



City of Geneva, Illinois

Local Historic District & Landmarks
Property Inventory Survey

GENERAL PROPERTY INFORMATION:

HISTORIC NAME:

COMMON NAME: DeGrout House

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1856

SIGNIFICANT ALTERATION DATES: n/a

ARCHITECT: n/a

BUILDER: Lyman Bixby

WILSON BROTHERS: ☐ AUGUST ☐ OSCAR ☐ BOTH

ARCHITECTURAL DATA:

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE: Gable Front, Double House, Greek Revival

OVERALL PLAN SHAPE: T-Plan

NUMBER OF STORIES: 2

FOUNDATION MATERIAL: Limestone

PRIMARY WALL MATERIAL(S): Fiber Cement over Clapboard

FRONT PORCH: Yes (paired)

VISIBLE SIDE PORCH: No

ENTRY DOOR(S): Historic (east); Altered Historic (west)

WINDOW MATERIAL: Wood

WINDOW STYLE: Double-hung (6/1)

PRIMARY ROOF FORM: Gable

PRIMARY ROOF MATERIAL: Asphalt

VISIBLE CHIMNEY: Yes

CHIMNEY MATERIAL: Brick

OTHER SIGNIFICANT ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES:

Full gable pediment; rare double house; porch columns appear to be original; windows are original; lower sash likely altered to single lite.

PROPERTY ADDRESS:

321 Ford Street

PARCEL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (PIN):

12-03-256-006



LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE RATING:

- ☐ Significant
- ☒ Contributing
- ☐ Non-Contributing – Built After 1987
- ☐ Non-Contributing – Reversible Alterations
- ☐ Non-Contributing – Irreversible Alterations

HISTORIC DISTRICT LOCATION:

- ☐ Central Geneva NRHD
- ☒ North Geneva NRHD
- ☒ Local Geneva HD
- ☐ Not in HD / Individual Historic Landmark

NR DISTRICT SIGNIFICANCE RATING:

- ☒ Contributing
- ☐ Non-Contributing
- ☐ Not Applicable / Not in NR District



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ADDITIONAL PROPERTY INFORMATION:

BRIEF HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION:

The property was owned very early by John Chambers who transferred the property to his sister, Jane Chambers, who eventually sold the lot to Lyman Bixby in 1855.

The house was built between August and November 1856 by Lyman Bixby, an early Geneva carpenter, who sold the completed house to John Degroodt (DeGrout) in November 1856.

The house was built for John Degroodt (1802-1891) and his second wife, Rebecca, along with his five youngest children.

John Degroodt was born in Fredonia, New York, where—on October 29, 1826—he married Mary Danforth [sometimes transcribed as "Banforth"] (1804-1851). There, five children were born: George W. (1827-1901), Myron Henry (1829-1830), Orville Henry (1831-ca. 1849), Myron Cornelius (1833-1862), and Ophelia (1835-1925). Another son, John Murray (1838-1910), was born in Pennsylvania; Lafayette M. (1840-1862) and Clement L. (1843-1924) were born in Ohio, and; Francis Marion (1845-1920) and Mary Louisa/Lovissa (1849-1935) were born in Illinois (Mary in Rockford in Winnebago County). The children's mother died in 1851, and—on September 6, 1855—John Degroodt married the former Mrs. William W. (Rebecca) Tyrrell (1820-1882). By early 1856, John and Rebecca Degroodt with his five youngest children moved to Geneva, Illinois. (His three surviving, older children stayed in Winnebago County until 1857 when they went to the Minnesota Territory.) The unique, "double house" in Geneva likely provided some privacy for the newlywed couple and the younger Degroodt children who ranged in age from 7-18 years old.

Lyman Bixby assigned the original mortgage to David Martin, a carpenter who lived at the southwest corner of Ford and Third streets. When John Degroodt defaulted on his mortgage with David Martin, the property reverted to Martin in 1860 after legal filings that resulted in a Sheriff's Sale of the Degroodt property.

By 1860, the Degroodt family moved to Union Grove, Whiteside County, Illinois, where their older son, Myron, rejoined the family. In 1862, Lafayette, fighting for the Union Army, was killed in a siege near Vicksburg, Mississippi. That same year, Myron died of an accidental gunshot in Union Grove, Illinois. John Murray Degroodt mustered in with the Union Army in September 1862. Near the end of the Civil War (or soon afterward), many members of the Degroodt family moved to Louisiana, Pike County, Missouri, where John, Rebecca, John Murray, and Clement died. Son George died in Kansas; daughter Ophelia died in Colorado; son Francis died in New Mexico; and daughter Mary Louisa (who married George E. Goodenough) died in Whiteside County, Illinois. Mary (Danforth) Degroodt, Myron C. Degroodt, and Mary Louisa (Degroodt) Goodenough are all buried in Whiteside County, Illinois.

After the property was acquired by David Martin, numerous families held the property for short intervals. Sarah Osborne, the wife of George Osborne (who was a local contractor), purchased the northeast corner of Third and Ford streets (Block 15, Lots 4 and 5 and the west 1/2 of Lot 3) from Grace and Etta Irene Mayborne (sisters) in 1907. George Osborne and his wife, Sarah, purchased the northeast corner of Third and Ford streets (Block 15, Lots 4 and 5 and the west 1/2 of Lot 3) from Grace and Etta Irene Mayborne (sisters) in 1907. In 1925, the Osbornes sold the 315 Ford Street property to Lulu E. (Hawkins) White, who sold the property to John Carr in 1927. Also in 1927, the Osbornes sold the remaining property at Ford and Fourth streets, including 321 Ford Street as well as 301 N. Fourth and 311 N. Fourth) to "Lu" White, who immediately sold the corner lots to Emma C. and Henry S. Hogans, who subdivided the property in 1928.



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ADDITIONAL PROPERTY INFORMATION:

The garage at 321 Ford Street appears to date to the period between 1945 and 1955 but is not a good example of an extant 20th-century garage.

The property was issued a Geneva History Museum Plaque in 1976.

The property is notable for its association with architecture—specifically methods of construction (double house) and the Greek Revival style—and for community development—specifically the Early Settlement Period of Geneva (1837-1857).

SOURCES:

GHPC Case Studies; GHM Archives; 2016 North Geneva NRHP Update; 1869 Bird's Eye View of Geneva; Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps; Kane County Recorder's Office Land Records; Geneva, Illinois: A History of Its Times and Places; Geneva, Illinois: 150 Reminders of 150 Years



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CONTRIBUTING ACCESSORY STRUCTURES:

AS1 GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

n/a

AS2 GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

n/a

CONTRIBUTING LANDSCAPE FEATURES:

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

n/a

HPC ACTION:

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Demolition Approved: n/a

Other HPC Action:

6.19.17 Shingles





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1999