



Historic Perspectives

Preservation of Prince William County's Historic Resources

Spring 2021 Contents

- 1 | Prince William County Resident Instrumental in Forming First Women's Nurses Corps
- 3 | Collections Corner:
By Emily Post
- 4 | Image Spotlight:
Brentsville Jail Museum
- 5 | Programs & Events
- 6 | History Corner:
Sophia Carter
- 7 | HPD News

PRINCE WILLIAM

Historic Preservation

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Prince William County Resident Instrumental in Forming First Women's Nurses Corps

Ben Lomond Historic Site, located near Manassas National Battlefield Park, is best known for its use as a Confederate field hospital following the Civil War's first major conflict—the Battle of First Manassas. However, a lesser-known resident of Ben Lomond was Presley Marion Rixey, a doctor who owned the property from 1910 until January 1917. He was the President's personal doctor for two administrations and was the Surgeon General of the Navy. His efforts led to furthering the legacy of women nurses that began in the Civil War.

Clara Barton, a woman nurse during the Civil War, said that the four years of war advanced the social position of women by fifty years. She was speaking of the years 1861 to 1865, yet it took until 1908 for the United States Navy to form the Navy Nurse Corps. Why then if women in the nursing field had proved to be so valuable did it take so long to establish them as permanently in that role in the Navy? Ideas often take a long time to come to fruition, thus is the case of the Navy Nurse Corps. In 1902, Rixey, wrote, "There has been a growing conviction in the minds



BUMED Library and Archives

The Sacred Twenty Front row (left to right): Mary Dubose, Adah M. Pendleton, Elizabeth M. Hewitt, Della V. Knight, J. Beatrice Bowman, Lenah S. Higbee, Esther V. Hasson, Martha E. Pringle, Elizabeth Wells, Sara B. Myer, and Clare L. DeCeul. Back row: Elisabeth Leonhardt, Estelle Hine, Ethel R. Parsons, Florence Milburn, Boniface Small, Victoria White, Isabelle Roy, Margaret Murray and Sara Cox.

of many of the most experienced medical officers of the service, especially since the war with Spain, that the employment of women for the nursing of the sick in our large hospitals would result in greater efficiency than has been obtained heretofore by the use of male nurses alone, and that such employment would not conflict with the conditions arising from the military character of the institution.”

Despite Rixey’s recommendations, it took until May 1908 to finally form the Navy Nurse Corps. It is easy to look at the reforms of Theodore Roosevelt’s presidency as novel, or the policies that followed in the Progressive Era as products of their time. However, Roosevelt’s policies were the manifestation of ideas that already persisted in William McKinley’s administration and were an extension of a larger push for women’s rights. The first twenty women who joined the Navy Nurse Corps formalized a role that women had been filling since the Civil War.

At Ben Lomond in July 1861, Lillie Parran Lee came to the house to care for her wounded husband. During the beginning of the Civil War, women were not allowed in hospitals because it was “improper,” and their presence was unwelcomed. Yet a few years into the war, women were widely accepted in hospitals as nurses, which opened the door to women entering the workforce. There is a sweet irony that the house that saw women begin to become nurses and were met with such resistance, was also host to the man who advocated the formation of the Navy Nurse Corps.

