

Brentsville Neighbors

Preserving Brentsville's History

May 2011



Welcome Neighbors,

The newsletter this month has taken a different format. You will notice that several of the "standard" subjects have been omitted to allow for two longer documents. We chose not to break these into sections in order to maintain continuity for the reader.

First we wish to thank Bonnie DeHart for her support and for the wonderful pictures and documents.

We are very grateful to Andrew Banks for his story and photos of the Iardella family, his direct family line. This is an abridged version necessary to fit this publication. The entire document may be found in the Brentsville notebooks with other information on the White House.

We are also very grateful to Catherine "Cay" Sinclair for her donation of pictures, documents and other historical artifacts from the Sinclair family. The story on page five is copied from an original manuscript written by Charles Armistead Sinclair between 1941 and 1974. It is believed to have been written as a speech. He started to say: "In childhood I picked and sold cherries from its trees, blackberries from its fields;" but changed it to read as now presented. How many of us have picked and sold blackberries from around Brentsville? I know I have!

As we reflect on the 150th anniversary of the Civil War I found the item written by Margaret Bowen to be equally true then as it was when written in 1917 as it still is today. God bless and watch over our service members wherever they may serve.

Very best wishes,
Morgan

Feedback

I don't know how you manage to do it, but each month you seem to outdo yourself in the interesting content presented in your newsletter. I particularly enjoyed Kay's story of her mama and her life in Brentsville. Keep up the good work.

Jan Cunard

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I read the newsletter from front to back with great interest, seeing many familiar names from the Agnes case. I have to know more about this letter! What a great find! Were there any others? The time stamp being only a couple months before the Agnes case is most fascinating and her assessment that prices from the sales of servants being "low" would also help make more sense out of the seemingly low sales prices recorded in Mason's probate records for his slaves." "Can't wait to get the next installment!"

Sheri Huerta

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Thanks for doing a great job on the newsletters.
Sue Brooks

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Thanks for the April Brentsville newsletter. It really is interesting to read and I enjoyed March's newsletter very much!

Thanks again,
Mickey Winslow

This month:

- Flashback ----- page 2
- Where Wild Things Live --- pages 2 & 3

Circulation: 227 - 112 Electronic

- Brentsville ... ----- pages 5 & 9
- The Family of C.T. Iardella -- pages 6,7 & 8

FLASHBACK

Where WILD Things Live

THE COUNTRY'S CALL

Here is a clarion call from Old Virginia, mother of Presidents, the birthplace of Woodrow Wilson:

To the Editor of the Herald:

Give us the bravest and the best
In this, our country's need,
Men who are loyal, faithful, true,
In word, in thought and deed.
Brave men who will not prate of peace
While vicious tyrants gloat
And cruel, gory handed war
Is clutching at our throat.

Men who will dare to do and die
For freedom and for right,
Men who will brave with courage strong
The thickest of the fight.
We want no cowards in our camp
Who shrink at war's alarms,
But men with hearts of steel who dare
To face a world at arms.

Our fathers fought and bled and died
To make this nation free;
Their spirits hover o'er us now
And plead for liberty.
Then buckle on your armor, men,
Be faithful to their trust,
No foreign foe must dare to trail
Our colors in the dust.

Go hoist Old Glory to the breeze
And let the tocsin be—
All honor to the Stars and Stripes,
The emblem of the free.
For she shall float where freedom reigns
On land and on the sea;
And death to all who dare defy
This banner of the free.

Margaret H. Bowen, in N. Y. Herald

Brentsville, Va., April 12, 1917

Source: The Manassas Journal, April 20, 1917

Common Name: Eastern Painted Turtle

The painted turtle lives in slow-moving fresh waters, from southern Canada to Louisiana and northern Mexico, and from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific. The adult female is 4–10 in long and weighs 11–18 oz; the male is smaller. The turtle's shell is smooth, oval, and flat-bottomed. Its skin is olive to black with red, orange, or yellow stripes on its extremities. The longest-running study, in Michigan, has shown that painted turtles can live more than 55 years.

