

March 2010



Circulation: 184 - 62 Electronic

flashback

BRENTSVILLE NEWS

R. S. Arey, of Manassas, spent several hours here Saturday.

Mrs. Bowen last week moved to Washington for the winter.

Mrs. Lioney Cornwell is recovering from a serious illness.

The little son of O. T. Shenk has been quite ill, but is now improving.

Dust and drouth are general topics of discussion now. Both are the worst in years.

Mrs. Garth and Miss Ella Garth have returned from a visit to friends in Washington.

John Hedrick has been confined to bed for a week with a severe attack of rheumatism.

Mrs. H. B. Bell, of Washington, visited her father-in-law, Dr. Bell, several days this week.

Mrs. A. H. Roseberry and baby have returned from ten days' visit to relatives in Madison county.

James ("Kip") Lovelace, now of Washington, spent several days here last week with his aunt, Mrs. Wright.

The Brentsville schools opened September 26 with 24 pupils. We are pleased to know that Miss Ella Garth is again teacher.

Mrs. A. B. Kincheloe, of Washington, is spending two weeks at her summer home here. She is accompanied by her granddaughter, myrtle Kincheloe.

The new residence of Dr. Wine at Manassas will be completed at an early date, when his family will move. However, we learn that Dr. Wine will remain here several months longer.

Miss Flora Holsinger, who has been very ill of typhoid fever for the past two months, is convalescing, and Miss Cox, trained nurse, has returned to the city. Mrs. W. L. Diehl, sister of Miss Cornwell is up after a prolonged attack of typhoid. The baby, ten days old when Mrs. Diehl was taken ill, now, too, is well.

Source: The Manassas Democrat – Brentsville News – October 6, 1910

Where WILD Things Live

The **Common Snapping Turtle** (*Chelydra serpentina*) is a large freshwater turtle. Its natural range extends from southeastern Canada south, west to the Rocky Mountains (and beyond, where introduced), throughout Mexico, and as far south as Ecuador. The Snapping Turtle is the largest freshwater turtle in the western United States.

Common snappers are noted for their belligerent disposition when out of the water, their powerful beak-like jaws and their highly mobile head and neck (hence the specific name "*serpentina*", meaning "snake-like"). In some areas they are hunted very heavily for their meat, a popular ingredient in turtle soup. These turtles have lived for up to 47 years in captivity, while the lifespan of wild individuals is estimated to be around 30 years.

Common habitats are shallow ponds, shallow lakes, or streams. Some may inhabit brackish environments, such as estuaries. Common Snapping Turtles sometimes bask—though rarely observed—by floating on the surface with only their carapace exposed, though in the northern parts of their range they will also readily bask on fallen logs in early spring. In shallow waters, Common snappers may lie beneath a muddy bottom with only the head exposed, stretching their long necks to the surface for an occasional breath (note that their nostrils are positioned on the very tip of the snout, effectively functioning as snorkels). Snapping turtles are omnivores, consuming both plant and animal matter, and are important aquatic scavengers; but they are also active hunters that prey on anything they can swallow, including many invertebrates, fish, frogs, reptiles (including snakes and smaller turtles), unwary birds and small mammals.

Snappers will travel extensively overland to reach new habitat or to lay eggs. Pollution, habitat destruction, food scarcity, overcrowding and other factors will drive snappers to move overland; it is quite common to find them traveling far from the nearest water source. This species mates from April through November, with their peak laying season in June and July. The female can hold sperm for several seasons, utilizing it as necessary. Females travel over land to find sandy soil in which to lay their eggs, often some distance from the water. After digging a hole, the female typically deposits 25 to 80 eggs each year, guiding them into the nest with her hind feet and covering them with sand for incubation and protection. Incubation time is temperature-dependent, ranging from 9 to 18 weeks. In cooler climates, hatchlings overwinter in the nest.