Lance Russell
Historic Site Interpreter

Spring Programs and Events

Register for these online at:
www.pwcparks.org/historicprograms

Science & History Of Gardening At The Haislip-Hall House	Apr 10
The Ellis' Magnificent Garden	Apr 17
Civil War Tours Of Brentsville Courthouse	Apr 17
Prince William Historic Preservation Lecture Series: James Longstreet After The Civil War	Apr 22
Calligraphy Class In The Brentsville Schoolhouse	Apr 24
Pre Revolutionary War Rippon	Apr 24
“A County To Be Named Hartford” Sixth Annual Prince William-Manassas Symposium	May 1
Museum Kid Monday!	May 10a
Brentsville Jail Exhibit Grand Opening!	May 15
History Walk On The Boardwalk	May 22
Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park Tours	May 22-23
Prince William Historic Preservation Lecture Series: Omar Bradley And George Patton’s Deception Role In Operation Overlord	May 27
Architectural Tours Of Brentsville Courthouse	May 29
Wednesday Walks At Bristoe Station Battlefield	May 5
First Friday Night Fires At Ben Lomond: Parks And Preservation	May 7
Walking Tour Of Historic Prince William Towns: Occoquan	May 7
How Does Your Garden Grow?	May 8
Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park Tours	May 8-9
Architectural Tours Of Ben Lomond	Jun 12
Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park Tours	Jun 12-13
Museum Kid Monday!	Jun 14
Walking Tour Of Historic Prince William Towns: Batestown	Jun 18
Juneteenth At Lucasville School	Jun 19
Tales From Rippon Lodge	Jun 19
African-American History Trail Car Caravan Tour	Jun 19
Wednesday Walks At Bristoe Station Battlefield	Jun 2
The Freedmen’s Bureau At Brentsville Tours	Jun 26
Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park Tours	Jun 26-27
First Friday Night Fires At Ben Lomond: Parks And Preservation	Jun 4p

Collections Corner

By Emily Post

Changing societies often translates into different styles of acceptable etiquette. Conventional rules followed by your grandparents are likely different than the rules that you follow today. While the United States has long been regarded as a relatively informal country, etiquette books have long been desired by many, especially upper-class Americans or Americans traveling abroad. One of the most influential etiquette books of the 20th century was Emily Post's *Etiquette in Society, in Business, in Politics, and at Home*. First published in 1922 the book has gone through multiple printings and editions. In 1938 while living in Hawaii Richard Black gave a copy of *Etiquette* to his new wife Aviza as a birthday present.

Some of the advice offered sounds strange to modern ears. For example, in a chapter entitled "Traveling at Home and Abroad" is a section for Ladies Alone in American Hotels:

If you have never been in a hotel alone but you are of sufficient years, well behaved and dignified in appearance, you need have no fear as to the treatment you will receive. But you should write to the hotel in advance—whether here or in Europe. In this country you register in the office and are shown to your room, or rooms, by a bell-boy—in some hotels by

"A lady traveling alone with her maid (or without one), of necessity has her meals alone in her own sitting-room, if she has one."

a bell-boy and a maid.

One piece of advice: You will not get good service unless you tip generously. If you do not care for elaborate meals, that is nothing to your discredit; but you should not go to an expensive hotel, hold a table that would otherwise be occupied by others who might order a long dinner, and expect your waiter to be contented with a tip of fifteen cents for your dollar supper! The rule is ten per cent, beginning with a meal costing about three or four dollars. A quarter is the smallest possible tip in a first class hotel. If your meal costs a quarter—you should give the waiter a quarter. If it costs two dollars or more than two dollars, you give thirty or thirty-five cents, and ten per cent on a bigger amount. In smaller hotels tips are less in proportion. Tipping is undoubtedly a bad system, but it happens

to be in force, and that being the case, travelers have to pay their share of it—if they like the way made smooth and comfortable.

A lady traveling alone with her maid (or without one), of necessity has her meals alone in her own sitting-room, if she has one. If she goes to the dining-room, she usually takes a book because hotel service seems endless to one used to meals at home and nothing is duller than to sit long alone with nothing to do but look at the tablecloth, which is scarcely diverting, or at other people, which is impolite.

While reading these types of books can be humorous today, they do offer a great insight on how people of a certain socio-economic status thought and valued during a time period.

Bill Backus
Preservationist, Curator
HistoricPreservation Division





Image Spotlight

Brentsville Jail Museum

In its nearly 200-year existence, the Brentsville Jail has seen a lot of different uses. From a jail in the 19th century, to a dormitory, private house, and office space in the 20th century, the building has changed a lot over the years. After years of restoration and research, join us for the grand opening of the Brentsville Jail Museum which tells the story of the town of Brentsville and its inhabitants, and highlights the building's various uses. Join us for a dedication ceremony at 10 a.m. and after the ceremony, join us for a day of free tours and programming at the site until 4 p.m. For more information, please visit www.pwgov.org/history or call 703-365-7895.



