

Brentsville Neighbors

Preserving Brentsville's History

June 2012



June 14th



June 17th

Welcome Neighbors,

June always holds a special place in the activities of children, second only to Christmas. It's when school ends which also signals the start of summer. This June is special in yet one more way that is explained by Dennis Van Derlaske, starting on page four. After being used as a residence, a community craft workshop under the guidance of the Park Authority, and a long list of other functions, the Brentsville one-room school will now be restored back to the way many of you knew it while you attended school there.

In celebration of this restoration, there will be a unique event in early October that will include the school reunion, a meeting of the Prince William Historic Preservation Foundation and the annual Historic Prince William picnic. While final details have not been worked out, it does promise to be a very enjoyable day and everyone is invited to attend. More to follow!

The site is also the recipient of a c1906 school desk which was donated by Nancy and Ken Lindgren. See page 7 for more information.

It seemed appropriate, then, to dedicate much of this issue to school related subjects. Starting on page two is an item about June school exercises to celebrate the end of the 1910-1911 school year in Brentsville. As I looked this over for the 4th or 5th time, I could not help but wonder about the selections chosen by (or assigned to?) the students. Through the magic of the World Wide Web I was able to get three of these selections. "My Mother at the Gate" (see page 5) is a reflection on the loss of a young child's mother and was presented by Lillie Molair (10 years old) who had lost her mother less than a year before. "At Harvest Time" (see page 8) has a strong religious theme written by a young black woman from Rhode Island and was presented by Tracie Spitzer (10 years old). Lastly, "Driving Home the Cows" (also page 8) reflects on the Civil War and was presented by Nettie (Jeannetta) Hensley (13 years old) who certainly may have known men who served in that great conflict. I found these fascinating and hope you will as well.

Very best wishes,
Kay and Morgan

This month:

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Flashback

Where WILD
things live...

SCHOOL EXERCISES AT BRENTSVILLE

With interesting exercises the Brentsville public school Friday evening, June 9, closed a most successful year under direction of Miss Ella W. Garth, teacher. James Wright was master of ceremonies. The following program was presented:

Welcome -----Song
Welcome -----Seven Girls
Welcome -----Philip Bradshaw
I'll Try -----Paul Woodyard
A Bunch of Flowers -----Four Girls
Our Flag -----Peter Woodyard
A, B, C of the Flowers -----The Children
June -----Viola Donovan
Tommy's Ride -----Fred Shenk
Recitation -----Floyd Shenk
Robin's Come -----Five Girls
My Mother at the Gate -----Lillie Molair
Cherry Time -----Minnie Keys
Alice's Flowers -----Alice Woodyard
The Contest of the Flowers -----Eight Girls
June -----Stella Shaffer
At Harvest Time -----Tracie Spitzer
All the Way -----Irene Shenk
The Wreath Drill -----Sixteen Children
Recitation -----Clyde Hedrick
Recitation -----Ora Hollar
Delsarte Children -----Twenty-two Children
Bug-a-Boo -----Song
Betsy and I -----Minnie Smith
Driving Home the Cows -----Nettie Hensley
June's Banner and Blossom -----Twelve Children
Fan Drill -----Ten Girls
Address -----The Rev. Cooke
America -----Song

Source: The Manassas Democrat, June 15, 1911



Dicentra cucullaria
(Dutchman's breeches)

This native perennial plant is about 4-8" tall. It consists of a rosette of basal leaves spanning about 6" across. From the center of the rosette, there develops a drooping raceme of 2-6 pairs of white flowers. These flowers hang upside down from slender pedicels. In the middle of each pedicel, there is a pair of tiny bracts. Each flower is about 3/4" long and assumes the form of upside down Dutchman's Breeches, hence the common name of the plant. It consists of 2 outer petals that are white and 2 inner petals that are pale yellow. The two outer petals form two nectar spurs that are long and spreading; they are joined together at the base. The two inner petals are much smaller and form the base of the flower; they have small wings that curl upward. The sepals of each flower are scale-like and insignificant. The blooming period occurs from early to mid-spring and lasts about 2-3 weeks. There is no noticeable floral scent. Each flower can

(Continued on page 9)



Snippets from the County School Board Minutes



Manassas Va August 16th-1923.

