

Brentsville Neighbors

“Preserving Brentsville’s History”

April 2016

Welcome neighbors,

Every so often I tend to make a mountain out of a mole hill. Especially true when talking about Brentsville. Point in case: I recently received an e-mail indicating a specific event “... will take place at the Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre in Bristow, VA.” When I half-seriously asked about the use of “in Bristow” I was told by the author, “Don’t blame me, blame the US Government!” Now I fully know and understand what this reply indicated. The mailing address for our courthouse is 12229 Bristow Road, Bristow, VA and following the lead of our local newspapers, the post office that serves your home makes that the place where you live. So it’s not unusual to see Brentsville people referred to as “from Nokesville” or “from Bristow” or “from Manassas.” Hmm... I wonder how many people attending the Greenwich Presbyterian Church know they are actually in Nokesville? But I stray from the point.

Always wanting to learn, I turned to Webster for enlightenment. “*At — (used to indicate a point or place occupied in space); in, on, or near: to stand at the door; at the bottom of the barrel.*” So saying “at the Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre” seems correct indicating the place where the event will take place. “*In — located or situated within; inner; internal.*” Now doesn’t this mean that the courthouse is located **within** Bristow? Golly! I wonder what it would take to get a post office back in Brentsville so our historic site would once again be from here?

On a more serious subject, we wish to thank Mrs. Mary Flory, Mrs. Jehane Keys and Mrs. Virginia Carrico for your support. It is always very much appreciated.

Three events are planned for the site this month: **April 9-10, Civil War Encampment**, 11 am—4pm—49th Virginia/ 3rd ANV Regiment encampment and drill weekend. In April of 1861, residents of Prince William County met in Brentsville and voted to secede from the United States. That same month, several military units were formed in Brentsville to prepare for war. Join Civil War living historians to learn about the formation of these units and how they were trained and drilled. **April 23, Open-Hearth Cooking Class at Brentsville**, 10am—4pm; \$40 per person; space limited, reservations required. Expand your culinary abilities by learning the skills of open-hearth cooking. Join an experienced open-hearth cooking historian and learn the basic skills needed to prepare food over an open fire. You will learn how to build a fire and will prepare and cook three different dishes. End the program by enjoying a taste of the food you cooked. Class will take place in the ca. 1850 Haislip Farmhouse. **April 30, Lost Towns of Prince William County**, 8am—5pm; \$80 per person (lunch included); reservations are required. While historic towns such as Dumfries, Occoquan, and Manassas survive to the present day, many smaller communities (and even towns), were abandoned, destroyed, or lost throughout history. Join local historians as we explore these long forgotten communities and learn about a lost chapter in Prince William County history. For these and all events you may call 703-365-7895 for information and to make reservations when required.

Very best wishes,
Kay & Morgan

This month:

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|-------------------------------|--------|---------------------------|-------------|
| ➤ Letter From Brentsville | page 2 | ➤ Remembering Aunt Gladys | pages 5 & 6 |
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Like everyone else last week, we sort of overdid it in the garden, and are now paying the price. If you ever tried to apply liniment to your aching back with one hand while typing up news items with the other, you would see that it is not conducive to a cheerful frame of mind, so we will work off our bad temper by dealing with all of the disagreeable things we have been meaning to mention for a long time.

For instance, what ever happened to that lovely cement floor that was supposed to have been laid in the Courthouse four months ago? We have been eagerly awaiting the arrival of hordes of workmen, and run to the window each morning hoping that today will be the big day, but it never is. Oh well, there are two sides to every picture, and I guess the termites have as much right to live as we do. Imagine the poor little things picketing Brentsville, carrying posters stating "We are a Persecuted Minority Group" or "Equal Rights for Termites"!

And has anybody ever done anything about the pollution of Broad and Cedar Runs that was so much talked about last year? Swimming time is practically upon us; in fact some of the boys went in last Sunday and reported through blue and trembling lips that "it wasn't cold at all!"

