

# Brentsville Neighbors



November 27th

Preserving Brentsville's History

November 2013



November 28th

Welcome Neighbors,

We have heard that the stories told around the campfire this past October 18<sup>th</sup> were a bit haunting (pun intended). And was that really apple cider and cookies they offered? Hummmm....

Well at least there is the promise of a most interesting day to be spent in the old Haislip Farmhouse on November 16<sup>th</sup>. Becky Laudenslager and Ann McWhirt (who are normally found conducting open-hearth cooking courses at Gunston Hall) have graciously volunteered their time and talents for a day at Brentsville sharing this knowledge. Those attending will learn the basic skills needed to prepare food over an open fire after first learning how to build a fire, of course! They will teach the preparation of three different dishes and the program will end with everyone enjoying the food they have just cooked. There is a cost of \$30.00 per person, space is very limited and reservations are required so please call 703-365-7895 and sign up early.

Very best wishes,  
Kay and Morgan



## This month:

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## Celebration At Old Brentsville Court House

### Historic Landmark Reconditioned

The pre-Christmas social season in Brentsville was officially ushered in last Wednesday night by a Reception in the Old Court House, given by the Court House Committee in honor of the recent face-lifting and general rejuvenation of one of our few remaining historic landmarks. The building had definitely acquired a New Look, being all decked out in festive array with baskets of flowers, wearing her fashionable new paint, plaster, and woodwork with the proud yet dignified air of a truly great lady whose age only adds interest to her beauty, as she modestly listened to her praises from a number of old friends and admirers.

Mr. J. M. Alvey introduced the speakers, among whom were the Reverend J. Murray Taylor, chairman of the Board of Supervisors, Mr. John Cox, head of the Art Department of the Vocational School, Hawes Thornton Davies, whose uncle, Judge Thornton, played so eminent a role in the history of Brentsville and the County, Mr. Wheatley Johnson of the Board of Supervisors, Mr. P. A. Lewis of the School Board and Mr. John Ellis, representing the Brentsville District.

Mr. Davies recalled the day when a young Brentsville lad, more slender than he is now ... one Walter Keys, came rushing into his office with the alarming news that somebody had "bought the Court House and was tearing it down!" It seems that the Authorities, convinced that the building was about to collapse anyway had determined to sell it, on the condition that the bricks were of the sort that the purchaser wanted, and the purchaser was taking samples. Mr. Davies moved with alacrity to set certain ponderous legal machinery in action and the sale was halted, but it was not until some years later

that money for it's restoration was made available by the executors of Judge Thornton's estate.

Great credit for the preservation of this fine old structure must be given to Mr. John Cox who, as chairman of the local Court House Committee, has tirelessly and persistently kept the matter in front of the Board of Supervisors and the School Board, not to say badgered them into authorizing the needed repairs and beautification.

Quite a crowd was present, including a number of distinguished out-of-town guests, and after the program was concluded refreshments were served by the ladies of the committee.

On Friday, the 28<sup>th</sup>, there will be a dance sponsored by the community of Bristow for the benefit of the War Memorial Health Center. The ten per cent of the gate receipts that usually go toward the upkeep of the Court House will also be donated to the Fund as a contribution from the Court House Committee.

On Friday evening the Young Turkey Supper will be given at the Court House by the ladies of the Kensington Society, an organization noted for the quantity and quality of edibles produced by it's members. Supper will start at 6:30, and it is hoped that as many as possible will attend.

The Brentsville Home Demonstration Club met on Tuesday afternoon to learn about Candlewicking; In the absence of Mrs. Kline the demonstration was given by Mrs. Kempton and Mrs. Webster (mostly Mrs. Kempton), and several new members were present.

On Friday evening the Young People's Group met at the home of Gill Machen. Due to the absence of the President and Secretary, the meeting was ably conducted by Frankie Golliday. After the business session was over refreshments were served by the girls, while the boys roasted

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popcorn over an open fire, following which stories were told and a good time was had by all.

On Sunday Mrs. Joe Keys with her sons, Raymond and Douglas, and her sister, Mrs. Payne, drove to Marshall to visit her brother, Mr. Lemuel Heflin.

