

Brentsville Neighbors

“Preserving Brentsville’s History”

A p r i l 2 0 1 4

Welcome Neighbors,

Whew!! Spring has finally arrived and I, for one, was more anxious for it than I can ever remember. It just seemed that winter didn’t want to go away. What happened to the “In like a lion, out like a lamb” theory? It was more like “In like a lion who wanted to spend the month!”

But now the wildflowers are starting to bloom and what better opportunity to get outside and enjoy a nice day in the woods than a **Nature Trail Walk** to be held on April 12th starting at 1 p.m. This will offer a guided tour along the nature trails at Brentsville and offer an opportunity to learn about the plants and animals that call this part of Virginia home. The cost is \$5.00 per person but children under six are free. Please – no pets.

Do you have a child age 8 – 12 that is looking for something really exciting to do this year? How about enrolling them in the **Basic Civil War Camp** that takes place at the Brentsville Courthouse Historic Center from April 14th thru the 18th. Children will participate in activities designed to develop a better understanding of soldier life during the American Civil War. Activities include: “Enlist in Virginia’s

Army,” “Life in Camp,” “Infantry Drill,” “Did Civil War Soldiers Really Eat that Stuff?” “Civil War Medicine,” and a field trip to Manassas National Battlefield Park. Reservations taken at the Ben Lomond Community Center (703-792-8320) or online at www.pwcparks.org Cost is \$130.00 per child and the sessions run from 9 a.m. until noon each day.

OK, so let’s assume you are not a child but you are still interested in Civil War activities. This might be just what you’re looking for. On April 26th from 11 a.m.- 4 p.m., **The Cavalry Comes to Brentsville**. In 1861, Brentsville served as the muster location for the Prince William Cavalry as they went off to fight in the Civil War. Join living historians as they portray cavalry units from the Civil War. Drills, firing demos and tours offered. The cost is \$5.00 per person with children under six free. Call 703-365-7895 for additional information.

We also have some exciting news about the Brentsville Jail restoration. Please see page 6.

Very best wishes,
Kay & Morgan

This month:

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Absent-mindedness is a miserable affliction, as anyone who suffers from it will tell you. I spent most of Friday morning delving into the remote recesses of cobwebby closets and cupboards, on the trail of my big roasting pan, which had apparently vanished into the fourth dimension. "Anything that size" I said, exasperated, "Simply couldn't evaporate into thin air like a moth ball. Somebody MUST have stolen it!" Whereupon I cast upon the children a cold and suspicious eye. It would do no good to come right out and ask them, I knew from bitter experience; They have a way of assuming a sweetly innocent expression and pretending not to understand English. So THIS time I determined to be subtle. It surely would not be difficult for an old hand at detective stories, like myself, to outwit a four-year-old child. And with this optimistic thought I opened the first round of conversation. "My", I said affably, "wouldn't it be nice to have a big PAN to play with!"

"Unhuh."

"A nice big SQUARE pan."

"Unhuh."

"Like the one Mother cooked the old turkey in."

"What's a turkey?"

"YOU know..." I hedged, wishing I had paid more attention to biology in school. "A -uh big sort of chicken with feathers. And Mother puts it in the PAN."

"With the feathers?"

"No, dear, without the feathers."

"Well, where are the feathers?"

"The man pulls the feathers out."

"What man?"

"The man at the store." I could feel the next question coming on.

"WHY does the man pull the feathers out?"

"Well, you can't eat Feathers, can you?" Giggles. "Besides it wouldn't fit in the PAN."

"What pan?" At last I felt we were on the right track; he had fallen neatly into my trap.

"Mother's nice big square roasting pan. Didn't you have it outside, putting dirt in it perhaps?"

"Yes." "Did you have it in the garden?" "No." "In the sand pile?" "No." "At the barn?" "Yes." "What did you do with it?" "Put dirt in it." "Did you leave it down there?" "No."

My patience was wearing thin. "Well what DID you do with it?"

