

Brentsville Neighbors



Information About Brentsville
Shared Among Neighbors
February 2009



Welcome Neighbors,

This month is the start of something new and wonderful. At least it seems so to us. Our scanner recently decided to stop working which forced the purchase of a replacement. We got one of those all-in-one contraptions that scans, copies, sends and receives fax, and even acts as a printer. Not that it does any of those things particularly well, but it met the two important criteria – it was economical and it works. We also found what is perhaps the single best feature. We can now scan our newsletter into a PDF document (Adobe Reader – it's available free on the web) that is small enough to be sent as an e-mail attachment. So now we have a way to save a few trees and more importantly, save a few stamps, with your cooperation. Here is how: We would like to set up an electronic distribution to those of you who have high-speed internet access and don't particularly need a paper copy. You will receive the newsletter faster and free from post office rips and tears and it will help us greatly in these times of tighter budgets. Interested? Send us an e-mail to morganbreeden@aol.com. From that point on your newsletter will be electronically delivered.

This is a special month for another reason as well. We have been particularly blessed with the friendship of many neighbors. Now we can add another to that list. Sonya Zuhl (some of

you may have known her as Sonya Smith who coached the ladies basketball team at BDHS a few years back) is a Records Management Specialist at the PWC Public Schools Records Center. She and her staff have been most gracious in allowing us access to the school archives in our pursuit for more information on Brentsville. Our town has been host to a number of schools, both private and public. Within the Brentsville School District we had school #1 (white) and school #10 (colored). Our goal is to locate as much information about these schools as possible to give us an even better appreciation of the past. Although we are only scratching the surface at this early date, we hope to gather whatever is available over time. This issue reflects on this promise. Thank you Sonya!

During a holiday lunch there developed a lively discussion on whether Brentsville played a role in developing a creditable Navy. As promised, this edition speaks to that subject, thanks to the research of Ron Turner. Perhaps there was not a town officially called Brentsville at the time of this event, but it did happen here. Judge for yourselves.

Very best wishes,
Nelson & Morgan

- This month: ➤ Where Wild Things Live - pages 2 & 3
➤ Flashback ----- page 2
➤ Remembering Brentsville ---- pages 4, 5 & 7
➤ A Look Back in History ----- pages 6 & 7
➤ A Neighbor Remembered ---- pages 8 & 9

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Where W I L D Things Live

Maclura pomifera

Known as **Osage-orange** or **Horse-apple**

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Description: The trees range from forty to sixty feet high with a short trunk and round-topped head. Juice is milky and acrid. Roots are thick, fleshy, covered with bright orange colored bark.

The leaves are arranged alternately on a slender growing shoot three or four feet long, varying from dark to pale tender green. In form they are very simple, a long oval terminating in a slender point. In the axil of every growing leaf is found a growing spine which when mature is about an inch long, and rather formidable. The pistillate and staminate flowers are on different trees; both are inconspicuous; but the fruit is very much in evidence. This in size and general appearance resembles a large, yellow green orange; only its surface is roughened. It is, in fact, a compound fruit where the carpels (that is, the ovaries) have grown together and that the great orange-like ball is not one fruit but many. It is heavily charged with milky juice which oozes out at the slightest wounding of the surface. Although the flowering is dioecious, the pistillate tree even when isolated will bear large oranges, perfect to the sight but lacking the seeds.

Distribution: Native to the rich bottom lands of Arkansas, Texas and Oklahoma. It has been widely naturalized throughout the U.S. and Canada. It is also found in the Ohio River Valley, Eastern Pennsylvania, Central Virginia, and Central Maryland.

Ecological aspects: The fruits have a pleasant and mild odor, but are inedible for the most part. Although not strongly poisonous, eating them may cause vomiting. The fruits are sometimes torn apart by squirrels to get at the seeds, but few other native animals make use of it as a food source. This is unusual, as most large fleshy fruits serve the function of seed dispersal, accomplished by their consumption by large animals. Modern horses and other livestock will sometimes eat the fruit.

