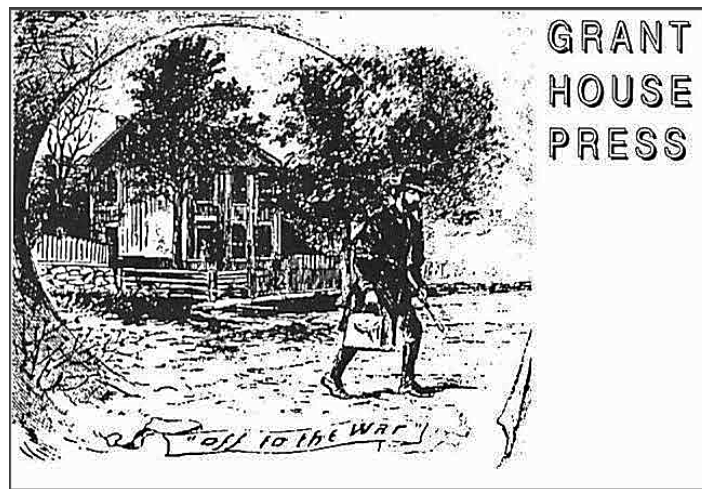


The Miller-Gully House

The Peripatetic Geneva Home of Dr.
John Bath Gully, Forrest Crissey, Squire
Hendrick Miller and Rev. Augustus H.
Conant

by
Rodney Baker Nelson, III, M.D., F.A.C.P



23 Kane Street
Geneva, Illinois 60134



“A little more I'll of their curing tell
How they help sore eyes with a new-found well
Great speech of Malvern Hills was lately reported
Unto which spring people in troops resorted.”

Richard Bannister in *Breviary of the Eyes* (1622)¹

The house half-way up the east-side hill simultaneously domiciled two of Geneva's most fascinating people. A half century earlier the house had been home to two stalwart Geneva founders. The home's resident physician was a member of a talented family of Bristol, England. His clan included his uncle James Manby Gully, M.D., a world renowned physician who treated some of the most celebrated men of the 19th century. The house physician was twice elected President of the Geneva School Board³ and he was professionally endorsed by

¹ Bannister, R. *Breviary of the Eyes*. London, 1662. Hydrotherapy (“water-cure”) in England dates to the time of Shakespeare, but it flourished in the Victorian Age, especially at Malvern Hills in Worcestershire under James Manby Gully, M.D.

² For Charles Darwin as Dr. J.M. Gully's patient, see: Ullman, Dana. “The Curious Case of Charles Darwin and Homeopathy.” *Evidence-based complementary and alternative medicine: eCAM* 7, no. 1 (2010): 33-39.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2816387/>

Another John Gully (?1819-1888) of Bath was a New Zealand landscape artist. *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, 1990.

³ *The Inter Ocean* (Chicago, Cook, Illinois) 26 Apr 1891, Sun, p 23.

Reverend Edward Beecher^{4,5} The first resident among the four men (and the first half of the house's moniker) was so well trusted by his neighbors they elected him justice of the peace.⁶ The famous Genevan who boarded with the Gullys was a versatile and gifted wordsmith who wrote poetry, interviewed Presidents, and lampooned the Geneva Mayor and City Council.⁷



The Miller-Gully House west wing is ready to roll in December 2018. In the exposed wall note the horsehair plaster "keys" protruding between the lath and the typical haphazard placement of the "oversized" studs. The original clapboards are visible where a later chimney had been placed. The columned high roofed porch is an awkward 20th century embellishment.

⁴ "John Bath Gully, M.D." *Geneva Republican*. Vol 63, #42, 17 Oct 1891.

⁵ *Kenosha Times*, 28 March 1861, p4. Beecher's *Riots at Alton*, 1838, was the first published treatise about the murder of Beecher's friend and colleague, Elijah Lovejoy. Beecher, Edward. *Narrative of Riots at Alton: In Connection with the Death of Rev. Elijah P. Lovejoy*. Alton Ill.: G. Holton, 1838. Gully and Beecher were in Galesburg, Illinois together in 1857-8.

⁶ The women of Miller-Gully House are apparitions. The little Widow Stoaks (or Stokes) House at 130 East State just to the east of Miller-Gully was demolished in 2018, the 18th year of Geneva's dark Epoch of the Scotsman's Curse. Widow Stoaks' story and connection with Hendrick Miller can only be told in tweet length demographic snippets, as told below.

