

Brentsville Neighbors



Information About Brentsville
Shared Among Neighbors
December 2007



Welcome Neighbor!

Please don't forget! The Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre Christmas Concerts will be held again this year on Saturday, December 8th, 2007. The buildings open at 4:00pm. Join us for **"Sounds of the Season"** as the Brentsville District High School Chorus performs two concerts at 5:00 and 6:00pm in the historic Brentsville Union Church. As a very special treat, snacks and cider will be provided in front of the fireplace inside the (almost completely) restored log cabin! This is a FREE event and nothing would be better than to have all of Brentsville's families and friends together on the courthouse grounds for this special occasion! Give us a call if you need more details.

During this season we ask that you please remember our wonderful men and women who are serving in the armed forces. Whether you agree or disagree with where they are and what they are doing, one thing remains the same. They are our country's children doing the job we ask them to do and they deserve our respect, love and support.

Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year!

With warmest wishes,
Nelson & Morgan

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**A Brentsville Building
The “Old Cornwell Place”
12220 Bristow Road**

The “Old Cornwell Place” is used as reference in all deeds from the time Thomas and Cornelia Cornwell sold their home to Peter F. Bowen in 1882 until present. Many of us remember it as “The Dewey Keys Home” or simply as “The Little Red House.” No matter what you would have called it, the house is gone – after over 100 years – demolished at the direction of our Prince William County officials. Here is what is known about the home as of this writing.

We have not yet determined just when Thomas Cornwell purchased the property but at the time of its sale to Peter F. Bowen on November 6, 1882, (DB33/477) it was called the “Old Cornwell Place” so one can assume they had lived there for some years.

Peter Bowen and his wife lived here for almost 30 years during which time their son, Walter F. Bowen and daughter M. Ada Bowen were born. After Peter’s death, his widow, son, daughter and her husband sold the home and property to Herbert Franklin Keys on April 11, 1912 (DB65/201-2). Just three months later, Herbert married Lillie Belle Woodyard on July 18, 1912, and this became their first home.

Herbert and Lillie obtained a Deed of Trust on March 12, 1921, to secure to Chas. King & Son, Inc., or order, the payment of the sum of one hundred and eighteen dollars and eighty-six cents, with interest since October 26, 1920, until paid (DB75/267-8). For reasons not identified, the loan was not repaid and by order of the Circuit Court of Prince William County, the property was ultimately sold at auction to the highest bidder with Jno. H. Burke and Jas. R. Larkin giving the last and highest bid of \$205.00 on October 20, 1922 (DB78/16).

About four years later, on August 4, 1926, Burke and Larkin sold the property to Mrs. Katherine Keys, wife of Miff Keys (he was not included in the title of the property). It’s possible that George Dewey Keys (everyone called him Dewey) and his wife, Rosie (Birch), Katherine’s nephew, moved in about this time. We believe

Dewey’s daughter, Elizabeth, was born in the home on May 19, 1931. At any rate, the property remained in the ownership of Katherine (or Catherine) until her death on March 22, 1936. Shortly after, her widower, James Mifflin Keys, Sr. (Uncle Miff to all who knew him), his son, James Mifflin Keys, Jr. and his wife, Mamie Atlee (Counts) Keys, as sole heirs, sold the property to Jesse J. Whetzel on May 2, 1936 (DB97/42-3) who was living in the big white house next door to the left. On December 19, 1957, Dewey’s daughter, Elizabeth and Jesse’s son, Ira, were married in the classic girl next door situation.

Jesse Whetzel held onto the property until April 12, 1963, when it was sold to Silas & Guiseppina (“Tina”) Bean (DB296/733). Silas obtained a Deed of Trust using this property and another parcel on the Brentsville-Independent Hill Road containing 14 acres (DB296/734). Two years later they sold it to Elden Fletcher, divorced, and his mother, Mintie C. Fletcher on March 23, 1965 (DB348/354). At the same time, Elden and his mother entered into two Deeds of Trust using the property as security with one to A.D. Scott and H. Selwyn Smith (DB348/356) and the other with Frank A. Hoss, Jr. and H. Selwyn Smith as a 2nd Deed of Trust (DB348/358). On March 13, 1967, they sold the home to James I. and Betty J. Fletcher (DB348/354) who kept it for two years before selling to Ellis Raymond Johnson (DB503/159). One year later Ellis sold to John and Maureen Patina (DB560/20-21-22).

