

Brentsville Neighbors

“Preserving Brentsville’s History”

October 2014

Welcome Neighbors,

Can you believe it? This issue marks the 10th year of our newsletter. So after all that time, can there be much more to know about Brentsville? You bet! After all, in just six more years we will be celebrating Brentsville’s 200th birthday and when you stop to consider it, an awful lot happened during that time. Now all I have to do is find the information but that, too, is continuing bit by bit.

We wish to thank Jehane Keys for her support. Her late husband, Gary Stone Keys, spent a large part of his life in Brentsville and they made frequent visits ‘back home’ over the years. We are also grateful to Bill Backus for his research on the uniforms of our famous cavalry and to Rob Orrison for his update on the restoration of the Jail. Much more information along those lines to follow.

People of Brentsville must seem strange to others at times. Take my daughter, Becky, for instance. She is not only a tree hugger (yes, I’ve seen her do that) but she absolutely hates to see any living creature hurt with perhaps the exception of mosquitoes. For example, during a recent visit with us she coaxed a common house fly to the table where we were playing cards with a crumb of bread and then tried to pet it! She may have even succeeded because she was thrilled at creating a new pet. She even gave it a name – buzzy or something weird – and she took the picture on page three. Yes, that’s her pet house fly.

There is developing a trend in Brentsville that defies explanation. Every time a major event is planned it rains.

Well, maybe not every time but often enough to make one wonder. For example, the latest event was Bluegrass at Brentsville. For weeks in advance the weather forecast was for clear skies and moderate temperatures. At least until the night before when they decided it would be an 80% chance of rain. In truth it rained most of the day. But that didn’t dampen the spirits of those attending who very much enjoyed the music.

For this month there are two events that you may enjoy. On October 17th enjoy **Spectral Stories at Historic Brentsville**. Do you love scary movies and hearing ghost stories? Join site staff for a fun filled evening spent around a campfire as you hear spooky stories about Historic Brentsville and other haunts in and around Prince William County. Apple cider and cookies will be provided. 7 p.m.- 9 p.m., \$5 per person, children free under six. And then on October 26th **Historic Sundays at Brentsville Union Church**. Come learn about the practices of faith that were once held here and how important churches were to society and local communities. Program conducted in partnership with Historic Faith Ministries, a non-profit living history organization focusing on Victorian period customs and spirituality. Program begins at 11 a.m. and is FREE to the public. For information on either event please call 703-365-7895.

Very best wishes,
Kay and Morgan

This month:

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Well, I haven't been able to get out this week and garner news as a good reporter should mainly on account of several bushels of apples sitting in the middle of the brick floor

in the kitchen, looking reproachfully from me to the pressure cooker and back again. Instead, I offer you a rather amusing story, for whose authenticity I can vouch.

It seems that my husband is making a documentary film entitled "Men Who Grow Cotton." One of the farmers selected as a typical man who grows cotton happens to live in the vicinity of Monroe, Georgia, scene of the late deplorable lynchings.

On his last trip South, Nick and his assistant cameraman, Fuzzy, an amiable Marylander, travelling by car, reached Atlanta late at night, stopped over in a well-known hotel, piled the large black camera cases in the middle of the room, and went to bed. Early next morning they called Monroe to inform the County agent that they would arrive in a few hours.

The colored maid came in while the following telephone conversation was in progress:

"Hello ... Monroe. Is this Monroe, Georgia? Webster speaking. We'll be there in a couple of hours and expect to start shooting immediately. Please have everything all ready to go as we don't want to waste any time. The last shooting we did was very successful ... yes ... everybody

in Washington was delighted with it. This time we'll shoot everything we missed last time."

At this interesting point there was a slight crash as an ash tray got dusted nervously onto the floor. Frowning, my husband continued.

"Have the men all set to go into action and we'll shoot all morning ... O.K.?"

