



The Barnard Bulletin

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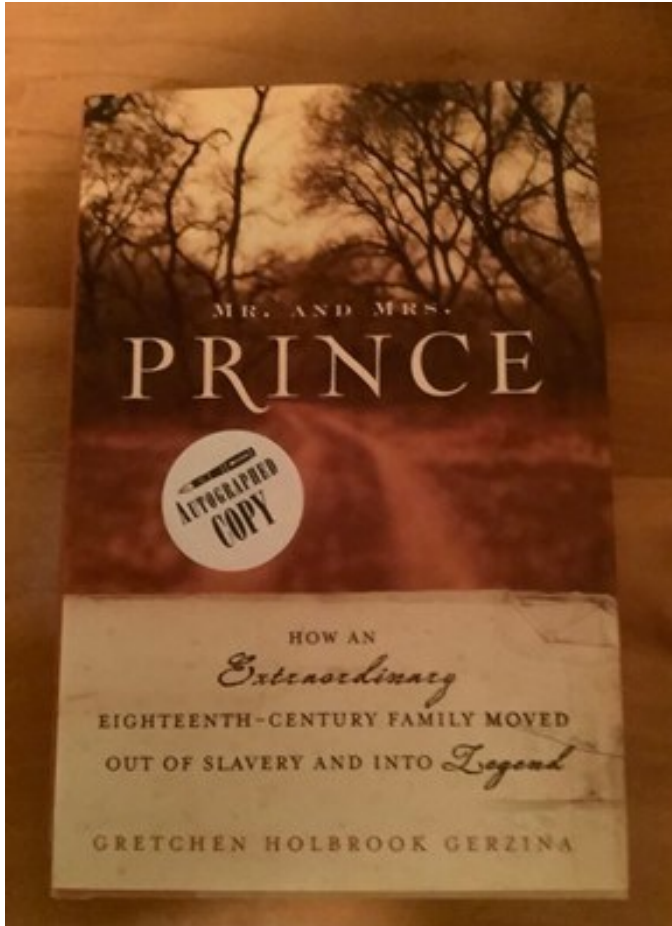
A VERMONT WRITER

by Margaret Edwards

This column is an offering of The Danforth Library in Barnard and a chance to introduce a Vermont writer who deserves wider renown.

Lucy Terry Prince

1730 – 1821



Vermont would like to claim this poet for its own, even though she made a name for herself (and became a legend) well before she came with her husband to settle in the state. She was America’s first Black published poet. Her only surviving poem is an account of an Indian raid, a rhymed ballad that was easily memorized and de-claimed. “Bar’s Fight” (as it is known) was orally transmitted for a century, then published 109 years after its creation by Josiah Gilbert Holland in his 1855 History of Western Massachusetts.

Lucy Terry was born in West Africa and brought to America as a small child, having survived the dangerous “middle passage” on a slave ship. She was first owned by a would-be minister turned alcoholic spendthrift named Samuel Terry, hence her last name. But from the age of ten, she belonged to Ebenezer and Abigail Wells in the Massachusetts settlement of Deerfield.

Slavery is usually associated with the American South, but there was slavery in the North as well. Small farms

and village households that were prosperous often had one or two slaves, usually called “servants for life.” In Deerfield, there was even a propensity for ministers to own slaves. Church congregations became increasingly at odds with each other over the ethics of slave-owning, and the topic became more and more heated in the mid-19th century, with Northern churches splitting angrily over the issue. But in the late 18th century and during Lucy’s lifetime, slavery in the North was a settled fact. Abolitionists were present and righteously indignant, but not yet a political force.

Sometime in 1751, or perhaps a bit earlier, Lucy Terry’s vivid personality—she was very bright, charming, articulate, and feisty—attracted a free Black named Abijah (or Bijah) Prince. Lucy, at the age of 20 or 21, was unmarried. The fact that her suitor, who had never married, was older than she by decades didn’t seem to matter. He was a former slave, a veteran of the French and Indian wars, a man whose entrepreneurial bent and common sense and good luck had won him his freedom. He had also been taught to read and write in his master’s Northfield, Massachusetts, household.

