

Brentsville Neighbors



Information About Brentsville
Shared Among Neighbors
September 2008



Welcome Neighbor!

September reminds us that it is now time for the Brentsville school reunion. Initial response indicates there will be several new faces present this year along with visitors who will enjoy talking with the former students about their experiences in this small school environment. We are looking forward to a very enjoyable day on Saturday, September 6th from 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. We hope to see you there.

Many thanks are in order to Ms. Jan Cunard for her support. Most of us know that Jan was involved in researching Brentsville for many years and the information she has gathered is being made available to us to expand our knowledge base on Brentsville's past.

Prince William County has finally reached final resolution on the distribution of funds set aside as payment for the Breeden Lot, now referred to as the Tavern Square Lot. We are pleased to report that Mr. Harry Visger was determined the rightful recipient of the funds in consideration of the many years he has paid taxes on the property and other issues. We believe this was the right outcome.

In a recent note from May Bradford, she is pleased to report that Lauren D. King and David P. Holt II were married on August

9, 2008, at 2:00p.m. in the Brentsville Union Church. Pastor Ralph Benson officiated. Lauren is the granddaughter of Stewart Bradford who was a life-long resident of Brentsville. Stewart would have been so, so proud! We wish them good luck and much happiness.

Mark your calendar for the Prince William Farm Tour to be held this year on September 27-28, 2008. The Brentsville Historic Site will be a designated stop on the tour and will feature the 1850's Haislip/Hall Farmstead and will include some of the everyday tasks that were important to 19th century farmers in Prince William County. There will be music, a spinning demonstration, candle dipping, butter making and tours available on Saturday from 11:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Admission is FREE.

Very best wishes,
Nelson and Morgan

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Where W I L D Things Live

Citheronia regalis

Hickory Horned Devils

The **Regal moth** (*Citheronia regalis*), also called the **Royal Walnut Moth**, is a North American moth in the saturniidae family. The caterpillars are called **Hickory Horned Devils**. The adult has a wingspan of 9.5-15.5 cm. It is considered rare in this region.

Citheronia regalis is an impressive creature in all stages of development. The adult moth is the largest (in mass, not wing area) north of Mexico, as are the spectacular larva and the substantial pupa.

Yellowish eggs are laid either singly or in groups of up to four on the upper surface of the host plant leaves, favoring nut trees such as walnut and hickories. Larvae are solitary in later stages and rarely occur in numbers large enough to cause defoliation, however an individual larva can strip several branches of their leaves.

When the eggs hatch 7-10 days later, small yellow larvae that darken rapidly emerge. The caterpillars are solitary nighttime feeders in early stages, when they curl up in a "j" shaped pattern during the day and resemble two-toned bird droppings.

As the caterpillars age, they feed during the day. They molt 5 times, each being a different form. But on their sixth and final stage, they become a bright green color, with huge black-tipped red horns, earning them their common name "hickory horned devils." They feed heavily on their host plant and can grow up to 7 inches long. Their scary appearance is purely a ruse; the spines, though prickly, do not sting, and the larva is harmless and actually one of the more easily handled.

It burrows into the ground to pupate in an earthen chamber, rather than spinning a cocoon. When the moths emerge, they have to pump their wings with fluid to extend them. The females emit pheromones, which the male can detect through its large, plumose antennae. Males can fly for miles in order to reach a female. After the moths mate, the female spends the majority of the remainder of her life laying eggs, while the male may mate several more times. Adults of this family of moths have vestigial mouths, meaning their mouthparts have been reduced. Because of this, they do not eat and only live for about a week as adults.

Citheronia regalis has always had value not just for unlikely beauty, but as a teaching aide and as an indicator species of environmental health and natural diversity. For that reason alone Hickory Horned Devils, monstrous though they may be, should be conserved and not harmed in ignorance.

Source: Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

flashback

Brentsville



The congregation at Hatcher's Memorial church enjoyed a series of meetings last week. The pastor was assisted by Rev. A. J. Ramey of the Tidewater section.

Rev. J. R. Cooke held services at the Presbyterian Church last Sunday morning.

Mr. K. M. Bradshaw, who has been quite sick, is improving.

Mr. Clyde Holsinger recently visited his sister in Washington.

Mrs. A. I. Huffman and daughter, Margaret, spent a week recently with relatives on a motor trip through the Valley of Virginia, from Harrisonburg to Staunton and vicinities.

The work of improving the Brentsville-Bristow road is progressing as rapidly as could be expected. Already great improvements have been made.

Mr. Owen Cornwell and family motored from Alexandria Sunday, visiting relatives here.

Miss Vada Lam is visiting her sister in Washington.

Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Whetzel are Washington visitors this week.

Mrs. Louvenia Carter and daughter-in-law, Mrs. D. H. Carter, and grandson, Philip, of near Dumfries, visited at the home of Mr. Paul Cooksey Sunday.