⁷ "GENEVA IS 'ALL TORN UP': HER MAYOR AND ALDERMEN INVOLVED IN AN AWFUL STRUGGLE." *Chicago Daily Tribune*; Jan 11, 1888; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chicago Tribune, pg. 1. This lengthy illustrated piece appeared in the *Tribune* without attribution to an author. The article begins with a poem about Geneva "...loveliest village on the plain, was it not once the pride of County Kane?" Forrest Crissey lived in the Gully home when the piece appeared, and he probably wrote it in one of its rooms. Compare "All Torn Up" with Crissey's, *Tattling's of a Retired Politician*. Chicago, Thompson & Thomas., 1904, and no doubt can remain as to its authorship. Crissey's brand of journalism has all but disappeared at the dawn of the Age of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Here are some synonyms for "artificial": feigned, insincere, false, affected, mannered, unnatural, stilted, contrived, pretended, put-on, exaggerated, actorly, overdone, overripe, forced, labored, strained, hollow, spurious. "Fake" also seems apropos.

Augustus Conant, the fourth well known Genevan to reside in the Miller-Gully house, lived there in 1841-2. He also preached to a small but growing congregation in the little house. Rev. Augustus Hammond Conant was one of Geneva's most admired members of the clergy. Harvard trained and a dedicated abolitionist, he died of exhaustion stemming from exertions on the battlefield while caring for the wounded of both sides at Stones River in 1863.⁸ Rev. Augustus Hammond Conant was buried in Geneva in the winter of 1863. Dr. John Bath Gully, also a liberal Geneva Unitarian, arrived in Geneva in the spring of that same year.

Dr. John Bath Gully, Forrest Crissey, Squire Hendrick Miller, and Rev. Augustus H. Conant have all been long departed from their home half-way up the hill on the south side of East State Street near the Fox River. In January 2019, in the name of progress, the house they shared was evicted (by forces created by a then-secret promise of a zoning change) from its perch where it had overlooked since the late 1830's the tranquil passing waters of the Fox River and the sometimes-raucous passing denizens along State Street, Geneva's main artery of commerce.

In September of 1887, Forrest and Kate Crissey became boarders with John and Jane Gully. "We had found a house, or rather half a house...halfway up the Eastside Hill on the Southside of the street. Five very pleasant good size rooms, west rooms looking down to the river through a grand old orchard. There was no road at the foot of the hill then ...there were magnificent elms, oaks and maples, quite a forest, extending up to what was called the Thompson Place. The Thompsons must have had several acres, and it was as beautiful as any park I ever saw. A little brook ran slantingly through it. The Thompsons had planted flowers along both sides of this little stream and built a couple of rustic bridges over it. All their land went down to the river and looked out on the island which then had no bridge to carry one to it."⁹

In 1891, Karl Kristiansson was one of the last to record an impression of Dr. Gully. Karl was in Geneva only because he had found a page from a two-year-old Geneva *Patrol* pasted as a temporary repair to the backing of an immigrant boarding house mirror. He had taken the mirror from the wall to squash a bed bug. Reading the paper, he learned that a railroad ran to Geneva from Chicago and that a shorthand course was being taught at Wheaton College a few miles to the east.

Karl somehow made it to Geneva, where a kindly Swedish couple took him in and set him up with a place to sleep in the attic of "Castle Garden" on Nebraska St. just behind the old East Side School on State Street, two blocks east from the Gully House. Karl was riding in a wagon with his newly discovered Swedish sponsor over the bridge towards the immigrant house when another horse-drawn vehicle approached from the east..." and the slow, even clip-clop of a horse's hooves came towards them, echoing over the River. A light in the small brass circled eye of the carriage lantern flickered weakly in the morning sun, on the right-hand side of a doctor's buggy. 'Doctor Gully, this epidemic [diphtheria] is hard on him... and he is not so young anymore, over 70' ...as they drew near, Karl saw that the reins lay over the dashboard, hunched

⁸ Nelson R, editor; Collyer R, *Augustus H. Conant, Geneva's Pioneer Abolitionist Preacher*. Geneva, IL, 1992. p40-42.

