

2021 WINTER NEWSLETTER



Dr. David Marchand's House

A Reminder of Jacksonville's Historic Past

by Bob Cupp

The entire Irwin-North Huntingdon area is rich in history. This is especially true of North Huntingdon's Jacktown neighborhood along Old Trail Road. The historic district is located between the intersection with Jacksonville Road and the point where Old Trail merges with Center Highway. Before a 1966 fire destroyed it, the famous Jacktown Hotel was located just up the road.

Among the earliest settlers were James and Jane Irwin, siblings of Colonel John Irwin, for whom the town of Irwin was named. The area was known as Jacksonville when it was originally laid out in 1810 by James Irwin and Humphrey

Fullerton. The town was actively promoted in the summer of 1816. Fullerton's advertisement in a Pittsburgh newspaper cited "the fine situation of the place and its numerous advantages as to public business must be obvious to the public."



The "Dr. David Marchand House", at 11110 Old Trail Road, serves as a reminder of Jacksonville's historic past. Current owner and caretaker, Jack Miller, is an antiques dealer, collector, appraiser and passionate restorer of old homes. (2005 Photo)

Jacksonville was a thriving community in the 1800's. The town served as a primary stagecoach stop along the Pittsburgh – Philadelphia Turnpike and was the final stop before reaching Pittsburgh. The road helped make Jacksonville the biggest and most important town in the township. Businesses located there included stagecoach inns, a furniture-casket maker, a dry goods store and a tannery. The historic significance of two of the early Jacksonville stagecoach inns has been recognized with the placement of historical markers along Old Trail Road.

The first stagecoach inn was what later became known as the "McIntyre

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House". Hugh McIntyre (1814 – 1859), a prominent abolitionist, bought the coach house in 1854. He, and later his wife, Jane, ran the McIntyre House until 1894. In 1976, the Norwin Jaycees sponsored an historical marker honoring "The McIntyre House": "Here stood one of the most famous early hotels in southwestern PA, 'Mrs. Macks'. As many as 4400 guests were accommodated here during the winter seasons, including prominent Pittsburgh and Greensburg citizens. Also the first stagecoach stop in the area and a main stop on the underground railroad before the Civil War."

The Jacktown Stagecoach Inn served as a tavern and hotel for travelers making the 300-mile, 56-hour trip from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh. The former tavern now serves as a private residence. North Huntingdon Twp. sponsored an historical marker honoring "The Fullerton House": "This stone structure, built circa 1798, owned by the Fullerton family served as the first general store and the area's second inn on the "King's Highway" (later renamed the Gbg-Pgh Pike). Humphrey Fullerton IV, operator of the establishment, laid out the plan of lots in Jacksonville in 1810." (The historical marker for this structure is no longer there.)

This is the view of the rear of the Dr. David Marchand house from Center Highway. Passersby admire the sunroom and screened-in porch. (2005 Photo)



It's amazing that there are so many original homes remaining along Old Trail Road in the Jacksonville neighborhood. Several of them should certainly qualify for historical recognition. A few residences have been covered with siding, hiding their original log exteriors. There are also two very impressive early brick homes here – the 1829 "Abraham Marchand House" and pioneer physician, "Dr. David Marchand's House" across the street.



Abraham Marchand House, 1829

Easily the most noticeable home in the neighborhood is "Dr. David Marchand's House" at 11110 Old Trail Road. It occupies all the property between Old Trail and Center Highway and provides a very attractive view from either road. Dr. David Marchand's family built this two-story, Georgian Colonial-style brick home over 200 years ago in 1804. A kiln was built on the property to fire all the bricks needed for the house and the fireplaces. The house remained in the Marchand family until 1865.

It's hard to imagine that there could be a more prom-
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inent medical family in Western Pennsylvania history. According to Thomas Davis in *Pioneer Physicians of Western PA*, “Dr. David Marchand located on Sewickly Creek, about six miles southwest of Greensburg, Westmoreland County, in the year 1770. He was born in Canton of Berne Switzerland; and his father David and mother Judith Marie were ‘doctors of medicine’. They all emigrated and settled near Hagerstown, MD, in 1754. His parents were Huguenots, and were led to this country on account of religious persecutions.”

“Dr. Marchand was a physician of rare ability and good repute. He used part of a log house for a school, and for religious services on the Sabbath. He practiced in Westmoreland and adjoining counties, and so great was the number of patients who applied to him that he established, about 1784, a hospital near his home, erecting a large, two-storied stone building, to which many resorted for medical treatment. This was undoubtedly the first non-military hospital west of the Allegheny Mountains.”

Marchand was also a major landowner in the area. In 1792, the state of Pennsylvania conveyed 347.5 acres of land to him, over half of which he sold to the German Reformed and German Lutheran congregations at Brush Creek Salem Church. His remains are buried there.