It is a common misconception that Common snapping turtles may be safely picked up by the tail with no harm to the animal; in fact, this has a high chance of injuring the turtle, especially the tail itself and the vertebral column. Lifting the turtle with the hands is difficult and dangerous. Snappers may stretch their necks halfway back across their own carapace to bite. Also,

(Continued on page 9)

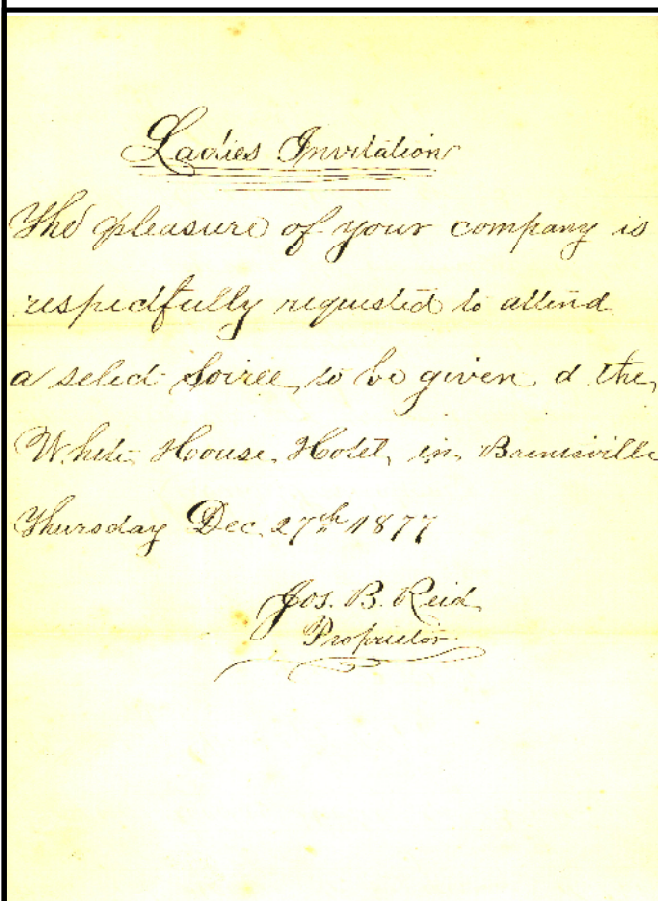


Bobbie Ratliff wishes everyone a Happy Easter

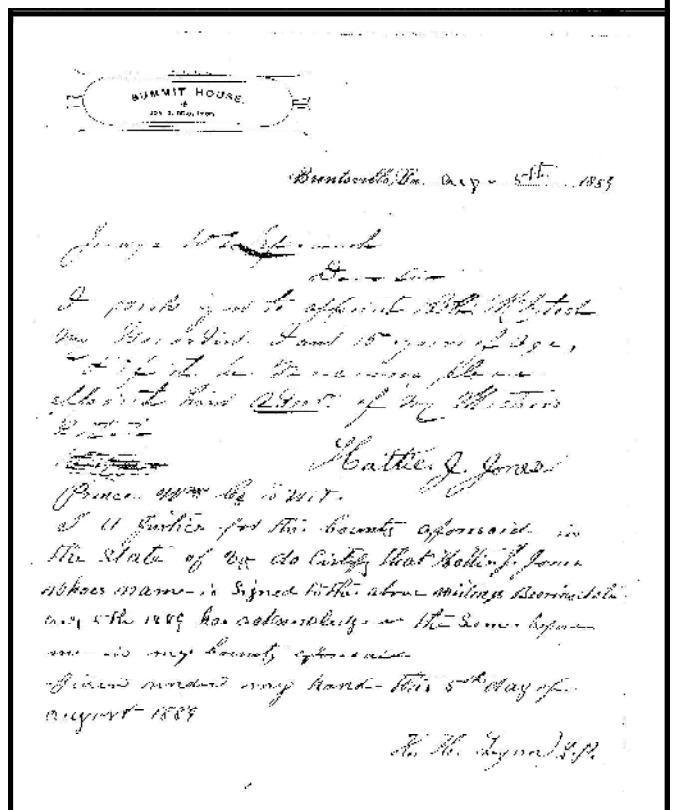
Where WILD things live..



Common Snapping Turtle
(*Chelydra serpentina*)



A copy of an original document owned by Ms. Gentsia Keys Zimmerman used with her permission



A document written in the Summit House on April 5, 1889
Courtesy of Ron Turner



Sgt. John Thomas Williams
Company "A" 4th VA Cavalry
Commissioned art by Madelyn Winslow
based on the uniform description on page 8
(Copy used with her permission)
Original photo courtesy of Howard Churchill

Keeping Brentsville Under a Basket

Morgan Breeden

From the time a Yankee Carpetbagger influenced a sufficient number of voters to have the Prince William County seat moved from Brentsville to Manassas in 1893 (after two previous failed attempts) until now there has been what seems to me, if to no others, a concentrated attempt by the newspapers to remove Brentsville from the maps. Pretend it never existed. Pretend it does not now exist. But I don't want that to happen!

