

Brentsville Neighbors

“Preserving Brentsville’s History”

June 2016

Welcome neighbors,

We have not received any specifics pertaining to the number of mothers who visited the site during May but the Brentsville Court and Trades Day was a success. While fewer people took advantage of this than had been hoped, at least 71 visitors coming in waves kept the site busy. We understand that the historic wheelwright was a big hit and many enjoyed taking a peek inside the jail. Plans are already being made to host an even larger Court and Trades Day program next spring.

The next time you visit the site take a look at the garden beside the log home. Todd Hunt of Boy Scout Troop 1390 rebuilt the fence as part of his Eagle Scout Project and did a wonderful job. He wanted to make sure we know that most of his materials for the fence were donated. Thank you Todd!

Also, what is good for the mothers is good for the fathers. So on June 18 and 19 Father’s Day tours will be offered at all of the historic sites from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. where all fathers will be given free tours of the sites. Other adults will

still have to pay the nominal \$5.00 fee but children 6 and under are always free.

Then from June 20 to 24 the very popular Virginia Heritage Camp will once again be hosted by Dave Born and his able assistants. The cost is \$250.00 per child and reservations are required as it sells out early. This is a time for children to explore Virginia history from Native Americans through the 20th Century. Learn about life in early Virginia through hands-on activities and crafts such as candle dipping and churning butter. Learn about how the Revolutionary War and the Civil War changed life in Virginia by drilling with soldiers and cooking over a fire. Registration for this camp can be done on line at www.pwcparks.org or by calling 703-792-8320 or 703-365-7895.

Finally, as promised to many of you last month, a complete update on the jail restoration is offered in this edition thanks to Brendon Hanafin, the county’s Historic Preservation Division Chief.

Very best wishes,
Kay and Morgan

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I have a humiliating confession to make, which is that I do not understand high finance, banks, bankers, or what "balance brought forward" means. Why anybody would WANT to bring a balance forward is more than my mind can fathom.

Couldn't they just leave it in the back-ground and sort of ignore it, the way I do, instead of sending out envelopes bulging with pages and pages of very boring figures, with dates interspersed here and there,—by way of variety, we decided, after examining them cautiously, first down-side up, and then up-side down, and ending no wiser than when we began? But obviously here was something to be dealt with, one way or another, so we rounded up enough pencils to construct a redwood tree, sharpened them carefully, drew a deep breath, and plunged.

First I tried adding up all of the red figures, but the result was so terrific that I knew I hadn't spent THAT much money, though I went and looked hopefully in my closet to see if any mink coats had somehow slipped in there in an absent-minded way. To my great disappointment they had not, so back I went to the desk, and this time added the BLACK number,—which made an even more awe-inspiring total. Next, I subtracted the red numbers FROM the black ones, and felt that at last I was beginning to get somewhere, when my son walked in and pointed out with nasty eighth-grade superiority that the red ones were DATES. (Incidentally, the national Bank should get a new red ribbon for its typewriter that "J" in June could be almost anything!) Well, this threw my calculations into abject confusion, and I had to start all over again with a completely new mathematical system, which I invented myself on the spur of the moment.

Perhaps I should here remark that before my husband left for California he spent three excessively long evenings patiently explaining how to balance a bank-book. —And I must say it all sounded very simple. "Oh, I can do THAT" I exclaimed airily, and proceeded to strain my knowledge of arithmetic to its utmost by deducting an imaginary ten dollar check from a theoretical fifty dollar balance, and then pocketing the forty that was left over.

Well, I think I can now say definitely that I have thrown his account into a state of chaos from which it will probably never recover; I doubt if Judah P. Benjamin himself could figure it out, especially those stray thirteen cents that seem to creep in from time to time, though I went to great pains to make the figures all come out even, and if a check was for \$14.37 for instance, I entered it as \$14 even, or sometimes as \$14.50 to simplify the book-keeping.