⁹ Crissey KS. "The Story of a Boy and a Girl." *Geneva Republican*, Fri, January 10, 1947. The first sentence contains a typo that lists 1877 as the year the Crisseys came to Geneva. They arrived in Geneva in Sept. 1887 when the newlywed Forrest went to write and edit for Joel Niles Wheelers' *Geneva Patrol* newspaper. The *Patrol* was a prohibition paper that suspended in April of 1911 after a twenty-year run. *The Editor and Publisher*, 6 May 1911, p47.

in the corner of the seat near the lantern was a crumpled form in black broadcloth, his chin rested on his chest, and his hat had slipped down over one eye.” A day or so later, Karl, a writer, passed by Dr. Gully’s office while visiting Forrest Crissey at the *Patrol* office next door. The imagery is evocative, but fictional.¹⁰

Starting in 1910, seventy years after the first pair and twenty years or so after the last pair of renowned occupants had left the building, a dweller sitting on its wrap-around porch could peer down the hill to see and hear the clattering rush of the “Roarin’ Elgin” as it rounded the corner of State and First (there were two so-named streets in Geneva) on its way to climb the east side hill a couple of blocks north, then hurtle on its way to Wheaton and on to Chicago’s loop.

The east side hill does not seem imposing today,¹¹ but in the cashless 1930s, farmers could not afford the RR freight charges built into the already low prices offered by the local commodity brokers. Many farmers resorted to hauling livestock to market in their own underpowered and ancient trucks. Fred Kurth was one of these farmer/truckers. Even though he lived just a mile north of Ashton in Ogle County, Illinois, where the C &NW ran, he resorted to hauling his pigs to the Chicago market, as did many of his neighbors. His farm was just a ½ mile west of Route 38, but fifty miles from Geneva and 90 from the Chicago hog butchers to the world of Carl Sandburg.

In the 1980’s Fred’s son Oliver recalled these Chicago trips and particularly the obstacle presented by the dreaded “Geneva Hill.” Even with a “running start,” their loaded truck could not “make” the hill “straight-on.” The Kurths and others resorted to zig-zagging up the hill, which made the path longer but reduced the grade. Human Geneva volunteer “afterburners” sometimes augmented the thrust.¹² Perhaps they paused at Bensen’s Grocery Store at the corner of Nebraska and East State for liquid refreshment (yes, amigos, the bodega existed in Geneva a century ago, and not just as a crossword puzzle answer).

In September of 1971, the house’s occupants must have watched in horror as the Bennett Mill, once run by Miller-Gully house neighbors, the brothers Charles and Henry Bennett, mysteriously burned to the ground. For now, at least, the two large white Bennett homes continue to face each other across State Street at the top of the hill in the same configuration as the two older and smaller Alexander, and Miller-Gully homes once faced off nearby just below the crest.

A face-off of a more disturbing nature occurred less than a half-block from Miller-Gully house around midnight on 15 May 2004 when an intoxicated man advanced while brandishing a knife towards the Geneva police officer who had stopped him for erratic driving. The officer retreated while loudly repeating his command to drop the knife. After falling over the curb as he walked

¹⁰ The immigrant house, “Castle Garden” was real. Unfortunately, it was razed by the Geneva School Board in 1923 to expand the school playground. A plaque on a boulder marks the location. Lillian Budd wrote a trilogy about Swedish immigrants at the turn of century in Chicago. The first, *April Snow*, was a best seller. She lived in Lombard and Geneva. Budd, L. *Land of Strangers*. Lippincott, 1953. p145-7. Brown, Nils. “An Immigrant Epic” *American Swedish Historical Foundation: The Chronicle, Autumn & Winter 1955*. American Swedish Hist Museum. p23-24.

¹¹ The east side hill’s grade has been gradually reduced by raising the bridge and cutting the roadbed into the east valley wall. ¹² Oliver Kurth, personal communication, ca 1985. Fred Kurth was under his truck in 1930, making repairs in the barnyard when his wife came to the backdoor and shouted: “the Aston Bank failed.” All the Kurth funds were deposited there. Getting no response, she repeated: “Fred, the Ashton Bank failed.” Fred, not diverting his gaze from the task at hand, shouted back: “I heard you the first time.” The implied wisdom of ignoring what cannot be influenced is breathtaking.

backwards, the officer was forced to resort to the use of his service revolver. Less than half a block away, the residents of the Miller-Gully house must have been startled by the two gunshots that punctuated the only fatal police shooting in Geneva's history.¹³ For almost all the other nights in the almost 180 years of its presence half-way up the East Side hill, the Miller-Gully House presided over peace in the valley. After all, it had been the home of one of the earliest peace officers in Kane County.

