



Historic Perspectives

Preservation of Prince William County's Historic Resources

Summer 2022 Contents

- 1 | A Busy FY22 in Prince William County Historic Preservation
- 3 | Preservation Corner
- 4 | Image Spotlight
- 5 | History Corner
- 7 | HPD News
- 8 | Foundation Update

PRINCE WILLIAM

Historic Preservation

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A Busy FY22 in Prince William County Historic Preservation



Historic Preservation Staff

Ben Lomond

This June 30th marks the end of the County's fiscal (budgetary) year FY 22. This past year saw the completion of a lot of projects at the County's historic sites. Most of these projects enhanced accessibility to our historic sites and some were restoration projects maintain our high standards for our historic structures. We also added TWO new historic properties in the past year. It has been an exciting time for Prince William County Historic Preservation, below is just a sampling of some of our biggest projects. Because we have restoration carpenters on staff, a lot of our restoration projects are

done in house, saving money and allowing for quicker turnaround.

- Purchase of Thoroughfare Historic Park, preserving two historic cemeteries. Park master plan process on going now, future interpretation of the Thoroughfare community.
- Purchase of the Williams – Dawe House in Brentsville. This ca. 1822 is the oldest and nicest house in historic Brentsville. First steps are to stabilize the structure and start long range restoration and public use plans.
- Ben Lomond Farmhouse Restoration. The former Flory Center house, next to the historic

house main house has served as a rented office space for the past 20+ years. The structure will now house staff offices (there are currently no staff office space in the historic house) and visitor use space (new restrooms, gift shop and exhibit space). This past year design and drawings were completed.

- Rippon Lodge Walkways. To make the site more accessible, new sidewalks were placed from the parking lot to the main house and to the restrooms. This not only makes all of these spaces more accessible, but also enhances the landscaping of the historic site. This project also included directing downspouts on the south side of the historic house to underground drains.
- Restoration of the Ben Lomond retaining wall. This stone wall lines the street entrance for Ben Lomond along Sudley

Manor Dr. The wall was in bad repair and beginning to deteriorate. This project also includes redirecting the downspouts from the main house to underground drains, keep water away from the historic house. Now with the stone wall completed, a new wooden reproduction historic fence can be constructed along the front of the property.

- Bristoe Station Battlefield historic landscape restoration. This project has been on going for the past five years. It includes planting trees on portions of the battlefield that were wooded in the historic period of significance for the park (ca. 1860). Also included is the opening up of historic viewsheds on the battlefield by removing underbrush and select trees, allowing visitors to get a better understanding of the historic events on the battlefield.

Next fiscal year, starting July 1, looks to be another exciting year. Work will begin on the farmhouse at Ben Lomond Historic Site for future visitor services and staff office space. The Rippon Lodge site office will get a new roof and we hope to have a master plan in place for Thoroughfare Historic Park. Work will continue on the Williams – Dawe House. Finally, we will be making a large operational change at our three regularly opened historic sites. To allow for more accessibility and flexibility, we will be offering self-guided and guided tours of Ben Lomond, Brentsville and Rippon Lodge. It is our hope that by expanding our tour offerings, we will expand our audiences.

Stay tuned to our social media pages for updates on these new projects and most of all...come see for yourself!

Rob Orrison

Division Manager, Office of Historic Preservation

Do you want to leave your mark in history? Join our dedicated team of volunteers!

Volunteers are part of an effort to preserve and enhance the historical and natural resources of Prince William County. They help bring these resources alive for citizens with special programs, events, and daily efforts to maintain and beautify our historic sites. We need volunteers during the week and on the weekends at Ben Lomond Historic Site, Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre, Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park, and Rippon Lodge Historic Site. Pick the site and volunteer work that is best for you!

Docents/ Tour Guides
Children's Programs Leaders
Living History
Junior Preservationists

Research
Gardeners
Special Events

For more information and to apply, visit www.volunteerprincewilliam.org and apply with the Prince William County Office of Historic Preservation.



Preservation Corner

The Prince William County Office of Historic Preservation manages a wide range of historic artifacts that range from archaeological remains to furniture pieces. Included in our collections is an archive of documents pertaining to the history of our community. One of the most extensive archival collections are a series of bound copies of local newspapers published in the 20th century. The bound volumes are mainly from older newspapers such as *The Manassas Journal* and *The Potomac News* among others. These bound volumes include a copy of almost every edition of the newspaper that was published as a reference volume. These volumes range from the 1930s to the early 2000s when the physical publication of newspapers ended.