The communication I received from the Bank was very emphatic on one point: "Please examine this statement upon receipt," it said firmly, "and report at once if you find any difference so we may know whether our books agree with your own." After wiping the tears of merriment out of my eyes,—who would think that an atmosphere of marble and

brass and adding machines could produce such a sense of humor? —I sat down to note the precise points of difference between the Federal Reserve System and my own, and found that they are quite hopelessly muddled. As a matter of fact, I made the startling discovery that they owe me the lavish sum of \$293,000. 62 which I propose to collect in small weekly installments. And the first check I am going to transmute promptly into a pig, before they can come and snatch it back. Maybe TWO pigs. I cannot help but feel that pigs have more personality than a bank statement, and besides they don't send you repulsive-looking brown envelopes on the first of every month, or go bouncing riotously around Manassas, as some checks seem to have a tendency to do.

Meanwhile, I have filed all statements, receipts, and business communications neatly away in a safe place where I feel sure I will be able to find them again. —In some book, I think it was; A red Book? —no, a green one. Oh well, we only have a little over a thousand books, of which two-thirds have either red or green covers, so tracking it down will make a nice occupation for my husband some rainy evening when he gets home. —IF he gets home. Good heavens! Here he is now!

—
The Brentsville Home Demonstration Club met on Tuesday at the home of Mrs. John Cox. Several new members were present, and a very pleasant and instructive afternoon was enjoyed by all.

Mrs. Myrtle Keys' son, David Landis, was at home on Sunday.

Mr. C. C. Cordell spent Saturday night at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Jim Shoemaker.

Mrs. Bean's daughter, Mrs. Dove, of Herndon, is in the hospital, and the children are staying with their grandmother.

Mrs. Bradshaw entertained a house full of relatives over the week-end; her father, Mr. J. E. Owens, of Alexandria, grandmother, Mrs. Ella Owens, great-uncle Albert Hale, from Norfolk and grandfather, Frank Hale, of Baltimore. Also her niece and nephew, Nancy and Lewis Frinks, who will stay until Wednesday.

Mr. and Mrs. Tucker were guests of Mr. and Mrs. Morris Keys on Sunday, and also Mrs. Keys' brother, Mr. William Diehl from Alexandria.

Mr. Lewis Bradford and his son, Steuart left last week to visit Mr. Bradford's brother and sister in Ohio. It has been thirty years since they have seen one another, so the reunion should be a very happy one. Mrs. Bradford's daughter Mrs. Claiborne, and granddaughter, are making a prolonged visit here, and her son, Russell, is also staying with his mother during the absence of Mr. Bradford.

Mr. Clyde Bean is home from South Carolina, where he has been working for several years.

Mr. K. M. Hartmann is now enrolled at the Vocational School in Manassas.

Sincerely,

Agnes Webster

Source: The Manassas Messenger, June 20, 1947

Where WILD things live...

Lonicera japonica

Japanese Honeysuckle

NATIVE RANGE: Japan and Korea

DESCRIPTION: Japanese honeysuckle is a perennial vine that climbs by twisting its stems around vertical structures, including limbs and trunks of shrubs and small trees. Leaves are oblong to oval, sometimes lobed, have short stalks, and occur in pairs along the stem. In southern and mid-Atlantic states, Japanese honeysuckle often remains evergreen – its leaves remain attached through the winter. In colder northern climates, the leaves may fall off after exposure to prolonged winter temperatures. Flowers are tubular, with five fused petals, white to pink, turning yellow with age, very fragrant, and occur in pairs along the stem at leaf junctures. Stems and leaves are sometimes covered with fine, soft hairs. Japanese honeysuckle blooms from late April through July and sometimes into October. Small black fruits are produced in autumn, each containing 2- 3 oval to oblong, dark brown seeds about ¼ inch across.

ECOLOGICAL THREAT: In North America, Japanese honeysuckle has few natural enemies which allows it to spread widely and out-compete native plant species. Its evergreen to semi-evergreen nature gives it an added advantage over native species in many areas. Shrubs and young trees can be killed by girdling when vines twist tightly around stems and trunks, cutting off the flow of water through the plant. Dense growths of honeysuckle covering vegetation can gradually kill plants by blocking sunlight from reaching their leaves. Vigorous root competition also helps Japanese honeysuckle spread and displace neighboring native vegetation.

