

# The Bell Ringer

A Publication from the Education and Research Committee  
of the Friends of Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre, Inc.

Volume 2, Issue 1

[www.brentsville.org](http://www.brentsville.org)

January 2006

## The Infamous Fewell Trial -- Part V

“She said she was going to marry a man by the name of Lee...”

The *Commonwealth v. Fewell* trial is continued in this fifth installment of the *Bell Ringer*. In the last issue, former Virginia Governor Wise had finally arrived to take part in the proceedings on behalf of the prosecution. A series of letters, written by Miss Fewell to Mr. Clark, were in Wise’s possession as he, at last, put in his appearance. The *Alexandria Gazette* claimed that these letters generated greater interest in the trial, especially since Wise reported that the telegram from his fellow council, Charles E. Sinclair, requesting he bring them, never arrived. After the delay, Wise brought the documents and they were introduced. The passion in these letters is evident in such phrases as, “Yours until death,” “Now do this, pet, for your little girl,” and “Oh, my darling! For God sake come back as soon as possible.” The newspaper accounts contain the entire transcript below.

*Alexandria Gazette 09 Nov 1872*

The Fewell Trial

Brentsville, Nov. 8, 1872 — The third day of Fewell’s trial has come and gone, and whilst but little was done in the progress of the case, a greater amount of interest than on the preceding day was manifested. On yesterday before Miss Fewell’s examination was concluded the Commonwealth asked for an adjournment till this morning in order to enable Gov. Wise to be present with some letters which were considered by counsel of much importance and material at that stage of the case. The counsel for the defense resisted the motion for adjournment, alleging that they would allow the letters, when ready to be presented, to go to the jury, after they were proven to be those written by Miss Fewell, and the Court so decided. The passion exuded by the letters

is obvious to the reader, including such phrases as, “Yours until death,”

On the appearance of Gov. Wise in Court this morning he rose to an explanation of his seeming dereliction of duty, and stated that Judge Sinclair sent a telegram to him on the 6th, which he read as follows:

Brentsville, Va., Nov. 6, 1872. TO HENRY A. WISE, 9TH AND MARSHALL STREETS, RICHMOND, VA.: To be tried; come immediately. Bring the letters. - CHARLES E. SINCLAIR.

This he did not receive. He did receive one on that day asking, Can you attend? To which was had this reply, I cannot before Friday; will case be tried? He inferred from the nature of the telegram which first reached him that the case would be continued if he could not attend, hence his reply. On the 7th another reached him informing him of the progress of the trial, and thereupon he started from Richmond and reached here this morning; but for this misadventure he would have been present at the inception of the trial. A motion was then made to introduce Miss Fewell as witness for the defense, for further cross examination by the prosecution; the Court, however, after reviewing the agreement of yesterday, decided that she could be introduced only as the witness for the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth then read six

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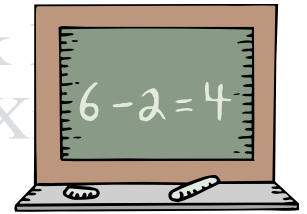
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# Take Note!



The Education and Research Committee continues to uncover new information about Brentsville and its former residents. Members of the Friends who are interested in collaborating on research into a variety of topics related to the Town of Brentsville are encouraged to contact [TheFriends@brentsville.org](mailto:TheFriends@brentsville.org). Check out page 10 for an opportunity to assist in the research and writing of an upcoming article on local businesses.

With spring just around the corner, we need adults to assist with first grade field trips to the Brentsville One Room School. Members interested in taking part in this valuable, educational experience may contact Wilkie Leith at [wleith@gmu.edu](mailto:wleith@gmu.edu).

Images and memorabilia documenting Brentsville's past are needed for interpretation of the Historic Centre and for inclusion in the newsletter. Anyone willing to share may contact Ron Turner at [pwcwabooks@comcast.net](mailto:pwcwabooks@comcast.net).

In this year, Prince William County's, 275th anniversary, an exciting event is being planned for Saturday, October 14. Members are needed to serve on committees for planning. Please come to the Saturday, February 11 meeting at 10am in the One Room School to become involved. See page 11 for a calendar of all the Friends upcoming meeting and events. We want to see you there!

## *The Education and Research Committee*

### **Friends of Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre, Inc.**

A nonprofit, 501(c)3 volunteer organization  
Established in 1996 to support the  
restoration and preservation of the  
Brentsville Historic Centre.