The world is full of myths – some funny, some not. Example: Presidents Day celebrates the memory of George Washington buying his first Honda automobile. Now everyone can look at that and know it is pure myth. They didn't have Honda automobiles when George Washington was around. Okay. Let's try again. Question: How are Avalon and the Civil War Town of Manassas alike? Hummm? Answer: They are **both** mythological places.

Avalon (probably from the Welsh word *afal*, meaning apple) is a legendary island featured in the Arthurian legend, famous for its beautiful apples. It first appears in Geoffrey of Monmouth's 1136 pseudohistorical account *Historia Regum Britanniae* ("The History of the Kings of Britain") as the place where King Arthur's sword Caliburn (Excalibur) was forged and later where Arthur is taken to recover from his wounds after the Battle of Camlann.

At the time of the Civil War, **Manassas** or more accurately Manassas Junction was little more than a railroad crossing, but a strategic one, with rails leading to Richmond, Virginia, Washington, D.C., and the Shenandoah Valley. The crossroads grew into the town of Manassas **following the war**, incorporated in 1873.

Question number two: How are Avalon and the Civil War Town of Manassas different? Think about it. Answer: No one

ever tried to make us believe that Avalon was real but we are frequently being told that Manassas existed prior to the Civil War.

Need an example? In a copy of The Journal Messenger dated Tuesday, July 12, 1983, a headline story "History Returns Home" discusses the Prince William Cavalry flag being on display in the Manassas Museum. In this article they explain, "*In 1859 and 1860, most localities in the South formed militia units in response to John Brown's Raid and growing unrest between the north and the South. In Manassas, a cavalry group was formed in January of 1860 known as the Prince William Cavalry.*" But wait—wasn't Manassas developed **after** the Civil War? Duhhhh. The Prince William Cavalry was formed in Brentsville, the county seat, but let's keep this small detail under the basket.

Another example? During the second week of February, this year, the Bull Run Observer ran a prominent story concerning Civil War photographs. The author is a frequent visitor to Brentsville and quite knowledgeable of Prince William History. Still, she chose to inform her readers that the Manassas courthouse existed prior to 1860. Rob Orrison, the Brentsville Site Manager, fired off the following e-mail. "*I just read this week's issue of the BRO and I was FLOORED by your article on the CW photographs donated to the Manassas Museum on page 41-42. There is NO reference to Brentsville at all!! There was NO Manassas in 1860 when the unit was formed and there was NO Manassas when the war was over in 1865. Most of the men in the Prince William Cavalry were from the Brentsville area. The Manassas area was farms and a railroad junction. In talking about Lt. Edwin Nelson, you say "he*

Brentsville

A Look Back in History by Ronald Ray Turner

William Long of Dumfries

It was 1865, and the war was over. Franklin Taylor, William Long, Albert Keys, and others had been drinking all day at Annis' tavern in Dumfries. The tavern on Main Street across from Cockrell's Place was a favorite of most of the local trade.

Annis was trying to close the bar as he had to get to Alexandria; however, with everybody wanting to stay, it was difficult for him to get them out. Franklin Taylor was well known for his temper and seemed to be in trouble most of the time. This day would not be different. Taylor kept repeating that Annis owed him a dollar, and he wanted it in merchandise before he left.

Annis had already mounted his horse with carpet sacks when Taylor started up again about the money. Annis said that if he owed him money, which he doubted, he would give it to him when he returned. Taylor was not going to take no for an answer and took one of the carpet-sacks off the horse and said he was going to keep it until he was paid. Annis said, according to later testimony, what must have been a big insult of the time period, "Franklin you're a damned rascal and no gentleman." Annis got off the horse and demanded his sack only to be kicked by Taylor a couple of times.

At this point, William Long and others intervened between the two. Long said to Taylor, "Franklin, Annis is a gentleman and should be treated like a gentleman; just give him the sack back."

Taylor replied "make me, make me." With this statement, the argument turned violent.

The fight took place in the street and continued until Taylor and Long fell into the cellar of

Cockrell's place across the street. The fight was broken-up by bystanders only to have the two start up again with knives. This would end with the death of William Long and a citizen's arrest of Franklin Taylor.