The county School Board met as per adjournment on above date with the following members present: J R Cooke, Chm. D J Arrington, Thos J Woolfenden, D C Cline and C B Allen. Absent, E S Brockett. Minutes of previous meeting read and adopted

James A Robinson, representing a committee from the Manley colored school appeared before the board and stated that the League had something over \$400 in cash to apply to the erection of a new room at that school. He also stated that the patrons and citizens would do all hauling necessary for such erection. On motion it was ordered that his request be granted and D J Arrington appointed committee to superintend construction.

On motion of C B Allen it was ordered that a school wagon be operated between Partloe's gate and Haymarket for the accommodation of certain children not within reach of any school and to relieve the crowded condition of the Gainesville school. It was also ordered that Mr Allen be authorized to operate a school wagon from Thoroughfare to Haymarket if found advisable in order to relieve the Thoroughfare school and to offer better school advantages to all concerned.

On motion D J Arrington was authorized to transport the pupils from the Bethlehem school to Manassas if such arrangements are found agreeable to the patrons and economical generally.

On motion of J R Cooke the following teachers were appointed in Brentsville district:

Woodlawn,	W H Winslow, Prin.	Salary \$90.00
"	Miss Viola Miller Primary	75.00
Aden	E D Nolly, Prin.	110.00
"	Mrs W D Nolly Int.	75.00
"	Cora Beahm Primary	75.00
Brentsville	Eleanor Smith Prin.	85.00
"	Tracie I Spitzer Primary	75.00
Kings X Roads	Florence Nash Prin.	85.00
"	Ruth Armentrout Primary	75.00
Kettle Run Col,	Mrs E J Woodson	65.00

On motion of Thos J Woolfenden the following teachers were elected in Coles District:

Smithfield, Primary	Miss Elthel Berry	75.00
Fayman	" Lois Duffy	75.00
Holmes	" Lottie Dixon	75.00
Woodbine	" Mary Eustace	70.00

The resignation of Miss Nora Beazley was received and accepted. Miss Beazley was appointed principal of the Dumfries school at a former meeting but on account of objections on the part of some of the patrons does not wish to accept appointment. There is also filed with the board a statement signed by 21 citizens and patrons recommending Miss Beasley as a good useful citizen and teacher and stating they would be glad to have her remain with the school.

(part intentionally omitted for use in this newsletter)

No further business meeting adjourned

Chas R Mc Donald, Clerk.



Brentsville School to Undergo Interior Restoration

by
Dennis Van Derlaske

During the spring and summer of this year, the interior of the one-room school at Brentsville will undergo a restoration that will more accurately portray the way it looked during the years that it was actively used as a school.

The work will be accomplished in large part as a result of a generous grant made by Dr. William (Bill) Olson through the Prince William Historic Preservation Foundation. Bill has been active for many years in the research and preservation of Prince William County history through his participation in many history-based organizations. Management and execution of this effort will be spearheaded by the county's Historic Preservation Division working with citizen consultants.

Research has been started to ascertain details of the interior features of the main schoolroom and cloakroom area. The current configuration of the room will be baselined then design details of the restoration will be established and implemented.

In the early 1970's, the school was rehabilitated into a recreational facility by the Prince William County Park Authority. This necessitated modifications to the room to accommodate recreational equipment and provide appropriate lighting and air conditioning. An enclosed area was built to accommodate the air conditioning equipment and modifications were made to the cloak room to allow it to become a storage and service area. In addition, a window was closed in, another door was cut and a shed-type structure was added to the rear of the original building.

Initial work has uncovered some of the tin ceiling in the cloak room that was hidden behind a drop ceiling for approximately 40 years. It retained some of the original color patina and together with the adjoining wall, will help yield clues as to colors that were used in the school's interior.



Original tin ceiling in the cloak room

The restoration will include the following tasks:

- *Relocating the heating and air conditioning air handler and removal of the room built to house it*
- *Restoration of the cloak room to its original form*
- *Replacement of a rear window that was enclosed*
- *Removal of a door that was added in the northwest corner of the building*
- *Restoration of the blackboard in that corner of the building*
- *Removal of the ductwork attached to the tin ceiling in the main classroom and relocating it behind wall and floor surfaces*
- *Removal of the fluorescent light fixtures on the ceiling and implementation of a lighting approach in keeping with the non-electrified nature of the original school.*
- *Gentle restoration of the floor surfaces to include removal of the electrical boxes that were subsequently installed.*

Frequently when old buildings were modified for new uses during the period when the Brentsville School was rehabilitated, care was not always taken

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to avoid destroying the interior architectural features. This was not the case here. The Park Authority did make an effort to protect these features. For this reason, the amount of work, and hence cost to accomplish this restoration, was reduced.