Visiting the Bradshaws on Sunday were Mr. and Mrs. Alan Herring, and son, of Washington, and Mr. Oscar Godfrey.

Mr. Nicholas Webster was home for the week-end from Ithaca, N. Y.

Mrs. Orebaugh has been quite ill, and her daughter, Mrs. Vaughn, arrived on Wednesday to stay until she is better.

Mrs. Essie Randall, of Manassas was a guest of Mrs. Bell on Sunday evening.

On Tuesday Mr. and Mrs. Wister Stephens entertained Mr. and Mrs. Harrell Heflin of Fredericksburg. Miss Doris Stephens was home for the week-end.

There was a fire at the Goldberg residence on Sunday afternoon, when a chimney became overheated. The Manassas Fire Department brought the fire under control, but considerable damage was inflicted.

With Best Regards,  
Agnes Webster

Source: The Manassas Messenger, November 21, 1947

On Saturday October 26th, the Prince William Historic Preservation Foundation held its 10th Annual Membership Meeting at the Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre. The Foundation's President, Mark Trbovich announced that we just received a donation of up to \$15,000 for the Brentsville Jail restoration project. This wonderful donation comes with a challenge. We need to raise matching funds to take advantage of the full donation. We already raised \$1,475 this weekend! Please help us reach our goal by the November 30th deadline. Online donations can be made through our website [www.pwhpf.org](http://www.pwhpf.org) or by calling 703.792.4754. Please help us to finish the restoration of this important historical building.

## Charles Ulrich Meng

The Meng family is of Teutonic origin. John Christopher Meng, the founder of this family in America, was born in Mannheim, Germany, in 1697, and married Dorathea Von Elsten on June 29, 1723. In 1728, with their two children, they came to this country and settled in Germantown, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He brought with him testimonials of himself and "honorable housewife" from Samuel Michael Doughfs, a preacher of the reformation. On August 24, 1728, he took the oath of allegiance. A large Bible, which they brought with them, and their letters and other records can be seen at the Historical Society, 130 Locust Street, Philadelphia.

From this union we have eight children. The third, John Ulrich, born June 11, 1731, married Sarah Calladay. We are uncertain as to the exact date of the birth of Christopher Meng, a son of this union and next in lineal descent.

Christopher Meng was a captain in the Revolutionary war. He served in the Second Batallion, Philadelphia Militia, was in the battle of Brandywine and records speak of him as having crossed in the boat with General Washington. At the close of the war he settled in Winchester, Frederick county, Virginia, and married Margaret Jones.

In 1780 Charles Ulrich Meng, next in line, was born in Winchester, Virginia and he lived there till he was fifteen years of age, at which time he moved to Woodstock, Shenandoah County, Virginia. He married Victoria Tebbs, daughter of Captain William and Victoria Haislip Tebbs. William Tebbs was a captain in the Revolutionary war in a company of Westmoreland militia. Charles Ulrich Meng was a captain in the war of 1812, Scott's Regiment of Virginia Militia. "Present on duty at Norfolk." Victoria Tebbs Meng (1782- 1869) brought her husband a great amount of wealth and after their marriage they lived at her native home, "Moss Hill" near Brentsville, Prince William Co., Virginia, where Charles U. Meng practiced law and served as judge until his death in 1865. Nine children were the issue of this marriage, Evelina, Ellen, Charles H. James Madison, Sarah, Martha, William. Edmond and Catharine.

Source: A History of Kentucky and Kentuckians, The Leaders and Representative Men in Commerce, Industry and Modern Activities by E. Polk Johnson, Volume III & IV, 1912.

# ART IN BRENTSVILLE

By

Madelyn “Mickey” Winslow

Our family moved to Prince William County from California in the early seventies when my husband Bill received orders to be sent to the Pentagon. For the first few years we were inundated with family from Pennsylvania and points south visiting and wanting to see the Washington D.C. sights. My step-dad and my Mom flew up from New Orleans to visit us and since he was a Civil War buff and of course a “Rebel,” we visited all the well-known Civil War sights around Manassas. My step-dad even had to stop and read all the historical markers along the highway! A few years later, while traveling on Rt. 619 west to go camping in George Washington National Forest we passed by Brentsville. Having never heard of Brentsville, I was intrigued by the little schoolhouse, the Courthouse and a third building, which was the jailhouse, but I didn’t know it at the time.

