogs distinguished by extensively webbed hind feet, horizontal pupils, and a bony sternum]), interesting habitat associations (peat bogs, vernal pools, uplands), and relatively long-range movements. The wood frog has been proposed to be the official state amphibian of New York.



vernal [of, in, or appropriate to spring] pools. Long-distance migration plays an important role in their life history. Individual wood frogs range widely among their breeding pools and neighboring freshwater swamps, cool-moist ravines, and/or upland habitats. Genetic neighborhoods of individual pool breeding populations extend more than one-half mile away from the

breeding site. Thus, conservation of this species requires a landscape (multiple habitats at appropriate spatial scales) perspective.

Wood frogs range from 2.0 to 2.8 inches in length. Females are larger than males. Adults are usually brown, tan, or rust-colored, and usually have a dark eye mask. Individual frogs are capable of varying their color. The underparts of wood frogs are pale with a yellow or green cast.

A small brown frog with a dark eye mask in the woods is likely to be a wood frog. No other species has a similar appearance to the wood frog in North America. The first evasive leap is fast and long. Close observation will often glimpse a second short dive under the leaf litter, making the frog seem to disappear.

The contiguous wood frog range is from northern Georgia and northeastern Canada in the east to Alaska and southern British Columbia in the west. It is the most widely distributed frog in Alaska.

Wood frogs are forest-dwelling organisms that breed primarily in ephemeral [lasting for a very short time], freshwater wetlands: woodland

Adult wood frogs spend summer months in moist woodlands, forested swamps, ravines, or bogs. During the fall, they leave summer habitats and migrate to neighboring uplands to overwinter. Some may remain in moist areas to overwinter. Hibernacula tend to be in the upper organic layers of the soil, under leaf litter. By overwintering in uplands adjacent to breeding pools, adults ensure a short migration to thawed pools in early spring. Wood frogs are mostly diurnal and are rarely seen at night, except maybe in breeding choruses. They are one of the first amphibians to emerge for breeding right when the snow melts, along with spring peepers. Similar to other northern frogs that enter dormancy close to the surface in soil and/or leaf litter, wood frogs can tolerate the freezing of their blood and other tissues.

Wood frogs eat a variety of small, forest-floor invertebrates. Omnivorous, the tadpoles feed on plant detritus and algae, and also attack and eat eggs and larvae of amphibians, including those of wood frogs.

This frog primarily breeds in ephemeral pools rather than permanent water bodies such as ponds or lakes. This is believed to provide some protection of the adult frogs and their offspring (eggs and tadpoles) from predation by fish and other predators of permanent water bodies. Adult wood frogs emerge from hibernation in early spring and migrate to nearby pools. There, males chorus, emitting duck-like quacking sounds. Females deposit eggs attached to submerged substrate, typically vegetation or downed branches. Most commonly, females deposit eggs adjacent to other egg masses, creating large aggregations of masses. Some advantage is conferred to pairs first to breed, as clutches closer to the center of the raft absorb heat and develop faster than those on the periphery, and have more protection from predators. If pools dry before tadpoles metamorphose into froglets, they die. This constitutes the risk counterbalancing the antipredator protection of ephemeral pools. By breeding in early spring, however, wood frogs increase their offspring's chances of metamorphosing before pools dry.

The wood frog is not endangered or threatened. In many parts of its range, urbanization is fragmenting populations. Several studies have shown, under certain thresholds of forest cover loss or over certain thresholds of road density, wood frogs and other common amphibians begin to "drop out" of formerly occupied habitats. Another conservation concern is that wood frogs are primarily dependent on smaller, "geographically isolated" wetlands for breeding. At least in the United States, these wetlands are largely unprotected by federal law, leaving it up to states to tackle the problem of conserving pool-breeding amphibians.

It has a complex lifecycle that depends on multiple habitats, damp lowlands, and adjacent woodlands. Their habitat conservation is, therefore, complex, requiring integrated, landscape-scale preservation.