Bijah Prince was smitten with Lucy Terry, who was an enthralling storyteller as well as a barmaid in a tavern run by her owners. He worked and saved to buy her freedom, then married her in 1756 and traveled with her to Guilford, Vermont, where they produced a family of six children.

Any record of the events of Lucy Terry Price’s life used to be sparse, almost to the point of non-existent. It took a very dedicated scholar named Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina, with some help from her husband, Anthony, to search out and put the crucial pieces together. Most of this article is derived from what Ms. Gerzina could confirm after having delved into public records such as wills, censuses, and court cases, as well as more private records of store purchases, slave sales, and church attendance. She even found facts in diaries written mostly by a white and privileged few. In 2008, she published her enthralling account entitled Mr. and Mrs. Prince.

The frontier town of Deerfield, during Lucy’s time there, was a settlement wary of attack by indigenous tribes under the command of French officers. Towns like Deerfield often fortified themselves so that white settlers and any slaves and free Blacks from outlying areas could have a place of safety toward which to flee. An important part of Deerfield lore, which was well known by both slaves and masters, was the winter raid of February 29, 1704. The facts, recounted many times among the settlers, were grim:

The sentry...drifted off to sleep and didn’t hear the raiders as they discarded their snowshoes and mounted the stockade walls on stairs of snow. Once inside, the Canadian Abenaki attackers, directed by their French offic-

Cont. next page - Prince

Prince - Cont. from front page

ers, split into groups and went to separate houses, dashing babies' brains out against hearths, ransacking trunks, and tomahawking and clubbing forty-one resist-ers. Rev. John Williams only survived because the gun he raised toward them from his bed misfired, and he and his remaining family were taken captive in a group of 111 villagers. The weak and slow were killed, and the rest subjected to a long march to Quebec, to be held for ransom. (Gerzina, p. 76)

Lucy had heard of this, no doubt. Even so, she and the townsfolk were used to decades of peace. Consequently it was a very nasty surprise when, in the summer of 1746, a French commander named Vaudreuil sneaked with his Abnaki soldiers toward the village one Sunday afternoon. They were hoping to take captives for ransom once again.

The place where the group launched their attack was called the Bars, a colonial name for a meadow. This meadow had two abandoned houses in it as well as fields of corn and vegetables. The attackers hid behind stacks of hay and in a grove of alder trees to wait for two families, the Allens and the Amsdens, to come work their fields. Lucy, age 16, was living in Deerfield when this raid happened, and her poem—soon famous and recited everywhere—commemorated the event:

*August 'twas the twenty-fifth,
Seventeen hundred forty-six;
The Indians did in ambush lay,
Some very valient men to slay,
The names of whom I'll not leave out.
Samuel Allen like a hero fout,
And though he was so brave and bold,
His face no more shall we behold.
Eleazer Hawks was killed outright,
Before he had time to fight,—
Before he did the Indians see,
Was shot and killed immediately.
Oliver Amsden he was slain,
Which caused his friends much grief and pain.
Simeon Amsden they found dead,
Not many rods distant from his head.
Adonijah Gillett we do hear
Did lose his life which was so dear.
John Sadler fled across the water,
And thus escaped the dreadful slaughter.
Eunice Allen see the Indians coming,
And hopes to save herself by running,
And had not her petticoats stopped her,
The awful creatures had not caught her,
Nor tommy hawked her on her head,
And left her on the ground for dead.
Young Samuel Allen, Oh lack-a-day!
Was taken and carried to Canada.*

This text is the one first published in 1855. It is worth noting that “fout” as a spelling for “fought” is unusual for the time. Critics speculate that the word was spelled that way to make it a plausible rhyme for the word “out”

in the line above. As for that last word, “Canada,” it was often pronounced “Can-a-day.” And one more note of interest: Astonishing to everyone in Deerfield was that Eunice Allen, gashed in the head, healed and lived.