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#### **Annual Membership Fees:**

**Individual: \$20**

**High School Student: Free**

**Corporate: \$125**

#### **2006 Executive Officers**

Laura Wyatt -- Chairman  
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#### **2005 Board of Directors**

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Vacancy      Vacancy



## On Record...

### *Primary Sources documenting Brentsville*

#### **Further Insights on the Life and Character of Lucien Fewell**

Lucien Fewell served in the Confederate Army during the Civil War. He fought at the Battle of Bristow Station. Recent research revealed an interesting book *Ramapo to Chancellorsville and Beyond*, by Fred Pierson available on-line at [www.talkeetna.com/Pierson/Introduction.html](http://www.talkeetna.com/Pierson/Introduction.html). Pierson was a Union soldier from New York attached to the Army of the Potomac. He became a Brevet Brigadier General at the age of 23 (the second youngest to do so behind Custer). Pierson's memoirs were written when he was in his nineties. They were published by family members Elizabeth and Alfred Scott. From this information, it appears that Fewell recovered a sword on the battlefield. He was happy to exchange it for a shot gun. Fewell's performance as a Confederate soldier may have influenced the jurors' views during his trial at Brentsville, which took place during the difficult Reconstruction years. Special thanks are extended to Tish Como of RELIC for sharing information for this piece.

#### **[Page 67]**

August 25th, 1862

Dear Father:

I have but few chances to write you now. One of General Birney's aides goes to Washington today and will mail this. I have had some hard and vexatious work lately. Leaving Yorktown on the steamer Coatzacoalcos, arrived at Alexandria the 21st. I left Colonel Dyckman at Yorktown under arrest. Major Clancey came with the regiment, also under arrest, awaiting sentence. Landing at Alexandria I had but eleven commissioned officers and no sooner had we touched shore when all of them but two went away leaving me positively alone with 580 of the hardest characters New York City could produce and in a city where liquor was to be had on every side. I marched the regiment to the railroad running from Alexandria to here and then was obliged to remain in the street for four or five hours, awaiting cars.

In spite of my exertions my men obtained liquor and many became drunk. Some of the officers were arrested in the street for drunkenness. I personally threw ten men in the cars who were dead drunk. As we left the city five officers returned, but they were no longer needed. Clancey, Coles, Duncan, Leslie and the adjutant were left in Alexandria. General Birney saw the whole affair and probably considers the regiment bad and undisciplined, and attributes it to me. At any rate, yesterday he relieved me of command of it, ordering a major from another regiment to assume command, and ordered me to report to Colonel Ward of the 38th N.Y. for duty. Last night, to my surprise I received an order from Birney as follows: "Lieut.-Col. Pierson, 1st N.Y.Vols., is hereby ordered under arrest. He will report himself immediately at Bristow Station."

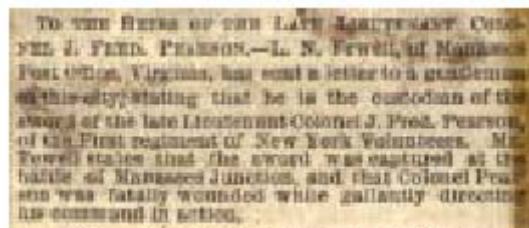
This Bristow is ten miles from here, and I am now awaiting a train to go there. I have not the remotest idea of the cause of my arrest and do not fear the result, but I am disgusted with my regiment. The men all like me and have always obeyed me. When on the cars from Alexandria, they gave me three cheers whenever I passed along, and you know in vino veritas. I think if I were in New York, I might obtain command of one of the new regiments. I am told Dyckman was seen drunk at Newport News. I have arrested the officers who are here and who left in Alexandria and have taken a determined part. I have the consciousness of having done all duties faithfully, and I think successfully. All my 7th regiment gentlemen officers are detached from the regiment on different generals' staffs but one, Leland, and he is here. Other officers are wounded or away sick and there are some vacancies. If Dyckman had been good for anything there would be no trouble now.

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When Fred Pierson was captured at Bristoe Station, his sword was taken by the cavalry under J.E.B. Stuart. He saw General Stuart that night as he was bivouacked with his staff beneath a tree, and asked for the return of his sword, but it could not be found. In July 1869, seven years later, a notice appeared in the New York

## Further Insights on the Life and Character of Lucien Fewell cont.

papers and was answered by Gen. Pierson. The result being that the sword was returned in exchange for a shotgun. Note that Mr. Fewell killed the Union officer and then took the sword. At the time he published these advertisements, Mr. Fewell was under the impression that he had killed Fred Pierson, and he was attempting to contact the family of the man he had killed. You can only imagine his emotions at the time of composing these.