Hanging up the receiver, he turned in time to see something like the escaping neutrons from an atomic explosion flash out of the door.

"What in the world was the matter with her?" he asked in astonishment.

"Well..." drawled Fuzzy, "I reckon she just didn't have no sense of humor."

The Morgan Breedens are the parents of another boy, their fourth, born in Washington on Wednesday the 25th. They have named him Daniel, quite appropriately: Comes a rainy winter afternoon Mrs. B. will doubtless feel like a refugee from a lion's den. I do.

I went up to the Kempton's all primed to get the real low-down on the atom bomb, only to learn that it's still too hush-hush to mention without first being checked by the War Department.

Shall I write a snippy letter to our Congressman on Manassas Messenger stationery, or just let the whole thing slide?

Yours very sincerely,

Agnes Webster.

The Manassas Messenger – Letter From Brentsville,
October 4, 1946

HORSEMEN'S ASSOCIATION.—A large number of farmers and horse owners from all over the county of Prince William on Wednesday [October 8, 1895] met at the town hall in Manassas and organized what will be known as "The Prince William Horsemen's Association," for the purpose of holding an annual horse show at that place, where awards of merit and suitable premiums will be given to horses, mules, ponies, &c., which shall be considered by competent judges to be the best of their particular class. The object of the show will be to improve the stock and grade of horses in the county and furnish a place where the best stock of the county can be seen and where exchange and barter can be carried on by those

desirous of buying and selling. A president, Mr. W. A. Buckley, and secretary, Mr. L. A. Larkin, jr., were elected and judges appointed as follows: W. W. Kincheloe, Brentsville, and Capt. Jas. E. Herrell and John T. Goodwin, of Manassas.

A committee of arrangements was named, consisting of C. H. Goodwin, H. L. Hilleary and E. C. Meredith, and a committee to solicit members, Lee McRae, Buckland; Henry Reid, Brentsville; D. J. Arrington, Buckhall; W. A. Buckley, Gainesville, and Thomas H. Lion, Manassas. The next meeting will be held next Monday (court day) at the courthouse, when the arrangements will be completed for the exhibit.

Alexandria Gazette, October 30, 1895

Where WILD things live...

Musca domestica Housefly

The housefly, or *Musca domestica*, is a fly that is among the most common of all flies in the world. It is said that houseflies account for nine out of every ten flies that inhabit the homes and other buildings that are used by humans. They can be found throughout the world and have been known to carry and spread disease. They are considered to be pests, and often times exterminators will need to be called in order to deal with a large infestation of houseflies within a home.

Typically, a housefly will have a torso that is just under ½ inch in length. The whole of the body will be covered in small hairs that are used to help them maintain flight and also provide them with information regarding their surroundings while they fly. They are also known for their large, red eyes, which can range between eight and twenty milligrams depending on the conditions surrounding the housefly.

Unlike other species of flies, the housefly only has one set of wings that is accompanied by a subset of wings. Their main wings are used to help them fly, but they do have an underdeveloped set of hind wings that are connected just under the main wings that is used to help them maintain stability while they fly.

Houseflies are nothing to be passive about. The average female housefly can lay as many as 500 eggs over the course of a number of egg laying sessions. These will be quite hard to spot, as they are just over a millimeter in length. Maggots will hatch within 24 hours of being laid, and the maggots will seek out organic



Photo by Becky Noonan

material in order to sustain themselves.

Typically, houseflies are known for eating feces, but will also feed on rotten food and flesh. They are only able to eat food in liquid form, and before feeding they must first spit their acidic saliva onto solid foods in order to break it down and begin the digestion process before

starting to feed.

In colder climates houseflies are only able to survive in areas that are heated and inhabited by humans. They can be very hard to get rid of when you are dealing with a large scale infestation and not just a single wandering fly that has entered your residence. It is important that you always try to remove houseflies as you see them so that they do not lay eggs in your home. They are known to carry a number of different diseases that can be spread through their hairs, mouth and even feces including parasitic diseases and bacterial diseases. They have also been known to pass on viral hepatitis to humans.