In the late eighties, I became a member of the Woodbridge Art Guild, now called the Prince William Art Society. Our club was often invited to Brentsville to be part of many outdoor shows, and members learned so much about the history of this historical town. Several of us participated in “Paint Outs” where we sat in the lawn in front of the buildings and drew and

painted. We also took photos of the buildings for future paintings. My particular favorite subject was the Jailhouse, thus my first creation was a drawing of the Jailhouse rendered in pen and ink.

As time passed by, we had the pleasure of meeting Kay and Morgan Breeden and they became active members of the art society. We continued to have art shows at Brentsville and a really fun one we participated in was the Chili Cook-Off to see who made the best chili! The food was scrumptious and it was fun to see whose chili was the very best; personally I’m glad that I didn’t have to judge as I liked them all! At many of these events, I noticed a lovely lady who always seemed to stand out as she wore color-coordinated outfits. I asked her if I might take





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her photograph and she always gave permission to do so. She wore a wide-brimmed hat with a filmy band which matched her skirt and top. She told me that her name was Peggy Mauck. Whenever we had a show there in Brentsville, I always watched to see which color she would wear and I was never disappointed; she looked lovely as always. I decided to paint a pastel portrait of her and when it was finished, I presented it to her at one of the shows. My delight in seeing her face light up was so marvelous!

As time went by, I drew many pictures of the buildings and decided to put 5" x 7" ink drawings of the three buildings into triptychs and the first one I sold at a show in the one-room school was to Bill Wade. I learned more Brentsville history from him and eventually he commissioned me to do a pen & ink drawing of the old store and family home. That was a challenge as the store was no longer there. He gathered many photos from his family from years gone by for me to study. We learned even more interesting things when we started to look at the many binders that Morgan had made of the wonderful history of Brentsville. I was envious of the fact that he and Kay had grown up there since I didn't come from a tight-knit community

like this special town. Kay mentioned to me at one time that the teenagers used to have dances at the Court House!

When the Courthouse was being remodeled to its original beauty, we went to check it out and Morgan was there and was kind enough to show us around; we had to wear hardhats! A young man came into the courthouse while we were there and took our pictures and the next thing we knew the three of us had our picture in the "Potomac News." Morgan also gave us a tour of part of the jailhouse and said that he had lived there at one time, interesting! Not too long ago, we drove out to deliver a painting to Morgan and he was going to do some work at the cabin back in the woods and took us along to see it. The cabin was lovely and we saw all the work that had been done on it to bring it back to its original beauty of so many years ago. Morgan showed us the vegetable garden which had some of the same vegetables that the generations before had cultivated!

Over the years, I drew pictures of the three historical buildings and the Union Church nearby. I did a pen & ink drawing of the church for Morgan. Morgan and Kay own many of my drawings and paintings and I am very grateful and delighted to have them displayed in their home. I continue to paint my favorite subjects of Lighthouses in Virginia, the Outer Banks and along the Chesapeake and local historical buildings in the county. Flowers, and pets, particularly dogs...cats sometimes...are also favorites. I owe much to the Breedens for sharing their time and their extensive knowledge of Brentsville to me. I am always glad to receive the Newsletter from Brentsville as it is full of so much history. If my step-dad were alive, he would love to read it too.



Mickey and Bill Wade  
August 13, 2007

# When WAR Came to Brentsville

HEADQUARTERS, Centreville, December 6, 1861.

Brigadier-General WHITING:

DEAR GENERAL: I am a little exercised on the subject of our communications. The blocking of the road near Greenwood Church was, I suppose, to cover your left flank. Could it be so done as to give us access to you? Think of it, and tell us how to approach you. I don't want our communications to be interrupted either by Davis' Ford or Bland's. Should we go to you, it might be well to do so two columns. It would be well, therefore, to observe river as your strength will permit-the Occoquan, I mean. Should you have to fall back and it is practicable, it should be towards us by Bland's or Brentsville. The batteries should not be watch when you are contending with an army coming from above; to oppose it, get all troops together. If we beat it, we get back the guns supposing a river party to have occupied the batteries in the mean time. The only question is where to meet him-whether on the Occoquan or where you are. York knowledge of localities enables to judge better than we can do here. I suppose that if an army approaches us and another the Occoquan, lesser columns will approach by every intermediate road. It might and would be well, as far as practicable, to have a party at each crossing place to impose upon these column and give information of them.

