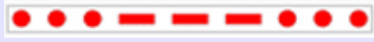


Brentsville Neighbors

Preserving Brentsville's History



SOS - Created 1906

October 2012



Little Orphan Annie
Created 1922

Welcome Neighbors,

Just as I was getting used to Summer it's now Autumn. The days are getting shorter, the nights cooler and there are even a few leaves starting to fall. But I have to admit, this is my favorite time of year when you can see your breath in the air during the morning and it has that crisp, clean feeling. I wonder how long it will be before I mention snow?

I'm just recovering from a major scare. Almost everything I do is tied to my computer in one way or another. So when I sat down to work on this newsletter and found my external hard drive—the one on which I had so carefully stored everything I've collected over the past 10 years—was dead, I experienced a sinking feeling that completely overwhelmed me. But I'm fortunate because everything was recovered from the drive. I'm really not sure what I would have done if all that work had been lost forever. So now I've vowed to have a back-up to my back-up just in case....

The "Bluegrass in Brentsville" event was a roaring success! Over 200 paid attendees plus a few volunteers. Mike Veness snapped the picture at the bottom. Thank you!

Please remember the "Rededication of the Restored Brentsville Schoolhouse and Alumnae

Reunion" will take place on Saturday, October 13th starting at 1:00pm rain or shine. The Historic Preservation Division is now the proud owner of a 30 X 30 tent that will be used for the outside events. And wait until you see the school—the work has been on-going under the watchful eye of Fred Wolfe so everything will be just perfect! Everyone is invited and urged to attend.

Very best wishes,

Kay & Morgan



"Skystone" by Mike Veness

This month:

- | | | | |
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| ➤ Flashback | page 2 | ➤ "Home" | page 6 |
| ➤ Where Wild Things Live | page 2 | ➤ When War Came | pages 7 & 8 |
| ➤ Snippets | page 3 | ➤ Reader Feedback | page 9 |
| ➤ To Build a Jail | pages 4, 5 & 9 | | |

Flashback

BRENTSVILLE

The Sunday School convention held in the Methodist Church, at Nokesville last Sunday, was largely attended with quite a number going from Brentsville. Among them were Mr. and Mrs. John Seymour, Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Bean, Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Keys, jr., and Mrs. Frank Egan.

Mrs. Clyde Wolf is much improved in health and is able to be out again.

Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Keys had as their guest for the past week, Miss Louise Suthard, of Washington.

Mr. Davis Keys was a recent visitor to his home here.

Mr. and Mrs. G. B. Shoemaker, returning to their home in Washington last Monday, following a week-end visit to Mrs. Shoemaker's parents here were overtaken by a terrible hail storm. Unable to find shelter they were forced to stop on the road side and sit out the storm, escaping injury to themselves or the car. Mr. Shoemaker, a police officer, attached to the fifth precinct, Washington, has many friends here.

Mrs. A. B. Manuel visited friends in Manassas on Tuesday, among them being Mrs. J. C. Peterson on South Main street.

Mr. and Mrs. C. T. Keys and little daughter, Patricia Ann, visited Mr. Keys' parents, Mr. and Mrs. John T. Keys, on Sunday.

Mrs. Emma Cooksey, mother of Mr. P. J. Cooksey, of Manassas, has been visiting her old home at Brentsville.

Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Keys, Mr. Lee Keys and Miss Ada Heflin, sister of Mrs. Keys, visited Mr. Keys' brother, Mr. H. F. Keys, at Independent Hill, on Sunday last.

Mr. J. R. B. Counts, father of Mr. Troy E. Counts, departed on Saturday night for an extended visit to relatives and friends in Russell County and Tennessee.

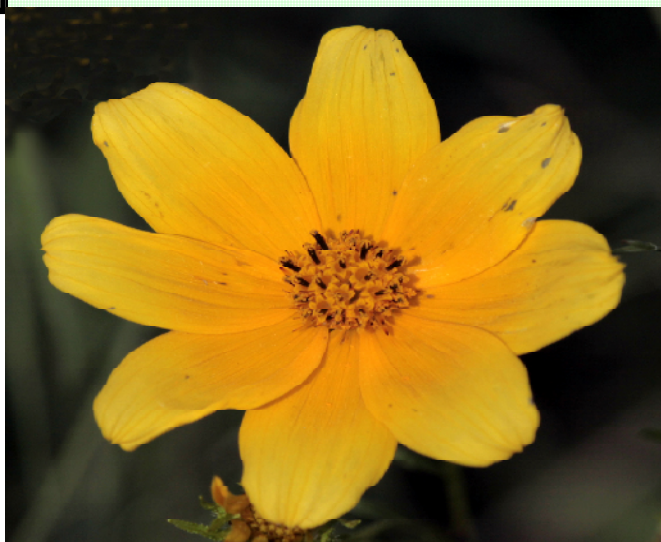
Mattie Catherine, little daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jess Whetzel, of this place, has been on the sick list this last week.