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Life Goes On

Hard to believe that it's been right at a year since we lost Bud; around four years since we lost Sam; and 16 years since H.L. passed away. Guess that kind of leaves me an only child for a while. Getting to spend time with Bud when he was dying, was a good time. We were able to talk about things that we'd never talked about when he was well, he wasn't one to talk about personal or emotional things. Might have damaged his "macho" image. When he realized his time was short, pride took a backseat and he was so open and real. He certainly set a high standard for dying; never getting bitter, never blaming anyone or anything, never complaining about pain or dying. Just kept saying "it is what it is" and "Jesus and I have it all worked out and I'm ready whenever He is". He said he was proud to be an American, no matter what a sorry state the country was in; he was proud of his family; and thankful that he had the opportunity to provide comfortably for his family. He felt that Brentsville was the perfect town to grow up in and enjoyed telling of the escapades that he and Sam got into.

Now that they are gone, life still goes on. I miss them every day and am proud to call them my brothers. I'm looking forward to seeing them again in the near future.

Mary Pearson Pumphrey
April 2016

In Search for Richard Donovan's Final Resting Place

by Brenda (Melvin) Crewe

Several months back I was asked to write a little story on one of my ancestors who left Page County in the late 1800's to reside in the little town of Brentsville, Va. His name was Richard Donovan, my great-great grandfather. With him he brought his new wife Agnes, his step-son Berlin and of course John, Richard's son by his first marriage to Mary Frances Hillyard.

A few weeks ago Morgan Breeden called and asked me to write another story about Richard. This one will tell you what it took to find his final resting place.

I started with the 1900 census. The three of them were listed, including a new addition to the Donovan family, a baby girl named Viola. I then went to the 1910 census and was surprised to see that Agnes and Berlin were not on it but Florida Donovan was. This was Richard's new daughter-in-law, wife of John who was married in 1909. I thought that was great but the question on my mind was, where were Agnes and Berlin? This would not have bothered most people but what can I say. I just hope by the time you finish reading this you won't think I've totally gone off the deep end. Two people don't just disappear without something written down somewhere or so I thought. Now the search is on.

I then took a little trip to the Dayton Historic Museum [in Rockingham County]. There I met a very nice lady named Margaret. With her help we did find Richard's marriage certificate to Agnes and additional information on some of Richard's brothers but that about covered it. I then did a state-wide search, military search and death records, etc. and again came up with bupkis.

Richard wasn't really concerning me at this time because he was still alive in the 1910 census but listed as a widower. So something happened between 1900 and 1910 to both Agnes and Berlin.

My best friend Kandy, who I have known for over twenty years, unfortunately now lives in North Carolina. She has been involved in my family search as I have hers. She also tries to be my voice of reason, such as, "Brenda, they're dead or maybe Berlin was just a child that happened to be there at the time they took the census and thought he was part of the family." Or she would call me and say "Hey Agnes had a sister who

had a son named Bernie. Maybe he was visiting his Aunt Agnes that day." So now the question is: was there really a child named Berlin Donovan?

Back to library I go. The people in the RELIC Department (we're now on first name basis) might say, "Ok Brenda, who are we looking for today?" or "Ladies, she's back!" When Beth pulled up the written 1900 Census it did specify that Berlin attended school for two months that year. After that nothing. But at least I now know that Berlin did indeed exist. So my search continues.

Another friend of mine, Wanda, that I've known since the day she was born, told me she was going to Pennsylvania to visit her sister Kim. Kim told her that she had made an appointment with a lady named Kelly that she met at a wine tasting party and was quite taken with her talent. That's right folks, she's a psychic. Now don't get me wrong. I'm really not into things of this nature but desperate times call for desperate measures. At this point I had nothing to lose but seventy-five dollars and five hours out of my life. So Kandy and I take off to Pennsylvania to meet Kelly. I told her what I wanted, to see if Agnes and Berlin would even come through because of going that far back but we gave it a shot. Berlin did come through but not really with a lot of information. She did say that Richard tried but a woman was coming in between them and would not let him come forward but my aunt Viola (John's half sister), however, did. She said that she didn't see much of Berlin but after what happened, mom wasn't the same. She also wanted me to know that she was there with me. I believe the reason Viola came through was because the woman was Agnes and obviously was not giving up any information. Aunt Via did, however, let me know that both her mother and half brother were buried as opposed to being cremated which I thought was the reason I couldn't find them. That led me back to the question where? Ok, that was fun. Not impressed. Next was Kandy's turn, I hope she has better luck than I did. Kandy wanted to talk to her dad who had passed away a few years ago, so while this was happening her mom also came through. Well if you knew her mom you'd understand. When her reading was

done, I'm here to tell you, it was spot on! Down to the last detail. At that point I regrouped.