When Forrest Crissey and his bride Kate Shurtleff first came to Geneva from Marengo in 1887 after their wedding on July 14th, they shared the home of the Gullys.¹⁴ After a year, the Crisseys moved to a small house on the NW corner of Third and Hamilton Streets. Eventually, after a stint in Chicago, the couple returned to their Geneva East Side "roots" and settled into the old Clyde E. Mann home just a couple blocks south on the former Batavia Street from the Gully home (the little square in block "3" of the map between Spring and Chambers (now Chalmers).

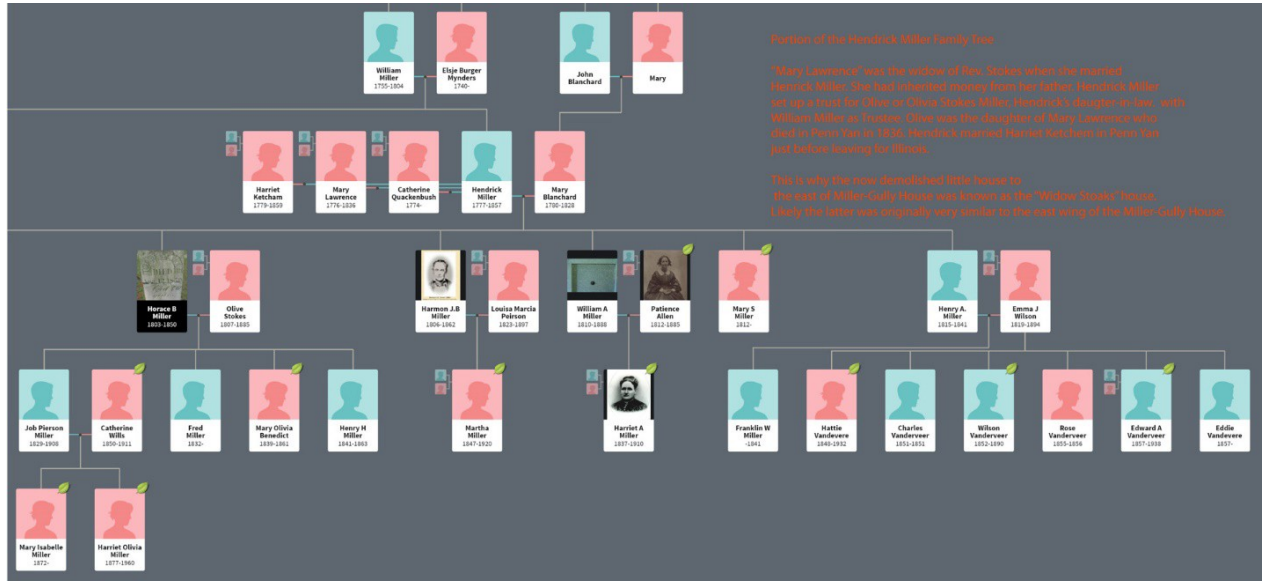
In December 2018, the home the Crisseys shared with the Gullys stood skewed, suspended, and tilted at a raffish angle. Resting on steel beams and mounted high on wheels, the house towered over Crissey Avenue, though still not as tall as the high-density fifty-foot "high-density housing" buildings slated to take its place. By 1949 the name of Batavia Street had been changed to Crissey Avenue to honor one of Geneva's best-known citizens, but sixty years later, "progress" forced the house to itinerate, or at least make a migration. Before turning to the lives of its occupants, the origin of the house itself bears examination.

The City of Geneva Historic Preservation Plan of 2008, which does not mention an actual preservation plan in the case of the house here under discussion, identifies the house at 122 East State as the "Miller-Gulley [sic] House, built in 1856." However, the story is more complicated.¹⁵

¹³ "Officer cleared in fatal shooting." *Chicago Tribune*, 18 August 2004.

¹⁴ "News and Comment." *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, Vol 53, #1, 1960. p106. Leon Wheeler, first President of the Geneva Historical Society, made a presentation on Dr. John Bath Gully that mentions Kate Crissey's recollections.