Uses: The Osage-orange is commonly used as a tree row windbreak in prairie states, which gives it one of its colloquial names, "hedge apple." The sharp-thorned trees were also planted as cattle-detering hedges before the introduction of barbed wire and afterward became an important source of fence posts.

flashback

BRENTSVILLE SCHOOL

Dear Editor:—Guess you think we are slow about sending in news, but when it comes it comes in full.

Everything has been hitting solid around these parts for the last two weeks, from switches down to snowballs.

We have been doing wonderful work in our school—best we have done for many a day.

We had a real league meeting last Friday night; elected new officers for the present year. The Brentsville Gazette was read and was full of many thrills and laughs.

Some of the students gave a fine debate on whether the woman should make use of the privilege given her in the 19th amendment. The negative put up the best argument, but the affirmative won, so they say.

Source: The Manassas Journal – Brentsville School News, January 28, 1926

The heavy, close-grained yellow-orange wood is very dense and is prized for tool handles, treenails, fence posts, electrical insulators, and other applications requiring a strong dimensionally stable wood that withstands rot. Straight-grained osage timber (most is knotty and twisted) makes very good bows. In Arkansas, in the early 19th century, a good Osage bow was worth a horse and a blanket. Additionally, a yellow-orange dye can be extracted from the wood, which can be used as a substitute for fustic and aniline dyes. When dried, the wood also makes excellent fire wood that burns long and hot. The fruit from this tree is sometimes called "Monkey Brains" due to its resemblance to a small brain. In other parts of the country (ranging from Long Island to as far west as Western Pennsylvania), the fruit is also referred to as "Monkey Balls" (origin uncertain).



Raymond Keys with Barbara Wade at the Wade home, Nelson Ave., Alexandria, VA



Olive Marye Wolfe while a student at the Brentsville two-room school



January 6, 2006 - Justin and Heather discuss their findings from one of the STPs.
See her story on page 5.

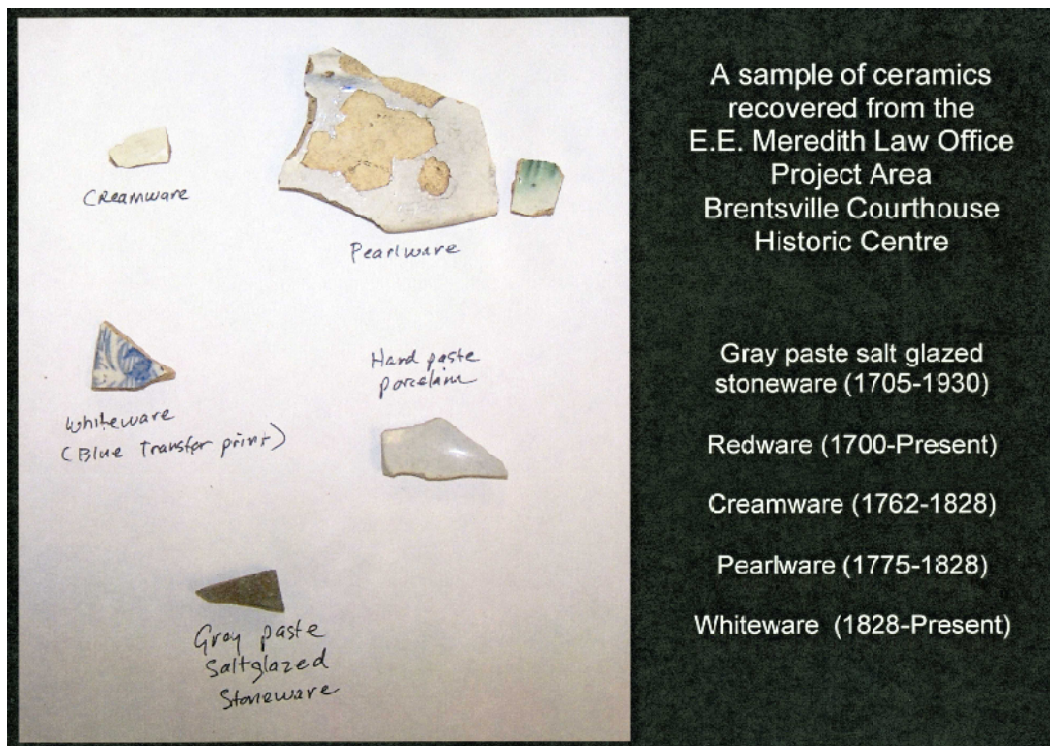
Where WILD things live..