"I didn't do ANYthing with it, YOU planted the little lettuces in it and put it up there..." He pointed to the window sill, where, indeed, sat the object of discussion with the "little lettuces" sprouting nicely. There was an embarrassed silence as I made a note on a piece of paper to remind me to subscribe to the next Memory Course I saw advertised. The piece of paper was subsequently used to light the fire in the stove, I might add, and that was the end of THAT. But they say that frustration is the mother of creative effort, so in an attempt to salvage the remnants of my dignity I sat down to compose a bit of deathless verse, to be entitled: "If You Are Too Stupid To Find A Roasting Pan That Is Under Your Nose, Maybe You Had Better Be A Poet, It is Easier."

When they said that Spring was coming
I'll confess I had my doubts;
Though the Sun has thawed the plumbing
And the seeds are sprouting sprouts
We have stored our woolen mittens
And we think of spreading lime,
And a brand-new crop of kittens
Will appear most any time.
Though the winds of March may blow,
There's a bud on every twig;
Had I not mislaid my hoe
I would rush outside and dig!

Yours,

Agnes Webster

The Manassas Messenger, April 4, 1947

Where WILD things live... Northern Cardinal

The Northern Cardinal is a mid-sized songbird. The male averages slightly larger than the female. The adult male is a brilliant crimson red color with a black face mask over the eyes, extending to the upper chest. The color becomes duller and darker on the back and wings. The female is fawn, with mostly grayish-brown tones and a slight reddish tint on the wings, the crest, and the tail feathers. The face mask of the female is gray to black and is less defined than that of the male. Both sexes possess prominent raised crests and bright coral-colored beaks. The beak is cone-shaped and strong. Young birds, both male and female, show the coloring similar to the adult female until the fall, when they molt and grow adult feathers. The plumage color of the males is produced from carotenoid pigments in the diet.

Northern Cardinals are numerous across the eastern United States and SE Canada. Its range extends west to the U.S.–Mexico border and south into Mexico. The species was introduced to Bermuda in 1700. It has also been introduced in Hawaii and southern California. Its natural habitat is woodlands, gardens, shrublands, and swamps.

The Northern Cardinal is a territorial song bird. The male sings in a loud, clear whistle from the top of a tree or another high location to defend his territory. He will chase off other males entering his territory. He may mistake his image on various reflective surfaces as an invading male, and will fight his reflection relentlessly. The Northern Cardinal learns its songs, and as a result the songs vary regionally. It is able to easily distinguish the sex of another singing Northern Cardinal by its song alone. Mated pairs often travel together.

Both sexes sing clear, whistled song patterns, which are repeated several times, then varied. Some common phrases are described as chee-er-a-dote, chee-er-a-dote-dote-dote, purdy, purdy, purdy...whoit, whoit, whoit, what-cheer, what-cheer...wheet, wheet, wheet and cheer, cheer, cheer, what, what,



what, what. The Northern Cardinal has a distinctive alarm call, a short metallic ‘chip’ sound. This call often is given when predators approach the nest, in order to give warning to the female and nestlings. In some cases it will also utter a series of chipping notes. The frequency and volume of these notes increases as the threat becomes greater. This chipping noise is also used by a Cardinal pair to locate each other, especially during dusk hours when visibility wanes.

They are preyed upon by a wide variety of predators native to North America, including falcons, hawks, shrikes, and several owls. Predators of chicks and eggs include: milk snakes, blue jays, eastern gray squirrels, fox squirrels, eastern chipmunks, and domestic cat.

The diet of the Northern Cardinal consists mainly (up to 90%) of weed seeds, grains, and fruits. It is a ground feeder and finds food while hopping on the ground through trees or shrubbery. It eats beetles, cicadas, grasshoppers, snails, wild fruit and berries, corn (maize) and oats, sunflower seeds, the blossoms and bark of elm trees, and drinks maple sap from holes made by sapsuckers, an example of commensalism. During the summer months, it shows preference for seeds that are easily husked, but is less selective during winter, when food is scarce. Northern Cardinals also will consume insects and feed their young almost exclusively on insects.