The ladies of the Brentsville Kensington with their friends and families are invited to the home of Mr. and Mrs. I. W. Lisky, Saturday evening, September 13, promptly at 7:30 for a social evening. Each member will please be prepared to respond to roll call with a favorite memory gem.



Source: The Manassas Journal – Brentsville News – September 11, 1924



Above: Ermine & Thelma Wade
(Courtesy of Bill Wade)

Where WILD things live..



Citheronia regalis
Hickory Horned Devils
(See page 2)



Tracie & Jesse Whetzel in Brentsville



Shirley Spitzer at home in Brentsville



Jessie Elizabeth Keys

[Above three pictures courtesy of Janice Speakes]



(above) Bill Wade with his grandmother, Myrtle Keys Landis
(below) Bill with Mickey Winslow, artist, who made the pen/ink drawings for him



Bill Wade Remembers Brentsville

My Mother was Thelma Ellen Landis Wade, daughter of Myrtle Keys and Elmer Landis. My Father was Ermine Howard Wade who from three years of age until he was thirteen years old was raised by John and Laura Seymour of Brentsville. After finishing the Technical School in Manassas he went to Carmichaels, PA to live with Ervin David Wade (his Dad) and new wife Nellie. He attended Cumberland High School and upon graduation he returned to the Seymour's and began dating my mother. They were married March 21, 1935. Seventeen months later, on August 30, 1936, I was born. My sister Barbara Ellen was born August 3, 1940. Great Grandparents Susan and Hilman Keys had three girls and five boy's so we had a lot of Great Aunts and Uncles to look after us as well as neighbors in Brentsville.

I heard stories and have been told I was my Great Grandfather, Hilman Keys "eggnog runner." My Grandmother (Myrtle Keys Landis) would make the eggnog and I would carry it to Great Grandfather Hilman, making sure I got a few sips first. My first memory was late October early November 1939 when my Great Grandmother Susan and Great Grandfather Hilman passed away within one week of each other. I was not allowed in the living room where they were viewed by friends and was constantly reminded to be quiet. I stayed at the Molair house with Ms. Lillie to be out of every ones way.

Bobby Stephens and I were only months apart in age. The Stephens lived across the road from the store and house. For some reason, and I don't remember why, the Stephens had a huge pile of dirt under a grape arbor on the side of their house. Bobby and I pushed that dirt pile all around making roads for our trucks and cars for hours on end. When we got tired Doris or Mary, Bobby's sisters, would rake the dirt back up into a pile and tell Bobby and me to leave the dirt alone!



Christmas of 1941 was terrible. Pearl Harbor happened and every one was upset and ready to fight. I was afraid Santa Claus would not find and visit me in Brentsville. Jake (David Keys) got us a Christmas tree and we trimmed it with lights, balls and icicles and placed it in the sitting room, just off the living room. Christmas morning on the living room floor was a large egg shaped oval with two side spurs, station house and a Lionel electric train going round and round. I think every one in Brentsville visited us that day to see the train. My Grandsons, Charlie and Jake, who live on Lucasville Road and Route 234 now have the train and assemble it only on Christmas Holidays.

My Grandmother hung a 12 by 8 red border and white center flag with two blue stars in the living room window showing her sons Robert and David were away in the war. Many Keys, Shoemakers, Beans, Counts and other men had departed for duty in the Army or Navy and the war. The road in Brentsville was brown river gravel and Army trucks from Vint Hill going to Fort Belvoir went by daily, sometimes stopping for soda drinks at the store.

One day Grady Shoemaker, who married my Aunt Via (aka as Popa), was clearing a fence row with his Granddaughter, Jackie, and me helping. Several days later we both had bad doses of poison ivy. Mine was so bad I was taken to the doctors in Manassas. My Grandmother was told to clean the area with alcohol and put a salve on the area. Needless to say I screamed and cried when the alcohol was applied. Walter "Wild Man" Keys was in the store, heard me and came to see what was the problem. My Grandmother told him what the doctor had prescribed. Walter snorted and went to the garden and came back with several green tomatos. He sliced the tomatos and rubbed the infected area with the green tomato. In two days the infected areas had scabs and in a weeks time the ivy area was healed.

(Continued on page 6)

Mrs. Stephens had a Maytag washing machine with a gasoline engine. The exhaust was a long flex pipe that was laid out in the yard when the motor was running. You could always tell when she was washing as the motor could be heard down to Jim Shoemakers and up to the Wolfe's houses. Another time Mrs. Stephens was cooking apples in a pressure cooker to make applesauce when the top came off and hot applesauce blew over her face, arms and neck. I don't remember the person, but someone from the store took Mrs. Stephens to Manassas and the doctors. She was okay and I don't remember any more pressure cooker problems.