Willard Keys caught a two-foot carp with a hook and line in Broad run. At least Frederick Whetzel who was telling the story was finally persuaded to bring his hand span from three feet down to two and obstinately declared that it wasn't an INCH smaller, so we take his word for it.

Attention Mother: The first ticks have made their appearance, two weeks early, and that vital problem of whether to shave the children's heads or go through them every night with a fine tooth comb cannot be postponed any longer. I'm strong for the GI coiffure myself.

Abraham Connor has been heard from again, this time from Sweden where he is still ice-bound. His letter states that he walked three miles out over the frozen North Sea.

The Young People's Group met at Whetzel's Friday night.

Three Brentsville girls, Mattie Katherine Whetzel, Nancie Goliday and Joyce Keys, went to Washington

last Wednesday to attend the matinee performance of "Hamlet" at the National Theatre.

Rev. Dr. Appleby, from Richmond, preached the sermon at the Presbyterian Church last Sunday, in the afternoon. There was no evening service.

Mr. Griffith conducted services at the Brentsville Baptist Church.

The sum of \$10.30 was netted for the Courthouse fund by the Daughters of America Dance last month.

Mr. Bell is home from the hospital where he spent last week undergoing treatment. Miss Alice Speaks, of Manassas, and Mr. Bell's son, Louis, were out Sunday.

We were sorry to hear of the death of Mr. Joe Bailey, which occurred suddenly last week.

Mrs. Bean, who has been ill, is now recovering, and her son, Clyde, is staying home for a visit.

The Brentsville Home Demonstration Club met on Tuesday at the home of Mrs. Ann Keys.

And for the benefit of any who might have heard mysterious hails from the Webster yard and wondered what they were, let me explain that Miss Webster was responsible. From being so agonizingly shy that she hid her face in the maternal skirt—excuse me,—trousers, and howled in anguish when visiting aunts said "Hello," Baby has now, for no apparent reason, gone to the other extreme and become so social-minded that it is equally embarrassing. For the past two days she has been rushing outside, sometimes, I blush to state, while my back was turned, delving through bureau drawers for her clothes, and affixing herself to the fence in front of the house like a tendrill of honeysuckle, from which vantage point she shouts "Ha!" at every human animal, or car, passing along the road. I suppose a child-psychologist would have an explanation, but frankly Mama finds it all very baffling. And while on the subject of Brentsville's Much-Younger Set, let me say that the Sunday-school class, conducted by Mrs. Morgan Breeden, is very popular these days.

There must have been twelve youngsters there last Sunday, all very much pleased with their new Easter outfits and the opportunity to show them off.

Regards,

Agnes Webster

Source: The Manassas Messenger, April 18, 1947

Where WILD things live...

Vinca minor

lesser periwinkle or dwarf periwinkle

Vinca minor is a perennial, evergreen herb that matures at about 6" tall and stems that continue to elongate each year to many yards in length. It exhibits a trailing mat, prostrate mat or mounding mat growth habit and has a medium growth rate. Its leaves are evergreen, elliptic and dark green above with a subtle white mid-vein. The flowers are predominantly bluepurple, originate from the leaf axils, composed of five fused pinwheel-like petals and a short tubular throat. They bloom in late March and April and sporadically throughout the growing season.



sometimes monotypic understory in the northeastern US.

As an invasive plant it is a threat to:

- Forests and wetlands
- Native plants
- Perennial gardens
- Wildlife
- Lakes and rivers
- Human health
- Farmland

You can help stop the spread of invasive plants by following these 8 easy guidelines:

Once established, this plant forms a dense carpet to the exclusion of other plants. This creates a problem where it is competing with native flora. In ideal growth conditions, it can spread with great rapidity by means of its arching stolons, which root at the tips. Dry or cold weather may temporarily set growth back, but it quickly resprouts and regains lost ground coverage. It grows most vigorously in moist soil with only partial sun, but it can grow in the deepest shade and even in poor soil.

Vinca minor is a native from southern Switzerland southward around much of the Mediterranean basin, from Portugal to Turkey, and across much of north Africa. It has been introduced in the United States as a medicinal herb and as an ornamental ground cover.

