

CUS

VIRGINIANA FILE ON COMMUNITY

BRENTSVILLE SCHOOLHOUSE (Note: This building is not "The White House" which is a different structure in Brentsville)
The clerk's office (1822) was on this site, *Don*

Prince William Library
Manassas, Virginia

Potomac News

Saturday, December 28, 1991

Brentsville Schoolhouse offers history lesson

By GREGORY TRIPLETT

Brentsville Schoolhouse, with its trim, white, weatherboard exterior, was known as the White House when it was built in 1822.

Now owned and used for storage by the Prince William County Park Authority, the White House also has served as a private residence, a schoolhouse and a meeting room.

Places

The three-acre site of Brentsville Historic Recreation Area at 12249 Bristow Road was designated as the public square when Brentsville was established as the fourth Prince William County seat in 1822.

A courthouse and jail were built on the property between 1820 and 1822. During those years, Jane Dawe Williams, the widow of John Williams, Esquire, who served as county clerk from 1795 until his death in 1813, built the White House on the same property.

The building was intended to be used as a residence and clerk's office.

Philip Devereaux Dawe, brother of Jane Williams, qualified as clerk for his sister until his death in 1832.

The White House was originally constructed by...



bricks brought from England, then hauled 18 miles from Dumfries.

The one-room building had a brick foundation, plaster-covered brick walls and a metal-covered gable roof. Brick window openings were flat-arched.

The building's present exterior is weatherboard with a pressed tin roof.

"The courthouse, clerk's office, and jail are handsomely situated on the main street in a public square of three acres. ... There is in the vicinity a common school in which the rudiments of English education are taught," wrote Joseph Martin in the Gazetteer in 1835.

After the Civil War, the White House became a girls' school. An academy was opened in the White House by Ezra Bauder in 1879. Bauder taught there for several years.

In an 1893 election, the people voted to relocate the county courthouse and

Brentsville Schoolhouse is one of the rare one-room school structures still standing in Prince William County.

jail to Manassas, a more central location since the railroad ran through town.

The courthouse building was used as a school beginning in 1893. Two teachers taught grades one through seven.

About 1910, the White House began to be used as Brentsville Schoolhouse.

Many one-room schoolhouses in Prince William County operated until the early 1930s when district or central schools came into favor.

Brentsville Historic Recreation Area, which includes the renovated courthouse, jail house, refined schoolhouse, picnic area, soccer field and unstructured softball-baseball field, opened to the public in October 1975.

Brentsville Schoolhouse was repainted and fluorescent lights were installed. The floor was stripped, sanded and revarnished by Richard Metz, Prince William County Parks and Recreation Center director at the time,

and another recreation employee, Reese Hoffman.

The one-room former schoolhouse was then used as a meeting place.

A traditional Arbor Day ceremony, of planting trees to replace trees that have come down, is tentatively planned for April, Park Authority Landscape Manager Dave Katz said.

The remains of big sycamore trees, more than 100 years old, have been removed and new sycamores may be planted.



Super

has Purple Heart

GOOD MORNING

Prince William County • Manassas • Manassas Park • Stafford County

Potomac News

December 28, 1991