



Prince William Library

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29 March 1988

TO: JAN TOWNSEND, COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGIST
FROM: DON WILSON, VIRGINIANA LIBRARIAN
SUBJECT: BACON RACE CHURCH AND BRENTSVILLE COURTHOUSE

Attached are copies of documents which I could find on short notice which I think will answer your questions about the boundaries of the Bacon Race Church and Brentsville Courthouse sites.

The document concerning Bacon Race Church is from Deed Book Z, page 295 (1798) from Samuel and Mary Jackson to the Baptist Society. "The meeting house" is mentioned in the deed as existing at that time. Whether or not this is the original site of the Occoquan Baptist Church, established about 1776, I have not determined. The 1820 map of Prince William County definitely calls it the "Bacon Race Meeting House". I think I have a note at home that I made from the G.H.S. King Papers at Virginia Historical Society, indicating some document from Prince William County refers to Bacon Race Church about 1760--which is very early, perhaps a typographical error.

Re the Brentsville Courthouse: As you requested an enclosing pages from the Annals of 10th Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteers (1875), describing the looting of the courthouse and clerk's office in 1863. Many of these regimental histories provide fascinating details about military activities here.

Until I looked at the plats today (from Deed Book 8) I incorrectly assumed that the old clerk's office was incorporated into the jail. From the drawing on page 481 it is clear that the clerk's office ("office") was a small building on the opposite side of the courthouse from the "gaol". The map is also of archaeological interest for pinpointing the location of the tavern and outhouses near it.

Have also enclosed some miscellaneous reports from our historic sites file which you may not have in yours. Do you have xerox copies of Frances Jones' handwritten field notes? They sometimes include details or citations not included on the final report. In this case they contain some measurements and notations you might be able to use. Also enclosed are a couple of historical reports on Brentsville which might help you flesh out your report. The 1861 description of Brentsville only mentions the courthouse and jail, not the clerk's office. Whether any remnant of the clerk's office exists now I cannot say. The item about the Girls' School suggests that it was the old clerk's office drastically remodelled.

Among the snapshots in the Brentsville Courthouse file is one (4921) identified as "Rifle pit" behind courthouse overlooking Broad Run. Another Civil War connection?

If you need more help, please give me a call.

Don