Periwinkle is frequently found in well-drained, open, disturbed ground of shaded woods, edges and roadsides. It is escaped throughout the eastern US, and can become a dominant and

1. Ask for only noninvasive species when you acquire plants. Request that nurseries and garden centers sell only noninvasive plants.

2. Seek information on invasive plants. Sources include botanical gardens, horticulturists, conservationists, and government agencies.

3. Scout your property for invasive species, and remove invasives before they become a problem. If plants can't be removed, at least prevent them from going to seed.

4. Clean your boots before and after visiting a natural area to prevent the spread of invasive plant seeds.

5. Don't release aquarium plants into the wild.

6. Volunteer at local parks and natural areas to assist ongoing efforts to diminish the threat of invasive plants.

7. Help educate your community through personal contacts and in such settings as garden clubs and civic groups.

8. Support public policies and programs to control invasive plants.

Source: Various Internet locations

Churches In and Around Brentsville

by

Robin Landes, 2005

(Used with permission)

Over the years, several houses of worship were built in and around the Town of Brentsville. Broad Run Church, nearby, was built in 1752. It was the parish church for Dettingen Parish for western Prince William County. It was a large, brick building (30' X 60'). For unknown reasons, Broad Run Church was in ruins by 1857, and a new church was built in the town of Brentsville in 1847. It was called St. James Episcopal Church. Following the Civil War, this church was used to hold court while the Brentsville Courthouse was undergoing repairs. The Prince William County Minute books for May 10, 1866 stated, "Ordered that William E. Goodwin be appointed Commissioner to have the following repairs put upon the church now occupied as a courthouse..." These repairs included the addition of windows and dividers so that the building could function as a court. This church is known as Hatchers Memorial Baptist Church today.

By 1871, there appears to have been a need for another church. We know this from data recorded on a small slip of paper, recently found in Judgments for 1871 at the Circuit Court Archives. According to this document, the courthouse was in use for Sunday services.

The several denominations worshipping at this place having been granted the privilege of the use of the Courthouse for religious services, and as the same is liable to abuse and injury during such time, and as the Jailor who has the care of the Court House is put to trouble in opening the doors and seeing after the same upon much [illegible], It is ordered that such privilege be granted such denominations only as shall compensate said Jailor for his trouble commenced thereby and it is further ordered that the doors and windows of the Court House except when opened upon such occasions or for the purposes of court be kept closed.

Apparently coordinating space on Sundays was enough of a problem, that in 1871, the Union Church was constructed on land sold by George M. Goodwin (land formerly part of the 3-acre tavern square lot). The original trustees included Aylett Nicol, Austin B. Weedon, A.M. Hershey, James F. Clarke, J.B. Reid and George Sexsmith. An article from the Alexandria Gazette about the new "Church at Brentsville" read:

You are requested to inform your readers that a delegation of ladies from this village will visit your city some day this week fully authorized to solicit contributions from your liberal people to aid in the erection of a church proposed to be built here. A festival will be held on the Court Green, here Monday next, by the ladies, the proceeds of which will be appropriated to the above named purpose. The Hotel proprietors in the place have generously declined furnishing any dinner on that day, so that the ample repast spread by the ladies may be enjoyed by all. Every delicacy the season affords will be procured.

It is hoped your merchants and citizens generally will lend these ladies a helping hand and contribute liberally to the object they have in view. The church will be free for white ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, Presbyterian, Episcopal, the New and both branches of the Old School Baptist churches.

Signed: Tyrone (Brentsville, June 27, 1871)

It seems fitting that the new Union Church at Brentsville was open to all denominations since the original 1680s land granted to Brent, Bristow, Hayward and Foote by James II granted religious freedom in this tract. However, it must also be emphasized that the church was for whites only, making it seem decidedly less "free" to all for worship.