The painted turtle eats aquatic vegetation, algae, and small water creatures including insects, crustaceans, and fish. Although they are frequently consumed as eggs or hatchlings by rodents, canines, and snakes, the adult turtles' hard shells protect them from most predators except alligators and raccoons.

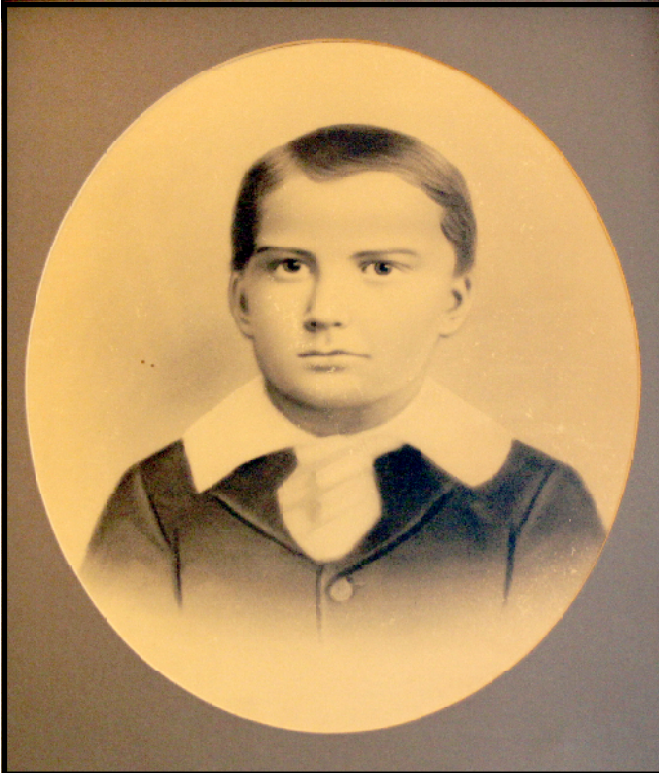
Reliant on warmth from its surroundings, the painted turtle is active only during the day when it basks for hours on logs or rocks. During winter, the turtle hibernates, usually in the muddy bottoms of waterways. The turtles mate in spring and autumn; between late spring and mid-summer females dig nests on land and lay their eggs. Hatched turtles grow until sexual maturity: 2–9 years for males, 6–16 for females.

The head of the turtle is distinctive. The face has only yellow stripes, with a large yellow spot and streak behind each eye, and on the chin two wide yellow stripes that meet at the tip of the jaw. The turtle's upper jaw is shaped into an inverted "V", with a downward-facing, tooth-like projection on each side.

To thrive, painted turtles need fresh waters with soft bottoms, basking sites, and aquatic vegetation. They find their homes in shallow waters with slow-moving currents, such as creeks, marshes, ponds, and the shores of lakes. The eastern painted turtle is very aquatic, leaving the immediate vicinity of its water body only when forced by drought to migrate.

Indian tribes were familiar with the painted turtle—young braves were trained to recognize its splashing into water as an alarm—and incorporated it in folklore. A Potawatomi myth describes how the talking turtles, "Painted Turtle" and allies "Snapping Turtle" and "Box Turtle", outwit the village squaws. Painted Turtle is the star of the legend and uses his distinctive markings to trick a woman into holding him so he can bite her. An Illini myth recounts how Painted Turtle put his paint on to entice a chief's daughter into the water.