Because they are so common, houseflies are often underestimated in the grand scheme of things in regard to danger to humans. They have the potential to quickly breed and infest warmer areas of the home that is rich with food for the maggots to feed upon. If you are looking to get rid of a housefly infestation, you may want to contact a local exterminator who has the proper tools and chemicals to dispose of the infestation for good.

Source: <http://house-flies.net/>

The Uniform of the Prince William Cavalry

By Bill Backus

“A plain but neat uniform in which the most insignificant must look his best”

In the exciting days of April 1861 when the Prince William Cavalry mustered into service at Brentsville, they cut a dashing image with their splendid uniforms and horses. However what uniform the Cavalry was wearing at this moment is a bit uncertain.

Years after the War Mrs. Margaret Williams Barbour and Miss Laura Lion published a history of the Prince William Cavalry in *The Confederate Veteran*. In their history Barbour and Lion left the only known written description of the 1861 uniform:

It was uniformed with gray cloth made at Kelly's mills in Culpeper County. The uniform consisted of a frock coat with one row of buttons up the front and one on each side, connecting at the top with a gold lace V. Pants with yellow stripes, black hats with black plumes on the left side held up with crossed sabers, and a shield with the letters "P.W.C." in front.

While it is a vivid description of the uniform there are no surviving images from this time period showing a member of the Prince William Cavalry wearing this uniform, nor has an original survived. Out of approximately 25 images of Prince William Cavalry members that the Manassas Museum obtained, only

one shows what appears to be an earlier war uniform. The image of Robert Weedon shows him wearing a



black Hardee style hat with what appears to be a plume on the left side and a dark single breasted frock coat. While it is hard to determine the exact color of his coat, based on the color of the hat and with comparison to other photographs, it appears that Weedon's coat is dark blue. While this uniform does not conform to the Barbour/Lion uniform, it does conform almost exactly to the uniform proscribed in the 1858 The Militia Law of Virginia. Under these regulations the

coat was to be “a frock coat of dark blue cloth; the skirt to extend from two-thirds to three-fourths of the distance from the top of the hip to the bend of the knee; single-breasted.”

With no surviving images of the Barbour/Lion uniform and an early war photograph showing instead Weedon in the Virginia militia uniform, what exactly the Prince William Cavalry was wearing when they mustered into service will probably never be known with certainty. However it is likely that both styles of uniforms would have been worn when the Prince William Cavalry rode off to war.

A Brentsville Citizen of Note

The Late Judge Charles Edward Sinclair

The announcement of the death of this gentleman was made in yesterday's Gazette. The following particulars are taken from the *Manassas Gazette*:

"Friday morning about 7:30 o'clock, Judge Charles Edward Sinclair was found dead in his room at the Cannon House. A servant who was sent to his room found him lying on the floor, partly undressed, dead. About 9 o'clock an inquest was held by Justice C. H. S. Baxter, which resulted in a verdict of death from hemorrhage of the brain. Judge Sinclair was the second son of Mordica Sinclair, and was born in the town of Dumfries, this county, in 1828. When quite young his father moved to Brentsville, where most of the subsequent life of the deceased was spent. Even in early boyhood he manifested the brightest and most perceptible mental faculties, which afterwards developed into one of the most brilliant intellects in Virginia. In an "old field school" in the town of Brentsville he learned his first lessons in mental culture and afterwards received a classical and legal training at the University of Virginia. As a student he was not close and pushing, but displayed that wonderful retentiveness of memory, that quickness of perception and readiness that placed him among the leading favorites of his class, among whom were Gen. Roger A. Pryor, of New York, Hon. Beverly B. Douglass, and other of equal note. About the year of 1849 he came to Brentsville and began the practice of his profession. When quite young, not more than 22 or 23 years of age, he was elected a member of the House of Delegates of the Virginia Legislature. When comparatively