The Patina’s lived in the big house to the right of this small place and used it for storage. On August 19, 1991, they gave the property to their daughter, Maureen Susan Patina, who was living in Gordonsville, VA at the time (DB1825/1960). Finally on July 22, 2004, Maureen sold the property to Mark & Maxie Brown (200407220123682) who are the current owners. Officials in the Prince William County government told the Brown’s to either tear it down or “we will tear it down at your expense.” So, on September 3, 2005, the house which had been a home for well over 100 years was demolished and taken to the dump.

The “Old Cornwell Place”



Reportedly built in the 1830's, this small house was home to a number of families during the course of its existence. Here, residents of Brentsville were born and died. It was small but, “Be it ever so humble, there is no place like home!”



National Register of Historic Places
The Brentsville Historic District
File#76-338
Photo by N. Born



George Dewey Keys with daughter Elizabeth (Keys) Whetzel and her daughter Sandra Whetzel.



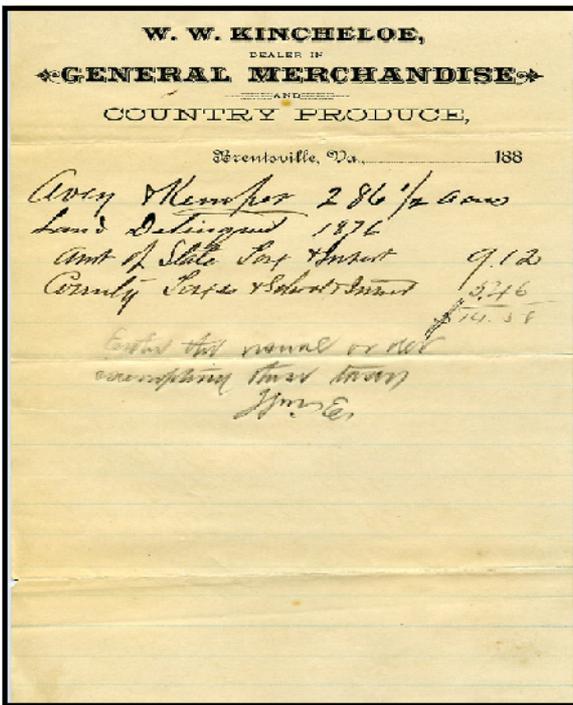
Rosie (Burch) Keys, wife of Dewey Keys and Violet Louellen Keys in front of Robert Hilman Keys' home in Brentsville, located just to the right of the store.



The Final Day -- September 3, 2005



Agnes Webster from a home movie taken in the 1940's Courtesy of Julie



From the Kincheloe Store
Courtesy of Ron Turner

Where WILD things live..



Ailanthus webworm moth

Atteva punctella (Cramer)
(See page 7)

Hall's Log Cabin during restoration (back view)
November 9, 2007



Brentsville Memories of John F. Wolfe (part 2)

Like I said earlier, my mother was an avid churchgoer and attended in the Union Church. I went with her most of the time. I was baptized in that church, around when I was 12-years old. I can't say I went every Sunday, 'cause that wouldn't be right. If the fishin' was bad, then I'd go to church! The church couldn't support a full-time minister so we shared a minister with another Presbyterian church for some time. After WWII a lot of people went into the seminary down in Richmond and they used to send someone during the summertime to come preach. They used to round us up to come to church. I remember my sister, Gladys, got married in the church.