Remembering Aunt Gladys

By: Cathy (Wolfe) White

As the daughter of Hazel & Freddie Wolfe, I grew up 2 doors down from the Eanes family. I was closest to Steve & David in age and being first cousins, they were my very first “best friends”. We spent time at each other’s homes playing. These are the memories of my childhood. They may not be completely “factual”, but they are the memories of a little girl that still live in my heart. I loved exploring in the Eanes’ barns which were chock full of Gladys’ treasures. The buildings housed items no longer used by various family members, yard sale finds, etc. It was a great place to use our imaginations. I always loved the smell of the lilac bushes out front even though we avoided getting too close because the bees also loved the sweet lavender colored blooms. We spent evenings catching lightning bugs and collecting them in Coke or Pepsi bottles, creating our own personal lanterns. They had a walnut tree by the driveway where the



walnuts would fall into the gravel and be “peeled” by the car tires. One day Gladys asked us to gather a bunch of the walnuts for her. At the end of the day, my hands & bare feet were black with walnut oil stain. When I asked her how to wash it off, she smiled and said, “Oh, it’ll wear off eventually”.

Gladys & A.V. played cards with my mom & dad on weekends. Whether it was around our kitchen table, theirs, or on the front porch of either house I was the “hostess” and took great pride & pleasure in serving coffee & tea to the grown-ups. While I’m sure that my barista skills were not excellent, they always made a big fuss about

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how delicious my hot beverages were and the wonder “service”.

I was the youngest at home and Cary had graduated and gone off to the Army. In the mornings I would get ready for school early and walk up to the Eanes’ to wait for the school bus. With kids of all ages, their house always had activity and conversation in the mornings. They were thought of as “cool parents” by the youth of Brentsville. They had a pool table in the living room where kids gathered to play pool and then there was Johnny’s band practice Most parents would’ve made their teens practice their rock & roll band in the garage. Not Gladys & A.V. Johnny’s band practiced in the living room! Again, many of the kids of Brentsville gathered for those “jam sessions” as well. Gladys attended many sports events at school and was known by everyone. I think that perhaps I inherited my love of the beach from Gladys. Growing up, she was about the only other person I knew that loved the beach as much as I did. Our families would take trips to the Outer Banks together. (Deanie was living there). On one particular trip, Gladys invited me to ride with them, as they were leaving in the middle of the night after A.V. got off the midnight shift at Vepco. I believe that David, Steve & Paul were all in the back of the station wagon. “Chatty Cathy” sat up front with Gladys & A.V. as there were no seatbelt laws back then. As we were approaching the Outer Banks there was a flagman or tollman (I’m not sure which) waving to slow down the oncoming traffic. The camper that we were pulling started screeching & grinding. Gladys said, “What’s that horrible noise?” A.V. said, “Well I didn’t want to say anything, but I’m pretty sure that our trailer brakes are going out. But we’re almost there now.... We’ll be OK.” As he’s tapping and pumping the breaks to approach the flagman he rolled down his window, smiled & waved while the flagman kept saying, “keep going, don’t stop!” Gladys quipped out of the open window “The jackass doesn’t know that we CAN’T stop!” The beautiful part of the trip was watching

the sunrise over the Wright Memorial Bridge as we crossed. It was mesmerizing, heart-warming and somehow a sign that all would be well. A.V. was right, and we made it there safely. He replaced the trailer brakes the next day for a safe ride home.

Years later, Gladys served as Mistress of Ceremonies at my wedding. She did a fabulous job keeping the service on track and everything went off without a hitch.

She & her family (grown kids & grandkids) continued to vacation in the Outer Banks. I told her many times that they should stop by and visit me on their way down or back sometime, as I live right off of the bypass leading to Nags Head. One day she called me and said that they were at a cottage and were being evacuated for a hurricane headed that way. We were excited to have them wait out the hurricane at our house until they received the “all clear” to return to the rental cottage.

