



Historic Perspectives

Preservation of Prince William County's Historic Resources

Summer 2024 Contents

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PRINCE WILLIAM

Historic Preservation

Prince William County
Department of Parks & Recreation
Office of Historic Preservation

17674 Main Street
Dumfries, VA 22026

Phone (703) 792-1731
Fax (703) 221-7504

Contact us at:
historicpreservation@pwcgov.org

Visit our website at:
www.pwcva.gov/history

For Historic Property Rentals call:
(703) 792-5546

Facebook: pwhistoric

X: @PWHPF

Instagram: PWC_History

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Historic Preservation

NEWSLETTER STAFF

Editor in Chief:
Dan Goldstein

Contributors:
Matt Schuller, Kevin Pawlak, Paige
Gibbons Backus, Jessica Alicea,
Dan Goldstein, and Bill Backus

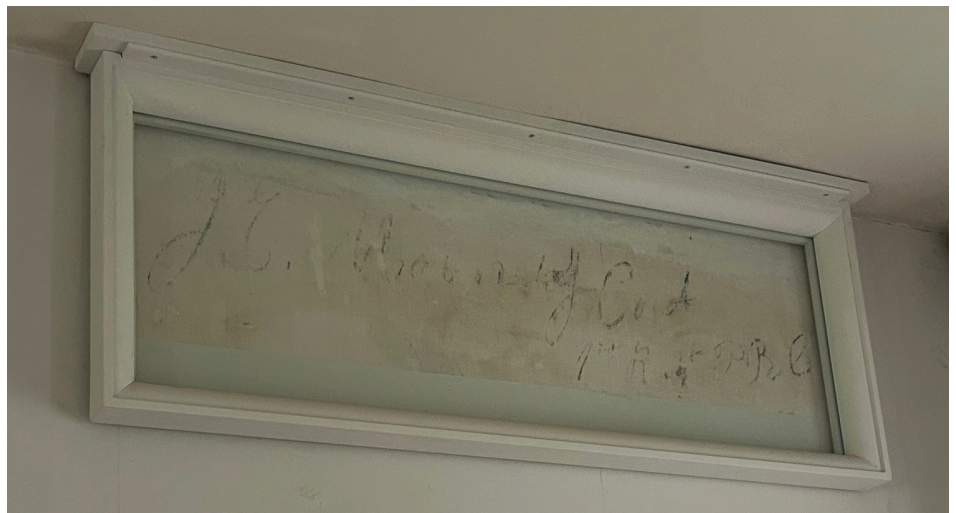
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Vandalism in Prince William County: Ben Lomond & Brentsville

On April 12, 1861, the first shots of the American Civil War rang out when Confederate soldiers attacked the Union-held Fort Sumter. Less than a week later on April 17, the Commonwealth of Virginia voted in favor of secession from the Union, with Prince William County delegates contributing to the vote. Many Americans on both sides of the conflict believed the war would be quick and decisive., Fate proved them wrong at the First Battle of Manassas. On the outskirts of the battlefield, the Pringle House at Ben Lomond was converted into a field hospital following the fighting. For just over a month, the Confederates occupied Ben Lomond, using the home to treat their wounded before evacuating them to permanent hospitals further south. By

March of 1862, the Confederates retreated from the area and were replaced by Union troops who ransacked the Ben Lomond property, vandalizing the structure's walls with graffiti and the signatures of soldiers who stayed there. These soldiers also destroyed much of the food and furniture found on its grounds.

The damage to the home was not as catastrophic as other unfortunate properties in the county and throughout the South, though some of the damage can still be seen today if visiting inside Ben Lomond's storied halls. In the space today called the "Recovery Room" on the first floor of the home, two sections of its walls were marked by the Federals, with both partitions preserved behind a protective layer of plexiglass. One signature that can



Pennsylvania Reserve Corps

The mark left behind by Union soldier James Moody.
It reads: "J.E. Moody of Co. A, 1st Regiment, P.R.C."

be made out is that of James E. Moody from the 1st Regiment of the Pennsylvania Reserve Corps, located in the northeast corner of the room if visitors immediately turned around upon entering the space.

Additional graffiti can be found on the second floor of the house, most notably the signature of Medal of Honor recipient, Private William Wallace Cranston, a Union soldier from the 66th Ohio Infantry who captured a wounded Confederate officer at the Battle of Chancellorsville. The remaining defaced surfaces are preserved according to best practice by Prince William County's Office of Historic Preservation, though many of the signatures have faded with the passage of time and exposure to sunlight, making it difficult to discern who else may have left their mark at Ben Lomond.

