

## The Sleigh Ride

By Barbara Glakas

In the mid-1880s, Herndon had a handwritten newspaper called "*The Weekly Comet*." The Herndon Depot Museum has four original fragile copies, issues dating from 1886 and 1887.

"*The Weekly Comet*" newspaper is handwritten on ruled 12" x 8" paper. The pages are held together with two metal fasteners at the top. The front-page list the contents. The contents include articles, editorials and commentary, stories, puzzles and poems. The writers are not named in these articles, but often used pseudonyms. However, it is easy to see that there were a few contributors, due to the different handwriting. The writers used pseudonyms such as "Close Observer," and "The Critic."

According to [handwrittennews.com](http://handwrittennews.com),

*"Handwritten newspapers and periodicals have been produced all over the world for hundreds of years. They illustrate the universal journalistic impulse to share news and information publicly, unconstrained by the need to meet our expectations of how 'real' newspapers happen to be produced in our cultural tradition. Sometimes, to tell their stories or to inform others, creative people break the rules or defy convention. Some have no choice; some are constrained by lack of resources or their economic circumstances; some are just a bit crazy or enjoying a lark."*

Apropos for this season was a short poem in one of the *Weekly Comet* issues entitled "The Sleighride." Sleigh rides were once popular in Herndon. One boy who attended St. Timothy's Rawson Lodge boarding mission school in Herndon in 1873 and 1874 wrote home and said, "The inhabitants [of Herndon] say that there is an average of 9 inches of snow on the ground here through the winter & splendid sleighing."

Eighty years later, sleigh rides were still enjoyed in Herndon. One former Herndon resident remembers riding in her in Uncle Paul Powell's sleigh as a young girl in the 1950s. She recalled, "Several of us kids piled in one sleigh for a ride over to my cousin's house on Van Buren Street."

But sleigh rides were not without their mishaps. Republished below is the poem entitled "The Sleighride" from Volume 7 of the 1886 Herndon newspaper, "*The Weekly Comet*."

### The Sleighride

One of our boys lay in the snowy road,  
When horse and sleigh had fled,  
And wished that he was save at home,  
Asleep in his own little bed.

He thought the money he would have to spend,

Of the girl he had dumped in the snow.  
He looked at the moon, and then up the road,  
And sighed, 'tis the last time I can go.'

Now boys, take a warning from this one,  
Although, sleigh riding has a charm.  
And when you are riding with a girl,  
Don't wrap the lines around your arm.  
Improvvisatrice.

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*About this column: "Remembering Herndon's History" is a regular Herndon Patch feature offering stories and anecdotes about Herndon's past. The articles are written by members of the Herndon Historical Society. Barbara Glakas is a member. A complete list of "Remembering Herndon's History" columns is available on the Historical Society website at [www.herndonhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.herndonhistoricalsociety.org).*

*The Herndon Historical Society operates a small museum that focuses on local history. It is housed in the Herndon Depot in downtown Herndon on Lynn Street and is open every Sunday from noon until 3:00. Visit the Society's website at [www.herndonhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.herndonhistoricalsociety.org), and the Historical Society's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/HerndonHistory> for more information.*

*Note: The Historical Society is seeking volunteers to help keep the museum open each Sunday. If you have an interest in local history and would like to help, contact [HerndonHistoricalSociety@gmail.com](mailto:HerndonHistoricalSociety@gmail.com).*