These archives are a great reference on the local history of Prince William County in the 20th century. Since there were other regional papers that covered on both international and national news, the papers in our collections focused on local news events that might not have been covered by any other newspaper. These newspapers can be a great resource for general Prince William County history, but there is a wealth of information on



A FUN DAY for the children of the Brentsville area was held last week by the Brentsville Lucky Clover 4-H Club. Above, a foursome of girls engage in a game of badminton. In the background is the old Brentsville Courthouse, which has been remodeled and now serves as a community center for the area.

Journal Messenger newspaper

the county's historic sites prior to them becoming the museum spaces that they are now. While not all the newspapers have been digitalized, working with the staff at RELIC, some of the

older editions are now available online and can be found at: www.pwcva.gov/departments/library/RELIC-digital-archives.

Bill Backus
Curator, Office of Historic Preservation

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Learn about the Division's many events throughout the year, see candid photos, get up to the minute accounts through Facebook Live and Twitter as well as find out interesting facts about Prince William County history.



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PRINCE WILLIAM
Historic Preservation



Image Spotlight



Historic Preservation Staff

James Robinson House, 1862

Located on the same lot as Ben Lomond Historic Site, The Flory Center serves as an architectural memory of the Carter family legacy in Virginia. This style of log structure, with a roadside porch, side gabled door, and a high gable roof, was a standard design for many of the working-class buildings built and used for the Carters and their descendants. This same style can be seen at the James Robinson House, belonging to freed man “Jim” Robinson and his family, who have patrilinear ties to the Carter family. Despite surviving the first and second Battles of Bull Run relatively unscathed, the Robinson House was unfortunately destroyed by arsonists in 1993, leaving only the stone foundation.

Madelyne Stratten
Historic Interpreter, Ben Lomond
Historic Site



Historic Preservation Staff

Flory Center Exterior, Present Day



Historic Preservation Staff

Exposed lumber inside Flory Center



A History of Juneteenth and Emancipation in Prince William County

On January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation stating that “all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward and forever free”. With this language, President Lincoln freed enslaved African Americans throughout the South in states that were actively fighting against the United States. Enforcement of the Emancipation Proclamation relied heavily on Union Troops and as a result, emancipation throughout the South was not an immediate transformation, but rather, a gradual change as the Civil War progressed. In fact, by the war’s end in 1865, there were still African Americans enslaved throughout the South and the West. While there are many Emancipation Days throughout the South, the most widely known today is Juneteenth.

Juneteenth (June 19th) is celebrated as the most popular annual celebration of emancipation from slavery in the United States. While it is now recognized throughout the United States, it originated in Galveston, Texas, where



Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

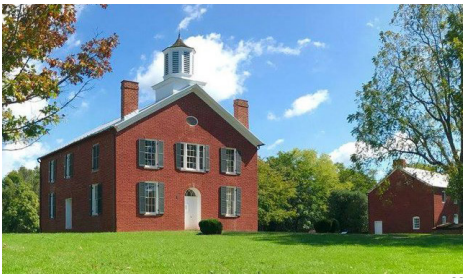
The Freedmen's Bureau, drawn by A.R. Waud

Union General Maj. Gen. Gordon Granger issued the following order on June 19, 1865:

“The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired labor. The freedmen are advised to remain quietly at their present homes and work for wages. They are informed that they will not be allowed to collect at military posts and that they will not be supported in idleness either there or elsewhere.” —General Orders, Number 3; Headquarters District of Texas, Galveston

By the time General Granger issued the order, a lot had

changed since the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation. The Confederate capital in Richmond had fallen; the “Executive” to whom he referred, President Lincoln, was dead, the Emancipation Proclamation has been effective for 2.5 years, and the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery was well on its way to ratification. However, this date is recognized for it was the date that many African Americans throughout the state of Texas were told they were freed, immediately turning it into an annual celebration beginning as early as 1866. In the holiday’s early years, Juneteenth celebrations came in many forms throughout the South, from picnics and games to rodeos and family reunions. It was also known by many names from “Jubilee Day”, “Emancipation Day”, and “Freedom Day”. Today, the celebration of Juneteenth places an emphasis on learning about African American History and culture.