Pairs mate for life, and they stay together year-round. Mated pairs sometimes sing together before nesting. During courtship they may also participate in a bonding behavior where the male collects food and brings it to the female, feeding her beak-to-beak. If the mating is successful, this mate-feeding may continue throughout the period of incubation.

Males sometimes bring nest material to the female cardinal, who does most of the building. She crushes twigs with her beak until they are pliable, then turns in the nest to bend the twigs around her body and push them into a cup shape with her feet. The cup has four

(Continued on page 9)

Battle of Brentsville

By

Bill Backus

When one mentions Confederate cavalry in Northern Virginia, John Mosby and his Rangers immediately come to mind. Mosby's long shadow has unfortunately obscured other Confederate units that operated in Prince William County at various times during the Civil War, such as the Chinquapin Rangers and the Iron Scouts. With such an emphasis on Mosby, few people are aware of the battle between the Iron Scouts and the 1st Michigan Cavalry on the streets of Brentsville in early 1863.

On January 9, 1863, a squad of 9 men of the 1st Michigan Cavalry led by 26 year old Sergeant Alonzo Wilcox approached Brentsville. Sgt. Wilcox's mission was to disrupt and disperse any Confederate soldiers that he came in contact with. While the Confederate army was around Fredericksburg, small bands of Confederate soldiers had ventured into Northern Virginia to try and disrupt the Union army. Staying with Pro-Confederate residents, members of these various units would unite at an appointed time, and dressed as Confederate soldiers harass the Union army with hit and run tactics. Eventually enough of these raids forced the Union army to send detachments of soldiers to deal with these Confederates. By the time Sgt. Wilcox and his fellow Wolverines climbed into their saddles, the area around Brentsville was known as a region of Pro-Confederate sympathizers who had harbored Confederate soldiers.

The men that the Union army were after was an organization known as the Iron Scouts. The majority of the Scouts were South Carolinians who had earlier in 1861 encamped at Brentsville as members of the Hampton Legion but had left when the Confederate army evacuated the region in early 1862. Returning to the area, the dual purpose of the Iron Scouts was to gather intelligence for the

Confederate high command and to harass the Union army when the situation warranted it. Aiding the Iron Scouts were three soldiers detailed from the Prince William Cavalry, a company which was raised from the Brentsville area. While operating behind Union lines, the Iron Scouts were not irregular partisans; every Scout was a soldier that had mustered into Confederate service and was either a member of the 2nd South Carolina or 4th Virginia Cavalry and would fight in a Confederate uniform. This meant that if a Scout was captured, which some were, instead of being executed they were treated like a regular Prisoner of War and could be exchanged back into the Confederate army at a later date.

Finding no Confederates around Brentsville, the Michigan troopers gathered in the front lawn of Brentsville's hotel. With the Federals unaware, the leader of the Iron Scouts, Sgt. Bill Mickler, was able to quickly round up 5 Iron Scouts and by "concealing himself and men under cover of the pines, managed to get within a hundred or two yards of them before he was seen." Dashing upon the unsuspecting Wolverines, a small fight ensued which cost the life of Sgt. Wilcox while the rest of the squad was captured. The period of captivity for the Federal soldiers varied with the release of 22 year old Edwin Norwood and 40 year old Frederic Schmalzried on May 19, 1863; 20 year old Albert Hough on June 6; 25 year old George Smith June 15; 19 year old William Jewell on August 5; and 22 year old Edward Hitchcock remaining a prisoner until December 21, 1863.

While nowhere near the size of a "typical" Civil War battle, the skirmish at Brentsville was just as deadly. For the family of Alonzo Wilcox, a loved one would never be coming home, killed in the war in Virginia.



Snippets from the County School Board Minutes



COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

(in part)

Manassas, Virginia

April 7, 1938

The County School Board met as per adjournment on the above date with the following members present: D. J. Arrington, Chairman, Anita D. Piercy, N. N. Free, A. T. Barnes, Fred M. Lynn, Floy H. McInteer, and R. C. Haydon, Clerk.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved.

