



Historic Perspectives

Preservation of Prince William County's Historic Resources

Fall 2022 Contents

- 1 | 200 Years of Voting History from Brentsville
- 3 | Preservation Corner
- 4 | Image Spotlight
- 5 | History Corner
- 8 | HPD News
- 9 | Foundation Update



200 Years of Voting History from Brentsville

To say that the last 200 years have seen changes in the way Americans vote is putting it mildly. In 1822 the nation was two years into the unopposed second term of Democratic-Republican President James Monroe, the last of the Revolutionary War generation. Fifty voters, of a potentially eligible 1,187, cast their ballots in 1820 for Monroe. One hundred twenty-two would cast their ballots for William Crawford, Andrew Jackson, and Henry Clay in 1824. By comparison, in 2020, 228,056 Prince William County residents cast their ballots for Joseph R. Biden, Donald J. Trump, Jo Jorgenson, or write-in candidates. While most readers know that part of the increase in numbers is because in 1820, people of color and women were not allowed to vote, as well as the fact the county's population has gone from 9,419 to 482,204, there are other distinct differences between the elections of the 1820s and today.

In 1822, Virginia was one of three remaining states, including Rhode Island and North Carolina, to maintain a property requirement to vote. Per the Virginia Constitution, to be eligible to



HP Staff

Polling Booth

vote you had to be a white male over 21 and possess “fifty acres of vacant land, twenty-five acres of cultivated land, and a house twelve feet by twelve feet; or a town lot and a house twelve feet by twelve”.

However, one significant difference between Virginia the other new states was that it did not require a “religious test” to vote or hold office before the new Constitution in 1788 explicitly forbid such acts. Of the original thirteen states only Virginia, New York, Connecticut, and Rhode Island did not have some law restricting the vote to Christians, or narrower still, Protestant Christians. This was formalized in 1786 by what is today called the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom.

PRINCE WILLIAM

Historic Preservation

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Another major difference was the number of offices elected by the electorate. The county's magistrates (judges and executive officials), sheriff, and clerk of the court were appointed by the Governor. Beneath them, the overseers of the poor, road surveyors, constables, deputy sheriffs, jailer, coroner, and Commonwealth's Attorney were appointed by the County Court (composed of the magistrates). There was a gradual shift; by the 1830s the Sheriff and Clerk became appointees of the County Court as well. By 1851, all local offices were made subject to general election.

Time was a significant factor in all elections. Today, it is unusual for an election to go more than a month without an official victor. In 1822, the Senate and House elections began in July and ran until August of 1823 before all 24 states had voted. Virginians cast their ballots in April 1823 and North Carolina brought up the rear on August 14, 1823. Senators were not elected by the people until after 1912, being appointed by the state legislature. Elections spanned two years at the states' discretion until 1879.

Perhaps most distinctly different was how Virginians voted until 1870. All votes were cast in public, by voice, before the election clerk who would then record

them formally by name in the poll book. There was no privacy or even a hint of it. Often, dissenting voters simply did not vote rather than face public scrutiny or violence for their beliefs. In a rare moment of accommodation, Virginia law allowed those who were mute to vote by ballot provided they met the other requirements mentioned earlier of being a white male over 21 with sufficient property and residency.

After the 1870 Constitution, all voting was done by ballot. It also widened the electorate to all males 21 and older who had resided in Virginia for 12 months prior to the election, with exceptions. All "Lunatics", "Idiots", those convicted of bribery, embezzlement, treason, or a felony, fought a duel, or who had sent or accepted a challenge to a duel, were not allowed to vote. This included African-American men who qualified. Their rights faced constant threat during the post-reconstruction years, until in 1902 a new state Constitution sharply curtailed voting rights for African-Americans, leaving much discretion in who got to vote in county clerk hands, as they administered the required literacy tests and collected poll taxes. Notably, Civil War veterans of both sides were exempt from the poll tax as were their sons.

In 1920, following the 19th Amendment women would cast their ballots in Virginia for the first time for state, local, and Presidential elections. In Prince William County the first woman to register and pay her poll tax was Miss Lucy Wooden of Nokesville, a 64-year-old long time Treasury Department employee. The first woman of color to register was Mrs. Clara Conway of Manassas, a 37-year-old housewife and part-time seamstress.

In 2021, Brentsville served as a polling place for the first time since the 1940s. Registered Prince William County voters could cast their early ballots in the old schoolhouse from Monday to Saturday in the weeks leading up to election day. Last year, over 1,300 voters exercised that option! More than there were potential voters in 1822!