New York Herald, July 9, 1869

### [Page 210]

*New York Tribune*, July 9, 1869

Mr. L. N. Fewell of Manassas, Va., has in his possession, having picked it up on the field of battle, the sword formerly belonging to Lieut.-Col. J. Fred Pierson, 1st New York Volunteers. Mr. Fewell, who was a Confederate soldier, is very anxious to restore the weapon to the friends of Col. Pierson. On the scabbard is the inscription, "A testimonial of regard to Lieut.-Col. Fred. Pierson, 1st N. Y. State Vols., the patriot and soldier."

*New York Herald*, July 9, 1869

TO THE HEIRS OF THE LATE LIEUTENANT COLONEL J. FRED PIERSON.—L. N. Fewell, of Manassas Post Office, Virginia, has sent a letter to a gentleman of this city, stating that he is the custodian of the sword of the late Lieutenant Colonel J. Fred. Pierson, of the First regiment of New York Volunteers. Mr. Fewell states that the sword was captured at the battle of Manassas Junction, and that Colonel Pierson was fatally wounded while gallantly directing his command in action. Henry Lewis Pierson, Jr., brother of General J. Fred Pierson, saw Mr. Fewell's advertisement and arranged for recovery of the sword. After writing to Mr. Fewell, he received the following letter:

### [Page 211]

Manassas, Va.

July 12, 1869

Henry L. Pierson, Esq.

Dear Sir:

Your communications of 9th and 10th inst at hand and contents noted. I am gratified to know that you are the brother of Lieut. Col. J. Fred Pierson whom I supposed was killed as the person that I took the sword off was dead and evidently an officer. The officer that wore it had severed the head of a Lieut in one of the Companies in my regiment and was in the act of piercing the heart of another private when Sergeant Deavers and myself killed him by shooting at him. He would not have lost his life if he had have surrendered but he swore he would die before he would surrender. I don't charge anything for keeping the sword but if you feel disposed you can send me an ordinary double barrel shot gun as a present which I would prize very highly. Excuse the paper being in two pieces but after I have finished my letter the ink stand turned over the letter and made a portion of it illegible. I forwarded the sword by Express to H. M. Lemman and Bros 116 William Street New York Importers and dealers in H. M. Lemans celebrated steel pens and Lead Pencils. You can get the sword by calling on him. Any thing or any information I can furnish you will be done with pleasure. Let me hear from you if you receive the sword.

Vry Respectfully

L. N. Fewell

Manassas

Henry Pierson sent a shotgun to Mr. Fewell.

Received of H. M. Lemman Esq

One double barrell gun in good order given in his hands by Henry L. Pierson Esq to be forwarded to me at Manassas.

L. N. Fewell

July 16th 1869

The sword is now in the possession of Henry Lowrey Pierson.



*Detail of Pierson's sword*

# The Infamous Fewell Trial -- Part V continued

letters, written by Miss Fewell to Clark, five whilst they both lived at Manassas, intimating, in substance, her willingness to leave with him, four of them without date or signature, one written July 2d, and the last August 22d, after they had returned from their trip to the West. The letters are as follows:

## **Letter No. 1**

I have only time to write a short note. It will be a day or two before I can decide positively at what time I can leave. But don't think I have given it out, for I would not for the world; I will write you a long letter by Tuesday's mail, telling you when I can go. — How short the time seems last night when we were together. You cannot imagine how delighted I was yesterday when I saw you on the picnic grounds. Can you remain until Sunday? Do by all means. I want you to go down to Church; Lizzie and I are going.

*This note bore no signature and no caption, endorsed upon the back was the following, written in pencil: Don't go to B—— tomorrow, if you can possibly help; wait until Monday.*

## **Letter No. 2**

What shall I say to convince you that I am not mad with you; and why you have taken up such an idea, I can't imagine; have I ever acted in any way to cause you to believe me angry? If I have, I assure you I was unconscious of it, and I have never heard that you said anything respectful or disrespectful about me, except what Walter M. told me. I do not hesitate to trust you in anything, and indeed, I have already trusted you a great extent. In regard to fishing, I can go at any time, whenever convenient to you. I will be ready, and your company on the creek will be perfectly agreeable. I have never heard that any one ever suspected us, but for fear that this might get lost. I had rather you would destroy it immediately. Don't stay longer in Fredericksburg.

## **Letter No. 3** (written in pencil and very faint.)

I can't leave Monday as I expected, but will go after the fourth of July. Mrs H. tells me you expect to leave for B. tomorrow. But, darling, try and put your trip off until the first of next week. We think of having a dance tomorrow night. I expect to by all means to be there. Don't think my seeming negligence

is an indication that my feelings towards you are changed, but you become dearer to me every day, and I agree with you in the arrangements you have made for me to leave with you, and hope it will not be long before we can be together to be separated no more. Do, for my sake, defer your trip until the last of the week. Goodbye, darling. Yours until death. Destroy at once. No signature and no date.