Ever since that childhood trip I took with them when the brakes went out, “Keep Going, Don’t Stop” was a standing joke between us. However, now I feel certain in my heart of hearts, that it was Gladys’ life theme. Gladys was a very strong woman. When she lost A.V. she kept going. She didn’t stop. Then the traumatic day that she lost a daughter. No mother should ever have to bury their child. But Gladys kept going. She didn’t stop. Cindy had a beautiful singing voice and sang many solos in the Brentsville Presbyterian Church as a youth. I know that she was singing for her mom when they met again the end of February 2016 along with A.V., her 7 other siblings, her mom (who was a true angel on Earth) and many other loved ones who have gone before her. She is now overseeing her loved ones & family from heaven, gently whispering in their ear “Follow the example that I set for you. Keep going. Don’t stop.”

In Our Town ...

DEBATE ARRANGED AT BRENTSVILLE

Prominent Local Speakers to Entertain on April 29

The public debate which will be held in the historic old Brentsville Court House on Friday evening, April 29, under auspices of the Brentsville Community League, is arousing much interest, not only on account of the issues involved in the subject of the debate, but because of the increasing determination among the speakers chosen to win their respective side of the argument.

The question is "Resolved that a strong army, navy and air force is America's best security for peace." Debating on the affirmative side of this interesting and nationally important question are Mr. Jenkyn Davies, and Judge C. Lacey Compton, both being prominent members of the Prince William Bar and gifted speakers.

On the negative side of the question will be Rev. John DeChant, pastor of the Manassas Presbyterian Church and a forceful speaker, and Mr. William Harrison Lamb, one of the editors of the Manassas Journal.

Judges for the occasion will be Professor R. C. Haydon, Superintendent of Schools of Prince William County; Prof. Frank G. Sigman, of the Occoquan High School, and Mr. F. H. May, of Brentsville.

The debate promises to be one of the most interesting of the various entertainments put on by the progressive Brentsville Community League, and will no doubt be attended by an audience representing all sections of the county.

Source: The Manassas Journal, April 21, 1938.

DEBATE ENJOYED AT BRENTSVILLE

Negative Side Gets unanimous Decision in Forensic Battle

The historic old Courthouse was filled to capacity last Friday evening to hear the debate which had been arranged by the Community League, on the question: "Resolved, that a strong army, navy and airforce are America's best security for peace."

Prof. R. C. Haydon presided with his usual courtesy and efficiency and the invocation was delivered by Rev. J. Murray Taylor. Judge Wheatley Johnson acted as time-keeper.

The affirmative argument was opened by Judge C. Lacey Compton, Trial Justice of Prince William County. The negative was opened by Mr. William H. Lamb, Editor of the Manassas Journal. Mr. Jenkyns Davies, Manassas attorney followed for the affirmative and Rev. John M. DeChant, for the negative.

In rebuttal, Judge Compton spoke for the affirmative and for the negative Mr. Lamb took one minute and Rev. DeChant the remainder of the rebuttal time.

Judges of the debate were Rev. J. Murray Taylor, Mr. F. H. May and Mr. Frank G. Sigman, who acted as chairman for the Judges and announced their decision as unanimous for the negative. He paid high compliment to all of the speakers.

During the intermission Sheriff John Kerlin made an interesting talk on the membership campaign of the Young Democratic Clubs of Prince William County which is now in progress.

Following the program, refreshments were served by the ladies of the Brentsville League and a silver offering was taken for the dental clinic.

Source: The Manassas Journal, May 5, 1938

When WAR Came to Brentsville

CAMP NEAR HOPE LANDING,
April 8, 1863.

Colonel CLENDENIN,
Eighth Illinois Cavalry:

COLONEL: Colonel Chapman, commanding pickets, reports a company of rebel cavalry in the vicinity of Brentsville. The colonel commanding the brigade directs that, in accordance to the detail for pickets, you send a squadron to-morrow morning, under an energetic officer, to scout in that vicinity, and to endeavor to capture them. The squadron should not be gone more than two or three days, and, after reporting the result of the scout to the officer commanding pickets, to return to camp.

The officer commanding pickets, if called upon to do so, will furnish an escort to the telegraph operator at Dumfries, to protect working parties on the line from that place to Occoquan.