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New architecture room



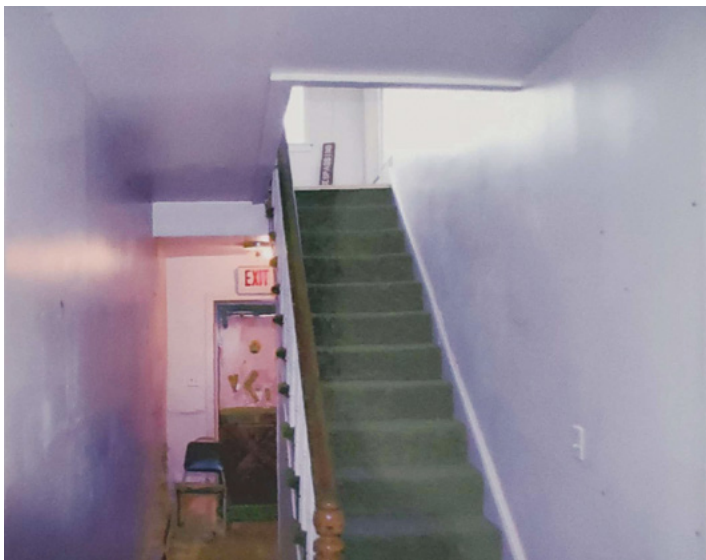
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Brentsville Jail exterior prior to restoration



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Jail exhibit installation



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Jail hallway prior to restoration



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Jail hallway after restoration



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Restored jail cell



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Jail interior prior to restoration



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for Spring Programs,
Events and
History Themed
Summer Camps**

pwcparke.org/historicprograms



History Corner

Sophia Carter

The Carter family is one of the best-known families in colonial Virginia history. They were also one of the wealthiest families in Colonial Virginia. Robert “King” Carter was the wealthiest man in Virginia in the early part of the 18th century. At the height of his wealth “King” Carter owned over 300,000 acres and 3,000 enslaved individuals.

His grandson was Robert “Councilor” Carter III. He was known as Councilor Carter because he was a member of the Royal Governor’s council in the colonial capital of Williamsburg. Carter married Frances Ann Tasker on April 2, 1745, in Annapolis Maryland. Together they had 17 children, most of them not surviving into adulthood. One of the children that did survive to adulthood was Sophia Carter (1778-1832). She was the twelfth daughter and sixteenth child born to her parents. She was born at the family seat Nomini Hall in Westmoreland County, VA.

In 1715 her grandfather Robert “King” Carter bought a large tract of land in Prince William County. When he died it passed to his son Robert “Councilor” Carter. In 1796, when her father bequeaths all his land to his children, Sophia receives land in Prince William County, where she establishes a plantation named Berea. (named after a biblical city in Macedonia). Records are incomplete and we

are not sure how many acres the Berea plantation contained.

In the 1780’s Sophia had a large brick house built on the property along with slave quarters, a kitchen and other outbuildings that supported the plantation. Berea was a typical late 18th century plantation and probably raised many different crops including tobacco, wheat, hay and possibly pork that could be transported via the King’s road to Dumfries and then shipped out of Virginia to markets all along the east coast and beyond.

Sophia Carter never married and as a single adult woman, whether unmarried or widowed, she was considered a *feme sole* according to Virginia law. She could buy and sell property, engage in contracts and other business and legal transactions, and manage households with servants. Sophia would have retained the rights to all properties granted by her father for her lifetime.

We do know that she was charitable and in 1808 she left \$10,000 for the benefit of the education of poor females in the town of Fredericksburg.” The Virginia State Legislature incorporated a school named the



Female Charity School in Fredericksburg

“Female Charity School” with 8 trustees in Fredericksburg.

Sophia Carter dies in 1832 and leaves the plantation, household goods, livestock, and slaves to her younger sister Julia Carter Berkeley. Berkeley lives on her own plantation in Frederick County, VA and does not move to the property. We have no records or written evidence that anyone lives on the property after Sophia’s death, except for possibly an overseer or property manager. Sophia is buried on the property which is now part of Locust Shade Park and golf course. An archaeological dig was performed on the Berea site in 2003.

Her life as a single woman in the late 18th and early 19th centuries in Prince William County is an intriguing story. All questions that we have about her cannot be answered at this time due to the lack of primary resources. No paintings or images of Sophia Carter are known to exist.