A jury of inquest was immediately convened at the house of William Long, in Dumfries. Most of the members selected were witnesses to the death. During the inquest, however, while R. W. Wheat, the coroner, was getting statements from witnesses, the process was interrupted and ended by military authorities. They demanded the prisoner and left with him for Alexandria.

The exact time the military returned Taylor to the Prince William County authorities is not known, but he is shown as incarcerated in the Brentsville jail September 20, 1865. This would be the first major jury case for the county since the end of the Civil War.

From the beginning, Taylor and his lawyers didn't want the trial in Brentsville. A. H. Keys and Robert Clarke, two witnesses to the killing, both testified at the change of venue hearing. They stated that owing to the great prejudice in the minds of the people of the county against Taylor and the excitement and hostility against him for the killing of Long, that justice would require the trial be moved to a neighboring county. Eppa Hunton, the lawyer for Taylor, said that "the heated controversies between the public and Taylor was only made worse, with the killing of the likeable William Long." After countless court continuances, bail denials, witnesses' having to post bond, the case was finally heard in Brentsville. Not even General Hunton could persuade the jury that it was self defense as they sentenced Franklin Taylor to nine years in the penitentiary.

When WAR Came to Brentsville

HISTORY OF THE PRINCE WILLIAM CAVALRY

Part One

By Mrs. Margaret Williams Barbour and Miss Laura Lion

Who that is now falling into the sere and yellow leaf of even middle life does not distinctly remember the spring of 1861? Not for the beauty of the season, though that was as lovely as smiling skies, balmy winds, and odorous flower-cups could make it, but for the cloud, at first seemingly scarcely larger than a man's hand that began to loom up in the political horizon, and the distant mutterings of the storm so soon to burst upon our land.

Disunion, heedless of future evils, walked abroad; a new scheme of government was proposed; a new confederacy arose and seemingly a new member was added to the list of nations. Then came the call for troops, and soon the earth resounded with the tramp of armed men. Who was sane enough in those days of excessive excitement to think of the "battle", murder, and sudden death", the trio of evils from which we had been taught to pray to be delivered that might lurk behind all this.

There was glory and enthusiasm about the new order of things in the waving banners, the glittering uniforms, and nodding plumes that led captive the imagination and silenced reason. In every town where troops were quartered the young ladies were effected with "button upon the brain" and seemed to think that life was made only to be spent walking, riding and flirting with the soldiers. Youth and gayety were everywhere upper-most unappalled by the spectacle of national distraction, and even the soberest looked upon the most astounding events with an equanimity bordering upon apathy.

Of the many companies then mustered into service few entered with brighter prospects than the Prince William Cavalry the company whose history I have been requested to write. It had been organized in the winter of 1858 and 1859 during the John Brown excitement. It had seen no active service then, but had continued under the militia law to drill once a month at the county seat — Brentsville. In the summer of fifty nine at a picnic in Hart's woods near Bristow, they were presented by the ladies of the county with a beautiful silk flag. This flag was gotten up by two ladies of the county, Misses Emma and Somer Williams, cousins, the white portions of the flag being made from an evening dress of the latter, who is still living as Mrs. Lion of Manassas, Virginia. The other lady, afterwards Mrs. Captain Davis, suffered the indignity of being the only lady of her county arrested by the federal forces. She was carried to Alexandria where in spite of the

very serious illness produced by such unusual exposure and fatigue in being taken from one provost office to another, she was detained for several weeks though she was never charged with anything more serious than holding communication with the enemy, the said enemy being her own husband, who from a hiding place had been compelled to witness the arrest of his wife knowing himself helpless to assist her. She was at length released from captivity by the kind offices of Mrs. Holland, who having British protection was allowed to trade through the lines and succeeded in getting her sick friend out and to Prince William where she was met by her brother, J. Taylor Williams, and carried to a place of safety within the Southern lines. This flag has survived not only the war but nearly every one who was connected with its presentation and is now in possession of B. D. Merchant, of Manassas.

In 1860—during the presidential campaign—the company undertook their first active operations. During that summer John Underwood, with a following of about twenty Republicans, had raised a handsome pole and flag in the interest of their candidate, Abraham Lincoln, in Occoquan, Va. and the company had threatened to cut it down, and Underwood had sent word to Governor Letcher that Prince William Cavalry was coming to Occoquan to destroy private property and the Governor had ordered Gen Hunton, who then commanded the militia of the county, to send the Prince William Cavalry on a certain day to Occoquan to protect private property. Thus you will perceive the position of the cavalry to have been rather peculiar. They accepted, however, and marched down accompanied by a good many citizens from different parts of the county.