In conjunction with the markings left behind by the occupying Federals, personal possessions and interior decorations belonging to the Pringle Family were either stolen or destroyed, as the occupying Union soldiers believed the immigrant Scottish family was supporting the Confederates when they stayed at Ben Lomond. Originally leasing the property from the Chinn family, the Pringles hosted the Confederates and lived inside a single room on the second floor instead of vacating the premises. When the Federal army rolled into Ben Lomond in Spring 1862, cattle, crops and furniture were among the goods that were pilfered.

The Pringles, namely Andrew, Jr. and Thomas, attempted to receive reparation payments from the United States government for all of the damages the property sustained. Despite having an itemized list of everything that



HP staff

The second-floor bedroom where the Pringles stayed during the house's tenure as a Confederate hospital. The family moved most of their prized possessions into this small room to prevent theft and destruction.

was seized or destroyed, the U.S. government paid out roughly \$550 to the Pringles, which is approximately \$12,000 in today's currency. After the Civil War concluded in 1865, the Pringles were among the many Southern families who found it difficult to recover. Although they ended up moving away from Ben Lomond, Pringle family members kept up the sheep business on a farm they built several miles to the west.

The Ben Lomond hospital was not the only location in Prince William County to be vandalized during the Civil War. The Town of Brentsville, which served as

the county's seat until 1893, was subjected to vandalism by the Union army. One such place that was ravaged was the clerk's office. Located to the west of the courthouse, the clerk's office was demolished by Federal soldiers in Winter of 1863, with its materials being transported up the road to Bristoe Station for use constructing winter quarters. Likewise, court documents that were kept by the clerk were subsequently taken, destroyed, or left vulnerable to the elements. Unlike the damage sustained at Ben Lomond, which was eventually repaired, the clerk's office



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The one-room schoolhouse that was built on top of the old clerk's office.

was never rebuilt, and the clerk relocated to a much smaller room upstairs inside the courthouse. The foundation of the clerk's office still exists today, albeit as part of the school that was built on top in 1928. Known as the Brentsville schoolhouse, it remained in use until 1944, when dropping population and improved transportation of students led to its closure.

While the demolition of the clerk's office and the theft of its materials by Union troops is one of the more extreme measures of vandalism within Prince William County, it also wasn't the only

noteworthy instance, especially within Brentsville. Many homes and nearby buildings in the town were demolished, particularly the home of Confederate General Eppa Hunton, who prior to the war, was a pivotal voice advocating for Virginia's secession after serving as the county's representative at the Virginia Secession Convention. Similarly, just as the clerk's office next door was ransacked, the courthouse was also burglarized, with its bell being the most notable object seized in 1864 by soldiers belonging to the Pennsylvania Reserve Corps. The bell was

never returned to Brentsville, but it is believed to have been transported north to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, where it was used for several decades before it was damaged and traded in for a new bell. Overall, throughout the duration of the war, Brentsville was the unlucky recipient of several high-profile acts of vandalism that was commonplace throughout Prince William County.

Destruction and the vandalization of personal property were a reoccurring sight in Prince William County, becoming more common as the Civil War dragged on. Ben Lomond and Brentsville were just some of areas that were damaged, either directly by the fighting, or by residing soldiers who would occupy these sites and pilfer resources and materials. After the war's end, it took years to repair the homes and towns caught in the crossfire. Thankfully, these sites have been preserved and maintained for guests to visit and immerse themselves in the history of Prince William County and its people, civilians and military personnel alike.

Matthew Schuller
Historic Interpreter, Rippon Lodge
Historic Site

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Image Spotlight

Historic musical organ of Rippon Lodge

Sitting in the center passage of Rippon Lodge Historic Site is a musical instrument that fascinates visitors. Although some believe it is a piano, it is actually a pump organ. In fact, this organ is one of several thousand manufactured by J. Estey & Co. in Brattleboro, Vermont between 1855 and 1955.

Jacob Estey was born in New Hampshire, but as a young man ran away from an orphanage in Worcester, Massachusetts before landing in Brattleboro, Vermont in 1835. A plumber by trade, he would eventually take over a plumbing shop he had worked in a matter of years. After some success, he expanded his plumbing business, and built a two-story building. He rented some of the space to a company manufacturing melodeons. When they couldn't afford to pay the rent, he took part-ownership in that business in lieu of rent. He was not a musician, nor did he know anything about building instruments, but in a matter of a few years he became



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sole proprietor of the melodeon business.

Opening the business bearing his name officially in 1855, although the business claimed to have been making organs since 1846, he found extraordinary success. At its peak, the Estey Organ Company employed over 700 people, manufactured, and sold over a half a million pump organs, and nearly 4,000 pipe organs in the United States and abroad. The Estey Company's Theater organs were popular during the silent movie era in the U.S. as well.