## **Letter No. 4**

I long for the sound of the freight whistle, and still I dream for fear my darling will not come, but will hope for the best. And just to think he is going to leave so soon again — going off on the 12 o'clock train to B. Now you could not defer your trip to-day, but I know you can to-night. We are all going after raspberries tomorrow, about two miles down the road, and I want you to go and may be we will have to have a little talk. Now do this pet, for your little girl. This note had no date or signature.

## **Letter No. 5**

At Home, July 2, 1872 — My own darling: According to promise I seat myself this morning, not at home — but you can guess— to ask you if you don't think it best to come back once more before we leave; you have left many things which I think you will need, and I would like to make some arrangements in regard to getting my clothes away; but if you think it impossible for you to return, don't you think it best that I should express them to you ? I can do it with safety. I have considered the matter, that is, about leaving Friday, and think that will be rather soon after your departure. It might cause suspicion, and I had rather wait a little longer. I can let you know this week at what time I will be ready to leave. Now darling, don't be angry, for I assure you I am doing this for the best. I am anxious for the time to arrive when we shall be together, as much as you are but don't think it prudent that I should leave Friday. The time has weighed heavily since you left; the days have seemed weeks. I would like for you to be here tomorrow night any how. Everybody expects you back, and come if you possibly can. Lizzie wants to know what is to be done with all your clothes you have left here. R. came this morning and

## The Infamous Fewell Trial -- Part V continued

got all the soiled ones to do up. I find that I can leave either on the passenger or the freight without any one finding me out, but tell me which you think will be the best. If you can't come up tomorrow, write a long letter to Lizzie telling me what to do. I will have to stop writing and go home immediately. Lizzie joins me in love to my little darling. No signature.

### **Letter No. 6**

Washington, D. C., Aug. 22. — Oh, my darling! For God sake come back as soon as possible, there is a great long piece in the Baltimore paper, and it says you ran off with the agent's daughter from Manassas, and that you have a wife and three children. Oh God, what are we to do? Come to me at once. I am cast off from them all at home; you are all that I have to look to and don't leave, but come right back to me. Mr. Gale came up here and told me of it just now. He says he heard some one making remarks about it, and told them it was another man. Please darling come back to me tomorrow. I am so nervous I can scarcely hold the pen. Don't fail to come right away. Yours, I hope forever, F. \_\_\_\_

The counsel for the defense, with the view of preventing the reproduction of Miss Fewell upon the witness stand, after a consultation among themselves, decided to acknowledge the genuineness of the above letters.

The letters written by Clark to Miss Fewell, were introduced as evidence. The first is postmarked St. Louis, Aug. 15, and is to this effect: "My Darling little Girl: I telegraph this morning as soon as I reached here and got my breakfast and although it is now after three o'clock, I have not heard a word from them. I truly and greatly hope to hear to-day, so as to have you come up tonight, and I could meet you and go on to Cincinnati but have been disappointed. If you knew how I have felt, darling, since I left you, you would never doubt or distrust me, I never felt as lonely and miserable in my life. If I don't hear by eight o'clock tonight I am going to Cincinnati to night; will get there by 8 o'clock in the morning, and if I do not hear from them to-morrow, I will go on to Washington and send you money back from there. Oh, how I do hate this arrangement and I am really afraid you will have to come to Cincinnati by yourself, anyhow, If you do, you can take the next night train at Mexico, and get to Cincinnati at 6 next night, and I will meet

you then, if possible. Don't get mad with me darling, or discouraged because of the delay, for as God is my judge, it is no fault of mine. Take good care of yourself darling, and just as soon as I can hear I will telegraph you.

Yours devotedly."

August 18, 1872 - To Mrs. Fannie S. Clark, 50 Ringo House, Mexico, Adrian County, Mo.

The "them" to which the letter alludes are friends from which Clark expected to procure money. The second letter was written the same day and addressed like the first: "My Darling little girl: In addition to what I wrote this evening I think it best to write again. It is now 5 o'clock, and still no answer. If I do not hear by half past eight I shall go to Cincinnati to night, and if in no other way will borrow enough to bring you to that place, and send it to you, so that you can leave to-morrow night. Oh darling, if I only had you with me tonight. You do not know how much I missed your dear little hand on my own in the train. When you get on the train, get the conductor to see that your baggage is properly attended to, if you want to change cars here. I will send you a money order, and you can collect it yourself. I want you to take the letters and photograph out of the trunk and put them in your pocket. You know the photograph I mean, the picture of somebody when she was small. I believe though, it is an ambrotype and is in the bottom of the trunk. It should be so that I cannot meet you at the depot at Cincinnati, you must go to the Galt House and register as Mrs. J. M. Moore, N. C., and I will find you. It may be that I cannot get off from Taylor Thornton but I do not apprehend any difficulty. I will send you a telegraph money order for enough to get you a ticket to Washington and to pay your expenses to Cincinnati, and after you get there I will meet you. Bring all letters that may come for me. I hope to be with you in a day or two, darling, and until then I hope you will try to be happy. You can tell Mr. Ringo that I could not return as expected, and will send him whatever I may not have paid him. If you leave to-morrow night you will get to Cincinnati Thursday night at 9. Good-bye till we meet. Ever and devotedly yours. Destroy these letters, or take mighty good care of them."