Cards have been received by friends here of Miss Aline Keys, who is stopping at Bridgeton, N. J., before going to Atlantic City.

Mr. Elmer Landes and Mr. John Donovan, where visitors at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Irvin Spitzer, on Sunday.

Source: The Manassas Journal, Brentsville News, July 4, 1929

Where WILD things live...



Bidens aristosa Bearded Beggarticks

Bidens is a genus of flowering plants in the family Asteraceae. It contains about 200 species. The common names beggarticks, black jack, burr marigolds, cobbler's pegs, Spanish needles, stickseeds, tickseeds and tickseed sunflowers refer to the acheneburrs on the seeds of this genus, most of which are barbed. The generic name refers to the same fact; it means "two-tooth", from Latin *bis* "two" + *dens* "tooth."

The plants are zoochorous; their seeds will stick to clothing, fur or feathers, and be carried to new habitat. This has enabled them to colonize a wide range, including many oceanic islands. It is now found in many areas of the world.

In some regions, leaves of Beggarticks are sometimes eaten as a vegetable and some are useful as honey plants.

Source: Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



Snippets from the County School Board Minutes



Form S. O.—No. 1—2M.

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA OATHS FOR DISTRICT SCHOOL TRUSTEES (For Counties)

[The law provides that these oaths shall be made and subscribed before the division superintendents of schools or any other officer authorized to administer an oath, who shall certify the same to the clerk of the circuit court, and the said clerk shall make in his record book a minute of the qualification of the trustee, and no fee shall be charged for either service.]

STATE OF VIRGINIA,

County of Prince William to-wit:

I, D. J. Arrington do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the Constitution of the United States, and the Constitution of the State of Virginia ordained by the convention which assembled in the city of Richmond on the twelfth day of June, nineteen hundred and one, and that I will faithfully and impartially discharge and perform all the duties incumbent upon me as District School Trustee to the best of my ability. So help me God.

I swear that I have not, while a citizen of this State, since the tenth day of July, nineteen hundred and two, fought a duel with a deadly weapon, or sent or accepted a challenge to fight a duel with a deadly weapon, either within or beyond the boundaries of this State, or knowingly conveyed such challenge, or aided or assisted in any manner in fighting such duel; and that I will not fight a duel with a deadly weapon, or send or accept a challenge to fight a duel with a deadly weapon, either within or beyond the boundaries of this State, or knowingly convey such challenge, or aid or assist in any manner in fighting such duel, during my continuance in office. So help me God.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 30 day of June, 1928

D. J. Arrington

Deputy Clerk

A minute of the above qualification entered in the Circuit Court of Pr. Wm. Co.

county this 10 day of July, 1928

Geo. E. Lyler Clerk

To Build a Jail

By Morgan Breeden

Part 3b - Logistics

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries-long before the era of tractor trailers, and before the development of a railroad system-Conestoga wagons were the primary vehicles for hauling freight. These wagons carried flour and other farm products from the hinterland to the cities, and they brought back commodities needed by the farmers and their families. This was especially true during the period from about 1750 to 1855, particularly in Pennsylvania and the neighboring states of Maryland, Virginia, and Ohio.

Like the cautious motorist of today the wagoner would not venture a trip without his (wagon) jack. The worn condition of those that remain is witness to their necessary and frequent use. For many years the blacksmith who “ironed” the wagon also made the jack. It also served to identify the wagon’s owner, as his initials and the date of making the wagon were generally cut into the vertical bar (rack) of the jack. The jack had to be capable of raising loads of four tons or more, so it needed to be solidly built. Ordinarily it was slung on the rear axletree alongside the feed and water buckets and the tar bucket that contained pine tar lubricant.