On motion, the Board decided to set the following days for the annual visitation of schools:

| | |
|----------|---------------------------------|
| April 20 | Occoquan and Dumfries Districts |
| April 27 | Coles and Brentsville Districts |
| May 4 | Manassas District |
| May 11 | Gainesville District. |

The Board, under the question of plans for next year, decided to close the Joplin School and transport the children to Quantico and Dumfries, this being the next step in consolidation of white schools in Dumfries District.

The Board also decided to close the Kettle Run Colored School and to transport the children to the Brown School, Manassas, thus providing better facilities for the graded school children and at the same time, providing the transportation facilities for the children in the neighborhood attending the Regional High School.

Some complaints having come to the attention of the Board with reference to the use of the Brentsville Court House property, the Board, after consulting the Board of Supervisors, adopted the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the legal title to the Brentsville Court House property is vested jointly in the Board of Supervisors and the County School Board; and,

WHEREAS, it appears to be advisable that a committee be appointed with exclusive authority and responsibility to control and manage said property;

THEREFORE, be it ordered, that the Board of Supervisors do hereby appoint Lester Huff, N. N. Free, F. H. May and Mrs. John Seymour, as such committee, said committee to continue in office until its successors are appointed.

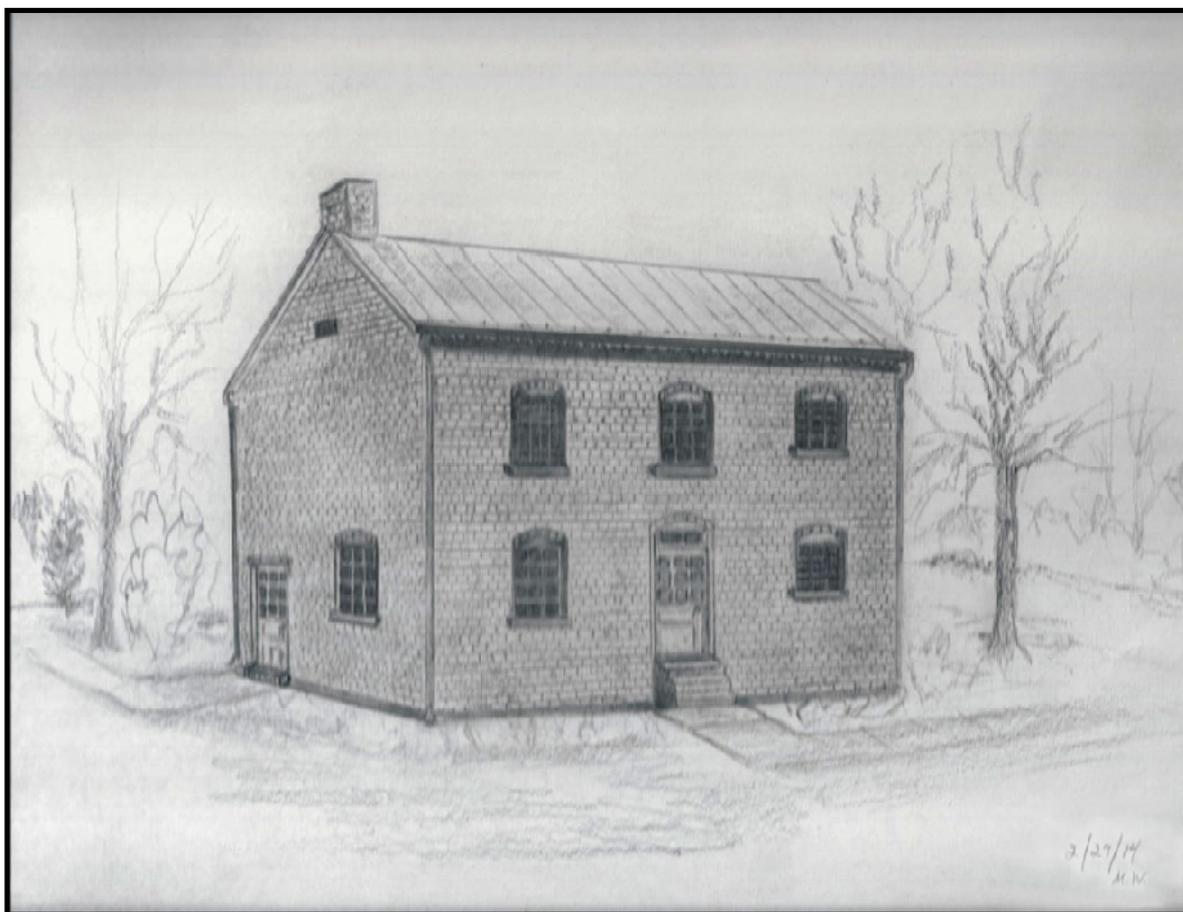
On motion, a Rosenwald library was approved for the Kettle Run School.