Source: Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



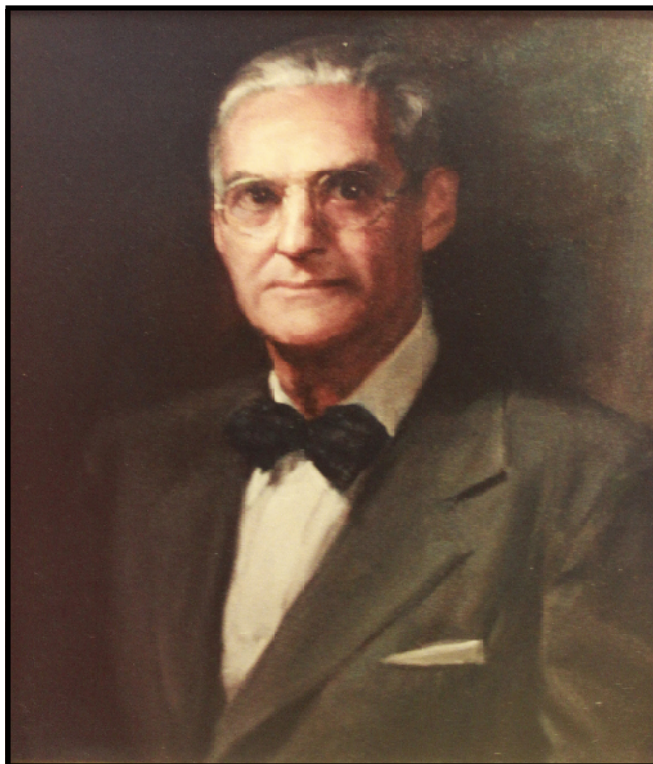
Arthur Williams Sinclair while a young student in
Brentsville

**Where WILD things
live..**

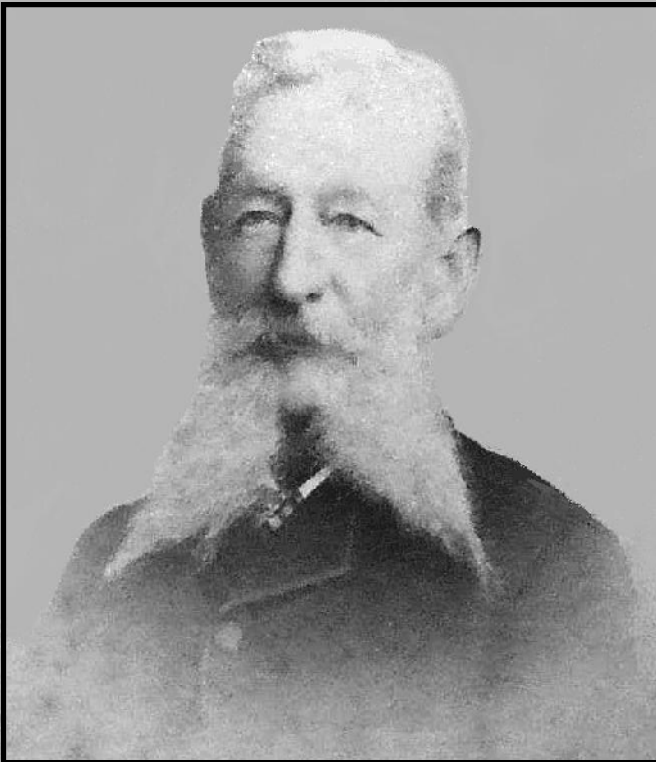


Eastern Painted Turtle

Charles Armistead Sinclair
born in Brentsville
August 3, 1880
son of Arthur Williams and
Eloise Armistead Sinclair



Sinclair family photos
courtesy of Catherine
"Cay" Sinclair



Capt. Charles Thaddeus Iardella



Annette G. Iardella
Born in the Brentsville White House,
1857



Walter Lewis Iardella
Born in the Brentsville White House
1858



Ella S. Iardella Southcomb
Born in the Brentsville White House
1859

All photos this page courtesy of Andrew C. Banks

Brentsville and the History of Prince William County

By

Charles Armistead Sinclair

Permit me to say that Brentsville was the place of my birth and my boyhood home. In childhood I roamed through the fields, fished and swam in nearby streams and played fox and hounds in the surrounding woods. To this day I love every foot of it.

Necessary to review briefly the history of Prince William Co.

County established in 1731 from the northern part of Stafford County. Boundaries extended from Chappawamsick Creek to the mountains, with the Potomac River as the eastern boundary and the Rappahannock River as the Western Boundary. It was necessary that a county seat be set up for the new county, and in April, 1731 the assembly ordered that the court of the county be held on the upper side of Occoquan River, near the ferry landing. It is rather hard to realize now but according to the early history of Prince William there were two ferry landings on the Occoquan, one called the upper ferry landing and the other the lower ferry landing. The act establishing the first court house did not name the ferry landing and the commissioners chose the lower landing as the court house site. This site later became known as Colchester and is now that part of Woodbridge which lies immediately adjacent to the Occoquan River. At this time the population of Prince William was chiefly along tide water and it was but natural that the court house should be located on a tidal stream and in what was then the south central part of the county.