¹⁵ *City of Geneva Historic Preservation Plan*, Appendix II: Historic Resources in the City of Geneva, p12, 2008. "Resolution No. 2018-118 Authorizing the Move of the Building Located at 122 E. State Street to 822 East Side Drive" was passed 9-0 by the Geneva Aldermen on 3 December 2018. No one asked a single question about the historical significance of the building, nor was any comment made about what part the location of the building played in that significance. The mover commented that the building was in "good shape" for being 179 years old (referring to the 162-year-old west wing), and that "All additions which were not in good condition have been removed." The 1837-8 east wing of the structure was a real Geneva historic jewel, but it was demolished without even being dignified by a demolition permit. That east wing was where Geneva's Unitarian Church met for a time before the 1848 completion of their Greek Revival style church on the SW corner of 2nd and James Streets.



To view the tree please see: <https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/tree/156384512/family>



Sleuthing the evolution of old homes can be challenging, and certainty of conclusions elusive. The house on the right is the Alexander House that faced the original Miller-Gully House across State Street. Both have been modified, notably the windows under the roof peak. The back gable of Alexander House has two smaller windows under the roof. The middle picture is the 2018 east façade of M-G and the left is as it appeared in about 1900. The little multi-pane eye-brow light was a 20th century addition. The bay window and fireplace chimney replaced the two or possibly three first floor fenestrations.

If the east wing of the house is the original structure, as has been postulated,¹⁶ the small building likely dates to 1837-8. The “east wing” was then the original house on the site. This little vernacular Greek Revival structure was one of several of its type built in Geneva’s first two decades. The structure probably made its only change in location in 1856 when it was rotated 90 degrees clockwise and then attached in an offset fashion to the more massive “new” west wing when that structure was built around 1856.¹⁷ The east wing’s bay window replaced an original front door or window, or likely both.



The front facade of the Hubbard-Pierce House, ca 1846 as it appeared ~1890 looks remarkably like the little houses once on the east side State Street hill. Here it was near the corner of Hamilton and Third Street but it, too, was later moved (to 728 Illinois Street).

“Engaged the house and premises of Esq. Miller for one year at 50 dollars a year and call his subscription for preaching paid.” was an entry in the daybook of Rev. Augustus Conant for 9 April 1841.¹⁸

¹⁶ Gibbons, A. *The Founders and Early History of Geneva, Kane County, Illinois, Vol 1 Beginnings to 1837*, n.p. p211. Mr. Gibbons has heroically undertaken to almost singlehandedly save the west wing 1856 portion of the Miller-Gully House by moving it to East Side Drive near the border with St. Charles. The house should there be renamed as the LaPitre-Gully House since the Miller portion was razed, and LaPitre built the west wing.

¹⁷ The usually reliable Alice Schwenkler stated Dr. Gully built the 1856 structure, but he did not arrive in Geneva until the spring of 1863. A French-Canadian Métis named Pierre Jerome LaPitre seems to be the best candidate for the builder of the 1856 wing. In Geneva, he was known as “Pete LaPete” in the 1855 Illinois Census and the 1860 Federal Census. (Year: 1860; Census Place: Geneva, Kane, Illinois; Roll: M653_191; Page: 932; Family History Library Film: 803191) (<http://s618661786.websitehome.co.uk/pitretrail/OtherStates/ILLres.htm>) He was a “mechanic” and carpenter and was making windows and doors possibly in the old malt house down the hill next to his house or possibly an outbuilding on the old Miller property. In 1855 “A. Demoney” had been running a “planing mill” perhaps in that versatile structure that had served as a malt house, distillery, church, school, and “grocery” (i.e., liquor bar). (see the Geneva section in Hall E.H. “Demoney A- planing mill.” *The Northern Counties Gazetteer and Directory, 1855-6*. Chicago, 1855. p88.) (See also the Geneva section: Hawes, G.W. “LePete and Peterson Sash, Doors and Blinds.” *Illinois State Gazetteer and Business Directory for 1858 and 1859*. George W. Hawes, 1859. p99.) LaPitre owned the Miller-Gully Home July 1856 until June of 1862 when it was sold to Lyman Dansbaum. (See Zollers, R., Notes on 130 E State Street House, Geneva Historical Museum).