Did Lucy compose more poems? There is no record that she did. The facts that she would purchase the occasional sheet of paper, and that she was known to be literate, make a good argument that she was not just a one-time poet but a true writer. However, whatever else she might have written has been lost. There is no likeness of Lucy, either as a photo or as an artistic representation, so we cannot envision her accurately today.

Lucy Terry Prince’s other claim to fame beside the poem was recorded in court records. She successfully petitioned the Vermont Supreme Court to defend her family’s land rights which had been called into question by two white men named John and Amos Noyes. It was not uncommon for whites to try to cheat their darker neighbors in this way. The presiding justice of the Court was impressed by Lucy’s “well reasoned and lucid argument” and put into his account that it was “better than he’d heard from any Vermont lawyer.” And she won.

There was another remarkable instance of the eloquent Lucy coming before a formal, official body of white men and making a strong case. In this instance, she was petitioning the trustees of Williams College to admit one of her sons. Supposedly she spoke to the trustees for three hours, citing Bible scripture and precedents in the law. Unfortunately the trustees did not grant her petition, impressive though it was.

The fact that an assertive Black woman was allowed to step forward and make an argument in a courtroom or at a college shows that the North and the South had very different attitudes. In the South, it was unlawful to teach slaves to read. And no person of color was allowed to testify in a court against anyone who was white. Another stark contrast was that free Blacks in the North were allowed to own guns, not just for game hunting, but for defense of self and community against raids.

After Lucy was widowed in 1794, she moved to Sunderland, Vermont, where her family also owned land. Though the move put her 90 miles away from where her husband had been buried, she rode on horseback and visited his grave every year up until her death at 91 in 1821. She was vital and quick to the last. It is believed that she died of a fall while lifting one of her great-grandchildren off a table.

The Danforth Library has ordered a hardcover copy of Mr. and Mrs. Prince by the remarkable Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina, a professor at Dartmouth College at the time of this book’s publication in 2008. The biographical account of Abijah Prince and Lucy Terry is fascinating, and Gerzina’s well-written book relates how the research was done, its triumphs and pitfalls, as well as the story of the two subjects it revealed.

DANFORTH LIBRARY NEWS

Hours: Wed 3:00-5:00 p.m. and Sat 10:00 a.m. to Noon

Thank You

The Danforth Library wants to thank Barnard resident Abner Schlabach for his donation of four more books by Noel Perrin, the subject of "A Vermont Writer" in the August 2021 issue of The Barnard Bulletin. In addition to a hardcover copy of Best Person Rural (published in 2006 by The Godine Press of Boston), the Danforth has now added to its collection the following: First Person Rural, Second Person Rural, Third Person Rural, and Solo: Life with an Electric Car.

Educational Resources: New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE).

NEBHE's Tuition Break program, the New England Regional Student Program (RSP), provides significant tuition savings to residents of the six New England states when they enroll at out-of-state public colleges and universities within New England and pursue approved programs.

Here's link to info for Vermont residents who may want to attend college in NH, Maine, CT, MA, or RI: <https://nebhe.org/tuitionbreak/find-a-program/vermont/>

New Books

Fiction:

Don Quixote by Cervantes (a recent HC translation from the Spanish)

Slow Fire Burning by Paula Hawkins

Cloud Cuckoo by Anthony Doerr

Apples Never Fall by Liane Moriarty (Thriller)

The Love Songs of W. E. B. DuBois by Honorée Fanonne Jeffers

Better to Have Gone: Love, Death, and the Quest for Utopia in Auroville by Akash Kapur

Beautiful World, Where Are You? by Sally Rooney

Memoir

Unbound: My Story of Liberation and the Birth of the Me-Too Movement by Tarana Burke

They Called Us Enemy by George Takei (graphic novel-style memoir)

Non-Fiction & Poetry

Breathing Fire: Female Inmate Firefighters on the Front Lines of California's Wildfires by Jamie Lowe