Fairfax County was taken from Prince William in 1742. The western boundary was the Occoquan to the mouth of Bull Run and thence partly with Bull Run to its northern boundary.

The act establishing Fairfax County left the county seat of Prince William in the extreme southeastern corner, and now entirely away from the center of population. It thus became impracticable to maintain the court house at Colchester and Col. Henry Fitzhugh, Col. William Fairfax and Col. John Colvil were appointed to recommend a more accessible location. Their recommendation resulted

in an order on December 15, 1742 establishing the court house at the plantation of Philemon Waters. This location was several miles from Cedar Run and near a place later known as Faymon. If this location of the county seat had a name it has disappeared along with the court house, clerk's office and jail and any other buildings that would normally be found at the seat of government of a county.

In 1759 Fauquier County was erected from Prince William and thus the western boundary of Prince William was contracted so that now the court house was on the extreme western edge of the county, inaccessible and removed from the center of population. Under these circumstances, in 1759, it was ordered that the court house be established in the town of Dumfries. In 1762 the Court ordered Benjamin Tompkins, who had undertaken to build a court house, released from the articles entered into for the completion of the same, it appearing that he had acted the part of a faithful and honest workman.

Every school child is familiar with the history of Dumfries. From a thriving port of entry its downfall as finally caused by the filling in of Quantico Creek. Let us leave the historic town with the simple reminder that the Peoples of Prince William County assembled there in 1774 to adopt resolutions approving Revolutionary measures and to appoint delegates to the first Virginia Convention.

The county seat remained at Dumfries until 1820 when Brentsville became the new seat of county government. Apparently at the time the court house building was erected there was no town of Brentsville for it appears that in the year 1822, two years after the court house had been built, the Virginia General Assemble directed that 50 acres of land belonging to the Commonwealth be laid out for a town by the name of Brentsville. How did the Commonwealth come by the land on which the town was built? In the year 1687 a tract of land containing 30,000 acres was granted by the Crown to George Brent, Nicholas Haywood, Robert Bristow and Richard Foote. This grant was known as the Brent Town Tract and was to be used as a sanctuary for people of all faiths.

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The Family of Charles T Iardella

By Andrew C Banks

Captain Charles Thaddeus Iardella was born on the 3rd of October 1820 in Washington DC. He was the child of Francisco Iardella and Camilla Franzoni. His parents both originated in Toscana Italy. Sadly, Camilla died in 1828, and Francisco died only 3 years later, on January 23rd 1831. His death was attributed to heart failure and he was only 38 years old. Charles, his eldest child was only 11 years old.

Charles Iardella probably lived with his family until being apprenticed to the Coast Survey, and no doubt attended Private schools in Washington. In 1850, he lived with the Simms family, his half sister and her husband, and clerked for the Coastal Survey. He married to Anne Eliza Williams on the 13th of November 1855 in Washington DC. Anne was born in Brentsville Virginia, in Prince William County. She was the daughter of Clerk of the Court John Williams and his wife Jane E.L. Shaw. The Williams family had long standing ties to the Courts in Prince William County. John Williams father John Sr. was married to Jane Dawe, daughter of Philip Dawe, a Dumfries Silversmith, and tavern owner. She had a brother Philip Devereaux Dawe who became Clerk of the Court in Prince William county following the death of John Williams Sr. John Williams Sr was the son of Evan Williams, who had been a Bursar of the American Revolution, and Sarah Carter, daughter of Joseph Carter. John Sr., also a Clerk of the Court, commissioned a home in Brentsville, to be built across from the Courthouse there in the 1820's, but died before it's completion. Jane Dawe Williams resided in the home with her brother Philip D. Dawe, and her children, and was said to have Clerked in her husbands stead, under her brother Philip's name. Philip D. Dawe ran a tavern in Brentsville, that was adjacent to the home.