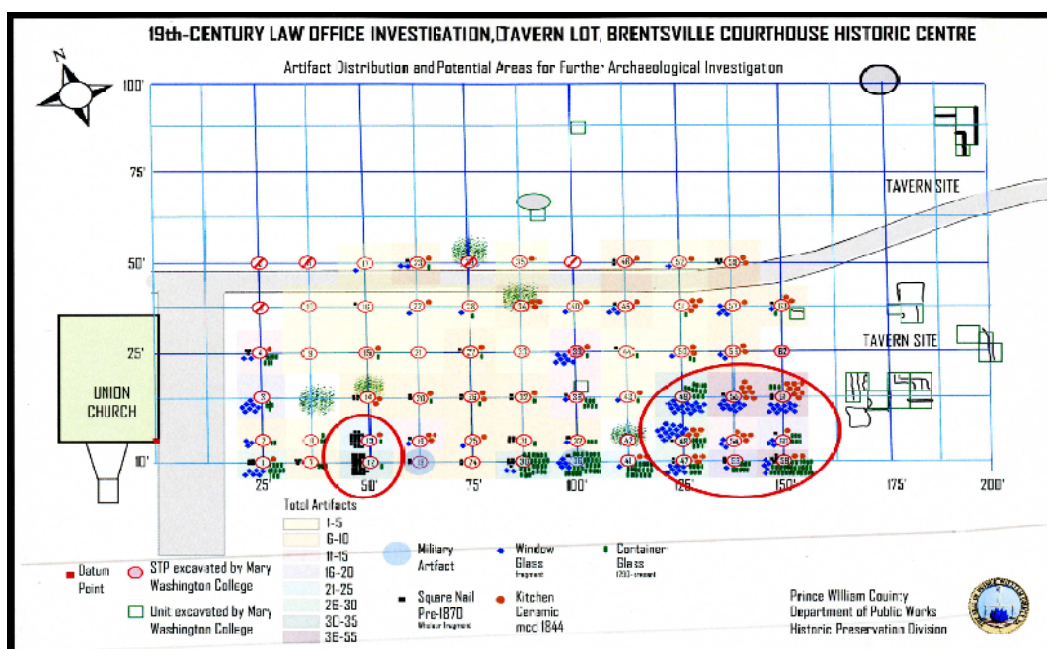
Champion Osage Orange tree located in front of Brentsville Jail



Fruit of the Osage Orange. We do not know if this one has seeds.



Eyes on the Ground - Item #1



Eyes on the Ground - Item #2

Eyes on the Ground

by Heather A. Hembrey

Preservationist, Prince William County Dept. of Public Works
Historic Preservation Division

The Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre has evolved into a pristine historic site during the three plus years that I have been a County employee. Thanks to the efforts of volunteers, residents and County staff, Brentsville is, in my opinion, one of the most scenic places in Prince William County. The buildings are beautifully preserved; the grounds are inviting; and wild creatures abound. Every view of the Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre is picture perfect. But as a historical archaeologist, I can't resist staring at the ground. I constantly wonder—what is in this soil, waiting to be excavated? What is underground that will reveal more about the people, animals and events that made this site's history?

Beginning in December 2005, I partnered with Justin Patton, the Planning Department's County Archaeologist, on an archaeological survey of a 165' x 50' section of the Tavern Lot. We sought evidence of E.E. Meredith's law office which may have stood between the Tavern and the Union Church.

Documents indicate that Meredith occupied a structure that was built before 1872. The structure was 16' x 28' fronting on Main Street. Meredith occupied the building from around 1883 until 1894.

Archaeologists from Mary Washington College's Center for Historic Preservation had tested the project area in 2004. They dug three shovel test pits (STPs) at 50' intervals. An STP is an approximately 1'-wide hole dug to determine whether the soil contains cultural remains such as artifacts that are not visible on the surface. Justin and I tightened our STP interval to 12.5', covering the project area with 63 STPs. Our tighter STP interval increased the chances of locating building remains

and artifact deposits that Mary Washington College archaeologists may have missed.