¹⁸ Conant Diary. *Bulletin of the Society of Medical History of Chicago*. Vol. V, #1, January 1939, p.44-45. Augustus Conant’s

“Esquire” or “Squire” was how locally elected justices of the peace were addressed in mid-19th century Illinois.¹⁹ In October of 1837, Hendrick Miller was elected Justice of the Peace for the Sandusky Precinct, one of four in the recently created County of Kane. Geneva was part of Sandusky Precinct.



Hubbard-Pierce House at 728 Illinois Street in 2017. Genevans have always deeply respected pee limits.

March 30 Married John Lewis Long and Sarah Cornell of Rock Creek

April 9 Engaged the house and premises of Esq. Miller for one year at 50 dollars and call his subscription for preaching paid

April 28 Removed to the Miller house

May 22 Received 2 boxes of Books containing about 250 volumes and 3000 tracts from the A.U.A.

July 13 Raised house frame

July 16 Received of the A.U.A. \$100

Aug: 9 Bought timber in Chicago for my house nails etc \$22.00

Sept. 6 Engaged Mr. Abbott to enclose my house except frontice and cornice \$27.50

Sept. 7 Engaged Jacob Hawkins to plane match and lay lower floor at \$10.00

Sept. 23 Engaged Mr. Derrickson to work on my house at 75 cts, per day

Sat. 24 Mr. Derrickson worked for Mr. Abbott Mr. Powers worked for Abbott half a day

27 Paid off Mr. Derrickson Loaned \$50.00 of Mr. Wickiser's? money to A. Burnham

Sept. 30 Paid over money 4 notes to Eld. Wickiser Mr. Abbott by Mr. Powers Dr. \$2.25

Mr. Wheeler of Blackberry for drawing 3 M shingle from Chicago Cr. 75

Paid to Mr. Abbott in beef ,75

Nov. 23 Mr. Danford to glass and beef 81 Sent to E. Clarke esqr. 53 lbs beef

Transcription of Augustus Conant Daybook for 1842, Chicago Historical Society

During the summer of 1842, Rev. Conant built his own house while living in Squire Hendrick Miller's. Jacob Hawkins (actually Jacob Harkins) planed and laid the floor. Harkins constructed several small homes of the same style in Geneva, including the Miller house.

Also, on the Miller “premises” were pens for livestock, a barn, and a building containing Kane County's first whiskey still. The Unitarians formed their “Society” in June 1842, though Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Baptists often

joined their services. They first met that summer in the already dilapidated first Kane County Court House on West State Street, but that rotting structure lacked even a heating stove. That winter, they met on the Miller/Conant premises for their Sabbath meeting in the Conant private dwelling, and “...at other times in a small room erected for a grocery²⁰ or store-room for ardent spirits, but now [Spring, 1843] occupied during the week as a school-room. The room, though so dark as to be very inconvenient, is very open, the walls plastered only in part, loose boards

original leather-bound “Daybook” was found in a Rockford garage by C.A. Earle, M.D. of Des Plaines, Illinois, in 1939 on his third A.H. Conant quest to Rockford. He donated the Daybook to the Chicago Historical Society, where Conant had read a paper at that Society's inaugural meeting in 1857. Robert Collyer's 1868 biography of Conant contains numerous references to and quotes from the Daybook. The book had been in the possession of a Conant daughter who “went west” leaving it behind.

¹⁹ Black, Henry Campbell, and Joseph R. Nolan. *Black's Law Dictionary: Definitions of the Terms and Phrases of American and English Jurisprudence, Ancient and Modern*. 6th ed. St. Paul, Minn.: West Pub. Co., 1990. p546, 1403. “Esquire...the use of this term in American law, particularly as applied to justices of the peace.” “Squire” is a shortened version of esquire.

²⁰ Hadley, C: *A Nineteenth-Century Slang Dictionary*. https://mess1.homestead.com/nineteenth_century_slang_dictionary.pdf “grocery: a drinking establishment. See also Doggery, Dram shop, Groggery.” Some have thought that the building was a “store,” but it seems more accurate to call it a groggery and storeroom for alcohol. The building had been constructed as a malt house and whiskey still that appears to have been operational for only a few years.