Later, Jane Dawe Williams resided in a cottage also adjacent to this home. John Williams Jr became Clerk of the Court, upon completion of his education, and married Jane Shaw, daughter of William & Mary Shaw. Jane Shaw Williams died in child birth, at the age of 40 on 25 Sep 1853, and John Williams Jr moved to Washington, having received a post there, said to have been under President Buchanan. His large family stayed in Brentsville with his mother Jane Dawe Williams, but some came to Washington, including his daughter Anne, who met Charles Iardella there in 1855. John Williams Jr remarried to widow Leonora Coolidge on 18 Mar 1857.

He remained in Washington until his death in 1868, and is said to be buried in the Congressional Cemetery.

In 1860 Charles Iardella and his wife Anne, and their children Walter, Annette and Ella were living in the Williams home in Brentsville, with several of the Williams family, including Anne's brother John Thomas Williams, who was listed as an attorney, and her sister Sarah "Sallie" Sommerville Williams. Other children of John & Jane Shaw Williams, that are known but were not listed in the home were, Mary Jane, Ann Amelia (who died in childhood), Margaret P, James E., William F, and Rosa Williams.

Mary Jane Williams who married Judge Aylett Nicol, and had a large family, died in 1863. One of her sons Charles Edgar Nicol would also become a lawyer and Judge of the 16th Circuit court of Virginia.

Margaret Phillipi Williams married Merchant and Commercial Traveler, as well as Confederate Soldier, James Mordecai Sinclair, and amongst her children was Arthur Williams Sinclair, who was a lawyer and later became Post Master of Manassas. Margaret Williams Sinclair died in 1853. Sarah Sommerville Williams met her husband Major Thomas William Lion at a reception at the White House in Washington DC during the course of the Civil War. She had been a vocal supporter of the Confederacy, and along with her cousin Emma J Williams, sewed the flag for the Prince William Cavalry.

Thomas Lion, a Major in the Union Army, was a native of England, and had moved to Peru following the death of his parents, where he had been involved in a Guano operation for ingredients needed in the making of Rocket combustives, his passion. When a Revolution occurred there, he lost all of his interests, and came to the US, where he became a Major in the first and only Rocket Battalion, a New York Light Infantry Unit. He convinced Secretary Edwin Stanton, of the importance of Rockets in combat, although when later tested, they were observed as having scared the horses, and set everything on fire, and were soon forgotten in favor of more conventional artillery. Major Lion fought at Antietam, where he was injured in the leg by an exploding shell, and served on the staff of General Burnside, during the Fredericksburg Campaign. Major Lion died in 1897, and Mrs Lion died at the age of 74 in 1911. They are buried in the Manassas Confederate Cemetery. They had three children, amongst them Florence Sommerville

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Lion, George James Lion and Thomas Harlan Lion, also a lawyer. Three brothers in the Williams family, sons of John & Jane Shaw Williams were members of the Prince William Cavalry, or the "Black Horse" Cavalry, and amongst many other relatives of the Williams family, joined the Confederacy, enlisting in the 4th VA Co. A. These brothers were John Thomas Williams, James E. Williams, William F. Williams. John Thomas attained the rank of Sergeant and was transferred to Capt. J.B. Norvill's Company 49th VA Regiment by order of the Secretary of War. He does not appear in their roster, so his fate has not been established. James E. Williams ranked out as a Private. William F. Williams ranked out as a private as well. W.F. Williams married Josephine___ around 1865, and had a family of at least 7 children that survived into adulthood. 2 sons and 2 daughters were still living at his death in 1908 in Bristol Tennessee. He was mentioned in his obituary as a Captain of the 4th VA. Many other family members were in the 4th Virginia, including but not limited to, Lucian A Davis, William W. Thornton, John Taylor Williams, and Philip D Williams, the latter of which was killed in action at the battle of Raccoon Ford. The history of the 4th VA is quite lengthy in the list of action they saw, including major battles like Gettysburg, although who may have still been in this Cavalry at that date is not known. Only two Field Officers from the 4th were present at the surrender at Appomattox.