While I was in Korea the congregation got too large for this church so they built the one down the road. The Union church closed up for a while before a couple of other churches moved into it but there was no parking and it was very difficult so they didn't fare well. It was about ready to fall down when the county decided, "Well, it's Historical so maybe we should save it," and I'm very glad they did. It had mulberry trees on both sides of the church and if they were ripe, I'd sit up in the tree and eat 'em, either before or after—or even during church.

During WWII we lost all of our able-bodied men. The only members around were little people like

me or older people like my daddy. They had dances over here in the courthouse quite often on Saturday nights and the money that they collected they

donated to the American Red Cross, which was a good thing. I was talking to my son about the bell in the courthouse—we used to have something called blackouts during WWII. If for one reason or another they thought there was an air threat, from Germany or some other place, they would call for a blackout for the entire region. Somebody from Brentsville was in charge of ringing the bell and you'd have to turn your lights out or you needed thick black curtains over your windows. Evidently the airplanes, the only way they navigated back then, was by ground sights. I remember one time we were coming back from Georgetown where we had gone to visit my sister when Morgan Earle was born. On the way back we were in the bus terminal, there were about four of us including momma, and they wouldn't go out during the blackout so we had to sit on the side of the street for about three hours. It was a scary situation because you never knew what was

coming. Thank God nothing did come.

I remember they had a little building down the road about half a mile and volunteers would sit in that building during the day and observe airplanes and report back to the people. It was kind of interesting



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(Continued from page 5)

but kind of scary. I remember reading and hearing about ships on fire in the Atlantic Ocean. I had two brothers that served in WWII. One of them was a gunner on an airplane—he served in Europe. The other one was in radar—he wound up in a station for the duration of the war in Panama.

I also remember that Mr. Kenny Bradshaw, who lived in a house behind us, had a room behind the dining room where he had a world map. He used to sit there by the radio and he would put pins in this map. And he kept track of everything that was going on during the war. I used to go over there and watch him do that. I thought Brentsville was big. But when he'd go over there and had maps of islands in the Pacific, Europe and Asia, I thought that was really something else! And I think that's what helped fire up my history and geography a little bit, so I learned where these places are—not that they are just millions of miles away. Well of course, at that time they WERE millions of miles away. Now, the moon is not that far away. Times have changed.

I've lived in Brentsville off and on all my life. I was in the military in the early 50's, and then I got off active duty and went to work full time with the Virginia National Guard. I worked with them from '54-'74. In 1954 I got married and we lived in the city of Manassas, well it was the town of Manassas at that time, and we lived in town for about a year. We bought one of the first houses in Manassas Park and lived there for about five years. Then we moved back to Brentsville and we've been here ever since. I have one son and one daughter. They were both born in DC while we were living in Manassas Park. My son was married in the Brentsville courthouse and my daughter was married in front of the

Brentsville Jail. It was outside where she got married and there used to be a large maple tree right in front of the jail house. And when she was just a little bitty thing she said "I want to get married right over there," and she did!

I still stay in touch with some of my old Brentsville friends. One of my nephews is very interested in the history of Brentsville and he produces a monthly paper. He's always digging up old members and sending their messages back to Brentsville. And that's good because I get to read about people that I grew up with and their idea of what Brentsville was like at the time. Gill Machen, who lived in the Webster house, he was Mr. Webster's stepson, was an avid musician and the rest of us played various instruments. We called ourselves the "Brentsville Hitch Hoppers." The biggest thing we ever played for? Well, we used to play for dances at the Osborn gymnasium for a while, for free. Well the biggest thing... what's the organization that cares about eyes? The Lion's Club had some big thing in the high school over there and we had two events with that but that didn't last very long. In the early 50's everybody my age, well we grew up, and most got a job in the military. Some came back and some didn't.

I'm pleased that the county decided to take over the courthouse property. The county has spent a terrible amount of money on it, to more or less resurrect it. This whole area that belongs to the county was about ready to be scrapped. And the county took it over and they've done a fantastic job of building it up. I'm proud of that. This area here has been around for a long time... and history's something that's worth keeping. And they've done a fantastic job with it.