There being no further business, the Board adjourned to meet again in regular session Wednesday, May 4, 1938.

[signed] D. J. Arrington
CHAIRMAN

[signed] R. C. Haydon

Changes Coming to the Jail



We are very pleased to announce that Mr. Brendon Hanafin, the County's Historic Preservation Division Chief, has decided that the two small windows on the front of the Brentsville Jail will be restored to the same size as the one on the back of the jail. All three of the rooms on the front side of the jail that were used as cells will be equipped with bars as they originally were. We believe this will greatly enhance the "first look" experience for visitors to this historic site. In addition, the "missing" window in the lower back of the jail will also be restored. The remaining small window on the back of the jail will be left in place to assist with the interpretation of all that happened (or might have happened) in the jail during the

Antebellum Period and later. Mr. Hanafin believes this work will be completed during the summer, perhaps in August, and all work is being funded by a private donation. The drawing on this page, made by Ms. Madelyn "Mickey" Winslow (see her story "Art in Brentsville" in #98 November 2013) reflects how we believe the front of the building looked soon after its completion.

If you are as pleased with this development as are we, please consider a donation to support the final phase of the Jail Restoration. Every donation helps no matter how small and is tax deductible. It can not be done without your help. Details are on page nine.

From a Dirt Field to the Hall of Fame

Sam Pearson

“Somewhere in all that we would get in a good ball game in the lot between Kenny Keys’ dirt lane and Daniel’s house.”

David “Sam” Pearson



SAM PEARSON WAS born at Alexandria, VA in 1945 and grew up in Prince William County. He graduated from Pensacola Christian College and was employed by the Prince William County Service Authority until his retirement. Sam played softball his entire adult life and each year could be found on the softball fields in the County and/or the Fredericksburg area. Sam also served several Churches in the area as their Minister. He was truly a “great individual” and a Hall of Famer on and off the field. He was one of the most admired and respected players in the sport and his ageless athletic ability was remarkable. The accomplishments of his senior teams spoke loud about his ability to solidify his team’s chemistry to win championships.

Playing with Thomas Engineering (Manassas) and later with Superior Senior Softball (Richmond) he was on over 60 National Champion teams. His ability to play any position at a high skill level made him a “manager’s player.” And along the way he was named to countless All World or All American teams. Sam will long be remembered as one of the truly outstanding players in his age division over many years. Sadly, Sam passed away in December 2012.

He was a standout player in the Prince William Senior League from 1995 until 2005 when he retired and moved to Birchwood, TN. His Thomas Engineering senior team won the league championship ten consecutive years with him on the team.

Sam has been inducted in the Prince William County Softball Hall of Fame, the Central Virginia ASA Hall of Fame and the National Senior Softball Hall of Fame.