Charles "C.T." Iardella, worked for the Coastal & Geodetic Survey, and mapped the coasts of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and later Florida. In his later years he was first Sub Assistant and later Full Assistant and Captain . He can be found in numerous ships logs, heading in and around Cuba, Florida, Maryland, and other locations. On the 28th of Jun 1854, C.T Iardella is listed amongst a group of Coast Surveyors from Baltimore having arrived in New York, and stayed at the "Irving House".

C.T. appears to have been gone for long periods of time with the Coast Survey, on mapping expeditions. For the large part he was often with one or more sub assistants on one of several Coast Survey Schooners. Some histories of these travels survive in accounts of the Coast Survey, and in numerous letters and newspaper articles. It was of great importance to map these areas of newly acquired land, and for the most part their travels were relatively safe. One passage about the Coast Survey reads in part " Southern Florida had other problems throughout much of the 1850's. Although a major war had been fought with the Seminole Indians in the 1830's, they remained unconquered and chose to move ever-deeper into the Everglades of south Florida rather than

submit to the United States Government. Coast Survey operations from Cape Florida to Cape Sable were carried on in Seminole territory. In the 1850's there was a renewal of hostilities. Although no Coast Survey parties were attacked, on occasion they were forced to move from their working area or were unable to obtain pilots to guide them to areas of active hostilities.

In 1861, C.T. returned home carrying with him the maps he had drawn in Florida, which he needed to ink. He was suffering a terrible fever, having probably been brought on by Malaria. He was sick with the fever for the better part of a month, and when he had recovered sufficiently enough to return to work, he found himself amidst the outbreak of the Civil War.

A history of the Coast Survey and their services during the War mentions this stating, "When the rebellion broke out, one of the assistants on the Coast Survey happened to be in Virginia with his family. Cut off from communication with the office, he was not only without his usual means of support, but, at the same time, exposed to solicitations to join the insurgents. Although in such a strait, he repelled the offers which were made to him, and managed to maintain himself and his family by keeping store in Brentsville, Va., where he was found when our lines were extended to that town. He immediately submitted to the Government proof of his loyalty, and delivered the maps which he had secreted during the time that he was liable to be plundered of them. Since that time he has been constantly engaged, with the rank of captain, in making surveys for/ the Corps of Engineers." However, he had just returned to the Coast and his work, when he received word that his wife Anne had died of Typhoid Fever, on 08 May 1862. Iardella had to return to Brentsville, to handle his family's affairs. He placed his three surviving children in boarding schools, and the family home , the 'White House', went to Ms Henrietta Holland, a family member, who married William Edward Lipscomb, son of Robert Lipscomb and Anne Williams (the sister of John Williams). Ms Holland was said to have been of English extraction, but was born in Saratoga New York, according to her obituary. She was a Confederate Sympathizer during the war, and able to operate across the lines. According to Mrs Viola Proffett, grand daughter of Captain Lucian Alexander Davis, of the 4th VA. Co. A. and his wife Emma Jackson Williams, Henrietta Holland aided her grandparents during the war. According to the story Captain Davis, and his very pregnant wife Emma were in flight, from Federals, and came to the home of Ms Holland, where their child was born. However, the child was premature

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and died. Emma J. Williams, has the distinction of being the only woman in Prince William County arrested by Federals during the war. She was the daughter of Robert Williams, brother of John Williams Jr. Her mother was Lucy Ann Thornton. Mrs Viola Proffett was daughter of Ada Davis, Lucian and Emma's daughter. Ada married to French Jackson Davis.

Emma's brothers John Taylor and Philip D. Williams were in the 4th Virginia as well, during the War. Her sister Margaret Roberta Williams married to Dr. Clement Clay Barbour. Charles Iardella appears in a ships manifest departing Havana Cuba on 12 Sep 1860, and arrived again in the US in 1861 in New York with a party of Coast Surveyors, where they stayed at a hotel.