This year, the Brentsville Schoolhouse will again be open for early voting from **October 25th to November 5th**. Monday through Friday the polls will be open from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM. On Saturdays the polls will be open from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM. Please see the Prince William County Office of Elections for more information! www.pwcvotes.org

Nate McDonald
Site Interpreter, Brentsville Courthouse
Historic Centre



Preservation Corner

The Office of Historic Preservation is the repository of many archaeological collections that were initiated by Prince William County. One of the collections contains the results of a Phase I archaeological survey of the 4th Alabama Infantry encampment in the Dumfries area over the winter of 1861-1862. The 4th Alabama had seen heavy fighting earlier in year at the First Battle of Manassas and they were destined to see more heavy fighting throughout the rest of the Civil War. However, during their winter in Dumfries, the Alabamians had no idea of the tough fighting that lay in their future.

The artifacts from the 4th Alabama encampment allows historians a snapshot of the material culture used by these Civil War soldiers. Not surprisingly, the majority of objects found are glass fragments from

bottles and brick fragments from the winter huts. Since these were utilitarian items used in large numbers we get a sense of what was used; this is more important since many utilitarian items were unlikely to survive 1-5 years after their production and unlikely to be passed down through families such as uniforms or furniture.

One of the most interesting objects from the 4th Alabama encampment is a small brass button, likely used on either a jacket cuff or potentially a woolen overshirt. The brass button is a United States Army button, known to collectors and reenactors as a Federal Eagle Button. Although the Alabamians were in the Confederate army, these buttons were not only prevalent in their ranks but could be found in many other Confederate units throughout the Civil War. The main reason for this unusual phenomena is the

Confederate military inherited many of these buttons when they confiscated many of the Federal arsenals throughout the South. Since the army needed hundreds of thousands (if not millions) of buttons to clothe its troops, many buttons were pressed into service, including these eagle buttons. Unlike other uniforms confiscated from these arsenals, the use of buttons would not cause problems of friendly fire instances since they were such a minute piece of the soldier's kit. Photographic evidence shows Confederate soldiers wearing these types of buttons until the end of the Civil War. As a result of this archaeological investigation historians now know that the soldiers of the 4th Alabama were also wearing these buttons during the first winter of the Civil War.

Bill Backus
Curator

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
- Research
- Special Events
- Children's Programs Leaders
- Gardeners
- Living History
- Junior Preservationists

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





Image Spotlight

The Office of Historic Preservation and the Prince William County Historical Commission dedicated a marker on September 10th to the Courageous Four, a group of Prince William County educators who helped desegregate County schools in 1964. The dedication took place at Fannie Fitzgerald Elementary School and drew over a hundred people seeking to honor these women. Speakers at the dedication included Lillie Jessie, a representative from the Prince William County School Board and Victor Angry, the Neabsco District Supervisor. The crowd also enjoyed performances by step teams from both Fannie Fitzgerald and Porter Traditional School. The highlight, however, was the remarks from family members of the teachers, as well as from Zella Brown herself, the last surviving member of the Courageous Four.

A traveling exhibit about the Courageous Four also made its debut at the dedication. The exhibit places the teachers' historic achievements within the context of segregated education in Virginia, and specifically within Prince William County. The exhibit is currently at Fannie Fitzgerald Elementary School and will move next to Porter Traditional School. Following this, the exhibit will be publicly displayed at Prince William County libraries.

Since staff were not able to include all of the photographs submitted by family members in



HP Staff

Zella Brown unveils the marker. Photo courtesy of Prince William Times.



HP Staff

Courageous Four exhibit at Fannie Fitzgerald Elementary School.

the exhibit, there is an accompanying website with these images. Those interested in learning more about the Courageous Four can also view two videos on this site about this important

moment in local history: <https://www.pwcva.gov/departments/historic-preservation/the-courageous-four-exhibit>.

Lauren Maloy
Historic Communities Coordinator



History Corner

The American Colonization Society And The Connection with Prince William County History

Often when conducting tours at Ben Lomond conversation turns to The Colonization Society and inevitably most people say, “No, I don’t know anything about that.” However, folks find that they know more than they thought. Let’s take a deep dive into the history of the American Colonization Society, Bushrod Washington, and Reverend Charles Wesley Andrews, two characters you will likely hear about when on tour at Rippon Lodge or Ben Lomond, two county historic sites.