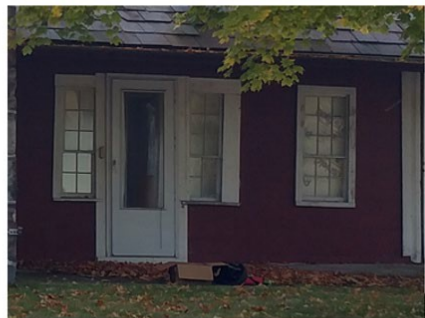
overhead and wide cracks in the floor were admitting the strong and abominable odor of alcohol from the cellar, and the cold air from every side without.”²¹



Augustus Conant's initials carved prominently just left of the entrance to John and Eben Conant House near Brandon Vermont, 1826.



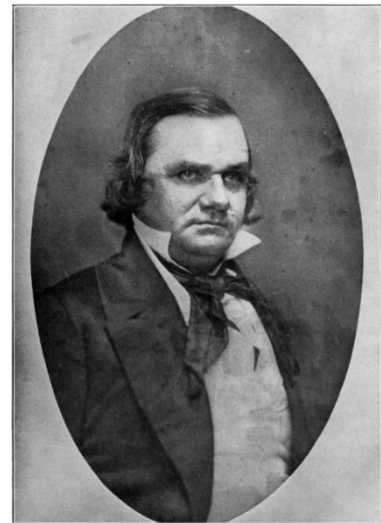
Judging by the 12 over 12 light windows one might suspect the lower picture is the older of the two.



Close up of addition. The 6 over 4 light double hung windows by the door are the same in both pictures, suggesting these are the originals.

Windows are the eyes of historic structures, and through them, one can peer into the building's soul. Yet windows can be sly and deceptive. A good example is the John and Eben Conant house near Brandon, Vermont. The house was built in 1826, and 15-year-old "A.H.C." helped. In fact, it may be Augustus H. Conant's earliest extant signed work.

The upper house photo depicts the house in the late 19th century after the main house windows were



STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS. 1846.

replaced with two over two light double-hung sashes. The lower picture, taken in 2018, shows modern reproduction 12 over 12 windows (with aluminum storms). The "giveaways" are the fact that in the upper photo, the main house door sidelights were one over one pane double-hung sashes, and in the lower picture, they are ten single light sashes which do not match precisely the addition sidelights. (Not discernible in the small photo is the fact that there is no transom window over the front door, only a shutter.

Unfortunately, the house is once again vacant and deteriorating.²²

²¹ "Letter of Augustus Hammond Conant." *Christian Register*, 18 March 1843.

²² Stevens F. Source: *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society (1908-1984)*, Vol. 16, No. 3/4, "Life of Stephen Arnold Douglas" (Oct. 1923 - Jan. 1924). p256-7. Before moving to their new 1826 house, the Conants lived closer to Brandon and were neighbors of the Dr. Stephen A. Douglass family. Stephen Arnold Douglas (he dropped the second "s" after coming to Illinois) was born in Brandon, Vermont, on the 23d day of April 1813. On the 1st day of July 1813, Dr. Douglass died suddenly at the age of 32 — So suddenly that he dropped his three-month-old son onto the grate of the fire where the Doctor had been warming himself. Little Stephen sustained burns on his right cheek resulting in a permanent scar, as seen in the above photo. Little Stephen would have burned to death except for the fortuitous arrival of a neighbor, John Conant. Douglas biographer Frank Stevens expressed some skepticism about the story wondering why there was a fire needed on the 1st of July. (1816, not 1813 was the year of "Eighteen Hundred and Froze to Death" caused by the eruption of Mt. Tambora that caused global cooling and exodus from Vermont.) No question exists that Doctor Douglass died that day of an acute illness. A vast array of severe diseases can cause chills, fever, shock or hypothermia.

Bay windows like that of the now razed east wing of the Miller-Gully House are associated historically with mansions of the early English Renaissance. They are characteristically employed at the end of a great hall opposite the entrance and behind the raised dais on which the lord of the manor was served. In more modern architecture, the bay window emerged as a prominent feature of the Chicago School. The utilitarian program of William Le Baron Jenney, one goal of which was maximum admission of natural light, resulted in the creation of a new emphasis on bay windows.²³ The rectangular “eyebrow” window under the roof is typical of the 1830’s period, but it is a deceptive “ringer” in this instance, as it was installed after 1970, as were the fireplace and chimney. Also, the flatter the pitch of a Greek Revival style roof, the older the building.²⁴ The small cottage-like one and a half story original gable façade faced State Street. Vernacular Greek Revival was the style of choice in antebellum Geneva until about 1855, and the gable end was always to the front where the door faced the street, as in a Greek temple.