On Freedom: Four Songs of Care and Constraint by Maggie Nelson -Poetry

Contacts Us: Phone during open hours:
1-802-234-9408

Email: charlesdanforthlibrary@gmail.com

Trustees: Margaret Edwards, Judy Maynes, Susan McNunty, Ellen Miles, and Edythe Wright

EAST BARNARD ANNUAL OYSTER STEW SUPPER CANCELLED

Dear Friends, Neighbors, and Community Members far and wide,

It is with deep regret that Broad Brook Volunteer Fire Association's (BBVFA) Trustees announce their decision to cancel this year's Annual Oyster Stew Supper fundraiser event (originally scheduled for October 23, 2021) and reschedule in October 2022. Our decision was more due to the continuing threat of COVID-19, the unusually high cost of oysters this fall, as well as the limited open and distanced space available in the East Barnard Community Hall.

Despite the cancellation, as our sole annual fundraiser event, if supporters feel so inclined, we welcome donations and look forward to holding next year's Oyster Stew Supper.

Donations may be made to BBVFA and sent to 166 East Barnard Rd, South Royalton, VT 05068.

Thank you for your understanding and ongoing support.

Sincerely,
Fran Carbino, BBVFA Chairman
Art Lewin, BBVFD Chief

LOCAL CRYPTOGRAM

A cryptogram is a code in which one letter is substituted for another. For example, the word "Church" could be written BWMSBW. The letter B would be the letter C and would be so throughout the entire message. In this message O = S. The solution is found by trial and error. The CRYPTOGRAM answer is on the last page.

"TG GLFYPNYS, MCY YDSMC TR
BSLXTGB ZETYM. TM TR PDOTGB
TMR NYA, D XTGMYS NYA VLS
VKLXYSR DGA RPKK
HSYDMESYR. MCY NYA TR
XCTMY DGA RTKYGM, DGA PEHC
KTVY HDG CTAY NYGYDMC TMR
NKDGOYMR."
-HUGMCTD SUKDGM,
TG GLFYPNYS

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS NOVEMBER 7, 2021

Remember to set your clocks back one hour on November 6th or 7th as daylight savings time ends at 1:00am Sunday.

THE PLANNING COMMISSION meets on the first Monday of the month at 7:00pm at the Town offices.

BARNARD CONSERVATION COMMISSION meets the second Monday of the month, 7:00pm, Town Hall.

BEES MEETINGS are held at 6:30pm on the 2nd Thursday of each month in the library at the school.

DANFORTH LIBRARY HOURS: Wednesdays 3:00 - 5:00 p.m., Saturdays 10:00 a.m. to Noon. ECFiber Wi-Fi access available .

SELECTBOARD meets the first and third Wednesday of the month at the Town offices at 7:00pm.

SELECTBOARD ASSISTANT, Rob Ramrath, select-board@barnardvt.us, 234-2911 x 2, Cell 603-762-5280. By phone at any time, in person by appointment.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR, Rob Ramrath, zoning@barnardvt.us, 234-2911 x 2, Cell 603-762-5280. By phone at any time, in person by appointment.

TOWN CLERK office hours are Monday & Tuesday, 8:00am-3:30pm. Public access is restricted. Call 234-9211 for an appointment.

THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD meets the third Thursday of the month at 7:00pm at the Barnard Town Hall as necessary.

THE BARNARD ENERGY COMMITTEE meets on the 2nd Tuesday of the month, 7:00pm at the Town Hall

YOGA CLASSES offered at Danforth Library, Mondays 9:00am - 10:30am with Amanda Anderson. Classes are by donation; for more information contact Amanda@innerliftyoga.com. Yoga Classes are also offered on Thursdays from 9-10:30 with Beth Umba. Contact Beth at: bethumba@gmail.com.