My brother Sam had several loves in his life: God, family, and softball, in that order. He played ball as long as I can remember, starting with baseball as a boy and switching to softball as a young man. He played on community teams as well as church teams. As he got older he started playing on traveling teams. His final team was the 65 and over. I had the opportunity to travel to several of his games in Texas, TN, GA and VA. I also had the opportunity to attend two induction ceremonies in which Sam was inducted into the Virginia Softball Hall of Fame and the most recent in March 2014 into the Prince William Softball Hall of Fame. In addition to these two he was also inducted in one in Dalton, GA (our mother's hometown). One incident that stands out in my mind was when his team really needed him to play in a tournament on Sunday. Since he was pastoring a church he never played on Sunday. They kept begging, so Sam made a deal with them: he'd play on Sunday if they all came to his house on Wednesday night for prayer meeting. My husband and I attended; Sam had set chairs up in his garage. About half way through, a little boy who was wandering around the garage hit the switch on a compressor and it went off. Of course everyone there was startled and I remember one of the rougher players on the team said "I didn't know what was going on but I was going to get hold of Sam's shirttail and

go wherever he went." On every team Sam played he was respected not only by his own team but members of other teams as well. He lived his convictions every day in every situation - at church, at work, at home and on the field. When Sam wasn't playing softball he was on the basketball or tennis court. When he retired to TN, he started playing on a church team with his son, Michael, in addition to the traveling team. Attending the ceremony in March for Prince William County, held in Nokesville, I thought how proud he would have been since that was where he started playing ball in high school. Sam's wife, Irma, and son, Michael, came up from TN for the ceremony. Everyone who spoke about Sam said how much he would be missed on the field and as a friend. Sam died doing what he loved to do - he was on the basketball court, staying in shape for the next season which he was already looking forward to.

Mary Pearson Pumphrey

(Continued from page 3)

layers: coarse twigs (and sometimes bits of trash) covered in a leafy mat, then lined with grapevine bark and finally grasses, stems, rootlets, and pine needles. The nest typically takes 3 to 9 days to build and is normally used only once. Eggs are laid one to six days following the completion of the nest. The eggs are white, with a tint of green, blue or brown, and are marked with lavender, gray, or brown blotches which are thicker around the larger end. The shell is smooth and slightly glossy. Three or four eggs are laid in each clutch. The female generally incubates the eggs, though, rarely, the male will incubate for brief periods of time. Incubation takes 12 to 13 days. Young fledge 10 to 11 days after hatching. Two to three, and even four, broods are raised each year. The male cares for and feeds each brood as the female incubates the next clutch of eggs.

The oldest wild Cardinal banded by researchers lived at least 15 years and 9 months, although 28.5 years was achieved by a captive bird. Annual survival rates for adult Northern Cardinals have been estimated at 60 to 65%; however, as with other passerine birds, the high mortality of juveniles means that the average lifespan is only about a year.

The Northern Cardinal is found in residential areas throughout its range. Backyard birders attract it using feeders containing seeds, particularly sunflower seeds and safflower seeds. Although some controversy surrounds bird feeding, an increase in backyard feeding by humans has generally been beneficial to this species. It was once prized as a pet due to its bright color and distinctive song. In the United States, this species receives special legal protection under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, which also banned their sale as cage birds. It is also protected by the Convention for the Protection of Migratory Birds in Canada. It is illegal to take, kill, or possess Northern Cardinals, and violation of the law is punishable by a fine of up to US \$15,000 and imprisonment of up to six months.

In the United States, the Northern Cardinal is the mascot of numerous athletic teams. In professional sports, it is the mascot of the St. Louis Cardinals and the Arizona Cardinals. In college athletics, it is the mascot of many schools.

The Northern Cardinal is the state bird of seven states, more than any other species: Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia and West Virginia. It was also a candidate to become the state bird of Delaware, but lost to the Blue Hen of Delaware.

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Brentsville Jail Interpretive and Exhibit Project

We are at 72%, please help
us achieve our goal.



70K
60K
50K
40K
30K
20K
10K

Make donations to:
Prince William Historic
Preservation Founda-
tion
17674 Main Street
Dumfries, VA 22026 or
online at
www.pwhpf.org

**Prince William Historic
Preservation Foundation**

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

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