The photograph referred to is one of his wife's taken when very young. These two letters, Miss Fewell testified, were sent to Mexico after her departure from that point, and forward to Manassas, where they were taken into the possession of her family and kept from her sight.

## The Infamous Fewell Trial -- Part V continued

The third letter dated Fredericksburg, and which was handed Miss F. at Boyle's Hotel in Washington, signed "Jim," and in which the expression "As bad a little flirt as you are, I am not afraid to trust you," is used, has heretofore been published in the *Gazette*.

Wm. Wright, conductor of the freight train on which Miss F. left Manassas, was the first witness in rebuttal.

**Examination by Mr. Meniffee** — I was in charge of the train on which Miss F. went off; left Manassas at 12:39 a. m.; after starting the train Mr. Fewell came out and requested me to stop it; I did so and he went through the caboose; when about a mile and a half from the place I observed an old gentleman who appeared to be very restless; soon after I saw a lady; I walked up to her and asked her if she wasn't Miss F.; she said yes and told me she was going to Washington to be married; I remonstrated gently with her, told her that I was much older than she, and advised her to return to her father, she said she had fully made up her mind to go; arrived at Alexandria 3:30, and there saw a hack, to which I escorted her, I saw a man on the pavement; they saluted each other, he helped her into the hack and got in with her; the old man got in also.

**By Gov. Wise** — She said she was going to marry a man by the name of Lee; stated she was about sixteen.

**Cross examination by Judge Thomas** — Heard Miss F's testimony yesterday; so far as she went I think it was correct; the man she met was a small man weighing about 130 pounds; did not know Clark.

At one o'clock Gov. Wise asked the Court to adjourn till to-morrow morning, as two of the witnesses for the Commonwealth were not present and could not get here until tomorrow morning. Considerable discussion ensued on both sides. The Court decided to adjourn in order to allow these witnesses to be present.

Based on the letters introduced as evidence, it appears that Fannie Fewell and Clark had a well established relationship before their elicit travels. The language used in the missives most certainly sounds dated when compared to modern verbiage, but was actually quite typical of romances of the nineteenth century. Several prominent Manassas residents are mentioned in the letters. "Lizzie," was Fannie's sister and

married to Benjamin D. Merchant, owner of a hotel near the train station. "Mrs. H." was Mrs. Georgianna (Weedon) Hynson, wife of Charles L. Hynson who owned a Manassas general store in the 1870s. So, it appears that Fannie was assisted in her efforts to "elope" with Clark by several people. More information on the mechanics of her departure came later in the day when the court reconvened and Fannie Fewell gave testimony. She also explained her repeated queries as to when Clark would marry her. One can imagine that his refusals, on account of the fact that it would be bigamy, must have left Fannie very distraught in light of the sacrifice she had made at the young age of sixteen years.

### Testimony of Miss Fannie Fewell [ continued from the *Alexandria Gazette* 09 Nov 1872]

The following is Miss Fewell's testimony: My name is Fannie Sandford Fewell; I was sixteen the 29th of last June; I became acquainted with Clark when he first moved to Manassas; had heard of him before; while we lived at Manassas we met frequently; I saw a great deal of him during this time; I left home July 21st. 1872; was persuaded to leave by the seductions of Mr. Clark; I met Clark at the depot in Alexandria; he was standing on the pavement, near the track; the conductor escorted me to the carriage; left Alexandria at 3 a. m.; we drove towards Washington; I thought we were going to stop in that city, but am told we went directly to Bladensburg, which I thought was a part of the suburbs of Washington, we procured tickets here and went to Baltimore; arrived there about 6 a. m., and drove to the Rennert House; Clark accompanied me; remained during the day, and left about eight the following morning; Mr. Clark had promised before I left Virginia to marry me when I reached Washington; when we arrived in Bladensburg I asked him why he did not do so; he said it was too early in the morning; asked him again when we reached Baltimore to marry me; he said it was impossible — that he was a married man, and it would be bigamy, a penitentiary offense, to marry while he had a wife living; this conversation occurred in my room, after supper; Clark then went down into the office of the hotel; about ten o'clock he returned to my room, he found me in tears and told me that I might as well become resigned to my fate; that if I had made a sacrifice in leaving home with him, he also had made sacrifices for me; I told him if he did not intend to marry me I would return to my home; he said that our fates were