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The American reed organ, such as the one at Rippon Lodge Historic Site, were more portable than their large counterparts, more affordable than pianos, and were widely used in private homes in the 19th century. The pump organ, or reed organ, generates sound as air flowed past a vibrating piece of thin metal in a frame. The air was created by "pumping your feet with the two pedals in the center. Like larger organs, the "stops" changed the sound. However, these home organs were limited in their volume and tonal range. This organ from the Wade Hampton and Dessie Ellis Collection unfortunately no longer works, but one may imagine how it sounded throughout the home during the 1930s.

Jessica Alicea
Historic Site Manager
Rippon Lodge Historic Site



HP staff



History Corner

Ben Lomond Scars of War

After more than 160 years, the scars of the Civil War are still visible on Ben Lomond. Many of these are scribbled names and units, left behind by visiting Union soldiers, and today have faded but are still partially legible. The floorboards bear more horrific marks of the home's use as a hospital in July and August 1861. A recent training conducted in the house by the Prince William County Police Department's Forensic Services Unit has found new bloodstains on the original wooden floors and confirmed previously found marks of hospital service.

Historic Preservation staff had long speculated that mysterious, dark, splatter marks on the home's second story floorboards were additional evidence of the house-turned-hospital. The Forensic Services Unit put those theories to the test in May 2024. The team utilized a new,

stronger luminescent chemical that detects blood better than the type used during the team's previous visit to the house in 2008.

Tarps and garbage bags blacked out the windows to each room as the forensics team conducted their testing, just as they would at a crime scene. Beginning upstairs, the chemical did luminate bloodstains in the southwest bedroom of the house. Surprisingly, the mysterious splatter marks on the floor in the northwest bedroom did not produce a positive result.

The team then moved downstairs to the basement, where the first floor's original flooring is exposed. Orange stickers on the basement ceiling denoted where bloodstains had been detected in previous tests. Following the same procedure, the floorboards were sprayed with the luminescent detector and staff waited for

light blue spots to appear out of the darkness. New bloodstains were found that had been previously missed, showing the extent of the hospital's scars on Ben Lomond.

While all the tests delivered inconclusive results of whether the bloodstains were of human origin, no other evidence exists to suggest that these bloodstains could be from anything but the Pringle House Hospital, as the Confederate records call it.

Though these bloodstains are difficult to see with the naked eye, they are there and marked for visitors. The bloodstains and graffiti provide us with a tangible link back to the soldiers who suffered, recovered, and died in the Pringle House Hospital in July and August 1861.

Kevin Pawlak
Historic Site Manager
Ben Lomond Historic Site



Preservation Corner

Preservation Update of the Williams-Dawe House

Since Prince William County purchased the Williams-Dawe House in April of 2022, a lot of progress has been made in the preservation of Prince William County's "newest" historic structure! Over the first couple of years, the Office of Historic Preservation's main focuses were stabilization, removal of immediate threats including vegetation and water, and research. In May 2022, the trees and overgrowth on the house were removed to protect the historic stucco beneath and provide easier access for work crews to conduct the important work of stabilizing the chimneys and repairing the roof, which was completed that November and December. The chimneys were stabilized by re-pointing cracked mortar and removing damaged bricks. Currently, the chimneys are shorter than they should be, but not to worry, they will be restored to their historic height later in the restoration process. A new metal roof was installed to repair the hole that caused water damage on three floors of the structure over ten years. Even though the house had a red roof for the longest time, dark brown was chosen to match the color of wooden shingles that would have been on the house in the 1820s.

Moving into 2023, the forest of bamboo and trees were removed from the adjoining lot to provide access to the Wolfe-Bauder house site and prevent the bamboo from



spreading closer to the structure. The piles of bamboo that were removed were taller than staff were! In April 2023, mold and asbestos studies were completed. Fortunately, no asbestos was found within the accessible areas of the structure, but as you can imagine, with ten years of water damage, basic household mold was present. With access to the Wolfe-Bauder site in May 2023, the chimney of the Wolfe-Bauder house site was stabilized and capped. In addition to the physical preservation work completed at the site, staff began researching the history of the Williams-Dawe House. Throughout 2023, staff has been able to find some information about the people, places, and events associated with the site, but we are not finished yet. Staff find new information about the Williams-Dawe House and Wolfe-Bauder House every month, contributing to the stories we tell at the historic site.

Now that we are in 2024, we are looking to the future of the Williams-Dawe House and continuing its preservation. Staff

recently applied for a Certified Local Government Grant, that if awarded, will allow us to conduct a Phase 1 Archaeology Survey of the site to find the remains of the historic outbuildings and give us more information about the history through the artifacts found at the site. Staff are currently working on an Architecture & Engineering study and a Historic Structures Report that will help us assess the condition of the Williams-Dawe House, tell us what is and is not historic, and make recommendations on how to update conveniences like plumbing, air conditioning, and electricity. As we work on these projects, we will be working with local stakeholders to help us determine how the site will be used in the future. Historic House Museum? Gallery Space? Bed and Breakfast? Rental Venue? These discussions will help us make the final determinations on how the building will be restored, interpreted, and made accessible to the public.

