



# PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY, VIRGINIA

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## Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre

12229 Bristow Rd. Bristow VA 20136 703-365-7895

The Town of Brentsville was established on 50 acres in 1820 to become the County seat of Prince William County. By 1820 many residents had moved farther west for better farm land and the old county seat of Dumfries was too far east for the western residents to travel conveniently. The new town of Brentsville was centrally located in Prince William County along the major east/west road that led from the port of Dumfries to the Shenandoah Valley. In 1893 the county seat moved to Manassas; and Brentsville became a rural community which allowed it to retain much of its 19th century character.

The Brentsville site consists of 28 acres with five historic buildings and various archaeological sites. These include the ca. 1850 Haislip-Hall House, ca. 1875 Union Church and the 19th-century Brentsville Tavern archaeological site. The site also includes a mile area's natural resources.



Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre interprets the history of Brentsville through three centuries. Currently the Courthouse Union Church has been restored. Work is underway for the restoration of the Jail and development of a museum. Once completed the site will give visitors a unique look into the history of Prince William County but Northern Virginia.

The grounds are open to the public from sunrise to sunset every day and a picnic area are available. Tours are offered Thursday through Saturday from October 31 from 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. or by appointment. The grounds are available for [rental](#).

## Learn more from our videos

You can take a virtual tour of [Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre](#) and learn more about its rich history. You can also visit the [Haislip-Hall Log Cabin Home](#) to learn more about family and farm life in the past.

## Brentsville Joins Other House Museums

Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre is a participating member of the Historic House Museum Consortium. Please visit [www.dchousemuseums.org](http://www.dchousemuseums.org) to learn about more than 40 historic house museums in the Washington, Virginia, Maryland and Washington DC area.

## Programs for School and Youth Groups

Educators and Youth Group Leaders are invited to Brentsville for special [Programs for Students](#) and youth groups. We offer a variety of activities to help youth gain an appreciation of days gone by and an understanding of the lives of Prince William residents in the past.

## Upcoming Programs and Event

Prince William County is actively participating in the [Civil War Sesquicentennial](#). Brentsville Historic Centre will host local activities to mark Virginia's commemoration of this 150th anniversary. For more information, visit <http://www.visitpwc.com/> or <http://www.virginiacivilwar.org>.

HISTORIC SITE FILE: HAISLIP-HALL Log Cabin HOME  
 PRINCE WILLIAM PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM  
 RELIC/Bull Run Reg Lib, Manassas, VA



## Jail Restoration

Learn about our efforts to restore the jail dating back to 1822 and wh.

## Brentsville Timeline

- 1686 Brent Town Grant made by King James II to Brent family including preser
- 1737 land was first surveyed
- 1779 Commonwealth of Virginia confiscates the land from the Bristow family du
- 1779-1820 Land was rented by the Commonwealth for farming and timber
- 1820 Town of Brentsville established by the Virginia General Assembly as the n seat
- 1822 Brentsville courthouse jail clerk of court's office and tavern completed
- 1835 William Hyden a freed black is falsely arrested as a runaway slave; attem slavery unsuccessful; escapes from Brentsville in 1836.
- • 1853 Samuel Haislip built a new farmhouse off of Vint Hill Road now located on
- 1860 (Winter) Prince William Cavalry formed at Brentsville in response to the J Harper's Ferry
- 1861 (April 1) Prince William County magistrates vote to endorse Virginia's sec
- 1861 (May 23) Citizens of Virginia vote to secede from the United States. Sever regiments formed.
- 1862 (March 3) Last day of court in Prince William County until end of war
- 1863 (Oct. 14) Battle of Bristoe Station Union troops occupy Brentsville
- 1870 (Oct. 17) First County Board of Supervisors meeting in courthouse with fi
- 1874 Brentsville Union Church completed
- 1893 County seat moved to Manassas
- 1928 Brentsville one room schoolhouse built for grades 1-5 school was previous
- 1928-1960s Courthouse and schoolhouse used as community recreational spac
- 1970 Prince William Park Authority takes possession of park and buildings
- 2004 Prince William County Historic Preservation Division assumes managemen
- 2006 Courthouse and Union Church restored
- • 2008 Haislip/Hall house restored
- 2010 Jail stabilization begins

## Brentsville Civil War History





Brentsville was the Prince William County seat during the Civil War. In Harper's Ferry in 1859 the Prince William Cavalry (Co. A Virginia Cavalr courthouse lawn in January 1860. The ladies of Brentsville made a flag Other Confederate units from Prince William County such as Ewell Guar were organized and drilled here.

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Like many Virginian towns Brentsville suffered heavily at the hands of both armies. Confederate General Eppa M. Fox's lawyer had his house and other buildings destroyed. The Hampton Legion among other units was posted here and homes and churches served as hospitals. The county clerk's office was torn down and its bricks used for the courthouse roof was torn off and many county records were either destroyed or taken by soldiers as souvenirs. Pennsylvania Infantry wrote of Brentsville in 1864 "the houses generally are in ruin."

The Battle of Bristoe Station fought three miles west on Oct. 14 1863 brought combat to Brentsville's doorstep. John Buford's cavalry was posted here to protect the Federal supply train. Confederate partisan units operated in the area during the war.

	
<p>Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre is part of the <u>Virginia Civil War Trails program</u>.</p>	<p>Brentsville Courthouse was named a part of the <u>National Underground Railroad</u> in 2008. Learn more about the <u>Underground Railroad</u> and specifically about the connection between <u>Brentsville and the Underground Railroad</u>.</p>

**For more information contact:**

Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre  
 12229 Bristow Rd.  
 Bristow VA 20136  
 703-365-7895  
[historicpreservation@pwcgov.org](mailto:historicpreservation@pwcgov.org)

From Interstate 95: Take Rt. 234 North (Exit 152B); travel seven and a half miles onto Independent Hill Drive. Then make your immediate right onto Bristow Rd. Brentsville is on the right.

From Interstate 66: Take Rt. 234 South (Exit 44); travel 4.5 miles and turn right onto Rt. 28 south (Nokesville Rd.). Turn left onto Rt. 619 (Bristow Rd.); Brentsville is four miles on the left.

For more information on historic resources in the Prince William County area [click here](#)