## The Infamous Fewell Trial -- Part V continued

linked irrevocably, that I had taken a step which I could not recall, that my family would not receive me, and the world would not believe me faultless; he also said that if I left him then he would leave me, and I would have no protector; we registered at the Rennert House as Mr. Green and wife, From Baltimore we went to Rochester, N. Y., without change of care; remained there two or three days; from Rochester, N. Y., without change of care; remained there two or three days; from Rochester we went to Detroit; reached that city at 9 p.m.; left next morning at 7 a. m. for Chicago; reached there Saturday night; did not leave Chicago until 10 o'clock Monday morning; did not go to church Sunday, but drove out to Lincoln Park with Clark in a hack; in Chicago we registered as Mr. and Mrs. Paxton; on leaving Chicago went to Palmyra, then to Hannibal, where remained several days, thence to Louisiana, Mo. where we stayed from 2 to 10 p. m.; from there we went to Mexico, Mo., the end of our tour, where we registered as John R. Lee and wife. Mr. Clark said he registered by the name of Lee because he had a friend named Dudley living near, and he wanted to surprise him in a few days; Dudley saw Clark; Mr. Clark did not say where he lived, and Mr. Dudley came to the Ringo House, where we were stopping, and asked the clerk if James F. Clark was there; he replied no; Mr. Clark told me that he did not want Mr. Dudley to find out where he was living because he might have likeness of his (Clark's) wife, and thus detect that I was not what I purported to be. Afterwards Mr. Dudley met Mr. Clark on the street and came with him to the "Ringo House;" Mr. Dudley was left in the saloon, and Mr. Clark came into my room and prepared me to be presented as his wife; he said if Dudley had a photograph of Mrs. Clark he would treat the subject of our marriage as if it were a ruse to amuse his friend, and then say that I was his cousin traveling with him; Mr. D was introduced and suspected nothing; his (Clark's) cousin, Miss Patten, called upon us, and I was introduced to her by him as his wife. Mrs. Clark; after Mr. Dudley's visit, Mr. Clark assumed his right name; Mr. Clark remained with me two weeks and then started for St. Louis, while he was in St. Louis I received a letter from him; he also wrote to the clerk, telling him to advise me to come on to Cincinnati; I was then without means, and the hotel bill was unpaid; I ask the clerk what I was to do; he sent for Mr. Patten and Mr. Ringo, proprietor of the hotel; they bought me a ticket to Cincinnati; Mr. Ringo detained my clothes to secure his hotel bill; Mr. Clark said he would meet me in Cincinnati; I arrived there about six in the morning; I remained in the ladies' sitting-room of the depot until 11 in the day, looking for Mr. Clark;

about midday a policeman, observed my disturbed manner, approached me and inquired what I was waiting for; I told him my story, and he declared that I was abandoned; while we were conversing the conductor of the train on which I had come to Cincinnati stepped up and claimed me as his guest; he offered to carry me to a hotel and pay my bills; his name was Marsh; the policeman, Mr. Kinney, told me that the conductor was a single man, and warned me to have nothing to do with him; he invited me to go home with him and let his wife take care of me; I accompanied him; in the meantime the policeman interested himself in my behalf; I stayed at his house until the next day; a proposition was made to send me to the Home of the Friendless; the telegraph operator sent me a message saying that Clark had been at the office and dispatched an order for \$31 to Mexico, and that I could get the money by calling upon him; I went twice; each time the operator said Clark had just been there; I saw a notice in a Cincinnati paper that a man by the name of Clark had deserted his wife, and that she was without money or friends in that city; a few days afterwards a publication appeared in the same journal congratulating Mr. and Mrs. Clark upon having met by accident on the train, as they were each going east in search of the other; this paragraph was uttered false; I did not see Clark from the time I left Mexico until I arrived in Washington; through Mrs. Kinney's exertion I obtained a ticket for Washington; I had only a dollar when I left Mexico; by this time it was all expended, I reached Washington about 10 p. m.; had heard Mr. Clark speak of a friend who was clerk at Boyle's Hotel; I knew no one in Washington; called a policeman and asked him to conduct me to Boyle's Hotel; inquired if John R. Lee was registered there; he replied "yes," and went to the room which he thought Clark occupied; he returned and said he was not in his room, and had probably left the city; I asked to be shown to a room; this was Sunday night; in a short time the clerk knocked at my door and said he had mistaken another for Mr. Clark's room, and that he had just entered the hotel; I requested that he should be brought to me; when he entered my room he seemed astonished and exclaimed "my God, how did you manage to get here?" Mr. Clark spent this night with me; when I awoke I examined my pocket book, and found \$26 of the \$30 which I had when I arrived in Washington gone; I thought I had been robbed and told him of it, he said he had taken the money; he was angry that the publication had appeared in the *Cincinnati Commercial* setting forth that Mrs. Clark had been abandoned by her husband and was destitute condition; he said this might be