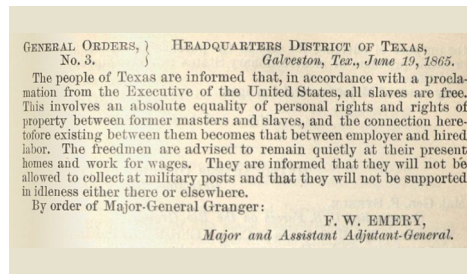
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Brentsville Courthouse

Throughout the Office of Historic Preservation, each of our historic sites are rich with African American history and culture in stories that we tell all year round. However, during Juneteenth, we like to highlight Prince William County's history of emancipation in the years following the Civil War, for with freedom came immeasurable new opportunities, including the right to vote and get an education, as well as many challenges that needed to be overcome.

Though the conclusion of the Civil War saw the emancipation of millions of African Americans from bondage (with thousands here in Prince William County) the work of gaining equality in education and voting rights had just begun. Across the south, the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands (commonly referred to as the Freedmen's Bureau) was established to "direct such issues of provisions, clothing, and fuel, as he may deem needful for the immediate and temporary shelter and supply of destitute and suffering refugees and freedmen and their wives and children." This Federal agency was tasked with keeping the peace between white and black Southerners, creating schools, and other efforts to rebuild the South. In Prince William County, Marcus Hopkins was tasked with running the understaffed and underfunded Bureau from the county seat of Brentsville.

Several efforts were made



Courtesy of the National Archives

General Order No. 3

during Reconstruction to provide African Americans with a chance for equality in Prince William County. By May 1870, five Freedmen Schools were opened for students in Gainesville, Buckland, Manassas, Manly and Brentsville to teach reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, and geography. By increasing this knowledge, the Freedmen's Bureau hoped that Freedmen would be able to better negotiate annual labor contracts with planters for better wages and conditions. In 1868, Virginia's Constitution granted the right to vote to all men, including African Americans, two years before the 15th Amendment. When African American's new rights were being challenged, the Freedmen's Bureau stepped into the courts to make sure that they were treated equally.

Throughout the second half of the 19th century, freed people valued opportunities to attend school for they understood that an education provided opportunities for both political and economic independence. After 1870, twenty-one segregated schools were built to educate African American children in Prince William County. Very few of these schools still survive today. Lucasville School is the one extant African American Schoolhouse established from 1885 to 1926 to teach young African Americans reading, writing, math, and history to help students acquire an education that could help them determine their own future.



Office of Historic Preservation

Lucasville School

However, emancipation was not easy. Reconstruction was widely considered a failure when it ended in 1872. Racial tensions were high, and Blacks were often the target of violence. Many African Americans and poor Whites were disenfranchised due to poll taxes and understanding clauses well into the twentieth century. Segregated schools quickly became unequal with less resources from textbooks and supplies to lower salaries for Black teachers. Many of these inequalities continued well into the twentieth century for Prince William County Schools were integrated in 1966 and the poll taxes were removed from the State Constitution in 1970.

In June 2021, a bill was passed making Juneteenth the eleventh American federal holiday and the first to obtain legal observance as a federal holiday since Martin Luther King Jr. Day was designated in 1983. Juneteenth is a celebration commemorating the freedom of enslaved African Americans and a celebration of African American history and culture. African American's stories of trials and triumphs are an integral part of Prince William County's history and too numerous to list in one small article. We encourage you to visit our historic sites not only during Juneteenth, but all year round, to learn more.

Paige Gibbons Backus

Historic Site Manager
Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre & Lucasville School



Staff News

In May the Office of Historic Preservation hired Kaitlin Becht as a Museum Collections intern for the summer. Kaitlin just finished her junior year at Mary Washington University where she is studying Historic Preservation. This summer she will be taking inventory of the collections at a few different historic sites in Prince William County. She is very excited to be part of these projects because they will allow her to apply what she has learned in her courses and give her the chance to learn new skills. She is also looking forward to working at the historic sites because she has always loved visiting them and interacting with the past in such a direct way. After graduation she hopes to continue working in the historic preservation field. She decided to apply for this internship after volunteering at Rippon Lodge where she helped take inventory of the artifacts there. She enjoyed that project because it was the first time, she



Historic Preservation Staff

Kaitlin Becht

had participated in preservation work. In the future she would like to continue this type of work and help preserve historic structures so that future generations can continue to appreciate and learn from them.