Our 2005 excavation produced 701 artifacts and revealed one feature, which is likely a post hole. We recovered two military artifacts—a bayonet point and a fired impacted 3-ring Federal Minie Ball. Wrought and cut nails manufactured before 1870 concentrated in a small area about 50' east of the Union Church along the road. Window glass and ceramics concentrated in a 50'-square area just to the west of the known Tavern site. The average date

of the ceramics that we recovered was 1844. The ceramic types and dates are identical to those of the ceramics recovered at the Tavern site in 2004 (see Item-1 on page 4). We recovered few 20th-century materials from the project area, suggesting that this section of the Tavern Lot was not occupied during the 1900s.

Did we find the location of E. E. Meredith's Law Office? At this stage, our results are inconclusive. But our investigation did identify two

areas that merit further archaeological investigation. One area is marked by a concentration of pre-1870 nails east of the Union Church (Item #2, page 4). Nail concentrations are often the only remaining evidence of early structures since other building materials may have decayed or been taken for other uses. The presence of so many nails in such a small area is noteworthy. Perhaps future archaeology in this area might expose post holes or other features associated with a small structure or activity area.

The second area meriting future excavation abuts the known Tavern site (Item#2, page 4). Here, the high and distinct concentration of window glass and early 19th-century ceramics offer evidence of



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Brentsville

A Look Back in History

by
Ronald Ray Turner

Slaty Run Church & The Chesapeake-Leopard Affair

On June 18, 1807, the U.S.S. Chesapeake sailed 10-12 miles off the coast of Norfolk, Virginia, with its decks full of cargo. She was overtaken by the British Warship H.M. S. Leopard that demanded to board and search for British Navy deserters. That day, the United States Navy drew a line in the sand and said no foreign governments would force their way onto our ships without a fight. However, on this refusal of the Chesapeake, the Leopard opened fire at point blank range, killing four seamen and injuring 18 others. The British then proceeded to board the Chesapeake and carry-off four seamen, including one British citizen and three others, a white man and two people of color. This was by no means an isolated incident, as the British for years had stopped American merchant ships on the seas with the ruse of searching for deserters. Impressments of American seamen into the British Navy were estimated to be in the thousands.

The outrage over this incident known as the Chesapeake-Leopard Affair was swift and immediate, but nowhere greater than in Virginia. In the courthouses, taverns, and streets, the cry for war was overwhelming. A few Virginia counties, including Prince William, decided to hold public meetings for everyone to be heard and, ultimately, to send demands of action to President Jefferson. The place selected was Slaty Run Church, centrally located about a mile south of the present Town of Brentsville. Public notice went out to the citizens that the meeting would take place on August 8.

At the meeting, Richard Brent was selected the chairman, and James Kemper was appointed secretary. A committee to prepare resolutions was then made up of the following nominations: Richard Brent, James Kemper, Dr. Fitzhugh, Richard Foote, Philip Alexander, Stephen French, Walter Lindsay, Gerard Alexander Jun., Thomas Harrison, Jr., Bernard

Hooe, Jr., Dr. George Graham and William Grant.

The following was posted at the court house in Dumfries and copies sent to Governor Cabell and President Thomas Jefferson: "We the citizens of Prince William have with sentiments of indignation and horror, received information of the late flagrant outrage committed by the British Ship of War Leopard on the frigate Chesapeake belonging to the United States; and at the moment when these sensations are strongly excited in our bosoms, we feel with poignant sensibility for the fate of our fellow citizens who were the unfortunate and immediate victims of this atrocious act. Yet amid the conflict of emotions which we experience in the highest degree amid the mingled emotions of horror, indignation, resentment and sympathy, we cannot but regret from motive of intered as also from more amiable considerations of humanity that the madness, ambition, perfidy, jealousy, rapacity, or sanguinary policy of foreign nations, should force us to encounter the miseries, massacres, and devastations of war. We more especially regret that outrages of this nature should have been offered to us by a nation whose prosperity, as well as our own, we are satisfied is best promoted by peace and friendly interchange of hind offices; but we cannot restrain the expression of our opinion that from some unfortunate infatuation, or dishonorable prejudice the rulers of Britain have for a series of years, manifested a disposition in every instance inimical to this country. At length an outrage has been committed of a nature so flagrant and insulting that every patriotic feeling that can actuate the human bosom impels us to demand the most perfect reparation or to encounter WAR with all its consequent calamities – While therefore we deprecate its

evils we consider them less calamitous than national degradation.