A few months later I received a call from Beth, one of the ladies at the library. She had come across Richard's death certificate. Funny how that happened because we couldn't find it before. She did, however, explain that the records are only released at certain times, depending on date of death. For whatever the reason I now had it.

The death record was signed by Baker's Funeral Home stating that Richard was laid to rest at Valley View Cemetery in Nokesville. I knew that my great-grandfather (John) had purchased four burial plots there. He and my great-grandmother (Florida) were in two. My grandmother (Audrey) occupied one and one was left. My father (George Melvin) decided he would take that one and has already placed his stone. So now I'm thinking, one day this could be a little awkward.

I knew who the caretaker was over at Valley View so I gave him a call and explained the situation. I asked if he could probe the grave just to see if dad was going to have company. It took a couple of months to get him out there but we did it. Yes, that's right we hit nothing. He then went over to my great-grandmother's grave and did hit that one but no surprise there. I knew where she was. The evening wasn't a total loss. We accidentally uncovered a footstone at the end of my grandmother's (Audrey) grave which had her initials on it. Strange thing, no one knew it was there or who had it placed there.

Picking up on my frustrated attitude, he suggested I contact a gravedigger and handed me a name and number. You best believe I called as soon as I got back home! I explained the situation and wanted to know if he could help me dig up a grave. He said he would call me when he knew more about his schedule. I then called Morgan Earle to let him know what I was going to do. Yes, during my quest I even brought him in on it. He said he would like to know when we were going to do this because he'd like to be there. Several months passed before all three of us could make it out to the cemetery but it finally happened. The digging began.

Later we find ourselves looking into an empty hole. No sign of Richard, no signs of anyone. Now not only was Agnes and Berlin messing with me, I've got Richard playing hide-and-seek as well. Now the twenty dollar question is, where is my great-great grandfather? The next day I called my new friend Mike who works at Baker's Funeral Home. That's right, I've bothered him too from time to time. He told me that even though

Baker signed off on it, the family could always change their minds and bury their loved ones somewhere else. Considering the source I could believe it.

Anyone in their right mind would say fine, let it go and move on. As you continue reading you'll know that didn't happen. I then went back and re-read Richard's obituary. He died of heart problems. His service was held on the Donovan farm but it never mentioned him being taken anywhere else. Then it dawned on me, Richard never left home! He was somewhere on his seventy acre farm.

There are now seven houses built on that property so I could see myself going door to door saying, "Hi, may I dig up your living room?" I now went back to the land deeds. Those wonderful sheets of paper that tell you how many rods from the old oak tree to the rock that's next to a post, which is what I had to go on. Richard's land went from the south side of a rock at the river bend, which is called Horseshoe Bend, and then runs north to the bridge at Cedar Run. So if he's buried on the farm it has to be in a place where he would not be disturbed.

In the mean time I've been talking with my aunt (Edith Turner), keeping her informed on all my craziness. I had asked her if she ever saw a rock or stump that seemed to be a little out of place. She said that she and her brother George had covered every inch of that farm and she really couldn't remember anything like that. Then, bless her heart, she brought up a spring that was behind the house. She said that across the spring her grand-dad planted popcorn, turnips etc., and if you walked to the top of the hill you could see Cedar Run.

She also mentioned that her grand-mom and she would take the insides of the hog that her grand-dad slaughtered, put them in a tub and carry them to the spring to be cleaned. So now my mind's in over-drive. I'm thinking he might be buried across the spring on that parcel of land.

I called Kandy and told her what I thought and again comes the voice of reason. "Brenda, do you know who owns the land now, do you even know if the spring is still there, etc. etc...?" Ok, I get it. Not long after that Kandy called to tell me the good news. She's going to be a grandmother. She also shared with me that by using a method called dowsing, she determined the gender of the baby, "It was going to be a boy." By the way, her doctor has now confirmed this. I had heard the term before but I thought it was used to find water or other types of minerals in the ground.

(Continued from page 6)

I did however remember back in the day when great-grand-mom used a needle and thread and held it over my palm. She said I could ask a question as long as it could be answered yes or no. Boy, I bet she's sorry she started that, but it was fun and it beat playing go fish again.