“Dr. Marchand died July 22, 1809, aged 64 years. ” His descendants included a long line of physicians and other professionals, including lawyers and politicians. “His sons Daniel, David and Lewis were all physicians of eminence in western Pennsylvania.” All three sons had sons of their own who, in turn, became physicians. Daniel’s son, Benjamin Rush Marchand, practiced medicine in Jacksonville from 1825 until his death in 1864.

The current owner and caretaker of Dr. David Marchand’s Jacksonville home is Jack Miller, antiques dealer, collector, appraiser, and passionate restorer of old houses. He purchased the home in 1998 after renovations had been started by previous owners. He’s made good use of his antiques collection, furnishing the home with authentic period



The nine-foot center hallway features the original cherry staircase. The staircase railing and newel post have never been refinished.

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The house was unoccupied from 1939 to 1949 and the property became overgrown. This is the way it looked in 1949. It’s no wonder the neighbors referred to it as the “haunted house”. (Courtesy of Jack Miller)



A majestic 1840 Sheraton Cherry Grandfather Clock adorns the entranceway, which is illuminated by antique angle lights and natural sunlight.



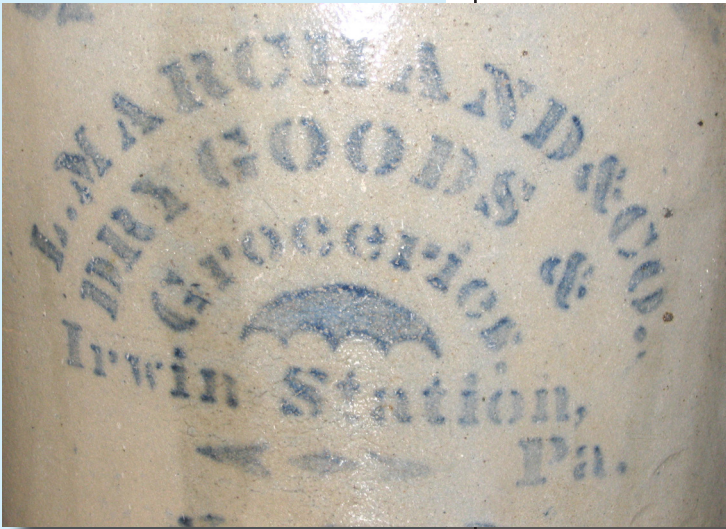
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furniture. From the antique farm table and dishes decorating the dining room to the majestic 1840 Sheraton Cherry Grandfather Clock adorning the entranceway, Miller has taken great care to ensure that the home's décor reflects its nineteenth century beginnings.

It took Miller five years to achieve his goals for restoration of the house and grounds. He may have done his job so well that he'll never be able to leave the home behind and move on to another project.

Among Miller's most prized possessions are items associated directly with the Marchand family. He has a Western PA stoneware four-gallon crock depicting "L. Marchand Dry Goods and Groceries - Irwin Station, PA." He proudly pointed out the original iron boot scrapers located beside the hand-cut stone steps leading to the grand entranceway. "The boot scrapers were completely buried; we uncovered them when we dug up the existing shrubbery," he explained.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, many Pennsylvania German communities continued an old German folk art tradition. A wide variety of the resulting documents, recording births, baptisms, marriages, etc., are referred to as "fraktur". Miller has



Among Jack Miller's most prized possessions is a Western Pa stoneware four-gallon crock advertising L. Marchand's "Dry Goods and Groceries" Store.

Entrance to the house is by way of an architectural 12-panel door with fan light and side lights. The original hand-cut stone steps lead to an inlaid ceramic tile landing installed by a previous owner. The original boot scrapers remain available beside the steps in case your shoes are muddy. (2005 Photo)



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a beautiful 1824 fraktur, created by Adamsburg fraktur artist, John George Busyaeger. Besides the lovely artwork and fine calligraphy, what makes it special to him is that it includes a reference to the marriage of one of Dr. David Marchand's descendents.

Kathy Smyser and her children, 6th and 7th generation descendents of Dr. David Marchand, traveled from Lancaster, Pa for a tour of the house; they were pleased to see the care their ancestor's Jacksonville home has been receiving. Kathy summed up her feelings: "This house is every bit as beautiful as the homes I've seen in Williamsburg; and someone is actually living in it!"

Long after the Marchand family left Jacksonville, the house serves as a lasting reminder of the village's, as well as the family's, historic past.



Jack Miller proudly displays this 1824 fraktur, a German folk art document that includes a reference to the marriage of one of Dr. David Marchand's descendents. It was created by Adamsburg fraktur artist, John George Busyaeger.



A stone marker for the Pittsburgh - Philadelphia Turnpike once served as a reminder of the old "pike" that passed through Jacksonville.

Please consider supporting the Norwin Historical Society!

We continue to preserve our local history, promote the history of the Norwin Community, and embrace the opportunity to educate the Norwin area about the people, places and events that comprise the history of Irwin, North Irwin and North Huntingdon Township.

We are located at 304 Main Street, Irwin, in the the former Egers Jewelry Store. Our mailing address is PO Box 623, Irwin, PA 15642 and our email address is info@norwinhistoricalsociety.org.

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