The lineage of the Conestoga horse is not definitely known. One tradition holds that William Penn sent three Flemish stallions into the Conestoga Valley, where they were bred with Virginia mares. Another supposition is that, since most of the earlier Conestoga horses were black, they might be the offspring of the black cart horses common in England,

ancestors of the great black horses of France that carried William the Conqueror and his armor-clad Normans to the Battle of Hastings in 1066. The bays and dappled gray Conestogas were very likely the result of mixed breeding with such strains as the Suffolk Punch and Chester Ball.

In temperament, the Conestoga horse was generally docile and steady. It stood seventeen hands (about five feet tall), was well muscled, weighed about eighteen hundred pounds, and had a longish stride that could cover about twelve to fourteen miles a day. The wagoner placed his heaviest and best horses nearest the wagon, for they had the job of turning and backing. Farmers and wagoners took pride in their animals, kept them well groomed and fed, and went to no little expense in fitting them out with good harnesses and fancy trimmings. Bridles were adorned with rosettes and sometimes elaborate headbands or pompoms; forelocks might be gaily trimmed with ribbon and colored loops.

On many wagons, each horse sported a set of bells (cone-or pear-shaped, not round) which produced a melodious ringing that heralded the approach of the Conestoga. These bells were made of brass or iron and mounted on a wooden or metal arched frame. Each frame customarily carried between three and five bells, those on the lead horses being the smallest, those on the swing horses somewhat larger, and those on the wheel horses the largest. Tradition holds that these were common on Pennsylvania teams in the nineteenth century, but on the National Road (which ultimately

(Continued on page 5)

became U.S. 40) they apparently were fairly rare. It is said that, in some areas, the unlucky driver whose wagon became stuck or disabled was obliged to surrender his bells to the rescuing wagoner. The reassuring statement, "I'll be there with bells on," seems to have originated in wagoning days.

On the road the Conestoga wagoner did not ride inside his vehicle but either walked beside his team, rode the wheel horse (the rearmost horse on the left) or perched himself precariously on the lazy board, a stout oak board that pulled out from beneath the wagon bed immediately in front of the left rear wheel. From this position he had a good view of the road ahead, and from it he or his assistant operated the brake. The lone wagoner often picked up a hitchhiker who would work the brake for him when the going was rough. Driving from the left side of the Conestoga, when other vehicles were driven from the right, made this a forerunner of the current practice of driving from the left side of the vehicle. Driving a team of horses pulling a load of four to six tons over miles of narrow, rutted road demanded toughness and stamina from driver, team, and wagon. Two groups were engaged in wagoning: the professional teamsters or "regulars" and the "sharpshooters."

The latter-many of them Pennsylvania Germans-were farmers who went into this work on a seasonal or casual basis when time permitted, or when the earnings looked good. The "regulars"-much like their modern counterpart, the overland truck driver-were a tough, resourceful group. They were seasoned by weather and experience, ready to fight for a load, and not hesitant about forcing another team off the road if the right-of-way was disputed. They particularly abhorred the "sharpshooters" who "horned in" when wagons were in strong demand to move goods out of over-flowing commission houses, or when a serious break in the canal meant full loads at

high rates. A "regular" might conceal brass knuckles or a blackjack in his rough homespun jacket, and his pockets might bulge with inexpensive cigars called "stogies"-presumably a corruption of "Conestoga"-that he smoked to keep the dust out of his throat. His pants were of homespun and sometimes of leather, and a flat wide-brimmed hat gave some protection from sun and rain.

On warm summer nights the wagoner would stop where dusk overtook him. The team would be fed, watered, and tied down before he prepared his own meal, and if a number of wagons were in caravan, jokes and stories would be swapped across the flames as supper cooked. On winter nights he headed for a tavern. Here he drove his wagon onto planks to keep the wheels from freezing to the ground, saw that his horses were cared for, and then entered the relative warmth of the tavern's interior where he could fortify himself with good food and ale, and swap yarns before stretching out for a night's rest on the floor. Wagoners and taverns were inevitable complements, and so it is not surprising that the first known printed reference to a wagon of this type is in the Pennsylvania Gazette for February 26, 1750, citing a tavern on Philadelphia's Market Street between Fourth and Fifth named the "Conestoga Wagon." At the other end of the Conestoga Road, in Lancaster, the wagoner could find Christian Martin's tavern, "The Sign of the Conestoga Wagon."