Just across State Street from the Miller-Gully House was the Alexander House, also in the 100 block of State and also dating to the late 1830s. Alexander House, too, was a mobile home, having been moved to 320 Sandholm Street sometime after 1860. When they had faced each other the two small homes with low-pitched Grecian roofs looked much alike.

The Alexander House still has six-over-six “light” (pane) double-hung windows typical of the vernacular Greek Revival architecture that flourished in New England and the Midwest from about 1820 to 1855.

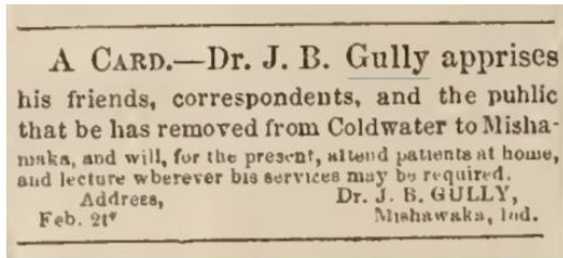
The Greek Revival style appeared in the United States in 1798 with a design by Englishman Benjamin Latrobe, the first professionally trained architect in the United States. The popularity of the style spread quickly due to its political associations (it was seen as the style of ancient democracies) and social associations (it was viewed as a welcome break with the English based Georgian and Federal styles).

The use of two-over-two light double-hung sashes did not become prevalent in the Midwest until the late 1850s (for one thing, the larger panes of glass were expensive). The “modern” Miller-Gully windows were likely Geneva made at the on-site planning mill. The original small Miller-Gully home’s six light upper story “ankle” windows mark the hybrid of 1837 architecture melded into the 1856 “finished” product. The 1856 more-or-less center entry in the west wing on the now non-gable side front, coupled with its wrap-around porch, gives hints of a tidewater vernacular Georgian influence.

Pneumococcal pneumonia has a significant mortality in the first 24 hours, for example. But for his Uncle John, Augustus Conant may not have had to be at Stone’s River.

²³ <https://www.britannica.com/technology/bay-window>

²⁴ Ehresmann, Julia M. *Geneva, Illinois, a History of Its Times and Places*. Geneva: Geneva Public Library District, 1977. p325.



Water-Cure, Feb 1855

The usually reliable Alice Schwenkler stated that Dr. Gully, the Englishman, built the west wing in 1856, and that would square with the shift in the style of the house to a more Federal or Georgian (i.e., English) façade. However, the French-Canadian Pierre LaPitre seems to have been the builder. Dr. Gully was in Mishawaka, Indiana in 1855, and, he made several more stops before reaching Geneva in the late spring of 1863.²⁵

The stories of the Miller and the Gully families will appear in a subsequent essay posted on www.genevanotes.com.



²⁵ The following paragraph appears in the essay written on the occasion of the awarding of a historical plaque by the Geneva Historical Society to the Miller-Gully House. (Copy in the Archives of the GHM, 2019)

“On March 23, 1858, LaPete sold it [122 East State] to Edwin Tinsley. Following the legal description is this: “together with Sash and Blind shop on the premises. It is hereby agreed that the house known as the ‘old malt house’ situated on said premises is hereby reserved from this conveyance.” This deal evidently was not carried through for on June 4, 1862, there was a transfer from LaPete to Simon Danbaum in the amount of \$550.00, and the next year on December 21, 1863, Danbaum sold it to Mrs. Eliza Gulley for \$1,000.00, so there was likely part of the house built in that year.”

This would indicate that the LaPete and Peterson “Sash, Doors, and Blinds Shop” was not in the “Malt House” that was on the small 30’x70’ lot on State Street that was detached from the larger Miller parcel. Kate Crissey remembered from 1887 that “he [Gully] had put up a number of small buildings.” Of course, she could not have known if Dr. Gully built them all or it somewhere extant when he arrived in 1863. Perhaps one of these structures was the sash shop. Crissey K: “The Story of a Boy and a Girl.” *Geneva Republican*, 10 Jan 1947. p2.

Favoring the malt house theory for the location of the “planing mill”/“sash and door shop” is the fact that one entry removed above the “Peter Le Pete” family entry in the 1860 Geneva Federal Census is “Carpenter Shop” without any listed occupants.