Summer Intern

Grace Powers is joining our staff as a summer intern for the Office of Historic Preservation and Planning Office. She is a rising fourth-year undergraduate student at the University of Virginia, double majoring in American Studies and Anthropology. Grace's research focus is the history of slavery in Virginia, and last summer she received the Harrison Undergraduate Research Award to create a digital index of details about enslaved laborers mentioned in the Overton Papers housed in UVA's Special Collections Library. Grace is also passionate about community engagement and works closely with the Louisa County historical organization One Shared Story as well as serves as Chief Historian for the UVA Student Council. Throughout this summer, she will create an annotated bibliography of sources on Native American history in Prince William County and the immediate surrounding areas, including scholarly books and articles, primary source documents, archaeological reports, historical maps, and disparate local histories. This annotated bibliography will be a preliminary resource in a longer-term goal of recovering and



Historic Preservation Staff

Grace Powers

consolidating Native American history in Prince William but is also meant to engage community members interested in learning more on the topic. Grace will largely be working remotely from Charlottesville, but she is excited to engage with staff and community members in-person one to two days a week!

Berea Work

The Office of Historic Preservation has finished work on the



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Grave Restoration work at Berea

preservation of a county owned cemetery. Prince William resident Sophia Carter lived at Berea now part of Forest Green Golf Course. Sophia Carter was the daughter of Robert "Councilor" Carter and a member of one of the wealthiest families in early Virginia history. Archaeologists used a radar sled to look for any additional graves. Unfortunately, no other graves were located within the search area. The grave marker was restored, and informational markers will be placed at the site explaining its history.

Williams - Dawe House

The Office of Historic Preservation recently purchased the Williams-Dawe House, the oldest structure in Brentsville, Virginia. Built in 1822, the House was once owned by Jane Williams, widow of John Williams, who had served as the county clerk from 1795 until his death in 1813. Jane filled in as county clerk until her brother Phillip Deveraux Dawe became clerk the next year. Jane was the first female county clerk of court in Prince William County. The



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property located at 12320 Bristow Road sits on 5.61 acres and is located across the street from the Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre. Follow along as we begin work on this historic property.

2023 Prince William County/Manassas History Symposium

The Symposium is scheduled for March 25, 2023 at the Old Manassas Courthouse. Topics will be announced later this year. Mark your calendars!

Rippon Lodge Amphitheater

A huge Thank You to Eagle Scout Gary Limber and Boy Scout Troop #608 for completely



Historic Preservation Staff

rebuilding the Amphitheater at Rippon Lodge Historic Site. This group showed up with a trailer full of lumber and knocked out this project in a matter of hours! Volunteer projects like this enable our site to have quality programming outside in the warmer months. If you have never visited the amphitheater, stop by and follow the trail marker signs to it. It is a very quiet and peaceful spot to enjoy being in the woods.

Americana Corner Grant

Rippon Lodge was recently awarded an \$8,000 grant for the fabrication and installation of new exhibit panels throughout the house.

Dan Goldstein

Historic Interpreter, Rippon Lodge Historic Site

Prince William County Historic Preservation Foundation

The Many Decades of Rippon is the theme for the 2022 Prince William Historic Preservation Foundation Gala, to be held Saturday, September 17 from 1PM until 4PM at Rippon Lodge. This year's fundraiser is going to be something totally different: a garden party with lawn games, themed luncheon, silent auction and a variety of period entertainments to highlight the lesser-known history of Rippon. We're featuring a wonderful presentation by a 1920 Suffragette as a belated nod to the 100th anniversary of the Women's Right to Vote followed by a tour of the lodge.

The Foundation has recently

funded the completion of the Brentsville Jail Museum restoration, the last piece of a multi-year project to restore the Brentsville Courthouse complex. Rippon Lodge is the next big undertaking which will include the creation of a Nature Center with community rooms and offices along with the continued restoration and furnishing of Rippon Lodge itself.

What a wonderful way to spend a gorgeous September afternoon than on the spacious lawns overlooking the Occoquan just as guests of the Blackburns, Atkinsons and Blacks had over the centuries. The Gala is the Foundation's only formal fundraising event

of the year, and we welcome you to join us for a delightful afternoon filled with history and good times as we launch the latest project to preserve the stories of Prince William County, the place we call 'home'.

Bill Backus, Curator

Office of Historic Preservation and
Cornelia Rutherford
Prince William Preservation Foundation

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