Some items that were removed in the 1970's were saved. For instance, when a door was cut in the rear wall on the west side of the building some of the original blackboard had to be cut out. The missing piece of slate was saved. It has been located and can be mended in a manner as to restore the blackboard to its proper form when the doorway is removed.



Corner door to be removed

The rear addition will remain on the building for the time being as it contains the only public restrooms currently on-site. In a few years, when a visitor center is established, this addition will be removed and the building will then revert to its original form. The current scope of work does not include furnishing of the room with accurate desks, chairs, wood stove, etc. This work will eventually need to be undertaken.

The goal is to have the school restored by the time of a Brentsville School reunion in the fall. Keep reading *Brentsville Neighbors* for updates on this vital project.

MY MOTHER AT THE GATE

By Matilda C. Edwards

Oh, there's many a lovely picture
On memory's silent wall,
There's many a cherished image
That I tenderly recall!

The sweet home of my childhood,
With its singing brooks and birds,
The friends who grew around me,
With their loving looks and words;
The flowers that decked the wildwood,
The roses fresh and sweet,
The blue-bells and the daisies
That blossomed at my feet—
All, all are very precious,
And often come to me,
Like breezes from that country
That shines beyond death's sea.
But the sweetest, dearest image
That fancy can create,
Is the image of my mother,
My mother at the gate.

There, there I see her standing,
With her face so pure and fair,
With the sunlight and the shadows
On her snowy cap and hair;
I can feel the soft, warm pressure
Of the hand that clasped my own;
I can see the look of fondness
That in her blue eyes shone;
I can hear her parting blessing
Through the lapse of weary years;
I can see, through all my sorrow,
Her own sad, silent tears,—
Ah! amid the darkest trials
That have mingled with my fate,
I have turned to that dear image,
My mother at the gate.

But she has crossed the river,
She is with the angels now,
She has laid aside earth's burdens,
And the crown is on her brow.
She is clothed in clean, white linen,
And she walks the streets of gold.
Oh! loved one, safe forever
Within the Saviour's fold,
No sorrowing thought can reach thee,
No grief is thine to-day;
God gives thee joy for mourning,
He wipes the tears away!
Thou art waiting in that city
Where the holy angels wait,
And when I cross the river
I will see thee at the gate!

Source: "One Hundred choice selections in poetry and prose, Issues 14-17" by Phineas Garrett, pages 60-61.

Very old desk donated to Brentsville.

I recently received a phone call from Mike Riley, the Brentsville Site Manager, who reported having received a very old school desk that may have been used in Brentsville. Different, he reported, from any he had seen before. Would I like to come up and get a picture? Well, yes. Of course! And this is where the story begins.

The desk, actually the top part, was donated to the Brentsville school by Kenneth and Nancy Lindgren of Orlando Road. As I later talked with them about the desk I learned that it probably belonged to Nancy's mother, Hazel Virginia (Tolson) Utterback who lived and raised her family at the end of Keyser Road. As a girl

she lived with her father and mother (Rollie B. and Mittie Angeline (Berryman) Tolson) along Joplin Road, on property that was bought to expand the Quantico Marine Base. There was also a school located on Joplin Road so it may have been used there instead of in Brentsville. Then again, Nancy's grandfather, Lorenzo Dow Utterback, taught school in Linden, Va., so possibly it could even have been



Nancy & Ken Lindgren looking over desk they donated

from there. The only clues are the many initials carved into the desk with the most frequent one being "A. L. P." Putting a name to the desk is going to be quite a challenge!

Nancy said the desk had been in her possession for over 20 years and prior to that had resided in one of the old barns on the family farm.

She and Ken wanted it to be kept in a historic location and the Brentsville School just seemed like the right place. We agree!

Gathering information about the desk turned out to be more difficult than one would have thought. After all, there is a stamp inside the desk that identifies it as "The Health School Desk,

Patented July 7, 1906, Fifth Ave., New York." But try as I might, only one "hit" made reference to this desk and is quoted in full below. For reasons unknown, it seems the desk, despite the many accolades, never made it to the Prince William school rooms in significant numbers.

Thank you Nancy and Ken. Your donation is very much appreciated and I am sure will hold an honored place in the restored Brentsville School.

New School Desk at the Model School of the Jamestown Exposition.

By MRS. EUGENE B. HEARD, Superintendent of the Model School, Jamestown Exposition.