The Conestoga wagon deserves full appreciation for all that it was, but it is also important to understand what it was not. There are, in fact, two misconceptions that should be put to rest.

First, the Conestoga wagon did not play a key in the westward migration across the United States that took place throughout the nineteenth century. The prairie schooners or "Western wagons" that were prominent in that migration were modified farm wagons, in

Home

by
Brenda (Melvin) Crewe

I've had many blessings in my life but the one that stands out the most (other than waking up each morning) is being raised in Brentsville

I was fortunate enough to come to Brentsville when I was five years old, to live with my great-grand parents John and Florida Donovan.

There are no other words to describe this little town but home. You could run away but never leave because wherever you landed you were home.

Most people there seemed to be related by blood or through marriage but if you weren't you still felt like family.

As we all know some families up and move. Children grow up and leave home (I've been told) but as for my own that didn't happen. It seems that my great-

great grandfather, Richard Donovan, settled in Brentsville in the 1800's. He took up residence so to speak at the end of what is now known as Izaak Walton Drive. After his death, his son, John Donovan, took

over the farm. John and Florida had a daughter named Audrey who had three children, Johnny, George and Edith. George Melvin is my dad and all of us at one time or another lived on Izaak Walton Drive or the Old Donovan Road or even Whiskey Avenue if you can

remember that far back.

It's funny how history can indeed repeat itself because now my son, Anthony Crewe, also lives on Izaak Walton Drive. The sixth generation of Brentsville that never left home.



When WAR Came to Brentsville

POINT OF ROCKS, Sunday, October 6, 1861.

Colonel MARCY:

I arrived this morning at this point, traveling all night from Williamsport. It is my duty to inform you that the Potomac is not properly guarded there, as I came across myself, a little below, in a small boat piloted by a negro, unchallenged.

The movements of troops in Virginia are numerous and uncertain. They are expecting an attack and scarcely know where to look for it. They have been strengthening a place called Brentsville, which is approached from Occoquan Creek and also Dumfries.

The arrangements of Beauregard have been materially interfered with by Johnston and also by the authorities in Richmond. By the orders of the latter, four regiments since last Tuesday have left by rail for Tennessee, and the cars up to last night had not returned; and by Johnston's [order] four regiments (about 2,500 men) have been stationed in the neighborhood of Newtown and Berryville, in the neighborhood of Winchester. Strong pickets are out north and east of these places. I discovered the sole object of this expedition. It has been represented to Johnston that as soon as the river is low enough 1,200 men could cross at Williamsport, take the First Maryland Regiment prisoners, and obtain supplies of salt and other necessities for which they are

in distress. I feel sure this will be attempted unless provided against.

A council of war was held at Manassas on Thursday and immediately afterwards two general officers left for Richmond. The feeling is prevalent among the troops, and it is said to be shared in by Beauregard, that the present rebel army of the Potomac is not large enough to cope with General McClellan's forces, whilst Johnston prates of their "invincibility." The forces at Leesburg have been kept up to nearly 27,000. The troops sent north were taken from positions near Middleburg and Falls Church.

I believe there is no intention to cross the river except on the Upper Potomac, where they make sure they could recross, before being interrupted. There is very little ammunition at Leesburg. A messenger was sent there for some for the troops near Winchester; he was told to go farther south, as they had only 24 rounds for each man.

Pardon my suggesting that if the national army advance shortly, and Occoquan Creek could be threatened at the same moment, there would be a general falling back upon Manassas, and that by a prompt movement via Falls Church, and a simultaneous one on

(Continued on page 8)

the part of General Stone, the whole force at Leesburg might be captured.

While the rebels are less hopeful about Washington, they are very jubilant at the state of things in Missouri. I was in Richmond one whole day, and whilst there was informed that a message had been received by President Davis from General Price, stating that if 6,000 disciplined troops could be sent immediately, he would establish his headquarters in Saint Louis within ten days.

At my request Colonel Geary telegraphed to you immediately upon my arrival to have a man named Larmour, at Baltimore, arrested. He is expected at Manassas again in a week. He was several times taken letters and information, and took letters there with important information just previous to McDowell's advance.