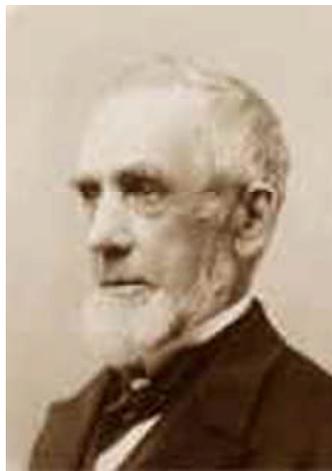
Instruct him, also, to be on the lookout, for it is about time Stuart was making another raid. If he thinks his force insufficient, direct him to report to that effect.

Very respectfully,

E. B. PARSONS,
Acting Assistant Adjutant-General, First Cavalry Brigade.

Enos Blossom Parsons was born in Brighton, Donose County, New York, on 1 September 1840, to Marshfield Parsons and Eliza D Blossom. Not much has been found on his early life but just before his 22nd birthday he enrolled in the New York Cavalry on August 13, 1862, at Rochester NY to serve three years. He was promoted to 1st Lt on 30 January 1863; Captain on 21 October 1863 and Major on 24 Dec 1864. Promotion to brevet LtCol was gained on 9 April 1865 for gallantry and meritorious service during the war and more particularly during the raid made upon Richmond, VA in 1864. He was honorably mustered out on 29 January 1866.

Following the war he became a prominent businessman most noted for his malting enterprise. He also served as director of the Northern Central Railroad. He was the builder of the "Lakestons", a baronial castle, and the well known Malt House,



both located at Sodus Point. In 1889, the wealthy Colonel Enos purchased Eagle Island, NY, a 98 acre parcel which is one of three islands in the eastern part of Sodus Bay in the township of Huron, NY. At the time he purchased Eagle Island the railroad company used it as a picnic ground. It was Colonel Parsons' plan to convert the island into a pleasure resort with a fine hotel. He began by having the pilings driven for the main dock in 1889 where steamships could

land. Plans were drawn to add an open pavilion, restaurant and a baseball ground. According to the April 1889 edition of the Wayne County Alliance, "The new resort was to be a formidable rival of the far-famed Ontario Beach at Charlotte, New York." Colonel Parsons' plans never materialized and he willed the property to his wife, Augusta, in 1897 and in 1907, Charles Fowler Garfield purchased the Island from Colonel Parsons' widow.

Source: Multiple Internet locations

(Continued on page 9)



**Portrait of General Alfred Pleasonton, Officer of the Federal Army, and Staff
Warrenton, VA, October 1863**

Standing: 1. Lt. Ira W. Trask, 8th Ill. Cav. 2. Lt. George W. Yates, 4th Mich. Inf. 3. Lt. James F. Wade, 6th U.S. Cav. 4. Lt. Henry Baker, 5th U.S. Cav. 5. Lt. Leicester Walker, 5th U.S. Cav. 6. Capt. Charles C. Suydam, A.A.G. 7. Lt. Daniel W. Littlefield, 7th Mich. Cav. 8. Unknown. 9. Lt. Curwen B. McLellan, 6th U.S. Cav. 10. Unknown. 11. Lt. G. Irvine Whitehead, 6th Pa. Cav.

Seated: 1. Lt. Col. Albert S. Austin, Chief Commissary. 2. Col. George A. H. Blake, 1st U.S. Cav. 3. General Pleasonton. 4. Lt. Col. Charles R. Smith, 6th Pa. Cav., Chief of Staff. 5. Capt. Henry B. Hays, 6th U.S. Cav., Ordnance Officer.

On ground: 1. Lt. Woodbury M. Taylor, 8th Ill. Cav. 2. Capt. Enos B. Parsons, 8th N.Y. Cav. 3. Capt. Frederick C. Newhall, 6th Pa. Cav. 4. Lt. Clifford Thomson, 1st N.Y. Cav. 5. Surgeon S. L. Pancoast, U.S.V. 6. Lt. B. T. Hutchins, 6th U.S. Cavalry

Brentsville Neighbors

“Preserving Brentsville’s History”

Contact us on:

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All back issues on:

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

IN GOD WE TRUST

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