BARNARD GENERAL STORE, Monday-Saturday: 7am-7pm, Sundays: 8am-6pm.
<https://www.facebook.com/barnardgeneralstore>

BARNARD LISTSERV: to subscribe please send an email to: barnard-subscribe@lists.vitalcommunities.org

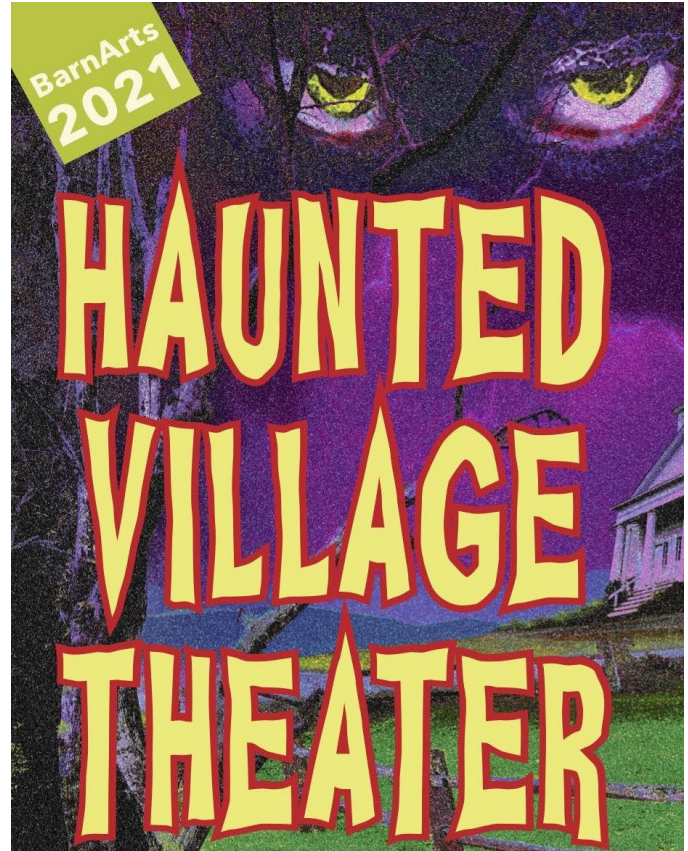
RECYCLING Click [here](#) for Hours and Regulations

THE BARNARD INN is running a "Feeding Neighbors & Sustaining Community" campaign. Purchase an e-Gift Card and in turn the chefs will feed neighbors. Whole chicken dinners (serves 4-6) and individual sized meals to help feed Vermonters in need. Thank you and please stay safe. E-Gift Cards are available at www.barnardinn.com.

ECFIBER Governing Board meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7pm in 012 Oakes Hall, Vermont Law School. More information at <https://www.ecfiber.net/>

HISTORICAL SOCIETY Programs to be announced. Questions? Email: historicalbarnard1761@gmail.com

BARNARTS EVENTS SCHEDULE



Saturday, October 23rd, (Rain date: October 24th)

Family-friendly Haunted Tours - 5 & 5:30 pm

PG Haunted Tours - 6, 6:30 & 7 pm

PG-13 Haunted Tours - 7:30, 8 & 8:30 pm

Tickets: "You choose" \$5-20 sliding scale. Each tour is limited to 20 people and tickets are selling out! Barnard Town Hall will be used as a parking/check-in/ tour start location. Food, drink and bathrooms will also be available inside.

Holiday Cabaret, December 11.

Winter Carols, rehearsal begins Monday, November 15, contact Linda at info@barnarts.org. Singing masks required.

CRYPTOGRAM ANSWER

"In November, the earth is growing quiet. It is making its bed, a winter bed for flowers and small creatures. The bed is white and silent, and much life can hide beneath its blankets."

- Cynthia Rylant, In November

WCSU SCHOOL CALENDAR

Nov. 3 - Two hour delayed start.

Nov. 8 - Teacher In-Service Day, no classes.

Nov. 11 - Veterans' Day observed, school closed

Nov. 9 & 16 - Parent/Teacher conferences, 3:00 - 7:30

Nov 24-26 Thanksgiving Recess (school closed)

Dec. 1 2 Hour Delayed Start (students)