DISTRIBUTION IN THE UNITED STATES: Japanese honeysuckle occurs across the southern U.S. from California to New England and the Great Lakes region. Escaped populations also occur in Hawaii. Severe winter temperatures and low precipitation may limit its distribution in northern latitudes and in the West, respectively.



HABITAT IN THE UNITED STATES: A ubiquitous invader, Japanese honeysuckle thrives in a wide variety of habitats including fields, forests, wetlands, barrens, and all types of disturbed lands.

BACKGROUND: Japanese honeysuckle was introduced to the U.S. in the early to mid-1800s as an ornamental plant, for erosion control, and for wildlife forage and cover. Its highly

fragrant flowers provide a tiny drop of honey-flavored nectar enjoyed by children.

BIOLOGY & SPREAD: Growth and spread of Japanese honeysuckle is through vegetative (plant growth) and sexual (seed) means. It produces long vegetative runners that develop roots where stem and leaf junctions (nodes) come in contact with moist soil. Underground stems (rhizomes) help to establish and spread the plant locally. Long distance dispersal is by birds and other wildlife that readily consume the fruits and defecate the seeds at various distances from the parent plant.

MANAGEMENT OPTIONS: Several effective methods of control are available for Japanese honeysuckle, including chemical and non-chemical, depending on the extent of the infestation and available time and labor. For small patches, repeated pulling of entire vines and root systems may be effective. Hand pull seedlings and young plants when the soil is moist, holding low on the stem to remove the whole plant along with its roots. Monitor frequently and remove any new plants. Cut and remove twining vines to prevent them from girdling and killing shrubs and other plants. Burning removes above ground vegetation but does not kill the underground rhizomes, which will continue to sprout. In certain situations, tethered goats have been used to remove honeysuckle growth, but must be monitored to prevent their escape to the wild where they would become an added ecological threat.

Source: <https://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/loja1.htm>

The Removal of the Courthouse from Brentsville to Manassas: Fraud or Sour Grapes

By Robin Landes, Laura Wyatt and Ron Turner

(Used with Permission)

On July 1, 1872, the qualified electors of Prince William County voted upon the question of removing their County Seat from Brentsville to Manassas. The impetus for this removal was, in fact, much like that begun in the late 18th century, when citizens in the western portion of the county urged removal of the courthouse from Dumfries to Brentsville. While petitioners for the change of venue relied upon the mercy of the Virginia General Assembly, the 1872 removal was put to a vote of the citizens.

The county seat was removed to Brentsville in 1820, after more than 35 years of petitioning. The justifications for this change included the fact that Dumfries was at an extreme end of the county and thus difficult to reach. Dumfries was no longer a viable port and center of trade due to the extensive cultivation of tobacco that resulted in the silting in of Quantico Creek. Speculation may have also played a role, as many parties with an interest in the move had already invested in lands where the new county seat would be built. It was for very similar reasons that a new group of supporters pressed for removal from Brentsville to Manassas by the 1870's.

The development of the railroad at Manassas Junction recommended the town as an excellent site for the public buildings. Many wealthy and influential businessmen had invested in property in the growing town. One man, George C. Round, went so far as to "donate" the land upon which the new county seat would be built. These factors, combined with damage that Brentsville incurred during the Civil War and its retarded repair and redevelopment, led to the raising of the issue.

So it was that, in 1872, the General Assembly issued a bill, "To authorize the qualified voters of the County of Prince William to vote on the question of removing the County courthouse to Manassas." (Prince William County Circuit Court Archives, Judgments, 1873). This bill stipulated: "*1....that it shall be the duty of the several officers conducting elections in the County of Prince William, at the time and place for holding the general election on the fourth Thursday in May, 1872, to prepare a separate ballot box for each voting precinct, in which shall be deposited the ballots of the then qualified voters who shall desire to vote upon the question of said removal. The said ballots should be respectfully as follows:*

For Brentsville.

For Manassas.