So, yes folks, I have now gone from a psychic to dowsing. Kandy and I both would write down the same questions but answered them separately. We found that ninety-five percent of the time our answers were the same. It told us that Richard was buried on the farm along with Agnes and Berlin. They were by a spring on the south side of the farm house beside a rock. So now I have to find out about this spring that comes with a rock.

My son (Anthony) came over with the grand children one evening and we started talking about the farm. I needed to know if that spring was still there and find that rock. I suggested that we could go down there one night with a flashlight and take a little look see. Unfortunately my son does not take after his mother. Anthony then told me that he knew one of the families that lived on the farm. They had met when they lived in Brentsville. He had stopped by Anthony's to check out the puppies they had for sale and introduced himself as Leon and told Anthony he lived at the end of Izaak Walton. It seems they had this in common, Anthony told him that his ancestors had owned the farm and his grand-father and his mom also lived on Izaak Walton at one time. Well that's all I needed to hear. I wanted this man's number. This was one person I truly needed to talk to. The next day I gave Leon a call. He told me there is a spring behind his house. I then asked about the rock. He said, funny you should mention that. There's a quartz rock in the ground about the size of a basketball, I never dug it up because I could mow over it and it's the only quartz rock I've found on my property. He then asked why I wanted to know. At that time all I could think of was, I hope this guy has a sense of humor. I told him that I believed one of my ancestors was buried where that rock is and if he didn't mind I would like to have the ground probed to see if we could find anything. Strangely enough he had no problem with it which made me feel a little more comfortable.



I then called my other new friend the grave digger. Told him what I was now up to and that I could once again use his help. This took some time to come together, but we finally made it happen. When we got there I didn't tell him how many bodies I was actually looking for, just that I thought Richard was buried by the rock. So he started to look at the site and using his probing tool started poking the ground. He then went beside the rock and that's when he hit something. He told me there was definitely a grave there. Yes! Hide from me will ya! As he continued looking he said, "Brenda, there's two more here." He showed us the layout of each one and how the grass was different in that area. We all saw it and we all agreed.

So for the sake of what sanity I may have left, I not only found Richard's final-final resting place but I know now that Agnes and Berlin are with him.



Brenda pointing to the stone that marks Richard's final resting place.

In Our Town . . .

Festival
of
American Folk Music
Presented by
Children of Brentsville District

at
BRENTSVILLE DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL
Nokesville, Virginia
Thursday, May 4, 1939

8:00 P. M.

AMERICAN FOLK MUSIC FESTIVAL PROGRAM

I Cowboy

Home on the Range—Piano Solo

1. Whoopee-ti-yi-yo—High School Glee Club
2. My Home's in Montana—Grades 1, 2 and 3
3. Sante Fe Trail—Grades 4, 5, 6 and 7
4. Home on the Range—High School Glee Club

II Indian

Indian Love Call—Violin Solo

1. My Little Owlet—Grades 1, 2 and 3
2. Down the Stream—Grades 4 and 5—Aden and Nokesville
3. From the Land of the Sky Blue Waters—Grades 6 and 7.

III Mountain

Turkey in the Straw—Harmonica Duet

1. Red River Valley—Aden
2. Billy Boy—Brentsville
3. Down in the Valley—Nokesville

IV Negro Spirituals

In the Evening by the Moonlight—Invisible Choir

1. It's Me, O Lord—Greenwich
2. Oh! Mary, Don't You Weep—Boys Glee Club
3. Water Boy—George and Gerald Herring and Boys Glee Club
4. Jacob's Ladder—High School Glee Club, Grades 6 and 7
5. I know the Lord's Laid His Hands on Me—High School Glee Club

V Stephen Foster

Oh, Susanna!—Piano Solo

1. Young Sambo—Grades 1, 2, 3 and 4
2. Beautiful Dreamer—Greenwich
3. My Old Kentucky Home—Aden
4. Jeannie Wi' the Light Brown Hair—High School; Glee Club
Swanee River—High School Glee Club
Old Black Joe—High School Glee Club

VI Blest Be the Tie that Binds—Entire Group and Audience

The Brentsville District Music Festival is presented by the four schools of the district; Greenwich, Aden, Brentsville and Nokesville. Unless otherwise stated on the program, all selections are sung by a combined group from the four schools.