He returned home ill in 1861, and spent his time in Brentsville "keeping store", he then reported back to work, and according to his records was working Baltimore defenses in 1863 under Col. W.F. Reynolds. In 1864 he was working with Assistant AD Bache aiding the Navy in the Defenses of the Potomac, probably still working as a Surveyor. The New York times reported that on 15 Feb 1863 "The United States Coast Survey steamer Vixen, Capt. JARDELLA {SIC}, arrived from the Florida Reef on the 15th, for coals and supplies. She will return in a few days." On 03 Apr 1863 he is again mentioned in Florida "Coast survey steamer Vixen, Capt. JARDELLA {SIC} commanding, finished work and going home." He is mentioned in a Brentsville Law Suit in 1867, but did not appear. The 'Suit' was over a 'Tavern Lot' in Brentsville, and a debt with interest since the year 1860 was listed, and the suit was brought forth by a John Williams and Aylett Nicol, and advertised in the Warrenton paper. Iardella was probably at sea during this time, as he was most of his lifetime.

In the 1880's he had remarried to a Mary Ellen _____, a native of Maryland, and was residing in Baltimore at 129 Fayette St. In 1890 he purchased a home in Washington at 1536 I Street, where he kept a residence until his death, although he spent much of this time at sea. He worked up until the year of his death, which occurred on 27 Oct 1897 in Washington DC. One obituary for him from the New York Sun read "Captain C.T. Jardella, {SIC} for more than 50 years an Assistant with the United States Geodetic and Coast Survey is dead at the age of nearly 90 years. Notwithstanding his advanced age, Captain Jardella {SIC} actively engaged in field work until this season". He was buried at the Congressional Cemetery, with services from the St Matthews Catholic church on Rhode Island Ave.

His children by Anne Williams Iardella were Walter Lewis Iardella, Annette Garnet Iardella, and Ella

Sommerville Iardella. Annette 'Nettie' Iardella, the eldest was born in September of 1856. She never married. In the years after she left Brentsville, she was sent to Mt St. Agnes Seminary School for Young Ladies, near Randallstown Maryland. She later lived in Washington with members of the Blaine family. Her Aunt Josephine Iardella had married to William Hicks. Josephine and William Hicks' daughter Rebecca Hicks married Robert Gillespie Blaine, brother of Presidential Candidate James G Blaine.

Robert and Rebecca Blaine had a daughter May Gillespie Blaine who later married to Charles Eppa Lipscomb, who was the son of William Edward Lipscomb and Henrietta Holland. 'Nettie' Iardella resided with her cousin Rebecca Hicks Blaine and her husband Robert in Washington DC, for many years. She worked as a Clerk for the Library of Congress, and was a census taker in the 1890 census. In her later years, she received a Civil War Pension, for her father's services during the War. She died on 12 Oct. 1952, and was buried in the Congressional Cemetery.

Ella Sommerville Iardella was born in 1858, her father evidently sent her to Stanford Ontario where she is found as a pupil in a school run by a Sister Priscilla. She came to Baltimore in the 1880's where her father and brother were living, and stayed in her father's residence on Fayette St. She worked as a sales lady while living there, and attended college. She married to Eugene C Southcomb, an Upholstery Shop owner on 27 Sep. 1890. They moved to New York briefly, before removing to Washington DC, and later Riverdale Maryland. She had two sons Gillespie Blaine Southcomb, and Allen Walter Southcomb. Gillespie died in 1922. Her grandson, Gillespie B Southcomb Jr. was a Detective Sergeant in Washington DC. Eugene Southcomb died in 1937, and Ella took up residence, first with her son Allen and then later with her sister 'Nettie,' until her death on 05 Jul 1946.

Walter Lewis Iardella was born 09 Apr 1857 in either Brentsville Virginia, or in Washington D.C. he later lived with his family at the White House in Brentsville. (* Note: Walter often stated he was born in Washington, where the Williams family evidently had a residence, but he might have been born at the White House, due to his year of birth, the family were listed in Brentsville). He attended private schools after his mother's death, and in 1870 was listed as a pupil at 'Calvert College' in New Windsor (Carroll County) Maryland. Walter was in the Maryland National Guard, as evidenced by a photo, taken sometime toward the end of his life in Baltimore

The land was ultimately divided among those to whom it was originally granted, and the part upon which the village of Brentsville stands was taken from that part of the Brent Town Tract allotted to Robert Bristow. During the Revolutionary War an act had been passed confiscating the land of English subjects. Another Robert Bristow, a son of the original grantor, remained loyal to England and in 1779 his land was escheated to the Commonwealth.

