

Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

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Hesel/Burns House Tour

A pleasant October evening, albeit, a dark one, awaited the visitors at the Dan Burns and Aileen Hesel-Burns house on South Street, Greenville. Attending were Harriett Rasmussen, Connie Teator, Don and Deb Teator, Larry and Dot Hesel (proud parents! and key renovators also), Kathie Williams, Mimi Weeks, Phyllis Beechert, Barbara Baron, Joe Mangold, Martha Turon, David and Judy Rundell, and Deb Tompkins. Reconnoitering down the flagstone sidewalk was made easier with Dan's flashlight that made the trip several times.

Chairs were set up in the formal parlor, and we looked at the Burns' before-and-after photographs. Many of us can sympathize with the family's efforts to bring a house up to date.

Aileen noted it took about five months to clean the walls, ceilings and floors. Wallpaper was taken down, and the nine foot high plaster ceilings were reinforced and resurfaced as needed. Larry installed a crown molding in the parlor that neatened the corners but also gave a room an elegant look. (Aileen and Dan made sure to give lots of credit to Mom and Dad.) The radiators were sanded, and original hardware was kept as possible. A wall of Wintertur prints occupies one wall.

In between, some place, a history of the house was given. Before the Ellis family

lived in it (nearly three-quarters of a century), the house belonged to the Sanford family, and then to the Earl family, one of whom built it (Charles?).

We toured the dining room, which will become a center of renovating activity soon. Off the dining room was a newly enlarged pantry, with wonderful shelving and lighting. Back we went to the center hall, and up the stairs whose runner was enhanced by an addition of fabric stitched to the width of the runner. Someone noted the black walnut handrail.

The upstairs center hall's stenciling immediately caught everyone's attention, as did the painting rail. Four rooms comprised the main structure upstairs, with the main bedroom containing similar inlaid woodwork as the parlor downstairs. We checked out the tin walls and ceiling of the bathroom, and the back room clothes closet/storage.

Back downstairs we went to the living room and back room that will be a major renovation job. I remembered the house beam that runs across the room at just above head level.

Finally, we re-entered the parlor and kitchen to avail ourselves of warm apple cider and sinfully delicious cookies. After a round of stories and chatting, we rambled back up the flagstone walkway and into the darkness we rode.

We thank Aileen and Dan for sharing their house, which shows the loving care and attention that I hope every old house in Greenville could get. Dot and Larry, you should be proud also!

The next meeting is a share session, starting at the Community Room, like usual. At about 7:35, we will proceed to Curt Cunningham's Civil War gallery. Curt maintains he has no speech ready but will be available to answer questions. I don't know how long it will take but a very preliminary, not-to-be-held-to-guess might be a half-hour. Then we'll head back to the Community Room to finish our last meeting of the year.

Calendars are still available, as are as many cards as you wish to sort from the Doris Hempstead collection. Mimi finished off the Bs, a massive undertaking, of thousands of cards just in that letter of the alphabet. I'm estimating the sorting is about half done, much of which Mimi has undertaken, with help from a half-dozen others of us.

Enclosed is a reprint of a recent Ray Beecher article about the Prevost family. We appreciate Ray's research and publicizing of that research.

Take care,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be the name 'Dan' written in a cursive, stylized script.

Prevost family of Greenville a fascinating historical subject

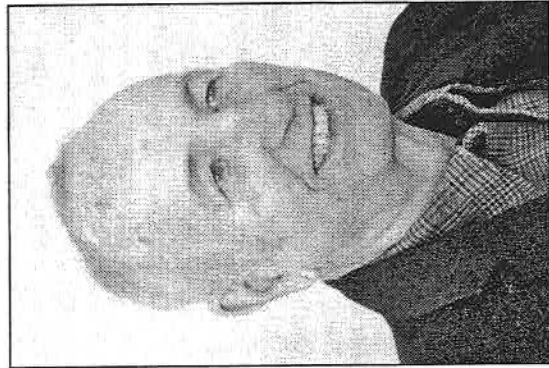
By Raymond Beecher
County Historian

It seems appropriate to write about the Prevosts of Greenville, since this year is the township's bicentennial.

Few families of pre-Revolutionary vintage hold more interest to me than the Prevosts. I devoted one section of my local history volume *Out to Greenville and Beyond* (now in its 4th printing and still available through the Greene County Historical Society) to the Prevost land grants from the British Crown and the building of Hush Hush, the Prevost manor house.