Yours, truly,  
J. E. JOHNSTON.

Joseph Eggleston Johnston (February 3, 1807 – March 21, 1891) was a career U.S. Army officer, serving with distinction in the Mexican-American War and Seminole Wars, and was also one of the most senior general officers in the Confederate States Army during the American Civil War. He was unrelated to Albert Sidney Johnston, another high-ranking Confederate general.

Johnston was trained as a civil engineer at the U.S. Military Academy and by 1860 achieved the rank of brigadier general as Quartermaster General of the U.S. Army. When his native state of Virginia seceded from the Union, Johnston resigned his commission, the highest-ranking officer to join the Confederacy. To his dismay, however, he was appointed only the fourth ranking full general in the Confederate Army.

Johnston's effectiveness in the Civil War was undercut by tensions with Confederate President Jefferson Davis, who often criticized him for a lack of aggressiveness, and victory eluded him in most campaigns he personally commanded. However, he was the senior Confederate commander at the First Battle of Bull Run in 1861, and his recognition of the important necessary actions, and prompt application of leadership in that victory is usually credited to his subordinate, P. G. T. Beauregard. He defended the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia, during the 1862

Peninsula Campaign, withdrawing under the pressure of a superior force under Union Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan. In his only offensive action during the campaign, he suffered a severe wound at the Battle of Seven Pines, after which he



was replaced in command by his classmate at West Point, Robert E. Lee. In 1863, in command of the Department of the West, he was criticized for his actions and failures in the Vicksburg Campaign. In 1864, he fought against Union Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman in the Atlanta Campaign, but was relieved of command after withdrawing from northwest Georgia to the outskirts of the city. In the final days of the war, he was returned to command of the small remaining forces in the Carolinas Campaign

and surrendered his armies to Sherman on April 26, 1865. Two of his major opponents, Grant and Sherman, made comments highly respectful of his actions in the war, and they became close friends with Johnston in subsequent years.

After the war Johnston was an executive in the railroad and insurance businesses. He served a term in Congress and was commissioner of railroads under Grover Cleveland. He died of pneumonia after serving in inclement weather as a pallbearer at the funeral of his former adversary, and later friend, William T. Sherman.

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

## Where WILD things live...

### Wild Turkey

The Wild Turkey is native to North America. It is the same species as the domestic turkey, which was originally derived from a southern Mexican subspecies of Wild Turkey. Although native to North America, the turkey probably got its name due to the domesticated variety being imported to Britain in ships coming from the Levant via Spain. The British at the time therefore, associated the Wild Turkey with the country Turkey and the name stuck.

The Eastern Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo silvestris*) (Viellot, 1817) was the turkey species first encountered in the wild by the Puritans, the founders of Jamestown, and the Acadians; its range is one of the largest of all subspecies. The natural range covers the entire eastern half of the United States from Maine to northern Florida and extending as far west as Michigan, Illinois, and into Missouri. The Eastern Wild Turkey is heavily hunted in the Eastern USA and is the most hunted wild turkey subspecies.

**Description:** Adult wild turkeys have long reddish-yellow to grayish-green legs. The body feathers are generally blackish and dark brown overall with a coppery sheen that becomes more complex in adult males. Adult males, called toms or gobblers, have a large, featherless, reddish head, red throat, and red wattles on the throat and neck. The head has fleshy growths called caruncles. Juvenile males are called jakes, the difference between an adult male and a juvenile is that the jake has a very short beard and his tail fan has longer feathers in the middle. The adult male's tail fan will be all the same length. When males are excited, a fleshy flap on the bill expands, and this, the wattles and the bare skin of the head and neck all

become engorged with blood, almost concealing the eyes and bill. The long fleshy object over a male's beak is called a snood. When a male turkey is excited, its head turns blue; when ready to fight, it turns red. Each foot has three toes in front, with a shorter, rear-facing toe in back; males have a spur behind each of their lower legs.