In the early days towns were laid out and managed by appointed commissioners or trustees. The trustees appointed to manage the affairs of Brentsville were John McCrea, John Gibson, John Mills, John Leachman, John Fox, John Hooe, Gerard Alexander, William S. Alexander, Richard Davis, Chas. Hunton, William French, Benj. Johnson, and James Foster. The plat of Brentsville is recorded in the county clerk's office and shows that 56 acres were divided into 69 lots and streets. It appears that all of the trustees appointed did not act, for the record shows that Thomas Nelson, Surveyor, on November 30, 1822, certified that he had laid out the town of Brentsville at the direction of Thoas. Lachman, Chas. Hunton, Thoas. Hooe and Benj. Johnson.

Thus did the town of Brentsville come into being. It is very likely that the location of the town was selected because it was then the center of population and because it was on the main road running the length of the county from Thoroughfare Gap to the town of Dumfries.

From the book Prince William – the story of its places and its people – it appears that one Joseph Martin in 1835 wrote in his Gazetteer: "Brentsville was located around the new court house in 1822, at which time it was completed and the court removed from Dumfries. The court house, clerk's office and jail are handsomely situated on the main street, in a public square of three acres. Besides them the village contains 19 dwelling houses, 3 stores, 2 handsome taverns, built of brick and stuccoed, 1 house of entertainment, 1 house of public worship, free for all denominations, a bible society, a Sunday school and a temperance and tract society. There is in the vicinity a common school in which the rudiments of English education are taught. Population 130 persons, of whom three are attorneys and 3 regular physicians. The wasteful tenure of the Bristow estate has in a manner cut it off from a thriving neighborhood. This tract has been ravaged of all of its timber and for the most part ploughed down to the barren by an unmerciful course of cultivation, under a numerous tenantry for upwards of 70 years-but by an act authorizing the sale of this estate there is not doubt but the desert will soon be

made to blossom under the labors of individual enterprise, and Brentsville will take a new start towards prosperity." The town fulfilled its destiny as a county seat but Martin's prophesy as to its prosperity did not come to pass. To day, in the town as laid out in 1822, there are fewer houses than the number stated when he wrote in 1835. Of the public houses only the court house building and the jail remain. Several of the older dwelling houses are still standing and occupied. The oldest of these is the White House, built in 1822 by Jane Williams, widow of John Williams who was county clerk from 1795 to 1813, and now the property of Nicholas Webster. Another is the former home of the Nelson family and still another former residence of Ezra Bauder. In 1893 the doom of Brentsville was finally sealed when, by popular vote, the county seat was moved to Manassas.

Clerks of court serving during the period that the county seat was at Brentsville were Phillip Dawe 1813-1832; John Williams 2nd, 1832-1854; Phillip D. Lipscomb, 1854-1865; Mordacai B. Sinclair, 1865-1869; John C. Poor, 1869-1870; Little C. Osmann, 1870; Lucien A. Davis, 1871-1887 and Edwin Nelson, 1887-1911.

In the Spring of 1861 the 4th Virginia Cavalry was organized at Brentsville, with William W. Thornton as Captain. Capt. Thornton later became a major on Gen Early's staff. After the war he became superintendent of schools of Prince William County.

There were many other gallant men enlisted in the War between the States at Brentsville, some officers and some privates; their numbers, however, are too great to be dealt with here.

The most conspicuous among them is Joseph W. Latimer, who was born within a few miles of Brentsville and went to school in the village. He was with Marye's Battery at Manassas in July 1861. When that battery was disbanded he joined Courtney's Battery and when that battery was ordered to the front in September, 1861, he, at the age of 18 was made senior second lieutenant. In 1862 he was promoted to first lieutenant, and in June 1862 at the battle of Cross Keys he was cited for conspicuous service and made captain. In 1863, at the age of 20 years, he was promoted to the rank of major. At Gettysburg he was in command of Andrews artillery battalion, and on July 2, 1863, he was mortally wounded. He was removed to Harrisonburg and died there on August 1, 1863. He is known as the Boy Major of the Confederacy.

Brentsville Neighbors

Preserving Brentsville's History

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IN GOD WE TRUST