Going back to the Constitutional Convention of 1787 representatives met in Philadelphia to craft a document that would be used to chart the course of the fledgling United States. This document would protect the institution of slavery to fulfill an immediate and important need for a labor force. While the Constitution ensured that slavery would be part of the nation’s economy, political leaders and slave owners were concerned about the growing free Black population in their respective states. The fear was that free Blacks would encourage and aid slaves to rebel. Many felt the need to find a solution for removal of the threat without creating economic disruption.

Rebellion in Haiti sparked debate among slave owning populations about slavery, eman-



Bushrod Washington

ipation, and colonization. The Haitian Revolution created an atmosphere of fear in the United States as well as other colonial countries in the West Indies. The shared belief of citizens in these regions was that free Black people were an active threat to the institution of slavery and needed to be separated from the rest of the country’s population.

In 1800, officials in Richmond, Virginia discovered plans for an insurrection to be led by a slave named Gabriel suggesting that the Haitian Revolution encouraged slaves in other countries to revolt against their owners. To prevent race wars, Virginia passed laws creating tighter restrictions or outright prohibition of emancipation. Other states like Maryland, Delaware, Kentucky, and Missouri policed and restricted movements

of enslaved and free Black people. State legislators debated how to manage or remove the free Black populations before they inspired slaves to revolt or assist their attempt to escape.

Despite these efforts slave led insurrections around the globe began to spread. Slave owners and political leaders demanded legislative codes and restrictions be placed against freed Black communities to gain control. Many began to consider colonization to rid the U.S. of free Black people. Through colonization, the free Black population would be settled in their own nation ultimately on the West Coast of Africa. In 1815 thirty-eight Black people were shipped to Sierra Leone. This voyage along with the desire to remove free Black people from the United States altogether, served as inspiration for the American Colonization Society.

Originally known as the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Color of the United States, the American Colonization Society was founded in 1816 by Reverend Robert Finney of New Jersey, Charles Fenton Mercer, Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, Elias Caldwell, Francis Scott Key, and Bushrod Washington the husband of Julia Ann Blackburn, eldest daughter of Thomas and Christian Blackburn. Washington was a big part of the Rippon Lodge story as



American
Colonization
Society
Certificate

he was instrumental in proffering the sale of Rippon to George Atkinson.

The ACS was formed to assist in the colonization and removal of free Black people. It recruited support and financial backing from slave owners, the Protestant and Presbyterian churches, and others including federal, state, and local government officials. This organization gained support by pro-slavery and abolitionists alike. While they had very different primary goals, they agreed that free Black people would never be accepted as equals in the United States. Abolitionist leaning members believed this to be an opportunity for free Blacks to escape racism and start their lives anew, form their own nation where they could enjoy liberation and citizenship. Pro-Slavery supporters considered this a means to remove those most likely to threaten slavery. Colonization was considered a progressive view at the time receiving support from both sides of the Peculiar Institution argument. The underlying thought shared by both sides was that white and black people could not peacefully co-exist in society.

As the ACS grew, the organization worked to create and settle

a colony in West Africa to fulfill its mission. In early 1820, the first group of emigrants numbering about eighty-six souls set sail for West Africa. Many fell ill with “Africa fever” and the rainy season impacted travel to the coast which hampered the success of the mission. To avoid a repeat the ACS chose to send future groups during a different time of year. In 1821, the next group traveled to West Africa, stopping in Sierra Leone to search for a suitable colony to purchase and settle. In December the ACS purchased land along the West African Coast and created the Colony of Montserrat, later called Liberia. The capital in the colony was named Monrovia in honor of President James Monroe, an ardent supporter of the ACS. President Thomas Jefferson was an early supporter of the colonization movement while in the White House likely due to a push by then Virginia Governor James Monroe. President James Madison was also a strong supporter of the ACS. He was elected the third president of the organization in 1833 and served until his death in 1836.

It is during this time, yet another figure of the Prince William County story is seen on ACS records. The Reverend

Charles Wesley Andrews, born in Vermont in 1807 had been a Virginia resident since 1827. In 1833, Charles married Sarah Walker Page, who manumitted her slaves on the day of the marriage, due in large part to Andrews opposition to slavery. Charles would soon become an active member of the American Colonization Society because it was suited particularly well to his concerns as well as other evangelical Episcopalians. It combined their zeal to convert Africans with the ultimate desire to end slavery in Virginia. Andrews work in the Episcopal church was an illustration of the intersection of evangelicalism and moral issues with 19th century American politics. He regarded slavery as an individual sin and believed that slave owners could be persuaded to emancipate their slaves once they understood the system as evil. Andrews was unshaken by arguments that sending all black Virginians to Africa was a practical impossibility.