Source: The Manassas Journal, May 5, 1939

Oh, where have you been,
Billy Boy, Billy Boy?
Oh, where have you been,
Charming Billy?
I have been to seek a wife,
She's the idol of my life.
She's a young thing,
And cannot leave her mother.

Where does she live,
Billy Boy, Billy Boy?
Oh, where does she live?
Charming Billy?
She lives on the hill,
Forty miles from the mill.
She's a young thing,
And cannot leave her mother.

Did she bid you to come in,
Billy Boy, Billy Boy?
Did she bid you to come in,
Charming Billy?
Yes, she bade me to come in,
And to kiss her on the chin.
She's a young thing,
And cannot leave her mother.

Did she take your hat,
Billy Boy, Billy Boy?
Did she take your hat,
Charming Billy?
Yes, she took my hat,
And she threw it at the cat.
She's a young thing,
And cannot leave her mother.

Source: <http://www.metrolyrics.com/>

When WAR Came to Brentsville

BRISTOE, May 2, 1864.

Lieutenant-Colonel RICHMOND,
Assistant Adjutant-General:

Since receipt of your telegram Colonel Morris has report result of this afternoon scout. They went some 4 miles beyond Brentsville without finding even a guerrilla. Do you desire a scout sent to a greater distance to-morrow? The vedettes have been thrown farther out and strengthened.

S. G. GRIFFIN,
Colonel, Commanding

Name: Simon Goodell Griffin
State Served: New Hampshire
Highest Rank: Major General
Army: Union

Promotions: Promoted to Full Captain (2nd NH Inf); Promoted to Full Lt Colonel (6th NH Inf); Promoted to Full Colonel (6th NH Inf); Promoted to Full Brig-Gen; and Promoted to Brevet Major-Gen

Griffin, Simon G., brigadier-general, was born in Nelson, N. H., Aug. 9, 1824. He was educated at Roxbury, N. H., taught school, represented his native town in the state legislature, 1859-60, studied law and was admitted to the bar, and in 1860 began to practice in Concord.

Being commissioned captain in the 2nd N. H. volunteers at the beginning of the Civil war, he fought at Bull Run, was commissioned lieutenant-colonel of the 6th N. H. regiment in the fall of 1861, commanded his regiment in Burnside's expedition to North Carolina in Jan., 1862, and on April 22 was promoted colonel.

He distinguished himself in April by capturing, with 600 men and the aid of five gun-boats, a number of prisoners and stands of arms at Elizabeth City, N. C., and again at Camden, where his regiment fought with such notable gallantry that it was permitted to inscribe "Camden April 19, 1862," upon its colors.

He commanded a brigade at second Bull Run, Chantilly and South mountain, and at Antietam he charged the stone bridge and carried it in the face of a heavy fire. He was present at Fredericksburg, where his regiment lost one-third its number, and in May, 1863, was given permanent command of the 1st brigade, 2nd division, 9th army corps,



and with it joined Sherman in the defense of the rear of Grant's army before Vicksburg.

He then joined Burnside at Knoxville, commanded Camp Nelson, Ky., where he was at the head of 9,000 troops, and in 1864 joined the Army of the Potomac on the Rapidan, commanding his brigade in the battles of the Wilderness and Spottsylvania Court House, and so distinguishing himself in the last named battle that on Gen. Grant's recommendation he was promoted brigadier-general.

Gen. Griffin commanded a brigade at the North Anna, Totopotomy, Bethesda church and Cold Harbor, and commanded two

brigades in the assault on Petersburg, carrying the works and capturing 1,000 prisoners, together with arms, ammunition and artillery. On April 2, 1865, he arranged and planned the assault at "Fort Hell", and for gallant conduct was brevetted major-general of volunteers, participating afterward in the pursuit and capture of Lee's army.

He was mustered out of the volunteer service, Aug. 24, 1865, declined an appointment in the regular army and returned to New Hampshire, where he was a representative in the state legislature, 1867-69, was chairman of the Republican state convention in 1868, and in 1888 commander of the Massachusetts commandery of the military order of the Loyal Legion.

He subsequently became extensively interested in land and railroad enterprises in Texas and devoted much time to literary work. Gen. Griffin died Jan. 4, 1902.

Source: The Union Army, vol. 8

Brentsville Neighbors

“Preserving Brentsville’s History”

Contact us on:

morganbreeden@aol.com

All back issues on:

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

IN GOD WE TRUST

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