There are two men now in Baltimore or Washington who have left Manassas on "spying" expeditions; one is named Maddox; he belongs to Loudon County; was once a medical student at Jefferson College, Philadelphia; said to be a very smart fellow. I should have come to Washington, but these men may have seen me when there ten days ago; and as I hope to be of some good service in the future, I had better not be stopped.

The troops are getting impatient; many of the Georgians openly expressing their desire to go home. They have not been paid and their clothes are getting very shabby.

The batteries at Leesburg I ascertained have not been touched. Should anything occur you

will have information. At Martinsburg yesterday morning I found two Eastern men, carpenters, who lodge at the house of Mrs. Cusahwa, a good Union woman; they both evinced a strong desire to risk their lives for their country; one of them has gone to Leesburg under the pretense of getting employment, and will communicate with the other every movement.

I propose, after I hear from you, to go quickly, which I can easily do, to Richmond, via Winchester, Strasburg, and Manassas, and report at Louisville, to you through General Anderson. I think you will see the importance of this in view of recent movements. I also fear to lie about there too long at a time. I have a splendid foothold, if I can only maintain it till something of importance occurs; and if you desire it, I will remain about the neighborhood of Manassas. I shall await your orders by telegraph.

The expected attack upon the coast is exciting a great deal of feeling, and should it come in Georgia or Louisiana, I believe hundreds of the army here, under pretense of going to the rescue, would go to swear allegiance to the United States.

Will you please authorize Major-General Banks to pay me what you think I am entitled to for sixteen days' services and risk.

Should I think of any other point I will send it on.

With great respect, I am, your obedient servant,

BUXTON.

contrast to the Conestogas which were freight wagons. Whereas the Conestoga wagons were distinguished by their beautifully proportioned sloping design, the Western wagons had much straighter utilitarian lines.

Second, the primary reason for the boat-like design of the Conestoga wagons was probably aesthetic, even though the slope of the wagon bed toward the center did help prevent the shifting of heavy loads. It is incorrect to maintain that the wagon box was boat-shaped so that travelers could float themselves and their goods across streams. Because of the method of its construction, making such a wagon water-tight would have been impossible; if anyone were to have been so foolhardy as to place the wagon in water, it would have leaked like a sieve.

Conestoga wagons, as long-distance haulers of heavy freight, had their peak of activity between about 1820 and 1840. The expansion of America's railroad lines in the middle of the century rapidly brought their use to an end. By the time of the Civil War, Conestoga wagoning was already thought of as a romantic episode of past history. Their manufacture had come to an end, and the Conestogas that remained were relegated to short-distance hauling, put away in barns, or left in the fields to rot. Soon, it appeared, the Conestoga wagon would be only a memory.

Next month—Part IV — Wood

Sources:

- The American Railroad Freight Car by John H. White
- *A Journey from Roads to Rails* by David Shackelford
- <http://www.offthebeatenpath.ws/Parks/AlleghenyPortageRailroad/index.html>
- http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/things/4280/conestoga_wagon/478210

F e e d b a c k

You really have done an INCREDIBLE job with all that you have done with Neighbors and the Court House Complex and all. You are REALLY SOMETHING!!! I have to force myself to quit reading and go to bed!

Julie Webster
California

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This is a very interesting newsletter especially the Conestoga wagons.

Ronald Cornwell
Edwardsville, IL

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I am so embarrassed that I have not previously written to thank you for the lovely and informative article you did on my great grandfather, Arthur Williams Sinclair, Sr. [Issue #83] Not to brag, but your portraits show what a handsome couple he and my great grandmother Eloise Armistead made.

I can tell you put in quite a bit of research; I wish Daddy was here to see it. [Actually, not much research was needed—the information was in the referenced document.] By the way, Daddy is frequently referred to as Arthur Williams Sinclair, Jr., but he was named for his grand father, not his father. Therefore, he was legally Arthur Williams Sinclair, II.

When my great grandfather died, my grandfather, Charles Armistead Sinclair, Sr., bought her a little cottage on S. Main Street in Manassas. My grandfather remained quite close to his mother for the remainder of her life.

Thank you for the research and beautiful editing; I hope other readers enjoyed knowing more [about] this Brentsville resident.

Fondly,
Catherine M. Sinclair

Brentsville Neighbors

Preserving Brentsville's History

Contact us on:

morganbreeden@aol.com

All back issues on:

<http://www.historicprincewilliam.org/brentsvilleneighbors/index.html>

IN GOD WE TRUST

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