A little more than a year ago I read with great interest an article on "The School Desk." The ideas therein advanced seemed to me to be so practical and so full of promise for the future welfare of school children, that I decided to use such a desk for our Model School at Jamestown, if such could be provided. After some correspondence with the author of the above-mentioned article, I learned that the Healthy School Desk embodied the advantages in modern school seating that had been emphasized in his paper.

The result was that the school-room of the Model School has been furnished exclusively with this modern school desk.

It may be of interest to the public to learn why we selected this desk in preference to any other which we found in the market.

First, it seemed to us that the good health of school children would be enhanced by a use of so rational a means of seating as movable chairs provide. Children are naturally the most active and aggressive little beings on earth. We all recognize the necessity of such a propensity in children. Then why hinder a child from freely

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adjusting himself to his task? When a teacher of many years experience tells me that children can use chairs in our schools as they do in our homes, I am disposed to let them do so. We all know that any one can work with less fatigue in more natural positions, and hence with greater effectiveness in a simple movable chair than upon any rigid bench. For example, did you ever observe that whenever you sit down at a table you always draw your chair up nearer the table after you have

sat down? The fact is that you cannot get into a chair which has already been placed near enough to a table for you to write. So, in a fixed seat, the school child has really never sat at the proper distance from his desk, hence the constant tendency toward acquiring round shoulders or narrow chests, by school children who must lean forward unduly. Again,

I have observed that when I write I always sit with my right forearm on the desk. This natural position cannot be taken without turning a little in the seat. Now this necessary movement of a child in a fixed seat must result in an unnatural twisting of the body. Certainly here is food for thought as to the reason why there is so much complaint of a growing tendency toward spinal curvature in school children.

In the second place, we found the desk more capacious than any other. Then, too, the room was more usable. The thought that a child should have a place for his school material, and should care for the same, appealed to me. I fear that there is a growing tendency of placing the responsibility for all these activities upon the teacher. To my mind, whenever the teacher performs any act or service that can be just as well performed by the child, that teacher is

depriving the pupil of just so much educative material. Hold the child responsible for his school material and product, and I am sure he will become a more positive individuality.

In the third place, the desk was very simple. There is no reason why so simple a desk and chair cannot be provided as economically to our schools as any other.

It is a simple table with a level top. Really, when you think of it every one uses a level desk nowadays.

Why habituate a child to that which is of no future benefit? Then, too, the desk offers such a simple means of making a slant top whenever that is desirable, so that, if you prefer the usual desk slant, you may have it.

It has room on its top to place the full forearm in writing, especially. One of the greatest failings of the usual school furniture is that it provides

insufficient room for writing, in addition to providing almost no room for books or material.

The desk cover also provides a mechanical drawing table. Drawing, as well as the preparation of school papers will be greatly facilitated.

Now when you think that, not only are the above activities of drawing and writing greatly facilitated, but all the special operations of geography, science, nature study, arithmetic, and history, then you will agree with me that we have selected an admirable desk for our Model School.

We expect many teachers to visit the Exposition during the summer and I am sure that you will be repaid, if you make your way to our Model School and see the attractive and useful improvements that are there exhibited.

Source: "The School Journal" July 6, 1907



AT HARVEST TIME

A Sower walked among his fields

When Spring's fair glory filled the earth;

He scattered seed with eager hand,

And sowing, thought upon their worth.

"These seeds are precious ones," he said.

"The finest flowers shall be mine;

And I shall reap rich, golden grain,

When these are ripe at Harvest time."

"I'll watch their growth with earnest care,

And faithfully will till the soil;

With willing hands each passing day

From morn till setting sun I'll toil.

And when the reaping time shall come,

A bounteous Harvest shall be mine;

I shall rejoice at duty done

When these are ripe at Harvest time."

Forth to his fields at Harvest time,

The Sower bent his steps again;

The Reapers' song sang merrily,

Their sickles gleamed 'mid golden grain.

With joyous heart the Sower cried

"Behold, what precious sheaves are mine;

And labor brings its own reward,

For these are ripe at Harvest time."

O Master! in thy fields so fair

We, too, are sowing precious seed.

And like the Sower we will toil

Till golden grain fulfill thy need.

Then shall we hear thy loving voice,—

"Behold! what precious sheaves are mine.

Let all be safely garnered in,

For these are ripe at Harvest time."

Original Poems by Olivia Bush (1869-1944).

Providence, RI: Louis A. Basinet Press, 1899

Driving Home the Cows

By Kate Putnam Osgood

Out of the clover and blue-eyed grass

He turned them into the river-lane;

One after another he let them pass,

Then fastened the meadow-bars again.