young he married Miss Lucy Shackelford, a beautiful and accomplished daughter of Judge Shackelford. Several children were born to bless their union, but their spirits were not congenial and a separation followed. The offspring each filled a child's grave, and the father never married again. The mother formed another union which proved of greater happiness. In the beginning of President Buchanan's administration he was appointed an associate with Judge Delaney W. Echols, as United States District Judge to Utah, which position he held until the outbreak of the war. He accepted a position at Richmond under President Jefferson Davis and worked nobly in defense of his kindred and mother State. After the war he edited the *Memphis Avalanche* for a brief period. In 1869 or '70 he returned to his native county and again commenced the practice of law. In about 1875 he was appointed Attorney for the Commonwealth by Judge Aylett Nicol to fill the unexpired term of James Clark, esq. In the fall of 1878 he was elected to the State Senate from this District, and served a full term. Since that time he has practiced his profession in this county."

Source: The Alexandria Gazette, March 12, 1887



Musings From Brentsville

by Kay Breeden

While on a leisurely drive out to Stanardsville last week with the intention of a photo shoot for Morgan on a portion of the Skyline Drive, including the Big Meadows picnic area, we noticed the signs of the transition from lazy, warm summer days to the shorter days, lengthening shadows, crisp morning air and falling leaves of autumn. We began to throw out ideas of the summer pastimes of our growing years, probably mostly unfamiliar to the youth of today with their video games, social media connections, rigidly structured after-school activities, lessons and so on, as though every minute has to be planned and accounted for. What happened to lying in the grass, watching the clouds move past and looking for recognizable shapes

among them? Driving back from Sedona in June, Morgan and I saw a cloud formation that looked like Snoopy of comics fame. Others sometimes resembled animals, witches, even castles. Hmm. They call it daydreaming.

My cousins, Joey and Peanut Braden, and I spent hours playing in the scrub pine trees on “Red Hill” by their house. We made one group of trees our fort where we were cowboys fighting the Indians with sticks for our guns and rifles, or a long, curved stick with a piece of string tied to each end for a bow if we were the Indians. We also used the long sturdy sticks for our swords if we were knights like King Arthur and Sir Lancelot. Morgan and I both remember using a

stick with a long piece of string tied on one end as a substitute for fishing poles we didn’t own. He used a real fish hook and a small twig as a bobber and worms for bait dug up beside the run. My cousin and I used an open safety pin for our hook. I don’t remember using any bait—maybe that’s why we didn’t catch anything. But it was fun.



Another activity we both remember was harvesting poke berries to make ink. By the time we smashed them up to get the juice out, our hands and clothes were stained with the telltale purple-pink color. Morgan would cut a notch in a turkey feather to use as his pen. I think I had a real fountain pen to use. We also picked daisies and both pink and white clover to make daisy crowns for the princesses and clover necklaces, rings

and bracelets to wear. Much better than plastic beads. And what youngster hasn’t gone out and picked a bouquet of cornflowers and Queen Anne’s Lace or maybe goldenrod as a gift for their mother. These gifts were more precious than the costliest roses from the florist I believe.

Here we are then, looking forward to the changing colors of autumn leaves, walks in the woods, maybe attending a local harvest festival or wine tasting, going apple picking, making apple butter, making more memories for another season’s musings. Life in Brentsville can be so much fun.

When WAR Came to Brentsville

FROM WASHINGTON.

WASHINGTON, April 9.—A special correspondent of the Philadelphia *Inquirer* returned this evening from the Rappahannock, which stream he left this morning. The United States forces occupy the north bank of the river, which is much swollen. The railroad is repaired up to Warrenton Junction. Numerous refugees and contrabands are coming in daily, who report that the main body of the rebel army have fallen back to Richmond, doubtless with the intention of strengthening Gen. Magruder. The rebel pickets are occasionally seen on the south bank of the Rappahannock, but they are believed to be merely watching our movements. The health of our troops is generally good. A guerilla warfare

is being carried on from Brentsville towards the Occoquan, and stray soldiers are picked off by these outlaws.