Photo by Fred Wolfe

Male turkeys have a long, dark, fan-shaped tail and glossy bronze wings. The male is substantially larger than the female, and his feathers have areas of red, purple, green, copper, bronze, and gold iridescence. Females, called hens, have feathers that are duller

overall, in shades of brown and gray. Parasites can dull coloration of both sexes; in males, coloration may serve as a signal of health. The primary wing feathers have white bars. Turkeys have 5000 to 6000 feathers. Tail feathers are of the same length in adults, different lengths in juveniles. Males typically have a "beard", a tuft of coarse hair (modified feathers) growing from the center of the breast. Beards average 9.1 inches in length. In some populations, 10 to 20 percent of females have a beard, usually shorter and thinner than that of the male. The adult male normally weighs from 11 to 24 pounds and measures 39–49 inches in length. The adult female is typically much smaller at 5.5–12 pounds and is 30 to 37 inches long. The wings are relatively small and the wingspan ranges from 4 ft 1 inch to 4 ft 9 inch. The record-sized adult male, according to the National Wild Turkey Federation, weighed 37.1 pounds, with records of tom turkeys weighing over 30 pounds uncommon but not rare. After the Trumpeter Swan, the turkey has the second heaviest maximum weight of any North American bird.

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**Flight:** Despite their weight, wild turkeys, unlike their domestic counterparts, are agile fliers. In ideal habitat of open woodland or wooded grasslands, they may fly beneath the canopy top and find perches. They usually fly close to the ground for no more than a quarter mile.

**Voice:** Turkeys have many vocalizations: “gobbles,” “clucks,” “putts,” “purrs,” “yelps,” “cutts,” “whines,” “cackles,” and “kee-kees.” In early spring, male turkeys gobble to announce their presence to females and competing males. The gobble can carry for up to a mile. Males also emit a low-pitched “drumming” sound produced by the movement of air in the air sack in the chest, similar to the booming of a prairie chicken. In addition they produce a sound known as the “spit” which is a sharp expulsion of air from this air sack. Hens “yelp” to let gobblers know their location. Gobblers often yelp in the manner of females, and hens can gobble, though they rarely do so. Immature males often yelp.

**Habitat:** Wild turkeys prefer hardwood and mixed conifer-hardwood forests with scattered openings such as pastures, fields, orchards and seasonal marshes. They seemingly can adapt to virtually any dense native plant community as long as coverage and openings are widely available. Open, mature forest with a variety of interspersions of tree species appear to be preferred. In the Northeast of North America, turkeys are most profuse in hardwood timber of oak-hickory and forests of red oak, beech, cherry and white ash.

**Foraging:** Wild turkeys are omnivorous, foraging on the ground or climbing shrubs and small trees to feed. They prefer eating hard mast such as acorns, nuts, and various trees, including hazel, chestnut, hickory, and pinyon pine as well as various seeds, berries such as juniper and bearberry, roots and insects. Turkeys also occasionally consume amphibians and small reptiles such as lizards and snakes. Wild turkeys often feed in cow pastures, sometimes visit back yard bird feeders, and favor croplands after harvest to scavenge seed on the ground. Turkeys are also known to eat a wide variety of grasses. Turkey populations can reach large numbers in small areas because of their ability to forage for different types of food. Early morning and late afternoon are the desired times for eating.

**Predators:** Predators of eggs and nestlings include Raccoons, Virginia Opossums, Skunks, Gray Foxes, raptors, Groundhogs, other rodents, and snakes. Predators of both adults and young include Coyotes, Bobcats, Cougars, eagles and (with the exception of adult males) Great Horned Owls, domestic dogs, and red foxes. Humans are now the leading predator of adult turkeys. When approached by potential predators, turkeys usually run away rather than fly away, though may also fly short distances if pressed.

Occasionally, if cornered, adult turkeys may try to fight off predators and large male toms can be especially aggressive in self-defense. When fighting, turkeys may kick with their legs, using the spurs on their back of the legs as a weapon, bite with their beak and ram with their relatively large bodies and may be able to deter predators up to the size of mid-sized mammals. Occasionally, turkeys may behave aggressively towards humans, especially in areas where natural habitats are scarce, though attacks can usually be deterred by giving turkeys a respectful amount of space and keeping outdoor spaces clean and undisturbed.