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seen by my family and lead them to search more diligently for me; he announced his intention to go to Fredericksburg and collect some money that was due him there; he asked me to lend some more of what I had left; he took five dollars; I then had a two dollar note and some small change remaining; he left me the same morning (Monday) for Fredericksburg, telling me that I must still pass as Mrs. J. R. Lee; I stayed here until Saturday night, August 24, 1872, never during that time having left the hotel but on one occasion, and then in company with Mr. Clark; I was brought away by Mr. Merchant, my brother in law.

The examination in chief of Miss Fewell here closed. It was conducted by Judge Thomas. The defense proposed to introduce Thomas M. Sullivan, a policeman from Washington, but the court declined to receive his evidence.

**Cross-examination** — Made Mr. Clark's acquaintance in June last, at Mr. Hynson's; he was then living at Manassas, and had a wife and two children; had no reason to know positively that he was married, but had never heard it denied, and beloved such to see the case, did not accept Mr. Clark's advances until I supposed he was divorced from his wife; do not know how long our intimacy had lasted before Mr. Clark's family left Manassas; they went to her father's; I inquired, and was told that they did not live happily together; after they had been gone some time I received a note from Mr. Clark asking me to meet him at Mrs. Hynson's, in which he said that he was separated from his wife, and wanted to see more of me now; I went to Mrs. Hynson's that night, and met Mr. Clark there, as I had done several times before; the following day he wrote a note asking me to go away to Washington with him and be married; on being assured that he was divorced I agreed to this; did not feel that it was morally wrong for Mr. Clark to pay his addresses to me under the circumstances; it did not occur to me that I should not go to Washington and be married when I had every assurance that he was an unmarried man; was also told he was divorced by Mrs. Hynson, who said she had letters in her possession to confirm this statement; knew that I was deceived and ought not to remain with him longer than the night we spent in Baltimore; but where could I go; I left Manassas with an emissary of Clark's his name is Hartman. and he stayed at Boyle's Hotel; I paid my own fare down; the conductor remonstrated with me and advised me to return to my father; upon his insisting on this I again refused, and told him if returned against my consent I would seek the first opportunity to escape, and find him, (referring to Clark;) the man who came for me

was a stranger; the first night appointed for my elopement I was not ready when the train passed; the following night my escort came again and we got off safely; Mr. Clark told me to reply Mr. Lee, if any one asked me whom I was going to marry; he had supplied me with fifty dollars, through Mrs. Hynson, to meet any expenses when we reached Alexandria the conductor escorted me about a square, and we found Mr. Clark in waiting with a track; I had been receiving notes from Mr. Clark for about a month before I agreed to leave home, at Manassas I lived with Mr. D. B. Merchant, did not receive Mr. Clark's visits at their house, they did not like him, and discouraged our growing intimacy; we passed the night in Baltimore together as man and wife; this was after he told me he could not marry me; I kept the money given me by Mr. Clark until we arrived at Mexico; I then gave it to him; during our relations several notes of affectionate character passed between us.

The Commonwealth here announced that they could not proceed further with the evidence of this witness until some valuable documents were obtained, which were then in the hands of the Governor [Wise].

Notable throughout Fannie's testimony is Clark's use of multiple aliases including the Greens of Baltimore, the Moore's of North Caroline, the Paxtons and John R. Lee and wife. This may attributable to the practice of newspapers of that time regularly publishing lists of persons, and their place of abode, registered at local hotels. In addition to the hotel registry lists, it was also a common practice for the newspapers publish a list of letters awaiting claim at the post office. For this reason, many of the details of the so-called elopement can be verified.