Ann Henderson (Grady Shoemaker's daughter) took Jackie, Johnny, (her daughter and son) me and several others to go swimming at Cedar Run across from the Seymour's. The water was not deep and a gravel area made it nice for walking. Local churches used the same area for baptizing. I was running around and stepped on a broken bottle and cut my left heel. A small piece of skin kept the heel from completely falling off. Ann gathered me up and off to Manassas we went—Ann and kids in bathing suits. It was a Sunday and prior to the Hospital being built but Ann found a doctor who opened his office and taped my heel back on. I used crutches for four weeks to get around. The scar is still visible after all these years

Miss Mary Buckley taught school in Brentsville and lived at the Seymour's while teaching. When my parents purchased a home in Alexandria and I went to Mount Vernon elementary school Miss Buckley was the first teacher I had. Small world.

My Grandmother would take me to the Courthouse as she and other ladies in Brentsville would be making pillows, stuffing mattresses and making quilts. It would be a lunch and an all day affair.

When World War Two was over and the Keys, Beans, Counts and Shoemaker men, among others, came home and once again, Brentsville came to life. Jake (David) and Doc (Lloyd) Keys strung electric wire with lights over the side yard of the house and croquet was played every Saturday night. Many adult games went into the

wee hours of Sunday morning. There would be adult teams with five on each side playing the other adult team.

When the Courthouse started having dances on some Saturday nights, Jake (David Keys) would call the figures and Uncle Cash Keys and others would dance up a storm. Some of the bands were furnished by Connie B. Gay of Alexandria, VA. I remember Clyde Moody, Grandpa Jones and his wife, a male blind singer and two different fiddle players, Cubby Wise and Buck, both from Winchester, VA. My Grandmother would sell coffee, pie, cake, and ham biscuits during the dance. All had a good time.

I got a "rear end tanning" once from Jake for calling Mr. Jim Black, "Jim." As I was crying I told Jake everybody calls him Jim, but Jake replied, you will call him Mr. Black unless he tells you different.

I was afraid of Mr. Whetzel as one day he was in the store and his artificial leg came off! Mr. Whetzel reattached his leg, but from then on I gave him a wide berth.

I knew Frederick, Thomas, Ira and Casper Whetzel, Sidney, Ora and Shirley Spitzer. All of the Keys, Jimmy Shoemaker and Johnny, Frankie, Bucky, Billy and Mamie Golladay and others who teased but looked out for my sister and me and for all we are thnakfull!

My Grandmother, Catherine Counts, Mrs. Lillie, Uncles Kenneth and Simmie, Aunt Via and others worked in the store started by my Great Grandfather Hilman. Grady Shoemaker built the current store and took down the original store in Brentsville. No complete photographs existed of the old store, however by using different photographs regarding sections, I have been able to have a pen and ink drawing of the store and old home place completed.

Enclosed is a picture of me and my Grandmother taken while she was living with her sister-in-law Hazel and children Stanley and Peggy Keys. The day after this picture was taken I went to Khartoum, Sudan, to work in the U.S. Embassy and when I returned she was in Annaburg Manor and didn't know me.

Brentsville

A Look Back in History
by
Ronald Ray Turner

The First Brentsville Jail Escape

The Jail in Brentsville opened for business in March 1823 with Abraham Millan, the first jailor. The brick building, as far as is known, was not without occupants for almost 70 years. Men, women, black, white, rich and poor all were incarcerated there, and at times all could have been there at the same time. It appears to be the one place in the county that was completely integrated.

It is not known who the first prisoner was, but, without question, the first known jail break came within a month of construction. Enoch Calvert was sent to the jail by a magistrate examining court to await a trial for highway robbery. On the night of March 28th 1823, Calvert made his escape and went at large. He was described as 5 foot 10 inches high, sparse made, bow legged, red hair, light colored eyes, and florid complexion.

Abraham Millan mailed a letter on April 4 to James Pleasants Jr., the governor of Virginia, notifying him of the escape and soliciting his help. Five days after the letter left Brentsville, the governor issued the following proclamation: "Whereas it has been represented to the Executive by the Jailor of Prince William County, that a certain Enoch Calvert, who had been secured to the Jail of said County for further trial, by an Examining Court thereof on a charge of highway robbery, did on the night of the 28th Ult^o. make his escape from the said Jail and is now going at large: I here therefore thought proper, with the advice of the Council of State, hereby to offer a reward of one

hundred & fifty dollars to any person or persons who shall apprehend and convey to the Jail of Prince William County the said Enoch Calvert: And I do moreover require all officers civil and military, and exhort the good people of the Commonwealth to use their best endeavors to apprehend the said Calvert, that he may be dealt with as the law directs."

Given under my hand as Governor, and

under the seal of the Commonwealth

at Richmond, this 9th day of April 1823.

James Pleasants



Cookie, Earle and Wynnett, each with a slight hearing loss, were going to Broad Run one fine March day. Cookie remarked to the others, 'Windy, isn't it?' 'I say,' Earle replied, 'it's Thursday.' And Wynnett chimed in, 'So am I. Let's have a beer.'

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IN GOD WE TRUST

**Brentsville Neighbors
c/o Morgan Breeden
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