**Significance to Native Americans:** The Wild Turkey, throughout its range, plays a significant role in the cultures of many Native American tribes all over North America. Outside of the Thanksgiving feast, it is a favorite meal in Eastern tribes who consumed both the eggs and meat, sometimes turning the latter into a type of jerky to preserve it and make it last through cold weather. They provided habitat by burning down portions of forests to create artificial meadows which would attract mating birds, and thus give a clear shot to hunters. The feathers of turkeys also often made their way into the rituals and headgear of many tribes. Many leaders, such as Catawba chiefs, traditionally wore turkey feather headdresses. Significant peoples of several tribes wore turkey feather cloaks. The Turkey Clan is one of the three Lenape clans. Movements of wild turkeys inspired the Caddo tribe's turkey dance.

Source: Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (in part)



# SURVEY OF OCCOQUAN RIVER FROM THE JUNCTION OF CEDAR AND BROAD RUNS TO THE TOWN OF OCCOQUAN.

*BY P. SCALES*

In April I set out to execute the duties called for at a meeting of the board of public works on the 26<sup>th</sup> of March last, appointing me to make a survey for a road from Warrenton to Occoquan, and also to survey the Occoquan river.

After examining the country between the towns of Warrenton and Occoquan, and running an experimental line to enable the selection of the fixed points in the survey for the *road*, it was thought proper to commence the survey for the river at the junction of the Cedar and Broad runs, and continue the line of levels to tide water, and then complete the survey for the road.

Under this conclusion, the survey of the river was commenced at the junction of the Cedar and Broad runs, upon a bench 6 feet above ordinary low water, and continued with the line of levels to station 3240, fronting the town of Occoquan, distance 23 miles, and fall to the top of common tides 141.14 feet, 79.91 of which is, however, encountered in the last 3 miles.

The river from near Brentsville to the Potomac is exceedingly winding, and discharges the waters from a very rolling or hilly country, and for agricultural purposes, one that very illy rewards the labor of the husbandman. It is, however, not from the marketable surplus of the products grown on the country contiguous, that the dividends upon this improvement are to be alone looked for. For although expensive in its nature, from the commensurate benefits to be conferred, and local in its operation, it might afford facilities of transportation to the products grown in the highly agricultural parts of Prince William and Fauquier to tide water, as well as lessen the land travel of heavy articles to the counties of Rappahannock and part of Culpeper.

The first 20 miles the river presents no material difficulty to the improvement, and moves upon an average descent of 3.39 to the mile,

while the 3 remaining miles to tide water encountered a fall of 71.91 feet through bold and extensive masses of gneiss rock thrown by the impetus of the current in wild confusion.

To improve this river with dams and locks, so as to form a slack water navigation for boats of ten tons burthen, is perhaps the only plan contemplated by the friends of the improvement. It is however recommended, that in addition a short canal of 1340 yards should be introduced in the 21<sup>st</sup> mile, and the present race to the Occoquan mills be widened to the adaptation of water craft of the size contemplated; then with all this economy of construction, the cost of such an improvement will probably amount to \$58,504.\*

But if the improvement was completed to the town of Occoquan, the trade thus accommodated to tide water, would be subjected to remaining embarrassment, from the accumulation of the deposits in the channel below Colchester, thus forming a bar that impedes the passage of water craft drawing more than 5 feet water; and the cost of removing these impediments permanently, would be difficult to estimate, for when once removed, the cause that formed them being uniform, their return would be certain.

Respectfully submitted,

P. SCALES, *Agent B. P. W.*

*January, 1835.*

\* The estimate made for wooden locks 60 by 10, placed out of the influence of extreme freshets, and the dams formed of parallel timbers bolted to the rocks and filled in with stone.

Source: Seventeenth, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Annual Reports of the Board of Public Works, to the General Assembly of Virginia; Vol. VII, 1835

# Brentsville Neighbors

## Preserving Brentsville's History

Contact us on:

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All back issues on:

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

IN GOD WE TRUST

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