Advices received at the State Department from our representatives at the various Courts of Europe, show that the public sentiment abroad is becoming unanimous in favor of our Government. This is being strengthened by our victories, which are carried over by every steamer, and which serve to elevate our national character and compel the respect of the people and rulers of Europe.

1862-04-18 The Daily Dispatch-Richmond, Va –
War News

Major General John B. “Prince John” Magruder

Magruder graduated from West Point in 1830, ranked 15 out of 42 in his class. He was assigned to the artillery school at Fort McHenry, Maryland. He served in garrison, on recruiting service, on the frontier, and fought in the Seminole War and the Mexican War, awarded 2 brevets. After the war he served in Maryland and California and was in command of Fort Adams at Newport, Rhode Island.

Nicknamed “Prince John,” he was fond of lavish living, fashionable military dress and courtly behavior toward ladies while stationed at Newport. He was held as “the picture of the Virginia gentleman, the representative of chivalry.” He commanded an artillery battery in Washington until the Civil War began.

At the formation of the Confederacy, Magruder promptly resigned his commission on April 20, 1861 and was commissioned as a Colonel in the Confederate army on May 16th. He was assigned to command of the artillery in and about Richmond on April 29th [Sic.], and soon afterward was given charge of the Virginia State forces in that locality. Put in command of the District of Yorktown in May, he defeated the Union force at Big Bethel, the first big battle of

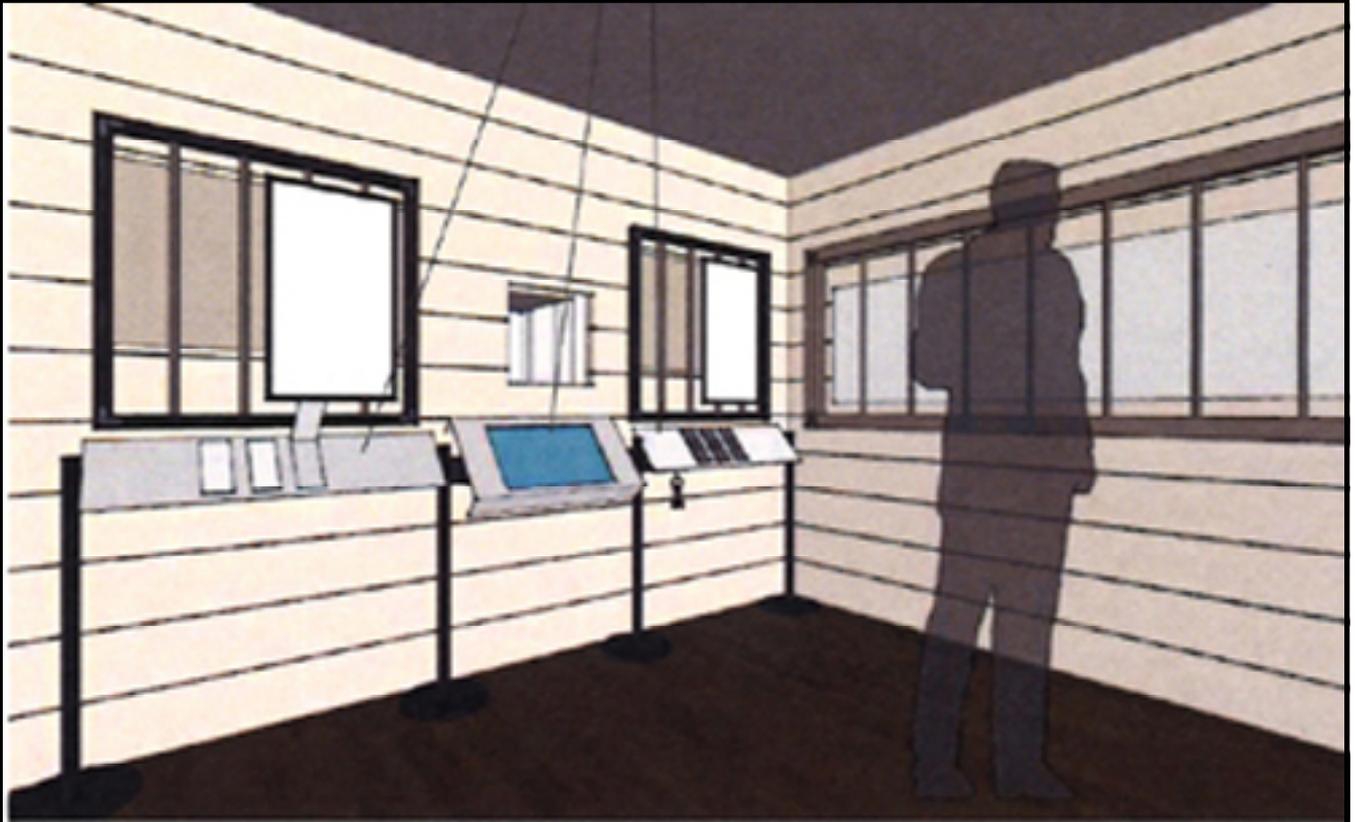
the war, in which his success gave confidence to the Confederate soldiers everywhere. The Confederate victory helped to establish his fighting reputation. He remained in this command until February, 1862. Stationed at Yorktown, with about 12,000 men, confronting McClellan’s Peninsula Campaign, he demonstrated his remarkable ability as a master of ruse and strategy, causing McClellan to believe that a force superior to his own disputed his advance. Magruder was not actively engaged at Seven Pines, but after Gen. Robert E. Lee took command, he was put in charge of the left wing of the Confederate army, and during the operations north of the Chickahominy River, was left before Richmond to engage the attention of the Union army.