This is just a brief update to the Williams-Dawe House Preservation project. Interested in learning more? See pictures of the restoration, read more about the history of the site, and learn how you can get involved at our new website at www.pwcva.gov/history/williams-dawe-house.

Paige Gibbons Backus
Historic Site Manager, Brentsville
Courthouse Historic Centre



JaVonne Pope

Staff News

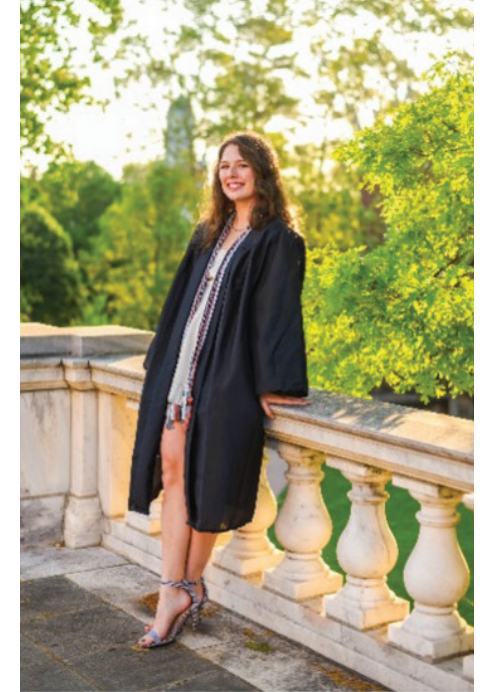
On June 8, 2024, the Office of Historic Preservation hosted the 250th Anniversary of the Prince William Resolves with an event during the day and an evening program. During the day, a new County Historical marker was dedicated noting the passage of the Resolves in 1774. Colonial Re-enactor's and special guests spoke about the enduring legacy of the Resolves and how they contributed towards the American Revolution. That night a Tavern Night was held in Williams Ordinary, featuring Colonial games, barbecue and beer.

Staff member Dan Goldstein spoke in April to the monthly meeting of the veterans' group at the Jubilation community about the Prince William African American History trail

Staff held the Commemorative event for the Prince William County Resolves on June 8th.

Prince William County Police Department's Forensic Services Unit came to Ben Lomond in May to test the floorboards for bloodstains from the Civil War Hospital. We are awaiting their results. Stay tuned!

Staff member Jessica Alicea spoke to the Woodbridge Senior



Emily Miller

Center in May about the history of Rippon Lodge.

The Department of Historic Preservation has two summer interns joining us this Summer.

Emily Miller, this year's Prince William County Historical Commission intern, is a 2024 graduate of the University of Virginia. She has a background in Virginia and American history, having previously organized public and oral history projects at the Albemarle Charlottesville Historical Society, at UVA's Miller Center of Public Affairs, and for the Project on Lived Theology. Her work has been recognized across Virginia and the country, with her scholarship on Charlottesville's first Black Baptist Church being featured at Indiana University's Undergraduate

Religious Studies Association Spring Symposium. Her work has also appeared on Cville Right Now radio. Over the course of this Summer, Emily will produce a roster and corresponding annotated bibliography of Prince William County residents who fought in the American Revolution. By consulting a variety of resources, including pension records, size rolls, and order books, Emily hopes to uncover a comprehensive profile of the PWC soldier and a deeper understanding of life in Colonial America.

Grace Kostrzebski grew up in Prince William County. She is currently attending Virginia Tech and will be a sophomore this coming fall. She is participating in the dual degree program at



Grace Kostrzebski

Virginia Tech – majoring in both History and Religion & Culture (VT’s version of Religious Studies). She previously interned at George Mason’s Gunston

Hall coming out of her senior year of high school and – after finishing the internship – knew she absolutely had to work at a museum in the future. She has participated in various public history research projects over her short time at VT as well as interned at Special Collections and the Center for Oral History on campus which has only made her love the field even more. This summer, she will be mostly focused on collections-based work – cataloging archeological artifacts and inventorying items from various historic buildings. She is so excited to get her hands on the physical relics of Prince William County’s long history!

Dan Goldstein
Historic Interpreter
Rippon Lodge Historic Site

Foundation Update

Foundation board members participated in the various commemorative events for the 250th anniversary of the Prince William Resolves. Part of the activities included Sip of History and Tavern Night in which a portion of the sales will be used by the foundation in support of its mission to help preserve Prince William County’s historic sites.

Bill Backus, Preservationist & Curator



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