It is also very interesting that Fannie's testimony includes people she encountered in her travels. A Mr. Dudley, supposedly a friend of Clark's in Mexico, Missouri, may actually have been able to verify the identity of Clark's wife because he possibly had seen a picture of her. Clark apparently carried an ambrotype of his wife. Why would Dudley have seen a picture of Clark's wife? Or, had he met her at some point in time? Was he possibly a relative or friend of Clark's family

## The Infamous Fewell Trial -- Part V continued

living in Missouri? Clark also introduced Fannie to his cousins, the Pattens. It was later that Mr. Ringo, the hotel proprietor, gained assistance from these cousins to reunite Fannie and Clark. Ringo did this with the provision that Fannie's clothes held as collateral for payment of the hotel bill Clark had not paid. One wonders what the cousins thought of Clark leaving his wife without funds, for that is what they believed Fannie to be, his wife.

Imagine Fannie's horror at the unmarried conductor, Mr. Marsh, offering to pay her way upon arriving alone in Cincinnati. The subsequent warning by the policeman, Mr. Kinney, alerted her to the impropriety of this possible arrangement. Fannie went home with the policeman instead, who recommended she seek aid through the Home of the Friendless. It was at this point that, supposedly, Clark made \$31 available to Fannie. She never managed to obtain it in the manner he arranged. Kinney ultimately assisted her in acquiring a ticket back to Washington, DC. She managed to meet with Clark at Boyle's Hotel, much to his astonishment according to Fannie. A major discrepancy in her testimony occurs at this point. Fannie claimed to have been abandoned without funds in Missouri. She never testified successful receipt of the \$31 in

Cincinnati. Later, in Washington, she stated that she had found that \$26 of \$30 was missing from her pocket book. From where did this \$30 appear?

According to Fannie's testimony, Clark's marriage was not satisfactory. Despite knowing his marital status, Mrs. Hynson assisted Clark in liaising with Fannie. Clark also employed an associate, Hartman, in his plans to get Fannie out of Manassas. Clark's insistence of his innocence appears to be in great contrast to the testimony Fannie supplied in light of the myriad people who appear to have been involved in his alleged scheme. With the court adjourned for the day, readers of the *Bell Ringer* will have to await the February issue to learn the conclusion of the trial.



*The Brentsville jail was the location of the murder of James F. Clark.*

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### Getting Down to Business in March!

The March *Bell Ringer* will feature businesses that operated in the Town of Brentsville and the Bristow area as early as the 19th century. Many of our readers may have knowledge, documents or artifacts that would make this article more accurate and informative. If you would like to share information for this feature, like photos, bills of sale, receipts, letterheads or other documents, please contact Ron Turner at 703-743-1926 or email at [pwcwabooks@comcast.net](mailto:pwcwabooks@comcast.net). In this same issue, learn how to research the history and records of a business in an article about the art of using primary sources in your research.

### What is an ambrotype?

An "ambrotype" image of Clark's wife was mentioned in the *Commonwealth v. Fewell* trial. An ambrotype is an old style of photograph consisting of a glass negative backed by a dark surface so as to appear positive. This method, used from the 1850s-1880s, reduced the cost of producing images such as *daguerreotypes*, positive images on a metal support. The Daguerreotype was the first successful photographic process, discovered in 1839. Another process, the *tin type*, was introduced in 1853. Because the tin type was simple to produce and inexpensive, it is most widely seen.

## ~UPDATES~

### Friends of Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre, Inc. Calendar 2006

#### Board Meetings

Thursday, January 12 at 7:30pm  
Thursday, February, 16 at 7:30pm  
Thursday, March 16 at 7:30  
Thursday, June 15 at 7:30  
Thursday, August 17 at 7:30  
Thursday, September 14 at 7:30

#### General Membership Meetings

Saturday, February 11 at 10:00am  
Saturday, April 1 at 10:00am  
Saturday, July 15 at 5pm – Picnic potluck  
Thursday, Sept. 28 at 7:30pm  
Saturday, November 4 at 10am – **Annual Meeting**

#### Events

Saturday, May 6 – **Chili Cook-Off** from 11:00– 3pm  
Saturday, September 9 - **One Room School Reunion**  
Saturday, October 14 – **Court Day & FBCHC, Inc. 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration**  
Saturday, December 9 at 12pm – 3pm – **Holiday Open House**

**For more information on meetings, events and volunteering visit our web site at [www.brentsville.org](http://www.brentsville.org)**

The goal of the Education and Research Committee of the Friends of Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre, Inc. is the preservation and accurate sharing of the history of the Town of Brentsville. The Committee is comprised of volunteers who work together to create this newsletter, *The Bell Ringer*, and provide interpretation to visitors to the site. Anyone who is a member of the Friends of Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre, Inc., is invited to join us in our efforts. Current committee members include: Becky Cumins, Dot Lane, Betty Machen, Keith Machen, Robin Meyering, Pam Sackett, Ron Turner, Jim Wyatt and Laura Wyatt.