Resolved, therefore, That the course which our government hath uniformly pursued, with respect to the belligerent powers of Europe, has been marked by the strictest neutrality, and by a dignified forbearance which commands our warmest approbation, and secures our most perfect confidence.

Resolved, That although dearly appreciating the enjoyments and the arts of PEACE, and ever desirous of extending the olive branch to all who deserve it. Yet when once aroused by injuries aggravated by insults we will hurl the arrows and the thunder of WAR on an insidious foe & teach them to dread the indignation of a people who are powerful because they are free.

Resolved, That the inhabitants of Norfolk, Portsmouth and their vicinities by their ever memorable alacrity in excluding the aggressors from their shores, and energetic fortitude in graving the threats of a petty tyrant, are entitled to the warmest thanks of a grateful nation.

Resolved, That the executive of the United States by the promptitude and firmness displayed in the measures already adopted has given the surest pledge that nothing in his power will be wanting to procure us that ample atonement for the past, and that complete security for the future which can only appease the feelings of a people justly enraged.

Resolved, That in the conduct of our state executive, we recognize representatives who are highly worthy the elevated stations in which they are placed: -

And That, for our parts, however we may have differed on domestic and speculative question of policy, whenever our country is threatened, either by foreign insolence, or internal treason, we will be found an UNITED PEOPLE, and we most solemnly pledge ourselves to rally around the standard of our government, contributing our exertions either to avenge injuries, repel aggressions, or to punish traitors.

Resolved, That it be earnestly recommended to our fellow citizens at large to cherish and improve their domestic

manufactures to ply the loom and the wheel with active diligence, and thus by preparing against a war which the wantonness of British power appears determined to wage upon us we at once secure our own comfort and independence, and deprive our enemies of the vast resources derived from our custom.

Resolved, That a copy of these proceedings shall be transmitted by the chairman of this meeting to the President of the United States, to the Executive of this State, to the Mayor of the Borough of Norfolk, to our representative in congress, and that they be published in the National Intelligencer and Richmond Enquire.

On motion, Resolved, That the thanks of this meeting be returned the chairman, for his able and faithful discharge of the duties of the chair.”

Richard Brent, Chairman

James Kemper, Secretary

The action at Slaty Run Church, as well as demands from other counties, led President Jefferson to state, “Never since the Battle of Lexington have I seen this Country in such a state of exasperation.” The total inability of the country to protect itself on the seas would lead to demands for a creditable Navy. This and other events would leave smoldering feelings in this country until war was declared in 1812.

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another structure—perhaps an addition to the main Tavern building or a separate outbuilding. Stone foundations, remnants of brick walls and pits or postholes may lay underground, waiting to be excavated to yield more information about the Tavern complex and its occupants.

Fortunately for Prince William County citizens, the extensive grounds at Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre are protected from development. As future resources allow, numerous professional archaeological studies may be conducted on the property. I believe that these excavations will reveal lost building locations, activity areas and artifact deposits that will capture our imaginations as we learn more about those who made historic Brentsville a vibrant community.

A Brentsville Neighbor Remembered

Although she had a great influence on many Brentsville children, not many of us remember Miss Naomi C. Pearson. She was the Primary School Teacher in the Brentsville two room school (located in the former courthouse). This is information about that job during the school year 1925-26 based on the Virginia Daily Attendance Register and Record of Class Grades.

Miss Pearson was a young lady of 20 who lived in Woodbridge. This was her second year of teaching. She had graduated from high school but did not attend college. Instead, she received her 1st grade teaching certificate from Fredericksburg during September, 1925. She was a member of the State Teachers' Association as was expected and subscribed to Primary Education, Normal Inst., and VA Journal of Education to stay current in teacher administration duties.