Each ballot so cast, which shall have written or printed thereon "For Brentsville," shall be taken and counted as a vote against the removal of the said courthouse, and each ballot so cast which shall have written or printed thereon "For Manassas," shall be taken and counted as a vote for the removal of said courthouse from its present location to the village of Manassas in said county.

2. The manner of receiving and canvassing the ballots cast at such election on the question of the removal of said courthouse, and making returns and abstracts of the results thereof, shall conform in all respects to the regulations prescribed by the general election law of this State, except the certificate of the judges of election shall be as follows:

We hereby certify that at the election held __

votes were cast "For Brentsville," and __ votes were cast "For Manassas," G.H., J.R. Clerks and A.B., C.D., E.F. Judges, and provided further, that the commissioners of election shall make on a separate sheet an abstract of said votes against and for the removal of the said courthouse of Prince William County, which abstract shall be duly signed by said commissioners and deposited in the office of the clerk of the county court of said county.

3. If from such returns and abstracts of votes so cast upon the question of the removal of the courthouse of Prince William County it shall appear that a majority of the votes were "for Manassas," the said village of Manassas shall be, to all intents and purposes, the place of holding courts in the said county of Prince William, and for conducting the business incident thereto, so soon as suitable buildings may be erected for that purpose: provided, that the people of Manassas shall furnish the necessary lot of ground, enclose it, and erect thereon, without expense to the people of the county, as good or better courthouse, jail and clerk's offices than those in present use, and shall convey, by proper legal conveyance, the title to the said lot and buildings thereon to the said county, the funds for the purchase of the said lot and the erection of said buildings to be received by Benjamin D. Merchant, Charles L. Hynson and William S. Fewell, who shall constitute, in connection with the Board of Supervisors, a building committee, to erect the courthouse and other necessary buildings; and it shall be the duty of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Prince William to sell the public buildings at Brentsville upon such terms as they shall deem best, and appropriate the proceeds of said sale toward the erection of the necessary public buildings at Manassas aforementioned; and the Board of Supervisors of said county shall select a

lot on which said public buildings shall be erected: and further provided, the said removal of the said courthouse shall not take place beyond the year 1873.

4. This act shall be in force from its passage."

The ballots were cast on May 23, 1872, but apparently the provisions of this bill were not followed, as petitioners addressed themselves to County Court Judge Aylett Nicol with voting irregularities as early as May 29. These petitioners wrote,

"That on said 23rd day of May, 1872, the vote on the said question was taken at various precincts in said county, and returns thereof made to the Clerk's office of Your Honor's Court – that on the 2nd day after the said election day two of the persons appointed by your Honor as Commissioners for the Election of the said County, met at the Clerk's office of the said County Court and without organization according to law and in the absence of a quorum proceeded unsworn to open the poll-books from the different election precincts in said county and to count and canvass the said returns. That the said two Commissioners left the said the poll books unsealed and the returns uncounted in the Clerk's office of the said Court from that day until the fourth day after the said election day at which time and place a full board convened. These two Commissioners, however, canvassed the election returns from Coles precinct and ascertained the certificate of the Judges and Clerks of the Election to the votes cast or alleged to have been cast "For Brentsville" and "For Manassas" to be insufficient in law..." (Manassas Gazette, June 1872).

Ultimately, the petition alleged that the Commissioners decided the vote of Monday, May 27, 1872 was in favor of Brentsville by a

majority of 49 votes. It stated that this decision was rendered under protest and that it was "...wholly wrong and erroneous," for many reasons including the decision was made on the wrong day, that a quorum was not present, that the two Commissioners who did meet were not properly sworn in and that the poll-books were left unsealed. The petitioners charged, "... *special fraud in the conduct of the election officers at the Occoquan precinct...*" and "... *that the judges of election who received ballots cast for Manassas opened many of them before depositing them and read the writing or printing on their face, and made public at divers times during the said day how many votes had been cast for Manassas, and how many for Brentsville, and this conduct your petitioners charge was illegal and fraudulent, and done to influence electors in voting.*" (Manassas Gazette, June 1872). The petitioners who charged that the results for the Coles and Occoquan precincts were fraudulent included Richard M. Weir, H. B. Varner, B. D. Merchant, George C. Round, George B. Jones, S. A. Thomas, B. M. Florence, J. W. Hornbaker, Robert M. Weir, B. L. Cannon, R. W. Merchant, John H. Butler, S. W. Burdge and C. L. Hynson.