Just over twenty years after beginning work in the ACS, Reverend Andrews found himself at the Pringle House General Hospital giving spiritual aid to wounded and dying soldiers after the First Battle of Manassas. Despite his opposition with secession, some of Andrews congregants were among the wounded and he was impelled to do what he could for them some in their final hours of life on Earth.

President Abraham Lincoln was also an ardent supporter of the ACS early in his political career and even as President of the United States. Even though he is known as a champion for emancipation and freedom for Black Americans, his belief was that Black and white people could not coexist after emancipation and supported sending freed blacks



Reverend Charles Wesley Andrews
Engraved by Samuel Sartain,
Philadelphia

to Liberia or Central America. On August 14, 1862, President Lincoln invited a group of prominent Black Leaders to the White House to discuss colonization. He argued that Black and white people were not capable of living together in the United States and that it was unfair to both groups to have to suffer the other's presence. After more dialogue as the Civil War raged Lincoln's views on emancipation and colonization evolved

to those he expressed later in his presidency.

Despite strong support for the ACS and its mission, the organization and its efforts failed due to opposition from the free Black community leaders. Many of the free Black community, particularly those in northern states felt they were Americans by birth and had no interest in leaving their homeland to live in a place they did not know or feel connected to in a meaningful way. As a result, the number of free Blacks willingly traveling to Liberia decreased over time. For example, 11,420 made the trip in 1830, but only 7,836 in 1852. Emigrants dealt with severe challenges upon arrival in Liberia. Poor living conditions in the colony deterred other free black people from settling in the colony. Those settlers who made the trip suffered high mortality rates and faced hostility from indigenous people who tried to defend their homeland from emigrants. The ACS's efforts to receive funding from state and federal governments as well as private donors deteriorated as reports from Liberia revealed difficulties settling the land. These reports also under-



Encyclopedia Virginia

American Colonization Society Token

mined interest from the free black community and continued to create funding problems for the colony. The ACS also lacked the funding to support multiple voyages to and from Liberia, and to maintain and protect the colony. Despite having significant private and public backing at the local and national level at the beginning, the ACS and colonization proved to be unsuitable in the long term. Liberia gained independence in 1847. The organization further stagnated, and the American Colonization Society formally dissolved in 1964.

David Born
Site Interpreter
Ben Lomond Historic Site

Register Online Today for These Upcoming Programs, & Events

pwcparcs.org/historicprograms

BEN LOMOND HISTORIC SITE

Farming The Fall Harvest
Campfire Ghost Stories Of Ben Lomond
Preparing A 19th Century Thanksgiving Day Meal
Christmas Traditions In Back Of The Big House

BRENTSVILLE COURTHOUSE HISTORIC CENTRE

Historic Cemeteries Of Brentsville Walking Tours
Historic Cemeteries Of Western

Prince William Car Caravan Tour
"Into The Woods" Walking Tours
Spirits Of Brentsville Haunted History Trail
Before The Bench At Brentsville
Historic Holidays & Christmas Concerts At Brentsville Courthouse

BRISTOE STATION BATTLEFIELD HERITAGE PARK

Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park Tours
Battle Of Bristoe Station Anniversary Weekend

Wednesday Walk At Bristoe Station
Battlefield: Decisions At Bristoe: Leadership In The 1863 Bristoe Station Campaign
Battle Of Bristoe Station Anniversary Hike
Bristoe Station Luminary
Christmas In A Civil War Camp

RIPPON LODGE HISTORIC SITE

The Duel-A Rippon Lodge Tale
275 Years-Rippon Lodge
Rippon Lodge Game Day



Staff News

Office of Historic Preservation Manager Rob Orrison was recently appointed by Governor Youngkin to be on the Board of the Frontier Culture Museum in Staunton, VA.

Paige Gibbons-Backus will be presenting a session about Cultural Institutions in Parks at the Virginia Recreation & Parks Society November 6-8, 2022 in Virginia Beach.

Kevin Pawlaak received the Ezra A. Carman Distinguished Scholarship Award from the Antietam Battlefield Guides.

The Prince William Office of Historic Preservation has hired three new part time interpreters that started in late September. Kayleigh Seng will work at Rippon Lodge, Lance Russell returns to Ben Lomond, and David Savidge will work at Brentsville. All three will be cross trained to cover all our historic sites. We welcome our new staff members to the team!