Source: http://www.mycivilwar.com/leaders/magruder_john.html



Brentsville Jail Restoration and Exhibit Design, Moving Forward

by Rob Orrison



This summer has seen some great advances in the development of the Brentsville Jail into a local museum. Though these achievements are not always evident, important milestones have been met as the restoration begins its most intense phase.

The original plan was to try to preserve and reuse as much of the original wooden beams and framing as possible. As County staff began removing the framing and woodwork, it was obvious that the condition of the 19th century wood was very poor. Most of the damage was due to termites and post beetles. Because of

the poor condition, new wood will have to be used to reconstruct the floor and walls. Some timbers will be pieced in, but fewer than was originally planned.

Once the wood framing was removed, the new concrete footers were poured. This will allow for more support for the rebuilt floors and walls as well as to stabilize the masonry walls. Currently, County staff are installing the subfloor on the first floor. Then work will begin on the first floor walls and second story floor. One difference you will notice are a new stairs – these

(Continued from page 8)



new stairs will be the same size and at the same location as the original ca. 1822 stairs.

Finally, progress on designing the museum that will be inside the Jail is moving ahead on schedule. The County has contracted with Riggs-Ward Inc. of Richmond, VA to design the exhibits. Staff is providing historic content, research and thematic concepts. The museum

will be a mixture of traditional exhibits and recreated historic spaces. Innovative technology will be used to engage all the senses. Original documents, images will be available through electronic screens. Visitors will be presented with various characters that were once associated with the Jail through audio and video depictions. The final designs for the exhibit will be completed in early November.



All of this work would not be possible without funding from private donors and grants. Without help from people like you, none of this would be possible. The Jail, once restored, will be a destination that the local community and visitors from across the country will enjoy. The museum will reflect not just the history of the building, but the County and community that surrounds it.

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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