By June 4, 1872, the Board of County Supervisors and Commissioners of Elections for Prince William County published that, "*We shall contest the election held in said county on the 23rd day of May, 1872 under a special act of the State Legislature, passed to enable the qualified electors of Prince William County to vote upon the question of removing their County Seat from Brentsville to Manassas, under that said election the Commissioners thereof, erroneously decided Brentsville to have a majority of 49 votes over Manassas.*" (Manassas Gazette, June 1872).

The Election officials were subsequently summoned to appear in court to give testimony

on the irregularities, Some of these men included John S. Powell, Thomas L. Selecman, A. H. Johnson, James V. Nash, Charles Ryan, Lycurgus Ledman, William Selecman, John Murphy, Thomas J. Powell Jr, John King, Charles Holland, Samuel R. Lowe, Isaac P. Baldwin, J. J. Cockrell and E. E. Conner. (Prince William County Circuit Court Archives, Judgments, 1872).

While the records of the court have not been found, one can surmise that the protest was disallowed, as the court remained at Brentsville for another twenty years. Records even indicate that repairs continued to be made through the 1890's One such document, dated 1875, was for payment of the cost of a weather vane and insulators to Frank Ash.

CORRECTION

I have been called on the carpet by several family members for my mathematical abilities. Seems that I made a mistake in the time since H.L. passed away; he has been gone since 2/5/92, so that makes it 24 years - not 16 as I said. Sorry folks, guess time really does move on!

Mary Pearson Pumphrey

When WAR Came to Brentsville

BUCKLAND MILLS, June 21, 1863-10.30 p. m.

Major-General BUTTERFIELD,
Chief of Staff,
Headquarters Army of the Potomac:

I arrived here at dark. My advance is half way from here to New Baltimore. I have reports that Hampton's brigade is at New Baltimore, of which I am certain; also reported that infantry and artillery are there. I have scouting parties out in all directions. I will attack the enemy to-morrow morning. Please inform me whether my scouting party has returned from Dumfries and Brentsville. I would beg to be informed how the fight of to-day resulted. Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JUL. STAHEL,
Major-General, Commanding Cavalry Division.



Julius H. Stahel-Számwald (November 5, 1827 – December 4, 1912) was a Hungarian soldier who emigrated to the United States and became a Union general in the American Civil War. After the war, he served as a U.S. diplomat, a mining engineer, and a life insurance company executive. He received the Medal of Honor for gallantry in action at the Battle of Piedmont in 1864. Until the outbreak of the American Civil War, he worked for a German-language newspaper in New York City.

In 1861 Stahel and Louis Blenker recruited the 8th New York Volunteer Infantry Regiment, the 1st German Rifles or Blenker's Rifles. Stahel, who had dropped the "Számwald" portion of his surname, became the regiment's lieutenant colonel, while Blenker served as colonel. Stahel first saw combat at the First Battle of Bull Run, leading the regiment in Blenker's first brigade of Dixon Miles's Fifth Division. The regiment covered the flight of the Union Army of Brig. Gen. Irvin McDowell. The 8th New York served in Blenker's division of the newborn Army of the Potomac until it was transferred to western Virginia. Stahel became a colonel on April 23, 1862. He commanded a brigade under Blenker in this period.

Stahel led a brigade under Maj. Gen. John C. Fremont in the Mountain Department during an incursion into the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. His brigade was of Fremont's left at the Battle of Cross Keys in which Stonewall Jackson stopped the Union advance into the Valley. Stahel's position on the left exposed his command to a flank attack by Isaac Trimble's brigade as Fremont was attempting to turn the right of the Confederate line.

By July 1862, Stahel was commander of the first brigade of Robert C. Schenck's first division Army of Virginia in the corps led by Franz Sigel in Maj. Gen. John Pope's Army of Virginia. At the Second Battle of Bull Run, Schenck was wounded and Stahel became acting commander of the division. (Adolphus Buschbeck succeeded to command of the brigade.) Stahel's brigade was one of two that covered Sigel's retreat when Pope's army was defeated.