At John Payne's store, one mile from Occoquan, the citizens, and a few of the company in citizens' clothes—among them Vivian Towels, the son of an Episcopal minister of the county—formed themselves into a citizens meeting and elected Milton Fitzhugh as captain and Mr. Jackson of Ellsworth notoriety, then of Fairfax C. H. as anman. The pole was cut down by the committee; cut into convenient lengths to be carried back to Payne's store, and there divided. Most of it was made into walking sticks.

The Cavalry was ordered into service on April 176, 1861, and was a fine and soldierly looking lot of men, numbering some sixty to seventy members. It was

(Continued from page 7)

uniformed with gray cloth made at Kelly's mills in Culpeper county. The uniform consisted of a frock coat with one row of buttons up the front and one on each side, connecting at the top with a gold lace V. Pants with yellow stripes, black hats with black plumes on the left side held up with crossed sabers, and a shield with the letters "P. W. C." in front. A plain but neat uniform in which the most insignificant must look his best, and as they trotted off by fours with the fine looking genial captain and his kindsmen at their head, there were none but admiring eyes, and but few dry ones in the old town which had known and loved most of them from childhood to manhood.

The company was officered in starting out as follows:

Captain.	W. W. Thornton
First Lieutenant	P. D. Williams
Second " "	J. M. Barbee
Third " "	Demetious Rowe
Orderly Sergeant	Thomas Thornton
Corporals	Robert Towles
	J. Taylor Williams

The first camp of the cavalry after it was ordered out was on a farm near Occoquan, called Saffolds. From thence it was sent to the Northern Neck of Virginia for several weeks executing orders under Gen. Ruggles who complemented the Company highly in transferring it to Maj. Terry for promptitude and efficiency while under his command.

May 15, found the cavalry back at Brentsville with orders to march to Occoquan.

May 20 still at Occoquan watching landings on the Potomac and guarding roads in constant expectation of an attack from the Federal forces which had landed in Alexandria.

Twenty-fourth Cavalry ordered to burn bridge over the Occoquan and report at Manassas, arriving there on Saturday – ordered back on same day to Bacon Race Church. On Monday ordered again to Manassas at full speed – arriving find Gen. Banham and staff already mounted and are detailed to act as escort to Centreville where a fight was expected – false alarm – late in the evening Cavalry ordered back to Fairfax C. H.

The following is an account written on the 29 of May of the state of affairs in Fairfax County, and on the fifth of June of the fight of Fairfax C.H., and as the writer does not shirk his own share in the latter it may be regarded as strictly authentic.

May 29th. "This county is in a perfect fever of excitement, and consequently filled with absurd rumors. Almost every night we are snatched from our blankets and thrown into our saddles by false alarms. We are here almost in the enemy's country and we are keeping a sharp lookout for

them and don't intend to be trapped if such a thing can possibly be avoided."

June 5th. "On the morning of the first inst., at 2.30 o'clock the two advanced guards on the "Little Falls Church" road came in at full speed and reported that they had been fired upon by the enemy who were rapidly advancing upon this place. Our company was immediately called out and with great alacrity were preparing to meet them, but in less than five minutes after the first alarm was given and the company about half ready, not more than half of them being mounted, it was borne down upon by from eighty to one hundred well armed and well mounted Federal Dragoons.

Our company being cut off from their officers (neither the Captain or I being with them) could in their confused state do nothing but retreat and that they did with the greatest possible speed. When the alarm was given I got up, went to the stable, got my horse and returned to the barracks for the purpose of arousing several members who were dilatory about getting out. I tied my horse in front of the barracks about twenty steps from the door and went into the building to bring out the men, not dreaming that the enemy was so near at hand. Upon my giving the two men notice, they immediately got up, and we were about midway the building on our way to the door when the enemy opened heavy fire upon our troop. When we got to the door our troop was passing under full retreat and the enemy firing at every jump; I rushed out to get my horse but found that the enemy was within fifty feet of him, and if I attempted to mount I would certainly be taken as well as my horse, and I halted about half way between the door and the horse, hesitating what was best to be done. In this position I was immediately discovered by them and fired upon about six times and at this juncture, cut off from the company, and directly under the eye of the enemy you know I very readily decided to make my escape by foot, with the least possible delay, leaving my horse to be taken by the rogues an opportunity they did not lose for I was hardly out of sight of the house before some twelve of them dismounted, entered the house, captured Henry Lynn, who was too slow about getting out, and took him and my horse off with them.