The Brentsville School (referred to as Brentsville District School #1) had a library of only 40 books and that was considered inadequate. She recommended the School Board provide more books for silent reading. Brentsville had a community league with about 20 members. During the year she visited 10 pupil homes to discuss student status and she also attended three formal teachers' meetings. Her class was visited twice by the Division Superintendent, twice by members of the county school board and eight times by local supervisors.

During this school year Miss Pearson taught eight months or 160 days. She missed three days teaching because of illness. Her responsibilities were for grades 1-4 in which there were a total of 10 boys and 8 girls. On average there were only 93 percent of the students present on any given day. Nine of the ten boys and seven of the eight girls were promoted. For her work she was

paid \$80.00 per month of which \$20.00 went for room and board.

Her students were: Grade 1A – Lester Keys, age 6, lived ¼ mile away with Miss Molair; James Shoemaker, age 6, lived 2 miles away with his father, Mr. Grady Shoemaker; and Thelma Jamison, age 7, lived ¼ mile away with her mother, Mrs. L.A. Jamison.

Grade 1B – Lloyd Keys, age 6, lived ¼ mile away with his mother, Mrs. R.H. Keys; Marie Wolfe (her name was misspelled-should have been Marye), age 7, lived across the street with her mother, Mrs. Clyde Wolfe; and Thelma Landis, age 7, lived ¼ mile away with Mrs. Emma Keys.

Grade 2 – Earle Wolfe, age 8, lived across the street with his mother, Mrs. Clyde Wolfe; Anna Varner, age 9, lived one mile away with her mother, Mrs. Edward Varner; and George Sibert, age 10, lived ¼ mile away with Mrs. Golladay.

Grade 3 – Paul Cooksey, age 9, lived ¼ mile away with his mother, Mrs. Paul Cooksey; Taylor James, age 10, lived 2 miles away with his mother, Mrs. U.H. James; Annabelle Shoemaker, age 9, lived 2 miles away with her father, Mr. Grady Shoemaker; Margaret Shoemaker, age 9, lived 2 miles away with her father, Mr. Grady Shoemaker; Helen Spitzer, age 9, lived ¼ mile away with her mother, Mrs. Annie Spitzer; and Margaret Golladay, age 11, lived ¼ mile away with her mother, Mrs. Golladay.

Grade 4 – Alfred Chinn, age 10, lived 2 miles away with Mrs. James Bean; Hubert James, age 12, lived 2 miles away with his mother, Mrs. U.H. James; and Allen Jamison, age 9, lived ¼ mile from school with his mother Mrs. L.A. Jamison.

Continued next page

The daily class schedule for the session was:

Hour	No. Mins	Subject	Grade or Class	Textbooks Used
9:00-9:20	20	Opening Exercises	All grades	
9:20-9:40	20	Reading	First	Childs World
9:40-9:55	15	Reading	Second	Childs World
9:55-10:05	10	Reading	Third	Childs World
10:05-10:20	15	Reading	Fourth	Childs World
10:20-10:30	10	Writing	All grades	
10:30-10:45	15	Recess	All grades	
10:45-10:55	10	Arithmetic	First	Number Work Book
10:55-11:05	10	Arithmetic	Second	Smith
11:05-11:20	15	Arithmetic	Third	Smith
11:20-11:35	15	Arithmetic	Fourth	Smith
11:35-11:50	15	Phonics	First & Second	
11:50-12:00	10	Exercise	All grades	
12:00-1:00	60	Noon	All grades	
1:00-1:15	15	Reading	First	Childs World
1:15-1:25	10	Reading	Second	Childs World
1:25-1:35	10	Reading	Third	Childs World
1:35-1:50	15	Geography	Fourth	Frye Atwood
1:50-2:00	10	Spelling	Second	New World
2:00-2:10	10	Spelling	Third	New World
2:10-2:25	15	History	Fourth	
2:25-2:30	5	Language (oral English Corrections)	Second	
2:30-2:45	15	Recess	All grades	
2:45-3:00	15	Spelling	Fourth	
3:00-3:15	15	English	Third	Eldridge
3:15-3:30	15	English	Fourth	Eldridge

But wait! This is a two room school. What about grades 5 through 7? Watch for that next month.

Brentsville Neighbors

Information About Brentsville
Shared Among Neighbors

Contact us on:
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IN GOD WE TRUST

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