Since that time of researching and writing, I have continued to be alert to Prevost source material. Long on my wanted list was *The Mallet-Prevost Family*; it was privately printed in 1930 in a limited edition of 150 copies and thus a scarce item.

In later summer in a New Jersey dealer's catalogue I found the Mallet-Prevost book listed and at a reasonable price. A telephone call revealed it had not yet been sold, and in a week's time it arrived at the Vedder Research Library. It has served to furnish more nuggets of history on the various branches of the Prevosts. I provide the readers with a few.



become a member. The family had risen in importance ever since Jean Prevost had secured a license in 1357 to practice civil law; the actual license is the earliest known Prevost document to have survived.

The first Augustine Prevost (1695-1740) by his marriage to a cousin produced ten children, two of whom are of importance to our Prevost line of descent. Augustine (2nd) named for his father, became a professional soldier for the British Crown and eventually came to America to help raise the contingent known as the Royal Americans. He participated in the British siege of French Louisburg (Nova Scotia); his head wound in that military effort was severe, but he recovered.

During his earlier time of residence in Geneva, in 1744, his eldest son, Augustine (3rd) arrived. That offspring would also follow in his father's footsteps as an officer hired by the British Crown. During the American period after the surrender of French Canada, many British officers and enlisted men took advantage of the desire of the English government to populate the wilderness lands in New York. The higher the military

The Prevosts, originally came from Bossey and played an important role in Geneva, Switzerland during the 14th and 15th centuries. These were ones of religious and civil strife in France, so much so that Switzerland and especially the city of Geneva offered a safe haven to many minor nobles and merchants. In 1536, Calvin the Frenchman relocated in Geneva and established a theocracy.

Later the Council of Two Hundred carried powerful influences. Augustine Prevost, born June 14, 1695, was eventually to

rank, the more grant acreage. Together the two Augustines managed to acquire several thousand acres in what is now Greene County.

General Augustine Prevost was well-acquainted with two sons of King George III, the Duke of Kent and the Duke of Cumberland who were father and uncle to the yet-to-be Queen, Victoria. As results of those connections both father and son not only promoted their own successful military careers but did the same for their several male offspring.

Among the more interesting male descendants of the once Prevosts of Switzerland are: Colonel George William Prevost of the 3rd English Regiment of Buffs. He married Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Palmer of Hampshire, England. From that marriage came two sons and three daughters. The eldest son, born June 1, 1810, married Adelaide Susan Close, her father being dean of Carlisle. There are numerous "cousins" from this branch of Prevosts of Kent and Hampshire, England.

Colonel Augustine Prevost, while enroute to Ireland, perished in the wreck of the "Albion," allegedly in an attempt

of bravery to save the life of a female passenger. Two of Major Augustine Prevost's sons by his first wife died of wounds in the fierce battle of Alburera while serving under the Duke of Wellington in the Peninsula Campaign. In that battle against Napoleonic French forces, of six thousand British infantry only fifteen hundred survived unwounded. Wellington would write grimly, sorrowful over the loss of life: "Another such battle would ruin us."

Major Augustine Prevost's half-brother, John Luis Prevost was in British service and held as a prisoner-of-war at Pondicherry, India.

Sir George Marc Prevost, baronet, became Lt. General of Nova Scotia, some records say Quebec.

James Prevost (3rd) was First Colonel of the 60th British Regiment and died a general on the army staff.

Marcus Prevost, a colonel in the British Army, died of wounds received in Jamaica during the Revolutionary War. He had married a Miss Barton of New Jersey and by her had two sons. After his death, his widow married Aaron Burr who undertook to educate the two Prevost

sons. It was this connection which helped save Augustine Prevost's land grants from attainer because of his wartime military service to the British Crown.

John Barton Prevost became an important American judge and Louisiana planter. He married Fanny Smith, daughter of Princeton College president Smith. There were numerous offspring from this connection.

For most of their lifetimes the Prevosts of Greenville maintained a correspondence with various Prevost cousins. It is also worth mentioning that Augustine Prevost's second wife, Ann Bogardus of Catskill, was a niece of Dr. Thomas Thomson's wife. This courtship finally brought a number of Hush Hush furnishings and memorabilia to Cedar Grove while Florence Cole Vincent was in residence. Somewhere on the West Coast of the United States are the Prevost portraits inherited by Augustine Prevost's first son's descendants. Also the Mallet-Prevost descendants long held a quantity of family manuscripts. It is a challenge worth following to locate the same.