The enemy pursued our company about three-quarters of a mile, firing at every step. They then halted and returned to the town to be received about forty five of the Warrenton Riflemen who had been aroused by the firing upon our men.

When they were within sixty yards of the W. R.'s a brisk fire was opened upon them which was promptly returned. In the first round the Warrenton Rifles lost their Captain, John Q. Marr – the enemy retreated, rallied and charged twice more upon the W. R.'s, in which they suffered serious

(Continued from page 5)

returned to Manassas and to his duties as Clerk of the Court” - but the Courthouse was in Brentsville, not Manassas.”

As recently as February 15, 2010, the News & Messenger ran a front page story on *Little-Known History* where the author writes about “*Wilmer McLean, who lived in the Yorkshire area of Manassas at the beginning of the Civil War.*” So now we learn that Yorkshire was a part of Manassas during that time when the town did not exist.

Perhaps these few examples do not make a trend but there are many, many more. Those of us who frequently research the newspapers can not help but note that reference to an individual who actually lives in Brentsville is almost always referred to as being from Prince William Co. or his/her post office address. So depending on where you live in Brentsville, you might be reported as being John Doe of Prince William, Nokesville, Bristow or Manassas (all three serve the Brentsville area) but **never** John Doe of Brentsville unless someone insists it be that way. Is that one way of keeping us under the basket? I suggest it is. And I suggest it's intentional. One news item that resulted in wide-spread radio, television and newspaper attention stated that the individual was from Bristow. I wrote the reporter and specifically asked if they were required to use the post office address rather than the actual place of residence. I never got an answer from that question. Surprise, surprise.

So here I am—peaking out from under the basket—trying to keep the name Brentsville on the map. Anytime someone asks me where I'm from I always say **BRENTSVILLE!** Because doggonit, I'm proud of this place. I sure hope you are as well.

(Continued from page 8)

injury. Our loss was one killed – Capt. Marr – four taken prisoners – W. T. Washington, Henry Lynn, Thos. Marders, and Chas Dunnington. The enemy's loss was three taken prisoners and twenty four killed and dis-abled.

After this incident the Cavalry was camped at various places in the vicinity of Fairfax C.H. July 19th 1861, it was at Camp Scott near the Occoquan, associated with the Albemarle Troop under the command of Capt. John Scott formally of the Black Horse and their duty was to guard the Potomac between Occoquan and Dumfries which was then considered such an important point that they were supported by a regiment of infantry, and in all numbered some one thousand men all eager to have a brush with the enemy and wipe out the remembrance of the surprise at Fairfax C.H. The Yankees, however, seemed to have been satisfied with their reception at that place and remained on their side of the river until ready for their advance for the first battle of Manassas. During that battle the Cavalry were left with the commands of Cols. Early and Hill on the extreme right of our army whose forces by some strange mistake in the transmission of orders were left inactive throughout the day and the cavalry were held in reserve until the enemy began to give way, when they joined in the short pursuit of the fleeing foe, which did not extend farther than Centreville through we know now that it might have been kept up to Washington City itself without damage to our forces.

(Continued from page 2)

their claws are sharp and capable of inflicting significant injuries. Manual lifting (which should be done only if no other options are available) is best accomplished by grabbing the top of the shell behind the head with one hand and the other hand holding the shell between the rear legs. Then you can proceed to lift the turtle with the head facing away from you and all others. This way the turtle will not be able to squirm and try to dislodge the handler's hands with its hind legs. If moving it is absolutely necessary, scooping and lifting the turtle just off the ground with a shovel (especially a snow shovel), if done quickly, may be safest and easiest for all concerned parties.

The year 2006 saw the snapping turtle declared the state reptile of New York by a sweeping vote of the New York Legislature after being popularly chosen by the state's public elementary school children.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_Snapping_Turtle

Brentsville Neighbors

Information About Brentsville
Shared Among Neighbors

Contact us on:
morganbreeden@aol.com

IN GOD WE TRUST

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