Under the willows, and over the hill,

He patiently followed their sober pace;

The merry whistle for once was still,

And something shadowed the sunny face.

Only a boy! and his father had said

He never could let his youngest go:

Two already were lying dead

Under the feet of the trampling foe.

But after the evening work was done,

And the frogs were loud in the meadow-swamp,

Over his shoulder he slung his gun

And stealthily followed the foot-path damp.

Across the clover, and through the wheat,

With resolute heart and purpose grim,

Though cold was the dew on his hurrying feet

And the blind bat's flitting startled him.

Thrice since then had the lanes been white,

And the orchards sweet with apple-bloom;

And now, when the cows came back at night,

The feeble father drove them home.

For news had come to the lonely farm

That three were lying where two had lain;

And the old man's tremulous, palsied arm

Could never lean on a son's again.

The summer day grew cool and late.

He went for the cows when the work was done;

But down the lane, as he opened the gate,

He saw them coming one by one:

Brindle, Ebony, Speckle, and Bass,

Shaking their horns in the evening wind;

Cropping the buttercups out of the grass—

But who was it following close behind?

Loosely swung in the idle air

The empty sleeve of army blue;

And worn and pale, from the crisping hair,

Looked out a face that the father knew.

For Southern prisons will sometimes yawn,

And yield their dead unto life again;

And the day that comes with a cloudy dawn

In golden glory at last may wane.

The great tears sprang to their meeting eyes;

For the heart must speak when the lips are dumb:

And under the silent evening skies

Together they followed the cattle home.

Source: Edmund Clarence Stedman, ed. (1833-1908). *An*

American Anthology, 1787-1900. 1900.

develop into a seed capsule that tapers to a point on both ends. This seed capsule eventually splits apart into 2 segments to release the seeds. The root system consists of a bulbous base with fleshy scales and secondary roots.

Dutchman's Breeches is a common plant that is native to rich woods of eastern North America. Habitats include deciduous mesic woodlands, especially along gentle slopes, ravines, or ledges along streams. This species occurs in original woodland that has never been plowed under or bulldozed over. It's abundance in such woodlands can be highly variable – from uncommon to common.

The nectar of the flowers attracts long-tongued bees primarily, including bumblebees, Mason bees, Miner bees, and Anthophorid bees. Less common visitors include *Bombylius major* (Giant Bee Fly) and various butterflies and skippers. The butterflies and skippers are not effective pollinators of the flowers. Because the seeds have elaisomes (fleshy or oily appendages), they are distributed by ants. Ants carry the seeds to their nests, eat the elaisomes, and discard the seeds some distance from the mother plant. The foliage is toxic to mammalian herbivores and is not often eaten by them.

This is a delightful spring wildflower of woodlands – both the flowers and foliage are attractive. Dutchman's Breeches is one of the earlier woodland wildflowers to bloom.

Native Americans and early white practitioners considered this plant useful for syphilis, skin conditions and as a blood purifier. Dutchman's breeches contains several alkaloids that may have effects on the brain and heart. However, *D. cucullaria* may be toxic and causes contact dermatitis in some people.

Source: Various internet locations.

F e e d b a c k

As always, a pleasure to read your newsletter! I had to chuckle when reading Carolyn's description of the errant hard hat and do confess it was my hard hat that rather unceremoniously tumbled down into the pit during the jail house tour! I can't wait for the next tour to see the progress on the restoration.

Sincerely,
Sheri Huerta
George Mason University
Department of History

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I guess that a little bit of poison don't cause grave results because we both know that there isn't a fruit, nut, bloom or leaf that your brother Daniel hasnt tried. Ha Ha

Fred Wolfe

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I'm catching up after a long trip back to the U.S (FL this time) and just now read the Apr edition. The letter from Larry Miles, former pastor of the Presbyterian Church next to the courthouse, caught my eye, since he was pastor when I attended the church during high school. If you have his e-mail address, would you forward him my address, along with best wishes and thanks for the work he did with the church youth group. I'd love to know what he's doing these days.

Thanks,
Mike Simpson
Germany

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I really look forward to your newsletter each month. Tom Cowne did a good job of expressing my feelings. Thank goodness we were all able to reconnect if only for a weekend. Your newsletters have brought me back to the community even more. Keep up the good work.

John McMichael

Brentsville Neighbors

Preserving Brentsville's History

Contact us on:
morganbreeden@aol.com

IN GOD WE TRUST

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