Dan Goldstein
Editor



Staff News

On February 22 we welcomed William “Billy” Griffith to the Office of Historic Preservation. Billy is a native of Branchburg, New Jersey. He received his BA in History from Shepherd University in 2014, and MA in Military History from Norwich University in 2018. His passion for history can be traced back to his first trip with his father to Fort William Henry along the southern shore of Lake George when he was five years old. While completing his undergraduate studies at Shepherd, he spent his time as a volunteer with the Gettysburg Foundation and the George Tyler Moore Center for the Study of the Civil War, and also worked as an intern and substitute librarian at the David Library of the American Revolution. He has previously served as a historical interpreter at Fort Frederick State Park in Big Pool, Maryland, and was employed by the Gettysburg Foundation from 2017 to 2019. Billy currently serves as a Gettysburg Licensed Battlefield Guide and contractual writer for the



Billy Griffith

American Battlefield Trust. When not indulging himself in military history, he can be found closely following his second passion: the New York Yankees. William’s first book, *The Battle of Lake George: England’s First Triumph in the French and Indian War*, was released by The History Press on September 5, 2016. He is the author of *A Handsome Flogging: The Battle of Monmouth, June 28, 1778*, which was released in July 2020 as part of Savas Beatie’s Emerging Revolutionary War Series. Billy continues to write for the Emerging Revolutionary Series as a contributing author.

DAR Marker Dedication

On Saturday March 6, the Prince William Resolves Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution visited Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre for the dedication and unveiling a new Courthouse marker donated



HPD

DAR dedication



HPD

DAR dedication

by the NSDAR. The marker tells the history of the Courthouse and of its restoration. Thank you to Congressman Wittman, Supervisor Lawson, and Supervisor Vega for attending.

Foundation update

The Prince William Historic Preservation Foundation is exhilarated about the near completion of the Brentsville Jail exhibit. Actively involved in the Jail restoration for over ten years, the Foundation has assisted with every facet of the project, from preservation and restoration to exhibit design and finally exhibit installation. With the Brentsville Jail nearly completion, in January the Foundation's 2021 Work Plan was approved by the Board of County Supervisors. This year's projects include:

Brentsville Jail Exhibit – The Brentsville Jail Restoration Project, 16C15023, was completed and dedicated in May 2017. The Foundation has since raised over \$66,770 for a new exhibit project through prior work plans. Additional funds will be raised to complete the fabrication and installation of exhibits which will be completed over the winter of 2020-2021. Grand opening of exhibit will be in May 2021.

Brentsville Travelling Trunk Field Trip – The downstairs portion of the Brentsville Jail exhibit is expected to be completed by May 2021. To compliment the new exhibit, an educational program is being developed for the building, with items for hands-on objects to facilitate interactive learning.

Williams Ordinary Interpretation Project– Fabrication of new interior exhibit for Williams Ordinary exhibition space.

Rippon Lodge Interpretation Project –Construction of new

interior exhibits that will replace current exhibit that needs to be replaced. Renovate historic cabin to create additional exhibit space and fabricate and install King's Highway exhibit.

Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park Cultural Resource Identification Study – This project will allow the Foundation to fundraise for archaeological surveys to better identify cultural resource areas at the Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park.

Signal Hill Cultural Resource Identification Study – The completion of a cultural resource study to identify cultural resources and interpretive themes for the Civil War era site. Project to be completed in conjunction with the Prince William County Planning Office and the City of Manassas Park, Parks and Recreation Department.

Bushy Park Site Interpretation – The site's exterior restoration has been completed and interior restoration is expected to be completed by summer, 2023. Once these are completed, interior interpretative exhibits will be next phase. The Foundation has received donations of \$1,220 for Bushy Park interpretation. This funding is expected to cover the production cost of interior exhibit panels.

Prince William Museum at Rippon Lodge Historic Site Fundraising – Preliminary plans for this project include the design and construction of a museum focusing on the history of Prince William County that will include exhibits on the history of the entire county. The Museum will also include visitor services amenities, office space for staff, collections storage and enhanced meeting/event facilities for rent. The anticipated cost is to be determined.

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www.pwcparks.org/HistoricCalendar

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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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