History Symposium

The 8th Annual Prince William/Manassas History Symposium will be March 25, 2023, at the Old Manassas Courthouse. The theme for next year's symposium is "Historic Community of Change." Topics include:

- Parson Weems
- Jim Robinson of Manassas
- George Carr Round
- Railroads of Prince William County
- The Community of Thoroughfare

Rippon Lodge Renovations

The Site Office at Rippon Lodge is being updated. Renovations began in September. Two new bathroom spaces and a new office will be created from the space that were formerly two bedrooms in the caretaker's home at Rippon Lodge during the first half of the 20th century.

The Garage at Rippon Lodge was painted and stabilized after some minor repairs recently. The garage was built during the occupancy of Rippon Lodge by Admiral Richard Blackburn Black during the last half of the 20th century.



"HISTORIC COMMUNITY OF CHANGE" THE EIGHTH ANNUAL PRINCE WILLIAM/MANASSAS HISTORY SYMPOSIUM



MARCH 25, 2023

Old Manassas Courthouse, Manassas, VA

Prince William County has many different layers to its history, and many individuals have shaped the County's complex past. Their contributions have also made Prince William the diverse and inclusive community we enjoy today. Come learn about some of the early pioneers in County history and how we still see their impact on modern Prince William County at the Eighth Annual Prince William/Manassas History Symposium.

Topics Include:

- Parson Weems and his Washington Anecdotes
- Jim Robinson of Manassas
- George Carr Round
- Railroads of Prince William County
- The Community of Thoroughfare

\$10 for all day symposium (8:30-4:00) Spaces are limited, reservations required.

Release of the Fifth issue of the Journal of Prince William History, which will be on sale for the special one-day price of \$5.

Symposium will take place inside the Old Manassas Courthouse Building
9248 Lee Avenue, Manassas, VA 20110

PRINCE WILLIAM Historic Preservation

Co-sponsored by the Manassas Museum, Prince William County Historic Commission, and Historic Prince William. For more information contact 703-792-4754 or register at www.pwcca.gov/department/historic-preservation/events

Connect with us on social media:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/pwhistoric

Twitter: @PWHHPF

Instagram: PWC History



HP Staff

ANNOUNCEMENT: 2 We have a new program offering at Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre! Bring your family to Brentsville to explore the site using our new family friendly adventure backpacks! Each backpack is filled with crafts and activities to explore the site with little ones. Two themes are available:

Nature Backpack: Explore the site looking for different plants and animals. Play nature bingo,



HP Staff

catch and release a bug with our bug boxes. Using magnifying glasses and binoculars to get a close look and record our findings in the field logs!

History Backpack: Explore a Brentsville's historic buildings with different crafts and activities. Try your hand at being the County Clerk, play a mix and match game to compare past and present, play historical games, design a town and more!

Backpacks are available during our open hours Fridays-Mondays from 10am -4pm for a two-hour rental for only \$20! A deposit is required and is returned when the backpack is returned. For


more information, please call 703-365-7895.

Ben Lomond Fence

Fences were important parts of 19th century farms. To restore the look of Ben Lomond to a farm and highlight the important farm lane that passed by the house, OHP recently installed a fence around the property boundary to restore the site to its pre-Civil War appearance. After the war, land-owner Benjamin Chinn noted that both armies had destroyed most of the fencing on the property.

Dan Goldstein
Site Interpreter
Rippon Lodge Historic Site

BRENTSVILLE ADVENTURE BACKPACKS



Bring the family to Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre to explore the area with an Adventure Backpack! Check out a history or nature themed backpack filled with crafts and activities as you explore the site. Backpacks are available for a 2-hour rental. Cost is \$20. A small deposit is required and will be returned when the backpack is returned. Backpacks are available to rent Fridays-Monday from 11am-4pm.

PRINCE WILLIAM Historic Preservation

Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre: 12229 Bristow Rd, Bristow (703) 365-7895 www.pwcva.gov/history

Prince William County Historic Preservation Foundation



The PW Historic Preservation Foundation has been hard at work planning our next projects. Rippon Lodge is our focus now along with the exciting new acquisition, Williams-Dawe House across the street from the Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre. Along with the actual fundraising plans, we've rebranded our organization with a logo that seems to better embody our mission. The website will also be completely overhauled and updated so you can easily follow

the work we're funding and watch the progress. The foundation thanks all of you for your support for preserving the county's historic properties. Check back with the website after the first of the year. www.PreservePW.org.

The Board has also chosen to postpone the Decades of Rippon Lodge Gala until Spring of 2023 when the weather is more reliable.

Cornelia Rutherford
President, Prince William Historic Preservation Foundation

Stay Connected & Informed

Sign up on: www.pwcparks.org/subscribe

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 Division

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