Roasted pumpkin seeds

These are delicious!! 1) boil the seeds in heavy salted water for 20 minutes (it cleans the seeds well); 2) lay them out on a cookie sheet overnight to dry; 3) mix them with 1 tablespoon salt, 1 tablespoon melted butter and 1 tablespoon olive oil; and 4) spread the coated seeds on a cookie sheet and bake them for 30 minutes at 300 degrees.

There are many variations. Here are two more:

- 1. Savory:** 4 tablespoons melted butter, 1/2 teaspoon garlic salt and 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 2. Lemony:** 4 tablespoons melted butter, 1 teaspoon 'Mrs. Dash' or lemon pepper

Where WILD things live...

Ailanthus webworm moth

Order: Lepidoptera
Family: Yponomeutidae
Genus and species: *Atteva punctella*

In their native habitats of Central and South America, *Ailanthus* webworm caterpillars build communal webs in native trees of the family Simaroubaceae. The species has spread north through much of the United States, where its caterpillars utilize primarily an introduced simaroub, Tree of Heaven, *Ailanthus altissima*. Tree of Heaven is native to North China. It was planted extensively in Europe in the 1700s and soon made its way to North America, where it is now naturalized along fences, roads, and in waste places.

The colorful adult *Ailanthus* webworm moths are pollinators, often seen visiting flowers of many different species during daytime. They mate at dawn and lay eggs at dusk, primarily on fibrous substrates, such as the larval webbing. Larvae of various ages feed gregariously on leaves, flowers, seeds, and even bark. Cocoons are constructed within the webbing. The species is multivoltine, and it apparently does not diapause. It is unlikely that it overwinters in the northern part of its range. Rather, it migrates north across the United States to southern Canada each year.

Source: <http://entomology.uark.edu/museum/ailamoth.html>

Some people try to turn back their odometers. Not me, I want people to know “why” I look this way. I’ve traveled a long way and some of the roads weren’t paved.

From the Brentsville Courthouse



At the County court held for
Prince William County, On
Monday the 7th day of December
1891

Present, Hon. William E.
Lipscomb, judge of said court

Grand Jury of Inquest

James M. Barbee – foreman, E. E. Conner, H. A. Keys, R. A. Arnold, J. Payne, L. Sullivan, & E. B. Reid were sworn special grand jury of inquest in & for the body of this county & having received their charge withdrew, and after some time returned into court and presented an indictment against Ephraim Shelton for a felony a true bill, and indictment against George Carter for a felony a true bill, and Grand Jury having nothing further to present was discharged.

Source: PWC 1890 - 1891 Court Minutes, Copyright 2003 by Ronald Ray Turner.

Flashback

The Manassas Journal
December 26, 1919

BRENTSVILLE

Miss Viola Donovan, of Washington, arrived at her house last Friday to spend the holidays.

Miss Martha Molair, who has been quite sick, is improving slowly.

Miss Sallie Cooper returned to Washington Sunday after spending several days at her home here.

Mr. Frank Albright, of Broadway, visited friends here last week.

Mr. Richard Donovan continues ill.

Miss Essie Cornwell, of Washington, is spending some time at her home here.

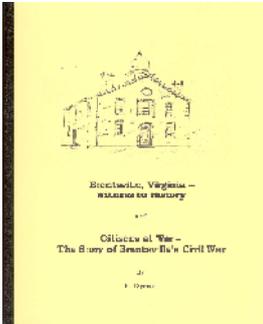
Mr. and Mrs. Troy E. Counts spent Sunday with Mrs. Counts' parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. T. Keys.

Miss Tracie Spitzer, who is teaching at Minnieville, is spending the holidays at the home of her parents here.

No services were held at the Presbyterian Church Sunday morning as Rev. J. R. Cooke was unable to get here on account of bad roads.

Brentsville Neighbors

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The Paul Spencer booklet “Brentsville, Virginia - Witness to History” is available from “Brentsville Neighbors” for \$5.00 plus \$2.00 if mailed. All proceeds go to the Brentsville Courthouse Fund.

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