Stahel was appointed a brigadier general on November 12, 1862. He commanded the first division in Sigel's corps, which became XI Corps in the Army of the Potomac. He commanded the corps briefly in early 1863. Stahel was named a major general on March 14, 1863.

At the Battle of Piedmont on June 5, 1864, serving as cavalry commander under Maj. Gen. David Hunter, Stahel distinguished himself under fire until he was hit in the shoulder. This led to Stahel's having received the Medal of Honor, on November 4, 1893, for leading his division until seriously wounded. Stahel served, after recovering from his wound, on court-martial duty until he resigned on February 8, 1865.

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Restoring the Brentsville Jail

By Brendon Hanafin

It has been a productive decade plus some for the restoration of the buildings of the Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre. Starting in 2001 with the stabilization of the Union Church and the Brentsville Courthouse, County staff, volunteers and the community have been hard at work. County staff restored the Union Church in 2005-2006 (with daily oversight and refreshments from Gladys). Keys Ridge Construction Inc. completed the restoration of the Courthouse in 2007. The Haislip-Hall House was also restored in 2007 and was the first project to utilize our new (at the time) saw mill. The mill continues to be worth its weight in gold in cost savings.

The last building to be restored turned out to be the toughest to restore. We felt as a staff that the most important project in our backlog of County historic properties was the jail. Staff requested



First floor hallway

the County Board of Supervisors pool together \$182,000 from projects like Ben Lomond, Historic Acquisitions, and Bennett School in order to restore the jail. The Board agreed and this along with left over Brentsville funds, donations from the Friends of Brentsville Historic Centre, appropriation from the Brentsville Magisterial District Supervisor, grants, and donations have increased the total budget to \$834,000.



Working on the drywall

In early 2012 design work began. Due to the deteriorated and unsafe condition of the Jail the work had to be phased. Phase 1 was the selective removals of termite and water damaged framing, Phase 2 rebuilt the brick walls with local masonry firm Dominion Restoration. Dominion rebuilt the entire 3-4' lower courses of brick in small sections and pumped in a soft mortar mix into all of the voids in the brick. They completed their very delicate and time consuming work in late 2013.



Fritz milling wood for the window frames

The final restoration Phase 3 started in 2014 after completion of the design. Restoration work to date includes digging and pouring a new foundation. It is not easy to dig inside 12' by 12' rooms. The stud walls in the cells were rebuilt with pressure treated 4X6 lumber as we don't want to have to come back and restore this one again! The new mechanical and electrical systems are complete. The eight rooms and two halls will be finished in a mixture of plaster, exposed brick, and planks. The plaster is well underway. Windows and bars have gone back in, the stairway to the second floor will be completed in a matter of weeks and then it is on to the flooring and completion of the plank walls.

These projects take time and an attention to detail on a daily basis. Items like the size of the windows, type of doors, configuration of rooms are all hard to determine and can change as the building is "peeled back" often revealing "ghost marks" or clues to the past. These clues can be a paint line, different color bricks, water staining, etc.

Whenever possible, staff and volunteers (AKA Morgan) took road trips to other historic jails across the Commonwealth to gain valuable insight into building practices and materials. We consulted with noted Historic Architect Dr. Carl Lounsbury of Colonial Williamsburg to review and consult on the drawings. This has been a long and sometimes arduous process but we are in the home stretch.

The Jail may look unfinished but the transformation back to 1822 will be completed over the summer and into the fall. We hope that you will attend the ribbon cutting this fall and be a part of our shared community and county success. Stay tuned for the ongoing effort to furnish and put exhibits in the Jail. The Prince William Historic Preservation Foundation is about to embark on a large scale campaign to appeal for donations to the project.



Busy, busy, busy ... gotta get it done ...

Brentsville Neighbors

“Preserving Brentsville’s History”

Contact us on:

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All back issues on:

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

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IN GOD WE TRUST

